

SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES

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<Book Review>

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Al Khanif and Khoo Ying Hooi, eds. *Marginalisation and Human Rights in Southeast Asia*. New York: Routledge, 2023.

Southeast Asian Studies, Vol. 12, No. 2, August 2023, pp. 380-384.

How to Cite: Maulana Amrullah. Review of *Marginalisation and Human Rights in Southeast Asia* edited by Al Khanif and Khoo Ying Hooi. *Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 2, August 2023, pp. 380-384. DOI: 10.20495/seas.12.2_380.

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tory to provide us with clues. And this, for me, is the last of his methodological gems, where he suggests, “Rather than looking for the big footprint of power on the routes, designed in the form of an aircraft carrier, perhaps it is better to seek out the small” in the

old inscriptions—there are literally thousands of them—that the Chinese have left across the width and breadth of the Malay world, in temples, caves, and on posts, often in the middle of nowhere. They chronicle the passing of the Chinese historically, all of them traveling the routes. (pp. 387–388)

Tagliacozzo suggests that to appreciate this vast maritime world, we must do away with the blinders that fossilized disciplines have imposed on us. Instead of national geobodies, we should focus on the oceans, where there is that timeless flow of commodities, ideas, and peoples that national borders cannot stop. As he put it in a podcast interview:

[I]t is more interesting to watch this movement from the sea because it gives us much more an idea of the fluidity and movement of history, rather than the more stationary ideas of having people bounded by the nation-state and the region. (Streckert 2022)

This is an excellent, extraordinarily superb, and fun book to read.

Patricio N. Abinales

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- Streckert, Joe. 2022. 232 Navigating the Asian Maritime World with Eric Tagliacozzo on Apple Podcasts. *Weird History Podcast*. July 11. <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/232-navigating-the-asian-maritime-world-with/id934222884?i=1000569576402>, accessed March 9, 2023.

Marginalisation and Human Rights in Southeast Asia

AL KHANIF and KHOO YING HOOI, eds.

New York: Routledge, 2023.

The topic of human rights for marginalized people in Southeast Asia is gaining more exposure in contemporary discourse. *Marginalisation and Human Rights in Southeast Asia*, edited by Al Khanif and Khoo Ying Hooi, critically examines the status of marginalized groups in Southeast Asia and the persistent violation of their human rights. The importance of the book lies in its ability to illuminate the current situation of marginalized groups and highlight the challenges they face in their pursuit of equal treatment and protection under the law. The book is a collection of case studies categorized primarily into two parts: regional and institutional settings; and country context

and issues-based cases. These case studies provide a comprehensive overview of the complex and diverse challenges marginalized groups face in Southeast Asia from the perspective of both regional and national contexts. The contributors have done an excellent job depicting various human rights issues and delivering policy recommendations essential to ameliorating them. *Marginalisation and Human Rights in Southeast Asia* is a must-read for anyone interested in understanding the current situation of human rights in the region and the practical solutions that can be implemented to improve it.

There are three hinges of argument connecting all the cases. First, marginalization is considered a significant factor leading to social exclusion, which has the potential to harm affected individuals or groups. Second, Southeast Asian governments have failed to address the issue and even systematically contributed to the marginalization process. Third, there are social structures that disregard principles of non-discrimination and fail to value cultural diversity and plurality.

The book's contributors extensively criticize the efforts made by ASEAN and its member states in addressing the human rights issues faced by marginalized groups. Drawing on a wealth of empirical evidence, they identify institutional constraints within ASEAN and highlight the lack of effective implementation by Southeast Asian governments. In response, the contributors collectively call for change and offer a range of policy recommendations.

These recommendations include a strong commitment to implementing plans of action at both the regional and national levels, a more liberal approach to human rights implementation, and greater awareness-raising efforts toward marginalized groups. The contributors argue that these changes are necessary to address the ongoing human rights abuses experienced by marginalized communities in the region.

The volume features chapters that emphasize statelessness as a principal subject. In Chapter 2, Su Yin Htun addresses the ineffectiveness of ASEAN in providing adequate assistance to stateless people, particularly refugees, due to several obstacles such as discriminatory laws and security concerns. She proposes solutions such as naturalization, enhancing ASEAN cooperation, and assisting stateless people to obtain legal citizenship by fostering collaboration among ASEAN countries. In Chapter 8, Lidya Christin Sinaga describes the challenges in obtaining legal citizenship encountered by Chinese people who have resided in Brunei for generations. Brunei's national law fundamentally prevents such people from acquiring citizenship, thereby limiting their access to several welfare benefits, passports, properties, worship buildings, and other basic rights that permanent citizens possess.

The next prevalent theme discussed is the issue of refugees, particularly the Rohingya crisis. In Chapter 5, Satria Rizaldi Alchatib analyzes the partnership between the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and regional institutions in Southeast Asia (ASEAN) and South Asia (SAARC) in accommodating the Rohingya. He also emphasizes the constraints faced by these institutions not only in advocating human rights but also in facilitating temporary settlement and

voluntary repatriation. Chapter 10 delves deeper into Thailand's stance on the Rohingya refugee crisis. Bhanubhatra Jittiang describes how the Thai government regards the issue as a national security concern, despite the Rohingya's intention to simply pass through Thailand en route to Muslim-majority countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia. Thailand has refused to protect and accommodate the Rohingya due to past negative experiences hosting Indochinese refugees, security concerns, and public disapproval. These practices have contributed to the displacement and criminalization of Rohingya refugees in Thailand, resulting in their involvement in the growing trafficking network.

Another topic discussed in the book is the challenges faced by minority groups in Southeast Asia. In Chapter 6, Al Khanif focuses on the difficulties encountered by religious minorities in Indonesia and the impact of these challenges on the country's development policies. He highlights the rise of religious fundamentalism, discriminatory regulations, and the unclear segregation of interreligious public spheres as contributing factors to religious conflict in Indonesia. Similarly, in Chapter 7, Mohor Chakraborty discusses the challenges faced by the Moro community in the Philippines in their quest for self-determination. He examines the community's struggle for autonomy and the policy responses they have received over the years. In Chapter 9, Rejinel Valencia describes the negative portrayal of Muslims in the Philippine media, and how this contributes to their marginalization. She argues that the media's racist practices perpetuate this marginalization, and thus it is essential to decolonize the local media in order to address the ongoing conflict in the region.

The remaining chapters discuss other marginalized groups, including migrant workers, disabled persons, children, and academics. In Chapter 3, Ömer Faruk Çingir explores the impact of domestic policies on the position of migrant workers in Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore during the COVID-19 pandemic. He claims that these policies led to violations of the human rights of migrant workers. Therefore, it is necessary to implement more fair and humane policies to protect them. In Chapter 4, Muhamad Nadhir Abdul Nasir discusses the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the promotion of a human rights model for the inclusion of persons with impairments and/or chronic illnesses in Southeast Asia. He identifies challenges such as insufficient political will, socioeconomic gaps, and lack of necessary data. He stresses the importance of addressing these challenges in order to fully realize the rights and inclusion of disabled persons in the region.

In Chapter 11, Archill Niña Faller-Capistrano highlights the issues faced by children in the Philippines, including the contrast between public progress on child rights and the reality of fluid abuse and violence within the private sphere. She emphasizes more fluid mechanisms for upholding children's rights and compares legal-structural compliance with children's rights governance to alternative reports from civil society organizations. Finally, in Chapter 12, Herlambang Perdana Wiratraman discusses the effects of Indonesian politics on academic freedom and the academics

themselves. He explains how the institutionalization of social exclusion based on factors such as sexual orientation, religion, political views, and race is a result of bureaucratization and excessive politicization on campuses. He strongly suggests the promotion of academic freedom and autonomy to create a more inclusive and democratic academic environment in Indonesia.

Marginalisation and Human Rights in Southeast Asia presents an extensive overview of the current state of human rights of marginalized groups in Southeast Asia. Despite its richness of content, the book is not without notable shortcomings. First, its objectives are inconsistent. The primary goal of the volume is not to make a generalized claim on the negative trend of structured human rights violations toward marginalized groups through regional analysis. Rather, “its primary aim is to illustrate some key themes and issues within this nexus but *not* to provide comprehensive regional analysis” (p. 6). However, certain chapters in the first part of the book seem to contradict this intention.

In Chapter 3, Çingir tends to make generalized claims about migrant workers in Southeast Asia despite focusing on only three countries: Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore. For example, he states, “migrant workers in Southeast Asia are also among its most vulnerable and marginalised population” (p. 31) and “in Southeast Asia, human rights are often viewed as a secondary concern, a trend clearly observed in the international agreements to which its states are party” (p. 39). Similarly, in Chapter 4, Nasir discusses the issue of disabled persons through a regional analysis. He critiques the flaws in ASEAN regional frameworks on disabled persons and offers his own recommendations. Some of his analyses include the following: “At the regional level, there must be a proper structure for the ASEAN secretariat to better monitor and hold member states accountable for their respective implementation of the masterplan” (p. 59) and “All member states can and should use ASEAN as a collective bargaining tool to achieve several target programmes of the ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025” (p. 60).

Another issue relates to the book’s style and structure. Although the volume is the product of a conference and the selection of chapters may have been challenging due to the limited papers presented at the conference, the book’s structure is excessively repetitive and overly specific in its depiction of the current human rights situation of marginalized groups in Southeast Asia. Most of the contributors overly repeat their common arguments about the severity of human rights violations of marginalized groups and how ASEAN and its member states are constrained in properly resolving the issue.

While at first glance the book’s division of chapters based on regional and institutional approaches with national and issue-based contexts appears logical, some chapters feel disconnected. In other words, while some chapters share a common thread, they do not effectively communicate with each other; as a result, each chapter seems to stand on its own. Additionally, some chapters are easily understood, while others are more complicated, making the book’s readability inconsistent.

In terms of balance, the book intends to criticize the efforts made by ASEAN and its member states to resolve the human rights issue of marginalized groups. However, the contributors fail to consider that resolving human rights issues is a long process that requires years, and that ASEAN and its member states are still young compared to the United States and European countries, which have been dealing with such issues for hundreds of years. While ASEAN and its member states lack proper implementation, they have at least put the issue on the table for discussion. Furthermore, most of the contributors clearly express strong support for liberal democratic values while deeply criticizing the more conservative “ASEAN values,” which they say form the core constraint. However, they do not consider how the proponents of such values have at least made the discussion a priority despite ASEAN’s incapacity to forcefully ask its member states to implement some mechanisms related to marginalized groups.

Overall, *Marginalisation and Human Rights in Southeast Asia* provides a critical examination of the human rights violations faced by marginalized groups in Southeast Asia. The book features case studies that offer a comprehensive overview of the complex and diverse challenges faced by marginalized groups in the region. The contributors offer policy recommendations that include greater awareness-raising efforts, a more liberal approach to human rights implementation, and a strong commitment to implementing plans of action at both the regional and national levels. The book highlights the need for change in addressing the ongoing human rights abuses experienced by marginalized communities in the region. It discusses the issues of statelessness, refugees, minority groups, migrant workers, disabled persons, children, and academics. For those interested in comprehending the present state of human rights in Southeast Asia and seeking feasible remedies to enhance them, the book is an essential read.

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Warring Visions: Photography and Vietnam

THY PHU

Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2022.

At long last, a book-length study of Vietnamese multi-genre photography! Vietnam commanded the world’s attention with its spectacle of violence and destruction during its war years. Viewers then, who are now well advanced in years, were bombarded with photographs of bodies writhing in pain. The photos initially helped in generating international support for the cessation of disastrous military intervention (mainly American, which is why the war is called the American War by