

## **Myanmar Update 2019**

### **Abstracts**

**Aung Myo Min**

**Co-authors: Amy Croome, Jane Lonsdale, Jo Rowlands and Martin Walsh**

#### **“Political trust in fragile and conflict-affected areas of Myanmar: Implications for good governance and peace-building”**

With conflicting sources of public authority, a longstanding protracted conflict and a rapid but turbulent democratic transition, governance is in a state of flux and a variety of factors influence people’s trust in public authorities. This study examines drivers of trust, mistrust and distrust of union government authorities, members of parliament, ethnic authorities, armed groups, village and religious leaders in different parts of Kayin and Kachin and how those drivers differ depending on people’s socio-economic situation. Given the difficulties of being able to ask people directly about their trust in various public authorities, this research uses people’s behaviour as a proxy to understand their trust in these actors. Participants were asked about the issues their local community face, how they resolve these and with who’s help or support. As part of an in-depth longitudinal study, we conducted 18 focus group discussions specifically on issues of trust, with communities in different conflict affected townships - in rural and urban areas, separating out people of different ethnicities, socio-economic backgrounds and gender. We collected data in union government controlled, non-government controlled and mixed or “brown” areas. Drivers of trust identified through this research include:

- previous experience with the authority i.e. whether they acted on the community member’s behalf or were reprimanded,
- the perception of the authority’s integrity i.e. are they genuine or following a hidden agenda,
- how people expect they will be treated i.e. with respect or ridiculed,
- how familiar people are with the authority i.e. grew up together or same ethnicity, religion, gender, language and level of education

This research project aims to expand and challenge our understanding of governance by asking how trust emerges in situations of fragility and conflict and how new evidence and insight in these areas can deepen theoretical insights and contribute to greater aid effectiveness.

**Aye Lei Tun**

#### **“Women’s rights to citizenship documentation”**

The meaning of citizenship gives someone a sense of belonging through national identity. Then the citizenship documentations are the basic essential elements to access to political and civil rights to involve in state’s affairs as well as to be attached with the society. Myanmar is a country where diverse ethnic people are living has been dealing with different

issues of ethnic rights and citizen's rights, particularly whether to be recognized or not as a citizen or indigenous people, and which customary practices should be adopted. According to Articles 345-90 in 2008 constitution, citizen's rights are maintained as "The Union provides rights to all citizens, such as equal treatment before the law, equal opportunities in public employment, occupation, trade, and non-discrimination against women (including mothers)". However, the practices on the ground have been different with the laws. The women in Myanmar, particularly the minority ethnic women except *Barmar*, have encountered with many challenges such as Barmarnization, state's institutionalization with patriarchal practices, and traditional social norms, no matter what the laws said. UNHCR's report in 2018 also indicated that one-third of the population was not provided with the national ID card; women were accounted for 54% of that group. The objective of the study "Women's rights to citizenship documentation" intended to understand the institutional barriers that women are experiencing during the application process for a national ID card, as well as the state's institutionalized patriarchal practices affecting women through citizenship card. The primary data for the main research questions: i) why women need National Registration Card (NRC), ii) the experiences of women in the NRC application process, and iii) how women conceptualize the role given in the national ID card were mainly explored. This study focused on qualitative data collection in which interviews were conducted with 56 female respondents from different geographical area of Myanmar. The findings indicated that women are experiencing more challenges in the application process of national ID card because of the institutional barrier, lack of exposure of dealing with the officials, low education, and lack of knowledge. Non-Barmar women and Non-Buddhist women had more limitations. Then it was also found that the state institutionalized the social practices of male domination through the ID card by devaluing the status of women. Finally, the study suggested that the state should have eliminated all the limitations and discriminations putting on women in the ID card application process and ensure for all citizens to enjoy all equal rights.

**Aye Thiri Kyaw**

**Co-presenter: Stephanie Miedema**

**"Changing norms around sexual harassment against women and girls in Myanmar: Women's movements and the era of #MeToo"**

Sexual harassment is a serious social problem facing women and girls in Myanmar. Open discussion of sex-related topics (including sexual harassment) is often considered taboo and inappropriate for women and girls. Women and girls who speak openly about their experiences of sexual harassment are considered promiscuous and are blamed for their assault. These social norms discourage public discussion of sexual harassment and inhibit change of the impunity culture. However, two emerging phenomena in Myanmar society are exposing this silence and creating opportunities for dialogue and activism around sexual violence: a nascent women's rights movement that has been growing since its inception in 2010, and the global #MeToo movement, which has made inroads in Myanmar society. In this paper, we review historical and contemporary literature on violence against women and women's rights in Myanmar. We then discuss how the global #MeToo movement builds on

a foundation laid by women's rights activists to open space for dialogue around sexual harassment and experiences of Myanmar women. Despite low internet connectivity and limited official government support to women's rights efforts, we propose that the traction of the #MeToo movement in Myanmar reflects a process of social norm change toward greater women's rights and freedom from violence. The paper will examine how women live with and navigate social norms around sexual harassment in Myanmar in this shifting social environment.

**Michael G. Breen**

**Co-author: Baogang He**

**“Do people really want ethnic federalism anymore? What contemporary deliberations tell us about the role of ethnic identity in federalism in Myanmar”**

The much-vaunted federal reforms proposed to be progressed through the 21st Century Panglong Conference have stalled. The legacy of the 1947 Panglong Conference, where representatives from three ethnic nationalities and the Bamar agreed on a federal future, hangs over their heads. Since that agreement, Myanmar governments and military leaders have implemented a range of assimilating policies and there has been significant internal migration. Ethnic identity remains a prominent marker and something of which people are proud. This paper, based on the results of a series of experimental deliberative surveys on federalism in Myanmar in 2018, argues that many people have moved on. People want to retain their ethnic identity and to have it recognised, but no longer is the main objective ethnic federalism. Surprisingly, a form of territorial or regional federalism was preferred by most participants, and increasingly so following deliberations. In other words, they concluded that ethnic identity should be recognised but not institutionalised in a federal arrangement. Just as much as participants did not want to engage with Bamar-centric institutions, merely replacing it with another ethno-centric set of institutions was also problematic. Furthermore, participants recognise that the current ethno-federal structure does not contribute to equality. Participants preferred to focus on individual equality, not group equality, and recognised that an ethno-federal structure left many small ethnic groups even more marginalised. Providing autonomy to all on a group basis was impractical and risky, heightening the chances of conflict and secession. In conclusion, the paper argues that to take Myanmar's federalism further, a territorially focused restructuring of the states and regions would take better account of contemporary views and help to mitigate the secession risk, thereby enabling states and regions to be more empowered through constitutional change.

**Peggy Brett**

**“The ambiguities of citizenship status in Myanmar and the implications of this lack of clarity”**

This paper will highlight the extent to which (legal) citizenship in Myanmar is not simply a binary status where one either is or is not a citizen. Instead there are a number of grey areas created by the Citizenship Law, the way it is implemented, and popular conceptions of citizenship, and by the intersection of these different factors. These grey areas include: those who are undocumented; National Verification Card (NVC) holders; refugee and diaspora populations; those who hold obsolete documents (such as Three-Fold Cards or White Cards); those whose documents were acquired on the basis of incorrect information; and the status of ‘associate citizens’ and ‘naturalised citizens’. In each case the individual may or may not be perceived as a citizen by those around them, depending on a range of factors such as ethnicity, religion, language, place of birth and parentage. These factors overlap with, but do not always correlate directly with, formal citizenship status or documentation. Both documentation status and the perception of belonging (or not belonging) may have an impact on an individual’s day-to-day life, on the options open to them, and on their ability to participate in society. Those without identity documents may face difficulties with everything from travelling between towns to opening a bank account as well as facing difficulty exercising rights reserved for citizens, such as voting. However, even someone who has and can document their citizenship, but who is not perceived as belonging, may face difficulties and be confronted with exhausting demands to prove their status, for instance, in their interactions with authorities.

**Francesca Chiu**

**“Gray markets on the margins: Resettlement and land tenure security in peri-urban Mandalay”**

This paper presents a preliminary ethnographic study of informal land transactions in a resettlement area of Mandalay. It examines how the resettlement practices of the government have contributed to residents' sense of de facto land ownership, even though they were not granted any legal title explicitly during the relocation process. As demonstrated in the paper, the lack of legal ownership does not stop people from buying and selling land, but rather has created an informal land market at the outskirts of the city that is well-known to officials. This paper argues that without any proper urban land policies or plans to cater the housing needs of the urban poor, informal land markets will continue to exist to supplement the inaccessible formal market for Mandalay's growing urban population, while at the same time creating issues of land tenure insecurity.

Note: This paper is based on provisional data and information collected from ongoing fieldwork, which is part of the author’s PhD research on land ownership, tenure security and governance in peri-urban Mandalay.

**Gillian Cornish**

**Co-author: Elizabeth Rhoads**

**“Informal strategies of Yangonites living with Myanmar: Everyday uncertainty in access to property”**

People struggle to maintain status quo in their respective challenges of everyday life in Yangon. This is compounded by legal uncertainty and everyday uncertainty faced by Yangon residents. In this paper we explore uncertainty in access to property, both in terms of legal uncertainty in property transactions and in terms of how this relates to everyday uncertainty for Yangonites. Yangonites have, however, developed multiple strategies to respond to uncertainty, gain access to needed resources, maintain the status quo and even make progress. We detail three of these here, as they pertain to property rights and tenure security: seizing opportunities, hedging bets, and reliance on social networks. Yet, these practices seem to be shifting or altering in meaning since 2011, and perhaps even further under the National League for Democracy government, as knowing which institutional powers are important and who might serve as a helpful or powerful connection are less clear than under military rule. In this paper we examine the informal arrangements, agreements and mutual obligations that allow Yangonites to continue "living with Myanmar". We will present examples of coping strategies that have become a normal function of everyday urban life in Yangon, tracing the emergence of such strategies and their place in a transitioning Myanmar.

**Renaud Egreteau**

**“Parliamentary life under the NLD”**

This paper examines the functioning of the Union parliament elected in November 2015 and compares it with the experiences of the previous USDP-controlled legislature (2011-2016). It interrogates whether the entrance in parliament of a large cohort of political neophytes and novice legislators drawn from pro-democracy forces – only 13 percent of incumbent MPs were re-elected in 2015 – has translated into meaningful changes in the legislative behaviour and socialization of new members, as well as in the lawmaking process and tentative scrutiny of the executive. How has parliamentary life been shaped under the dominance of the NLD? Halfway through the second post-junta legislature, how have the three core functions of parliament – representation, lawmaking and oversight – been performed by elected and military-appointed MPs? Have consolidated parliamentary procedures and rules transformed the thinking and behaviours of new legislators? Is a process of institutionalization emerging? Building on ethnographic research regularly carried out in Naypyitaw since 2013 and the literature on legislatures and democratic change, the paper discusses the attitudes of new MPs towards representation, the relative effects of party discipline in the NLD-dominated legislature, the relations between the new executive and legislative organs, the impact of capacity-building programs, and the new trajectories of civil-military relations in the house. The study hopes to contribute to a better understanding of the causes and potential consequences of high turnovers of legislators in post-junta

Myanmar and the enduring dominance of senior, experienced politicians in a polity facing a long and arduous process of democratization.

**Jane M. Ferguson**

**“Turning battlefields into zoos: Myanmar cinema and minority representation in two eras”**

In contemporary Myanmar, issues of ethnic identity and diversity are of prominent concern: pluralism, exclusion, war, refugees; pressing issues rooted in the political and military history of the country. One aspect of ethnic politics in Myanmar which has received less international attention is the role of minority representation in Burmese popular culture. With one of the longest-running internal conflicts in modern history frequently drawing its battle lines along claims for ethno-national self-determination, how has the Myanmar motion picture industry presented non-Bamar peoples to mainstream audiences? And what do these representations mean to ethnically diverse groups? Following a brief overview of the national film industry at independence, I will discuss the emergent film genre, Taingyintha Youbshin or “Ethnic Minority Film” as a socialist era propaganda tool to present non-Burman ethnic nationalities in a positive light. Next, I will discuss how post-Cold War ceasefire agreements have economically empowered certain groups, but underlying ethnic tensions persist; increasing symbolic contact has also led to new narratives of ethnic domination, arguably, points which might not have been allowed during the socialist era of heavy censorship. How socialist ideology might have intentionally presented ethnic minorities as equal within the union, but neo-liberal ideologies now present them as symbolic markets to be exploited, remains to be seen.

**Hitomi Fujimura**

**“How did the term ‘Dawkalu’ come to be used? A historical consideration of proclamation of ethnicity by Karen intellectuals in the 1880s”**

Recently, many scholars have discussed the definition of citizenship in Myanmar in relation to ethnicity, leading to a need for multidimensional analysis of articulation of ethnicity. This paper presents a historical perspective on ethnic representation by Sgaw Karen intellectuals. The key term here is ‘dawkalu,’ meaning ‘nation’ in Sgaw Karen. ‘Dawkalu’ is a compound of two Sgaw Karen words, ‘daw’ (whole) and ‘kalu’ (kind), which creates an explicit term for ‘nation.’ Regarding the history of the term ‘dawkalu,’ historical documents suggest that it was never attested before the 1880s, when Baptist Karen elites started to use it. The term was used in the Karen National Association’s organization name and its periodical, as well as in the commemoration letter KNA members presented at Queen Victoria’s Jubilee ceremony in 1887. Given the fact that this term was only used by the Baptist Karen elites in Rangoon, some of whom attended universities in America and learned Western racial interpretations, this paper suggests that Karen intellectuals created this new term themselves in order to pursue the better political recognition within British Burma because they knew the claim of ‘nation’ was important to political contestation. By depicting their engagement in the contestation over the political representation using the term

‘dawkalu/nation’, this paper demonstrates the context and logic behind this minority’s articulation of ethnicity, which will provide a perspective to interpret Myanmar’s current situation, in which different groups proclaim their ethnicities to be recognized as citizens of the country.

**Susan Harris Rimmer**

**“No living with Myanmar? Pathways to justice for the Rohingya”**

The United Nations has made many claims about protecting human rights of minorities in conflict-affected and post-conflict states, the prevention of mass atrocities, especially sexual and gender-based violence and the ending of impunity for international crimes. None of these claims were backed with demonstrable action in Myanmar, with most rights issues trumped by the opportunities for foreign direct investment in the newly open state. Rohingya communities in Rakhine State have been cruelly treated and displaced in great numbers in August 2017, but also since the riots in 2012. The UN reports that at least 720,000 Rohingyas have fled the violence into Bangladesh since 25th August 2017, and a significant number remain displaced inside Myanmar. Meanwhile, other Burmese ethnic communities also face rights violations, such as Kachin State. The conflict in Rakhine state has been brewing for years and shows the weakness of ASEAN and UN conflict prevention mandates. This paper traces the compound failures of local and international actors to prevent atrocity crimes, using an international human rights law lens. I then analyse the justice mechanisms that have been put in motion by the Burmese Government, China and India, ASEAN, the UN Human Rights Council and the International Criminal Court (ICC), and judge their likelihood of combatting impunity for international crimes. The justice pathways are partial, contested and slow. The UN must invest in prevention.

**Htet Min Lwin**

**“An update of local government in Myanmar in 2018: Decentralisation at the lowest level”**

2013 is a year of significant changes in Myanmar history—one of them being the presidential order to state and regional parliaments to legislate subnational-level laws to create semi-elected local government bodies called “township development affairs committee (TDAC)” and three local government bodies for cities: Yangon, Mandalay and Naypyidaw. Decentralization has provided local governments with a broad range of municipal competencies and more importantly fiscal competencies—their own tax and non-tax revenues. This study is concerned with the question if there is any change how these institutions work with the election of NLD government in 2015, and how democratic transition with its momentum for change in 2012 onwards and 2015 has mutually affected the space for/by local government, either in positive or negative ways or both. The study also questions if the current debate of constitutional change and federalism has any bearing for functioning local governments, what factors shape/lead to effective and efficient local governments, and the level of public participation, expectation, and fulfillment. By doing in-depth semi-structured interviews with members and staff of Mandalay City Development

Committee, chairs, members and staff of TDACs and civil society leaders in two regions and one state—Mandalay, Sagaing and Mon, this paper intends to provide preliminary findings of the dynamics of local government in today’s Myanmar vis-à-vis the constitutional and other constraints, the place of local government in democratic transition in general, and in particular its relations to the immediate superior, the subnational governments, and with the central government. As a contribution to the debate of structure or agency, this paper tries to analyse the mutual impact of kinship, societal culture and trust toward institutions, i.e. local government bodies in this case.

**Stéphen Huard**

**“Doubt and trust: Crafting village headship in central Myanmar”**

This presentation questions what is like to be a village headman in contemporary Myanmar countryside. It describes how U Kyaw, headman from 2013 to early 2016, navigates headship and daily life in the village of GawGyi, near Monywa in Sagaing Region, where I conducted fieldwork for eighteen months. More precisely, it shows how a person craft his position as headman. Being the headman placed U Kyaw in a specific set of relations because headship is about navigating contradicting expectations, affiliations, responsibilities and duties. So, what is U Kyaw’s story? He is coming from a relatively well-established family living on the oldest settlement area of the village. Son of the village doctor, he is known for being a helpful person. Through the support and affiliation with the village lu-gyi (influential people) he candidated for headship in 2013. Selected as headman, he had to remake the village-tract families’ registration and the land cadastre. He had to officialise land agreements, setting loan scheme, dealing with NGOs, assuring village “security”, and managing land conflicts for instance. As a broker between villagers and government agencies, he had to find trade-offs between collusion and support. He also learnt how to negotiate with officials. Meanwhile, he became married and father, implying change in residency and issue of inheritance. He also had to support his family after his father’s death. He distanced himself from the local monk due to the latter’s behaviour. Eventually, he hosted me, acting as an introducer and caretaker. Later, he organized headman selection under the patronage of local lu-gyi and managed to find a gateway from being candidate for headship one more time. From that moment onward, he gradually declined involvement in village affairs. Across this period, U Kyaw faced challenging interactions related to his authority and role as headman. He navigated those relationships by keeping distance and avoiding collusion. But also by adapting governing practices in respect to his evolving position and status in the village and with officials. U Kyaw’s story is thus an entry for understanding what being a headman is like in contemporary Myanmar countryside. It emphasizes that performing across a social space is about relations’ overlaps, dilemmas and multiple engagements. Finally, it enable to see how local relationships with the state are conceived and practiced and how people make sense of local political history.

**Andrew M. Jefferson**

**“Carceral legacies: On prisons, punishment and politics in Myanmar”**

Drawing on data collected in 2017 as part of the *Legacies of Detention* research project (<https://legacies-of-detention.org/>), this paper aims to contribute to our social scientific understanding of how prisons make themselves felt in the lives of people and society. It marks a shift in my work on the relationship between confinement and subjectivity from Africa to Asia, and from a focus on institutional dynamics and logics to a focus on the interaction between personal, societal and historical trajectories. Drawing on a series of interviews with contemporary politicians with their own histories of incarceration, I explore the relationship between journeys into politics, experiences of imprisonment and perspectives on punishment. This mini case-study reflects an interest in what the sites, practices, and states of mind associated with incarceration have meant for contemporary politicians in Myanmar, how they have mattered and how they came to matter. The accounts gathered all attest to the fact that prison experience is woven into people’s life experience rather than separate from it. This confirms the need for an approach that traces personal and sociopolitical trajectories beyond site taking account of the development of penal and political consciousness across, through and beyond spaces of incarceration or politics.

**Christine Jubb**

**Co-presenters: Mohshin Habib, Salahuddin Ahmad, Sultana Razia**

**“Rohingya mass exodus: Who should pay compensation and how much?”**

Rohingya people have faced recurring military crackdowns and fled from Myanmar in 1978, 1931, 1992, 2012, 2015, 2016 and 2017. These recurring military crackdowns have devastated Rohingya peoples’ lives and rendered them destitute. In August 2017 the Myanmar army burned approximately 300 Rohingya villages. It is estimated that during the August 2017 military crackdown 25,000 Rohingya were murdered, 18,000 raped, 43,000 received gunshot wounds, and 116,000 beaten. As a result, at least 800,000 Rohingya fled from Myanmar and took refuge in Bangladesh, joining those who had fled earlier. At the time of writing, the number of Rohingya in Bangladesh is estimated to number 1.1million, but this research focuses on data gathered in January 2018 and a refugee population of 800,000. This study was conducted by a research consortium consisting of academics and practitioners from Australia, Canada and Norway and several international institutional partners from Australia, Bangladesh, Canada and the Philippines. The research team visited the Rohingya refugee camps on several occasions and conducted structured interviews with 3,300 Rohingya household heads of families in total comprising 16,314 members. In-depth semi-structured questionnaires and qualitative interviews were utilised in collecting various socio-economic data, such as livelihood activities, household income, expenses, savings, asset holdings, and the condition of respondents’ houses in Myanmar before fleeing. In this

paper, researchers develop a compensation model estimated using economic and demographic data collected from respondents. The paper goes beyond investigating the cost of displacement of Rohingya people to develop an estimate of the compensation that would be required for repatriation, resettlement and rehabilitation of Rohingya people to restore their original state of economic life in Myanmar.

**Khin Htet Wai**

**“The threat of new large-scale land confiscated for the broken model of development in Myanmar: An analysis of Vacant, Fallow, Virgin Management Law”**

As part of Myanmar’s democratic economic and political transition, land reform is integral to ensuring the nation’s long-term sustainability, development, peace and security. The recent and complex history of land confiscation, acquisitions, and conflict has permeated every aspect of life for many smallholder farmers, leaving them to rebuild and reclaim their livelihoods. The new NLD government, under Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, has constituted a new Central Review Committee on Confiscated Farmlands and Other Lands to monitor State and Divisional governments’ handling of land disputes and returning to dispossessed farmers from government ministries, state-owned enterprises, and private companies. However, over the past three years, the new government has resolved less than 10% of land confiscation claims submitted to them the reinvestigation committee. Further, the government had released a series of drafts repressive land laws (Farmland Law, Vacant Fallow Virgin Law, Land Acquisition Act and Forest Law) and begun the process of significant legal reforms framed by the government’s Myanmar Sustainability Development Plans. However, the bills are critical and debatable as covering a wide spectrum of policy topics to addressing ongoing land disputes across the country. Much of lands have been being confiscated and went into large-scale development projects and special economic zones which is likely to continue posing problems for farmers trying to seek justice while the government is committing to the resolution of land disputes, the promotion of agriculture-based economic development, and the advancement of the national peace process. Access to land has a significant impact on the lives of farmers, and 65% of the rural population who earns a living through agriculture. This paper will outline how the Myanmar Government could effectively toward land tenure to ensure that land and justice is restored to smallholder farmers and ethnic minorities and develop impactful policy and a regulatory framework going forward in line with National Land Use Policy. This paper will explore five themes in particular: a briefly examination of land acquisition legacies, the progress of resolving land disputes with NLD government, the complex legal framework with an emphasis on new existing Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Management Law and Land Acquisition Act, detrimental impacts of repressive land laws and its implication for a model economic development in which include increasing land conflicts and grievances, recognition customary land tenure which may undermine the peace process, land tenure security of

smallholder farmers and challenging land use rights of ethnic nationalities and considerable policy recommendations to address land disputes.

**Khin Khin Mra**

**Co-presenter: Deborah Livingstone**

**“The winding path to gender equality in Myanmar: How institutions, interests and ideas influence the ongoing implementation of the Government of Myanmar’s National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women”**

In 2016, implementation of the Myanmar National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (2013-2022) was widely perceived as having stalled; there was still no operational plan, monitoring and evaluation framework or resourcing plan and it was generally seen as a paper exercise languishing on the shelf. In 2016, however, a rapid analysis of existing mapping exercises revealed that many activities were being undertaken by government, civil society organisations, donors and the private sector. The dominant narrative of failure, the human resource capacity of the Women’s Development Division, and a lack of coordination with, and between, development partners and other government departments meant that important steps were not recognised as having taken place. Since then, the Government of Myanmar’s Department of Social Welfare, with national and international technical assistance, has attempted to accelerate implementation by taking a more strategic technical and high-level policy approach, leveraging results and accountability across government, and improving coordination and communication in government and with development partners. Progress has been slow, however, and results for women remain hard to see. This paper uses a feminist institutionalist approach to explore how institutions, interests and ideas in have supported or hindered the path towards gender equality in Myanmar. Specifically, the paper will explore the legacy of military rule, and how this interacts with religion, ethnicity, Myanmar social norms, geography and international gender norms and standards in the context of the current political settlement. Myanmar is at a critical juncture where there are both threats and opportunities to enhancing gender equality: Myanmar’s democratisation could reinforce male-dominated politics and institutions or provide an opportunity to create new political institutions and cultures that include and benefit women. The paper seeks to understand how progress in NSPAW implementation has been made in this complex context, and what might support future progress towards gender equality in Myanmar.

**Kyaw Lin Naing**

**Co-presenters: Than Htaik, Nwe Ni Aung, Aung Lin Oo**

**“Living with prison: Exploring prisoners’ contact with the outside world in Myanmar”**

Myanmar’s recent political transition to democracy has created many changes from political, economic and social reforms to peace negotiations between armed groups and government to the release of political prisoners and reforms in the penal sector. Amidst these positive developments, there is still relatively little social scientific attention paid to issues around prison institutions and life behind the curtain, and the sufferings of prisoners and their families. With the purpose of filling this gap and based on a collaborative case study of prisoners’ contact with the outside world, conducted as part of the Legacies of Detention Research Project, this paper identifies the opportunities and challenges that prisoners face inside Myanmar prisons with regard to their contact with families and friends. The study was conducted in four different locations - two urban and two rural. Using an ethnographic, qualitative approach, we conducted field observations and interviews with lawyers, ex-prisoners, prisoners’ families, and CSOs and had conversations with prison staff and judges. The paper seeks to answer the questions of what we can learn about prisoners’ lived experience from the practices of family visits. By doing so, it highlights the challenging conditions of access, the variety of practices of prison visitation, the varied quality of visits, and the way prisoners survive when they do not have family support. We stress the importance of listening to the voices of prisoners and their families and developing studies to increase the knowledge around prisons and their effects in order to advocate for policy change in Myanmar.

**Lwin Cho Latt**

**“Trust deficit in building social capital under the NLD rule”**

This paper examines the trust between societal groups to explore the approaches of building social capital under the current elected NLD government. Since the democratic transition began in Myanmar, the social situation has been greatly tested by several controversial local protests. Two case studies provide better insights into trust in building social capital and democracy: the ‘Bridgegate’ issue in Mon State and the protests against erecting of the ‘statue of General Aung San’ in Kayah State. This paper raises two major research questions: 1) What role did trust play in the two protests? 2) What strategies exist to build social capital as a force for democracy in Myanmar? I hypothesize that a trust deficit challenges the government’s political entity. Therefore, I conclude that lack of generalized trust-building in society leads to a decline in democracy, observing weak vertical links in social and political relations can be detrimental to the political situation. Through the analysis of these two cases and through short fieldworks, this paper gathers together diverse perspectives in order to offer new ways of building trust in Myanmar that will strengthen democracy. The paper’s findings aim to contribute Myanmar policy-makers to

better understand a high level of 'trust' that can be built by deploying concepts such as bridging and linking social capital between diverse social and political groups towards a sustainable peace and democracy.

**Mai Betty**

**"Tax incentive and foreign direct investment in Myanmar"**

Foreign direct investment (FDI) is an important factor in the economic development of Myanmar. FDI can bring capital flows, create jobs, transfer advanced technology as well as organizational and managerial practices into the source countries. Developing countries are competing each other to attract FDI by offering location advantages for international investors. In general, there are tax factors and non-tax factors to promote FDI. Non-tax factors refer to framework (i.e. political stability, good governance and fiscal stability), market characteristics (i.e. size of the market, human capital and resources) and economic rent (location-specific profits) investment. Tax factors constitute a stable and transparent taxation system, low cooperative tax rate and providing tax incentives. The purpose of this research is to investigate the relation between tax incentives and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Myanmar. Myanmar government has passed Foreign Direct Investment Law and Special Economic Zone Law to promote Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) by offering tax incentives. Therefore, there is a necessity to assess whether tax incentives increase FDI and what are the consequences of tax incentives in Myanmar. This research investigates the current situation and possible consequences of tax incentives in Myanmar by answering the following three questions:

- First, do tax incentives attract more FDI?
- Second, what are the costs and benefits of using tax incentives?
- Third, how to monitor and control tax incentives?

The research findings demonstrate that the number of FDI in manufacturing and infrastructure sectors has generally increased because of tax incentives. However, non-tax reasons such as locational specific profit and political interests also account more than tax incentives. Second, the social benefits from FDI are currently obvious while the costs of tax incentives are less likely to be visible. Third, simultaneous monitoring and evaluation systems could prevent tax evasion and revenue loss from offering tax incentives. The paper is divided into four sections. Section One describes the literature of tax incentives and FDI in developing countries. Section Two illustrates the background data to understand Myanmar's economy and tax system. Section Three illustrates the major findings of this paper and finally, section Four will conclude by giving some critical recommendations to the Myanmar government.

**Roxanne Missingham**

**Co-authors: Mary Carroll, Ni Win Zaw**

**“Building a knowledge society through evolving library education in Myanmar”**

A golden opportunity exists to open up New Myanmar through developing the digital capabilities of library education to create university graduates able to lead Myanmar into the digital age and support the development of a digitally literate nation. Myanmar has been nation of strong literacy with local publishing creating material available through bookshops and libraries. The nature of the political and military environment has however limited access to many kinds of information and literature and there has been limited digital infrastructure or capability to allow access to this information and literature via digital platforms. In the new Myanmar access to university is now expanding, providing increasing numbers of graduates who will lead the new nation. As Myanmar moves to connect students to the world framing the capabilities that will change lives is becoming more critical and visible. Included amongst these are strong digital literacy skills. In this presentation we look at the potential to transform Myanmar through higher education initiatives aimed at increasing digital literacy amongst students, educators and academics. This will assist in creating a generation of digitally literate and community focussed graduates with the aptitude and attitudes needed to increase the countries digital capabilities. In countries such as Australia libraries of all kinds are leading the way in providing free access to digital materials and equipment with librarians providing access to the knowledge and skill needed to build capability. Education for librarians in Australia has increasingly emphasised digital knowledge and community engagement with an aim to produce digitally capable and community focussed graduates. A program by the Department of Library and Information Studies at the University of Yangon has taken the first steps on this journey for Myanmar. Innovations in rubrics, digital content and digital delivery have the potential to open up digital literacy within schools, archives and higher education. The complexities of developing new programs within the course framework means that the University of Yangon is innovatively looking at partnerships and closer cooperation with the library and archive sectors to frame the educational change. Crafting a worldwide view has mean acknowledging the challenges of day to day living including social networks and technology. Understanding the tensions in simultaneously dealing with the existing wold and the potential requires vision and endurance. Shaping a new tole for education which will break through knowledge boundaries and connect Myanmar citizens to the world will require a move from traditional separation of state and education together with new forms of civic engagement. The presentation will review the different circumstances of Myanmar and explore how engaging beyond discipline and national borders is making a major contribution to digital knowledge capabilities in Myanmar. Such a rich era will require a commitment to digital preservation heritage of the nation, repatriation of knowledge about Myanmar and its research located around the world and a new workforce with capabilities beyond that yet seen.

**Myo Win**

**“Citizenship and identity”**

Citizenship and identity in Myanmar continues to be a highly sensitive and political issue - often only understood in the context of the Rohingya. Further, the ambit and scope of the 1982 Citizenship Law and 1983 Procedures is typically not well understood domestically by relevant decision makers within the Myanmar Government, civil society leaders and the public generally as well as internationally by key stakeholders. This obstructs constructive engagement and wider understanding of the 1982 Citizenship Law and 1983 Procedures, and how their current implementation significantly impacts the lives of minorities other than the Rohingya. Since 2016, Smile Education and Development Foundation has conducted small-scale qualitative studies, with the support of UNHCR, across six locations, namely, Yangon, Mandalay, Bago, Patheingyi and Mawlamyine, to assess the access that non-Buddhist minorities have to citizenship documentation and the impact that lack of citizenship documentation can have on their access to education, health care, decent livelihoods, and land rights. Key findings from the research include that 46 percent of the young people who participated in the study reported not holding any form of identity documentation. Additionally, participants from minority communities reported feeling fearful of authorities and experiencing significant discrimination when dealing with authorities. By better understanding and documenting the discrimination faced by minorities in Myanmar in accessing citizenship documentation and citizenship rights, beyond the Rohingya, we hope to overcome the current stalemate in efforts to understand, debate, and eventually reform the citizenship legal framework and practice in Myanmar to one that protects and validates the rights of all minority groups in Myanmar.

**Kei Nemoto**

**“A disappearing community? Brief history of the Anglo-Burmese and their situation after independence of Burma/Myanmar”**

The Anglo-Burmese had been classified as ‘Eurasians’ or ‘Anglo-Burmans’ in a legal sense before independence and they never played a salient role in the political arena. On the contrary, they were swept away into the peripheral sections of society, due to the rise of a strong mood of anti-British nationalism that arose both during the 1920s and later. In the colonial days, they were psychologically possessed of a strong attachment to Britain. However, due to the fact that they harboured feelings of superiority towards the indigenous Burmese (who were Buddhists and Burmese speaking), once Burmese nationalism surfaced as a powerful political movement, they began to be viewed with distrust by the Burmese majority. After independence many of them chose to leave Burma and settled abroad the rest of their lives, since the newly independent state urged them to use Burmese as a national language, and even pressured them to change their names to ‘Burmese’. Moreover, the political and economic situation after independence was too unstable for them to pursue their daily lives in peaceful manner. This presentation deals with the brief history of the Anglo-Burmese especially looking into their identity as ‘Anglo-Burmese’ during and after WWII. It also refers to their situation after independence, using information based

on the interviews conducted during 2006 and 2008 towards 24 persons of Anglo-Burmese residing abroad such as Australia and New Zealand.

**Nyein Thiri Swe**

**Co-presenter: Zaw Min Oo**

**“People power or political pressure? Drivers of representative performance in southern sub-national parliaments, Myanmar”**

Representation is widely considered to be an essential role of parliament (Johnson, 2005), both in terms of institutional and individual dimensions (Judge and Leston-Bandeira, 2017). Sub-national legislatures are crucial entities for the building of a federal system in Myanmar. However, Myanmar’s current electoral system of representation constitutionally mandates that one fourth of parliamentarians at either national or sub-national legislatures are appointed, at present, by the military. Whilst the representational performativity of elected MP’s is more closely aligned with submitting questions and concerns of constituents to their respective legislatures, the representational role of appointed MPs is less clear. This paper will explore the modes of representation of both elected and appointed MPs, considering not only the issues and modes of communication, but how representative performativity is crucial to the wider perception of democratic norms in the public eye. In other words: how does the manner of representation draw from, and in turn re-shape, public conceptions of democracy? We believe that the comparative study of the effectiveness of the representative method of elected MPs and appointed military MPs will provide useful insights to help analyse patterns of representative practice in both national and sub-national legislatures. This in turn can provide an analytical framework for theorizing about the development of a popular mode of democracy in Myanmar.

**Anuk Pitukthanin**

**“The slum in Yangon: Inequality, urbanisation and changing”**

In the last two decades, there has been a rapid growth in urbanization in Myanmar and a lack of efficient housing policy planning for low-income people, led to slum expansion in several cities, especially, in Yangon, the capital and the central of economy for the country. This article examines and explains the expansion of slum in Myanmar in relation to economic and social contexts of the country. The survey in this research was conducted by the researcher and Bendar Social Development Group, in 467 households of 10 communities in Hlaing Tharyar industrial estate in Yangon city. The result of the survey shows that the important causes of slum expansion in Yangon city constitute of three interrelated factors; firstly, Cyclone Nargis in 2008 and the climate change, secondly, economic inequality between urban and rural area and thirdly, technological change in agriculture sector. These causes are significantly associated with unemployment, land loss and migration of rural people, especially migrating from Ayeaywaddy to Hlaing Tharyar in order to pursue better living and career opportunities. Nevertheless, the article shows the overview detail that slum people’s living condition and environment condition are lower than their living

standard as they have to live with high living costs, which is challenging for them to improve their quality of life. Furthermore, welfare and housing policy of the state have not been able to enhance social safety net.

**Caitlin Reiger**

**Co-author: Zaw Myat Lin**

**“Still searching for justice in the law: Current perspectives on injustice in Myanmar”**

As calls outside Myanmar grow louder for accountability for serious human rights violations, inside the tone remains largely quiet in the face of official denials and national security justifications. A fear-generating public discourse framed in terms of counter-terrorism and nationalist identity politics is by no means unique to Myanmar. Yet the breadth and depth of the silence in demanding justice - with few notable exceptions - is not only a result of these dynamics but reflects long-standing practices in how law is used and understood. Recent research reveals the daily reality for most people, especially vulnerable groups, is one in which 'legal' justice is neither expected nor sought even for ordinary grievances, let alone those which are politically sensitive, taking place on an extraordinary scale, or happening to a marginalised 'other'. The penalties for challenging this hegemony remain real. Yet people in Myanmar continue to seek justice, albeit in ways that are largely overlooked by policy and institutional responses. This paper presents the results of the largest quantitative survey to date on knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding justice and the law in Myanmar. In 2017 over 3500 women and men in all 14 states and regions shared their experiences and views. Across gender, rural/urban and ethnic groups, the vast majority of people conceive justice as anchored in principles of fairness and equality. The law and its institutions, however, are viewed as a mechanism for maintaining state control of people's behaviour. Fewer than one in three people see the law as playing a role in protecting people's rights, constraining state power or resolving disputes. Collective experiences of how laws are applied by officials are far greater determinants of people's views of where and to whom to turn in seeking justice. Despite the majority Buddhist culture, fate or karma is less explanatory of inaction in the face of injustice than corruption, abuse and delays. Diverse forms of community-level justice are by far the most trusted and widely-used avenues, and there are early signs that these may at last be the subject of serious attention among development programmes, peacebuilders and government.

**Chiraag Roy**

**“China's role in Myanmar's peace process”**

This paper examines perceptions of China's role and influence in Myanmar's peace process based on a series of in depth, semi-structured interviews conducted in Myanmar in early 2018. Specifically, this paper contrasts perspectives held by local alongside foreign actors based in Yangon towards China's support for the peace process. Elites within Myanmar have been strict in declaring Myanmar's peace process as locally led with minimal international involvement barring technical and advisory assistance. Nevertheless, China's role has

remained overwhelmingly influential in Myanmar's political sphere, further exaggerated by the turn away from the West in light of the Rakhine crisis of 2017. Despite a stated position of non-interference, China has been active in Myanmar's peace process, maintaining strong links with several of the ethnic armed groups in northern Myanmar, often encouraging these groups to participate in the nationwide peace dialogue. Concurrently key economic factors are present in driving China's involvement in Myanmar's peace, including but not limited to: The Belt and Road initiative and Kyaukphyu Special Economic Zone in Rakhine state. For those involved in Myanmar's peace process, how do they live and operate within the reality of China's prevalence in Myanmar's political and economic sphere? Based on 54 interviews with key stakeholders, this paper analyses how Chinese support for Myanmar's peace process is perceived by actors who are part of the greater peace industrial complex, both local and foreign. From this analysis emerges a conversation between local and foreign perspectives. For foreigners, China represents an existential cause for concern, whereas for the local, predominantly Burmese informants, China is a practical reality which they have to contend with daily. In the course of analysis, this paper simultaneously considers China's role in Myanmar through the prism of International Relations theory and the 'grand strategy' concept, as well as Myanmar's ongoing transformation against the backdrop of the nationwide peace process.

### **Ayako Saito**

#### **"The history and current situation of Bamar Muslims: The difference in ethnic consciousness between Bamar Muslims and Buddhist majority"**

This presentation focuses on Bamar Muslims who live among the majority of Buddhists. They possess a strong consciousness that they are indigenous citizens of Myanmar. Since the late colonial period, they have claimed that their ancestors were from some region in West, Central or South Asia although they were indigenous and respected Myanmar's culture. The Bamar Muslims believe that they are not accepted as ethnic Bamars despite their long-term claim. Furthermore, the presentation highlights several examples of the objectionable combination of race and religion, which appears on their identity (ID) documents. Although many people regardless of race or religion encounter problems such as bribery in the occasions associated with the issuance of ID documents, the case of Bamar Muslims shows us the most typical one. It demonstrates the difficulties which non-indigenous Myanmar citizens face in their daily lives due to religion.

### **San Myint Yi**

#### **"The importance of public participation in solid waste management: A case study of Mandalay City, Myanmar"**

Solid waste is one of the major issues being faced for Mandalay to become a clean, green, and healthy city in Myanmar due to a lack of resources, improper collection, poor management of disposal sites, and a lack of awareness and cooperation from the public in regard to solid waste management. With the growth of population and changing

consumption pattern, 1.3 million inhabitants in Mandalay city produce around 1090 tonnes of per day in 2017. Collected rate is about 900 tonnes (85%) of the waste per day. Of the remainder, about 10% of the garbage is scattered on the illegal dumping sites in the city and disposed into drains and creeks, which block drainage system. Thus, the objective of this study is to highlight the important role of public participation in solid waste management. This study also examines the challenges and potential prospects of public participation in solid waste management of Mandalay city. This is a descriptive - qualitative approach to data collection, and an analysis of primary reports, secondary documents and articles from open literature. Personal interviews had been conducted with the staff officer from the Cleansing Department of MCDC with regard to public involvement in effective way of SWM. Through a simple random sampling method, the study selected 170 respondents to collect data in the Mandalay municipal areas with regard to the knowledge and attitude of public how to take and engage in 3Rs activities, methods of waste disposal, and waste collection in their surrounding areas. Out of 170 individuals 159 returned completed questionnaire, a response rate of 93.5 %. This study found that it is necessary for a collaborative partnership between all the stakeholders including the public, federal government, city authorities, and private sector in tackling the problem of solid waste.

### **Jérémie Sanchez**

#### **“Blinded like a state: Urban sanitation, improvement and high modernism in contemporary Myanmar”**

This paper explores a topic that has partly been left out of academic inquiry in Myanmar: how and what the state sees when it comes to attempts of materially improving the human condition throughout the country (Scott, 1998). The paper engages with the vision of the Myanmar state on improvement primarily through the lens of urban sanitation, building on qualitative material gathered from over 120 interviews carried out with state and non-state actors between 2015 and 2018 in Mandalay, the second largest city of the country. Taking a cue from Li (2005) and Ferguson (1994), the paper explores what state improvement efforts “actually do”, so as to contribute to answer Robert’s (2017) call to unveil what is and what makes the urban in Myanmar. The paper first argues that urban improvement in Myanmar cities – or at least in Mandalay – is still guided by a largely unchallenged state gaze, one that is now increasingly subjected to the governmental rationality of the National League for Democracy government. The paper further shows that this governmental rationality is hybrid, guided both by historically rooted sovereigntist aspirations and what seems to be a renewed will to improve. Although the paper does not question the genuineness of this will, it argues that urban improvement is increasingly being understood and carried out in aesthetic, shallow ways by the Myanmar state and that actual improvements to the human condition in Myanmar cities are yet to be witnessed. The paper identifies in this process the re-emergence of high modernism à la Burmese, which it attributes not only to the re-engagement of international actors in the country but also to the state’s own understanding of urban challenges, its blinding practices and, possibly, political calculations of the current government.

## **Saw Chit Thet Tun**

### **“Trend analysis of Myanmar peace process”**

President U Thein Sein initiated new approach of peace talk with several of Ethnic Armed Organisations in late 2011 after he took the office through 2010 general election. His initiative offered institutionalised political dialogue and it is different from previous ceasefire and peace agreements had done by military government. As a result, under his administration, Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement has made between Myanmar government with 8 EAOs including Karen National Union and Restoration Council of Shan State. The home-grown peace initiative has welcomed by some national political forces and international community. As a result, international community promised to support the peace process by providing financial and technical aid. On the other hand, several EAOs mainly from Northern part of the country refused to sign the NCA even though some of them participated in NCA drafting process. The peace process has declined when Aung San Suu Kyi and her party NLD won in 2015 general elections. Since then, the process remains blocked with several problems until now and could not move further meaningful success. This paper will examine the Myanmar peace process with SWOT analysis tool through existing peace infrastructures (formal and informal platforms), the key actors and ongoing dialogue, particularly NCA framework, Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee, Joint Monitoring Committee, 21st Panglong Union Peace Conference, ethnic national dialogues, etc. I will argue that it would be difficult to achieve meaningful peace agreement unless there is no changes or adjustment over current peace’s architect. To conduct this research, I will use scholarly written books and journal articles, news from reliable news agencies, publications from government and international organisations, and will interview with several people who are deeply engaging in the process. The trend analysis will be made on the finding from interviewees and secondary sources. This study will enhance better understanding of Myanmar peace process with updated information and it will also help to find solution of current crisis.

## **Tani Sebro**

**Co-authors: Mary Mostafanezhad, Roger Norum**

### **“Precarious humanitarianism: Goeconomic hope and geopolitical fear in Myanmar’s borderlands”**

In the midst of Myanmar’s mass human displacements, another troubling development lies just behind the headlines of war, collusion and genocide: that of the termination or redirection of foreign humanitarian support from Myanmar’s exiled populations. As major humanitarian organizations and aid foundations turn towards the centre of Myanmar – or turn away to other regions entirely – those who live on the margins of the nation are left to contend with the sudden departure of NGOs with budgets in excess of millions of dollars each year. This leaves a destitute population vulnerable to trafficking, military recruitment, illicit and exploitative employment situations, malnutrition and poor (or non-existent) education. Using an analytic that connects the goeconomics of hope and geopolitics of fear (Sparke 2017), this paper will argue that Myanmar’s economic development and its hard-

line stance towards ethnic minority groups are co-producing the condition of protracted exile. The humanitarian crisis along Myanmar's borders is currently intensifying despite the lifting of sanctions against the military regime and despite efforts to open up the Myanmar economy to foreign investment. We contend that the sudden influx of foreign investment funds, coupled with large-scale infrastructure programs and the establishment of special economic zones, has intensified the already rampant inter-ethnic strife in Myanmar. This research is based on long-term ethnographic fieldwork (2010–2017) with refugees and NGO workers in UNHCR and IDP camps along the Thai-Myanmar border, as well as with undocumented refugees and migrant laborers in Thailand.

**Soe Yar Zar**

**Co-presenter: John Henderson**

**“Social media's impact on Myanmar Muslims”**

Social media has unsettled the Myanmar Muslim community. This disruptive technology is changing religious and cultural life among the diverse collection of people who follow Islam in Myanmar. Myanmar's rapid introduction to online networking and information sharing appears also to be feeding shifts in Myanmar Muslim behaviours and authority norms. Social media are undoing restrictions on community beliefs and activities. Facebook in particular has furthered local interpretations of Quranic texts, enlivened sharing of community news, and enabled new conversations across levels of Muslim society. Some Myanmar religious leaders have reluctantly begun to join the social media wave, though most remain hesitant, often deeming such activities un-Islamic. A growing number of Muslim women from conservative communities are receiving their first window onto life outside their homes. Many Muslim groups, including Rohingya Muslims, are sharing new content related to political debates, religious ideologies, and cultural issues. Myanmar Muslim individuals and associations are exercising the same cautions as most other Myanmar social media users in response to unique local constraints, such as a restrictive telecommunications law and the frequent use of online spaces to incite violence. Lively debate followed Facebook's recent decision to close the accounts of 20 high-profile organizations and individuals to “prevent them from using our service to further inflame ethnic and religious tensions.” Compiling current analysis with new primary research on Muslim civil society in Myanmar, we describe the community's new potential, new challenges, and new risks.

**Wora Suk**

**“Access to remedies: Thai outbound investments and human rights violations in Tanintharyi region, Myanmar”**

Thailand's transboundary investments in Southeast Asia has intensified in recent years and there is growing concerns over a lack of accountability for the human rights and environmental impacts of these investments. Thai-backed projects in neighbouring countries have led to human rights violations, including: Dawei Special Economic Zone (SEZ)

and Ban Chaung Coal Mine in Myanmar; KohKong and Oddar Meanchey sugar plantations in Cambodia; and the Hongsa Mine and Power Plant in Laos. Proposed hydropower dams along the Salween River in Myanmar involving Thai investments are also linked to escalations of conflict and human rights violations. This paper exposes human rights violations in Thailand's notorious outbound investments in ASEAN: focusing on Dawei SEZ, Heinda tin mine project, and Banchuang coal mine in the Tanintharyi region of Myanmar. Commonly found in these projects are adverse impacts to the environment, health and subsistence livelihoods- such as betel nut tree plantations, cashew nut farms, and in vegetable gardening. At the heart of the tragedy are the shockingly callous company practices, including the lack of compliance with Myanmar's laws and lack of public participation by the affected communities. Resistance of the impacted communities consists of strategies of contestation, alliance building at the local and transnational levels, and seeking remedies via both judicial and non-judicial mechanisms. Local communities affected by these projects have pushed for accountability for human and environmental rights abuses through litigation in Thai courts and non-judicial mechanisms such as the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand (NHRCT). The NHRCT has investigated numerous complaints around Thailand's transboundary investments, developing procedures for concretizing the extra-territorial human rights obligations of Thai state and non-state actors. The affected communities recommend proactive measures to regulate Thai investments and to adopt the principles suggested by the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) such as protection, respect and remedy frameworks. Community's rights to remedies should be respected by Thai investors abroad.

### **Wen-Ching Ting**

#### **“The tactics of in-/visibility: A dual life of displaced Shan along the Thai-Myanmar border”**

This paper mainly demonstrates how the displaced Shan people have lived a dual life (Goffman's (1959) frontstage and backstage practices) to negotiate their subordinate and oppressed positions along the Thai-Myanmar border. On one hand, they construct sentimental attachments to support each other during their displacement. Through dynamic, embodied and emplaced practices in habitus and rituals (Goffman's 'frontstage'), they make a new space a meaningful place, like 'home' and create a sense of 'at-homeness', which ties them and their provisional dwellings together, as well as heals the disruption between the past and present that forced migration have caused; on the other hand, in spite of ritual performances making Shan 'visible' on the frontstage, as being portrayed as exploitable cheap labour force, they still keep a low profile and hide their features or markers in the mainstream Thai society, and employ roundabout routes in the practices of their everyday lives. This is one of their tactics used to protect themselves and also a way in which they could retain some degree of freedom of movement against the geo-political control they have been subject to (Goffman's 'backstage').

**Graham Walker**

**“Building science communication/education capacity in Myanmar: The Science Circus Myanmar project”**

Science, technology, engineering and maths, or the STEM disciplines, are critical to underpin development and economic growth in Myanmar. This has been reflected in a focus on STEM education and development of a new primary science curriculum with greater focus on practical activities and hands-on exploration, however – like many countries – classroom practice still favours rote learning and ‘chalk and talk’, with a subsequent lack of classroom engagement and interest in STEM from students. This presentation shares experiences with a recent science communication/education capacity building pilot project, Science Circus Myanmar. The project, in partnership with the University of Yangon, involved training a team of young, enthusiastic early-career lecturers from two universities in Yangon to perform ‘science shows’ – a combination of live experiments and dramatic delivery tailored to engage, educate and inspire. To cement and continue the training, trainees and ANU staff and graduate students then conducted a series of school and public outreach performances, including at the University of Yangon Science Fair. This talk will discuss the impact of the project, the training process and bilingual delivery, the use of locally available low-cost materials, the importance of grounding training in authentic environments, and the two-way capacity building process, whereby both the UY lecturers and ANU graduate students were able to develop new skills and knowledge, while also benefitting schools and the wider community in Myanmar. Finally, strategies to aid the sustainability of impacts and future directions will be discussed, along with situating the project in the broader landscape of science communication in Myanmar.

**Peter Warr**

**“Poverty and inequality within rural and urban areas of Myanmar: 2005 to 2015”**

Nationwide household survey data for Myanmar indicate that between 2005 and 2010 poverty incidence declined within Myanmar and that the Gini coefficient of consumption expenditure inequality also declined. The downward trend in both variables is statistically significant and robust to the choice of inequality indicator. This study extends that comparison using new survey data for 2015. The study investigates the factors contributing to the level and change of both poverty incidence and expenditure inequality over this interval. The analysis combines household survey data from the Integrated Household Living Condition Assessment surveys for 2005 and 2010 and World Bank data for 2015. This research is important in that Myanmar’s political landscape has changed since these data were collected. The Myanmar people expect to see profound social and economic reforms, and these reforms have the potential to increase income disparities among households. Examining the influencing factors on the levels of expenditure inequality and its changes should provide analytical information for a comprehensive policy framework to plan ahead in order to ensure inequality is kept at a low level, and to address potential inequality-increasing elements. Knowing what factors determine the level of, and changes in, both

poverty incidence and inequality over time would highlight whether existing inequalities are due to intrinsic unchangeable characteristics, such as location or ethnicity, or due to variables whose distribution can be changed through policy, for instance, through broadening access to education services. This research builds on, and contributes to work in expenditure inequality research. Although numerous studies have identified the magnitude of classic inequality indices, less analytical attention has been paid to the reasons that inequality increased or decreased over time.

**Yin Nyein**

**Co-presenters: Rick Gregory, Aung Kyaw Thein**

**“Ten years of freshwater fisheries governance reform in Myanmar (2008-2018)”**

The history of freshwater fisheries governance in Myanmar from The British colonial period onwards consistently focused on revenue generation resulting in a gradual reduction in small-scale fisher access to their traditional fishing grounds and encouraging natural resource degradation and declines in fisheries production. The most significant problems in the fisheries sector have been associated with stakeholder inequality, resource decline, and poverty. In recent years these issues have triggered demands from small-scale farmers for more equitable sharing and sustainable resources co-management. During the democratic transition period, freshwater fishery governance has steadily improved through structural changes and interactive processes. Through persistent lobbying, collaboration, engagement and trust building by NGOs and CSOs, regional and state parliaments have promulgated freshwater fishery laws in Rakhine, Mon, Bago, and Ayeyarwaddy that encapsulate pro-poor policies and create a legal basis for community fisheries co-management. Three interactive processes have supported these reforms; Firstly, the civil society movement has strengthened significantly, and in many areas, small-scale fishers have demanded improved access to their traditional fishing grounds and recognition of their rights. Secondly, the democratic transition created uncertainty for bureaucrats, policymakers, and private sector who had previously controlled the fishery resource rents unchallenged, opening the door for multi-stakeholder engagement initiatives and proactive engagement by small-scale fisher groups, associations and partnerships Thirdly, the establishment of inter-state/regional experience exchange platforms amongst the various fishery partnerships contributed to improvements in fishery governance, supporting not only the learning and sharing of experiences but also introducing an element of competition amongst the different partnerships striving to achieve better policies and governance arrangements. Several challenges to the successful implementation of these new laws and pro-poor policies remain. Firstly, there are the conflicting revenue collection and socio-economic development goals of the state and regional governments. Secondly, the limited capacity of local Government staff to implement the new policies due to personal motivations, conflicting interests and on-going power struggles between local governments and the Union fishery department. Finally, the limited institutional and financial capacity of small-scale fisher organizations to effectively implement co-management mechanisms, when many of their members remain poorly educated and shackled to local bonded market chains.

Despite these challenges, the recent reforms of freshwater fisheries sector governance in Myanmar are regarded as a significant success and provide lessons and guidance for the improved governance of other economic sectors. Lessons include; approaches to the incorporation of pro-poor policies into legal frameworks; the role of democratically elected MPs in law-making processes; the role of NGOs and CSOs in lobbying for pro-poor policies and supporting law-making processes by Government; the role of partnerships and networks in widening perceptions and improving stakeholder communications; and the importance of cooperation with other countries in the Region, who can articulate lessons learned from their own national context and experience.