

## **Local Knowledge and Knowing as Social Products: A General Model With Cases From Southeast Asia**

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Local knowledge consists of information and capabilities related to the performance of acts. Usually it is gained through long-term experience, has a certain basis in localized cultural contexts and thus is spatially limited. The paper asks whether local knowledge might have some general structural aspects despite its tremendous diversity. It is proposed that local knowledge should neither be equalized with science nor essentialistically contrasted with science. Local knowledge shares some attributes with empirical scientific knowledge. The question is whether some of these qualities are loosed if local knowledge is formalized and delocalized. Using ethnographic examples ten general qualities of local knowledge are presented. The examples are primarily from Indonesia and Malaysia and are related to environmental and migrancy-related knowledge. The paper proposes that local knowledge might be a specific form of knowing and rationality found in all societies worldwide. Thus local knowledge could be analyzed as a human universal.