

## Middle-class Projects

Practising Class among the Malays

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## THURSDAY, 15 MAY 2014

**09:45 – 10:00 REGISTRATION**

**10:00 – 10:15 WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS**

**MAUREEN HICKEY**, Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore

**YE JUNJIA**, Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Germany, and Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore

**10:15 – 11:15 KEYNOTE ADDRESS 1**

CHAIRPERSON | **MAUREEN HICKEY**, National University of Singapore

10:15 **Middle-class Identities and Residence in an Urban World**

**ROBYN DOWLING**, Macquarie University, Australia

11:00 Question and Answer

**11:15 – 11:30 BREAK**

**11:30 – 13:00 PANEL 1: CLASS, DIVERSITY AND RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY**

CHAIRPERSON | **MARCO GARRIDO**, National University of Singapore

11:30 **Gendered Realities: Women and Property in Urban India**

**BIPASHA BARUAH**, The University of Western Ontario, Canada

11:50 **Opening the Gates Back Home: Mapping Geographies of Social Differences and Hope in and Outside Philippine Gated Communities**

**ARNISSON ANDRE C. ORTEGA**, University of the Philippines – Diliman

12:10 **Securing Islam: Urban Diversity, Muslim Gated Communities and the Spatial Formation of Muslim Middle Class in Contemporary Indonesia**

**HEW WAI WENG**, Zentrum Moderner Orient, Germany

12:30 Question and Answer

**13:00 – 13:15 A MULTIMEDIA PIECE BY BERNICE WONG**

Shabdar Ali is one of thousands of Bangladeshi migrant workers who arrive in Singapore every year to seek a better future for himself and his family back home. Unfortunately, this migrant dream of his was shattered in 2013, when he met with a severe workplace accident that left him seriously injured and permanently blind in one eye. This multimedia piece casts light on Shabdar Ali's post-accident life and road to recovery, as he deals with the emotional challenges and uncertainties that lie ahead for him.

**13:15 – 14:15 LUNCH**

## THURSDAY, 15 MAY 2014

### 14:15 – 15:45 PANEL 2: ENCOUNTERING CLASS IN AND THROUGH PUBLIC SPACES

CHAIRPERSON | **CHENG YI'EN**, University of Oxford, UK

14:15 **Spatializing the Politics of Co-existence: Gui Ju (规矩) in Singapore**

**YE JUNJIA**, Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Germany, and National University of Singapore

14:35 **Class as Trajectory: Forms of Mobility and Their Conversation in the Thai Capital**

**CLAUDIO SOPRANZETTI**, University of Oxford, UK

14:55 ***Kaminey / On Scoundrels***

**PRASAD KHANOLKAR**, University of Toronto, Canada, and Collective Research Initiatives Trust, India

15:15 Question and Answer

### 15:45 – 16:15 TEA BREAK

### 16:15 – 17:45 PANEL 3: URBAN LIFESTYLES AND LEISURE SPACES

CHAIRPERSON | **SALLIE YEA**, National Institute of Education, Singapore

16:15 **Reconceptualising the Relationship between Social Diversity, Urban Liveability, and Public Space Design in Singapore's Quotidian Neighbourhoods**

**YEO SU-JAN, HO KONG CHONG, & HENG CHYE KIANG**, National University of Singapore

16:35 ***Anak Punk and Kaum Pekerja: Indonesian Punk and Class Recomposition in Urban Indonesia***

**SEAN MARTIN-IVERSON**, The University of Western Australia

16:55 **The Rise of "Hipster" Culture in Singapore: Spatial Transformation in Tiong Bahru**

**CHUA YI, JONATHAN**, National University of Singapore  
**TAN JUN HAO, SHERMAN**, The Australian National University  
**TAN SU YING, LAURA**, National University of Singapore

17:15 Question and Answer

17:45 **END OF DAY ONE**

## FRIDAY, 16 MAY 2014

### 10:00 – 11:00 KEYNOTE ADDRESS 2

CHAIRPERSON | **YE JUNJIA**, Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, and National University of Singapore

10:00 **Class Encounters of the Peri-urban Kind**

**PHILIP F. KELLY**, York University, Canada

10:45 Question and Answer

### 11:00 – 11:15 BREAK

### 11:15 – 12:25 PANEL 4: NEGOTIATING WORK, CLASS AND DIFFERENCE IN THE 'GLOBALIZING' CITY

CHAIRPERSON | **MARIA PLATT**, National University of Singapore

11:15 **"And with Time... I Could Sing along to the Songs": Laboured Encounters with Difference in the Global City of Work**

**AMANDA WISE**, Macquarie University, Australia

11:35 **Negotiating Class: Taxi Drivers, Passengers, and Theorizing Social Relations in Mobile Workspaces**

**MAUREEN HICKEY**, National University of Singapore

11:55 Question and Answer

### 12:25 – 13:30 LUNCH

### 13:30 – 15:00 PANEL 5: ENCOUNTERS, CLASHES, AND CONTESTED URBAN SPACES

CHAIRPERSON | **ELI ELINOFF**, National University of Singapore

13:30 **Class/Ethnicity/Politics: Multiple Diversities in Bangkok and Chiang Mai during the Current Political Crisis**

**JIM GLASSMAN**, University of British Columbia, Canada

13:50 **Swift Cities: Contested Political Ecologies of 'Swiftlet Farming' in George Town and Malacca, Malaysia**

**CREIGHTON CONNOLLY**, The University of Manchester, UK

14:10 **Unsettling Modernity's Markets: Trader Advocacy and the Resilience of "Traditional" Fresh Food Provisioning Systems in Baguio City, Philippines**

**B. LYNNE MILGRAM**, Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD) University, Canada

14:30 Question and Answer

### 15:00 – 15:30 TEA BREAK

## FRIDAY, 16 MAY 2014

**15:30 – 17:00** **PANEL 6: CULTURAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF CLASS DIFFERENCE AND BELONGING**

CHAIRPERSON | **ESTHER MADDY ROTHAM**, National University of Singapore

15:30 **Middle-class Projects: Practising Class among the Malays**

**JOHAN FISCHER**, Roskilde University, Denmark

15:50 **Rich Nurses, Low Paid Nurses: A Global and Visual Ethnography of Class in the Philippines and Canada**

**MARK LAWRENCE SANTIAGO**, Brocher Foundation, Switzerland, and University of Washington, USA

16:10 **Igorot Ways of Belonging in Kuala Lumpur**

**YEOH SENG GUAN**, Monash University – Malaysia

16:30 Question and Answer

**17:00 – 17:30** **CLOSING REMARKS**

**BRENDA S.A. YEOH**, Asia Research Institute, Department of Geography, & Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, National University of Singapore

**17:30** **END OF WORKSHOP**

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS 1

## Middle-class Identities and Residence in an Urban World

**ROBYN DOWLING**Department of Environment and Geography,  
Macquarie University, Australiarobyn.dowling@mq.edu.au

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The residential correlates and practices of 'being' middle class have long been fascinations of cultural and urban geographers. In this literature, class is much more than a position or element of social differentiation, but also an identity that is performed. Moreover, class identities are materialized and spatialised, connected to, and constructing, places. For the 'middle classes', of increasing prevalence in south-east Asian contexts, the residential context, home and neighbourhood are experienced and transformed in the performance of middle-class identities. In this paper I offer some critical reflections on the ways spatialisations of middle-class identities are understood, using two lenses. The first is theoretical, where I consider how performative perspectives on class challenge conventional wisdom on middle-class residence. The second is empirical, where I ask how this conceptual framework is challenged by thinking through non-western contexts. Throughout, the argument is illustrated with examples from the burgeoning research on middle-class identities in both the Pacific and Southeast Asia. The paper concludes by drawing out the implications of spatialities of class for urban diversity.

**Robyn DOWLING** is an urban and cultural geographer at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia. She has a long term interest in the character of middle-class residence (home) and identity, principally in Australia but also in diverse contexts as considered in her co-authored 2006 book *Home* (with Alison Blunt). Her recent work on new suburban communities in Sydney (published in *Asia Pacific Viewpoint, Political Geography, Urban Studies*) explores the connections between privatism, spatial enclaves and class identities. She has recently turned to a more explicit examination of urban responses to climate change, and building upon her earlier work on identities (*Progress in Human Geography*, 2009) a key theme in this work is the identities assumed and carved out through the processes of governing carbon in the city. This includes her current project on alternative mobilities, including electric bikes and carsharing. Robyn is on the editorial boards of *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* and *Geography Compass* and regularly reviews and assesses for diverse journals and grant agencies.

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS 2

## Class Encounters of the Peri-urban Kind

**PHILIP F. KELLY**Department of Geography, and York Centre for Asian Research,  
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The peri-urban fringes of cities such as Manila are marked by the relatively recent juxtaposition of diverse landscapes, production processes and social identities. They are simultaneously commuter belts for urban centres, new urban growth zones in their own right, sites of intensive industrialization, as well as landscapes of residual agricultural production. This makes for a complex social mix that includes a nascent industrial working class, urban professionals, remittance recipients, returned international migrants, arrivals from less prosperous regions of the country, as well as the farming classes that still remain. Unlike the fully urban spaces of metropolitan cores, these are largely sites of a national, rather than an international, cosmopolitanism. Nevertheless, the peri-urban zone witnesses equally complex social encounters of difference and co-existence. This paper will draw upon an extended research engagement with Manila's metropolitan fringe, and other examples in Southeast Asia, to argue that increasing social diversity in such places necessitates a multivalent reading of class in both economic and cultural registers.

**Philip F. KELLY** is Professor of Geography at York University, Canada, where he is also Director of the York Centre for Asian Research. He has conducted research on labour issues in Southeast Asia and in Canada, and his current research examines the labour market trajectories of Filipino immigrants in Canada, Asia-Canada transnationalism, process of socio-economic change in migrant sending areas and intergenerational class mobility. He is the author of *Landscapes of Globalization: Human Geographies of Economic Change in the Philippines* (Routledge 2000), co-author with Neil Coe and Henry Yeung of *Economic Geography: A Contemporary Introduction* (Wiley-Blackwell 2007, 2013) and editor of *Migration and Rural Change in Southeast Asia* (Routledge 2013).

## Gendered Realities: Women and Property in Urban India

**BIPASHA BARUAH**

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This paper examines land tenure in informal urban settlements in India from a gender perspective through field research conducted in Ahmedabad in collaboration with the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA). The author describes the formal and informal tenure arrangements that were in place in these settlements and analyses their implications for women. She proceeds to raise key issues that need consideration in developing a more inclusive, diverse gender-equitable vision of urban land rights, tenure and reform. These include more widely established issues such as tenuous inheritance rights of daughters and the challenges of securing joint property titles for married women as well as emerging issues such as the obstacles faced by renters in informal settlements, the largely unsubstantiated fears of gentrification and market eviction associated with tenure security, and the legal and practical challenges of translating the 'right of residence' into the 'right of ownership'. In each case, the author also draws out policy recommendations for redressing the discrepancies in women's ownership of urban land and housing in India.

**Bipasha BARUAH** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Women's Studies and Feminist Research at The University of Western Ontario. She also holds the Canada Research Chair in Global Women's Issues. Dr Baruah was previously an Associate Professor of International Studies at California State University, Long Beach and a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Toronto, Canada. She earned her PhD from York University (Canada) in 2005. She specializes in gender and development; gender and globalization; women and work; and social, political and economic inequality. In addition to her academic work experience, Dr Baruah has 10 years of professional international development experience with United Nations organizations, state agencies, non-governmental organizations and private foundations. Dr Baruah's publications appear in *World Development*, *Development in Practice*, *Progress in Development Studies*, *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, *Labor Studies Journal*, *Environment and Planning*, *Geography Compass* as well as other journals and anthologies. Her 2010 book, *Women and Property in Urban India*, was published by the University of British Columbia Press.



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# Opening the Gates Back Home: Mapping Geographies of Social Differences and Hope In and Outside Philippine Gated Communities

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In recent decades, gated communities have become major modes of urban transformation in the Philippines. While these developments may conjure images of security, wealth, demographic homogeneity and sanitized isolation, social life inside the gates is much more complex and intimately embedded to the outside. These gated communities have attracted migrant property owners mainly comprised of ‘new rich’ Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) and their families, as they return home and build their dream lives in the Philippines. Drawing from several years of ethnographic work, this paper examines the social reconfigurations associated with these developments by mapping everyday practices of life in and outside the gates. Inside the gates, ruptures to idealized suburban veneer of wealth expose social spaces of difference and tensions surrounding intersectionalities of class, race, ethnicity, citizenship and religion. Despite a general tendency of ‘fear’ of the outside, feelings of sadness and isolation, and the need for basic necessities of community living impel gated community residents to transact with the outside. Outside the gates, apathy or disdain of ‘rich’ (*mayayaman*) gated community residents is obscured by everyday engagements and convivial interactions in multiple sites. What emerges out of these accounts is an interface, a relational geography among residents inside and outside gated communities. As more returning OFWs purchase properties back home in the Philippines, more gated community developments will continue to reshape urban and rural landscapes in the Philippines. Thus, this paper argues for a rethinking of spatial politics within and beyond gated binaries and toward spaces of hope. By examining ties and relations inside and outside the gates, I locate spaces of engagement and explore possibilities for fostering solidarity and resistance in an attempt to open the gates and build socially just communities.

**Arnisson Andre C. ORTEGA** is an Assistant Professor of Demography and Geography at the University of the Philippines. He received his PhD (Geography) at the University of Washington, Seattle under the Fulbright exchange program in 2012. His dissertation entitled “Building the Filipino Dream: Real Estate Boom, Gated Communities and the Production of Urban Space” received the Edward Ullman Best Doctoral Dissertation Award. He has published articles in *Urban Geography*, *Asian Journal of Population Studies* (forthcoming), *Philippine Population Review* (forthcoming), and *Philippine Geographical Journal*. His current research interests are on spatialities of migration and urbanization, housing and real estate.

## Securing Islam: Urban Diversity, Muslim Gated Communities and the Spatial Formation of Muslim Middle Class in Contemporary Indonesia

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In the last few years, there are increasing numbers of Muslim gated communities (*Perumahan Muslim*) surrounding Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia. Situated at the edge of city, these housing complexes claim themselves offering 'modern, green and Islamic' living atmosphere to young middle-class Muslim families, thus they are ideal sites to investigate how religiosity, modernity and class are negotiated by various Muslim actors. While these Muslim clusters share similar idea of other gated communities - providing modern, safe and comfortable housing environment, Islam has been a defining criteria for them, as reflected by their residents (only for Muslims), transactions (sharia banking), features (mosques in the center of housing areas), activities (religious classes) and regulations (veiling for female residents).

Drawing upon the concepts of Bourdieu's 'Distinction' and Lefebvre's 'Production of Space', I argue Muslim gated communities as a spatial formation of urban Muslim middle class's identities and aspirations. On one hand, they distinct themselves from 'non-Muslim' gated communities with 'Islamic' features. On the other hand, they separate themselves from existing Muslim living places with 'modern' characters. Through the production and deployment of such Muslim clusters, both developers and residents aim to promote an 'Islamic way of modern living'. Many of the residents are young Muslim families, have tertiary education, work as professionals and active in various Muslim organisations. Most of them are originally from smaller towns or villages in Indonesia, before moving to Jakarta for study and work.

Under what circumstances, such housing enclaves become desirable for many pious Muslim middle class? How do the residents in these clusters relate themselves to Muslims and non-Muslims outside of their living compounds? Based on interviews with developers and residents, as well as ethnographic fieldwork in the Muslim gated communities, this paper explores how the discourse of fear of urban diversity (e.g. challenges from 'secular lifestyle' and 'Christian missionary') and the search for a secure community (e.g. free from crimes and floods) justify religion and class-based exclusion strategies. By choosing to buy into a fenced community, some Muslims find a place where they can secure themselves religiously and socially.

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**HEW Wai Weng** is Research Fellow at the Zentrum Moderner Orient, Germany, and currently developing a research project entitled, “Sites of Inclusion and Exclusion: New Muslim Places in Urban Malaysia and Indonesia”. He graduated from the Australian National University, where he submitted his PhD thesis, “Negotiating Ethnicity and Religiosity: Chinese Muslim Identities in Post-New Order Indonesia” (2011). He was also a postdoctoral fellow at the International Institute for Asian Studies, Leiden (2012).

## Spatializing the Politics of Co-existence: Gui Ju (规矩) in Singapore

**YE JUNJIA**

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There is a growing body of scholarship developing ways of describing urban diversity, with much of them addressing the various discourses and practices of migrant incorporation. Much of this work either posits these as either progressive or exclusionary. This paper challenges the existing understandings of co-existence using the term *gui ju* (规矩) to discuss the micro-level politics embedded within everyday forms of social organization in shared spaces in the context of Singapore's rapidly growing migrant-led diversity. I depart from recent work on urban diversity by arguing that the politics embedded within social encounters in public space leads to creative tensions within everyday life. Firstly, I demonstrate that localized norms and codes of conduct in a historically multiethnic state such as rapidly diversifying Singapore function to enable productive everyday encounters. Secondly, I argue that the maintenance of these norms become ways of differentiating new migrants from locals. I examine how locals manage coexistence with newcomers of different backgrounds via various government-led campaigns and how these are internalized by individuals. Drawing upon ethnographic data collected from fieldwork in the neighbourhood of Jurong West, I interrogate the politics of migrant incorporation. Through this term used by Chinese Singaporeans to mean proper behavior, this paper aims to problematize and situate coexisting with diversity by illustrating the socio-spatial possibilities and the exclusions that emerge through everyday encounters with difference. While *gui ju* mediates these interactions, it is also a highly sophisticated filter that people employ to distinguish who belongs and who does not.

**YE Junjia** is currently a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Urban Geography with the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic as part of the multi-sited GLOBALDIVERCITIES project. She is also a Visiting Research Fellow at the Asia Research Institute at National University of Singapore. She received her PhD in Geography at The University of British Columbia in 2011. Her research interests lie at the intersections of cultural diversity, critical cosmopolitanism, class, gender studies and the political-economic development of urban Southeast Asia. Alongside extensive ethnographic research methods, she also uses techniques of film and photography to further create visual narratives through her work. She has published in journals such as *Geoforum*, *Gender, Place and Culture* and *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*. She is currently finishing her first book, entitled *Inequality in the Global City: The Division of Labour and the Politics of Cosmopolitanism in Singapore*.

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## Class as Trajectory: Forms of Mobility and Their Conversation in the Thai Capital

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This paper explores the attempts, and failures, of motorcycle taxi drivers in Bangkok to transform their social status and activate social relationships that allow the creation of new channels through movement. Building on twenty months of ethnographic research among the drivers, I reveal how, much like in Bourdieu's concept of economic, symbolic, and cultural capitals, drivers aim at converting different forms of mobility – physical, social, and economic – one into the other. Such endeavor, however, if occasionally successfully, is always ridden with risks and challenges, contingencies and failures. In most cases, being able to traverse social and physical spaces does not create new paths but rather makes drivers more aware of existing barriers and limitations. In these instances, the driver's position in society exposes them to daily material reminders of larger systems of exclusion and exploitation. Exploring the lives of three drivers, my paper shows how their perception of class, either as an upward trajectory or as a stagnant loop, is informed and shaped by their relation to physical mobility in the city and between Bangkok and their villages. Similarly, I argue, their engagement with forms of political mobilization are structured around their success or failures, whether personal or collective, to convert forms of mobility one into the other.

**Claudio SOPRANZETTI** is a Postdoctoral Fellow at All Souls College, Oxford University. He received his PhD in anthropology from Harvard University in 2013 with a dissertation titled "The Owners of the Map: mobility and politics among motorcycle taxi drivers in Bangkok." He is also the author of *"Red Journeys: inside the Thai Red Shirts movement,"* an ethnographic account of the 2010 protest in the Thai capital.

## *Kaminey / On Scoundrels*

**PRASAD KHANOLKAR**

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Religious and class ideologies are very much intertwined into everyday life and ethics of defining what cities are or could become. In the post-colonial Indian context, visions for cities are/were based on religious myths of progress, order, and nationalism; here enlightenment and capitalism entered into a holy matrimony called modernism to shape urban futures and urban spaces; highways, financial centers, dams, and special economic zones—modern infrastructure—were its temples and private property the ideological basis of a state craft. With the urban turn, Indian cities such as Mumbai have become the primary places for the manifestation of this modern religion.

Simultaneously, 'nativist' political groups have attempted to territorialize the urban space by appropriating those tools to create a 'vernacular modernity' through the creation of a religious other. In such a context, Muslim dominated slums have become the primary site facing the material and representational violence of these two religious movements. Through an ethnographic study in a Muslim dominated slum of Mumbai, this paper attempts to bring this intertwining of religion, class and development under the microscopic lens through the figure of the 'scoundrel'. In doing so, it attempts to exemplify three ideas: first, how religious ethics and class constitute and get constituted in a slum locality; second, the ways in which the figure of scoundrel reconfigures relation between ethics, aesthetics and politics; and third, how attention to such urban figures in urban slums can help release them from the shell of its dominant conceptualizations.

**Prasad KHANOLKAR** is a PhD student of Planning and South Asian Studies from University of Toronto, Canada. He is also a member of Collective Research Initiative Trust (CRIT), Mumbai. His doctoral research focuses on how everyday different urban spaces and infrastructural objects get assembled in slum localities and looks at the possibilities of change held within them.

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## Reconceptualising the Relationship between Social Diversity, Urban Liveability, and Public Space Design in Singapore's Quotidian Neighbourhoods

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In Singapore, 'strangers' (or non-residents) comprise 30% of the total population; and, in this city-state, where land constraints have steered urban planning policies towards high-density living, foreigners and locals must coexist in even closer proximities than ever before. Nowhere is this confluence of difference and diversity made more visible than in the public realms of the city. As public arenas for everyday leisure and consumption, the nightlife spaces of quotidian neighbourhoods are significant because of their potential to foster social interactions amongst strangers—in this way, cultivating meaningful relationships between people and places. Drawing on research activities in Holland Village and Toa Payoh Central, this paper examines the physical, social, and civic qualities of quotidian neighbourhoods after dark and discusses the everyday possibilities of the public realm at night to enhance street vitality, urban conviviality, and place attachment. Findings from this study support the central argument that diversity and inclusivity in the public spaces of quotidian neighbourhoods promote sociability and liveability in an increasingly urbanised and cosmopolitanised city-state such as Singapore.

**YEO Su-Jan** is a Research Associate at the School of Design & Environment, National University of Singapore, where she received her PhD in Architecture in 2014. Her doctoral thesis, entitled 'Encounters with the Everyday (Night)life in a Global City: Urban Informality and Social Sustainability in Three Quotidian Neighbourhoods of Singapore', examines the implications of contemporary urban nightlife in the design of public spaces and planning of local neighbourhoods. Su-Jan's research interests also include topics on urban transformation, sustainable urbanism, and visual methods of urban analysis. Prior to her PhD studies, Su-Jan worked as an urban planner at the Urban Redevelopment Authority in Singapore.

**HO Kong Chong** is Associate Professor of Sociology at the National University of Singapore. His research focused on neighborhoods and collective participation. His recent works include "Theories of Place and a Place for Theories" in *Cities and Economic Change* (2014), and *New Economic Spaces in Asian Cities* (2012).

**HENG Chye Kiang** is Professor and Dean of the School of Design and Environment, National University of Singapore. He serves as member of several editorial boards of international journals and as jury member of many international design competitions in Asia. He is also Board member of the Jurong Town Corporation and Centre for Liveable Cities, Singapore. His research covers the urban design and history of Chinese cities. Chye Kiang consults internationally and is the conceptual designer of several international urban design/planning competition winning entries in China. He publishes widely on urban history and design. His books include *On Asian Streets and Public Space* (2010), *A Digital Reconstruction of Tang Chang'an* (2006), and *Cities of Aristocrats and Bureaucrats* (1999).



*Anak Punk and Kaum Pekerja:*  
Indonesian Punk and Class Recomposition in Urban Indonesia

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Since the 1990s, punk has become an increasingly visible part of urban youth culture in Indonesia. Demonstrating that punk remains more than a mere fashion, Indonesian punks have engaged in diverse forms of contestation, accommodation, and at times open political conflict in order to carve out their own spaces in the urban terrain. They also make assertive claims to a global, modern working class identity, often connected to a combative anti-capitalist political stance as well as a cosmopolitan urbanism which transcends many of the social divides which structure Indonesian cities. The social composition of Indonesian punk is somewhat ambiguous – including urban poor, creative workers, student activists and assorted ‘middle class’ dropouts; however, I argue that the identification of punk as ‘working class’ expresses more than a symbolic political affiliation, and instead constitutes a precarious but potentially powerful class alliance grounded in the neoliberal transformation of urban capitalism in Indonesia. While this alliance incorporates diverse experiences and competing interests, it also serves as a critical response to the dislocating and disempowering experiences of capitalist development, with the potential to contribute to a wider recomposition of working class politics in Indonesia. While they may not be directly engaged in workplace struggles, I argue that Indonesian punk goes beyond subcultural identity politics to enact a form of urban working class politics, organised around autonomous cultural production and reclaiming the urban commons. Yet their spatial and cultural practices contribute to as well as contesting the neoliberalisation of Indonesian cities, demonstrating the weaknesses as well as the strengths of punk’s ‘anti-work’ politics as a form of working class struggle while reflecting the contradictory dynamics of the wider processes of class recomposition within which Indonesian punk is situated.

**Sean MARTIN-IVERSON** received his PhD in Anthropology and Sociology from The University of Western Australia, where he currently teaches. This paper is drawn in part from his doctoral research project on “The politics of cultural production in the DIY hardcore scene in Bandung, Indonesia”, for which he carried out fieldwork in Bandung in 2004 and 2005. His research interests are in the politics of creative labour, global underground music, transnational social movements, and urban Indonesia. Sean is currently collaborating on a research project investigating creative community activism and the re-appropriation of public space in Bandung.

## The Rise of “Hipster” Culture in Singapore: Spatial Transformation in Tiong Bahru

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Traditionally viewed as exemplary of Singaporean “heartland” community and local ways of life, Tiong Bahru is filled with sites of cultural significance and heritage, such as old public housing flats that predate Singapore’s independence. However, with the recent introduction of small cafes and specialty stores, Tiong Bahru has taken on a new identity as a “hipster” locale. Hipster culture is characteristically defined by the deliberate emulation of particular counter-cultural lifestyles (as opposed to the status quo) as well as a receptivity to cultural experimentation. Such places within Tiong Bahru are frequented by both locals and foreigners alike, presenting themselves as dynamic and interactive spaces for cultural contact as well as the development of hybrid and creative social practices.

We propose to examine the rise of hipster culture within Tiong Bahru as a focal point of cross-cultural influences. There are two aspects to our ethnographic inquiry. Firstly, we investigate the socio-economic and material conditions within Tiong Bahru that made it a conducive site for hipster culture to germinate. By actively seeking out and emulating what is perceived as counter-cultural, hipster culture brings about a juxtaposition of new, foreign elements against a highly traditionalised backdrop. It opens up an opportunity for dialogue between the foreign and the local. Moreover, it constitutes a metacommentary on cultural differences in Singaporean society, translating into a specific social literacy employed in subjects’ encounters with conditions of diversity.

Secondly, we delve into the contradictions inherent within a hipster culture that manufactures 'hyperauthentic' experiences, and the tensions this potentially creates when pit against the backdrop of an 'authentic' local community. This will be explored through a series of interviews with local residents, foreign residents, foreign visitors, as well as shop owners. We will use these interviews to explore their experience of hipster spaces within Tiong Bahru, with a specific focus on how the rise of these hipster spaces have influenced the dynamics of local communities, traditions, and practices.

**Jonathan CHUA** is a final year philosophy undergraduate at the National University of Singapore (NUS). His research interests range from deliberative democratic theory and anarchist political thought, to critical social theory and postmodernist philosophy. He is currently working on his honours thesis, which investigates Foucaultian methodologies for conducting self-critique. Jonathan is also in the process of publishing an article that criticises political meritocracy based on ideas drawn from both western and chinese philosophers. In the future, he intends to investigate issues related to Singaporean identity, and to explore counter-narratives that critically challenge how we understand and construct the "Singaporean."

**Sherman TAN** is a PhD candidate in Anthropology at the The Australian National University (ANU). He recently graduated from the ANU with a Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) in Sociology and Linguistics, and First Class Honours in Anthropology. His research interests include Linguistic and Semiotic Anthropology, Visual and Material Culture, the Aesthetic and Affective Dimensions of social life, as well as Contemporary Social, Political and Literary Criticism. He has also previously published on intergenerational language attitudes and the politics of language in Singapore, and has presented on democratic developments in the Singaporean context as well as present limitations on political discourse and dialogue in the country. His PhD thesis (currently in progress) investigates how consumerism and the politics of lifestyle in Singapore reproduce cultural fantasies of social entitlement and success, and have ideological effects on the aesthetic and affective lifeworlds of women across the life-course.

**Laura TAN** is a final year architecture undergraduate at the School of Design and Environment, National University of Singapore. Laura is interested in how psychological effects are produced by our experience of space, and is particularly passionate about how the built environment can develop and edify us as human beings. At the same time, she is cautious about the overly-prescriptive nature of utopian ideals in urban design thought, and is working on a paper on the failure of the Athens Charter as a producer of inhuman, mechanistic utopias. It is this tension between the imposition of an ideal state and the variances of everyday human life that she is keen on exploring further in both writing and design. Laura hopes to develop a previous design project on new school typologies and how they can be integrated in the urban landscape in order to achieve a vision of an 'intelligent city.'

## “And with Time... I Could Sing along to the Songs”: Labourers Encounters with Difference in the Global City of Work

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In a multi-racial global city like Singapore--where more than 30% of the workforce is foreign labour-- encounters with difference are negotiated as much in the space of work as in urban public space. Yet work is constantly overlooked as a core multicultural contact zone. This paper will discuss findings from a qualitative research study among workers in multiracial workplaces in Singapore. Through the lens of Ash Amin's 'Micro-publics', the study explored the space of neoliberal work as an important 'contact zone' in diverse societies where people come to habituate a capacity to navigate difference. Micro-publics are spaces of mundane, habitual encounter and engagement with difference. Spaces of sustained encounter have been held up by some as holding great potential to enhance interethnic relations and unsettle problematic stereotypes. The paper argues that the workplace is a special kind of micro-public, where the economies, rules, and codes of contemporary neo-liberal working cultures and variegated visa regimes interplay with collegial and hierarchical relationships (Du Gay 1996, Willis 1981), which in turn mediate interethnic relationships (Essed 1991).

The paper considers current debates on 'intercultural habit' (Noble, Wise etc) and asks: is capacity for navigating difference simply a matter of skill and habit, or are there other conditions at work that underpin an atmospherics of 'convivial encounter'? These questions are reflected upon through two contrasting case studies of cleaners in Singapore: one involving a local Tamil woman who cleans the offices of a global multinational; the other involving a PRC Chinese cleaner in an Indian restaurant in Little India. Both exhibit capacities and habits of vernacular cosmopolitanism, but the local Indian woman's account of intercultural encounter is inflected with narratives of convivial solidarity and care, while the foreign PRC worker describes raw skill and capacity to navigate difference as survival strategy in a context of denigrated labour, race, and migrant status. Drawing on the work of Bernard Lahire, the overarching argument is that, while capacities to navigate difference are habituated slowly over time, these vernacular forms of working class cosmopolitanism don't always result in convivial multicultures.

**Amanda WISE**'s research interests include materialities, civilities, and 'sensibilities' of urban life; global cities and diversity; multiculturalism (especially 'everyday multiculturalism') in Australia and Singapore; racism and interethnic relations; national and cultural identities; cultural attachments to and formations of place, especially in relation to multicultural cities; diasporic, transnational and migrant communities; theorisations of 'work' and transnational labour; and experiences of low wage migrant labourers in Australia and Asia. She is currently working on a book manuscript with Prof Greg Noble, provisionally entitled 'Inhabiting Diversity'. This is the culmination of research she has been doing on everyday multiculturalism over the last decade. This work has explored the phenomenology of diversity 'on the ground' – with a special focus on everyday conviviality and everyday racisms in diverse cities. Questions that underpin this work include; what characterises 'convivial multiculturalism'; how do people become 'cosmopolitan' in practice and in what ways are identities transformed in the process; how do emotions, the senses and our habitus inflect our experiences of super-diversity; and how do larger scale forces like the media, moral panics and neo-liberal economic forces filter down into the realm of everyday practice and meaning making about difference. Key publications in this area include, "Hope and belonging in a multicultural suburb. *Journal of intercultural studies*, (2005), Wise, A., & Velayutham, S. (Eds.). (2009). *Everyday multiculturalism*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, Sensuous multiculturalism: emotional landscapes of inter-ethnic living in Australian suburbia. *Journal of ethnic and migration studies* (2010), Moving Food: Gustatory Commensality And Disjuncture In Everyday Multiculturalism. *New Formations*, (2011), Wise & Velayutham, Conviviality in everyday multiculturalism: Some brief comparisons between Singapore and Sydney, in *European Journal of Cultural Studies* (Online First 9<sup>th</sup> December 2013)."

## Negotiating Class: Taxi Drivers, Passengers, and Theorizing Social Relations in Mobile Workspaces

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Automobile taxicabs play a key role in the ongoing function of daily life in the rapidly expanding mega-cities of Asia. Yet taking a taxi requires passengers to enter a small, enclosed, mobile, and potentially deadly machine over which they have no physical control; turning such ordinary transactions into fraught and anxiety-producing events that draw both drivers and passengers into fleeting - yet spatially intimate - encounters. In Bangkok, taxis remain an important site of daily class contact and intra-cultural negotiation within Thailand's increasingly polarized socio-political climate. In addition, for foreign visitors, the taxi driver is often the first 'real' local person that they meet and, as such, personifies both the possibilities and dangers of an encounter with difference. The result is a pervasive sense of vulnerability for passengers that must, in turn, be successfully addressed and managed by national and local stakeholders seeking to attract tourism and business to Thailand.

In this presentation I examine two narratives that provide a framework for both Thai and foreign passengers to understand and manage encounters with taxi drivers: first, the cabbie as a *conman* and *cheat*, and second, the taxi driver as a *Good Samaritan* and *upright citizen*. These contrasting - yet deeply intertwined - narratives circulate and re-circulate regularly in local newspapers and radio reports, in conversations in offices, restaurants and hotel lobbies, and on traveler websites and local news forums. Drawing on in-depth ethnographic fieldwork, I then analyze how drivers' perceive their work and their encounters with passengers, and how they manage both their reputations and working conditions within their mobile workspaces. I conclude by examining how these negotiations of class and difference inside the taxicab participate and reflect ongoing street protests and debates over national identity and democratic participation in Thailand today.

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**Maureen HICKEY** is a Research Fellow with the Asia Research Institute at the National University of Singapore where she works with the Asian Migration Research Cluster. She completed her doctorate in geography at the University of Washington in 2010 and is currently working on a book based on her dissertation and follow-up research entitled, *Taxi Man!: Neoliberalism, Transportation Work and Gendered Labor in Bangkok Thailand*. She recently launched a new research project, entitled *Globalising English, Mobile Aspirations, and Rural Engagements: Transnational English-Teacher Migrants from Asia and Africa Working in Asia*, investigating the growing number of professional educators from ‘outer-circle’ English-speaking countries migrating to Asia in order to participate in the region’s booming English-language education industry. Dr Hickey’s research interests include economic and cultural globalization, international political economy, labor and migration, class relations, gender and masculinity studies, and critical development studies.

## Class/Ethnicity/Politics: Multiple Diversities in Bangkok and Chiang Mai during the Current Political Crisis

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Recent, ongoing, and violent political struggles in Thailand have frequently been thematized as betraying a strong division between Bangkok and the rest of the country—a thematization that highlights national-scale uneven development. As useful as such a first-cut thematization may be, it misses much of the texture and diversity of class and ethnicity-based political differences within Thai cities. Bangkok—a sprawling and cosmopolitan city—has been reshaped over many decades by mass migration from the Northeast of the country (among other locations) and is far too socio-spatially diverse to be fully dominated by any one social group or any one particular kind of politics. As such, attempts to portray Bangkok as “middle class” and politically Yellow Shirt show a misperception of class relations, ethnicity, and politics in the nation’s capital. In much the same fashion, perceptions that the Northern city of Chiang Mai is fundamentally Red Shirt territory betray a misperception of the class, ethnic, and political diversity in Thailand’s “second city”—a city shaped, among other things, by waves of in-migrant Burmese labor and a significant presence of national minority groups. In this paper, I will attempt to deflate over-simplified thematizations of Thailand’s current crisis by providing an overview of Bangkok and Chiang Mai’s development and class/ethnic/political diversity, noting the relationship of all this to the socio-spatial politics of the 2006, 2008, 2010, and 2014 political upheavals.

**Jim GLASSMAN** is Professor in the Department of Geography at the University of British Columbia. His research has addressed state development policies, class struggles, and geopolitics in Thailand and South Korea, with particular emphasis on the processes of urbanization and industrialization. He is the author of *Thailand at the Margins: Internationalization of the State and the Transformation of Labour* (Oxford University Press, 2004) and *Bounding the Mekong: the Asian Development Bank, China, Thailand* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2010). His current research is on the geo-political economy of regional development in the Cold War period, including its legacies for class processes and politics in Thailand and South Korea today.



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## Swift Cities: Contested Political Ecologies of 'Swiftlet Farming' in George Town and Malacca, Malaysia

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This paper uses the case of edible bird's nest harvesting in the UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Melaka and Georgetown, Malaysia, to investigate conceptions of appropriate use of land and spaces within the city. It asks how such narratives are shaped and contested by various competing interests and socio-economic groups both within and without the city, and how different human and non-human groups figure differently into these accounts. The case of edible bird's nest harvesting in Melaka and Georgetown is a useful case study in this regard, as it encapsulates the myriad social struggles and political conflict which is quite literally built into the landscape of Malaysian cities and towns. The changing urban landscapes brought about through this particular form of economic activity have generated intense political debate over how urban space is being used (by whom), and the implications for social well-being and quality of life. Though the paper does not investigate questions of migration or demographic change, it nonetheless makes a strong contribution to the workshop by focusing on the implications that changes to the material and socio-natural landscape of cities can have for inter-group relations and notions of conviviality and coexistence. Through ongoing multi-sited ethnographic research in Malaysia, this paper traces circulating narratives and controversies articulated by different groups both within the research sites, and in various media outlets (print and online), that are used to make particular claims regarding appropriate uses of urban space. Because the production and consumption of edible birds' nest is dominated by one particular ethnic group (Chinese), yet this group is an economic and social minority within the nation(s) in which it is produced; the empirical findings of this research speak directly to issues of how urban dwellers deal on a day-to-day basis with issues of social and economic diversity in cities. Furthermore, it demonstrates the ways in which struggles over rights to the city and appropriate uses of space always reflect broader social and political tensions and faultlines.

**Creighton CONNOLLY** completed his BA (Hons) in geography at the University of British Columbia (2006-2010), and in addition completed an undergraduate exchange program in Geography at the National University of Singapore in 2009. This latter experience set the stage for his MA work entitled: 'Singapore is a gold mine': Re-orienting transboundary flows of secondhand electronics, completed in geography at Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2010-2012, under the guidance of Dr Josh Lepawsky. Creighton is now at the University of Manchester conducting doctoral research on 'The Environmental politics of bird's nest production in Malaysia's cityscapes' under the supervision of Professors Erik Swyngedouw and Maria Kaika. Additionally, Creighton is an internationally competitive racewalker, and has represented Canada at several international competitions at the 20km distance.

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## Unsettling Modernity's Markets: Trader Advocacy and the Resilience of "Traditional" Fresh Food Provisioning Systems in Baguio City, Philippines

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Urban public marketplaces in Global South cities have historically hosted a vibrant mix of trade, functioned as wholesale and retail hubs, and provisioned city residents to nurture rich urban centers. Yet, since the 1980s, as southern countries modernize, governments have embraced visions of development that privilege upper class residents by promoting centrally regulated, privatized, and sanitized urban spaces. These visions favour constructing modern retail outlets (e.g., shopping malls, supermarkets) while discouraging what governments consider "traditional remnants" of entrepreneurial trade (e.g., informal stall owners, street vendors). These political decisions and the resultant urban designs dramatically disrupt the working-class livelihoods of those who have supplied urbanites with essential commodities for decades.

Based on long-term (since 2005), yearly ethnographic fieldwork in Baguio City, Philippines, this paper engages these issues by analyzing how often-marginalized vegetable and fruit marketers in the Baguio City Public Market – the wholesale and retail hub for fresh produce in northern Luzon, – sustain their provisioning relationships given that the public market's new design threatens the viability of their enterprises. In 1995, the municipal government awarded the market redevelopment contract to a Manila-based developer. Traders, protesting that they were insufficiently consulted, have launched a series of civil law suits and appeals that continue to thwart the city's urbanization agenda. I argue that such working-class traders, individually and in associations engage both everyday and insurgent public space activism (Hou 2010) such that they do not acquiesce to the power of top-down control, but rather interpose a solid "sovereign" existence of their own that operates both collaterally and against it (Humphrey 2004). Focusing not only on traders' resistance tactics as signs of their individual voice, but also on using their actions strategically to tell us about forms of power and how people are caught up in them, materializes that traders operationalize informal/formal tactics as an "urban organizing logic" to realize their demands (Abu-Lughod 1990; Roy 2005). My research findings demonstrate, moreover, how Baguio City's market traders have harnessed the power they require, through resistance, to successfully (albeit with challenges) negotiate conflict, reconciliation, and civic engagement when competing ideologies clash over access to urban public space, legal/illegal practice, and "appropriate" urban provisioning.

**B. Lynne MILGRAM** is Professor of Anthropology at OCAD University in Toronto, Canada. Her research in the Philippines analyzes the cultural politics of social change regarding the transformation of urban public space, governmentality, formal/informal economies, and illegal/legal practice. She applies these theoretical concepts to her research on street vending, public market development, and the Philippine-Hong Kong secondhand clothing trade. Her recent co-edited books include: *Street Economies in the Urban Global South* (with Little and Hansen, SAR Press, 2013), *Economics and Morality: Anthropological Approaches* (with Browne, Altamira, 2009). Recent book chapters and articles include: 2012, Tangled Fields: Rethinking Positionality and Ethics in Research on Women's Work in a Hong Kong-Philippine Trade. *Critical Arts* 26 (2): 175-191; 2011, From Secondhand Clothing to Cosmetics: Philippine-Hong Kong Entrepreneurs in Cross-Border Trade. In *Economic Globalization from Below*. G. Mathews, ed., 120-137. Routledge; 2011, Street Vending, Legality, and Work in the Philippines. *Journal of Developing Societies* 27 (3 & 4): 261-293.

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## Middle-class Projects: Practising Class among the Malays

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Within the last two decades or so there has been increased scholarly focus on the emergence, consolidation and future of the middle class in developing Asia. This is also the case with the Malay Muslim middle class in Malaysia. The Malays (virtually, all Muslims) constitute the largest and fastest growing section of the middle class in Malaysia. This paper argues that an unpacking of the Malay Muslim middle class over time is essential in order to understand the broader picture surrounding the emergence, consolidation and future development of this class and its relationship to Malaysian national repertoires such as Islamic revivalism, politics, consumer culture, social mobility and state-market nexuses. Based on three research projects carried out in and around Kuala Lumpur and one among the Malay diaspora in London, this article explores the Malay middle class from the mid-1990s to the present. Each of these research projects examines how Malay Muslim informants understand and practise 'middle-classness' in different spatial and temporal contexts. The first research project studies how middle class informants cope with urban modernity and the intensified media flows as a consequence of liberalized media policies in the mid-1990s. The fieldwork for the second project took place in 2001–2002 and examined 'proper Islamic consumption' among suburban Malay middle-class families. An important question in this project and the subsequent ones is halal (literally, 'lawful' or 'permitted' in Islam) production, regulation and consumption among middle-class Malays. The third project explores this kind of consumption among middle-class Malays in London. The fourth and ongoing project studies middle-class Malay engagement in halal production, trade and regulation in Malaysia. In short, my findings show that Malay Muslim middle-class projects such as Islamic consumption shape local class culture in Malaysia.

**Johan FISCHER** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Society and Globalization, Roskilde University, Denmark. His work focuses on modern Islam and consumer culture in Southeast Asia and Europe. More specifically, Johan explores the interfaces between class, consumption, market relations, Islam, and the state in a globalized world. A central focus in this research is the theoretical and empirical focus on the proliferation of halal commodities on a global scale. He is the author of *Proper Islamic Consumption: Shopping among the Malays in Modern Malaysia* (NIAS Press 2008) and *The Halal Frontier: Muslim Consumers in a Globalized Market* (Palgrave Macmillan 2011) as well as numerous articles in journals and edited volumes.

## Rich Nurses, Low Paid Nurses: A Global and Visual Ethnography of Class in the Philippines and Canada

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In conversation with the transnational work of geographer Philip Kelly (P. Kelly and Lusi 2006; P. F. Kelly 2007; P. F. Kelly 2012b; P. F. Kelly 2012a) on (a) the role of class in the formation of Philippine self-hood and (b) the class formation of Philippine communities at home and abroad, my presentation analyses intra-ethnic “class tensions” among professional registered nurses (RN’s) who are educated and trained in the Philippines and its visual representation in Philippine cinema. First, using detailed participant observation, in-depth interviews and live-in community ethnography of nurses both in Canada and the Philippines, I explain how Philippine nurses perceive and compare each other (social comparison) through the lens of “class” I focus on the contrasting narratives of nurses left behind in the Philippines and those who living in Canada and show how their career trajectories (and perceived and real class status) are eventually determined by pre-accumulated family wealth, education, training and social status within the Philippine community. I also look into how their self-perception coalesces and contradicts with the perception of those who evaluate them at their workplace and in the nursing recruitment and migration process (through interviews with recruiters, nursing program coordinators, immigration and settlement workers, among others). These factors also influence their movements and disable/enable them to enter nursing job markets overseas. Second, and outside my ethnography, I analyse a critically acclaimed Philippine movie *Nars*, to show how “cinematic” imagination and “real-life” career decision making intertwine with and enables the making and reproduction of global realistic dreams and unachievable fantasies about class and social mobility in Asian cities like Manila.

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**Mark Lawrence SANTIAGO** recently received his PhD from the Department of Geography at the University of British Columbia and is currently a Post-doctoral Fellow at the Brocher Foundation in Geneva, Switzerland and the University of Washington, Seattle. He studied Philosophy at the National University of Singapore and at the Ateneo de Manila University, where he graduated as Class Valedictorian. He is the initiator, founder and creative mind Asia Pacific Worlds in Motion (<http://apwim.org/>) a series of global interdisciplinary graduate conference on Asian Migrations held at Green and St. John's College, UBC in 2008, at NUS in 2009, at UBC in 2010, at NUS in 2012 and most recently at UBC in 2013. He began this conference to encourage mentorship among graduate students and senior scholars in the field of Asia Pacific migration studies as well as promote Asia as a source of theorization in the field of global migration studies. Outside his academic work, he concurrently serves as research and policy advisor on health human resources for the government of British Columbia's *Health Match BC*, where he organized a province-wide forum called *Health Worker Migration in Canada: Histories, Geographies, Ethics* and presently responsible for the creation of province-wide guidelines on the application of the *WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel*. More about him can be viewed at <http://www.fondationtrudeau.ca/en/community/mark-lawrence-santiago>

## Igorot Ways of Belonging in Kuala Lumpur

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In the past decade or so, Malaysia has become a major destination or transit point for migrant workers hailing largely from South Asia and other parts of Southeast Asia in tandem with the programmatic thrust to re-make Kuala Lumpur and the country into a “World Class City” and a “fully developed” nation by the year 2020. While there have been skilled and professional workers among them, most are employed in the construction, manufacturing and plantation sectors. A significant number are also domestic helpers or work in the service sector ranging from hotels and restaurants to hawker food centres and street vending. The large and diverse influx of migrant workers has broadened the cosmopolitan and class spectrum of Kuala Lumpur. Thus, while there is now a greater array of citizenry on display, various parts of old Kuala Lumpur have also become ambivalent migrant worker residential and commercial enclaves.

This paper draws from fieldwork conducted among a cohort of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) who hail from the Cordillera highlands of northern Philippines. Generically called “Igorots”, they have social and cultural practices that are distinctive from lowland Filipino OFWs because of the exigencies of history and geography. In a diasporic and diverse urban context, I argue that Igorot ways of belonging are not merely limited to the machinations of the analytic category of “class” as epitomised by the international division of labour and neo-liberal globalisation. Their evolving sense of personhood and social relations of (non)conviviality are also inflected by the vectors of “locality” and “trans-local subjectivities”, viz., linguistic abilities, tribal affiliations, religious beliefs, and modern communicational technologies, among others. In short, I suggest that in an age of the production of multifarious contact zones as a consequence of mobility, one should also discern how “class identities” travel and manifest in multi-scalar ways.

**YEOH Seng Guan** is Senior Lecturer in the School of Arts and Social Sciences, Monash University Malaysia. He holds a PhD from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. He has conducted fieldwork in Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. He is an urban anthropologist with research interests in the interfaces between cities, religion, media and civil society in the Southeast Asian region. He is editor of *The Other Kuala Lumpur* (2014) and *Media, Culture and Society in Malaysia* (2010). He has also recent book chapters in Chiara Formichi (ed), *Religious Pluralism, State and Society in Asia* (2014), Joshua Barker et al (eds.), *Figures of Southeast Asian Modernity* (2014) and Julius Bautista (ed.) *The Spirit of Things: Materiality in an Age of Religious Diversity in Asia* (2012).



## About the Chairpersons and Speakers

**Bernice WONG** is a documentary photographer based in Singapore. As an avid traveler with a keen interest in social issues, her work casts light on under-reported segments of society through visual stories that depict the fortitude and fragility of the human conditions. Her photographs on migrant and indigenous communities in South and Southeast Asia have gained numerous awards in international photo contests such as Prix de la Photographie, Freedom House, and The Other Hundred. Aligned with her passion to promote social engagement through photography, her work has been exhibited by Plan International's BIAAG campaign in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and supported by the Singapore National Arts Council for public education purposes. She hopes that her pictures will provide a catalyst for thought and emotion to evoke empathy, raise awareness, and inspire action. To this end, she is co-founder of Beyond the Border, Behind the Men, a local arts initiative that explores creative platforms through which to bring visibility to stories of Bangladeshi migrant workers in Singapore.

**Brenda S.A. YEOH** is Professor (Provost's Chair), Department of Geography, and Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, National University of Singapore. She is also the Research Leader of the Asian Migration Cluster at the Asia Research Institute, NUS, and coordinates the Asian MetaCentre for Population and Sustainable Development Analysis. Her research interests include the politics of space in colonial and postcolonial cities, and she has considerable experience working on a wide range of migration research in Asia, including key themes such as cosmopolitanism and highly skilled talent migration; gender, social reproduction and care migration; migration, national identity and citizenship issues; globalising universities and international student mobilities; and cultural politics, family dynamics and international marriage migrants. She has published widely in these fields. Her latest book titles include *The Cultural Politics of Talent Migration in East Asia* (Routledge 2012, with Shirlena Huang); and *Migration and Diversity in Asian Contexts* (ISEAS press, 2012, with Lai Ah Eng and Francis Collins); *Return: Nationalizing Transnational Mobility in Asia* (Duke University Press, forthcoming in 2013, with Xiang Biao and Mika Toyota); as well as a paperback reprint of her book *Contesting Space in Colonial Singapore: Power Relations and the Urban Built Environment* (originally published in 1996 by Oxford University Press; reprinted by NUS Press in 2003 and 2013).

**CHENG Yi'En** is a DPhil candidate at the School of Geography and the Environment, University of Oxford, UK, supported by the Clarendon Fund and St Peter's Diggle Scholarship. He received his Bachelor of Social Sciences (Honours) and Masters of Social Sciences in Geography from the National University of Singapore in 2010 and 2012 respectively. Yi'En's research interests span across the broad field of social and cultural geographies, with particular attention to issues around identities and change in contemporary worlds. His doctoral research examines how young people participating in private higher education are producing ideas about education and class in contemporary Singapore. He has published on the cultural production of time amongst student migrants (*Social & Cultural Geography*), Singaporean men's experience in international marriages (*Area: Gender, Place & Culture, forthcoming*), the role of money in transnational families (*Global Networks*).

**Eli Asher ELINOFF** received his BA (Anthropology) from University of Colorado, Boulder, and MA and PhD in Anthropology from the University of California, San Diego, USA. He is currently a Postdoctoral Fellow with the Asian Urbanisms Cluster at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. His research focuses on citizenship, emerging political practices, notions of sustainability, and contestations over urban development in Thailand. He has co-edited a special focus issue of *South East Asia Research* that explored Northeastern Thailand's political transformations.

**Esther Maddy ROTHAM** is currently a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Department of Geography at National University of Singapore (NUS). Prior to arriving at NUS in 2013, she has worked as a Postdoctoral Researcher with Professor Linda McDowell on a Leverhulme Trust funded research project as part of the Oxford Diasporas Programme. The study explored the varied experience of worklessness amongst young men with different migration histories in two British towns. Her doctoral thesis, completed in 2012 at the University of Oxford, UK, examined the production of young people's intersectional identities in the context of dominant ideologies, secularism/laicite, postfeminism, and neoliberalism in France. Her research interests include processes of racialisation, the politics and performativity of categorisation, and the connections between economic restructuring and the production of gender, race and class and other social boundaries.

**Marco GARRIDO** is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Asia Research Institute in the National University of Singapore. He received his PhD in Sociology from the University of Michigan, USA. His work, which links class segregation and political polarization in Metro Manila, has been published in *Social Forces*, the *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, and *Philippine Studies*.

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**Maria PLATT** is currently a Research Fellow at the Asia Research Institute at the National University of Singapore. Prior to this she completed her PhD in anthropology at La Trobe University. In 2007-2008, as an Endeavour Research Fellow, she undertook field work on gender relations and marriage on the Indonesian island of Lombok. Her PhD thesis explored women's capacity to exercise agency within marriages where Islam and local custom rather than the state are the key institutions which govern marriage. Her research interests include gender, migration and marriage, which includes the regulation of intimacy, within Indonesia and the Southeast Asian context.

**Sallie YEA** is Assistant Professor at the Humanities and Social Science Education, Nanyang Institute of Education, Singapore. She is also an Associate of the Asian Migration Cluster at Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. She has published extensively on the subject of human trafficking and vulnerable migrations in Southeast and East Asia, including a recent edited volume on *Human Trafficking in Asia* and monograph titled *Moving on from Trafficking: Filipina Migrant Entertainers in Korea*, both with Routledge. She is currently conducting research with migrant workmen in Singapore and migrant fishermen on long haul fishing vessels through Singapore, considering the experiences of these men as expressions of precarious work.