**Proposals for a panel at the EuroSEA 2024 conference**

**Title:**

Minority Citizenship: Mobility, Religion, Gender and the State in Asian Context

**Convener:**

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The panel is supported by Astrid Norén-Nilsson, Senior Lecturer, Centre for East and Southeast Asian Studies, Lund University

**Description of the format:**

The panel is comprised of five presenters coming from various national and institutional backgrounds. The individuals involved in this panel are Chontida Auikool, affiliated with the Centre for East and Southeast Asian Studies at Lund University, Sweden; Chitiphat Suntornsaratool and Jidapa Buayairugsa, both associated with the International Doctoral Program in Asia-Pacific Studies at National Chengchi University; Hu Ning, affiliated with the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Universiti Malaya; and Bruce Dame Laoera, affiliated with Doctoral School of Humanities, Jagiellonian University in Poland. This panel is a single session, 90 minutes.

**Description of the panel:**

The panel is titled ‘‘Minority Citizenship: Mobility, Religion, Gender and the State in Asian Context’’. It delves into the examination of citizenship regimes and the experiences of diverse minority groups, including those based on ethnicity, religion, and gender, within the Asian context. The specific focus of this panel revolves around the minority citizenship of countries such as Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Taiwan. The panel engages in an analysis of several case studies to explore the process by which citizenship is constructed through legal frameworks, state institutions and other cultural elements. The primary objective of this panel is to demonstrate that although citizens’ rights should be ensured and protected by the state, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, and religion, minority citizenship can be a complex issue due to the potential discrimination and unequal treatment based on group affiliation and status within the state. This thus gives rise to concerns regarding the living situations of minority groups within the political system, also prompting an intriguing examination of their approaches to pursuing inclusion and advocating for their political and social demands in different contexts. All the presenters offer diverse case examples from various nations and time periods. Chontida examines the experiences of the Aceh Chinese community residing in Aceh under the jurisdiction of the Sharia law. She explores the influence of the Islamic legal framework on the citizenship status of the Aceh Chinese, highlighting the existing tensions between the local government, Muslims and non-Muslims within Indonesia’s special autonomous area. Chitiphat analyzes the evolution of women’s societal roles in Thailand from the beginning of the first National Economic and Social Development Plan. The study investigates the increased inclusion of women within the national framework and identifies the persisting challenges faced by women in Thailand. Hu Ning explores how the Malaysian Chinese perform the Guan Gong belief within the Malaysian state and underscores the value of the “Dynamic Interactions” theoretical framework in better comprehending the interaction of Chinese as a minority in Malaysia. Then, Jidapa focuses on the transnational marriage of Thai women in Taiwan. Not only does she explore the legality which constrains the rights of Thai woman migrants, but she also investigates strategies and advocacy efforts employed by Thai woman migrants to promote their rights and facilitate their integration into Taiwanese society. Lastly, Laoera analyzes feminist narratives in Indonesia by reassessing the identities and roles of Indonesian women’s agency in Indonesia through the examination of Indonesian women’s discussion in the digital space, specifically Twitter.

**Abstracts:**

**1) Constructing and Negotiating the Identity and Belonging of the Aceh Chinese under Sharia Law**

By Chontida Auikool, PhD Candidate, Centre for East and Southeast Asian Studies, Lund University, Sweden

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The development of the modern Aceh Chinese community has been significantly impacted by several historical occurrences in Aceh, the westernmost region of Indonesia. This includes significant events such as the anti-communist atrocities in 1965 and 1966, the GAM-Indonesia conflict, and the 2004 Tsunami, which have profoundly influenced on identity and sense of belonging of the community. However, the matter of citizenship in Aceh became even more intricate, particularly after the conclusion of a peace agreement in 2005. The agreement not only resulted in the integration of Aceh into the Indonesian state, but it also conferred autonomy upon the region, enabling the full implementation of the Sharia law within its jurisdiction. Special status for the Acehnese Muslims and segregated citizenship based on religious affiliations thus become apparent as a consequence of the law and autonomy. The Aceh Chinese although being officially recognised as Indonesian citizens based on the country’s citizenship law of 2006, the group unavoidably encounter challenges and struggles to find their place and belonging within the jurisdiction of the Islamic law. This paper delves into the post-conflict scenario in Aceh, focusing on the significant role of the Sharia law in shaping the citizenship regime, and the explanation of the tension between religious groups and how the Aceh Chinese construct and negotiate their belonging within the special autonomous area. It argues that the incorporation of Aceh into the Indonesian nation has paved the way for the dissemination of Indonesian values such as Pancasila to be adopted by the Acehnese populace. This phenomenon enables the Aceh Chinese community and its affiliated organizations to undertake proactive measures in establishing and defining their position within the broader societal context. However, there is perceived silent tension in the Acehnese society due to the limitation of freedom and the law that impacts the life of ethnoreligious minorities within Aceh province.

Keywords: Aceh Chinese, Aceh, Sharia law, Indonesia, Ethnoreligious minority, Belonging, Identity, Pancasila, Citizenship

**2) On her own: Reframing Image of Women’s Roles in the Public Sphere of Thai society**

By Chitiphat Suntornsaratool, Ph.D. Student, International Doctoral Program in Asia-Pacific Studies, National Chengchi University

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Thailand was socially a patriarchal society from various factors. Women have been viewed as the inferior gender in Thai society since in the past. Women should be kept in private areas to deal with housework. Her tasks were mainly about giving birth, raising children and cleaning the house. These were the expectations of women’s roles. The changes of the political and economic sphere have hugely affected the roles of women. Especially the middle-class women in urban areas. In 1957, Thailand had launched the first National Economic and Social Development Plan. In the details, the policies clearly pointed to the promotion of women in careers. Thus, women had more space in publicity and became more economically independent. However, the social expectation for women was still strong. This paper will explore the changes of women’s roles in the early 1960s to 2020 from “Mae Sri Reun” or wife and mother to a salesperson and single mom by using the author’s mother interview as a case study. This paper will then consider the self-perspective of a woman who did not fall into the social expectations and her life solutions. It will be the expansion of a better understanding of marginalized women which would be critical to the development of feminist studies. The result of this research finds a significant key; economic conditions and family issues led to the changes of women’s roles and self-perception to the women community.

Keywords: Marginalized women, National plan.

**3) The Dynamic Interactions of Malaysian Chinese: A Case Study of Guan Gong Belief**

By Hu Ning, Ph.D. Student, Chinese Studies in Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Universiti Malaya

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The interaction mechanisms within Malaysian Chinese society can be understood through the lens of Chinese religion. This paper takes the case of the Guan Gong belief, considering individuals, beliefs, and culture as the constituents of interaction. To systematically analyze the complex interactions within Malaysian Chinese society, we have established a theoretical framework of “Dynamic Interactions”, encompassing four key components: events, interactions, sources, and targets. By exploring the events associated with the Guan Gong belief, which include rituals, cultural performances, and parades on Guan Gong, we scrutinize the interactions between individuals and the interactions between individuals and deities. In the process of these interactions, we gain insight into the underlying social networks and social capital that drive these activities. These events trigger multifaceted interactions within Malaysian Chinese society, involving believers, clergy, and community leaders, among others, along with their respective objectives tied to their faith in Guan Gong. Further analysis reveals how Malaysian Chinese society, through the interaction of various elements, can transform scattered individuals into interconnected members of the society, thus creating a potential sense of cohesion. In conclusion, this study summarizes the Guan Gong belief as a dynamic interaction case, underscoring the value of the “Dynamic Interactions” theoretical framework in better comprehending the interaction of Chinese as a minority in Malaysia.

Keywords: Dynamic Interactions, Malaysian Chinese, Malaysian Chinese

**4) The Reality of Thai Marriage Migrants in Taiwan: \*Citizenship and Welfares as New Immigrants**

By Jidapa Buayairugsa, PhD Candidate, International Doctoral Program in Asia-Pacific Studies, National Chengchi University, Taiwan

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This study investigates the different experiences of Thai marriage migrants in Taiwan, addressing three key aspects of their journey: 1) the driving factors influencing their choices between obtaining permanent residency or full citizenship in Taiwan, 2) the challenges they encounter in accessing state-provided welfare services as new immigrants, and 3) their endeavors to assert and secure their rights as new immigrants in the Taiwanese context. Utilizing a comprehensive research approach, incorporating qualitative interviews, ethnographic fieldwork, and document analysis, this study illuminates the factors affecting Thai marriage migrants' decisions regarding legal status. These factors encompass economic opportunities, social integration prospects, and legal constraints within the host country. Furthermore, the paper explores the bureaucratic complexities, societal dynamics, and economic obstacles that Thai marriage migrants face when attempting to access welfare services, including healthcare, education, and other social assistance. The research also delves into the strategies and advocacy efforts employed by Thai marriage migrants to advance their rights and integration into Taiwanese society. This includes organized activism, community building, and engagement with local authorities. In a sociocultural context where Thai marriage migrants often confront language barriers and social disparities, this research underscores the pivotal role of legal status, government policies, and migrant agency in shaping their integration experiences. The findings underscore the imperative need for tailored policies, support mechanisms, and rights-based approaches to enhance the well-being and socio-economic inclusion of this migrant population in Taiwan.

Keywords: Thai marriage migrants, citizenship, welfare access, migrant rights, integration, activism, Taiwan, migrant well-being

**5) Rethinking Indonesian Women’s Agency and Feminist Narrative on Twitter Activism as Counterpublic Space**

By Bruce Dame Laoera, Doctoral School of Humanities, Jagiellonian University

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Since the fall of the New Order regime in 1998, Indonesian people seem to have more opportunity and space to express opinions and thoughts both in the public and digital sphere. With the advancement of information technologies and the usage of free social media platforms, many Indonesian people utilize them to discuss social and political issues, especially Indonesian women. Many Indonesian women use social media platforms to offer discourse on women’s issues and conduct online activism. As a matter of fact, Indonesian women are still considered as ‘subordinates’, attached to traditional gender roles, and prone to gender-based violence. Moreover, this research purpose is to apply a qualitative exploratory content analysis on the Twitter posts (n=50) using particular search key terms. It will observe and focus on the political and gender discussion carried out by Indonesian women on Twitter posts during January-December 2023. There are several social issues that are involving women in gender and political contexts, for instance the law on sexual violence crimes (UU Tpks), the omnibus law plans (RUU Ciptaker), and electoral campaigns. Counterpublic theory will be applied as a framework since this research will seek and analyze feminist narratives within women’s issues discussion in the digital space. It will also aim to rethink the identities and roles of Indonesian women’s agency and the use of Twitter as a counterpublic space that influences the public culture in Indonesia.

Keywords: Counterpublic, Feminist Narrative, Indonesia, Twitter, Women’s Agency