

Approaches to Southeast Asian Studies: Beyond the “Comfort Zone”

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Abstrak

Over the last decade, the field of Southeast Asian Studies has been inundated with issues of its “territory” (or the definition of what comprises Southeast Asia), relevance and future. The methodology of approaching Southeast Asian Studies has also come under constant scrutiny providing much fodder for debate. One significant suggestion was that the field of Southeast Asian Studies should “break out of the comfort zone” (Van Schendel, *Bijdragen*, 2012:168(4)). This paper will explore some of the ways of approaching Southeast Asian Studies beyond that comfort zone by examining other/alternative units of studying Southeast Asia in place of the traditional (or statist) perspectives that tend to confine the field within the scope of the national/nation-state boundaries. The paper will also provide some personal observations of the author on the current state and limitations to teaching and researching Southeast Asian Studies in the region.