



Center for Global Asia  
 环球亚洲研究中心

# INDIAN OCEAN PORT CITIES AND THEIR HINTERLANDS



If interested,  
 please email  
 cga@nyu.edu



**PARTICIPANTS**

Tiraana Bains | Kathleen Burke |  
 Duane Corpis | Grace Easterly |  
 Ritesh Kumar Jaiswal | Hasan Karrar |  
 Shaul Marmari | Elke Papelitzky |  
 Vidhya Raveendranathan |  
 Alexander Schunka | Tansen Sen |  
 Kaustubh Mani Sengupta |  
 Daniel Steinbach | Anabelle Suitor |  
 Peter C. Valenti | Laura Yan

**SEP  
 26-27,  
 2019**

Room 1504,  
 NYU Shanghai





# Overview



During the past decade there has been a considerable increase in literature documenting the growth of Indian Ocean port cities. Famously described as the Brides of Sea, port cities such as Cape Town, Shanghai, Karachi, Bombay (Mumbai), Madras (Chennai), Calcutta, Rangoon, Singapore, and Jakarta were considered the bridgeheads for the establishment of European dominance. This workshop has three significant aims. Firstly it will focus on the mobile and multifaceted connections, networks and routes of exchange that constitute the life worlds of port cities and beyond them, into their immediate hinterlands or even more distant localities. Secondly it will not only highlight the interconnected oceanic histories, networks and flows but also examine the uneasy relationships between port cities and the coast, the boundaries between land and sea, the relationship between the port and hinterland and how they were shaped by labour, infrastructure and property. Thirdly the workshop will also explore the legal, regulatory and political structures put in place to govern the port cities. This includes both the institutions and technologies of rule, policing and racial segregation of populations, as well as the different levels of political mediation, legal manoeuvring and petitioning undertaken by a cross section of society.

# Program

Thursday, September 26, 2019

09:30–09:45 Registration

09:45–10:00 Introduction

**Tansen Sen (Director of the Center for Global Asia & Professor of History, NYU Shanghai)**

10:00–12:30 Session 1: Indian Ocean and the Building of the Empire

**Chair: Elke Papelitzky (NYU Shanghai)**

**Peter C. Valenti (New York University)**

*Mouth of the Desert: Kuwaiti State-building and Arabian-Indian Trade*

**Tiraana Bains (Yale University)**

*Anchoring Empire: The Making and Remaking of a British Imperial State between Bombay and Bencoolen, Circa 1685-1824*

**Grace Easterly (The Stimson Center)**

*From Imperial Port City to Logistics Hub: The Production of Strategic Space in Djibouti*

12:30–13:30 Lunch

13:30–15:15 Session 2: Production, Consumption and Resource Management

**Chair: Duane Corpis (NYU Shanghai)**

**Kathleen Burke (University of Toronto)**

*Cooks and Cultivators in the Littoral Societies of Dutch Batavia and Colombo*

**Alexander Schunka (Freie Universität Berlin)**

*Indian Ocean Ports and Water Scarcity in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*

15:15–15:45 Tea & Coffee

15:45–17:30 Session 3: Law, Labour and Infrastructure in Early Colonial Port Cities

**Chair: Alexander Schunka (Freie Universität Berlin)**

**Kaustubh Mani Sengupta (Bankura University)**

*Making Calcutta Supreme: Infrastructure, Economy and Law in Eighteenth-Century Bengal*

**Vidhya Raveendranathan (NYU Shanghai & Universität Göttingen)**

*Between Land and Sea : The Case of Coastal Labour in Late Eighteenth Century Madras*

# Program

Friday, September 27, 2019

10:00–10:15 Tea & Coffee

10:15–12:00 Session 4: Migration, Mobility and the Diaspora

**Chair: Vidhya Raveendranathan (NYU Shanghai & Universität Göttingen)**

**Laura Yan (Columbia University)**

*Migration, Decasualization, and Sedentarization: Dock Work in Indian Ocean Port Cities, 1945-1979*

**Ritesh Kumar Jaiswal (Delhi University)**

*'Rangoon as an Indian City': Analyzing Rangoon as a site of Indian migration, Commodity Circulation and 'Depression' Politics (1880-1940)*

12:00–13:00 Lunch

13:00–14:45 Session 5: Narrativizing Life and Labour of Fishers

**Chair: Tansen Sen (NYU Shanghai)**

**Hasan Karrar (Lahore University of Management Sciences)**

*Global over Local? Community, Fishing and Local Networks in a Future Port City in Pakistan*

**Anabelle Suitor (Brown University)**

*The World in A "Smaller" Port-City: Mapping Fishers' Narratives in Chittagong*

14:45–15:00 Tea & Coffee

15:00–16:45 Session 6: Ideas and People in Motion

**Chair: Peter C. Valenti (New York University)**

**Shaul Marmari (Universität Leipzig)**

*A Tale of Two "Rothschilds": Bombay, Aden and the Emergence of Jewish Diasporas at the Indian Ocean*

**Daniel Steinbach (University of Copenhagen)**

*Global Encounters and Local Challenges: African Port Cities during the First World World and its Aftermath*

16:45–17:00 Tea & Coffee

17:00–18:00 Concluding Remarks & Roundtable Discussion

**Duane Corpis (Area Head of Humanities & Associate Professor of History, NYU Shanghai)**





地址：上海市浦东新区世纪大道 1555 号 1215 室  
电话：(+86) 021-20595032  
邮箱地址：shanghai.cga@nyu.edu  
网站：cga.shanghai.nyu.edu  
微信：NYUShanghaiCGA

Address: 1555 Century Avenue, Pudong New Area, Shanghai, China  
Phone: (+86) 021-20595032  
Email: shanghai.cga@nyu.edu  
Website: cga.shanghai.nyu.edu  
Wechat: NYUShanghaiCGA



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