**(1) Title**

New Area Studies within New Global Polarisations?

**(2) Convenors**

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**(3) Brief description and explanation of the chosen format**

The debates on New Area Studies have made an important contribution to critically questioning (classical) area studies and pointing out their coloniality and their intertwining with geopolitical strategies of the Cold War. These debates have thus made it possible to integrate transdisciplinary, post- and de-colonial approaches into a new paradigm of New Areas Studies using a critical approach.

As much as the "classical" project of Area Studies is a child of the Cold War, New Areas Studies unfolded under the political and institutional framework after the end of the Cold War and under the conditions of advancing globalization, which had a twofold impact: On the one hand, the geopolitical logic of the bloc confrontation was lifted in favor of a unipolar world order; on the other hand, a global epistemic community could be formed, as ideas and scholars were increasingly free to transcend borders and debates could be conducted in the Global South in addition to the former colonial centers.

These conditions have been reversed in recent years and pose challenging questions for the project of New Area Studies.

The rapid increase in global inequality, the spread of authoritarianism, the existential crises facing humanity such as climate change, pandemics, financial and economic crises and new interstate wars have led to a renewed global polarization. Buzzwords used to outline the current situation are the *end of globalization*, *deglobalization* processes and *a new bloc confrontation* between the so-called Western liberal world (led by the USA) and an emerging anti-Western bloc (led by China). In this confrontation, governments in Southeast Asia - but also scientists - are increasingly expected if not pressured to position themselves within the new geopolitical logic, and declare their loyalty to either the USA or China. Moreover, under conditions of authoritarianism, academic freedom is increasingly restricted in many Southeast Asian countries. European universities are often becoming a safe haven for critical scholarship. Against this backdrop, in a scientific landscape characterized by increasing authoritarian state intervention and the influence of large corporations, it is increasingly difficult to maintain a global dialogue.

How can New Area Studies react to this situation – given that the conditions of their existence have changed so dramatically or are even lost?

What role can New Area Studies play against the backdrop of a new global polarisation and existential crises?

To address these fundamental questions, we want to bring together scholars who have been working in and about the framework of New Area Studies for an open discussion at a roundtable.

**(4) Urgency of topic**

The new global political and institutional conditions – the global rise of authoritarianism, existential crises of humanity, and a global political polarisation – are posing fundamental challenges to the approach of Area Studies in general and to New Area Studies in particular. These challenges on the theoretical, conceptual and practical level have exacerbated with the outbreak of the wars against Ukraine and in the Middle East. The roundtable is meant to continue the reflections on Area Studies that have been part of the EuroSEAS conferences for many years.

**(5) Presenters**

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