**Eclectic Leftism in Southeast Asia**

EuroSEAS 2024 Panel Proposal

**Conveners**

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**Explanation of the Chosen Format**

A single session conference panel with four presenters (three designated presenters and one open slot) and a discussant. We believe the traditional panel format fits better with our proposed topic and current needs: to test our ongoing works and ideas and promote forthcoming publications. This format also ensures that the session gives platform for mid-career and early-career scholars.

**Panel description**

Southeast Asia is home to varied expressions of leftist, revolutionary, and progressive politics, movements, and ideas. From revolutionary traditions of millenarian and Marxist-Leninist movements to progressive agendas of contemporary social movements, most studies on the region have captured these diverse expressions of ecumenical leftism, including its cosmopolitan inspirations and local transmutations. What is more challenging to discuss is the *eclectic* nature of these leftist/left-leaning articulations, especially for heterodox and revisionist/reformist variants. Considering the popularity of this perspectival eclecticism at discursive and practical levels across the region, a closer look at this phenomenon is warranted.

This panel aims to start a more thoughtful, deeper conversation on this subject. We are interested in a range of eclectic leftism. This includes, but not limited to, local anarchisms, anti-authoritarian/anti-totalitarian ideas, labor-social reproduction-environmental struggles, progressive and (left)liberal currents in civil society activism, and quasi-Marxist and populist thoughts, among others. How do we make sense of this eclectic leftism? What are the ideational and material origins of this strange dissident politics? How does it intersect with the older, more orthodox Marxist and revolutionary traditions in Southeast Asia? Finally, what are its implications for political praxis in the region?

In this panel, we invite you to ponder these questions together. We particularly encourage submissions on case studies outside Indonesia.

**Format**

Single session (1 X 90 minutes)

**Presenters**

1. Tian An Wong (Assistant Professor of Mathematics, University of Michigan-Dearborn) and Gabriel Facal\* (Deputy Director, Research Institute on Contemporary Southeast Asia, IRASEC)

Title:**Insurgent Southeast Asia: Protest, Rebellion, and Resistance**

This presentation provides an overview of a variety of pro-social insurgencies in Southeast Asia. Insurgency is meant loosely, and gestures to the larger field of social relations across which unequal power relations travel and intersect along the various axes of nation, race, class, gender, and sex. Different case studies from the region will give a glimpse on the structural challenges faced by social movements struggling for material survival, political freedom, and social and ecological justice. Through descriptions of latent opposition, overt political claims, and armed struggles, we will highlight the porosities existing between society and the state, the role of mediators, the historical transformation of the nature, and qualification of resistance. Ongoing and future dynamics for social movements will be discussed. The presentation is inspired by an array of national and thematic angles: after-Coup civilian resistance in Myanmar, former communist Lao soldiers, anarchism in Indonesia, environmental justice in Vietnam, evolution of Philippine anti-authoritarianism movements, activism of Indonesian female factory workers, and food induced conflict in Thailand and Indonesia.

\*Attending presenter

1. Iqra Anugrah (Research Fellow, IIAS, Leiden University)

Title: **Dawam Rahardjo: A Muslim Progenitor of Revisionist, Populist Socialism**

Studies on receptions of Marxism in the Global South including Indonesia tend to focus on revolutionary and counter-revolutionary views of Marxism, proven by the proliferation of studies on leftist and left-nationalist groups and their right-wing rivals.

But this focus overlooks two major modes of appropriation of Marxism: populist and revisionist readings of Marxism, which emphasises elite-mass distinction in the former and welfare capitalism in the latter. In the absence of a revolutionary leftist tradition during the anti-communist New Order authoritarian-capitalist regime (1966-1998) in Indonesia, such “moderate” interpretations of Marxism became increasingly popular among critical Muslim intellectuals and activists, a major political force during the New Order period.

By focusing on the lives and thoughts of Dawam Rahardjo (1942-2018), a left-leaning Muslim scholar-activist who combined several streams of Marxisms – Marxist political economy, dependency theories, and Frankfurt School, to name a few – to formulate his own brand of populist, yet revisionist socialism, this study scrutinizes the weird transmutations of Marxist thinking in the context of peripheral capitalism. I ask: How did Dawam Rahardjo use Marxist-influenced ideas to perceive societal problems during the New Order and formulate their solutions? What were the achievements and limits of his localised, left-leaning, yet petty-bourgeois alchemy of political economy prescriptions?

1. Windu Jusuf (PhD Candidate, LIAS, Leiden University)

Title: **The Social Democratic Origins of Indonesian Liberalism**

This paper looks at the continuity between contemporary liberalism in Indonesia and Marxist revisionism through the history of Indonesian Socialist Party (Partai Sosialis Indonesia/PSI, 1948-1960) and its extended networks of intellectuals (since the 1960s). It situates both the party and its organizational heirs as a singular element instrumental in the trajectory of liberalism as well as its foremost custodian. In doing so, this paper would delve into the key ideas emerging among the socialist intellectuals in the transformation to liberalism and subsequently map their networks.

**Keywords:** Marxist revisionism, Indonesian socialism, liberalism

1. Fourth presenter – Open slot for a woman scholar to be selected by the panel conveners

**Discussant**

Yatun Sastramidjaja (Assistant Professor of Anthropology, University of Amsterdam)