

Wartime Identities and National Scholarly Frameworks:
Northern Laos and the Long 1970s

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Research with US-based refugee immigrants from Laos is faced with multiple legacies of war. One of them is ethnographic; characterizations of the Lu Mien or the Hmong are entangled in national frameworks and debates - American, Japanese, French, German, Thai, etc. The recent characterization of mainland Southeast Asia's highland peoples as freedom-loving Zomians suggests a paradigm rooted in the current wars in Burma. Laying out the main features of this analytical complex as *OMG - Our Moral Geographies* - I ask if area scholarship and anthropology can do better. Anthropology may be the worst enemy of the people we draw on for our descriptive and analytical kicks, and only a serious consideration of the ethics, politics, and pleasures of representation can change this situation.