

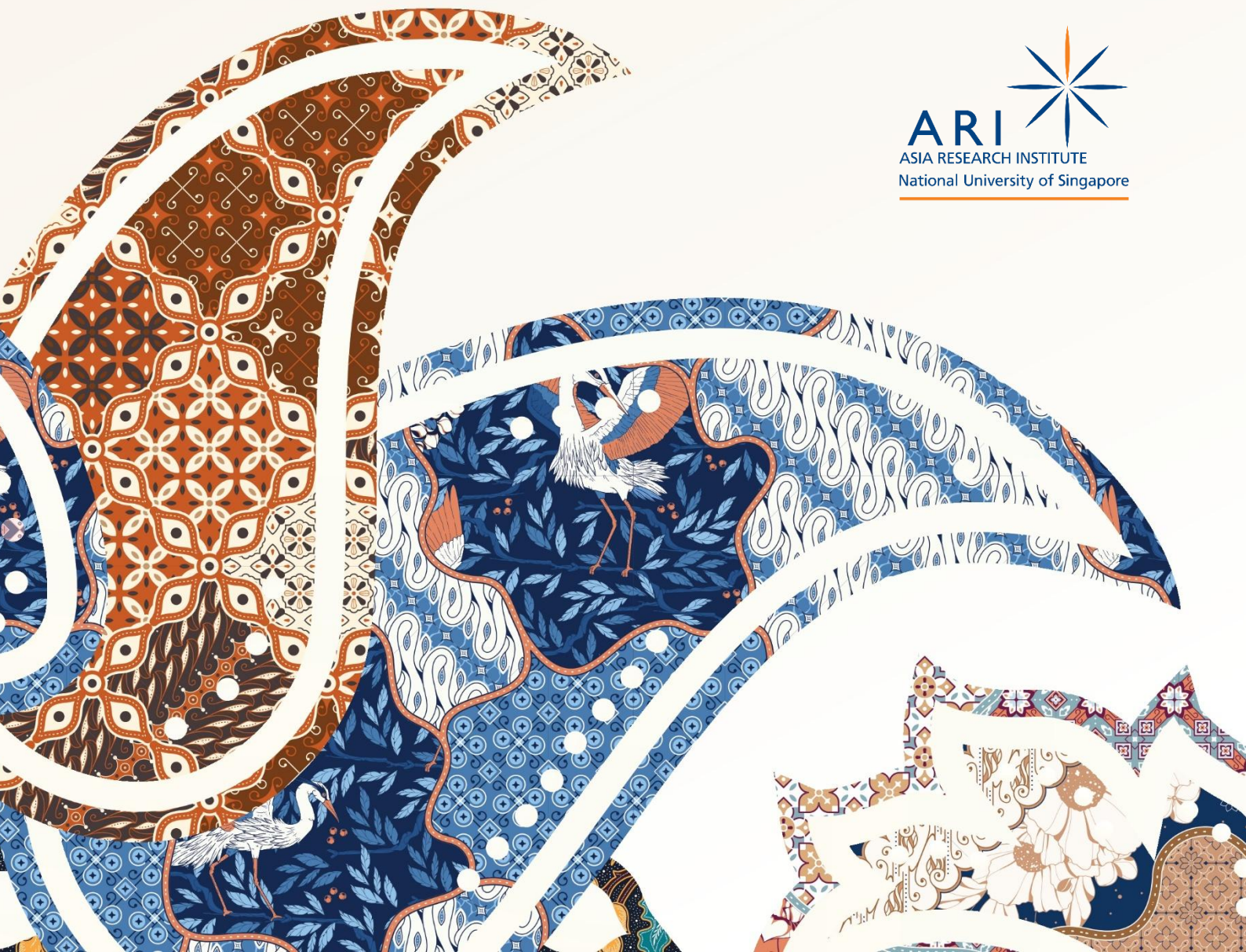
With support from ARI-Luce Southeast Asian Studies Collaboratory: New Generation Scholars

21ST SINGAPORE GRADUATE FORUM ON SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES

24-26 JUNE 2026

Keynote Addresses • Participants' Presentations

Block AS3, Lecture Theatre 12
National University of Singapore



This forum is organized by the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, with support from the Henry Luce Foundation.

The 21st 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 and recent PhD recipients from around the world working on Southeast Asia to communicate and interact, as they mature into the next generation of academic leaders. 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:

15-23 JUNE | ACADEMY SESSIONS

Open to the Forum Participants and Invited Guests only

These are 1.5-hour sessions which hone in on one aspect of academic labour or professional development and provide advice and practical tips.

24-26 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 **Sandeep Ray** (University of Nottingham Malaysia) and Professor **George E. Dutton** (University of California – Los Angeles).

ABOUT ASIA RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The Asia Research Institute (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

A/P Maitrii V. AUNG-THWIN, Asia Research Institute, NUS (Chair)

Dr Amorisa WIRATRI, 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

A/P Sumit MANDAL, Asia Research Institute, NUS

A/P Titima SUTHIWAN, Centre for Language Studies, NUS

Dr Xiaoling CHEN, Asia Research Institute, NUS

WEDNESDAY, 24 JUNE 2026

09:45 – 10:00	OPENING ADDRESS		
	<p>MAITRII V. AUNG-THWIN <i>Chair, 21st Singapore Graduate Forum on Southeast Asian Studies, Deputy Director, Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore</i></p>		
10:00 – 11:00	KEYNOTE ADDRESS 1		
<p><i>Chairperson</i></p> <p>10:00</p> <p>10:40</p>	LECTURE THEATRE 12		
	<p>MAITRII V. AUNG-THWIN, <i>National University of Singapore</i></p>		
	<p>Southeast Asia in the Age of Decentralized Scholarship</p> <p>SANDEEP RAY <i>University of Nottingham Malaysia</i></p>		
	QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION		
11:00 – 11:30	MORNING TEA		
11:30 – 13:00	BREAKOUT SESSIONS		
<p><i>Discussant</i></p> <p>11:30</p> <p>11:50</p> <p>12:10</p> <p>12:30</p> <p>12:40</p>	ROOM 02-15	ROOM 02-14	ROOM 02-13
	PANEL 1	PANEL 2	PANEL 3
	COLD WAR	DIGITAL MEDIA	WOMEN, LIVELIHOODS, AND POWER
	SIMON CREAK	RENYI HONG	YINGSHAN LAU
	<p>From Revolutionary Frontier to Economic Enclave: China and the Geopolitical Persistence of the Golden Triangle</p> <p>CUI FENG <i>Independent Scholar</i></p>	<p>Digital Affective Piety and Islamic Philanthropy in Indonesia's Climate Action: The Case of <i>Wakaf Hutan</i>, <i>Wakaf Energi</i>, and <i>Sedekah Energi</i></p> <p>LAMIA PUTRI DAMAYANTI <i>University of Amsterdam</i></p>	<p>Gendered Livelihoods at the Edge: Malay Muslim Women's Economic Agency in Kelantan, Malaysia</p> <p>FAN YANG <i>Sun Yat-sen University</i></p>
	<p>An Uncommon Kinship: The Indonesia-Vietnam Relationship during the Third Indochina War (1978-1991)</p> <p>DANIEL MCCOY <i>Australian National University</i></p>	<p>'PM for the Link': Exploring the Socio-Technical Infrastructure of Singapore's NCI Telegram Communities</p> <p>RACHYL LIM <i>National University of Singapore</i></p>	<p>Reworking Social Capital: Returnee Female Migrant Workers and Entrepreneurship in East Java, Indonesia</p> <p>MUKHAMAD ZULIANTO <i>National Dong Hwa University</i></p>
	<p>Cold War Contact Zones: The Second Indochina War, U.S. Military Bases, and Rural Transformation in Thailand</p> <p>MORRAGOTWONG PHUMPLAB <i>Thammasat University</i></p>	<p>Informal Communicative Infrastructures: Migration Decision-Making in North-Central Vietnam</p> <p>THI QUYNH NGA NGUYEN <i>Vinh University</i></p>	<p>Regulating Subsistence: Food Governance, Conservation Policy, and Hmong Daw Women in Northern Thailand</p> <p>RENI JUWITASARI <i>Khon Kaen University</i></p>
	DISCUSSANT'S COMMENTS		
	QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION		
	13:00 – 14:00	LUNCH	

WEDNESDAY, 24 JUNE 2026

14:00 – 15:30	BREAKOUT SESSIONS		
	ROOM 02-15	ROOM 02-14	ROOM 02-13
	PANEL 4	PANEL 5	PANEL 6
	SACRED GROUNDS	MEDIA	PERFORMANCE
	TANIA LI	SANDEEP RAY	ALVIN ENG HUI LIM
<p><i>Discussant</i></p> <p>14:00</p>	<p>“Do Not Separate from the Land”: Indigenous Livelihoods in Upland Calinog, Philippines</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DAVID GOWEY <i>Glendale Community College</i></p>	<p>The White Building and Kavich Neang’s Infrastructures of Dream</p> <p style="text-align: center;">EMILY MITAMURA <i>Bentley University</i></p>	<p>Examining the Impacts of Rice-Merit Networks among the Karen Communities in Thailand</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MICHAEL BISTIS <i>Assumption University of Thailand</i></p>
<p>14:20</p>	<p>Holy Disposessions: Church, State, and Corporate Claims to Timor-Leste</p> <p style="text-align: center;">LISA BEYELER-YVARRA <i>Yale University</i></p>	<p>Visualisation of Institutionalised Invented Tradition: <i>Tonari Gumi</i> (1943), Japanese Film Propaganda in Indonesia, and the Continuity of Surveillance and Control</p> <p style="text-align: center;">HARIFA ‘PYE’ SIREGAR <i>Bandung Institute of Technology</i></p>	<p>From Allegory to Memory: Intercultural Translation and Collective Memory in Padayon, a Post-Pandemic Mindanaoan Performance</p> <p style="text-align: center;">TED NUDDENT F. TAC-AN <i>University of Science and Technology of Southern Philippines</i></p>
<p>14:40</p>	<p>Calling Back Ancestors’ Ways: Revitalization of Traditional Agricultural Rituals in Yogyakarta, Indonesia</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NAJIYAH MARTIAM <i>Gadjah Mada University</i></p>	<p>Whose Media?: Refiguring Authorship and Responsibility in Inter-Asian Media Co-Production</p> <p style="text-align: center;">KENZELL HUGGINS <i>University of Chicago</i></p>	<p>Sounding Chinese in Singapore: KTV, Getai, and the Differential Audibility of Chineseness</p> <p style="text-align: center;">TIANYU WANG <i>McGill University</i></p>
<p>15:00</p>	DISCUSSANT’S COMMENTS		
<p>15:10</p>	QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION		
15:30 – 16:00	AFTERNOON TEA		

WEDNESDAY, 24 JUNE 2026

16:00 – 17:30	BREAKOUT SESSIONS		
	ROOM 02-15	ROOM 02-14	ROOM 02-13
	PANEL 7	PANEL 8	PANEL 9
	FOOD	URBAN CULTURAL ANXIETIES	NEIGHBOURHOOD
<i>Discussant</i>	EMILY SOH	FAIZAH ZAKARIA	PRIZA MARENDRAPUTRA
16:00	Between Host Nation and Homeland: Indonesian Restaurants as Transnational Culinary Nodes in Singapore PRIMA NURAHMI MULYASARI <i>Nanyang Technological University</i>	Fluid Identities in Kuala Lumpur's Public Art Murals: Narrating Multiculturalism through Visual Heritage HANYIN XU <i>University of Malaya</i>	A City in the Villages: Understanding Geographies of Urbanisation in the Hinterland of Jakarta DWIYANTI KUSUMANINGRUM <i>The University of Melbourne</i>
16:20	“Work Like a Cow, Fed Like a Chicken”: Food Control and Moral Governance among Indonesian Migrant Domestic Workers in Hong Kong YIQU HUANG <i>The University of Hong Kong</i>	The Cost of Building a “Garden City”: A Phenomenological Reading of Melancholia in Postcolonial Singapore Chinese Novels QIANRU HE <i>Nanyang Technological University</i>	Educating the Neighborhood: Waste Banks, Social Work, and Community Dreams in Jakarta JIWON KIM <i>Johns Hopkins University</i>
16:40	(Southeast) Asian Fusion Food in Asia: The Ethnicity Representation at Vietnamese Restaurants in Japan VIEN THI-THUC DINH <i>Kyoto University</i>	Rethinking Chinese New Villages beyond Heritage: Ethnicised Governance and Forced Urbanisation in Malaysia JAU MEI CHENG <i>University of Malaya</i>	Negotiating Livelihoods through Participatory Kampung Upgrading in Jakarta WIBISONO BAGUS NIMPUNO <i>Bandung Institute of Technology</i>
17:00	DISCUSSANT'S COMMENTS		
17:10	QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION		
17:30	END OF DAY 1		

THURSDAY, 25 JUNE 2026

11:30 – 13:00	BREAKOUT SESSIONS		
	ROOM 02-15	ROOM 02-14	ROOM 02-13
	PANEL 10	PANEL 11	PANEL 12
	CONCEPTUALIZING FOOD	GOVERNANCE, LAND, AND NATURE	WOMEN, HISTORY, AND RURAL TRANSFORMATION
<i>Discussant</i>	JAMIE S. DAVIDSON	JAMES D. SIDAWAY	CHAND SOMAIAH
11:30	Vietnamese's <i>Ăn Chay</i> : Rethinking Veg*n Motivations beyond Western Frameworks BICH THUY NGUYEN <i>Macquarie University</i>	Navigating Malaysia's Fragmented Frontiers: Primates, Privatized Property, and the Post-Plantation Landscape KYMBERLEY CHU <i>Princeton University</i>	Filial Piety Strategies of Poor Rural Women in the Mekong Delta: A Cultural Studies Perspective TRINH NGOC LINH <i>University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City</i>
11:50	On the Margins of Supply: Dognapping in Peri-Urban Areas in North Sulawesi NICOLAS BARAN <i>Université Catholique de Louvain</i>	Mediating Memory, Contesting Peace: Youth, Social Media, and the Digital Reworking of Conflict in Southern Thailand NADIA PAYO <i>Prince of Songkla University</i>	Women and Historiography in Early Modern Makassar (17th Century) RISMAWIDIAWATI <i>University of Indonesia</i>
12:10	Sensing Seeds: Embodied Knowledge, Feminist Political Ecology, and the Co-production of Environmental Knowledge in Thailand YUTING ZHOU <i>University of Hawai'i at Mānoa</i>	Decolonising Peace Studies: Toward a Framework for Understanding Islamic Epistemologies of Peace SYAIFUL ANAM <i>University of New England</i>	Constructing and Negotiating Gender Safeguarding in Energy Megaprojects: Local Institutions and Social Relation Context in Indonesia SRI MULYATI <i>Bandung Institute of Technology</i>
12:30	DISCUSSANT'S COMMENTS		
12:40	QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION		
13:00 – 14:00	LUNCH		

THURSDAY, 25 JUNE 2026

14:00 – 15:30	BREAKOUT SESSIONS		
	ROOM 02-15	ROOM 02-14	ROOM 02-13
	PANEL 13	PANEL 14	PANEL 15
	URBAN	ISLAM	BUDDHISM AND THAILAND
<i>Discussant</i>	SNEHA ANNAVARAPU	NORSHAHRI SAAT	MAITRII V. AUNG-THWIN
14:00	The Crypto Circuit: Loudness, Flexing, and Entrepreneurial Urbanism through Bangkok AL LIM <i>Singapore Management University</i>	<i>Seni dan Islam Sejalan: Understanding 'Permissibility' of Islamic Creative Practice in Indonesia's Gema Islam (1962-1967)</i> KATIA CHATERJI <i>Loyola Marymount University</i>	Fruits of Desire: Nariphon Trees, Shifting Masculinities and the Making of the Sacred RONI N. WANG <i>Independent Scholar</i>
14:20	Resonant Histories in Singapore's Forgotten Infrastructure JEAN CHIA <i>University of Toronto</i>	Muslim Philanthropy as an Ethical Presence: Muhammadiyah in Christian-Majority Eastern Indonesia MUHAMMAD AFDILLAH <i>Sunan Ampel State Islamic University Surabaya</i>	Milinda and Modernity: (Re)Defining the Borders of Theravada Civilization TONY SCOTT <i>The University of Tokyo</i>
14:40	Paving the Way? Urban Order, Street Life, and the Moral Politics of Sidewalks in Hanoi OLIVIER JACQUES <i>Vietnam National University</i>	Becoming Pious Palm Oil Bosses: Aspirational Mysticism in Indonesia's Food Estate Frontier NOORHIDAYAH <i>State Islamic University of Palangka Raya</i>	"Esoteric" or "Normative"? Reconsidering the Circulation of Premodern Kammatthāna (Meditation) Traditions in Southeast Asia through Manuscripts and Murals WORAMAT MALASART <i>Otani University</i>
15:00	DISCUSSANT'S COMMENTS		
15:10	QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION		
15:30 – 16:00	AFTERNOON TEA		

THURSDAY, 25 JUNE 2026

16:00 – 17:30	BREAKOUT SESSIONS		
	ROOM 02-15	ROOM 02-14	ROOM 02-13
	PANEL 16	PANEL 17	PANEL 18
	HERITAGE, CONSERVATION AND BELONGING	INTER-ASIA	MIGRATION, MOBILITY, AND BELONGING
<i>Discussant</i>	JUSTIN LAU	ALLEN XIAO	EVA SAMIA DINKELAKER
16:00	From Sedentarisation to Shared Stewardship: Conservation Politics and Local Food Systems in Vietnam’s Central Highlands MELINA KAISER <i>University of Hamburg</i>	Mercenaries, Pirates, and Merchants: The Malay “Maritime Zomia” in Southern Vietnam BOYU XIA <i>Xiamen University</i>	Syncretic Buddhism in Motion: Migration, Transnational Networks, and the Making of Kek Lok Si Temple in Penang HYUNG-JIN AN <i>University of Delhi</i>
16:20	Curating the Nation, Silencing the Street: Heritage Narratives and Everyday Life in Penang SHIYU FAN <i>Tsinghua University</i>	Kachin-China Border: Cross-Border Ethnic Identity and Community Relations among the Kachin/Jingpo People SENG RA <i>Waseda University</i>	Beyond Economic Pull: Discovering Aspirational Return and Citizenship among Highly Skilled Filipino Migrants via the Philippine “Balik Scientist” Program JACONIAH SHELUMIEL T. MANALAYSAY <i>De La Salle University</i>
16:40	Cloth of Legacy: Tenun Pahang Diraja SU YEN CHONG <i>University of Toronto</i>	A Bornean Borderland: Sabah as the Frontier of Malay(sian) State Building, 1967-1985 SHARMINI APHRODITE <i>National University of Singapore</i>	Assimilation versus Acculturation of Migrants from the Same Root: The Case of Cham Descendants in Kelantan Malaysia and Hainan China YAHUI ZHOU <i>Hainan Normal University</i>
17:00	A Comparative Study of Coastal Ecological Restoration Cases in China and Malaysia from the Perspective of Maritime Community with a Shared Future YUHU CUI <i>Shandong University, and University of Malaya</i>		
17:20	DISCUSSANT’S COMMENTS		
17:30	QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION		
17:50	END OF DAY 2		

FRIDAY, 26 JUNE 2026

10:30 – 11:30	BREAKOUT SESSIONS	
	ROOM 02-15	ROOM 02-13
	PANEL 19	PANEL 20
	FOOD POLITICS	RELIGION
	EMMA WILLOUGHBY	ERICA M. LARSON
<i>Discussant</i>		
10:30	<p>Recasting Nutrition at the Margins: A Critical Exploration of Food and Nutrition Inequities in Fishing Communities in Palawan, Philippines</p> <p>ANDRE FLORES <i>University of Wollongong</i></p>	<p>The Poetry of Violence in a Buddhist State: Development, Religion, and Memory Culture in the Epigraphy of Jayavarman VII</p> <p>RYAN CONLON <i>University of Hamburg</i></p>
10:50	<p>Indonesia's Free Nutritious Meals: Narratives in Tensions with the Right to Food and Food Sovereignty</p> <p>MUHAMMAD BAHRUL ULUM <i>Queensland University of Technology</i></p>	<p>A Study of Pilgrim Experiences and Purchasing and Eating in Catholic Pilgrimage Sites in Java, Indonesia</p> <p>YUGA ORITA <i>Sophia University</i></p>
11:10	DISCUSSANT'S COMMENTS	
11:20	QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION	
11:30 – 12:00	MORNING TEA	

FRIDAY, 26 JUNE 2026

12:00 – 13:30	BREAKOUT SESSIONS		
	ROOM 02-15	ROOM 02-14	ROOM 02-13
	PANEL 21	PANEL 22	PANEL 23
	CULTURAL INTERACTIONS	FLUID URBANISMS	KINSHIP AND CARE
<i>Discussant</i>	SERINA RAHMAN	ELISABETH PEYROUX	NOR ISMAH
12:00	<p>Girlscape in Urban Indonesia: K-pop Fan Merchandise Industry as Transnational Girl Culture</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AYUMI INOUCHI <i>Arizona State University</i></p>	<p>A Place to Call Home: Comparative Analysis of Settlement Choices in Coastal Villages of Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam in the Lower Mekong amid Sea-Level Rise</p> <p style="text-align: center;">RENZ PRUDENCIADO <i>Asian Institute of Technology</i></p>	<p>Bare Infrastructure of Care for People with Disabilities in Indonesian Urban Kampung</p> <p style="text-align: center;">LAMBANG SEPTIAWAN <i>The University of Melbourne</i></p>
12:20	<p>Temporary Migrants as Transnational Musicians</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CARLJOHNSON ANACIN <i>Griffith University</i></p>	<p>Dreams of Streams: The Cheonggyecheon Effect on Urban River Imaginaries in Greater Jakarta</p> <p style="text-align: center;">RIZKI DWIKA APRILIAN <i>National University of Singapore</i></p>	<p>Gruosār: What Lies Hidden behind the Cambodian Word “Family”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SITHBUNNAWATH MAO <i>Independent Researcher</i></p>
12:40	<p>“We Rescue a Hundred Whispers”: A Poetic Reanimation of Cold War Archives in Mai Der Vang’s <i>Yellow Rain</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">JASMINE N. AN <i>University of Oregon</i></p>	<p>Frontiering the Urban Sea: The Restart of a Mega-Infrastructure Project and Uncertain Futures in Coastal Jakarta</p> <p style="text-align: center;">WENJING QIU <i>Leiden University</i></p>	<p>Body Experience and Skills of “Liver Qi Stagnation” among Malaysian Chinese Patients</p> <p style="text-align: center;">YIEN XU <i>Xiamen University</i></p>
13:00	DISCUSSANT’S COMMENTS		
13:10	QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION		
13:30 – 14:30	LUNCH		

FRIDAY, 26 JUNE 2026

14:30 – 15:30	BREAKOUT SESSIONS		
	ROOM 02-15	ROOM 02-14	ROOM 02-13
	PANEL 24	PANEL 25	PANEL 26
	ECOLOGY, RESTORATION, AND RESILIENCE	MIGRATION AND URBANISM	MINING, ECOLOGY, AND POWER
<i>Discussant</i>	W. NATHAN GREEN	DHIRAJ NAINANI	BOSMAN BATUBARA
14:30	Volcano and Refugee: The 1963 Mt. Agung Eruption and the Emergence of Hindu Balinese in Lampung ANIF E. TRISNADI <i>Murdoch University</i>	Temporalized Legitimacy and Living in the Present: Business and Everyday Life of Burmese Migrants in China DIANDIAN ZHANG <i>Yunnan University</i>	The Battery Dream: Technopolitics, Infrastructure, and the Imaginaries of Indonesia's Nickel Boom ALIM BUBU SWARGA <i>Khon Kaen University</i>
14:50	Peatland Restoration as a Pathway to Climate Change Adaptation: Reconfiguring Community Livelihood Strategies in Central Kalimantan SRI LESTARI <i>Australian National University</i>	Uneven Social Reproduction: A Case Study of Households in the Philippines and Singapore KEVIN TAN <i>SOAS University of London</i>	Exploring Everyday Resistance of the Coastal Farmers Union (PPLP) in the Context of the Sand-Iron Mining Plan Conflict in Kulon Progo, Indonesia EKA ZUNI LUSI ASTUTI <i>University of Limerick</i>
15:10	DISCUSSANT'S COMMENTS		
15:20	QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION		
15:30 – 16:00	AFTERNOON TEA		
16:00 – 17:00	KEYNOTE ADDRESS 2		
	LECTURE THEATRE 12		
<i>Chairperson</i>	MAITRII V. AUNG-THWIN , <i>National University of Singapore</i>		
16:00	"Local Genius": Southeast Asian Literature from the Ramayana to the Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye GEORGE E. DUTTON <i>University of California – Los Angeles</i>		
16:40	QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION		
17:00 – 17:15	CLOSING REMARKS		
	MAITRII V. AUNG-THWIN <i>Chair, 21st Singapore Graduate Forum on Southeast Asian Studies, Deputy Director, Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore</i>		
17:15	END OF FORUM		

KEYNOTE ADDRESS 1**Southeast Asia in the Age of Decentralized Scholarship****Sandeep Ray**University of Nottingham Malaysia
ray.sandeep@gmail.com

The field of Southeast Asian Studies has shape-shifted significantly since its tenuous inception. Yet it has endured. Two broad patterns have emerged in recent years.

First, subject specialization is becoming a thing of the past. Most scholars now embrace interdisciplinarity, and the strongest work often grows out of broader inquiries. While rigorous disciplinary training remains foundational, no single branch of knowledge can provide all the tools needed to make meaningful contributions today. We find ourselves in an era in which scholars must locate primary sources, conduct interviews, interpret statistics, examine visual archives, and analyze social media, often within the same project. Increasingly, we also recognize creative outputs such as filmmaking, blogging, and creative writing alongside traditional academic publishing. Disciplines once relegated to the margins are now moving to the forefront of scholarly engagement and becoming important avenues for connecting with the public humanities.

A second major shift is the emergence of a new generation of scholars trained within the region itself, as centers of excellence are no longer concentrated exclusively in the West. This session will explore how we can build complementary strengths and view the field from different vantage points as it reorients and adapts. We will also consider what it means for a field that is becoming increasingly regionally grounded, and what new possibilities this holds for the research and scholarship that will emerge in the decades ahead.

Sandeep Ray is Associate Professor and Head of School of Humanities at the University of Nottingham Malaysia. He studied at Hampshire College and the University of Michigan, and he received his PhD from the National University of Singapore. As a scholar/practitioner, he specializes in the intersection of colonial history, non-fiction film, and Southeast Asian archival visuals. Ray is the author of *Celluloid Colony: Locating History and Ethnography in Early Dutch Colonial Films of Indonesia*, which was a finalist for the EuroSEAS Social Science Book Prize 2021, and the novel *A Flutter in the Colony* (Penguin Random House). Ray has published in leading journals including the *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, *positions: Asia Critique*, and the *American Historical Review*. He serves as a peer reviewer for multiple academic publications and has been invited to film festivals as artist, juror and curator. In 2025, Ray was elected as council member of the International Association for Media and History.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS 2**“Local Genius”: Southeast Asian Literature from the Ramayana to the Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye****George E. Dutton**University of California – Los Angeles
dutton@humnet.ucla.edu

In talking and thinking about Southeast Asia, we are indebted to H.G. Quaritch Wales’s conception of what he called “local genius”. It was a term he coined to reflect the ways in which Southeast Asian artisans were able to adapt imported artistic elements and transform them into works uniquely of the region. It is a term much used since its coining, not least because it offers a way to defend the region against its detractors, those who dismiss it as a place of derivative and borrowed cultures. My paper takes the idea of local genius and applies it to the case of Southeast Asian literature. I offer a brief sketch of the region’s literature to demonstrate how its authors have used important genres, forms, characters, and even plots to make uniquely Southeast Asian works. This has been true since at least the arrival of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, but in any case continued over the millennia and persists into the present. I conclude with a reading of Sonny Liew’s recent graphic novel, *The Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye*, to argue for it as a supreme example of Southeast Asian “local genius” and the process of localization. Liew’s graphic novel serves, I argue, as a reminder that the region’s writers continue to draw inspiration from elsewhere, even as they produce distinctly local literature.

George E. Dutton is Professor of Vietnamese History and Southeast Asian Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). He completed his PhD in History at the University of Washington (Seattle) after an MA degree in International Relations at Yale University. As an undergraduate, Dutton also spent a year studying at the National University of Singapore (1987-88). He did graduate coursework with Ben Kiernan and James Scott at Yale, and studied with Laurie Sears, Christoph Giebel, and Dan Lev at the University of Washington. He has written books on early modern Vietnamese history and edited several volumes on Southeast Asian literary and historical texts, including *Sources of Vietnamese Tradition*, the most comprehensive anthology of Vietnamese primary documents in English translation. Dutton’s teaching interests, in addition to Vietnamese history, include contemporary Southeast Asian religion and society, upland ethnic minorities in mainland Southeast Asia, and modern Southeast Asian literature. He served two terms as Director of the UCLA Center for Southeast Asian Studies and as Vice Chair for his home department. He has also served as Chair of the Steering Committee for the Consortium for Graduate Education and Training on Southeast Asia (GETSEA) of which he was a founding member. He has served as Chair of the AAS Southeast Asia Council, where he is currently serving a second term and have also served on the AAS Program Committee. Dutton is currently serving as Chair of the AAS Benda Book Prize Committee.

PANEL 1 | COLD WAR**From Revolutionary Frontier to Economic Enclave:
China and the Geopolitical Persistence of the Golden Triangle****Cui Feng**Independent Scholar
cui.feng@u.nus.edu

This article examines the structural persistence of Chinese engagement with the Golden Triangle borderland across the Cold War and post-Cold War periods. Challenging both state-centric and discontinuity frameworks, it argues that China's involvement in the region has shifted in form—from revolutionary support for the Communist Party of Thailand in the 1970s to capital investment and Special Economic Zone development in the 2000s—while remaining anchored to the same geopolitical terrain: a zone of weak state control, porous borders, and transnational mobility at the intersection of Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand. Drawing on archival sources, published scholarship, and original fieldwork conducted in Chiang Rai, Chiang Saen, and Bangkok between 2025 and 2026, the article traces this structural continuity through three phases: Cold War revolutionary intervention, post-Cold War commercial penetration, and the most recent cycle of enclave governance, enforcement-driven contraction, and renewed projection visible in the Golden Triangle Special Economic Zone as of early 2026.

Cui Feng is an independent scholar and historian specializing in Cold War Asia, transnational revolutionary networks, and China–Southeast Asia relations. He received his PhD in Comparative Asian Studies from the National University of Singapore in 2024.

**An Uncommon Kinship: The Indonesia-Vietnam Relationship
during the Third Indochina War (1978-1991)****Daniel McCoy**Australian National University
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Indonesia and Vietnam achieved a comprehensive strategic partnership in 2025, marking 70 years of enduring amiability and cooperation. Their relationship weathered multiple regional conflicts amid great power competition in Southeast Asia during the Cold War. The geopolitical fallout and realignment of power politics across Southeast Asia after the Second Indochina War strained Indonesian-Vietnamese relations and intraregional relations between the non-communist Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), including Indonesia, and the communist Indochina bloc, including Vietnam. Vietnam invaded Democratic Kampuchea in late 1978, overthrew the Khmer Rouge, and established the Hanoi-backed People's Republic of Kampuchea. ASEAN member states including Singapore and Thailand regarded Vietnam as the regional pariah intent on leading a communist Indochina Federation through violating Cambodian sovereignty despite growing international condemnation against the Khmer Rouge. Vietnam viewed ASEAN as an untrustworthy pawn to Western interests vis-à-vis Southeast Asia. Vietnam defended its invasion of Cambodia to topple the genocidal Khmer Rouge and curb mounting Chinese regional hegemony. Indonesia was the only ASEAN member to continue amiable relations with Vietnam throughout the Third Indochina War (1978-1991), compelling ASEAN to distinguish Indonesia as its interlocuter toward Vietnam within ASEAN's efforts to resolve the Kampuchean Crisis. Their ideological and economic imbalances notwithstanding, Indonesia and Vietnam respected one another on a deeply symbolic level as kindred spirits who had forged their nationhood through revolution, the only two formerly colonized Southeast Asian nations to do so. These intangible linkages undergirded Indonesian "dual-track diplomacy" parallel ASEAN regional diplomacy. Indonesian state and non-state actors during the New Order under President Suharto spanning the military, foreign ministry, and the Centre for Strategic and International Studies played distinctive roles in meeting Vietnamese officials on a people-to-people level within formal, track-one diplomacy and informal, track-two diplomacy. The evolution of Indonesian-Vietnamese relations during the Third Indochina War contributed to its political resolution, elevated Indonesian statecraft, and integrated Vietnam into regional economic and security cooperation at the end of the Cold War. This paper examines the dimensions of Vietnam-Indonesia relations during this period and how it impacted the outcome of the Third Indochina War to segue the Asia Pacific into the post-Cold War.

Daniel McCoy earned his PhD in History from Northern Illinois University in August 2025. A 2022-2023 Fulbright student research grant to Indonesia produced his dissertation, "To Negotiate a Labyrinth: Indonesia within and without ASEAN during the Third Indochina War (1978-1991)", that addresses Indonesian multi-actor, multi-track diplomacy and their impact on conflict resolution within and outside ASEAN during the Third Indochina War. He participated in the COMPOSE Fellowship at the Indonesian International Islamic University from September to December 2025 where he began research for his postdoc project that examines how the Asian Cold War ended and the post-Cold War period began through the development and impact of trilateral Indonesian-Sino-Vietnamese normalization from 1985 until 1995. He will conduct another round of

postdoc research sponsored by an AIFIS-CAORC Research Fellowship to Indonesia in 2026. He has served as a remote research consultant to Dr Deepak Nair at the Australian National University since April 2023, assisting on two projects. His research interests include the institutional history of ASEAN, Cold War geopolitics and diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific, Indonesia's New Order period, and postwar Southeast Asian conflict studies and peace studies.

Cold War Contact Zones: The Second Indochina War, U.S. Military Bases, and Rural Transformation in Thailand

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This paper examines how the Second Indochina War reshaped rural society in Thailand through the establishment of U.S. military bases, focusing on Takhli District in Nakhon Sawan Province as a Cold War “contact zone.” Moving beyond state-centered and elite-driven Cold War historiography, the study advances a ground-up approach that foregrounds local experiences, social transformations, and contested meanings of modernization. It asks how the American military presence during the Second Indochina War transformed everyday life in rural Thailand, and how these changes were interpreted, negotiated, and remembered by local communities. Following the 1962 Thanat–Rusk Joint Statement, Thailand authorized the United States to operate seven air bases in support of military campaigns in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Takhli Royal Thai Air Force Base became a major hub for U.S. air power between 1964-1971 and 1972-1974. While aerial bombardment unfolded across Indochina, its social and economic aftershocks were displaced onto Thai rural districts far from the battlefield. Formerly an agrarian community characterized by subsistence farming and limited infrastructure, Takhli underwent rapid transformation as thousands of American servicemen arrived, introducing dollar-based economies, wage labor, and service industries that linked local livelihoods directly to a regional war economy. Conceptualizing Takhli as a Cold War contact zone reveals how global militarism intersected with rural Thai society to produce uneven modernization and new social configurations. Drawing on archival sources, contemporary media, literary texts, and oral histories, this study demonstrates how rural residents migrated from nearby provinces to work in construction, logistics, domestic service, and entertainment economies servicing U.S. forces. Women's labor—particularly in service, affective, and intimate economies—emerges as central to household survival, complicating dominant moral narratives that frame base towns solely as sites of degradation or cultural erosion. Local accounts emphasize opportunity, mobility, and pragmatic adaptation rather than passive victimhood. By situating Takhli within an intra–Southeast Asian Cold War geography, this paper challenges nation-bound historiography and Bangkok-centered moral discourse. It argues that the Second Indochina War should be understood not only as a conflict fought in Vietnam, but as a regional process that profoundly reshaped societies across Southeast Asia. In doing so, the study contributes to the decolonization of Cold War historiography by centering rural communities as active participants in, rather than peripheral recipients of, the war's enduring social legacies.

Morragotwong Phumplab is Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University, Thailand, and she also serves as Assistant Director for Research and Academic Service Affairs at the Institute of East Asian Studies. Her scholarship focuses on diplomatic history and the socio-political and cultural histories of Southeast Asia, with particular emphasis on Vietnam and Thailand. Her current research explores Cold War dynamics in the region, especially the interplay between high-level political processes and the lived experiences of people on the ground, as well as transnational mobility and historical interactions in Southeast Asia.

PANEL 2 | DIGITAL MEDIA

Digital Affective Piety and Islamic Philanthropy in Indonesia's Climate Action: The Case of *Wakaf Hutan*, *Wakaf Energi*, and *Sedekah Energi*

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The growing climate crisis in Indonesia has become a prominent subject of academic and political discussion. Considering the nation's status as one of the largest Muslim-majority countries in the world, religion is a crucial tool for mediating environmental consciousness and promoting active citizenship. In response to this pressing challenge, the eco-Islamic movement is currently gaining momentum within the country. This movement is essential for addressing the urgent ecological damage stemming from resource extraction, particularly the destruction of tropical rainforests driven by short-term economic needs like nickel mining and palm oil expansion. To operationalise this concern, Muslims for Shared Action on Climate Impact (MOSAIC) created the digital platform @umatuntuksemesta to promote Muslim environmentalism. This study examines three key campaigns conducted by @umatuntuksemesta, which is also part of MOSAIC's main project: *Wakaf Hutan* (Forest Endowments), *Wakaf Energi* (Energy Endowments), and *Sedekah Energi* (Energy Donation) on

Instagram. These programs strategically combine Islamic philanthropy (*wakaf* and *sedekah*) with a modern climate fund mechanism to stimulate public participation in addressing the climate crisis in Indonesia. Drawing upon the theoretical frameworks of affective politics and the politics of piety, the research aims to analyse the specific discourses and narratives constructed by the initiative to motivate Muslim engagement in climate action. The methodology employed is Foucauldian discourse analysis, used to deconstruct the power relations embedded within the campaign texts and visuals. The findings reveal a powerful mechanism where religious piety (*taqwa*) among Indonesian Muslims is translated into tangible, pro-environmental action. This is achieved by framing donations as '*amal jariyah*' (continuing charity), promising '#pahalasepanjangmasa' (eternal reward), thereby bridging ecological restoration with continuous spiritual benefit. This strategy constitutes a potent affective-ethical political program that transforms the way Muslim subjects relate to the material world. While these finance-based solutions are promising for manifesting eco-Islamic theories, the research argues that they must be accompanied by demands for consistent government policies on reforestation and energy transition to avoid being mere "patchwork projects." It is necessary to be critical of viewing donation as a "final solution", as the operative logic risks shifting from "I care, leading me to donate" to the problematic post-facto justification: "I have donated, therefore I have already cared".

Lamia Putri Damayanti is a PhD researcher at the University of Amsterdam and an interdisciplinary researcher focused on media and cultural studies. Her project explores how Indonesian Islamic media narratives, digital culture, and traditional cosmologies are being reconfigured to address the climate crisis. By analysing social media controversies, popular culture (including film, music, children's books, and festivals), and the agency of non-human entities and interspecies kinships (such as mountains, forests, coastal regions, orangutans, and elephants), she demonstrates how environmental care in Indonesia is shifting from passive piety toward an affective, more-than-human resistance against extractive violence.

'PM for the Link': Exploring the Socio-Technical Infrastructure of Singapore's NCII Telegram Communities

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While encrypted messaging platforms have emerged as primary vectors for image-based sexual abuse (IBSA), existing research often treats these digital environments as passive containers, framing abuse around individual pathologies or isolated victim-perpetrator dyads. Consequently, how perpetrators collectively organize, govern, and sustain gendered deviance at scale remains underexplored. To address this gap, this exploratory study investigates three controversial and highly publicized Singapore-based Telegram groups dedicated to the non-consensual circulation of intimate images (NCII): *SG Nasi Lemak*, *SharingisCaring* and *Sam's lot of CB collection*. Drawing on a qualitative content analysis of secondary sources, including media investigations, policy documents, and social media posts, this paper conceptualizes these Telegram groups as organized homosocial collectivities built around the collective production, circulation, and consumption of voyeuristic access. It argues that Telegram does not merely host criminal communities; its platform architecture actively structures how deviance is organized, trusted, and normalized for an 'imagined community' of perpetrators. Participation is sustained not only by infrastructural affordances, such as large-scale group capacity and pseudonymity, but by specific social mechanics. Trust is manufactured through 'information hostages', a gendered mechanism of mutual incrimination where the active violation of women serves as collateral for access. To manage risk, administrators construct quasi-legal governance models, while platform features facilitate homosocial bonding, utilizing tools like customized stickers to commodify women's bodies and neutralize moral culpability. By foregrounding how platform design shapes participant culture, this study reconceptualizes platform-mediated crime as coordinated social organization, highlighting that disrupting gendered harm on these platforms requires dismantling the sociotechnical infrastructure of the communities themselves, rather than merely policing content.

Rachyl Lim is a PhD student in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the National University of Singapore (NUS), supported by the President's Graduate Fellowship and the Dean's PhD Fellowship. She holds an MSc in Sociology from the University of Oxford and a BSocSci (Highest Distinction) in Sociology from NUS. Her doctoral research examines trust within youth gangs in Singapore, focusing on how members navigate cooperation, collaboration, and betrayal in contexts marked by uncertainty, suspicion, and violence. More broadly, her work explores deviance, organized crime, and social trust in Singapore and East Asia, attending to how local narratives and lived experiences challenge conventional sociological frameworks. Rachyl is currently the lead research assistant on Everyday Citizenship in Singapore, a project led by Dr George Radics and funded by MOE. She has also taught as a teaching assistant at Oxford and NUS, and her research interests include organized crime, deviance, trust, and Taoism.

Informal Communicative Infrastructures: Migration Decision-Making in North-Central Vietnam

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Labor migration has become a central livelihood strategy in North-Central Vietnam, particularly in provinces such as Nghệ An and Hà Tĩnh, where mobility is both widespread and socially embedded. While existing research has highlighted the roles of structural conditions, social networks, and, more recently, digital media in shaping migration, less attention has been paid to how migration knowledge is produced and made actionable through everyday communication. Drawing on 39 qualitative interviews conducted between 2025 and early 2026 with prospective migrants, returned migrants, and individuals preparing to migrate, this paper examines how migration decisions are formed through informal, interpersonal communication. The findings show that migration is not primarily driven by access to formal information, but by relationally mediated knowledge grounded in trust, familiarity, and lived experience. Participants consistently relied on close social ties—family members, relatives, and peers—as key sources of guidance, while decisions were validated through “proof by example,” where the visible success of others functioned as credible evidence. Migration is thus understood through circulating narratives of opportunity, stability, and upward mobility, which are socially reinforced and emotionally resonant. Building on these insights, the paper conceptualizes oral communication networks as informal communicative infrastructures that organize the production, validation, and circulation of migration knowledge. This perspective shifts the analytical focus from information access to the social processes through which knowledge becomes credible and actionable. In doing so, the paper extends existing approaches to migration infrastructure by foregrounding the epistemic and affective dimensions of everyday communication. By situating migration decision-making within these communicative processes, the study contributes to ongoing debates in migration and media studies, offering a framework that is applicable beyond the Vietnamese context, particularly in settings where informal communication remains central to social life.

Thi Quynh Nga Nguyen is Lecturer in Journalism and Communication in Vinh University. She received her PhD in 2026 from Vietnam National University, Hanoi, with a dissertation examining audience demand for multi-platform television in Vietnam. Her research interests lie at the intersection of media and communication, migration, and cultural practices, with a particular focus on how communication shapes social behaviour and decision-making. She is currently involved in a collaborative research project with the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement, France, exploring migration, informal communication, and financial risks in North-Central Vietnam. Her recent work investigates how everyday communicative practices influence migration decisions and the production of social knowledge in contemporary Southeast Asia.

PANEL 3 | WOMEN, LIVELIHOODS, AND POWER

Gendered Livelihoods at the Edge: Malay Muslim Women’s Economic Agency in Kelantan, Malaysia

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This paper examines Malay Muslim women’s economic agency in Kelantan, Malaysia, by focusing on everyday livelihood practices in Tumpat District, a borderland society located along the Malaysia–Thailand frontier. Kelantan is often represented in Malaysian public discourse as a Malay Muslim heartland marked by Islamic politics, regional distinctiveness, and cultural conservatism. Within this dominant image, gender frequently becomes a key sign through which Kelantan’s conservatism is recognized, with women’s mobility, public visibility, and economic participation assumed to be constrained by Islamic moral expectations and patriarchal norms. Based on eleven months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted between 2024 and 2025, this paper complicates such assumptions by showing that Malay Muslim women in Tumpat are highly visible and central actors in local economic life. Drawing on participant observation and semi-structured interviews in markets, food stalls, households, village spaces, and border-crossing zones near the Golok River, the paper analyzes how women sell cooked food, manage small businesses, contribute to household income, and sometimes serve as primary economic providers. Rather than interpreting these practices either as resistance to Islam or as passive accommodation to patriarchy, the paper argues that women’s economic agency should be understood as a form of situated agency embedded in local moral economies. Central to this argument is the everyday Malay expression *cari makan*, literally “to look for food,” but more broadly referring to the effort of making a living. In the Kelantanese context, *cari makan* provides a moral language through which women’s labor becomes understandable, respectable, and necessary.

Fan Yang is a PhD candidate in the School of Sociology and Anthropology at Sun Yat-sen University, China. Her doctoral research focuses on borderland society, everyday livelihood practices, ethnic relations, and the making of belonging in Kelantan, Malaysia. From 2024 to 2025, she conducted eleven months of ethnographic fieldwork in Tumpat District, Kelantan, with particular attention to the Malaysia–Thailand border, the Golok River, local governance, informal economies,

gendered livelihoods, and everyday forms of interethnic interaction. Her broader research interests include border anthropology, Southeast Asian studies, gender and economy, and the anthropology of the state. She has also been involved in research on Chinese indentured labor in South Africa and transnational knowledge circulation in late Qing Chinese newspapers. Her current work seeks to understand how ordinary people in borderland societies navigate political boundaries, moral expectations, and everyday economic uncertainty.

Reworking Social Capital: Returnee Female Migrant Workers and Entrepreneurship in East Java, Indonesia

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Former female Indonesian migrant workers are a unique but under-explored group in the broader literature on return migration and post-migration entrepreneurship. Indonesian female migrant workers who return largely rely on informal village-based and kinship networks in their places of origin. These social relations are embedded in moral norms and gender expectations that view female migration as a temporary sacrifice rather than a source of long-term economic transformation. As a result, the transnational skills, discipline, and experience gained abroad are often not valued upon return, especially when women engage in small-scale entrepreneurial activities that are socially considered an extension of household responsibilities. This context highlights the need to reconsider social capital not as a uniformly facilitating resource, but as an ambiguous and gendered field of power. This study analyzes how former female Indonesian migrant workers in East Java mobilize, negotiate, and transform social capital into entrepreneurial livelihoods after returning from working abroad. Previous research has extensively documented the vulnerability and precarious conditions of women during migration and the post-return phase, as well as the relational dynamics that shape women's economic reintegration, but these aspects have not received sufficient attention in research. This article asks how different configurations of transnational and local social relations facilitate or constrain women's efforts to establish micro-enterprises, and what this reveals about gendered processes in the return of former Indonesian female workers and their reintegration. This analysis draws on Bourdieu's theory of capital, in dialogue with feminist research on migration and entrepreneurship, to conceptualize social capital as a relational and contested resource shaped by obligations, reciprocity, moral judgments, and reputational judgments. Empirically, this study is based on qualitative field research conducted in districts in East Java. Data were obtained through in-depth semi-structured interviews with 30 former female migrant workers. Findings indicate that social capital plays a central yet ambiguous role in women's entrepreneurial strategies. Transnational migrant networks provide access to information, skills, and initial business support, while kinship ties and local environments offer labor, customers, and reputational legitimacy. At the same time, these networks reinforce gendered expectations related to caregiving, moral integrity, and financial responsibility, which limit business expansion and return women's labor to the domestic sphere. This study argues that gender-sensitive reintegration and entrepreneurship policies in Indonesia must go beyond individual capacity-building to address social infrastructure and strengthen collective support that provides safe spaces for more resilient and transformative entrepreneurial development among returning women.

Mukhamad Zulianto is a PhD candidate in the Department of Asia-Pacific Regional Studies at National Dong Hwa University, Taiwan. His research focuses on entrepreneurship, migrant workers, and socio-economic transformation in Southeast Asia. His work engages with interdisciplinary approaches that connect migration studies, economic development, and social theory. He has published research on topics such as migrant workers, entrepreneurship, and education. In addition to his research, he serves as a reviewer for several international academic journals and contributes. His academic profile reflects a strong engagement with both theoretical and applied research in regional and global contexts.

Regulating Subsistence: Food Governance, Conservation Policy, and Hmong Daw Women in Northern Thailand

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This paper examines how conservation policy restructures subsistence food systems in upland Northern Thailand by recasting local agrarian practices as environmental risk and administrative disorder. Focusing on Ban Huai Han, a Hmong Daw (White Hmong) village in Wiang Kaen District, Chiang Rai Province, it analyzes how the "60-day without burning" policy, forest reclamation measures, protected-area governance, and the reinforcement of plantation landscapes narrow the temporal and territorial conditions under which rotational subsistence can be sustained. Based on qualitative ethnographic research conducted between 2023 and 2026, including participant observation, semi-structured interviews with Hmong Daw women, key informant interviews, and document analysis, the paper shows that Tsua Tseb, a rotational swidden system, and Ntoo Xeeb, a Hmong institution of forest protection associated with Xeeb Teb and Xeeb Chaw, have long governed

fallow, resource access, and ecological restraint under conditions of uncertainty and limited state support. The paper argues that contemporary conservation policy does not simply protect forests; it extends state power into everyday agrarian life by delegitimizing local systems of environmental governance and privileging scientific metrics, bureaucratic categories, and administratively legible land uses. In this process, subsistence is not abolished but rendered precarious, conditional, and increasingly vulnerable to surveillance and restriction. The burden of this restructuring falls disproportionately on Hmong Daw women, who become central to maintaining food production, preparation, seed management, medicinal knowledge, and household care under shrinking agrarian conditions. These practices function as informal food governance from below, but they also reveal an unequal transfer of regulatory responsibility from institutions to households. When such care labor no longer stabilizes subsistence, some women extend their survival through informal gold mining along the Ngao River, linking food insecurity to extractive and toxic risks. Framed through food politics, feminist political ecology, Science and Technology Studies, and Joan Tronto's politics of care, the paper argues that upland food insecurity is produced not only by environmental change, but by regulation, unequal recognition, and uneven authority over land, labor, and survival.

Reni Juwitasari is a PhD candidate in Development Science at the Khon Kaen University, Thailand, and a researcher at the Asian Research Center for International Development, School of Social Innovation, Mae Fah Luang University. Her work focuses on climate change adaptation, gender, and community-based forest governance in Northern Thailand, with particular attention to how Hmong women negotiate vulnerability and agency under shifting environmental and policy regimes. Grounded in intersectionality and the capability approach, her research develops gender-responsive frameworks for resilience and adaptation in forest-dependent communities. She has published book chapters and journal articles on disaster risk reduction, education, traditional knowledge, and sustainable development in the Global South. Currently, her projects examine disaster resilience, sustainable development, and local knowledge for climate adaptation, supported by the Sumitomo Foundation, JSPS, MFU Research Fund, UNESCO Chair Kobe, and the Asia Pacific Academic Network on Disaster Displacement coordinated by the Raoul Wallenberg Institute.

PANEL 4 | AGRICULTURE

“Do Not Separate from the Land”: Indigenous Livelihoods in Upland Calinog, Philippines

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Indigenous Panay Bukidnon people in Central Panay Island, Philippines claim ancestral lands that include the headwaters of the Jalaur and Pan-ay Rivers. In contrast to popular depictions of them as being inherently close to nature and technologically distinct from outsiders, they—like other Indigenous Peoples around the world—are deeply interconnected with non-Indigenous “mainstream” society in the lowlands. Panay Bukidnon artisans sell their traditional hand embroidery (panubok), participate in academic conferences, and keep in touch with loved ones through the internet. Young people frequently live away from home for years in urban centers while pursuing higher education and more lucrative careers abroad than are available to them in the mountains. This article is based on 10 months of ethnographic field research in three upland Indigenous communities in Calinog, Philippines inclusive of participant-observation in local culture schools, semi-structured interviews, and attendance at government-run agriculture training sessions. It examines Panay Bukidnon livelihood strategies in relation to outsiders' stereotypical expectations of them being primarily agriculturalists who are unfamiliar with or wary of modern technologies. Panay Bukidnon people with whom I spoke expressed strong preferences for adapting newly introduced agricultural methods alongside their own traditional knowledge and crops, including ritually significant varieties of upland rice that can only be grown through the illegal practice of kaingin (swidden agriculture). At the same time, many parents also encouraged their children to enter into wage labor-based careers as sailors, tourism hospitality workers, in-home caregivers, or nurses. By focusing on the lived realities of Panay Bukidnon people as they seek to make a living and provide for their families, this article problematizes the contradiction between what is expected of Indigenous Peoples by outsiders and what they expect for themselves. I argue that this contradiction is one that Indigenous Peoples can use to their benefit when interacting with outsiders but that it also imposes unrealistic expectations on them which can negatively impact their sense of connection to cultural heritage and identity. In doing so, I draw upon an extensive base of interviews and more informal conversations with Panay Bukidnon young people, parents, farmers, artisans, produce vendors, musicians, and elders.

David Gowey is currently an adjunct professor of anthropology at Mesa Community College and Glendale Community College. He earned his doctorate in Sociocultural Anthropology from Arizona State University. His dissertation entitled “‘Where We Left Off, There We Begin’: Sugidanon Epic Performance in Calinog, Philippines” examined oral tradition, cultural education, and ethnic performance among Indigenous Panay Bukidnon communities. Fieldwork for this dissertation was completed as part of a Fulbright Open Research award with additional funding from the Endangered Language

Documentation Programme and the School of Human Evolution and Social Change at Arizona State University. Recently, his work has been published in *Colonial Latin American Review*, *Journal of Asian Studies*, and *Ethnohistory*. His research interests include ethnomusicology, comparative Iberian colonialisms of the Trans-Pacific region, and folkloristics.

Holy Dispossessions: Church, State, and Corporate Claims to Timor-Leste

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As climate emergency intensifies across the Transpacific, the commodification of the built environment has become an increasingly urgent political issue. In Southeast Asia, protests reached a fever pitch in 2025 over government corruption and the mismanagement of funds allocated to address climate resilience through public-private infrastructure projects. Yet the question of how religion operates within the interplay of climate change, finance capitalism, and the built environment has been largely overlooked. Many historians assume financial networks function in the monetary interests of those who organize them and that this organization is numerical, rational, and therefore secular. To date, little work has examined the contemporary religious regimes of ownership that fuel the ongoing global machinations of capital accumulation and environmental precarity. Consequently, scholarship has characterized religious proprietorship as peripheral modernities, detached from institutional capital and only concerned with preserving the remaining assets bequeathed to them by colonial empires past. Without critical analysis of religious extrastatecraft, scholars have overlooked some of the most powerful institutional capitalists and landowners of the postcolonial era. This paper explores the extractive spatial economies of church, state, and corporate entities in the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. Bringing together archival research and ethnographic fieldwork, this paper interrogates the propertied enmeshments between the Archdiocese of Díli, the government of Timor-Leste, and foreign developers as they co-constitutively make claims to Timorese land over and against the so-called “illegal settlements” of indigenous communities in the nation’s capital. I concentrate on the imminent forcible displacement of over four-thousand Timorese families to make way for Pelican Paradise Resort, a 550-hectare speculative five-star tourist center adjacent to the largest Catholic pilgrimage site in Timor-Leste. I scrutinize Pope Francis’ 2024 apostolic journey to Asia and Oceania, focusing on the sweeping state-funded infrastructure projects and building campaigns associated with his papal visitation to Timor-Leste. I argue that archdiocesan-led religious tourism initiatives—like the erection of a \$1.5 million permanent altar designed by Vatican engineers for Pope Francis’ open-air mass next to Pelican Paradise—function as covert strategies for public-private infrastructure projects that siphon revenues from the National Petroleum Fund’s \$40 billion reserve. By unearthing the spatial operations of religious tourism in Timor-Leste, this paper demonstrates how Catholic proprietorship secures capital within the domain of the church and state while keeping Timor-Leste economically dependent on finite offshore oil and gas reserves.

Lisa Beyeler-Yvarra is a historian of architecture and religion. A recent graduate of the School of Architecture and the Department of Religious Studies at Yale University, her work explores how religious proprietary powers are operationalized in the built environments of East Asia, Southeast Asia, and Oceania. Her current project, *New Dispensations: Catholic Property, Global Capital, and the Making of the Transpacific*, is a study of the spatial politics of Catholic institutions that mediate flows of capital in the Philippines, Guåhan-Guam, and Timor-Leste. Lisa’s work has been published in *Asian Diasporic Visual Cultures and the Americas* (Brill, 2023), the edited volume *Mapping Malcolm* (Columbia University Press, 2024), and the forthcoming collection *Enduring Objects* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2027). Her research has been supported by the Yale Centre for the Study of Race, Indigeneity, and Transnational Migration, the Richard U. Light Fellowship, and the MacMillan Centre for International and Area Studies, among others. This fall, she will embark on new archival research as a 2026-27 Rome Prize Fellow in East-West Intersections at the American Academy in Rome.

Calling Back Ancestors’ Ways: Revitalization of Traditional Agricultural Rituals in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

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In Java in general, the dual processes of modernization and religionization have gradually eroded not only indigenous belief systems but also ancestral agricultural practices. While the former transformed rice farming, especially among younger generations, religionization shifted societal attitudes toward rice from a sacred entity to a mere commodity. Modernization of agriculture, namely Green Revolution during Indonesia’s New Order era (1965–1998), including the construction of extensive irrigation systems, the introduction of new rice varieties, and the widespread use of chemical fertilizers and modern farming techniques, stigmatized traditional practices as primitive and inefficient. Consequently, rice rituals declined in many areas, though they never disappeared entirely. Some farmers continue to perform *wiwitan* rituals before harvesting,

often in secrecy to avoid accusations of idolatry. More recently, alongside the global resurgence of indigenous rights movements, interest in revitalizing ancestral cultures, religions, and practices has increased. In Indonesia, where religion and culture are institutionally distinguished, movements for indigenous land rights and for the recognition of indigenous religions have developed along separate trajectories. The latter, however, embeds ancestral agricultural practices as an integral component of indigenous religious rituals. In Yogyakarta, although communal ancestral rice-farming practices have largely vanished, collective memories remain strong. Older generations who once participated in these traditions are still alive, and manuscripts documenting ancestral practices continue to circulate within certain families. Drawing on these memories and texts, younger generations, who affiliated with indigenous religion organizations supported by university-based activists, are attempting to reactivate ancestral rice rituals within contemporary social life. This paper examines the reactivation of traditional rice farming rituals and practices in Yogyakarta by the adherents of indigenous or ancestral religion (*agama leluhur*). I argue that global discourses on religion and ecology, indigenous people rights, traditional ecological knowledge, and freedom of religions or beliefs have created spaces for cultural articulation and claim for recognition of these rights and practices. Yogyakarta's political interest to maintain its status as a "Special Region" and its symbolic role as a center of Javanese culture (*adat*) are expected to facilitate this process by the advocates of indigenous religion followers.

Najiyah Martiam is a guest lecturer in the Center for Religious and Cross-cultural Studies at Gadjah Mada University. She is also the founder and CEO of a new environmental initiative, Godong Sukun (Breadfruit leaf) Environmental Collective, which focuses on environmental education, research on religion and the environment as well as environmental action. She earned her PhD in August 2024 from the University of Florida with a dissertation titled "Tropical Islam: Indigeneity, Religion, Environment, and Gender Relations in Indigenous-Muslim Communities in Indonesia", which explored the intersections of indigeneity (*adat*), religion, environmental ethics, and gender dynamics in Indigenous Muslim communities. She holds a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Technology (specializing in food science and microbiology) and a master's degree in Religious Studies, both from Gadjah Mada University. Her research interests include science and religion, indigenous traditions, foodways, art and spirituality/religion, and environmental movements such as permaculture and other creative ecological initiatives.

PANEL 5 | MEDIA

The White Building and Kavich Neang's Infrastructures of Dream

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This paper draws on cultural analysis, ethnographic, and interview research with the Anti-Archive film collective in Phnom Penh to investigate creative response to contemporary conditions of urban displacement, capitalist extraction, and environmental destruction faced by Cambodian communities. Cambodian filmmaker Kavich Neang's three acclaimed films about the famed White Building unpack the destruction of the community in which he grew up: the 1960s post-independence, pre-war experiment in public housing turned post-genocide artist collective that stood in Phnom Penh from 1963 to 2017) when the state evicted residents, sold, and demolished it). Anti-Archive, the film collective that Neang helped to found obliquely records and recalls histories of state, colonial and capitalist violence, building an alternative infrastructure of creative expression, education, and film production. This study builds on recent scholarship addressing creative industries and infrastructures in globalized Southeast Asian cityscapes (particularly Việt Lê's *Return Engagements*, Jasmine Nadua Trice's *City of Screens*). I argue that the infrastructures Neang remembers and (re)creates in his three films about the White Building are oriented toward revised and liberatory relationships to dominant histories, stories, and state policies. In this way, their works rewrite the space of dream in both literal and imaginative capacity-building as part of a crucial turn in internationalist Southeast Asian art and storytelling.

Emily Mitamura is a poet and scholar of gender, race, film, and empire. With commitments to Third World and women of color feminisms, critical refugee studies, postcolonial thought, and Asian/American expressive culture, her book project unpacks narrative afterlives of colonial and mass violence in Cambodian life, investigating how the story of violence becomes a terrain of political life negotiated, contested, and reimagined by survivors and kin. She is currently Postdoctoral Fellow in the Gender, Sexuality, Women's Studies Program at Bowdoin College and will start as Assistant Professor of Asian/American Cultural Studies in the Department of English and Media Studies at Bentley University in Fall 2026.

**Visualisation of Institutionalised Invented Tradition:
Tonari Gumi (1943), Japanese Film Propaganda in Indonesia,
 and the Continuity of Surveillance and Control**

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In 1943, Nippon Eighasha produced *Tonari Gumi*. A two-part film focuses on the establishment of the *Tonari Gumi* system in a neighbourhood in Java, Indonesia, during the Japanese occupation—a system for distributing food and supplies, cleaning the village, and helping the unfortunate. Interestingly, after independence in 1945, *Tonari Gumi*, as a structure, is still used and has become part of the “tradition,” which is reflected in Neighbourhood Associations (*Rukun Tetangga*/RT) and Citizens Associations (*Rukun Warga*/RW). *Tonari Gumi*, as argued by Kazuo Kobayashi (2007), is an “invention of tradition.” Along with *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), RT and RW have become an effective system for monitoring and controlling citizens to ensure conformity to shared norms and values, in line with Japanese wishes. As tradition, *gotong royong*, RT, and RW might be rooted in Indonesian culture, but, as systems, they reflect the policies of the occupier. During 1942-1945, in their attempt to establish the ideal condition, the Japanese incorporated propaganda, including film, to push down the implementation of their “values”. Intriguingly, the studies of Japanese film propaganda in Indonesia are limited. Many scholars have thoroughly analysed the history of the “invention of tradition”, but the film itself remains untouched. In publications on Japanese propaganda media from 1942 to 1945, *Tonari Gumi* is mentioned only briefly. As a moving-image medium, it remains understudied and has not been analysed independently. Whether through the lens of film studies or from its historical perspective as visual instructions on how to behave during the occupation. In this research, I argue that non-theatrical film, including propaganda, contains more than mere mind manipulation and brainwashing. *Tonari Gumi* is a complex, multilayered audiovisual media that offers meaning beyond its narratives. Through close reading of its formal elements and archival research, I understand how the “invention of tradition” is visualised and how that visualisation remains relevant in Indonesia today, while complicating the idea that Indonesian nationalism derives from its local and traditional cultural values. Following Stanley Cavell’s conception of knowing and acknowledging, *Tonari Gumi* can be seen from two sides. On one side, as a knowing, the film is a product of an occupying force. On the other hand, in terms of acknowledging, *Tonari Gumi*’s scenes are internalised as a visual description of the community’s system and structure, aided by the political projects of the Old Order and the New Order.

Harifa 'pye' Siregar is a faculty member at the Visual Culture Literacy Research Group and head of Culture Hub Moving Image Lab at the Faculty of Arts and Design, Bandung Institute of Technology (FSRD ITB), Indonesia. He earned his PhD in Moving Image Studies from Georgia State University. His research focuses on non-theatrical film, film history, and film archives. His dissertation, “Location, Moving Images, and Industrialisation: Goodyear’s Documentary, *Conquering the Jungle*, and Changing Landscape of a Plantation Site”, discusses *Conquering the Jungle*, an industrial film by Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company in 1920 and 1939 about their plantation in Sumatra and how it affected the site’s development, the global rubber market, and the people’s historicity, among other things. At FSRD ITB, he has been actively involved in teaching and researching the related issues of Indonesian contemporary visual and material culture, as depicted in film and historical archives.

**Whose Media?: Refiguring Authorship and Responsibility in
 Inter-Asian Media Co-Production**

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Co-production, the act of producing film with significant multinational financial and creative input, has been an important part of the development strategy for Singaporean film and television industries since the Singapore Film Commission was established in 1998. Though Singapore has made co-production agreements globally, co-productions with Asian partners have been key as the Singaporean media authorities position the local media industry as a key player in inter-Asian media development. While co-production fosters the growth of a smaller film industry through sharing resources and knowledge, co-production also introduces questions about whether certain media texts truly belong to a certain country’s “national cinema”. Understanding the problem of attribution of national cinema as akin to problems of the attribution of authorship and responsibility for a text or speech act, this article argues that applying sociologist Erving Goffman’s concept of the production format to international media industries will elucidate how collaborating industries may variously claim credit for a particular media text. Goffman was concerned with the overly simplistic attribution of responsibility for the production of any given utterance to a single speaker. Instead, he showed that there are at least three roles associated with the production of any given utterance: a principal, in whose name the utterance is made; an author, who orders and conceives the word of the utterance; and an animator, who voices the utterance. This article takes this model, applies it to media texts instead of utterances, and scales the three roles from individuals to national media industries that can claim aesthetic and cultural credit for their involvement in the creation of a given media text. The article brings together historical, ethnographic,

and interview data. A brief history of non-Singaporean film production in Singapore, alongside Singaporean co-production strategies, is presented. Ethnography conducted at the Asian Television Forum in 2021 and 2022 shows how media producers from the Asia region situate their own as well as Singaporean media production in a comparative global regime of media industries. This is supplemented with interviews conducted with Singaporean media professionals which create a narrative of the Singaporean media industry largely serving as an animator (in Goffman's sense) for the creative direction of foreign media industries.

Kenzell Huggins is a cultural and linguistic anthropologist who studies the construction of social value around and through screened entertainment media industries, with particular attention to the semiotics of media. His dissertation research examines the production of film and television in Singapore. The project explores the values attached to developing film and television production in a place historically perceived to be at the peripheries of global media production. These issues are analyzed through the conceptual lens of animation, understanding media production as the semiotic construction of life. Kenzell holds a PhD in Anthropology from the University of Chicago and BA in Anthropology from the University of Notre Dame. His work has been supported by the National Science Foundation's Graduate Research Fellowship Program. He is currently a teaching fellow at the University of Chicago.

PANEL 6 | PERFORMANCE

Examining the Impacts of Rice-Merit Networks among the Karen Communities in Thailand

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Rice-sharing practices among Indigenous communities play a central role in sustaining socio-cultural relationships, ritual values, and ecological responsibility, yet their broader impacts as integrated community systems remain underexplored. Despite growing scholarship on Indigenous food systems and moral economies, limited attention has been paid to how such practices operate as integrated religio-cultural systems linking ecology, ritual, and social protection. This study examines the impacts of Rice-Merit Networks (RMNs), grassroots community-based organisations among Indigenous Karen Catholic communities in northern Thailand, asking how ritualised rice-sharing practices function as holistic religio-cultural systems shaping multiple dimensions of community life. Drawing on the frameworks of moral economy, relational food sovereignty, and Indigenous knowledge systems, the study conceptualises RMNs as religio-cultural systems linking food circulation with the common good and ecological stewardship. A convergent mixed-methods design combined a structured survey of 390 participants (299 adults, 91 youth) recruited at three zonal rice-merit ceremonies in the Chiang Mai diocese (December 2025–March 2026) with 20 semi-structured interviews and ethnographic participant observation. Survey data were analysed using descriptive statistics, independent-samples t-tests, one-way ANOVA, and Pearson correlation. All five dimensions were perceived at high to very high levels (overall $\bar{x} = 4.28$, $SD = 0.49$), with ethnic identity highest ($\bar{x} = 4.41$) and ritual knowledge lowest ($\bar{x} = 4.14$). Independent-samples t-tests indicated that adults scored significantly higher than youth, with minimal gender differences, a marginally significant effect emerging for ethnic identity alone ($p = .048$). While ANOVA revealed variation across zones and participant roles, correlation analysis showed strong positive relationships among the key variables, including a particularly strong association between social protection and ecological care ($r = .820$). Overall, the findings advance scholarship on Indigenous moral economies by conceptualising RMNs as a religion-based mercy economy: a local infrastructure of social protection, ecological guardianship, and cultural continuity with relevance for Indigenous food sovereignty in contemporary Southeast Asia.

Michael Bistis is a PhD candidate in Philosophy and Religion at the Assumption University of Thailand, and a lecturer in the Faculty of Humanities at the Saengtham College in Thailand. He previously served as a school principal among indigenous communities in Northeast India, shaping his interests in education, culture, and community life. His research spans anthropology of religion, cultural anthropology, Southeast Asian indigenous studies, migrant studies, the Asian Catholic Church, and Catholic education in Asia. He examines how religious worldviews, moral economies, and cultural practices influence sustainability, belief, and social ethics. His doctoral work focuses on Southeast Asian Indigenous communities, exploring the implications of cosmologies and rituals for Christian thought and anthropology. His research also engages debates on religion, society, solidarity, ecological ethics, and Indigenous resilience. He is currently conducting research with Catholic Indigenous communities in northern Thailand. He contributes to interdisciplinary scholarship linking religion, culture, ethics, and community transformation in Asia.

**From Allegory to Memory:
Intercultural Translation and Collective Memory
in Padayon, a Post-Pandemic Mindanaoan Performance**

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This paper examines Padayon, a devised performance created by Teatro Guindegan in 2022, based on Gil Vicente's sixteenth-century morality play *Auto da Alma*. Drawing on a Practice-as-Research approach supplemented by insights from performance ethnography, the study investigates how a historical Portuguese allegory was transformed into a contemporary Mindanaoan performance through collaborative artistic practice. Using interpretation worksheets, translation activities, workshop records, personal reflections, rehearsal documentation, scripts, and production archives, the analysis traces three interconnected stages in the devising process: the translation of text, the translation of experience, and the translation of performance. The findings suggest that the most significant acts of intercultural translation occurred not through linguistic adaptation alone but through collective interpretation, memory work, and embodied creation. Collective memory functioned as the critical bridge through which *Auto da Alma* acquired new meanings within the lived realities of Mindanaoan student-artists in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. The paper further argues that intercultural translation remained ongoing through subsequent restagings of Padayon, demonstrating how performance memories continue to be inherited, reinterpreted, and reanimated by new ensembles. By tracing the movement from allegory to memory, the study contributes to discussions of intercultural theatre, devised performance, collective memory, and Southeast Asian performance-making.

Ted Nudgent F. Tac-an is a theatre practitioner-researcher and cultural educator based in the Philippines. He holds a Master of Education (major in Mathematics Education) and a Master of Arts in Education (major in Cultural Education) from La Salle University – Ozamiz. He completed a professional diploma in Intercultural Theatre (Acting) at the Intercultural Theatre Institute in Singapore and is currently pursuing a doctorate in Technology Education at the University of Science and Technology of Southern Philippines. He served as Director of the Educational Technology Center of La Salle University from 2020 to 2025 and is currently designated as Director of Student Affairs, Culture, and Arts. He has been the artistic director of Teatro Guindegan since 2021 and is the founding lead of the Beyond Fortress Collective. He serves as Secretary of the National Committee on Dramatic Arts and is Executive Board Member of the Association of Cultural Offices in Philippine Educational Institutions. His research examines devised performance, intercultural theatre, arts-based learning systems, and even educational technology in Southeast Asia.

**Sounding Chinese in Singapore: KTV, Getai, and the
Differential Audibility of Chineseness**

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This article places two scenes of Singaporean Chinese musical life side by side: a KTV room where my Singaporean Chinese friends sing Mandopop, and a getai (歌台) stage where Hokkien, Teochew, and Cantonese songs are projected outward into public space. I juxtapose them not to set the modern against the traditional, but to ask how the category of Chinese is sounded into being, and made audible in entirely different ways. What counts as Chinese sound in Singapore, I argue, is historically specific. At the center of my argument lies the postcolonial CMIO framework, which extends colonial logics of race management and couples race to language; this framework has accumulated across colonial history and the management of everyday sonic life. The 1979 Speak Mandarin Campaign extended its logic into the acoustic register, functioning less as a practical language policy than as a profound auditory reorganization of the “Chinese” category. By pushing dialect out of radio, television, and everyday public speech, it did not merely change what people spoke; it reshaped what Chinese was expected to sound like, and how people learned to hear it. Drawing on Ochoa Gautier's aurality and Feld's acoustemology, I treat KTV and getai as two acoustic scenes, and on Robinson's critical listening positionality to interrogate my own hearing as a mainland Chinese listener never socialized within CMIO. In the KTV room, a shared Mandopop repertoire gathers as Sinophone intimacy, making the space feel homogeneous while masking incommensurable modes of listening. On the getai stage, dialect remains audible, but only because the same framework admits it as rite, performance, and heritage, bounded by curfews and licensing. I hold my own position as both analytic and ethical limit, wary of a hungry listening that would force heterogeneous sounds into legible categories. What emerges is not a unified Chinese sound but a differential audibility: race heard as everyday infrastructure, a violence we hardly notice, through which to listen is already to be sorted into who can hear what, and where.

Tianyu Wang is a PhD student in Ethnomusicology at the Schulich School of Music at McGill University. His research explores how listening practices turn into forms of everyday violence within specific local frameworks, and he is passionate about the intertwining of liveliness and silence in acoustic environments. Currently, he is renewing his focus on the intersections of multispecies studies and ethnomusicology. He is wary of the reproduction of center-periphery dynamics, observing that “hungry listening” remains a mainstream practice across various settings.

PANEL 7 | FOOD

Between Host Nation and Homeland: Indonesian Restaurants as Transnational Culinary Nodes in Singapore

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Indonesian cuisine in Singapore is often regarded as overlapping with Malay cuisine, a conflation that this paper seeks to challenge. This paper explores how Indonesian restaurants in Singapore navigate their position between two nations: as providers of halal food in the host country whilst simultaneously serving as representations of Indonesian cuisine abroad. Drawing on archival research, field observations, and material culture analysis, this paper proposes the concept of transnational culinary nodes to argue that the position of Indonesian restaurants in Singapore is the result of a layered historical process ranging from migration during the colonial era, halal practices, to cultural diplomacy through cuisine that predated the state's official formulation of it as gastrodiploacy, understood as the use of food and culinary practices to reinforce state-led public and cultural diplomacy. The concept of transnational culinary nodes is developed by expanding James Farrer's framework of transnational culinary fields, incorporating halal governance as a variable that has been overlooked. Two restaurants examined as case studies are Rumah Makan Minang (est. 1954) and IndoChili (est. 2012). Both have received dual recognition from Singapore through inclusion in the Singapore Tourism Board Halal Directory, and from Indonesia through official gastrodiploacy programmes Rumah Makan Minang via Komunitas Rasa Indonesia and IndoChili via the Wonderful Indonesia programme. Taken together, these cases suggest that the effectiveness of Indonesian gastrodiploacy is not determined solely by state programmes, but also by non-state actors who had previously established the presence of Indonesian cuisine abroad. Indonesian restaurants in Singapore thus constitute a soft power infrastructure formed through the long-standing movement of people and food between two neighbouring nations sharing Nusantara roots.

Prima Nurahmi Mulyasari is a PhD candidate at the History Programme, School of Humanities, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, and holds an MA in History from Leiden University, the Netherlands. Her research focuses on culinary history, transnational history, and urban history. She has co-authored several academic papers, including “Culinary Diaspora: An Anchor for Indonesian Gastrodiploacy in the Netherlands” (*The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 2023), “Considering Australia: Exploring Indonesian Restaurants in Promoting Ethnic Foods as an Instrument of Indonesian Gastrodiploacy” (*Journal of Ethnic Food*, 2023), “A Global Pela: The Moluccan Diaspora in the Sister City of Vlissingen-Ambon” (*Diaspora Studies*, 2024), and “Indonesia's Spice-Based Gastrodiploacy: Australia and Africa Continents as Potential Markets” (*Journal of ASEAN Studies*, 2024), “Development of Maritime Culinary Tourism in Bangka-Belitung Province: Synergy of Blue Economy and Indonesian Gastrodiploacy” (*Handbook of Sustainability in Tourism and Hospitality in Indonesia, Reference Works in Business and Management*, 2025).

“Work Like a Cow, Fed Like a Chicken”: Food Control and Moral Governance among Indonesian Migrant Domestic Workers in Hong Kong

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This paper examines food control among Indonesian migrant domestic workers (IMDWs) in Hong Kong as a central yet underexplored mechanism through which migrant care labour is governed and morally ordered. While existing scholarship has documented the precarious working and living conditions of domestic workers, food deprivation is often treated as incidental, an outcome of employer neglect, cost-saving strategies, or individual cruelty. Shifting this perspective, the paper argues that hunger is not merely endured but actively produced, regulated, and moralised as part of everyday labour governance. The paper addresses three questions: (1) How is food organized, restricted, and monitored in the daily lives of IMDWs? (2) How do these food practices shape workers' holistic well-being, dignity, and sense of self as migrant caregivers? (3) How do everyday food practices operate as an intimate mode of governance within live-in migrant domestic labour regimes? Drawing on in-depth interviews, the analysis shows how food is tightly controlled in workers' daily lives. Participants describe preparing abundant meals for their employers' households while surviving on leftovers, rationed portions, or food consumed in secrecy. Eating is frequently monitored and evaluated: workers are accused of being “lazy”

or “greedy” if they eat “too much,” while the ability to endure hunger is framed as a marker of discipline, gratitude, and moral worth. By centring food as an analytical lens, this study contributes to migration and feminist scholarship by demonstrating how power operates through everyday, embodied practices. The paper reveals how migrant precarity is produced not only through legal and economic structures but through the moral regulation of the most basic human need.

Yiqiu Huang (Mia) is a PhD candidate in the Department of Social Work and Social Administration at The University of Hong Kong. Her doctoral research focuses on migration, gender, and labour, with particular attention to the lived experiences of Indonesian migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong. Using qualitative methods, including in-depth interviews and photovoice, she examines how violence, care, and everyday practices shape migrant workers’ embodied, emotional, and holistic well-being. Her broader academic interests lie in feminist theory, migration studies, and the politics of everyday life in the Global South. She has presented her work at international academic venues, including seminars and workshops in Cambridge and Manchester. She has also worked on projects related to gender-based violence, minority stress, and health inequalities. Her work aims to contribute to critical understandings of labour, inequality, and resilience among marginalised populations.

(Southeast) Asian Fusion Food in Asia: The Ethnicity Representation at Vietnamese Restaurants in Japan

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When food culture travels, it confronts a contradictory tension between adaptation and authenticity, a dilemma typically for migrant restaurateurs. Meanwhile, mainstream nationals are often cast as passive consumers rather than active participants who reproduce, hybridize, and educate dominant clientele about the ethnic cuisines. While Asian fusion food is well-recognized in the West, the transformation of Asian ethnic food within Asia and its related social processes remain understudied. Japan presents a compelling case study, given the prevalence of ethnic restaurants owned by Japanese nationals alongside accelerated immigration from Southeast Asia. Among that, Vietnamese migrants have become the second-largest foreign population, as well as the growing visibility of Vietnamese restaurants across the country. Drawing on the concepts of culinary authenticity and localization, this paper examines how Vietnamese restaurants in Japan have constructed and represented their ethnic authenticity over time. It focuses on the perspective of both mainstream and migrant restauranters, exploring how they negotiate local foodscapes and respond to the perceived expectations of their targeted clientele. The study employs a mixed-method approach, combining Tabelog web-based data from 1197 Vietnamese restaurants nationwide with subsequent ethnographic fieldwork conducted at nine restaurants across the Kansai region between 2022 and 2023. Over the past four decades, Vietnamese restaurants in Japan have evolved through three distinct developmental stages: Introduction, Fusion and Consolidation. Beginning with a simplified version of a few iconic dishes, Vietnamese food was blended within a broader (Southeast) Asian fusion category before reaching a recent period of culinary reclamation. In the earlier stages, mainstream restauranters served as indispensable cultural intermediaries who incorporate local ingredients, adapt culinary techniques and translate this minor cuisine for Japanese clientele. Japan’s expanding culinary diversity and migrant populations have since created structural opportunities for Vietnamese migrants to enter the industry and make more authentic culinary experiences. In turn, these migrant-owned restaurants become spaces of comfort and nostalgia for co-ethnic diners, and vital intercultural spaces, contributing to Japan’s urban multiculturalism.

Vien Thi-Thuc Dinh is a researcher specializing in global environmental studies and natural resource economics from Kyoto University. Her doctoral research focuses on the culinary adaptation of Vietnamese migrants in Japan, specifically exploring the mutual exchange of food practices between migrant and host residents at the household, restaurant and community levels. Her featured work highlights how traditional ecological and food knowledge of foraging and consuming wild plants carried by Vietnamese migrants to Japan and Germany contributes to local sustainability, cultural continuity, and social integration in the host societies. Beyond her academic work, Vien is actively engaged in numerous projects regarding multicultural community gardens, heritage cuisine classes, and grassroots food initiatives surrounding the Vietnamese and Asian diaspora across Asia and Europe.

PANEL 8 | URBAN CULTURAL ANXIETIES

Fluid Identities in Kuala Lumpur's Public Art Murals: Narrating Multiculturalism through Visual Heritage

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Public murals have become a conspicuous medium through which multicultural capitals in Southeast Asia stage questions of identity, belonging, and cultural authority. In Kuala Lumpur, murals proliferate across heritage precincts, back lanes, and riverside corridors under the combined pressures of indigenous tradition, religious conservatism, and cosmopolitan urban aesthetics. Yet prevailing scholarship tends to treat such murals either as economic instruments of heritage tourism or as decorative additions to urban regeneration, overlooking both the creative agency of local artists and the mediating role of the municipal authority that commissions, approves, and maintains them. This study examines how Malay muralists and Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur (DBKL) together negotiate and narrate fluid identities through public visual heritage, and it develops a localised analytical framework suited to postcolonial urban contexts. The research was conducted as a qualitative case study in central Kuala Lumpur, with twenty-five murals selected through snowball sampling across heritage precincts, back lanes, and ethnic enclaves. Non-participant observation was combined with sixteen semi-structured interviews: fifteen with muralists and relevant property owners, and one with a DBKL architect responsible for mural projects in the Project Implementation and Building Maintenance Department. The data were coded thematically through a three-dimensional model that integrated visual semiotic resources, cultural representation, and identity negotiation. Identity emerged not as static cultural inheritance but as situated strategy, in which indigenous motifs, geometric patterns, and global street-art conventions were recombined to produce what are identified as guerrilla symbols, that is, visual elements repositioned to circumvent official categorisations of cultural belonging. Crucially, institutional negotiation with DBKL surfaced as a co-authoring force: the municipality's guidelines, commissioning routes, and maintenance regimes did not simply constrain the artists but actively shaped the repertoire of permissible fluidity. The study contributes to Southeast Asian studies a context-sensitive framework through which murals can be repositioned as arenas of symbolic politics jointly produced by artists and municipal agencies, with implications for urban cultural policy, heritage governance, and comparative research on public art across the region.

Hanyin Xu is a doctoral candidate in Fine Arts at the Academy of Malay Studies, Universiti Malaya. Her research sits at the intersection of visual culture, urban studies, and identity politics, with a particular focus on street art, urban graffiti, and public art in multicultural Southeast Asian cities. Her current doctoral project investigates how Malay muralists in Kuala Lumpur negotiate fluid identities through visual symbols, spatial choices, and cross-cultural collaborations. She has undertaken extensive fieldwork across Kuala Lumpur's back lanes, heritage districts, and emerging art quarters, and her work engages closely with local artist collectives and community-based art projects. She is broadly interested in how public visual heritage mediates relationships between the state, ethnic communities, and the urban environment.

The Cost of Building a "Garden City": A Phenomenological Reading of Melancholia in Postcolonial Singapore Chinese Novels

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This paper deploys a Husserlian transcendental phenomenological framework to critically interrogate the spatial politics and aesthetic resistance in postcolonial Singaporean Chinese fiction. Examining Fan Beiling's *The Black Arch* (1986), Yeng Pway Ngon's *A Man Like Me* (1987), and Joo-Ming Chia's *M40* (2009), this study maps an evolutionary genealogy of spatial *melancholia* that systematically tracks the cost of building Singapore's state-mandated "Garden City". Rather than adopting a traditional, mimetic thematic analysis that merely treats literature as a passive mirror of social reality, this paper operationalizes a phenomenological textual strategy rooted in the traditions of Roman Ingarden and the Geneva School. By treating fictional characters as loci of intentional "quasi-consciousness," it meticulously charts the violent, structural rupture between the subjects' inner experiential acts (*noesis*) and the highly disciplined, hyper-rationalized urban landscapes (*noema*) manufactured under the ideology of environmental authoritarianism and ruthless pragmatism. Across these three novels, which correspond to three pivotal historical junctures of Singapore's urban transformation, spatial melancholia matures from a visible symptom into an all-pervasive existential atmosphere. In *The Black Arch*, the melancholy manifests as a localized, somatic resistance and subsequent resigned endurance as organic vegetable-garden houses (*caiyuanwu*) are forcibly systematized into standardized public housing (Housing & Development Board Flat). In *A Man Like Me*, the affect untethers from definitive spatial catalysts, diffusing into a generalized, pathological alienation within the polished, sovereign public spaces of the global metropolis, where the subject's intentional links to the local environment are cleanly severed. Finally, in *M40*, pushing into the twenty-first century where environmental governance ostensibly shifts into a consultative

“environmental democracy”, the repressed spatial memory erupts uncontainably. The protagonist’s anachronistic, subterranean return to the ruins of childhood drainage ditches and the defiant enshrinement of evicted vernacular deities within corporate skyscrapers represent an absolute refusal to forget. Drawing upon Sigmund Freud’s distinction between mourning and melancholia and Sara Ahmed’s concept of the “politics of emotion”, this study ultimately argues that Singaporean Chinese literature strategically leverages pathological melancholia as an unyielding testimonial against state assimilation. By stubbornly clawing at the pristine, manicured surface of the Garden City, these narratives preserve an irreparable, bleeding structural fissure, enacting a profound historical witness that refuses any lukewarm compromise or therapeutic reconciliation with spatial hegemony.

Qianru He is a PhD candidate in the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, working on Singapore literature and culture studies. Her research involves Singapore Chinese literature, especially poetry and novels. She is also a special correspondent and columnist for *Lianhe Zaobao*, actively involved in the creation and dissemination of Chinese literature in Singapore.

Rethinking Chinese New Villages beyond Heritage: Ethnicised Governance and Forced Urbanisation in Malaysia

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This paper rethinks Chinese New Villages (NVs) in Malaysia beyond their portrayal as sites of historical memory, cultural heritage, or ethnic community life. Existing scholarship has largely examined NVs through lenses of history, identity, or socio-economic development, often treating urbanisation as a natural pathway toward integration. This paper argues instead that NVs should be understood as ethnicised spaces of governance through which Chinese urbanisation has been spatially organised, managed, and constrained by the state. The paper asks: What role have NVs played in shaping the trajectories of Chinese urbanisation in Malaysia, and how do they challenge the assumption in urban theory that urban integration leads to de-ethnicisation? Rather than accelerating an organic urban transition, NVs institutionalised a form of forced urbanisation, whereby Chinese populations were reorganised into concentrated settlements and incorporated into differentiated systems of governance. Conceptually, the paper draws on Henri Lefebvre’s theory of the production of space, particularly the spatial triad of conceived space, spatial practice, and lived space, alongside theories of ethnicised governance and spatial hierarchy. Methodologically, it adopts a historically grounded, qualitative case-based approach centred on Serdang, one of the urbanised NVs in Selangor. Empirical materials include archival records, policy documents, field observations, and fieldwork interviews. The findings show that while urban integration has transformed NVs materially—through improved infrastructure, economic connectivity, and incorporation into urban systems—it has not dismantled their underlying institutional structures. Mechanisms such as differentiated land tenure, administrative categorisation, and dual governance arrangements continue to reproduce NVs as distinct ethnicised spaces. This results in a persistent paradox: material integration alongside institutional segregation. By analysing NVs as products of forced urbanisation and enduring spatial governance, this paper contributes to broader debates on urbanisation, state–society relations, and ethnic politics in Southeast Asia. It argues that urbanisation should be understood not only as a developmental process, but as a spatial political strategy through which states manage difference in plural societies.

Jau Mei Cheng is a PhD student in Chinese Studies at the Universiti Malaya. She holds a Master of Arts degree, with a thesis examining the transformation of Serdang New Village from a resettlement space into an urban-integrated New Village, focusing on how urbanisation reshapes governance structures and local political dynamics in Malaysia. Building on this work, her doctoral research investigates Chinese New Villages as ethnicised spaces of governance, analysing how state policies, local administrative frameworks, and urban expansion shape differentiated trajectories of Chinese urbanisation. Her research interests lie at the intersection of Southeast Asian studies, political sociology, and urban studies, with particular attention to ethnic governance, urban integration, and state–society relations in plural societies. Methodologically, her work combines archival research, policy analysis, qualitative interviews, and field observation. Through Malaysia-based empirical research, she seeks to situate local-level dynamics within broader regional and comparative conversations on urbanisation and governance in Southeast Asia.

PANEL 9 | NEIGHBOURHOOD

A City in the Villages: Understanding Geographies of Urbanisation in the Hinterland of Jakarta

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As contemporary urban studies move beyond ‘methodological cityism’, urban scholars have argued to decentre the focus of theoretical and empirical urban studies from traditional cities to urban peripheries. In the context of urban Indonesia, one of the most notable peripheral urban processes is manifested in private-led new town development that encroaches on agricultural areas, which leading to a new urban geography on the outskirts of Jakarta. Among other hinterlands of Jakarta, Tangerang has been known as hotspots for new towns or *kota mandiri* in the Jakarta Metropolitan Region. Despite the ongoing process of city-making through new town development, I use the term hinterland in this study since Tangerang covers all the definition of the term: a lying inland from a coast, outside major metropolis (Jakarta), and economically tied to Jakarta (from being space of agricultural extractions in historical *Ommelanden* Batavia to the current source of skilled/professional labour for Jakarta). By using historical geography as approach, this paper aims to investigate the spatial genealogy of urbanisation in Tangerang, 40 km southwest of Jakarta. This paper will show pattern of urban morphology and diagrammatic representations of centralities which highlight kampung as spatial entity that has been always central in urban process since colonial era. This paper uses archival maps from KITLV, Rupabumi Indonesia collections and satellite imageries (Pleiades and Sentinel) as main sources of data to analyse the land use and identify urban centralities over time. In this study, I attempt to reconstruct the past and current geographical scenes of Tangerang and contextualise these data with the logic of urbanisation. This paper will demonstrate how private developers are rapidly transforming agricultural land into urban areas, encroaching on the pre-existing rural landscapes in the study area. This study will also highlight the shift of centralities in Tangerang. In the colonial past, kampung served as the extension of power seen by the existences of *landhuis* (house of landlords) and *pasar* (traditional market) as the central business district (CBD). Before new town develops, many traditional markets managed to function as CBDs in Tangerang. As new town develops, traditional markets are neglected and the centralities shift to modern CBDs built by the private developers. This study will contribute to the construction of legibility of Tangerang as an ideal urban laboratory and a more nuanced understanding of urbanisation which enrich urban geography in Southeast Asia.

Dwiyanti Kusumaningrum is a PhD student in the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning at The University of Melbourne and a researcher at Urban-Rural Dynamics Research Group, Research Centre for Population Studies, National Research and Innovation Agency of The Republic of Indonesia. She earned her undergraduate degree at the Department of Geography, Universitas Indonesia, followed by master double-degree at The Graduate School of Universitas Gadjah Mada and University of Twente. She is engaged in human geography, especially topics related to extended urbanisation, gentrification, geography of settlements, and socio-cultural dynamics of kampung in Indonesia. Her works have appeared in both Indonesian and international journals such as *Masyarakat Indonesia*, *Journal of Property Research* and *Journal of Urbanism*. Her writings are also published in scholarly media such as *The Conversation*, *Indonesia at Melbourne*, and *The Malay Archipelago*. This paper is part of her PhD project supervised by A/Prof Amanda Achmadi and Dr Ash Alam at The University of Melbourne.

Educating the Neighborhood: Waste Banks, Social Work, and Community Dreams in Jakarta

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Jakarta’s waste banks (*bank sampah*) are neighborhood-level recycling initiatives that the Indonesian state endorses as a community realization of the circular economy. Waste banks are predominantly organized by housewives active in neighborhood associations (RT/RW) or the Family Empowerment and Welfare Program (PKK), and thus have emerged as “trusted” partners, over informal waste pickers, both for the government and corporations. This paper asks what the state, corporations, and organizers alike have taken for granted: the community as a self-evident subject and site of recycling. It argues that it is not coincidental that “community” and “recycling” have come together in this way; it is through the practice of recycling that a community recognizable to the circular economy paradigm is produced. In practice, these recycling initiatives changed individual recycling practices into “community recycling” and, in doing so, produced a “recycling community” legible to the emergent circular economy paradigm. Organizers articulated this vision through the idiom of education (*edukasi*), transforming environmental management into a pedagogical framework where teaching and being taught become the primary markers of neighborhood belonging. This essay is based on participant observation, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and in-depth household interviews conducted at two-to-four-week intervals.

Ultimately, this essay attends to the intimate social milieu of the household, illuminating the ways in which domestic sociality and the gendered labor of the women who sustain it are restructured when the circular economy becomes the new paradigm of urban development.

Jiwon Kim is a PhD candidate in Anthropology at Johns Hopkins University. Her research explores the environmental crisis as a form of mundane and intimate violence. This central question has guided her engagement across academia, activism, and public service. Jiwon's current project examines recycling as the transformation of discarded objects' materiality and meaning within Jakarta's grassroots waste governance, focusing on communities engaged with waste banks. Previously at Seoul National University, she studied the contestation of parenthood and victimhood in South Korea's humidifier disinfectant tragedy, work that led her into environmental health activism and service on a government special investigation.

Negotiating Livelihoods through Participatory *Kampung* Upgrading in Jakarta

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Participatory kampung upgrading has emerged in Jakarta as an alternative to forced relocation, premised on the expectation that on-site redevelopment with resident involvement will preserve community social and economic practices. Kampung are dense, self-built settlements that have sustained household economies for decades through proximity to informal commerce and livelihood support. Understanding whether participatory upgrading fulfils this expectation is critical as vertical housing programmes expand across Indonesian cities. Existing scholarship on Jakarta's vertical kampung has documented weak economic outcomes but has not traced the spatial mechanism through which upgrading produces them. The present study addresses this gap through the cases of Kampung Susun Kunir and Kampung Susun Aquarium, both situated within the Kota Tua historical zone, asking whether participation sustains livelihoods when urban restructuring alters spatial conditions. The study adopts a qualitative comparative case study design. Drawing on spatial and activity mapping, field observation, and semi-structured interviews with twenty residents across the two sites, it analyses livelihood conditions before and after upgrading through a socio-spatial framework examining three dimensions: spatial configuration, socio-spatial interaction, and livelihood practices. The analysis distinguishes between internal transformation within the settlement and external transformation in the surrounding Kota Tua area. Two patterns of disruption operate concurrently. Internally, vertical housing dissolves the dwelling-to-street interface and with it the visibility and pedestrian flow on which informal trade depended. Externally, Kota Tua revitalisation redirects circulation, displaces markets, and narrows residents' access to former income sources. Spatially fixed livelihoods, including kiosk operation, rent-room ownership, fishing, and clothing trade, are most severely affected, while spatially mobile livelihoods remain largely insulated. New cooperative roles absorb a portion of the affected workforce but introduce financial obligations that did not exist before upgrading. The findings demonstrate that participatory upgrading maintains community presence but does not sustain the spatial conditions required for livelihood practices. Participatory planning operates at the scale of the building, while livelihood conditions are shaped at the scale of the city. Policy that confines participatory authority to the building while urban transformation proceeds on its own logic risks undermining the socio-spatial systems it is intended to sustain.

Wibisono Bagus Nimpuno is a PhD student in Architecture at the Housing and Settlement Research Group, Institut Teknologi Bandung, and a lecturer at Universitas Mercu Buana Jakarta. His research focuses on informal settlements (urban kampung), housing, urban design, and urban morphology, with particular attention to spatial behavior and socio-spatial processes. His current doctoral research examines the socio-spatial dynamics of kampung upgrading in Jakarta, focusing on the transition from landed settlement to vertical housing and its implications for spatial configuration, built form, and everyday social and economic practices. The study employs spatial and activity mapping, morphological analysis, and qualitative interviews to understand changes in spatial structure and resident experiences. He has been involved in an architectural team for Community Action Plan programs aimed at improving informal settlements in Jakarta, contributing to participatory planning, spatial assessment, and design formulation. His research interests include housing transformation, settlement upgrading, and the relationship between spatial configuration and social life in rapidly changing urban environments.

PANEL 10 | CONCEPTUALIZING FOOD**Vietnamese's *Ăn Chay*: Rethinking Veg*n Motivations beyond Western Frameworks**

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Veganism is often defined and debated through Western ethical and political frameworks that privilege relatively fixed understandings of motivation, identity, and practice. Existing scholarship has therefore tended to centre questions of authenticity, purity, and activist commitment, while paying less attention to how plant-based practices emerge in non-Western contexts. Addressing this gap through the case of Vietnam, this paper responds to and extends recent work by human geographers calling for greater attention to the understudied “invisible” vegan spaces, places, plants, and peoples beyond dominant Western frameworks. The paper draws on qualitative data collected during two months of fieldwork in Da Nang, Vietnam, in January and February 2026. It is based primarily on semi-structured interviews with 17 vegan practitioners, supported by broader field observations across 32 vegan venues, interviews with 18 restaurant owners, engagement with online discussions, and informal conversations with both vegan and meat-eaters. Building on recent work in vegan geographies, the paper approaches veganism as plural, situated, and practice-based rather than as a singular universal identity. The findings show that Vietnamese veg*n *ăn chay* practice is motivated by a much wider range of meanings than those typically foregrounded in Western debates. First, *ăn chay* is strongly shaped by Buddhist traditions, spiritual beliefs, and ritual observances, including ideas of compassion, karma, merit, luck, vows, and moral self-cultivation. Second, participants often associated *ăn chay* with bodily and emotional wellbeing, describing it as a way to feel lighter, calmer, healthier, and more at peace, especially in relation to stress, illness, and food safety concerns. Third, while animal ethics and health concerns were important in sustaining long-term *ăn chay* practice, environmental sustainability was notably absent as a primary motivation. This paper argues that Vietnamese *ăn chay* add important nuance to broader understandings of veganism by showing how plant-based practice can be spiritually embedded, culturally flexible, and meaningful without necessarily being organized around a fixed vegan identity. In a collectivist and post-socialist context where the space for overt civil society activism is more limited, *ăn chay* practice has taken a less confrontational and more culturally embedded form. In doing so, the paper calls for a more geographically sensitive and globally inclusive understanding of veganism, and for greater recognition of diverse pathways toward decentering animal meat from food systems and everyday social life.

Bich Thuy Nguyen is a PhD candidate in the Discipline of Geography and Planning at Macquarie University, Australia. Driven by her interest in sustainable food transitions, Thuy completed a Master of Research on the cultivated meat and alternative protein industry in Australia and is now investigating meatification and emerging possibilities for “demeatification” in her home country, Vietnam. Her broader research interests include food geographies, sustainability transitions, political ecology, and everyday ethics and emotions around eating.

On the Margins of Supply: Dognapping in Peri-Urban Areas in North Sulawesi

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Based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted since 2024 in the markets of Manado and Tomohon, the article analyzes an informal supply circuit that supplements the availability of dog meat through opportunistic capture in peri-urban and rural areas. This circuit brings into relation two interdependent figures: the *doger* (dog thief–collector) and the dog itself. Publicly denounced yet economically functional, dog theft intensifies during festive periods when demand for dog meat rises sharply. The analysis shows that the dog’s capturability derives from its polymorphic status. As *anjing kampung* (village dogs), these animals occupy an intermediate position between pet, hunting auxiliary, ritual mediator, and food resource. Their mobility across domestic and public spaces, combined with partial attachment to households, makes them simultaneously close and available. This relational openness allows their periodic requalification as game. In this context, the *doger* emerges not as an ordinary thief but as a liminal operator within a festive food economy. Drawing on techniques, skills, and temporalities analogous to hunting, he transforms a socially proximate animal into a consumable resource. While his actions are morally condemned, particularly as violations of domestic boundaries, they remain tacitly integrated into local systems of provisioning. Dognapping thus operates as an extension of a hunting regime grounded in opportunistic capture. Engaging with anthropological debates on hunting and human–animal relations (Bird-David, Ingold, Hallowell), the article proposes that predation does not stand in opposition to domestication but emerges from its relational margins. By situating dog theft within a continuum of hunting practices, it contributes to an anthropology of food procurement attentive to the unstable

boundaries between wild and domestic, licit and illicit, and to the moral ambivalences that structure contemporary food economies.

Nicolas Baran is a PhD candidate in Anthropology at Université Catholique de Louvain (Belgium) and a researcher affiliated with the ERC-funded INTERSPECIFIC project. His research focuses on wildlife trade, food practices, and human–non-human relations in North Sulawesi, Indonesia. Drawing on long-term ethnographic fieldwork conducted since 2024, he investigates the social, economic, and ecological infrastructures that sustain wildlife commodity chains, from hunting and market exchanges to digital forms of circulation and representation. His current work examines multispecies interactions involving bats, snakes, and dogs, with particular attention to how practices of hunting, butchery, consumption, and trade shape local social worlds. Combining ethnographic and historical approaches, his research explores the entanglements of humans and animals within contemporary processes of environmental, economic, and cultural change in Southeast Asia. His work also benefits from ongoing interdisciplinary collaboration with historian Roger A. C. Kembuan (Universitas Sam Ratulangi, Indonesia), whose expertise has greatly enriched this research.

Sensing Seeds: Embodied Knowledge, Feminist Political Ecology, and the Co-production of Environmental Knowledge in Thailand

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Seed legitimacy in Thailand is a contested site related to value, authority, and practice. Formal expert standards, developed through laboratory testing, certification standards, and regulatory frameworks, define what counts as a “legitimate” seed. These expert systems align with international intellectual property regimes and privilege uniformity, stability, and documentation. At the same time, the farmer-developed and community-maintained seeds are widely cultivated, exchanged, and trusted through sensory, relational, and ecological practices embedded in everyday life, even though these seeds fall outside expert definitions. This research examines how seed legitimacy is produced and contested through everyday encounters between expert authority and community lived practice. Using seed governance in Thailand as an empirical lens, the research contributes to discussions in political ecology of knowledge and environmental justice. Over seven months of multi-sited qualitative fieldwork, this research engaged with seed networks, seed festival, NGO practitioners, local officials, researchers across northern, northeastern, eastern, and southern Thailand. Employing field visits, semi-structure interviews, and participatory workshop, this paper shows how farmers and community groups sustain alternative forms of legitimacy through everyday practices such as sensory evaluation, collective emulations, exchange networks, and relational governance. This research highlights that expert and community legitimacy are not binary but a contested and negotiated process. Firstly, expert legitimacy is not neutral technical process but an active form of knowledge-power, shaping which seeds are rendered visible and valuable. Meanwhile, Farmers and communities do not completely reject expertise; instead, they selectively engage with expert systems while subtly develop everyday practices that claims legitimacy. These practices are rooted in memory, trust, everyday embodied experience, ecological adaptation, and collective governance. These everyday practices quietly expose how epistemic inequality and procedural injustice are embedded in technical standards. What is more, farmers and communities rework the boundaries of environmental governance. Seed legitimacy, thus, appears as a contested area shaped by ongoing interaction and negotiation between expert authority and community practice. This research offers broader insights into how alternative forms of environmental knowledge persist, negotiate, and sometimes transform dominant expert regimes under conditions of climate change and agrarian transition. Empirically, it shows how legitimacy comes from practice rather than being imposed from above. Conceptually, it expands political ecology by viewing everyday governance as a space where authority is quietly built, challenged, and reformed.

Yuting Zhou is a PhD student in Geography and Environment at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Her research focuses on political ecology, environmental justice, and the politics of knowledge in Southeast Asia, with particular attention to seed governance, agrarian transitions, and community-grounded seed systems in Thailand. Drawing on political ecology of knowledge, science and technology studies, and participatory research methods, her work explores how environmental knowledge, particularly seed knowledge, is produced, legitimized, and contested across scientific, state, and community contexts. She holds an MA in Anthropology of Food from SOAS, University of London, and has over ten years of professional and research experience across education, development, and policy-related fields in Asia. She is a Just Future Mekong Fellow hosted by the Center for Social Development Studies at Chulalongkorn University and an alumna of the Asia Pacific Leadership Program (APLP) at East-West Centre, and has participated in regional research communities through LuceSEA Political Ecology Field School.

PANEL 11 | GOVERNANCE, LAND, AND NATURE**Navigating Malaysia's Fragmented Frontiers:
Primates, Privatized Property, and the Post-Plantation Landscape****Kymerley Chu**
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According to the World Bank, postcolonial Malaysia's extreme urban poverty slashed from an estimated 49% in the 1970s to just 6.2% in 2022. During the New Economic Policy era (1971-1991), the Malaysian government established the Federal Territories (FT), particularly demarcating federal and state land-use divisions between various residential townships such as Petaling Jaya, Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya, Lebuhan, and more over the years. These new zoning designations paved the way for the government's compulsory land acquisition of secondary forests for public housing complexes and conserved large-scale forest reserves (e.g., community, state, and federal parks) with the purpose of maintaining multicultural societal harmony, previously exacerbated by British colonialism (Aihwa Ong, 1987, Christine B.N. Chin, 1998). Accompanying this urban policy transformation, local plantation elites established conglomerates in secondary forests, sites of defunct oil palm plantations, and mining sites, to diversify their portfolios in property development, federal highways, and ecotourism spaces (Edmund Terence Gomez and K.S Jomo, 1997; James Ferguson and Akhil Gupta, 2008). Since the 1980s, public-private partnerships, in the dominant form of Build-Operate-Transfer (bot) model, have played a pivotal role in expanding Malaysia's car-centric urban infrastructure. In ongoing dissertation fieldwork, I investigate how local Malaysian scientists, property developers, housing advocates, and park custodians negotiate and contend between ecological research, community-based conservation, and corporate funding models as land disputes and human-primate conflict are exacerbated in peri-urban neighborhoods. How do ecological models of territoriality become entangled with economic understandings of property management, and what are their policy consequences for urban development? Departing from moralizing multispecies interactions, citizen science sampling data is now mobilized as a speculative policy tool in absorbing the 'shock externalities' of uneven development impacts such as property damage, housing insecurity, and human-primate conflict (Nicholas Malone, 2021; Neil Smith, 1984). Conservation, especially in tropical peri-urban areas, emerges as a dominant paradigm that alters the ways in which urban planning takes shape. My paper interweaves understandings of socio-ecological dynamics, post-liberal economic formations, and urban spaces. What does it mean to live, dwell, and contend in 'green cities' that promise competing and contradicting visions of postcolonial harmony?

Kymerley Chu is a PhD candidate in Anthropology at Princeton University and a visiting scholar at Monash University Malaysia. Her dissertation research has been funded by the Wenner-Gren Foundation (Gr. 11070), the Royal Anthropological Institute Emslie Horniman Fund, the Princeton High Meadows Institute, and the Company of Biologists. Specifically, she examines how free-ranging primate bodies and their physiologies traverse through uneven development projects, economic valuations, and cultural histories that all mutually intersect in Malaysia's post-plantation landscapes. For more information, please visit her webpage at <https://anthropology.princeton.edu/people/kymerley-chu> and her Bluesky handle is @dialecticprimates.bsky.social.

**Mediating Memory, Contesting Peace: Youth, Social Media,
and the Digital Reworking of Conflict in Southern Thailand****Nadia Payo**
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How do younger generations come to understand peace in societies where they have little or no direct experience of the conflict that preceded it? This question is increasingly important in contexts where digital media have transformed how memories of conflict are produced, circulated, and contested. Drawing on qualitative interviews with youth in the Southern Border Provinces of Thailand, this paper examines how young people engage with conflict-related memories through social media and how such engagements shape their interpretations of peace. The paper argues that dominant approaches to collective memory and peacebuilding continue to assume that memories of conflict are transmitted across generations through relatively stable institutions such as families, communities, and schools. However, this assumption is increasingly difficult to sustain in digitally mediated environments. Participants in this study did not inherit a coherent narrative of the conflict. Instead, they reconstructed understandings of the past through fragmented, competing, and often contradictory representations encountered across digital and non-digital spaces. To explain this process, the paper introduces the concept of interpretive inheritance, which refers to the inheritance of competing interpretive frameworks rather than fixed memories of conflict. The findings demonstrate that these reconstructed memories shape how peace itself is understood. While some participants interpreted peace through everyday stability, coexistence, and normalcy, others evaluated peace through unresolved grievances, contested histories, and questions of justice. Many occupied uncertain positions between these perspectives. What emerged was not a shared generational understanding of peace but multiple and sometimes

competing interpretations shaped by how participants engaged with memories of the conflict. The paper contributes to debates on collective memory, digital media, and peacebuilding by demonstrating that peace is not understood solely through present conditions but through competing reconstructions of a past that many young people never directly experienced. In Southern Thailand, digital media have become a key arena through which both conflict and peace are continuously reinterpreted.

Nadia Payo is Lecturer in Political Science at the Faculty of Political Science, Prince of Songkla University, Thailand. She holds a PhD in Political Science with a specialization in conflict and peace studies. Her research focuses on conflict, peacebuilding, governance, and youth engagement, with particular attention to the Southern Border Provinces of Thailand. Her work examines how communities navigate protracted conflict and how digital technologies shape conflict narratives, collective memory, and peacebuilding processes. She is particularly interested in the intersections of youth, digital media, and peace, exploring how online environments influence political engagement, identity, and coexistence in conflict-affected societies. Her publications focus on the socioeconomic dimensions of conflict, youth resilience, and peacebuilding in Southern Thailand. Beyond academia, she is actively involved in research initiatives that promote dialogue, social cohesion, and sustainable peace in the region.

Decolonising Peace Studies: Toward a Framework for Understanding Islamic Epistemologies of Peace

Syaiful Anam

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This paper explores how Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) in contemporary Indonesia engage with global ideas of peace, pluralism, and social harmony through locally grounded pedagogical practices. Focusing on *Peacesantren Welas Asih* in Garut, West Java, the study investigates how this faith-based institution reinterprets Islamic teachings on compassion (*welas asih*) and peace within broader global discourses on peace education and interfaith coexistence. Drawing from ethnographic fieldwork, including participant observation, semi-structured interviews with educators and students, focus-group discussions, and document analysis, this research examines how peace education is taught, internalised, and performed in everyday *pesantren* life. It asks three guiding questions: (1) How do teachers and students articulate the meaning of peace and conflict resolution within the *pesantren* setting? (2) In what ways are global concepts such as tolerance, dialogue, and human rights translated into Islamic moral vocabularies? (3) How does this pedagogical process shape youth religious subjectivities and social imaginaries in an increasingly interconnected world? The findings reveal that *Peacesantren Welas Asih* acts as a “glocal” moral space—where local Islamic ethics meet transnational norms of peace and citizenship. While drawing inspiration from global peace discourses, the *pesantren* reformulates them through Qur’anic and prophetic ethics emphasizing compassion, justice, and communal harmony. Students emerge as moral agents who navigate between local religious commitments and global ideals of coexistence, positioning themselves as peacebuilders both within and beyond their communities. By situating this case within the broader Southeast Asian context, the paper argues that *pesantren* like *Welas Asih* contribute to a uniquely Southeast Asian Islamic cosmopolitanism—one that embodies religious tradition while engaging with global ethical frameworks. The study offers new insights into how Islam, youth, and education interact amid globalisation, and how religious institutions mediate between the universal and the particular in shaping everyday peace.

Syaiful Anam is a PhD candidate in Peace Studies at the University of New England, Australia. His doctoral research, “An Ethnographic Journey into *Peacesantren Welas Asih*: Exploring the Nexus of Islam, Youth, and Everyday Peace in an Indonesian Islamic Boarding School”, investigates how Islamic education shapes youth agency and everyday practices of peace in Indonesia. His academic interests span peace education, faith-based peacebuilding, and Southeast Asian Islam. Prior to his PhD, he taught courses on conflict resolution and peace studies at the university level and has been involved in community-based peace initiatives in Indonesia. His broader work examines how local Islamic institutions engage with global discourses on peace, pluralism, and coexistence.

PANEL 12 | WOMEN, HISTORY AND RURAL TRANSFORMATION**Filial Piety Strategies of Poor Rural Women in the Mekong Delta: A Cultural Studies Perspective****Trinh Ngoc Linh**University of Social Sciences and Humanities,
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The Vietnamese Mekong Delta stands at a precarious crossroads where the escalating climate crisis—marked by record-breaking salinity intrusion and land subsidence—intersects with deeply rooted patriarchal structures. This paper explores the “filial piety strategy” (chiến lược hiếu thảo) employed by poor rural women as a primary response to environmental and economic vulnerability. Moving beyond the perception of filial piety as a static moral virtue, this study utilizes a cultural studies lens to analyze it as a dynamic survival mechanism that reconfigures gender roles and migration patterns across Asia. Grounded in qualitative research within the delta, the paper addresses two substantive issues. First, it investigates the “feminization of agriculture” and the “double burden” placed on women who remain in their villages. While men often migrate for industrial labor, women are bound by the Confucian expectation of being “fire-keepers” and caregivers for the elderly. They must navigate a “double standard” where they are pressured to be modern breadwinners while simultaneously adhering to traditional “Three Submissions and Four Virtues” (Tam tòng, Tứ đức). Second, the study examines the phenomenon of “Inter-Asia marriage migration” to Taiwan and South Korea. It argues that for many young women from impoverished delta households, taking a foreign husband is not merely an economic escape but a deliberate “filial sacrifice” intended to liquidate family debts and provide for aging parents in a region where land is increasingly disappearing due to erosion. In this context, kiều hối (remittances) act as a materialization of the daughter’s filial duty from a distance. Finally, the research interrogates the Vietnamese state’s “No One Left Behind” policy. It suggests that the policy’s effectiveness is often undermined by a “gender-blind” approach that fails to recognize the invisible moral infrastructure governing women’s choices. By analyzing the interplay between local ecological shocks and globalized labor flows, this paper posits that the delta’s resilience is a profound cultural negotiation. It calls for a reconfiguration of social protection systems that account for the gendered costs of maintaining ancestral roots amidst a changing climate.

Trinh Ngoc Linh is a PhD candidate in Cultural Studies at the University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University – Ho Chi Minh City. Her research focuses on Confucianism, invented traditions, new religious movements, and contemporary Confucian discourse. She has contributed over 15 research papers to reputable academic journals both in Vietnam and internationally. Linh has presented her findings at conferences in Japan and South Korea and is currently a member of a national-level research project in Vietnam. She was a recipient of the doctoral research scholarship from the Korea Foundation, affiliated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea (2022–2023), and was honored with two research awards on Daesoon thought from the Daesoon Academy of Sciences at Daejin University, Korea, in 2023 and 2025. Beyond her academic work, she is an active translator in non-profit communities, disseminating the contemporary teachings of spiritual leaders such as Sadhguru and Mohanji.

Women and Historiography in Early Modern Makassar (17th Century)**Rismawidiawati**University of Indonesia
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Early modern Southeast Asian historiography generally positions men as the primary actors in politics and trade, while women’s roles are frequently marginalized or reduced to domestic figures and genealogical symbols. This article challenges this tendency by demonstrating that Makassar’s advancement in the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries, as part of wider transregional networks, was not accompanied by commensurate recognition of women’s contributions in existing historical narratives. Makassar’s seventeenth-century development coincided with processes of Islamisation, following the kingdom’s official conversion to Islam in 1605, which reshaped political authority and social relations. This study examines the roles of women in early modern Makassar and explains why their contributions remain obscured in historiography. It demonstrates that women were active agents in political, economic, and social processes, yet their roles have been obscured in historical narratives shaped by gendered modes of knowledge production. Conceptually, the article is grounded in gender as an analytical category within critical historiography, drawing on feminist and postcolonial perspectives to analyse how power relations, including those linked to religious transformation, shape the production and transmission of historical knowledge. Methodologically, the research adopts a qualitative historical approach, with Makassar (South Sulawesi, Indonesia) as a case study in early modern Southeast Asia. Primary sources include Portuguese and Jesuit archives, as well as European travel accounts, before VOC dominance. VOC records such as the *Dagregisters Batavia*, *Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren*, *Generale Missiven*, and the Speelman Archive (1669–1670), together with diplomatic materials in the *Corpus Diplomaticum*

Neerlando-Indicum, are used to examine political, commercial, and administrative developments and their socio-economic implications. These colonial sources are read critically and combined with local manuscripts, including *Lontara Gowa dan Tallo*, *Patturioloang ri tu Talloka*, and *Lontara Bone and Suppa*, which record genealogies, warfare, and elite marriages in which women played strategic roles as inter-dynastic connectors within evolving Islamic political cultures; the manuscripts utilised in this study are based on versions that have been transcribed and translated by scholars, enabling systematic textual analysis and comparison with other sources. The study also engages with selected secondary works that incorporate primary materials and offer critical historiographical perspectives. The findings indicate that Makassar women played central and demonstrable roles in dynastic alliance-building, diplomacy, and the management of economic and maritime networks during a period of religious transformation and intensified global interaction. Evidence from both colonial and local sources shows that women were actively involved in political marriages that structured inter-polity relations, participated in diplomatic correspondence, dominated local market systems, and, in some cases, controlled maritime trading ventures. These roles were not marginal or implicit, but explicitly documented within the sources themselves. The article argues that the marginalisation of women in Makassar historiography does not stem from a lack of evidence, but from interpretive frameworks that have systematically prioritised male actors and overlooked women's agency within existing records.

Rismawidiawati is a researcher at the National Research and Innovation Agency, Indonesia, and a doctoral candidate in the Department of History, Faculty of Humanities, Indonesia University. Her research focuses on gender and local wisdom in Indonesia, with a particular interest in how women's roles are constructed and represented within historical and cultural contexts. She has authored several academic publications, including a recent study on the *belis* tradition in Southwest Sumba, as well as co-authored article on the *sasapton* tradition in the Banten Sultanate. She has also served as a reviewer for internationally reputable journals and actively participates in academic conferences and seminars. Through her doctoral research, she aims to contribute to broader discussion on gendered knowledge production and the role of local wisdom in shaping historical narratives.

Constructing and Negotiating Gender Safeguarding in Energy Megaprojects: Local Institutions and Social Relation Context in Indonesia

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This article examines how gender safeguarding is constructed, operationalized, and negotiated within the Upper Cisokan Pumped Storage (UCPS) Hydropower Project in Indonesia. Drawing on debates in gender mainstreaming, safeguard governance, feminist institutionalism, and energy megaproject studies, it argues that gender safeguarding operates not merely as a technical policy instrument but as a contested institutional process shaped by power relations, social norms, and local institutional dynamics. Using a qualitative case study approach, the research combines document analysis, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions. The findings show that gender safeguarding was primarily framed through institutional risk management, inclusionary participation, and vulnerability-based protection. Women were largely positioned as vulnerable subjects in need of protection from project-related social risks, while safeguarding was operationalized through governance mechanisms and community-based interventions. Although these measures expanded institutional attention to gender concerns, implementation remained largely procedural and compliance-oriented, focusing more on protection and risk mitigation than on addressing structural inequalities related to resource control, decision-making power, and gendered divisions of labour. The study further demonstrates that the implementation of safeguarding was shaped by interactions between formal governance arrangements and informal social institutions. Local actors functioned as institutional mediators who interpreted, adapted, and translated safeguard objectives into locally meaningful practices. In practice, safeguarding was negotiated through everyday social relations, informal communication, community norms, and interpersonal trust rather than through formal mechanisms alone. The article argues that gender safeguarding in energy megaprojects is a continuously negotiated socio-spatial governance process and contributes to debates on megaproject governance, feminist institutionalism, and feminist planning by demonstrating that gender is a constitutive dimension of infrastructure governance and socio-spatial transformation.

Sri Mulyati is a PhD candidate in Urban and Regional Planning at Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB), Indonesia, with a strong academic and professional focus on gender, spatial justice, and development planning in Southeast Asia. She holds a Master's degree in Development Studies from Universitas Katolik Parahyangan and has more than 18 years of experience as a gender and social inclusion specialist working at the intersection of policy, planning, and community-based development. She currently serves as Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Consultant for the Upper Cisokan Hydropower Project, where she supports the integration of gender-responsive policies and worker protection mechanisms in large-scale infrastructure development. She combines rigorous academic research with extensive professional experience as a practitioner and in her research toward energy megaproject planning and infrastructure projects, leading advocacy, and

capacity-building initiatives on GBV prevention, care systems, and gender mainstreaming across ASEAN contexts. Her research interests include gendered planning discourse, rural-urban transformation, feminist planning, and the role of institutions in shaping inclusive and equitable development trajectories in Southeast Asia.

PANEL 13 | URBAN

The Crypto Circuit: Loudness, Flexing, and Entrepreneurial Urbanism through Bangkok

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This article explores the socio-spatialities of the crypto circuit, a transnational calendar of conferences and side events, to argue that entrepreneurial urbanism is being reshaped through embodied urban encounter and platform-mediated circulation. Drawing on 27 months of ethnographic fieldwork, semi-structured interviews, and content analysis across Bangkok and the broader circuit, I trace how urban co-presence is converted into digital loudness: a measurable and contested form of prominence with financial stakes. Flexing organizes this process through a dual valence, operating as both a multi-scalar spatial practice linking urban nodes across the circuit and a performative mode through which entrepreneurs project status and capture attention. Focusing on Bangkok, host of major conferences such as Devcon VII and Blockchain Genesis Week, I situate these dynamics as a broader reworking of entrepreneurial urbanism: no longer solely anchored in municipal strategies of inter-city competition, but driven by platform-mediated actors who convert embodied presence into digital visibility and financial value.

Al Lim is Presidential Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Singapore Management University. At a time when finance and technology are reshaping economic life in Southeast Asia, his research examines how people navigate value and risk under conditions of pervasive uncertainty. His current book project explores the social worlds of crypto builders in Thailand, drawing on extended ethnographic fieldwork in Bangkok and across the region. His work has appeared in *Urban Geography*, *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space*, and *The Journal of the Siam Society*. He was awarded the H. Russell Bernard Paper Prize by the Society for Anthropological Sciences for his work on crypto and AI. He holds a combined PhD in Anthropology and Environmental Studies from Yale University, following an MSc in Urbanisation and Development from the London School of Economics and Political Science (overall best performance) and a BA (Hons) in Urban Studies from Yale-NUS College (*summa cum laude*). He has previously been Visiting Researcher at the Chulalongkorn University and IvyPlus Scholar at the University of California, Berkeley. He has also spent several years in ecosystem building and venture investing in AI and crypto startups.

Resonant Histories in Singapore's Forgotten Infrastructure

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In a city in perpetual development and motion, and where most residents are disinterested in history and believe such pursuits are “wasting time”, a group of excited Singaporean retirees gather around a buried water channel relating childhood stories of fishing in ditches and speculating the whereabouts of long forgotten food stalls. The evocative presence of water is a form of physical and temporal re-orientation: seizing otherwise fragmented social histories or memories from the unstable formulations of nationalism to find renewed relevance in the geographical present. In this paper, I argue that in a city with little presence of the past, Singapore's extensive hydraulic infrastructure network as a prominent feature of the island's topography serves as an entry point into the past. Hydraulic infrastructure not only catalogues the island's developmental history, but also serves as vectors of social memory, historical consciousness and national imagination. I describe how the ordinary citizens I study take on the role of ‘heritage enthusiasts’ to uncover the city's hidden urban archive through the lens of the city's hydraulic infrastructure network. I draw upon ethnography to suggest that their various entanglements with water, history and memory are attempts to navigate identity and belonging at a time of transformative change. Water is approached in this paper as an analytical and methodological tool attending to the neglected yet pervasive sense of the past. This is because water is a particularly prolific unit of study in Singapore. Its physical and affective intensities, with the strong social association it shares with time and memory, renders it a particularly effective medium for studying emergent historical consciousness. At the same time, water's material and symbolic significance is of particular importance to the urban environment: its indeterminable boundaries and omnipresence on a densely populated tropical island with high rainfall and intense water needs means that historically and contemporarily, hydraulic infrastructure on the island is a highly charged presence that organises both nationalist imaginaries and the island's political economy. In a city where most have little time for the past, it is important to draw attention to features in the landscape where the past

resides. This paper attends to today's global political climate, when it is particularly pressing to draw attention to heritage practices on the part of both Singaporeans and the state as they signal shifts in the contemporary social and geopolitical landscape.

Jean Chia is a sociocultural anthropologist who researches urban infrastructure, water and social histories in Singapore. Her work examines how belonging and identify, national imaginations and social memories are reshaped by urban and hydraulic infrastructure. She is currently a research associate at the Department of Anthropology at the University of Toronto where she is studying experiences of infrastructural change along Toronto's Don River Valley and Port Lands.

Paving the Way? Urban Order, Street Life, and the Moral Politics of Sidewalks in Hanoi

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Repeated campaigns to restore "urban order" (trật tự đô thị) on Hanoi's sidewalks have long sought to outlaw encroachment, makeshift building elements, and informal vending. By the mid-2010s, Vietnamese press coverage of so-called "exemplary streets" had already highlighted the short lifespan of the cleaned-up cityscape and the rapid return of everyday street practices. Renewed city-wide campaigns in 2025 revived the same vocabulary of civility—by which the city should look modern, clean, and beautiful—now coupled with stricter enforcement and pleas for increased public awareness. This recurrence raises a central question: what kind of order is being produced, through what ideological targets, and who does it serve? In a city marked by chronic scarcity of formal public space, Hanoi's sidewalks, even when commercially encroached, function as de facto public spaces where economic activity, social interaction, exercise, and informal gatherings intermingle. This hybrid publicness renders sidewalks both essential and controversial—celebrated as sites of everyday urban life yet condemned as obstacles to civility and walkability. Through the lens of "aesthetic governmentality" (Ghertner), recent ordering campaigns appear less as technical fixes than as moral and visual projects, where sidewalks become indicators of discipline, modern conduct, and national aspiration, staged through visibility, legibility, and comparison with exemplary urban elsewhere such as Singapore or Seoul. Yet the persistence of sidewalk life despite repeated clearances suggests that these interventions operate more symbolically than situatedly. Drawing on Ananya Roy's formulation of "informality as a mode of urbanization," this persistence is not treated as regulatory failure but as a governance logic in which ambiguity, selective tolerance, and periodic correction reproduce the very indeterminacy that campaigns seek to eliminate. Informality, in this sense, is not contrary to urban order but one of its operating conditions. At street level, this inversion remains incomplete without attention to how sidewalks function in practice. Approached through "assemblage urbanism" (McFarlane), Hanoi's sidewalks are recognized as sociomaterial configurations of tube houses, motorbikes, bodies, goods, rules, and rhythms. Repeated clearances fail not because elements are incorrectly targeted, but because relational orders—coordination, proximity, mutual dependence, and economic survival—reassemble faster than regulation can override them. It is at this intersection that the article proposes adaptive publicness as a conceptual requalification of existing negotiations: one that recasts sidewalk use as situated practices sustained by constraint, shifts evaluative criteria from visual clarity to relational capacities for coordination and livelihood, and reframes regulatory attention from erasure toward negotiated thresholds.

Olivier Jacques is an architect and urban researcher currently teaching at Vietnam National University. He received his PhD in Architecture from McGill University, where his research examined speculative urban development and the cultural, political, and aesthetic frameworks through which ideals of modernization have been pursued in contemporary Hanoi. His work has contributed to reframing debates on urbanization in the Global South through questions of volatility, idleness, and sociopolitical land dynamics, and has been shaped by long-term, embedded engagement with Hanoi's urban contexts. Trained in both professional and research-based architecture, Olivier approaches urban questions through architectural theory, spatial analysis, and design-based inquiry. Alongside academic research, he has been involved in design- and policy-oriented projects in Vietnam, including heritage preservation and community-based planning initiatives. His broader interests include postcolonial planning, everyday urbanism, and the tensions between formal design ambitions and vernacular spatial practices in Southeast Asian cities.

PANEL 14 | ISLAM**Seni dan Islam Sejalan: Understanding 'Permissibility' of Islamic Creative Practice in Indonesia's *Gema Islam* (1962-1967)****Katia Chaterji**Loyola Marymount University
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At an unprecedented meeting in Jakarta in 1961, the *Majelis Seniman Budajawan Islam* (MASBI) issued an opinion (*fatwa*) on the permissibility of diverse arts practices as they relate to Muslim identity and conduct. Led by Hamka, MASBI served as an advisory board to the Indonesian Islamic cultural organization known as *Himpunan Seni Budaja Islam* (HSBI). This *fatwa* was announced to the public on the inaugural pages of *Gema Islam*, HSBI's mouthpiece periodical that was in circulation for five years between 1962-1967. Read at home by HSBI members and the general public, this *fatwa* held relevance for cultural heritage practitioners and contemporary artists alike. It suggests that the struggle to formally define Muslim cultural heritage, tradition, and permissible creative practice were of central concern to Indonesian Muslim artists in the turbulent 1960s. At a time of heightened fear, repression, and censorship, Islam became a refuge for some artists to continue their creative practice while avoiding the crackdown from the State and the suspicion of their neighbors – a possibility explored by anthropologist Kenneth George on the career of Acehnese painter A.D. Pirous (George 2010). At the same time, Islam became a banner under which some Indonesians in fact justified the policing of other art forms, mobilizing some groups to endorse the actions of State and community actors. This article argues that the 1961 *fatwa* regarding Muslim artists must be revisited in light of the trajectory of 1960s Indonesia, a period where everyday artists (dancers, *dalang*, painters, thespians, etc.) were monitored for "permissible" practice, with extreme consequences should they be found in violation (Larasati 2013). This article asks how permissibility was defined by those who wrote the 1961 *fatwa*, and how the authors engage with Islam's textual and lived traditions in postcolonial Indonesia. The implications of this moment are significant. Not only did other cultural organizations form after HSBI to establish affiliations with Indonesia's myriad Islamic political parties, this *fatwa* also illuminates the Islamic legal debates that frame the relationship between State and the performing arts at a time of significant upheaval. No less important is the foundation of Indonesia's national arts academies in 1965, institutions that would cultivate Islamic performing arts pedagogy and train generations of Muslim arts practitioners. This article claims a relationship between these events and places a minimally studied text (the 1961 *fatwa*) at the center of negotiating identity, culture, and nationhood in Indonesia.

Katia Chaterji is Assistant Professor of Asian and Asian American Studies at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, California. She earned her MA and PhD in history at the University of Washington, and her BA in anthropology at the University of Chicago. An interdisciplinary scholar of maritime Southeast Asia, she engages with oral history, performance ethnography, and historical archives to research the shared histories between Islam and the performing arts in Sumatra, Indonesia. Her doctoral research was supported by US-Fulbright, among others, and contributed to understandings of mystical Islam in Sumatra and to ongoing debates around gender, piety, and performance. Her ongoing scholarship explores Islamic *dakwah* performing arts traditions of West Sumatra and Riau as embodied archives and as Islamic knowledge production historically contingent upon shifting politics towards permissibility of Muslim creative practice and the institution of the national arts academy.

Muslim Philanthropy as an Ethical Presence: Muhammadiyah in Christian-Majority Eastern Indonesia**Muhammad Afdillah**Sunan Ampel State Islamic University Surabaya
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This article examines the Muhammadiyah's philanthropic activities in the predominantly Christian regions of eastern Indonesia and their impact on Muslim-Christian relations. The current studies on Islamic philanthropy have focused on Muslim-majority areas, where Islamic charities are often viewed as a means of strengthening intra-Muslim solidarity, religious authority, and welfare services. Meanwhile, there have been fewer studies focusing on Islamic philanthropy in areas where Muslims are minorities. To fill this gap, this article scrutinizes Muhammadiyah's historical presence and philanthropic engagement in Eastern Indonesia, where Christianity is the majority, such as Papua, the Maluku Islands, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), and North Sulawesi, through schools, universities, hospitals, disaster relief programs, and community empowerment initiatives. The article argues that Muhammadiyah maintains its Islamic presence in predominantly Christian environments through the concept of *ethical presence*. This refers to a form of minority Islamic engagement that focuses on humanitarian service, civic contributions, and building trust, rather than seeking political dominance or aggressive proselytization. Drawing on public religion theories, the article demonstrates that Muhammadiyah's philanthropy functions not only as charity but also as a method for social integration and civic legitimacy, connecting bridging social capital, lived religion, and contextual Islamic ethics. Muhammadiyah's educational and humanitarian institutions foster everyday

interactions between Muslims and Christians, promoting interreligious coexistence through practical cooperation rather than formal theological dialogue. The article also discusses the emergence of the “Kristen Muhammadiyah” phenomenon, in which Christian and Catholic students develop emotional connections and sympathy for Muhammadiyah after studying in its institutions, while remaining committed to their own faith traditions. Although tensions remain over Christianization, mosque construction, and religious competition, Muhammadiyah’s philanthropic approach has generally mitigated religious polarization by emphasizing inclusive service, education, healthcare, and humanitarian ethics. Finally, the article demonstrates that Islamic philanthropy in minority contexts can serve as a means of ethical citizenship, foster interreligious bridge-building, and promote socially embedded da’wa in pluralistic societies.

Muhammad Afdillah is Lecturer in Interreligious Studies at the Department of Religious Studies, Faculty of Ushuluddin and Philosophy, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel (UINSA) Surabaya, Indonesia. He earned his PhD in Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations from Hartford International University in 2025. His research focuses on interreligious dialogue, Christian-Muslim relations, Indonesian Islam, and religion and the State. His latest publications include *Indonesian Islam and the Other* (2025) and *Scriptural Nationalism in Print* (2026). Afdillah also serves as Director of the Center for the Study of Religion and Peacebuilding at UINSA and Chief of the Office of Interreligious Dialogue for Muhammadiyah East Java. Beyond academia, he has facilitated numerous international and national peacebuilding and dialogue programs in collaboration with organizations such as KAICIID, UNAOC, Indika Foundation, and Indonesia’s Ministry of Religious Affairs.

Becoming Pious Palm Oil Bosses: Aspirational Mysticism in Indonesia’s Food Estate Frontier

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Scholarship on Sufism in Southeast Asia has predominantly framed Islamic mysticism as an ascetic ethical tradition, a spiritual coping mechanism, or a source of moral critique against capitalist modernity. While valuable, these approaches risk romanticizing Sufism by overlooking how mystical knowledge and practice can be reconfigured to actively sustain extractive development. This article intervenes in these debates by examining the transformation of Sufi discourses within Indonesia’s state-led food estate project in Pulang Pisau–Dadahup, Central Kalimantan—an extractive frontier shaped by overlapping economic crisis, ecological degradation, and agrarian restructuring. The study asks: how are Sufi discourses and practices reworked within frontier extractive projects, and what ethical, political, and class-related work do they perform in legitimizing extractive futures? Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork conducted among communities living in and around the food estate zone, the research combines in-depth interviews, participant observation, and critical discourse analysis of sermons, majelis taklim, and everyday spiritual narratives. I argue that, rather than constituting a counter-hegemonic ethic, Sufism in this frontier context operates as a flexible moral framework that renders extraction meaningful, survivable, and morally legitimate under frontier capitalism. The analysis identifies three interrelated transformations. First, Sufi epistemologies are rearticulated to frame large-scale land extraction—through food estate development and oil palm expansion—as a necessary response to socio-ecological crisis and as a benevolent state intervention aimed at improving livelihoods rather than exacerbating environmental destruction. Second, mystical teachings increasingly cultivate aspirational subjectivities oriented toward upward mobility and individual accumulation. Religious actors seek to move beyond semi-proletarian positions within plantation capitalism by aspiring to become pious palm oil bosses, reconciling entrepreneurial ambition with spiritual virtue. Third, Sufism functions not merely as a mechanism of spiritual coping but as a moral technology that actively motivates and legitimizes wealth accumulation within extractive regimes. At the same time, the ethnography reveals a grey zone of unresolved ethical tension. Expressions of suffering over ecological damage associated with earlier development projects—such as the Green Revolution—coexist with an acceptance of extractive futures framed as “new energy” and unavoidable opportunity. Rather than constituting resistance, these moments reflect a residual cosmological unease in which ethical discomfort persists but no viable non-extractive horizon is imaginable. To conceptualize this configuration, the article introduces the notion of aspirational mysticism, capturing how mystical piety, economic desire, and class aspiration become mutually reinforcing within structurally constrained choices. By foregrounding both alignment and ambivalence, this study challenges dominant portrayals of Islamic mysticism as inherently anti-capitalist or environmentally benign and contributes to broader debates on religion, development, and socio-ecological crisis in Southeast Asia.

Noorhidayah is a lecturer at the State Islamic University of Palangka Raya, Indonesia. She holds a PhD in Islamic Studies from UIN Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, with research focusing on the intersections of religion, food practices, and socio-ecological dynamics in Southeast Asia. Her work spans food regimes, political ecology, ecological justice, and legal pluralism in multi-ethnic Islamic contexts. She has conducted ethnographic fieldwork in urban and rural communities, and has participated in international research programs including Goethe University Frankfurt, and the National University of Singapore.

PANEL 15 | BUDDHISM AND THAILAND

Fruits of Desire: Nariphon Trees, Shifting Masculinities and the Making of the Sacred

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This paper examines the evolving narrative of the *nariphon*, mystical trees that bear fruits that ripen into the shape of beautiful women, in Thai Buddhist literary traditions, visual culture, popular media and amulet practices, with particular attention to the ways in which these expressions reflect shifting conceptions of masculinity. Existing scholarship and literature have largely framed the *nariphon* as embodiments of sexual temptation whose irresistible beauty challenges male discipline and self-control. Extending on these interpretations, this paper further argues that the transforming depictions of the *nariphon* reflect a reconstructed masculine ideal that progressed from virility to hybrid notions that privilege virtuous masculinity. Simultaneously, the paper explores the gradual sacralization of the *nariphon*, whereby they cease to function as merely objects of desire and are endowed with agency that is characterized by supernatural potency and divine qualities. Grounded in direct engagement with material evidence, this paper thus demonstrates the adaptability of the *nariphon* motif through time and space.

Roni N. Wang holds a PhD in Religious Studies from SOAS University of London. Her doctoral research examined Thai cosmological parks, with particular attention to representations of the *apāya*, the lower realms of existence. An independent scholar based in Lampang, Thailand, her multidisciplinary research engages with Buddhist visual, material, and ritual culture in Thailand. Her work explores temples as artistic platforms, cosmological narratives, and their tangible and visual manifestations, focusing on the intersections between Buddhist teachings, sacred spaces and contemporary cultural expression in Thailand.

Milinda and Modernity: (Re)Defining the Borders of Theravada Civilization

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The *Milindapañha* was a watershed text for the introduction of Pali literature and Theravada Buddhism into European scholarship in the nineteenth century, capturing the occidental imagination by bringing together, if only nominally, the Greek and Indian spheres of knowledge. Yet the *Milindapañha* also played an integral role in debates and discourses about modernity around the same time in South and Southeast Asia. This chapter will reveal the ways the *Milindapañha* became a contested site for religious reformers, government agents, even proto-nationalists in the region promoting their progressive and political agendas, defending Buddhism against Christian polemics, or trying to align themselves with the encroaching scientific worldview brought by colonial occupation. By focusing on a series of case studies from Burma, Thailand, and Sri Lanka during the latter half of the 19th and the first half of the 20th century, I will illustrate how the *Milindapañha* acted as a vector to work out many of the most pressing questions posed by modernity and colonial rule. These questions included the role of religion in society, the clash between Christianity and Buddhism, the assimilation of ideas from one civilization into another, and how Buddhism would survive in the face of new forms of knowledge and technology. The debates into which the *Milindapañha* was thrust played out in the Thai Royal Court, the merchant classes of Sri Lanka, and the monastic community of Burma, but they had much wider implications and shaped in part the development of Buddhism in Asia for the decades to come. Just as scholars in Europe were fascinated by the *Milindapañha*, the fact that this text had such a central role in the debates about modernity in Asia is not surprising, for it is the quintessential piece to work out the contradictions of Theravada Buddhism. Hence in many ways, the *Milindapañha* is a text that defines the literary, epistemic, even political borders of Theravada civilization itself.

Tony Scott, trained in Hong Kong and Toronto, is a scholar of Pali literature in Southeast Asia, pioneering a technique of dialectical philology to examine the political and social topographies of modern Pali texts and their commentaries in Myanmar. As a Japan Foundation-Global Japan Studies Fellow at the University of Tokyo, he is currently exploring how a centuries-old religious infrastructure and anti-imperial Buddhist internationalism supplied the raw materials for the world-historical projects of independence, nation building, and reconstruction in Cold War Asia. Tony also has interests in the theories and practices of meditation in early modern and modern Asia, Indigenous epistemologies around fossils and sacred geologies in western North America, and radical labour histories in the mining towns of Alberta, like those of his hometown, the Badlands of Drumheller.

“Esoteric” or “Normative”? Reconsidering the Circulation of Premodern Kammatṭhāna (Meditation) Traditions in Southeast Asia through Manuscripts and Murals

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It is often assumed that meditation (kammattṭhāna) traditions in Southeast Asia prior to the twentieth century CE were primarily preserved and transmitted through direct, embodied practice and close teacher-disciple relationships rather than through written texts or visual media. Some scholars, notably Crosby, Skilton and Choempolpaisal, further argue that premodern meditation traditions in this cross-cultural region were esoteric in nature, requiring initiation and legitimate membership within specific traditions. Consequently, these practices were transmitted within relatively closed circles and were not openly disclosed to the public sphere. While this view captures important aspects of these traditions, it does not fully account for their historical complexity or the broader realities of their transmission. In this paper, I contest this argument by examining a corpus of illustrated manuscripts and mural paintings dated to the nineteenth century in premodern Thailand. This study reveals that the illustrations in both the manuscripts and the mural paintings were created on the basis of the *Visuddhimagga*—a classical Theravāda Buddhist meditation text that remains influential in Southeast Asia, particularly in Burma, Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia—as well as premodern meditation manuals. I argue that this corpus of illustrated manuscripts and mural paintings reflects an innovative pedagogical approach in which textual descriptions of meditation practices were transformed into pictorial representations. This method of conveying meditation instruction suggests that, in so-called “premodern” Thailand, meditation practices were not confined to closed lineages. Instead, they were accessible to lay men and women beyond the monastic community as part of broader Theravāda Buddhist practices.

Woramat Malasart is currently Postdoctoral Fellow sponsored by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, affiliated with Otani University in Kyoto, Japan. He is working on the research project, “Traditional Meditation: Texts and Illuminations in Endangered Manuscripts from Southeast Asia” in collaboration with Professor Shobha rani DASH. Prior to this position, he served as a lecturer at the College of Religious Studies, Mahidol University, Thailand, and as a teaching fellow in the Religion Program at the University of Otago, New Zealand where he also completed both his PhD and MA in Religious Studies. His research interests center on the intersections of textual traditions, manuscript cultures, and contemplative practices in Theravada Buddhist contexts, with a particular focus on Southeast Asia.

PANEL 16 | HERITAGE, CONSERVATION AND BELONGING

From Sedentarisation to Shared Stewardship: Conservation Politics and Local Food Systems in Vietnam’s Central Highlands

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This paper examines how state-driven land use transformations in Vietnam’s Central Highlands have reshaped local food systems, livelihoods, and human-environment relations, using Yok Đôn National Park as a focal case. Drawing on archival research, observations, and interviews conducted in communities surrounding the park, the study traces shifting conservation paradigms and their entanglement with national development agendas, migration policies, and contested visions of ‘proper’ food production. By situating Yok Đôn within broader debates on food politics, the paper highlights how power, knowledge, and vested interests shape both landscapes and the possibilities for subsistence. Since the country’s reunification in 1976, protected area establishment in Vietnam’s Central Highlands has been guided by a developmentalist logic grounded in a naturalist ontology that sought to separate humans from nature and replace local livelihood practices with state approved forms of fixed, intensive cultivation. These interventions drew on epistemological and institutional legacies of population redistribution policy—sedentarisation programmes targeting Indigenous groups, and state-sponsored migration of Kinh settlers to promote wet rice agriculture—which were justified through narratives framing Indigenous farming as ecologically destructive and culturally backward. These policies aimed simultaneously to protect forests, modernise food production, and assimilate minority populations into a national development model – objectives that were reproduced within protected area governance. Yet archival records and oral testimonies reveal that these interventions often undermined local food security, reduced access to land, and generated new dependencies while failing to fully establish the proposed agricultural systems. In recent years, the rigid boundary between conservation and livelihood has softened as authorities increasingly recognise the limits of imposed agricultural models. Many households face shrinking landholdings, volatile cash crop prices, and persistent vulnerability to poverty and food insecurity. These pressures have contributed to illegal forest use, encroachment, and intensified competition over resources, thereby undermining conservation goals while exposing the fragility of top-down mandated food systems. Yok Đôn’s recent experiments with regulated resource access, such as small scale forest product collection and controlled cattle grazing, illustrate emerging

attempts to reconcile conservation with livelihood diversification and self-determined food production. These developments highlight a growing recognition of local communities as active environmental stewards rather than threats to conservation. This paper argues that national parks are not merely ecological spaces but areas of complex socio-environmental relations where food politics, mobility, and state power intersect in dynamic ways. It further suggests that more integrative approaches to conservation, attuned to local ecologies, food systems, and ontological plurality, offer more sustainable pathways for both environmental protection and rural livelihoods.

Melina Kaiser has recently submitted her PhD thesis in Vietnamese Studies at the University of Hamburg. She works on socio-environmental histories of two national parks in the Vietnamese Central Highlands, which she analyses through an environmental justice framework. She has completed both extensive archival research and fieldwork and is fluent in Vietnamese. Her other research interests include equitable resource use, food security, and technology justice. She has received the Karl H. Ditze award for an outstanding master thesis, which will be published as a book in 2026. Her most recent publication, a contribution to an ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute edited publication titled “The Parks to the People: The Potential of Environmental Stewardship and Sustainable Agriculture in Vietnamese Protected Areas” is also awaiting publication in early 2026. Melina Kaiser’s research is funded through a PhD scholarship from Heinrich Böll foundation.

Curating the Nation, Silencing the Street: Heritage Narratives and Everyday Life in Penang

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This paper examines how history is constructed, curated, and consumed within heritage sites, focusing on George Town, Penang, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Malaysia. It argues that heritage narratives presented in institutional spaces are not neutral or comprehensive representations of the past, but selective constructions shaped by state agendas, curatorial practices, and heritage governance frameworks. The paper seeks to understand how official heritage discourses are produced and normalized, and how they interact—often uneasily—with the everyday experiences and memories of local residents. Conceptually, the study draws on critical heritage studies and theories of everyday life, particularly scholarship on authorized heritage discourse, cultural governance, and the tension between national narratives and lived experience. It approaches heritage as a discursive and affective process through which history is framed, circulated, and internalized, rather than as a fixed or consensual account of the past. Methodologically, the paper is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in George Town, Penang. Data were collected through participant observation in heritage zones, in-depth semi-structured interviews with local residents, shop owners, and community members, as well as close readings of heritage displays, museum texts, policy documents, and tourism materials. These sources were analyzed comparatively to trace divergences between institutional representations of history and residents’ everyday engagements with place. The findings reveal a marked disjuncture between official heritage narratives and grassroots historical understandings. While curated representations emphasize cultural harmony, architectural nostalgia, and economic progress aligned with national and tourism-oriented goals, residents’ memories and attachments are frequently marginalized, rendered invisible, or selectively aestheticized for external consumption. Everyday experiences, marked by displacement, discomfort, and emotional ambivalence, rarely find space within authorized heritage frameworks. The paper concludes that heritage-making in George Town operates as a form of selective remembering that privileges institutional coherence over lived plurality. By foregrounding everyday historical consciousness, this study calls for a more dialogic and participatory approach to heritage curation, which recognizes history not only as a national project but also as a contested and socially embedded process shaped by those who inhabit heritage spaces.

Shiyu Fan is a PhD candidate at the Institute for International and Area Studies, Tsinghua University. Her research focuses on cultural heritage, everyday life, and state-society relations in Southeast Asia, with particular attention to Malaysia. Her doctoral project examines how heritage narratives are produced, governed, and negotiated in urban heritage sites, drawing on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in George Town, Penang. More broadly, her research interests include heritage-making, cultural governance, nationalism, and the lived experiences of local communities in heritage spaces. She has conducted long-term fieldwork in Malaysia and employs interdisciplinary approaches from cultural studies, anthropology, and political sociology to examine heritage as a socially embedded and contested process. Her research has been presented at graduate seminars and international conferences in Southeast Asian studies.

Cloth of Legacy: Tenun Pahang Diraja

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Recent scholarship has shown how the circulation of textiles attests to ancient trade routes and the exchange of materials, techniques, and ideas. However, in the era of the nation-state, they have been used as fixed markers of ethnic identity, particularly in multi-ethnic states. Textiles are a site for re/formulating ideas of Malayness in Malaysia. In *Ethnicity, Inc.*, Jean and John Comaroff analyze the essentialization and commodification of culture as modes of sustaining a collective identity, primarily through corporate means, at the turn of the 21st century. This paper examines the sultanate of Pahang's institutionalization of handwoven cloth in the state of Pahang through the branding of Tenun Pahang Diraja. This serves as a case study of the process of institutionalizing craft through reifying the meaning of authenticity by which Malayness materialized. My examination of Tenun Pahang Diraja asks the following questions: 1) How did *tenun pahang* come to be associated with discourses of race, ethnicity, and culture? 2) How do users and makers' knowledge and practices affirm and/or subvert cultural institutions and the state's reification of identities? Using ethnographic observation in various weaving workshops in the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia, this paper examines the textile ecology in Pekan in relation to the circulation of power, concentrated in the royal capital at Pekan, radiating across the state of Pahang and into weaving workshops before and after 2006, when tenun pahang was conferred royal status (*diraja*) by the sultanate of Pahang. Since 2006, the Sultanate and the state of Pahang have mobilized resources to the branding of Tenun Pahang Diraja, primarily championed by the queen consort of the Sultan of Pahang, Tengku Ampuan Pahang, Tunku Azizah Aminah Maimunah Iskandariah. This process of branding and corporatization of craft shifts cultural practices available in the public realm to private property, facilitating encounters between new forms of commerce and earlier forms of craft and moral economies in Pahang.

Su Yen Chong is a third-year PhD candidate in the Department of Art History at the University of Toronto (UofT), supervised by Professor Kajri Jain. Her doctoral research examines the material and visual cultures of Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean world, with particular attention to textiles, circulation, and the formation of diasporic identity. She holds an MA in Art History and Visual Studies from the University of Victoria and an Honors BA from the University of Toronto. She believes in the importance of dialogue in building communities in academic circles and beyond. This is reflected in her career interests in a museum setting and in her active involvement with the Graduate Union of Students of Art at UofT. Alongside her academic work, she brings extensive curatorial and museum experience, including previous experience at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, the Royal Ontario Museum, and the Wei-Ling Gallery (Kuala Lumpur).

A Comparative Study of Coastal Ecological Restoration Cases in China and Malaysia from the Perspective of Maritime Community with a Shared Future

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Coastal ecological restoration is central to addressing accelerating marine degradation, but pathways in major developing maritime states remain understudied. This paper compares China and Malaysia through the perspective of a Maritime Community with a Shared Future (MCSF), focusing on the Bohai Comprehensive Governance (BCG) and Terengganu Marine Park (TMP). By using survey interview analysis and secondary ecological and socio-economic documents, we apply a four-dimensional framework to assess how national strategies are translated into practice. The findings reveal that BCG is a centralized, engineering-intensive, campaign-style model under China's ecological civilization program. It has led to significant gains in water quality, wetland area, and shoreline configuration, and is increasingly related to ecological security and blue-carbon goals. The system is primarily technocratic, with limited institutionalization of community engagement, livelihood integration, and climate-adaptive management. In contrast, TMP operates within Malaysia's marine national policy, emphasizing biodiversity, local communities, equity, and ecological connection. Despite developing participatory monitoring and habitat-sensitive tourism practices, federal-state fragmentation, unpredictable funding, and project-based interventions limit ecological advances and sustain coral and seagrass system vulnerability. The comparative analysis indicates that neither model is sufficient in isolation. Effective coastal restoration in the other countries requires hybrid approaches that combine China's strengths in policy integration, large-scale engineering and monitoring with Malaysia's advances in community engagement and livelihood-sensitive governance. More broadly, the findings underscore the need to embed restoration in long-term climate and biodiversity strategies, design multi-level governance that balances central coordination with local co-design, and establish diversified, predictable financing and knowledge-sharing mechanisms.

Yuhu Cui is a PhD student in a joint program between Shandong University and University of Malaya under the China Scholarship Council. His research interests include coastal ecological restoration, analysis of China-Malaysia affairs and other policy topics. He has published several academic papers in journals such as *Aquaculture*, *Frontiers in Marine Science*, and *Ocean and Coastal Management*.

PANEL 17 | INTER-ASIA

Mercenaries, Pirates, and Merchants: The Malay “Maritime Zomia” in Southern Vietnam

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Although the term “Malay” is often used to describe the dominant maritime population of Island Southeast Asia, Vietnamese historical sources more frequently employed the term “Xà Bà” (閩婆) to designate seaborne peoples arriving from the sea. This article examines the changing meanings of “Xà Bà” in Vietnamese records from the medieval period to the nineteenth century, and argues that the term was not a fixed ethnonym but a historically shifting label shaped by textual transmission, political memory, religious classification, and state administration. Early Vietnamese and later imperial compilations frequently conflated “Xà Bà” with older terms such as “Kunlun,” producing anachronistic narratives that pushed the history of these maritime peoples further into the past. The article shows that meaningful Vietnamese interaction with Xà Bà people did not begin before the fourteenth century, when they first appear as traders, tribute bearers, and occasional mercenaries. Under the Nguyễn in southern Vietnam, especially in the Mekong Delta, Xà Bà communities became more visible and were increasingly identified with Malay-speaking Muslim populations connected to Melaka and the wider maritime world. These groups could serve as merchants, settlers, and soldiers, but they also became associated with piracy, especially in the nineteenth century, when maritime instability in the Gulf of Siam and the collapse of regional polities produced large numbers of displaced seaborne people. By tracing Vietnamese, Cambodian, Cham, and European sources, the article argues that Xà Bà identity emerged through the interaction of maritime mobility and state classification. In Vietnamese eyes, Xà Bà people could be useful frontier subjects when incorporated into administrative order, but dangerous pirates when left outside it. Their history therefore reveals both the limits of state power at sea and the ways in which early modern and nineteenth-century Southeast Asian polities attempted to classify, manage, and domesticate mobile populations.

Boyu Xia is currently a second-year PhD student in World History at the School of History and Cultural Heritage, Xiamen University. His current research focuses on the maritime history of southern Vietnam and the translation and political activities in Vietnam during the early modern period. His research interests include the intellectual history, social history, historical geography, and Eurasian cultural exchange of the early modern Chinese Empire, maritime Asia, and inland Asia. Recently, he published a paper based on translation materials from the Ming Dynasty and was invited to give presentations on East Asian maritime history and the history of translation during the Ming Dynasty at the “11th Young Scholars’ Forum in Chinese Studies: Waterways and Global China: Ecology, Agency, and Cultural Formation” and “The Fifth International Conference on Chinese Translation History: Text and Context” at the Research Center for Translation in The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Kachin-China Border: Cross-Border Ethnic Identity and Community Relations among the Kachin/Jingpo People

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The Kachin (Wunpawng/Jingpo) are a trans-border ethnic group divided between Kachin State in Myanmar and Yunnan Province in China. Historically, they maintained strong kinship, cultural traditions, and jade trade networks across the border. Since 2020, China’s construction of a high-surveillance border fence has severely restricted cross-border movement. Combined with ongoing political conflict and repression by the Burmese people and Tatmadaw (Myanmar military), the Kachin community faces continued social and cultural pressures since independence in 1948. This research aims to examine how the Kachin people sustain ethnic identity and solidarity despite physical separation and political threat. It investigates the roles of digital communication and jade trade networks in maintaining cross-border relationships and explores how internal state oppression influences their sense of solidarity and identity. The study is socially significant because it highlights the challenges faced by marginalized borderland communities and may inform policies supporting ethnic minority rights and cultural preservation. Academically, it contributes new insight by extending ontological security theory to transnational ethnic minorities, challenging assumptions that physical borders necessarily weaken ethnic unity.

Seng Ra has been studying for a PhD specializing in Peace and Conflict Studies at the Graduate School of International Culture and Communication Studies (GSICCS) at WASEDA University since September 2024. As an ethnic Kachin who comes from northern Myanmar, where civil conflict happens, she wants to search for possible contributions for local peace; therefore, she is seeking opportunities to raise the local voice, especially ethnicities from Myanmar, as much as she can. Now, while doing her PhD, she is collaborating to work on research related to the topic above, "Kachin-China Border: How Cross-Border Trade Shapes Ethnic Identity and Community Relations among Kachin/Jingpo People," with her supervisor and two seniors to publish soon.

A Bornean Borderland: Sabah as the Frontier of Malay(sian) State Building, 1967-1985

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Sabah, a territory in Malaysian Borneo, has been described as the Malaysian state's 'last frontier' in terms of development and potential. Through a survey of programmes related to land development and alienation, education and Islamisation, this paper explores how the Malay(sian) state attempted to appropriate and 'tame' this 'last frontier'. It focuses on the tenures of two chief ministers under whom these efforts began and were refined: Mustapha Harun (1967-1976) and Harris Salleh (1976-1985). It examines how Sabah's Indigenous Peoples, in particular, were the target of these efforts as part of a 'civilising project' whose simultaneous aim was to make them ideal Malay(sian)—that is, Malay-Muslim—citizens, as Sabah itself was imbricated into the larger Malaysian project. The Malay(sian) state, in this effect, is also read in this paper as a settler-colonial body. Within this context, Sabah's borderland character emerges as more than merely cartographic. Michael Eilenberg describes the borderlands as 'the *raison d'être* of state sovereignty but also a place where the state is most fiercely challenged'. In this regard, this paper reads Sabah as a Malaysian frontier, reified through the state marking of land and faith but also ultimately resisted on those same grounds. It argues Sabah as a frontier and borderland precisely because it ultimately frustrates the Malay(sian) state's settler-colonial project.

Sharmini Aphrodite is a PhD candidate in the Department of Southeast Asian Studies at the National University of Singapore, and Department of History in the King's College London. Her research focuses on Kadazan-Dusun political and social history and Indigenous Sabahan resistance to the Malaysian state. Her research areas include agricultural and peasant communities, conversion histories in Borneo, Indigenous Christianity and orality.

PANEL 18 | MIGRATION, MOBILITY, AND BELONGING

Syncretic Buddhism in Motion: Migration, Transnational Networks, and the Making of Kek Lok Si Temple in Penang

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This paper investigates Kek Lok Si Temple in Penang not merely as a syncretic assemblage of Mahāyāna, Theravāda, and esoteric Buddhist elements, but as a dynamic site where transregional religious circulations are materially translated into ritual authority and shared devotional practice. I argue that the temple's multidimensional configuration emerged from historically specific encounters among Hokkien, Cantonese, Thai, and Burmese communities, alongside Vajrayāna-inflected iconographic traditions, whose ritual needs and institutional networks intersected within Penang's *entrepôt* environment. Rather than treating syncretism as an aesthetic coexistence of diverse traditions, the paper conceptualizes Kek Lok Si as a ritual infrastructure produced through continuous negotiations among migrant groups who differently participate in the temple's ritual economy, patronage structures, and devotional circuits. The paper draws on scholarship on transnational religion, material religion, and vernacularization while proposing a more processual understanding of syncretism as situated ritual brokerage within a plural society. Methodologically, the study integrates (1) on-site ethnography conducted in 2025; (2) photographic and spatial documentation of iconography, donor inscriptions, and ritual zones; and (3) textual analysis of temple guidebooks, pamphlets, and donor records, supplemented by archival materials on Chinese Buddhist associations active in Penang during the 19th–20th centuries, enabling a historically grounded account of how different Buddhist traditions were institutionalized within the temple's organizational structure. Findings show that Kek Lok Si operates through a decentralized system of ritual authority sustained by multiple competing and cooperating Buddhist lineages. Authority is negotiated through everyday devotional practices shaped by market forces, pilgrimage routes, transregional patronage, and the pragmatic needs of lay worshippers. This process produces a form of vernacular pluralism that is neither state-managed nor doctrinally harmonized, but materially enacted across ritual spaces. By foregrounding the mechanisms through which syncretism is produced and maintained, the paper offers a new account of how global Buddhist flows are

operationalized within a socially heterogeneous Southeast Asian context, contributing to debates on religious connectivity, ritual infrastructure, and the making of sacred space in contemporary Southeast Asia.

Hyung-jin An was born into a traditional Korean Buddhist family. In his early twenties, he became interested in Buddhism after reading the Dalai Lama's *The Art of Happiness*. He entered the Department of Buddhist Studies at Dongguk University and graduated second in his class. Later, through connections with the Indian Cultural Centre in Seoul and a recommendation from a Sanskrit guru, he began studying philosophy at the University of Delhi as an ICCR scholar. He completed his MA in Philosophy at Hindu College with first-division marks and is now in the third year of his PhD program. His academic specialties include the religious philosophy of devotion, social participation of religion, and interreligious syncretism. He has presented 21 research papers at conferences held in eleven countries, including South Korea, India, China, Australia, and Ireland, and currently has seven papers in the publication process.

Beyond Economic Pull: Discovering Aspirational Return and Citizenship among Highly Skilled Filipino Migrants via the Philippine "Balik Scientist" Program

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Global debates on skilled migration often frame return as driven by economic push–pull factors, retirement, or failed integration abroad. These accounts, however, fail to adequately explain why highly skilled migrants voluntarily return to developing countries where material and institutional conditions remain constrained. This paper examines voluntary skilled return among Filipino scientists through the Philippine government's Balik Scientist Program (BSP). It advances the concept of aspirational return to describe return migration motivated by ideals of contribution, citizenship, and national belonging rather than immediate economic gain. Drawing on in-depth interviews with current and former Balik Scientists, the study explores how personal aspirations, professional identities, and nationalist commitments shape return decisions and reintegration experiences. The Philippines offers a critical case because of its long-standing reliance on labor export as a development strategy and the limited empirical attention given to highly skilled returnees who repatriate by choice. Although the BSP is formally designed as a "brain gain" initiative through research funding, logistical support, and institutional placement, participants' trajectories reveal a more complex relationship between agency and constraint. Findings show that return is shaped by professional mission, the desire to "give back," and civic responsibility rooted in contemporary Filipino citizenship. However, returnees also face bureaucratic inefficiencies, resource limitations, and the need to (re)build professional networks. Aspirational return is therefore a negotiated process in which ideals of service and nation-building are continually reconciled with institutional realities. The study contributes to migration scholarship by moving beyond economic explanations of return migration and offers policy insights on sustaining scientific diaspora engagement for national development.

Jaconiah Shelumiel T. Manalaysay is a doctoral researcher of health politics and medical sociology at the De La Salle University in Manila. He specializes in informal care and ontologies of care. His research and dissertation centers on the Filipino phenomenon of "pagbabantay" as a heuristic tool highlighting ambivalence in health systems. He teaches sociology and political science courses at the De La Salle University, the University of the Philippines, and the University of Santo Tomas. He graduated with a degree in political science from the University of the Philippines and an MA in global politics from the Ateneo de Manila University. His latest works are published in *Contemporary Perspectives in Family Research* and in *Acta Medica Philippina*.

Assimilation versus Acculturation of Migrants from the Same Root: The Case of Cham Descendants in Kelantan Malaysia and Hainan China

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This article employs a comparative historical analysis and an ethnographic fieldwork including observations and conversations among Cham communities in Kelantan, Malaysia, and Hainan, China, to examine the various integration pathways of diaspora populations sharing a common ethnic origin. While both groups trace their ancestry to the historic Champa kingdom in Vietnam, their distinct historical trajectories within different nation-states have led to fundamentally different modes of incorporation: one approaching assimilation and the other characterized by state-mediated acculturation. In Kelantan, Malaysia, the Cham communities have undergone a profound process of assimilation into the dominant Malay-Muslim society. Facilitated by shared Islam religion and strategic state policies that equate Malay identity with being Muslim, the community has largely been absorbed into the majority. The loss of the Cham language and the adoption of Malay customs, legal identity as *Bumiputera*, and social norms indicate a near-complete merging with the host society, where a

distinct Cham ethnic identity is virtually indistinguishable in the public sphere. Conversely, in Hainan, China, the Cham descendants are officially classified as part of the *Hui* nationality within China's ethnic minority (*Minzu*) system. Their experience is reasonably described as acculturation under a state-managed framework. While they maintained the usage of Tsat dialect and adopted the local Hainanese as well as Mandarin and many *Han* Chinese customs, their classification as *Hui* institutionally preserves a separate ethnic identity, centered primarily on Islamic faith. This national categorization creates a formal space for difference, preventing full assimilation and instead fostering a dual identity, which simultaneously integrates into the national fabric yet is officially distinct. This comparison demonstrates that shared origins do not predetermine diaspora outcomes. Rather, integration trajectories are shaped by host-state ideologies, institutional arrangements, and majority-minority configurations. Evidence from interview data further underscores how these structural conditions translate into differentiated patterns of identity formation and cultural practice. The findings highlight the importance of understanding ethnic integration as a context-dependent and institutionally embedded process.

Yahui Zhou is a lecturer at the School of Foreign Languages, Hainan Normal University. She just received her PhD from the Institute of the Malay World and Civilisation, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia in 2025. Her research focuses on the migration and diaspora of the Cham people, with a particular interest in comparative cultural studies between the Cham descendants in Sanya, Hainan, and those in Malaysia. Her doctoral thesis examined this very comparison, and she has published several papers on related topics such as *Champa Immigrants in Malaysia: Environmental and Social-Psychological Adaptation* and *Socio-Cultures of the Cham Community in Sanya, Hainan and Sungai Buloh, Selangor: A Comparative Analysis on the Effects of Identity Contestation*. She has conducted extensive ethnographic fieldwork in Malaysia, Vietnam, and China's Hainan Island. She is proficient in Malay, Indonesian, English, Mandarin and Hainan dialect which facilitates her cross-regional research on Cham communities.

PANEL 19 | FOOD POLITICS

Recasting Nutrition at the Margins: A Critical Exploration of Food and Nutrition Inequities in Fishing Communities in Palawan, Philippines

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Malnutrition in all its forms remains among the world's most pervasive development challenges. The Philippines continues to experience persistently high rates of child malnutrition, with 23.6% or about 3 million children under-five experiencing chronic undernutrition or stunting. Stunting is widely recognised as both an indicator of inequality and a predictor of long-term health and socioeconomic outcomes. However, despite targeted and universal interventions, substantial food and nutrition disparities persist. Efforts to address malnutrition have been largely shaped by clinical and highly individualised approaches, often overlooking community-based perspectives and broader food systems dynamics. Foregrounding lived experiences therefore offers a way to develop a more nuanced understanding of the drivers of malnutrition, as well as the coping strategies households adopt, helping identify more effective entry points for intervention. The study seeks to understand how marginalised households experience malnutrition by analysing inequities across the food system that constrain their ability to achieve optimal nutrition. It adopts an equity-focused and food systems lens to examine how children and their families in fishing households situated in geographically isolated communities navigate these realities, focusing on the challenges faced and coping mechanisms employed to ensure nutrition. Using a qualitative case study design, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of 22 fishing households across six island and coastal villages in the municipalities of San Vicente and Taytay, Palawan, Philippines. The study finds that intersecting inequities across the food system shape the persistence of malnutrition among fishing households. At the household level, caregivers face a daily balancing act of reconciling nutrition knowledge, children's preferences, and food environment constraints. These pressures are further intensified by precarious fishing livelihoods characterised by income uncertainty, climate vulnerability, and limited livelihood options. Simultaneously, governance gaps compound these challenges by enabling unequal access to resources and support and increasing reliance on localised networks during crises. While households employ coping strategies to secure food, these often involve trade-offs that compromise dietary quality and reinforce longer-term vulnerability. Addressing these intersecting constraints requires improving coastal food environments, promoting equitable care and work arrangements, supporting sustainable livelihoods, and strengthening inclusive and accountable governance to achieve more equitable nutrition outcomes.

Andre Flores is a PhD candidate in the Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security at the University of Wollongong, supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship. His research examines longstanding inequities in food and nutrition among coastal and island communities in the Philippines, including the role of multistakeholder governance in achieving equitable food and nutrition outcomes. Prior to his doctoral studies, Andre worked with the Philippine government, international and UN organizations, on nutrition advocacy and multilevel capacity-

building initiatives. He holds an MA in Food and Development (with distinction) from the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex as a Chevening Scholar of the UK government, and a BSc in Community Nutrition (Cum laude) from the University of the Philippines Diliman. His work continues to interrogate and expand the evidence base on food systems to drive policy innovation and practice in the Philippines and the Southeast Asia region.

Indonesia's Free Nutritious Meals: Narratives in Tensions with the Right to Food and Food Sovereignty

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In 2025, the Indonesian government introduced the Free Nutritious Meals (MBG) program to address child malnutrition by providing free school meals. This paper critically examines how the government constructs the MBG narrative and its alignment with grassroots perspectives, drawing on interviews with small-scale farmers affected by land dispossession, through the lenses of the right to food and food sovereignty. It argues that this nationally oriented feeding project is neither rights-based nor grounded in food sovereignty, as it fails to assert state obligations and marginalises local farming. Rather than reflecting 'progressive realisation,' its large budget is coupled with cuts to other sectors, positioning it as politically driven social assistance, especially given widespread food safety incidents poisoning tens of thousands of students. The findings suggest a further disjuncture between the government's 'feeding the nation' and the simultaneous expropriation of farmers' livelihoods under the National Strategic Project (PSN). Farmers emphasise food self-reliance through access to land rather than state-provided meals. MBG broadly reflects a state-centric food politics that marginalises rights-based approaches and farmers' autonomy, while advancing militarised and patronage-based governance structures. The MBG structure is largely managed by police-military actors, political parties, religious organisations, and those closely affiliated with power alliances, which privilege state control and weaken decentralisation, leaving it unable to effectively address global food insecurity.

Muhammad Bahrul Ulum is a PhD candidate at the School of Law, Queensland University of Technology. His research examines how Indonesia's land-use framework within Jokowi's developmentalism shapes access to land for small-scale farmers, with implications for livelihoods, human rights, environmental outcomes and grassroots resistance. Muhammad is also an assistant professor at Universitas Brawijaya, specialising in land law, food law, human rights law, and constitutional law, and was previously affiliated with the Centre for Human Rights, Multiculturalism, and Migration at Universitas Jember. He has worked with several institutions, including drafting the Standard of Norms and Settings for the Right to Adequate Housing at the National Commission for Human Rights (2022) and developing local regulations in East Java, including protections for local farmers (2018). From 2012-2013, he was involved with the Legal Aid Institute (LBH) in Surabaya.

PANEL 20 | RELIGION

The Poetry of Violence in a Buddhist State: Development, Religion, and Memory Culture in the Epigraphy of Jayavarman VII

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The reign of Jayavarman VII (1181/2–ca. 1220 CE) was characterised by prosperity, expansion, and ambitious state-led undertakings. It came at the twilight of the Sanskrit Cosmopolis in Southeast Asia and was strongly inflected by Mahāyāna and tantric Buddhism. The period also produced some of the most lengthy and sophisticated Sanskrit epigraphy in Southeast Asia. These inscriptions draw on trans-regional literary forms and political concepts to express distinctly local and, at times, personal concerns. While 20th-century scholarship largely mined these texts for positivistic data, this paper analyses them as discursive instruments that support the state's resource mobilisation, religious ideology, and memory culture. Specifically, this paper examines the theme of state violence as depicted in the corpus of Sanskrit inscriptions issued under Jayavarman VII. For primary source material, the research relies on my own philological re-evaluation and critical translations of key stelae, particularly those of Ta Prohm, Preah Khan, Phimeanakas, Prasat Chrung, and the 'Hospital Edicts'. To provide the necessary context, the paper first introduces the trans-regional political culture in which Sanskrit inscriptions were essential and the specific corpus under investigation. The paper then highlights three themes of violence central to the 12th-century Cambodian context. First, it shows how inscriptions depict violence as a necessary prerequisite for the state's creative activity. Second, it explores how the theme of violence was harmonised with Buddhist attitudes and expressions as the religion was being integrated into the state, and how the eroticisation of violence parallels the flourishing of tantric Buddhism. Third, the paper argues that depictions of violence in inscriptions and art are indicative of an evolving memory culture that elevated realism and memorialisation, historicising rather than universalising the traumatic experience of war.

The study thus aims to offer a critical historical framework for analysing how the 'consciousness of violence' is curated and naturalised within political discourse.

Ryan Conlon is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Hamburg, where he also completed his PhD in South Asian Studies. His research focuses on the religious and intellectual history of pre-modern South and Southeast Asia (including Tibet), with a specialisation in tantric religious traditions and Buddhist Studies. His primary training has been in Tibetan and Sanskrit philology, based on which he has contributed both critical editions and historically focused studies. He is currently expanding his research to examine the flows of ideas, culture, and religion across Monsoon Asia, particularly through the study of Cambodian epigraphy. His recent experience with digital humanities projects has deepened his interest in pursuing research through interdisciplinary approaches that closely integrate digital methodologies.

A Study of Pilgrim Experiences and Purchasing and Eating in Catholic Pilgrimage Sites in Java, Indonesia

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This study examines experiences of Catholic pilgrims in Java, Indonesia, focusing on purchases and meals around pilgrimage sites beyond prayer. The Catholic Church is a religious minority in Java, where Muslims are the majority. However, many Catholic pilgrimage sites exist, primarily in Central Java and Yogyakarta, where Catholics actively practice pilgrimages. Similar to sites worldwide, famous pilgrimage locations have approach paths lined with shops and restaurants. Christian goods and fruit are sold similarly at every site, and pilgrims purchase fruit and eat pork dishes in consistent patterns across the pilgrimage. Previous research on Catholic pilgrimage in Java has discussed factors attracting pilgrims from theological and cultural perspectives, such as connecting pilgrimages to religious and cultural identity in Java (Laksana 2014), describing inculturation with Javanese culture from pilgrimage sites' formation history (Herman 2018), and discussing how holiness of pilgrimage sites forms between Javanese and Catholic traditions (Antono 2021). However, insufficient attention has been paid to practices beyond prayer, such as what is bought and eaten, even though these activities are very active in Javanese Catholic pilgrimages. In recent years, pilgrimage studies have focused on the economic activities surrounding pilgrimages, which were previously thought to be inessential to the practice. Reader (2014, 14) criticizes the rigid distinction between sacred and profane in pilgrimage studies, noting that market dynamics surrounding pilgrimage link to its promotion and appeal. Based on Reader's perspective, this study examines purchasing and eating practices around Catholic pilgrimage sites in Java, discussing meanings and motivations of pilgrimages. The research methods are participant observation Through observations at two major pilgrimage sites around Yogyakarta, we examine what is sold, by whom, and how. In this study, we argue that purchasing and eating specific items around pilgrimage sites are essential to the pilgrimage experience for Javanese Catholic pilgrims.

Yuga Orita is a PhD student in Area Studies at the Graduate School of Global Studies, Sophia University, Tokyo, Japan. His focus is Indonesian studies and cultural anthropology, specifically the Catholic Church in Java, Indonesia. In 2024, he completed his master's thesis "Development and Practices of the Catholic Church in Javanese Society: A Study of Social Changes and Interreligious Relations in Indonesia after Independence". This thesis examines policy-making processes on interfaith relations in post-independence Indonesia, their impact on the Catholic Church, and current interfaith relations in Java's local communities. Since June 2025, he has been in Yogyakarta, supported by the INPEX Scholarship Foundation, conducting fieldwork. His research in Java focuses on Catholic pilgrimages, interfaith relations, and the intersection of church and Indonesian nationalism. He is affiliated with Sanata Dharma University, a Catholic institution in Yogyakarta. While conducting field work, he learns Javanese language and attends Catholic daily practices in Java such as a choir group in a parish.

PANEL 21 | CULTURAL INTERACTIONS

Girlscape in Urban Indonesia: K-pop Fan Merchandise Industry as Transnational Girl Culture

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This paper examines the urban Indonesian K-pop fans' merchandise market as a form of women-led transnational hybridization that unsettles nation-centered understandings of popular culture. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Jakarta, Bandung, and Solo, this study examines how K-pop, one of the most influential global popular cultures, is reconstituted as "transnational girl culture" through local practices by young Indonesian women, rather than being accepted as a coherent expression of Korean culture. Employing the concept of girlscape (Yoda, 2017), it also aims to reveal

the way neoliberal gendered subjectivity is constituted through the consumption of particular aesthetic and cultural literacy in contemporary Indonesia. Departing from soft power-centered accounts of K-pop that emphasize state diplomacy and authenticity, the paper argues that Indonesian K-pop fan culture operates through an aesthetic regime in which “cuteness” takes precedence over “Koreaness.” Within women-centered spaces of fan production and consumption, ranging from pastel-colored merchandise shops to fan merchandise conventions, K-pop is routinely reimagined and embodied through aesthetics historically associated with Japanese girl culture, including *kawaii* aesthetics, *shōjo* manga styles, and cute characters like Hello Kitty. Rather than viewing them as “Japanese” culture, this paper illuminates what I call a “transnational grammar of girl culture,” formed through the global circulation of Japanese popular culture since the 1990s, and now serving as a global literacy of cuteness. Through such aesthetically embodied production and its circulation, Indonesian women carve out markets under the nose of the global Korean corporations. In doing so, they generate affective communities that connect women across generations and national borders, from Indonesian mothers and daughters to transnational networks of fan creators and consumers, while embodying a subjectivity as cosmopolitan, entrepreneur-minded girlhood. K-pop’s popularity among Indonesian women is not simply a reflection of media content or industry strategies, but the result of their everyday practice to transform K-pop into a cute-coded transnational girl culture. By centering female crafts and cultural spaces—domains often marginalized in studies of cultural globalization and soft power—this paper highlights a feminized mode of transnational cultural production, or what Miller (2017) calls a “minor variety of Asian transnationalism.” In doing so, it foregrounds the cultural agency of Indonesian women by demonstrating how they transform, if not originate, transnational cultural forms through appropriation, remixing, and resale. Simultaneously, it seeks to understand the consumer culture, which places the aspirational entrepreneur-minded girl’s figure at the center, might change urban women’s subjectivity.

Ayumi Inouchi is currently a postdoctoral research scholar at Arizona State University. Formally trained in linguistics and sociocultural anthropology and Japanese studies, her research focused on how language practices, daily aesthetics, and cultural production of young women stimulated by popular culture give rise to emergent negotiation of social relations and ideologies, particularly around gender. Her current book project examines the cultural-semiotic processes through which the perception of South Korea has shifted among Japanese young women via aesthetically embodied practices and mediated discourse. She is also researching the consumption of East Asian popular culture among urban women in Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia, since 2024. Her primary research questions are 1) how “Japan” and “Korea” are (re)imagined through girl culture led by young women, and 2) how the small businesses of young women harnessing the popularity of Korean pop culture reveal local and global economic-cultural logics, especially under neoliberal social transformation.

Temporary Migrants as Transnational Musicians

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Migrants play a vital role in the globalisation of culture and art through their movement as transnational creatives and labourers. For Filipinos in Australia – the fifth largest overseas-born population and a constantly growing migrant group – musical expression has always been a key site for negotiating their identity and belonging. Yet, little research has examined the musical mobility of Filipinos and its implications for creative labour and transnational cultural exchange between the Philippines, Australia, and Southeast Asia in a broader context. This paper seeks to understand the experiences of Filipino migrants on temporary visas who engage as transnational musicians in Australia, and how their cultural and artistic expressions contribute to their negotiation of belonging and identity in the transnational and multicultural schema of Australia. Moreover, I ask how Filipino migrants’ participation and engagement contribute to strengthening Australian-Southeast Asian relations and the economy through creative labour and beyond their usual notion as skilled work commodities in other industries. Drawing on *pakikipagkuwentuhan* with 20 musicians who hold or have held temporary visas in New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland, the research explores their participation in the live music ecosystem and the ways music facilitates identity representation, cultural maintenance, and transnational connections. The research situates music as more than an aesthetic practice, but rather as a form of belonging, cultural memory, resistance, and representation, which are not commonly explored in migration studies. By foregrounding temporary migrants as creative labourers, this study contributes to debates on migration, cultural diplomacy, and the creative economy in Southeast Asia. Ultimately, it seeks to decolonise the sociology of music and migration by adopting transnational and translocal approaches, offering insights relevant to policy, scholarship, and regional collaboration.

Carl Johnson Anacin received his PhD (cultural sociology) at Griffith University with a thesis on Filipino migrant musicians' identity, musicality, and translocality. His research interests include music, migration, culture, and interdisciplinary studies. Carl is currently working on a collaborative project, *Temporary Migrants as Transnational Musicians*, funded by the ANU-Philippines Institute. He is also State Library of Queensland 2025 Letty Katts Fellow and Co-convenor of The Australian Sociological Association Cultural Sociology Thematic Group. His recent publications include *Transnational Labour Migration and Musical Performance: Filipino Musicians in Australia* (Palgrave, 2026) and contributions in *Journal of Intercultural Studies* (2025) and *The Qualitative Report* (2024). Carl is a practising musician (Nicky Anacin) and media correspondent.

“We Rescue a Hundred Whispers”: A Poetic Reanimation of Cold War Archives in Mai Der Vang’s *Yellow Rain*

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What follows is part of a larger monograph project, *Paperwork Poetics: Literary Responses to Empire from the Southeast Asian Diaspora*, which focuses on the work of contemporary, Southeast Asian diasporic poets who critique US empire in Southeast Asia by incorporating paper documents into their poetry. I ask: What possibilities for reimagining histories of empire and colonialism does the creative labor of poets make possible when the medium on which the poets write is not the blank page but rather immigration court summons, hate crime reports, and declassified military memos—paper facsimiles of empire itself? In response, my term “paperwork poetics” refers to the range of textual practices such as collage, mimicry, use of found language, and erasure through which poets incorporate paperwork into their writing. Ultimately, I argue that Southeast Asian diasporic writers’ practice of paperwork poetics expropriates the bureaucratic power of governmentality and shifts those technologies of control into a formally innovative poetic practice to critique US empire in Southeast Asia during the Cold War era and the lasting echoes of that cultural, military, and economic violence that remain in the Southeast Asian diaspora. This draft is an excerpt from the second chapter of the monograph, which shows how poetry by Mai Der Vang wrestles with issues of ethics and resists the co-option of representation surrounding the Yellow Rain chemical attacks against Hmong people in the wake of the Secret War. By framing Vang’s paperwork poetics as a performance practice, I show how her work contests aesthetic and ethical pitfalls that often accompany Western-centric readerly expectations regarding the validity of knowledge production, poetic form, mediation, identity, and reception. I argue that in Vang’s work, Paperwork Poetics becomes a performative mode of engaging the materiality of both the paper records of Hmong experiences with yellow rain and the embodied memories excised from that official archive. First, Vang’s expropriative work restages the encounter with the archive, offering a poetic mode of distorting the narrative logic of declassified state documents into a critique of the bureaucratic infrastructure of state secret keeping. Second, paperwork poetics as a performance practice makes explicit the racialized and gendered performances demanded of authors as they navigate the literary landscape. Ultimately, I hope that making explicit the performative labor embedded in these author-reader interactions can contribute to first making explicit the hegemonic logics behind these expectations and secondly offering the opportunity to imagine these interactions otherwise.

Jasmine N. An is poet-scholar and Assistant Professor of English at the University of Oregon. Her research traces the aesthetic strategies of contemporary, Southeast Asian, diasporic writers who poetically deform bureaucratic paperwork as a critique of US empire in Southeast Asia. Previously, she was Assistant Professor of Literature at Fulbright University Vietnam in Ho Chi Minh City and Research Fellow at Chiang Mai University in Thailand. Her debut poetry collection, *Counterpoint*, was selected as the Editors’ Choice for the 2025 QTBIPOC Poetry Prize at Kelsey Street Press and is forthcoming in 2027. She is also the author of two poetry chapbooks: *Naming the No-Name Woman* (Winner of the 2015 Two Sylvias Press Chapbook Prize) and *Monkey Was Here* (Porkbelly Press 2020). More creative work can be found in journals such as *Poetry Northwest*, *Waxwing*, and *Guesthouse*, among others, or at jasmineanho.com.

PANEL 22 | FLUID URBANISMS

A Place to Call Home: Comparative Analysis of Settlement Choices in Coastal Villages of Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam in the Lower Mekong amid Sea-Level Rise

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Coastal communities in Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam in the Lower Mekong region face urgent threats from sea-level rise, such as erosion, saltwater intrusion, and economic hardship. This study examined how local people view resettlement and adaptation, focusing on connections among ecological, social, and cultural factors. Through focus groups and qualitative analysis, we explored preferences across governance, spiritual, and social contexts. Vietnamese communities viewed

relocation as a form of collective resilience and state-supported adaptation. Thai villages, on the other hand, emphasized local autonomy, circular livelihoods, and spiritual bonds. Cambodian participants highlighted the aspirational goal of gender-inclusive decision-making and the importance of preserving social cohesion and mutual aid. Across all sites, people valued protecting mangroves, systems of care, internet access, and shared spaces. Relationships, values, and attachment to home influenced decisions about potential relocations. The findings demonstrate that effective resettlement and adaptation require culturally grounded, gender and socially inclusive strategies that use local knowledge, strengthen cohesion, and promote ecosystem management, such as conserving and restoring mangroves. This study provides key evidence on the complex social, institutional, and political factors essential to progress, supporting the goals of SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 16 (Strong Institutions) for a peaceful, inclusive, and sustainable more-than-human society. This work is co-authored with the following individuals: Malay Pramanik, Md Saify Ababil, and Pyae Mon Naing from the Urban Innovation and Sustainability, Faculty of Climate Change and Sustainability, Asian Institute of Technology (AIT); Paula Banerjee from the Centre on Gender and Forced Displacement, Gender and Development Studies, Faculty of Public Policy and Sustainable Development, AIT; Rajendra P. Shrestha from the Natural Resources Management, Faculty of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources, AIT; Shobhakar Dhakal from the Climate Change, Disaster and Urban Sustainability, Faculty of Climate Change and Sustainability, AIT, Thailand; and Seak Sophat and Chandara Phat from the Faculty of Development Studies, Royal University of Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Renz Prudenciano is a PhD candidate in Gender and Development Studies at the Asian Institute of Technology, where she is supported by His Majesty The King's Scholarship. She earned her master's degree in the same field as a DAAD scholarship recipient. Renz's research journey began with a thesis on masculinities and sexuality in relationships with transgender women. Her current work explores the intersections of masculinities and Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) within the context of disasters and climate change in Southeast and South Asia. Specifically, her doctoral research examines how disasters shape Nepali men's masculinity. She frequently integrates feminist political ecology into the study of the masculinities of both men and women within fields such as peace and sustainability studies.

Dreams of Streams: The Cheonggyecheon Effect on Urban River Imaginaries in Greater Jakarta

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Rivers have long anchored the development and civilization of the Indonesian archipelago. Historically, waterways such as the Ciliwung in Jakarta served as primary arteries of trade and urban life for centuries. However, the intertwined relationship between cities and their riverine shifted in the mid-twentieth century, as rapid industrialization and unplanned urban expansion accelerated pollution, flood vulnerability, and informal settlement along these waterways, transforming them into urban "backyards." In the same period in the early 2000s, the restoration of the Cheonggyecheon Stream in Seoul, South Korea, into a vibrant public space emerged as a milestone in global riverfront revitalization. Amplified by the internet and social media, this "Cheonggyecheon Effect" reached Indonesia in the 2010s and triggering a wave of projects in major cities such as Jakarta, Bandung, Palembang, and Denpasar that adopt Seoul's success story. Drawing on policy mobility and policy translation frameworks, this paper traces how the South Korean model was not simply transferred but selectively translated by local actors as it particularly in Greater Jakarta, the world's largest urban agglomerations with a population of nearly 42 million. The study employs a qualitative approach based on media and statement analysis, policy documents, and comparative case studies across municipalities in Greater Jakarta that influenced by Cheonggyecheon project. By closely examining interactions among high-level stakeholders, international institutions or firms, and the diplomatic-financial flows supporting these initiatives, the study identifies disconnection between Seoul's precedence and the strategies implemented in Greater Jakarta. I argue that many of these projects materialized as forms of "cosmetic restoration" which prioritizing the production of "Instagrammable" public spaces for political branding while leaving systemic issues in waste, pollution, and ecological degradation largely unaddressed. Through a comparative analysis, this paper further shows that the "Dreams of Streams" in Greater Jakarta which inspired by Seoul's Cheonggyecheon have become political commodities, mobilized by local leaders to signal modernity during elections. Many projects have been realized only at small and fragmented scales, failing to function as originally planned. The paper also maps an interconnected network of actors and influencers, suggesting that these initiatives are not isolated experiments in urban planning. Instead, the Cheonggyecheon Effect in some municipalities in Greater Jakarta constitutes a largely symbolic trend embedded in political ties between elite actors in both countries, driven by local leadership ambitions, yet unable to meet the needs of urban communities.

Rizki Dwika Aprilian is a young Indonesian scholar and a PhD student in architectural and urban history at the National University of Singapore, focusing on the interconnections between infrastructure, disasters, and politics in Southeast Asian cities, particularly Java, Indonesia. He earned his bachelor's degree in interior architecture (B.Arch) from Universitas

Indonesia and a master's degree (M.Arch) from Institut Teknologi Bandung. Over the past five years, he has taught, researched, and documented architectural history, vernacular architecture, and heritage preservation in Indonesia. He is also a member of ICOMOS Indonesia and currently serves as vice chair of the TENGGARA foundation. Through the lenses of infrastructure studies, environmental history, and urban political ecology, he examines how urban societies have shaped and been shaped by nature, and how these interactions continue to influence contemporary environmental hazards and resilience.

Frontiering the Urban Sea: The Restart of Infrastructural Projects and Uncertain Futures in Coastal Jakarta

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The seafront in Jakarta is a strategic location for a tug-of-war among the state, oligarchs, kampung dwellers, and other third-party actors. The initiation, cancellation, negotiation, sounding, and reactivation of infrastructural projects can destabilize the future of a coastal community, where multiple stakeholders' shifting standpoints even complicate the political process. The National Capital Integrated Coastal Development (NCICD) is the national infrastructural project designed to protect land from Jakarta's tidal flooding. It is contested owing to its poor effect on risk control of natural hazards and a suspected purpose of building exclusive luxury properties for the rich. Based on 2023-2025 ethnographic fieldwork in one of the coastal communities directly affected by NCICD, this paper examines how the frontiering of the urban sea unfolds in this focal area throughout the sophisticated political process of this mega-project's cancellation, intermittent probes and restart. Through long-term participant observation and informal conversations in a fishing neighborhood, in-depth interviews with activists, local leaders, professionals involved in urban movement, and archival research on official planning documents, I examine this distinctive moment of political transition around 2024 across national, urban, and local levels. I thereby argue that residents' uncertain futures will undermine their faith in the national leadership, widen socioeconomic disparities and intensify the everyday precarity of coastal life. Even as kampung dwellers enjoy their new housing and sponsorship from President Prabowo Subianto, they remain suspended in an ambiguous political moment that strains local solidarity and exposes the vulnerability of collective consensus. Consensus remains elusive during pre- and post-restart periods, leaving local solidarity fragile, disillusioned, and difficult to sustain. The restart of NCICD at a micropolitical level is a political arena of "the right to the seafront". The "seafront" is a frontier of the urban geographically and politically. I intend to reconceptualise the concept of "frontier" and propose the heuristic of "frontiering" to unravel the tug-of-war under the restart of a contested mega-infrastructure project in Indonesia. Through the analytic lens of "frontiering the urban sea", this article interrogates the complicatedness of technopolitics and the precariousness of marginalized coastal residents on the urban fringe. This research provides an ethnographic account of urban fisherpeople's overlooked lives amidst a contested coastal mega-project. It contributes to scholarship on Asian urbanism, coastal urbanism, political anthropology, political ecology, and infrastructural studies in science and technology studies (STS).

Wenjing Qiu is a PhD candidate at the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies, majoring in Southeast Asian Studies with a focus on Indonesia and being trained as an anthropologist. Her research interests include urban political ecology, port-city relationships, land political economy, and inter-Asian migration in Southeast Asia. She conducts two-year fieldwork in coastal areas of North Jakarta, where she examines the class question, economic disparities, political marginalization and ethnic issues through a comparative microcosm of two adjacent communities: a fishing settlement and a gated superblock. Her fieldwork coincidentally follows the special time of an election year and the restart of a national coastal infrastructural project, which enriches her observations. She has presented her research at international conferences organized by the Association of Asian Studies in Asia, the European Association of Social Anthropology, the American Anthropological Association, the International Convention of Asian Scholars, the Urban Studies Foundation, Xiamen University, and PortCityFutures at TU Delft.

PANEL 23 | KINSHIP AND CARE

Bare Infrastructure of Care for People with Disabilities in Indonesian Urban Kampung

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This paper develops 'bare infrastructures of care' as a framework to understand how care infrastructures operate and enable survival in Global South settings. Bare infrastructures of care framework is grounded in urban informality, feminist ethics of care, and new infrastructure studies literature; and is conceptualised through empirical engagements with the caring experiences of people with disabilities living in two (urban) kampungs in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Bare infrastructures

of care in the kampung are driven by informal care infrastructures that provide bare survival for people with disabilities. In post-welfare Global North cities, these infrastructures are in the ‘shadow’ of the traditional welfare state and operating within more formalised built environment. In contrast, bare care infrastructures are always laid bare and embedded in more communal and collectivist societies and informally developed built environment in the Global South generally, and the kampung specifically. Bare infrastructures of care are fundamental for survival but in ways can also expose individuals to harm. These infrastructures are providing the bare minimum for survival and not flourishing. The paper contributes to the debate on how care infrastructures operate across diverse contexts of welfare regimes and socio-cultural norms within Global North-South care landscapes.

Lambang Septiawan is a PhD candidate at the School of Geography, Earth, and Atmospheric Sciences, The University of Melbourne. He obtained a master’s degree from the same institution in 2022. His master’s research project on urban informality and participation of people with mobility impairments in Tegalrejo, Indonesia, has been published in *Disability & Society* and *The Conversation Indonesia*. Lambang is an urban geographer whose research interest is surrounding urban informality, care, and disability. His PhD research project examines how the kampung as a landscape of care shapes relations of care for and with people with disabilities in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

***Gruosār*: What Lies Hidden behind the Cambodian Word “Family”**

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This paper offers a reflection aimed at illuminating the contemporary organizational logics shaping the everyday life of an urban population in Phnom Penh, using the notion of *gruosār* as its main analytical framework. The term *gruosār* has often been translated rather simplistically as “family”. In parallel, there is a common tendency to assume that Cambodian families—like those of many other societies—can be understood through universal sociological categories based solely on residential configuration (“nuclear family,” the “stem family,” or the “extended family”). Yet my research invites a different perspective on Cambodian *gruosār*, showing that the nuclear family, the stem family, and the extended family can not only coexist but also form a single continuum—residential, *successorale*, economic, ritual, etc.—within one and the same *gruosār*. In this paper, the notion of *gruosār* is presented as a nested system composed of three scales of relations, which manifest themselves depending on the context and are embedded within one another: the “conjugal unit”, the “co-affinity unit”, and the “ceremonial or descent unit”. The relation that prevails within the *gruosār* can “reverse” from one scale to another. This hierarchical reversal between the different types of relations within this kinship unit corresponds to Dumont’s (1979: 402) definition of hierarchy, understood as an “encompassment of the contrary” (*englobement du contraire*). At the first scale, the conjugal unit, the relation between spouses takes precedence over both the descent relation (parents–children) and the relation of siblinghood among brothers and sisters. This conjugal unit is itself encompassed by the co-affinity unit, the second scale, within which co-residential relations between married siblings—and especially between affines—take on increased importance. Finally, the co-affinity unit is encompassed by the descent unit, the third scale, within which the descent relation becomes the central element in ceremonial contexts.

Sithbunnawath Mao is an independent anthropologist and associate researcher at CASE (Centre Asie du Sud-Est), specializing in contemporary Cambodian society. His research focuses on urban social dynamics, monetary practices, kinship and marriage, ancestry, and the resilience of social values in the context of modernization. He served for four years as a lecturer in Khmer language at INALCO (Paris) and currently teaches anthropology (in French) within the Manusastra Project in Phnom Penh.

Body Experience and Skills of “Liver Qi Stagnation” among Malaysian Chinese Patients

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In contemporary high-pressure societies, Liver Qi Stagnation (Gān Qì Yǔjié), a prevalent pattern diagnosis in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), demonstrates a high incidence among Malaysian Chinese communities. However, due to insufficient knowledge of TCM, many patients fail to fully recognize the intricate connections between emotion and physical discomfort. Based on long-term ethnographic fieldwork conducted with Malaysian Chinese patients diagnosed with Liver Qi Stagnation and their embodied experiences, combined with observations of daily clinical practices by local TCM practitioners, this article posits that the theory of body experience (shēntǐ gǎn) provides an analytical framework for elucidating the connections between patients’ psychosomatic states of stagnation and the external world with TCM culture.

Within Malaysia's socio-medical context, which is characterized by coexisting plural healthcare systems, Malaysian Chinese patients cultivate distinctive TCM body skills through interactive practices with practitioners. Throughout this process, they also engage in innovative adaptations. Particularly, individuals who have developed embodied TCM experiential capabilities demonstrate enhanced efficacy in managing stress-induced psychosomatic discomfort, thereby forming a unique and culturally distinctive healing approach.

Yien Xu, currently a postdoctoral researcher at the School of Sociology and Anthropology, Xiamen University. She previously obtained a Master's degree in Medical Anthropology from the University of Edinburgh and a PhD in Sociology and Anthropology from Sun Yat-sen University (2020-2025). During her doctoral studies, she received funding from the China Scholarship Council to pursue joint doctoral training in Southeast Asian Studies at the University of Malaya (2022-2023). She currently serves as Young Editorial Board Member of the journal *Chinese Life and Death Studies*. She has accumulated rich academic experience at the intersection of medical anthropology and Southeast Asian studies. With multidisciplinary backgrounds in medical anthropology and sociology, along with solid research training foundations, she has long been engaged in research on Traditional Chinese Medicine in Malaysia.

PANEL 24 | ECOLOGY, RESTORATION, AND RESILIENCE

Volcano and Refugee: The 1963 Mt. Agung Eruption and the Emergence of Hindu Balinese in Lampung

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In 1963, Mt. Agung in eastern Bali erupted after a 120-year dormant period, which occurred in two phases. The eruption caused devastating impacts on humans and the natural environment in Bali. The direct impact of pyroclastic flows and lahar floods resulted in 1,022 casualties. The eruption also caused major destruction to the natural environment and threatened hundreds of thousands of Balinese with food insecurity, starvation, disease, and malnutrition. During this disastrous event, both local and central governments were unable to provide sufficient aid and relief. Therefore, the government declared the Mt. Agung eruption a national disaster (*Bencana Alam Nasional*), opening the door to international humanitarian assistance. The eruption, more importantly, had exposed structural inequality within Balinese society, especially between lower and upper castes and those who had limited access to land and land ownership. The government were reluctant and unable to provide long-term food assistance to those impacted by the eruption if they remained in Bali. As a result, thousands of stricken people were relocated to other Indonesian islands, but particularly to Lampung in Sumatra. The idea behind the large-scale displacement of these environmental refugees under the government's transmigration programme was to provide opportunities for land ownership, improve their economic capacity, and reduce inequalities. The government provided equitable distribution of land blocks to each household for settlement and agricultural purposes. Additionally, the government provided food assistance and other necessities to each household until they could produce their own food. The participants not only came from the disaster-affected areas of Karangasem Regency but also from all regencies in Bali, which initially lacked land resources. The major destination of this programme was Lampung, followed by several areas in Sulawesi, Kalimantan, and Sumatra. In Lampung, the transmigrants spread out in different areas in North, Central and South Lampung. The government put them in specific villages, creating homogenous enclaves. The transmigrants maintained their Hindu Balinese identity and religion through extended cultural and kinship ties and knowledge transfer. These initiatives also gained support from the government and Hindu organisation, especially PHDI (Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia), making them the most significant Hindu population outside Bali. This paper explores the history of the 1963 Mt. Agung eruption and the relocation of Balinese people to Lampung. The research also highlights the coping mechanisms and adaptation techniques utilised in the new frontier regions of Lampung that contributed to the formation of a new Hindu Balinese community. This research is based on primary sources, including archives and reports from government institutions and newspapers, such as the National Archives of Indonesia, Lampung Provincial Archives, Bali Provincial Archives, and the National Library of Indonesia. More importantly, this research also utilised ethnographic research and oral history accounts based upon direct testimonies from survivors of Mt. Agung and their descendants in Lampung, who provided the rare and marginalised voices to reconstruct this disastrous eruption.

Anif E. Trisnadi is a PhD candidate in History at Murdoch University. He formerly worked as a lecturer at the State University of Semarang from 2019 to 2022. He holds a bachelor's degree in History from Universitas Gadjah Mada and a master's degree in Economic and Social History from the University of Glasgow. His main research explores the intersections of natural disasters, volcanology and environmental history. Currently, he is working on the 1963 Mt. Agung eruption and its impacts on humans and the environment in Bali under the supervision of Professors James and Carol Warren. Outside of PhD activities, he also serves as a reviewer for several journals, including *Lembaran Sejarah* and *Siginjai Journal*.

Peatland Restoration as a Pathway to Climate Change Adaptation: Reconfiguring Community Livelihood Strategies in Central Kalimantan

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Peatland degradation in Indonesia has resulted in high carbon emissions, significant biodiversity loss, threats to future food security, and increased community vulnerability to climate change impacts. This study investigated peatland restoration initiatives implemented by the Indonesian government and a private restoration company to improve community livelihoods and enhance their adaptation to climate change. Stakeholder interviews, household surveys, and focus group discussions were used to collect primary data in nine villages across the Katingan, Kotawaringin Timur, and Pulang Pisau Districts in Central Kalimantan Province, Indonesia. The findings revealed that the Indonesian government, in collaboration with various stakeholders, including the private sector, has taken several initiatives to restore degraded peatlands in Central Kalimantan through rewetting, revegetation, and revitalisation programs. Community involvement in those programs is crucial to their success, especially in preventing forest-damaging activities such as land burning, illegal fishing, and illegal logging. At the local level, the government and a private company take different approaches to improving community livelihoods and climate change awareness. The government provides livelihood-improvement programs only to community members who are involved in firefighting groups as a reward. In contrast, the private company offers a range of benefits and support to all community members. In the research area, both the government and a private company provide training to improve community understanding of peatlands and their management, thereby increasing community income while enhancing their ability to adapt to environmental and climate change. They raise community awareness of the issues arising from peatland degradation in a changing climate and environment, particularly the implications for agricultural production on their land and for fish availability in the nearby river. The study highlighted that a community-centred approach has enabled communities to build resilience to climate change, leading to long-term adaptation. Therefore, the government must expand the number of recipients of livelihood improvement programs. A pathway for community adaptation to climate change can be established by integrating local knowledge, community involvement, and stakeholder collaboration.

Sri Lestari is a PhD student in the Department of Resources, Environment and Development at the Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University. Her research topic is about peatland restoration in Indonesia, with a focus on Central Kalimantan Province. Lestari obtained her Master of Arts from the International Development Program at the International University of Japan and her Master of Science in Economics from the Faculty of Economics, University of Indonesia. Her bachelor's degree was from the Faculty of Forestry at Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia, with a major in Forest Management. In her home country, Lestari works for Indonesia's National Research and Innovation Agency as a senior researcher. Her research interests include the socioeconomics of forestry, public policy, marketing analysis, social forestry, and gender.

PANEL 25 | MIGRATION AND URBANISM

Temporalized Legitimacy and Living in the Present: Business and Everyday Life of Burmese Migrants in China

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Myanmar's long-standing armed conflicts and the intensifying political fragmentation in recent years have profoundly disrupted everyday life for local populations, forcing large numbers of people to cross borders in search of safety, income, and stability. In the China–Myanmar border region, the border city of Ruili has long functioned as an important corridor for cross-border mobility and livelihood practices. For Myanmar migrants—regardless of whether they possessed legal documents—Ruili once provided a relatively flexible space of cross-border movement, enabling them to engage in informal employment and sustain everyday survival across the borderlands. However, since the COVID-19 pandemic, China has increasingly intensified the securitization of the border through the construction of barbed-wire border fences and strengthened policing practices. In neighborhoods where Myanmar migrants live and work, police officers frequently hide at alley entrances to conduct sudden document inspections, creating a persistent atmosphere of surveillance and uncertainty. These governance practices have effectively severed migrants' formerly flexible mobility, confining them within the space of Ruili. For Myanmar migrants living in Ruili, legality is no longer a fixed legal status, but rather a constantly shifting and temporally limited condition of existence, shaped by intermittent law enforcement and the continuous anticipation of inspections that may occur at any moment. This article conceptualizes this phenomenon as “temporalized legality”. Based on long-term ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Ruili, this article examines how conditions of enforced immobility reshape Myanmar migrants' everyday perceptions of time as well as their commercial and everyday life practices. The fieldwork included long-term residence in villages with high concentrations of Myanmar migrants, participant observation, and continuous everyday interactions conducted on the basis of learning the Myanmar language.

Methodologically, this article adopts the “communicative” approach proposed by McDuie-Ra (2012), rather than relying primarily on formal interviews. This approach is both a response to migrants’ legal vulnerability and an attempt to gradually establish trust through everyday interactions. The empirical materials presented in this article demonstrate that, in response to increasingly intensified policing and document inspections, Myanmar migrants have gradually concentrated within highly localized ethnic spaces and organized their everyday lives around low-risk, small-scale economic activities. Constrained by limited access to social networks and economic resources, most Myanmar migrants engage in small businesses dependent on handicraft production rather than large-scale commodity trading aimed at profiting from price differences, thereby reducing their visibility and economic risk. Residential instability further shapes their consumption practices: because housing arrangements are temporary and relocation may occur at any time, many migrants deliberately avoid purchasing large household appliances such as washing machines, as these items are difficult to transport and incompatible with uncertain living conditions. At the same time, migrants’ temporal rhythms have also been reorganized. Since many people engage in different forms of work during the daytime, social life has gradually shifted into the night. Friends frequently gather together to drink, chat, and remain together until late at night or even early morning. Within an unstable border environment, such nocturnal sociality not only provides emotional support, but also anchors everyday life more firmly in the immediacy of the present. Accordingly, this article does not treat border governance as an abstract institutional system, but instead emphasizes how it is concretely perceived and experienced in the everyday lives of Myanmar migrants in Ruili. Practices such as sudden document inspections, the refusal to purchase large household appliances, reliance on handicraft-based small businesses, and late-night drinking and socializing all constitute concrete ways through which migrants cope with uncertainty and maintain the bearability of everyday life under conditions of enforced immobility. In this process, legality itself is experienced as a temporally conditioned and unevenly enforced state of existence.

Diandian Zhang is a PhD candidate in Anthropology at Yunnan University. Her research focuses on Myanmar migration and border studies, with particular attention to cross-border mobility and everyday life along the China–Myanmar frontier. She is currently conducting ethnographic fieldwork in Ruili, examining how Myanmar nationals navigate uncertainty under changing border regimes. She has participated in multiple research projects, including the China Rural Survey Project.

Uneven Social Reproduction: A Case Study of Households in the Philippines and Singapore

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This paper seeks to analyse the uneven reorganisation of household social reproduction through a case study of households in the Philippines and Singapore, specifically households in the Philippines from which women have left to work abroad as migrant domestic workers (MDWs) and households in Singapore that employ MDWs. Theories of dependency and social reproduction are synthesised to examine the everyday reproductive labour performed in these households within the broader context of their respective positions in a polarised world economy. An interdisciplinary, mixed-methods approach is used that draws on qualitative data from 75 semi-structured interviews with employment agencies, government officials, households and MDWs in the Philippines and Singapore, alongside quantitative data on household composition, spending and work from the Philippine Statistics Authority and the Department of Statistics, Singapore. The findings reveal that the time of women employers of MDWs in Singapore who typically would have been responsible for the childcare, elderly care and household work, is now freed up. This enables them to undertake more productive activities by joining the labour force as seen in the rise of dual income households, as well as enjoying more quality family time. Although the employment of MDWs has contributed to the high-employed, productive labour force over the last fifty years, its impact on a declining fertility rate and rapidly ageing population has been less noticeable. This suggests that while MDWs have been one component of resolving the tendency to social reproductive crisis before it becomes fully fledged, a more holistic intervention is necessary to counter the demographic crisis. Meanwhile remittances sent to the families of MDWs in the Philippines contribute to the adaptive practices of care and reproductive labour locally, including older sibling parenting, and from afar as embodied in transnational mothering. However, the unevenness of this reorganisation of social reproduction is highlighted by the physical absence of mothers, sisters and women family members in the Philippines, unlike in Singapore, which has contributed to several negative impacts, including family disintegration that have not yet been fully offset by remittances or government programmes like the Smart Child: e-Habilin programme. By bringing dependency and social reproduction theories into dialogue the micro-macro gap is bridged yielding new insights in understanding the uneven social reproduction of households in a migratory context.

Kevin Tan is a PhD student in the Department of Economics at SOAS University of London. Their research interests concern theories of dependency and social reproduction, with a particular emphasis on migration and the social reproductive labour performed under capitalism in Southeast Asia.

PANEL 26 | MINING, ECOLOGY, AND POWER

The Battery Dream: Technopolitics, Infrastructure, and the Imaginaries of Indonesia's Nickel Boom

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This study examines the sociotechnical legitimation of Indonesia's nickel export ban, interpreting the policy as a strategic exercise in technopolitics that is pivotal to the region's shifting resource governance. Grounded in the theoretical framework of sociotechnical imaginaries, the research investigates how the Indonesian state utilizes the narrative of the global electric vehicle supply chain to justify protectionist measures and construct a national identity centered on technological sovereignty. By projecting a future where Indonesia leads the Global South in high-technology manufacturing, state elites discursively reframe raw material extraction from a symbol of post-colonial backwardness into a prerequisite for national modernity. Methodologically, the study relies on qualitative data collected through 2025, comprising 22 in-depth interviews with key elite actors across central government ministries, legislative bodies, local authorities, and civil society. This state-centric fieldwork is triangulated with a thematic analysis of state media, presidential speeches, and secondary environmental reports to juxtapose formal public narratives against institutional realities. The empirical findings reveal that the state has effectively curated a "Battery Dream" imaginary that performs three distinct functions: it constructs technological sovereignty as an existential nationalist imperative; it necessitates a radical institutional centralization that disenfranchises local governments; and it operationalizes systematic discursive obscuration to normalize localized ecological degradation and carbon lock-in as acceptable transitional costs. The study concludes that Indonesia's nickel policy represents an emergent form of Southeast Asian technopolitics where global sustainability imperatives are strategically weaponized to reassert state sovereignty, forcing marginalized communities to absorb toxic externalities in the name of national advancement.

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Exploring Everyday Resistance of the Coastal Farmers Union (PPLP) in the Context of the Sand-Iron Mining Plan Conflict in Kulon Progo, Indonesia

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This research focuses on the Coastal Farmer Union, named *Paguyuban Petani Lahan Pantai* (PPLP), and its everyday resistance to land-grabbing policies in Kulon Progo, Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY), Indonesia. The PPLP resistance seeks to defend coastal land as agricultural land against sand-iron mining plans and state-backed attempts to certify coastal land as the property of the Pakualaman Duchy under the hegemonic authority of the Yogyakarta Sultanate. To unify coastal farmers, coastal farmers' groups in the coastal area initiated the PPLP in 2006. The PPLP is an informal grassroots organization aiming to facilitate resistance to the mining plan and policies that could seize coastal land. The struggle is not merely to refuse the mining plan and maintain the coastal land as agricultural land. Coastal farmers also challenge the Sultanate's domination over land politics in the DIY. The mining plan is one of the instruments employed by the DIY government and the Sultanate in their efforts to pursue industrialisation and, concomitantly, secure recognition of land ownership in the Kulon Progo coastal area. The DIY government and the Sultanate utilise Law Number 13 of 2012 of the Republic of Indonesia on the Privileges of the Special Region of Yogyakarta to legitimise the Sultanate's domination over governance, land management, spatial planning, and culture. For coastal land, the Pakualaman Duchy used law and the colonial archive to claim ownership. This research explores how the PPLP sustained its resistance from 2006 to 2024, despite the postponement of the implementation of the mining plan policy. This research uses a single case study as the methodology and ethnography as the research methods to examine forms and strategies of PPLP's everyday resistance. The data is interpreted using Scott's everyday resistance theory. This research argues that PPLP resistance exercises everyday resistance strategies by continuing farming on coastal land, conducting communal prayer, developing resistance funding

schemes, and performing resistance through the arts. Therefore, everyday resistance is significant for sustaining PPLP resistance.

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