

Workshop Report

**Communities In Between:
Redefining Social Spaces in Southeast Asian Borderlands
3-4 November 2014**

Location:
Institut d'Asie Orientale (IAO), École Normale Supérieure de Lyon, France

Convener: Dr. Danielle Tan (IAO – ENS Lyon)

Organized by the Institute of East Asian Studies (IAO – ENS Lyon) and the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS)



The workshop was made possible thanks to the generous grant awarded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the logistical support provided by IAO – ENS Lyon and IIAS. The organizers and participants of the workshop, as well as the authors of the report would like to thank the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for its financial support.

Authors of the report:

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The *Communities in Between* Workshop as part of the broader *Rethinking Asian Studies Research Network*:

The three-year pilot programme (2014-2016) "Rethinking Asian Studies in a Global Context" seeks to foster new humanities-focused research, with the objective of reshaping the field of Asian Studies. In practice, this means adapting Asian Studies to an interconnected global environment built on a network of academics and practitioners from Asia, North America, Europe and Africa. Educational opportunities are created by selecting cross-disciplinary methodological questions likely to shift scholarly paradigms as they pertain to Asia.

Funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the initiative is coordinated by the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) in collaboration with numerous institutions. Within this programme, the Institute of East Asian Studies (IAO-ENS Lyon) is in charge of the Forum "Asian Spatialities 3: Across Southeast Asian Borderlands" whose ambition is to challenge the artificial boundaries dividing Asia. The first workshop, ***Communities In Between: Redefining Social Spaces in Southeast Asian Borderlands***, was held at the Institut d'Asie Orientale (IAO - Institute of East Asian Studies) in Lyon, France, on 3-4 November 2014. The workshop aimed at revisiting state-society relations through the specific perspective of borderlands, considered as products of a social and political negotiation of space. The participants highlighted the ongoing deep transformation of statehood, citizenship, sovereignty and identity formations along routes and borders across Southeast Asia. Whereas most globalization theories have put the emphasis on the dissolution of borders, this workshop sought to unravel the ways in which everyday practices of peripheral subjects intersect with central powers, thus producing heterogeneous scenarios of manoeuvring, negotiation, collaboration, and resistance. The second workshop, ***Beyond the State's Reach: Casino Spaces as Enclaves of Development or Lawlessness?***, will be held in Southeast Asia – probably at the Center for Khmer Studies (CKS), Siemp Riep Cambodia – in August 2015. It will further explore borderlands as "transitional zones" that have emerged in the wake of the encounter between local communities, new migratory circulations and the global economy. The multiplication of mega casino resorts in the region is emblematic of these new spaces created across local and global scales. This new perspective will enable fresh understanding of how the state, society and the market interact in complex ways through which technologies of regulation are developed.

The outcomes of the workshop:

The two-day workshop was organized into two parts. The first part was structured around three panels, with no less than twelve scholars from all over the world sharing and discussing their work on borderlands in Southeast Asia (cf. programme in Appendix). The second part was a roundtable where the participants, drawing on their knowledge, experience and fieldwork, brainstormed on the new contours of Southeast Asian studies. Dr. Salemink prepared (cf. his PowerPoint in Appendix) and led the discussions.

Two PhD candidates from Radboud Universiteit, Nijmegen, the Netherlands and the Graduate Institute in Geneva showed their interest in attending the workshop. We decided to subsidize their travel costs. Moreover, 15 BA and MA students from Sciences Po Lyon, following the Asian programme run by IAO – ENS Lyon, also attended the workshop as part of the seminar “Mémoires d’Indochine” organized by François Guillemot.

Dr. Danielle Tan opened the workshop by presenting the context and the objectives of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation-supported programme “Rethinking Asian Studies”. She reminded the participants of the issues at stake for Southeast Asian studies in general and this workshop in particular. In the context of the crisis in areas studies, she stressed that Southeast Asian studies are particularly in danger. In order to counter this decline, she wished to propose and develop a theoretically sophisticated area studies project which recognizes the continued importance of “geography” or “spatiality” as a “domain of theoretically and discursive difference in the era of globalization”. She proposed to keep in mind during the workshop the following question: “How can we identify new ways to link disciplines with deep area knowledge and language competence while drawing on technology to create new global sites for networking among Asian studies scholars?” She suggested that the issue of borderlands and “transitional zones” in general could be an interesting entry point to address that question, precisely because these spaces or border landscapes are vibrant sites of rapidly intensifying flows of money, goods, services, information, and people across the historical borders of nation-states and culture-language areas.

Then, Dr. Janet Sturgeon was invited to deliver the keynote speech of the workshop.

➔ **Keynote address: Dr. Janet Sturgeon, Simon Fraser University, Canada**

○ ***Sources of Legitimation for Communities in Between***

Dr. Sturgeon started her talk by questioning the concept of “communities in between”, and mentioned that borderlands communities were not only in-between nation-states but also, as showed by her own research, “between worlds” (as in “pre-modern” and “modern” world). Having spent several years doing field research along with the Akha minority in Mengsong (Yunnan, China), Dr. Sturgeon highlighted the fact that the local people of Mengsong were currently transitioning between a traditional source of legitimation to a “modern”, Han Chinese-based source of legitimation. She drew on French Philosopher Henri Lefevbre’s concepts of absolute/abstract space to describe this transition from a society shaped by traditions to a “modernized” Chinese-based one, better integrated in the national space, through the use of scientific agricultural techniques and transgressing former cultural taboos. Dr. Sturgeon also highlighted the research of one of her PhD Student, Sai Latt, working on Shan migrants in Thailand who have become one of the most vulnerable communities in Thailand since they are left without any alternative source of legitimation. While Akha people from Mengsong are becoming Chinese entrepreneurs, patriots and are

integrated in the national space, Shan migrant workers are unrooted and have become a vulnerable community.

PANEL 1 (Nov. 3rd): “STATE-FORMATION AND INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS IN THE MARGINS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA” CHAIRED BY DR JEAN MICHAUD (UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL, CANADA)

→ Dr. V. Pholsena, IAO/ National University of Singapore

- ***Social Change and State Emergence in Times of War and Revolution : Insights from a Border Region in Laos***

The presentation delivered by Dr. Pholsena was focused on the border region of Sepon (Laos) during the Indochina and Vietnam wars. After giving a brief history of the Sepon, a long-time disputed region between Laos and Vietnam, she showed that the upcoming state-making practices of the Lao PDR after 1975 have roots in the wartime revolutionary practices in the periphery, like in Sepon. According to her, the wars gave the Laotian communists the material conditions to implement state-making policies. Nevertheless, they also perpetuated pre-war local political structures (left almost in place by the French colonizer). As a conclusion, Dr. Pholsena mentioned the fact that existing political structures in Laos are at the same time the result of wartime and pre-war political cultures, and that political experience from the borderlands was later used as state-making policies at a central level.

→ Dr. M. Eilenberg, Aarhus University, Denmark

- ***Frontier Colonization: Agrairian Expansion and Militarization in the Indonesia-Malaysia Borderlands***

Dr. Eilenberg’s presentation dealt with the contemporary process of frontier colonization on the island of Borneo at the border between Indonesia and Malaysia. He described the very last developments of a process that has been going on for more than forty years, transforming a green and wild border into a huge monoculture palm oil and large-scale mining bauxite zone. He explained how Indonesia’s Kalimantan used to be an “estranged and backward frontier” which also embodies imaginaries for being a patchwork of ethnic minorities at the border with rival brother, Malaysia. Dr. Eilenberg showed how the exploitation of the borderland also echoed with a claim of gaining political sovereignty, as a way to master territory to its edges, despite foreign ownership of the companies exploiting the resources. This theme is regularly played in the Indonesian press in the name of nationalism. He concluded that his case study had some similarities with others resource-rich Southeast Asian countries and the “foreignisation” they confront with.

→ Dr. E. Roszko, Durham University; Dr. O.Salemink, University of Copenhagen

- ***The Navel of the Nation: Centering, Territorializing and Enclosing Vietnam’s Margins***

Dr. Roszko’s and Dr. Salemink’s presentation dealt with the changes of the Vietnamese discourses regarding the centre and the margins of the Vietnamese state. While Vietnam traces its origins in the lowlands, it appears that, for political reasons (including the South China sea dispute), the Vietnamese discourses tend to integrate remote islands/islets,

including the islet of Lý Sơn. Whereas this islet used to be considered as a margin, it is now represented in territorial maps as what Dr. Salemink and Dr. Roszko call “the navel of the Nation”, thus making Vietnam a “sea-oriented country” [Nước biển]. Drawing from several theoretical references as well as from their own empirical research, the presentations described how formerly marginalized people have been integrated in the national space and how the Vietnamese have become inhabitants of the sea. According to Dr. Salemink and Dr. Roszko, this outward projection of the nation involve at the same time a “decentering of the centre” and an enclosure of terrestrial and maritime commons. Through domestication and instrumentalization of islands and islanders, the former margins of Vietnam are drawn into the centre of the nation.

PANEL 2 (NOV. 4TH): FRONTIER ENCOUNTERS, EXCHANGES AND FRICTIONS CHAIRED BY DR. DANIELLE TAN (SCIENCES PO LYON-IAO, FRANCE)

→ **Dr. Caroline Grillot, Max Planck Institute, Germany**

- ***Smuggling or not Smuggling? Balancing Powers between Chinese Traders and Vietnamese Law-Enforcement Agents***

Based on her fieldwork in Móng Cái (Vietnam) border town with China, Dr. Grillot gave a presentation of the conversations and exchanges she had with local traders from the two sides. She emphasized the role of the translator for setting deals in this unpredictable environment for Chinese traders. Unable to understand Vietnamese language, they reinforce their negative perceptions of the other side whenever trust and reliance are broken, fuelled by Chinese nationalism in a context of growing tensions between the two countries. Dr. Grillot argues that in these unbalanced situations, which give Vietnamese negotiators relative power, the Chinese sellers often interpret a setback in a commercial deal as due to an unsurpassable difference of values. The smuggling of goods appears then, as a sometimes-negotiated process with local authorities, as a reverse empowering for unsecured Chinese traders. Besides highlighting Chinese narratives, this presentation showed the Chinese rise in Southeast Asia at a local level. The audience then discussed the possibility of interrogating the notion of capitalism in Asian borderlands.

→ **Dr. Kyoko Kusakabe, Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand**

- ***Working through “Exceptional” Space: a Case of Women Migrant Workers in Mae Sot, Thailand***

The presentation delivered by Dr. Kusakabe focused on the region of Mae Sot, which is located in Thailand at the Burmese border, and the social practices of women migrants. While Thailand is already implementing a legal framework to fight illegal immigration, Mae Sot border region, according to Dr. Kusakabe, constitutes an “exceptional space” since migrant women workers tend to create their own space by juggling between both sides of the border and thus trying to keep the Thai State at arm’s length. Using conclusions from empirical research in the borderlands and drawing comparisons from data she gathered among Burmese migrants in central Thailand, Dr. Kusakabe argues that women migrants in Mae Sot obtain much more room to manoeuvre, particularly regarding the education of

children (in Burmese diaspora schools) compared with the migrant population of central Thailand. Gender issues were also discussed, as the women migrant workers of Mae Sot often transgress their social norms and comply both with their productive and re-productive roles in the borderlands area.

PANEL 3 (NOV. 4TH) : RELIGIOUS-BASED MOBILIZATION BETWEEN RADICALIZATION AND TRANSNATIONALISM CHAIRED BY DR. ALEXANDRA DE MERSAN, (INALCO-CASE, PARIS)

➔ **Dr. Rémy Madinier, Centre Asie du Sud-Est, CNRS-EHESS-Seatide-IAO, France**

○ ***Southeast Asian Islam: Boundaries of an Imagined Community.***

Dr. Madinier's presentation mainly discussed the boundaries of Malay identity. He explained that despite the fact that Islam can be seen as a unifying element of Malayness, it never succeeded in establishing a homogeneous political space in Southeast Asia. After reminding the audience of the twin influences of India and China, he argued that Islam grew in concentric circles, whose harbours were the centres. Taken in the colonial conception of belonging, Southeast Asian Islam never made it into a homogeneous political space despite there used to be a consciousness of a common identity (*Bangsa Melayu*). Dr. Madinier argued that nationalism emerged from the different colonized spaces and asserted its own imagined community, as shown by the creation of Malaysia and Indonesia later on, along with the permanence of customary law (*adat*) which resulted in a crossbreed Islam. He added that the Islamist rebellions born after independences and fuelled by Middle East neo-fundamentalism never challenged nation-state structures inherited from colonization. In the post 9/11 context, Al Qaeda's inspired Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) perpetrated the Bali bombing and claimed to create a Nousantarian Islamic state. For Dr. Madinier, this assumption never came to be but was a narratives-result influenced by "clash of civilizations" rhetoric.

➔ **Dr. Alexander Horstmann, University of Copenhagen**

○ ***The Culture and Landscape of the Humanitarian Economy among the Karen (Kayin) in the Borderland of Southeast Myanmar and Northwestern Thailand.***

Dr. Horstmann delivered a presentation focusing on how to characterize faith-based and secular humanitarian assistance to the Karen in the Thai-Myanmar borderland. He argued that the dense presence of local and international humanitarian organizations on both sides of the border due to long-lasting conflict with Myanmar's central state resulted in a "humanitarian-takes-all" socio-economic landscape. Drawing from Janet C. Sturgeon "landscape plasticity" concept, Dr. Horstmann regards the emergence of a humanitarian economy as the result of state-sponsored institutions collapse. It thus paves the way for the reinforcement of social support networks of Karen villagers, filling the void of a failed state, which then necessarily result in spreading the ferments for self-governance. Dr. Horstmann also found that long-term refugee camp way of life impacted on Karen religious divide, due to a dynamic proselytizing Christian minority (30%) among them. The discussion with participants emphasized on the impact of recent 2012's ceasefire and the prospects of potential dismantling of humanitarian socioeconomic landscape, while Dr. Horstmann reasserted that humanitarianism provided the means with which the Karen were able to counter the production of landscapes of rule and terror.

ROUNDTABLE ON RESHAPING ASIAN STUDIES

Oscar Salemink (University of Copenhagen) prepared a PowerPoint (cf. Appendix) in which he highlighted the main issues discussed during the workshop. His PowerPoint enabled to start the debate. Every participant took the floor to give their comments and insights on how to reshape Asian studies. In the **globalizing context**, Southeast Asia is often perceived as following the trend rather than generating it, despite it is becoming a big demographic, economic and political player on its own right.

As place of interaction and friction, borders help researchers to understand the **processes of change** among societies and peoples. Borders, because of the contacts they inevitably create, should be conceptualized as places for rapid spatial change and dynamic social de/recomposition. Borders also create agency between states and peoples but also among peoples themselves through negotiated spaces. Those spaces can be questioned as **suppliers of modernity** in a globalizing context which reshape values and symbolical systems of interaction between intermediaries and brokers.

Several scholars pointed out that the most interesting feature of borderlands studies is to **cross-cut nation-state-centric views**, which tend to be considered as totally sterile by some attendants. Since borderlands constitute **interstitial spaces**, borderlands spaces can prove to be useful in order to think post-nation-state and/or the conflict between statehood and statelessness caused by international borders. **A shift of paradigm** might be needed; instead of focusing on long-used concepts such as internal/external or centre/margin (of nation-states), one should **think borderlands as processes**, on different scales ranging **from local** (cross-border ethnic communities, markets) **to borderless global studies** (belief systems, environmental issues, etc.).

Others attendants hinted that even though **state-nation-centric views** are only one key to a multi-faceted issue, they still have some relevance if **combined with other approaches**. In this view, reconceptualising borderlands economic/political systems (especially in Southeast Asian socialist countries) or processes of state formation in the margins (and drawing comparisons with the centre) might also provide us valuable insights to better understand the borderlands. For instance, the overlapping of different cultures near the international borders can be understood as a **juxtaposition of different state cultures** (i.e law regimes, economic and political systems) but also **cross-border ethnic relations** (belief systems) or **non-state political actors** (local guerrilla warfare, smuggling, etc.). To have a global picture of these complex interactions, nation-State-centric view can be useful but never sufficient. The concepts of **landscape of rule** and **plastic landscapes** appear as promising approaches to theoretically overcome this dichotomy.

Concerns were also raised about dichotomous education programs (mainly in Europe) where conciliating area studies (language and culture) and social sciences should be seen as a priority to form future researchers in Asian studies.

APPENDIX

I. List of participants

Name	Title	E-mail address
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Janet STURGEON	Associate Professor, Simon Fraser University, Canada	sturgeon@sfu.ca
Danielle TAN	Convener of the workshop, Lecturer and Research Associate, Sciences Po Lyon/IAO-ENS Lyon	danielle.tan@sciences-po.org
Titia VAN DER MAAS	Programme Coordinator "Rethinking Asian Studies", IIAS, Leiden	t.van.der.maas@iiias.nl

II. Programme Booklet (Poster, programme, and list of abstracts included)



IIAS Workshop
3-4 November 2014

Communities in between

Redefining social spaces
in Southeast Asian borderlands

Institut d'Asie Orientale (IAO)
15 Parvis René Descartes
Lyon, France

Organised by the Institute of East Asian Studies (IAO)
and the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS)
Funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
For more information visit: www.rethinking.asia
For registration, email: t.van.der.maas@iias.nl



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WORD OF WELCOME

The International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) received support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for a two-year pilot initiative aimed at strengthening and redirecting Asian studies. Its long-term scholarly objective is to frame the contours of global knowledge about Asia “after area studies,” linking emerging fields and scholars through real and virtual spaces of engagement and interaction, enabling them to identify new ways to link disciplines with deep area knowledge and language competence while drawing on technology to create new global sites for networking among Asian studies scholars.

Within this programme, the Institute of East Asian Studies (IAO-ENS Lyon) is in charge of the Forum “**Asian Spatialities 3: Across Southeast Asian Borderlands**” that will challenge the artificial boundaries dividing Asia. These divisions not only mask the varied commonalities that transcend such boundaries, they also reinforce the marginalization of people who live in the so-called border areas. Yet, a better appreciation of these “transitional zones” is critical to our understanding of processes of social and cultural changes in the states lying beyond them, a focus that remains peripheral to traditional “area” studies. This is particularly true of the so-called region of Southeast Asia, squeezed between two predominant regions dominated by India and China, which appears to have been the poor relative of Asian studies over the past decades. Recent economic and geopolitical developments associated with the growth of China have revived long-standing linkages and created new forms of connections across the “Southeast Asian region” in both its maritime and continental configurations, thereby renewing scholarly and political interest for this area.

For the first workshop of this Forum, “**Communities in Between: Redefining Social Spaces in Southeast Asian Borderlands**,” we are delighted to welcome outstanding scholars from all over the world to provoke thoughts on how to “rethink Southeast Asia”. Our wish is to consolidate a transnational network of academic institutions and scholars capable of challenging the standard boundaries of the field by generating new paradigms and methodologies that go beyond geographical and disciplinary barriers. This two-day workshop will not only be an opportunity to share our respective work, but also to brainstorm and to open critical dialogue on the new contours of Southeast Asian studies. Of course, students are more than welcome to come and join us in enriching the debate.

Welcome to the Institute of East Asian Studies, we hope you will enjoy this workshop!

Danielle TAN, in the name of IAO and IIAS

THE OBJECTIVE OF THE WORKSHOP

The workshop “**Communities in Between: Redefining Social Spaces in Southeast Asian Borderlands**” will study Southeast Asia based on networks, processes, transitions, polyvalence, and fluidity, in opposition with the concepts of the “nation-state” or the “region”. The participants will revisit state-society relations through the perspective of the borderlands as they can be seen as products of a social and political negotiation of space. They will highlight the ongoing deep transformation of statehood, citizenship, sovereignty and identity formations along routes and borders across Southeast Asia. While globalization theories have put emphasis on the dissolutions of borders, the waning of the state power, as well as the destruction of local traditions and communities, this workshop seeks to unravel the ways in which everyday practices of peripheral subjects intersect with central powers, thus producing heterogeneous scenarios of manoeuvring, negotiation, collaboration, and resistance. The contributions will show how peripheral subjects are increasingly engaging in processes of globalization and development, and concomitantly, how the state engages in projecting frontier areas into national territory, using the new spaces thus produced as means of reinforcement of state authority.

PROGRAMME

MONDAY, 3 NOVEMBER 2014	
10:15 – 10:30	REGISTRATION
10:30 – 10:45	WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS CHRISTINE CORNET, Université Lyon 2, Deputy Director of IAO DANIELLE TAN, Sciences Po Lyon-IAO
10:45 – 12:00	KEYNOTE ADDRESS
10:45	<i>Sources of Legitimation for Communities in Between</i> JANET STURGEON (Simon Fraser University, Canada)
11:30	Question & Answer
12:00 – 14:00	LUNCH
14:00 – 17:30	PANEL 1 STATE-FORMATION AND INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS IN THE MARGINS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA
	CHAIRPERSON JEAN MICHAUD (Université Laval, Canada)
14:00 – 14:30	<i>Social Change and State Emergence in Times of War and Revolution: Insights from a Border Region in Laos</i> VATTHANA PHOLSENA (IAO-National University of Singapore)
14:30 – 15:00	Question and Answer
15:00 – 15:30	<i>Frontier Colonialisation: Agrarian Expansion and Militarization in the Indonesia-Malaysia Borderlands</i> MICHAEL EILENBERG (Aarhus University, Denmark)
15:30 – 16:00	Question & Answer
16:00 – 16:30	COFFEE BREAK
16:30 – 17:00	<i>The Navel of the Nation: Centering, Territorializing and Enclosing Vietnam's Margins</i> OSCAR SALEMINK (University of Copenhagen) and EDYTA ROSZKO (Durham University)
17:00 – 17:30	Question & Answer
17:30	END OF DAY ONE
19:30	Conference dinner (for speakers, chairpersons and invited guests only)

PROGRAMME

TUESDAY, 4 NOVEMBER	
10:00 – 12:00	PANEL 2 FRONTIER ENCOUNTERS, EXCHANGES, AND FRICTIONS CHAIRPERSON Danielle Tan (Sciences Po Lyon-IAO)
10:00 – 10:30	<i>Smuggling or not Smuggling? Balancing Powers between Chinese Traders and Vietnamese Law-Enforcement Agents</i> CAROLINE GRILLOT (Max Planck Institute, Germany)
10:30 -11:00	Question & Answer
11:00 -11:30	<i>Working through “Exceptional” Space: A Case of Women Migrant Workers in Mae Sot, Thailand</i> KYOKO KUSAKABE (Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand)
11:30 – 12:00	Question & Answer
12:00 – 14:00	LUNCH
14:00 – 16:00	PANEL 3 RELIGIOUS-BASED MOBILIZATION BETWEEN RADICALIZATION AND TRANSNATIONALISM CHAIRPERSON ALEXANDRA DE MERSAN (INALCO-CASE, Paris)
14:00 – 14:30	<i>Southeast Asian Islam: Boundaries of an Imagined Community</i> RÉMY MADINIER (Centre Asie du Sud-Est, CNRS-EHESS – Seatide – IAO)
14:30 – 15:00	Question and Answer
15:00 – 15:30	<i>The Culture and Landscape of the Humanitarian Economy among the Karen (Kayin) in the Borderland of Southeast Myanmar and Northwestern Thailand</i> ALEXANDER HORSTMANN (University of Copenhagen)
15:30 – 16:00	Question and Answer
16:00 – 16:30	COFFEE BREAK
16:30 – 17:30	ROUND TABLE ON RESHAPING SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES CHAIRPERSON OSCAR SALEMINK (University of Copenhagen)
17:30	END OF CONFERENCE
19:30	Conference Dinner (for speakers, chairpersons and invited guests only)

PRESENTATIONS

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Sources of Legitimation for Communities in Between

JANET STURGEON

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Borderland communities In Southeast Asia, many of them ethnic minority, operate in rapidly changing social and political economic contexts, including new national policies, increasing regional infrastructure, and growing markets. Minority communities also respond to multiple sources of legitimation, such as the desire for national inclusion, the lure of modernization, and their own cultural and spiritual understandings of belonging in the world. Drawing on Lefevbre's notions of absolute and abstract space, this paper traces changing sources of legitimation for Akha farmers in upland Xishuangbanna (Sipsongpanna), China, whose livelihoods stretch into neighbouring Burma, and for Shan migrants from Burma working in Thailand. These cases represent two extremes of possibilities, with Akha increasingly enclosed in Chinese national space, and Shan increasingly belonging nowhere. The cases both point to the deepening of capitalist relations and spaces and the huge variability of contingent outcomes for "communities in between".

Janet STURGEON received her doctorate from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies in 2000. Since 2004 she has been in the geography department at Simon Fraser University, where she is now an Associate Professor. Her work looks at access to resources and landscape transformations among ethnic minority peoples along the borders of China, Laos, Thailand, and Burma. She is interested in how borders are constituted and transgressed, and how globalization is changing livelihoods and identities for farmers. Sturgeon's research has brought to light the complex and unintended outcomes of regionalization. She has published numerous articles and a book, *Border Landscapes: the Politics of Akha Land Use in China and Thailand* (University of Washington Press, 2005).

PANEL 1

STATE-FORMATION AND INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS IN THE MARGINS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

Social Change and State Emergence in Times of War and Revolution: Insights from a Border Region in Laos

VATTHANA PHOLSENA

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This paper investigates the course of action that the Lao and Vietnamese Communist movements undertook during these conflicts to expand their military rule and to legitimise their political claims over Sepon (a border region in Laos), the population of which had never before known such a direct form of control. The Lao revolutionary project of state-making in essence began in the so-called peripheral uplands, such as Sepon, then reached across the country after the Communist victory in 1975. The edification of “a new people” was also part and parcel of making “the state” as a material reality and an ideological idea. The latter realisation took advantage in Sepon of pre-existing political territories and the ethnic dynamics that ran through them, which the Communists perpetuated.

Pholsena VATTHANA is a research fellow at the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS). In 2013, she returned to the Department of Southeast Asian Studies at NUS as an Associate Professor. Her current research covers the social history of the Vietnam Wars from the vantage point of the Lao-Vietnamese borderlands, and the nexus between state, local elite, and ethnicity in post-socialist Laos. More generally, her research interests include the processes of state and social formation in borderlands, the interaction between the past and personal and collective memories, and post-socialism in Asia. She is mostly known for her work entitled *Post-war Laos. The Politics of Culture, History and Identity* (ISEAS-Cornell University Press, 2006). She recently published *Interactions with a Violent Past. Reading Post-Conflict Landscapes in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam* (NUS Press, 2013, with Oliver Tappe, eds.).

Frontier Colonialisation: Agrarian expansion and Militarization in the Indonesia-Malaysia Borderlands

MICHAEL EILENBERG

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Throughout history the Indonesian state has struggled to assert control over its borders and accompanying natural resources, using the arguments of national security and promotion of development to the 'estranged and backward' frontier inhabitants. As part of this pragmatic strategy in frontier colonization and resource extraction successive Indonesian governments have since the late 1960s allocated large-scale timber and plantation concessions along the resource-rich border on the island of Borneo to military entrepreneurs and private companies. Long stretches of Indonesian-Malaysian border are still widely forested and contain large patches of land classified in government policy narratives as 'sleeping', 'waste' or 'idle,' while the sparse population is classified as 'uncivilized.' This paper highlight the multiple meanings and imaginaries associated with regions where resource frontiers and national borders interlock. Particularly, how frontiers as zones of transition are created and transformed through state policies and local/global mediations. The paper examines the frontier constellation that combines resource extraction and sovereign politics, which is found repeated along other resource-rich Southeast Asian borderlands. It is argued that scrutinizing this specific frontier constellation could create new insight into how contemporary processes of agricultural expansion in Southeast Asia often is justified through discourses of sovereignty and security.

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The Navel of the Nation: Centering, Territorializing and Enclosing Vietnam's Margins

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Like most Southeast Asian states, the Vietnamese state traces its origins in the lowlands, but its assertion as a modern, postcolonial state requires it to project itself outward into the highlands (from the 1940s onward) and increasingly into the sea. Vietnam's territorial map consequently expanded to not only include the highlands, but more recently the sea and its islands/islets as well, with the island of Lý Sơn—which is considered as a historic and contemporary stepping stone to the Paracels—in the middle of Vietnam's imagined land/sea map, as a figurative cartographic navel of the national body. Discursively, these territorial shifts were marked by stories about the “autonomous” village shielded by a bamboo hedge as the basis for the nation in the lowlands (“*Phép vua thừa lệ làng*” – The king's privilege yields to village custom); about the (eternal) “great solidarity” [*đại đoàn kết*] between the diverse ethnic groups ethnic groups with the Việt and vice versa in the highlands, during and after the successive wars for independence and reunification; and about the most recent ‘turn towards the home islands [*hướng về biển đảo quê hương*]’ and the idea of Vietnam as a “*nước biển*” [lit. “sea country” but better a sea-oriented country], which is a contemporary invention of tradition that discursively places Vietnam in Tony Reid's Malay World. Based on our respective empirical material about highlands, lowlands and maritime spaces, we would argue that these outward projections of the nation and the state on the one hand involve a decentering of the center but on the other hand lead to enclosures and appropriations of terrestrial and maritime commons and both the domestication and instrumentalization of highland and maritime populations which are drawn into the center. Theoretically, such a paper would speak to the work on state territory (Thongchai Winichakul, Goscha), on state territorialization (Peluso & Vandergeest; Scott), on nationalism as performance (Anderson; Butler), and on enclosures (Ostrom; Jeffrey, McFarlane & Vasudevan, etc).

Oscar SALEMINK is Professor in the Anthropology of Asia at the University of Copenhagen. Until February 2011, he was Professor of Social Anthropology at VU University in Amsterdam. He received his doctoral degree from the University of Amsterdam, based on research on Vietnam's Central Highlands. From 1996 through 2001 I was responsible for grant portfolios in higher education, arts and culture and sustainable development in Thailand and Vietnam on behalf of The Ford Foundation. He has published on processes of ethnic identification and classification; the history of anthropology; development and civil society; human security and human rights; cultural heritage; and religious and ritual transformations. Recent book-length publications include *Colonial Subjects* (1999); *Vietnam's Cultural Diversity* (2001); *The Ethnography of Vietnam's Central Highlanders* (2003); *The Development of Religion, the Religion of Development* (2004); *A World of Insecurity: Anthropological perspectives on human security* (2010).

Edyta ROSZKO received her doctoral degree in 2011 from Martin Luther University – Halle Wittenberg. From 2006 to 2009 she was also a Doctoral Fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Social

Anthropology in Halle. Before coming to Durham as a Marie Curie Research Fellow to work on her project *Maritime Enclosures. Fishing communities facing the effects of the South China Sea dispute*, Edyta was an Assistant Lecturer at the Department of Anthropology of the University of Copenhagen and a Rechtskulturen (Legal Culture) Postdoctoral Fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin (Institute of Advanced Studies) and an Associate Fellow at Humboldt School of Law in Berlin.

PANEL 2
FRONTIER ENCOUNTERS, EXCHANGES, AND FRICTIONS

Smuggling or not Smuggling? Balancing Powers between Chinese Traders and Vietnamese Law-Enforcement Agents

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In Móng Cái, a small border town and an international gate located in northeast Vietnam, the main economic activities center around cross border-trade with China. During daytime, hundreds of Chinese traders settle in the local markets to conduct their business with Vietnamese customers, under various sets of rules, adjusting to long-established practices and hasty upheavals. However, the dynamic of border activities must comply with national security concerns that are regularly at stake. The obvious antagonism between border control that could guaranty state sovereignty and the regional economic development is revealed in trade practices. Daily collaboration between Chinese and Vietnamese traders always entails sensitive aspects, and the uneasiness and feeling of insecurity that already frame business deals is exacerbated by uneven and (perceived as) unfair attitude of the local authorities. Drawing on local discourses about the official versus actual purposes of the Vietnamese and Chinese states regarding cross-border trade control, particularly smuggling, this presentation will reveal the ambiguity of local policies. Experiences of Chinese traders show how they constantly challenge and negotiate with state officers and Vietnamese negotiators to pursue their commercial project whereas enduring a constant pressure that virtually constrains them to maintain a commercial partnership with Vietnam under specific conditions. A description of blurry aspect of Móng Cái's market management will illustrate a fragile balance of powers regularly renegotiated or left in the blur, which navigates between rules, threat, resistance and submission.

Caroline GRILLOT is an anthropologist and Sinologist. He received her PhD in Anthropology from Macquarie University, Sydney and VU University in Amsterdam. She is currently a postdoctoral researcher at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology (Halle, Germany). Her research focuses primarily on the social margins in China and Southeast Asia. She is the author of *Volées, Envolées, Convolées, les fiancées vietnamiennes en Chine* (Connaissances et Savoirs, 2010).

Working through “Exceptional” Space: A Case of Women Migrant Workers in Mae Sot, Thailand

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This paper argues that the ways in which Burmese women migrant workers are able to manage their childcare responsibilities by juggling support between both sides of the border dividing Thailand and Burma (Myanmar) constitutes an “an exceptional space” where they are able to better circumvent state control. We deploy Scott’s (2009) argument that ethnic groups use “terrains of friction” to keep the state at arm’s length, and analyze borderland around Mae Sot as such an area where migrants are able to create their own space. The study is based on empirical research with migrant women employed in the factories located in the border town of Mae Sot, Thailand which is adjacent to the Burmese city of Myawaddy. We carried out in-depth interviews with 133 workers as well as a survey questionnaire with 504 workers about how they managed their child bearing and child care activities, and compared their experiences with those of Burmese migrant workers working in factories in the centerland provinces around Bangkok. The paper argues that, as proposed by Mezzara and Nelson (2012) borders create an exceptional space where intersecting power relations of domination and resistance are more vividly experienced and observed, and we would maintain, are also sites where gender roles and norms can be challenged or transformed as women seek to comply with their reproductive as well as their productive responsibilities.

Kyoko KUSAKABE is an Associate Professor in Gender and Development Studies at the Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand. She teaches post-graduate courses, carries out research and outreach activities in the areas of economic empowerment of women focusing on various countries in Asia. Her recent research is on gender issues in labour migration, mobility and border studies.

PANEL 3

RELIGIOUS-BASED MOBILIZATION BETWEEN RADICALIZATION AND TRANSNATIONALISM

Southeast Asian Islam: Boundaries of an Imagined Community

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This paper discusses the formation and evolution of an Islamic imagined community in Southeast Asia. It shows how Muslim transnational networks have had limited influence in the region and never really managed to supplant the nation-state borders inherited from colonization. Since the pan-Islamists in the late nineteenth century to the recent attempts to create an Islamic state in Southeast Asia with the Daulah Islamiyah Nوسانتارا, these networks have been challenged by regional and national identities, which forced them to remain in a primarily symbolic register.

Remy MADINIER is a research fellow at the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS). He is co-director of the Centre Asie du Sud-Est (CASE-EHESS) and the Institute for the Study of Islam and the Muslim world (IISMM-EHESS). He dedicated his doctoral thesis to the history of Muslim democracy in Indonesia. He has published several books on contemporary history of Islam in Indonesia, including *The End of Innocence? Indonesian Islam and the Temptations of Radicalism* (NUS Press, 2011, co-written with Andrée Feillard). He now works on the history of Muslim-Christian relations in Southeast Asia.

The Culture and Landscape of the Humanitarian Economy among the Karen (Kayin) in the Borderland of Southeast Myanmar and Northwestern Thailand

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In this chapter, I provide a concise map of faith-based and secular humanitarian assistance to the Karen in the Thai-Myanmar borderland to show the emergence and development of a humanitarian economy for Karen villagers in Southeast Myanmar and in the nine refugee camps in Northwestern Thailand. By humanitarianism, I understand a culture of humanitarian aid, compassion and relief, but prefer a broad definition that includes agency from emergency health care to advocacy work, such as training for documentation of human rights violations. I suggest that decades of civil war and repression in Southeast Burma have created a particular landscape of humanitarianism in the borderlands of Southeast Burma and Northwestern Thailand that is characterized by a dense presence of local and international humanitarian organizations. I advance the thesis that humanitarianism takes over state functions in the social services as the economy, health and

education sector in Southeast Burma have largely collapsed. Humanitarianism thus contributes in a crucial way to the consolidation of social support networks of Karen villagers and a parallel state or self-governance of the Karen in the context of open state terror and hostility.

Alexander HORSTMANN is a social anthropologist. He received his PhD from the University of Bielefeld (2000) with a work on Buddhist and Islamic movements in Southern Thailand. His research interests include the study of religious and ethnic diversity in Southeast Asia and in a comparative perspective, Islam, Theravada Buddhism, Christianity (especially Pentecostalism and Charismatic Movements), autochthonous religion (spirit beliefs), modernity, violence, and border régimes. He is interested in the manifestations of world religions in the local context and in the encounters of the local and the global, globalization of religion and the impact of modern media. He is presently Associate Professor for Southeast Asian Studies at the Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies (ToRS) at the University of Copenhagen.

ABOUT THE CHAIRPERSON

Jean MICHAUD (PhD Montréal 1995) is professor of social anthropology at Université Laval, in Canada. He specializes in critical anthropology and the peoples of the Southeast Asian Massif. He is the author of *'Incidental' Ethnographers. French Catholic Missions on the Tonkin-Yunnan Frontier, 1880-1930* (Brill 2007), *The A to Z of the People of the Southeast Asian Massif* (Scarecrow Press 2009), coeditor of *Moving Mountains: Ethnicity and Livelihoods in Highland China, Vietnam, and Laos* (UBC Press 2011), and co-author with Sarah Turner and Christine Bonnin of *Frontier Livelihoods: Hmong in the Sino-Vietnamese Borderlands* (University of Washington Press 2015).

Danielle TAN is currently teaching Political Science and Asian Studies at Sciences Po Lyons (France). She is also Research Associate at Lyons Institute of East Asian Studies (IAO-CNRS). Previously, she had the opportunity to pursue her postdoctoral research at IIAS and at the Australian National University. She received her PhD in Political Science from Sciences Po/CERI (Paris) in December 2011. Her dissertation (in French) was entitled *"From Communism to Neoliberalism: the Part Played by Chinese Networks in the Transformation of the State in Laos."* She is currently co-editing a volume with Pál Nyíri (VU Amsterdam) gathering together the most recent research on the renewed Chinese presence in Southeast Asia: *How Chinese Engagements Are Transforming Southeast Asia. People, Money, Ideas and their Effects* (on-going peer-review, University of Washington Press).

Alexandra DE MERSAN, anthropologist, is associate professor at the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (INALCO, Paris). She is an associate member of the Centre Asie du Sud-Est (CASE-CNRS, Paris). She has a PhD in Social Anthropology from the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS, Paris). Since her doctoral dissertation, untitled: *"Ritual space and the Making of a Locality. Contribution to the Ethnography of the Arakanese Population of Contemporary Burma"* (in French), she has been working on issues of territory and religion in Buddhist societies, mostly among Arakanese. Her research in Burma has also covered such topics as ritual, migration and socio-religious dynamics, ethnicity and nation-building.

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