

**A Roundtable Symposium, 5 & 6 September 2018, Jakarta, Indonesia**



**EMERSA**

Epistemic Mobilities and the  
Governance of Environmental Risks in  
Island Southeast Asia

## **Translating Sea-Level Change in Urban Life: Policies, Practices, and their Intersections in Island Southeast Asia**



**Event venue: Center for Urban and Regional Studies (4th floor), Universitas  
Indonesia (Salemba campus), central Jakarta**

Host: Center for Urban and Regional Studies, Universitas Indonesia

Co-organizers: Leibniz Center for Tropical Marine Research (ZMT), Bremen, artec Sustainability  
Center, University of Bremen, Germany

Funders: SPP 1889 Regional Sea Level Change and Society, a funding line supported by the German Science Foundation (DFG)

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Cover photo: *Protection, Relaxation and Serendipity?*  
Anna-Katharina Hornidge©

## INTRODUCTION

### Roundtable Symposium

#### Translating Sea-Level Change in Urban Life: Policies, Practices, and their Intersections in Island Southeast Asia

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The symposium will be organized in the form of a roundtable dialogue with respect to submitted papers (first drafts), and their corresponding presentations. Particular emphasis will be placed on refining arguments and texts in preparation for the edited volume/special issue.

'Translating Sea-Level Change in Urban Life' aims to bring together researchers from the social sciences, the humanities and area studies with practitioners and policy-makers that work across a diverse range of themes relating to the lived and experiential aspects of (relative) sea-level change in Southeast Asia.

Drawing inspiration from the recent 'mobility' and 'translational' turns across the social sciences and the humanities, the event seeks to discuss how sea-level change dynamics in island and archipelagic megacities and other urban settings can be empirically studied and re-theorized beyond their mainstream articulations as sources of risk and 'riskscapes.'

At its core, the symposium seeks to advance several nascent lines of inquiry that engage with how: a) diversely the amorphous notion of 'sea-level change' is interpreted across urban spaces; b) coastal societies in Southeast Asia are reconfiguring what it means to live with/out water in everyday life; c) policies and everyday social practices of living with/out water have been transforming contemporary urban life, and indeed the very imaginaries and futures of 'urbanity' in island and archipelagic Southeast Asia.

The event is targeted at international researchers and scholars that work at the science-policy interface spanning a range of disciplines that include geography, sociology, anthropology, political science and environmental history.

The event is organized along the following interrelated thematic clusters:

**Panel A:** *Coastal protection and adaptation in Urban Southeast Asia: Imaginaries, contradictions, and their broader material and discursive politics*

**Panel B:** *Littoral contestations: the making of 'new'/hybrid knowledge(s) and their coastal justice concerns*

**Panel C:** *Living with/out water in everyday life*

**Panel D:** *Futuring the Coastal Metropolis*

## IMPORTANT DATES

Abstract submission deadline: June 3, 2018

Registration deadline: July 1, 2018

Submission of photographs (exhibition): **August 18, 2018**

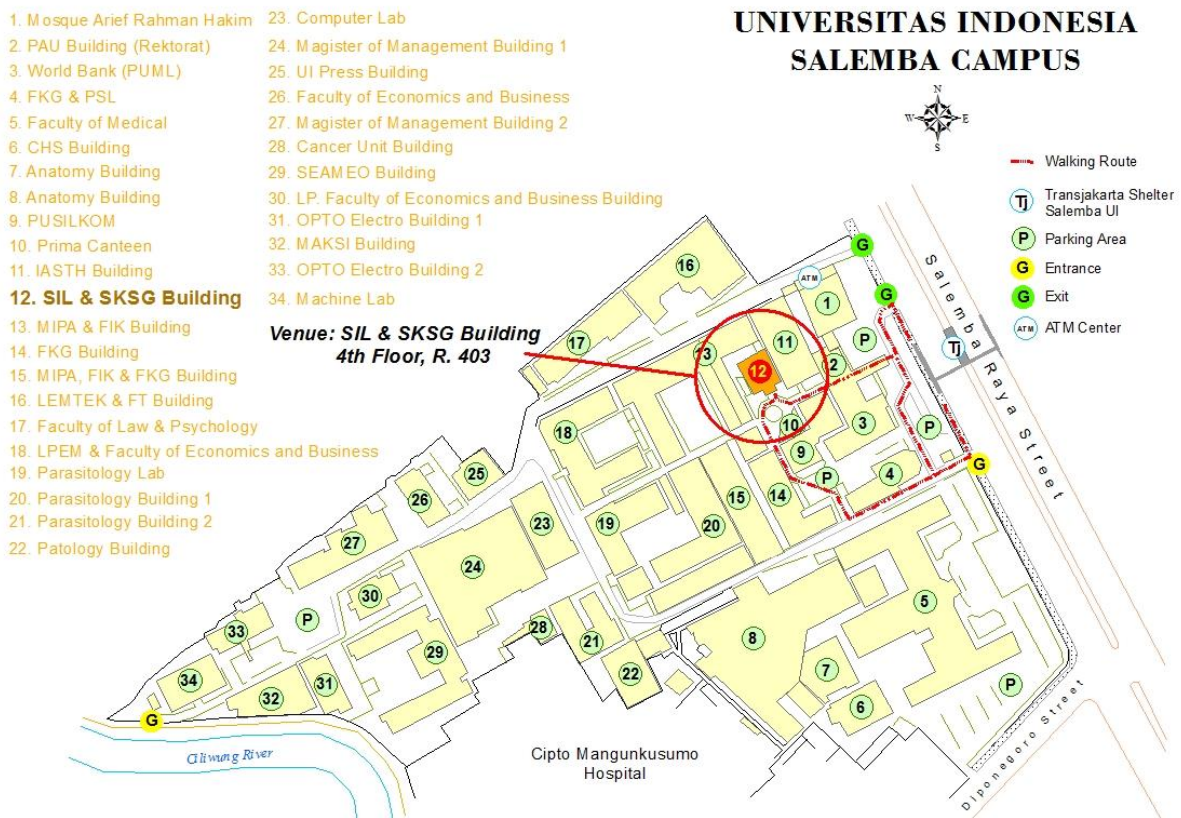
Submission of paper or proposal concept/outline: **August 27, 2018**

## VENUE - UNIVERSITAS INDONESIA (SALEMBA CAMPUS)

Universitas Indonesia has two campuses. One is in the heart of Jakarta (Salemba), and the other (newer campus) is in Depok.

Many of the faculties are located in the Depok Campus while Salemba in Central Jakarta has historically been the home of the Faculty of Medicine and several graduate programs, including the Center for Urban and Regional Studies.

The campus is located at *Kampus UI, Jl. Salemba Raya No.4, RT.1/RW.5, Kenari, Senen, Kota Jakarta Pusat, Daerah Khusus Ibukota Jakarta 10430, Room: SIL&SKSG Building, 4<sup>th</sup> floor, Room 403*



## GETTING TO JAKARTA FROM THE AIRPORT

Nearest airport - Soekarno-Hatta International Airport (abbreviated SHIA or Cengkareng Airport, hence IATA designator "CGK"). Universitas Indonesia's Salemba Campus, where the symposium will be hosted is in Central Jakarta.

Bluebird taxis (metered) can be hired to take you into the city at any time of the day or night.

A queue number should be picked up at the Bluebird taxi counter outside the airport before waiting in line.



Johannes Herbeck©

By car - from Jakarta International airport, the trip often takes one hour along the toll road (the toll fare is usually 9,000 IRP).

By train - take any of the regular (Jabotabek) trains to Cikini Station. The campus is only within a short 10-15 minute distance by car, but could be a little too far to reach on foot. Take the bus no. 502, hop off at Salemba traffic light intersection (you should alert the driver).

## PRE-EVENT PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION

4 September, Symposium photographic exhibition – “**Living with Sea Level Change in Urban Southeast Asia**”, 18.30-20.00 hrs.

(shuttle service leaves Blue Sky Hotel at 18.00)

*Venue:* Ke:kini Gallery, ground floor, Jalan Cikini Raya No. 45, Cikini, Menteng (Jakarta)

*Opening address:* Dr. H.A. Simarmata, Secretary-General, Center for Urban and Regional Studies, UI (in Indonesian & English), followed by brief introductions from the EMERSA project PIs Prof. Dr. A-K Hornidge and Prof. Dr. Michael Flitner.

The exhibition showcases photographic material submitted by symposium participants – both on land and at sea. The gallery also serves as a community-owned co-working space.

Many of the photographs were taken during fieldwork over the past few years, and features spaces and communities from across the Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore, New Caledonia, and the South China Sea.

**The event is open to the public.** All symposium participants and organizers are welcome to invite their own guests.



## DAY 1, September 5 (& event dinner)

8.30	<p>Opening, <b>Dr. Hendricus Andy Simarmata</b>, Secretary-General, Center for Urban and Regional Studies, Univeritas Indonesia</p> <p>Welcome address: <b>Dr. Muhammad Luthfi</b>, Director of School of Global and Strategic Studies</p> <p>Introduction: <b>Prof. Dr. Anna-Katharina Hornidge</b>, Principal Investigator (EMERSA), Head of the Social Sciences Department, Leibniz-Center for Tropical Marine Research (ZMT) &amp; Professor of Sociology, University of Bremen, Germany</p>
9.00- 10.30	<p>Keynote address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Dr. Matthew Schneider-Mayerson</b>, Assistant Professor in Environmental Studies, Yale-NUS College (USA/Singapore) "Feeling Sea Level Rise: Narrative, Perception, and Action" (followed by an open discussion)</li> </ul>
10.30-10.50	Tea/coffee break
10-50-12.00	<p><b>PANEL A: Coastal Protection and Adaptation in Urban Southeast Asia</b> Moderator: Rapti Siriwardane-de Zoysa (Leibniz-ZMT)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Dr. Johannes Herbeck &amp; Prof. Dr. Michael Flitner</b>, Uni Bremen (Germany) "Mobile Adaptation Policies? Protecting Southeast Asian megacities against relative sea level rise"</li> <li>- <b>Irene S. Fitrintia, Nala Hutasoit &amp; Arif Gandapurnama</b>, Universitas Indonesia "Spatial Behaviour to Response Risk Planning and Development in Northern Coastal Jakarta"</li> </ul>
12.00-13.00	Catered lunch (at the venue)

13.00-14.30	<p><b>PANEL B: Littoral Contestations &amp; the making of 'new'/hybrid knowledge(s)</b> Moderator: Hendricus A. Simarmata (Universitas Indonesia)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Prof. Dr. Emma Porio</b>, Ateneo de Manila University &amp; the Manila Observatory (Philippines) "Sea-Level Rise and Living with Water in Littoral Cities: Potentials for People's Practices Informing Policies for Risk Reduction and Resilience"</li> <li>- <b>Irina Rafliana</b>, Indonesian Institute of Sciences/LIPI (Indonesia) "A Tsunami of Anxiety: The '57 Meter Threat that Shook the Urban Dwellers in West Jawa and Jakarta"</li> <li>- <b>Dr. Rapti Siriwardane-de Zoysa</b>, ZMT (Germany) "Shifting Sands: Shored Place-making in Outer Singapore"</li> </ul>
14.30-15.00	Tea/coffee break
15.30-17.00	<p><b>PANEL C: Living with/out water in everyday life</b> Moderator: Loh Kah Seng (University of Western Australia)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Assoc. Prof. Dr. Remmon Barbaza</b>, Ateneo de Manila University (Philippines) "Adapting to Sea-Level Change: Insights from the Balangay Experience, Philippines"</li> <li>- <b>Asst. Prof. Dr. Jennifer Gaynor</b>, University at Buffalo – SUNY (USA) "Keeping sea people in the city"</li> </ul>
19.00-21.00	<p><b>Symposium dinner for all participants and invited guests</b> Restaurant: <a href="#">Tugu Kunstring Paleis</a> (with a guided tour of the heritage building)</p> <p>*transport to and from the restaurant will be organized outside the Blue Sky Hotel Pandurata, with a shuttle leaving at <b>18.30</b>)</p>



## DAY 2, September 6, 2018

9.00	Welcome note, <b>Prof. Abimanyu T Alamsyah</b> , Universitas Indonesia "Amphibious Histories in Indonesia"
9.30- 10.30	<p><b>PANEL D: Futuring the Coastal Metropolis</b> Moderator: Johannes Herbeck (University of Bremen)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kelvin Low</b>, National University of Singapore "Sensory Narratives of Sea Lives and Displacement: The Orang Laut in Singapore"</li> <li>- <b>Wanling Hu</b>, Leibniz Center for Tropical Marine Research (Germany) "Narrating Science as a World-Making Activity: Sea Level Change in Singapore"</li> </ul>
10.30-10.45	Tea/coffee break
10.45-11.45	<p><b>PANEL D (contd.): Futuring the Coastal Metropolis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Isabelle Simpson</b>, McGill University (Canada) "Seasteading in French Polynesia: Sea-level change as 'secessionist' opportunism?"</li> <li>- <b>Prof. Dr. Anna-Katharina Hornidge</b>, ZMT (Germany) "Following-the-Moving-Target? Tracing Epistemic Mobilities in the Environmental Risk Discourses of Island Southeast Asia"</li> </ul>
12.00-13.15	Catered lunch (at the venue)
13.15-15.30	Open discussion on the organization of the edited volume/special issue (with tea/coffee break)
15.30-16.30	Key reflections / <i>quo vadis</i>

## ABSTRACTS

### DAY 1

#### PANEL A: COASTAL PROTECTION & ADAPTATION IN URBAN SOUTHEAST ASIA

##### **Mobile Adaptation Policies? Protecting Southeast Asian megacities against relative sea level rise**

Johannes Herbeck, postdoctoral researcher & Michael Flitner, Chair, artec Sustainability Center, University of Bremen (Germany)

The search for suitable adaptation pathways to accommodate for relative rises in sea levels is a current concern for many megacities in Southeast Asia and beyond. The proposed measures and pathways are thereby not developed in isolation, but are the outcome of processes of knowledge exchange between various sites and places, of technical advices to local governments and of postcolonial entanglements of a global 'consultocracy' of coastal adaptation experts.

Taking a policy mobility approach, this article sketches processes in the development of coastal protection measures in the cities of Singapore, Manila and Jakarta. We argue that as opposed to other fields, policies and measures for coastal protection are distinctively co-produced by international experts which are often employed by urban governments in order to plan for future sea level changes. As a corollary, such policies are heavily relying on already institutionalized ways of mobilizing technologies and designs. Established best practices and building guidelines favor a specific actor set and pre-determine the options at hand. The modes of knowledge transfer are manifold; reaching from basic notions and concepts that are introduced into national political debates, to simple sketches of potential protective measures taken up and worked over by local administrations, organized study tours for different levels of city administration officials, and to very close and systematized working relationships in shared offices. We argue that the privileged access of a global consultancy to decision-making processes makes non-biased political deliberations over potential coastal futures difficult, and complicates the contestation of basic approaches and technologies that are spread in transnational circles.

## **Spatial Behaviour to Response Risk Planning and Development In Northern Coastal Jakarta'**

Irene Sondang, Nala Hutasoit, Arif Gandapurnama, researchers at CURS, Universitas Indonesia (Jakarta)

Much of the Jakarta area is 40% below sea level, and coastal areas like Kampung Muara Baru are 4 meters below sea level. Population growth from 8.9 million people in 2007 to 10.3 million people in 2017 (BPS, 2017) has become an added pressure on land subsidence, thus posing immense sustainability challenges on future generations in the city, particularly around coastal Jakarta. The government and other stakeholders are working on mitigation measures ranging from large to small scale initiatives. Major projects such as the construction of the NCICD, reservoir dredging together with road elevation are among the efforts being undertaken by the government alongside the private sector in order to "secure" the coastal area of Jakarta. Yet we ask, what about the kampung/villagers along the coast of Jakarta? Do they also feel the threat of the environment and climate change in their daily lives? How much effort do they place on these so-called 'threats'? Do they also undertake mitigation activities with the same urgency that the government does? Through mix methods and by combining observational insights, in-depth interview and GIS mapping, we illustrate the spatial behavior in several kampungs along northern coastal Jakarta, in with a focus on key coastal transformations. Our findings show that people are also very much involved in mitigation processes. However, these insights also reveal that these changes were made in response to larger scale infrastructural developments – particularly in the way of governmental projects – in order to cope with anthropogenic 'disasters' instead of purely addressing the socio-ecological risks affecting their respective settlements.

## **PANEL B: LITTORAL CONTESTATIONS AND THE MAKING OF 'NEW'/HYBRID KNOWLEDGES**

### **Sea-Level Rise and Living with Water in Littoral Cities: Potentials for People's Practices Informing Policies for Risk Reduction and Resilience**

Emma Porio, Professor of Sociology, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, School of Social Sciences, Ateneo de Manila University; Science Research Fellow, Manila Observatory

About 25 million Filipinos live and derive their livelihood bases from the 36, 289 kilometer coastline around the archipelago. Seven (7) of the twenty-five (25) coastal cities around the world that are exposed to a one-meter sea level rise are in the Philippines, namely: Butuan, and Davao in Mindanao; Iloilo in Central Visayas; and Caloocan, Malabon, Manila, and Taguig in Metro Manila. Meanwhile, the observed magnitude of sea level rise in the eastern

side of the Philippines has been more than double the global average over the last 20 years, and its impact on coastal areas is worsened by long-term anthropogenic land subsidence due to groundwater depletion. Thus, the expected impacts go beyond the permanent flooding of low-lying areas but include shoreline erosion and retreat, salinization of coastal freshwater aquifers, damage to coastal defenses and greater extent of flooding during extreme events. More significantly, 10 provinces are highly affected by a 1 meter sea level rise, with the provinces of Cagayan, Camarines Sur and Palawan, being the most vulnerable with 180 coastal towns which provide livelihood and basic services to about 13.6 million people. Coastal and riverine populations, especially sustenance fisherfolks, have always lived with the vagaries of water -floods, drought, king tides, storm surges, monsoon rains - and for centuries they have survived. But with the rising waters, also came the intensification of capital-intensive programs to develop the coastal lines that favor the development of high-end consumption spaces and structures. These investments seem to nullify the definition of these littoral spaces as dangerous and risky spaces for habitation.

This paper interrogates the ways that the coastal lines of Metro Manila (with special focus on the cities of Navotas, Malabon and Valenzuela) and Metro Cebu (focus on Cebu City, Lapu-Lapu City and Mandaue City) have been reconfigured, physically and symbolically, by large climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction (CCA-DRR) measures designed and implemented through tri-partite partnerships (state, civil society, private sector), involving support from external bi-multi-lateral institutions. This paper argues that the understanding of risk and vulnerability to climate-related hazards is heavily driven by technocratic-driven infrastructural solutions on how to reduce their impacts on vulnerable populations. The paper concludes with community-driven resilience innovations with their local governance systems to “trump” the technocratic ascendancy, espoused by national government agencies in partnership with external donors, in the construction of the “modern city” by the sea.

### **A Tsunami of Anxiety: The 1.57 Meter Threat that Shook the Urban Dwellers in West Java and Jakarta”**

Irina Rafliana, Researcher, International Center for Interdisciplinary and Advanced Research, Indonesian Institute of Sciences/ICIAR LIPI (Jakarta)

Living with tsunamis was never part of Jakarta’s contemporary history. The imagination of Jakarta inundated by rapid and destructive water movements are scarcely exposed in schools or at communities, not as much as, for example, exposures to narratives of floods and sea-level change. Yet, a recent closed scientific forum was held at the BMKG (Bureau for Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics) on April 2018, discussing several scenarios of tsunami inundations for South Java that would in fact affect the coasts of North Jakarta. The scenario scientifically suggested inundation areas around the region based on the recent National Active Fault Map launched by the Government of Indonesia.

The narratives of tsunami threats was 'leaked' unprecedentedly, and exposed by a particular digital media, using vivid and deterministic info graphics, with little or no referencing to its empirical sources. An anxious public was quickly driven towards the imagination of '57 meters of tsunami potentials', as being narrated in digital media news. Further, contradicting scientific explanations, political responses by the House of Parliament, and later by police officials had fired up the topic. The way emotions are stirred through media narratives, intended at aiming click baits, as political-economic drives are observable through public responses in social media. The social anxieties that grew rapidly were argued as being rooted by challenges in risk and disaster literacies, risk communication and the failure of media to conduct ethical news production.

This paper deploys digital media content analysis and national newspaper articles throughout April 2018, and important notes from several meetings on tsunami risk perceptions in Jakarta responding to the news, which was held in April and May 2018. This study is also complemented with references and interviews with tsunami scientists and modelers. The limitations of this study though are the absence of direct engagements of the author with coastal communities in a sufficient and quantitative manner to understand complex and contradicting risk perceptions.

This paper aims at joining arguments that create separations between the technical science and perceived risks among laypeople that are often evident in a clash of rationalities, while also pointing towards the poor role of science communication, challenges in literacies, intertwined with media riding the wave.

### **Shifting Sands: Shored Place-making in Outer Singapore**

Rapti Siriwardane-de Zoysa, postdoctoral researcher, Development and Knowledge Sociology WG, Leibniz Center for Tropical Marine Research/ZMT (Germany)

Engineered practices in marine shoreline place-making, particularly in Euro-American contexts, have conventionally been associated with socio-ecological dynamics such as coastal erosion, flooding, and land scarcity. However, the late 1980s and 1990s witnessed a paradigmatic shift, particularly in the ways in which dredged and reclaimed spaces came to be regarded as a recreational luxury resource (taking for example the Arabian Gulf), capable of generating their own forms of capital accumulation (and by extension - dispossession). This presentation explores a host of meanings and their contradictions inherent within the aesthetics and broader politics of coastal sandscaping in Singapore's 'outer' islands - as both an engineered form of foreshore protection, as well as a national recreational resource. By integrating currents within postnatural scholarship and Science and Technology Studies, I consider the nature-cultural figure of the 'artificial beach' as a feature of contemporary urban coastal transformation. While exploring a number of everyday lived meanings and rationales around shored use/dwelling, I particularly focus on interpretations of the natural

and the contrived, lived past(s) and imagined futures of shored constructions. The individual narratives presented here will also be woven alongside diverse experiential practices around desired and reviled sand(s), many of which at times appear against the anguished backdrop of Singapore's contemporary 'sand scandals' with its archipelagic neighbours.

## **PANEL C: LIVING WITH/OUT WATER IN EVERYDAY LIFE**

### **Adapting to Sea-Level Change: Insights from the Balangay Experience**

Remmon E. Barbaza, Associate Professor & Chair, Department of Philosophy, Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines (Manila)

In 2011, a group of Filipino adventurers embarked on a series of voyages on board three replicas of the precolonial boat called the balangay, taking them to several Southeast Asian cities and, recently, in 2018, to mainland China. This essay considers how the crew members of the balangay team, some of whom belong to traditional boat-building communities in southern Philippines (in Mindanao), see the changes in sea level in relation to their everyday life. Moreover, this essay will show how this boat community imagines the future, its risks and challenges, in a way that manifests both resilience and adaptability, while remaining faithful to their origins.

### **Keeping Sea People in the City**

Jennifer L. Gaynor, Assistant Professor, University at Buffalo, State University of New York, School of Law (USA)

The colonial imaginary wrongly portrayed Southeast Asia's sea people as living on the fringes of society. My research shows that before colonial rule took hold, the maritime-oriented Sama (Bajo/Bajau), often considered "sea people," held high political office, led naval expeditions, and were counted among the region's political and social elites (Intertidal History in Island Southeast Asia, Cornell University Press, 2016). This completely contradicts the stereotype of "sea nomads." While no single trait defines people of Sama descent, and many different groups have followed maritime pursuits, historically, most regional sea people have been Sama. Show me a contemporary Southeast Asian coastal city, and I can point out its neighborhood of seafarers, many of whom I promise you are Sama. From the Bird's Head to Burma, maritime oriented people build villages that extend out over the waters. Evidence for this settlement pattern reaches back many centuries. Although colonial and national governments sometimes tried to resettle maritime populations on land, settlements in the littoral are neither new nor the result of "modernity." Instead, living in floating houses (also known as "boats"), and living in structures built in the littoral (stilt houses), are but two modalities for coastal dwelling among variable tides and seas.

Appropriately engineered, the tidal waters cleanse beneath the houses, and evening breezes keep away mosquitoes. We have much to learn from this legacy of littoral architecture, which should be lifted, as in Brunei, out of its negative associations, and restored—for seafarers, their descendants, and others—to its rightful place along the region's sheltered shores.

## DAY 2

### PANEL D: FUTURING THE COASTAL METROPOLIS

#### **Sensory Narratives of Sea Lives and Displacement: The Orang Laut in Singapore**

Kelvin Low, Associate Professor and Deputy Head of the Department for Sociology, National University of Singapore/NUS (Singapore)

In contrast to the highly modernized island-city state of Singapore today that has developed at a rapid pace, early Singapore depicts a starkly different living environment comprising a Malay fishing village before the period of European settlement. At the southern part of the island resided gypsies or boat people known as the orang laut, the indigenous peoples who lived along the coast, rivers, and other nearby and smaller islands. In the 1830s their homes populated along the Kallang River, the Singapore River and the bay area of Telok Blangah. The orang laut were probably one of the earliest residents of Telok Blangah, having been resettled under the British colonial government in the latter half of the nineteenth century. They made a living by ferrying people across the Singapore River, and by selling sweetmeats and fruits to crews of local vessels. Also known through other terms including 'sea folk', 'sea roaming groups', 'maritime mobile groups', and 'sea hunters and gathers', academic discussion pertaining to the orang laut shore up debates related to traditional notions of citizenship based upon bounded territories, borderlands, and state governance. Drawing upon preliminary archival research in Singapore, the paper makes a case for how sensory experiences are built into discourses surrounding identity and livelihoods as sea nomads. How did the orang laut perceive and respond to flows of urban modernisation and development? How do they talk about resettlement or forced displacement? How do their sensory recollections of living with/by the waters reflect upon their sense of identity and communal life? What is the relation between sea and land within the wider discourse on Malays in Singapore? These are some guiding questions that the paper attempts to engage with in order to consider how analyses contingent upon sensory studies and migration shed light on the orang laut community in Singapore and the wider region.

## **Narrating Science as a World-Making Activity: Sea Level Change in Singapore**

Wanling Hu, Doctoral student, Development and Knowledge Sociology WG, Leibniz-Center for Tropical Marine Research/ZMT (Germany)

Sea level change serves as “a good magnifying glass” to understand the political and social construction of meaning in everyday life. The proposed doctoral study aims at qualitatively tracing different types of sea level change narratives either produced or consumed in Singapore, and to analyse how and to what degree do certain metaphors, motifs, framing, and logical arguments in these narratives enter into public and political discourses. Some of the “successful” stories enter into (or get picked up in) national climate change strategy, public policies, action plans, and government programs with regard to coastal protection and early warning systems. While depicting or explaining sea-level change as a natural, scientific, and engineering issue, these narratives also embed themselves or co-shape Singapore’s promotion of “global city,” “garden city,” and “knowledge society” as their core national identities? Thus, they should also be regarded as “world-making” activities that seek to affectively engage with the environmental risks and social vulnerabilities that are local and global at the same time.

The conceptual framing of this research will be based on the Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse (SKAD), with a strong focus on ethnographic, qualitative methods of data collection and interpretative analytics. As a small, low-lying island state, how have land, sea, and the environment been configured in contemporary imaginations? How is the challenge of future sea level rise depicted and imagined in science narratives both produced and consumed in Singapore? A qualitative comparison will be made between imported and locally produced narratives. How do imported narratives influence local conceptions of climate change and the environment? And how does this relate to Singaporean-Chinese (Mandarin speaking) sea-level change related narratives? How do these narratives delve into the everyday conversation and practice of individuals and communities and construct a public space for creative and active forms of knowing and living with a sea level change challenged future?

## **Seasteading in French Polynesia: Sea-level change as ‘secessionist’ opportunism?**

Isabelle Simpson, doctoral researcher, McGill University (Canada)

Seasteading is the practice of establishing permanent settlements on structures located in areas of sea outside the jurisdiction of any country. In January 2017, The Seasteading Institute, a non-profit organization founded in 2008 in California, announced the signature of a memorandum of understanding with the government of French Polynesia to begin feasibility studies on the construction of a first private floating island. The Floating Island Project requires the creation of two special economic zones, one on land (the Anchor Zone) and one at sea (the Sea Zone). It has received the endorsement of the current government,



which emphasizes the opportunity to attract foreign capital and expertise and to connect the archipelago to global networks, but it is strongly opposed by local activists who fear the privatization of their ancestral territory. Based on fieldwork at seasteading-related events between 2014 and 2018 and on a critical discourse analysis of seasteading communicative events (in this case promotional brochures and webpages), this study examines how the seasteading discourse is contextually and locally adapted. I suggest that the discourse targeting the local population centers around sustainability and 'enhancing Polynesian culture,' whereas the discourse to attract investors strongly draws on evolutionary political, economic, and technological discourses, confusing 'traditional' Polynesian and 'libertarian' Silicon Valley epistemologies to gain political legitimacy and to justify special regulatory frameworks. Seasteading was originally conceived as a way to exit the nation-state model of governance. Now the Floating Island Project is presented as a blue-green urban solution to rising water levels that will bring territorial and economic security, but also cultural continuity to French Polynesians and, paradoxically, economic and political freedom to investors and residents of the island. This study draws attention to the role of non-governmental and private organization in the circulation of new, radical policy models turning climate change and humanitarian crisis into opportunity to secede.

### **Following-the-Moving-Target? Tracing Epistemic Mobilities in the Environmental Risk Discourses of Island Southeast Asia**

Anna-Katharina Hornidge, Professor, Institute for Sociology, University of Bremen & Head, Social Sciences Dept., Leibniz Center for Tropical Marine Research/ZMT (Germany)

Coastal (mega-)cities are hotspots of change – zones where socio-economic and political transformation processes and environmental change processes meet and where the social, political, infrastructural etc. effects of it are extrapolated. They are the nodal points of immense amounts and different types of global flows – the flow of people, goods, finances, viruses and, of course, knowledges. And while these entities travel, they change, are adapted to and translated into different contexts and functionalities.

This paper reflects on travelling, and while doing so changing, knowledges, how they are reflected in discourse practices, contribute to larger change processes and the living with them, as well as the scientific challenge they pose. It is a conceptual paper embedded in scholarly thoughts of the sociology of knowledge, mobility turn inspired discussions on the multidimensionality of space, as well as younger debates on rethinking Area Studies, that nevertheless draws on a range of prior empirical research endeavors and quests. Based on this, the paper conceptualises 'epistemic mobilities', and offers an understanding of what they are, how they can be studied and what they mean to social change processes.

## ACCOMMODATION

Blue Sky Boutique Hotel, Pandurata, Mercure, Ibis (Cikini), Hotel Cordela, Zen Rooms, and a number of other hotels are within a one/two mile radius of the Salemba Campus (address: Kampus UI, Jl. Salemba Raya No.4, RT.1/RW.5, Kenari, Senen, Kota Jakarta Pusat, Daerah Khusus Ibukota Jakarta 10430).

Airbnb options: the newly built condominium Capitol Park offers a number of private bedsitters and smaller self-catering flats in Salemba, within a 5 minute walk to the campus venue.

**IMPORTANT:** As our event will be hosted soon after the Asian Games, we advise participants (for whom accommodation is not being reserved by the EMERSA Co-ordination Office), to secure their hotels/apartments as soon as possible.

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EMERSA consortium members (and guests) will have paid accommodation booked for them at the [Blue Sky Boutique Hotel](#) (Pandurata), with breakfast provided for September 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> nights (check out time – September 7, 12noon).

Hotel address: Jalan Raden Saleh No. 12, Central Jakarta (telephone: +62 – 21- 390 5205)  
Email: [reservations@bluesky-pandurata.com](mailto:reservations@bluesky-pandurata.com)

A group shuttle service will be organized by the hotel each morning to bring participants to the Salemba Campus, and to bring them back after 17.00. We hope to finish slightly earlier on the second day.

You should have confirmed the type of room you would like us to reserve for you should you not be traveling solo (i.e. single, double etc.) before **July 18, 2018**. If we had not heard from you, we would have routinely reserved a single-superior for three nights.

## GROUP DINNER

All participants are invited to the group symposium dinner at the *Tugu Kunstring Paleis* on the 5<sup>th</sup> of September (7-9.30pm) hosted by the EMERSA project, inclusive of a complementary soft drink. A selection of vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes will be served at each table. The restaurant staff will offer a brief guided tour of the heritage building before dinner.

The shuttle service (to Tugu Kunstring) will leave the Blue Skye Boutique Hotel at 7pm.

*Address:* Jl. Teuku Umar No.1, RT.1/RW.1, Gondangdia, Menteng, Kota Jakarta Pusat, Daerah Khusus Ibukota Jakarta 10350

Room: The Pangeran Diponegoro Main Hall (reservation made under EMERSA)



### Contact details/Organizing committee:

**Bremen:** Dr. Rapti Siriwardane-de Zoysa, Dr. Johannes Herbeck ([rsi@leibniz-zmt.de](mailto:rsi@leibniz-zmt.de) / [herbeck@uni-bremen.de](mailto:herbeck@uni-bremen.de)); Pls (EMERSA project): Prof. Dr. Anna-Katharina Hornidge & Prof. Dr. Micheal Flitner

**Jakarta:** Dr. Hendricus Simarmata & Irene Fitrintia Sondang

Mobile: +62 815 908 282 29 (Irene)

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## PANELISTS

### **Keynote speaker:**

[Matthew Schneider-Mayerson](#), Assistant Professor, Yale-NUS Campus (USA/Singapore)

### **Main event host:**

[Hendricus Andy Simarmata](#), Vice Chair, Center for Urban and Regional Studies, Universitas Indonesia

### **Presenters:**

[Remmon Barbaza](#), Associate Professor & Chair of the Philosophy Department, Ateneo de Manila University (Philippines)

[Irene Sondang Fitrinitia](#), Researcher, Center for Urban and Regional Studies, Universitas Indonesia

[Michael Flitner](#), Chair, artec Sustainability Center, University of Bremen (Germany)

[Johannes Herbeck](#), Postdoctoral Researcher, artec / Geography Institute, University of Bremen (Germany)

[Arif Gandapurnama](#), Senior Urban Planner, HAS Advisory (Indonesia)

[Hu Wanling](#), PhD candidate, Leibniz-ZMT & Fiction Meets Science initiative – sub-project “Narrating science as a world-making activity: Sea level change in Singapore”

[Nala Hutasoit](#), Senior Associate, HAS Consulting Group (Indonesia)

[Loh Kah Seng](#), Honorary Research Fellow, University of Western Australia (Sydney)

[Kelvin E.Y. Low](#), Associate Professor & Deputy Head, Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore (Singapore)

[Emma Porio](#), Professor of Sociology, Ateneo de Manila University & Senior Research Fellow, the Manila Observatory (Philippines)

[Anna-Katharina Hornidge](#), Head of Social Sciences, Leibniz-ZMT and Professor, Institute for Sociology, University of Bremen (Germany)

[Jennifer Gaynor](#), Assistant Professor, University of Buffalo – SUNY (USA)

[Irina Rafliana](#), Executive Secretary, International Center for Interdisciplinary and Advanced Research/LIPI (Indonesia)

[Isabelle Simpson](#), PhD candidate, New Cities Lab, McGill University (Canada)

[Rapti Siriwardane-de Zoysa](#), Postdoctoral Researcher, Department of Social Sciences, Leibniz-ZMT (Germany)