

Convener

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Title

Progressive Urban Religion in Southeast Asia

Religious Activists and their Struggles against the Conservative Turn in Metropolitan Areas

Abstract

Metropolitan Areas in Southeast Asia have become the space for power struggles and political contestation. Religious (-political) forces experience a conservative turn with polarization, politicization and are part and parcel of wider national power struggles. Conservative forces, at times conservative-majoritarian or outright illiberal and radical, are at the forefront of appealing to followers and non-followers, voters, civil society and the wider public. At the opposite are progressive religious groups, activists and movements which struggle for liberal values, for the inclusion of LGBTIQ+, for interfaith marriage as well as for harmony between religious groups. These civil society groups and activists also care for the poor and the marginalized, which are otherwise overheard by the “loud” discourses of the conservative forces. Not only are these groups and initiatives at the forefront of a struggle for better lives of their members or target groups, for peace among religions, but they ultimately safeguard liberal democracy and values, such as freedom of religion, freedom of speech etc.

This panel gives space and room for the study of progressive religious groups and organizations, churches, mosques, temples etc. of Southeast Asian urban areas. The focus is both the religious groups from a mere social-movement theoretical point of view as well as about concrete ideas, initiatives and activities that counter the conservative-majoritarian currents trying to establish counter-narratives of progressive nature – the empirical aspect of this panel. Academics and practitioners from a variety of interdisciplinary backgrounds are invited to contribute to this panel and are welcome to contact the convener at markphilipstadler@gmail.com to apply for participation.

Format

Single session with 3-4 presenters