**Roundtable Proposal EUROSEAS, Amsterdam 2024**

**Emerging Trends in Southeast Asian Politics: Deeper Democratic Backsliding or Trickles of Emancipation?**

**Convener:** Jacques Bertrand, Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Toronto ([Jacques.bertrand@utoronto.ca](mailto:Jacques.bertrand@utoronto.ca))

In recent years, scholars of Southeast Asia have analysed and debated the trend toward democratic backsliding, against the backdrop of a region that has been comparatively weak historically in its democratic credentials. Over the last year, the region has seen a number of significant events and electoral benchmarks across several key countries. This roundtable takes stock of these events to discuss to what extent they are indicators of further backsliding or whether they indicate some resistance, or perhaps even slight reversals, from deepening authoritarianism. In particular, the roundtable will assess the results of the 2024 Indonesian legislative and presidential election, and whether a new parliament and executive promise new directions and a move away from recent repressive tendencies. It will also evaluate the first year of the Marcos presidency, which has largely been expected to continue or even deepen backsliding trends of the Duterte administration. Thailand has held its first fully free and fair election since the latest coup and relatively long stint under military rule. How fragile will the new parliament and government be? Does Thailand set an example for Myanmar’s military government to proceed with its promises of an election? The roundtable will discuss the evolution of military rule in Myanmar, its planned election, and the fate of the opposition. Finally, a new direction was set in Malaysia with the appointment of Anwar Ibrahim as prime minister, and a historical decimation of the Barisan Nasional coalition in the 2022 elections, then its surprising recovery. The roundtable will discuss the state of the fragile coalition led by Anwar, and whether we are seeing represents a more pluralized and decisive democratizing trend or a step toward illiberal reconsolidation. The roundtable will wrap up with what these events and benchmarks mean overall for the region’s politics.

We will follow a standard round-table format. Each presenter will begin with opening remarks (maximum 10 minutes), followed by a brief set of comments, questions. We will have one round of responses to initial prompts and then open for broad discussion to the audience. The panel currently has four panelists and welcomes additional participants who are Southeast Asia based in particular.

Participants include:

Professor Meredith Weiss

Dept. of Political Science, SUNY-Albany

Professor Ardeth Maung Thawnghmung

Dept. of Political Science, University of Massachusetts-Lowell

Associate Professor Sarah Shair-Rosenfield

Dept. of Politics and International Relations, York University

Professor Jacques Bertrand

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