

# Cambridge Elements

Elements in Politics and Society in Southeast Asia

edited by

Edward Aspinall

*Australian National University*

Meredith L. Weiss

*University at Albany, SUNY*

## THE POLITICS OF CROSS-BORDER MOBILITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Michele Ford

*The University of Sydney*



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press & Assessment  
978-1-009-46242-6 — The Politics of Cross-Border Mobility in Southeast Asia  
Michele Ford  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)



Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom  
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA  
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,  
New Delhi – 110025, India  
103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment,  
a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of  
education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781009462426](http://www.cambridge.org/9781009462426)

DOI: 10.1017/9781108673914

© Michele Ford 2023

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions  
of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take  
place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

First published 2023

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

ISBN 978-1-009-46242-6 Hardback  
ISBN 978-1-108-72289-6 Paperback  
ISSN 2515-2998 (online)  
ISSN 2515-298X (print)

Cambridge University Press & Assessment has no responsibility for the persistence  
or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this  
publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will  
remain, accurate or appropriate.

## The Politics of Cross-border Mobility in Southeast Asia

Elements in Politics and Society in Southeast Asia

DOI: 10.1017/9781108673914  
First published online: December 2023

Michele Ford  
*The University of Sydney*

**Author for correspondence:** Michele Ford, [michele.ford@sydney.edu.au](mailto:michele.ford@sydney.edu.au)

**Abstract:** This Element explains how cross-border mobility defines diplomatic relationships between Southeast Asian states and social and political dynamics within the region's key destination countries. It begins by providing a historically situated discussion of bordering processes within the region, examining evolving historical conceptions of power and sovereignty and processes of bordering in colonial and post-colonial times. It then turns to the political, environmental and economic drivers of contemporary cross-border mobility before examining governments' efforts to manage different kinds of border-crossers and the tensions that these efforts generate. Having discussed the politics of cross-border mobility in host communities, the Element returns to the question of why consideration of bordering practices and cross-border mobility is necessary in understanding contemporary Southeast Asia.

**Keywords:** refugees, asylum seekers, human trafficking, labour migration, bordering practices

© Michele Ford 2023

ISBNs: 9781009462426 (HB), 9781108722896 (PB), 9781108673914 (OC)  
ISSNs: 2515-2998 (online), 2515-298X (print)

## Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Of Nations and Borders	2
3	Drivers of Cross-border Mobility	9
4	Managing Cross-border Flows	16
5	Impact on Host Communities	32
6	Conclusion	38
	References	41