



'Nusantara': The Governance of the South China Sea

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Speaker's Profile



Professor Hans-Dieter Evers, an Emeritus Professor of Development Planning, ZEF University of Bonn is Eminent Visiting Professor, Universiti Brunei Darussalam and Senior Fellow, Centre for Policy Research and International Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia. His career led him from Monash University to Yale University, where he was Director of Graduate Southeast Asian Studies, to the University of Singapore, where he headed the sociology department, to Bielefeld University and the University of Bonn in Germany. He was Distinguished Visiting Professor of Sociology at the National University of Singapore, Visiting Professor at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris and Visiting Fellow at Trinity College, University of Oxford. His major publications include *Monks, Priests and Peasants: A Study of Buddhism and Social Structure in Central Ceylon* (Brill, 1972). *Sosiologi Perkotaan (LP3ES Jakarta, 1982)*, *Strategische Gruppen* (Reimer, 1988), *Southeast Asian Urbanism* (ISEAS & McMillan, 2000) and as co-editor *Governing and Managing Knowledge in Asia* (World Scientific, 2005, 2nd ed 2010, 3rd ed 2013) and *Beyond the Knowledge Trap, Developing Asia's Knowledge-Based Economies* (World Scientific, 2011).

Abstract

The South China Sea has become a contested maritime space. Contrary to the opinion voiced by many Western commentators, the PRC's government has not claimed the full territory demarcated by the so-called "red dotted line", but has claimed an EEZ around islands claimed for historic reasons, following UNCLOS Article 15.

Sociologically speaking the South China Sea is a mediterranean sea and a mediterranean socio-cultural area, or in Malay terms a "Nusantara". Earlier research by the author suggests that Malay and Indonesian seafarers have ample knowledge of rocks, islands and currents in the South China Sea and beyond, but a directory of these names has yet to be assembled, proving Malays utilization of these islands as fishing grounds or shelter. The paper argues that research on the concept of Nusantara or similar concepts would be necessary to establish a Malay cultural concept of mediterranean maritime space to assist Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia "in the battle of words" for the peaceful and sustainable governance of the South China Sea. Additional research in maritime sociology would be needed to highlight its governance problems and to extend our knowledge on the South China Sea as a cultural area.