

What's in a Claim? Making Family, Nation, and Territory in Southeast Asia

Convenors:

Cheryl Yin, University of California, Berkeley

Hilary Faxon, University of Copenhagen

Format:

Panel (single session)

This panel explores how people in Southeast Asia make or dissolve claims, whether to place, people, citizenship, or identity. Amidst resurgent authoritarianism and lack of robust legal institutions, claims-making often takes place beyond, beside or outside the law. Public performances in newspapers, classrooms, scientific laboratories, farmlands and Facebook groups index ownership and belonging. The papers in this panel ask: how do actors assert and challenge ideas about kinship, property, citizenship, and sovereignty? We are particularly interested in the ways in which claimants harness or subvert official rules and cultural conventions to (re)make claims, both from above and from below. When what is required 'on paper' or 'by blood' does not align with people's everyday experience, they must find ways of making claims to the contrary. Using cases concerning family conflict in Cambodia, land restitution in Myanmar, DNA and citizenship in Thailand, and rubber plantations in Laos, we explore the multiple, dynamic ways in which state actors and everyday people forge claims about themselves and their social world.

Panelists:

Cutting Family Ties: announcements disowning kin in Cambodia

Cheryl Yin, University of California, Berkeley

To Each Her Own: giving land back in Myanmar

Hilary Faxon, University of Copenhagen

Drawing Borders in Blood: DNA Testing as Citizenship Adjudication in Thailand

Amanda Flaim, Michigan State University

Rubber as Development, Rubber as Forest: state and investor claims to the benefits of plantation rubber in China and Laos

Juliet Lu, Cornell University

Discussant:

Christian Lund, University of Copenhagen