

EuroSEAS Conference Berlin, 10-13 September 2019, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Title:

## Beyond wage labour: An inclusive approach to work and its implications for the emergence of new workers' alliances in urban Southeast Asia

Convenors:

Mark Philip Stadler (University of Copenhagen; [markphilipstadler@gmail.com](mailto:markphilipstadler@gmail.com)) and Mechthild von Vacano (Freie Universität Berlin; [m.vacano@fu-berlin.de](mailto:m.vacano@fu-berlin.de))

Abstract:

If economies of the global North are assessed to be entering a post-wage era, where are all those other economies going which have never fully been dominated by formal, waged labour? How can we grasp the structural changes of work and work relationships in geographic contexts which are largely characterized by economic activities dubbed 'informal'? Based on an inclusive approach to work which encompasses all kinds of provisioning and caring, this panel draws attention to the multifarious forms of work in urban(izing) Southeast Asia. It seeks to examine the on-the-ground negotiations of different forms of work – from formal employment to microbusiness; from entrepreneurship to hustling; from service jobs to (unpaid) care work – and invites empirically founded assessments of current labour trends in the urban centres of the region.

On a second level, the panel raises the question of labour mobilization: If classical modes of union organization depend on formal employment relationships, how can workers collectively represent their interests beyond these specific conditions? What empirical examples of 'informal' workers' or cross-sector alliances does Southeast Asia have to offer? And what are the organizational forms to foster these alliances (NGOs, CSOs, unions, confederations, social movements, etc.)? Inspired by the Indonesian "*rakyat pekerja*" (working people) approach, which seeks to unite the struggles of (female) domestic workers, migrant workers, fishermen, farmers, and workers in the classic sense, the panel will discuss the political challenges and potentials of grassroots mobilization based on an inclusive understanding of work.

We are interested in conceptual and empirical contributions from scholars engaged in the study of (plural forms of) work in urban Southeast Asia and welcome papers on the political potential of non-traditional / cross-sector workers' alliances.

Format:

Open panel, double-session (2x90 minutes)