



People, Ports and Power

Issue 1, Spring 2022

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PEOPLE, PORTS AND POWER

Issue 1, Spring 2022

This zine is written by and for people living in port surroundings, logistics nerds, resistant thinkers, and all those captivated by sea-land interconnectedness. It is a space for communities to reclaim their rights to territory facing the unsustainable effects of global maritime logistics.

As an unconventional publication related to my research project *Contested port cities: a global geography of community conflicts*, this zine shares people's experiences and thoughts around inhabiting port territories – considered as critical zones between sea and land, whose destinies are increasingly dependent on transformations in global shipping. The competition-based dynamics that are reconfiguring ports is demanding more resources from local communities, creating power imbalances, and increasingly becoming sites of threat and risk.

Community resistance to predatory port projects is an underrepresented narrative, often ignored by mainstream media and under-acknowledged in academic research. Against this backdrop, this zine celebrates the constellation of democratic expression through the community voices presented here, hoping to encourage counter-hegemonic ideas and collaborative connections.

People, ports and power takes and expands the content of the online platform contestedports.com, which is co-produced by inhabitants and activists from port territories, members of NGOs and scholars. The platform is also an output of my research project.

Many thanks to all our contributors! I hope this zine will travel in unexpected ways. Please get in touch if you would like to get involved.

Francesca Savoldi

PORT CITY COLOMBO:

A controversial flagship city development project under “One Belt One Road”

By Subashini Deepa, Coordinator of Sri Vimukthi - Fisher Women Organisation



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Post-civil war and post-tsunami, tourism has been a priority development sector for the Sri Lankan government. The tourism master plan prepared in 1984 envisioned the entire coastal belt for tourism, operating in different guises under various regimes since. After the war ended in 2009, these plans were further expanded, with 45 tourism zones proposed for the period between 2013 and 2030.

The idea for Colombo International Financial City [CIFC] – also known as the new Port City Colombo – was conceived in 2002, under the then UNP government. The plan drafted in 2004 proposed a “megapolis” in the western region by 2030, incorporating the CIFC. In this plan, the Ports Authority, a state-owned operator, was proposed as the responsible agency for the construction of major commercial ports in Sri Lanka.

This plan, which did not materialise due to the vast cost in building the breakwater in deep water to protect the reclaimed land, was shelved during the civil war. It re-emerged in 2012 when China Harbour Engineering Company (CHEC) made its first proposal. In 2014, the project was officially launched by the Chinese President Xi Jinping and the former Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa.

The project is expected to cost over \$1.4bn, needing over 665 acres of land – even though the maximum that can be sold is 420 acres. As the largest single foreign direct investment in Sri Lankan history.



The project is expected to become not only a major maritime hub in South Asia, but also a financial center with shopping, tourism, office complexes, hotels with casinos and a residential area. Although this is seen as development of the country, we as citizens are opposed to this project for these reasons:

- 3 1. **Violates national laws regulations:** The agreement between China and Sri Lanka is an illegal one. The signatory to the agreement was the chairperson of the Sri Lanka Ports Authority, whereas national law states that for any reclamation of land, the president needs to sign.
2. **Ignores environmental laws:** A report on the environmental impact assessment (EIA) should be submitted before any mega project. This has not happened prior to the Port City Colombo project. Only after the people's agitations, the EIA conducted several stages, but these reports are in poor quality and incomplete. At the same time, the experts who conducted the EIAs in at later stage became consultants for the CIFIC construction company. This is definitely a conflict of interest. Sand mining in the western coastal region has devastated rich fishing grounds, coral reefs and the wider aquatic ecosystem, including the lagoon and the coast.
3. **No transparency, no engagement:** There has been no public consultation to determine whether this is necessary or a priority development activity for the people in the country.
4. **Develops a debt trap:** We seriously doubt the idea that Port City Colombo is good for the country's economic progress. It will also increase the debt crisis of the country and entangle it further with the debt trap of China.
5. **Divides communities:** The fisher communities have been ensnared into receiving loans given by China Harbour Engineering Corporation [CHEC] as so called "compensation", which further divide and threaten the social fabric of the communities and their local culture.
6. **Threatens sovereignty:** The extent of Chinese investment impinges on the state sovereignty of Sri Lanka. Despite the claims of the Sri Lankan government, the CIFIC will not benefit for most of Sri Lankan citizens. As part of the Belt and Road Initiative, the CIFIC is a top-down development project that only serves the political aim of China.
7. **Fosters crime:** CIFIC would be a centre of money-laundering, an open playground for black money holders from both Sri Lanka and other countries. The Colombo Financial City Act passed by Parliament in April 2020 proved our suspicions.



What is happening today?

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At time of writing, the sand filling and reclamation of 665 acres has been completed. Several buildings have also been constructed. At present, particularly during the monsoon season, the western sea coast north of Colombo has faced sea erosion due to sand mining along the shore areas. A number of houses have been damaged or washed away. Sand mining, the main environmental problem identified, is negatively affecting the aquatic ecosystem, fishing ground and livelihood of the residents of the villages in the coastal areas.

Rock mining has also caused environmental damage. The black rock is taken from inland areas. The people of this area also face water problems and damage to their houses.



Small-scale fishers lost their traditional livelihood and have been forced to take up other occupations. To survive, many families are compelled to pawn their jewelry for quick cash to buy food. Small-scale fisher families who reside in and around the CIFIC construction areas and North of Colombo are particularly affected. Many fishing community members are anxious about future generations losing their means of sustenance, their fishing traditions, and local culture. Coastal erosion has also been a problem for women in post-harvest processing as they lost their traditional grounds that they engaged in the coastal land masses.

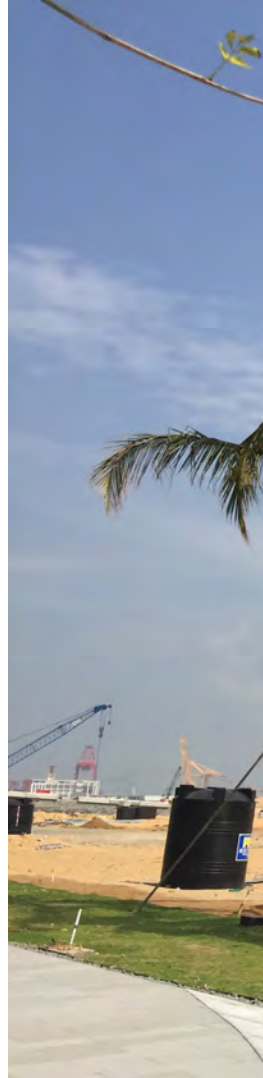
What is the connection between the movement and the Catholic church?

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The Catholic church was the first to take the lead and mobilise fisher communities and media. Under its leadership, many protests have been conducted by fisherfolk against the project. Their demands were limited to stopping sand mining, rather than halting the entire project. They thought that this project only affected fishermen because of sand mining at sea.

However, this project affects a far wider spectrum of people and sectors in society. The agitations led by the Catholic church did not move far to stop the port city. Why?

- The Chinese company has paid the church LKR 30m to construct Thewatta Basilica and to silence the church hierarchy.
- LKR 500m has been paid in compensation to fishing societies and LKR 2m has been paid in loans to the fisheries cooperatives, Rural Fisheries Organisations.
- Most Media journalists and media stations, kept quiet. Some media stations promoted the CIFIC.
- GO Officials- Provide False information under the R2I act.
- New Post newspaper revealed the bribes given to Sri Lankan politicians and the payments to run the Presidential election campaign held 2014.





The formation of People's Movement Against Port City [PMAPC], Sri Lanka

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The People's Movement Against Port City formed in 2014 with the slogan: "Stop Port City: The damage to the whole country." This collective of CSOs, scholars, youth, fisheries organisations, trade unions, religious groups, media and some women's groups such as SVFWO continue to fight against the CIFC. We also collected all the information related to this project and disseminated it widely.

As a result, we were able to strengthen the Peoples Movement Against Port City. Through this organisation we arranged and engaged with a lot of advocacy and protest work.

SRI VIMUKTHI:

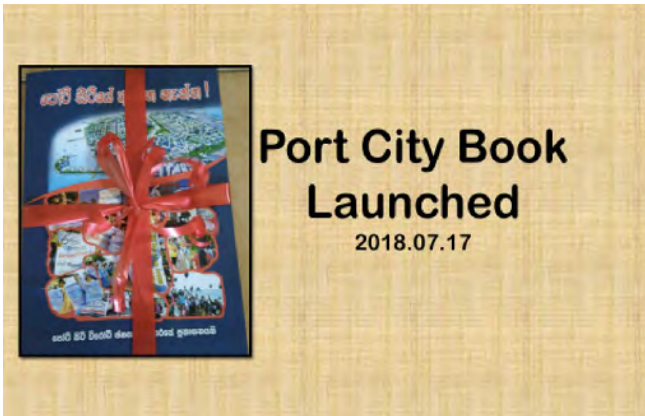
A brief history of fisherwomen resistance in Sri Lanka

By Subashini Deepa, Coordinator of Sri Vimukthi - Fisher Women Organisation

The Sri Vimukthi fisherwomen's organisation was formally launched in 2000. The main reason was that at the time, Sri Lankan fishermen who went fishing in the deep sea were arrested by Indian coast guards for violating the IMBL between India and Sri Lanka. From that day, wives of the fishermen attempted through various means to secure the release of their husbands and did not find any solution. It was in this context that a priest from Kerala, India visited NAFSO (National Fisheries Solidarity Organisation).

When the women learned that the priest had come to Sri Lanka, they went to meet him. Since then, women have joined NAFSO. Under the guidance of the National Convener of NAFSO, women fought on many fronts and also protested outside of the Ministry of Fisheries until their husbands were freed.

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Since then, Sri Vimukthi has been leading many struggles whenever fisherfolk rights are violated, and not limited to fishing-related struggles only; we have joined hands with farmers, plantation workers, displaced communities, war-affected people and also with workers. In light of the awareness campaign started in 2014 by the Peoples Movement Against Port City, Sri Vimukthi realized that the Colombo International Financial City [CIFC] – also known as the new Port City Colombo – was an illegal project, and so mobilised more fellow community members against it. The leaflets prepared by NAFSO and PMAPC were used to educate communities, focusing on the detail of the CIFC, rather than just sand mining as had been done previously by actions led by the Catholic church.

The PMAPC led a campaign to hand over the petition to the Coast Conservation Department as the scoping agency of the CIFIC EIA process and project approving agency. Herman Kumara, National Convener, Hemantha Vithanage, Chairperson, FOE, Sajeewa Chamikara, Environmentalist, with the papers in front of the ministry of fisheries. All these campaigns were organised with the discussions held among the PMAPC Members. We used social media to mobilize people. One of the campaigns were launched during Christmas season. Hence we had to make several telephone calls other than email communication, sending letters and organising community meetings.

Sri Vimukthi Fisher Women Organisation leaders together with PMAPC engaged several campaigns in Negombo, Colombo, Chilaw and many other areas along the western and north western coastal belt. For these campaigns, there were several fisheries organisations other than SVFWO and NAFSO engaged. MONLAR, CEJ, Small Scale Fisheries Trade Union, LST, Janawaboda Kendraya and many more organisations got together to organise campaigns in Colombo.

Seminars, street agitations, round table discussions, media briefings and stakeholders meetings were conducted to in several occasions to raise the awareness, register people's protests, dialogue with policy-makers throughout the campaign launched during this period.

The PMAPC brought various sectors together to highlight how the CIFIC would affect the country. The scholars looked into how the economy, environment, food security, fisheries, social life would be affected by the CIFIC and presented their reports. Based on the reports, PMAPC prepared a book and this was also used as educational material which circulated widely among various communities. The editorial board was formed and editors met communities, scholars, media and journalists.

Most of the team members voluntarily served, considering the issue as an important national matter. One of the Bishop of Methodist Church was very much inspired by the group at the time when the Catholic Church gave up their campaign and deserted the fishers, and other members agitated against the CIFIC.

The campaign continues with the limited number of groups and the Coordinator of Sri Vimukthi Fisher Women Organisation leading the People's Movement Against Port City with the support of concerned community members and the CSOs, media and religious groups.



People Engaged on Anti Port City Campaign in Negombo area -2014-2017





DURBAN

A fishers' movement in the Durban Port

By Kira Erwin

The Port in the city of Durban, on the East Coast of South Africa, is both the city's economic hub and a deeply contested space. As the article by Patrick Bond on the Contested Ports site shows, the port's activities and plans for expansion are fundamentally shaped by global capital logics and logistics, as well as desires for national GDP growth and development. These driving objectives are frequently abstracted from the environmental and climate harms of busy ports, as well as the health and livelihoods of local people living next to (and sometimes inside) the port area.

While environmental activists like the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance have engaged local and national government on these environmental issues, they have also stood in solidarity with small-scale and subsistence fishers. These fishers are immediately impacted by planning and regulations pertaining to the port area. For example, from 2003 onwards Durban fishers were excluded from accessing the areas of the port, including piers that fishers have historically used for generations. The tragedy of 9/11 in the USA brought in security restrictions around public entry to ports. In 2006 the National Ports Act in South Africa legislated further access regulations for the public. Subsequent plans for developing the back of port and expanding the port itself solidified fishers' views that their fishing grounds were being closed off to them, without any recognition of the dire consequences on their daily attempts to put food on their tables and make a meager livelihood from selling limited catch.

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The Battle for the Piers: Photography Nompilo Mthethwa, 2021 (this is the North Pier)





Segregated: by Rohini Amratlal, Privilege in the Distance, 2021 (Watercolours on Fabriano)

But the port area is more than just a location in which to catch fish for many fishers. The Durban port area is an integral part of Durban's history, experienced differently for people depending on how you were classified under colonial administration and later apartheid rule. Many urban fishers in Durban trace their historic roots to the indentured labours brought from India around 1860 to serve as slave labour in the then colonial province of Natal. These indentured labourers brought with them cultural traditions and skills of fishing, rod and reel as well as line and seine nets, that helped them subsist and build a community despite the harsh oppressions of colonial administration.

These fishing skills not only provided food for indentured labourers but over time grew into a robust craft industry that provided seafood to Durban markets. Many of these fishing families lived around Salisbury Island within the Durban harbour. Already in the colonial area restrictions were placed on 'Indian' fishers as the growing populations of 'white' Europeans demanded more leisure access and fishing rights to the harbour area. But the real blow to this rich cultural heritage of fishing came with the first forced removals of fishing families away from the sea.

In 1963 family homes in Salisbury Island were torn down and people forced to relocate first to Bayhead further from the harbour mouth, and then to Chatsworths a designated 'Indian' township under the notorious Group Areas Act that forced racial segregation in South Africa. Chatsworth is over 20kms away from the seaside, which meant fishers had to make a daily train commute to earn their livelihood and feed their families (see the Cast Out report for a full coverage of this history).

Over the years one of the prize fishing spots was the famous South Pier, a deep-water pier in the mouth of the port that made rod and reel fishing feel like you were fishing off a boat out at sea. The stories of bonding and brotherhood between fishers as they braved the rough Indian ocean waves that break over this pier are legendary. At the gateway to the Durban Port, the South Pier has heard countless iterations of culture and heritage related to fishing, including the best spices to flavour a fish curry, passed down from generation to generation.

It is no wonder then that subsistence fishers and fishers with cultural roots to these piers mobilised against their exclusions from the Port. After writing letters and petitions, as well as peaceful protests to demand access to cultural fishing areas within the port, they finally started collectively legal action in 2009. In 2013 the South African courts recognised the rights of these fishers and the port authority at Transnet opened the South Pier to fishers with permits. If you are interested in reading some of these stories you can explore the Fishers Tales websites to hear in the words of the fishers themselves the meaning this, and other spaces, hold for them.

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But why is this contestation around the port important for contemporary understandings of Port cities? Primarily it shows how poor participation in port planning, especially planning that does not pay attention to historic injustices, can catalyse strong opposition to top-down developments. This opposition mobilised many fishers who had not previously organised for their rights or taken on political fights to realise these rights. The struggles for subsistence fishing access in the Durban Port saw the growth of a robust and more organised fishers' movement. More recently this movement has been mobilised to engage the national Department of Forestry, Fishing and the Environment on the onerous regulations that apply to small-scale fishers in the country. It has also joined a national mobilisation of small-scale and subsistence fishers across the South African coast against Oil & Gas prospecting and mining in the oceans.

Increasingly politically savvy and drawing on learnings from their contestation on accessing the Durban port, fishers in this city are starting to see themselves as fishers and as environmental defenders. Fishers who dream of their grandchildren fishing in an ocean full of fish and not oil.





Brothers Bond: Kenneth Shandu, Durban Harbour 2021 (Oil on canvas)



Dr Kira Erwin is a sociologist and Senior Researcher, at the Urban Futures Centre at the Durban University of Technology in Durban, South Africa. Her research and publications focus largely on race, racialisation, racism and anti-racism work within the urban context. She is involved in The Fishers' Tales project – an arts-based storytelling project that collect fishers' tales, recognising their knowledge and care for the ocean as inspirations for ocean governance in South Africa.

A VICTORY FOR THE NO PORT MOVEMENT IN PIRAEUS

By Francesca Savoldi

On 17 March 2022 a police helicopter, heading towards the Greek HQ of China's state-controlled shipping group COSCO, thrummed high over the port city of Piraeus. COSCO, which took over the port in 2016, was about to receive the Supreme Court decision that many thought impossible: its ongoing port expansion was now considered illegal, and had to stop.

Local inhabitants have been organising public gatherings and marches against port expansion since 2016, rejecting the proposed transformation of the port and its consequences on their daily lives under the movement No Port in Piraeus. They have been reclaiming their right to their territory, including public space, coastal sea spaces and local economies as well as the right to decent public health. They have organized awareness campaigns, informing local inhabitants about the socio-environmental damages of the expansion plan, demonstrations and other actions, including fundraising event events in order to get lawyers to bring COSCO to court.

The lack of a strategic environmental impact assessment for the masterplan, and the dumping of toxic material into the sea, are the main reasons why these lawyers have been demanding to interrupt the works of construction. On top of this, port workers have also conducted series of strikes over the last two years due to the increased precarisation of work contracts and reduced health and safety conditions. These intensified after October 2021, when a port worker was killed at his work site.

The Council of State finally ruled in favor of Piraeus' local inhabitants. This has followed more than a decade of policymaking against their interests: following the 2008 financial crisis and the 2015 EU bailout, the Greek government agreed to privatise a number of state-held assets, including the Piraeus Port Authority. In 2016, COSCO, bought a 51% stake in Piraeus Port Authority, taking over port management. In the summer of 2021 COSCO obtained another 16% stake. COSCO declared the intention to expand the port, turning it into an important transit hub between Asia and Europe, another node along the new maritime Silk Road.



OXI ΛΙΜΑΝΙ ΣΤΗΝ



The port project intended to expand westwards of Piraeus to make space for a fourth container terminal, a new cruise terminal (funded by the EU) and a car terminal. But it is much more than a port expansion project. The plan includes the enlargement of roads, the construction of a large shopping center, hotels and other opaque interventions in the urban fabric of Piraeus. This has generated multiple conflicts, and has been deeply contested by various groups located in five municipalities around the port: Piraiki, Perama, Drapetsona, Keratsini and Salamina.

Citizens of Piraiki, the largest of the five, have been particularly concerned about the planned construction of six new cruise ship piers on top of the already existing 11. This would have meant an increase in the already strong atmospheric, water, sound and light pollution, as well as the environmental damage caused by seabed dredging in a very populated area of schools and homes. The local beach – one of the few and very popular public spaces of Piraiki – would have been destroyed.



During the dredging phases, 293,000 cubic meters of mud were disposed at sea. This was sanctioned by the Greek authorities as the waste from legal dredging is not treated as potentially hazardous. The chemical analysis of the mud had revealed a high concentration of mercury and other heavy metals at levels harmful to public health.

New shipyards were also planned, entering in competition with already existing ones. One of the new shipyards was to risk an ancient archaeological site in Salamina. Another archeological site, the Tomb of Themistokles, was also threatened because of the new cruise terminal.

Citizens have also been apprehensive about the potential impacts coming from a dramatic increase of tourism that could be brought by the new cruise terminal, both in terms of socio-economic transformations and the pollution caused by buses going back and forth from Piraeus to the famous Acropolis site, less than an hour away.

The inhabitants of Piraeus have obtained an important victory. However, the lack of transparency and allegations of corruption that has emerged around this issue means that their fight isn't over.

COLLECTIVE MONITORING OF PORT TRANSFORMATIONS

The Observatory of Piraiki-Piraeus

By Dimitra Vini, from the group 'OHI LIMANI STIN PIRAIKI'

The first step of COSCO in the construction of the cruise terminal was on 31 March 2020, when it sunk buoys in the sea of Piraiki, one of the municipalities of Piraeus. The country was in lockdown and people were scared of Covid-19. Citizens of Piraeus reacted strongly on social media to the works started by COSCO, sharing pictures and videos of the construction works taken from their windows. The ships were dropping toxic material in the sea.

We made posters and flyers to invite other citizens around the port to contribute to monitoring and to collect testimonials. The Observatory of Piraiki-Piraeus was born as a spontaneous and collective method to monitor the environmental damage related to port construction.

Photos were taken from many locations around the port: Elefsina, Salamis, Drapetsona, etc. Citizens were documenting changes in the landscape. Right now the observatory also counts on a small boat that is sent out to spot any illegal dredging happening in the sea.

The observatory obtained the support of Tselentis Vassilis, a great professor of the University of Piraeus, working on environmental monitoring in maritime environments. Thanks to the observatory, we have enough evidence for solid scientific work about the environmental damages caused by port construction. Now we are about to transform the Observatory into a non-profit for the study and protection of public health, environment and climate in our port territory.

During lockdown, we also organised public actions, and made an outdoor installation with childrens' paintings about the port's impacts. The paintings were fixed on the trees along the seaside road of Piraiki, but the police came and destroyed them. But after we made them again.

In 2020 we also won in court, obtaining a temporary restriction to halt dredging operations. We also organised marches, such as the one for the protection of the monuments the Tomb of Themistokles and the Kononion wall.





COSCO-MASTERPLAN

ΟΧΙ
ΣΤΟΝ ΕΡΓΑΣΙΑΚΟ
ΜΕΓΑΛΩΝΑ

ΕΠΙΧΕΙΡΗΣΙΑΚΟ
 ΠΕΡΙΒΑΛΛΟΝΤΙΚΟ
 ΕΓΚΛΗΜΑ

ΔΗΜΟΣΙΟ ΛΙΜΑΝΙ
 ΣΤΗΝ ΥΠΗΡΕΣΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΛΑΟΥ

ΣΥΓΚΕΝΤΡΩΣΗ
 ΠΕΜΠΤΗ 25 ΙΟΥΝΙΟΥ 7 Μ.Μ.
 ΠΛΑΤΕΙΑ ΚΟΡΑΗ ΠΕΙΡΑΙΑΣ

Εργατικό Κέντρο Πειραιά



GENOA

Out of control: ship emissions and the problem of environmental monitoring

By Enzo Tortello, president of Comitato Tutela Ambientale Genova Centro-Ovest

The Committee for Environmental Protection – Centre-West Genoa, of which I am president, was born in 2017 in the San Teodoro neighborhood, and is supported by the consultancy of ECOINSTITUTO RE-Ge. For several years, many of us have been engaged in denouncing the pollution produced by marine traffic, reporting it to the port authority, City Hall and other institutions. But we have been systematically ignored.

After creating a committee, we collected 1,700 signatures via word-of-mouth. We then organized a demonstration in May 2018, as well as conferences and workshops, creating awareness on the pollution problem that affects port areas. Our protests were based initially on our sensorial experience: black or even yellow smoke, bad smells, ship noise and dark dust on the external surfaces of our buildings, and even on our hanging laundry. Back in August 2011, at the request of a person who later participated in the creation of the committee, the municipal police measured the sound reaching his apartment from the port at 10pm. Before the departure of the ferry the sound level was 54.4 dB, while after its departure the residual level measured was at 42.3 dB. The limit set for nighttime is 50dB.

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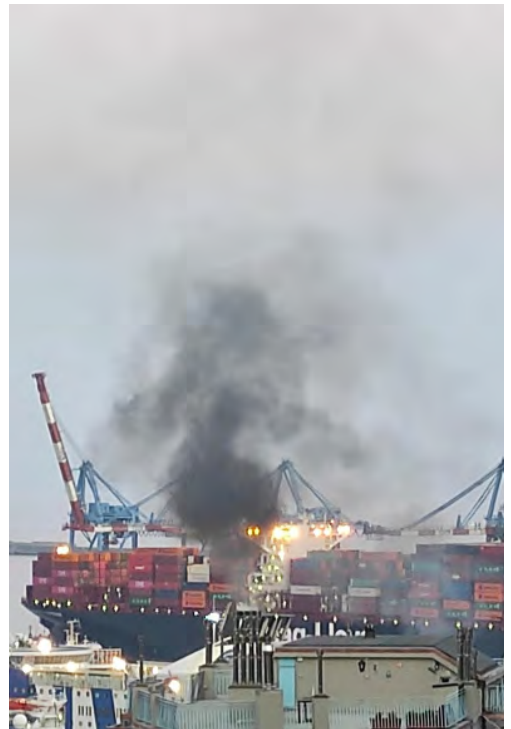
Marta Perelli-Rocco



As well as noise, other official data on atmospheric pollution have been made available by ARPAL (regional agency for the protection of the environment in Liguria region). Their equipment records the atmospheric concentrations of various pollutants: NO₂, SO₂, ozone, carbon monoxide, fine dust (in some stations) and even benzene.

The measurements are available on the ARPAL website, hour by hour. However, despite this mass of data, marine traffic is still obscured. The control unit closest to the port is located in Via Bruno Buozzi but is located on a road with heavy traffic and at street level. Consequently, this control unit ends up mainly monitoring road traffic. The other control unit next to the port is in Corso Firenze. Crossing that data with those about the movement of the ships, however, you can still see peaks in the detection curves.

Between 19-23 June 2016, the association Cittadini per l'Aria, which represents us in Genoa, measured ultra-fine particles from the Hotel Savoia in Piazza Principe (about 800 mt from the sea): during the docking and departure maneuvers of ships, particulate emissions were 40 times higher than those of clean air areas ([link](#)). Research undertaken at the University of Genoa has shown how naval emissions contribute to the concentration of PM 2.5 in Genoa for about 10% of the total, with a clear increase in values in the summer season.



The problem of monitoring through control units is that they cannot determine the source of pollution. What is needed is an 'inventory of emissions', which would also consider international standards on emissions associated to the power of ship engines, as well as the traffic in the port. The last report by ARPAL on atmospheric emissions in 2015 revealed that maritime activities are most responsible for NO_x emissions (62%) and particles (39%), followed by road traffic (26% and 28% respectively). The situation improves with favorable winds, which reduce NO_x down to 40%, but gets worse in summer, when the winds are not favorable and there is high port traffic.

We need more precise and updated data, and this should be a priority for City Hall and ARPAL in order to target the sources of emissions and to avoid European fines, which taxpayers end up paying. We have developed a more accurate method for an autonomous calculation of ship emissions, considering international references (EMEP/EEA air pollutant emission inventory guide book), but this data is not considered official.

Another important detail to consider when monitoring emissions from the port is the (increasing) age of the ships and ferries that circulate – some of them here in Genoa are more than 40 years old. The other polluting factor is the vertiginous increase of the number and dimensions of cruise ships, which even if they are less polluting compared with the past, still have power with an electrical absorption of 10-20MW. Every cruise ship uses the same power of a town, such as Ovada. The norms that regulate the environmental impact of maritime traffic are the MARIPOL (MARine POLLution), established by the IMO (International Maritime Organisation), but these norms are influenced by shipping companies. As an example, limits for NO_x emissions are not applicable to ships built before 2000, while the Energy Efficiency Design Index – used to determine the production of CO₂ – is not used for ships built before 2013. So older ships have a sort of environmental immunity.

It is estimated that premature deaths in Genoa caused by pollution (not only by maritime traffic) are about a hundred cases, with a similar number for severe hospitalisations. This is the direct cost, but there is also an indirect one. As reported by the previously mentioned document by ARPAL, an ongoing legal dispute is taking place between the region and the European Commission for exceeding the annual average emission of NO₂ (regulated by the 2008/50/CE) between 2010 and 2013.



Being aware of the importance of targeted monitoring, we contacted the environmental department of the Liguria region, demanding pluri-seasonal monitoring of particles. The important thing now is to find the right location for the monitoring unit. We have proposed three locations in private apartments in the area, and we are now awaiting for a definitive response from the region.

Control of emissions is in the hand of the port authority. Controls of the ship's oil and fuels are mainly two: the engine efficiency through NOx, and the sulfur content in the fuel. According to Italian law, the first must be applied to 10% of the ships that enter the port; the second control to the 20%. The first control can be limited to the 2% (counting them once at year). However, the first control is generally applied through a document check. The direct method for measuring emissions is drilling the chimney

and installing special sensors. Acquisitions and analyses are carried out with special instrumentation, and rarely used. Last year only seven ships have been inspected with this direct method.

With such ineffective laws, controls are scarce and there is a possibility for shipping companies to use illegal fuels. After a meeting with the port authority in June 2021, it was decided to propose an agreement with shipping companies for the use of fuels with less sulfur. I have written to the shipping companies, but I am still waiting for a reply. There are some technological solutions that could improve the situation. Electric docks could be a solution to reduce smoke and eliminate noise. Scrubbers are also useful for decreasing sulfur content in currently used fuel. LNG or conversion to methanol are also alternative options. These options have also secondary effects, which should also be subject to inquiry.



INFRASTRUCTURAL HEGEMONY IN THE ARCTIC: THE CASE OF KIRKENES

By Lukas Höller (PhD candidate at PortCityFutures, TU Delft)



An Arctic railway protest in Inari, Finland, September, 2018. Saami protesters were joined by Canadian Indigenous activists.

Photo: Jonne Sippola / Greenpeace / CBC News

Below: protesters in Finnish Sápmi draw red lines against railroad to Arctic Ocean. The Barents Observer, 2018.

Photo: Inger-Elle Suoninen / Yle Sápmi

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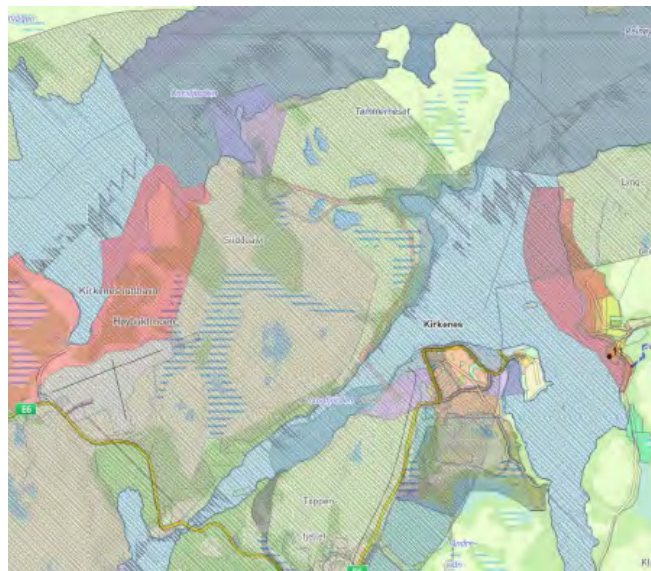
Arctic regions are facing the impacts of climate change about twice as fast as the global average. One of the most visible consequences of today's climate crisis is the retreat of the Arctic sea-ice extent. Paradoxically, this concerning development increases the accessibility to newly discovered fields of oil, gas, and valuable metals, and faster and the usage of faster sea routes between Asia and Europe. The cumulative impact is driven by climatic changes, enabling new opportunistic, anthropogenic activities, which again worsen the impact on the environment and thus create enormous, twofold pressure on such territories and the people that inhabit them.

One of these changing territories is the Norwegian city of Kirkenes, Norway, a former mining town with 10,000

inhabitants, located around 400 km above the Arctic Circle, bordering Russia and Finland.

Some investors in the region of Kirkenes imagines the development of a new extra-urban port and a railway connection towards the hinterland along the "Arctic Corridor," potentially serving as a strategic node for China's 'Polar Silk Road', shortening transit between Asia and Europe by up to 60%. The Mayor of Kirkenes has promoted the Arctic deep-water port in China, courting the interests of COSCO. Peter Vesterbacka – the developer of the hit game Angry Birds – is partnering with Chinese construction firms to build the tunnel from Helsinki to Tallinn. He also signed a preliminary deal with Kirkenes-based public development company Sør-Varanger for developing the Arctic railway.





This “vision-of-a-few” is anchored within the history of Kirkenes. The city was founded in 1905 as a worker- and transshipment town to exploit iron ore from the Sydvaranger mine, several kilometers land-inwards. Since then, the city’s collective memory has centred mining and heavy labor, which has brought periods of economic boom-and-bust and societal uncertainties. The extra-urban port and railway plans would accelerate global trade and the extraction of aquatic and terrestrial resources. The port is planned to be connected by train to Rovaniemi and Helsinki in Finland, and across the Baltic Sea to Estonia. The infrastructural apparatus would cross Sami territory, without Sami consensus, bringing further risks of assimilation to the Sami society.

Previous to the emergence of the mining town, the transborder territory between Norway, Finland, Sweden, and Russia was already inhabited by Sami people, the only officially recognised indigenous people in Europe. Access to ancestral land is essential in Sami culture. The migration routes of the their semi-domesticated reindeers across Sapmi as well as from sea to land and land to sea, it is a are vital in terms of food, income, as well as for the ancient Sami culture. Besides that, the catalytic potential

of infrastructure for driving extraction is a further concern for Sami people. and their culture, have which in modern times has been heavily undermined by Christianisation and processes of nation-state making. Assimilation processes, stigmatizations, and the exclusion from decision- making, has led to the loss of culture, language, collective memory, and dispossession of land and resources. Despites the formalisations within the Norwegian Constitution in 1997 and as the Norwegian Truth and Reconciliation Commission started to examine the injustices against the Sami, significant financial and infrastructural investments are being pumped into the “Arctic Corridor”, once more endangering the future of Sami livelihoods.

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SECTIONING INDIGENOUS LAND

Interview with Matti Aikio

By Francesca Savoldi

Matti Aikio is a Sami and Finnish artist. His work deals with nomadic world views and nomadic philosophy, attempting to unfold the increasing conflict between indigenous communities and nation states, which he describes as a symptom of the collision of two fundamentally different worlds that cannot co-exist in the same territory.

Francesca: Can you tell us a bit about your background?

Matti: I am Sámi and I come from a reindeer-herding culture, and I am an artist. It's hard to say if I represent the voice of everyone in my community, but maybe I represent some kind of mindset and philosophy in relationship to nature, time and space that I consider to be Sámi.

My mother is Finnish, and my father is Sámi; my mother has worked a lot on the socio-linguistic situation of the Sámi language in my father's village, dealing with the history of the 70s, 80s and 90s, and with Sámi history and culture in general. My father is Sámi and his ancestors were from many different places, but my family ended up based in and around a village called Vuotso, Finland. It is a village that was built when people were forced to move there from small Sámi villages due to the post-second world war socio-economic changes that resulted in a very intensive forest industry and hydro power construction. This damaging kind of development is neverending, it is a continuum, with new threats – the mining industry coming closer, the tourism industry encroaching everywhere, and now the logistics infrastructures plan.



Photo: Matti Aikio





F: How would the planned infrastructural complex, including the construction of the mega-port and the railway, affect the community where you come from?

M: Members of the community are very threatened, frightened about this. My father's village's reindeer-herding district is called Lapin paliskunta – Lappi reindeer-herding district – and the railway line would go straight through the middle of it, because the village of Vuotso is in the middle of these two artificial manmade lakes. One of them is the biggest one in northern Europe, called Lokka, so the railway cannot go around them. Since we have already lost so much land because of the forest industry and the tourism industry coming closer, the system

is already so endangered – we cannot have any new obstacles, any kind of infrastructure there, that would make a major change to the system. Some of the people in my village who are full-time reindeer herders have told me that this would mean the end of reindeer herding in our area.

F: How important has reindeer-herding been in terms of sustaining Sámi identity and society?

M: The reindeers are herded in free natural pastures either part of the year or all-year round – depending on the region and the local reindeer culture. Traditionally this reindeer-herding culture has always been nomadic, as they migrate long distances,

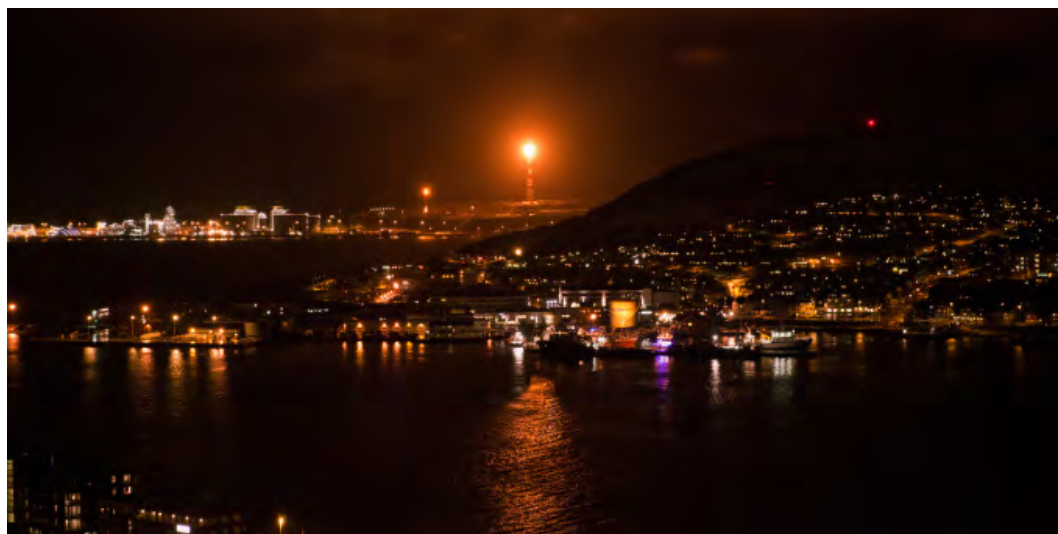


Traditionally in some places during spring migration the reindeer would swim to the islands off the coast of Northern Norway; now in some cases they are transported by boat; they spend the summer there on the island and migrate back to the inland boreal forests for the winter. This system has been affected by the creation of national borders of the northern countries, which is a long history, starting from the 1750s, maybe before, but officially from a very important border treaty signed in 1751, the first that separated the Sámi land in the northern Sámi area. The treaty included a protocol that allowed Sámi people to continue to migrate across the national borders. It is complicated because when the treaty was made, Finland was part of Sweden and 100 years later, Finland was actually part of Russia. It is a long story, but the increasing pressure of

Finnish settlers on Sámi people's land meant there were more complaints about 'Norwegian' reindeer herders coming over the borders and destroying their fields – but they were not Norwegian herders, they were Sámi people that have always been there even before the border was drawn. Because of this kind of pressure, Finland decided to close the border in 1852 and after that, Sámi people had to decide on which part of the border to stay permanently.

The pressure of settlers and the increasing industry has really shaped and affected the culture. For instance in my father's village we have lost so many elements of the traditional Sámi reindeer-herding culture, not because we wanted to, but because we were forced to. This is why we have a completely different system today.





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This kind of [infrastructural development] plan will increase assimilation, because this kind of infrastructure will make it more and more and more difficult for the people in the local Sámi community to maintain livelihoods that are part of the Sámi culture. This means that more and more people will have to find different kind of jobs, away from their areas, which means that they become more and more assimilated. This is really a big problem. We are struggling with similar kinds of problem in Norway, Finland, in Sweden, in many different areas at the same time.

F: The melting of the Arctic ice is seen by some as an opportunity to trace new logistical routes, potentially accelerating the extraction of natural resources from Sapmi. How can an indigenous perspective respond to that?

M: In my opinion, it is really crazy to think that some people think the ice melting will open new opportunity for business. The answer is that we need stop shipping so much from Asia to Europe, we need to find alternative ways to live – there is no other option. This is not only for indigenous people and culture: this is a problem for all of us. We all know that global warming has an accumulative effect, at the same time we are talking about ecocide, which is actually real. We are not considering the time that nature needs to adapt to global warming, we are just making more crazy plans that will destroy more and more. This is really shocking for me. Maybe that is where through an indigenous point of view you can really see things differently, in a different perspective related to time, space and nature. During this period of increased assimilation of the Sámi culture, the reindeer culture has been very, very important for keeping the Sámi language and culture alive. Sámi people have always been sovereign in their terrain, they have been able to move without modern technology, in any kind of weather, so this is what helped in the long run to protect the culture and protect the language, because the language stays alive with the practices.

The reindeer terminology is very rich in Sámi language. If you lose some elements of cultural practice, you lose that vocabulary from your language, because it's the cultural practice that keeps those words alive. This is why, even if we speak the Sámi language and you go to the Finnish side of the border, if I go to meet some reindeer herders that practice the traditional nomadism, they have a much richer vocabulary about reindeer herding culture than us. The reindeer herding culture is still so important because, when we start to ask what indigenous culture means, as long as we have this indigenous status we can use international law to protect our rights, culture and lands from the plans of the Finnish the Norwegian government, and so on. This is where reindeer herding culture is really essential because the living reindeer herding culture in the Sámi land is like our more powerful tool to protect this land, because if we stop practicing that then it is easier for the governments to take over them and build whatever kind of infrastructure there.

F: It seems that this way of making infrastructure and its relationship with the process of cultural assimilation resembles a continuum with the colonial past...

M: Absolutely! One of the things that the majority of the people here in Finland do not understand – because it does not really concern them – is that the assimilation process and the colonisation never ended. We Sámi people are stuck in this neverending defensive position, where we are just trying to defend what is left of our land and our culture, when we know we cannot afford to lose more. There is this kind of narrative among the public in general, that Sámi people's rights were already fixed in the 1990s, now everything is good and why are we still complaining, and so on – these two realities are not really meeting.





F: A frequent rhetoric that supports this kind of development often counterposes conservationism against job creation, the promise of creating wealth for everybody. How do you see that?

M: This kind of argument is exactly the problem, it is really a problematic model of destruction. We have to understand that these jobs, this wealth do not have value if we destroy our nature and culture; we have seen how this economic wealth benefits a very few people in the current system. In Finland there has been a lot of questions about why the government has allowed forests that are thousands of years old to be cut down. We are talking always about jobs, but they are not even so many jobs.

F: How do you elaborate on these reflections in your work?

M: Recently I have started to think about what the indigenous relationship to nature really means, how can we talk about it.

In my work exhibited at the Terminal B art space in Kirkenes I have been trying to address how the indigenous peoples are being squeezed in between the two extremes of the nation states' schizophrenic relationship with nature." On the one hand nature is seen as idealised, an image that has to be protected – this point of view does not recognise indigenous people and how their livelihoods depend on the ecosystem; the government tells us how nature has to look, and criminalises absurd behaviours, like putting you in jail if you kill a wolf, which is not even an endangered species, while allowing permanent, large-scale destruction of the ecosystem, without anyone having to go to prison. So indigenous people are stuck between these two very problematic policies of dealing with nature.

Recently Aikio's works have been presented in Tromsø, Henie Onstad Kunstsenter Oslo, The National Museum of Finland, and various venues in Stockholm and Venice.



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