

2025 Lockard Prize Report

Committee members:

Amanda Cheong (University of British Columbia)

Helena Varkkey (University of Malaya)

Sin Yee Koh (University of Brunei Darussalam)

The MSB Studies Group is delighted to recognize **Timothy Sim** as the recipient of the 2025 Lockard Prize for his article, **“The Citizen as a Public Health Actor: Complaints as Public Engagement with *Aedes* Mosquito Control in Singapore, 1965-1985,” published in the *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* in 2024.** Timothy Sim is a PhD student in the Department of History and Philosophy of Science at Cambridge University, and is writing his dissertation on the history of dengue fever in Singapore after 1965.

Richly drawing from a wealth of sources, including ministry archives, newspaper articles, and parliamentary records, “The Citizen as a Public Health Actor” is a thrilling and enlivened chronicle of Singapore’s public health crusade against dengue fever between 1965 and 1985. By the end of this period, the Singaporean Ministry of Health successfully implemented a series of health measures and public education campaigns, becoming a global model for the political and technical control of dengue fever. Sim argues, however, that such a story should not simply be read as emblematic of the “Singapore Story”—that is, the deeply-entrenched, arguably overworked, narrative of “an enlightened, authoritarian technocracy [that] transformed a third-world country into a first-world pioneer.” Instead, Sim urges readers to recognize the role of the “public” in shaping and institutionalizing “public health.” He weaves together a historical narrative of bottom-up, versus top-down, collective efforts that were central to the consolidation of modern public health institutions in Singapore. In addition to making a significant empirical contribution to a topic that is pertinent to the region, Sim’s article also builds on interdisciplinary theories of the state and state-society relations. “Public health in Singapore,” Sim writes, “thus appears not simply as the imposition of an autonomous state’s vision onto a docile or even resistant citizenry but as a coevolution of the state and the public.”

The MSB Studies Group also recognizes **Dr. Mu’izz Abdul Khalid** with an honourable mention for the 2025 Lockard Prize for his article, **“Civic Subjecthood: The Hybridization and Reformulation of Subjecthood and Citizenship in Brunei,” published in *Critical Asian Studies* in 2024.** Dr. Khalid is currently a Fung Global Fellow at Princeton University, having earned his PhD in Southeast Asian Studies at the National University of Singapore in 2022.

Dr. Khalid’s article is a history of Brunei’s state formation from 1906 to the present day, read through a critical engagement of theories of citizenship and varieties of political membership. Khalid challenges conventional theorizing that assumes a teleological evolution from subjecthood into national citizenship, by which the two forms are mutually exclusive and antonymous to one another. Instead, he conceptualizes term “civic subjecthood” to describe the new type of political membership—“an amalgamation of subjecthood and citizenship”—that

evolved specifically out of its history of British colonial intervention. This system, argues Dr. Khalid, has roots in British colonial officials' establishment of a "dual-state apparatus," which blended elements of the modern state and traditional *negara*, in order to maintain "a façade of indigenous rule while maintaining and advancing British imperial interests." In addition to making an essential intervention into Brunei studies, "Civic Subjecthood" offers new theoretical possibilities for understanding surprising congruences between *kewarganegaraan* ("citizenship") and *kerakyatan* ("subjecthood") in monarchical regimes more broadly.