Living With Floods In A Mobile Southeast Asia: A Political Ecology of Vulnerability, Migration and Environmental Change

**Introduction**
- Flooding is a common experience in monsoonal regions of South East Asia
- Southeast Asia is also a very mobile region: many households pursue domestic and trans-national migration strategies.
- Whilst regular seasonal floods are often beneficial in rural areas, where livelihood strategies adapt to 'living with floods', in urban-centric public discourse floods are often framed as being catastrophic, in need of control, and linked to arrival of unwanted migrants.

**Research goal**
- To conceptualize the link between flooding disaster and migration in ASEAN – as a socio-natural phenomenon.
- To complicate simplistic analysis that states flooding causes migration.
- To sensitize flood disaster policy to the complexity of migration/mobility.
- Key concepts: vulnerability; resilience; diverse forms of migration/floods; A political ecology of mobility.

**Methodology**
- Defining the flood regime, and it’s 'nature',
- Historical contextualization of the social setting
- Contemporary analysis of power and access to resources and entitlements
- Assessing vulnerability created/reduced by migration
- 'Vulnerability Assessment Tool' quantitative analysis

**Findings**
- People's 'vulnerability' to flooding in Southeast Asia reflects a larger story of socio-economic and political inequality;
- Destructive floods disproportionately affect those from lower socio-economic groups who lack of access to secure forms of livelihood, and have a weak voice in political processes.
- In urban case studies, migrants are often blamed for living in risky places, rather than recognizing the wider socio-political circumstances that locate them there. They are often subject to policies that regulate their movement, including forced resettlement, and that reinforces vulnerability.
- The effects of floods are mitigated or exacerbated by institutionalized response strategies (or the lack thereof), as well as shaped by long-term development planning policies that include the construction of infrastructure intended to manage floods but that also redistribute risks from one (often privileged) group to others (often disadvantaged or precarious).
- People living with floods express their agency through vulnerability reduction strategies that include migration to: spread risk across multiple locations; and by being able to move away temporarily when disaster strikes.