

EuroSEAS 2022 Panel submission

Title: The Enigma of Authority: Conflict and Continuity in Thai Politics

Conveners: Daena Funahashi (UC Berkeley), Andrew Alan Johnson (UC Berkeley)

Format: Single session panel

Format Description: This panel will be an in-person session of four speakers with commentary by a discussant. For maximum representation, we have chosen speakers from a mix of academic levels, including junior faculty (Funahashi), emeritus faculty (Herzfeld), scholars outside of academia (Johnson), and postdocs (Renwick), at institutions in the United States and Asia.

We will feature four presenters and one discussant.

Panel Abstract

History is constantly being made and remade: witness the serial installation and removal of plaques in Bangkok commemorating opposing historical narratives: the 1932 People's Party, the Chakri dynasty, and the 2020 democratic movement. But monuments and other spaces of commemoration are not simply changing scripts of a landscape meant to be read, but proposals on how to read. Such proposals form channels for different claims, claims to alternative uses already inherent in the paradoxes and contradictions of the everyday.

These proposals draw sustenance from what superficially appear to be mutually opposed values (e.g., egalitarianism and hierarchy, nationalism and cosmopolitanism, conspicuous consumption and religious piety). In this panel, we explore the way in which such moments are enabled by the internal vortex of such paradoxes, and their contemporaneous but mutually-opposed readings of history. Here, we are interested in ruptures and mergings, dissonances and polyphonies, collaborations and competitions. How do different or opposing conceptions of politics, polity, or "past-ness" manifest themselves, compete with each other, or emerge into the quotidian? To what extent do such dynamics help to explain the reputation of Southeast Asian polities for compromise even in the face of the threat of violence, and to what extent are such resolutions based in the everyday experience of life in these countries?

Participants:

- Daena Aki Funahashi (funahashi@berkeley.edu) : Assistant Professor, University of California-Berkeley
- Andrew Alan Johnson (andrewjohnson@berkeley.edu) : Visiting Scholar, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, University of California-Berkeley; Foreign Expert, Mahidol University (Thailand)
- Trude Renwick (trenwick@hku.hk) : Fellow in the Society of Fellows in the Humanities, Hong Kong University
- Michael Herzfeld (herzfeld@wjh.harvard.edu) : Ernest E. Monrad Research Professor of the Social Sciences, Harvard University
- (Discussant) Justin McDaniel (jmcdan@sas.upenn.edu) : Professor, University of Pennsylvania.