

Panel Title: Everyday Justice in Myanmar

Conveners: Helene Kyed (DIIS, Denmark: hmk@diis.dk) and Lue Htar (EMReF, Myanmar: lue.htar@emref.org)

Panel description:

Myanmar, like other Southeast Asian countries, is characterized by the co-existence of various informal, yet pervasive, alternative authorities and parallel state formations. This is also seen in the area of justice provision – the topic of this panel. Although, the official judicial system is legally the only recognized system, in practice it constitutes only one among many avenues for seeking remedies in criminal and civil cases. Official state law does not enjoy a monopoly in deciding most cases, but is frequently avoided and supplanted by customary rules, the laws of ethnic armed organizations and cultural-religious norms. This panel will include papers on how ordinary citizens in Myanmar seek justice and try to resolve disputes and crimes following the end of five decades of military rule and protracted armed conflict. Theoretically, the panel will discuss everyday justice provision in relation to broader questions about the dynamics of state formation, identity politics and the constitution of order and authority in a transitional Southeast Asian context. Papers in this panel will draw on in-depth anthropological research from 2016 to 2018, focusing on ethnic minority areas, including Karen, Mon, Naga and Kachin.

Discussant: Ardeth Thawngmung

Double session with 6 papers.

Proposed papers:

1. *Everyday justice and forum shopping in southern Mon State*, by Thang Sorn
2. *Everyday trepidation: State affects and mental absconding in a marginal neighbourhood in Myanmar*, by Annika Pohl Harrison
3. *Seeking local justice and evading the state in Hpa-An, Karen State*, by Lue Htar.
4. *The role of customary justice practices in the changing political and social landscape of the Naga Self-Administered Zone*, by Myat The Thitsar
5. *Are we so different? Inter-religious collaboration in a rural Karen-Muslim village in Hpa-An Township*, by Than Pale.
6. *Formality phobia: fear of formality in justice provision in Myanmar*, by Myat The Thitsar.