

Populations and  
Precarity during  
the COVID-19  
Pandemic

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# Populations and Precarity during the COVID-19 Pandemic

*Southeast Asian Perspectives*

Edited by

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# PREFACE

The origins of this edited volume stem from a two-day online webinar series on *Managing Demographic Change in Southeast Asia: Challenges and Issues amidst the 'New Normal'*, which was held from 19–20 November 2020 and hosted by the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute.

At that time, the COVID-19 coronavirus had already spread throughout many parts of the world, and the situation declared a pandemic. It was something that many people had not experienced before, especially its wide-reaching global nature. Few communities, if any, were spared the impact of the pandemic. Within the span of a year, the pandemic not only claimed thousands of lives, but also closed international borders, disrupted air travel between countries and devastated the livelihood of countless others in societies all around the world.

The abovementioned workshop, therefore, not only provided a timely and important platform for a dialogue on the complex and multifaceted demographic issues emerging across Southeast Asia, but also connected them to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic on various communities and the lived experiences of many persons living in the region.

By 2022, however, it seems that the pandemic has been gradually receding. With increasing numbers of persons having been vaccinated against the COVID-19 coronavirus, many countries are gradually reopening with the resumption of international travel. Although there is more progress to be made in the fight against the pandemic, there has been a growing but cautious sense of hope that perhaps the worst is over. Many countries in Southeast Asia have reopened their borders with the recognition that the virus is considered “endemic” as part of a broader narrative of the “new normal” in a post-COVID-19 world.

This edited volume is, then, an important scholarly response to discussing the outcomes and potential futures that will result from such a “new normal”. Combining selected papers from the abovementioned webinar series, along with invited authors, a key theme that has emerged is the concept of precarity and its relationship with various populations throughout Southeast Asia. With the ongoing realities of social inequality and cultural diversity that many societies face, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the uncertainties that many encounter in all aspects of everyday life. Consequently, we hope that this collection will provide insightful perspectives to enable a deeper appreciation of such challenges and lead to potential efforts to overcome them.

*Kevin S.Y. Tan and Steve K.L. Chan*  
*The Editors*



## ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

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**Jason Tan** is Associate Professor in Policy, Curriculum & Leadership at the National Institute of Education. Among his latest publications is *Teacher Preparation in Singapore: A Concise Critical History* (co-authored with Yeow-Tong Chia and Alistair Chew, 2022).

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**Prapaporn Tivayanond Mongkhonvanit** is the Dean of the School of Global Studies at Thammasat University. She was a Board Member of the National Council on Social Welfare of Thailand and the Founding Director of Social Policy and Development (SPD) International Programme at Thammasat University. Prapaporn is currently leading the SDG Lab at the School of Global Studies, and is working on promoting a vital connection between localization and globalization under the SDGs. Her research and publications cover social protection & welfare, social entrepreneurship, and social policy innovation.

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