

**Panel title:**

Niches and Networks of Expertise: Negotiating Citizenship, Science, and Economy in Southeast Asia and Beyond

**Convenors:** Agus Suwignyo / Andreas Weber (equal contributions)

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Over the last two centuries, Southeast Asia has witnessed the rise of a wide variety of governmental and non-governmental networks of expertise related to issues of citizenship, economy and science. By conceptualizing such networks as temporary niches in which individuals with transnational backgrounds came together to identify, formulate and perform their responses to perceived challenges in society, this panel problematizes sociological accounts which take more rigid categories such as 'nation-states', 'economic growth', or the 'knowledge society' as analytical starting points. Instead of suppressing the historic role of experts and their networks in shaping Southeast Asia, contributors to this panel study a polycentric and variegated landscape of political activists, engaged citizens, poets, educationists, naturalists, businessmen, medical doctors. Taken together contributions to this panel elaborate on two interrelated issues: first, it shows that the concept of niches is a good heuristic tool to reconstruct and evaluate the functioning and impact of transnational expert networks in Southeast Asia and beyond. Second, by zooming in on different groups of experts and the controversies they created, it has the potential to unravel the multifaceted agencies that helped shape the institutional polities in Southeast Asia many existing studies have generally ignored.

**Double session (2 x 90 minutes)**