

# 20TH SINGAPORE GRADUATE FORUM ON SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES

25-27 JUNE 2025

Keynote Addresses • Participants' Presentations

Block AS8, Seminar Room 04-04  
National University of Singapore



The 20th Singapore Graduate Forum on Southeast Asian Studies is one of the flagship events of the Asia Research Institute (ARI). This two-week event provides a platform for graduate students from around the world working on Southeast Asia to communicate and interact, as they mature into the next generation of academic leaders. Selected candidates will have the opportunity to engage in activities with ARI's research clusters prior to the commencement of the forum. The Forum culminates with participants presenting their work in panels organised thematically around the fields that broadly reflect the core research strengths of ARI, including the Asian dynamics of religion, politics, economy, gender, culture, language, migration, urbanism, science and technology, identities, population and social change.

This year, there are two components to the Graduate Forum:

### **16-24 JUNE | METHODOLOGY MASTERCLASSES & SKILLS BASED SESSIONS**

*Open to the Forum Participants and Invited Guests only*

Methodology masterclasses are 1.5-hour sessions which take a deep dive into a specific research methodology, exploring its implications, offering theoretical insights and providing practice training. The 1-hour skills-based sessions hone in on one aspect of academic labour or professional development and provide advice and practical tips.

### **25-27 JUNE | GRADUATE FORUM WITH KEYNOTE ADDRESSES & STUDENT PRESENTATIONS**

*Open for all to attend*

During these three days, forum participants will present their work in thematically organised sessions. In addition, there will be keynote lectures offered by Associate Professor **Marvin Montefrio** (National University of Singapore), Assistant Professor **Bryce Beemer** (Duke Kunshan University) and Dr **Robin Bush** (Development Practitioner).

## **BACKGROUND**

ARI was established as a university-level institute in July 2001 as one of the strategic initiatives of the National University of Singapore (NUS). It aims to provide a world-class focus and resource for research on the Asian region. ARI engages the social sciences broadly defined, and especially interdisciplinary frontiers between and beyond disciplines. One of ARI's aims is to foster research on Southeast Asia, in particular by scholars from the region.

## **CONVENERS**

**Assoc Prof Maitrii V. AUNG-THWIN**, Asia Research Institute, and Comparative Asian Studies, NUS (Chair)

**Dr Emily SOH**, Asia Research Institute, NUS

**Dr Jia Wen HING**, Asia Research Institute, NUS

**Dr Michel CHAMBON**, Asia Research Institute, NUS

**Dr Michelle MILLER**, Asia Research Institute, NUS

**Dr Stefan HUEBNER**, Asia Research Institute, NUS

**Assoc Prof Sumit MANDAL**, Asia Research Institute, NUS

**Assoc Prof Titima SUTHIWAN**, Centre for Language Studies, NUS

## WEDNESDAY, 25 JUNE 2025

09:45 – 10:00	OPENING ADDRESS	
	<b>MAITRII V. AUNG-THWIN</b> <i>Chair, 20th Singapore Graduate Forum on Southeast Asian Studies,  Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore</i>	
10:00 – 11:00	KEYNOTE ADDRESS 1	
Chairperson	<b>COLUM GRAHAM</b> , <i>National University of Singapore</i>	
10:00	Between a Decent Meal and Debt: Negotiating Precarities and Uncertainties in the Age of Polycrisis <b>MARVIN MONTEFRIO</b> <i>National University of Singapore</i>	
10:40	QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION	
11:00 – 11:30	MORNING TEA	
11:30 – 13:00	BREAKOUT SESSIONS	
Discussant	ROOM 04-04	ROOM 04-02
	PANEL 1	PANEL 2
	ENVIRONMENT	FOOD POLITICS & SOCIETY
	<b>YINGSHAN LAU</b>	<b>JAMIE S. DAVIDSON</b>
	Decarbonization in Sustainable Architecture: Navigating the Dynamics of Global Standards and Local Wisdom in the Design Process of Indonesian Architects <b>DYAH KUSUMA WARDHANI</b> <i>Bandung Institute of Technology</i>	The Political Economy of Rice Trade Liberalization in the Philippines: Policy Reforms, Price Dynamics, and Food Security Implications <b>BATES BATHAN</b> <i>Kasetsart University</i>
	Navigating Urban Sustainable Development Policy in Conservative Communities: The Case of Waste Management in Banda Aceh City, Indonesia <b>MIRZA FANZIKRI</b> <i>Indonesian International Islamic University</i>	Food Politics and Everyday Resistance: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Mythical Narratives in Javanese Rice Farming <b>FARDAN MAHMUDATUL IMAMAH</b> <i>Gadjah Mada University</i>
	Workers of Global Biodiversity Conservation: Transforming Tropical Rainforests and Indigenous Livelihoods in Brunei Darussalam <b>NAPAK SERIRAK</b> <i>Universiti Brunei Darussalam</i>	Singapore Under One Roof: The Anaesthetisation of Hawker Culture and the Politics of Space <b>XING JUN SEAH</b> <i>The University of Melbourne</i>
	DISCUSSANT'S COMMENTS	
	QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION	
	LUNCH	

## WEDNESDAY, 25 JUNE 2025

14:00 – 15:30		BREAKOUT SESSIONS	
Discussant  14:00  14:20  14:40  15:00 15:10		ROOM 04-04	ROOM 04-02
		PANEL 3	PANEL 4
		GENDER	DEVELOPMENT & GOVERNANCE
		<b>VERONICA L. GREGORIO</b>	<b>REBECCA GRACE TAN</b>
		Living with Stereotypes in Everyday Life: How Do Individuals in their Sino-Vietnamese Mixed Marriages Perceive and Respond to Stereotypes? <b>HAISU CHEN</b> <i>Radboud University</i>	Social Acceptance and Stakeholder Engagement in Philippine Rural Electrification Policies: A Qualitative Content Analysis <b>ALLEN LEMUEL LEMENCE</b> <i>Kyoto University</i>
		“Flower of the Nation”: Femininity and the Politics of Beauty Pageants in Thailand (1934-1957) <b>NATTIDA THONGKASEM</b> <i>Thammasat University</i>	Translocal Trajectories and Critical Junctures: The Development of Chinese-Medium TVET in Malaysia (1962-2024) <b>LIN XU</b> <i>University of Malaya</i>
		South Sulawesi’s Silk Tenun Industry: The Emergence of a Chinese Company and its Impacts <b>NURLATIPAH NASIR</b> <i>SOAS University of London</i>	Decadal Climatic Variability and Hydrological Influences in the Tonle Sap Lake Basin, Cambodia <b>RAKSMEY ANG</b> <i>Cambodia Development Resource Institute</i>
		DISCUSSANT’S COMMENTS	
		QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION	
15:30 – 16:00		AFTERNOON TEA	



## WEDNESDAY, 25 JUNE 2025

16:00 – 17:30		BREAKOUT SESSIONS	
Discussant 16:00  16:20  16:40  17:00 17:10 17:30		ROOM 04-04	ROOM 04-02
		PANEL 5	PANEL 6
		DIGITAL RURAL TRANSFORMATION	NEGOTIATING ISLAM IN INDONESIA
		<b>VEN PAOLO B. VALENZUELA</b>	<b>ERICA M. LARSON</b>
	16:00	Digital Engagement in Agriculture: A Capability Approach to Recontextualising Digitalisation of Agriculture in Indonesia <b>MEDINA SAVIRA</b> <i>University of Groningen &amp; Bandung Institute of Technology</i>	Perang Sabil as Decolonial Praxis: Acehnese Islamic Resistance and the Eurocentric World Order <b>BAIQUNI HASBI</b> <i>State Institute for Islamic Studies Lhokseumawe</i>
	16:20	Matricentric Perspectives: The Cultural Role of Mothers-in-Law from Farming Families in Central Luzon, Philippines <b>PRINCES MARA PAGADOR</b> <i>Mahidol University</i>	Challenging Norms, Preserving Harmony: Women Ulama's Strategies in Combating Child Marriage in Indonesia <b>HILDA KEMALA</b> <i>Waseda University</i>
	16:40	Segmenting Farmer Perceptions and Behavioral Intentions for Climate-Smart Agriculture in Salinity-Affected Mekong Delta Vietnam <b>TRANG VO</b> <i>National Chung Hsing University</i>	
	17:00	DISCUSSANT'S COMMENTS	
	17:10	QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION	
17:30		END OF DAY 1	

## THURSDAY, 26 JUNE 2025

<b>10:00 – 11:00</b>	<b>KEYNOTE ADDRESS 2</b>	
<i>Chairperson</i>	<b>PORTIA REYES</b> , <i>National University of Singapore</i>	
<i>10:00</i>	The Subaltern Can Make and Do: Recovering Histories of Slavery from Art and Ritual <b>BRYCE BEEMER</b> <i>Duke Kunshan University</i>	
<i>10:40</i>	<b>QUESTION &amp; ANSWER SESSION</b>	
<b>11:00 – 11:30</b>	<b>MORNING TEA</b>	
<b>11:30 – 13:00</b>	<b>BREAKOUT SESSIONS</b>	
<i>Discussant</i>	<b>ROOM 04-04</b>	<b>ROOM 04-02</b>
	<b>PANEL 7</b>	<b>PANEL 8</b>
	<b>MIGRATION &amp; LABOR</b>	<b>URBAN INFORMAL LANDSCAPES</b>
	<b>BERNICE LOH</b>	<b>PRIZA MARENDRAPUTRA</b>
	Brokerage in Low- and Middle-Skilled Migration Infrastructure: Moving Specified Skilled Workers from Vietnam to Japan <b>ANH LE</b> <i>Waseda University</i>	From Trees to Titles: Land Commodification, Legal Pluralism, and Local Resistance in Aceh, Indonesia <b>ASRUL SIDIQ</b> <i>Australian National University</i>
	Divergent Pathways: Labor Stratification of Vietnamese Skilled Migrants under Neoliberal Migration Infrastructure <b>VY VU HONG HUYNH</b> <i>Waseda University</i>	Urban Informality in a Formalized City: Ethnographic Insights into “A-Formal” Commercial Practices in Singapore <b>HANKANG YANG</b> <i>National University of Singapore</i>
	Traps of Documentation: Illegality, Deportability, and Document Dilemma of Burmese Migrants Crossing the China-Myanmar Border <b>ZHUO NIU</b> <i>Free University of Berlin</i>	Urban Dwelling between the Rocks and the Sea in Southeast Asia: A Transect Walk through the Liminal Spaces of Waterfront in the City of Ha Long (Vietnam) <b>THI MAI THOA TRAN</b> <i>L’Université du Québec à Montréal</i>
	<b>DISCUSSANT’S COMMENTS</b>	
	<b>QUESTION &amp; ANSWER SESSION</b>	
<b>13:00 – 14:00</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>	

## THURSDAY, 26 JUNE 2025

14:00 – 15:05	BREAKOUT SESSIONS	
<i>Discussant</i>  14:00  14:20  14:40 14:50	ROOM 04-04	ROOM 04-02
	PANEL 9	PANEL 10
	POWER GOVERNANCE	URBAN FUTURES IMAGINED
	SHAUN LIN	KAH-WEE LEE
	Epistemological Foundations: Faith, Gender, and Coloniality in Anti-Trafficking Work in Southeast Asia <b>CHARULATHA PITIGALA</b> <i>Monash University Malaysia</i>	Institutionalizing Mobility Reform in Greater Jakarta: Leveraging the Capital Relocation for Metropolitan Governance Transformation <b>BANI PAMUNGKAS</b> <i>Bandung Institute of Technology</i>
	Volcano Monitoring and Scientific Collaboration along the Pacific Ring of Fire: Japan, the Philippines, and the Netherlands Indies 1900-1920 <b>GHAMAL MOHAMMAD</b> <i>Murdoch University</i>	Playable City or Privatized Paradise?: Connectivity and Privatized Urbanism in Sunway City <b>ZIRAN ZHAO</b> <i>Monash University Malaysia</i>
	DISCUSSANT'S COMMENTS	
	QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION	
15:05 – 15:30	AFTERNOON TEA	

## THURSDAY, 26 JUNE 2025

15:30 – 17:00		BREAKOUT SESSIONS	
<div>Discussant</div> <div>15:30</div> <div>15:50</div> <div>16:10</div> <div>16:30</div> <div>16:40</div> <div>17:00</div>	ROOM 04-04	ROOM 04-02	
	PANEL 11	PANEL 12	
	INTER-ASIA ENGAGEMENTS	CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION PROCESSES	
	RANI SINGH	TIM WINTER	
	A Forgotten Lao King: Zhao Wenmeng between Qing China, Vietnam, and Siam (1785-1819) <b>CHEN ZHANG</b> <i>Sun Yat-sen University</i>	Migration from Displacement to Integration: The Socio-Economic Transformation of the Karen Community from Myanmar in North and Middle Andaman <b>AYUSHI PAL</b> <i>Pondicherry University</i>	
	Building Trust Relationships: The Chinese Commercial Bank in the British Straits Settlements (1912-1928) <b>JEREMY GOH</b> <i>University of Warwick</i>	Born and Beyond Digital: Instapoetic Practice and Literary Remediation in Brunei Darussalam and Singapore <b>HANA GHANI</b> <i>Universiti Brunei Darussalam</i>	
	Inventing “Malaya”: National Imagination in Early Chao Foon <b>YIDUO AN</b> <i>Nanyang Technological University</i>	Translational Cultural Heritage: Ekphrastic Translation by Singaporean Artists <b>SEE LING QUEK</b> <i>Nanyang Technological University</i>	
	DISCUSSANT’S COMMENTS		
	QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION		



## FRIDAY, 27 JUNE 2025

10:00 – 11:30	BREAKOUT SESSIONS	
Discussant  10:00  10:20  10:40  11:00 11:10	ROOM 04-04	ROOM 07-60
	PANEL 13	PANEL 14
	COLONIALITIES	BORDERLAND LABOR NETWORKS
	ANNE RAFFIN	JACOB RINCK
	Performing Margins: Displacement and Cultural Negotiation among the Mah Meri of Malaysia <b>FANYING YANG</b> <i>Xiamen University</i>	Conflict, Economy, and Social Networks: A Study of Kuki Migrants from India-Myanmar Borderlands to Singapore <b>HEMKHOLEN HAOKIP</b> <i>North-Eastern Hill University</i>
	Rethinking Mobility in the Colonial Periphery: Chinese in 19th-Century Misamis Province, Philippines <b>JAY ROME DE LOS SANTOS</b> <i>University of the Philippines – Diliman</i>	International Migrant Domestic Workers: The Case of Kuki Women in Singapore <b>LHUNJAMANG BAITE</b> <i>North-Eastern Hill University</i>
	Births at Home in the New Camp <b>VALENTINA GRILLO</b> <i>University of Vienna</i>	Securitization, Precarity, and Development in Post Coup Migration of Myanmar Migrants in Mae Sot, Thailand <b>TIN MAUNG HTWE</b> <i>Chiang Mai University</i>
	DISCUSSANT'S COMMENTS	
	QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION	
11:30 – 12:00	MORNING TEA	

## FRIDAY, 27 JUNE 2025

12:00 – 13:05		BREAKOUT SESSIONS	
<i>Discussant</i>  12:00  12:20  12:40 12:50		ROOM 04-04	ROOM 07-60
		PANEL 15	PANEL 16
		TOURISM & HERITAGE	DEVELOPMENT
		KONG CHONG HO	JA IAN CHONG
	12:00	Geologizing Landscape: Knowledge Production and Geotourism Development in Karst of Gunung Sewu, Indonesia <b>HILARY REINHART</b> <i>Victoria University of Wellington</i>	The Domestic Political Logic of International Development Cooperation: The Politicization of the BRI in Southeast Asia <b>CHENYU FANG</b> <i>Fudan University</i>
	12:20	Identifying the Cultural Landscape Character of the Toraja Indigenous Settlement Using the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) Method: A Case Study of Tongkonan Sa'pang <b>IRA PRAYUNI RANTE ALLO</b> <i>Bandung Institute of Technology</i>	Governing the In-Between: Dual Infrastructure State and the Reconfiguration of Regional Space under Global China <b>RUNZE QIAO</b> <i>National University of Singapore</i>
	12:40	DISCUSSANT'S COMMENTS	
	12:50	QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION	
13:05 – 14:15		LUNCH	

## FRIDAY, 27 JUNE 2025

14:15 – 15:45	BREAKOUT SESSIONS	
Discussant 14:15  14:35  14:55  15:15 15:25	ROOM 04-04	ROOM 07-60
	PANEL 17	PANEL 18
	LANGUAGE	RELIGION
	MIE HIRAMOTO	JULIUS BAUTISTA
	Expectations and Realities of Language Use and Identity Construction of Filipino University Students in South Korea <b>ALLAN JAY ESTEBAN</b> <i>Kyung Hee University</i>	The Seen and Unseen Forces: Understanding the Concept of Bisà (Power) in Mendez, Cavite, Philippines <b>DEBORRAH ANASTACIO</b> <i>De La Salle University</i>
	Diachronicity in Linguistic Landscape in New Chinatown on Pracha Rat Bamphen Road, Bangkok: Focusing on Three Waves of Chinese Migration <b>HAO LIU</b> <i>Waseda University</i>	Weaving the Divide: Understanding the Irayas' Entangled Embodiments as Indigenous Christians in Mindoro, Philippines <b>SUNSHINE BLANCO</b> <i>University of California – Riverside</i>
	Home For You, Not For Me: Second-Generation Rohingya Refugees in Malaysia Memories of Home <b>NUR NADIA LUKMANULHAKIM</b> <i>University of Nottingham Malaysia</i>	Buddhist Iconography in Thai Art in the Late 20th Century: Dynamism in Art and Reflection of Globalization <b>SZU YING HSU</b> <i>Chulalongkorn University</i>
	DISCUSSANT'S COMMENTS	
	QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION	
	15:45 – 16:15 AFTERNOON TEA	
16:15 – 17:15	KEYNOTE ADDRESS 3	
Chairperson	<b>MICHEL CHAMBON</b> , <i>National University of Singapore</i>	
16:15	From Area Studies to Development Practice: Reflections on a Career Bridging Research and Action in Southeast Asia <b>ROBIN BUSH</b> <i>Development Practitioner</i>	
16:55	QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION	
17:15 – 17:30	CLOSING REMARKS	
17:15	<b>MAITRII V. AUNG-THWIN</b> <i>Chair, 20th Singapore Graduate Forum on Southeast Asian Studies, Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore</i>	
17:30	END OF GRADUATE FORUM	

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## KEYNOTE ADDRESS 1

### **Between a Decent Meal and Debt: Negotiating Precarities and Uncertainties in the Age of Polycrisis**

**Marvin Montefrio**

National University of Singapore  
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Many communities in Southeast Asia now face polycrises, in which multiple interconnected crisis events converge and amplify one another. Poor rural and urban communities, especially those situated along coastal regions, are particularly vulnerable. The plight of those living in the coastal areas of the Philippines is a prime example. In the province of Capiz, coastal communities have experienced several rapid and gradual social and environmental crises over the last five years, including extreme weather events such as super typhoons, the COVID-19 pandemic, an economic recession resulting from the pandemic's aftermath and the war in Ukraine, and the looming collapse of marine ecosystems. Among the impacts of polycrisis is the reduced ability of vulnerable and precarious smallholder fishers to secure safe, nutritious, and culturally appropriate foods. In his talk, Associate Professor Montefrio will explore the complex relationships between precarity and food insecurity amid multiple, overlapping crises. Drawing from his ethnographic work in Capiz, he illustrates how the Capisnon fisherfolk navigate varying magnitudes of transitory and chronic food insecurity in relation to declining household incomes, the escalation of dependence on credit, and the eventual accumulation of debt. The uncertainties brought about by polycrisis impel smallholder fishers to engage in greater risk-taking behaviors akin to gambling. In the long run, it is their health and nutrition that get sacrificed when smallholder fishers are left to their own devices in dealing with polycrises.

**Marvin Montefrio** is Associate Professor at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, National University of Singapore (NUS). He is a member of the Food Politics and Society Cluster of the Asia Research Institute at NUS. He specializes in food, agrarian, and environmental studies, with a specific interest in the political ecology and cultural politics of food and sustainability in Southeast Asia.

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS 2

### **The Subaltern Can Make and Do: Recovering Histories of Slavery from Art and Ritual**

**Bryce Beemer**

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The histories of enslaved Southeast Asians lay mostly outside texts. For this reason it is nearly impossible to recover their historical voices from written documents. However, in mainland Southeast Asian kingdoms, foreign war captives labored to glorify the king and palace through grand artistic, architectural, and theatrical projects. This talk will describe the ways that histories of Ayutthaya's war slaves can be distilled from the arts and entertainments they produced for the Konbaung kings of Upper Burma.

**Bryce Beemer** has been Assistant Professor of History at Duke Kunshan University (DKU) since 2019 where he teaches courses on world history and Southeast Asia. He studies cultural exchange in the context of long-distance slavery and warfare in Southeast Asia, Northeast India, and coastal Bengal. He is busy finishing his first book, *Creole Kingdoms in Southeast Asia*. In 2014, Dr Beemer received the World History Association's best dissertation award. His scholarship received support from Fulbright, the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), the Mellon Foundation, and other private funding agencies. He received academic awards from the American Historical Association and the Burma Studies Foundation. Prior to joining DKU, Dr Beemer was an SSRC Transregional Research Fellow for InterAsian Contexts and Connections.

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## KEYNOTE ADDRESS 3

### **From Area Studies to Development Practice: Reflections on a Career Bridging Research and Action in Southeast Asia**

**Robin Bush**  
Development Practitioner

This keynote reflects on a 27-year career spent working at the nexus of academic inquiry and development practice in Southeast Asia. Drawing from my formal training in political science and Southeast Asian studies and my subsequent work with think tanks, universities, and international development organizations—including my leadership roles at The Asia Foundation—this talk aims to offer graduate students practical and intellectual insights into how scholarly foundations in area studies can be translated into impactful careers beyond the academy.

I will explore how skills honed through qualitative research, historical analysis, and regional language training have remained central to my professional identity and effectiveness in the development sector. The discussion will critically examine the colonial genealogies of both Southeast Asian Studies and international development, raising questions about knowledge production, institutional power, and the ethical imperatives of working in postcolonial contexts.

Recent shifts in U.S. foreign policy, including actions targeting international education and global development funding, have disrupted long-standing transnational flows of scholarship and practice. These developments underscore the urgency of rethinking the role of area studies and the obligations of scholar-practitioners in navigating contested political terrain.

Through personal narrative and institutional examples, I will reflect on the opportunities and challenges of a hybrid professional path—one that resists the conventional binary between “academic” and “practitioner”. My goal is to encourage early-career scholars to consider more expansive and dynamic definitions of impact, interdisciplinarity, and public engagement.

This session aims not only to offer practical career insights, but to catalyze critical reflection on the structural conditions shaping knowledge, development, and power in the region today.

**Robin Bush** has over twenty-seven years of experience in governance and policy reform as well as academic expertise in Southeast Asia. Until recently she was The Asia Foundation’s Country Representative in Malaysia, where she oversaw programs in support of Malaysia’s inclusive economic growth. She also served as the Foundation’s Country Representative in Indonesia for many years. She specializes in programming related to inclusive economic growth, digital skilling, evidence-based policymaking, and political economy analysis. Bush has lived in Southeast Asia for most of her life – growing up in Indonesia and working for her entire career in Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia. Her career has been a blend of practitioner and academic pursuits, and she holds a PhD in political science from the University of Washington. She has served in a range of leadership and program director roles for The Asia Foundation as well as RTI International in Indonesia and Malaysia, between 1998 to the present. As an academic, she taught classes in evidence-based policymaking, religion and politics, and Global Asia at the Singapore Management University 2019-2021. She was also a senior research fellow at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore from 2012-2014, where she contributed to a program of research and publications related to religion and development. She can be contacted at [www.linkedin.com/in/robinbush/](http://www.linkedin.com/in/robinbush/).

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## PANEL 1 | ENVIRONMENT

### **Decarbonization in Sustainable Architecture: Navigating the Dynamics of Global Standards and Local Wisdom in the Design Process of Indonesian Architects**

**Dyah Kusuma Wardhani**  
Bandung Institute of Technology  
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This study examines how Indonesian architects incorporate contextual and locally grounded sustainability strategies that diverge from the technocratic frameworks commonly embedded in global green building rating tools, such as LEED, BREEAM, and EDGE, particularly regarding the architectural decarbonisation agenda. Using a comparative method, the study examines design strategies in 11 award-winning architectural projects by 5 Indonesian architects, both at the national and international levels. The primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which included open-ended questions, while the researcher gathered secondary data from architectural publications, award documentation, and project portfolios. Thematic classification followed an integrative framework that synthesised categories from international rating systems (LEED, BREEAM, EDGE) with locally adapted tools such as GREENSHIP and Indonesia's Green Building Regulations. This synthesis identified six key sustainability themes: (1) Energy Efficiency, (2) Material Resources and Life Cycle, (3) Water Conservation, (4) Sustainable Site Development, (5) Indoor Health and Comfort, and (6) Building Resilience and Adaptability. The study employed an inductive coding approach to thematically organise the data and uncover the underlying rationale behind locally embedded sustainability strategies. The findings show that architects not only adopt community-based and low-tech practices but also integrate vernacular architectural principles. These include passive design strategies, disaster responsiveness, and systems for self-sufficient and ecologically balanced living supported by local resource management. Such approaches not only contribute to reducing carbon emissions but also foster community engagement and sustain cultural continuity. Rather than framing sustainability as a purely technical objective, Indonesian architects understand it as a socio-cultural process. Their strategies often involve collaboration with end-users and local builders, resulting in spaces that are culturally resonant, meaningful, and maintainable by the community after construction. These approaches are more prevalent in small to medium-scale private or community-based projects, where architects enjoy greater flexibility in applying contextual design strategies. In contrast, in large-scale developments dominated by formal regulations and institutional actors, architects tend to limit sustainability practices to resource efficiency and site-level responses, often overlooking deeper socio-cultural dynamics.

**Dyah Kusuma Wardhani (Dhani)** conducts doctoral research at the School of Architecture, Planning, and Policy Development, Bandung Institute of Technology, as a second-year PhD candidate. Her work examines how Indonesian architects actively adapt global sustainability frameworks to local contexts, with a particular focus on advancing architectural decarbonization. She teaches architecture at Ciputra University and actively contributes to academic practice, drawing on nearly a decade of experience in the field. Dhani also holds professional certifications as a Greenship Professional and WELL Accredited Professional. Through her research, she aims to contribute constructively to academic and professional dialogues on sustainable architecture in both the Indonesian and global contexts.

### **Navigating Urban Sustainable Development Policy in Conservative Communities: The Case of Waste Management in Banda Aceh City, Indonesia**

**Mirza Fanzikri**  
Indonesian International Islamic University  
mirza.fanzikri@uiii.ac.id

Banda Aceh City has received the Adipura Award for the eleventh time since 2010, the highest recognition from the Indonesian Ministry of Environment and Forestry for exemplary urban cleanliness and environmental management. While Shari'a law was predicted to have impacted urban development, public spaces, and economic activity in Banda Aceh, its application in waste management remains dubious. Consequently, Banda Aceh presents a distinctive case study to examine the actual application of the Islamic environmentalist concept inside Muslim conservative communities, specifically regarding waste management issues. This paper explores the following questions: How does Banda Aceh navigate Islamic environmentalism to foster waste management? This case study uses a framework of Muslim environmentalism and communitarian urbanism to explain the intersection of government and conservative communities' participation in fostering collective responsibility and moral obligation to enhance community engagement in waste management. This article argues that while the government actively promotes waste management policies, the engagement of conservative communities remains limited due to insufficient integration of the Islamic environmentalism narrative in policy and public discourse. Using a case study, this research delves into how Banda Aceh encourages sustainable urban development in waste management despite a lack of participation from its communities. Employing triangulation analysis, primary data from observation and interviews with local government and religious leaders were cross-referenced with policy documents and existing literature on Islamic environmental governance. This case demonstrates that despite the compatibility between Islamic environmental ethics and sustainable waste management,



its application in Banda Aceh remains inconsistent. The findings indicate that the lack of community awareness and participation has necessitated greater involvement and effort from the government in waste management. For instance, owing to insufficient public awareness of trash classification, the apparatuses must exert the utmost effort to classify waste and ensure its collection according to specified categories before transportation to the final disposal site. This study contributes to test Muslim environmentalism ethics in urban society, particularly in the context of conservative communities. Furthermore, the finding encourages policymakers to consider cultural and ideological narratives to boost sustainable urban development policy implementation.

**Mirza Fanzikri** is a lecturer at the Public Administration Department at Ar-Raniry Islamic State University Banda Aceh, and a PhD candidate in Political Science at the Indonesian International Islamic University (UIII). This member of the International Public Policy Association was also the founder of skemaindonesia.org, an emerging think tank and policy consultancy institution based in Banda Aceh. He is also the functional representative of the Community Early Vigilance Forum in Aceh, recommending decisive policy to the Aceh governor on the current issue. He is the author of the book *Multicultural Society: The Dynamics of Village Funds Management in Sharia Regions*. During his PhD, he published and presented several research papers on development studies, public policy, and comparative political economy. Last year, he achieved the best UIII PhD student paper of 2024, and he presented his paper at the 2024 Australasian AID Conference at the Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University.

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### **Workers of Global Biodiversity Conservation: Transforming Tropical Rainforests and Indigenous Livelihoods in Brunei Darussalam**

**Napak Serirak**  
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Borneo is a site of contentious issues that makes the term 'sustainable development' an oxymoron. On one hand, it is perceived as a 'commodity frontier' supplying cheap tropical forests and agricultural produce and labour to transnational markets. On the other hand, it is one of the world's 'biodiversity hotspots' containing high diversity and large numbers of endemic species yet threatened by human activities. Yet, creating 'protected areas' to conserve flora and fauna raises questions about the impact on local or indigenous livelihoods. This paper aims to understand the 'conservation-as-development' nexus through the shifting livelihoods of the local people as the tropical rainforests were turned into conservation spaces. The study revolves around Ulu Temburong National Park and the people living in the adjacent areas of the park in Brunei Darussalam. Noticeably, whilst this region is perceived to be a 'remote' forested frontier, it is closely and rapidly linked to local and international markets and scientific networks through diverse infrastructures of connectivity. By drawing on studies of environmental history, political ecology and urban studies, this research contributes to the discussion of how certain 'lands' have been unevenly appropriated and turned into specific 'places' yet connected in networks of complex centre-periphery relationships. Specifically, it focusses on how environmental governance and capital have transformed 'nature' into governable and marketable forests and incorporated local people to become labourers. This paper explores how local people make a living with regard to constraints and opportunities arising from structural and historical conditions. Through the discussion of work-life histories of four Iban interlocutors whose work is related to biodiversity conservation, this paper demonstrates how indigenous livelihoods have been transformed, particularly commercialised through sciences and tourism. Whilst the local Ibans have been alienated from their resource-based economy, this paper finds that their traditional livelihoods skills and knowledge have been commodified as their labours have been incorporated into the extensive networks of global biodiversity conservation and ecotourism. Thus, within the landscapes they have grown up and lived with but owned by the state and intervened by transnational conservation, I argue, the local Ibans have become subordinated yet indispensable workers for such national and transnational endeavours.

**Napak Serirak** is a PhD candidate at the Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam. He is a sociocultural anthropologist with research interests in environmental history and political ecology of Southeast Asia and its global connections. His current research uses historical and ethnographic methods to study co-constitution of 'nature', 'place' and 'people' regarding production of scientific knowledge on tropical rainforest biodiversity, politics of nature conservation, and nature-based tourism in Temburong district, Brunei Darussalam. He holds a BA in Economics and MA in Anthropology from Thammasat University, Thailand, and was formerly a lecturer in Sociology and Anthropology at Prince of Songkla University.

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## PANEL 2 | FOOD POLITICS & SOCIETY

### The Political Economy of Rice Trade Liberalization in the Philippines: Policy Reforms, Price Dynamics, and Food Security Implications

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The Philippines faces ongoing challenges in balancing the welfare of farmers and consumers within its rice industry. Over the years, various policy instruments—such as production subsidies, price controls, and trade policies—have been employed with mixed results. This study analyzes the political economy of rice trade liberalization, with a specific focus on the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL) and its effects on spatial and vertical price dynamics, as well as broader food security outcomes. It also examines the policy discourse surrounding the RTL. The enactment of the RTL in 2019 marked a shift from a rice self-sufficiency model to a market-driven approach to food security. The law replaced tariff quotas with ordinary tariffs, lowered tariff rates, established the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF), and reduced the role of the National Food Authority (NFA). In 2024, the law was amended to increase the budget for supporting paddy farmers, extend funding through 2031, and grant additional powers to the executive branch in regulating the rice industry. Further amendments are being proposed, underscoring the persistent power dynamics embedded in the rice policy process. Using a spatio-temporal framework, this study analyzes monthly data from January 2010 to December 2024, including domestic prices of paddy and rice, NFA rice stocks, exchange rates, and international rice prices. It also examines indicators of food availability and accessibility. To establish relationships among these variables, the study employs Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) models with robustness checks. Complementing the quantitative analysis, content analysis is used to examine the problems, policies, and political streams surrounding the RTL and to identify the factors influencing domestic prices, transmissions, and food security. The findings reveal that the RTL significantly reduced farmgate and retail prices of regular milled rice (RMR) at the national level, with notable effects on regional wholesale and retail prices. For well-milled rice (WMR), wholesalers and retailers appear to be exerting market power, resulting in double marginalization. Food availability is influenced by the long- and short-term volatility of retail prices for RMR and WMR, respectively. Meanwhile, food accessibility is determined by retail rice prices and income. Ongoing policy debates center on the future role of the National Food Authority (NFA), alongside continued calls for the repeal of the RTL. Additionally, renewed advocacy for rice self-sufficiency and emerging advocacy for food sovereignty are reshaping stakeholder demands within the Philippine rice industry.

**Bates Bathan** is a PhD candidate in Agricultural and Resource Economics at Kasetsart University, Thailand, and Assistant Professor at the University of the Philippines Los Baños. He holds BS and MS degrees in Agricultural Economics, with expertise in agricultural marketing, price analysis, and rural finance. A prolific academic, he has authored or co-authored 11 international journal articles, five monographs, a training manual, and presented around 40 papers at conferences and symposiums. Beyond research, he is deeply engaged in instruction and public service, mentoring students and leading initiatives in capacity-building, impact evaluation, and agri-food supply chain analysis. His work reflects a commitment to advancing sustainable and inclusive agricultural development in Southeast Asia.

### Food Politics and Everyday Resistance: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Mythical Narratives in Javanese Rice Farming

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This study investigates how mythical narratives among Wintaos Hamlet Gunungkidul Regency farmers serve as forms of everyday resistance within contemporary food politics. It draws upon Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and everyday resistance theory to explore how conventional beliefs subtly challenge market-driven agricultural policies and support subsistence-based food systems. Rather than commercialising into food economies, Wintaos farmers preserve rice cultivation for household consumption, achieving food sovereignty through symbolic and practical compliance with traditional ancestors. Myths and rituals act as cultural mechanisms that strengthen local sovereignty and counter the dominant narrative of agricultural commodification. The community-based education program has helped to expand the discourse on local food to be increasingly recognised through various media platforms. It has been able to integrate traditional knowledge around food into the process of collective learning, community empowerment, and the spread of ideology on food sovereignty. The findings show that although farmers in Wintaos continue to face structural pressures due to agricultural modernisation, dependence on chemical inputs, landscape changes, as well as socio-economic-religious changes such as increasing cash needs, consumerism, and changes in religious styles or beliefs, they persist in subsistence farming practices through diverse cropping systems such as polyculture followed by the myths that accompany it. While transformations in lifestyle and political food policies challenge local resilience, these everyday farming practices

represent a subtle yet enduring form of resistance, sustaining household food security and reaffirming local agricultural identities against external commodifying forces.

**Fardan Mahmudatul Imamah** is a PhD candidate at the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies, Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, and a lecturer in the Sociology of Religion program at the Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab, and Dakwah, UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung. Her academic interests focus on critical discourse analysis, particularly exploring how power relations are embedded and reproduced through language in religious, cultural, and political contexts. She has researched women's leadership in Islamic organizations, discourse on traditional agricultural knowledge, and the representation of religion in public and digital media. Drawing on interdisciplinary perspectives, her work bridges discourse studies, sociology, and media analysis to better understand how dominant narratives operate within Indonesian society. Imamah's current doctoral research uses critical discourses to determine how and to what extent power relationships defined by political and economic rule affect ritual, myth, and ecological discourses.

### **Singapore Under One Roof: The Anaesthetisation of Hawker Culture and the Politics of Space**

**Xing Jun Seah**

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Singapore's communal food spaces like hawker centres and coffee shops (*kopitiam*s) have transformed from informal, organic spaces of labour and community into regulated, aestheticised environments emblematic of national identity. Tracing this trajectory from colonial-era street vending to post-independence relocation to contemporary social enterprise model, this paper examines how hawker culture has undergone a process of (an)aesthetisation—a term drawn from Cressida Heyes to describe the affective and political sterilisation of public space under state-sanctioned regimes of control, cleanliness, and consumption. Focusing on hawker centres and coffee shops (*kopitiam*s; *Malay kopi – coffee, Hokkien tiam – shop*) located around and within Housing Development Board (HDB) estates, this paper situates their evolution within a larger history of spatial regulation, where public hygiene and urban order served as tools of colonial and postcolonial governance. These sites, now positioned as national heritage through efforts such as the 2020 UNESCO inscription, symbolise the city-state's multicultural harmony and economic development. The paper engages with the extent to which such representations engage with, reflect, or obscure the socio-political complexities embedded within them, and how artistic responses act as 'antiprojects' that challenge dominant visual narratives to this transformation and disrupt the state's celebratory framing of hawker centres and coffee shops, revealing the dissonance between lived experience and national representation. By foregrounding the tensions between heritage and erasure, (an)aestheticisation and affect, this paper positions hawker centres and coffee shops as contested public spaces where power, identity, and memory are negotiated. It ultimately asks: how might we resist the anaesthetisation of public life, and what forms of cultural practice can re-politicise spaces rendered invisible by state-sanctioned narratives of progress?

**Xing Jun Seah** is a PhD student at The University of Melbourne exploring the profound cultural implications of the built urban environment's changes on heritage preservation, communal identities, and senses of belonging, delving into how these changes ripple across social and artistic realms, giving rise to innovative creative expressions and aesthetic paradigms. Her work examines creative practices as forms of dissent and critique against conventional physical constraints. With an academic background in literature, art history, and museum studies, she brings critical discourse and art historical lens to the study of the built urban environment of Singapore. She is interested in exploring cross-cultural and interdisciplinary faculties to bridge disciplinary divides by looking at the role art plays in shaping, uncovering, and fostering fresh perspectives. She has over 10 years' professional experience working in museums and galleries, and is currently a teaching associate at the Potter Museum of Art and Science Gallery Melbourne at The University of Melbourne's Museums and Collections.

## **PANEL 3 | GENDER**

### **Living with Stereotypes in Everyday Life: How Do Individuals in their Sino-Vietnamese Mixed Marriages Perceive and Respond to Stereotypes?**

**Haisu Chen**

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Sino-Vietnamese marriages are often stereotyped by publics and academics who draw on macro-economic and demographic theories. These imply a global hierarchical framework in which national, gender, and social class intersect, thus creating a highers other--the lower other binary. These theories tend to depict Vietnamese women as hyper-materialistic or passive victims while their Sino-husbands are characterized either as patriarchal figures or as marginalized men. In this way, Sino-Vietnamese marriages are reproducibly considered as undesirable marriages. My paper argues that

these fixed stereotypes (re)constructed by others do not provide a fair or balanced picture of Sino-Vietnamese couples and impede our imaginations about Sino-Vietnamese couples' nuanced and dynamic realities. To broaden our imagination for Sino-Vietnamese couples, I seek to answer the following research question: How do individuals in Sino-Vietnamese marriages perceive and respond to stereotypes? Inspired by Abu-Lughod's concept of "writing against culture" (1993), which aims to understand individuals' views and actions through their own narratives, I draw on the approach of ethnography and life story interview in the research. Based on a one-year online and offline multi-sited ethnography, life history interviews were held from June 2023 to June 2024 in the Netherlands, Mainland China, and Vietnam. I interviewed 43 individuals including upper-class, middle-class, and lower-class Vietnamese men and women and Taiwanese/mainland Chinese women and men. All participants were in documented Sino-Vietnamese marriages residing in mainland China, Taiwan, or Vietnam. All the interviews were recorded, fully transcribed, and explored using a thematic analysis approach. The findings highlight the complex ways individuals in Sino-Vietnamese marriages navigate and negotiate intersecting stereotypes. By foregrounding their lived experiences and resistance strategies, this study challenges dominant narratives and calls for a more nuanced understanding of mixed marriages shaped by global intersectional hierarchies.

**Haisu Chen** is a second-year PhD candidate at the Department of Cultural Anthropology and Development Studies at Radboud University in the Netherlands. She is interested in critically engaging with sociological and anthropological theories and applying them creatively and humanely to interpret individuals' lived experiences, particularly through life story interviews. Her previous research includes the evaluation of the life situation of refugees in the UK and exploring why returning female migrants decide to go back to their home countries. These studies inspired her to pay more attention to marginalized people, stigmatized groups, and minority groups in society. This attention guides her current project, which examines how stigmatized Sino-Vietnamese couples experience widespread stereotypes and how they challenge and resist these dominant narratives.

## **"Flower of the Nation": Femininity and the Politics of Beauty Pageants in Thailand (1934-1957)**

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This article explores the phenomenon of "Miss Thailand," examining the intersection of culture, gender, and politics. I argue that beauty contests are not merely forms of entertainment but reflect and influence the power dynamics within the nation. Furthermore, beauty pageants serve as platforms for showcasing a country's image to the global community. By utilizing the frameworks of "power networks" and "cultural politics", this analysis highlights the role of beauty pageants in constructing national identity and shaping political discourse in Thailand. While beauty pageants are often dismissed as frivolous, particularly in developing countries, in Thailand they have historically played a significant role in nation-building efforts. Originating in the Western world, beauty pageants were introduced to Asia during the colonial era in the late 19th century. For Western nations, the status of women became a key measure of modernity for countries in this region. However, beauty pageants faced resistance in Asia, including Thailand, where traditional values emphasized the role of women as "good daughters, good wives, and good mothers." The first beauty pageant in Thailand was organized in 1930 by a British colonial firm. However, it was not until the 1932 political shift —transitioning from an absolute monarchy to a democratic regime led by the "People's Party"—that beauty pageants took on a more significant role in promoting gender equality and democratic ideals. During this democratic transition, the new government sought to redefine the image of Thai women, moving away from traditional constraints. In 1934, the first Miss Thailand pageant was held, selecting representatives of the modern Thai woman: educated, employed, and political awareness. Unlike beauty pageants in other nations, which are often organized for commercial gain by private enterprises, the Thai version was state-sponsored and aligned with national modernization efforts. Thai government has elevated beauty queens to the status of national symbols through the discourse termed "Flower of the Nation," framing these events as integral to national identity. The Miss Thailand pageant thus became a platform for showcasing women's roles in the nation-building process and for interest group to express support for the democratic government. However, in 1957, the political landscape shifted dramatically with a coup led by royalists, resulting in a military dictatorship that banned beauty pageants and labeled beauty queens as "immoral." This stigmatization mirrored similar developments in Myanmar and Indonesia during the same period.

**Nattida Thongkasem** is a PhD student in the History Department at the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University, Thailand. She holds both a bachelor's and a master's degree in political science from Chiang Mai University. Nattida's research interest include Thai politics, gender, and beauty pageants. With over 15 years of experience in the Thai beauty pageant industry—both as a participant in local competitions and the Miss Thailand pageant—she is deeply motivated to explore the political dynamic surrounding beauty pageants. Her goal is to offer an academic perspective on beauty pageants, which are often dismissed as trivial or focused solely on physical appearance. In reality, beauty pageants are

closely tied to broader issues such as gender, race, religion, business, and international relations. Nattida's current thesis topic focuses on power networks in Thai beauty pageants, 1930s-2000s.

### **South Sulawesi's Silk Tenun Industry: The Emergence of a Chinese Company and its Impacts**

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In the Bugis community, silk tenun (traditional woven fabric) is an essential aspect of their culture and possesses economic value. Historically, this community has been able to make silk thread, weaving it into tenun sarongs, trading it, and using it for various traditional occasions. Women play a central role in its production, from upstream to downstream. However, the industry now faces numerous challenges, especially in the upstream sectors. One major issue is the difficulty in obtaining high-quality silkworm eggs, which has led to a decline in mulberry and silkworm farming, thereby affecting cocoon production for silk thread. In response, a Chinese company has stepped in, providing free silkworms to farmers on the condition that they sell their cocoons exclusively to the company for their production needs in China. This study, using a feminist political economy framework, examines how this external intervention influences the gendered division of labour and social reproduction within the tenun industry chain in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. Through ethnographic research and in-depth interviews with 75 participants, including farmers, weavers, government officials, and entrepreneurs, the study reveals the impacts of this company's intervention. While the company supports farmers by offering free silkworms and ensuring their livelihoods, it also enforces exclusive purchasing agreements, effectively controlling the labourers and their mulberry farming. The farmers are forced to sell the cocoons instead of the silk thread, which has more economic value. This intervention reduces the availability of cocoons for local yarn spinners, resulting in job losses, particularly for women involved in traditional yarn production. Thus, by taking over the labour in the upstream sector, the company disrupts the existing value chain, leading to an increased reliance on imported silk thread in the manufacturing process. This shift raises production costs and transforms silk tenun into a luxury commodity. This study highlights how external market forces can reshape local industries, disrupting traditional labour structures and social reproduction in South Sulawesi's tenun industry.

**Nurlatipah Nasir** is a PhD student in Development Studies at SOAS University of London. Her research focuses on the intersection of patriarchy, labour, and social reproduction in the *tenun* (traditional weaving) industry chain in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. She examines how gendered labour is shaped by cultural traditions, state policies, and market dynamics, with a particular interest in feminist political economy, social reproduction, and the state's role in labour and gender relations.

## **PANEL 4 | DEVELOPMENT & GOVERNANCE**

### **Social Acceptance and Stakeholder Engagement in Philippine Rural Electrification Policies: A Qualitative Content Analysis**

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Achieving a sustainable future requires the transformation of the energy sector. Governments worldwide aim to achieve this change by formulating policies that would contribute to the realization of the three pillars of sustainability – economic, environmental, and social. However, the social component has been lagging relatively in research and application. To understand social sustainability within energy governance, we explore the presence of social sustainability considerations within Philippine energy policies related to off-grid rural electrification. We are particularly interested in investigating the presence of social acceptance and stakeholder engagement and identifying stakeholders affected by these policies. To achieve our objectives, we analyzed government documents consisting of energy laws and department-level guidelines provided by relevant government offices. Through qualitative content analysis, textual references were assigned to three sets of predefined categories. The first set corresponds to social acceptance and stakeholder engagement aspects. The second set attributes texts to the consumers, government, and non-government stakeholders (excluding consumers) as potentially impacted by the social aspects. The third set refers to the subsectors of the electric power industry. Results reveal that current energy policies in the Philippines have more provisions related to stakeholder engagement, but not so much of social acceptance. The former is evidenced by provisions that strengthen the

participation and collaboration of government and non-government actors as well as institutional support. Meanwhile, social acceptance is present mainly in high-level policy objectives. In terms of subsectoral presence and stakeholder impact, facets of social acceptance are present in the consumption subsector, mainly affecting consumers. Meanwhile, mechanisms related to stakeholder engagement are exhibited throughout all subsectors, impacting the industry actors and consumers in different manners. This study examines current energy policies in the Philippines to better understand how social sustainability aspects, particularly social acceptance and stakeholder engagement, are included in energy governance. It also highlights areas where social sustainability is underrepresented or not fully addressed. The findings of this study offer valuable insights for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners on how the Philippine energy sector can better incorporate social sustainability to create a fairer and more equitable energy future for everyone.

**Allen Lemuel Lemence** is currently a third year PhD student at the Graduate School of Energy Science in Kyoto University, Japan. His current research focuses on the social sustainability of energy systems. The first part of his research focused on developing social sustainability themes derived from academic literature. He continues this research by investigating Philippine energy policies well as engaging government stakeholders to develop a social sustainability assessment framework for off-grid rural electrification systems. His previous research experiences are related to energy planning and the evaluation of renewable energy integration in Philippine public rural healthcare facilities. Prior to pursuing a PhD, he served as assistant professor in the University of the Philippines Los Baños. He has also been part of research teams focusing on energy systems modeling and energy policy. Allen's research interests include energy system evaluation, sustainable development, and social impacts of rural electrification.

**Jordi C. Cravioto** is Junior Associate Professor at the Institute of Advanced Energy, Kyoto University. His research focuses on social dimensions of energy use, such as quality of life, energy poverty and energy justice, and the sustainable use of energy and resources. He is also an academic mentor, teacher, and advisor. He holds a BEng in Electro-Mechanics from Tecnológico de Monterrey (Mexico) and both a Master's and PhD in Energy Science from Kyoto University. He is a member of the Japan Society of Energy and Resources and the Mexican Network of Energy Poverty Studies.

**Benjamin C. McLellan** has been at the Graduate School of Energy Science in Kyoto University since 2010. Prior to that he undertook research at the University of Queensland, Australia, where he also obtained his undergraduate degrees (BA / BE (Chemical)) in 2002, and PhD in Chemical Engineering (on Sustainability assessment of Hydrogen Energy Systems) in 2007. His research focus is broad, covering technologies, systems and their social, economic and environmental implications, within the energy and resources sectors. He has particular research interests in critical minerals, deep ocean mining, just transitions and coffee. He has published over 140 peer-reviewed journal articles, about the same number of conference papers, and various other chapters, reports and edited volumes. He has supervised or co-supervised over 10 PhD students to completion, as well as more than 50 Master's students. Ben is also Editor-in-Chief of Resources (MDPI).

## Translocal Trajectories and Critical Junctures: The Development of Chinese-Medium TVET in Malaysia (1962-2024)

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Malaysian Chinese Independent Secondary Schools, established following the *Education Act 1961*, operate outside Malaysia's national education system to preserve Chinese cultural identity while providing technical and vocational education. This study applies a historical institutionalist framework to examine the 63-year evolution (1962–2024) of Chinese-medium Technical and Vocational Education and Training within the MCISS. It identifies three critical junctures: the 1961 policy compromise enabling parallel schooling systems; the industrial policies of the 1980s, which encouraged collaboration with Taiwan; and post-2010 digital transitions that challenged the relevance of existing curricula. The findings highlight how path dependencies enabled cultural resilience but limited adaptive capacity in the face of Industry 4.0. The study shows how minority education systems negotiate structural constraints through transnational alliances, yet face innovation bottlenecks when historical commitments collide with contemporary policy and technological shifts. It argues that sustainable TVET in pluralistic societies requires hybrid governance models that balance community agency with state engagement.

**Lin Xu** is currently a PhD candidate in the Department of Chinese Studies at the University of Malaya. An experienced international Mandarin Chinese teacher, he taught Chinese language and culture at institutions across Australia from 2018 to 2020. His research interests center on international Chinese language pedagogy and sociolinguistics. To date, he has authored over 10 peer-reviewed articles in journals including *Overseas Chinese Education*. He is committed to advancing culturally responsive teaching methods and fostering cross-cultural understanding through language education.



## Decadal Climatic Variability and Hydrological Influences in the Tonle Sap Lake Basin, Cambodia

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The most evident effects of climate change are rising global temperatures and shifting precipitation patterns. As core components of the hydrological cycle, these changes—driven by global warming—disrupt the spatial and temporal distribution of rainfall and temperature. Such disruptions significantly alter water resource availability, affecting both global systems and regional ecosystems. Changes in temperature and rainfall patterns influence evapotranspiration rates, soil moisture retention, and groundwater recharge, ultimately modifying river discharge and water storage in lakes and reservoirs. Understanding the spatiotemporal changes in climate and their hydrological impacts is crucial for sustainable water resource management in river basins, particularly in regions where agriculture, fisheries, and livelihoods are highly climate-dependent. This study comprehensively evaluates spatiotemporal trends and variability in rainfall and temperature, as well as their effects on streamflow in the Tonle Sap Lake (TSL) basin in Cambodia—a critical freshwater ecosystem supporting biodiversity, fisheries, and millions of people. The basin-scale analysis was conducted using historical temperature data (1990-2020) and rainfall data (2001-2020). A validated Soil and Water Assessment Tool (SWAT) model was employed to simulate streamflow from 2001 to 2020 for hydrological impact assessment. The analysis revealed an increasing trend in temperature, both annually and seasonally, with a rise of approximately 0.15 °C per decade since the 1990s. Warming was more pronounced in the dry season, potentially intensifying drought conditions. Additionally, annual rainfall in the basin has increased since the 2000s, showing a strong correlation with the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) phenomenon. However, rainfall trends indicated a decrease before the wet monsoon season (April–May) and an increase after it (September–October), which could extend droughts in the early dry season and exacerbate flooding in the late wet season. These spatiotemporal changes in temperature and rainfall characteristics have significantly impacted the hydrological cycle, as evidenced by the increasing amplitude of peak flows or flood peaks. The annual flow volume experienced downward trends, decreasing by approximately 3.83 km<sup>3</sup> (9.40%) since the 2000s. Furthermore, streamflow was likely to decline between May and August but increased between October and December during this period, altering the natural flood pulse system of the Tonle Sap Lake. Such shifts could negatively impact fishery productivity, as the lake's ecosystem relies on seasonal flooding to sustain fish breeding habitats and nutrient cycling. Therefore, this study provides a scientific reference for understanding current climate conditions and anticipating future climate change. It also offers insights for developing adaptation policies to ensure sustainable water resource management in the country.

**Raksmei Ang** is Research Fellow at the Centre for Natural Resources and Environment, Cambodia Development Resource Institute, specializing in climate change and water resource engineering and management. With over five years of experience, he holds a PhD in Engineering from the Tokyo Institute of Technology, focusing on global engineering for development, environment, and society. His research focuses on hydrological modelling and environmental impact assessment, particularly in the Tonle Sap Lake Basin—Southeast Asia's largest freshwater ecosystem. Currently, Raksmei leads a project enhancing water resources management for climate-resilient WASH services in Cambodia, involving policy review, fieldwork, and multi-stakeholder collaboration. His past work includes assessing climate and land-use change impacts on hydrology. An active researcher, he has published peer-reviewed papers and presented at international conferences, demonstrating expertise in sustainable water management and climate adaptation. Committed to interdisciplinary solutions, Raksmei drives impactful contributions to resilient development in Cambodia and beyond.

## PANEL 5 | DIGITAL RURAL TRANSFORMATION

### Digital Engagement in Agriculture: A Capability Approach to Recontextualising Digitalisation of Agriculture in Indonesia

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Digitalisation in the agricultural sector is transforming practices to enhance efficiency and create a greater impact. The transformation of traditional agricultural practices creates unique contexts that present varied opportunities influenced by capital-related structures in agrarian relations. Changes in production, reproduction, and social relations within agricultural societies lead to shifts in the organisation and management of agricultural production. Changes in the business model create diverse opportunities for farmers and entrepreneurs, allowing them to decide whether to engage in digital practices or not. This study uses the Capability Approach (CA) to provide empirical evidence of how socioeconomic status shapes farmers' digital choices during the agrarian transition. The agrarian transition serves as the broader context of this study, but our primary focus is on how farmers engage with digitalisation, referred to as digital engagement, in navigating complex changes. We interviewed 17 individuals from diverse backgrounds in Wates Village, Blitar, Indonesia, a community experiencing agrarian transition in the Global South. In this paper, we use vignettes to present empirical

findings that capture the socioeconomic dynamics within the Wates community: 1. farmers association; 2. independent Farmers; and 3. small and medium enterprises. Our findings align with existing research on digital inclusion, showing that individuals engage in various forms of digital interaction. Disengagement should also be seen as a deliberate choice rather than merely a lack of ability, urging a shift away from simply categorising people as included or excluded. We identified various types of engagement: information and learning, communication and networking, and commercial activities. While some farmers choose to engage in specific digital technology functions, others intentionally decide to disengage for their own reasons. These farmers' and entrepreneurs' choices are interpreted as expressions of their freedom to engage or disengage in the digitalisation of agricultural practices through CA lens. Future research should consider socio-spatial and temporal contexts to better understand farmers' digital engagement choices during agrarian complex transitions.

**Medina Savira** is a double degree PhD student at the University of Groningen (The Netherlands) and Institut Teknologi Bandung (Indonesia). Her research focuses on digitalisation and rural entrepreneurship. She explores how offline dynamics shape how rural communities engage with and adopt digital technologies. She completed the first two years of her PhD in the Netherlands and is currently finishing her studies in Indonesia. During her PhD studies, she presented her work at the 20th Rural Entrepreneurship Conference in Glasgow, the 21st Rural Entrepreneurship Conference in Leeds, and the 3rd European Rural Geographies Conference in Groningen. Her research has been published in *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, *Journal of Enterprising Communities*, and *Rural Society*. Before starting her PhD, she worked as a research assistant on a project about the digitalisation of rural Indonesia, which was funded by her university and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of Indonesia.

### **Matricentric Perspectives: The Cultural Role of Mothers-in-Law from Farming Families in Central Luzon, Philippines**

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This research sheds light on the roles and responsibilities of mothers-in-law from farming families, highlighting their influence within the household and their role in preserving the values and cultures being upheld in the province. In rural areas like Nueva Ecija, familial structures remain deeply rooted in long-standing customs, where elders play a significant part in maintaining harmony within the family. Given that this province is known as the "Rice Granary of the Philippines" and relies heavily on farming as its primary source of livelihood, this study also explores how farming as a profession shapes their aspirations for future generations, influencing their values, career choices, and perceptions of economic stability. To explore these dynamics, the study employs narrative research to allow an in-depth understanding of the personal stories and lived experiences of five mothers-in-law from farming families in Nueva Ecija. By giving voice and recognition to these mothers-in-law, a topic seldom explored in existing research, this study contributes to the broader discourse on gender, family dynamics, and cultural continuity in rural Filipino communities. Purposive sampling was used to ensure that the respondents met the specified criteria. The study is grounded in Matricentric Feminism, a framework that recognizes and validates mothers' experiences to underscore the need to acknowledge the agency of mothers-in-law as key figures in household and community life. Family Systems Theory was also employed to examine how interconnected roles, relationships, and dynamics shape individual behaviors and collective decisions within the family. The findings from the study reveal that mothers-in-law perceive their roles and responsibilities as limited to the needs of the married couple. The results also underscored that the mothers-in-law value maintaining a harmonious relationship with their daughters-in-law, viewing it as one of the indications of overall family harmony. Furthermore, this study highlights that mothers-in-law see themselves as custodians of tradition, playing an essential role in passing down cultural values and practices to the younger generations. Despite the increasing influence of social media and the rapid changes brought by the advancement of technology, these women remain committed to preserving the identity of the Filipino family in the province.

**Princes Mara Pagador** is Assistant Professor at Central Luzon State University, where she contributes to academic scholarship and instruction in language, literature, and cultural studies. She holds a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Arts in Language and Literature. She is a PhD candidate in Multicultural Studies at Mahidol University, Thailand, where she focuses on women's studies, particularly exploring issues of gender, culture, and representation. Her research delves into the intersection of different identities and factors that affect women's experiences in various cultural contexts. Her research interests span across literary criticism, gender studies, multicultural studies, cultural studies, and film criticism. Through her work, she aims to challenge dominant narratives by examining existing discourses to amplify marginalized voices, question societal norms, and promote a more inclusive and diverse representation of gender and culture.

## Segmenting Farmer Perceptions and Behavioral Intentions for Climate-Smart Agriculture in Salinity-Affected Mekong Delta Vietnam

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This paper examines how smallholder rice farmers in Vietnam's salinity-affected Mekong Delta decide whether to adopt Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA). Using a survey of 238 farmers, we first applied principal component analysis and clustering to identify three distinct perception-based groups: one that is highly aware of climate change and supportive of CSA, a middle group that is moderately aware but neutral toward CSA, and a third group that is less informed and skeptical. We then measured farmers' behavioral intentions using Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Protection Motivation Theory (PMT) constructs. Separate TPB and PMT models showed that farmers' confidence in their ability to implement CSA, their perception of CSA's benefits, and their recognition of the effort required were key drivers of adoption intention. When combined, social influences, self-efficacy, perceived benefits, and perceived effort emerged as the strongest predictors. These results highlight the need for tailor-made extension strategies: leveraging early adopters to influence peers, reinforcing social support, and clearly communicating CSA's benefits and realistic effort requirements to encourage broader uptake across diverse farmer groups.

**Trang Vo** is currently a PhD candidate at National Chung Hsing University, Taiwan. Her research focuses on sustainable agriculture, climate change adaptation, and behavioral economics, with a particular emphasis on how smallholder farmers respond to climate-related challenges such as salinity drought. She has led several interdisciplinary projects funded by US Missions to Asean Department supporting farmers in Vietnam's Mekong Delta and the Philippines. Her academic work spans a variety of topics, including energy transition, aging societies, food systems, and education. In addition to her research, she actively participates in international leadership programs and policy dialogues related to food security and sustainable development. Her goal is to bridge research and real-world solutions to support climate-resilient and inclusive agricultural practices across Southeast Asia.

## PANEL 6 | NEGOTATING ISLAM IN INDONESIA

### Perang Sabil as Decolonial Praxis: Acehnese Islamic Resistance and the Eurocentric World Order

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This article attempts to reinterpret the Acehnese Perang Sabil (the Malay term for holy war) of the late 19th century. It argues that Perang Sabil occurred not only as a religiously motivated resistance against Dutch colonialism but also as a manifestation of a multifaceted critique of the racialized, Eurocentric world order that legitimized imperial violence. In saying so, it challenges reductive narratives that often frame jihad as a static, transhistorical doctrine or a civilizational clash between Islam and the West. This study focuses on Teungku Kuta Karang's pamphlet *Tadhkirat al-Raqidin* (1880s), a prominent scholar of the Sultanate of Aceh in the late 19th century. Through this text, Kuta Karang declared fatwa Perang Sabil as a decolonial rebuttal to the double standard of Europe's "civilizing mission," which weaponized claims of Acehnese "barbarism" to justify conquest. He urged his followers (mujahidin) to flaunt gold and silk as markers of Aceh's existing civilization. Thus, he subverted colonial hierarchies and exposed the double standards of a Eurocentric global order. The article situates Perang Sabil within broader 19th-century intellectual currents, arguing that the Acehnese resistance synthesized Islamic universalism with racial capitalism and Eurocentric imperialism critiques. This study, therefore, historicizes jihad as a dynamic, worldmaking project and shows how colonized intellectuals appropriated Eurocentric colonial discourses to demand inclusion in—and reform—the international order. It offers fresh perspectives on the intersections of religion, race, and anti-colonial ideology in the era of empire by highlighting Aceh's involvement with international networks and ideologies, challenging the dichotomies of tradition/modernity and East/West.

**Baiquni Hasbi** is a global historian specializing in the modern history of Southeast Asia, focusing on the role of Muslim societies within global systems. His research integrates global history, international relations, and Islamic studies to examine how communities in the global south challenge Eurocentric narratives. He explores how these societies envision world orders based on justice, equality, and sovereignty, pushing back against dominant historical perspectives. Currently, as a senior lecturer at the State Institute for Islamic Studies Lhokseumawe, Indonesia, he is committed to guiding students in critically engaging with history. He encourages them to move beyond simplistic "clash of civilizations" frameworks, especially in understanding the interactions between Muslim and non-Muslim societies. This approach helps students appreciate history as a complex, dynamic process shaped by diverse ideas and movements rather than binary conflicts. Through this, he aims to foster a deeper awareness of how historical insights can inform and address contemporary global challenges.

## Challenging Norms, Preserving Harmony: Women Ulama's Strategies in Combating Child Marriage in Indonesia

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The role of religious leaders to end child marriage has become an increasingly important topic of discussion, particularly in countries with strong religious traditions. This study examines the role of women religious leaders (*ulama*) in Indonesia in combating child marriage while navigating the complex dynamics between the state authority, religious institutions, and local communities. It traces the longstanding history of women *ulama* in Indonesia and their advocacy for gender equality before analyzing their position within Indonesia's religious landscape. The article also focuses on women *ulama*'s strategies, motivations, and challenges while examining the broader implication of their influence in the urban and rural setting in Indonesia. Drawing on conceptual framework that integrates gender and religion studies with community-based intervention, this research situates women *ulama* within the broader discourse on Islamic feminism and grassroots social change. It explores how religious interpretation, institutional positioning, and socio-cultural dynamics shape their advocacy on child marriage. For the methodology, this study employs qualitative research through document analysis and semi-structured interviews with women *ulama* in Jakarta (urban setting) and Lombok (rural setting). Sources include religious edicts (*fatwa*), advocacy documents from major Islamic organizations, and online and offline interviews with women *ulama*, community leaders, government officials, and NGO staffs. Twelve interviews have been conducted. During the COVID-19 pandemic, data collection is conducted through online interviews with Zoom and participation on religious lectures held by women *ulama* on Zoom. The findings reveal that women *ulama*'s strategies primarily rely on community-based interventions through Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), religious lectures (online and offline), and partnership with local community leaders to shift societal perceptions on child marriage. Partnership with government is found mostly at the top level while women *ulama* who are situated in rural area focuses more on education and dialogues with local community leaders. While the indirect approach in rural setting enables them to promote change while maintaining social harmony within their communities, tensions emerge within the women *ulama* themselves regarding this indirect strategy as the progress is deemed slow in eliminating child marriage. This study highlights the growing presence of women *ulama* in religious setting and their critical role in tackling child marriage issue, challenging the male-dominated religious interpretations in the society. It also underscores the complexities of religious-based advocacy, revealing the tensions between gradual community-based interventions and the urgent need for structural change to effectively end child marriage.

**Hilda Kemala** is a PhD student in International Studies at Waseda University, specializing in child marriage, gender, and human rights. Her current research focuses on the role of women religious leaders (*ulama*) and tribal (*adat*) community in combating child marriage in Indonesia. She has experience in research, translation, and project management, including previously working with international organizations such as the United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD) to conduct research on women as water fetcher in Indonesia. She is passionate about gender equality and community-based advocacy. Her latest publication is a journal article titled "Efforts to End Child Marriage: The Role of Women Ulama in Indonesia's Successful Revision of the Marriage Law" in *Journal of the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies*.

## PANEL 7 | MIGRATION & LABOR

### Brokerage in Low- and Middle-Skilled Migration Infrastructure: Moving Specified Skilled Workers from Vietnam to Japan

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Japan's introduction of the Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) visa in 2019 marked a significant shift in its approach to foreign labor, officially opening doors to low- and middle-skilled workers in key sectors. Promoted as a reform to reduce exploitative practices associated with the Technical Intern Training Program (TITP), the SSW policy also aimed to decrease reliance on intermediaries and offer clearer, more regulated migration pathways. However, drawing on qualitative interviews with labor and study-abroad agencies in Hanoi, this paper argues that intermediaries remain central actors in the evolving migration infrastructure. Rather than being sidelined, brokers have adapted to the new system by repositioning themselves within the education-work-migration nexus and developing new forms of legitimacy. This paper explores how Vietnamese agencies interpret, implement, and market new SSW-related programs, particularly the emergent Tokutei Ryūgaku model—a collaborative pathway linking language and vocational education in Japan with post-study employment under the SSW visa. Agencies, language schools, and vocational institutions jointly facilitate this model, promising faster transitions from study to work, reduced educational costs, and higher chances of employment. Brokers now target different categories of potential migrants—from former TITP trainees seeking to return to Japan, to newcomers with no prior experience, to international students. Through digital platforms and marketing discourse, agencies portray themselves as trustworthy guides navigating a complex and bureaucratic system, offering both procedural expertise and institutional connections. In doing so, they differentiate themselves from past exploitative

models, strategically distancing from TITP and promoting SSW as a “value-added” migration route. The findings demonstrate how migration infrastructure is not dismantled by reformist policy but rather reconfigured and sustained through adaptive brokerage. The paper contributes to scholarship on migration industries by showing how digital mediation, policy shifts, and the commercialization of education-work mobility converge to reproduce intermediated migration in new forms. It also highlights the infrastructural logic behind education–work transitions, where labor mobility is carefully planned and packaged as a commodity.

**Anh Le** is a PhD student in International Studies at the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies, Waseda University, Japan, and a research assistant at the Waseda Institute of Asian Migrations. Her research examines the mobility of Vietnamese students and specified skilled workers in Japan and their social and economic practices. In 2023, Anh co-founded Vietnam Migration Studies Network, a community that connects students and early career scholars interested in studying Vietnamese migrants and the Vietnamese diaspora. Her teaching at universities focuses on the topic of multicultural Japanese society. As an advocate for migrants' welfare, she volunteers as an interpreter/translator for NPO POSSE, a Tokyo-based organization that supports the rights of migrant workers in Japan.

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### **Divergent Pathways: Labor Stratification of Vietnamese Skilled Migrants under Neoliberal Migration Infrastructure**

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This paper examines how neoliberal migration infrastructure shapes fragmented and stratified labor trajectories among Vietnamese migrants in Japan holding the Engineer/Specialist in Humanities/International Services (EHSIS) visa. While these migrants are institutionally categorized as “skilled” and expected to enjoy greater access to stable employment and long-term residency, many experience precarious outcomes shaped by unequal access to infrastructures and segmented labor markets. Drawing on Xiang and Lindquist’s concept of migration infrastructure, this paper argues that the EHSIS visa, rather than functioning as a straightforward pathway for skilled migration, has become a commodified product under Japan’s neoliberal migration regime—one that produces intra-category labor stratification. Based on 37 life history interviews with Vietnamese EHSIS visa holders and digital ethnography conducted between 2023 and 2025, this study illustrates how infrastructures such as universities, brokers, language schools, and staffing agencies assess and sort migrants based on their human, social, and cultural capital. Migrants with Japanese university degrees or in-demand technical skills tend to access more stable primary-sector jobs, while others are funneled into hybrid or secondary sectors where they face unstable contracts, job mismatches, and labor exploitation. At the same time, this paper emphasizes the role of migrant agency in navigating and complicating these pathways. Migrants are not passive recipients of structural forces; rather, they actively analyze their existing capital, choose from among available infrastructures, and engage in capital-building strategies post-migration to reposition themselves within Japan’s labor market. In doing so, they contribute to the further fragmentation of migration outcomes even within a single visa category. By focusing on labor stratification within the EHSIS visa group, this study highlights how neoliberal migration infrastructure, rather than simply facilitating mobility, constructs differentiated and commodified pathways shaped by capital and mediated through institutional actors. Understanding how migrants negotiate these constrained infrastructures provides a more nuanced perspective on skilled migration, one that goes beyond institutional classifications to center the lived experiences and strategies of migrants navigating a precarious and market-driven migration regime.

**Vy Vu Hong Huynh** is a PhD student in International Studies at the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies, Waseda University. She holds an MA in Japanese Studies from Sophia University, where she researched Japan’s soft power in Vietnam and its influence on Vietnamese student mobility. Her research interests include Japanese studies, Vietnam-Japan relations, and migration. She first came to Japan in 2011 for her undergraduate studies. During her MA program, she became interested in migration studies and worked as a research assistant on a project examining Vietnamese technical intern trainees in Japan. Her PhD research explores the lived experiences of Vietnamese skilled migrants in Japan, focusing on their career trajectories, identity formation, and social integration. She is also actively involved in some non-profit organisation’s activities supporting Vietnamese migrants' lives in Japan, providing assistance for their challenges in work and daily life.

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## Traps of Documentation: Illegality, Deportability, and Document Dilemma of Burmese Migrants Crossing the China-Myanmar Border

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For Burmese migrants crossing the China-Myanmar border, documentation functions as both a necessity and a constraint, shaping their mobility choices, legal status, and economic survival in Ruili, China's largest border city with Myanmar. While migrant documents are often framed as tools of regulation and sovereignty, their implementation creates structural entrapments that migrants must navigate. Drawing on ten months of ethnographic fieldwork in Ruili, this paper examines how Burmese migrants struggle with and adapt to the evolving documentation landscape. This paper builds upon the concepts of "*entrapment in the borderlands*" (Talavera, Núñez-Mchiri, & Heyman 2010) and *migrant illegality and deportability* (De Genova 2002) to analyze how documentation policies not only regulate migration activities but also actively produce migrant illegality and precariousness. While some documents offer limited conveniences for Burmese migrants in Ruili, they simultaneously impose rigid constraints. Holders of old red books (expired long term border passes), for example, found themselves trapped in Ruili's post-pandemic political economy, unable to renew their status if they returned to Myanmar. The new red books (newly-issued long term border passes after COVID-19) provide certain privileges, but their validity is restricted to the border zone, leaving inland China inaccessible. This research employs ethnographic methods, including participant observation and formal and informal interviews with over 50 individuals, including Burmese migrants, Ruili's government officials, labor agencies, employers, and small entrepreneurs. The study highlights how border enforcement is not only about exclusion but also about producing conditional legality, shaping migrants' vulnerabilities in an unstable border context labeled by armed conflicts, intensified border controls, frequent deportation, and universal labor exploitation. Ultimately, migrants' empirical experiences articulate the possibility to transform vulnerability into resilience even under a harsh documentation regime.

**Zhuo Niu** is a PhD candidate in Social and Cultural Anthropology at the Free University of Berlin. His research focuses on the post-pandemic border regime between China and Myanmar, with a particular emphasis on Burmese migrants, labor mobility, the state, and geopolitical relations between China and Myanmar. As part of his doctoral studies, he conducted ten months of ethnographic fieldwork in Ruili, Yunnan, the largest border city between China and Myanmar. He has also contributed to the research project titled Mobility Regimes of Pandemic Preparedness and Response: The Case of COVID-19 (MoRePPaR). He has presented his research at multiple international conferences, including the 2024 International Interdisciplinary Conference on Myanmar's Borderlands (Chulalongkorn University) and the 2023 East Asian Anthropological Association Annual Meeting (Chinese University of Hong Kong). He holds an MSc in Social and Cultural Anthropology (2019-2021) and an MA in Cultural Studies (2021-2022) from KU Leuven, both *magna cum laude*. His anthropology thesis explored pandemic experiences and identity formation among 2020-Erasmus students in Helsinki, while his cultural studies thesis examined how international and Belgian students in a multicultural student dormitory negotiate social boundaries in daily life.

## PANEL 8 | URBAN INFORMAL LANDSCAPES

### From Trees to Titles: Land Commodification, Legal Pluralism, and Local Resistance in Aceh, Indonesia

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This research explores the emergence and failure of tree-growing programs, the impact of land formalisation, the changing dynamics of land management, and community resistance to land commodification in Mukim Lamteuba, Aceh, Indonesia. The primary objective is to understand what happens when the policy approaches of tree-growing and land formalisation come to an area where customary rights overlap with state forestry and titling programs. This research asks the main research questions: How do land formalisation and tree-growing approaches shape evolving patterns of land management, along with their socioeconomic and environmental outcomes in a context where customary rights overlap with state forestry and titling programs? This involved analysing how micro-processes, linked to broader dynamics, can shape who benefits and who is disadvantaged among rural actors. Additionally, the study seeks to explore the factors, structural features, and relational dynamics that shape the commodification and resistance scenarios. This study employs analytical frameworks grounded in the political economy, power, accountability, property rights, land grabbing, and counter-movement. Methodologically, this study adopts a qualitative case study approach, utilising ethnographic fieldwork and in-depth interviews. Data was collected through participant observation and interviews with local villagers, community leaders, investors, and government officials, complemented by analysing policy documents and local regulations. This paper argues that land governance in Lamteuba is shaped not by policy intentions but by the interconnectedness of economic interests, political connections, and power structures. Ostensibly beneficial initiatives, such as tree-growing programs, land formalisation policies, and governance reforms, function as mechanisms that facilitate the commodification of land through collusion between external investors, local elites, and government agencies.



These dynamics undermine customary (*adat*) and mukim governance systems, leading to the erosion of communal land rights. However, resistance to land commodification emerges when four critical conditions converge: strong customary institutions, historical traditions of resistance, robust village cohesion, and effective leadership that enforces accountability. This ongoing tension between commodification and resistance demonstrates that land governance outcomes are determined by socio-political processes between market-driven interests and community-based governance capacities, rather than by policy intentions alone.

**Asrul Sidiq** is a PhD scholar at the Australian National University. His research interests include agrarian change and land tenure, regional and rural development planning, environmental policy, development studies, and economic geography. Asrul is also a lecturer at the Department of Architecture and Planning, Syiah Kuala University, Banda Aceh, Indonesia. He holds an MSc in Regional and Rural Development Planning from AIT Thailand (2013) and a bachelor's degree in Regional and City Planning from ITB Bandung (2010). He is an affiliate researcher at the International Centre for Aceh and Indian Ocean Studies and Resilience Development Initiative. Asrul has experience working with several government organisations, such as the Aceh Public Works Department and the Aceh Development Planning Agency. Alongside his work and studies, Asrul has been involved in various Indonesian civil society organisations focusing on youth development, civic engagement, and environmental sustainability.

## **Urban Informality in a Formalized City: Ethnographic Insights into “A-Formal” Commercial Practices in Singapore**

**Hankang Yang**

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Singapore's urban landscape comprises a wide array of commercial typologies—from luxury malls to historic shophouses and everyday markets—all unified by a stringent regime of regulation and formalization. Even state-sanctioned spatial relaxations, such as Activity Generating Uses (AGUs) and Outdoor Display Areas (ODAs), remain tightly bound by prescriptive controls on use, form, and boundaries. This paper investigates commercial practices in Singapore that challenge these highly formalized logic. These practices retain elements of self-organized informal logics while simultaneously accommodating aspects of formal regulation, existing in a state of negotiated ambiguity between informality and full formalization—these hybrid practices—neither fully formal nor entirely informal—I refer to as ‘a-formal’ commercial practices. Based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted at Clementi Centre Market, this study focuses on three such forms: Extended Storefront-Frontage Commercial Practices (ECP), Rented Storefront-Frontage Commercial Practices (RCP), and Mobile Street Commercial Practices (MCP). Drawing on field observation and semi-structured interviews with vendors, shopowners, and shoppers, the study explores which aspects of these “a-formal” practices retain informal elements, which have been absorbed into formal regimes and further examines the motivations behind preserving informal elements, the limitations introduced by partial formalization, and the strategies through which informality is either tolerated or tactically obscured within formal regulation. In doing so, the paper offers a situated and nuanced exploring of the resilient urban informality existing in commercial practices that persist in Singapore—a city marked by high and intensifying degrees of formalization. By exploring the “a-formal” commercial practices in Singapore, this paper argues that in a city often held as the archetype of authoritarian formalization, urban informality continues to exist—not as direct resistance or state negligence but as adaptive, negotiated responses to economic pressures, regulatory regimes, and the rhythms of everyday urban life. Recognizing these practices reveals the overlooked resilience of informality in highly regulated environments and contributes to a more contextually grounded and differentiated understanding of urban informality beyond Global South paradigms.

**Hankang Yang** is a PhD student at the Department of Architecture, National University of Singapore, under the supervision of Professor Naomi Hanakata. He also holds a Master's degree in Architecture from the National University of Singapore. His research interests center on urban informality in Singapore. Adopting a multidisciplinary perspective that integrates history, politics, and urban planning, he examines the informal practices persisting within Singapore—a highly formalized city striving to eliminate randomness. Hankang's research seeks to advance the understanding of informal urbanism within highly formalized urban settings and to extract bottom-up insights into economics, policy, and urban planning that support more sustainable urban development.

## **Urban Dwelling between the Rocks and the Sea in Southeast Asia: A Transect Walk through the Liminal Spaces of Waterfront in the City of Ha Long (Vietnam)**

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Once a coastal group of rocky mountains almost uninhabited, the city of Ha Long today is one of Vietnam's most developed urban hubs thanks to a relentless process of land reclamation. In this quickly evolving coastal city, with a terrain completely terrestrialized and life increasingly distanced from the waterscape, urban change and sea change have never ceased to entangle. As urbanization forces gravitates towards the coastal parts of the world and as Asia's coastal towns are enrolled into interlocking Anthropocene-themed narratives of possibilities and vulnerability, hope and anxiety, it has become an imperative to explore how the urban and the marine come together in shaping everyday urbanities for an ever-growing population. In line with an emerging field of enquiry on coastal urbanism in (Southeast) Asia, this research puts into conversation two theoretical corpuses. First is the one of "urban amphibious" which conceptualizes the "coast" as a site of flow and flux, fluidity and volatility, and which prompts us to move away from the preconceptions of boundedness and fixity rooted in terra-centric ontologies of urban studies. Second is the studies on urban liminality as spaces of hybridity and in-betweenness generating intersectional forms of inclusion and exclusion, subversion and contestation. I will argue that Ha Long's waterfront is liminal space(s) testifying to various forces of littoral city-making driven by both human beings - from local government, corporate actors to local denizens, tourists, fishermen - and non-human actors, including land, water, air, tides, and sediments. A walk through the city's shoreline today is a journey through various fragments and traces of its pasts, presents and futures jammed between quickly shifting terrestrial and marine terrains. As a site where multiple narratives, imaginaries, materialities, subjectivities and socialities, both local and non-local, top-down and bottom-up, are constantly enacted and (re)assembled between the land and the sea, the waterfront allows us to unpack the politics and poetics of dwelling in an urban world increasingly oceanized and an ocean world ceaselessly urbanized. Main research methodology is urban ethnography combining semi-structured interviews with observation done as I made repeated visits on foot and by motorbikes along the city's waterfront.

**Thi Mai Thoa Tran** is a fourth-year PhD student in Urban Studies. Her current PhD project is about green and coastal urbanism in the post-socialist context of aspiring cities of Vietnam. Her research contributes to expanding knowledge of development discourse, policies and realities in Vietnam but also Southeast Asia where cities and countries are at the forefront of fighting enormous ecological challenges as well coping with climate change risks. In her studies, she tackles urbanization in Vietnam as a highly fluid and unpredictable process at the interface of three interacting forces: a resilient late-socialist State, a booming neoliberalized market and a quickly evolving society, all under increasing pressures from looming ecological and climatic threats. Her broader research interests extend to politics of urban development in Vietnam, urban political ecology, aspirations and imaginaries of urban futures and everyday life in Vietnamese cities, with comparative perspectives across Southeast Asian and Chinese cities.

## **PANEL 9 | POWER GOVERNANCE**

### **Epistemological Foundations: Faith, Gender, and Coloniality in Anti-Trafficking Work in Southeast Asia**

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Faith-based interventions in anti-trafficking work in Southeast Asia and their real-life impacts are often side-lined in anti-trafficking discourse globally, despite faith-based practitioners' direct engagement with vulnerable populations and their unique position at the intersection of faith and social justice. The existing literature on faith-based advocacy in anti-trafficking work in this sub-region shows a need to approach the subject through an axis of faith, gender, and coloniality, with emerging key themes such as: human dignity and worth, stigma and discrimination, empowerment and spiritual healing, faith-based advocacy and power dynamics, and faith-based advocacy and rehabilitation efforts. This study therefore addresses the following research question: To what extent do FBOs in Southeast Asia mitigate and problematise the issue of human trafficking? The research aims are as follows: to investigate how inter-faith interventions contrast to specific faith-based efforts, to explore how FBOs contribute to anti-trafficking efforts that complement other 'secular' stakeholders, and to create a common framework for inter-faith interventions that strengthens cross-sector collaborations and anti-trafficking efforts. The theoretical frameworks this research draws upon include decolonial theories, gender and decolonial feminist theories, and Asian postcolonial theologies and religious epistemologies. The research employs a constructivist grounded theory methodology and draws upon an action-oriented research approach to enhance policy and advocacy frameworks. The qualitative data consists of in-depth, semi-structured recorded interviews with 15 faith-based practitioners in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines. The significance of this study lies in challenging existing development models and Western-centric approaches to anti-trafficking work by foregrounding faith-based epistemologies and decolonial feminist ethics. Moving beyond Western-centric approaches to anti-trafficking work provides policymakers with evidence-based recommendations that consider cultural and religious contexts, particularly in

a sub-region as diverse as Southeast Asia. The findings from this research have direct implications for interfaith networks, NGOs, and government agencies involved in anti-trafficking work. They are rooted in the lived experiences of faith-based practitioners in the field. By centring faith-based practitioners in this research, the study privileges their positionality, recognising them as critical agents in anti-trafficking work whose perspectives offer valuable, yet often overlooked, insights that are essential for fighting modern-day slavery.

**Charulatha Pitigala** is a PhD candidate with a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) and Double Major in Global Studies and Gender Studies. Her Honours dissertation “We Are the Historical Owners: A Discourse Analysis on the Manifestation of Sinhala Buddhist Nationalism in Post-War Sri Lanka” earned her the Best Graduate Award in 2020. Before beginning her PhD candidature, she worked as a junior research consultant on areas such as migration, gender-based violence, freedom of speech, and corruption. These consultancies include projects conducted in collaboration with governmental and non-governmental organisations such as the Ministry of Environment, UNICEF, WHO, Save The Children, HELVETAS, and ILO.

### **Volcano Monitoring and Scientific Collaboration along the Pacific Ring of Fire: Japan, the Philippines, and the Netherlands Indies 1900-1920**

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This paper examines the emergence of volcanological institutions and the exchange of scientific knowledge among Japan, the Philippines, and the Netherlands Indies (Colonial Indonesia) along the Pacific Ring of Fire between 1900 and 1920. Although volcanology was still an emerging science during this period, the need to understand the nature of the numerous active volcanoes in each country became increasingly urgent following several significant eruptions at the beginning of the Twentieth Century, namely Mount Taal (1911), Mount Sakurajima (1914), and Mount Kelud (1919). In each country, the initiative of scientists played a pivotal role in the push for the institutionalization of volcanological research. These efforts were further reinforced by government responses to natural disasters and by the growing awareness of the social exchange of information about volcanism among volcanologists across colonial and imperial boundaries. In 1900-1920, Japan became the exemplary country in developing volcano monitoring systems, establishing the first permanent observatories, and advancing instrumental volcano seismology through the work of scientists like Fusakichi Omori. With the support of a wide-reach publication policy, Japan’s model of integrating scientific expertise with state-supported institutions influenced developments in both the Philippines and the Netherlands Indies. In the Philippines, Jesuit scientists at the Manila Observatory had long engaged in seismological research, but institutional constraints limited advanced progress in volcano monitoring during this period. In contrast, the Netherlands Indies saw a significant shift after the 1919 Kelud eruption, which prompted the establishment of the Volcano Monitoring Service (Vulkaanbewakingsdienst) in 1920, following earlier demand by its scientists. Using historical methods and a range of primary sources, including scientific reports, memoirs, and archives, this study argues that the development of volcanology in these three countries was shaped by a transnational scientific network. Despite the geopolitical tensions and competition of the era, scientific collaboration and mutual influence played a crucial role in shaping early disaster mitigation strategies. This research highlights the importance of international scientific cooperation in addressing shared environmental risks and demonstrates how scientific communities in the Pacific Ring of Fire laid the groundwork for modern volcanology through both local initiative and regional exchange of information.

**Ghamal Mohammad** (BA Universitas Indonesia, BA Leiden University, MA (Res.) Leiden University, PhD Murdoch) is an early-career historian and Honorary Research Associate at the Indo-Pacific Research Centre, Murdoch University. His research primarily investigates the historical interactions between human societies and active volcanoes, with broader interests in the development of (colonial) science in Southeast Asia, the history of royalty and nationalism in the region, and the evolving role of pusaka (heirlooms) in Javanese culture. Ghamal is a former recipient of the Southeast Asia Environmental History PhD Scholarship Award (2019) from the Asia Research Centre, Murdoch University.

## **PANEL 10 | URBAN FUTURES IMAGINED**

### **Institutionalizing Mobility Reform in Greater Jakarta: Leveraging the Capital Relocation for Metropolitan Governance Transformation**

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Managing metropolitan regions presents complex challenges in balancing economic growth, service provision, and environmental sustainability. As urban areas extend beyond administrative borders, weak institutional coordination often leads to fragmented infrastructure and policy inconsistency. The relocation of Indonesia’s capital to Nusantara has opened a critical policy window to reform urban mobility governance in Greater Jakarta, particularly by institutionalizing Bus Rapid

Transit (BRT) as the backbone of an integrated and sustainable transport system. This study explores institutional shifts in managing metropolitan mass transport, using capital relocation as an agenda-setting opportunity. A qualitative case study was conducted in two phases. First, a scoping review of regulatory frameworks, policies, academic literature, and planning studies was conducted to map the current governance landscape and identify systemic challenges. Second, in-depth interviews were held with 15 key informants, including a former regional governor, a legislator, senior national and local officials, transport planners, and policy experts. These interviews offered insights into institutional dynamics, coordination mechanisms, and the political processes influencing BRT development. The findings reveal that effective institutionalization of BRT requires integrated planning, spatial and institutional alignment, and collaborative decision-making across multiple levels of government. Persistent challenges include overlapping mandates, fiscal constraints, limited bureaucratic leadership, and resistance to shared governance. Hence, the capital relocation has triggered renewed political alignment and intergovernmental negotiations, providing momentum for institutional reform. The study underscores the need to move beyond authority- and project-based models toward a governance framework grounded in the Triple Bottom Line (TBL), which emphasizes social equity, environmental responsibility, and economic viability. Achieving long-term sustainability and effective service delivery requires a collaborative governance approach that reflects the functional realities of metropolitan regions. In response to the institutional fragmentation in Greater Jakarta, a collaborative agglomeration mobility governance model is proposed. It is structured around four key pillars: (1) integrated planning across sectors and jurisdictions to align spatial development with transport systems; (2) the establishment of a metropolitan coordination board to enhance policy alignment and interagency collaboration; (3) the implementation of mandatory intergovernmental cooperation to replace fragmented, voluntary arrangements; and (4) the formation of a BRT Integrated Joint Service Board as an institutional mechanism for managing cross-jurisdictional service delivery and ensuring operational continuity. By framing capital relocation as a policy window, the research contributes to broader discussions on adaptive metropolitan governance. It provides actionable insights for policymakers aiming to institutionalize integrated and resilient urban mobility systems in complex megacity regions.

**Bani Pamungkas** is a PhD student in Regional and Urban Planning at the School of Architecture, Planning, and Policy Development, Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB), Indonesia. His academic interests include metropolitan governance, institutional transformation, post-capital city development, and urban law and politics. He currently serves as an assistant researcher at ITB's Center for Research on Infrastructure and Regional, where he contributes to the research project titled Post-Capital Metropolis: Institutional Transformation and Regional Implications. Since 2012, he has also been a lecturer in the Political Science Department at Bakrie University, focusing on legal systems, public policy, and urban studies. Beyond academic roles, he was a member of the Jakarta Governor's Team for Accelerated Development (TGUPP) from 2018 to 2022 and participated in the drafting process of Indonesia's Urban and Metropolitan Law under the Ministry of National Development Planning (Bappenas) in 2022-2023.

### **Playable City or Privatized Paradise?: Connectivity and Privatized Urbanism in Sunway City**

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This ethnographic study examines the multi-layered connectivity infrastructure of Sunway City, Malaysia, focusing on how elevated walk canopies, BRT lines, and spatial hierarchies shape everyday experiences. While these infrastructures promise seamless mobility, they simultaneously exclude marginalised spaces and users, reinforcing a branded, consumer-driven urban landscape. Drawing on the *Playable City* framework, we argue that Sunway's connectivity infrastructures prioritise purposive, commercial play over spontaneous social interaction. Our analysis of unwalkable zones and privatised urban logics underscores how these engineered environments transform urban connectivity from inclusive possibility to exclusionary spectacle.

**Ziran Zhao** is a PhD candidate in the School of Arts and Social Sciences at Monash University. His research interests focus on popular culture and player culture. He is a visiting scholar at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and Nanjing University.

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**PANEL 11 | INTER-ASIA ENGAGEMENTS****A Forgotten Lao King: Zhao Wenmeng between Qing China, Vietnam, and Siam (1785-1819)****Chen Zhang**Sun Yat-sen University  
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The history of Laos has not been as extensively studied in English scholarship compared to other Southeast Asian countries. One of the main reasons for this is the scarcity of indigenous sources, making it necessary to incorporate sources from neighboring countries into the study of Lao history. Initiated in 1729 with its first tribute mission to the Qing court, Luang Prabang was formally incorporated into the Siamese tributary circle of *dokmainguen-dokmaithong* in 1779. In 1795, a prince named Zhao Wenmeng from the Kingdom of Luang Prabang (1699–1893, in present-day northern Laos) was invested as King of Luang Prabang Kingdom by the Qing court. However, Lao and Thai sources contain no accounts of him. By utilizing Chinese, Hán Nôm, Thai, and Lao sources, this article reconstructs how the frontier forces, including the Cheli native chieftain and the ruler of Mueang Sai, orchestrated the imperial investiture of Zhao Wenmeng through the advantages of cross-cultural communications. Zhao Wenmeng's life illustrates how Lao rulers navigated the international systems dominated by neighboring powers to protect their interests. Furthermore, his case vividly demonstrates how the coexistence of the China-centered tributary system and the Siam-centered *dokmainguen-dokmaithong* circle depended on the flexible maneuvering of frontier figures.

**Chen Zhang** is a postdoctoral researcher of the School of International Relations, Sun Yat-sen University. He spent seven years studying the history of Laos at the University of Macau from 2017 to 2024, during which he completed his master's thesis, "The Limits of Empire: Relations between Ming China and the Lán Xāng Kingdom (1402-1613)", in 2020 and his PhD dissertation, "Navigating Two Systems: The Kingdom of Luang Prabang's External Relations with Qing China and Siam (1699-1893)", in 2024. During his time at the University of Macau, he also studied Lao at the National University of Laos from January 2019 to January 2020 and Thai at Chiang Mai University from April 2022 to November 2023. Hence, his PhD research incorporated sources in multiple languages, including Chinese, Lao, Thai, English, and French. He is now conducting a postdoctoral project on the relationship between Siam and Lán Nā (1767-1902).

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**Building Trust Relationships: The Chinese Commercial Bank in the British Straits Settlements (1912-1928)****Jeremy Goh**University of Warwick  
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This paper analyses how a new financial institution, the Chinese Commercial Bank (CCB), developed public trust in the British Straits Settlements (Singapore, Malacca, and Penang) during the early twentieth century. It does so by using a business history approach, drawing on little-utilised archival sources, newspaper reports, and oral history records in Singapore. It argues that CCB achieved this by institutionalising not only formal practices in running the bank, but also interpersonal networks of its bankers. In addition, the bank also sought to build public trust and legitimacy by embedding itself in society through philanthropy and civic projects. Taken together, the trust practices of the CCB differ from the disembedded and profit-driven rationality that is often associated with contemporary financial capitalism. In the Straits Settlements, an open, multicultural, and fluid society, trust was assembled and cultivated through a combination of institutionalisation, kinship and native-place ties, cross-ethnic cooperation, and embeddedness in local society. In this colonial environment, financial capitalism expanded not at the expense of social embeddedness, but with it.

**Jeremy Goh** is a PhD candidate in the Department of History, University of Warwick, UK. He is also Social Science Research Council Graduate Research Fellow in Singapore (2024-2026). Jeremy was previously a research associate at the Nanyang Centre for Public Administration in Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. His interdisciplinary interests lie in business and financial history, Chinese overseas, capitalism, transnationalism, as well as Southeast Asia's past and present. His doctoral project is titled "Globalising from the Periphery: Chinese Banking Transnationalism in Colonial Singapore, Malaya, and China (1900-1950)". His research has been published in leading academic journals including *Asia Pacific Business Review*, *Global Policy*, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, and *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*.

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## Inventing “Malaya”: National Imagination in Early Chao Foon

**Yiduo An**

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This paper investigates the national imagination articulated in early issues of Chao Foon, a pioneering Chinese-language literary magazine founded in 1955 in postwar Malaya. Situating the magazine within the complex historical backdrop of colonial withdrawal, the rise of Malay nationalism, and Cold War cultural politics, the paper examines how Chao Foon’s editorial discourse and translated content reveal competing visions of cultural identity, belonging, and political participation among Chinese intellectuals in Malaya. Through close readings of the founding editorial manifesto and selected translated fiction published in the magazine’s formative years, the study reveals Chao Foon’s attempts to construct a localized literary identity under the banner of “Malayanization.” While the magazine projected a commitment to multiethnic coexistence and cultural rootedness, it also bore the imprint of Cold War ideological frameworks, particularly through its affiliation with the Asia Foundation and the Union Press. These affiliations introduced narrative contradictions: the magazine’s cultural idealism was often undermined by the imported colonial gaze embedded in the translated texts it chose to publish. The paper argues that Chao Foon offered a “third space” where Chinese writers sought to negotiate their position between inherited notions of Chineseness and emergent Malayan nationhood. The magazine simultaneously inherited and contested cultural traditions from China, selectively borrowed from Western modernity, and grappled with its peripheral status within Malay-centric political structures. In doing so, it formulated a hybrid form of national imagination—both idealistic and compromised—that reflected the broader dilemma of Chinese communities attempting to integrate into a decolonizing polity. Ultimately, this study contends that Chao Foon should not merely be viewed as a Cold War cultural artifact or a diasporic literary experiment, but as a critical site of negotiation where literature served as a mode of political intervention and cultural self-fashioning. By tracing how Chinese-Malaysian intellectuals used literary production to assert moral agency and political vision, the paper contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how nationhood was imagined, debated, and contested on the margins of postcolonial Southeast Asia.

**Yiduo An** is a PhD candidate in Chinese Studies at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. Her research focuses on modern and contemporary Chinese literature, with particular emphasis on Chinese literature in Malaysia and Singapore, Lu Xun studies, and twentieth-century Chinese intellectual thought. Her doctoral dissertation, “Narrating the Nations: National Imagination in the Chinese Literature of Singapore and Malaysia after the Second World War”, explores how postwar Chinese literature in these regions engages with the political and ideological transformations during decolonization. It examines the diverse narrative strategies and the construction of national identity in response to colonial legacies, racial tensions, and the broader socio-political challenges of the era. She has presented her work at academic conferences hosted by the Association for Asian Studies, Tsinghua University, and Nanyang Technological University.

## PANEL 12 | CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION PROCESSES

### Migration from Displacement to Integration: The Socio-Economic Transformation of the Karen Community from Myanmar in North and Middle Andaman

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Migration patterns from Myanmar have historically been shaped by ongoing conflict, significantly impacting various ethnic groups, including the Karen community. As one of the earliest migrant groups to settle in the Middle Andaman, this phenomenon of migration becomes unique while analysing the transformative journey of the Karen community in the Andaman Nicobar Islands of India. Continuous conflict has historically had a significant impact on various ethnic groups, including the Karen community, and has influenced migration patterns out of Myanmar. As one of the earliest migrant groups to settle in the Middle Andaman, this phenomenon of migration becomes unique while analysing the transformative journey of the Karen community in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands of India. Their displacement, primarily driven by conflict, necessitated adjustments in livelihood strategies, social integration, and cultural preservation. This study investigates their migration experiences, settlement patterns, and adaptive strategies, with a focus on their economic and cultural transitions. This research aims to take an academic approach to studying the socio-economic aspects of displaced communities, assessing them through planned interventions by policy actors. This study has described aspects of livelihood, adaptation after migration, and well-being of this Karen community by proposing a three-part typology. First, conflict-induced migration, which outlines the external factors shaping their displacement and settlement; second, livelihood strategies and socio-economic integration, emphasizing their transition from subsistence farming to commercial economic activities; and further hybrid identity formation, showcasing their ability to preserve traditional customs while engaging with the broader socio-economic environment of the islands. This paper presents the findings of my fieldwork conducted in 2023, enriched by comprehensive secondary research on the historical and socio-political context of the Karen in the Andaman Islands. The collected data provide valuable evidence on how the



community has maintained its economic viability, preserved its cultural identity, and fostered social ties with local populations. These interactions have not only strengthened communal bonds but also facilitated opportunities for younger generations to access resources and improve their socio-economic conditions. Towards the end, the research looks at rights-based perspectives but also adopts an actor-oriented perspective, focusing on the agency of displaced people rather than viewing them as passive victims. It focuses on how individuals and communities respond positively to the challenges they face. Findings show that these responses are very important, especially in building strong social connections. These connections not only provide support but also help young people find resources and opportunities for a better future. The research emphasizes the necessity of policy frameworks that recognize the agency of displaced populations, ensuring their meaningful inclusion in socio-economic development.

**Ayushi Pal** is a PhD research scholar at the Department of Politics and International Studies, Pondicherry University, India. Her doctoral research explores the strategic importance of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, with a particular focus on maritime security, regional geopolitics, and the socio-historical dimensions of migration and ethnic identity, especially in relation to Southeast Asia. Her academic interests lie at the intersection of defence studies, migration policy, and indigenous rights in island territories. Ayushi has interned with leading think tanks such as the Observer Research Foundation and has participated in academic programs by the Centre for Advanced Defence Studies, gaining interdisciplinary exposure to international relations, strategic affairs, and security studies. She brings a unique perspective shaped by her experience, academic engagement, passion, and dedication to exploring underrepresented strategic geographies.

## **Born and Beyond Digital: Instapoetic Practice and Literary Remediation in Brunei Darussalam and Singapore**

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This research explores instapoetic practices—a term this paper conceptualises as the creative and distributive practices of instapoets—within the literary landscapes of Brunei Darussalam and Singapore, focusing on how instapoets in both regions navigate the production and (re)circulation of their born-digital works. The study employs a mixed-methods approach; a close reading of selected instapoems to uncover overlaps that indicate distinct instapoetic writing styles, and interviews of Bruneian and Singaporean instapoets to identify their motivations. The study reveals adaptive platformed practice that combines visual and rhetoric strategies and poetic practice. Tracing post-platform circulation reveals how born-digital instapoems are remediated into diverse mediums, thus demonstrating how remediation is crucial to sustain its life across the literary circuit. All findings contribute to platform studies and digital literature, particularly within Southeast Asia's online creative-cultural landscape. Ultimately, this comparative research aims to uncover cross-regional parallel strategies and/or limitations of platformed literary practices, assessing Instagram's viability as a digital literary infrastructure. By doing so, it shifts the discourse beyond mainstream, capitalized 'I' instapoetry—often Western-centric—toward a localised and regionally contextualized study of instapoetry.

**Hana Ghani** is a PhD candidate in English Literature at Universiti Brunei Darussalam. Her doctoral thesis examines the treatment and representations of the female body in Rupī Kaur's poems in a new materialist feminist lens. Her research interest also includes exploring the intersection of social media and literature, Blue Humanities, and Bruneian Literature. She obtained her MA in English Literature from Universiti Malaya, where she dissects the perceived simplicity of instapoetry's writing style and poetic language. In her spare time, she writes poetry and fiction, and facilitates 'Meet Lit', a grassroots writing and reading community in Brunei.

## **Translational Cultural Heritage: Ekphrastic Translation by Singaporean Artists**

**See Ling Quek**

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Heritage, a term that comprises "inherit" and "age," conveys the human vision of preserving historical memory that they deem important for future generations. The institutionalisation of translation studies has been established over the past few decades, and discussions regarding its elevation to the status of a subfield of cultural heritage as "translation heritage" are progressing in scholarly discourse and heritage policy planning (O'Hagan 2021). The word *ekphrasis*, which is derived from the Greek, is widely defined as the verbal representation of the visual representation (Heffernan, 1993), or more specifically, "literary response to a visual image or visual images" (Brosch 2018), intended to circumvent the use of the questionable term "representation." The translation of an ekphrastic work operates under the theoretical undertaking of a translation's translation, in respect that it translates the artwork and literary work. Singapore is a multilingual society, where translation activities have been vibrant, historically and in the present. This study uses this context to explore

ekphrastic translation in Singapore. We chose three Singaporean versatile artists and polyglots who excelled at painting, translation, and literary writing, namely Swie Hian Tan 陈瑞献 (1943–), Chee Lick Ho 何自力 (1950–), and Poh Leng Chua 蔡宝龙 (1964–), to illustrate transdisciplinary creativity and ekphrastic endeavour of Singaporean artists, which contribute to the glocalisation, interconnectedness, and affective domain of the cultural heritage. Owing to the time constraints for the presentation, I will highlight the key points using two of the artists. By analysing Tan's 1970 Chinese translation 一只鸟的画像 (To Paint the Portrait of a Bird, "Pour faire le portrait d'un oiseau" [1949] by French poet Jacques Prévert [1900–1977], which is often associated with the painting "La Clairvoyance" [1936] by Belgian artist René Magritte [1898–1967], co-translated into Chinese with Jean-Marie Schiff) and Ho's 2000 English translation "Mother and Son: Viewing the Original of a Charcoal Drawing By Da Vinci" (a Chinese poem 达文西木炭画稿母与子真迹 by Singaporean calligrapher Shou Pan 潘受 [1911–1999] in 1970), I will argue how they instrumentally translated exotic ideas, foreign literature, and artworks to stimulate the local artistic scene and their artistic manifestation. As an inherently elastic approach to promoting transmedia and artistic dialogue, critical ekphrastic theory offers a fresh perspective to scrutinise how artist–writer–translators perceive artworks with their voice, which is crucial to advancing the study of postcolonial cultural landscapes in Singapore and broader Asia, leaving behind a cultural heritage imbued with layers of significance.

**See Ling Quek** is a PhD candidate of the School of Humanities at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore. With research interests in literary translation, art history and cognitive sociolinguistics in Singapore and Malaysia, she has published her works in *WAKUMON* (Kansai University, Japan), *Taiwan Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* (National Chi Nan University, Taiwan), *Chinese Language Review* (The Chinese Language Society of Hong Kong), and *Southeast of Now: Directions in Contemporary and Modern Art in Asia* (NUS Press, Singapore), and conference proceedings published by Soochow University and National Taiwan University. Her research essay collection was also published in 2023. After completing her BA (First Class Honours) and MA degrees from NTU, she worked as a senior editor and university tutorial instructor for over a decade. She is also an award-winning poet-writer-artist of nine poetry collections, a Chinese ink painting collection, four children's storybooks, two books on history of Singapore's book industry (co-authored), and four historical and literary books on Singapore and Malaysia (edited).

## PANEL 13 | COLONIALITIES

### Performing Margins: Displacement and Cultural Negotiation among the Mah Meri of Malaysia

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Urban transformation in Southeast Asia is often driven by rapid development and large-scale infrastructure projects. Yet, such progress frequently comes at the expense of peripheral communities, resulting in displacement, environmental degradation, and the reconfiguration of local lifeworlds. On Carey Island in Selangor, Malaysia, the indigenous Mah Meri people have seen their ancestral coastal lands gradually reshaped by expanding plantations, tourism infrastructure, and port development. Although they have not been physically relocated, changes in land use, reduced access to traditional resources, and the repurposing of ritual spaces have profoundly affected their everyday lives and cultural practices. While existing scholarship often highlights the agency and empowerment of the Mah Meri through a romanticized lens of indigeneity, it tends to overlook the deeper structural constraints that limit their choices. This study argues that the Mah Meri's performative visibility—especially in cultural tourism—must be understood within a broader context of structural displacement and political marginalization. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in a Mah Meri village between 2024 and 2025, this research examines how ecological transformations—particularly the loss of accessible coastal and forest areas—shape the community's strategies for survival and cultural continuity. Findings suggest that the Mah Meri remain largely excluded from formal development processes. Instead, their cultural identity has been reimagined as a consumable spectacle for urban tourists. In response, they have strategically adapted, using cultural performance as a means of livelihood. Although the Mah Meri continue to inhabit rural spaces, these are increasingly embedded within urban consumer logics—what I describe as a condition of "urbanism without urbanity." They face urban pressures without enjoying the benefits of urban citizenship, infrastructure, or legal protections. Their experience invites us to rethink the boundaries of the urban, and to imagine urban futures that are attentive to ecology, identity, and cultural survival.

**Fanying Yang** is currently a PhD student in Anthropology at Xiamen University, China, conducting fieldwork among indigenous communities in Malaysia, with a particular focus on the Mah Meri ethnic group and their cultural life along the west coast of the Malay Peninsula. Born in Yunnan—China's most ethnographically diverse region—her Han Chinese identity has served as a reflective lens through which she has engaged with minority cultures from an early age. This formative experience fostered a deep sensitivity to cross-cultural dynamics and has profoundly shaped her anthropological perspective. Her current research interests include Malaysian society, development and governance, and political anthropology. In 2023, she was awarded the 11th "Chinese Anthropology Graduate Thesis Fieldwork Scholarship" by the Southern University of Science and Technology. Recent publication includes "The Rise of Local Anthropology in

Malaysia: From Colonialism, Nationalism to Regionalism” in *Journal of Minzu University of China (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*.

## Rethinking Mobility in the Colonial Periphery: Chinese in 19th-Century Misamis Province, Philippines

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In the mid-19th century, the resurgence of the Chinese diaspora became a global phenomenon—an event Asian scholars often refer to as the second wave of Chinese migration. Much of this movement occurred in Southeast Asia, especially in the Philippines. However, an examination of historical literature reveals that the Chinese in the Philippines under Spanish colonial rule has been viewed through an overly Manila(capital)-centric lens, with insufficient attention given to the impact of geographic mobility and the integration of the Chinese in the colonial periphery. By shifting the focus to Misamis—a province on the island of Mindanao officially established in the 19th century—this paper offers a new perspective on Chinese scholarship in the Philippines. By examining the intersection of migration, colonial policies, and periphery, this study frames the concept of mobility in the 19th-century Philippines. Grounded in extensive archival research, this study draws on primary sources in the National Archives of the Philippines, including *Padron General de Chinos*, *Contribucion Industrial*, *Anfion*, and *Estadistica Mercantil*. The paper contends that the Spanish liberal policies in the early 19th century, which allowed overseas Chinese to settle anywhere in the Philippine archipelago, significantly transformed Manila and the provincial landscape, including the southern periphery. This reflects the Spanish government’s reliance on Chinese support for economic development while trying to limit their mobility and privileges, as demonstrated by the 1880s migration policies. In Misamis Province, Chinese immigrants and laborers contributed to the region’s economic activities and became agents in colonial projects in Mindanao, such as military campaigns to the frontier, infrastructure development, and the opium trade. Despite these contributions, the Chinese in Misamis faced a resurgence of anti-Chinese sentiment. This was primarily fueled by cultural and economic rivalries with local communities, leading to restrictions on Chinese migration to Mindanao. This paper, therefore, argues that these developments and the experiences of the Chinese immigrants in the colonial periphery reveal broader implications for mobility in the Philippines and transnational connections in the 19th century.

**Jay Rome de los Santos** is Associate Professor at the Department of History, Mindanao State University – Iligan Institute of Technology. He completed his AB History in 2014 and his Master in History in 2017 at the same institution. Currently, he is a full-time PhD student (first year) in History at the Department of History, University of the Philippines – Diliman. His research interests include the local history of Salay, religious history, memory and heritage studies, and the history of Misamis Province (Northern Mindanao region) during the Spanish and American colonial periods, with a particular focus on mobility, conflict, negotiation, and interactions. Aside from publishing, he also presents research papers at national and international conferences. The most recent he attended was in Indonesia, presenting his paper on “Chinese and the Opium Trade in Misamis Province, 1872-1908” at the International Society for the Studies of Chinese Overseas 2024.

## Births at Home in the New Camp

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The paper explores home births among Rohingya women in a “new camp” in Southeastern Bangladesh. It examines the role of Rohingya birth attendants (*dhoroni*), and the impact of policies on birth registration and access to services, highlighting how these institutional practices reflect broader issues of discrimination, exclusion, and the clash between different forms of knowledge. Rohingya women faced systemic discrimination, which has forced them to give birth at home, due to being denied access to hospitals in Myanmar. In Bangladesh, many Rohingya women prefer home births as they mistrust medical facilities, and fear the lack of care and respect in hospitals. The Bangladeshi government, along with the UN and NGOs, has actively tried to ban home births in the camps, as part of reproductive health policies. This institutional approach aims to control and promote “safe” births through hospitalisation, excluding women who give birth at home from receiving birth certificates, primarily issued for facility-based births. Stateless newborns delivered at home often remain unregistered, leading to problems in accessing services. The *dhoroni*, or birth attendant, plays a crucial role for many women who pursue their “survival strategy” by giving birth in their shelters.

**Valentina Grillo** was born in an island, Sicily, and her birthplace made her soon curious of people on the move. She studied international relations and diplomacy at the University of Trieste (Italy) and completed her MA in Cultural and Social Anthropology at the University of Vienna (Austria). After some years of work in the field of asylum law in the United Kingdom, Austria and Italy, she studied Bangladeshi language for 2 years at the INALCO in Paris (France) and started a PhD in Cultural and Social Anthropology that she is currently completing. Her PhD at the University of Vienna focuses on

Rohingya women, topics of legal and medical anthropology, such as social exclusion, birth and reproductive health in the precarious conditions of refugee camps in Bangladesh.

## PANEL 14 | BORDERLAND LABOR NETWORKS

### **Conflict, Economy, and Social Networks: A Study of Kuki Migrants from India-Myanmar Borderlands to Singapore**

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This paper examines the social, economic, and political determinants that have influenced the migration of the Kuki community from the borderlands of India and Myanmar to Singapore. Drawing insights from Lee's (1966) Push-Pull model, The New Economics of Labour Migration (Stark and Bloom, 1985), and Social Network Theory (Boyd, 1989; Massey et al., 1993) of migration. These key theoretical perspectives have been integrated to develop a cohesive framework to perceive and analyse the motives behind the Kuki migrants. Insights have been drawn from these theories to explain migration decision-making process and migration patterns, particularly by taking macroeconomic and micro-level interactions into its ambit of analysis. This paper adopts a qualitative research design to explore the socio-economic, conflict induced displacement, and the role of social network that influenced the Kukis to migrate to Singapore. The qualitative analysis and narratives have helped to delve deeply into the participants' experiences, motivations, and challenges to glean a detailed insight into the complex and multifaceted nature of migration (see, for example: Austin and Sutton, 2014). Interview technique, a method that flows naturally and is rich in detail is employed to collect primary data. The interviews were conducted in *Thadou-Kuki* dialect, the native language of the Kuki community, so that the participants could express themselves more freely without any linguistic barriers. After the interviews, all conversations were transcribed into English for analysis. The findings reveal that economic hardship and conflict are the primary drivers of migration, leading people to seek better living conditions, reliable work, and safety. Economic incentives, particularly higher income and financial stability are crucial for migrants. Social networks also play a crucial role in migration by providing support systems and influencing travel destinations. Singapore's appeal as a migration destination is supported by its proximity, safety, and diverse social fabric. However, Kuki migrants face challenges such as unstable working conditions, socioeconomic weaknesses, and restricted social security coverage in Singapore. This paper contributes to the broader discourse on migration and security studies by offering an in-depth analysis of the structural and agency-driven factors shaping Kuki migration. It highlights critical issues concerning migrants' perceptions, vulnerabilities, and welfare, while also addressing broader implications for migration policy and ethnic minority experiences in host countries.

**Hemkholen Haokip** is a research scholar in the Department of Political Science, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, India. His research interests include international relations, ethnic conflicts, and migration. Haokip has published several research papers in reputable journals, including UGC-CARE list journals, showcasing his academic excellence and contributions to the field. He has also presented papers at various national and international conferences, engaging scholars and experts on pressing global issues.

### **International Migrant Domestic Workers: The Case of Kuki Women in Singapore**

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This paper examines the migration experiences of Kuki women working as domestic workers in Singapore, focusing on the socio-economic factors driving their migration, their working conditions, and their strategies for adapting to life in a foreign country. Drawing on interviews and secondary sources, the paper highlights the intersection of gender, ethnicity, and labour migration within the broader context of South and Southeast Asian migration. The Kuki, an ethnic minority from Northeast India, have a long history of migration driven by economic hardship, political instability, and limited employment opportunities in their homeland. In recent years, Singapore has emerged as a key destination for Kuki women seeking employment in the domestic service sector. The paper explores the factors that push Kuki women to migrate, including poverty, lack of formal employment, and familial obligations, as well as the pull factors, such as Singapore's demand for domestic workers, relatively higher wages, and the presence of social networks facilitating migration. Once in Singapore, Kuki women face a range of challenges, including exploitative working conditions, cultural and linguistic barriers, and restrictions on mobility. Many experience long working hours, limited personal freedom, and vulnerability to abuse. However, they also develop resilience through coping strategies such as forming support networks, engaging in religious and cultural activities, and leveraging community organisations for assistance. This paper further investigates how Kuki women negotiate their identity in a foreign environment, balancing their roles as workers, community members, and transnational actors who maintain strong ties with their families in India and Myanmar through remittances and communication. By situating the experiences of Kuki women within broader debates on international labour migration,

gender, and ethnic identity, this paper sheds light on the often-overlooked narratives of Northeast Indian migrants in global labour markets.

**Lhunjamang Baite** is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Sociology, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, India. His PhD thesis focuses on Kuki diaspora, culture, and identity. He has published a research paper on “Domestic Violence and Coping Strategies among Married Women in Rural Manipur”. He is also the author of a paper titled “Redefining Borders in the Era of Digital Globalisation”.

## **Securitization, Precarity, and Development in Post Coup Migration of Myanmar Migrants in Mae Sot, Thailand**

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The 2021 military coup in Myanmar has triggered a humanitarian crisis and economic collapse. This event drives thousands to seek refuge in Mae Sot, Thailand. This study examines the impact of post-coup migration on labor dynamics, systemic barriers to economic and social security and the efficacy of Thailand’s policies in addressing these challenges. The influx of undocumented migrants has intensified labor exploitation, Weak labor protections in the Special Economic Zone (SEZ), systemic rights violations. Reinforcing precarious employment conditions and economic marginalization as securitization, Migrants, especially women, face heightened vulnerabilities due to legal exclusion and economic insecurity. Study argues that Humanitarian aid in Mae Sot is not an apolitical or neutral intervention but is deeply entangled in state control and economic interests. The Thai government shapes migration and humanitarian governance through bureaucratic exclusion, legal precarity and securitization. Effectively using displaced populations as both a labor force and a political tool, Thailand’s policy response has been inadequate. The country’s refusal to recognize Myanmar refugees after coup has further exposed migrants to exploitation and deportation threats. Both Bilateral relations between Thailand and Myanmar shape the securitization of migration in Mae Sot. Even securitization of thailand legitimizes surveillance, detention and deportation, exacerbating precarity.

**Tin Maung Htwe** is Research Fellow at Chiang Mai University's Regional Center for Social Science and Sustainable Development, with a solid decade-plus background in both scholarly and practical realms. His areas of expertise include human rights, peace studies, migration, and economic development, with a regional focus on Myanmar, China, and Southeast Asia. Previously, he served as a program manager at the Center for Diversity and National Harmony in Maungdaw, Rakhine State, Myanmar, tackling issues related to the Rohingya Genocide. He has also held the position of an advocacy manager at Equality Myanmar, a leading human rights organization in Myanmar. Tin Maung Htwe has been recognized as a Professional Fellow of YSEALI (US 2017), a participant in the USIP Dalai Lama Youth Leadership Program (India 2017), and a KAICID fellow (2019). His publications include “Mapping Injustice in Myanmar”, “The Life Struggles of Laborers during the Covid-19 Epidemic and Coup”, and “Lives of Migrant Factory Workers from Rural Areas”, which focus on human rights and sustainable development in Myanmar. He is an active member of various professional organizations, such as the Young Heritage Experts International Association, the Australia Myanmar Institute, and the One Young World Ambassadors. Tin Maung Htwe earned his master’s in Development Studies from City University of Hong Kong and a bachelor’s in Psychology from Dagon University, Myanmar.

## **PANEL 15 | TOURISM & HERITAGE**

### **Geologizing Landscape: Knowledge Production and Geotourism Development in Karst of Gunung Sewu, Indonesia**

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Through this study, I examine the interplay of knowledge with contemporary Geotourism—a type of tourism that stresses geological significance and uniqueness as tourist attractions—in the Karst of Gunungsewu, Indonesia. Departing from a political geology framework that focuses on the entanglement of political power and geological knowledge to form an extractive regime, this research asks: how do actors leverage geological knowledge in Geotourism development? Also, how has this extractive regime shaped new political meanings, values, and governance of the Karst of Gunungsewu? To address these questions, I employed ethnographic approaches, including field observations and twelve interviews with four tourism workers, four visitors, and four environmental activists across two Geotourism destinations: archaeological museum as a center of public knowledge production and the coastal area of Gunungsewu as a mass tourism destination. From the participants’ perspectives, I argue that actors mobilize knowledge to discursively construct their interpretations, interests, and values related to the Karst of Gunungsewu. Workers at the museums utilize geological and archaeological knowledge to nurture pride among local people, market merchandise, and brand the prehistoric cultures of the Karst as a

representation of harmonious living. In the coastal area, karst science is deployed by environmental activists as part of their political education and empowerment projects for the local community. These projects aim to raise communities' awareness of the environmental impacts of large-scale tourism projects that risk excluding them from their daily sources of livelihood. The production and circulation of knowledge by these actors are shaped by the valorization of scientific discoveries from naturalists, archaeologists, and karst geomorphologists introduced by the colonial government during the pre-independence era. Stemming from the same scientific foundations, contemporary Geotourism development perpetually reproduces this karst area as a scientific and economic frontier. Geotourism enables natural resource extraction and capital expansion, particularly in cultural and symbolic domains. As the impacts, it has led to landform alterations, tenurial conflicts, infrastructure development, and the commodification of nature and culture. These dynamics resonate with neoliberal environmental governance, which necessitates the capitalization of knowledge to serve the imperatives of profit and growth.

**Hilary Reinhart** is a PhD candidate in the School of Geography, Earth and Environment Sciences, Te Herenga Waka-Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. He is also a junior lecturer in the Department of Development Geography and a researcher in Karst Research Group, Faculty of Geography, Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia. His research interest is situated in the intersection of political ecology/geology, tourism development, and development geography—particularly in frontier and marginal regions such as karst landscape. An avid caver since his undergraduate study, Hilary has been involved in several research expeditions and landscape management projects in the karst areas of Gunungsewu, Menoreh, Binaia, Sangkulirang-Mangkalihat, and Tuban, Indonesia.

### **Identifying the Cultural Landscape Character of the Toraja Indigenous Settlement Using the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) Method: A Case Study of Tongkonan Sa'pang**

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The Toraja indigenous settlement represents a cultural landscape shaped through continuous interaction between the local community and its natural environment. Within this landscape, social structures, belief systems, and spatial configurations form a coherent and integrated whole. In recent decades, this landscape has undergone significant transformations due to modernization and land-use changes, threatening the continuity of both its physical structures and intangible cultural values. This study aims to comprehensively identify the key characteristics of the cultural landscape as a basis for formulating preservation strategies that are adaptive to evolving socio-environmental dynamics. A thorough understanding of the landscape is essential prior to implementing effective conservation interventions. The main challenge lies in preserving these essential elements without diminishing their inherited functions and symbolic meanings. The research adopts the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) method, which consists of four main stages: (1) defining the study scope and objectives; (2) collecting natural and cultural data through literature review and field surveys; (3) identifying Landscape Character Types (LCTs), including settlement patterns in hilly terrains; and (4) mapping Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) based on physical features, cultural components, and indigenous perceptions. These stages enable the analysis of how communities adapt to ecological and cultural contexts while supporting preservation strategies grounded in a deep understanding of the human-environment relationship. While LCA has been widely applied in European contexts, this study demonstrates its cultural applicability and adaptability within Southeast Asian indigenous landscapes, particularly through the integration of ritual space, kinship-based structures, and participatory validation. The findings reveal seven primary landscape character units and three core zones within the cultural landscape of Tongkonan Sa'pang. The results demonstrate the effectiveness of LCA in uncovering the layered meanings and values embedded in the Toraja cultural landscape. This process is reinforced through participatory validation involving community perspectives, thereby strengthening the participatory dimension of cultural preservation. Furthermore, the findings contribute to the identification of elements that support both social and ecological sustainability and provide policy-relevant insights. The methodology presented is adaptable to other indigenous settlements, including early Austronesian communities, with appropriate contextual adjustments.

**Ira Prayuni Rante Allo** is a doctoral candidate in Architecture at the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB), Indonesia. Her research focuses on cultural landscapes of indigenous settlements, particularly the Toraja community, vernacular architecture, and cultural heritage preservation. Alongside her doctoral studies, Ira works as a practicing landscape architect, with experience in designing open spaces in urban and rural settings. She also serves as a teaching assistant in the Master's Program in Landscape Architecture at ITB. Her academic work explores the relationship between traditional knowledge, cultural identity, and contemporary landscape planning. She has a strong interest in participatory preservation approaches, collaborating closely with indigenous communities to document and analyze the dynamics of cultural landscapes amid modernization pressures. Through her ongoing research, Ira is committed to contributing to sustainable landscape management and the development of policy frameworks that respect local heritage while remaining adaptive to environmental and social change.

**PANEL 16 | DEVELOPMENT****The Domestic Political Logic of International Development Cooperation:  
The Politicization of the BRI in Southeast Asia****Chenyu Fang**  
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This paper investigates the domestic political underpinnings of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), arguing that domestic political dynamics are crucial to the implementation and outcomes of international development cooperation, particularly the politicization of the BRI. The study explores the increasing risks associated with the BRI in ASEAN, identifying openness of domestic public policy, domestic political division, and external power dynamics as key drivers of politicization. A theoretical framework is developed to define politicization, distinguishing between issue linkage, instrumental politicization, and ideological politicization. A mechanism involving contact, differentiation, mobilization, and solidification is proposed to explain how international development cooperation integrates into domestic political contexts. The “impossible triangle of development cooperation” is introduced as a framework for understanding the challenges of international development cooperation in the Global South. Empirical evidence from the Subic-Clark Railway project in the Philippines and the Myitsone Hydropower Project in Myanmar supports the arguments, illustrating the “impossible triangle” of development cooperation. Conversely, the analysis of the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) project in Malaysia and the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway project in Indonesia reveals instances of limited politicization. The findings strongly support the hypothesis that open and democratized public policy processes, coupled with political divisions and great power competition, render international development cooperation susceptible to ideological division.

**Chenyu Fang** is a PhD candidate in International Relations at Fudan University, where he concurrently holds a visiting student position at Nanyang Technological University. His research focuses on three interconnected areas: (1) ASEAN and great power competition (2) international development (3) Chinese foreign policy.

**Governing the In-Between: Dual Infrastructure State and the  
Reconfiguration of Regional Space under Global China****Runze Qiao**  
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This chapter theorizes Dual Infrastructure State (DIS) to explain how two states, typically a host and a capital-exporting country, co-govern transnational infrastructure projects through differentiated but coordinated institutional arrangements. Drawing on the case of the Malaysia–China Kuantan Industrial Park (MCKIP) and its linkage to Kuantan Port and the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL), the chapter develops a “COZ-Infrastructure” approach to analyze infrastructure not as isolated assets, but as interdependent governance platforms. The discussion unfolds in three analytical layers. First, it examines five key dimensions of ownership, financing, design, construction, and operation, through which state power is materially embedded and contested. Second, it examines how the dimension of ownership produces a structure of duality, often framed as symmetrical. Duality emerges not only as a division of labor but also as a dynamic governance logic structuring the temporal and scalar evolution of co-governance. Finally, the chapter argues that these institutional arrangements culminate in the making of the State, the active process by which sovereignty, legitimacy, and coordination tools are stabilized across borders. Rather than assuming seamless integration or hierarchical dominance, DIS captures the recursive negotiation that defines China’s overseas infrastructure engagements. By tracing how adaptive practices emerge in response to tensions between strategic ambition and structural constraints, this paper offers a new lens to understand China’s infrastructural statecraft and its entanglement with host-state developmental goals in the Global South.

**Runze Qiao** is a PhD candidate in the Department of Architecture at the National University of Singapore (NUS). His research explores Chinese Overseas Zones (COZs) within Southeast Asia’s multi-scale infrastructure networks, integrating urban planning, geopolitics, and economic geography. Runze started in transportation engineering at Southeast University before transitioning to architecture, then earning bachelor’s and master’s degrees there with distinction. His global perspective was shaped by exchanges at Vienna University of Technology and Politecnico di Milano. His fieldwork spans COZs in Malaysia, Thailand, and Cambodia. Due to research needs, he travels between Southeast Asian countries by various means, such as trains, cars, intercity buses, and airplanes. Runze has served as a teaching assistant for Urban and Regional Economics (DEP5104) and delivered a guest lecture in Policy of Landscape (LA5201). He has also presented his research at international conferences, including the NUS-Tsinghua Joint PhD Workshop and the International Association for China Planning.

## PANEL 17 | LANGUAGE

### Expectations and Realities of Language Use and Identity Construction of Filipino University Students in South Korea

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Student migration through study abroad (SA) fosters language use, intercultural immersion, and identity construction, yet most studies focus on student mobility to English-speaking native contexts. To address this gap, this study examines the expectations and realities of language use among 140 Filipino university students in South Korea and language use in academic and social contexts influence their identity construction. Drawing on language socialization, investment theory, and third space theory and using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected through a five-point Likert scale instrument called the Language Use during Study Abroad Survey (LUSAS). The findings reveal statistically significant difference in English and Korean proficiency, length of residence, previous international experience, and age and significant impact of language use in academic and social contexts on identity construction during SA. The thematic analysis on open-ended survey data provided further insights into participants' language use, social integration, and identity construction during their sojourn. Hence, this study contributes to the understanding of student mobility to a non-English-speaking environment and provides valuable insights to inform policies and support systems that enhance international students' linguistic adaptability, academic integration, and cultural belonging while studying abroad.

**Allan Jay Esteban** is a PhD candidate in English Language and Literature at Kyung Hee University, South Korea. He is a recipient of the Higher Education for ASEAN Talents scholarship program of the Korean Council for University Education and the ASEAN-ROK Cooperation Fund. He serves as a faculty member of the Department of English and Humanities at Central Luzon State University, Philippines. He has published articles in journals under well-known publishers such as Taylor & Francis and Springer, as well as several other Scopus-indexed journals. He also serves as an article reviewer of *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, *International Journal of Serious Games*, and *Environment and Social Psychology*. Additionally, he actively participates in international conferences as a presenter, showcasing his scholarly works and engaging with global academic communities. His research interests are language use and study abroad, technology-enhanced language learning, and language and culture.

### Diachronicity in Linguistic Landscape in New Chinatown on Pracha Rat Bamphen Road, Bangkok: Focusing on Three Waves of Chinese Migration

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This paper examines the diachronic evolution of the Linguistic Landscape (LL) on Pracha Rat Bamphen Road in Bangkok's Huai Khwang District, an area transformed over the past two decades into a distinctive Chinese community. Influenced by three successive waves of Chinese migration, this street now presents a complex multilingual environment where interactions, tensions, and coexistence between Chinese migrants and local Thai residents are visibly embedded. Drawing upon the notion of "layering" (Backhaus, 2005) and "Chronicles of Complexity" (Blommaert, 2013), this study explores how LL illustrates historical continuity, socio-cultural negotiations, and transnational economic interactions within urban landscapes. Methodologically, the research employs a LL ethnography approach (Blommaert & Maly, 2015), incorporating fieldwork conducted over three distinct phases: December 2023, November 2024, and March 2025. Data collection includes photographic and video documentation, walking tours, and in-depth interviews with local Thai residents and Chinese business owners. The analysis specifically investigates diachronic shifts in the LL across three key migration periods. In the early "Yunnan Era", the neighborhood—locally known as "Yunnan Street"—was shaped predominantly by Thai-Chinese residents of Yunnanese descent. Educated in Taiwanese-sponsored schools, these residents created a LL characterized by traditional Chinese scripts blended with Thai aesthetic influences. Subsequently, in the "Daigou Period", beginning over a decade ago, the influx of Chinese tourism and "buying on behalf of" (Daigou) led to the widespread use of simplified Chinese signage and increasing dominance of mainland Chinese-oriented businesses, earning the street the nickname "Daigou Street". More recently, the post-COVID-19 wave of Chinese investors has established a "New Chinatown", marked by significant Chinese commercial developments. This contemporary LL exhibits a noticeable "de-Thai-ization", closely mirroring current mainland Chinese semiotic styles, while simultaneously reflecting localized adaptations to an expanding Chinese presence. The diachronic analysis of Pracha Rat Bamphen Road's LL highlights how migration reshapes linguistic, visual, spatial, and social urban dynamics. This research contributes to broader discussions on Asian migration by providing an ethnographically grounded examination of the co-construction of language, mobility, and space in contemporary Southeast Asia.



**Liu Hao** is a PhD student at the Graduate School of International Culture and Communication Studies, Waseda University. He holds an MA in International Culture and Communication Studies from Waseda University. His research interests include translanguaging, LLS, and language policy and planning.

### **Home For You, Not For Me: Second-Generation Rohingya Refugees in Malaysia Memories of Home**

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As of 2024, Malaysia has continued to be the home or places of shelter for almost 100,000 Rohingya refugees. As the crisis causing their exile continue to remain unsolved, more and more young generation of Rohingya refugees were born in their places of exile. As such, this paper explores second-generation Rohingya refugees' memories of home, by exploring their memories growing up in Malaysia. Most of these second-generation Rohingya refugees have little to no memories at all of Rakhine, Myanmar, the supposedly home to Rohingya refugees as they were born in Malaysia or have been in Malaysia since they were 7 years old. The researcher conducted oral history interviews onto six second-generation Rohingya refugees living in Kuala Lumpur or the neighboring districts. This interview focused on the participants experience of living in Malaysia, from playing with friends, interacting with local communities, going to school, or even pursuing higher education or skill certificates. The interview reveals a degree of integration between second-generation Rohingya refugees to the local community, which can be seen from their language proficiency and cultural awareness, local network and relationship established, to mobility and migration aspirations. Despite the limitation in access to work and other basic services in Malaysia, the second-generation Rohingya refugees are able to navigate the precarious living in Malaysia via the support of local networks. This paper hope to shed light on the issues of prolonged displacement among refugees in Southeast Asia and its impact to the community.

**Nur Nadia Lukmanulhakim** is a doctoral candidate of University of Nottingham Malaysia and an independent researcher working on the issue of human rights among refugees and migrant workers in Malaysia and Southeast Asia. Her doctoral research is about home, memory, and agency on second-generation Rohingya refugee in Malaysia. She is currently an associate of North-South Initiative, supporting the organization on various works on labor migration in Malaysia. Nadia represents the organization and Malaysian CSO to the 17th ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labor which focused on the issue of labor migration and care work, held in Vientiane, Laos. Before her participation in labor migration advocacy, Nadia previously works with IMAN research, an independent think tank focusing on community resilience in Malaysia and Southeast Asia. Some of the publications she has written are *On the Edge: Vulnerabilities of Rohingya Refugees in Malaysia* as well as *Remembering Pattani: Patani Conflict and Negotiating Identity*. In 2023, Nadia was the fellow of CrossCulture Programme in which she was attached to Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies for three months.

## **PANEL 18 | RELIGION**

### **The Seen and Unseen Forces: Understanding the Concept of Bisà (Power) in Mendez, Cavite, Philippines**

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Mendez, a municipality in Cavite Province, Philippines, is known for its residents' traditions, including the use of *anting-anting* (amulets), the performance of *Sanghiyang* rituals, and the elaborate processions featuring religious *carrozas* (floats carrying *Poons*, statues of biblical figures). These processions typically occur during Holy Week and the feast days of Catholic saints. *Anting-antings* are believed to bestow supernatural powers and protection upon their owners. Their power (translated in the Filipino Language as "bisa") is attributed to deities, spirits, and the Supreme Being. *Poons* are statues of biblical figures, often cared for by devout Catholic families who consider them integral members of their households, believing they provide guidance, blessings, and a tangible connection to the divine. *Sanghiyang* is a Thanksgiving ritual honoring the Supreme Being and invoking communication with ancestors and unseen spirits. This study examines these three elements—*anting-anting*, *poon*, and *Sanghiyang*—to understand how power is conceptualized, accessed, and manifested within Mendez. Employing a mixed-methods approach, this study combines ethnography, semi-structured interviews, and archival research. Six individuals, named by their families and community as elders knowledgeable in local traditions and rituals, were interviewed. The researcher also did the ethnography on the week-long Holy Week celebration and made several community visits. This study draws on Filipino philosophical frameworks and seeks to develop a contextual understanding of bisà grounded in ethnographic data. The community's concept of bisà (power) is influenced by inculturation—the blending of traditional religious beliefs with Catholicism. They believe in the interconnections of the visible and invisible forces and their influence on the world of living, linking everything in the world. The visible objects are the instrument of "Power". Ancestral spirits and invisible forces, including environmental

elements and Catholic saints, consist of the invisible forces, while the Supreme Being is the ultimate source of "Power". However, the efficacy of the "Bisà" depends on the individual's belief and the performance of rituals. Obtaining and maintaining the "Bisà" requires *mabuting loob* (kindness of heart) and respect for all beings.

**Deborrah Anastacio** earned a Doctor of Philosophy in Philippine Studies (specializing in Language, Culture, and Media) with a dissertation on Filipino Psychology from De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines. She was awarded a scholarship by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology to pursue a Master of Arts in International Relations at Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan, where she focused on the research project seminar in Cultural Heritage and Development in Southeast Asia. Additionally, she participated in several research fellowships, including the 2022 and 2023 seminars hosted by the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy at the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C. Her research interests encompass Philippine Studies, heritage studies, lived theology, critical pursuit of sustainability, and historization of indigenization movements of social sciences and humanities in the Philippines. She is Chair of the Department of Filipino at De La Salle University. She is also a probationary board member of the Propesyon ng mga Tagapagtaguyod ng Salin, Inc. (PATAS, Inc./ Professional Association of Translation Advocates).

### **Weaving the Divide: Understanding the Irayas' Entangled Embodiments as Indigenous Christians in Mindoro, Philippines**

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The Filipino-Indigenous bifurcation is a colonial remnant that endures in postcolonial Philippines. Indigenous Peoples are still imagined to be non-Christian highlanders. Their identity remains anchored on their resistance against colonial religion and influences which allowed them to maintain "authentic" culture despite remaining "uncivilized." Indigenous Peoples' resistance is what legally sets them apart from the majority Catholic population who were colonized and subsequently became the embodiment of the "Filipino". These enduring categories not only shape the othering of Indigenous Peoples today but also reinforce the unmarkability of the Tagalog Catholic identity. My work with a Christianized Indigenous group who contests their racialization and negotiates their othering in a majority Catholic country through membership in diverse Christian religious organizations reveals the role of religion in identity negotiation in a post-colonial, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious polity. I employ a multi-methodological approach that integrates participant observation and ethnographic interviews with Iraya villagers to investigate how they use religion to cope with the colonial gaze that has and continues to racialize them. The subject of my ethnographic work, the Iraya, Mangyan live in a tourist village in Mindoro, Philippines where they perform basketweaving before tourists. They moved to the highlands in the 16<sup>th</sup> century to evade Christianization and Hispanization which conditioned citizenship and civilization during Spanish colonization. Thus, they were treated as inferior racial category. However, after being caught in the crossfire of hostilities between Philippine military and communist groups in Mindoro highlands, they moved back to the lowlands and converted to lowland religions in the 1980s. I focus on the Irayas' membership in three Christian religious organizations namely *Koinonia Evangelical Protestant Church*, *JITC Presbyterian Church*, and *Members Church of God International*. These three religious groups hold their worship services in selected houses within the tourist village. While exclusively attended by Irayas in the village, these groups connect their members to an international community of worshippers either through affiliation or sponsorship. My work reveals how Irayas' membership in these groups allows them to associate with Christianity and counter their racialization, while continuing to refuse the colonial Catholic identity. I further explore its ramifications for their performance of a distinct indigenous identity through basketweaving in the tourist village. Understanding how the Irayas negotiate their Christian and Indigenous identities can shed light on the persistent colonial vestiges that continuously shape identity appraisal in the Philippine society, as well as reveal the contemporary mechanisms of coping by marginalized populations.

**Sunshine Blanco** is a PhD candidate in Anthropology at the University of California, Riverside (UCR), where she also obtained her MA in Anthropology. At UCR, she is a recipient of the Dean's Distinguished Fellowship Award. Her research interests include indigeneity, performance, religion and citizenship in the Philippines and Southeast Asia.

### **Buddhist Iconography in Thai Art in the Late 20th Century: Dynamism in Art and Reflection of Globalization**

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Buddhism is a fundamental aspect of Thai identity. "Buddhist iconography" has been discussed as sacred objects in religious contexts. However, it also reflects transitions of globalized influence in Thai art during the 20th century. Drawing on Iconology by Erwin Panofsky, this paper will examine the socio-cultural relationship underlined within the Buddhist iconography of Thai Arts in the 20th century, particularly in between the 1980s and 1990s by studying the works of

Corrado Feroci, murals of “Wat Buddhapadipa” and the works of Montien Boonma. The paper highlights three paths of globalization related to Thai Buddhist iconography: the involvement of a foreigner in the establishment of the Thai art academy and nationalist monuments, the overseas dissemination of Buddhism, and participation in international art exhibitions. The paper proposes that globalization of Buddhist Iconography is inextricably intertwined with localization processes in cultural exchange, highlighting the dynamic interplay between global influences and Thai identity. Corrado Feroci (1892-1962), an Italian sculptor from Florence served the Thai government as chief creator of nationalist monuments, with one of his most iconic works being the Buddha image in Phutthamonthon (1957). Feroci also paved the way for a more diverse representation of Buddhist iconography. Almost four decades later, a group of artists gained their reputation as “Thai artists” through combining Buddhist iconography with current affairs, popular culture, and Buddhist meditation, etc. Their works were displayed in different countries and each indicates different aspects of globalization. Led by Panya Vijithanasarn(1956-), the “Wat Buddhapadipa” (1984-88) project in London reflects global influence in the mural painting as modern celebrities and objects can be spotted on the temple’s Buddhist scenes. Their creative paintings became part of the features that attracted foreign visitors. Referencing Khmer Empire’s hospital temples-Arokhoyasala and Sukhothai Buddha image - Phra Phuttha Chinnarat and Montien Boonma(1953-2000)'s immersive and meditative installations such as *Nature’s Breath: Arokhoyasala*, *Melting Void: Molds for the Mind* indicate Thai artists successfully networked Buddhist iconography with worldwide art exhibitions during the late 1990s, shaping a new recognition of Thai identity. In conclusion, the idea that Buddhist iconography became “modern artworks” was influenced by an Italian artist and it was presented internationally as “Thai art” with multiple interpretations between the 1980s and 1990s. Documentary research, field research and in-depth interviews of case studies lay the foundation for data collection, including the records of Phutthamonthon National Park, the artists’ sketches and hand writings from Montien Atelier, Asia Art Archive, Rama IX Art Museum Foundation, the exhibition of “200 Journey through Thai Modern Art History,” interviewing with Jumpong Boonma, Panya Vijithanasarn, and Beaw Apisit.

**Szu Ying Hsu** is currently a PhD student from the Thai Studies Center of Chulalongkorn University, Thailand. She obtained her Master’s degree in Arts Theory from the School of Arts, Peking University, China in 2015. Prior to earning her Master's, she completed her undergraduate degree from the Department of Fine Arts at National Taiwan Normal University, Taiwan in 2012. Her areas of interest are visual practices in modern art and contemporary art in Asia, such as paintings, photography, curation, etc. She has published papers in art books and journals such as *Annual of Contemporary Art of China*, *Tianjin Academy of Fine Arts*, and participated in a range of forums on Asian studies and arts, including Text, Image and East Asia Culture Interaction Virtual International Conference, 2022 – Singapore; Comité International d'Histoire de l'Art (CIHA), 2016 – Beijing. Over 200 articles of her art and cultural critics have been published on Taiwan art platform heyshow.com since 2017.

## ABOUT THE CHAIRPERSONS AND DISCUSSANTS

**Anne Raffin** is Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the National University of Singapore (NUS). Trained as both a sociologist and a historian, her research focuses on French colonialism in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Pondicherry (India), as well as the post-colonial legacies in these regions. She is the author of *Republican Citizenship in French Colonial Pondicherry: 1870-1914* (Leiden: Amsterdam University Press, 2022), which examines the intended and unintended consequences of French colonial authorities' attempt to implement an ideal of participatory democracy in French India, and the lasting impact of this experiment. In addition to her work on colonialism, she has recently written about French retirees in Asia, analyzing how colonial histories continue to influence contemporary migration and retirement patterns. Currently, she is engaged in two research projects: one investigates heritage policies related to the colonial past in Puducherry (India), and the other explores evolving notions of citizenship in the post-colonial world.

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**Bernice Loh** is Research Fellow at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. Her research centres on cross-national marriages and families, including the experiences of mixed children and youth from these households. Her work lies at the intersection of migration, gender, identities, and intergenerational dynamics within the cross-national family, and has been published in journals such as *Ethnic and Racial Studies* and *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*.

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