Thailand in Comparative Perspective
An International Symposium

Abstract Supplement
Monday 26 September 2016

Session 1

Politics and Society I

Discussant: Dr Jacob Ricks

Dan Slater (University of Chicago) and Joseph Wong (University of Toronto)

*Developmental Militarism and Democracy through Strength: Thailand, Burma/Myanmar, and Indonesia Compared and Contrasted*

This paper applies our theory of “democracy through strength” in developmental Asia (Slater and Wong 2013) to the vexing case of Thailand. It begins by situating Thailand comparatively as a relatively if unevenly impressive case of institutional strength and economic development within what we call Southeast Asia’s “developmental militarist” cluster: Thailand, Burma/Myanmar, and Indonesia. All three cases have at some point pursued military-backed democratic reforms in the confident expectation that elections would neither overturn military prerogatives nor decimate conservative party allies (Thailand in the 1980s, Indonesia in the 1990s, and Burma/Myanmar in the 2010s). Contrary to most leading theories in comparative politics, the common factor motoring top-down democratization across all three authoritarian regimes was not the presence but the absence of an imminent and growing threat of being toppled by political outsiders. The paper considers further why democratization through strength has gone especially smoothly in Indonesia, quite choppily in Thailand, and remains highly vulnerable in Burma/Myanmar despite that country’s remarkable recent reform strides.

Chontida Auikool (Thammasat University)

*Indonesia and Thailand’s Memories on Anti-Communist Purge*

Southeast Asia as a region has a lot in common especially experiences of controversial and sensitive matters such as political massacre and communal violence. Through the lens, many documentaries reveal social memories and hardships of victims in conflict and violence. The ones that have been produced currently working as a tool in demanding for reconciliation and transitional justice. Here, it debates two documentary films, *The Look of Silence*, *Senyap* (2014), directed by Joshua Oppenheimer and *Silence-Memories*, ความทรงจำไร้เสียง (2014), directed by Pattaraphon Phoothong and Saowanee Sangkara. Both are testimonial art produced according to two comparable cases of mass killing in 1965-1966 in Indonesia and the Watershed event of October 6th, 1976 in Thailand. They give life to the memories of those whose stories had become silenced or lost from the national consciousness. They gave voice to the victims’ who needed communal healing and acknowledgment of the injustice and hardship they suffered. Similarly, both incidents involved aggressive and violent acts from state that propagated anti-communism sentiment during the cold war period. On the one hand, the events on October 6th in Thailand have now been moderately acknowledged. The victims have received a certain degree of reconciliation and most of them granted amnesty. The mass killing in 1965-1966 is on the contrary. Alleged communists are still suppressed and continue to face hardship. Their stories have rarely been told and there are seldom stories accepted by the public. In many areas, the survivors of this violence are treated unfairly and discriminated by society, and continuously deprived of justice. Up to this day, both cases have not paved way for alternative history to present in the public and types of justice for the victims and the community seem to be limited. The paper here argues the past incidents have shaped Thailand and Indonesian politic characteristic strongly. As a result, the impunity culture and power structure from the old authoritarian regime have been lingered to challenge rule of law and democracy of both countries. Also, the paper discusses social memories reflected from both societies in present day and debate the role of documentary as humanitarian arts.
YoungJoon Koh (Independent Researcher)

Formation and Maintenance of Traditional Elite Groups: The Philippines and Thailand in Comparative Perspective

The main purpose of this study is to investigate how traditional elites formed and maintain their political power. The basic method of this study will be historical and descriptive in comparative perspective. In this study, I will review and analyse literatures, newspapers, government documents, and academic works. There are two reasons to start this study. First of all, when democracy and non-democracy are strictly divided by most people, the democratic system will be consolidated in each country. The roles of political leaders, who were chosen by most people in the country, are also significant to stabilize democratic institutions. Second of all, the Philippines and Thailand showed a typical democratic transition in Southeast Asia. However, it is evident that the traditional elites in these nations strongly affect democratic basic principle. I will examine research questions about formation and maintenance of tradition elite groups in the Philippines and Thailand. The first question is how traditional elites formed in the Philippines and Thailand. The second question is how much these elite groups affected the formation and maintenance of political system in each country. The third question is whether their political power in both countries experienced changes after democratization or not. I expect that some meaningful findings of this study will provide me with insight into traditional elite groups in democratized countries.

Arts and Culture I

Discussant: Professor Peter Jackson

Anjalee Cohen (University of Sydney)

Youth Gangs, Violence and Local Culture in Chiang Mai

Drawing on 24 months of ethnographic research, this paper examines the role of violence among northern Thai youth gangs at the intersection of global capitalism and local culture. Contrary to dominant representations that depict youth gang violence as a means for psychologically coping as victims of dramatic social change, I argue that youth violence may be viewed as active and creative ways of negotiating change under conditions of rapid urbanisation and modernisation. For gang youth in northern Thailand, violence offers an opportunity to ‘fit in and stick out’ in an anonymous cosmopolitan city. While some Chiang Mai youth subcultures draw primarily on global cultural resources as a means of standing out and enhancing one’s status, northern Thai youth gangs rely more heavily on local culture to achieve status and a sense of self-worth, particularly in relation to enduring Thai values of masculinity centred on notions of invulnerability.

Steve Dodds (University of Sydney)

Coup Tank Happy Snaps: the “Aesthetic Dimensions of Power” in Contemporary Thailand

In the eventual aftermath of each major violent Thai military crackdown, massacre and/or coups d’état that resulted in the removal of a democratically elected government since 2006, Thais are obliged to feel a sense of relief when they see that the tanks sitting on their streets are – in a visual cue to signify the king’s alleged tacit approval – adorned with yellow royal ribbons. Monks, locals and tourists alike have utilised these situations to take ‘happy snaps’ of themselves with these semiotically-charged war machines, generating social media friendly, fetishised keepsakes only too characteristic of Thailand’s problematic “entertainment nationalism.” A projection of violence in reserve, such potent photographic images demonstrate the complex collusion of politics, aesthetics, violence and enforced silence in Thailand’s spectacle of the king-image regime, and function as part of a simulated rollout of the “commodified and mass-mediatised ideology of magico-divine royal power” at work within this spectacle. A photograph of a military coup tank garnished with simple yellow ribbon is major prop of political expediency, and alludes to a much more comprehensive concealment in the reshuffling of the “business-royalist-military-bureaucratic elite” at the true locus of power,
screened off behind the gilded mystification of recently resacralised invented traditions and accoutrements of monarchy. A chilling validation of Heidegger’s statement that "the fundamental event of the modern age is the conquest of the world as picture," these coup tank happy snaps are a reminder that, in the brutal and obfuscating realm of Thai politics, “power and aesthetics are often one and the same.”

Garry Fry (Thammasat University) and Songsiri Putthongchai (Thammasat University)
Correspondence and Discontinuity

Our action research using replay, a participatory theatre application, focuses on what teenagers consider to be the ‘worst’ of teenage life in rapidly diversifying social environments. The plays are a tool by which young people, using critical thought, suggest strategies to improve outcomes and so experiment with social relations. They test these strategies by replaying the actions of the play attempting to avert the characters’ dangerous actions and life-threatening anxieties. The play, Wairun Woonak, was derived from workshops with Thai teens at high schools in Rangsit district, Bangkok. During the play-building stages, other students confirmed that in their experience the behaviour and situations depicted in the play were accurate. The play toured high schools in Bangkok, Thailand and then in Canberra and South East NSW, Australia. The play-building process meant that the characters of the plays embodied the life environments of a cross section of young people in the Rangsit district. The play’s audiences in Australia share the corresponding life moment: school students in mid-teenage. The two characters with disaffected lives in Thailand resonate in the lives of mid-teenagers at Australian high schools. Each audience understands despair leading to dangerous biking and anxiety about personal appearance. Yet in the replay, when they, the audiences, can contribute to effective actions to reverse the tragedies they see unfold, they realise the discontinuity between the life worlds they each inhabit. Thus, in devising strategies within diversified societies, the immediate element of cultural difference tests their thought.

Geography and Environment I

Discussant: Professor Philip Hirsch

Vanessa Lamb (University of Melbourne)
Maps and Promises

In this paper, I focus on the ways that the Thai nation is reimagined through environmental governance and development, and the ways that residents are enrolled in both development and reimagining the Thai nation. Drawing geographical critiques of mapping into conversation with work on the ground-breaking scholarship which contributes to geographical understandings of the nation that have Thailand as their center, Imagined Communities and Siam Mapped, I consider the role of dam development, not in its infrastructure but in the promises it makes and what these promises, made alongside and inscribed in maps, accomplish for the nation. I examine maps and promises together by engaging with work in science studies on enrolment and inscription drawing on work in science studies. As a contribution to political ecology and work in geography more generally on mapping, I argue that maps can be conceptualized as promises which enrol wider audiences in imagining development and themselves within (or without) the national community. For the purposes of offering a comparative perspective, I contrast these findings with recent research on large-scale dam plans and their maps in neighbouring Burma (Myanmar) and the ways that maps—or the lack of mapping and maps—can influence who participates in national development.

Sarinda Singh (University of Sydney)
Upland Development’ in Laos and the Implications of Governance

This paper examines changes to land-use and livelihoods in Laos, and whether these are equivalent to 'upland development' that incorporates government policy commitments to poverty alleviation and sustainable forest management. It examines recent changes in poverty
and livelihood activities at four ‘focal sites’, which are areas targeted by the government for upland development. Fieldwork was conducted across 45 ethnic minority (mostly Brou) villages in the upland districts of Nong, Sepon and Phine in Savannakhet Province, near the Vietnam border. Despite variability between the focal sites, three general trends are apparent in changes to land-use and livelihoods. First, while government rhetoric continues to castigate swidden cultivation as the cause of deforestation and poverty, new land-uses will likely entail much greater impacts than swidden. Second, recent success in poverty alleviation is mainly due to villagers’ illegal logging of luxury timbers from National Protected Areas. Furthermore, government plans for villagers’ new livelihood activities – especially, work on rubber plantations – are more often linked by villagers to negative impacts than poverty alleviation. Third, while villagers’ perspectives of these changes are complex, they highlight the lack of effective governance for new land-uses and livelihoods and villagers’ increasing awareness of this failing.

Hironmoni Borgohain Gogoi (Sonali Probhat)
The Thailand-Northeast India Connect with Special Emphasis on Tourism Sector

As characteristic of Thailand and India, both countries have been trying to establish relationships of goodwill and cooperation since the last seven decades. The relationship between the two countries has their roots in historical, sociocultural and people to people connections. With the increasing pace of Globalization, the connections appear to be intensifying and accelerating, moving ahead towards greater connectivity. This paper would be an attempt to understand Thailand’s interest and connection with the North Eastern Region of India, particularly with regard to collaboration in Responsible Tourism/Sustainable Tourism/Community-Based Tourism. The North Eastern Region of India has been acknowledged as the Gateway to South East Asia since the last decade. Interestingly, a majority of the tribes and communities residing in North East India belong to the Mongolian Race and had migrated from different regions of South East Asia at different periods of historical time. India’s North East has been identified by Thailand as an important destination for investment, a potential sub-regional market centre and a land bridge connecting India with the mainstream Indian Market. With the Government of India’s Look East Policy, relations with Association of South East Asian Nations forms one of the cornerstones of their Foreign Policy and has forged to a strategic partnership since 2012. Therefore the North Eastern Region of India bears special importance for India too as it forms the landmass connecting the rest of India with S.E. Asia. The sectors in which Thailand and N.E. India would like to work together are primarily agro-business and food processing industries, energy, communications and tourism. The methodology adopted for the study will be primarily the Qualitative Research Method with the prime objective of finding out ‘why’ the focus needs to be on Responsible Tourism, ‘what’ needs to be done and ‘how’ the work will be done.

Session 2

History and Historiography I

Discussant: Dr Tyrell Haberkorn

Arjun Subrahmanyan (Murdoch University)
History and Interpretation of the 1932 Revolution

In contemporary scholarship and the popular imagination, the seeming failure of popular democracy to take root in Thailand breeds cynicism and despair. It also leads to the belief that the entire endeavour to implant Western-style democracy in Thai culture has been misconceived and is doomed to failure since Thailand is special and different. While this characteristic provincialism and negativity are salient in discussion of the political turbulence of the past couple of decades, it in fact has been a persistent interpretation going back to the beginnings of a politics of popular sovereignty in the 1932 overthrow of the absolute monarchy. But more importantly, historically it has not been the only gloss of Thai democracy
and alternative interpretations of its origins offer a more complex picture of the contradictions of Thai politics that fully acknowledge, and embrace, the intellectual cosmopolitanism that marks modern Thai history. This paper outlines the main interpretations of 1932 in their temporal frame, as a revolution (1932-1947), a coup d'état (1947-1970s) or an uncertain combination of the two into an ambiguous political incident (1980s and 1990s). My presentation concludes by offering a new argument that hopes to rescue 1932 from the condemnation of posterity. I propose a new interpretation that restores importance to the aspirations of the makers of the revolution and those inspired by them, places the event in a longer-term frame of Thai engagement with modernity, and contends that the event’s attempt to ‘universalise’ Thai history still shapes Thai politics and society.

Greg Raymond (Australian National University)
Orphan Histories and Conflicting Narratives: Explaining Thailand’s Official Silence on World War II

For many countries of the Asia Pacific, the seventieth anniversary of the end of World War II was a significant milestone. In Thailand the date passed with virtually no official recognition. Despite Japan’s invasion of Thailand in which some 183 Thai soldiers died, its occupation of Thailand from December 1941 to August 1945, and the Allied bombing of Bangkok which killed hundreds of Thai citizens, no national leader gave a speech or presided over a ceremony to mark the event. Over the past three decades the trend has been for societies and governments to pay greater attention to commemoration of war. In this respect the relative absence of World War II in official Thai consciousness appears anomalous. This article considers five reasons for why a war that deprived Thailand of its sovereignty for over three years appears to figure so little in official memory. These reasons are: (1) embarrassment and ignominy – that the Thai Government’s collaboration with Japan is an unpleasant memory; (2) occupation-lite - that the Japanese invasion and occupation was so minor in its impact on Thais that it was quickly forgotten; (3) conflicting narratives – that the complex and conflicted Thai view of World War II produces an official muteness; (4) orphan history – that none of Thailand’s key institutions own World War II history and so it remains uncelebrated; and (5) getting on with business- that Thailand sought to quickly rebuild its relationship with Japan for economic and strategic reasons and so has avoided commemorative activity.

Rebecca Townsend (Cornell University)
Cold Fire: Psychological Warfare and Nation-Building in Thailand, South Vietnam and the Philippines

On August 24, 1970, the American Psychological Warfare Unit and Thai Communist Suppression Operations Command (CSOC) distributed 65,000 bars of soap to rural residents in Thailand. The soap was imprinted with anti-communist slogans, including “To remain a Thai one must be anti-communist” and “The government of His Majesty the King sends its good wishes to all the Thai people” (Wakin, 1992). This came after more than a decade of increasing joint US-Thai psychological warfare operations, in which American anti-communist messages were accompanied by assertions of Thai cultural and social nationalism. In 1965, for example, the United States Information Service (USIS) film Fai Yen (Cold Fire) depicted a band of communists that were labelled phuak jon communit, or communist bandits. Their un-Thai immoral and predatory behaviors were emphasized over their supposed communist ideology. But analysis of the circulation of anti-communist psychological warfare offers a transnational perspective on Thailand’s Cold War experience. While the messages conveyed through psychological warfare appear distinctively “Thai,” they were formulated in transnational and regional contexts. Indeed, the US government typically created templates for materials, with only slight modifications for specific countries. Comparing psychological operations in Thailand with countries that likewise engaged in anti-communist and nation-building operations with the US helps to construct a clearer picture of the Cold War in Thailand. My project examines the production of USIS materials, including pamphlets and films, and operations Thailand, the Philippines, and South Vietnam in order to consider transnational influences on Cold War articulations of Thai national identity.
Political Economy I

Discussant: Professor Evelyn Devadason

Luke Nottage (University of Sydney) and Sakda Thanitchul (Chulalongkorn University)

The Past, Present and Future of International Investment Arbitration in Thailand

Thailand’s approach to international investment arbitration is comparatively unusual within Southeast Asia, and indeed world-wide. First, Thailand was initially cautious with its bilateral investment treaties (BITs), consistently excluding the option of investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS). As it opened up to foreign investment, from 1989 it began sometimes concluding treaties with ISDS, but drafted idiosyncratically. ISDS was only available if both states were party to the ICSID Convention, which Thailand had signed in 1965 but has then never ratified. From 1993, BITs started to provide increasingly for ad hoc arbitration. Secondly, major disputes emerged from the 1990s under concession contracts with foreign investors containing arbitration clauses. Following adverse arbitral rulings and filings, from 2004 such contracts providing for arbitration have required pre-approval by Cabinet. This limitation was extended to all public contracts from 2009, shortly after the first (and only) treaty-based ISDS award against Thailand. Yet such Cabinet Resolutions do not insulate Thailand from further investment treaty claims, and a second dispute was initiated in 2015. The first (Walter Bau) claim attracted much public attention in 2011, when the Crown Prince’s airplane was seized by court order in Germany as the claimant continues to seek enforcement of its award, but newspaper reporting also did not clearly distinguish this treaty claim from other contract-based arbitrations. Nonetheless, a 2002 Model BIT was revised in 2013 to incorporate most pro-host-state provisions. Thailand has continued to some treaties providing for ISDS, in the context also of becoming a net FDI exporter in 2011. This article concludes by teasing out the complex interplay of internal and external influences on international investment arbitration in Thailand, as well as its likely future trajectory. From a broader theoretical perspective, it also argues that the experience reveals ‘more than bounded rationality’ from the Thai government.

Popkarn Arwatchanakarn (University of Newcastle)

Macroeconomic Modelling for Thai Monetary Policy Analysis under Two Exchange Rate Regimes

This study aims to highlight the importance of price stability with the conduct of monetary policy. Using data from the mid-1970s or a shorter period, the study undertakes an empirical investigation of key issues in inflation and monetary policy in Thailand under two different exchange rate arrangements. The study adopts a macroeconomic modelling approach to investigate interrelations among the key macroeconomic variables under two exchange-rate arrangements, namely fixed-pegged exchange-rate regime for the period 1950-1997 and managed float exchange-rate regime for the period 1998-2014. After taking into account some institutional features of the Thai economy, this study specifies two models and then estimated by deploying both annual and quarterly data depending on data availability. The estimated models are applied to investigate and compare the impacts of both policy and exogenous shocks on the Thai economy. The empirical findings of the study under two exchange rate regimes are then used to draw monetary policy implications for both maintaining price stability and sustaining steady economic growth.

Piyanoot Putthawong (Thammasat University)

Thai-Lao Border Trade for AEC: Comparative Study of Nong Khai and Mukdahan Provinces

Thailand is located at the strategic centre of the ASEAN region, gained favourable border trade with its four neighbouring countries comprises the largest proportion of border trade especially, Lao PDR where is the border trade value increasing every year. It is important for the Thai economy and directly influences development in other ASEAN members to meet AEC. The study using comparative studies and conducted based on the qualitative method of in-depth interviews of local government and private sector. Then determine whether Nong Khai or Mukdahan is better prepared for border trade to enter AEC2015 requirements with five
factors: education, infrastructure, regulations, activity and relationship. The data was analysed in three areas: 1) Compare the role of local government and businesses, 2) Analyse the border trade statistics and 3) Integrate local government and businesses with the MPAC. The study found the three problems with styles to develop border trade: 1) The local administration lack of knowledge; 2) local business not strong community; and 3) lack of unity and less cooperation. Nongkhai have a higher trade value and the growth rate rapidly increasing every year than Mukdahan, they are ready to meet the AEC 2015 quickly by the best cooperation between local government and local business. The AEC and these influential factors have gradually shaped Thailand and ASEAN countries. Moreover, both key players must cooperate, brainstorming and communicate together. Border trade promotion throughout the AEC will address most of the opportunities and challenges to be faced in the future.

Tantima Tungjaipongtham (Thammasat University)
Thailand Aviation Development towards ASEAN Single Aviation Market 2015: A Comparative Study of Thailand Public and Private Sector in the Aviation Industry

In an era of emerging Association of Southeast Asia Nation (ASEAN) Community, ASEAN member state are agreed to fully liberalize for the economic integration at the end of 2015. At the same target date, the ASEAN Single Aviation Market (ASAM) will be fully liberalized. As ASEAN member states are difference in term of economic status, politics and social context, it is significance to discover the preparation of ASEAN members on their development towards the upcoming challenges and opportunities. In case of Thailand, conducting research by in-depth interview and collected secondary data from public and private sectors in aviation industry, aviation laws, regulations and policies, aviation infrastructure, airlines operation and aviation personnel have been discussed. All aviation parties are fully attempted and prepared to enjoy benefit and advantages from single market aviation by endeavour the same direction of plans, strategies and projects. While, the awaiting for approval process of related laws and regulation revisions; the unfinished, delayed and timeframe beyond 2015 airports development projects; the limitation of airlines access to member states airports through the implementation of endorsed multilateral agreements; and the need of professional teaching in aviation schools are considered as difficulties preventing Thai aviation industry from fully developed and readied to compete with other state members by 2015.

Language and Education I

Discussant: Professor Nick Enfield

John Knox (Macquarie University)
Communicative Differences in Spoken Exchanges: Thai Learners with Thai and Foreign Teachers

This paper reports on the discourse of two interviews conducted in English at a Thai university: one between a Thai learner of English and a Thai teacher of English, and one between a Thai learner of English and a Canadian teacher of English. In each interview, the teacher asked the learners about student and teacher roles and responsibilities. Analysis of the interviews was conducted using Systemic Functional Linguistics, and revealed that the Thai-Thai interview involved a considerable degree of 'joint construction' of the student contributions, whereas the Thai-Canadian interview involved the student taking on a higher degree of 'discursive independence'. Implications for pedagogy and for notions of World Englishes are considered.

David Evans (University of Sydney) and Kanokporn Vibulpatanavong (Srinakharinwirot University)
Examining a Framework for Supporting the All Thai Students in Learning to Read

Learning to construct the meaning of text empowers one for a lifetime. While the definition of 'reading' is contested within the modern digital environment, the simple view of reading contends that difficulty in decoding text (i.e., identifying the code on the page) and/or comprehension (i.e., understanding the language within the text) (Tumner, Greaney &
Prochnow. 2015) can impact one’s ability to independently extract meaning from text. Providing students in the early years of schooling the skills to become skilled and independent readers is a goal of education systems around the world. This goal is paramount within the context of Thailand as they strive to enhance capital within its citizens. In working to ensure all young children learn to be skilled readers; schools are reflecting practices from other developed countries (e.g., USA, Australia). This paper seeks to draw on research undertaken within schools in Bangkok in regards to early reading assessments, and to examine the emerging use of processes to address reading difficulties experienced by some students in primary schools (e.g., Response to Intervention; Thai Ministry of Education’s cchecklists for screening nine types of disabilities). The key tenants of these processes will be outlined, and cautions outlined in implementing them without considering the outcomes from research other countries and upholding the key tenants. The final part of the paper will examine how valid and reliable early reading assessments could go part way in addressing concerns about the implementation processes like RtI in Thai schools; directions for future research that supports all students in learning to read in a timely manner will be outlined.

**Assunta Hunter (University of Melbourne)**

*Citizenship and the Making of Modern Traditional Medicine Practitioners: A Comparison of Thailand, India and Australia*

There are political dimensions to the acquisition and creation of professional expertise in a rapidly modernising country and this paper explores how notions of expertise are intimately connected to forms of education and to cultural understandings of knowledge, legitimacy and value. I draw on ethnographic material from research in Thailand showing how Thai health policies have re-shaped the practice of Thai traditional medicine through university-based education, the licensing of practitioners and the introduction of a scientific rationale for treatment. University education has transformed the status and aspirations of students studying Thai traditional medicine and created tensions within the traditional medicine community about the changing knowledge base and the status of licensed and unlicensed practitioners. I use a comparative perspective to examine the regulation of practitioners and the establishment of a state-supported hierarchy of legitimacy and skill that excludes unlicensed Thai traditional medicine practitioners (folk healers). I compare the selective authorisation of modern licensed practitioners and the de-legitimation of traditional healers in India and in Australia and interrogate the linking of modern professionalised practice to citizenship, the formal health system and notions of nationhood. The contradictions and tensions inherent in offering professional recognition for a specific group, exemplify the problems associated with the concept of medical expertise cultivated only through university training. I examine the problematic potentials of state authorised expertise that carries with it the status, values and meanings associated with the institutions of modern medicine and the promise of modern citizenship.

**Nitipong Pichetpan (Thammasat University)**

*Playing with “Shit”: An Analysis on Compound Words Headed by an Excrement Meaning Component in Central Thai and Northeastern Thai*

The single word ขี้ /kʰîː/ in Central Thai and its counterpart in Isan are principally defined as faeces that leave through the anus. Also, they occur as a verb expressing an action of passing excrement. There are, in addition, certain words formed in each regional variant by the process of composition where the excrement-meaning component precedes others. A preliminary look shows that such compounds of the two variants considered separately are formed in diverse grammatical structures and that although comparatively some of them rather indicate denotation explicitly linked to excreta and suggest connotation concerning discarded materials, some in both variants could implicate a sense of negativism in entities mentioned. Moreover, as for verb compounds, the words with the first component ขี้ /kʰîː/ possibly express the high frequency of an action referred. However, the initial look has not demonstrated numbers of lexical patterns and of possible meanings, related to the compounds.
in the two variants. The present study aims at examining grammatical models formed with the first component /khʰi/ and possible significations of the compounds therein. Furthermore, the compounds also need semantic classification to a greater extent. Analytically, morphological and semantic notions of compounds proposed by Bauer (1983, 1998, 2001, and 2004) are considerably adopted. The analysis suggests the principle internal structures and the semantic constraints on consecutive components in both dialects. It also confirms that meanings of compounds may be assigned in isolation from those of the components. Besides, a notion of head-preceding endocentric meanings of compounds, largely found in the Thai language, is likely to be herein called into question.

Session 3

Politics and Society II

Discussant: Dr Chavalin Svetanant

Ladawan Khaikham (Australian National University)
From Stateless to Citizen: Stateless Youths in Thailand and Japan

Citizenship is simply seen as nationality: individuals either are, or are not citizens of a specific country (McCargo, 2011). The theory of citizenship was discussed by T.H. Marshall with three core components: civil, political, and social rights (Marshall, 1950). Nevertheless, citizenship is a negotiated relationship between state and individuals involving rights, responsibility, and obligation. Stateless people in Japan, especially those who are from refugee camps in Thailand, is not recognized by the Japanese Government whilst stateless people Thailand are recognized and have been in waiting for their legal status for more than 30 years. The paper discusses the study of stateless youths along the Thailand-Myanmar border in comparison to stateless youths in Japan. It offers the discussion on how stateless youths negotiate their basic rights through education, healthcare service, legal protection and restriction of movement with the state. Finally, this paper drawn on a conclusion that the stateless youths can negotiate their right with the Governments. The stateless situation, as international phenomenon, requires the cooperation of the states to solve the problem. Consequently, granting them citizenship will make these youths less vulnerable.

Nicole Jenne (Catholic University of Chile)
Domestic Mobilization and the Political Constraints on Conflict: Evidence from the Thai-Cambodian Border, 2008-2011

Strong states were once the center point of international security considerations. Paradoxically, however, in the post-Cold War era the international community has sought to promote the creation of strong states in order to build a more peaceful international order. Weak states, the conventional wisdom holds, are exporters of insecurity and cause external conflict by incentivizing diversionary wars. How does this fit with the observation that large-scale inter-state conflict has only rarely occurred in regions populated by states lacking domestic capacity? This paper enquires into the effects of state ‘incapacity’ on foreign policy behavior in the case of the Thai-Cambodian conflict over the border at the temple of Preah Vihear during 2008-2011. Based on qualitative evidence, I compare the policy strategies of Thailand and Cambodia with regards to their capacity to mobilize domestic resources. Internal weakness, I argue, wielded a conflict-inhibiting effect on both states.

Alisa Hasamoh (James Cook University)
Natural Disaster and Conflict Research Methodologies: A Case Study of Aceh, Indonesia and the Deep South of Thailand

This paper describes and reflects on a research methodology used to study the inter-related social impacts of natural disasters and violent conflict in two sites – Aceh in Indonesia and the
Deep South of Thailand. The paper follows three stages in the development and implementation of the methodology. First, it presents the researcher’s own experience of both natural disasters and living in a violent conflict zone and how this experience shaped the conceptualization of the research. Second, the paper discusses the importance of building relationships of trust between the researcher and interviewees and how this was approached during the collection of data. Third, the paper examines the question of how researchers’ background and techniques of data analysis can be brought together and applied to reflexive, comparative studies. As a result of the existing research experience, the new research methodology and methods of comparative studies in natural disaster on top of violent conflict has emerged.

Geography and Environment II

Discussant: Dr Yayoi Lagerqvist

Tubtim Tubtim (Chiang Mai University)
Class and Agrarian Change in Comparative Perspectives: A Case Study of Peri-Urban Chiang Mai

Class has long been a core theme in studies of agrarian change. In earlier studies of agrarian change in Thailand and more widely in Southeast Asia, class was based on means of production – access to land, labour and capital. Increasingly with urban penetration of the countryside, with de-agrarianisation and with post-productivist understandings of society, class analysis has been influenced by consumption values and patterns. Rural change is rapid in most parts of Thailand and more generally in Southeast Asia, but perhaps nowhere more so than in peri-urban areas. This talk will use a case study of peri-urban Chiang Mai to compare class and agrarian change across time on analysis of class, and across space with comparative reference to cases elsewhere in Southeast Asia.

Ming Li Yong (University of Sydney)
Assembling Transboundary Decision-Making Arenas and Hydropower Development in the Lowe Mekong River Basin: The Cases of Thailand and Cambodia

The Lao People’s Democratic Republic (PDR) government’s decisions to proceed with the unprecedented construction of two dams on the mainstream of the Lower Mekong River have alarmed its neighbours due to their potential and understudied harmful impacts to livelihoods and food security across the Lower Mekong Basin (LMB), comprising Thailand, Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Vietnam. While the Thai government has vested interests in at least one of these dams, it has also had to deal with domestic and transnational advocacy networks who have challenged the extraterritorial obligations of the Thai state agencies, companies, and banks involved in the Xayaburi Dam project. These challenges have taken place within relatively new multi-scalar ‘decision-making arenas’ (Dore et al., 2012) that have emerged in this context of unprecedented LMB mainstream dam construction. This can be seen in terms of new translocal assemblages (McFarlane, 2009) that have emerged in the LMB, where government institutions and civil society have had to deal with the challenges of participating in, and influencing decision-making across national boundaries. This study aims to understand how transboundary decision-making processes have been implemented and contested in the LMB, with a focus on comparing the experiences of government institutions and civil society in Thailand and Cambodia. The dynamics and relationships between these actors have played out in unique ways in both countries, and this study aims to identify how the practices and configurations within the translocal assemblages that constitute these decision-making arenas may contribute towards a more inclusive and just space of governance in the Mekong Region.

Shekh Mohammad Altafur Rahman (Thammasat University)
Thailand’s Initiative against Haze Problem: A Rejection of the Dichotomy between the Traditional Farming Practice and Environmental Protection
The popular perception about the smoky haze problem in Thailand indicates traditional farming practice as its cause. This paper describes that the rampant burning of vegetation to clear rice fields and discarding agricultural waste in nine provinces of North Thailand troubles the region from February to May. It argues whether this traditional farming practice is the sole cause of the wide-spread haze problem or not is a bigger question. The serious air pollution and significant forest-fire pose challenge to public health, local economy, food security, tourism and environmental sustainability. As a response the Thai government approved a plan with a budget of 98.8 Million THB in March 2016. At the core of the plan is a preventative campaign focusing on villagers who clear forestland for farming or burn off rice fields (TTR Weekly, 9 March 2016). By reviewing existing literature on the topic the paper analyses various programs under the plan and argues that most of those actions presuppose the traditional farming practice as opposite to environmental protection. The paper argues that the governments’ plan to protect environment shall be viewed holistically. It suggests that previous pitfalls of the sustainable solution of the haze problem shall be reconsidered. The suitability of recommended agricultural methods, monitoring government program and social acceptance of the slash-and-burn techniques shall be reviewed. It concludes by suggesting that relevant stakeholder participation is needed to deconstruct the dichotomy between the traditional farming practice and environment protection.
Tuesday 27 September 2016

Session 4

Religion and Society I

Discussant: Dr Patrick Jory

Peter Jackson (Australian National University)

Living across Religious and Gender Differences in Thailand: Context and Hierarchy as Regimes of Power over Ethno-Cultural Multiplicity in Southeast Asia

How do societies at the intersection of several religious and cultural traditions establish order? What forms of power come into play in negotiating multiple co-existing cultural forms, when each may operate by a radically different, perhaps incommensurable, cultural logic? In this paper I argue that in Southeast Asia processes variously labeled as contextualisation, compartmentalisation, or autonomisation -- where domains of cultural life are divided into largely discrete but nonetheless hierarchically ordered spaces or settings -- have been a common response to the need to establish social order in this cultural borderland, where everyday life requires skill in living across multiple forms of radical cultural difference. The contextuality of religious expression, gender culture and other domains of life has been a recurring trope in anthropological studies of Southeast Asian societies. However, to date, this has remained largely a descriptive account lacking theorisation. I suggest that a theory of context and hierarchy as strategies of power over appropriated cultural “others” has the potential to bring Southeast Asian studies into productive dialogue with other models of negotiating cultural difference that have emerged from other domains of “area” studies. A theory of Southeast Asian hierarchical contextualisation as a regime of cultural-political power could speak to hybridity theory, which emerged from South Asian and Latin American studies, respectively, as well as to critical of accounts of the assimilationism that underpins policies of multiculturalism in post-WWII Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand. As a first step, I draw on studies of the contextuality of religion, gender and language use in Thailand, and expand my (2004) account of the surface nature of power in the Thai regime of images. I argue that this mode of power in contemporary Thailand, which contrasts with Foucault’s panoptic model of modern power as intrusive, emerges in part from a deep history of negotiating multiplicity and represents one response to the challenge of constructing social and cultural order in a setting characterised by multiple incommensurable cultural logics.

Natcharee Suwannapat (Thammasat University)

Negotiating ‘Modern’ and ‘Traditional’ Values in Thai Newlywed Marriages

Recent debates in studies of family have paid great attention to the historical transformation of marriage. The dichotomy of ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ marriage has proved useful in conceptualizing different marriage types; however, it may also limit our understanding of the transformation of marriage. Marriage nowadays is a complicated and ongoing resulting from the continuing introduction of novelty, together with the continued influence of past values and practices. The presentation will elaborate on the ways married couples develop married selves and marriage through navigating the competing ideals of tradition and modernity. Twenty-two Thai newlyweds’ experiences demonstrate that both the modern and traditional values are sets of ideas from which the couples choose in creating their particular version of the marital relationship. Whereas the newlyweds often embrace modern values of equality, freedom and personal preference, they also maintain some of the values of traditional marriage, for example, dividing their labour along gender lines and devoting themselves to the couple in order to establish a sense of togetherness and marital stability. Thus, I argue that what happens in Thai marriages neither follows a rigid pattern/fixed script determined by tradition, nor demonstrates a complete value as suggested by ideas of modernity. This reinforces the notion that traditional and modern values are unable to be assumed as something ‘real’ that
can be uncritically described, but rather are social constructions to which individuals and groups have different relationships at different times, enabling those constructions to be subject to change over time and to vary across individuals/groups.

Zulfadhli Hilmi Bin Mohamad (National University of Singapore)

Expanding the Islam in Islamic Arts: A Study of the Patani Contemporary Arts Scene

Attempts to understand Islamic art has been largely based on its aesthetic principles such as Arabic calligraphy and the use of arabesque patterns. Art historians have codified these principles towards the categorization of Islamic art. However, such conventional criteria in the designation of Islamic art, fails to recognize the diversity of Islamic art in various societies, especially non-Arab ones. I argue that this neglect in art history can be overcome by paying attention to the artist’s source of inspiration (ilham) and intentions (niat) in producing art. In this paper, I employ ethnographic methods, such as interviews and primary observations of the social context within which these artists operate in, to complement the aesthetic analysis of art historians to study the religiously inspired contemporary Muslim artists in southern Thailand. In my preliminary assessment, while conducting semi-formal interviews in Patani, I observed that these artists constantly observed the teachings of Islam, when they create, study and discuss their works of art. Through the understanding of Islamic art within the context of Patani, the premise of Islamic art will extend beyond the Arab world, and its codified aesthetics principles.

Politics and Society III

Discussant: Dr Aim Sinpeng

Jonathan Rante Carreon (Huachiew Chalermprakiet University) and Chavalin Svetanant, (Macquarie University)

I AM THE BOSS: A Critical Analysis of Thai PM’s Political Discourse on TV Programme “Returning Happiness to the People”

Discourse is a form of social practice and an integral part of a communicative event, depicting ideologies which influence culture and the distribution/circulation of power in a society. Employing the tools of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the main goals of this paper are to qualitatively and quantitatively examine the political discourse of the Thai Prime Minister General Prayut Chan-o-cha in the speeches he delivered on the TV program ‘Returning Happiness to the People’ or in Thai คืนความสุขให้ประชาชน (Khuen Khwam Suk Hai Prachachon). The findings reveal moves and attitudes, linguistic features, and linguistic strategies laid within the political discourse, which are manifestations of ideologies in the discursive practice. While the PM’s speech is characterised by simple language, it is evident that invocations of power are interspersed throughout the discursive practice. To broadly understand the similarities and differences of the moves and structure, linguistic features and linguistic strategies employed by popular world leaders in communicating with their constituents, the findings are further examined in relation with the results obtained from the analyses of the political discourses of these world leaders.

Wimonsiri Hemthanon (Mahidol University)

Framing on Facebook: Case Studies on Thai Virtual Public Sphere during the Transitional Period

The violent crackdown on Thailand’s pro-democracy movement in 2010 established Facebook as a crucial channel for information and communication among the Thai Netizen in a situation of political uncertainty. It was not only used as a hub to self-broadcast a collage of news media snippets mixed with accusations and tales documented by citizen journalists and sourced from a variety of social media platforms as the events unfolded. Today, Facebook has become of increasing importance as a vehicle for the casual commentator to air political opinions and a tool to channel support for political campaigns and related activities in the struggle for meaning of political causes on citizen’s minds. Three prominent individual and Facebook pages
had been observed in this study; Sasin Chalermlarp – an environmental activist individual
Facebook, The Citizen Resistant – a Facebook page of political activists and The Rabbish
Collection Organization – a Facebook page of royalist supporters. The study examined how
Thai Facebook users, as the subject of the societal movement, use Facebook as their
communication tools to frame and reproduce discourses in order to maintain and enhance their
power by using concept of capitals as well as the reaction of the state towards the online
movement in Thailand at this present time.

Rotjaret Narongrach (Waseda University)
Fighting for Righteousness: Economic Foundations and Regionalism in Southern Women’s
Demonstrations against the Shinawatra Government

In the rallies to topple the Thaksin government and Thaksin network parties in 2006, 2008,
and 2013-2014, the protests were spearheaded by the People’s Alliance for Democracy
(PAD) and later by the People’s Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC). Notably, female
demonstrators outnumbered their male counterparts. Most female demonstrators were not only
from Bangkok but also from the south of Thailand. In particular, the fact that greater numbers
of active southern women participated in the rallies than men was unprecedented. Previous
studies have attempted to explain the anti-Thaksin movement in terms of class, economy, and
the ideology of Bangkokian protesters. They have overlooked the role played by women from
the south. In addition, the description of the PAD and PDRC protesters as middle class and
metropolitan has neglected the role of the southern political movement. This study focuses on
crucial political participants, southern women. The paper analyzes two key factors that directly
related to such a phenomenon: (1) the economic background factors that initiated the southern
women’s movement; and (2) the reasons for southern women’s irrational support for the
Democrat Party by using a regionalism framework. In addition, this study also explores the
achievements of the Democrat Party in creating its popularity by exploiting regionalism and
royalism. As a result, it invoked southerners, particularly women, to participate in
demonstrations on their behalf as allies of the southerners.

Thannapat Jarernpanit (Chiang Mai University)
Pa Sia Daeng vs. Pa Sia Luang: the Different Perspectives in Two Sides of Politics and Regions

This paper aims to discuss the different perspectives of the old women people, who plays the
active role inside the Red Shirts and the Yellow Shirts political groups in Chiang Mai and
Bangkok of Thailand. This work concerned on the issue in the gender political role of the old
aunt (or called Pa in Thai language) in the contemporary divided political conflicts in Thailand.
The different perspectives of this women groups in the different areas could reflect the crucial
point of the women role in the Thai politics as well as the class conflicts and regionalism based
issues.

Political Economy II

Discussant: Dr Gavan Butler

Monthien Satimanon (Thammasat University) and Thasanee Satimanon (National Institute
of Development Administration)
Dynamic Systemic Vulnerability and Middle Income Trap: Comparative Study of Singapore and
Thailand

Though the concept and empirical studies of Middle Income Trap (MIT), a situation in which a
country that has developed its status from being low-income country (LIC) to a middle-income
country (MIC), but it has small prospect to develop to the high-income country (HIC), has only
been developed for the past ten years (Gill & Kharas, 2015). The main economic cause of MTI
is eroding country’s’ competitiveness in the world market since declining labor productivity as
well as increasing industry sectors’ reliance on foreign capital and technology. As a result, a
conventional solution for MTI involves the measures to upgrade the exporting goods through
the design, process, and production, extensive use of export-led strategy, human capital development (education and training), and research and development (R&D). This paper seeks to shed light on the success/failure of conventional policies to overcome middle income trap in two prospects. First, it extends the concept of static systemic vulnerability to dynamic systemic vulnerability. Second, by using dynamic concept, paper explores why Thai’s economy fails whereas Singapore’s economy succeeds. The paper examines these questions through dynamic relationship between structural conditions, coalitional breadth, and urgency and willingness of the ruling class to embrace productivity upgrading measures at critical juncture. In explaining Singapore’s greater economic performance, the paper emphasizes on interaction of key political economic factors, economic crises and hurdles, importance of productivity growth in the economy, relationship within or between ruling class, and need for deepening and widening coalitional breadth, and options for growth without upgrading.

Veerayooth Kanchoochat (National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies/GRIPS, Tokyo)
The Middle-Income Curse: The Making and Mutation of Thailand’s Developmental State

This paper examines the “middle-income trap” from an institutionalist political economy framework and puts the Thai case into an East Asian comparative perspective. It develops the concept of institutional compatibility – meaning the compatibility between political institutions for power sharing and economic institutions for policymaking – to explain the success and failure of countries’ transitions from middle-income to high-income levels. The argument is threefold. First, after undergoing economic growth for decades, most countries would face the problem of institutional decay as their previously well-functioning institutional arrangements no longer fit either among themselves or with changing contexts. Second, from the East Asian development experience, there have been two possible routes to escape from such institutional decay: (a) replacing old political institutions with more democratic ones to serve new demands from economic actors (South Korea and Taiwan); and (b) consolidating old economic institutions towards more directive state intervention to serve the political status quo (Singapore and Malaysia). Third, Thailand could do neither and has been plagued by an increasing incompatibility between its political and economic institutions. In the past two decades, whenever elected governments came to power with growth-enhancing policies, they would cause political discontent among the marginalised unelected elite. On the other hand, while the military-backed governments may be able to restore social order, their political alliances and ideological legitimacy would deter them from making meaningful growth-enhancing policies. This interlocking condition is “cursed” by Thailand’s relative success during the catching-up process.

John Walsh and Petcharat Lovitchakornkitkul (Shinawatra University)
Industrial Policy, Special Economic Zones and the Middle Income Trap: Thailand’s Economy in Comparative Perspective

Thailand is on the verge of exiting the Middle Income Trap (MIT) by virtue of having successfully completed its trajectory along the Factory Asia paradigm of import-substituting, export-oriented, intensive manufacturing with low labour cost competitiveness. The Pheu Thai government (2011-4) outlined a plan to achieve this through raising the minimum wage, encouraging value-added production in manufacturing and encouraging low labour cost companies to offshore their activities to cross-border special economic zones (SEZs) such as Myanmar’s Dawei. This position was transformed by the 2014 military coup, after which the junta conflated industrial policy and labour migration with national security as part of the multi-pronged war against the working poor and migrant labour. Fundamentally, the opportunity to enact the single most important requirement for successful exit from the MIT – trusting the people – has been lost for the foreseeable future, as it becomes increasingly evident that the junta will not consider relinquishing power and control of the money until well into the next reign. Deprived of coherent political leadership, what are the prospects for the Thai economy to move forward to the qualitative changes needed? This paper investigates cases of MIT negotiation in Korea, Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan as a means of trying to assess how, if at all, Thailand’s economy will be able to make meaningful progress. It is evident that the public sector will need to take a strong role in this effort, although it is possible that
private sector interests can substitute for government agencies, as did take place under Pheu Thai to some extent. The discussion of industrial policy and SEZs leads to the formulation of some policy recommendations.

**Session 5**

**History and Historiography II**

*Discussant: Dr. Arjun Subrahmayan*

**Patrick Jory (University of Queensland)**

*Thailand's Civilising Process*

In Thailand today manners are politically charged. The debilitating political crisis that began in 2005 has brought the subject of manners and morality to centre stage. Adapting Norbert Elias’s concept of the “civilizing process” this paper proposes a schema that accounts for the historical development of Thai manners. The hypothesis is that there are four broad periods that are crucial to the formation of modern codes of appropriate conduct in Thailand: the “age of colonialism” in the second half of nineteenth century, when the Thai court was forced to adapt to the European standards of behaviour, in particular the ideal of the “English gentleman”, due to colonial pressures; the “age of revolution” dating from around the first decade of the twentieth century to the beginning of the Cold War, which witnessed a reaction against courtly protocols, the growing popularity of more egalitarian models of social interaction, from notions of the “gentleman” to etiquette for the modern woman. This period culminated with the overthrow of the Absolute Monarchy in 1932 and the establishment of a constitutional nationalist regime; the “age of reaction” starting from the late 1950s, when royalist culture made a comeback under a military dictatorship and conservative, courtly ideals of behaviour were elevated as the standard for Thai citizens to emulate; and the “age of development”, when rapid economic development, the spread of the mass media, the expansion of the private sector, and the influence of liberal ideas, challenged the conservative status quo.

**Kittisak Sujittarom (Waseda University)**

*The History of Thailand’s Mother’s Day and Its Politics in Comparative Perspective*

Mother’s Day is an ‘invented tradition’ of the modern nation-state in the 20th century. The origins of Mother’s Day in each country differs depending on the culture, even though most of them were widely adopted from the American tradition. It seems that Thailand’s Mother’s Day, which originated in the 1950s (Phibun era) and was revived in 1976 as the Queen’s birthday, was quite different from America’s. How can we understand the history of Thailand’s Mother’s Day and its politics from a comparative perspective? Due to the lack of in-depth detail in previous works, this paper provides new material by using primary sources such as archival documents and newspapers to illustrate the history of Mother’s Day and to analyze its connection to the state’s agenda. In order to clarify both specific and common characteristics among other traditions around the world, this paper discusses alternative Mother’s Days, such as in Japan, Germany, and America. It argues that the history of the Thai and Japanese cases are in reverse. Japan’s Mother’s Day was changed from the Empress’s birthday during the period of the 1930s-40s to the American tradition in 1949, whereas Thailand’s Mother’s Day was changed from emphasizing the ordinary people to emphasizing the Establishment. Moreover, interestingly, Thailand’s Mother’s Day in the 1950s was somewhat similar to Germany’s during the Nazi period, in which the emphasis was on boosting the birthrate and improving national health. Using a comparative perspective this paper not only explains the history of Mother’s Day in Thailand, but criticizes the use of Mother’s Day in the state’s interest.

**Estrella Montient (Silpakorn University)**

*The Challenges of Developing a Shared History of Thai-Dutch Relation into a Museum: Collaboration, Curatorial Voice and Practice: A Case Study of Baan Hollanda*
“We can’t really say something bad about the king, can we?” These were some parts of conversation during the process of developing Baan Hollanda, a historical information center of Thai-Dutch relation which in 2010, the Dutch foreign ministry employed me as a museum consultant and project director. This paper explains the behind the scene process how I set up and dealt with the differences of perspective and practice of two nations in making a museum. For example, a selection process for a story telling, how we tell the “truth” to our audience, which “truth” is “true”, Asian or European? Such as the content of “the picnic incident”, when drunken Dutchmen were initially sentenced to be trampled to death by royal elephants, the Dutch thought that the incident should be told as it was a funny story while the Thais were much concerned about it because it may damage the reputation of Thai king.

Jason Lim (University of Wollongong)
The Status of the Overseas Chinese Merchant in Nation-Building: Thailand and South Vietnam

Chinese citizenship laws were passed by the Qing Dynasty in 1909 and the Nationalist government of the Republic of China in 1929. Citizenship was determined by the principle of jus sanguinis, where anyone who was ethnic Chinese would be a citizen if his/her father was an ethnic Chinese. However, the presence of the overseas Chinese – especially the merchant – became the focal point of a nationalist agenda by King Vajiravudh after he ascended the throne in 1910 and reinforced by the new People’s Party government following the bloodless June 1932 coup. Similarly, as part of his plans for the new Republic of Vietnam, President Ngo Dinh Diem announced policies that were largely implemented to assimilate his country’s ethnic Chinese into (South) Vietnamese society and making it difficult for ethnic Chinese merchants to trade in South Vietnam. The communist victory in China in 1949 placed the new regime in Beijing in an awkward position: while the laws clearly favoured citizenship to ethnic Chinese, the Southeast Asian Chinese (especially the merchants) showed little signs of wanting to go to China. Added to that was the Cold War concern that Beijing would be promoting revolution to Southeast Asia through the Chinese communities there. During the Bandung Conference, new Chinese premier Zhou Enlai said that the overseas Chinese could take up citizenship in the territories they were residing. My presentation will compare the ‘nation-building’ experience of Thailand and South Vietnam for the countries’ Chinese merchants.

Law and Society II

Discussant: Professor Luke Nottage

Bjoern Dressel (Australian National University) and Khemthong Tolsakulrungruang (Chulalongkorn University)
Who is Doing the Judging?: A Look at the Thai Constitutional Court (1998-2015)

Thailand’s Constitutional Court (CC) looks back at a tumultuous history. Created almost two decades ago as part of far reaching constitutional and political reforms, the court has been embroiled in major political controversies with far reaching consequences for political governance in Thailand. Yet its ability to act as an independent political arbiter has been questioned based on a number of high profile decisions that have favoured one political camp following the 2006 coup. Observers have attributed this to the traditional close relations between the judiciary and the traditional political elites. Yet is this view empirically justifiable? Based on an original dataset of 50 judges on the CC bench between 1998-2015, our paper seeks to provide an initial sketch of the socio-biographic background of CC judges, changes in the composition of the bench and linkages between judges and traditional political elites via existing social and political networks. We present evidence for increasingly partisan nominations to the bench despite formal apolitical appointment procedures and growing ties between judicial and traditional political elites. Our study thus provides further evidence for the politicization of the court and growing ties between judicial and political elites. It raises important issues for the public legitimacy of the court and the prospects for the rule of law in Thailand – issues critical to Thailand’s ongoing political transition.
**Kwanchanok Kittiwanchich (University of Manchester)**

*The Politicisation of the Judiciary under the Authoritarian Regimes: the Comparative Studies of Egypt and Thailand*

This paper aims to challenge the understanding of the judicial role in authoritarian regimes, which is identified as “muteness” and suggests that judiciary has highly politicised itself during such regimes as well as democracy regimes. Regarding the political contexts of Egypt and Thailand that have experienced on and off polarised political unrest and military junta since 2011 until present, the supreme constitutional court of Egypt and the constitutional court of Thailand have politicised themselves to secure the authoritarian regime with strategies as follows: (1) providing legal legitimacy to the ruler and sideling political opponents; (2) upholding economic capital that nourishes the regime, by protecting neoliberal ideology in national policy and facilitating trust for foreign investors; (3) offering opportunity to the judiciary to politicise itself by giving controversial decisions on policy implementations and the interpretation between legal accountability and political accountability that, in this sense, court will have no solid precedent to follow; and (4) institutionalising the deep state, that in Egypt’s context, it refers to the military network and Mubarak loyalists while in Thailand, it refers to the network monarchy. All these strategies demonstrate that in authoritarian regimes, where most of political institutions are fragmented, court is not passive but it still plays a significant role to preserve self-hierarchy of elites and to some extent it paves the path toward the juristocracy.

**Sarah Bishop (Australian National University)**

*The Judicialisation Reconsidered: Individual Petitions before the Thai Constitutional Court 2007-2014*

In recent years academic attention on the Thai courts, in particular the Constitutional Court, has increased substantially as the courts have become much more significant political actors. The focus, however, has been almost exclusively on a small number of highly politicized cases in which the courts have intervened and on the role of judges in driving change. This paper will take a different approach to understanding the role of the Constitutional Court in the post-2007 period, focusing instead on cases where it has been asked to intervene and has refused to do so through an analysis of rejected petitions submitted to the court under sections 68 and 212 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2550 (2007). The analysis will support the contention that the court in the post-2007 period became highly politicized, but suggest the shift was more complex than currently understood. In particular, it will suggest that whilst judges had a significant role in the changes, they faced significant pressure to do so due to the nature of petitions coming to the court both under powers which were clearly political and under powers which were less clearly political. It will also suggest that whilst the court has commonly been understood as taking a highly activist role there have been many occasions where restraint has been exercised. These findings have ramifications for how the Thai Constitutional Court and judicialization process are understood comparatively, indicating that they may not be as exceptional or different as current portrayals suggest.

**Jutha Saovabha (Georgetown University)**

*Ending Impunity for the Coup in Thailand: the People’s Tribunal for Justice*

Since its democratic revolution in 1932, Thailand has had 18 coups. Every time the military stages the coup, the military government deprives the citizens of rights and liberty by arbitrarily detaining, arresting, and restricting those who attempt to act against the government. Throughout Thai history, the military juntas, however, have never been convicted of such human rights violations. In the wake of the recent coup in 2014 and absence of the legal research, this paper aims to propose the People’s Tribunal as an alternative justice to end impunity for the act of the coup itself and human rights violation by the military in Thailand. First, this paper will examine the possible means to prosecute the military junta under the Thai constitution, criminal law, and the court’s reasoning. These mechanisms, however, do not efficiently mete out justice. Then, the paper will introduce the concept of the People’s Tribunal and samples from several countries, such as Vietnam, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and others.
This paper will use a comparative method to examine the historical backgrounds and threshold of the situations in each country that motivate people to establish the People’s Tribunals to act against the repressive authorities and regimes. In addition, this paper will analyze challenges and evaluate the success of people’s tribunals in several cases. Ultimately, this comparative study will consider how establishing the People’s Tribunal can be the feasible solution to enable the existing laws to prosecute the military junta and end impunity culture that has been rooted in Thai society.

**Arts and Culture II**

*Discussant: Dr Anjalee Cohen*

**Natanaree Posrithong (Mahidol University)**

*Siamese Modern Girl and Women’s Consumerist Culture in Siam 1920-1935*

This paper studies the emergence of the Modern Girl as an icon of consumerism and femininity in Siam from 1920 to 1932. This final decade of the Siamese absolutist monarchy marked the rise of female literacy and the remarkable increase in the number of women’s magazines and newspapers. The Modern Girl Around the World Research Group studied that the period between 1925 and 1935, was when the Modern Girl became popular in Asia. While the Modern Girl icon, as a popular symbol of femininity, emerged as a global phenomenon: the same icon, sao samai (modern woman) in the Siamese print media, has been overlooked in current women’s study. Therefore, the key focus of this paper is to discover the consumer trends and the definitions behind the images of sao samai that portrayed in the women’s magazines and newspapers during the period of Siam's social and political transitions. From the preliminary survey, the period between 1925 and 1933 was the most flourishing period for the publications of women’s magazines. From the records at the National Library of Thailand, there were as many as ten magazines that emerged during the decade before the revolution in 1932. This paper is based on analysis of these sources. Through considering these historical materials, this study reveals trends and the significance of women’s consumerist culture in Siam’s pre-revolutionary period.

**Purinut Phumitharanon (University of Sydney)**

*Behind the Smiles: A Study of Cultural Factors and Employee Silence in Thai Manufacturing*

Many cultural factors and dimensions underlie managerial practices. In considering this, these factors reflect on many norms and behaviours. The cultural factors of power distance, collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity in particular are very prominent in the East and South East Asian context. Differences that vary amongst nations suggest potential issues when these cultures interact; thus to better prepare foreign investors, an importance to how these cultural factors apply in the workplace should be given. One of the main aspects of workplace behaviour is communication. And within this domain lies the area of employee silence, which is the behaviour of not speaking up to superiors. Many implications occur when employees do not engage in speaking up about important concerns and matters in the workplace. For example, this can be detrimental to productivity and efficiency. Employee silence can be affected by many factors, and culture is not an exception. Moreover, previous research has illustrated that different levels of cultural factors may alter between individuals and groups in one culture, such as age and gender. Hence, demographics potentially moderate the relationship between culture and employee silence. With the introduction of the ASEAN Economic Community, Thailand’s manufacturing industry remains substantial. Therefore, the current study aims to measure and explain the relationship between cultural factors and employee silence in the Thai manufacturing industry.
Suriyaporn Eamvijit (Chulalongkorn University)
Haunted Homelands: the Domestic Uncanny and Fractured National Identity in Rattawut Lapcharoensap’s Sightseeing and James Joyce’s Dubliners

The aim of this paper is to examine the portrayal of space in Rattawut Lapcharoensap’s Sightseeing (2004) and James Joyce’s Dubliners (1914) in relation to the conceptualisation of the national identity of Thailand and Ireland through the notion of the uncanny propounded by Homi K. Bhabha and Jacque Derrida’s concept of hauntology. I argue that the spatial uncanny of the two texts does not only contest the imperialist power of the West/coloniser but also disrupts the nationalist perception of both Thailand and Ireland of their national identity as homogeneous and unchanging. In Sightseeing, the domestic space is permeated by an abject atmosphere of stench and bodily fluids which undermines the homeliness in the text. The uncanny narrative of the landscape of Thailand becomes what Bhabha terms “third space”, which resists the Western orientalist attitude towards Thai culture that associates Thailand with an exotic paradise and at the same time deromanticises Thai nationalist discourse that considers its national culture homogeneous and morally pure. On the other hand, Dublin in Dubliners is uncanny because of the haunting atmosphere of death and paralysis, which is juxtaposed with its urban landscape and the restless desires of the characters. The contrast between desire in an urban landscape and haunting stagnation and death unveils traces of colonial violence from the British Empire and the nation’s struggle between modernity and traditionalism, which simultaneously criticises nationalist movements in Ireland including the Catholic nationalism and the Celtic revival that yearns for the irrevocable past of pastoral Ireland.

Session 6

Geography and Environment III

Discussant: Dr Sarinda Singh

Philip Hirsch (University of Sydney)
Agrarian Change across Space and Time: Studying Thai Land in Comparative Regional Perspective

During the 1980s and 1990s, land issues featured quite prominently in the social science of rural Thailand. These issues were situated mainly rurally, mainly within agriculture, and the studies were carried out mainly as local cases understood through the cultural politics of ethnicity and the political economy of agrarian change. After a subsequent decline in scholarship on land issues per se, there has been something of a resurgence of interest. In this presentation, I suggest that the resurgence is due both to the emergence of new contexts of land conflicts in urban as well as rural Thailand, and to a wider regional politics of land governance in which Thai actors are involved, and which also provide points of comparative reference to Thailand’s experience of marketised relations in land over a longer time period. There are thus both temporal and spatial dimensions in which we can explore comparative approaches to land in Thailand.

Rattawit Ruangprakhon (Thammasat University)
Comparative Perspectives on Lands and Natural Resources Conflicts: From Civilian to Junta Governments in the Past Five Years

Since the time of civilian governments to the nowadays junta government, lands and natural resources conflicts have always been one of the most controversial issues in Thai society. Governments, hands in hands with energy and extractive industries, have introduced many new policies, laws and regulations to ensure its power to solely control the decision-making process. On the other hand, a full awake of the public stakeholders has played a significant role to reaffirm the basic human rights to protect, to access and to manage local lands and natural
resources and the right to participation. With influences from business sector, the centralized decision making process and very strict controls of the junta government and its “special power”, the conflicts on the large-scale projects have been significantly worsen. This paper will study and compare the changes on national policies, laws, regulations in the past five years as well as the broad picture of political connection and influence of Thai corporates, and the perceptions of public towards the situation. It will also analyze the most recent conflicts happening in many areas such as the Gold Mines in Pichit and Loei Province, the “Xayaburi Dam” in Mekong River in Laos which will adversely affect local people in Loei and Nongkhai Provinces. The paper is based on content analysis and in-depth interviews with local people, academics, public servants, civil society leaders as well as self-observations.

Poome Petkanjanapong (Kyushu University)
Social Capital and Environmental Management after Decentralization in Thailand

Decentralization is a political process where some of authorities from the central government are distributed to local government. In Thailand, the decentralization process started officially after 1997. Several tasks and authorities were transfers to local government. Environmental management is one of the important tasks governed by local governments after the decentralization. When comparing the centralization period, the decentralization increased the ability of local government in environmental management because of more budgets, powers, and human resources. The study of a success case show that the decentralization can also increase the social capital of individuals and local government agencies, and increased social can be used as a vital tool for local environmental management. Moreover, local people also use their social capital as a gateway for natural resources usage. In other words, for both local government organization and individuals, increase in social capital after the decentralization is an important component of their ability in environmental management. Although the change of social capital after decentralization is a solid way to explain how some local government and people succeed in their environmental self-management, this way of explanation is still limited at a small community in rural area. In urban areas, where the size of social network is bigger and the environmental issues are more complex, such as waste management, we might need more various sociological items to study each social-environmental phenomena before and after decentralization.

History and Historiography III

Discussant: Dr Tyrell Haberkorn

Preeyaporn Kantala (Waseda University)
Mapping Champasak as Part of the Lao Nation: Looking through Historical Relations between Siam and France

This work examines the creation of Champasak as a Lao polity in the transitional period from the colonial state to the nation-state by focusing on crucial events: the 1904 Franco-Siam agreement; the 1940 Franco-Thai conflict followed by a period of Thai governance at first and a return to French Indochina in 1946; and Laos’ gaining of independence in 1953. The author will discuss the relations between Siam, France, and Champasak through historical accounts of territorialisation and state-formation. The study is based on archival materials in Thailand, Laos, and France, including records of government administration, royal chronicles, and memoirs. Also, the author aims to understand how indigenous people dealt with the new idea of the state, especially the significant role of the Champasak royal family. This study will especially contribute to understanding how Lao national consciousness developed as well as enhancing our understanding of the creation of the Lao and Thai geo-bodies (Winichakul 1994).
Joseph Rickson (Macquarie University)
On People, Places and Things: Kachin and an Alternative Politics of Bare Life

Focusing on the historical movement of Kachin to northern Thailand from northern Burma, this paper explores the processes and interactions between national sovereignty over geographical domains and cross-border movement. In particular, I analyse the juxtaposition of the relationships between the centre and the periphery at the national and regional level, and the “illegal” and “legal” that produce unique spaces where nation, state, and borders intersect and diverge. However, this is not the only explanatory narrative of power and the creation and transcendence of boundaries in the region. The institutionalised performances of the state, enacted through decentralised channels of local authority are legitimised through central law and local implementation. The continuity and contradictions that exist within the structures of the “legal” and the “illegal”, the “friend” and the “enemy”, and the “non-fit” are not solely a state-defined project, but as a continually evolving milieu of power that simultaneously incorporates the unique characteristics of belonging and non-belonging. The relevance of sovereignty in contemporary Thailand stems not only from a geo-political concern of the central government, but also constitutes a conceptual heuristic process that is fundamental to understanding how cross-border movement and the establishment of fixed territorial spaces affect spatial and temporal perceptions of national borders and the people who reside in these areas. Nations of belonging and cross-border political identities for the Kachin in northern Thailand is predicated on constitutive tensions that exist between imagined and actual representations of the state as a legitimate basis of power and sovereign decision-making in border areas.

Thanapas Dejpawuttikul (Waseda University)
From Archenemy of the Nation to the Intimate Other: Prince Damrong’s “Journey through Burma” and the Colonial Ecumene

During the late 19th century to the 1930s the process of the transmission of historical knowledge between Colonial Burma and the Siamese State went through a massive new phase of Burmese history writing by the Siamese, even though this was still restricted to the circle of the elite and state administrators. This paper focuses on the circulation of and reflections on the making of ethno-historical knowledge through the work of the prominent Siamese elite scholar, Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, in his travelogue of Burma, Journey through Burma, published in 1936. Using a method of close reading and analyzing its ideology and intellectual context this paper will show the pattern of the Siamese elite’s historical perceptions and worldview, and also how there was a change in locating the subject of Siam/Thai in relation to knowledge of Burma.

Politics and Society IV

Discussant: Ms Alisa Hasamoh

Nguyen Huy Hoan (Chulalongkorn University)
Thai Foreign Policy’s Continuities and Changes: A Comparative Analysis from 2008 – 2014

The paper examines recent developments and policy-making process of Thailand to clarify the patterns of continuities and changes in Thai foreign policy and how they affect Thai policy approach in an effort to advance our understanding of state’s foreign policy, particularly those of non-Western country, in our world still characterized by systemic anarchy, complex interdependence and unpredictable social-constructed changes. Conventional wisdom describes the history of Thai (city-) state evident of real politik and elitism, while the end of history belief supports claims on an increasing pluralism. The systemic changes politically after the Vietnam War and economically after the spicy Tom Yum Kung crisis, further inspired by Thaksin’s domestic and regional aspiration, suggests others about Thailand’s emerging activism. However, Thailand’s diplomatic and political landscape since 2008 indicates that none of these policy approaches can dominate Thai foreign policy. This paper will, thus, look through
the lenses of two-level game theory and constructivism to argue that Thai foreign policy is characterized by its (re-)definition as a middle power struggling internationally between the great powers’ competition, domestically between elitism forged by entrenched values and pluralism influenced by prevailing norms. Incremental changes occur mostly from inside the circle of policy making while major changes are caused by structural shifts at international level, leverage change at national level and the degree of leaders’ activism at individual level. Certain political values play key roles in determining such changes.

Nicole Jenne (Catholic University of Chile)

*Hegemonic Distortions? The Securitisation of Separatist Movements in Thailand and Indonesia*

This paper argues that Southeast Asian states adopted the US-originated narrative of new security threats in an unreflective manner in line with their alignment to the American hegemon. In practice, this mimetic reliance led policy-makers to translate doctrines and policy modalities emanating from the US into measures that did not necessarily fit their needs. We use securitization theory to trace the impact of the new/non-traditional security agenda on the policy responses of Thailand and Indonesia with regards to separatist/independence movements in the two countries. The paper holds that differing levels of securitization in the cases of Thailand’s Deep South and the Indonesian province of Papua were primarily a function of hegemonic influence rather than domestic imperatives.

Amie Liebowitz (University of Sydney)

*Human Trafficking: A Thailand and China Comparison*

Both Thailand and China are known as source, transit and destination countries for human trafficking. Although both countries have created domestic laws against human trafficking, the United States have scrutinised both Thailand and China for their lack of efforts and therefore, penalise them in forms of withholding particular forms of aid. This paper will explore how both countries have implemented domestic law against human trafficking, understand the key issues from both countries and compare and contrast policy implementation. This paper will also analyse the differences between rural and urban communities and if particular areas within each country are deemed as vulnerable question what actions are being taken to ensure that there is progress occurring. By understanding the breakdown of the legal processes and what each country is doing in an attempt to prevent human trafficking, practical recommendations can be made and particular steps towards progress can be reached.

Session 7

Law and Society III

*Discussant: Dr Bjoern Dressel*

Dr. Darunee Paisanpanichkul (Chiang Mai University)

*From the Case of Nang Noom Mai Send to Mr. Joe (without last name) and the Partial Precedent to Uphold the Right to Workmen Compensation of Migrant Workers*

These are attempts to set new precedent to have migrant workers recognized as “employees” according to the workmen’s compensation law of Thailand. They should be entitled to the compensation. It is thus challenging to set out the litigation strategy. In this case, the aim is to convince the Administrative Court to revoke the Circular no. Ro Sor 0711/Wor 751 given that it is an unlawful regulation. Meanwhile, an attempt has to be made to prevent confusion with the issue of “rights or duties as per the Workmen’s Compensation Fund Act (which is a labour protection law and any cases related to it should fall under the jurisdiction of the Labour Court (according to the law) in 1979)” and how to avoid using the same or similar facts to litigate. Based on the consultation among the team members of Human Right and Development Foundation and the attorneys, it was decided that the plaintiffs in this case should not be “the parties” who have already been affected by the order of the WCF and denied access to the
compensation (by invoking the Circular no. Ro Sor 0711/Wor 751). In other word, the plaintiffs in this case should not be the persons who have already been affected or injured as a result of the previous ruling of the Administrative Court regarding the Circular no. Ro Sor 0711/Wor 751, but they should the “potential parties to be affected or inflicted with suffering”. Eventually, the Supreme Administrative Court ruled that the Circular no. Ro Sor 0711/Wor 751 was unlawful. There are also other issues in the verdict that the attorneys in this case have been looking for nervously since they can make precedence for the future interpretation and application of the law.

Isaree Tantasith and Kobchart Jaraswimol (Australian National University)
The Thai Polarity in LGBTQ+ Rights and Reality: Reflections on Thailand’s Political and Legal Culture

This paper aims to uncover the political and legal explanations underlying the lack of strong legal protection of the LGBTQ+ community in Thailand. On the surface, Thailand has all the necessary ingredients for the cultivation of LGBTQ+ rights. The Thai queer community is large and visible; and the society is tolerant towards them. But strong protection of their rights - what some would assume to be a corollary of such attributes - has yet followed. To name a few, same-sex couples cannot get married and transgender people cannot alter the genders listed on their official documents. While events within the past decade tell us that Thailand is not a politically inactive country, its political aspirations are yet extended to cover the protection of marginalized groups in its society. The lack of legal protection is problematic in its own right, but the gravity of the problem is further accentuated by the Thai discourse of tolerance. However, such belief is mistaken and reflects the Thai deep-seated lack of understanding regarding the community. Our purpose for this work then is to pinpoint the contemporary problems facing the LGBTQ+ community and contribute our efforts in reaching a sustainable solution. We identify the unique and not-so-unique aspects of the Thai political and legal culture; and compare them with those of countries in which protection of LGBTQ+ rights is stronger. We choose to explore both aspects as we are convinced that, concerning LGBTQ+ rights, the two institutions are inexplicably linked. On the political aspect, we propose that the Thai familiarity with, and arguably tolerance of, oppression in all forms, coupled with the Thai affection for conformity, discourage the desire for demanding stronger rights. On the legal aspect, we suggest that law is not the commonly chosen avenue for redressing injustice; and as such the call for stronger protection does not feel urgent. Ultimately, employing the analysis done on LGBTQ+ rights, we argue that this implicit acceptance of oppression runs across all sectors of Thailand.

Kitpatchara Somanawat (Chiang Mai University)
Thai Lawyers and the Literature: Blurring the Boundary of Law and Humanity

Even if studying law is about interpretation, the personality and culture of legal interpreters like the judges still myth among Thai scholars. Thai legal education focuses on statutory law and objective data. Even though later on, Thai legal education expands to law and society studies, as alternative methodology to understand the society holistically, still has no subjectivity, and humanism in legal education. Hence, law and literature as one of the legal research methodology confidently fulfills sentimental gap in legal studies. This paper applies the progressive literature of Thai Intellectuals in era of the People’s Party such as Kulap Saipradit, Malai Chupinit and Seni Saowapong to examine the relation between lawyers and literature, on the other hand it is law and humanity as well. The fiction expresses that human under legal power have very deep subjectivity. These progressive writers explains lawyers like Manoj Raksmakom, Sai Sima, and Narain Nararak have different personal background and experiences. Manoj, which Kulap calls him ‘the Man’ could be the ideal type of Thai judge who behave himself as ascetic, polite and honorable. However, Narain, who has perfectly educational background, cannot prevent himself from his desire, so all his legal professional life has ruined. Although, normally, the progressive and conservative should be in opposite cultural position, there is no significant different in Thai legal culture. Both sides demand for heroic and ascetic character of the lawyer. The composition among progressives and
conservatives in Thai legal culture became the origin of mainstream judicial ideology until this day.

**Katja Rangsivek (University of Freiburg)**

*Legislation of Symbolic Capital: Medals of Honour and Law Making in Thailand*

Medals of honour are awarded as an outer sign of a special public respect. The decoration of deserving personalities has always been one of the tasks of the head of state -- the king. The king has the supreme power to decide on the honours system yet his decision is framed by legislation on which he has seemingly little influence. This study seeks to explore the relationship between the legislature and the Thai monarchy. More specifically it will be asked who dominated the distribution of symbolic capital in the forms of medals of honour and thus fundamentally shapes social class. This question will be answered by the close examination of laws and regulations concerning medals of honour and their amendments from the late nineteenth century until the present day. Were available supplementary documents, such as minutes of meetings from the parliamentary sessions, on how these laws changed will also be analysed. This is expected to show that there has been a shift of power from the monarchy to the legislature, which has increasingly used the former to enforce its own place in the social hierarchy. Ultimately, this has led to an inflation of medals of honour and a decrease of their symbolic value.

**Political Economy III**

*Discussant: Dr Gavan Butler*

**Jacob Ricks (Singapore Management University)**

*Delaying Development: The Politics of Rice Price Policies and Agricultural Transformation in Thailand*

Focusing on the historical movement of Kachin to northern Thailand from northern Burma, this paper explores the processes and interactions between national sovereignty over geographical domains and cross-border movement. In particular, I analyse the juxtaposition of the relationships between the centre and the periphery at the national and regional level, and the “illegal” and “legal” that produce unique spaces where nation, state, and borders intersect and diverge. However, this is not the only explanatory narrative of power and the creation and transcendence of boundaries in the region. The institutionalised performances of the state, enacted through decentralised channels of local authority are legitimised through central law and local implementation. The continuity and contradictions that exist within the structures of the “legal” and the “illegal”, the “friend” and the “enemy”, and the “non-fit” are not solely a state-defined project, but as a continually evolving milieu of power that simultaneously incorporates the unique characteristics of belonging and non-belonging. The relevance of sovereignty in contemporary Thailand stems not only from a geo-political concern of the central government, but also constitutes a conceptual heuristic process that is fundamental to understanding how cross-border movement and the establishment of fixed territorial spaces affect spatial and temporal perceptions of national borders and the people who reside in these areas. Notions of belonging and cross-border political identities for the Kachin in northern Thailand is predicated on constitutive tensions that exist between imagined and actual representations of the state as a legitimate basis of power and sovereign decision-making in border areas.

**Trin Aiyara (National Graduate Institute of Policy Studies/GRIPS)**

*The Political Economy of High Speed Railway in Thailand: Comparison of Yingluck and Prayuth Government*

This article examines the impact of trade in agricultural products between Thailand and China, with a focus on the changing power relations and institutional arrangements. Mainstream economics considers free trade to be benefiting both trading partners by increasing the
efficiency of resource allocation – but it overlooks political economy factors. In analytical terms, I argue that China should not be seen as a unitary and homogeneous state, but rather a fragmented and decentralized entity. For example, while China’s tariffs have been reduced, different provincial states have pursued a number of non-tariff barriers with different motivations. As a result, power relations at the local level have played a crucial role in determining trade impacts. Moreover, institutional arrangements also matter because trade in agricultural products involves a host of actors, not only farmers and consumers as found in economic modelling. Thailand’s tropical fruits sectors, for example, may obviously gain from China–Thailand FTA, but they have been experiencing the new patterns of power distribution. With the increasing demand from Chinese buyers for Thai tropical fruits, Chinese middlemen have been increasingly engaged in trading activities. They have offered higher prices than the Thai counterparts; made joint-investments with Thai merchants, and even rented orchards. Thai middlemen have therefore been increasingly outcompeted by the Chinese ones and begun to call for intervention by local and provincial authorities. In sum, by taking seriously power relations and institutional arrangements, this article hopes to provide a better insight into impacts of trade in agricultural products.

Brownwyn Isaacs (Harvard University)

Photoshop Bangkok: Bangkok’s Advertising Production Workers, Labor and Value

The study of Thai history and political economy demonstrates the influential role that images play in Thai society. When Thailand is considered comparatively both within and outside of South East Asia, religious, political and commercial images exhibit exceptional force in defining and animating desire, patriotism and political hierarchies. In an attempt to better understand the source and movement of this power, this paper presents ethnographic fieldwork with a particular group of image makers - Bangkok advertising production workers. These workers perform creative and manual labor in tasks that include styling, shooting, and editing video commercials for TV, internet and other screen platforms, and are increasingly successful in securing work from both Thai and international corporate clients. The paper discusses the way that hierarchies and inequalities embedded into Thai political and economic life are crucial to the particular creative processes used in Thai advertising video production. The paper then considers how these inequalities fit within broader social-economic exchanges through a discussion of the particular value and character attached to Thai creative labor in the international market.

Pakpoom Saengkanokkul (L'Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales/INALCO)

Public Health in Thailand, Public Health for the Nation, Religion (Buddhism) and King

Nation, Religion (Buddhism) and King has been ideology of healthcare system in Thailand. The belief of most Thai Buddhists is that health depends on karma. Health is moral and to be healthy is moral practice. Those who have done well in their previous life are healthy in the present life. We are not aware that health should be a fundamental right for all citizens and health protection should be a state’s duty. Individuals are held fully responsible for their health. After the democratic revolution of 1932, the administrative power of the king was removed. However, after the World War II, the King Rama IX, as symbol of unity, intervened population health through royal projects and charity. The direction of the royal projects greatly influenced governmental health policies. During the Cold war, the government prioritized public health policies for the sake of National Security and Economic growth, rather than social security. Many health programs were launched to control people’s body and fight against communist insurgency. Consequently, the main characteristics of health system before 2001 were that the State had a minimal role in providing basic care to citizens. Each individual had to seek medical care by themselves. The State selectively provides only some groups of population that could benefit economic growth and national security. Only the poorest should receive healthcare provided by government and private charity for moral obligation, and the prestige of the givers.