Proposal for

EuroSEAS 2024 Conference at the University of Amsterdam

22-26 July 2024

**Format: Roundtable**

**Title: Malaysia’s Tumultuous Political Development Since 2018 and Its Future Trajectory**

**Roundtable Participants:**

*Co-Convenors*

Assistant Professor Elvin Ong, National University of Singapore, [poloje@nus.edu.sg](mailto:poloje@nus.edu.sg)

Associate Professor Kikue Hamayotsu, Northern Illinois University, [khamayotsu@gmail.com](mailto:khamayotsu@gmail.com)

*Presenters*

Professor Dan Slater, University of Michigan, [dnsltr@umich.edu](mailto:dnsltr@umich.edu)

Associate Professor Kai Ostwald, University of British Columbia, [kai.ostwald@ubc.ca](mailto:kai.ostwald@ubc.ca)

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**Roundtable Abstract**

In May 2018, the Pakatan Harapan opposition alliance defeated the dominant ruling coalition, Barisan Nasional that had ruled Malaysia for six decades. Since then, Malaysia has seen four different Prime Ministers helming precarious coalition governments in five years. This roundtable brings together scholars of Malaysian politics from diverse institutions, ranks, gender, and ethnicity to assess Malaysia’s turbulent political development since this first electoral turnover.

The scholars will address how Malaysian politics has remained the same or evolved in the years since 2018 through the lens of religion and identity (Hamayotsu), political parties (Ong), coalitions (Slater), ideology (Ostwald), political Islam (Tayeb), and civil society (Yeoh). They will also seek to sketch out potential divergent trajectories of political reform and development over the next few years under the current unity government helmed by Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim.

**Roundtable Importance and Urgency**

Since the 2018 and 2022 general elections where there have been two peaceful non-violent turnovers of government, Malaysia has become the world’s youngest democracy, having successfully passed Samuel Huntington’s “two-turnover test” of democracy. Moreover, excluding the petro-state of Brunei and the city-state of Singapore, Malaysia is also the most economically developed country in Southeast Asia. Yet, whether Malaysia’s nascent democracy will consolidate or continue vacillating is still a matter of debate. It is therefore important and urgent for scholars from various disciplines to unpack and understand Malaysia’s recent political developments and its future trajectory for political reforms and democratic consolidation.