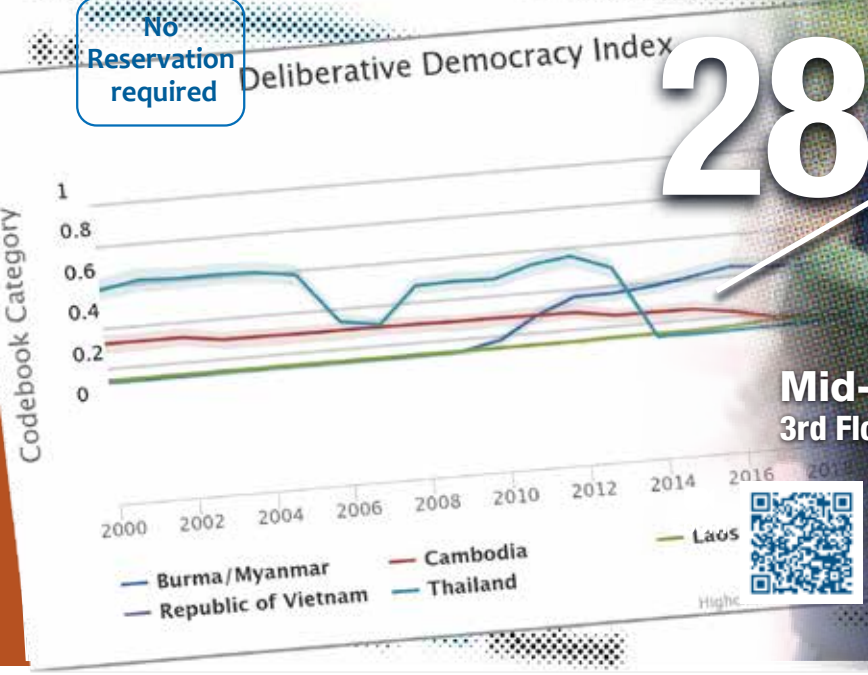
An Authoritarian Security Community in Mainland Southeast Asia

Regional Dynamics in an Actor-Centred Theory of Transnational Authoritarianism

No Reservation required



28 (Thu) November

13:30-15:00 (Japan Time)

Mid-sized Meeting Room (No.332)
3rd Floor, Inamori Center, CSEAS, Kyoto University

Format: Hybrid
For Zoom participants, please join from the following link
https://kyoto-u-edu.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJApdeCprzsoGtEW3BTJLfBdYf9J_-RnRdrJ

This lecture presents a novel actor-centred theory of transnational authoritarianism that puts the nexus between security and authoritarianism at the heart of its explanation of how and why neighbouring states collude to preserve their authoritarian regimes. It proposes the "authoritarian security community", in which regionally proximate states of similar power and status form a "no war" community, allowing their security services to actively cooperate in transnational repression. These relations are underpinned by personal networks for both regime security and kleptocratic purposes. In total, the retooled relationships between networks of security actors leverage the authoritarian dividends of an autocratic peace, providing assurance of reduced space for opponents, less prospect of future accountability and more opportunities for material gain. I demonstrate the argument based on the case of the Mekong sub-region of Southeast Asia. Empirically, the case shows that attributing democratic deconsolidation or autocratic regression in mainland Southeast Asia to the rise of China risks overlooking important local, transnational dynamics that foster authoritarianism.

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Gregory Raymond is a senior lecturer at the Australian National University (ANU) researching Southeast Asian defence, politics and foreign relations, with a focus on Thailand and the Mekong states. His current research interests are transnational authoritarianism and kleptocratic networks in the Mekong sub-region and southern China. Greg also convenes the ASEAN Australia Defence Postgraduate Scholarship Program and is currently President of the Association of Mainland Southeast Asian Scholars (AMSEAS). He is the author of *Thai Military Power: A Culture of Strategic Accommodation* (NIAS Press 2018) and the lead author of *The United States-Thai Alliance: History, Memory and Current Developments* (Routledge, 2021). He has also published widely in leading journals including *Contemporary Southeast Asia, Southeast Asia Research*, *Journal of Contemporary China* and *Contemporary Security Policy* (forthcoming). Before becoming an academic, Greg worked for the Australian government in the strategic and international policy areas of the Department of Defence.