

EuroSEAS Conference 2021
Palacký University, Olomouc, Czech Republic

7-10 September 2021

PANEL PROPOSAL

Panel Title

Identity Politics in Southeast Asia: Decolonial Approaches Toward Constructing the Pluriverse

Panel Convenor

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Panel Abstract

This panel interrogates the origins and dynamics of recent forms of political contention around identity in contemporary Southeast Asia through a decolonial theoretical lens. The panel adopts a broad interpretation of political contention that includes oppositional activism, collective action, social movements or street protests. The panel aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how the colonality of power and knowledge, a key concept in the decolonial school of thought, is implicated in recent examples of political contention over issues of race, religion, gender or sexuality in the postcolonial countries of Southeast Asia. Through the empirical examples provided in the papers of this panel, we demonstrate the operationalisation of the colonality of power – i.e., the notion that prevailing political, economic and social structures of modernity that were formed during the era of Western colonialism is constantly being reproduced and updated under the rhetoric of modernity and progress in ways that maintain unequal social hierarchies and power differentials in postcolonial countries, even though explicit colonialism as a political order has long come to an end. The panel seeks to answer fundamental questions on why and how these seemingly intractable identity differences contribute to political contention in the different national contexts studied, with some identities favoured while others marginalised. We also reflect on the benefits and limits of decolonial approaches, which emphasise the alterity and multiplicity of knowledge production, in the quest to de-marginalise oppressed groups toward the construction of more equal and pluriverse societies. The panel will convene junior and senior scholars of Southeast Asia to address these questions from an interdisciplinary perspective.

Panel Type

Single Session (1 x 90 min)

Confirmed Presenters:

1) Saleena Saleem
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Topic: Decolonizing Feminisms: Islamic Feminists and Islamist Women Activists in Malaysia