

1/10 **POWER, PARADIGMS, AND OUR PLANET**

Navigating climate change from alternative perspectives

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Photo by Gerald Schömba

*Human beings are not separate from each other or Nature. We are totally interrelated and our actions have consequences to all. What we do to others we do to ourselves. What we do to the Earth we do to ourselves.*  
Thich Nhat Hanh

**PROJECT SUMMARY**

Climate change is real, yet the debate is typically driven by cultural paradigms and power structures undergirded by Western worldviews and epistemologies. This project takes the study of climate change out of the halls of Western power and academic ivory towers, and situates it in a grounded theory (sea-based in this case) and more anthropological approach. The ultimate purpose is to highlight alternative perspectives on the implications of climate change for marginalized communities, many of which would be represented by Coboat's ports of call, especially in Southeast and Southern Asia.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

**People & Planet:** At the macro-level this project is about better understanding humanity's ecological relationship with planet earth. Climate change is a contested debate involving numerous Western and/or industrialized antagonists and protagonists, but what no one denies is that we are all in the same boat (pun intended). However, there are substantial populations excluded from this debate, communities that are more in touch with nature and the planet and will likely be more affected, particularly by rising sea levels. This project explores the alternative perspectives arising from these latter groups.

**Power & Paradigms:** On a micro-level this project explores the more nuanced aspects of climate change and relates specifically to how the global political and economic systems and corresponding power structures influence climate change discourse. Certain paradigms and worldviews are inherent within Western hegemony of the institutions tasked with tackling climate change. The dominance of technological solutions and habits that humankind can prevail against Mother Nature overlook alternative perspectives and approaches to building symbiotic relationships with the environment. My project examines the consequences of asymmetrical power and provides fresh insight on sustainable social development and environmental policy and practices.

**Platform & Perspectives:** As the principle investigator, my daily exposure to the sea and climatic conditions informs the research with a reality similar to those inhabiting coastal regions. Having online access to the wealth of web-based research gives ongoing support to explore climate change as it relates to upcoming ports of call, i.e. Malaysia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, etc. My interaction with these communities when ashore would add the ethnographical approach and local perspective angle. In short, Made on Coboat is the perfect platform for facilitating this project.

**Pilot Project:** As a pilot project, I foresee two possible scenarios unfolding from this research. The first is a book project directed toward a general readership and based on the findings and empirical data gathered during the 100 day voyage. The second assumes I gain additional research funding, thus enabling me after the voyage to spend greater time among these coastal communities, diving deeper into their cultures and relationship with the environment to inform a more comprehensive study.

**Solution**

**People & Planet :** At the macro-level this project is about better understanding humanity's ecological relationship with planet earth. **Power & Paradigms:** On a micro-level this project explores the more nuanced aspects of climate change and relates specifically to how the global political and economic systems and corresponding power structures influence climate change discourse. **Platform & Perspectives:** My daily exposure to the sea and different cultures enables new research perspectives.

Status: 19.06.2018

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## **POWER, PARADIGMS, AND OUR PLANET**

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In summary, what is your “Made on Coboat” project idea (max. 3 sentences)?

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How much of your project can you realistically achieve in 100 days if you will get the chance to stay on the Coboat?

A 100 day immersion into the maritime world would adequately inform my project by providing the core experiential knowledge base to advance the project to either the general book stage, or if future outside funding is available, to a more advanced research phase.

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Will you complete this project on your own, or will you be working with a together with a team?

I will be working alone, but in service to the other seven billion people sharing our planet.

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Why should your project be chosen?

My project represents the perfect mix of everything this competition, Coboat, and Jovoto represent. Consider me the Coboat Corporate Social Responsibility Coordinator, utilizing the innovative platform of Coboat and Jovoto to facilitate research on a topic that will impact future voyages, enlighten fellow Coboaters on the implications of climate change for ports of disembarkation, and ultimately support the mission of Coboat.

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What does this project mean to you?

This project means experiencing life at sea again, standing in awe at the power of nature, interacting with other cultures, conducting research, thinking deeply, and journaling/blogging the process—in short, a dream come true—but also the realization of my skills, education, and passion to see marginalized voices given greater prominence in the climate change debate, thus enabling me to return to humanity part of the numerous investment made in my life.

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Why do you want to do this project?

I have just spent nine years pursuing a PhD. During this academic journey, I've reconfirmed that I am an explorer, an adventurer, a deep thinker, and passionate about challenging the status quo. Combine this with the fact that the poor, marginalized, and disempowered are often the most affected by climate change, but the least acknowledged and usually not invited to the debate. Their story needs to be told in a proactive and complementary manner. I want to facilitate this dialogue.

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Have you used any third-party material? Even if you've modified it, please ensure you source the original here. See FAQ for details.

I used a photo sent to me by Gerald Schömbms and a quote from Thich Nhat Hanh.



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Please tell us a bit about yourself and your professional background. How do you fit into a team? What have you done before within the field of your idea?

I grew up on a farm in the middle of the United States...about as far from the sea as a boy could get. I have since morphed into a global nomad working/studying/traveling in over 50 countries, including a three year stint working on a hospital ship. Living and working on a ship, with 350 people from 30 plus nations, made it the definitive team building exercise. I have since pursued graduate and post-graduate work in the social sciences, gaining a PhD in political anthropology.

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Creative's profile



**lichtys**  
Social Architect

Creative's top 5 skills

Photography