

EUROSEAS conference

Organizers: Dr. Christina Schwenkel and Dr. Kirsten Endres, cschwenk@ucr.edu; endres@eth.mpg.de

The Mobility of Infrastructure

Studies of infrastructure that have grown exponentially in the humanities and social sciences in recent years have been much less pronounced in research on Southeast Asia. This panel asks how “infrastructure” as method, theory, and object of inquiry might be a fruitful site for the investigation of contemporary Southeast Asian societies undergoing rapid social, political, and economic change. It proposes to do so through the conceptual framework of mobility in order to think in more multifaceted ways about the spatiality and temporality of modern infrastructures in Southeast Asia today. In the literature, infrastructures are typically identified as *built* material systems—both technical and social—that facilitate the movement of capital, people, goods, technologies, and services, also across borders. This approach tends to privilege fixed nodes in larger nested systems. Here, presenters shift the analysis to mobilities and circulations across time and space to bring an attention to infrastructure as *process*: of becoming and undoing, of constitution and reconstitution, of materiality and immateriality. This analytical focus allows other types of geographically dispersed or discontinuous infrastructure to emerge as sites of inquiry: digital, migrant, and financial infrastructures, for example, to encourage new conversations about colonial and postcolonial histories of infrastructural power and violence. Panelists will bring multi-disciplinary perspectives and methods from across peninsular and mainland Southeast Asia—including trans-Asian linkages between Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Indonesia—to bear on the ways mobility refracts gendered, racialized, and classed relations of power that underpin public-private infrastructures and their associated state and non-state actors.

Single session

Participants:

Dr. Christina Schwenkel, Department of Anthropology, Director of Southeast Asian Studies, UC Riverside. Convener and presenter: imported infrastructural technologies

Dr. Rachel Silvey, Department of Geography, Director of Asian Studies, University of Toronto. Presenter: ride hail economy/migrant infrastructures

Dr. Johan Lindquist, Department of Anthropology, Director of Asian Studies, Stockholm University. Presenter: click farming/digital infrastructures

Floramante Sir John Ponce, PhD student, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology. Presenter: energy infrastructure

Dr. Jane M Ferguson, Senior Lecturer, Anthropology and Southeast Asian History The Australian National University. Presenter: aviation infrastructure

Dr. Kirsten Endres, Head of Research Group, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology.
Discussant