

2022 AAS-in-Asia Symposium

Cultivating the Humanities and Social Sciences:  
Addressing the Multiple Marginalities of South and Southeast Asia

8-10 December 2022  
UNISERV, Chiang Mai University, Thailand

Roundtable Session

**“Current Trends in East Timor Studies”**

By  
**National University of Timor-Leste (UNTL)**

Since Timor-Leste’s independence in 2002, academic research on Southeast Asia’s youngest country flourished in Timor-Leste itself and around the world. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the country’s independence, and it is worth reviewing the exciting developments and challenges in the field of East Timorese Studies over the past two decades. Namely, Timor-Leste’s colonial pasts under Portugal and Indonesia have overshadowed how we know what we know about Timor-Leste, therefore critically engaging the post-colonial/post-conflict situations and external knowledge production is an important task for all Timorese scholars. The speakers invited for this roundtable will discuss issues related to recent developments in the field. Bernardo Leto and Martinho Martins will share their insights into Timor-Leste’s roadmap for higher education. Martinho will also examine the processes and the state of democratization in the country. Kisho Tsuchiya will analyze the trends and gaps in history writings while engaging both the speakers and the audience in questioning the international division of labor in the context of historical knowledge production. In light of this, Mica Barreto Soares will discuss Timorese people’s role in knowledge production. Finally, Maria Madeira, an academic and artist, will take this discussion a step further by looking through the lenses of local art and culture that help shape the growing field of Timor Leste Studies.

### **Speakers**

**Bernardo Idalina Leto** teaches at the Faculty of Social Science, Department of International Relations of the National University of Timor-Leste (UNTL). He obtained masters’ degrees in Peace and Conflict Studies from Gadjah Mada University in Indonesia in 2009.

**Martinho Martins** is a lecturer in Political Science at UNTL. He received a masters’ degree in the same discipline from Aveiro University in Portugal. His research interest includes post-independence Timor Leste foreign policy, gender issues, democratization as well as the electoral system in East Timor.

**Laurentina ‘Mica’ Barreto Soares** teaches international relations at the Department of International Relations of the National University of Timor-Leste (UNTL). Mica earned her PhD at the Swinburne University of Technology, Australia. Her research focuses on China-Timor-Leste relations. She obtained her masters’ degrees in Peace Studies from Notre Dame University in USA in 2003 and International Development Studies from Ohio University in USA in 2011.

**Kisho Tsuchiya** is an assistant professor in the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University. He served the United Nations' Electoral Support Team in Timor-Leste, then earned M.A. in Southeast Asian Studies and PhD in History both from the National University of Singapore. His book, *Emplacing East Timor: The Cycle of Regime Change and Knowledge Production, the 1850s-1999* is expected to be published by the University of Hawaii Press in January 2024.

**Maria Madeira** was born in the village of Gleno in the Ermera region of Timor-Leste. The Portuguese Air Force evacuated her from Timor in 1976 during the Indonesian invasion. She spent most of the following eight years in a refugee camp run by the Red Cross on the outskirts of Lisbon in Portugal. She migrated with her family to Australia in August 1983 and she now holds a postgraduate (Doctor of Philosophy – Art) from Curtin University in Australia. Maria has produced artwork in a wide range of media, from painting to sculpture, drawing, mixed media collage and installation work.