

IPS Workshop on Examining Ethnic Hostilities in Asia

Tuesday, 2 July 2024

Hybrid; in-person and online via Zoom
Saffron Room
Shaw Foundation Alumni House, NUS

PROGRAMME

12.00 pm – 1.00 pm

Registration and Lunch

1.00 pm – 1.15pm

Opening Remarks

Dr Mathew Mathews
Principal Research Fellow &
Head, Social Lab
Institute of Policy Studies

1.15 pm – 2.00 pm

Book Sharing of “The New Governance of Religious Diversity” (2024)

Professor Tariq Modood
Professor of Sociology, Politics and Public Policy
Founding Director of Centre for the Study of
Ethnicity and Citizenship
University of Bristol

Question-and-Answer Session

2.00 pm – 3.30 pm

Panel Discussion 1: Contemporary Forms of Ethnic Hostilities in Asia

Moderator

Dr Clara Lee
Research Fellow
Social Lab
Institute of Policy Studies

Speakers

Professor Tong Chee Kiong
Adjunct Principal Research Fellow
Institute of Policy Studies

Dr Thung Ju Lan
Senior Researcher
Research Centre for Society and Culture, National
Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN)

Dr Beverly Asor
Assistant Professor
Department of Sociology and Behavioral Sciences
De La Salle University Manila

Question-and-Answer Session

3.30 pm – 3.50 pm

Tea Break

3.50 pm – 5.20 pm

**Panel Discussion 2: Impacts of Ethnic Hostilities on
communities in Asia**

Moderator

Professor Tong Chee Kiong
Adjunct Principal Research Fellow
Institute of Policy Studies

Speakers

Dr Alberto Fidalgo-Castro
Assistant Professor
Department of Social Anthropology and Social
Psychology
Complutense University of Madrid

Dr Muhammad Arafat Bin Mohamad
Assistant Professor
Sociology and Anthropology
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Universiti Brunei Darussalam

Dr Thitiwut Boonyawongwiwat
Associate Professor
Faculty of Political Science and Public Administration
Chiang Mai University

Question-and-Answer Session

5:20 pm – 5:30 pm

Closing Remarks

5.30 pm

End

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SYNOPSIS

Ethnic tensions, characterised by acts of prejudice and aggression towards particular ethnic groups, have emerged as a significant societal challenge, propelled by entrenched tribalism and identity politics. Contemporary manifestations of ethnic hostilities continue to loom large over the Southeast Asian region, underscoring the continual need for proactive measures to prevent its eruption.

In response to this pressing concern, the workshop serves as a platform for scholars, researchers, practitioners, and community leaders to engage in critical discussions about understanding ethnic hostilities in the region. The main objective is to examine the present manifestations of ethnic tensions in Asia, with a focus on non-violent expressions. Additionally, the workshop's focus extends to understanding the impact of these non-violent ethnic hostilities on communities and intergroup relations. By bringing together participants from diverse backgrounds, it seeks to explore interdisciplinary perspectives and develop a more holistic approach in addressing ethnic tensions.

This workshop will provide an opportunity for regional scholars to present their examinations of how these non-violent hostilities manifest within their societies and to share lessons that have emerged. In doing so, it aims to identify strategies that contribute to fostering harmony, inclusivity, and peaceful coexistence. The outcomes of these discussions will also inform the speaker's contributions to a forthcoming publication on related themes.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Muhammad ARAFAT Bin Mohamad is an Assistant Professor of Sociology and Anthropology at the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences, Universiti Brunei Darussalam. He holds a PhD in Social Anthropology from Harvard University and an MA and BA (Hons) in Southeast Asian Studies from the National University of Singapore. Dr Arafat has been keenly interested in and has conducted field research among the Malays of southern Thailand since 2002. He is preparing a monograph on the Patanian diaspora in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. His research interests include Trans-Asia connections, the anthropology of the Malay-Muslim World, and the anthropology of modern and contemporary art of Southeast Asia.

Beverley ASOR is an assistant professor at the Department of Sociology and Behavioral Sciences and the academic coordinator of the Initiative for the Study of Asian Catholics (ISAC) at De La Salle University Manila. She received her PhD in Sociology at the National University of Singapore. Her research interests include religious organisations, migrant integration, urban diversity, border studies, international migration to South Korea, and Philippine migration. She holds a Research Fellow position with the Border Studies Cluster, Faculty of Humanities at the Airlangga University, Surabaya. She is currently working on the transnational advocacy work of Scalabrini Migration Study Centers in Manila, Paris, Rome and New York as part of the larger research project, "Framing Migration: Role of Religious Actors in the Production of International Law," by Sciences Po Paris and Asia Research Institute, NUS. She is the Editor-in-Chief of the Philippine Sociological Review.

Thitiwut BOONYAWONGWIWAT has been deeply engaged in ethnic studies since 2001, beginning with his influential thesis on the identity politics of the Shan people along the Thai-Burmese border. This thesis garnered the Best Thesis Award in Political Science from Thammasat University. He currently serves as an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Political

Science and Public Administration, Chiang Mai University. After completing his Ph.D. at University College Dublin in 2015, Dr Boonyawongwiwat founded the Center for the Study of Ethnic Conflict, a hub for academic research and social engagement. His acclaimed book, "Peace Process in Myanmar: The Interrelation Among Government, Army, and Ethnic Groups," has gained widespread recognition in Thailand for its insightful analysis of Myanmar's peace process.

Dr Boonyawongwiwat's research interests have broadened to encompass border studies, with a particular focus on the political economy of narcotics in ethnic conflicts and the challenges of transnational organized crime. His significant academic contributions have led to his role as an advisor to the Northern Regional Operations Command Center for Drug Control and Prevention.

Alberto FIDALGO-CASTRO is an assistant professor in the Department of Social Anthropology and Social Psychology at the Complutense University of Madrid. He also serves as a visiting professor in the Postgraduate Program in Social Anthropology at the University of Brasilia. His primary research interests are in the socio-cultural anthropology of insular Southeast Asia, with a specific focus on Timor-Leste and Indonesia.

MATHEW Mathews is Head, IPS Social Lab and Principal Research Fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies, National University of Singapore. He also leads the IPS Programme on Race, Religion and Intergroup Cohesion. He has distinguished himself through conducting over 30 research projects examining race and religious issues, some of which have been well covered in media outlets and used in policy making circles. Dr Mathew has published on issues related to religious and community harmony in a range of books and journals. He has also led forums and conferences on issues related to race, religion and immigrant relations. Most recent forums he has led include: the IPS-OnePeople.sg Forum on Ethnic Identity and Culture (2018); the IPS Forum on Religious Harmony (2018); and the IPS-MHA Forum on Religion, Extremism and Identity Politics (2019) and IPS-RSIS Forum on Racism (2021) and the OnePeople.sg-IPS Community Leaders Forum on Workplace Harmony (2022).

TARIQ Modood is Professor of Sociology, Politics and Public Policy and the founding Director of the Centre for the Study of Ethnicity and Citizenship at the University of Bristol, UK He has held over 40 grants and consultancies, has over 35 (co-)authored and (co-)edited books and reports and over 350 articles and chapters. He was awarded an MBE for services to social sciences and ethnic relations in 2001, was made a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences (UK) in 2004 and elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 2017. In 2022, he was ranked in the top 20 UK cited scholars in Politics, Law, Sociology and Social Policy. He served on the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, the National Equality Panel, and the Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life.

Ju Lan THUNG is a distinguished senior researcher at the Research Center for Society and Culture, part of the National Research and Innovation Agency. She received her Ph.D. in Sociology from La Trobe University, Melbourne, in 1998. Her academic and research interests span a wide range of social issues, including Chinese Indonesians, ethnicity, and multiculturalism. Dr Thung's research includes comprehensive studies on the vulnerability and resilience of impoverished households in Indonesia. Her work examines the dynamics of ethnicity and social class within the Indonesian middle class, especially in the context of the digital era. Dr Thung explores themes of nationalism, contrasting traditional forms with contemporary millennial perspectives, and addresses cultural solutions for regional issues such as those in Papua. She has edited and contributed to books that analyse the relationships between Indonesia and China, as well as the interactions between East Asia and Southeast Asia. Additionally, her publications

address the challenges faced by the agricultural sector in Indonesia, highlighting the impact of science and technology.

Dr Thung's extensive body of work underscores her commitment to understanding and addressing complex social issues in Indonesia and beyond.

TONG Chee Kiong is currently the chairholder of CIPSH Chairs programme for New Humanism: Spiritually & Secularity in the Modern World since 2021. He was previously the Special Academic Advisor and Chair Professor at Universiti Brunei Darussalam. Prior which, he was Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, NUS between 1997 and 2000. His research interests focus on, from both an academic and a policy perspective, religious change, business networks, ethnic identity and multiculturalism. He is presently engaged in a project studying new humanisms in Asia, as well as a longitudinal survey of Chinese traditional customs and ritual practices in Singapore. His book publications include *Identity and Ethnic Relations in Southeast Asia* (Springer, 2010) and *Chinese Business* (Springer, 2014).

Clara LEE is a Research Fellow at IPS Social Lab. She obtained her PhD in Political Science from the University of Pennsylvania. Clara's research in her current capacity extends across several domains, including social and economic mobility and the political economy of labour. This builds upon her prior academic endeavours examining labour immigration within the broader international and comparative political economy contexts. The role and influence of public opinion also underpin much of her work, where she explores how beliefs and perceptions of various social phenomena shape decision-making and behaviour. Her research employs diverse methodologies and seeks to leverage interdisciplinary tools and epistemic frameworks to advance methods of inquiry.



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