

Queer (In)Visibility in Southeast Asia: Class, Politics, and Global Sexual Health

Double session (2X 90 minutes)

Convenor: Sylvia Tidey

Description panel – How do sensationalist concerns with gay men’s sex parties relate to upper class anxieties? How do class distinctions work to exclude transgender women from LGBT HIV-related care? What new opportunities for queer belonging, desire, and exclusion do digital media platforms offer? What are possibilities for Muslim queer care, belonging, and politics in an increasingly hardliner Islamic contexts? How do global sexual health discourses create new queer categorizations?

Through questions such as these, this panel addresses queer (in)visibility in twenty-first century Southeast Asia at the intersection of class, politics, and global sexual health. For queer Southeast Asians, frictions between moral, political, and economic ideologies and practices affect possibilities for being and belonging in multiple and often contradictory ways. While rights-based activism, global health concerns, and an expansion of the middle classes have opened up new avenues for queer visibility and relationality, they have obscured others. While increasing homo– and transphobia threaten queer social, political, and actual lives, contemporary processes of marginalization also present new opportunities for interstitial connections and organization.

The members of this panel combine their disciplinary insights from the arts, anthropology, and queer studies by drawing on their work in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand. In so doing, they turn to the topic of queer Southeast Asian (in)visibility to look for forms of Southeast Asian queerness both highlighted and neglected in the hegemonic ontological and ideological perspectives of liberal economics, liberal humanism, and global health discourses. By attending to such processes of making visible and rendering invisible, we commit to queering the transnational turn (Chiang and Wong 2016). One that refuses a Euro-centric perspective in rendering Southeast Asian queerness as mere empirical objects of study severed from “theory” proper (Chen 2010). Instead, we deploy our commitment to a Southeast Asian queer regionalism (Martin et al. 2008: 15) as a means for rethinking queer possibilities for being, community, and politics.

Presenters:

- **Paul Michael Leonardo Atienza (PhD Candidate, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign – atienza2@illinois.edu)**
“Ugliness” as Pathways to Intimacy: On Deception and Disclosure among Gay Filipino Men on Dating Apps in Manila and Los Angeles
- **Ferdiansyah Thajib (PhD Candidate, Freie Universität Berlin – ferdi.thajib@gmail.com)**
Politics in the Cracks: Indonesian Muslim Queer Communal Care and Belonging
- **Richard Karl Deang (PhD Candidate, University of Virginia)**

MSM Peer Counseling and the Dispositions of Care in HIV Prevention in the Philippines

- **Benjamin Hegarty (Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Melbourne – benjamin.hegarty@gmail.com)**
Queer Activism and the State in Postauthoritarian Indonesia
- **Sylvia Tidey (Assistant Professor, University of Virginia – st3fx@virginia.edu)**
“They’re Just Too Lower Class”: Queer Inclusion and Exclusion in HIV-related Care in Indonesia

Discussant:

- **Terje Toomistu (PhD Candidate, University of Tartu – terjetoomistu@gmail.com)**