

Muslim Belonging and Politics of Belonging in the Philippines

Closed Panel, single session

Conveners:

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Abstract

This panel looks into the diversity of Muslim lives and experiences, self-making, self-representation, and assertions in the Philippines through the lens of belonging and politics of belonging. It will tackle the various ways in which Muslims in the Philippines perform and construct their belongingness, which Nira Yuval-Davis defines as “emotional attachment, about feeling ‘at home,’” that exists at three analytical levels: “[the first is] social locations; the second relates to individuals’ identifications and emotional attachments to various collectivities and groupings; the third relates to ethical and political value systems with which people judge their own and others’ belonging/s.” Belonging becomes political, Yuval-Davis asserts, when contestations over the latter ensue and when social locations—including political and historical positionalities, and narratives of identities, are used, particularly by hegemonic powers, to draw, enact, maintain, and reproduce boundaries between “us” and “them.” Thus, the panel will also look at how these boundaries are drawn and what their consequences are for particular Muslims, while, at the same time, interrogating how these boundaries are contested and challenged. These discussions will be embedded within broader historical, social, economic, and political contexts in the Philippines, particularly the recent events on the wars in Zamboanga and Marawi and the resulting forcible displacements, the declaration of martial law in Mindanao, and the signing of the Bangsamoro Organic Law and upcoming plebiscite, as well as the burgeoning creative productions by young Muslims—ranging from short stories to films—through which they tell their stories in their own voices, in a country where they have been historically minoritized, marginalized, and misrepresented.

Cited work:

Yuval-Davis, Nira, “Belonging and the Politics of Belonging,” *Patterns of Prejudice*, 40:3 (2006), 197-214, at 197.