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## Call for Papers

### **Outside the Box: Beyond national borders – Southeast Asia in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

*Comparative Workshop*

**University of Passau, 5. - 6. June 2020**

Since the formation of independent states in Southeast Asia in the decades after World War II, the region went through processes of rapid transformation at the political, economic, social as well as religious-cultural level. The charismatic leadership of the independence struggle was followed by the bureaucratization of the governments in the mid-1960s. The “economic miracle” of the 80s and 90s cumulated in the Asia crisis of 1998. The new emerging parties, groups and governments after the crisis resulted in a loss of legitimation for the elites.

While these transformations are well documented for each nation, research seldom looks beyond these national borders to engage in a comparative approach. However, many of these processes of transformation are not singular for one country but can be understood in a broader regional and global dynamic. Hence, the aim of this workshop is to think outside the box, engage research beyond the national bias and turn to processes shaping the region.

Underlying processes of transformation, which can be observed in most Southeast Asian countries, can provide a starting point to discuss similarities and differences beyond the national framework. In fact, the countries face similar problems even though we have different political systems and cultures. From the comparative perspective we can identify specifics as well as generalities. In studies looking only at one country, these differences get blurred.

### **Citizenship and belonging**

In recent years, a growing crisis of legitimation in many Southeast Asian Countries is countered by increasing authoritarian governments and state repression. At the same time, the role of elites and their relationship with the heterogeneous middle classes puts processes of democratization into question. Ideas of citizenship become fields of intensive tension surrounding identity and belonging. This process is reinforced by the marginalization and

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exclusion of ethnic and social groups and an increasing inequality, which puts pressure on the social order. Within these dynamics, the media plays a double role as medium of expression but also of propaganda. Consequently, a diverse set of fields of conflicts emerges in which environmental protection, local and national identity, corruption and land rights are hot topics and used as tools of social mobilization. In this conflicted political and social landscape, religious revivalism in the 1990s promoted the idea that the strict following of religious beliefs would solve all social, economic and political problems like corruption. Moreover, in the last two decades, a new nationalism emerged which promised solutions to the same problems. However, after two decades, this brings into question whether or not this religious revivalism and new nationalism can live up to their promises to provide solutions or do they rather create new problems.

To begin understanding these complex dynamics', a range of topics for discussion can be envisioned for the workshop.

- State formation, crisis of legitimation and state repression
- The role of elites, the middle class and a 'fragmented' society
- Conflicts, tensions and social mobilization: environment, land grabbing and other hot spots?
- Mobility and marginalization
- Religious revival and the state

We would like to bring our individual country expertise together to carve out and to highlight the complex processes in the Southeast Asian region that shall be analyzed in a comparative perspective in order to be able to understand the directions of current processes and to initiate new research approaches and questions. The workshop is interdisciplinary and we invite individual abstracts from academics, researchers, Ph.D. and graduate students and professionals with an interest in Southeast Asia beyond borders.

Individual abstracts can address the overall themes of transformations in Southeast Asia.

We promise coffee, beer, and Wacholder.

**The Deadline for Abstracts (300 words) is 31. March 2020.**

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The workshop is being hosted by the Department of Southeast Asian Studies of the University of Passau. Head of Department is Prof. Dr. Rüdiger Korff. The focus of the Department of Southeast Asian Studies lies on the comparative study of social and political processes in Southeast Asia, with the following specialist areas: Nation-building and conflicts, urban development, media organizational studies, development policy and process, culture, religion and gender. A key feature of Southeast Asian studies at Passau is the extensive language program, which offers courses taught by native speakers for beginners and advanced students in the following Asiatic languages: Indonesian, Thai, Vietnamese and Chinese.