

Panel Proposal: EuroSEAS 2019 Conference in Berlin

Title – Emerging Scholarship on Myanmar’s Chin State: Interdisciplinary Perspectives

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Single session panel

Discussant - tbc

Panel Description (250 words)

Chin State is a predominantly Christian State rich in ethnic and linguistic diversity found in North-Western Myanmar, a region which for a number of reasons has lagged behind Myanmar’s overall economic development. Chin State is experiencing fast social, political, and agricultural transformations which are having an impact on traditional indigenous practices and cultures, livelihood and social justice strategies, relationships to land and the environment, and to the multiplicity of Chin histories. The recent arrival of large international aid and development programs in the region has also been contributing to a variety of socio-political shifts, where international humanitarian organisations have been embedding themselves into Chin spaces via a number of different programs, methods, and affective practices. The expansion of the international humanitarian regime in Chin State is also tethered to a complex legacy of interactions between “The International” and the Chin, such as vestiges of British Colonialism and Christian missionary activities.

By presenting six interdisciplinary papers that look at Chin State from a variety of critical perspectives across the Humanities and Social Sciences, this panel aims to open up scholarly spaces of conversations around Chin State, an area significantly understudied in the field of contemporary Burma Studies. In particular, the panel proposes a nuanced and inquisitive debate around the ways in which gender, post-colonial theory, religion, law, and politics entwine with and relate to contemporary Chin identities, indigenous practices, ideas and projects for ‘development’, and an overall tumultuous relationship with the Burmanising Myanmar State.

Keywords: Myanmar, Chin State, indigenous, gender, development