

## **Panel Proposal**

European Association for Southeast Asian Studies (EuroSEAS)  
University of Oxford  
16-18 August 2017

### **State Islamic Higher Education and the Public Sphere in Indonesia**

The constitution of modern nation states has changed the composition and impact of Muslim public spheres on the state and on policy processes through the appearance of new social actors, amongst others intellectuals (Eisenstadt 2002). This is also true for post-colonial Indonesia, where Muslim academics and intellectuals have been highly present and influential in public debates about issues of national concern.

This panel focuses on the locus of Indonesia's leading Muslim intelligentsia – the state system of Islamic higher education (Perguruan Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri, PTAIN) – and its relation to the public sphere. The PTAIN curricula are committed to teaching religious tolerance and pluralism and PTAIN representatives mostly stand out as key players in publicly defending these values. This is striking, as in the post-9/11 era the West tends to distrust organizations of Islamic education from kindergartens to universities, and suspects them to socialize for regressive attitudes in hidden spheres.

The papers based in such diverse disciplines as anthropology, religious studies, and political science share an emphasis on the strong embeddedness of the PTAIN within the public sphere, and individually present how it is involved in national discourses on Islam, religious pluralism, national identity, and democracy. The panel shows how Indonesian state Islamic higher education is shaped by these discourses and how in itself shapes them. The panel also takes up a comparative perspective and reveals the distinctiveness of the high degree of pro-democratic engagement of the PTAIN through contrasting it with state organizations of Islamic higher education in other Muslim-majority democracies. The panel's aim is to contribute to discussions on the public sphere, Muslim agency, and Muslim academia in Indonesia and in the wider Muslim world.

**Convener**

**Amanda tho Seeth, M.A.: Amanda.tho.Seeth@gmx.de**

Ph.D. Student, Institute of Political Science, Philipps-University Marburg/Germany

**Discussant**

**Prof. Mirjam Künkler**

Political Scientist at the Lichtenberg Kolleg – The Göttingen Institute for Advanced Study, University of Göttingen/Germany

**Presenter 1**

**Prof. Azyumardi Azra**

Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta/Indonesia

Historian, public intellectual and former Rector of Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta

“Indonesian State Islamic Higher Education and the Democratic Public Sphere: Tasks, Achievements, and Challenges”

**Presenter 2**

**Prof. Ronald Lukens-Bull**

Professor of Anthropology and Religious Studies, University of North Florida/USA

“State Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia: Continuity and Conflict”

**Presenter 3**

**Prof. Florian Pohl**

Professor of Religion at Emory University, Atlanta/USA

“Comparative Religious Studies within the PTAIN System and its Relation to the Public Debate on National Identity, Pancasila, and Religious Pluralism”

**Presenter 4**

**Amanda tho Seeth, M.A.**

“A Comparative View on State Islamic Higher Education and Democratization in the Muslim World and the Particularity of pro-democratic Civic Engagement at UIN Jakarta during Transition”