

# **A Euroseas 2017 laboratory on The Citizenship of Climate Change Adaptation in Southeast Asia**

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## ***EUROSEAS LABORATORIES***

Laboratories are closed meetings for young scholars to develop innovative cross-disciplinary plans. Laboratories run for half a day and consist of a convenor and max 8 participants. Towards the end of the conference convenors will present the results of these meetings to a larger audience.

Submission format: (1) title, (2) convenor, (3) explain in ½ page plans for discussion and collaboration, (4) max 8 participants.

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## ***THIS LABORATORY***

The laboratory will generate new research ideas to better understand the politics of weather-related disasters in Southeast Asia. What can the politics of past floods, typhoons, droughts, fires tell us about the way Southeast Asian states handle climate change adaptation in the future?

Climate change impact in Southeast Asia is high, while state capacities are medium to low. The risk that governments adopt maladaptive solutions is high, as is the likelihood that citizens protest and demand a new social pact to protect them.

The short-term political impact of extreme weather is greater than that of long-term temperature change. Citizens realise 'natural' disasters are in reality socially constructed. Vulnerability is open to human action.

Adaptive responses to climate change either tend towards 'resilience' or towards 'transformation.' The former involve social learning and self-organisation without disturbing the political status quo. The latter arise from fundamental dissatisfaction that lead towards replacing the dominant regime on the basis that it has failed to fulfill the social contract with its citizens (Pelling 2011) (similarly Albala-Bertrand (1993), Drury and Olson (1998)).

Vulnerability to weather-related disasters has 3 components: exposure (the weather), sensitivity (impact), and adaptive capacity (politics). One way to explore new territory is to link historical datasets in each of these 3 areas.

This laboratory will bring together young researchers in the areas of: (a) climate science, (b) environmental sociology/ political anthropology of weather-related disasters in SEA, and (c) 20<sup>th</sup> C Southeast Asian history. It will seek to develop new hypotheses about the way citizens in Southeast Asia deal (have dealt) with weather-related disasters.

Participants will bring to the table relevant historical datasets on disasters (eg EMDAT), on political regimes (eg VDEM, Polity IV), citizen surveys (eg at ASEP/JDS), and human development data (UNDP 1980-2015). Experiments will be run during the laboratory.

Participants – to be advised.

## ***MOTIVATION***

“[T]here is now little to no chance of maintaining the global mean surface temperature at or below 2°C. Moreover, the impacts associated with 2°C have been revised upwards, sufficiently so that 2°C now more appropriately represents the threshold between ‘dangerous’ and ‘extremely dangerous’ climate change. Ultimately, the science of climate change allied with the emission scenarios ... suggests a radically different framing of the mitigation and adaptation challenge from that accompanying many other analyses, particularly those directly informing policy” (Anderson and Bows 2011).

“[D]isaster lays bare the real political relations in a state” Olson (2000).

“The government response to the floods has in fact contributed towards a fundamental shift in state–citizen relations. This underdeveloped and still emerging ‘disaster citizenship’ in Pakistan is based on entitlements and rights rather than a citizenship more commonly understood to be based on identity, kinship or patronage” (Siddiqi 2013).

“[V]ictimhood is the moral content of how citizens engage with the state after a disaster” (Chhotray 2014).

“[T]he Anthropocene thesis might be viewed as the positing of a ‘disaster to end all disasters’ ..... However, ... the idea of the Anthropocene might also be taken as a prompt to consider the very limits of the political, and the challenge of dealing with forces that exceed the effective scope or reach of any polity” (Clark 2014).

“When climate change is associated with extreme events, then it is the potential for disaster to destroy place as well as social life that opens scope for new understandings of identity and social organisation and an alternative to established structures in the social contract” (Pelling 2011).

## ***REFERENCES***

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