

PANEL

Epistemic Violence, Testimonial Injustice, and Ecocide in Contemporary Myanmar: Insights from the Philippines

Convener

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Panel Description

This panel brings together three critical inquiries into the layered forms of violence shaping contemporary Myanmar, with particular attention to the Rohingya crisis and the post-2021 military coup. Collectively, the papers interrogate how epistemic structures, embedded in nationalism, regional diplomacy, and environmental governance, produce and sustain material violence against ethnic minorities. Notably, this panel represents one of the few academic initiatives in the Philippines dedicated to Myanmar Studies, contributing to the expansion of Southeast Asian scholarship beyond dominant national frames.

The first paper examines the Rohingya conflict through the lens of epistemic violence, arguing that a blended national sentiment, rooted in Burman ethnonationalism, religious rhetoric, and postcolonial state formation, has systematically erased Rohingya identity. Drawing from Gayatri Spivak and Miranda Fricker, it demonstrates how dominant knowledge systems silence subjugated groups and normalize exclusion.

The second paper shifts the scale to regional politics, analyzing how ASEAN's principle of non-interference operates as a mechanism of testimonial injustice. By deflating Rohingya credibility within diplomatic spaces, ASEAN's institutional framework reinforces a double marginalization: the denial of both citizenship and epistemic recognition. It offers a critical rethinking of sovereignty, human rights, and regional accountability.

The third paper expands the conversation to environmental violence, conceptualizing ecocide in post-coup Myanmar as both a military strategy and an epistemic problem. Integrating political ecology and critical legal analysis, it argues that large-scale environmental destruction in ethnic minority areas is strategically obscured as "collateral damage," revealing how ecological harm becomes instrumentalized in counterinsurgency and authoritarian consolidation.

Taken together, the panel foregrounds the entanglement of knowledge, power, and violence. It advances a regional and interdisciplinary conversation on how epistemic injustice, institutional norms, and ecological destruction converge in shaping the lived realities of ethnic minorities in Southeast Asia, while positioning Philippine-based scholarship as an emerging site for critical Myanmar Studies.