

Proposal for EuroSEAS 2019 Laboratory
“Legal Intermediaries: Reading, Interpreting and Documenting ‘Law’ in Southeast Asia”

Convener:

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Plans for discussion and collaboration:

Legal Intermediaries are those people and increasingly, technological systems, that facilitate and provide the documentation, rules and mediate (or decide) the outcome of commercial, social and political disputes. They can be religious leaders, diplomatic actors or lawyers. The nature and qualifications of legal intermediaries change across time and place. They are essential for the movement of people, development aid, information circulation, and capital flows. These actors create, and document, the legal connections across Southeast Asia. Through sharpening our focus on legal intermediaries, we are able to interpret the operation, practices and mechanisms that underpin legal connections across Southeast Asia from social, political and legal perspectives.

We are living in a period of great commercial and socio-political upheaval, climatic change and technological disruption. As a result, the role of legal intermediaries is being reconfigured. Through an inter-disciplinary collaboration between lawyers, historians, and anthropologists, the laboratory seeks to identify how these changes impact legal intermediaries. We aim to trace how conceptions of legal intermediaries and their role have evolved across geographies and times.

The dynamic composition of scholars participating in the laboratory will consider the question of legal intermediaries from multiple perspectives that cross traditional, modern, local, transnational, digital, and physical boundaries. The discussion will address questions including:

- The changing role and definitions of ‘law’ in the Southeast Asian settings, for example, the role of lawyers contrasted to the role of religious leaders as legal intermediaries;
- What it means to be a ‘lawyer’ as a historical matter, as a contemporary iteration and into the future in Southeast Asia;
- The role of technology and non-humans as legal intermediaries in Southeast Asia; and
- The concept of ‘figures of prowess’ (Barker and Lindquist 2009) in relation to legal intermediaries.

Please note: we are running a reading group preparing for this laboratory that will commence in January 2019.

Participants:

Dr Kristina Simion (Australian National University) / **Mr Mohamed Mahayni** (Paris I University) / **Dr Sanne Ravensbergen** (Leiden University) / **Dr Kari Telle** (CMI, Norway) / **Ms Santy Kouwagam** (Leiden University) / **Dr Antje Missbach** (Monash University) / **Dr Wayne Palmer** (Bina Nusantara University) / **Ms Lam Chen Meng** (Singapore University of Social Science).