

ISA INTERNATIONAL GUEST LECTURE

LIVING BY THE SEA: THE POLITICAL HISTORY AND MARINE ECONOMY OF MINICOY (SOUTH LAKSHADWEEP)

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Minicoy, locally called Maliku, is the most southern island of the Lakshadweep, but culturally and historically linked to the Maldives. All are Muslims and follow matrilineal and matrilocal kinship rules. Most men work internationally as seamen, or - after an early retirement from commercial seafaring - locally as fishermen. They maintain a high reputation in their economic field and never complained about under-employment. As a decisive aspect of their economic success, I would suggest, is the seaman's ethos. Sailing and fishing appears as the privileged (or even only) way for a young man to come up in life. In songs, proverbs and narratives the ocean appears as a male arena, a space of (or for) working, longing, competition, and (formerly) decapitation. Trade goods, fish and cash, come from the ocean. In the seamen's perception, there is no dichotomy of land and sea, but rather a continuum of village, coconut-plantation, lagoon, atoll and open sea.



Frank Heidemann is professor for social and cultural anthropology at the University of Munich. His research interests include politics, religion, indigeneity, social aesthetics, visual anthropology and the history of anthropology. Most of his fieldwork was based in South India and Sri Lanka, especially in the Nilgiri Hills, on the Andaman Islands, and more recently on the Lakshadweeps. After his habilitation on politics and religion of the Badaga people (Akka bakka, 2006, Berlin, Lit) he authored an introduction to Ethnology (2013, in German, utb, Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht), and co-edited „Manifestations of History. Time, Space and Community in the Andaman Islands“ (with P. Zehmisch, Primus 2016), „The Bison and Its Horn. Indigeneity, Performance and the State in South Asia“ (with R. Wolf, Asian Ethnology, 2014) and „The Modern Anthropology of India“ (with Peter Berger, Routledge 2013). On social aesthetics, atmosphere, proximity, and social proprioception he published in Aesthetics (2013 (23, 1,) 49-67) and in A. Grieser's and J. Johnston's Aesthetics of Religion (2017 Berlin, De Gruyter, 457-67). In spring 2019 he plans to continue his fieldwork in Minicoy.

