

Euroseas Conference: 10-13 September 2019, Humboldt University in Berlin
 Deadline of proposals: 1 December 2018

(1) Panel title: Hybrid Communities in Southeast Asia: Identity Formation, Evolution, and Transformation

(2) Convener: Danny Wong Tze-Ken, University of Malaya, E-mail: dwongtk@gmail.com, on behalf of the SEASREP Foundation

(3) Panel description

When nation-states in Southeast Asia began to take shape, ethnic identity emerged as a prominent concern on the very eve of independence. While the dominant indigenous ethnic group quickly assumed the role of leadership, it did not take long for more fundamental questions to surface, such as who or which group(s) constitute the indigenous and on what grounds (lineage? language? religion? ethnic affiliation?). In his *Imagined Community*, Ben Anderson argues that all nations are creole in nature, highlighting the hybrid nature of nations ranging from the United States to Brazil all the way to Southeast Asia.

In the region of Southeast Asia, hybridity has tended to be interpreted in terms of contrasts: groups on the one hand who are indigenous, local, home-grown and on the other, non-indigenous or foreign-infused groups whose ethnic 'purity' was doubtful. Yet in the process of settlement, some of the ethnically hybrid came to be accepted as part of the newly defined indigenous communities, while others were disfranchised or placed in positions of disadvantage owing to their distinctive non-indigenous ways and identity.

Hybrid communities in Southeast Asia vary from country to country as do their processes of hybridization. The *peranakan* in Malaysia are indigenous communities who were infused with either Arab, Chinese or Indian blood. The same term is also used in Indonesia, especially among those with Chinese blood. But among Indonesian Chinese, the same term also means those who were born locally and adopted the indigenous way of life. Malaysia and Singapore also have the *baba* and *nyonya*, whose hybridity initially sprang from mixed marriages between Chinese men and indigenous women and later shifted toward the adaptation of indigenous cultural practices, including the use of the indigenous language, Malay. In East Malaysia, the Sino-Native who had long existed in the country, became a new category in the 1951 census. In the Philippines, the infusion of Spanish as well as Chinese blood created a distinctive community known as the *mestizo*, whose ranks included some of the most illustrious Filipino nationalists such as Jose Rizal and Emilio Aguinaldo, who helped establish the Filipino nation.

Changes began to take place in the post-colonial era when indigenous elites began to assert themselves and in the process, marginalized those who were categorized as non-indigenous, including many of hybrid background. This led to a feeling of disenfranchisement and loss among some hybrid communities. Nonetheless, certain hybrid communities who were able to adapt to the changes were accorded indigenous status. As post-colonial states

commenced a life as independent nations, new ethnic policies were put in place, creating new challenges for hybrid communities, including space for negotiation and adaptation. Some hybrid communities were able to thrive under the new national government as changes in the identity of hybrid communities took place and new categories emerged while old ones underwent transformation.

Despite their long standing cultural heritage and their long residence in their respective countries, the hybrid communities continued to face new and complex challenges. The question of acceptance by both indigenous and non-indigenous communities dominated much of their existence. Tussles of identity between indigenous and non-indigenous status also remains a recurring problem, which has resulted in different treatment and reactions from different hybrid communities.

This panel on hybridity in Southeast Asia hopes to trace the origins and development of selected hybrid communities, namely, the Chinese Peranakan in Indonesia, the Sino-Kadazan of Sabah; the Chinese-Filipino in Binondo, and the Chinese-Peranakan in Kelantan. It is hoped that through the investigation on these four communities, some of the questions raised on hybridity in Southeast Asia could be answered.

(4) Presenters

Paper 1: Hoon Chang Yau, Institute of Asian Studies, University Brunei Darussalam, "Between Hybridity and Identity: Chineseness as a Cultural Resource in Indonesia", E-mail: changyau.hoon@ubd.edu.bn

This paper will first discuss the concept of hybridity, and then apply it to the context of the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia through a mapping of both historical and contemporary trajectories of their identity constructions. It explores the multidirectionality of the hybridizing process of the Chinese Indonesians, from assimilation during the Suharto's New Order (1966-1998) to "resinicization" following the democratization process after the fall of Suharto. For many assimilated Chinese Indonesians who are unable to access the cultural resources in Chinese, learning Mandarin appeals more to economic rather than cultural logic. The paper will attempt to unpack deeper embedded cultural and economic meaning to the return to primordial Chineseness among the Chinese in contemporary Indonesia.

As the antithesis of identity, hybridity blurs and traverses the boundaries that identities have established, undermining the phantasmic integrity and purity that the boundaries attempt to safeguard. To resinicize or be "Chinese again" involves returning to primordial identity and the essentialist "cultural stuff" (Barth 1969) in which "identity" is bounded. This paper endeavors to examine the cultural politics of the Chinese Indonesians in negotiating between hybridity and identity, as well as the underlying power dynamics in such negotiations. Lastly, in light of the rise of China, this paper will explore the cultural and political economy of resinization in post-Suharto Indonesia.

Paper 2: Danny Wong Tze Ken, Institute of China Studies, University of Malaya, “A Hybrid Community in East Malaysia: The Sino-Kadazans of Sabah and their Search for Identity”, E-mail: dwongtk@gmail.com

In 1962, an organization called the United National Kadazan Organization (UNKO) submitted a memorandum to the Cobbold Commission outlining the Kadazan community of North Borneo’s (present-day Sabah) position vis-à-vis the idea for the formation of the new Federation of Malaysia. The Memorandum hit out at the Chinese whom the Kadazan considered as immigrants for not being supportive of the proposed Malaysian Federation. The Memorandum went on to assert the Kadazan as the true indigenous community, and affirmed their support for the new federation. Yet, among the leaders of the Kadazan people were people of mixed parentage or hybrid-origins, many with Chinese blood and carried with them Chinese family names. This paper will investigate the origin and development of this hybrid community and its efforts to champion for an indigenous status. The paper will focus on several families of Kadazans leaders who traced their genealogies to Chinese origin.

Paper 3: Jeffrey P. Yap, Intramuros Administration, Manila, “The Troubled Dual Construction of Ethnicity of Recent Chinese Migrants and Third Generation Chinese-Filipinos in Binondo, Manila”, E-mail: jeffreypyap@gmail.com

The district of Binondo, since its establishment in 1594, as a settlement for the Chinese Catholics, its cultural space has different layers and stories to tell particularly its people who lived and preserved its history and traditions. Popularly-known as Manila’s “Chinatown” as depicted by mainstream media, film, and literature, the former suburbs of Intramuros, the island of Binondo, surrounded by esteros, is one of the most densely populated areas in the city. People from different ethnic backgrounds occupy its narrow streets and alleys although most of the residents are referred to as Chinese-Filipino.

This paper would like to know if the troubled assimilation of the Chinese-Filipino community in Binondo with the rest of the population living in the same district is grounded on questioning their own status in the community. It will discuss a number of Chinese-Filipino literatures written by recent migrants and third generation migrants that were published in the late 1980s to 2010s.

The paper will also examine the origin and development of the Chinese-Filipino community in Binondo from the time that it was conceived as a land devoted to the conversion of the native Chinese to Catholicism and their settlement in 1628, with particular focus on the Spanish, American, Japanese, and postwar periods. In addition, the particular role/s of the Chinese-Filipino community in Binondo during the Spanish/American/Japanese colonial/Postwar era and if there were significant changes in their role/s in the community will be studied. With these, the paper will be able to determine the types and extent of stereotyping that recent migrants (2000s to present) and third generation Chinese-Filipino families in Binondo receive from the Binondo community.

By tracing the past and present interactions of Chinese-Filipinos with fellow Filipinos, the paper will be able to determine if there were instances of their attempt to assimilate with the Binondo community and if such attempt garnered an acceptance or otherwise.

Paper 4: Pue Giok Hun, Institute of Ethnic Studies (KITA), Universiti Kebangsaan, "Malaysia Empowering Local Knowledge in Search for Unity in Diversity: The Case of Peranakan Chinese in Kelantan, Malaysia", E-mail: ghpue@hotmail.com

At the turn of sixtieth anniversary of Malaya's independence from the British colonial powers, the issue of race and ethnicity remains ardent in Malaysian society today. In this context, the country's diversity posits two conflicting social issues. On the one hand, it faces an increasingly uphill battle against ethnic polarization. On the other hand, several established 'hybrid communities' are becoming more visible in the mainstream society, particularly the Peranakans in the Peninsular Malaysia. They still exist and may even thrive today despite centuries have passed since their emergence from assimilation process between at least two distinctive ethnic groups. Interestingly, general consensus finds the Peranakans and other native ethnic groups in their localities enjoy relatively more harmonious interethnic relations as compared to interethnic relations between the mainstream ethnic groups. Such positive reception of the Peranakans by the dominant ethnic group is remarkably unique, as progeny of mixed races are often negatively discriminated in societies that are beset with problematic race relations. Against this background, this paper seeks to examine how and why the Peranakans are positively embraced by native ethnic group who is the majority, as part of the society. By focusing on Peranakan Chinese community in Kelantan as a case study, this paper finds that Kelantan society enjoys collective consciousness which transcends ethnicity, made possible through their shared local knowledge and practice which are rooted in regionalism, i.e., being '*anak Kelantan*' (children of Kelantan) in everyday lives.

(5) Proposed budget: Euro 10,540, broken down below:

	<u>Item</u>	<u>Unit Cost</u>	<u>Total</u>
a.	Airfare to/from Berlin	1,350 x 4 pax	5,400
b.	Accommodation	130 x 4 pax x 5 nights	2,600
c.	Registration fee	140 x 4 pax	560
d.	Schengen visa fee*	60 x 1 pax	60
e.	EuroSEAS membership fee	30 x 4 pax	120
f.	Stipend**	90 x 5 days x 4 pax	1,800

*Bruneians and Malaysians are not required to apply for Schengen visa

** For meals and local transportation.

Single session