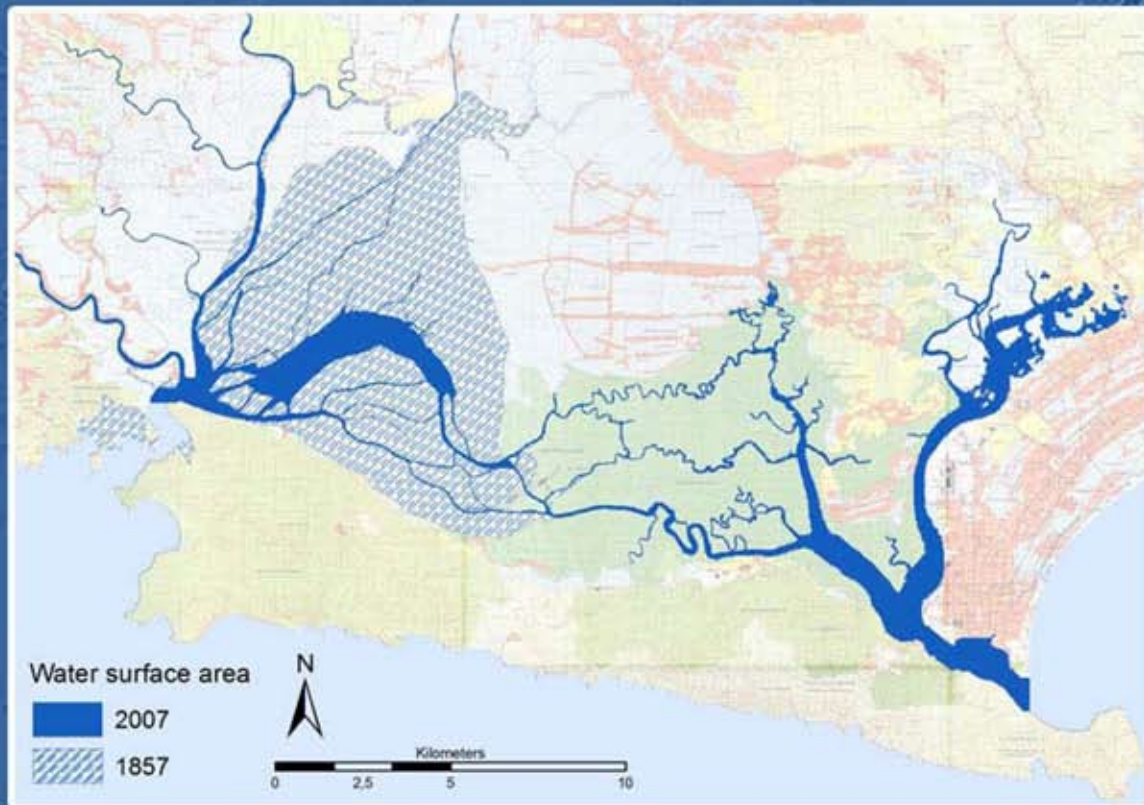


# Challenging environmental myths

## Struggles over watershed governance in Java, Indonesia

The mangrove-fringed Segara Anakan lagoon, a valuable ecosystem at Java's south coast, has lost three fourths of its water surface area since the mid-19th century due to riverine sediment input. Rapid coastal sedimentation in Java has been attributed to unsustainable farming practices and population pressure. Accordingly, watershed management efforts have for decades focussed on tree planting, terracing and agricultural extension programmes; however with limited success.



Map: Historical-cartographic reconstruction of the Segara Anakan lagoon, Java, Indonesia (© M. Lukas)

My research in the lagoon's catchment area shows that contrary to common assumptions, land use / cover changes and critical erosion prone land are not mainly a result of 'unsustainable small holder agriculture', but of historically grounded conflicts over the access to and control of forest and plantation land. Disputed land is critical land.

The research focusses on analysing land use and land cover changes and their drivers, and on exploring past and current patterns of watershed governance. It combines methods of historical cartography and remote sensing with social-scientific research methods.