Travelling Policies and Practices for living with Sea level Rise

Research Focus: Patterns of epistemic (im-)mobilities related to sea level rise and the contestation processes that define them in and between the cities of Singapore, Jakarta and Manila.

Research Question: How are policies and (standardised) practices for living with the effects of sea level rise communicated by international donors and civil society organisations, and taken up, translated into local contexts, politically legitimised and at times recirculated internationally by local actors, thus shaping local anticipatory learning trajectories for change adaptation?

Empirical Focus & Analytical Synthesis

What are Epistemic Mobilities?

Policies and practices aiming at the mitigation of and adaptation to the effects of sea level rise are highly mobile stocks of knowledge - across world regions, scale levels (global, regional, national, local), socio-cultural and political contexts.

Originally developed in particular local contexts, eventually communicated globally, taken up elsewhere, adjusted, developed further, or silenced and made immobile, these policies and practices are exemplary for social learning and political contestation processes at the interface of global climate politics and local, everyday forms of living with nature.

Practices:
- Seawall construction, Dykes
- Dredging/Pumps
- Living with & off floods/moving
- Artificial reefs & water breaks
- Land reclamations

Methods:
- Qualitative ethnographic research (interviews, participant observation - local language skills & regional expertise exist)
- Tracing policies and practices: “follow-the-moving-target” methodologies
- Policy & document analysis based on Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse (SKAD)

Why Jakarta, Singapore and Manila?

Sea level rise, further exacerbated by the El Niño-Southern Oscillation Phenomenon, is especially felt in the Island nations of the Tropics – and in particular in coastal Megacities such as Jakarta and Manila. (Kraas and Mertins 2014)

In the processes of translation and contestation, Singapore in addition acts as epistemic hub and idea incubator, but also as powerful, interest-driven player in the region.

Conceptual Underpinnings

Communicative & Discursive Constructivism (Keller 2011a, 2011b; Knoblauch 1995; Reichertz 2010)
- Practices: conventionalised patterns of action, based on collective stocks of knowledge about the ‘proper’ way of acting
- Dispositifs: infrastructures (i.e. policies) of discourse production and infrastructures emerging out of a discourse
- Translations, Contestations & Social Learning (Pahl-Wostl 2009; Siebenhüner 2008) = discursive battles as part of power/knowledge complexes

Travelling Models and Policy Mobilities (Behrends et al. 2014; Rottenburg 1996; McCann 2011, 2013; Müller-Mahn 2013)
- Diffusion/transfer: intercultural translation, co-creating their own vocabularies, networks, tacit knowledges
- Co-production of policies, political spaces & legitimacies for transformation

Project Implementation

• Collaborative research with long-standing partners in Jakarta, Manila and Singapore
• Collaboration with projects in Work Program C foreseen

Workplan, Milestones & Deliverables

References: