



Myanmar Conference 2020
Minorities in Myanmar
 Stuttgart 5-7 October 2020



LINDEN-MUSEUM STUTTGART
 Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde



Opening

05.10. 14:00 pm

Time	Name	Institution	Title of the Presentation
14:00-14:10	Prof Dr Inés de Castro	Linden-Museum Stuttgart	Welcome Address of the Museum's Director
14:10-14:20	Dr Georg Noack	Linden-Museum Stuttgart	Opening Address

Panel 1: Minority politics

05.10. 14:30-18:00 pm

14:30-15:00	Dr José María Arraiza and Phyu Zin Aye (Rima)	Advisor, Norwegian Refugee Council Mahidol University, Bangkok	Is There an Alternative to Nativism? Exploring the Alternatives to Mainstream Xenophobia and Discrimination Against Minorities in Contemporary Myanmar (Virtual presentation)
15:00-15:30	Prof Dr Thi Thi Lwin	Dept. of Law, East Yangon University, Yangon	Practical issues of the protection of the language rights of ethnic groups through legal framework in Myanmar (Virtual presentation)
15:30-16:00	Dr Edgard Rodriguez and Francesco Obino	International Development Research Centre, Canada/Myanmar	Promoting inclusive research in Myanmar (Virtual presentation)
16:00-16:30	Coffee break		
16:30-17:00	Prof Dr Michal Lubina	Jagiellonian University, Krakow	Panglong (myth) and beyond. Aung San Suu Kyi's approach to ethnic minorities in Myanmar
17:00-17:30	Moritz Fink	Willy Brandt School of Public Policy / Erfurt University	Contested State- and Nation-Building in Myanmar. Approaches towards a common vision?
17:30 -18:00	Stephanie Verlaan	Alice Salomon University Berlin	Informal Local Governance Actors in Myanmar: The forgotten pioneers for peace

19:30 pm Screening of Myanmar short films in cooperation with Wathann Film Festival with introductions by Diana M. Tobias, Goethe-Institut Myanmar/Chairwoman, Myanmar-Institut e.V.

Panel 2: Religious and Ethnic Minorities

06.10. 10:00 am -12:00 pm

10:00-10:30	Prof Dr Judith Beyer	University of Konstanz	Communal Sense. We-formation and the work of community in Myanmar
10:30-11:00	Phuong Le Trong	Institute of Oriental and Asian Studies (IOA), University of Bonn	The Shan – Narratives and Nationalism
11:00-11:30	Sarah Riebel	University of Konstanz	Harmonious Coexistence? Interfaith dialogue between (ethno-)religious communities, NGOs and the state in Myanmar
11:30 – 12:00	André Müller	University of Zürich	The internal structure of the verb complex across the Kachin languages

06.10.2020 14:30 pm – 5 pm

14:30-15:00	Abellia Anggi Wardani	University of Tilburg	The impact of COVID-19 on the vulnerable groups in Northern Rakhine State
15:00-15:30	Prof Md. Matiul Hoque Masud	University of Chittagong / University of Oldenburg	Understanding the Rohingya Refugee 'Crisis' in Myanmar: The Individual, the State and the International System
15:30-16:00	Coffee break		
16:00-16:30	Prof Dr Alan Potkin	Northern Illinois University, De Kalb	Impasse on the Lower Salween/Thanlwin: Is it resolvable?
16:30-17:00	Prof Dr Catherine Raymond	Northern Illinois University, DeKalb	Giving a Voice To Their Own Communities

17:30 pm Guided Tour: An exhibition curated by representatives of the Kayan Literature and Culture Central Committee (Pekon) and the Kayaw Literature and Culture Central Committee (Loikaw) at the Linden-Museum. Short talk on the cooperation between the Linden-Museum and the two Committees.

Dr Georg Noack, head of the Southeast Asia department, Linden-Museum Stuttgart

19:30 pm Swabian Dinner at the restaurant "Stuttgarter Stäffele". While speakers are invited, others are welcome to join at their own cost (10-15 € plus drinks).

However, registration is necessary and due to the covid regulations, the number of available seats is limited. Please register early to make sure you can join. Please write to noack@lindenmuseum.de to register.

Panel 3: Diverse Aspects of Myanmar Society

07.10.2020 09:00 am – 13:00 pm

09:00-09:30	Christiane Voßemer	University of Vienna	Between Shanty and Shelter - Meanings of Home in Childbirth at Myanmar's margins
09:30-10:00	Dr Felix Girke	University of Konstanz	Children drawing Yangon: Learning to see the(ir) city
10:00-10:30	Yuzana Khine Zaw	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine	Managing with 'nar-lel-hmu' or mutual understanding - Medicines, Markets, Drug Shops, and Regulators in Yangon, Myanmar
10:30-11:00	Coffee break		
11:00-11:30	Johanna Neumann	Humboldt-University Berlin	Gender, Nationalism and Zat Pwe
11:30-12:00	Carolin Hirsch	University of Konstanz	Becoming rebel - Performing social minority through a punk collective
12:00-12:30	Prof Dr Tilman Frasch	Manchester Metropolitan University	Foreigners, Minorities and Buddhist Cosmopolitanism in Bagan
12:30-13:00	Georg Winterberger	University of Zurich	Closing Remarks

Abstracts

Panel 1: Minority Politics

1. Is There an Alternative to Nativism? Exploring the Alternatives to Mainstream Xenophobia and Discrimination Against Minorities in Contemporary Myanmar

The paper will analyse the role of nativism in the making of Myanmar's 1982 Citizenship Law and other policies leading to the exclusion of minorities such as the Rohingya as well as persons of Indian, Nepali, Chinese and Malaysian descent. Nativism is a type of xenophobia more specifically engaged in the defense of the nation state understood as a unity of culture, including religion, language, and even "blood" (following a racist understanding of biology and human evolution). The American historian John Higham described it in the US context as "intense opposition to an internal minority on the grounds of its foreign (i.e., 'unamerican') connections".

The question the paper will address is: are there alternatives to mainstream nativism? The paper will seek to identify and assess alternative narratives and intellectual currents within contemporary Burmese society which challenge the mainstream nativism of both the government of the National League for Democracy as well as the discourse of the Tatmadaw, its affiliate political parties and Mabatha. The paper will consist on both desk research and data from qualitative interviews with relevant actors in Myanmar.

José María Arraiza, PhD Åbo Akademi University, is a researcher on minority issues specialized on legal identity rights based in Madrid. He has combined research and humanitarian and peace-keeping field work since 1998 in conflict and post-conflict scenarios such as Kosovo, East Timor and Myanmar.

Phyu Zin Aye, PhD student Mahidol University, focuses her interests on citizenship, statelessness and refugees from a non-discrimination perspective. Apart from her present work at OXFAM, she has worked on statelessness, displacement and minority rights issues with the UNHCR and the Norwegian Refugee Council in Myanmar.

2. Practical issues of the protection of the language rights of ethnic group through legal framework in Myanmar

Myanmar is the official language recognized by 2008 Constitution of Myanmar and spoken by most of the population of Myanmar. However, there are other minority languages, belonging to several linguistic families. Though the 2008 Constitution and Protection of the Ethnic Rights 2015 recognized and encouraged the flourish of minorities' language, all ethnic minorities have to use and learn Myanmar language due to not having timely translated books and government official letters. This paper

figured out that not supporting minority languages in the past became one of the issues for ethnic minorities for the sustainability of language cultures and injustice for them. Nevertheless, this paper argued that there is a possibility to mitigate those issues by using an inclusive approach towards national languages, stimulated by the Myanmar government and supported by locals so that it might contribute to establishing sustainable peace in the ethnic -based conflicts in Myanmar. Furthermore, this paper believed that by offering more space to local languages at school, minority children will gain confidence that their language, culture and values matter and are respected. Myanmar Government has made some efforts starting from 2012 such as ethnic languages were allowed to be taught in government schools, ensuring this through National Education Law provides to teach at the basic education level and promulgating the Law on Protection of Ethnic Rights was enacted in 2015. The objective of the paper is to examine whether Myanmar is adequately living up to protect the language rights of ethnic group and effectively fulfill the relevant legal obligations conferred by international law or not and how to overcome the practical issues of the protection of the language rights of ethnic group through legal framework. To reach this objective, this paper used documentary analysis and key informant interviews in 2019. The paper revealed that while encouraging the translation of required books into multi-languages, the government should adopt rules and policies for the short term and long term commitment to fulfill Article 15 (2) of ICESCR which Myanmar has responsibility to take steps for the full realization of language right.

Prof Dr Thi Thi Lwin is Head of the Law Department, East Yangon University, Yangon, Myanmar. Her teaching career began in 1995 at Dagon University, the largest undergraduate institution in Yangon. She was conferred PhD degree in Law from University of Yangon in 2008 for her research on Adoption in Myanmar. She taught Law subjects especially from civil law field at Pyay University and Dagon University from 1995 to 2005. In 2006 she moved to Monywa University and took a position of Head of Law Department up to 2010. Her research interests are Criminal Law, Family Law and Human Rights Law. In 2012, the Myanmar Academy of Arts and Science conferred her best paper award for her paper titled "Legal Aspect of Polygamy under Myanmar Customary Law". Since 2012 she has been appointed as a professor at Taungoo University. Now she has been working as a Professor and Head of Law Department of East Yangon University since 2016. She is participating in the establishment of University Human Rights Education at East Yangon University under the Denmark-Myanmar Country Programme, 2016-2020. She is also doing human rights research under the supervision of the Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) relating to cultural rights of ethnic minor groups in Myanmar. She has been to Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) for exposure visit to Denmark-Rule of Law and Human Rights.

3. Promoting inclusive research in Myanmar

Decades of systematic underinvestment in research and higher education have eroded Myanmar's internal capacity to generate sound advice for public policy and the ability to use this knowledge for policymaking to promote a more inclusive society. Interventions that boost local scholarship could nurture a new generation of young actors from universities, think tanks and civil society to promote inclusion, gender equality and respect for ethnic diversity. The presentation will draw from examples of an on-going international initiative that helps strengthen local research and analytical capacity. The Initiative involves Myanmar university faculty and students, civil society leaders, think tank researchers, and public officials through different approaches: capacity-development for individuals, where expert international training institutions will mentor a large and geographically diverse pool of aspiring leaders; organizational capacity development with Myanmar independent think tanks, working on a range of policy issues from economics to gender and ethnic relations in the peace process; and support for joint research, carried out by Myanmar and international experts to hone local research capacity and to fill knowledge gaps around women's political participation, gender budgeting, and public services in Myanmar. A cross-cutting approach has been to promote engagement and collaboration across these different actors for a change in mindsets needed to boost democracy in the country.

Dr Edgard Rodriguez is an expert on economic development and research capacity building. On enterprise development, Edgard Rodriguez has worked on impact evaluation of small enterprise development at the World Bank in Washington, D.C., lending and technical assistance operations at the Asian Development Bank in Manila, Philippines, as well as local enterprise development in Eastern Europe at the former Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Edgard Rodriguez has worked directly with small entrepreneurs and local governments, mostly in South and South-east Asia, and written numerous articles and book chapters on enterprise development policies. On labour markets and migration, his research experience includes published work on remittances in the Philippines as part of his doctoral dissertation and as part of his work at the Asian Development Bank in Manila, Philippines. He has designed and led multiple research projects on employment and development at the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in Canada, and he is the lead in the Knowledge for Democracy-Myanmar Initiative, funded by IDRC and Global Affairs Canada, to promote policy research capabilities in Myanmar. Edgard

Rodriguez holds a PhD in economics from the University of Toronto with specialization in economic development and labour economics.

Francesco Obino currently leads the Research and programs Unit of the Global Development Network. In this role, he leads the Doing Research initiative, an innovative global program focused on generating high-quality evidence on the state of social sciences in developing countries through partnerships with local research institutions. Currently implemented in Bolivia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nigeria and Venezuela. Francesco has over a decade of experience in research and research capacity building, academic publishing and in the design of spaces for research-practice interactions.

4. Panglong (myth) and beyond. Aung San Suu Kyi's approach to ethnic minorities in Myanmar

Myanmar has two parallel governments: a civilian one under Win Myint (but de facto headed by State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi) and a military "shadow" one, deeply entrenched within this "disciplined democracy" system. Tatmadaw's stance on ethnic minorities is quite well known. Less so is the NLD's position on ethnic issues.

This presentation will outline Suu Kyi's vision of ethnic minorities. Although ethnic issues do not figure prominently in Suu Kyi's political rhetoric, one may decode from her speeches several important ideas on ethnic minorities. These are: democracy first; guided federalism; unconscious acceptance of the Bamar privileges; accent on values and emotions; platitudes and moral messages and a perpetuity of the Panglong myth. All these make up what can be described as "unity in diversity under Bamar guidance". As such Suu Kyi's ideas present more gentle, more humane and much more acceptable version of the Tatmadaw's view of ethnic relations. Given this, a marginalization of ethnic minorities in the NLD agenda is unsurprising. It is even so, despite Suu Kyi's (unsuccessful) 21st Century Panglong scheme.

Prof Dr Michal Lubina is assistant professor at Institute of Middle and Far East, Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland and author of 7 books, 4 on Myanmar (e.g. "The Moral Democracy. The Political Thought of Aung San Suu Kyi"). His most recent book on Myanmar, a political biography of Aung San Suu Kyi, is planned to be published by Routledge in late 2020.

5. Contested State- and Nation-Building in Myanmar. Approaches towards a common vision?

Myanmar currently discusses the prospect of a federal 'Union'. The quasi-federal arrangements in the 2008 constitution were not suffice to be regarded as a genuine federation, nor to satisfy the ethnic minorities. Federal principles already existed (Panglong 1947) and were about to be implemented, before amendments were made to the constitution of 1947. Another attempt to uphold federal visions in Taungyi came soon to an end after General Ne Win had staged a coup and established military-rule. The following, forceful assimilation of the ethnic minorities into a Burmese state (one nation, one language, one identity) was highly rejected and resisted against. The absence of trust deriving from failed attempts of state- and nation-building between the Bamar-majority and the ethnic minorities is now the issue to overcome. The main argument here highlights the necessity of consociational tools in addition to federalism, that protect minority rights, secure their inclusion in the decision-making structures and grant them veto powers. Because under current circumstances, minorities are under-represented, are outvoted on important issues and lack the institutional means to defend their ethnic autonomy. A federation in a consociational fashion that features a grand coalition, segmental autonomy, proportional representation and a minority veto (Ljiphart 1977, 1985) illustrates the opportunities as a potential tool for conflict resolution and a measure of effective confidence-building. The proposed framework has so far not been discussed in the peace negotiations, hence also aims at initiating a debate about consociational practices in general.

Moritz Fink is Master student at the Willy Brandt School of Public Policy, Erfurt University, and a former student at the University of Passau.

6. Informal Local Governance Actors in Myanmar: The forgotten pioneers for peace

The current study investigated the roles of Myanmar's informal local governance actors (ILGA), the institutions (ILGI) they form and the customary laws on which they operate. ILGAs include village elders, chiefs and leaders; ethnic leaders; and religious leaders. ILGAs were found to be providing effective governance at the community level and forming a third-tier of government not recognized by the Myanmar government. One of the main functions of ILGIs was to provide dispute resolution mechanisms, facilitated by ILGAs who act as mediators and negotiators in conflicts occurring at the community level and adjudicate these according to customary laws. Government institutions were reportedly perceived to be highly un-trustworthy and corrupt,

therefore were not considered a legitimate authority by the Myanmar people. This was reported to be particularly true for the justice system, as it is this institutions responsibility to police all other government institutions. ILGI mechanisms were found to be substituting the Myanmar government in these regards and were considered legitimate. According to theories on building peaceful states with highly ethnically diverse societies, the strength of the states institutions are a better predictor of its propensity for ethnic conflict, over and above democracy, with the stronger the institution the lower the likelihood of ethnic conflict occurring, offering a partial explanation to the continuation of Myanmar's ethnic conflicts post transition to democracy. The weakness of Myanmar's institutions can be reasonably attributed to the strategy used by the former junta government to transition to the current civilian government model and that prevented a true shift in the traditional "hardline" principles on which the junta governed. This has created a roadblock to de-centralization processes and fulfillment of the ethnic minorities demands for autonomy as was promised by the NLD in its 2015 election campaign. This theses conclusions pointed to recognizing the plurality of Myanmar's governance systems by incorporating the ILGIs into the government system as an official third-tier. The anticipated end to this mean would be stronger authority legitimacy of government institution positions. The study's data was collected via eleven qualitative interviews, eight with experts and three with civilians, over a three-month period between March and June 2019 in Yangon, Myanmar.

Stephanie Verlaan has a background in social work and recently completed her MA in Intercultural Conflict Management with the Alice Salomon University in Berlin, Germany. Her thesis discussed the role of Myanmar's customary governance institutions in the countries peace process and transition to democracy. Her professional experiences include working for the Australian state government in the disability and child protection sectors and within Samoa's disability sector. Stephanie has also been a volunteer researcher for the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research where she holds the conflict portfolio of caste discrimination in India. Her main interests include human rights, feminist approaches to foreign policy and peace-building, and transparency and accountability of governments and civil society.

7. Screening of Myanmar short films

Diana M. Tobias is chairwoman of the Myanmar-Institut e.V. and works at Goethe-Institut Myanmar. She studied Popular Music and Media at University of Paderborn focusing on music and film, and South- and Southeast Asia Studies at Humboldt-University in Berlin. In her master theses she wrote the early history of film industry in Myanmar. She is well connected to the film and cinema scene in Yangon.

Wathann Film Festival is the most important film festival in Myanmar organized by the Wathann Film Institute that supports film education and media development and promotes the independent film scene in Myanmar. The main part of Wathann Film Festival is the competition of short local or region produced artistic films. In 2020 they celebrate the 10th edition of the festival as well as 100th anniversary of Myanmar Film.

Abstracts

Panel 2: Religious and Ethnic Minorities

1. Communal Sense. We-formation and the work of community in Myanmar

While ethnic minorities in Myanmar have for a long time been a research focus, the non-indigenous urban Muslims and Hindus of Yangon have been much less adequately covered. Based on extended ethnographic research in Yangon since 2013, I argue that their dominant communal portrayal dates from the predominant way to characterize subalterns in the British empire. These policies were continued through the various regimes in postcolonial Burma and contemporary Myanmar where the category of community has retained its distinct characterization as a marker of ethno-religious others, most recently enshrined in the "Race and Religion Laws." But at what point do individuals recognize themselves and are recognized by others as a we? What I call the work of community needs to be understood as a practice of colonial governance that has become naturalized to such an extent that today, my interlocutors have internalized it, even as it constrains them. To not uncritically duplicate this emic taxonomic category, I offer communal sense as a sensitizing concept that upholds that no individual can ever entirely become defined through such categorizing acts. What I call practices of we-formation are as important: we need to pay attention to often disregarded or overlooked moments where individuals come to encounter themselves as individual human beings, co-existing with others as well as intersubjectively sharing experiences. There, they become a we that is situational, contextual and non-dependent upon communal identity.

Prof Dr Judith Beyer is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Konstanz. Her research focuses on the anthropology of law, the anthropology of the state, and theories of sociality and social order. Her current thematic interests are: the concept of community, practices of traditionalization, common sense, statelessness and ethnomethodology.

2. The Shan – Narratives and Nationalism

The asymmetrical relationship between the central state in Myanmar and the Shan state accounted not only for a dichotomy of competing identities – ethnic, regional, cultural, national – but also for different narratives and interpretations of what constitutes "shanness", depending on the state of relations between them, and drawing symbols and narratives that create a sense of belonging out of identification and recognition. The case of the Shan is more complex than the idea that nationalism and an essentialist idea of ethnicity are a corollary of liberation from colonialism and a response to the new order after the establishment of the central state in Myanmar, but rather that nationalism and ethnical discourses are a reciprocal interplay between reactions to external changes and challenges on the one hand, and internal dynamics and tools on the other that require the recourse to nationalist rhetorics. This paper aims to interrogate how nationalist and ethnicity-based narratives and symbols of identification influence policy-making and implementation in Myanmar. The link between nationalism, its tensions and national identity may provide new insights into the role of politics in identifying the Shan state in the nation-building process.

Phuong Le Trong is a Lecturer at the Dept. of Southeast Asian Studies, Institute of Oriental and Asian Studies (IOA), University of Bonn.

3. Interfaith dialogue between (ethno-)religious communities, NGOs and the state in Myanmar

Within my doctoral project currently titled Harmonious Coexistence? Interfaith dialogue between (ethno-)religious communities, NGOs and the state in Myanmar, I aim to investigate the interplay between religion, ethnicity and coexistence in multi-religious and multi-ethnic Myanmar within the field of interfaith dialogue. In response to the discrimination of Muslim and Hindu populations in Myanmar, which has also reached Western public discourses (see Beyer 2020; Galache 2020; Crouch 2016), the Burmese state as well as international organizations and local non-governmental organizations postulate interfaith dialogue as an avenue towards conflict resolution and as conflict-prevention mechanism.

The public state discourse on interfaith, which is often implemented top-down and with support of large organizations such as the United Nations, will be examined through an anthropological approach. In addition, different local ideas and practices of interfaith are to be made visible by examining smaller NGOs, activist groups and initiatives by individuals (bottom-up). Theoretically, the work will follow up on the work of legal anthropologist Laura Nader (1990) and her concept of 'harmony ideology' as well as on Judith Beyer's (2020) research on pervasiveness of ethno-religious 'communities' in Myanmar in order to critically examine the parallelization between interfaith, dialogue and harmony.

In continuation of this theoretical work, my own hypothesis is that interfaith dialogue in Myanmar can be studied as a particularly prominent example of 'harmony ideology' and, depending on the context and group of actors, can be interpreted both as a 'tool of governance' (state) and as a 'weapon of the weak' (grassroot activists / minorities) (see Scott 1985; Beyer & Girke 2019).

Sarah Riebel is a doctoral candidate at the working group Social and Political Anthropology of Prof Dr Judith Beyer. She studied sociology and history (B.A.) at the University of Konstanz as well as at the University of Oslo and has subsequently earned her master's degree at the University of Konstanz in social and cultural anthropology and sociology (M.A.).

4. The Internal Structure of the Verb Complex Across the Kachin Languages

The Kachin Linguistic Area (cf. MÜLLER 2016, 2018) in and around Northern Myanmar comprises of the languages of the peoples who identify culturally and linguistically as "Kachin". Depending on the definition, they include between 5 and 8 languages in 4 distinct branches of the Tibeto-Burman language family (Jinghpaw, Zaiwa, Lhaovo, Lacid, Ngochang, Rawang, Lisu, Bola). Many of their linguistic features that were not inherited from Proto-Tibeto-Burman are shared due to the long-standing contact and multilingualism of their speakers. Apart from loanwords, the Kachin languages also share similar phonological systems and many parallel syntactic structures.

This study concentrates on the borrowability of another system with high variability: the internal structure of the verbal complex — the order and function of the elements that can constitute the predicate in a sentence — including verbs, negation, tense/aspect markers, politeness, certain adverbial particles such as 'still' or 'anymore', etc. I will demonstrate that there is indeed a degree of convergence between the verb complexes across the Kachin languages: another piece of evidence to help us understand language contact in general, and in Northern Myanmar in particular. To this end, I also include some influential non-Kachin languages like Burmese, Shan, Khamti, and Wa in this comparison.

André Müller is a doctoral candidate and researcher at the Department of Comparative Language Science, University of Zurich.

5. The impact of COVID-19 on the vulnerable groups in Northern Rakhine State

Rakhine State is the most vulnerable and poorest state in Myanmar which is situated in the tri-border country including India, Bangladesh and Myanmar. For the past few decades, it has engaged with the episodic protracted subnational conflicts. In 2012, the epidemic communal violence has outbreak that leads to the bloody and brutal incidents, continued with violent unrest in 2017 against the unrecognized citizenships. The consequences of these incidents have brought mass displacement, dozens of dead and prolonged tensions within the communities between Buddhists and Muslims. Armed conflicts between the Arakan Army (AA) and Tatmadaw have also intensively erupted in the contemporary landscape of conflict that arise serious humanitarian crisis . In addition, in May 2020, Rakhine State is also affected by global pandemic called the COVID-19. It is important to note that the most vulnerable communities in Northern Rakhine State, especially the Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) communities have seriously encountered the additional conflicts and threats. This paper aims to provide preliminary analysis of conflicts in Northern Rakhine State during the pandemic crisis. It analyses the tensions through two types of conflicts, namely the vertical conflict and horizontal conflict. This paper collects data mainly from secondary sources including policy briefs, reports, articles and newspapers from both government and non-government sources. The findings suggest that there are at least three existing and potential vertical conflicts identified during the crisis, namely: intensive fighting between Myanmar army and ethnic armed groups; increase of human rights abuse; and insufficient health protection for vulnerable communities. In addition, the paper also maps out potential horizontal conflict among conflict-affected communities especially those who were displaced to the camps and the coming of illegal migrants who tested to be positive to the Northern Rakhine State. It concludes that the on-going fight as part of the vertical conflicts in NRS has more profound impacts with the spread of corona virus crisis in the region. The COVID-19 crisis also opened more space for potential horizontal tensions among refugees in the camps as well as positive cases brought by returnees from abroad to NRS.

Abellia Anggi Wardani is a PhD candidate at the School of Humanities, Tilburg University, the Netherlands. She is Research Advisor / Program Coordinator in the Research and Advocacy Department at the Center for Social Integrity (CSI), Yangon. She oversees research projects especially on topics related to livelihoods and post-conflict society. Apart from her current role, she is also affiliated with Universitas Indonesia, Jakarta as lecturer in the Faculty of Humanities. She previously worked in a Geneva-based organization focusing on mediation for peace for almost 4 years where she assisted projects on promoting dialogue and mediation in conflict-prone regions in Indonesia.

Abellia Anggi Wardani holds two bachelor's degrees from Universitas Indonesia, Jakarta in the Faculty of Humanities and from Université d'Angers, France in the Faculty of Social Sciences. She received her first class honours Master's degree from Tilburg University, The Netherlands majoring Management of Cultural Diversity with research on the community formation among diverse communities in slum area in Jakarta. In 2016, she started her PhD program in culture studies at the same university. Her research project aims to unveil the roles of traditional markets and economic exchanges among segregated communities affected by ethno-religious communal conflict in the Eastern part of Indonesia. Her research interest ranges from livelihoods, traditional market, post-conflict society, economic exchange during conflicts, marginalized community, community formation, and ethno-religious conflicts. During her four-year PhD training, she has presented papers relevant to her research in Lebanon, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Australia, The Netherlands, Indonesia, among others.

Maw Thoe Myar is Program Officer in the Research and Advocacy Department at the Center for Social Integrity (CSI), Yangon, Myanmar. Her current work is to conducting researches and writing the policy brief paper which is based on the current contexts of Myanmar. Her current research interest is about social cohesion and peace. Her prior experience was a youth activist that led a youth organization to promote diversity and peacebuilding.

She was studying a Master of Arts in Social Science at Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai Thailand. She has conducted her master thesis in Karenni State, Myanmar which is about "the IDPs' right to access the land and human security". She also has experience to do a research about "women, land and migration in Karenni State" that was funded by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UNFAO). Moreover, she has attended the international conference to proceed and present her master thesis at Mae Fah Lung University, Chiang Rai, Thailand.

6. Understanding the Rohingya Refugee 'Crisis' in Myanmar: The Individual, the State and the International System

Despite a recent increase in research on the political and international nature of forced migration, theories and concepts of International Relations (IR) are rarely used to understand the politics of forced migration. More specifically, the three levels of analysis of IR- the individual, the state and the international system- are seldom used as an analytical framework to present a comprehensive analysis of refugee 'crises'. Drawing on the secondary literature, this paper attempts to understand the Rohingya refugee 'crisis' in Myanmar by employing the three levels of analysis. At the individual level, this paper explores Myanmar's most influential decision-makers and how their military backgrounds prompt forceful solutions in the increasingly securitized Rohingya refugee issue. At the state level, this paper examines how the Myanmar governments' official exclusion policy towards the Rohingyas has remained the same, while the responses to the repatriation of Rohingya refugees have varied widely over time. At the international system level, Myanmar uses its geo-strategic potentialities and resources as leverage to balance the interests of the global and regional powers, discusses the Rohingya issue with Bangladesh (the largest host to Rohingya refugees) bilaterally, and avoids multilateral negotiations, including with the international humanitarian agencies.

Brief biographical information

Prof Md. Matiul Hoque Masud is an Assistant Professor in the Department of International Relations, University of Chittagong, Bangladesh. He studied International Relations at his Bachelor and Master's levels. Currently, as an Erasmus Mundus Scholarship recipient, he is pursuing the European Master in Migration and Intercultural Relations (EMMIR) at the University of Oldenburg, Germany. He presented papers at three international conferences, including the International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion in Europe (IMISCOE) Spring Conference 2020; and the EMMIR- the African Centre for Migration and Society (ACMS) Conference 2019. His research articles are forthcoming in two international peer-reviewed journals.

7. Impasse on the Lower Salween/Thanlwin: is it resolvable?

The Salween is the largest undammed major river basin in SE Asia. It originates in Tibet (PRC), enters into Burma/Myanmar for 300 km, then comprises the international border between Thailand and Myanmar for another 160 km; at which point it re-enters Myanmar and flows another 400 km before debouching into the Gulf of Martaban, below Mawlamyine.

For most of its course and catchment throughout Myanmar, the Salween Basin is primarily inhabited by non-ethnic-Burmese (i.e., "Bamar") minority peoples; including the Shan, the Kayin (Karen), the Karenni, and the Mon; of which the first three have been in intermittent armed uprisings against the central Myanmar government since the close of the colonial era. Aspects of these conflicts could be described as "genocidal"; and forced removals of ethnic minority communities from prospective reservoir inundation zones have already created some 50,000 or more internally- or externally-displaced political refugees. There exists fierce resistance by Myanmar's ethnic minority communities to any large-scale hydropower development anywhere in the Salween Basin and to inter-basin transfer schemes primarily benefiting Thailand. Separatist-leaning factions within Kayin

(Karen) State have recently promulgated the Salween Peace Park (SPP): encompassing some 5,500 km². Elaborated here is a “grand bargain” —of which serious downsides may be entailed— to potentially implement the SPP.

Prof Dr Alan Potkin originally trained as limnologist specializing in tropical rivers and I hold a doctorate in environmental planning (Ph. D., 1989) from U. Calif., Berkeley. His focus has always been on media applications in cultural and ecological conservation and on the evolving interactive visualization toolbox for strengthening impact assessment, public participation, and post-facto evaluation. He was based in Vientiane from 1995 through 2002 and founded the Digital Conservation Facility, Laos (DCFL): affiliated since 2003 with both the Center for Southeast Asian Studies at Northern Illinois U. (NIU) and the NIU Center for Burma Studies. His ongoing research has largely been on the politicized aesthetics of waterfalls hydropower in Lao, Cambodia, and Sri Lanka; on the 12,000 MW Myitsone cascade project on the Ayeyarwadi headwaters in Myanmar’s troubled Kachin State; on museums as essential to pharaonic projects; on downstream learning —broadly defined— from actual outcomes of both proposed and implemented development schemes within the Mekong and other South and Southeast Asian river systems; and most recently, on energy and inter-basin transfer schemes proposed for the Nujiang/Salween/Thanlwin.

8. Giving a Voice to Their Own Communities

Since the “transition period”, a greater number of artists in Myanmar —either from the Center or from the periphery— have been engaged more openly and socially than before with their audiences, in giving a voice to their own communities for those suffering from the on-going conflicts along the periphery: notably in Kachin, Karen (Kayin), and Rakhine States. Their new work —in traditional media: painting, sculpture, photography— or more recently, in video or “performance art” — plays an essential role for these heretofore-silent witnesses from within the conflict zones. This paper will focus on how artists from these borderlands and the art they produced recently reflect not only their own minorities but also lend a new voice from what had been the far margins of the Yangon art scene. Through their art we will analyze how they are both reflecting and creating social change from outside the cultural and political center.

Catherine Raymond holds a Ph. D. (Art and Archaeology) in Indian and Southeast Asian studies from La Sorbonne (Université de Paris III). and a DREA (equivalent to an M.A.) in Burmese from Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, Paris, where she studied under Professor Denise Bernot. She is Professor of South and Southeast Asian Art History at Northern Illinois University and is also the Director of the Center for Burma Studies where she curates the unique and extensive Burma Art Collection. Dr. Raymond’s research has largely focused on the arts of Burma/Myanmar —past and present— and more broadly their interaction with South and Southeast Asian civilization.

Guided Tour: Collaborative Exhibition on the Karenni Region

Indigenous groups were often marginalized by precolonial empires, colonial powers as well as by postcolonial nation states. Threatened by poverty and war, they often had to sell their cultural property. What can museums as keepers of collections of indigenous heritage contribute to the empowerment of indigenous communities today? Together with representatives of indigenous cultural initiatives from Myanmar’s Karenni region, a “LindenLAB” titled *Museums and Indigenous Communities: New Ways of Sharing and Working Together* sought to find possible answers to this question.

In the framework of the LAB an exhibition was curated by Olivia Musu and Patricio Doei of the Kayaw Literature and Culture Central Committee, and by Khun Vincentio Besign and Khun Myo Aung of the Kayan Literature and Culture Central Committee with assistance from the Linden-Museum’s team. Dr Georg Noack, project leader on the Linden-Museum’s side, will explain the exhibition and the details of its creation process.

Dr Georg Noack is the Linden-Museum’s South and Southeast Asia curator. He holds a PhD in Southeast Asian Studies from Humboldt University Berlin. He is doing research in Myanmar since 2001. Dr Noack curated an exhibition on Myanmar arts and crafts at the Linden-Museum in 2014 and a participative virtual exhibition on the Linden-Museum’s collections of objects from the Ifugao and Bontoc indigenous groups in the northern Philippines together with Ifugao scholar Prof Dr Leah Enkiwe Abayao, University of the Philippines. His research interests include indigenous groups in Southeast Asia and their strategies for passing on cultural knowledge and identities to future generations, southeast Asian textile and weaving tradition as well as traditional musics, oral and written literatures of Southeast Asia.

Abstracts

Panel 3: Diverse Aspects of Myanmar Society

1. **Between Shanty and Shelter - Meanings of Home in Childbirth at Myanmar's margins**

Homebirth remains a common practice in the borderlands of Myanmar with Thailand, extending – though less visibly - also to migrant communities. This presentation explores the role of home in marginalized home-birthing women's rationalities of childbirth in the borderlands. It finds that home-birthing women in the borderlands often perceive and shape the home as a place and space of self-protection in non-biomedical senses of ensuring encouragement, attentiveness and support for the struggles of a childbearing marginalized mother, and of building belonging and hope for the new-born child. Though seeking the home as a shelter from birthing environments raising diverse vulnerabilities, their arrangements of home birth also link to hospital environments and often extend aspects of the home-space towards institutional settings in the effort to build continuity of care.

The opposing strands of academic debate on homebirth as either women's resistance to disempowering birthing regimes, or as dangerous practice surging from remoteness, deprivation, and ignorance both seem to be too narrow to capture the importance of home-based birth-care within these women's life struggles, ideas about safe birth and birth-attendance. Their arrangements might be better understood as imperfect, yet use- and meaningful practices of self-protection, part of a local counter-topography of healthcare (Aung 2014).

Christiane Voßemer is a PhD Student at the University of Vienna's Department of Development Studies. She is based in Hamburg.

2. **Children drawing Yangon: Learning to see the(ir) city**

Within the framework of the 2015 "Heritage Works" project in Yangon, local children across downtown schools were asked to draw an image depicting an element of the cityscape, and answer a few prompts regarding what they liked in their urban environment. Analysis of these "postcards", for which an awards ceremony was held and which were publicly presented in City Hall, suggests that rather than tapping into an existent experiential sense of the city, the exercise much rather a) served to instill appreciation of "urban heritage" in the participants, while at the same time b) seemingly documenting to non-participants that already children appreciated the colonial buildings of the city, thus providing adding to the argumentative framework that prioritizes conservation in urban development.

Dr Felix Girke is a socio-cultural anthropologist working on southwestern Ethiopia, urban Myanmar and the Lake Constance region. He is the author of *The Wheel of Autonomy* (2018, Berghahn) and has edited four books, and is currently finishing his monograph on the politics of cultural heritage in Myanmar. He works as researcher and Asia Studies coordinator at the HTWG Konstanz - University of Applied Sciences and is a member of the editorial collective of the anthropological blog portal Allegra Lab.

3. **Managing with 'nar-lel-hmu' or mutual understanding - Medicines, Markets, Drug Shops, and Regulators in Yangon, Myanmar**

This paper explores how the Myanmar state practices the regulation of 'illegal' and 'legal' transactions of medicines, and the potential implications such practices have for global and national implementation plans to regulate and restrict medicines in Myanmar. Drawing on ethnographic research in Yangon and documentary and media analysis, our findings demonstrate how wider social, political, and structural factors in Myanmar such as the militarisation of healthcare; regulations around taxes; and the onset of neoliberal reforms influence and determine the ways in which medicines move between retailers; providers; patients; and regulators, beyond the narrative of medicine overuse. We show how the Burmese notion of 'nar lel hmu' (mutual understanding) formulates between regulatory bodies; medicine vendors; and their wider networks, permitting so called 'illegal' practices to become accepted public secrets that are integral to the healthcare provision in this context. These findings suggest that the currently growing action against the 'illegal' - such as jail sentences for vendors selling so called 'illegal' medicines, or confiscation and burning of locally unregistered medicines - combined with the global call to reduce medicine use, may exacerbate pressures on such people. These people include individual health providers; patient/ clients; and street-level

administrators, who are often already struggling to cope under a precarious healthcare system. 'Nar lel hmu' acts as one coping mechanism, a means to mutually care for one another while enabling each actor to continue performing one's duties whether this involves selling medicines or on the contrary, regulating the sales of such medicines.

Yuzana Khina Zaw is a PhD Candidate at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. My current research interests are informed by various disciplines including anthropology, development studies, gender studies, Burma studies, and global health. My work is based in Yangon, Myanmar and adopts anthropologically informed research methods to explore the role of healthcare providers; pharmaceutical markets; the interrelations between labour and health, in antimicrobial use and distribution.

4. Gender, Nationalism and Zat Pwe

In my research I use the popular performance art zat pwe as a tool to examine the effects of social discourses. Zat pwe is a medium that is produced, used and enjoyed by a majority of bama people. Nevertheless, it is influenced by an educational elite, a minority, that itself does not take part in zat pwe.

In my presentation I will speak about gender roles. The discourse on nationalism has created its own specific gender roles. In this discourse women and men are assigned different responsibilities in the nation. Women are regarded as the guardians of tradition while men have a more fluent role of connecting the nation to the outside. This nationalised concept of gender roles is connected to a specific concept of culture which also belongs to the discourse of nationalism. In zat pwe these different concepts come together and reveal discrepancies between elite discourses and majority discourses. I will present which gender roles I could observe among the zat troupe members behind the stage, which gender roles were presented on stage throughout the very different genres of zat pwe and which gender roles were described by my interview partners from the audience.

Johanna Neumann is a Ph.D. student at the Department of Asian and African Studies of Humboldt University of Berlin. She has a M.A. degree in South East Asian Studies from SOAS, London and has been doing research in and about Myanmar since 2009.

5. Becoming rebel - Performing social minority through a punk collective

The punk collective rebel community is best known for the Food Not Bombs chapter they have been running in Yangon since 2013 and for the punk rock band Rebel Riot, which is by now known on an international level. Although some of the 20 rebel community members are active on social media and therefore widely known also for their political stance, little is known about the people themselves and the idea behind the term rebel. The term rebel not only became the name of the punk collective but also describes their ideal of how to be a punk.

Over the years, the term rebel developed within the punk collective and now unites notions of philosophy, activism, business and art. Looking at the punks' individual biographies, I will show how becoming a punk was first and foremost an adoption of the Anglo-American punk that arrived in Myanmar in the 1990s. Over the years this model was adapted and nostrified with local elements. Rebel punk in Myanmar today is a unique way of living an activist life and trying to promote social change on the grassroots level.

Carolyn Hirsch is enrolled as a PhD candidate in Social and Political Anthropology at the University of Konstanz in Germany. She carried out long-term ethnographic fieldwork in urban Yangon in Myanmar, focusing on a group of punk activists who are centred around the Burmese punk band Rebel Riot. This group of punk activists named themselves rebel community and is, among other initiatives, also using music and art as tools for their activism.

6. Foreigners, Minorities, and Buddhist Cosmopolitanism at Bagan

Within a nationalist framework of interpretation, the kingdom of Bagan was the first state of the Myanmar people to extend over the territory of modern-day Myanmar. For this (and other) reasons it came to be seen as the model of the Burmese state and indeed the "origin of modern Burma". The state collapsed at the end of the 13th century, but the city that gave the kingdom its name served as a site of memory for successive Myanmar dynasties since the 16th century (as evidenced by numerous royal visits and renovations), and in the 1990s the then military government advertised the restoration of Bagan as a huge affair to raise national consciousness and unity. Simultaneously, they began to work towards the inscription of Bagan as a World Heritage Site; a project that came to fruition in 2019 with much ado in the documents underpinning the listing about the generosity of the Myanmar Buddhists who built the monuments at Bagan.

But what this nationalist approach to Bagan tends to ignore is the transnational, cosmopolitan nature of the city in its heyday. This cosmopolitanism shows in ethnonyms, languages, art and architecture, and not last in the sphere of religion, where exchanges and interactions existed with numerous regions outside the Bagan kingdom and indeed outside Myanmar. This presentation will provide an overview of the various ethno-linguistic communities found at Bagan during the 12/13th centuries, and then proceed to focus on the members of two of these communities in greater detail, namely Indians and Cambodians.

Prof Dr Tilman Frasch studied South Asian History, Indology and European History at Heidelberg University, where he gained an MA and PhD with dissertations on the early history of Myanmar (Burma). After teaching at Heidelberg University and holding research fellowships at Manchester and Singapore, he joined Manchester Metropolitan University in 2006.

- **Closing Remarks**

Dr Georg Winterberger is a social anthropologist working as an executive director of the department of social anthropology and cultural studies at the University of Zurich. His research focuses on economic anthropology, anthropology of law, and medical anthropology with a regional scope comprising Southeast Asia (especially Myanmar) and West Africa (mainly Cameroon). He currently researches on livelihood strategies in Mon State, Myanmar.