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## THE ECONOMIC CRISIS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA & THE POLITICAL CLIMATE IN THAILAND

### **Southeast Asian Agriculture and the Global Food, Financial and Economic Crises**

**By Derek Hall**

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Southeast Asian agriculture, like the rest of the world economy, has been buffeted by a series of interconnected crises over the last two years. In 2007, food prices – most importantly for rice, but also for other crucial regional crops – began to rise very dramatically. This bubble burst in mid-2008, and since then agricultural prices have dropped significantly while still remaining high in historical terms. Both the rise and fall of commodity prices have been intimately connected to the broader crisis of the global economy that began in mid-2007. While the rise in prices was driven by factors in-

cluding the simultaneous bubble in the price of oil, the entry of large amounts of speculative capital into commodities markets in late 2007, and the fall in value of the US dollar, the retreat of agricultural prices from mid-2008 was connected to the collapse of the price of oil and the constriction of trade credit as world financial markets seized up (Headey and Fan 2008, Clapp forthcoming). These shifts have created wrenching problems in Southeast Asia. Much higher prices for the region's key food crop have put enormous pressure on the livelihoods of the poor, while price volatility, higher input costs, and restrictions on credit have made life very difficult for farmers who might have been expected to benefit from higher prices. While this paper cannot cover the full scope of the impact of the crisis on Southeast Asian agriculture, I will attempt here to

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**By D. Hall**

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use press reports to suggest how the crisis is transforming three markets in the region: those for rice, for land, and for “boom crops” like oil palm, rubber, coffee, and cocoa.

The real price of rice on world markets, having fallen throughout the 1980s and 1990s, began a steady rise in 2003 which, in 2007, turned into a dramatic spike. By early 2008, the world market was in a condition of panic. Exporters like India, Egypt, Vietnam and Cambodia were restricting or even banning exports, and the Philippines (the world’s largest rice importer) moved in the first four months of 2008 to buy more rice than the country had imported in all of 2007 (Headey and Fan 2008, 379). The price finally began to fall in May, when the Japanese government announced that it would release rice from its reserve, with 300,000 tons going to the Philippines (Bradsher and Martin 2008; Timmer 2008). The price bubble and export restrictions of early 2008 have, however, left a legacy of distrust for the reliability of the international rice market among regional governments. One of the most striking manifestations of this has been the emergence of barter as an important component of the international rice trade. Barter deals were first mooted when the price was at its peak, with Malaysia, for instance, offering in May 2008 to trade oil palm for rice with any country willing to make a deal (Lewis 2008). Even as prices have fallen, however, difficulties with trade finance have led regional governments, including those of Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam, to continue pursuing these deals (Blas 2009a). This sense that the dynamics of the regional rice market are moving away from standard models of trade is heightened by the ironies of the Japanese moves that popped the rice bubble. The rice that Japan sold to the Philippines was not Japanese rice. It came from the reserve of foreign rice, largely from the US, Thailand, Vietnam, and Australia, that Japan is obliged to import by its commitments to the WTO. The Japanese government refuses to release this rice into the domestic market, but rather sells it for animal feed or processing, gives it away as food aid, or simply warehouses it. The bubble in the regional rice market, then, was only popped through the mobilization of rice reserves created by highly peculiar trade distortions.

This wariness of world markets is not limited to rice and Southeast Asia. The 2008 food crisis prompted many governments to reassess the extent to which they relied upon international commodity markets for their food imports. Nervousness about this market, however, has stimulated very rapid expansion of another: the market for the purchase of agricultural land in developing countries by foreigners. Governments of import-dependent countries in East Asia and the Middle East, in particular, have been moving very vigorously on behalf of their corporate sectors to negotiate access to agricultural land in Africa, Asia, and central and eastern Europe (Grain 2008). While the now-defunct deal that was meant to see the South Korean company Daewoo lease half of the arable land in Madagascar is likely the most famous of these efforts (Blas 2009b), every state in Southeast Asia has been involved in such negotiations. Some of these schemes verge on the bizarre. In March 2009, for instance, an Indonesian government official announced that Indonesia plans to allocate at least 2 million hectares of land to agricultural joint ventures with Saudi Arabia alone, including 500,000 hectares in Papua for a \$4.3 billion rice-farming project. These moves will allegedly make Indonesia the world’s top rice exporter in 2009 (Reuters 2009). Many of the mooted deals in Southeast Asia are still under negotiation, and details regarding the conditions of land access, who is going to do the actual farming, and (not least) where in Southeast Asia there might be parcels of tens of thousands of hectares of arable land up for sale, are still sketchy. Even assuming that many of these visions of massive plantations of rice, cassava, palm oil, soy, and other crops never leave the drawing board, these moves suggest that the region may be in line for another bout of intense conflict over agricultural land.

If new dynamics are visible in regional markets for rice and land, many of Southeast Asia’s boom crops seem to be going through an all-to-familiar cycle of boom and bust. The commodities boom was good for some crops, but the deepening global economic crisis is causing export demand to shrink. In Malaysia, the price for oil palm rose from 1920 ringgit in February 2007 to a peak of 3681 in March 2008, and then fell back to 1553 ringgit by December (Hoh 2009). In November 2008, Malaysia’s deputy com-

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modities minister warned that the price collapse was pushing smallholder oil palm producers to the point of bankruptcy (*Straits Times* 2008). Thai shrimp farmers are trying to cope with a substantial drop in export prices while bracing for more (Olimpo 2009), while export prices for Vietnamese coffee and rubber have both fallen dramatically (Deutsche Presse-Agentur 2008; on coffee in Indonesia, see *Jakarta Post* 2008). While hopeful voices in Malaysia hold out the prospect that “palm oil exports will continue to be a saviour just like 10 years ago” (during the 1997-8 economic crisis) (MY Palm Oil 2009), it seems more likely that regional boom crop producers are in the midst of another brutal shake-out.

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Red Shirts, Yellow Shirts, Blue Shirts, and Beyond

By Jim Glassman

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The ongoing political conflict in Thailand—which ticked up several notches in April with mass anti-government demonstrations by “red shirts” (most of them backers of the ousted former Prime Minister and Thai Rak Thai Party leader Thaksin Shinawatra), the repression of the demonstrations by the military with more than one hundred injured, the appearance of a new “blue shirt” paramilitary group opposing the red shirts (to go along with or compete with the pro-royalist “yellow shirts”), and the assassination attempt against yellow shirt leader Sondhi Limthongkul—defies easy description or brief analysis. At its most basic, it can be described as a two-layered conflict. One layer is an inter-elite contest between Thaksin-affiliated political leaders and leaders of an older and better established elite within

the military, the royalist networks, and the bureaucracy. Bangkok-based media tend to focus obsessively on this layer of the conflict, ritually blaming as much as can be blamed on Thaksin and alleging that he has been funding the demonstrations.

But were this the only significant layer of the conflict, its current dynamism would be difficult to explain, since Thaksin’s ability to fund or control events—given that he has been in exile for some time—can be questioned. What has come to the fore instead is a second layer of conflict, pitting most of Thailand’s comparatively poorer rural majority, along with some members of the urban working and middle classes, against Bangkok-centered urban professionals, conservative middle classes, and social elites. The former resonate with Thaksin’s populist policies, such as the national health insurance system implemented by Thai Rak Thai, while the latter seem more opposed to state spending for social purposes and back a return of Thai politics to its historically elite-dominated forms. Yellow shirt leaders

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such as Chamlong Srimuang have in fact called for changes to the constitution that would make 70 percent of the parliament appointed (presumably by the bureaucracy) rather than elected—this being seen as a way to stop repeated electoral victories by Thaksin-affiliated parties, which won elections in 2001, 2005, and 2007 (the People’s Power Party or PPP) before being ousted by military coup in 2006 (Thai Rak Thai) and judicial dissolution in 2008 (PPP). The red shirts, meanwhile, demand that Democrat Party leader and current Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva—who came to power without being elected, after yellow shirt demonstrations and the judicial decision to dissolve PPP drove pro-Thaksin groups from office—dissolve the current government and hold new elections. Fearful that this would lead to another victory at the polls by the Thaksin-affiliated groups such as the Phua Thai Party, the Democrats have so far refused, at least until there is a new constitution and an attempt to purge Thaksin supporters from government.

For the time being, this royalist bloc (the Democrats, the military, and crucial actors within the state, backed by middle classes and elites) have been able to restore an aura of normalcy around the existing government. But this has done little to quell red shirt discontent, which now fastens not only on the over-

throw of elected governments but on the differential treatment by the state of yellow shirt protestors—who were allowed to shut down Bangkok’s airports for a week last December and to occupy Government House for months, without military repression or their leaders so far being charged—and red shirt protestors, who were attacked by military and paramilitary groups and forced to end their demonstrations, with some possibly killed and more than one hundred injured, and red shirt leaders immediately arrested. Moreover, the red shirts claim that Bangkok-based media systematically downplayed or refused to report military violence against the red shirt demonstrators, most of whom were not themselves engaged in acts of violence. The Abhisit government has fanned these flames of discontent by allowing state agencies to close down radio stations and block web sites carrying information critical of the government, while applying stiff sentences to people accused of insulting the monarchy (a liberally-interpreted offense in the current context) or violating draconian laws regulating the media. In this context, the second layer of struggle seems set to continue, irrespective of the disposition of the first, which is itself influenced by complex maneuverings surrounding the monarchy in the context of the current King’s physical decline and the challenges of succession.

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Figure 1. The calm before the storm? The Victory Monument, at a strategic crossroads in Bangkok, is occupied by the Red Shirts. Photo: Nick Nostitz (April 9, 2009), published on New Mandala



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Figure 2. The Red Shirts demonstrate en masse and occupy the institutional heart of Bangkok. Photo: Nick Nostitz (April 8, 2009), published on New Mandala

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For more information, consult:

[Glassman J. \(2009\) Thailand in the Era of the Cold War and Rama IX. Human Geography, 2\(1\):29-44 Bangkok Pundit](#)

[New Mandala](#)

[Prachathai](#)

[Thai Political Prisoners in Thailand](#) (particularly the [commentary](#) section)

**Thailand: An Impossible Reconciliation**

Jean-Philippe Leblond

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Thai society is profoundly polarised between two broad alliances (see Glassman, this issue). The first alliance is tied to the Palace network and is radically opposed to the second, which gravitates to Thaksin Shinawatra, the former prime minister who was evicted in the 2006 coup. This second alliance has now become openly opposed to the backdoor, political influence of the Palace as well as the current coalition government led by the Democrat Party. These alliances are represented in the streets by the “Yellow” and “Red Shirts”, respectively.

In the current political context reconciliation is fundamentally impossible. The obstacles to reconciliation are both profound and numerous. First, the stakes are now simply too high for either side to back down. This is particularly striking for the Roy-

alist Alliance, in which some important people are apparently determined to make sure they will control Thailand and its Parliament when King Rama IX, aged 81, passes away. If he doesn’t designate his successor prior to his death, the choice of his successor among the three plausible candidates (the Prince, his 4 year old son, and the highly popular Princess) will be made by the Privy Council. However, its decision will have to be endorsed by the Parliament. The anxiety in the Palace could be exacerbated by the fear that a republican movement could emerge after the King’s death and successfully use the well known astrological prediction which holds that only 9 kings of the Chakri dynasty will reign in Thailand. The leaders and supporters of the Royalist Alliance appear truly convinced that Thaksin – who is openly depicted as demonic – constitutes a threat to the survival of the nation not only because he secretly intends to destroy the monarchy but also because of the economic development model he defends. This model does not aim at keeping rural areas

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“traditional” and relatively isolated from the modern, consumer-driven world, but rather seeks to better integrate them into the global economy and increase the domestic demand for consumer goods. According to the conservative perspective of the Royalist Alliance, these changes corrupt the mind of the population and will eventually destroy “Thainess”.

The absence of institutions that are trusted by both sides and could arbitrate the conflict or create a space for open and violence-free discussion constitutes the second major obstacle to reconciliation. Indeed, all candidate institutions, be they in the judicial system, the media, universities, the state apparatus (police, armed forces, Interior Ministry), or even the Palace and the Privy Council are perceived by at least one group as biased. Re-establishing trust would require a major *mea culpa* by all key actors involved. It is unlikely this will happen as they would risk losing face, or at least some of their prestige in the eyes of their detractors. This reluctance to criticise one’s camp and personal behaviour constitutes a third obstacle. This is particularly significant for the Royalist Alliance as it is comprised of many individuals who consider themselves to be endorsed by members of institutions, such as justice courts and the Palace, which, for legal or social reasons, cannot be criticized and whose clout emanates largely from their consciously moulded aura of infallibility and moral behaviour.

The fourth obstacle stems from the fact that the supporters of the

Figure 3. The Military reclaim territory occupied by the Red Shirts, not without using arms. Photo: Nick Nostitz (April 13, 2009), published on New Mandala



© Nick Nostitz

two alliances have different understandings of the nature of Thailand’s problems, and have therefore proposed solutions which are mutually irreconcilable. Each of their respective visions for the future of Thailand conflict in at least three areas: the political regime (i.e. nature of democracy), the social safety net, and the economic development model (mentioned above) that should be put in place.

The first ideological conflict stems from differing views on the nature of democracy and the ideal political regime. According to the dominant views within the Royalist Alliance, “democracy” is simply a regime in which the government makes the right decisions and is led by moral and benevolent leaders. They believe the extent of corruption under Thaksin was unprecedented. They consider such an immoral and egotistical leader to be unfit to govern and feel that those who disagree with them should not have a significant influence in politics. Repeatedly, members of this alliance have depicted Thaksin’s supporters either as simple-minded individuals manipulated by demagogues into exchanging their vote for dangerous and populist policies, or as poor people constrained into selling their vote to the highest bidder. The Royalist Alliance solution is simple: limit the political influence of the uneducated lower classes and place effective power in the hands of trustworthy and selfless traditional elites. Red Shirts on the other hand are highly critical of the great stratification of Thai society and demand to be rec-

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ognized as legitimate political actors. By demanding effective government based on a one citizen-one vote system, they call for the end of a semi-democratic system in which the Palace, the military and the bureaucracy are openly or surreptitiously making the key decisions. Further complicating matters is the fact that Thaksin's accusation that privy councillors and eminent judges have conspired to bring down his government has brought to the fore a fundamental yet taboo issue, namely the involvement of the Palace in politics.

The second ideological conflict has to do with the social safety net. The conservative traditional elites aspire to maintain Buddhist charity as a key aspect of Thailand's social welfare. In this system, the less fortunate do not have the *right* to be helped, but must rather be grateful for whatever help they receive. Through their altruistic acts, the better-endowed obtain Buddhist merit and increase their *barami* (prestige, grandeur, virtue). From this *barami* stems the power of traditional elites and in particular the King, who adroitly multiplied and publicised his charity work. Advised by former members of the Communist Party of Thailand, Thaksin established the basis of a welfare system in which all citizens have the right to receive state support. While these policies, which facilitated access to credit, education and the health system have been highly popular with the lower classes, traditional elites within the Royalist alliance feared that they would not only lead to high taxes and ruin state finances, but more importantly, they

would be considered meritorious and provide the Prime Minister with more *barami* than the traditional elites.

Recently, a campaign and a political committee for national reconciliation have been established. Due to the serious obstacles depicted previously, these efforts are unlikely to succeed and Thailand may drift further towards civil war. Arguably only extraordinary events significantly altering the political context could allow a truce sufficiently long or a realignment of political forces great enough to make possible open and violence-free discussions. Then, hopefully, a political compromise acceptable to all major actors could be found. Examples of extraordinary events include the designation of a successor to the throne respected by both alliances, a major economic crisis, or the unfortunate death of a universally respected member of the Palace.<sup>1</sup> It is possible that such an extraordinary event has already taken place. The attempt of the life of Sondhi Limtongkul, a charismatic leader of the Yellow Shirts, could lead many in the Royalist Alliance to realise they share with the Red Shirts a new and powerful common enemy: the Blue Shirts and their backers. This could open the way for discussion and respect between the groups.<sup>2</sup>

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Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> I would like to state unequivocally that I do not wish to offend anyone by referring to the political impacts of the aforementioned hypothetical events.

<sup>2</sup> On the implication of the murder attempt, see for example Walker A. & Farrelly N. (2009) Thailand's royal sub-plot thickens. *Inside Story*, (6 May). The call by Thaksin to end Thailand's bureaucratic polity could also modify the political context as this plea is popular among many Yellow Shirts as well.

Figure 4. Emotional Red Shirts assemble around a disciple of a monk who disappeared during the military repression of the morning of April 13. A bag belonging to the missing monk was recovered and its contents were spread out on the ground. With this attack on the monk, the crisis left more psychological damage. Photo: Nick Nostitz (April 13, 2009), published on New Mandala



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## President's Column

By Philip Kelly

Department of Geography

York University

Dear Southeast Asianists,

Arrangements are now well underway for our conference this Fall at UBC and the response has been unprecedented. Over 150 papers and panelists have been submitted, covering a full range of issues related to economic, cultural, political and environmental processes in Southeast Asia (and among Southeast Asian communities elsewhere). This will, I believe, be the largest CCSEAS conference to date. Special kudos goes to Lisa Drummond (York) and Michael Bodden (Victoria), whose numerous panels on Vietnam and Indonesia respectively constitute almost a quarter of the program – indeed a major scheduling issue will be to ensure that Lisa and Michael can attend all of their own panels!

Please note that with the conference program now bulging at the seams, abstract submission is definitely closed.

The conference team at UBC (lead by Tineke Hellwig) have been making careful arrangements for our two days of meetings, and the York team (myself and Keith Barney) will soon be writing to participants requesting payment of registration fees. We are hoping that all participants submit their pay-

ments as soon as possible so that we can proceed with planning more effectively.

You will notice on the conference website that there are different registration fees for members and non-members of CASA. I would like to strongly encourage you to join CASA and avail of the lower registration fee. As you will know from the last newsletter, there are organizational changes underway at CASA, especially since the disintegration of the Canadian Council of Area Studies Learned Societies (CCASLS), of which it was a part. CCASLS functioned with IDRC funding which ended last year. CASA is now in the process of applying to IDRC for its own grant that would support the association for the next 3 years. Many in the CCSEAS have been unhappy with the way CCASLS and CASA have been managed in recent years, but this new round of support, being lead by CASA President Scott Simon (Ottawa), promises greater accountability, better services to members, and a sensitivity to the CCSEAS' tradition of accessibility and affordability at its conferences.

The outcome of the application to IDRC, and thus the future management and funding of CASA, should be apparent by the time we meet in October, and thus we will collectively decide how CCSEAS should proceed. But to participate in those decisions, you need to be a CASA member, so do please renew your membership this year! ([Click here for a membership form](#))

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## News from Members

### ChATSEA UPDATE

ChATSEA (The Challenges of the Agrarian Transition in Southeast Asia) is a major Canadian research program focused on Southeast Asia. Led by Rodolphe De Koninck at the University of Montreal, this SSHRC MCRI project includes collaborators from across Canada, and around the world – including co-investigators in five Southeast Asian countries.

The project runs from 2005-2010 and has now funded almost 70 Masters and PhD theses and is publishing a rapidly expanding working paper series on its [website](#).

Recent workshops organized by the project took place in Toronto in April 2009. One, organized by Peter Vandergeest and Jonathan Rigg, focused on a

set of village re-studies from across Southeast Asia. Another, organized by Philip Kelly, focused on migration and rural change in Southeast Asia. Papers from both workshops will eventually be published as edited volumes. Other books being developed by the project focus on land (Derek Hall, Phil Hirsch, Tania Li), poverty (Phil Hirsch, Jonathan Rigg), Borneo (Rodolphe De Koninck), organic agriculture (Peter Vandergeest, Steffanie Scott, Mary Young, Atchara Rakyutidharn) resistance (Dominique Caouette, Sarah Turner), periurbanization (Michael Leaf), and agricultural sedentarization (Stan B.H. Tan).

An important part of the ChATSEA project has been regular dissertation workshops for graduate students. The purpose is to enable students to hone their proposals or written work with feedback from

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a range of faculty mentors. The next ChATSEA workshop will be held in Whistler, BC, immediately after the CCSEAS conference in October 2009. The application deadline for the workshop is June 15<sup>th</sup>, and further details are available [here](#).

For further information on the ChATSEA project, visit the [website](#).

Philip Kelly (York)  
ChATSEA Co-Investigator

### Gordon P. Means

Gordon P. Means, professor emeritus of political science has recently published *Political Islam in Southeast Asia* with Lynne Rienner Publishers. This book traces the evolution of Islam in Southeast Asia from the religion's early arrival in the region to the present day. His analysis deals with the events and actions shaping Islamic politics today and the impact this has on policy outcomes.

### Vincent K. Pollard

Vincent Pollard of the Asian Studies Program at the University of Hawai'i—Manoa reports that he is editing and contributing three chapters to *State Capitalism, Contentious Politics and Large-scale Social Change*, Critical Studies in Social Sciences (General editor, David Fasenfest) (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, forthcoming, 2010). This volume will include chapters on China, India and the Philippines.

Additionally a major revised excerpt of Chapter 5 in his first book *Globalization, Democratization and Asian Leadership* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2004), is being translated into Chinese as "Redesigning Asia's Military Landscape at the 1986 Constitutional Commission of the Philippines," *Guo ji leng zhan shi yan jiu* [*Cold War International History Studies*] [Center for Cold War International History Studies, 华东师范大学 {East China Normal University}], vol. 6 (2009), forthcoming.

Finally, Professor Pollard reports that since 2003 and with support from two small grants from the Freeman Foundation, he has compiled and edited the online [Chinese Cultures Abroad WWW Virtual Library](#). This online archive documents, summarizes and evaluates websites by and about Chinese diaspora across the planet. Thus far, Southeast Asia section has twenty-two entries.

### New Publications from Members

Barney, Keith. (2009). "Laos and the making of a 'relational' resource frontier." *The Geographical Journal* 175(2): 146-159.

Cooke, Fadzilah Majid. (2009). "In situ off-farm work in the transport industry among oil palm small holders in Sabah: negotiating the borders of licit and illegal activities." *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 50(1): 43-51.

Cooke, Fadzilah Majid. (2009). "Border crossings in the Asia Pacific." *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 50(1): 24-28.

Latt, Sai (2009) *Ethnic Politics, Migrant Labour and Agrarian Transformation: A Case Study of the Hmong and Shan in a Royal Project in Northern Thailand*. ChATSEA Working Paper No. 4, Montreal: ChATSEA.

Leblond, Jean-Philippe (2008) *The Retreat of Agricultural Lands in Thailand*. ChATSEA Working Paper No. 1, Montreal: ChATSEA.

### Vietnam Ph.D. Study Group

We are inviting students and researchers based in Hanoi to join a small seminar group recently created with the aim of giving participants an opportunity to get feedback from their peers at various points in their research. The group consists of social science and humanities Ph.D. students at various stages of dissertation whose work touches on issues of interest to members of CCSEAS. The group is meeting every two or three or four weeks to discuss pieces by one or two persons. Participants are invited to present anything from a draft chapter to a conference paper to a research plan to a survey instrument. The group is open to Masters's, Ph.D. and Post-doctoral students as well as researchers and faculty based at foreign and Vietnamese universities.

If you are interested to join us please let the organizers know by email.

Jim Delaney, University of Toronto:  
[j.delaney@utoronto.ca](mailto:j.delaney@utoronto.ca): 012.1224.4708

Jason Morris-Jung, University of California, Berkeley: 012.3426.1445

### Southeast Asia Psychology Conference (SEAP 2009)

It is my honour and pleasure to invite you to the upcoming **Southeast Asia Psychology Conference**

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# GRADUATE STUDENTS DOING FIELDWORK IN THE SUMMER AND FALL, 2009

STUDENTS IN THE FIELD

Student & Discipline	Time and Location	Research Title or Subject	Supervisor
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**University of British Columbia**

Danielle Labbé Urban Planning (PhD)	January – September 2009	Hanoi	Hanoi on the edge: A study of the socio-spatial construction of periurban Hanoi	Michael Leaf
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**Université de Montréal**

Denis Côté Political Science (MA)	January – July, 2009	Philippines	Successful peasant struggles for the implementation of land reform in the Philippines	Dominique Caouette
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Justin Veuthey Geography (PhD)	September 2009 – January 2010	Quezon, Philippines	The influence of social inequities on vulnerability to typhoons	Rodolphe De Koninck
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**University of Toronto**

J-F Bissonnette Geography (PhD)	October 2009 – April 2010	Sabah, Malaysia and Indonesia	Labouring in the space of the plantation: the deployment of migrant workers on oil palm estates of Sabah, East Malaysia	Rachel Silvey
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Jim Delaney Geography (PhD)	December 2008 – March 2010	Hanoi and northern Vietnam	The emergence of a globalized market for bamboo in Vietnam	Katharine Rankin
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**York University**

Ei Phyu Han Geography (PhD)	June 9 – August 19, 2009	Chiang Mai and Mae Sot, Thailand	Gender formation of Karen refugees along the Thai Burma border	Robin Roth
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Adrienne Johnson Geography (MA)	June – Mid-September, 2009	Bogor, Indonesia	The involvement of NGOs in the palm oil sector of Indonesia: An evolutionary perspective on the work of Sawit Watch	Robin Roth and Elizabeth Lunstrum
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Vanessa Lamb Geography (PhD)	June – Mid-August, 2009	Salween River, Chiang Mai, Thailand	Intersectionality of conservation, development, water/river mobility and livelihood issues	Robin Roth and Peter Vandergeest
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Jennifer Payton Geography (MA)	June – September, 2009	Penang and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Labour, migration and agricultural intensification in the Malaysian oil palm sector	Philip Kelly and Robin Roth
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Nga Dao Geography (PhD)	May 2009 – March 2010	Hanoi and La Son Province, Vietnam	Displacement, resettlement and agrarian change in the northern uplands of Vietnam	Robin Roth and Peter Vandergeest
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(SEAP 2009) at Universiti Malaysia Sabah, KotaKinabalu, Malaysia on July 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>, 2009. This conference is jointly organized by the Psychology and Social Health Research Unit and School of Psychology and Social Work, Universiti Malaysia Sabah. The theme for this conference is "Issues, Challenges and Opportunities in Southeast Asia".

The aim of this conference is to gather psychologist and friends from other related fields to discuss issues that are of importance to the Southeast Asian region. However, we also welcome presentation from other areas of the world that might be of interest to this region. In addition, this is a good venue for all of us to

increase our network, plan research collaboration and meet old friends.

Besides scientific programs, Sabah is naturally endowed with endless beaches and bays, world famous wildlife sanctuaries, ancient Borneo rainforests, amazing plants and animals and much, much more.

Do let us hear from you. Please explore this website <http://www.ums.edu.my/conferences/SEAP2009> for more information about the conference.

Kindly download conference poster, brochure and registration form below:

1. Click [POSTER](#) to download the poster
2. Click [BROCHURE](#) to download brochure
3. Click [REGISTRATION FORM](#) to download the registration form

NEWS FROM MEMBERS

THANK YOU

After four years of excellent service Jean-Philippe Leblond will be stepping down as a student representative to the CCSEAS Executive and finishing up as co-editor of the CCSEAS Newsletter. Join us in thanking J.P. for all of his hard-work and dedication to the executive and this paper. We will be accepting nominations for a new student representative at this year's CCSEAS General Meeting at the Conference at UBC.

The CCSEAS Newsletter endeavours to inform Southeast Asian specialists in Canada about relevant Southeast Asian issues: events, debates, innovative research. It is sent by email to Canadian Council for Southeast Asian Studies (CCSEAS) members. Previous editions are available on-line at the CCSEAS website (<http://canadianasianstudies.concordia.ca/case/htm/seac.htm>). If you would like to be removed from the distribution list, please send a message to the editors ([cseas.executive@gmail.com](mailto:cseas.executive@gmail.com)) with the subject line "Remove me from the Newsletter distribution list."

The deadline for the next edition of the Newsletter is **November 1<sup>st</sup> 2009**. Send us news from your research, from your fieldwork, ideas and commentaries so we can publish them in the next edition. Please, keep articles short and send both a French and English version whenever possible.

Editors: Jean-Philippe Leblond & Geoff Stewart

THE NEWSLETTER



<http://www.yorku.ca/ycar/ccseas.html>