

Pacific Affairs

Vol. 95, No. 2

JUNE 2022

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Publications Mail Registration No. 07775

PRINTED IN CANADA

GST No. R108161779

ISSN (print) 0030-851X

ISSN (online) 1715-3379

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Pacific Affairs is delighted to announce the 20th

William L. Holland Prize

for the best article published in Volume 94 (2021) is awarded to:



Jiazhi Fengjiang

for her article published in Vol. 94, No. 2

“TO BE A LITTLE MORE REALISTIC”: THE ETHICAL LABOUR OF SUSPENSION AMONG NIGHTCLUB HOSTESSES IN SOUTHEAST CHINA

Through the lens of “ethical labour,” a bridge to a nuanced engagement with the concept of suspension [xuanfu/悬浮] as applied to migration and mobility, Jiazhi Fengjiang’s Holland Prize winning article, “To Be a Little More Realistic”: The Ethical Labour of Suspension among Nightclub Hostesses in Southeast China,” captures the negotiations of temporal, societal, and affective interstitiality by young women migrants working as hostesses in high-end nightclubs in southeast China. Based on sustained, in-depth and empathetic ethnographic research that leads to revelatory vignettes and evocative writing, the article guides readers from the intensely personal to the emphatically systemic with aqueous ease. This combination of theoretical nuance and committed empirical research enables an array of contributions to the study of the intersections of gender, mobility, temporality, affect, and work.

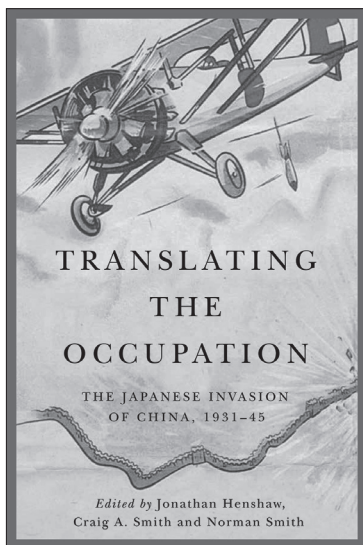
JIAZHI FENGJIANG is lecturer (Assistant Professor) in social anthropology at the University of Edinburgh. She holds a PhD in Anthropology from LSE. Her first ethnographic monograph explores the rise of ‘grassroots philanthropy’ in late socialist China. She has previously held research positions at Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity and Princeton University.

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Controlling the Opposition Abroad: Cambodia's Extraterritorial Activities in Long Beach, California

Susan Needham and Schroedel Grubb

ABSTRACT

This article presents findings from research conducted in Long Beach, California on the history, motives, and functions of the Cambodian People's Party Youth Organization (CPPYO), a network of Cambodians outside the country who support Cambodia's long-time ruling party, the Cambodian People's Party (CPP). Officially, the CPPYO, headed by Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen's son, Hun Manet, was created to promote the current government and to provide political options for Cambodians living abroad. However, many Cambodians in the Long Beach area see the CPP's presence in the US as invasive and as a threat to their autonomy. To understand how the CPPYO functions in Long Beach, we make use of Gerschewski's three pillars of authoritarian stability¹ and Glasius' framework for identifying extraterritorial authoritarian practices.² We conclude that the CPPYO is primarily a strategy for repressing opposition abroad, but that it also contributes to the ruling party's legitimacy through the participation of Long Beach Cambodian Americans, who accept the CPP's authoritarian control as a condition for participating in Cambodia's socioeconomic system. This study contributes to a growing body of research interested in identifying and interconnecting the various legitimization processes, strategies, and practices developed by autocracies to stabilize rule at home and abroad.³

Keywords: extraterritorial authoritarianism, transnational social fields, Cambodian Americans, Cambodian People's Party Youth Organization, Long Beach Cambodian community, legitimization, repression, co-optation

DOI: 10.5509/952205

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SCHROEDEL GRUBB is an economist and political scientist. Because of close associations with Cambodia s/he is writing under a pseudonym.

Acknowledgements: We wish to thank Shane Barter and Karen Quintiliani for generously providing valuable comments on earlier drafts of this article. We also thank the *Pacific Affairs* editor and anonymous reviewers for their careful review and detailed comments that helped strengthen the article.

Introduction

Since 1979, when Vietnamese troops entered Cambodia and installed a new government composed in part of former members of the Communist Party of Kampuchea (a.k.a., the Khmer Rouge) the dominant narrative among Cambodians in Long Beach has been that the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia to set up a “puppet government.” The current ruling party, the Cambodian People’s Party (CPP), led by Prime Minister Hun Sen, is a direct descendent of that early government. It has been seen by many Cambodians throughout the greater Long Beach area as an authoritarian regime serving the interests of the Vietnamese, not the Cambodian people; as such, it is illegitimate and must be removed. Cambodians in the Long Beach area can cite a litany of grievances against the government which include human rights abuses, manipulation of the legal system, widespread corruption, and runaway environmental destruction. Despite this seemingly unanimous sentiment, a small number of Cambodians in Long Beach have quietly supported the CPP since early in the Long Beach community’s history. Following the party line, they argue that CPP leaders played a role in bringing an end to the Khmer Rouge and the country has stabilized socially and economically under Hun Sen’s leadership, albeit through authoritarian means. More recently, a new generation of Cambodian immigrants, with no memory of the Khmer Rouge, are supporting the CPP through participation in the Cambodian People’s Party Youth Organization (CPPYO), a CPP-sponsored global network of Cambodians outside the country who support the CPP. The CPPYO, headed by Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen’s son, Hun Manet, was officially created by the CPP to promote the current government among Cambodians living outside the country and to provide political options.

Using Long Beach as our case study, this article examines the history, motives, and functions of the CPPYO in Long Beach, California and surrounding areas in order to identify the various ways the CPP seeks to control Cambodians outside the country’s legal borders. To do so, we make use of Gerschewski’s three pillars of authoritarian stability: legitimization, repression, and co-optation.⁴ According to Loughlin, the “CPP as an institution, [is] historically and presently organized for the purpose of suppressing dissent and rewarding its elite supporters,” and is not concerned

¹ Johannes Gerschewski, “The Three Pillars of Stability: Legitimation, Repression, and Co-Optation in Autocratic Regimes,” *Democratization* 20, no. 1 (1 January 2013), <https://tinyurl.com/y4shf3uj>.

² Marlies Glasius, “Extraterritorial Authoritarian Practices: A Framework,” *Globalizations* 15, no. 2 (February 2018): 179–197, <https://tinyurl.com/nav3k986>.

³ Glasius, “Extraterritorial Authoritarian Practices”; Alexander Dukalskis and Johannes Gerschewski, “What Autocracies Say (and What Citizens Hear): Proposing Four Mechanisms of Autocratic Legitimation,” *Contemporary Politics* 23, no. 3 (2017): 251–268.

⁴ Gerschewski, “Three Pillars of Stability;”; Dukalskis and Gerschewski, “What Autocracies Say.”

with legitimacy among its electorate.⁵ Prime Minister Hun Sen has asserted his right to rule by virtue of having liberated the country from the Khmer Rouge, having established and maintained social stability and economic development, and by holding elections.⁶ However, many Cambodians in the diaspora do not agree with his legitimacy claims and continue to support opposition groups. Gerschewski argues that to remain stable, autocracies require a self-reinforcing process of legitimation that is in a reciprocal relationship with the processes of repression and co-optation.⁷ One legitimation strategy used by authoritarian states to build support among their populations abroad is the development of youth organizations.⁸ On its surface, the CPPYO appears to be a genuine effort on the part of the CPP to build legitimacy; however, to those who continue to oppose the CPP, the CPP's increasing presence in the US looks and feels like intimidation and a threat to their autonomy. The introduction of the CPPYO in Long Beach provides an opportunity to explore how the CPP is extending its control into the international arena and how this activity is both restricting opposition and building support in Long Beach. This study contributes to a growing interest in identifying and interconnecting the legitimation processes, strategies, and practices developed by autocracies to stabilize rule at home and abroad.⁹

As part of our analysis, we distinguish between two broad groups: Cambodians who arrived in the US as refugees in the aftermath of the Khmer Rouge, and those who began arriving in the late 1990s as immigrants. Those of refugee status are older, the majority lived through the Khmer Rouge, and all were cut off from contact with extended family networks until the country reopened in the early 1990s. Cambodian immigrants began arriving in the US after Cambodia reopened in the 1990s. This group is younger and part of well-established extended family networks in Cambodia. While these two groups each have their own internal complexity, there is a qualitative difference between them that has resulted in different relations with Cambodia. Membership in the CPP is found primarily among former refugees while participation in the CPPYO is found primarily (but not exclusively) among more recent Cambodian immigrants. However, both groups accept Hun Sen's leadership as a condition for successfully participating in Cambodia's socioeconomic system.

⁵ Neil Loughlin, "Reassessing Cambodia's Patronage System(s) and the End of Competitive Authoritarianism: Electoral Clientelism in the Shadow of Coercion," *Pacific Affairs* 93, no. 3 (September 2020): 503.

⁶ The CPP has put legal safeguards in place preventing any real threat to their power through elections. They engage in what Dukalskis and Gerschewski call a "democratic-procedural mechanism of autocratic legitimation." Dukalskis and Gerschewski, "What Autocracies Say."

⁷ Gerschewski, "Three Pillars of Stability."

⁸ Glasius, "Extraterritorial Authoritarian Practices," 191.

⁹ Glasius, "Extraterritorial Authoritarian Practices"; Dukalskis and Gerschewski, "What Autocracies Say."

Methodology

In researching and writing this article, we drew on over 30 years of personal engagement and ongoing ethnographic fieldwork in the greater Long Beach area and Cambodia. We each have worked closely with various individuals and organizations in Long Beach, including the Cambodian Association of America, the Cambodian Coordinating Council, and Cambodia Town, Inc., on a variety of community projects and events. More recently we have attended CPPYO events and informal gatherings with friends and family. One author lived and worked in Cambodia for a number of years and is fluent in Khmer and English. We each have conducted ethnographic and survey research in Cambodia on politics and religious practices.

Collecting data specific to this study has been challenging. Historically, community members who have worked with or shown any favourable consideration for the Cambodian government have experienced public ridicule and loss of business.¹⁰ Although support for the CPP has become more open in the last several years, many people we know well and have seen at CPP and CPPYO events have been hesitant to talk with us or to confirm their support or membership. This is especially true of former refugees who are now CPP members. However, in 2020 and 2021, with the assistance of key informants, we were able to conduct an additional 21 semi-structured face-to-face and telephone interviews with male and female leaders, members, and supporters of the CPP, local leaders of the Cambodian National Rescue Party (CNRP, which until 2018 was the major opposition party), and individuals who are not members of any group, but who have active familial and economic ties in Long Beach and Cambodia.¹¹ As an indication of the growing level of concern for their own and their family's wellbeing, all respondents, regardless of affiliation, requested they remain anonymous. We also make use of CPPYO internal documents, CPP public speeches, nongovernmental and news reports, and Facebook postings.

Extraterritorial Authoritarian Practices

Transnational interactions between diasporas and their homelands take many forms which are influenced by historical, ideological, political, and economic interests and conditions within and between the state and the diaspora. Early studies of such interactions focused on how states attempted to control remittances and encourage diasporic and migrant participation

¹⁰ Street poster ridiculing Cambodia Town parade organizers, 19 April 2016. Schroedel Grubb field notes, CPPYO event, Long Beach, 8 December 2020. All interviews were conducted by the authors in confidentiality. The names of interviewees are withheld by mutual agreement.

¹¹ All respondents were Khmer/English bilinguals; five were more comfortable speaking Khmer. Their interviews were conducted with the aid of a translator. Breakdown of interviews: CPP = 8, CPPYO = 2, CNRP = 4, unaligned = 7. We have also used field notes from participant observation in the community and at CPPYO events.

in the development of the homeland through special programs or the creation of governmental institutions.¹² With improvements to transportation and communication as well as the opening of formally closed countries (as in the case of Cambodia), relations between diasporas and their home countries have become more complex as individuals have developed social networks and organizations within the home country not only to help those in need but also to effect change in homeland development, economics, and politics. As diasporic involvement in homeland activities has increased, authoritarian states have become more concerned with how to manage and control the diaspora's influence within and outside their territorial borders. States now engage in their own form of border crossing, devising tools to promote legitimacy as well as monitor and control the political and economic activities of their diasporas. The formation of social organizations in the diaspora, such as the CPPYO, that support the ruling or opposition parties (referred to as "diaspora building" by Gamlen¹³) is no longer unusual. What is different about the case under study here is that the CPPYO was not created to integrate the diaspora and extend rights, but rather to reduce support for opposition parties, which are largely funded from the diaspora.

To better identify and understand the strategies and practices used by the CPP to influence Cambodians in the diaspora, we follow Glasius¹⁴ in extending Gerschewski's three pillars of authoritarian stabilization—legitimation, repression, and co-optation—beyond the state's territorial jurisdiction into the transnational space. In developing her model, Glasius argues that authoritarian states seek to govern populations abroad through distinct sets of practices and policies that may *include* extraterritorial populations as "subjects (to be controlled and repressed), patriots (getting them to buy into legitimation strategies), or clients (with potential for co-optation) ... or *exclude* them as outlaws (denied any trappings of legal personality) or traitors (castigated and scapegoated as enemies of the state)."¹⁵ As will be seen, each of these identities and associated practices are present in the Long Beach case. The CPPYO is a top-level CPP program offering restricted economic inclusion to Cambodian populations abroad in exchange for their support. Additionally, member activities help the party establish a physical presence in Long Beach, increasing its ability to silence opposition through co-optation and intimidation.

¹² José Itzigsohn, "Immigration and the Boundaries of Citizenship: The Institutions of Immigrants' Political Transnationalism," *International Migration Review* 34, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 1126–1154; Doreen Rannveig Aguinas, "Committed to the Diaspora: More Developing Countries Setting Up Diaspora Institutions," Migration Policy Institute, 2 November 2009, <https://tinyurl.com/3mh9abc8>.

¹³ Alan Gamlen, "The Emigration State and the Modern Geopolitical Imagination," *Political Geography* 27, no. 8 (1 November 2008): 843, <https://tinyurl.com/yckzvzve>.

¹⁴ Glasius, "Extraterritorial Authoritarian Practices."

¹⁵ Glasius, "Extraterritorial Authoritarian Practices," 186, emphasis added.

In what follows we review the social, political, and economic transnational history of the Cambodian community of Long Beach. This will provide a context in which to understand acceptance of the CPP and the CPPYO's role. The review includes the community's long-standing opposition to the CPP, its evolving social, economic, and political transnational ties to Cambodia, and the complex sociopolitical and generational composition of the community today. Following this, we provide background and history on the structure of the CPPYO and conclude with an analytical discussion of the processes of, and sources for, legitimation, repression, and co-optation in the Long Beach community.

Long Beach Cambodian Community

Transnational connections between Cambodia and Long Beach have developed over a period of 50 years. Each migration event occurred under different circumstances representing different socioeconomic segments of the country with differing reasons for leaving as well as maintaining connections with the homeland. Because of this, Cambodians in the Long Beach area are not socially, economically, or politically homogenous. Cambodian Americans vary in many ways depending on social background; their ranks include members of the royal family, first-generation middle- and upper-class elites, former military, Western-educated individuals, and agriculturalists from rural villages. Cambodians also vary by the legal status under which they were accepted to the US: initially admitted as parolees, followed by refugees, and, since 1995, immigrants. Each subsequent group came with different motives for migration: refuge, family reunification, education, and more recently, investment and US citizenship while retaining Cambodian citizenship. Additionally, there are generational differences between the early arrivals, most of whom are now elderly, and Cambodian Americans raised in the United States who, in most cases, do not know about the deadly Communist Khmer Rouge (who controlled the government from 1975 until early 1979) or their parents' migration stories.

Cambodians in Long Beach also have differing political goals for the homeland. Some are former Khmer Rouge Communists who may or may not support the current government. Others continue to support the monarchy, many more support the Khmer Republic (1970–1975), others hope for the establishment of a more representative democratic system, and a much smaller group have quietly supported the CPP. Strong disagreement as to what the Long Beach community's relationship with the current Cambodian government should be has been publicly and forcefully voiced over the years. These views have become complicated as more Cambodians have returned home to reconnect with family and participate in Cambodia's politics and economic growth. Although Cambodians in greater Long Beach have appeared to be overwhelmingly united in the opinion that Hun Sen is

an authoritarian dictator, narratives of grudging acceptance and even outright appreciation for the current government have become more widespread over the years. The strongest of these echoes the ruling party's assertion that Hun Sen is responsible for the peace and economic growth the country has experienced. His strongman leadership style was necessary to bring order to the chaos after the Khmer Rouge. He should be shown gratitude for these achievements and accepted as the legitimate leader of the country.¹⁶ A second acknowledges the economic and technological gains the country has made and holds the hope that the next generation of Cambodian leaders (in particular, Hun Sen's son, Hun Manet) will be willing to make democratic changes.¹⁷ A third accepts that Hun Sen controls the country and there is no sense fighting this fact. There is no war, the country is stable and, as long as individuals do not speak out against the government and are willing to publicly support the CPP when asked to do so, they are left to live their lives in relative peace. This explanation is sometimes accompanied with the Cambodian saying: *choul styng taam baat* (ចូលស្ទឹងតាមបាត) meaning, "when in the river follow its route."¹⁸ The saying emphasizes the need to adapt to circumstances rather than struggle against them. An individual may reach their goals just as well by being flexible and making use of what is available.

Opportunities for investment and entrepreneurial activities in Cambodia and concern for extended family who remain in the country are among the contributing factors to this shift and are explored in more detail in the next section, along with the CPP's extraterritorial interest in the diaspora and Long Beach in particular.

Transnational Interconnections with Cambodia

As early as 1987, the Cambodian government was developing ways to co-opt and neutralize overseas opposition groups, primarily by inviting Cambodians in the diaspora who had held prominent positions in both the Sihanouk and Lon Nol governments to return to Cambodia to participate in national reconciliation and drafting of the constitution.¹⁹ However, after this initial outreach, the CPP largely ignored the diaspora as it focused on rebuilding the country and consolidating its power. It was not until the 1991 Paris Agreements, which established the United Nations' oversight of national

¹⁶ Two CPP members, interview by Susan Needham, Long Beach, 27 January 2018; email correspondence, Hun Sen supporter, Long Beach, 15 March 2016.

¹⁷ Susan Needham, field notes, Long Beach, 10 March 2016. CPP supporter, interview by Needham, Long Beach, 10 April 2016.

¹⁸ Grubb, field notes, Long Beach, Cambodia, September 2017. We are using the Library of Congress romanization system for Khmer, <https://tinyurl.com/3jbad7fp>.

¹⁹ Evan Gottesman, *Cambodia After the Khmer Rouge: Inside the Politics of Nation Building* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 286 and 303.

elections, that travel between Long Beach and the homeland became possible and transnational connections dramatically increased, diversified, and strengthened. Dozens of Long Beach leaders returned to Cambodia to take part in the elections as members of the royalist party, *Front uni national pour un Cambodge indépendant, neutre, pacifique et coopératif* (FUNCINPEC), founded in 1981 in France by the exiled former Cambodian king and head of state, Norodom Sihanouk. The party was headed by Sihanouk's son, Prince Norodom Ranariddh, and funded by Cambodians in the diaspora. Many more Long Beach refugees returned to Cambodia to find family, assess the damage to the country, and pursue ways to bring aid. They also began to invest in the country, buying property and taking advantage of newly opening markets.²⁰

FUNCINPEC won the elections held in 1993, but CPP leadership would not give up control. In an early sign of how powerful the CPP was, just before the 1993 elections some members of FUNCINPEC, including some from Long Beach, switched parties to join the CPP, having “reassessed their options against new power realities on the ground.”²¹ Many more switched from FUNCINPEC to the CPP in 1997 following the CPP's successful coup, which ousted Ranariddh and seriously diminished FUNCINPEC's power and support. Many hoped that by joining the CPP they could promote the ideals of democracy from within the existing system.

Not everyone who returned to participate in the elections switched parties for purely political reasons. Those who lived through the Khmer Rouge era felt gratitude toward the Vietnamese for their intervention. A Cambodian refugee and CPP leader in Long Beach told us the day the Vietnamese entered Phnom Penh is the day he was “reborn,” having been saved from certain execution.²² He returned to Cambodia in 1994 to help rebuild the country, initially supporting one of the dominant opposition parties, but eventually realizing that the CPP vision for peace and development was the same as his own, so he joined them. After returning to Long Beach, he became a leader of the local CPP chapter. He helps organize the annual “7 January, Victory over Genocide Day,” an event that celebrates the country's rebirth and during which CPP (and now CPPYO) members publicly give thanks to Hun Sen for bringing peace. Others found that there were opportunities for economic gain in Cambodia and that supporting the CPP, or at least not speaking out against them, made business arrangements easier. To solidify their support and increase access to other financial opportunities controlled by the government, some joined the party. For many, membership in the CPP or the CPPYO is a practical sociopolitical and economic strategy

²⁰ Community member, interview by Needham, Long Beach, 12 April 2008.

²¹ Khatharya Um, “Political Remittance: Cambodian Diasporas in Conflict and Post Conflict,” in *Diasporas in Conflict: Peace-Makers or Peace-Wreckers?*, eds. Hazel Smith and Paul Stares (Washington, DC: United Nations University Press, 2006), 268.

²² Interview by Needham, Long Beach, 27 January 2018.

expressed in the saying, *samruol kangia* (សំរួលការងារ), meaning “compliance/acceptance makes business smooth.”²³ In American English we might say, membership removes “roadblocks.” As with the previous idiom, flexibility is emphasized over struggle.

The late 1990s was also a time when many younger Cambodian Americans who were children during the Khmer Rouge and had not yet established jobs and families in the US began to return to Cambodia to help strengthen the country's democratic infrastructure and to work in social services. Expecting to be welcomed and anxious to help, many Cambodian Americans experienced profound prejudice among homeland Cambodians. Overseas Khmer were resented for leaving the country while those in the homeland—suffering from malnutrition, torture, and disease—struggled to piece together their lives in the aftermath of the destruction wrought by the Khmer Rouge. From the point of view of the Cambodian government, and Hun Sen in particular, overseas Cambodians were, and remain, deserters: those who ran away at the country's most critical time. They had abandoned Cambodia to live in relative luxury in another country and, rather than contribute to the government's efforts to reduce the violence and establish and maintain national stability, overseas Cambodians worked to oppose Hun Sen's actions by creating and funding opposition parties and bringing unwanted (and in his opinion, unwarranted) punitive attention to the government's efforts. Returning Cambodians were (and still are) called *anikachun* (អណិកឌុន), a term of contempt meaning they are traitors who have lost their Khmer soul and will never be Khmer again. *Anikachun* cannot be trusted to stay if there is trouble and the fact that they hold dual citizenship is proof of their inability to fully commit to the homeland. At the same time, many of those who returned to Cambodia discovered they had become accustomed to American ways of doing things. Younger Cambodian Americans found it difficult to adjust to Cambodia's hierarchical social structure and authoritarian government.²⁴ According to Wijers, to work in Cambodia, “[t]hey had to find ‘patronage’ with political parties or in the governmental service,”²⁵ but this was antithetical to the democratic principles they sought to help establish. Those who returned for business opportunities also encountered “cultural exclusion from mainstream Cambodian society” and impediments to engaging in business due to limited social networks.²⁶

Shortly after the first elections, in October 1993, a group of Cambodian leaders in Long Beach helped establish the Long Beach/Phnom Penh sister cities and a delegation of Long Beach city leaders travelled to Phnom Penh

²³ Community member, interview by Needham, Long Beach, 4 April 2018.

²⁴ Susan Needham and Karen Quintiliani, “Cambodians in Long Beach, California: The Making of a Community,” *Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies* 5, no. 1 (2007): 29–53.

²⁵ Gea D. M. Wijers, “Navigating a River by Its Bends: A Study on Transnational Social Networks as Resources for the Transformation of Cambodia,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 37, no. 9 (2014): 1531.

²⁶ Wijers, “Navigating a River,” 1539.

to develop international business opportunities.²⁷ As the years progressed and the CPP solidified its control over the country, Cambodians who wanted to do business in Cambodia expressed the view that although they did not agree with Hun Sen's politics, the CPP is the recognized government and, in their opinion, the only way to bring change to Cambodia is to work with them.²⁸ Many Cambodian Americans now have business investments in Cambodia and spend as much time in Cambodia as in the US.²⁹ These people are also likely to become CPP members. However, until recently, these individuals were in the minority.

Following the UN-directed national elections of 1993, the US ended its refugee programs for Cambodians. Each year a small number of Cambodians continue to be admitted to the US as refugees, but 90 percent (close to 3,000 individuals per year) now have immigrant status.³⁰ Most of these new immigrants are older children or adults who have come through the family reunification program, which allows US citizens to sponsor members of their immediate family (spouses, children, and parents) and a limited number of distant relatives. A much smaller number have been admitted to the US as students, through marriage, or the US immigration law, EB-5, that allows "immigrant investors" to become lawful permanent residents if they invest US\$500,000 in commercial enterprises.³¹ Anyone born after 1980 has no personal memory of the Khmer Rouge. They have witnessed the slow rebuilding of the country's infrastructure followed by rapid modernization in the last ten years. Among the new immigrants to the US, many retain strong ties to the homeland while purchasing homes and businesses, primarily liquor stores and donut shops in the US. Their families in Cambodia are fully engaged in the Cambodian socioeconomic system and the Hun Sen government is all they know. Their immigration to the US (and elsewhere in the diaspora) expands the family's resources, providing a hedge against trouble in Cambodia.³² This group does not relate to the refugee history of the earlier arrivals and in fact group members look down on those who came earlier as being *neak srae* (អ្នកដីស្រែ), literally translated as "farmers," but

²⁷ "Sister Cities of Long Beach, Inc.," accessed 29 July 2018, <https://tinyurl.com/2p8rzxsm>. Delegations from Long Beach have since gone to Cambodia periodically. The most recent, in 2019, included the current mayor and former vice-mayor.

²⁸ Needham, field notes, Long Beach, 2009 and 30 January 2018; Mira Jang, "L.B. Business Owners Join Delegation to Their Former Homeland," *Press Telegram*, 25 November 2006, "Community" section.

²⁹ Needham, field notes, Long Beach, 2013. Community member, interview by Needham, Long Beach, 8 September 2004.

³⁰ Statistical Yearbook of Immigration and Naturalization Service, Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1990–2019, <https://tinyurl.com/2w4x35xs>.

³¹ The program ended 30 December 2021, <https://tinyurl.com/4aj63d3n>.

³² M. J. Verver and J. B. M. Koning, "Toward a Kinship Perspective on Entrepreneurship," *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* 42, no. 4 (2018): 631–666.

meaning uneducated and socially backward.³³ This group generally does not participate in activities organized by members of the earlier groups. They are more careful to show respect to Hun Sen as the patron of the nation. This group represents the largest segment of CPPYO members.

As noted earlier, there is a pattern of support in Long Beach related to an individual's time of migration. Older Cambodian refugees who began arriving in the US in 1975 were cut off from contact with extended family networks until the country reopened in the early 1990s. Initially politically engaged, many have since become more socioeconomically involved in Cambodia. Members of this group are more likely to become members of the CPP. Cambodians who began arriving in the 1990s with immigrant status are younger and more likely to join the CPPYO. Although those in both groups who have built businesses in the US risk losing Cambodian customers once their support becomes public knowledge, many find their investments in Cambodia to be more lucrative than those in the US and thus worth the risk.³⁴ Successful business dealings and an obligation to protect family socioeconomic networks in Cambodia contribute to continued support for the CPP through membership in the CPPYO. As will be discussed further, another factor that may be influencing people in both groups is Hun Sen's eldest son, Hun Manet, who everyone we spoke to agrees will likely be Cambodia's next prime minister and who is perceived to be more sophisticated than his father.

Creation of the CPPYO

The creation of the CPPYO is part of a larger CPP strategy to undercut diasporic funding to opposition parties by increasing its physical and social media presence, both at home and in the diaspora. In the case under review here, "youth" is a loosely defined category referring to anyone who is a generation or more younger than the members of the ruling party, who are 60 to 70 years old. Glasius suggests that legitimation can be bolstered through the mobilization of youth organizations;³⁵ however, the majority of members in the CPPYO chapters in Los Angeles County and neighbouring Orange County are married couples, ranging in age from late thirties to late fifties. They are primarily independent businesspeople with investments in the US and Cambodia. Unlike more conventional youth organizations that bring teenagers and young adults together for education, indoctrination, and training, the CPPYO chapters in greater Long Beach do not have special programs for their members. The organization attracts those who are doing business in Cambodia into this self-reinforcing social group. CPPYO

³³ Grubb, field notes, Long Beach, 2016.

³⁴ CPPYO member, interview by Grubb, Long Beach, 8 December 20.

³⁵ Glasius, "Extraterritorial Authoritarian Practices," 191.

gatherings generally provide opportunities for businesspeople to show off their success and keep abreast of shifting markets and business opportunities in both countries.³⁶ But its primary purpose is to contribute to the CPPYO's goal to "decapitate the opposition" by cutting off monetary backing to the opposition parties supported by Cambodians in the diaspora. When asked in 2017 why the CPPYO was formed, a CPPYO member explained:

The CPP doesn't think the opposition parties should be the only ones getting the Khmer expatriate's money, especially money that supports political activities against them. The CPP might not be able to solicit money directly from overseas Khmer, but they may be able to divert, slow down, or even cut off funding currently going to the CNRP [Cambodia National Rescue Party].³⁷

An early indication of the CPP's interest in expanding activities into the diaspora came in 2010 when the Cambodian Embassy in the US announced the CPP would increase its campaigning in the US by opening party branches in California, Massachusetts, Louisiana, and Pennsylvania.³⁸ The Cambodian ambassador, Hem Heng (a CPP member), explained this strategy of social influence:

The Cambodian Diaspora, including the defectors to the CPP, do not have the right to vote, but they can contribute to the result of the election through indirect decision-making like sending their money to relatives which can encourage them to join the CPP back home.³⁹

Opposition parties continued to make steady electoral gains back home, in part because of intense organizing among Cambodia's youth.⁴⁰ In 2013 the newly formed CNRP, which received some 60 percent of its funding from overseas Cambodians,⁴¹ received 44 percent of the votes in the general elections. This was the first election since 1993 in which an opposition party had received enough votes to threaten the CPP's total control of Cambodia's National Assembly. The CNRP claimed they had won the election and moved to contest the results. In an unprecedented display of public protest, tens of

³⁶ Grubb, field notes, Long Beach, 13 November 2021.

³⁷ Interview by Grubb, Long Beach, 7 January 2018.

³⁸ Khmerization, "CPP Expands Party Branches in the U.S," 20 April 2010, <https://tinyurl.com/2p8p29wc>.

³⁹ Overseas Cambodian citizens do have the right to vote but must return to Cambodia to do so. We know of at least one case in which a formerly apolitical Cambodian American became a member of the CPPYO and subsequently convinced a family member in Cambodia to join the CPP: Grubb field notes, Long Beach, 11 August 2021.

⁴⁰ In 2007, 300,000 youth (ages 15 through 30) were registered to vote in Cambodia. The Sam Rainsy Party created a national youth congress with close to 53,000 members. Socheata, "KI Media: First National Congress of Sam Rainsy Party Youth Movement to Take Place on 02 March," *KI Media* (blog), 29 February 2008, <https://tinyurl.com/5ebp68h>.

⁴¹ David Hutt, "What We Don't Know About the Cambodian Opposition's Financial Plans," *The Diplomat*, 12 May 2017, <https://tinyurl.com/42s9awbj>.

thousands of homeland Cambodians took to the streets, calling for Hun Sen's resignation.⁴² In Long Beach, and elsewhere in the diaspora, Cambodians held demonstrations in support of the CNRP's claims.⁴³ Surprised by the significance of the youth vote, the CPP began developing its own youth groups and took limited action toward redressing some of the issues the CNRP campaigned on. The party also began an image campaign to spread "good news" about how well the CPP was doing at maintaining stability and promoting economic development.⁴⁴ Facebook profiles were created for government officials and Hun Sen's Facebook page became "one of the country's most popular sources of information."⁴⁵ In Long Beach, CPP supporters pointed to the reforms as proof of the government's attempts to change. They also noted, as Loughlin has recently confirmed, that elite patronage is deeply entrenched in Cambodian institutions and poses a significant obstacle to making change.⁴⁶ Long Beach supporters stressed that "Hun Sen wants to make changes. He shouldn't be blamed if he is unable to make everyone in the government stop breaking the law."⁴⁷

In 2015 the CPP implemented a comprehensive plan for increasing its presence in the global diaspora. In the interest of giving overseas Cambodians "political options" and to "counteract negative propaganda," seven new Cambodian ambassadors were appointed to Belgium, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kuwait, and the US. In addition to their regular duties, these ambassadors would "find members to strengthen the party, increase support, and explain how the party has developed the country."⁴⁸ Because of his knowledge of the US, Lieutenant General Hun Manet, Hun Sen's eldest son and a West Point graduate, was put in charge of administering the CPP Overseas Youth Working Group (OYWG), an organizational structure that has been central to Cambodia's government control at the local level since the Communist era.⁴⁹ Hun Manet is commander of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces and of Cambodia's National Counterterrorism Task Force. Additionally, he oversees the "cyber war room" to "monitor and control information on social media," "create and distribute media favorable to the party," and research and observe

⁴² Robert Carmichael, "Tens of Thousands March in Cambodia Demanding Hun Sen Quit," Cambodian Information Center, 29 December 2013, <https://www.presselegram.com/>.

⁴³ Grace Wong, "Hundreds in Long Beach Protest Election Results in Cambodia," *Press Telegram* (blog), 19 August 2013, <https://www.presselegram.com/>.

⁴⁴ Kheang Un, "The Cambodian People Have Spoken: Has the Cambodian People's Party Heard?," *Southeast Asian Affairs* (2015): 112–114.

⁴⁵ Julia Wallace, "Fight Over Cambodian Leader's Facebook 'Likes' Reaches a US Court," *The New York Times*, 9 February 2018, <https://tinyurl.com/mcuudcdh>.

⁴⁶ Loughlin, "Reassessing Cambodia's Patronage System."

⁴⁷ Needham, field notes, Long Beach, 2 April 2007. CPP supporter, interview by Needham, Long Beach, 3 November 2017.

⁴⁸ Matt Blomberg and Odom Sek, "Ambassadors to Double as CPP Campaigners," *The Cambodia Daily*, 13 June 2015, <https://tinyurl.com/2xyjeyf>.

⁴⁹ Loughlin, "Reassessing Cambodia's Patronage System," 506.

“any behavior which promotes the opposition party.”⁵⁰ Given his position, it appears another function of the CPPYO is to surveil and control diasporic Cambodians.

The Youth Working Group is composed of five groups responsible for the creation of CPPYOs in Australia and New Zealand, Europe, South Korea, Thailand, and the US and Canada. The US is further divided into four groups: West Coast, Central North, Central South, and East Coast. Along with “listen[ing] to concerns that oversea [*sic*] Cambodians might have,” these groups are tasked with recruiting new members, strengthening relations between the country and overseas youth, publicizing and promoting the successes of both the Royal Government of Cambodia and the CPP, and “inspir[ing] and encourag[ing] oversea [*sic*] Cambodian youth to love the country and to seek opportunity to use their skills and experiences for the betterment of Cambodia.”⁵¹ But these skills are expected to be used within the diaspora by supporting the current government and decreasing opposition. The CPP party leadership has not invited *anikachun* to come to Cambodia to work on behalf of the government. In fact, one of the CPPYO leaders in Long Beach who wanted to return to Cambodia to help in the “betterment of Cambodia” was told by a CPPYO leader that the best way to help the CPP was to stay in the US. Those who return to Cambodia for visits are treated well: they are met at the airport; their visas and luggage are quickly cleared through customs while cameras record the auspicious event to be shared on social media. But some have complained that they are noticeably excluded when “important” political matters are discussed.⁵²

To form a CPPYO group, a formal request goes to the local CPP leader and from there up the chain of command to Hun Manet for final approval. To become a member of a group, the CPP prepares a dossier with names of family members (including children) and their affiliations. All local-level activities must be approved before the group may proceed. For example, the CPPYO group hosting the 2018 “Victory over Genocide” celebration was told who would lead the event and serve on the organizing committee, who the guest speakers would be, and where it would be held. CPPYO members’ Facebook accounts are monitored, and members have been asked to report anyone who speaks against the government. As a network within a social field of networks,⁵³ the CPPYO creates a social space where large numbers of participants may collectively demonstrate their support for the current government and counteract the negative voices of those who oppose it. In this and other ways, the CPPYO is more like a social network of personal

⁵⁰ Ben Paviour and Odom Sek, “Members Confirm CPP-Linked ‘Cyber War Room,’” *The Cambodia Daily*, 25 May 2017, <https://tinyurl.com/3vyx4rv9>.

⁵¹ Ry Tuy, “Cambodian People’s Party CPP Canada Committee,” 21 January 2016.

⁵² Grubb, field notes, Long Beach, February 2018.

⁵³ Nina Glick Schiller, “Transnational Social Fields and Imperialism: Bringing a Theory of Power to Transnational Studies,” *Anthropological Theory* 5, no. 4 (2005): 442.

relationships centred on the adulation of Hun Sen, but most particularly, his son Hun Manet, for whom they express deep respect and excitement that borders on being starstruck.⁵⁴ It also provides a measure of protection for members' economic interests.

Hun Manet planned to visit Cambodian communities and CPPYO groups in Canada and the US during the Cambodian New Year in April 2016. His stated purpose was to promote national reconciliation and unity with overseas Cambodians. He had planned to be in Long Beach for the annual New Year's parade and contributed a full-size Angkorean-style chariot along with dozens of costumes from that era of Khmer history for the parade. Outraged protests against the Cambodia Town parade planning committee and Hun Manet's participation in the parade were immediate. People were already angry that Manet would be visiting Long Beach, but to walk in the parade was for many unacceptable: "We will not applaud the son of Hun Sen in our New Year celebration!"⁵⁵ Many Cambodians felt genuinely threatened and fearful of the Cambodian government. It was one thing for Cambodian Americans to try to do away with the current Cambodian government, but quite a different experience to have that government assert itself in Long Beach. The United States was seen by most Cambodians as an unassailable sanctuary where they could openly support opposition parties and work to undermine the CPP's hold on Cambodia without fear of repercussion against themselves or their families. Any hint or rumour that a CPP official might participate in or have anything to do with Long Beach activities was immediately attacked in public venues, such as Long Beach city council meetings. Out of concern for family members in Cambodia and unsure of business investments there, individuals began censoring themselves on social media, knowing that they could be watched.⁵⁶

In explaining their position, parade organizers expressed the view that Hun Sen's son, Hun Manet, would probably be the next prime minister and being on friendly terms would facilitate dialogue and perhaps influence policy.⁵⁷ Parade organizers also argued that producing a parade is expensive and support from Cambodia would help finance professional floats. However, many in the community felt insulted. They liked the parade the way it was and did not want interference from Cambodia that might make them indebted to Hun Sen. As one woman put it, "It's a crappy parade, but it's *our* crappy parade."⁵⁸ To have someone from Hun Sen's family show off their wealth and power, and expect Cambodian Americans to cheer and be

⁵⁴ Grubb and Needham field notes, CPPYO event, Long Beach, 21 December 2017.

⁵⁵ Community member, interview by Needham, Long Beach, 18 March 2016.

⁵⁶ Grubb and Needham, field notes, Long Beach, 2018; Greg Yee and Josh Dulany, "Cambodian New Year Parade Appearance by Military Leader Stirs Controversy," *Press Telegram* (blog), 19 March 2016, <https://www.presstelegram.com/>.

⁵⁷ Needham, field notes, Cambodia Town planning meeting, Long Beach, 21 February 2015.

⁵⁸ Community member, interview by Needham, Long Beach, 5 May 2016.

grateful, was too much. Over 200 Long Beach-area Cambodians attended the March 2016 Long Beach city council meeting to protest Hun Manet's participation in the parade.⁵⁹ Outside the meeting, people held signs with images of Hun Manet behind a large red X, or with slogans stating, "No Hun Manet in Long Beach," and "Like Father, like son." Those who addressed the city council during public comments provided a history of the current Cambodian government's links to the Khmer Rouge, the regime's numerous human rights violations, and their perspective on Hun Sen's affiliation with the Communist Vietnamese. Speakers denounced parade planners and were passionate in their demands that Hun Manet not be allowed to participate in the parade. They urged city council members and all Cambodian Americans to boycott the parade.

Parade organizers and other prominent Long Beach Cambodian Americans, most of whom had some connection with the Cambodian government and wanted to further facilitate communications, held a Town Hall-style meeting, giving people the opportunity to express themselves. Some shouted and cried in anger, recounting their experiences during the Khmer Rouge and noting atrocities perpetrated by the current government.⁶⁰ Shortly after this event, Hun Manet announced that he would visit Long Beach as planned, but would not participate in the parade because of concerns of violence between CPP supporters and non-supporters. He stressed that "Khmer New Year is a special occasion for our Khmer people and should unite us in a desire to support our race by working together."⁶¹

Despite the very public and intense show of resistance while Hun Manet was in Long Beach, there was a noticeable shift in the narrative following his visit: supporters characterized those who were opposed to Hun Manet as being "sick," uneducated, or suffering from PTSD. The protestors' manner of speaking was ridiculed and said to be offensive—not the way Cambodians should speak in public. CPPYO supporters, especially those meeting Hun Manet in person for the first time, were enthusiastic about him. They talked about how polite, soft-spoken, and thoughtful he was. They pointed out that he has a special understanding of the US, having been educated at West Point. They also explained that "he will be the next prime minister and unlike his father, who often uses peasant language, he will be different; he will make changes."⁶² That same year a Long Beach Cambodian created a page on Facebook called "Cambodian American [*sic*] for Peace and Development." Focusing on "positive developments ... in Cambodia that might otherwise not get the attention they deserve," the group's objective is

⁵⁹ Josh Dulany, "Hundreds of Protesters Urge Long Beach Council to Denounce Visit from Cambodian Leader," *Press Telegram*, 22 March 2016, web edition, <https://www.prestelegram.com/>.

⁶⁰ Needham, field notes, Long Beach, 10 March 2016.

⁶¹ Jason Ruiz, "After Public Backlash, Hun Manet Says He Won't Attend Long Beach Cambodian New Year Parade," *Long Beach Post News*, 28 March 2016, web edition, <https://tinyurl.com/2p8ux9th>.

⁶² Needham, field notes, Long Beach, 23 April 2016.

to “promote stability, progress, and economic development for the people of Cambodia, both at home and abroad.” Members are slightly younger (30 to 50 years old), from the US and Cambodia, the majority of whom live in the Los Angeles area. The page is not explicitly pro-CPP, but in 2019, they posted a private Facebook page, “Hun Manet, my hero,” and more recently posted group photos of members, with Hun Manet at the centre.

Also in 2016, Cambodia's State Assembly made changes to election laws to impede electoral gains by opposition parties. Despite these moves, the CNRP made significant gains in the July 2017 provincial elections, winning seats in areas historically dominated by the CPP and giving many Cambodians in the homeland and abroad reason for genuine optimism. But in September 2017, the independent newspaper *The Cambodia Daily* was forced to close and the CNRP's president, Kem Sokha, was arrested on charges of treason, espionage, and conspiring with the US to overthrow the Cambodian government. The charges against Sokha were based on a video of him instructing CNRP youth in Australia in strategies for winning over voters and strengthening democracy in Cambodia. Cambodian Americans in Long Beach and elsewhere in the diaspora gathered to protest the government's blatant shutdown of free speech, but with little impact,⁶³ because in November 2017, the Cambodian Supreme Court officially dissolved the CNRP and several newspapers, radio stations, human rights and environmental activists, and NGOs with US personnel were threatened or ordered to close. CPP supporters in Long Beach felt the charges against Kem Sokha were justified and referenced the video as evidence of his goal to overthrow the government. They also echoed Hun Sen's assertions that “the CNRP was all talk and no action.” In this narrative Hun Sen, who brought peace to Cambodia, is the only one capable of maintaining the country's current stability and economic prosperity. Without him, Cambodia would once again fall into civil war—a statement that sounds like a threat to those who oppose him.

CPPYO members also engaged in humanitarian activities that helped soften the CPP's image. They began regularly holding social events at members' homes and fundraisers at smaller Cambodian restaurants in Long Beach, to which friends outside the CPP were invited. They organized campaigns to raise money for flood victims, to rebuild an orphanage, and to buy bicycles for the children of the orphanage. They also became involved in local politics, hosting a debate between Cambodian candidates for the Long Beach sixth district city council seat, where the largest number of Cambodians live. A primary motive for the event was to build support for a candidate who would support Hun Sen and the CPP. More Long Beach Cambodians began self-consciously confessing that while they did not support Hun Sen, they enjoyed the company of the CPPYO group, which they

⁶³ “Long Beach's Khmer Community Marches to Decry Crackdown on Free Speech in Cambodia,” *Press Telegram*, 17 September 2017, <https://www.presselegram.com/>.

described as full of “nice people, doing good things for Cambodia.”⁶⁴ The CPP anniversary dinner of July 6, 2018, was held at a well-known Cambodian restaurant in Long Beach and for the first time there were no protesters. Later that month, a group of about 14 CPPYO members, calling themselves “patriots,” flew to Cambodia to vote in the general elections. Before boarding at the Los Angeles airport, they shared on Facebook their excitement at being able “to vote for the leader we love,” Prime Minister Hun Sen. Six months later, some 500 Cambodian Americans attended the Long Beach “Victory Over Genocide” celebration.

Legitimation, Repression, Co-optation, and the CPPYO in Long Beach

Cambodia has a stable one-party authoritarian government,⁶⁵ the foundation of which is based on a repressed citizenry and a cohesive “alliance between state officials, military enforcers, and civilian capitalist entrepreneurs.”⁶⁶ Opposition parties have been restricted, co-opted, or outlawed—actions which contribute to the diaspora’s claims that the CPP is not a legitimate representative government. Having consolidated power in Cambodia, the CPP has turned its attention to Cambodians abroad and begun implementing extraterritorial strategies designed to curtail criticism of the CPP and challenges to the party’s legitimacy. In what follows we use the three pillars of authoritarian control to examine the sources of support and evidence for how legitimation, repression, and co-optation manifest in the Long Beach community.

Legitimation is defined “as the process of gaining support, which is based on an empirical, Weberian tradition of ‘legitimacy belief.’”⁶⁷ As a descriptive concept, legitimacy belief does not focus on whether the political institutions are right or just, but rather on peoples’ faith in a particular form of government. From this perspective, the function of legitimation, regardless of the form of government, is “to guarantee active consent, compliance with the rules, passive obedience, or mere toleration within the population.”⁶⁸ The three sources of legitimacy belief identified by Weber are tradition (the government has been in place for long enough to be considered “traditional”), charisma (trust in the leader), and legality (following the rule

⁶⁴ Needham, field notes, Long Beach, 1 August 2020.

⁶⁵ Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, “The New Competitive Authoritarianism,” *Journal of Democracy* 31, no. 1 (2020): 51–65, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2020.0004>.

⁶⁶ Loughlin, “Reassessing Cambodia’s Patronage System,” 500.

⁶⁷ Max Weber. *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Grundriß der verstehenden Soziologie*. Tübingen: Mohr, 1956, 122. Quoted in Gerschewski, “Pillars of Stability,” 18

⁶⁸ Gerschewski, “Three Pillars of Stability,” 18.

of law).⁶⁹ Although some Cambodian Americans in Long Beach argue that Hun Sen is trying to follow the rule of law, others (including some CPP supporters) scoff at the notion, observing that laws are created as they are needed to benefit the goals of the CPP, the military, and business elites.⁷⁰ In terms of charisma, Hun Sen is admired by some in Long Beach for his authoritarian style of leadership, but Hun Manet receives the widest praise and expressions of hope from both CPP supporters and non-supporters.⁷¹ The third source of legitimacy belief, tradition, is more difficult to identify without further study, but as noted earlier, some in the Long Beach area have come to reluctantly accept the CPP because of its longevity and stability, which is one of the functions of the process of legitimation. Based on this analysis, it can be said that legitimacy belief among Cambodians in the Long Beach area is weak, as it is based primarily on the passage of time and the hope that Hun Manet, if given the opportunity, will bring change to the country.

Gerschewski identified two forms of empirical evidence for the process of legitimation that help clarify the CPPYO's functions and the CPP's objectives. The first is specific legitimation, which is indicated by the state's ability to meet demands for social stability and economic growth. This is one of the cornerstones of the CPP's claim to legitimacy, which holds that the CPP alone is responsible for bringing peace, economic growth, and social stability to the country. As shown in the historical review presented above, economic growth and social stability are the bases for increasing (reluctant) support for the CPP. One of the main functions of the CPPYO is to celebrate this through the annual "Victory Over Genocide" observance, which is recorded and used by the party to demonstrate to those at home how much Hun Sen is appreciated in the diaspora. The second form of evidence is diffuse legitimation, which is more difficult to measure because it relies on peoples' attitudes, which they may not want to share in public.⁷² For example, there are people we know to be CPP members, but they deny any association, while there are others who do not support the current government and would like to see change, but because of business interests and family in Cambodia, will not speak out against the party in public.⁷³ Considering both Weber's and Gerschewski's concepts we can see that among those Cambodians

⁶⁹ Fabienne Peter, "Political Legitimacy," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Summer 2017 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2017), <https://tinyurl.com/2p86bpae>.

⁷⁰ CPP supporter, interview by Needham, Long Beach, 30 January 2018.

⁷¹ Some in Long Beach question whether Hun Manet has the political savvy necessary to hold the military, government, and elite entrepreneurs together as well as his father has.

⁷² Gerschewski, "Three Pillars of Stability," 20.

⁷³ CPPYO member, interview by Grubb, 21 December 2018

we have talked with, legitimacy *belief* in the CPP is weak, but a legitimization *process* that began with a small number of Cambodians early in Long Beach's history has slowly expanded as Cambodia's economy has stabilized, as well as through the establishment of the CPPYO.

The second pillar, repression, takes two forms, the first being "high intensity coercion," which uses "(violent) repression of mass demonstrations, (violent) campaigns against parties, and the attempted assassination or imprisonment of opposition leaders,"⁷⁴ each of which has occurred within Cambodia's legal borders but not in Long Beach or elsewhere in the diaspora.⁷⁵ However, there is always the threat that family in Cambodia could be harmed or individuals may be barred from returning to Cambodia, as is the case for the CNRP leaders with whom we spoke. The second form of repression is "lower intensity coercion," which includes formal and informal surveillance [and] low intensity physical harassment and intimidation."⁷⁶ The CPP may not be able to use the threat of assassination or imprisonment to repress opposition activities outside its borders, but lower intensity coercion through social media has been used to great effect in both Cambodia and the US. As Internet availability has increased in Cambodia, so has the government's ability to block and restrict content, surveil user activity, and collect data.⁷⁷ This makes it easier to monitor and document communication content between people in Cambodia and the diaspora, and supports the formal and informal coercive activities carried out by the CPPYO social network. As discussed above, people have reacted to the increased presence of CPP representatives and the CPPYO in the Long Beach area with deep concern and caution. Many report they are more careful of what they say and to whom, for fear that family members and investments in Cambodia may be endangered. Both supporters and non-supporters have reported censoring themselves in phone conversations and on Facebook.⁷⁸

The third pillar, co-optation, is defined as "the capacity to tie strategically-relevant actors (or a group of actors) to the regime elite."⁷⁹ Gerschewski identifies relevant actors in autocracies as the "intra-elite" military and business elites with whom autocratic regimes must share power in order to prevent competition for power. Gerschewski's theory was developed to describe authoritarian processes within a state's territorial jurisdiction, but Glasius has argued "populations *abroad* may also be 'strategically relevant,'

⁷⁴ Gerschewski, "Three Pillars of Stability," 20.

⁷⁵ Hun Sen threatened to "beat up" Cambodian Australian citizens prior to his visit in March 2018, but did not carry out the threat. Lindsay Murdoch, "Cambodia PM Hun Sen Threatens to Beat up Protesters on Australia Visit," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 February 2018, <https://tinyurl.com/5cxdeb9r>.

⁷⁶ Gerschewski, "Three Pillars of Stability," 20.

⁷⁷ Freedom House, "Cambodia: Freedom on the Net 2021 Country Report," accessed 20 December 2021, <https://tinyurl.com/yckmfk2e>.

⁷⁸ Grubb field notes, Long Beach, 4 April 2018.

⁷⁹ Gerschewski, "Three Pillars of Stability," 22.

and co-opting them may be mutually beneficial: fortunes and careers are tied, not just to the home country, but more specifically to the home regime.”⁸⁰ In return for their support, members of the CPPYO receive tacitly understood, but not guaranteed, benefits in the form of increased family security and less interference in business and property transactions in Cambodia. Applying Glasius’ framework, it becomes clear that CPPYO members have been co-opted to be lower-echelon “clients” of the CPP, but this new position does not fully release them from the status of *anikachun* “traitors.” Their economic, social, and political advancement remains restricted because of their migration history and because they are more useful outside the country where, as representatives of the CPPYO, they can help repress opposition through open support of the CPP and informal surveillance of others.

Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated how through the establishment of the CPPYO, Hun Sen and the CPP have extended the regime’s usual methods of repression and co-optation across national borders into the Cambodian American community of greater Long Beach for the purpose of silencing opposition to its rule. Through the CPPYO, the CPP binds *anikachun* to the regime as “clients” for whom business transactions are smoother, but political and socioeconomic advancement within Cambodia remains restricted. The usefulness of CPPYO members is in their willingness to manifest the presence of the CPP physically and symbolically in Long Beach, providing the means through which the CPP may breach the transnational diasporic space to directly monitor and threaten the activities of those who oppose its control. The fact that the organization also contributes to a legitimization process does not appear to be of immediate concern to the party. As a CPPYO leader explained to us, ultimately, “it doesn’t matter whether people join the CPP or CPPYO or not. What matters is that they don’t speak out in opposition or work against the Party.”⁸¹

California State University Dominguez Hills, Carson, USA, February, 2022

⁸⁰ Glasius, “Extraterritorial Authoritarian Practices,” 189, emphasis added.

⁸¹ CPPYO member, interview by Grubb, Long Beach, 2 January 22.

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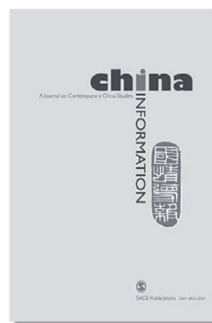
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The Art of Thai Diplomacy: Parables of Alliance

Ryan Ashley and Apichai W. Shipper

ABSTRACT

This paper argues that a pragmatist theory of international relations, combined with parables of alliance formation from local proverbs and literary classics, best explains the art of Thai diplomacy from a historical perspective. Notably avoiding Western colonization, the Thais have enjoyed relative sovereignty and independence throughout their history. Rather than balancing, bandwagoning, or hedging, our study finds that Thailand has deliberately leveraged asymmetrical partnerships between often-opposed great powers and more symmetrical partnerships with less powerful states and multilateral organizations in order to maintain its physical and identity-based ontological security. We draw our empirical evidence from four historical periods: the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, World War II, the Cold War, and the post-Cold War modern era. Our findings can be applied to other Southeast Asian states and their own parables of alliance.

Keywords: ontological security, pragmatism, leveraging, alliances, Thai diplomacy, Bang Rachan, Wanthong

DOI: 10.5509/2022952227

Thais pride themselves on their fabulous international relations achievements and adept diplomatic maneuvering. In the official narrative, the origins of the Thai people lie in an escape en masse from the Chinese encroachment into their kingdom in Sipsong Panna, southern Yunnan Province, to present-day Thailand during the early thirteenth century.¹ They then established self-governing states after the

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Acknowledgements: For their helpful comments and/or assistance, we thank Amitav Acharya, Thanet Aphornsuvan, Thak Chaloemtiarana, Hyung-Gu Lynn, Duncan McCargo, Ploy, and the two anonymous reviewers. We also thank participants of the 2018 Thailand Update conference at Columbia University, where this idea originated.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the US Department of State, the US Department of Defense, or the US government.

¹ David Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003). While Wyatt offers a conservative view of Thai history, Sujit Wongthet provocatively argues that Thai people of the central plain area had always been there as Lao, Mon, and Khmer. If they had migrated from anywhere,

decline of the Pagan and Khmer kingdoms. The Thais enjoyed relative sovereignty and independence throughout their history, despite having been sacked by the Burmese at least twice. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they alone in Southeast Asia avoided Western colonization. Even before they successfully navigated their way out of Japanese military domination in Asia during World War II, Prime Minister Plaek Phibunsongkhram (Phibun hereafter) decided to celebrate his country's remarkable achievement in preserving its freedom by renaming it "Thailand," or Land of the Free.²

Having avoided direct Western colonization, Thailand provides a unique model for the study of international relations conducted by small-medium states. Unlike other Southeast Asian countries, where European colonizers ran foreign relations, Thailand (Siam) improvised and developed an independent form of foreign policy from its interactions with Western powers and Asian neighbours.³ In doing so, it embraced Western-style mapping, national boundaries, fixed taxation, and bureaucratization, without having to abandon traditional behaviours.⁴ Today, it sends most of its aspiring young diplomats and IR scholars to elite US universities to learn "modern" techniques of diplomacy.

Sadly, these academies expose them to Western international relations theories and foreign policy strategies that are deprived of Thai cultural context and local narratives. For instance, they read works from scholars who simply apply Western theories to Thailand.⁵ As a result, their theories are oftentimes ahistorical or inadequate in fully explaining the foreign relations of Thailand.⁶ In an attempt to bring in cultural context and local narratives,

they would have done it from around 950 CE from the Lanna Kingdom (Laos)—not around the late thirteenth century from southern China, where many ethnic Thais still live happily today. According to Sujit, people moved from the Mekong area (around Luang Prabang) down the Nan and Yom Rivers into the Chaophraya Plain. See Sujit Wongthet, *Khon thai maa chak nai?* [Where did Thai people come from?] (Bangkok: Matichon, 2005).

² The brainchild for the name change was Luang Wichit Wattakan, who was instrumental in formulating an official notion of "Thai" identity on behalf of the military-dominated state. See Scot Barmé, *Luang Wichit Wattakan and the Creation of a Thai Identity* (Singapore: ISEAS, 1993).

³ Anthony Reid, *A History of Southeast Asia: Critical Crossroads* (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2015).

⁴ See Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994); Seksan Prasertkul, "The Transformation of the Thai State and Economic Change" (PhD dissertation, Cornell University, 1989).

⁵ For example, see Chanintira na Thalang, Soravis Jayanama, Jittipat Poonkham, eds., *International Relations as a Discipline in Thailand* (New York: Routledge, 2019). In this edited volume, Jittipat Poonkham (47–70) asks, "Why is there no Thai (critical) International Relations theory?" and argues that this is in part due to Thailand's status as a small state in the global political economy, and in part because "almost all Thai IR scholars have been trained in Western universities, especially the 'American social sciences'" (347). In fact, Chanintira na Thalang (251–278) finds far more conceptual and theoretical discussions on Thai domestic politics than on its international relations.

⁶ A notable exception is Pavin Chachavalpongpun, *Reinventing Thailand: Thaksin Shinawatra and His Foreign Policy* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2010). Amitav Acharya, who often employs historical context in his work, laments this shortcoming when scholars think theoretically about Asian IR. See his "Thinking Theoretically about Asian IR," in *International Relations of Asia*, eds. David Shambaugh and Michael Yahuda (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 59–92.

this article introduces a cognitive approach to understanding Thailand's international relations and repeated decisions to forge alliances, especially with competing great powers, by examining well-known Thai parables from classical sources. It posits that Thailand actively cultivates and leverages these partnerships in a conscious effort to maintain its identity-based ontological security. This approach also provides a new perspective on the geopolitical strategy and intentions of a vital regional power in Southeast Asia.

This article is organized into eight sections, consisting of a theoretical part and an empirical part. The first section reviews the dominant discourse on Thailand's international relations from the realist school and offers our critique. It then reframes Thailand's international relations as those of a self-confident nation that actively leverages its relationships between great powers. The second section advances a pragmatic approach to understanding Thailand's international relations by employing the concept of ontological pragmatism to Thai diplomacy. The third section explores Thai parables of alliance derived from classical literature and proverbs with an assumption that a pattern of diplomatic behaviour can be explained based on the cultural products policy makers consumed during their formative years. The next four sections offer empirical evidence from four historical periods: the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, World War II, the Cold War, and the post-Cold War period. Finally, the conclusion explores the possibility of employing this approach to understand other Southeast Asian nations.

Our data are drawn from archival documents of the Thai National Archives, press releases on the websites of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, Japan, and the People's Republic of China, oral histories of US diplomats posted in Thailand on the website of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, personal interviews with Thai and US government officials, and a variety of secondary sources.

Theoretical Discourse on Alliance Formation

From Realism to Pragmatism

A dominant theory often used to explain alliance formation comes out of the realist tradition. According to realism, alliances form when small-medium states choose either to bandwagon with a stronger power or balance against a prevailing threat. Bandwagoning is typically associated with "offensive realism," and balancing with "defensive realism." Kenneth Waltz believes that states prefer to act defensively rather than offensively within anarchic systems because "the first concern of states is not to maximize power but to maintain their position in the system."⁷ Similarly, Stephen Walt points to

⁷ Kenneth Waltz, *Theories of International Politics* (Boston: Addison-Wesley, 1979), 126.

balancing as the main driver of alliance formation.⁸ In other words, anarchy in international politics does not spur continuous competition among states, but rather promotes threat balancing. For Walt, threat balancing occurs regardless of the aggregate power of the states involved and is triggered by shared perceptions among states of an outside threat.

With the rise of China, scholars have applied realist theories of bandwagoning and balancing to international relations in Asia.⁹ For example, Laos and Cambodia are widely described as choosing bandwagoning with China for economic gains.¹⁰ Most Southeast Asian countries, however, employ a mixed or “limited bandwagoning” strategy: economic engagement with China and soft balancing against China via security alignment or reassurances with the US.¹¹ They align with two competing larger powers who may threaten their national sovereignty, or what Evan Laksmana calls “pragmatic equidistance.”¹² In this way, Southeast Asian states maintain good relations with both China and the US in case one relation spirals downwards. Evelyn Goh interprets this behaviour as “hedging,” when states carry out two *contradictory* policy directions (balancing and engagement) simultaneously.¹³ In hedging, a state prepares for the worst by balancing and for the best by engaging. Cheng-Chwee Kuik explains that threat balancing entails maintaining a strong military, building and strengthening alliances including trade networks, increasing diplomatic links, and creating binding multilateral frameworks.¹⁴ Kuik describes hedging as a behaviour guided by the degrees of “power rejection” and “power acceptance” a small state holds towards one of two imposing and competing great powers.¹⁵ In this framework, small states accept or reject varying degrees of power according to their risk tolerance. A state can reject power by accepting “risk-contingency” options,

⁸ Stephen Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 17–49.

⁹ For Northeast Asia, see, for example, David C. Kang, “Between balancing and bandwagoning: South Korea’s response to China,” *Journal of East Asian Studies* 9, no. 1 (2009): 1–28.

¹⁰ Sovinda Po and Christopher B. Primiano, “An ‘Ironclad Friend’: Explaining Cambodia’s Bandwagoning Policy towards China,” *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* (2020): 1–21; Edgar Pang, “‘Same-Same but Different’: Laos and Cambodia’s Political Embrace of China,” *ISEAS Perspective*, no. 66 (2017).

¹¹ For example, see Le Hong Hiep, “Vietnam’s hedging strategy against China since normalization,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 35, no. 3 (2013): 333–368; Enze Han, “Under the shadow of China-US competition: Myanmar and Thailand’s alignment choices,” *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 11, no. 1 (2018): 81–104; see Seng Tan, “Consigned to Hedge: South-East Asia and America’s ‘Free and Open Indo-Pacific’ Strategy,” *International Affairs* 96, no. 1 (2020): 131–148.

¹² Evan Laksmana, “Pragmatic Equidistance: How Indonesia Manages its Great Power Relations,” in *China, the United States, and the Future of Southeast Asia*, ed. David Denoon (New York: New York University Press, 2017), chapter 4.

¹³ Evelyn Goh, *Meeting the China challenge: The US in Southeast Asian regional security strategies* (Washington, DC: East West Center, 2005).

¹⁴ Cheng-Chwee Kuik, “The essence of hedging: Malaysia and Singapore’s response to a rising China,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 30, no. 2 (2008): 159–185.

¹⁵ Cheng-Chwee Kuik, “How do Weaker States Hedge? Unpacking ASEAN states’ alignment behavior towards China,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 25, no. 100 (2016): 500–514.

or accept power by committing to “returns-maximizing” options. Each of these choices exists on a spectrum from balancing (the most risk-contingency and power rejection) to bandwagoning (the most returns-maximizing and power accepting). For both Kuik and Goh, hedging refers to a mixed approach that enables small-medium states to seek a middle path to navigate through security uncertainty while maintaining economic incentives through engagement with great powers. Some scholars term this strategy “economic pragmatism.”

Realist concepts of “bandwagoning,” or “balancing,” and pragmatist concepts of “equidistancing,” or “hedging” inadequately explain Thailand’s foreign relations. Why does Thailand need to seek a security alternative from China in ensuring its own survival, when little pressing challenge or threat from China to Thailand exists? Indeed, while the South China Sea represents a major security concern for the Philippines and Vietnam, that is not so for Thailand.¹⁶ Moreover, the frameworks of “equidistancing” and “hedging” are overly dependent on the Cold War and post-Cold War periods as the context for strategic alignment decisions, especially in Southeast Asia. By focusing on the duopoly of the US-China or the US-Soviet Union relationship, such theories overrate the role of great power competition in the foreign policy making of Southeast Asian countries, consequently underrating the agency of those countries themselves and of other influential actors.

Instead of viewing international relations in terms of “balancing,” “bandwagoning,” “equidistancing,” or “hedging,” we interpret anarchy in international relations to be a deliberative effort of leveraging among strong states to expand the role of state control abroad and among weaker states to avoid being controlled by external powers. Leveraging differs from balancing and hedging. Small-medium countries leverage their geopolitical positions and wealth/resources against regional powers by diversifying their partnerships for reasons more complex than simple avoidance of commitment and/or to protect themselves against possible losses. Rather, they make unequal commitments and asymmetrical relationships in the form of formal and informal alliances.¹⁷ Instead of hedging by maintaining an economic engagement with one power (China) and a security alliance with another (US), they deliberately maintain both economic and security ties with competing powers and form new and more symmetrical ones with regional organization/s in order to leverage their resources with each partner to achieve a specific outcome. These resources may be real or aspirational but require a high level of self-perception of their own national identity. Leveraging entails practical knowledge, informal processes, and constant

¹⁶ Gregory Vincent Raymond, *Thai Military Power: A Culture of Strategic Accommodation* (Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Press, 2018).

¹⁷ Tom Long, “It’s not the size, it’s the relationship: from ‘small states’ to asymmetry,” *International Politics* 54, no. 2 (2017): 144–160.

improvisation in the face of unpredictability. These three characteristics are germane for a small-medium nation's survival, independence, and sovereignty.

Historically, such diplomatic efforts intensified in Europe following the Westphalia Treaty, with the recognition of state sovereignty and the development of international trade to promote capital accumulation and national wealth. Strong states took the lead in creating international organizations and determining membership rules (and selecting organizational leadership) in order to maintain maximum influence in international relations. Weaker or smaller states have a variety of options if they do not want to be subjected to the international system created by strong states. First, they can decide not to join the dominant intergovernmental organization (IGO) and join an alternative and smaller one. For example, many newly independent states in Asia and Africa preferred to join the Non-Aligned Movement rather than an organization established by Western powers. Second, they can form regional alliances with like-minded states to increase leverage vis-à-vis strong states in decision making within the dominant intergovernmental organization. Because members of the alliance of smaller states often vote together as a block, their collective votes can outweigh those of stronger and independent states. Third, smaller states can join the dominant international system but try to maintain both sovereignty and national security, while maximizing wealth.

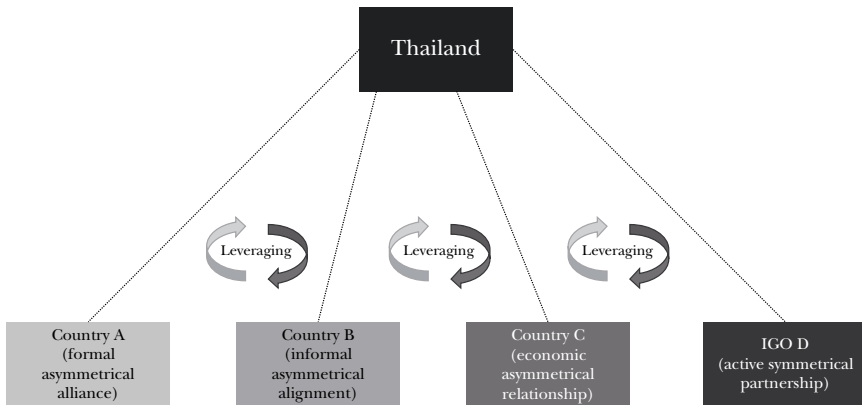
Therefore, states act pragmatically in their foreign engagement.¹⁸ Pragmatism in international relations entails the formation of formal and informal alliances, allowing a non-dominant country to formally choose A and informally B, even if A and B are rivals or enemies. This pragmatic alliance may appear irrational or contradictory but is based on maximizing its private national interests and avoiding control by foreign powers. Moreover, a pragmatic country can avoid choosing between A and B altogether, and go with non-contentious (yet powerful) C and D. Of course, it also may decide not to choose at all. In this sense, pragmatist international relations theory, or “thick constructivism,” focuses on the agency of weaker states. Figure 1 summarizes the proposition discussed above.

Thailand has exercised pragmatic options throughout its long diplomatic history. Today, Thailand has established asymmetrical relationships with the US (formal), China (informal), and Japan (informal).¹⁹ It has also formed symmetrical and formal relationships with regional organizations, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and various Mekong partnerships. The result is a Thai propensity for what are often described as seeming alliances of interest and convenience. As Phibun stated, “whoever

¹⁸ Simon Frankel Pratt, “Pragmatism as Ontology, Not (Just) Epistemology: Exploring the Full Horizon of Pragmatism as an Approach to IR Theory,” *International Studies Review* 18 (2016): 508–527.

¹⁹ Pongphisoot Busbarat, “Bamboo Swirling in the Wind: Thailand's Foreign Policy Imbalance between China and the United States,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 38, no. 2 (2016): 233–257.

Figure 1
Pragmatist IR



Source: Created by author.

loses this war [WWII] will certainly become our enemy.”²⁰ This sentiment still resonates in a popular 2021 meme featuring Japanese Emperor Showa asking a stern-faced Phibun: “[I]f Japan loses, we will be responsible together, right?” Historian Wasana Wongsurawat aptly describes this tendency: “[S]ince the nineteenth century, Thai leaders have seemed willing to ally with whichever world power appeared to be on the winning side, even if that meant breaking a treaty of alliance signed in the [most sacred] Temple of the Emerald Buddha.”²¹ Pavin Chachavalpongpun refers to this style of Thai diplomacy as “bamboo diplomacy,” which bends with the wind (*pai loo lom*), yet never snaps.²² For him, Thai diplomacy follows pragmatic goals and constitutes part of a larger nation-building project. Foreign relations serve the domestic priorities of elites. Therefore, the primary goals of Thai diplomacy are to maximize national sovereignty and territorial integrity, while keeping external interferences to a minimum. Pragmatism in Thai diplomacy entails close observation of mistakes and of the conduct of

²⁰ Net Khemayothin, *Ngan taidin khong Phan-ek Yothi* [The underground work of Colonel Yothi], 3 vols. (Bangkok: Kasem Bannakit, 1967). In other words: “Who is Siam’s friend? Whoever wins!”

²¹ Wasana Wongsurawat, *The Crown and the Capitalists; the Ethnic Chinese and the Founding of the Thai Nation* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019), 154.

²² Chachavalpongpun, *Reinventing Thailand*; Pavin Chachavalpongpun, “Thailand: The Enigma of Bamboo Diplomacy,” in *Routledge Handbook of Diplomacy and Statecraft*, ed. Brian McKercher (London: Routledge, 2012). He developed this idea from the work of Arne Kislenko, “Bending with the Wind: The Continuity and Flexibility of Thai Foreign Policy,” *International Journal* 57, no. 4 (2002): 537–561.

neighbouring states, while adjusting one's own goals and conduct accordingly. In order to maintain sovereignty and territorial integrity, Thai leaders pragmatically bend or swirl with international changes as they occur.

Figure 2
Phibun and Japan WWII meme



Translation (left to right / top to bottom):
Phibun: "Siam agrees to join Japan [in the war]."
Showa: "So if Japan loses, we will be responsible together, right?"
Phibun: "..."
Showa: "... right?"

Source: "Thai history meme." Reddit, 17 June 2021, available at <https://i.redd.it/58svy7yd7u571.jpg>

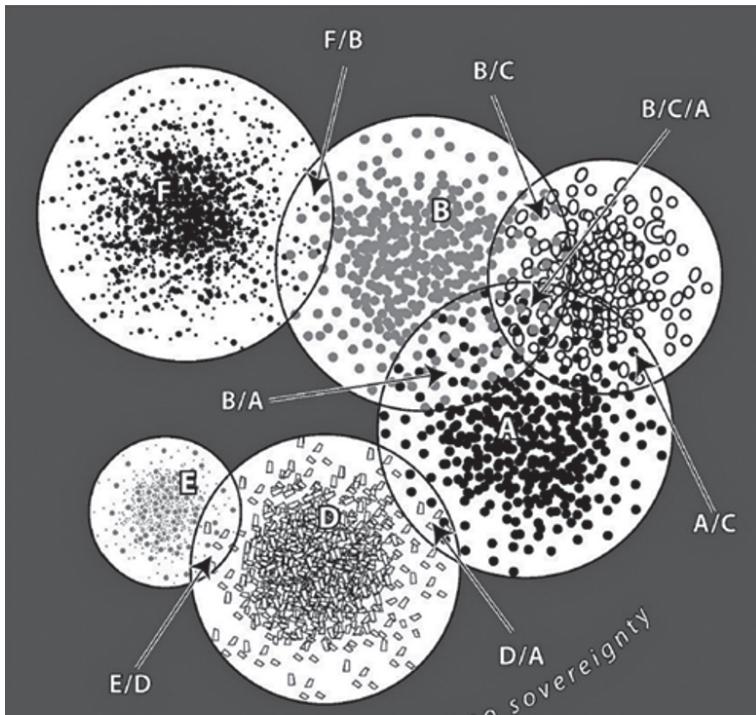
This diplomatic practice is not new to the region. During the premodern period, Thailand (then Siam) was part of an international system that scholars refer to as a "mandala" system.²³ A typical mandala consisted of a dominant kingdom at the centre, in connection with numerous smaller kingdoms. James C. Scott explains:

²³ Oliver W. Wolters first introduced this mandala concept in his *History, Culture and Region in Southeast Asian Perspective* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1982). His student Sunait Chutintaranond later applied it to Siam in "Mandala, Segmentary State and Politics of Centralization in Medieval Ayudhya," *Journal of the Siam Society* 78, no. 1 (1990): 88–100.

Outside the central core of a kingdom, dual or multiple sovereignty or ... no sovereignty, was less an anomaly than the norm. Thus, Chiang Khaeng, a small town near the current borders of Laos, Burma, and China, was tributary to Chiang Mai and Nan (in turn, tributary to Siam) and to Chiang Tung... (in turn, tributary to Burma). The situation was common enough that small kingdoms were often identified as “under two lords” or “under three lords” ... and a “two-headed bird” in the case of nineteenth-century Cambodia’s tributary relationship to both Siam and Dai Nan (Vietnam).²⁴

In Scott’s mandala conceptualization, Southeast Asian states recognized relative equality between mandalas A, B, and C without disputing territorial boundaries. Geographical boundaries were mutually recognized and typically fungible based on the season and the extent of state control over the territory.

Figure 3
Mandala governance



Source: James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 60.

²⁴ James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 61.

Under this system, overlapping boundaries were not rare, and those people who lived under several mandalas paid tribute to each mandala, rather than choosing one over the others. In this way, they enjoyed relative freedom and avoided the central core's meddling in their internal affairs. This system changed after the British and French colonizers encroached onto mainland Southeast Asia, forcing Siam to fix its borders and officially take in various minor kingdoms within its modern physical boundaries.²⁵

Thai Diplomacy as Ontological Pragmatism

Pragmatists emphasize ever-changing complexity, intersubjectivity, and contingency in social relations. In this framework, Thai diplomatic acts are pragmatic transactions between the “geobody” and its environment, stimulated by survival impulses and past experiences. As a result, forming asymmetrical relations with both competing great powers, while simultaneously seeking more symmetrical partnerships with multilateral organizations, characterizes a habitual action of Thai diplomacy. This habitual action follows sub-intentional imperatives and supplies the context for its own behaviour revision. That is, such consistently diplomatic practices are not simply repetitive, ingrained behaviour, but reveal the process of human learning. In the face of domestic uncertainty and international unpredictability, diplomatic action requires constant improvisation, based on human experience, and oriented toward solving practical problems. In this way, repeated diplomatic behaviour constitutes social reality, which manifests in similar (though not identical) acts across social time and space.

What is the goal of Thailand's international relations? Rather than seeking material gains and protecting physical security, Thai diplomacy aims to maintain and improve upon its international prestige and to protect its “ontological security.” Ontological security entails having a positive or optimistic view of the self, the world, and the future. Thai elites cultivate such a positive self-image by promoting the notion that the greatness of the Thai nation, since ancient times, is rooted in the Thai race.²⁶ They espouse a now-debunked narrative that a “Thai race” exists and is shaped by a pure ethnicity and the unity of Thai culture. This unity of Thai culture includes a combination of a shared Buddhist faith, Thai language, and reverence to the monarchy.²⁷ Since the 1910s, the government has socialized this nationalistic narrative to the public through popular songs and literature. In particular, literature became a foundational part of coping with the West's

²⁵ Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*.

²⁶ Barmé, *Luang Wichit Wattakan and the Creation of a Thai Identity*.

²⁷ Duncan McCargo observes that shared faith and language have provided the state with an opportunity to promote Buddhism as a patriotic act of political Thai-ness. Moreover, royalist elites routinely use Buddhism as a political tool to legitimize state power. See Duncan McCargo, “Buddhism, democracy and identity in Thailand,” *Democratization* 11, no. 4 (2004): 155–170.

influence and the construction of modern Thai nationalism.²⁸ Under an expanding public school system, students were encouraged to participate in newly written dramas with scripts that contained patriotic themes, emphasizing the glory of the Thai race.²⁹ On December 15, 2021, Prime Minister Prayut Chan-ocha (Prayut hereafter) reinforced this idea of Thailand's greatness (*thai ying yai*) during his visit to the southern province of Yala by stating: "Although Thailand is inferior to the U.S. in terms of military might, we have a great culture of nation, religion, and king—that is our 'soft power.' We must make everyone accept that that's the source of Thai happiness."³⁰

Thai elites prioritize cultivating a strong international image—a source of national pride to further enhance a positive self-image. They also seek ontological security that allows their compatriots to freely practice their daily routines, providing certainty and familiarity to their existence, thereby giving meaning to their lives.³¹ States become ontologically insecure when critical situations rupture their routines, thus bringing fundamental questions to public discourse. Insecurity then arises with events that are inconsistent with the meaning of a collective life. To ensure their ontological security, states may even jeopardize their physical territory. As a result, Thai leaders have willingly ceded territories and physical sovereignty in the pursuit of the greater security of Thai identity.³² They act in a manner consistent with the traditional conception of overlapping rings which characterizes "mandala"-style governance.

This ontological security and international image are based on promoting Thai perceptions of prosperity and freedom. For example, the Kingdom of Ayutthaya (1351–1767) built a great deal of its domestic legitimacy on its real and/or symbolic prosperity.³³ Buddhist notions of karma provide a moral justification for the riches of prosperous people. Moreover, the people of Ayutthaya defined themselves as free from rule by their former Khmer

²⁸ Thak Chaloemtiarana, *Read Till It Shatters: Nationalism and Identity in Modern Thai Literature* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2018).

²⁹ Charnvit Kasetsiri, "The First Phibun Government and Its Involvement in World War II," *Journal of the Siam Society* 62, no. 2 (1974): 25–88 (see 39–40).

³⁰ Translated from Thai in Khaosod's twitter account at: <https://twitter.com/KhaosodOnline/status/1471029425932099586>.

³¹ Anthony Giddens first introduced this concept in his *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge: Polity, 1991).

³² For example, in 1893, Siam gave up its claim to the territories on the east bank of the Mekong River. In 1904, France further acquired control of the Lao provinces of Sayaburi and Champasak. In 1907, they obtained the Cambodian provinces of Battambang, Sisophon, and Siem Reap. In 1909, the British negotiated an end to Bangkok's claim to suzerainty over the northern Malay states of Kedah, Perlis, Trengganu, and Kelantan.

³³ Charnvit Kasetsiri, *The Rise of Ayudhya: A History of Siam in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1976). In addition to the control of the Tenasserim coast and its trade, the Siamese king went to war against the Burmese over white elephants that he refused to give to the Burmese king in order to protect Siam's symbol of prosperity.

overlords, and they embraced the Thai word of “free man” (*tai*) to describe themselves.³⁴ In fact, the freedom to live amongst and associate with other Thais who shared ties of language and religion was the bedrock of early Thai states. During the last Burmese military campaign against Ayutthaya (1765–1767), its soldiers tried to abduct Siamese women. Some villagers gathered at Bang Rachan (about 80 kilometres north of Ayutthaya) and fought against the Burmese forces, who challenged their ontological security by disrupting their practiced daily routines.³⁵ Faced with impossible odds and nearly certain death, the villagers fought to protect their rights to live free (of harassment). However, they did not necessarily fight on behalf of Ayutthaya or its king.³⁶ In fact, the villagers felt bitterly towards Ayutthaya (to this day!) for its refusal to send weapons (particularly cannons), reinforcements, or assistance despite multiple requests. This is one example of the common practice among both Thai elites and commoners to value the symbols of prosperity and freedom that highlight the importance of ensuring Thailand’s ontological security. Therefore, material gains and physical security are merely secondary goals, the results of promoting a positive national image. Today, Thailand aims to improve its international image of prosperity and freedom by attracting foreign investment from Japan, China, and the US. It chooses not to become bonded to a single country, as this may lessen its ontological security.³⁷

Thailand’s ontological pragmatism is based on a mechanism of positive (not zero-sum) leveraging of various relations with multiple powers in order to maintain Thai sovereignty, freedom, and prosperity. These foreign policy goals are based on an ontological sense of security, rather than a threat-centric security mindset. While Thai diplomats favour the presence of two powerful partners, one formal and one informal, they prefer additional partnerships with less powerful countries or multilateral organizations in order to safeguard Thai sovereignty, freedom, and prosperity. Thai leaders prioritize the projection of a positive Thai reputation based on the relative freedom and prosperity of its people. Preferred partners, then, are typically those that

³⁴ George Coedès, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1968), 197.

³⁵ Burmese forces also included captured Siamese troops, who had pledged allegiance to the Burmese general. On the battles of Bang Rachan, see Chaweegnam Macharoen, *Wirachon Khai Bang Rachan* [The heroes of Bang Rachan] (Bangkok: Rongphim Kan Satsana, 1976). Mai Muangdoem also wrote a historical novel of *Bang Rachan* (Bangkok: Samnakphim Bannakhan, 1968). Two popular films about Bang Rachan came out in 1966 and 2000. A folk song “Bang Rachan” by Carabao is highly popular.

³⁶ Sunait Chutintaranon argues that Prince Damrong (King Chulalongkorn’s half-brother) vastly exaggerated the battles of Bang Rachan to be anti-Burmese to promote popular support and Siamese nationalism for the newly emerged Chakri dynasty in Bangkok. See his “The Image of the Burmese Enemy in Thai Perceptions and Historical Writings,” *Journal of the Siam Society*, 80, no. 1.1 (1992): 89–103. School children are taught Prince Damrong’s nationalist version of Bang Rachan history in their textbooks.

³⁷ Peera Charoenvattananukul, *Ontological Security and Status-Seeking: Thailand’s Proactive Behaviors During the Second World War* (London: Routledge, 2020), 7.

offer a foreign policy that helps promote such an image of Thailand, while maximizing its leveraging capacity. These pragmatic styles of Thai foreign relations offer a unique local perspective on the conduct of small-medium states, particularly in their ties with great powers, weaker states, and regional institutional infrastructure.

Previous studies of leveraging in international relations focus on a state's use of international organizations to "name, shame, and sanction" its rivals.³⁸ This frame perpetuates the Cold War paradigm of states building tools to exercise negative power to gain relative power within the international system, or between two jostling great powers. Within this understanding of leveraging, the largest risk to states is the temptation to over-leverage, depending on an abundance of relations that may contain unworkable contradictions. In its practice of ontological pragmatism, Thailand has risked leveraging too many relations in the face of a crisis.

Leveraging may appear similar to Kuik's idea of hedging, which includes three policy traits: not taking sides between competing powers, adopting opposite and contradictory measures, and using opposite acts to pressure gains while cultivating a "fallback" position.³⁹ Our conceptualization of ontological pragmatism and leveraging diverges from Kuik's hedging in three ways. First, states practicing ontological pragmatism do not limit their alignment choices by responding to two imposing and competing great powers. Instead, leveraging allows for a complementary deepening of relations with multiple great powers and international institutions, even if such ties are seemingly contradictory from an outsider's perspective. Second, we view foreign relations as driven by a positive choice to leverage upwards from small states to great powers. As such, ontological pragmatism allows for small states to forge formal or informal ties with great powers through positive and complementary acts, rather than "opposite" acts that are "mutually counteracting" or as a negative choice forced upon a small state by outside powers. Third, insights into the unique cultural identities driving ontological pragmatism provide nation-state-level context unavailable to theories applied to the region of Southeast Asia as a whole. By factoring in the ideals, norms, and cultural preferences common amongst a country's foreign policy elites, ontological pragmatism provides a frame ideally applied to a single nation-state, rather than a grouping of culturally diverse countries.

³⁸ For example, see H. Richard Friman, *The Politics of Leverage in International Relations* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

³⁹ Kuik, "How Do Weaker States Hedge? 502–506.

Thai Parables of Alliance

Common Thai diplomatic practices of alliance formation follow the sub-intentional imperatives absorbed and developed through state schooling and pop culture. The action of choosing competing sides is well preceded in Thai culture, as demonstrated in various Thai parables and literary classics, such as the epic poems of *Sepha Khun Chang Khun Phaen* (KCKP hereafter).⁴⁰ The tragic tale depicts aristocratic life during the early Ayutthaya era, with all protagonists possessing a positive self-image. It is universally studied by school children and adapted into various mass media formats, making it well known among Thais.⁴¹ Like the classics and mythologies of any culture, the parables of alliance from these texts and associated proverbs live in both the unconscious and the practical consciousness of educated Thais, which in turn helps to guide common behaviour.

Originally, KCKP was an unremarkable hero tale about Khun Phaen's unconditional loyalty to an absolute ruler of Suvarnaphumi (Suphanburi) and his acclaimed military campaigns of the Lanna (Chiang Mai) kingdom.⁴² During the early Rattanakosin (Bangkok) period, the Chakri courts of King Loetlanaphalai (Rama II) commissioned literary figures, including Prince Sakdiphonlasep (Loetlanaphalai's uncle) and Sunthorn Phu (Siam's illustrious poet), among others, to recreate the tale of KCKP from an oral tradition into written form, with additional chapters and accompanying parables. The main parable of KCKP, especially for government officials, is arguably about unconditional "loyalty" to the ruler, regardless of whether or not the ruler is just or competent. Soon after the failed Palace Revolt of 1912, Prince Damrong (King Chulalongkorn's half-brother) constructed a standard edition of the tale based on four sets of manuscripts, in order to foster people's loyalty to an absolute monarchy.⁴³ In 1917 and 1918, the Vajirayan Royal Library, headed by Prince Damrong, published the book in three volumes. Since Prince Damrong was the founder of Siam's modern educational system, the Ministry of Education to this day mandates the use of his intertextuality of KCKP as one of the primary works in Thai language classes in order to teach the many Thai proverbs, idioms, and parables stemming from the text.⁴⁴ According to the 2008 *Basic Education Core*

⁴⁰ We use the following Thai and English editions of KCKP: *Khun Chang Khun Phaen* (Bangkok: Bamrungsañh, 1990); Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit, translators, *The Tale of Khun Chang Khun Phaen* (Chiangmai: Silkworm Books, 2010).

⁴¹ James H. Grayson, "The Tale of Khun Chang Khun Phaen: Siam's Great Folk Epic of Love and War," *Folklore* 123, no. 2 (2012): 239.

⁴² Interview on Thai cable TV with Sujit Wongthet, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ScoHjzfrxVQ>.

⁴³ See Kittosak Jermittiparsert, "Political Implication in 'Sepha Khun Chang—Khun Phaen,'" *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences* 3, no. 10 (2013): 86–95.

⁴⁴ Other notable Thai epic poems required for study in secondary schools include *Lilit Phra Lo* and Sunthorn Phu's *Phra Aphai Mani*. Because these classical tales do not metaphorically deal with alliance formation, we exclude them from the discussion. Although *Lilit Phra Lo* depicts the male

Curriculum, KCKP is included in the Thai language curriculum twice: in chapter 24, in which Khun Chang discovers and describes Wanthong's *song jai* (two hearts), and in chapter 35, in which the King of Ayutthaya orders Wanthong's execution for refusing to choose between Khun Chang and Khun Phaen.⁴⁵ It has been adapted into five full-length films, four television series, dozens of novelizations, and two pop songs. A recent and highly popular TV drama (*lakorn*), which focuses on the perspective of Wanthong, aired between 2020 and 2021, and featured a hit pop song *Songjai*.

KCKP depicts the love triangle between the beautiful Wanthong and her two suitors: the poor yet dashing maverick Khun Phaen and the rich yet fat bureaucrat Khun Chang. In love and living with Khun Phaen, Wanthong is duped into marrying Khun Chang, thinking that Khun Phaen has been killed at war. Surprisingly to her, Khun Phaen returns with a new wife, but her love for him remains the same. Despite the enormous cultural constraints imposed on Thai women during its feudal period, Wanthong leverages her beauty to maintain intimate relations with both, eventually causing intrigue and calamity, and leading King Pannawasa to order her to choose one under the punishment of death. Although she demonstrates admirable loyalty to both suitors by refusing to choose one over the other, the King is infuriated by her disloyalty to his command and eventually decides to execute her. Thai diplomacy can be understood from the position of Wanthong's "*song jai*." Wanthong longs for the handsome yet oft-absent playboy Khun Phaen and deeply cares for her well-heeled but bald devotee Khun Chang. By being committed and loyal to both men, Wanthong consciously chooses to prioritize no man over the other. As such, Wanthong refrains from speaking negatively about one to the other, as she views both men as equally important and neither as a threat to the other in her life. For her, to choose between them would cause more calamity and sadness for the other.

Similarly, Thai foreign policy and alignment choices operate on a series of mechanisms unique to its political system, decision-making philosophy, and national identity. First, in cultivating simultaneous relations with multiple state partners, Thai leaders will rarely speak poorly about one partner in front of the other in an attempt to play one off of the other. Instead, Thai leaders will use polite and deft diplomacy to directly manage each partner's expectations. This mirrors Wanthong's treatment of each male partner, both of whom resent the other man's presence in Wanthong's life. During the few moments of direct conflict between Khun Chang and Khun Phaen, Wanthong carefully abstains from picking sides and strives to play peacemaker. She leverages each partner to provide her with specific needs in her life. Similarly,

protagonist as having multiple romantic partners with rival kingdoms, the main parable from this tragic tale is about reconciliation (and the negative impact of revenge).

⁴⁵ Thailand's Ministry of Education, *Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551* (Bangkok: Ministry of Education, 2008).

Thai officials handle relationships with opposing foreign partners by deepening ties with all, rather than choosing one over the other. They welcome any state that can contribute to Thailand's ontological security, even if that state is geopolitically opposed to another current partner.

In CCKP, Khun Phaen often leaves Wanthong to busy himself with womanizing and glory-seeking pursuits, like warfare and adventure. This allows Khun Chang to step in and devote all his love and riches to Wanthong. When Khun Phaen returns to the scene, often as a glorious hero, Wanthong then resumes her exciting and stimulating life with him. Similarly, Thailand will adjust or reassess its relationships with partner nations as a result of one partner's increased or decreased presence. It will choose to deepen relations with its partners, or establish new ones, based on its sense of ontological pragmatism, which can occur from internal challenges to Thai culture or an external identity-threatening nation.

"*Wanthong song jai*" also contains a romantic and heroic sentiment of love, loyalty, faithfulness, and personal sacrifice in having a romantic relationship with two men and being willing to die for not choosing one over the other. Given the restrictive norms of behaviour imposed on women in the feudal Ayutthaya society, Wanthong's actions are often sympathetically reinterpreted by modern audiences as heroic.⁴⁶ For example, the mid-1980s pop song "Wanthong" by Khon Dan Kwie and the 2021 TV drama "Wanthong" captures this reaction to the restrictions that Wanthong was forced to face in a feudal and chauvinistic system, given her class and gender. The pop song "Songjai" by Da Endorphine from the 2020 TV drama "Wanthong" adds a feminist interpretation to this sentiment. Wanthong laments: "It's my heart's fault for not remembering it shouldn't love someone else Even though I must choose someone, all choices only end in sadness." Therefore, she loves both, even when other people may view her as unfaithful or *ying songjai* (a two-hearted woman). Faced with difficult choices, she questions: "But who wants to be a bad person?"⁴⁷

Interestingly, "*Wanthong song jai*" is similar to three other Thai proverbs: "*yiab rua song kham*," "*nok song hua*," and "*chub pla song mue*." *Yiab rua song kham* means to stand on each side of a boat's (canoe's) gunwale. The lesson in the proverb is that, since the sea is turbulent, one needs to stand on both sides of the gunwale in order to maintain balance and avoid falling into the water.⁴⁸ According to the Royal Institute Dictionary, *nok song hua* refers to a person who associates him/herself with two opposing/hostile sides for his/

⁴⁶ On class and gender relations during Siam's feudal period, see Jit Poumisak, *Chomna sakdina thai nai patchuban* [The real face of Thai feudalism today] (Bangkok: Nitisat, 1957). For the English translation and excellent analysis, see Craig J. Reynolds, *The Radical Discourse: The Real Face of Thai Feudalism Today* (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 1987).

⁴⁷ Author's translation.

⁴⁸ This is conceptually different from realism's notion of "balancing" with the weaker power to offset the potential aggression of the stronger power.

her own benefits.⁴⁹ This proverb also appears in KCKP.⁵⁰ The last Thai proverb, *chub pla song mue* (catching fish with two hands or catch [two] fish with each hand) implies a person who decides to engage in two difficult tasks simultaneously, including dating two people, without consideration of his/her own capability. Unlike *yiab rua song kham*, *chub pla song mue* and *nok song hua* contain clear negative connotations. The parable for *chub pla song mue* can be summarized as: don't do it (*ya*), because the probability for success is low. Similarly, a person that is described as a *nok song hua* is one who cannot be trusted.

Thai Diplomacy in Historical Perspective

Empirical evidence from the Ratanakosin (Bangkok) period supports the proposition we outlined above. We divide Thailand's modern history into four historical periods: the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, World War II, the Cold War, and the post-Cold War period. In our historical review, we employ five categories to explore Thailand's pragmatist international relations: its self-image at the time, its status of diplomatic relations, its foreign policy objectives, the outcomes of those diplomatic actions, and its eventual state of ontological security. Table 1 summarizes our central argument with supporting empirical evidence, organizing the four case study periods across five categories of analysis: Thailand's self-image at the time, the state of Thailand's diplomatic relations, the objectives of Thai leveraging, the outcomes of those diplomatic relationships, and the result of each for Thailand's ontological security. Despite variations across each of the first four categories of analysis, our research finds that the fifth remains constant; that is, Thailand's ontological security is consistently focused on improving its international self-image.

Siam During the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

During the nineteenth century, the regional balance of power in Asia shifted from China to Europe. By some luck, the British and the French defeated Siam's major rivals and determined its borders as a modern state. European powers lacked interest in colonizing Siam as they did other regions in Southeast Asia. The kingdom held no position along the European trade routes to China (for silk, porcelain, and tea) or to maritime Southeast Asia (for spices, peppers, and coffee). Moreover, Siam had few products to offer Europe and had no direct land access to China, unlike Burma and Indochina.⁵¹ Nevertheless, Siamese kings exhibited a positive image of Siam

⁴⁹ Royal Society of Thailand, *Royal Institute Dictionary* (Bangkok: Royal Society of Thailand, 2011).

⁵⁰ In KCKP, the king of Chiang Mai finds out that Chiang Tung has recently become associated with Ayutthaya and is planning to bring troops to attack Chiang Mai. After he finds out, he becomes furious, as Chiang Tung used to be a subordinate of Chiang Mai. Therefore, the king calls Chiang Tung a "*nok song hua*."

⁵¹ Siamese exports such as sugar, wood, and deerskin were readily available in continental Europe.

Table 1
Thailand's pragmatist IR

| | Nineteenth century | | WWII | |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| Self-image | -Central to European colonial projects -Attractive as a buffer state between France and Britain | | -Central to Japan's attack against British Burma and Malaya -Attractive as uncolonized state | |
| Diplomatic relations | Formal | Informal | Formal | Informal |
| | Treaties with Britain (Bowring Treaty) Treaties with various other colonial powers | Traditional tribute relations with Qing China | Alignment with Imperial Japan in 1941 | Underground "Free Thai" movement with US (via China) Underground "Free Thai" movement with Britain |
| Objective of leveraging | -Freedom by independence from colonization -Prosperity through international trade | -Economic prosperity | -Return of territories lost to Britain and France in East and South -Maintain freedom (independence) -Ensure postwar economic prosperity via gold-backed loans | -Avoid punishment by Allies after WWII -Maintain freedom through strategic alignment with rising US over Britain |
| Outcomes of diplomatic relationships | -Uncolonized, maintained political freedom -Maintained relative prosperity | | -Avoided Japanese control, maintained (relative) political freedom -Ensured postwar prosperity | |
| Ontological security | Improved international self-image | | Improved international self-image | |

| Cold War | | | Post-Cold War | |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| -Central to US war in Indochina -Attractive as a stopgap to the Domino Theory of communist expansion | | | -Central to regional supply chains and logistics -Attractive as a strategic location between US-China competition | |
| Formal | Informal | | Formal | Informal |
| Treaty alliance with the US (Thanat-Rusk Communiqué, SEATO) | PRC (via Sang, Khmer Rouge) | | Treaty alliance with the US | Numerous economic agreements and projects with PRC, growing to include defence cooperation |
| Founding member of ASEAN | | | ASEAN, facilitation of Mekong institutions with China, Japan, US, and neighbours | |
| -Prevent falling to communism (freedom) -Economic growth within global capitalist system -Regional stability | -Prevent domino falling to Vietnam in Cambodia -Economic expansion into PRC markets (prosperity) | | -Prevent PRC regional hegemony (freedom) -Serve as “bridge-maker” to ensure regional stability and prosperity, notably with Myanmar -Position Thailand as respected free society | -Leverage against US pressure on human rights and democracy -Promote development of regional supply chains and Thailand as a logistics hub |
| -Avoided communist expansion, maintained political freedom -Economic prosperity through turning Indochina into marketplaces Improved international self-image | | | -Avoiding pressures around US-China competition, ensuring political freedom -Economic prosperity as subregional economic leader Improved international self-image | |

Source: Authors

to the West through a traditional and deeply meaningful symbol of prosperity: elephants. In 1824, King Nangklao (Rama III) supported the British campaigns against Burma with Siamese fleets and elephants.⁵² Furthermore, King Mongkut (Rama IV) offered to assist the US president in developing the North's economy by sending him elephants, a gesture intended to project his kingdom's wealth and generosity.⁵³

During the early nineteenth century, Siamese foreign trade operated under the old tribute economic regime, and the two ministers in charge of trade were deliberately foreigners. The Siamese king placed his richest Chinese subject (Chodukrachasetthi) in charge of trade with the East, while his richest Muslim (Chularachamontri) handled trade with India, the Middle East, and beyond.⁵⁴ Despite this even-handed approach, the China trade clearly ranked as one of the most lucrative of all the Siamese Crown's enterprises, in contrast to relatively meagre flows to the West.⁵⁵ Yet, the realities of the colonial period made the Siamese king's preference unworkable. The Chinese and Indian merchants he counted on soon operated in a subordinate role to the powerful Western imperialists. Both former regional powers lost control of their territories and national identities by political and economic projects of the colonial powers. In response, Mongkut and later Chulalongkorn (Rama V) perceived Western imperialism as Siam's greatest ontological security threat, because Western economic and cultural dominance could threaten to unravel the interwoven Thai identities of Buddhism and the Thai language. Thus, these Chakri kings promoted a new strategy focused on avoiding the imperial subjugation experienced by neighbouring states.

This strategy embraced five seemingly contradictory tenets. First in 1855, the Siamese accepted the change in global geopolitics when the British forced Siam to sign the Bowring Treaty and imposed an end to the royal monopoly on international trade, a fixed tariff rate of 3 percent, and extraterritorial rights for subjects of colonial powers. Rather than resisting this trend, or resigning itself to British dominance, Siam later signed similar "unequal treaties" with France, granting extraterritoriality and access to Siamese trade. These formal treaties were an intricate diplomatic compromise by Siamese leaders, intended to avoid forced concessions. By sacrificing certain aspects of its sovereignty, Siam leveraged both French colonial interests in Indochina and British interests in Burma without describing one party negatively to the other. It then incentivized beneficial competition

⁵² Wyatt, *Thailand*, 169; Wongsurawat, *The Crown and the Capitalists*, 86.

⁵³ Abbot Low Moffat, *Mongkut, the King of Siam* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1961).

⁵⁴ The *Rattanakosin Chronicles of 1831* describes Chinese and Indian/Muslim traders as people who would "stay under the complete control of the King," whereas European traders are depicted as bullies. Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, *Phraratchaphongsawadan krung rattanakosin ratchakan thi 3* [Royal chronicles of the third reign of Bangkok] (Bangkok: Khurusapha, 1969), 130.

⁵⁵ Wongsurawat, *The Crown and the Capitalists*.

between Britain and France for access to its markets. In contrast, neighbouring states often granted extraterritoriality to a single power, paving the way for future monopolistic trade and political domination.⁵⁶

Second, in the absence of any multilateral organization, Siam later diversified its formal relations with a number of other major and minor powers, including the US and Japan. Mongkut and Chulalongkorn granted these new suitors similar rights of trade access and extraterritoriality. By opening the country to nearly all powers, Siamese leaders increased the competition for access to Bangkok's thriving port and trade markets, making the Western colonial powers competitive stakeholders in its success. Moreover, Siam further diversified its ties by increasing its informal ties to Qing China. By accepting European sovereignty over large swathes of Chinese territory and Southeast Asia, Siam recognized Chinese traders from those territories as equivalent to Europeans themselves, granting them the same extraterritoriality as their European imperial rulers. Many Chinese merchants in various port cities throughout Southeast Asia opportunistically responded by invoking their status as colonial subjects of Western powers to take advantage of extraterritorial rights. As a result, they continued to flourish economically and contributed to the growth and development of Siam's modern nation-state. Meanwhile, the Chakri kings maintained a cordial relationship with leading Chinese entrepreneurs in order to entice them to continue trading and investing in a transformed and bureaucratically modernized Siam.⁵⁷ In diversifying and leveraging its relations across formal and informal spaces, Siam managed to remain free from any imperial control, while ending its symbolic tribute system with Qing China in 1853. Table 2 provides a detailed summary of Thailand's various trade treaties.

Third, Siam faced an existential crisis from the two European powers encircling its frontier.⁵⁸ To the west and south, the British colonies in India, Burma, and Malaya dominated all commerce in the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea, and crucially controlled access through the Strait of Malacca at Singapore. To the north and east, French colonizers gradually encroached into Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. In particular, France gave Siam enormous difficulties, approaching a rupture of their relations. Siamese leaders regarded the geopolitical shifts during this period unfavourably and viewed the presence of Westerners in their kingdom with serious concerns. The Chakri kings soon had to seek help from foreign advisors, and preferred to rely upon unbiased or "disinterested" nations for support. In 1892, the Chakri courts established the office of the general-adviser, with extraordinary

⁵⁶ Only Qing China ceded its sovereignty to several Western powers in specific port cities, while losing its domestic and global legitimacy in the process.

⁵⁷ Wongsurawat, *The Crown and the Capitalists*.

⁵⁸ Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*, 62–94.

Table 2
“Unequal” treaties with Siam: 1826–1910

| Year | Siamese King | Treaty Partner | Treaty Name | Result / Outcome of Treaty |
|------|---------------|------------------------|--|---|
| 1826 | Nangkhlaio | Great Britain | Burney Treaty | Transfer of four Malay states to British control, Patani remaining Siamese |
| 1833 | Nangkhlaio | United States | Siamese-American Treaty of Amity and Commerce | Free trade, most favoured nation status |
| 1855 | Mongkut | Great Britain | Bowring Treaty | Free trade, extraterritoriality rights for British in Siam |
| 1856 | Mongkut | France | Treaty of Trade and Commerce | Free trade, extraterritoriality for French in Siam, protections for French missionaries |
| 1856 | Mongkut | Denmark | Treaty of Amity and Commerce | Free trade, extraterritoriality rights for Danes in Siam |
| 1856 | Mongkut | United States | Harris Treaty | Expanded on 1833 treaty by adding extraterritoriality rights to Americans in Siam |
| 1860 | Mongkut | Portugal | Treaty of Amity and Commerce | Free trade, extraterritoriality rights for Portuguese in Siam |
| 1862 | Mongkut | Prussia | Treaty of Amity and Commerce | Free trade, extraterritoriality rights for Prussians in Siam |
| 1867 | Mongkut | France | Treaty between France and Siam | Siamese recognition of French Cambodia, French recognition over Siamese control of Siem Reap/Battambang |
| 1868 | Mongkut | Belgium (& Luxembourg) | Treaty of Commerce, Friendship, and Navigation | Free trade, extraterritoriality rights for Belgians in Siam |
| 1868 | Mongkut | Italy | Treaty of Commerce, Friendship, and Navigation | Free trade, extraterritoriality rights for Italians in Siam |
| 1868 | Mongkut | Norway | Treaty of Commerce, Friendship, and Navigation | Free trade, extraterritoriality rights for Norwegians in Siam |
| 1868 | Mongkut | Sweden | Treaty of Commerce, Friendship, and Navigation | Free trade, extraterritoriality rights for Swedes in Siam |
| 1887 | Chulalongkorn | Japan | Declaration of Amity and Commerce between Japan and Siam | Mutual diplomatic recognition, free trade guarantees |
| 1893 | Chulalongkorn | France | Franco-Siamese Treaty of 1893 | Siam cedes Laos to France |

| | | | | |
|------|---------------|---------|--|--|
| 1897 | Chulalongkorn | Japan | Treaty of Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation | Most favoured nation status, extraterritoriality for Japanese in Siam |
| 1899 | Chulalongkorn | Russia | Treaty of Friendship and Maritime Navigation | Free trade, extraterritoriality for Russians in Siam |
| 1907 | Chulalongkorn | France | Treaty of 1907 between France and Siam | Return of Battambang and Angkor States to Cambodia (now a French Protectorate) |
| 1909 | Chulalongkorn | Britain | Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1909 | Thai recognition of British Malaya, British recognition of Siamese Pattani, Songkhla |

Sources: Uma Shankar Singh, “Thailand’s Policy towards the Western powers during the reign of Mongkut: 1851-1868,” *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 40 (1979): 997–1004; Shane Strate, *The Lost Territories: Thailand’s History of National Humiliation* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2015), 24–36. Relevant archives of these treaties can also be found in the articles of the Siam Society Under Royal Patronage’s *Journal of the Siam Society* (<https://thesiamsociety.org/publications/journal-of-the-siam-society>).

influence and responsibility over the kingdom’s foreign policy, home legislation, finance, and the general order of the country.⁵⁹ Chulalongkorn reasoned:

... our friendliness towards both France and England can cause us concern when coming to the question of appointing our advisers If we appoint a British as an adviser, the French will be very concerned about this, or if we appoint a French to such a post, this will also cause concern among the British. Therefore, if we choose to appoint some national of a neutral country ... things will be easier.⁶⁰

As a result, Chakri kings employed a Belgian and three successive Americans to act as general-adviser to the kingdom: M. Rolin-Jacquemyns (1892–1903), Edward H. Strobel (1903–1908), Jens I. Westengard (1908–1915), and Wolcott H. Pitkin (1915–1917). In particular, Strobel, a Harvard law professor, is credited with improving Siam’s relations with France and Britain by softening Chulalongkorn’s position in regard to the two European nations.

Fourth, Siam embarked on a long-term modernization campaign by developing its infrastructure and centralizing political control within its newly

⁵⁹ Thamsook Numnoncla, “The First American Advisers in Thai History,” *Journal of the Siam Society* 62, no. 2 (1974): 121–148.

⁶⁰ *Papers of Prince Damrong* (Bangkok: National Archives), section 56, file 130.

established borders.⁶¹ Under the reign of King Chulalongkorn (1867–1910), Siam committed to developing into a modern nation-state with the abolition of slavery, construction of schools and railroads, and the creation of a Western-style administrative system.⁶² Thongchai Winichakul considered even the simple act of commissioning an authoritative map of Siam to be a politically revolutionary move.⁶³ Defining Siam's territory on a physical map meant partially forgoing the traditional view of Siam as a “mandala” polity, and embracing Western perceptions of physical sovereignty. This modernization of administrative control and remapping process was accompanied by an acceptance of permanent territorial losses, including Laos, the Shan state, western Cambodia, and northern Malaya.⁶⁴ For Chulalongkorn (and Mongkut earlier), these territorial losses over areas outside of Siam's traditional sphere were worth the sacrifice in order for Siam to preserve its ontological security. By removing French troops from Chantaboon Province (near Bangkok) and regaining formal judicial control of the people inside its borders, Siam lost territory on the map, but solidified itself as a state. Interestingly, American General-Adviser Edward Strobel convinced Chulalongkorn to sign the Franco-Siamese Treaty of 1904 and the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1909, which granted these peripheral territories to France and Britain, in exchange for a return of judiciary rights.⁶⁵ These diplomatic compromises with European powers and their modernization projects helped to improve Siam's international image and to legitimize its place as an independent polity in the Western-dominated international system. As a result, Siam avoided colonial domination, while allowing Siamese leaders to independently develop their new governance, and to launch modernization.

Fifth, Siam sought to ingratiate itself into the international system. Siam decided to participate in World War II by sending an expeditionary force to the European theatre to demonstrate its modernity and international status. During the 1920s, Siamese representatives to the League of Nations cautiously considered standing for election to the League Council. However, Siamese officials ultimately decided against it for “fear of being drawn into great power disputes, and especially the possibility of having to take sides in the event of a clash between the French and the British governments.”⁶⁶ They

⁶¹ Christopher Paik and Jessica Vechbanyongratana, “Path to Centralization and Development: Evidence from Siam,” *World Politics* 71, no. 2 (2019): 291–293.

⁶² Prasertkul, “The Transformation of the Thai State”; Paik and Vechbanyongratana, “Path to Centralization and Development.”

⁶³ Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*.

⁶⁴ By the time of the Franco-Siamese War of 1893, Siam was forced to cede control of modern Laos, but not give up any territory west of the Mekong or cede any further sovereignty to the French. See Martin Stuart-Fox, *A History of Laos* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 25.

⁶⁵ Numnoncla, “The First American Advisers in Thai History,” 130–135. Besides Siam's diplomacy and modernization, the Anglo-Franco agreements left the Menam area to be a buffer zone, thereby also partly contributing to Siam's independence.

⁶⁶ Benjamin A. Batson, *The End of Absolute Monarchy in Siam* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1984), 179.

reasoned that “Siam is not strong enough to freely express her opinion [on European matters],” choosing instead to take a subdued yet still active position.⁶⁷ By doing so, Siam improved its leveraging power within the newly established international system.

Thailand During the Pacific War

Following Japanese imperial expansion into Korea, Taiwan, and Manchuria, Thai leaders understood that the regional balance of power was noticeably shifting away from European powers. On one hand, some viewed the rising power of Japan favourably. Imperial Japan, which expanded its influence with an expressly anti-Western focus, put the overbearing European colonial powers on the defensive. On the other hand, Japanese militarism and colonial excesses in Korea and Manchuria led to skepticism in Bangkok of Japan’s actual, presumably imperial goals in spreading its pan-Asian vision.⁶⁸ Like Wanthong, Thai leaders chose to cultivate and leverage their relations with both Japan and the Allied powers, despite their rivalry, to counter a larger ontological threat of losing independence and maintaining prosperity.

A pivotal moment came at the League of Nations in 1933, when Japan walked out of the organization in response to a unanimous condemnation of Japanese actions in Manchuria following the Mukden Incident of 1931. In a diplomatic act, Siam provided the single abstaining vote. This “neutral” stance empowered Thailand’s position, as both the Japanese and Europeans competed to curry favour in Bangkok in support of future initiatives. Moreover, Japan was a major market for Thai rice. Thai diplomats feared if the League voted to impose economic sanctions on Japan, that would negatively affect Thailand’s already depressed rice trade.⁶⁹ Thailand’s ruling political clique opportunistically but cordially leveraged competing offers, sometimes with strategic exaggeration, in order to gain support from each party. This resulted in a formal relationship with Japan and the recovery of territory previously conceded to France and Britain.

In July 1941, Thailand provided a 10-million-baht loan to Japan, but stipulated that it must be repaid in gold. In August 1941, Thailand provided another 25-million-baht loan, requiring the gold to be stored in Bangkok.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ *Papers of Prince Damrong* (Bangkok: National Archives), section 42, file 118.

⁶⁸ Thailand’s relative ambiguity between both sides in this rising conflict is best outlined in a contemporary account by John L. Christian and Nobutake Ike, “Thailand in Japan’s Foreign Relations,” *Pacific Affairs* 15, no. 2 (June 1942): 195–221.

⁶⁹ Thailand’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Seventh Reign” (Bangkok: National Archives), section 20, file 14.

⁷⁰ Interestingly, Phibun and Pridi, who led the 1932 coup that transformed Siam from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy, became political rivals with diverging positions on Thailand’s alignment choices during the war. The diplomatic efforts to secure these loans in gold held in Bangkok was a rare point of cooperation between them. Despite Pridi’s pro-Western leanings, he strongly advocated for the gold-backed loan. Embassy Bangkok, “Chargé in Thailand (Chapman) to the Secretary of State” (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2010), archival document 438, available at: <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1939v01/d860>; “Pridi announcement regarding the negotiations,” *Japan Times and Advertiser*, 30 August 1941.

By late 1941, however, Japan forced Thailand's hand. The Imperial Japanese Army menacingly massed its troops along Thailand's southern border, with Thai territory standing as the only barrier to a full invasion of British Malaya.⁷¹ Meanwhile, British forces in Burma and Malaya stood ready to defend their colonies, seemingly prepared to violate Thai sovereignty in the process to do so.⁷² Following brief skirmishes with Japan (and Britain) on its southern borders while Prime Minister Phibun was conspicuously on the road visiting Chachoengsao Province, he threw his weight behind a formal alignment with the Japanese, signing an agreement to allow the Japanese free access to move through Thailand for operations against Burma and Malaya.⁷³ However, calling Phibun's agreement with Imperial Japan a formal "alliance" is a slight misnomer, as not all Thai leaders signed a full alliance treaty with the Japanese. Instead, Phibun signed a formal agreement that specifically "permitted" Japanese free passage through Thailand, as long as the Japanese respected Thai "sovereignty" by, for example, not disarming Thai forces or remaining overnight in Bangkok.⁷⁴ Thai leaders carefully crafted an accommodation with Japan that could be perceived by all parties as neither the act of an occupied nation nor one of an unambiguous collaborator.

This distinction empowered other Thai leaders, namely the Regent Pridi Banomyong (Pridi), to form informal ties with the Allied powers to balance Japanese influence. This Western-aligned faction was notably influential within the cabinet. After Phibun declared war on the Allies in early 1942, for example, he could not gather enough signatures to legally certify the action. Meanwhile, Ambassador Seni Promoj failed to deliver a *demarche* to the US government. As a result, the US never declared war on Thailand.⁷⁵ In Thailand, the pro-Allies Seri Thai (Free Thai) emerged with Pridi (code name "Ruth") acting as the main interlocutor between the resistance and the US, engaging in informal, clandestine collaboration between the US and high-ranking Thai officials. Seri Thai leaders chose to favour the Office of Strategic Services, the precursor to today's Central Intelligence Agency, over British intelligence, as the British still considered Thais to be "enemy aliens," and responsible for the loss of British Malaya.⁷⁶ Choosing the US as a wartime

⁷¹ E. Bruce Reynolds, *Thailand and Japan's Southern Advance, 1940–1945* (New York: St. Martin's, 1994).

⁷² Christian and Ike, "Thailand in Japan's Foreign Relations," 218–219.

⁷³ Edward Thaddeus Flood, "Japan's Relations with Thailand: 1928–1941," (PhD dissertation, University of Washington, 1967).

⁷⁴ Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Dainiji sekai taissen to Nipponkoku Taikokukan dōmei jōyaku teiketsu" [World War II and the signing of the Japan-Thailand alliance treaty] (Tokyo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1941), available at: <https://www.digital.archives.go.jp/das/image/M00000000000000800419>.

⁷⁵ David Van Praagh, *Thailand's Struggle for Democracy: The Life and Times of M. R. Seni Pramoj* (New York: Helmers and Meier, 1996), 51–53.

⁷⁶ Puey Ungphakorn, "Temporary Soldier," in *Thai Politics: Extracts and Documents, 1932–1957*, ed. Thak Chaloemtiarana (Bangkok: Thammasat University Printing Office, 1978), 406.

partner rather than Britain, which was busy fighting the Japanese in the colonies, was a deliberate act within Thailand's informal ties with the Allies.⁷⁷ Despite the raging war, Thailand perceived a postwar imperialist Britain and France to be the biggest threats to Thai sovereignty, freedom, and prosperity.

A less well-known, underground anti-Japanese group in Thailand during World War II involved the Sino-Thais. Prominent and high-ranking *lukjin* (offspring of an ethnic Chinese), who led this group, made secret missions to Chongqing, where Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek operated his wartime government. As a result, Chiang perceived Thailand as a victim of Japanese imperialist aggression, and not as a collaborator. Wongsurawat claims that "China's endorsement of Thailand's pro-Allied position in the Second World War was crucial in bringing about further endorsement by the United States and eventually [a] favourable outcome for Thailand upon the conclusion of the war."⁷⁸ This endorsement proved important after the war ended, when the British wanted to punish Thailand for Phibun's "declaration of war" against the Allies and collaborating with Japan. In contrast, the US posited that Thailand was better classified as an occupied territory, and restored it to full sovereignty following the war. As a result of its *songjai*, Thailand remained unconquered by the Japanese during the war and unpunished by the Allied powers after the war. In effect, it even improved its international self-image as both an uncolonized and unconquered (by Japan) nation. More importantly, Thailand emerged prosperous due to its shrewd wartime loan to the Japanese, which it still demanded be paid back in gold after the war had ended.⁷⁹

Thailand During the Cold War

Following World War II, Thailand swapped its informal ties for a formalized alliance relationship with the US throughout the Cold War, with the US serving as Thailand's guarantor of sovereignty and national identity of "*chart* (nation), *sasana* (religion), and *phramaha kasat* (monarchy)." After the 1947 coup, Phibun spearheaded this change in Thai international relations in the form of a formal military alliance with the US in the face of ontological challenges from Communist China and Vietnam. Thailand was the first Southeast Asian country to send troops to the US-led coalition fighting in support of South Korea on the Korean Peninsula. It also supported the US-backed government in Saigon. With its strong formal defence ties with the US, complemented by informal economic partnerships with Japan and China, Thailand set itself up for a comfortable period of both freedom and

⁷⁷ A smaller pro-British faction, the "Free Siamese Movement," played a smaller role throughout the war.

⁷⁸ Wongsurawat, *The Crown and the Capitalists*, 130.

⁷⁹ After the war, it took two C-47 planes to transport the gold from Bangkok to Fort Knox for storage on behalf of the Thai government. Interview with Pote Inkanaanda, a former Thai official responsible for this transport, 1 August 1991.

prosperity, leveraging all regional powers, similar to Wanthong's positioning with both Khun Chang and Khun Phaen.

Throughout the Cold War, the Thai government grouped ethnic Chinese and Vietnamese migrants into a single pool of threatening, non-Thai foreign interlopers, dedicated to overthrowing the Thai sociopolitical system. Therefore, Thailand sought new formal security partners to safeguard against perceived challenges from Communist China and Indochina, leading to a formal alliance with the US through the 1954 Manila Pact of the former Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), the 1962 Thanat-Rusk communiqué, and the 1966 Treaty of Amity and Economic Relations.⁸⁰ The waves of Communist revolution in Indochina, varyingly sponsored by Moscow and Beijing, threatened the security of Thailand's borders, as well as traditions of commerce and Buddhism, making both the Soviet Union and China unworkable formal partners in national polyandry. In 1967, with the creation of ASEAN, Thailand also established enduring partnerships with four Southeast Asian neighbours. It was the Thai Foreign Ministry that wrote the first draft of the ASEAN Charter, and the founding ASEAN Declaration was promulgated in Bangkok.⁸¹ The declaration stressed the importance of promoting regional prosperity, freedom of movement, and freedom of political association. It provided an alternative economic model for equitable economic growth to Chinese, Vietnamese, or Soviet-style socialism. As a founding member of ASEAN, Thailand has shaped the organization's priorities from an early date and has leveraged ASEAN to promote its perceptions of freedom and prosperity.

Nevertheless, the Phibun government maintained informal person-to-person relations with Beijing through his longtime advisor Sang Phathanothai. Phibun recruited Sang to establish Thailand's informal relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC). Soon after the 1955 Bandung Conference, Sang led a small delegation of Thai officials to Beijing, meeting both Zhou Enlai and Mao Zedong.⁸² During the meeting, Mao advised Sang that Thailand should "not side with anyone" in its dealings with China and the US.⁸³ Despite backing formal alignment with the US, Phibun sent Sang's daughter Sirin as a goodwill offering to Zhou, reenacting a historical practice of human "pledges" sent to China as an act of imperial deference.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ On Thai-US relations during the Cold War, see Kullada Kesboonchoo Mead, "Cold War and Thai Democratization," in *Southeast Asia and the Cold War*, ed. Albert Lau (New York: Routledge, 2012), chapter 11.

⁸¹ Amitav Acharya, *The Making of Southeast Asia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012).

⁸² Mitchell Tan, "Confronting Communism: Sang Phatthanothai and Thailand's Dynamic Relationship with the Cold War, 1948–1957," *Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 33, no. 1 (March 2018): 90.

⁸³ Tan, "Confronting Communism," 91.

⁸⁴ Sirin Phathanothai and James Peck, *The Dragon's Pearl* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994). This book discusses the domestic politics surrounding China's Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution from a Thai perspective.

After the 1957 coup, Sarit Thanarat ended Sang's dealings with the PRC and jailed him for alleged leftist tendencies.⁸⁵ Until the end of the 1960s, the PRC continued to be at the core of the Thai government's anti-Communist policies, which were further exacerbated by the fall of Laos and Cambodia to Communism. Yet, Thailand's stridently anti-Communist government continued to pursue informal relations with the PRC. These paid off following the US rapprochement with the PRC in 1972 and the fall of Saigon to North Vietnam in 1975. A unified Vietnamese state changed Thai leaders' ontological security perceptions, with the danger of Chinese influence outweighed by potential Vietnamese (and Soviet) regional hegemony. Within a few months after the Communist takeover of Saigon, Thailand switched its diplomatic recognition from the Republic of China in Taipei to the PRC in Beijing. Even the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) issued an official position stating they would stand by the Chinese policy against the "social imperialism of the Soviet and Vietnamese." The CPT based their anti-Soviet and anti-Vietnam position on the "Three World Theory" put forth by the Chinese Communist Party.⁸⁶

This trend accelerated under Deng Xiaoping. Previously seen as a challenge to Bangkok due to its sponsorship of revolution among overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia, post-Mao China offered middle-income Thailand a lucrative trading partner and market for Thai exports.⁸⁷ For example, the first registered foreign company in the PRC was the Charoen Pokphand (CP) Group (known as *Zhèng Dà* or 正大 in China) of the Sino-Thai Chearavanont family. The informal relationship deepened further following the Asian financial crisis, when the PRC offered US\$4 billion in aid to Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries without the "humiliating" conditions attached by the IMF.⁸⁸ These ebbs and flows of the informal relationship with China highlight Thailand's actions within the parameters of its formal-informal strategy. The doctrinaire chaos of Mao-era China, for example, removed China as a potential partner for Thai leaders, as China was either absent from Thailand's sphere or only present in order to promote Communist revolution. When China regained its domestic and economic footing under Deng Xiaoping, Thai leaders recognized the benefits of leveraging an informal and complementary partnership with the new China without degrading or subordinating its formal ties with the US.

⁸⁵ Tan, "Confronting Communism," 96–97.

⁸⁶ Thigarn Srinara, "Lang 6 tula: wadeau kwam katyang tang kwamkit rawang kabuankan nakseuksa kab pak kommunid haeng prathet thai" [After October 6: regarding intellectual dispute between the students and the Communist Party of Thailand] (Bangkok: 6 Tula Lamleuk Press, 2009), 145. We thank Thanet Aphornsuvan for bringing this point to our attention.

⁸⁷ Kevin Hewison, "Thailand: An Old Relationship Renewed," *Pacific Review* 31, no. 1 (2018): 119–120.

⁸⁸ Interestingly, as China (and Japan) stepped in to help with the Asian Financial Crisis, the US watched on the sidelines. See William A. Callahan, "Beyond Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism: Diasporic Chinese and Neo-Nationalism in Thailand," *International Organization* 57, no. 3 (2003): 497.

Thailand's less well known but meaningful security cooperation with Deng's China took place in Cambodia, where both the PRC and Thailand sent and sponsored varying levels of support to the Khmer Rouge regime in an attempt to counter a perceived malign Vietnamese influence in the region.⁸⁹ Meanwhile, at this time, the US had recently fought a war against Vietnam and shared Thailand's (and China's) skepticism of Vietnamese intentions.⁹⁰ The *Washington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times* reported that Thai officials sponsored the smuggling of arms and supplies to the Khmer Rouge, while the US provided food aid to approximately 40,000 Khmer Rouge insurgents in semi-official bases in Thai territory.⁹¹ Gregory Vincent Raymond observes that, rather than attempting to militarily challenge Vietnam's expanding influence in Indochina, Thai military and foreign policy elites pushed for a strategy of coalition building, akin to leveraging, through Bangkok's relations with Beijing, Washington, and ASEAN. Raymond identifies "politico-military narratives" of Thai culture from the Bangkok and Ayutthaya periods as a primary variable to explain this strategic choice.⁹² Facing a self-perceived threat to Thailand's unity (i.e., ontological security), Bangkok chose to call upon its partners and allies, rather than face the Vietnamese threat. These narratives were so prolific and universal as to even impact the internal structure of the Thai Armed Forces, leading to questionable military decision making but focusing military leaders on effective leveraging of diverse international partners.

During the standoff over the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, Raymond claims that Bangkok's overreliance on near-contradictory coalitions built through multi-layered leveraging reduced the success of Thailand's anti-Vietnam strategy.⁹³ Nevertheless, from the perspective of ontological pragmatism, the successful practice of leveraging seemingly opposed partners represents a success in itself. While such a strategy may not perfectly protect Thai sovereignty from a Western perspective, it does promote Thailand as a respected, prosperous, and free country with high standing in the international community.

⁸⁹ Interview with Stanley Karnow, Potomac, Maryland, 1 November 2012.

⁹⁰ Published oral history of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training from Ambassador Victor L. Tomseth, former deputy chief of mission at the US Embassy in Bangkok, 13 May 1999; Ambassador Morton I. Abramowitz, former chief of mission at the US Embassy in Bangkok, 10 April 2007, available at: <https://www.adst.org> (accessed 8 June 2021).

⁹¹ See Michael Haas, *Cambodia, Pol Pot, and the United States: The Faustian Pact* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1991).

⁹² Gregory V. Raymond, "Strategic Culture and Thailand's Response to Vietnam's Occupation of Cambodia, 1979–1989: A Cold War Epilogue," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 22, no. 1 (Winter 2020): 4–45. doi:10.1162/jcws_a_00924.

⁹³ Raymond, "Strategic Culture," 4–45.

Post-Cold War Foreign Relations and the 2014 Coup

During the post-Cold War period, Thailand has strived to play a central role in regional supply chains, and to promote itself as providing an attractive strategic location between US-China competition. In a 2021 campaign, Secretary General Duangjai Asawachintachit of the Board of Investment refers to “Thailand’s strategic positioning as ASEAN’s investment hub and gateway to Asia.”⁹⁴ Accordingly, Thai leaders have sought to improve the country’s international self-image in order to ensure its ontological security. In particular, the Thai government actively seeks “to secure Japanese investment and Thailand’s position as the key regional production base with well-equipped infrastructures and abundant natural resources for Japan.”⁹⁵ Unsurprisingly, Japan dominated Thailand’s FDI inflows for five decades, until 2020, when China became Thailand’s top source of FDI applicants.⁹⁶ Japan plans more investment to complete the Eastern Economic Corridor, connecting industries in Chonburi, Rayong, and Chachoensao.⁹⁷ The Thai government also agreed to a nearly 900-kilometre, Chinese-backed, North-South rail network connecting Kunming in the North to Singapore, crossing over Laos, Thailand, and Malaysia along the way.⁹⁸ This high profile and expensive high-speed rail project is believed to be a critical part of China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in Southeast Asia and at the heart of China’s infrastructure goals for the region. In terms of trade, China, Japan, and the US consistently ranked among the top three trading partners with Thailand between 2009 and 2019. Interestingly, China was Thailand’s largest export partner for seven years, while the US held that position for four years. Thailand also enjoyed a trade surplus with the US and consistently suffered a trade deficit with China. Table 3 provides a snapshot of these trends in Thai economic relations from 2009 to 2019.

As for security, Thailand continues to maintain a formal defence treaty with the US. In 2003, the US elevated Thailand’s status as a major non-NATO ally (MNNA). This designation came within weeks of a successful joint Thai-US operation to capture Jemaah Islamiyah terrorist leader Riduan Isamuddin (a.k.a. Hambali) in Thailand, hailed at the time as an example of US-Thai

⁹⁴ See https://www.boi.go.th/index.php?page=press_releases_detail&topic_id=125494.

⁹⁵ See <https://www.mfa.go.th/en/content/thaijap300764-3?cate=5d5bcb4e15e39c306000683e>.

⁹⁶ The importance of Japanese FDI to Thailand was further demonstrated by the fact that the junta chose the Japanese Chamber of Commerce as its first meeting with a foreign group after the 2014 coup. See Nobuhiro Aizawa, “The Japanese business community as a diplomatic asset and the 2014 Thai coup d’etat,” in *The Courteous Power: Japan and Southeast Asia in the Indo-Pacific Era*, eds. John D. Giorciari and Kiyoteru Tsutsui (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2021), chapter 8.

⁹⁷ Japan International Cooperation Agency, “Southeast Asia and the Pacific,” *JICA Annual Report 2019* (Tokyo: JICA, 2018), available at: https://www.jica.go.jp/english/publications/reports/annual/2019/c8h0vm0000f7nzvn-att/2019_05.pdf.

⁹⁸ Kate Hodal, “Thailand’s ruling junta approves China rail links worth \$23bn.,” *The Guardian*, 1 August 2014, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/01/thailand-junta-approve-china-rail-link-23bn>.

Table 3
Thai economic trends from 2009–2019 (in million USD)

| Country | FDI (ranking) | Trade volume (ranking) | Total exports (ranking) | Total imports (ranking) |
|---------------|------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Japan | 38,494 (1) | 632,168 (2) | 239,340 (3) | 392,829 (2) |
| United States | 11,208 (3) | 409,919 (3) | 262,790 (2) | 147,126 (3) |
| China | 5270 (5) | 692,117 (1) | 279,554 (1) | 412,622 (1) |

Sources: Bank of Thailand, “Thailand’s Macro Economic Indicators,” 2020, available at: https://www.bot.or.th/App/BTWS_STAT/statistics/BOTWEBSTAT.aspx?reportID=409&language=ENG; Thailand’s Ministry of Commerce, “Foreign Trade Statistics of Thailand,” 2020, available at: <http://tradereport.moc.go.th/TradeThai.aspx>.

security collaboration.⁹⁹ However, events following the 2014 coup have placed a strain on Thailand’s formal relationship with the US, and have strengthened its informal ties with China. The Obama administration reacted negatively to the coup, cancelling around US\$3.5 million in financing for military purchases, reducing funding for the training of Thai military officers, and scaling down the annual Cobra Gold exercises.¹⁰⁰ The Obama administration’s swift denunciation dented Thailand’s carefully cultivated self-image as a land of freedom and prosperity. Coup leader General Prayut was surprised by the administration’s relative tolerance of a similar coup in Egypt, which received no formal downgrade in security ties. In contrast, Prayut appreciated the Trump administration’s focus on business interests in American foreign policy and lack of interest in human rights and democracy promotion, a sensitive topic for Thailand’s ruling clique.¹⁰¹ Despite the downgrade in the relationship, the US sold roughly US\$600 million of military equipment to Thailand from 2015 to 2019.

With a cooling in its formal relations with the US following the 2014 coup, Thai leaders have leveraged their informal security ties with China to expand military cooperation by purchasing Chinese military equipment and inviting the People’s Liberation Army to join bilateral military exercises.¹⁰² In fact, military sales from China to Thailand date back to the late Cold War.¹⁰³ From

⁹⁹ Interview with Ambassador Alex Arvizu, former deputy chief of mission at the US Embassy in Bangkok, Arlington, Virginia, 4 June 2021.

¹⁰⁰ Claudio Sopranzetti, “Thailand’s Relapse: The Implications of the May 2014 Coup,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 75, no. 2 (May 2016): 299–316; Kasian Tejapira, “Elite alignment, a populist moment: reflections on Thailand 2019 general elections,” *New Mandala*, 4 April 2019; Chris Baker, “The 2014 Thai Coup and Some Roots of Authoritarianism,” *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 46, no. 3 (2016): 388–404.

¹⁰¹ Interview with Ambassador Glyn Davies, former chief of mission to the US Embassy in Bangkok, Washington, DC, 14 May 2020.

¹⁰² Charlie Campbell and Felix Solomon, “Thailand’s Leader Promised to Restore Democracy. Instead, He’s Tightening His Grip,” *Time*, 21 June 2018, available at: <https://time.com/5318235/thailand-prayuth-chan-ocha/>.

¹⁰³ Ian Storey, “Thailand’s Military Relations with China: Moving from Strength to Strength,” *ISEAS Perspective*, no. 43 (2019): 3–4.

1987 to 1988, China sold over 400 armoured personnel carriers, 50 Type 69 main battle tanks, 650 HB-5A man-portable surface-to-air missile systems, and 6 warships to Thailand at remarkably low “friendship prices.”¹⁰⁴ Modest military sales, mostly consisting of upkeep and upgrades to previously purchased equipment, continued through the 1990s and 2000s.¹⁰⁵ From 2016 to 2017, China and Thailand committed to the largest round of military purchases in the history of their relationship, with Thailand spending around US\$1.3 billion on 48 advanced VT-4 main battle tanks, 3 S-26T diesel-electric submarines, and 34 ZBL-09 armoured personnel carriers.¹⁰⁶ Thailand’s recent military purchases from China do not reflect a security realignment away from the US, but are likely a result of China’s lack of concern for human rights violations or political restrictions on arms sales—not to mention their relatively low costs of purchase, upkeep, and maintenance. In addition, Thailand committed to a jointly funded weapons production and maintenance centre in Khon Kaen run by Norinco, a leading Chinese arms manufacturer.¹⁰⁷

Combined Thai-Chinese military exercises also grew in scope and scale, especially after the 2014 coup. Joint military exercises with China began in 2005 and expanded in 2011. In December 2011, all Mekong-adjacent countries (except Vietnam) began conducting joint law enforcement and paramilitary security patrols of the Mekong River.¹⁰⁸ Between 2011 and (April) 2021, Thailand and China collaborated on 103 joint river patrols.¹⁰⁹ These regular patrols formed the first meaningful basis of direct Thai-PRC military

¹⁰⁴ Armoured personnel carriers, rather than tanks, are a mainstay of Thai arms purchases. Given Thailand’s domestic unrest, these weapons can be used against Muslim insurgents in Pattani as well as pro-democracy youth protestors in Bangkok.

¹⁰⁵ This included upgrades to on-board, anti-ship missiles on previously sold *Juanguhu* and *Naresuan*-class frigates, as well as the latest model QW-18 man-portable, surface-to-air missile systems.

¹⁰⁶ Storey, “Thailand’s Military Relations with China,” 4.

¹⁰⁷ Panu Wongcha-um, “Thailand Plans Joint Arms Factory with China,” *Reuters*, 16 November 2017, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-thailand-defence/thailand-plans-joint-arms-factory-with-chinaidUSKBN1DG0U4>.

¹⁰⁸ Michael Sullivan, “China reshapes the vital Mekong River to power its expansion,” *NPR*, 6 October 2018, available at: <https://www.npr.org/2018/10/06/639280566/china-reshapes-the-vital-mekong-river-to-power-its-expansion>; “China Focus: Joint patrols on Mekong revitalize ‘golden waterway,’” *Xinhua*, 24 November 2019, available at: http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-11/24/c_138579268.htm; The “Mekong River Massacre” provided the impetus for the creation of these joint patrols. In October 2011, a transnational criminal group attacked two Chinese shipping vessels, killing 13 Chinese sailors in Thai waters along the Mekong River. This attack led to a Chinese suspension of all shipping along the Mekong, jeopardizing regional economic ties and development. The Thai government rapidly responded and arrested nine militants suspected of conducting the attack, most of whom “disappeared from the justice system” under mysterious circumstances. Brian Eyler, *Last Days of the Mighty Mekong* (Zed Books: London, 2019), 124–127; “Whitewash at Chiang Saen,” *Bangkok Post*, 2 October 2016, available at: <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/1100293/whitewash-at-chiang-saen>.

¹⁰⁹ “Mekong River patrol goes after drug crimes,” *China Daily*, 26 March 2021, available at: https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202103/26/WS605d7696a31024ad0bab1d9e_3.html.

cooperation. From 2012 to 2016, a combined counterterrorism exercise called “Blue Strike” nearly doubled in Thai participants. After 2014, Thailand also committed to Air Force and Navy exercises, which are typically longer in duration than ground force exercises. They require detailed integration of highly technical systems and a larger logistical footprint with the transportation of warships and fighter aircrafts. Of note, the Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF) refused to commit any US-made F-16 fighter aircraft to the Blue Falcon drills and used the Swedish Gripen aircrafts instead, despite its inventory of 38 F-16s and 7 Gripens.¹¹⁰ Otherwise, these exercises would have provided Chinese pilots with an opportunity to train against a widely used and proliferated US fighter aircraft, a far greater prize for China than any routine bilateral drill.

Like the faithful Wanthong in KCKP, Thailand did not abandon the US when the US downgraded its relations with Thailand after the 2014 coup. Rather, Thailand simply deepened its ties with China regardless of its relative strength, ideology, or position in the international system. In this way, Thailand continued to enjoy the economic and security benefits from leveraging its formal security relations with the US and its informal economic relations with the PRC without any larger alignment choice or major animosity from either partner. As evident from their increased trade and investment in Thailand after the Cold War, the continued sale of US military equipment to Thailand after the 2014 coup, and the PRC’s increased military cooperation with Thailand during the past two decades, both the US and China view Thailand as strategically attractive. Meanwhile, the dual partnership with the US and the PRC has assured ontological security for the Thais. Despite its apparent hollowness, Thailand remains active in the formal security alliance with the US and hosts the annual Cobra Gold exercises, still its largest and most sophisticated military exercises.¹¹¹ Since 2015, Thai foreign ministers have stressed the strength and history of the formal security alliance in press releases following meetings with the US, emphasizing the benefits of freedom of navigation offered by Bangkok’s alliance with Washington. In regard to China, they have highlighted the benefits of continued informal economic cooperation and potential mutual prosperity brought by Thai-Chinese trade and investment.¹¹² Moreover, they

¹¹⁰ Storey, “Thailand’s Military Relations with China,” 7.

¹¹¹ Cobra Gold exercises involve more complex inter-service and multinational collaboration than those with China to date.

¹¹² While this assessment of the tone concerning the US and the PRC came from many press releases, a representative example of the tone of each relationship is found in “Joint Press Statement between the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand and the Government of the People’s Republic of China issued on 5 November 2019, Bangkok,” available at: <https://www.mfa.go.th/en/content/111092-joint-press-statement-between-the-government-of-the-kingdom-of-thailand-and-the-government-of-the-people%E2%80%99s-republic-of-china-issued-on-5-november-2019-bangkok?page=5d5bd3da15e39c306002aaf9>; and “Joint Press Statement between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Thailand issued on 2 October 2017,” available at: <https://th.usembassy.gov/joint-statement-united-states-america-kingdom-thailand/>.

do not typically provide full-throated criticisms of provocative Chinese actions near Thai borders, including attempts to control the flows of the Mekong River, lest they risk a backlash to Thailand's favoured position in Beijing. Thus, Thailand continues to follow the tenets of formal-informal asymmetrical alliances, actively leveraging its geopolitical and geoeconomic position against great power competition.

Another example of Thailand's pragmatist approach to alliances during the post-Cold War period is found in its multiple partnerships and multidirectional leveraging of all four major governance institutions for the Mekong River. Thailand actively participates in the China-backed Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC), the US-backed Mekong-US Partnership, the Japan-backed Greater Mekong Subregion-Japan Partnership, and the regional Mekong River Commission (MRC).¹¹³ Thailand's participation in and leadership of these partnerships enables it to leverage all parties to maintain Thai sovereignty and to promote its prosperity. Since 2014, Thailand has been satisfied with cultivating its positive international image as a "bridge-maker."¹¹⁴ In 2015, Thailand twice hosted special international meetings on irregular migrants in the Indian Ocean. Between 2017 and 2018, former foreign minister Surikiart Suthirathai headed the Advisory Board of the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendation on Rakhine State.¹¹⁵ Despite well-publicized abuses of Rohingyas by Thai boat owners, prominent Thai diplomats served in leadership positions in regional organizations to advance individual freedoms, while addressing Myanmar's incidents of forced migration and ethnic violence against the Rohingyas. Moreover, they proudly played the role of a bridge-maker between ASEAN members and international organizations, thereby improving their self-image in the region and the broader international community.

Representing a nation that seeks to protect its identity and improve its international image and prestige, Thai leaders are concerned with global rankings on human rights, transparency, and democracy. After the US designated Thailand in the lowest tier 3 of the 2016 *Trafficking in Persons Report*, Thai diplomats committed to a considerable lobbying campaign in

¹¹³ People's Republic of China's Foreign Ministry, "China and Thailand sign the MoU on Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Special Fund Projects," 16 October 2018, available at: <http://www.chinaembassy.or.th/eng/sgxw/t1834682.htm>; Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Press Release: 1st Lower Mekong Initiative (LMI) Policy Dialogue," 30 April 2019, available at: [http://www3.mfa.go.th/main/en/news3/6886/102377-1st-Lower-Mekong-Initiative-\(LMI\)-Policy-Dialogue.html](http://www3.mfa.go.th/main/en/news3/6886/102377-1st-Lower-Mekong-Initiative-(LMI)-Policy-Dialogue.html); Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Joint Statement of the 11th Mekong-Japan Summit," (Tokyo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs), 4 November 2019, available at: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000535954.pdf>; Mekong River Commission, "About MRC: History," available at: <https://www.mrcmekong.org/about/mrc/history/>.

¹¹⁴ Interview with Dr. Witchu Vejajiva, deputy director-general of the Department of American and South Pacific Affairs of Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Arlington, Virginia, 22 December 2017.

¹¹⁵ "Outgoing Remarks from Rakhine Advisory Board," *The Irrawaddy*, 17 August 2018.

Washington, DC.¹¹⁶ Similarly, after the European Union (EU) Commission on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing gave Thailand a poor ranking, which halted some of Thailand's exports to the EU bloc and forced the government to establish countermeasures, Prayuth was seriously concerned about Thailand's international image. He requested that "[t]he media should consider the impact the news will have on the country. It may cause problems, and affect national security If this news get[s] widely published, [it could raise] problems of human trafficking and IUU illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing."¹¹⁷ In both cases, the negative international attention on Thailand was unacceptable, as each finding depicted Thailand as a country that practices bonded labour rather than one that promotes freedom and prosperity. In response to this tarnishing of the country's international image, Thai leaders committed to thorough countermeasures in order to improve the negative international perception of Thailand's freedom and prosperity, core symbols of its national ontology.

Conclusion

Our understanding of Thai diplomacy can also apply to other ASEAN countries with their own parables. Of the ASEAN states, Thailand and the Philippines have formal security ties with the US, Singapore has a strong security cooperation arrangement with the US and allows American forces to use its air and naval bases, and Malaysia, Indonesia, and Vietnam have recently increased their informal security relations with the US. Formal security arrangements, like the August 2002 US-ASEAN Joint Declaration on Combating Terrorism, form a baseline of security cooperation across the region. On the other hand, no ASEAN members have established a formal security alliance with China, although Laos, Cambodia, and perhaps Myanmar have increasingly turned to the PRC for military support. However, all of the countries mentioned above enjoy strong economic relations with the PRC. The recent signing of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), an ASEAN-led regional free trade zone, places these ties on track to formalization.

In sum, we hope to shed light on the study of diplomacy by small-medium states. We observe that small-medium states act pragmatically in their foreign engagements by forming formal and informal alliances with great powers to leverage their real or perceived positive self-conception. Specifically, this article examines the art of Thai diplomacy by exploring the parables of

¹¹⁶ US Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report: 2016*, available at: <https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/258876.pdf>.

¹¹⁷ "Thai Junta Warns Media Against Reporting on Human Trafficking," *Khaosod English*, 25 March 2015, available at: <https://www.khaosodenglish.com/politics/2015/03/25/1427268620/>.

alliance taken from classical literature and proverbs. In explaining Thai diplomacy, we have focused on the pragmatism of Thai leaders in leveraging great powers throughout its modern history during the Bangkok period. Accepting the importance of ontological security and international image, we have emphasized the ways in which these forces shape and structure Thai leaders with their decisions to form alliances with competing powers in the region. Following a pattern of behaviour in establishing balanced formal-informal relations, Thai leaders actively cultivate and leverage both relations to the furthest extent possible to advance the self-perceived freedom and prosperity of Thailand.

University of Texas, Austin, USA

Georgetown University, Washington, DC, USA, April 2022

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Diasporic Hallyu

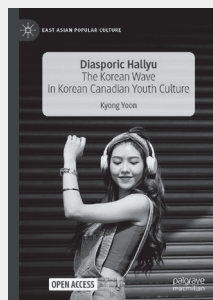
The Korean Wave in Korean Canadian Youth Culture

Author: Kyong Yoon

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- Contributes to enabling a critical understanding of diasporic audiences
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This open access book examines the lived experiences of diasporic Korean youth in light of the transnational flows of South Korean popular culture, known as the Korean Wave, or Hallyu. Drawing on an ethnographic study of Korean Canadian youth and their engagement with the Korean Wave, the book proposes a critical understanding of the interactions between diasporic youth audiences and popular culture. By examining the Korean Wave as diasporic cultural practices rather than the diffusion of national cultural products, the book reveals the diversified ways in which cultural flows are negotiated by audiences who take up relatively ambivalent reception positions between two or more national and cultural contexts. This book expands the scope of transnational audience studies and youth cultural studies by focusing attention on the diasporic media practices of young people.

Kyong Yoon is Professor of Cultural Studies at the University of British Columbia Okanagan, Canada. He has published widely on digital media, South Korean popular culture, migration, and youth culture.



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P E R S P E C T I V E

Cynical and Celebratory Sensibilities in South Korea's 2022 Presidential Election

Erik Mobrand

ABSTRACT

Why was South Korea's 2022 presidential election so close, when only a few years prior the party of the winning candidate had been out of contention? The answer can be found by situating the election against a battle between democratic and anti-democratic forces. Anti-democratic forces cynically bid for power by denigrating politics. An examination of how this cynical sensibility developed, from 2016 to 2022, but on the back of a deeper history, points both to what was at stake in this election and to the methods deployed by representatives of the anti-democratic forces that helped create parity in the vote.

Keywords: electoral politics; party politics; democracy; South Korea's politics

DOI: 10.5509/2022952265

Introduction

The South Korean dictator Park Chung-hee called his political party the Democratic Republican Party, as if to please both sides in American politics. The name was both meaningless and oozing meaning. Meaningless, because the term related in no way to the vision or platform of the party. Yet this formal meaninglessness pointed precisely to its substantive meaning: the name conveyed to American patrons that Park's party was a normal one. It was not the Developmentalist Party nor the National

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Acknowledgements: The article benefitted from Hyung-Gu Lynn's and Hyejin Kim's extensive comments on earlier drafts, while Stephan Haggard's invitation to present ideas on the election resulted in helpful feedback on the main themes. Faults remain the author's own. Institutional support for the initial research underpinning the article came from the Graduate School of International Studies at Seoul National University and the Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies at Lund University.

Security Party, both of which would have been more honest or accurate, because those would have been harder for Washington to read. Surely, a Democratic Republican Party, resplendent in its reassuring terminological familiarity, was credible as the ruling bloc of an American ally.

The deployment of double meanings continued as a strategy in South Korea's electoral politics. Parsing these meanings is crucial to explaining the question left by the country's 2022 presidential election: Why did the winning candidate, Yoon Suk-yeol, have a chance at all? For several reasons, the election ought to have been an easy victory for the Democratic Party (DP) candidate Lee Jae-myung. First, the predecessor parties of Yoon's People Power Party (PPP) had been all but vanquished only five years before. As recently as 2020, the DP had crushed the PPP in National Assembly elections. As the election year approached, a common refrain was that the PPP "had nobody" (*saram-i õpta*) to run. Second, at the time of the election, President Moon Jae-in, of the DP, had the highest approval ratings of any outgoing president.¹ Surely, that support should have rubbed off on the DP candidate. Third, DP candidate Lee was more similar to Moon and a more popular figure than his closest rivals for the DP nomination, suggesting that the party chose the right candidate. Fourth, Yoon expressed support for positions that simply did not fit with public views in South Korea.

A search for the source of surprising parity between the candidates starts with understanding that in this election a major struggle in South Korea spilled into the electoral realm. On one side of this struggle, forces demanded a further deepening of democracy and a rollback of lingering authoritarian structures. Those who felt threatened by these demands sought to obstruct change and circumscribe accountable authority. These anti-democratic forces cynically denigrated politics while pretending to uphold democratic principles. Their opponents, seeking to maximize the benefits of democracy for society, celebrated the political as a way of solving problems and pursuing collective aspirations. These two sensibilities, the cynical and the celebratory, clashed on an unprecedented scale in the 2022 election. The election was close because the anti-democratic forces, taking risks to cultivate constituencies, deployed cynical frames that drew on a repertoire of known tropes and found help from media organizations in propagating their messages. That the election processed real struggle pointed to the power of democracy; the result demonstrated the power of cynicism to undermine the political in even the most celebratory of democracies.

¹ An editorial in a conservative newspaper wondered how Moon could sustain approval ratings as high as 45 percent on the eve of the election. See Choi Min-woo, "Moon Still Shines. Why?" *Korean Joongang Daily*, 8 March 2022, <https://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/2022/03/08/opinion/columns/Moon-Jaein-approval-rating/20220308200331970.html>.

Alternative Ways to Frame the Problem

Elections can be studied in many ways. How we study them shapes the questions we ask. The closer an observer is in time to an election, for instance, the more their analysis focuses on opinion polls. In the case of this election, polls in the days up to the election indicated that Yoon could defeat Lee by a larger margin.² Seen from that close-up perspective, through a macro lens, the narrowness of Yoon's win—by less than a percentage point—is what needs explaining. The explanation might have as much to do with polling practices as with voting, campaigning, or contestation.

Another approach would be to zoom out and view the contest in terms sometimes called structural. Two main parties, one more progressive and another more conservative, fielded candidates and divided up the electorate, just as they have done in previous cycles. Similarities and differences with past presidential elections can be found by looking at the divisions, such as regional and generational, that have mattered. In this election, the more conservative party won heavily in the southeast while the more progressive party won heavily in the southwest, following the established pattern.³ That divide does not produce majorities, since around half of voters live in the Seoul area. Over the past 15 years, a generational divide has grown in importance in elections. Pensioners have preferred the conservative party and those under 50 have supported the more progressive party.⁴ In 2022, voters over 60 overwhelmingly preferred the conservative Yoon, while those in their thirties and forties opted for the more progressive Lee.⁵ In a significant new trend, the youngest voters were split. That development is crucial, and I will return to it.

The limitation with framing this election as the latest round in a series of contests between conservatives and progressives is that the definitions of the contestants have changed. What the two leading candidates stood for in 2022, the options they represented, marks a shift from past elections. That shift in meaning was crucial to dividing the electorate. Part of the reason for this change was that neither Lee nor Yoon was a typical candidate for their party. Neither had served in the National Assembly, the traditional source of senior party politicians. Lee had little backing from senior DP figures,

² The pledge by Ahn Cheol-soo, who dropped out of the race, to support Yoon indicated that the PPP candidate could win close to half the votes, compared to 40 percent for Lee. See Lee Haye-ah, "South Koreans to Elect New President This Week after Tight Race," *Yonhap News*, 6 March 2022, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20220304004100315>.

³ Chông Suyôn, "20-tae taesôn chiyôkpyôl tûkp'yoyul" [Votes received by region in the 20th presidential election], *Yonhap News*, 10 March 2022, <https://www.yna.co.kr/view/AKR20220310022451001>.

⁴ Won-taek Kang, "How Ideology Divides Generations: The 2002 and 2004 South Korean Elections," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 41, no. 2 (2008): 461–480.

⁵ "0.73% ch'aiga malhanûn köt" [Talking about a 0.73% gap], *Han'gyôre* 21, 11 March 2022, https://h21.hani.co.kr/arti/politics/politics_general/51707.html.

even after he won nomination. Yoon was not even a party politician. With the identity of the parties in flux and candidates from outside the core of those parties, an analysis that starts from the premise that this election featured the same protagonists as earlier ones can be misleading.

Narrowing our view again, we might train our focus on the votes that determined the result. The key fact from that viewpoint is that some 200,000 votes put Yoon over the line. Less than 1 percent of the votes made the difference. The question becomes one of why Yoon was able to win those extra votes. Several factors certainly contributed to push Yoon's vote share just high enough. Two weeks before the election, a prominent third candidate—Ahn Cheol-soo—withdrew from the contest and pledged his support to Yoon. In previous elections, candidates from outside the top two have also shaped outcomes. In 2002, Chŏng Mongjun, scion of the Hyundai empire, dropped out of the race at the eleventh hour and lent support to eventual winner Roh Moo-hyun. This election might be seen as similar.

A further factor, much discussed in South Korea immediately after the election, was that President Moon, attempting to remain above the fray, did little to assist Lee's campaign. The prominent public commentator and Buddhist monk Kim Yongok, known as To'ol, railed against Moon on his Youtube channel while decrying the election outcome: "Who is ultimately responsible? It's the one called Moon Jae-in, Moon Jae-in!"⁶ The sources of Kim's frustration included the charge that Moon and his most fervent supporters (*Mun ppa*) lacked critical reflection on what the administration had and had not achieved. There can be practical and strategic lessons to be learnt by examining the election from the perspective of what Moon and the DP might have done differently.

Yet posing the question in terms of marginal votes is largely an exercise in counterfactuals. It is impossible, in any case, to isolate a single source of that difference. We need a question that can be answered. Stepping away from the day-to-day news, and taking a slightly wider view, while still recognizing what is particular about this election, offers a more useful scale of analysis. When positioned against the past half-decade, the standout surprise of the 2022 election was that the race could be close at all. The parity would not have been expected five years earlier, or even two.

The analysis I offer strays from vote shares, opinion polls, internal party politics, and structural factors, even though such analyses are useful for certain purposes. The question, as phrased here, is best answered by thinking about how a particular conflict entered the arena of party and electoral politics. Elections do not reflect conflicts in society; certain conflicts are processed through elections, while others are not. The theoretical

⁶ Hyŏn Yesŭl, "Yi Chaemyŏng chijihan To'ol, 'tasin Mun kat'ŭn taet'ongnyŏng t'aednaji maraya'" [To'ol, supporter of Lee Jae-myung: "another president like Moon shouldn't be born"], *Chungang ilbo*, 24 March 2022, <https://www.joongang.co.kr/article/25058069#home>.

foundations for this perspective can be found in scholarship on South Korea's democracy and on the United States. The eminent theorist Ch'oe Chang-jip makes the bifurcation between electoral politics and substantive politics a core theme in his analysis of the country's democracy.⁷ Because the Republic of Korea was forged in a context of superpower conflict and counter-revolutionary suppression of popular forces, the expression of social demands in the formal political sphere was limited to a narrow social base. With democratization, old social forces continued to occupy the domain of party and electoral politics, supporting a "conservative two-party system."

Ch'oe's formulation echoes the insights of E. E. Schattschneider. In a classic work on American democracy, Schattschneider argues that party politicians' calculated determination of what electoral conflicts are about is the core element of electoral democracy.⁸ Only certain conflicts are brought into electoral politics. Schattschneider's realism—in the sense of Machiavelli and the writers he inspired—points out that democracy has the potential to force powerful groups, organized through one or more parties, to settle for conflicts that give the rest of us a modicum of voice. Questions about politics are answered by examining the interplay of what happens outside of the electoral sphere with what happens within. In this type of analysis, voters should not be taken as proxies for the primary social forces. I thus begin outside the arena of electoral politics and examine how a conflict—the central conflict in South Korea, between celebratory and cynical democratic sensibilities—was brought into the 2022 presidential election.

Denigrating and Celebrating the Political

Political actors use words and symbols as means of dividing up the electorate and signalling what electoral conflict is about. Public words are performance: they are chosen not only for their substantive meaning but also to convey something that is not said. Words and phrases, like Democratic Republican Party, transmit more than their formal meaning.⁹ To take a public statement at face value is to miss this theatrical dimension and, therefore, the political meaning.

Politically meaningful representations of democracy have a history in South Korea. The unequal relationship with the United States in the decades following the end of Japanese rule in 1945 fostered an elite that excelled at pretending to be democratic. This elite included some, like first president

⁷ Ch'oe Changjip, *Minjuhwa ihu ūi minjujuūi: Han'guk minjujuūi ūi posu kiwŏn kwa wigi* [Democracy after democratization: The conservative origins and crisis of Korea's democracy], rev. ed. (Seoul: Humanitas, 2005).

⁸ E. E. Schattschneider, *The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America* (Hinsdale, IL: Dryden Press, 1960).

⁹ On substantive and formal meanings in politics, see James Burnham, *The Machiavellians: Defenders of Freedom* (London: Putnam, 1943).

Syngman Rhee, who had been socialized in American ways. It included others, like the military leaders of the 1960s through the 1980s, who lacked that socialization but still monopolized channels of contact with the United States. These groups lied to Americans—perhaps only so that Americans could lie to themselves, or keep up appearances, about the nature of the regime they supported in East Asia. The approach was cynical. It made a mockery of democratic principles. South Korea's Cold War liberalism was a repressive system with elections on the side.¹⁰ The country's leaders gained decades of experience cloaking anti-democratic activities in democratic language. Even if few believed them, these ways of talking created a vocabulary and symbols that endured as a repertoire for political actors even decades later.

In reaction against the cynical sensibility, an opposing democratic sensibility emerged. Its origins lie in the denunciation of authoritarianism. Political movements in the 1970s and 1980s included diverse elements and demands. Activists were tied to churches or illicit labour movements, or both, and to student organizations or artists' circles. The collective, mobilizing spirit of the authoritarian-era movements celebrated the political as a way of addressing problems and pursuing aspirations.

The democratic transition of the late 1980s set South Korea well on a path to becoming an undisputed democracy. A decade later it was clear that multiparty elections were buttressed by freedoms and parties took turns in power. But South Korea was a democracy resting atop power configurations created in earlier, profoundly anti-democratic times. Those configurations lingered. A set of forces adjusted to operating in an open environment, but they maintained a preference for limiting threats to their power and status. The major elements in this configuration included parts of the bureaucracy, intelligence offices, a portion of the legislature, big business, the major media groups, and certain churches. Through party politicians, this anti-democratic force contested elections but worked to make democracy less meaningful.

Another segment of society attempted to maximize democracy. The democratic project of South Korea from a decade or so after the transition of 1987–1988 was not primarily about having a particular party or individual win elected office. Rather, it focused on reforming the state away from its authoritarian legacies and building capacities in new areas to serve the needs of a changing society. For this challenging task, its champions celebrated the political. They believed that working collectively, soliciting participation, and setting out programs for transformation could improve society.

Anti-democratic forces in the post-authoritarian era adapted a cynical sensibility to the changed circumstances. They employed old slogans about anti-communism that could be used to discredit a political opponent.

¹⁰ Pak Ch'anp'yo, *Han'guk ūi kukka hyōngsōng kwa minjujuūi: Naengjōn chayujuūi wa posujōk minjujuūi ūi kiwōn* [State formation and democracy in Korea: Cold War liberalism and the origins of conservative democracy] (Seoul: Humanitas, 2007).

Democratic cynicism granted normal cover to activities that could have been presented as, at best, dubiously democratic. A favourite trope was the danger of corruption. Warnings about corruption distracted and disempowered the public, while claiming to serve democratic purposes. Scandals were invented or exaggerated to discredit individuals rather than deal directly with issues.¹¹ Eager to preserve existing power structures, anti-democratic forces cynically appropriated and deployed democratic principles.

The cynical and celebratory sensibilities not only conflict with each other; they also muddy analysis of the country's politics, especially from the outside, because of how they are read. The tropes of the cynical sensibility are familiar to overseas audiences, in part because they developed in response to being watched from abroad. For the celebratory sensibility, the same is not true. Opponents of authoritarianism focused on mobilizing Koreans and did not pitch their stories for a non-Korean audience. They developed stories, tropes, and symbols that could be understood by Koreans, drawing especially on folk culture.¹² In the post-authoritarian era, the most serious political reporting and commenting remained oriented to a Korean audience. As a result of this divide, English-language analysis of South Korean politics tends to reflect, uncritically, the narratives of the cynical sensibility while often neglecting the celebration of politics.

Making Democracy Korean: Candlelight and the Celebratory Sensibility

The year 2016 is a good starting point for examining the entrance of the conflict between cynical and celebratory sensibilities into party and electoral politics. It was in that year that the most recent major episode in the battle over democracy in South Korea developed. Revelations of wrongdoing by then-president Park Geun-hye prompted a series of peaceful demonstrations that came to be known as the Candlelight Movement. Protesters gathered weekly in the hundreds of thousands to demand Park's resignation. While the movement focused on Park's violation of her duties as president, the calls and symbols of the movement resonated with larger and deeper problems in South Korean society. The movement was connected to critiques of the Park administration's handling of the Sewol ferry tragedy, which saw 304 passengers, mostly children, perish.¹³ It also occurred against the

¹¹ Research in other contexts has explained that the use of revelations and scandals in democratic politics disempowers voters relative to courts and media organizations, as the latter entities gain greater influence over which elected officials serve or stay in office. See Benjamin Ginsberg and Martin Shefter, *Politics by Other Means: The Declining Importance of Elections in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1990).

¹² Nancy Abelmann, *Echoes of the Past, Epics of Dissent: A South Korean Social Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Namhee Lee, *The Making of Minjung* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007).

¹³ Nan Kim, "The Color of Dissent and a Vital Politics of Fragility in South Korea," *Journal of Asian Studies* 77, no. 4 (2018): 971–990.

emergence of new frames to understand problems of inequality and barriers to social mobility.¹⁴

The Candlelight Movement has been discussed elsewhere,¹⁵ but for the purposes of this essay, a few points merit attention. The Candlelight Movement brought people together to deepen or maximize democracy. This movement put collective, political energy behind the project of de-authoritarianizing the state and making politics more responsive to the needs of a plural society. It drew on the political movements of the 1970s and 1980s, but also departed in important ways. Through a series of candlelight protests starting in the early 2000s, demonstrations shifted away from the hierarchical, ideological movements of the authoritarian era to more loosely tied, issue-specific demonstrations.¹⁶

The Candlelight Movement celebrated the political in a global context that was moving in another direction. Duterte had won power in the Philippines in 2016 and was using his office to carry out extra-legal murders. The United Kingdom had a surprising result in its Brexit vote. After the Candlelight Movement was well underway, the United States had its own startling election result. Popular engagement in democratic politics seemed to be driven by hate, misinformation, and manipulation. In South Korea, by contrast, citizens showed that mass political participation could be positive and nonviolent.

Against this global background, the movement created a confidence in Korean imaginings of democracy. While external reference points had always served as aspirations for democracy, those reference points no longer made sense. Democracy, as an aspiration, could become Korean. Civic groups held public seminars on how to reinvent democracy.¹⁷ Pluralism was a buzzword. Activists recognized that South Korea was a diverse society with groups presenting different vulnerabilities and needs. Since the current system was not addressing those, it was time to build alternatives.

The Candlelight Movement was political but not partisan. The major parties did not organize demonstrations. Minor parties like the Green Party,

¹⁴ Hyejin Kim, "Spoon Theory' and the Fall of a Populist Princess in Seoul," *Journal of Asian Studies* 74, no. 4 (2017): 839–849.

¹⁵ For example, Mi Park, *South Korea's Candlelight Revolution: The Power of Plaza Democracy* (Vancouver: Coal Harbour Publishing, 2018).

¹⁶ Social movements in South Korea have undergone changes from the authoritarian to the post-authoritarian period, as well as during the years since the democratic transition—all the while maintaining the celebration of the political. Discussion of the early shift focused on moving from oppositional politics to civil society. Candlelight protests first emerged in 2002, continued in 2004 with rallies opposing Roh Moo-hyun's impeachment, grew further with anti-beef import rallies in 2008, and reached their peak in the 2016–2017 demonstrations. On the decentralized nature of candlelight rallies before the 2016–2017 episode, see Jongyoung Kim, "The Networked Public, Multitentacled Participation, and Collaborative Expertise: US Beef and the Korean Candlelight Protest," *East Asian Science, Technology, and Society* 8, no. 2 (2014): 229–252.

¹⁷ Erik Mobrand, "Prosecution Reform and the Politics of Faking Democracy in South Korea," *Critical Asian Studies* 53, no. 2 (2021): 273.

which had no representation in the National Assembly, were visible, but they are on the margins of electoral politics.

In response to the candlelight gatherings, counter rallies formed in central Seoul. These drew on the old symbols of anti-communism to demand protection for Park Geun-hye and denounce those who sought her impeachment. These rallies were much smaller in scale but highly visible.¹⁸ The elderly made up a notable proportion of the flag-waving demonstrators, as did Christians. Park's critics, they claimed, were pro-Pyongyang enemies of the Republic of Korea. Such a claim, historically, was grounds for persecution under the National Security Law. It is not a simple, civic political view, but comes with a menacing reference to the state's coercive resources. Building on the cynical sensibility of the authoritarian era, participants also had symbols and stories intelligible to a foreign audience. They waved American flags alongside Korean ones. Christian crosses featured, while vendors also sold Israeli flags.¹⁹ The flag rallies showed that there was a social basis to which anti-democratic forces could appeal.

The flag rallies, which continued beyond Park's removal from power, have been offered as evidence that South Korean society is deeply divided.²⁰ The claim that South Korean society is polarized normalizes the hate and threats of the flag rallies. More importantly, it also mistakenly presents an equality between two sides that are imagined to exist. While the flag rallies denounced those they disagreed with as dangerous leftists, the candlelight rallies did not criticize the right or the left or argue that supporters of other views should be punished by the state or excluded from public discussion. The flag rallies and the candlelight rallies were not equivalents. If the suggestion, implicit or explicit, is that South Korea was somehow like the United States in its polarization, then the concept of polarization is stretched to the point of encompassing phenomena that have little in common with each other. That view reads partisanship or right-left ideology into political activities that should be understood in other terms. It looks for divisions in society that correspond to divisions in partisan politics and asserts that the latter must be a reflection of the former. South Korea has had a diversity of political perspectives, as any plural society should have, but that is not the same as deep division.

¹⁸ Myungji Yang, "Defending 'Liberal Democracy'? Why Older South Koreans Took to the Streets against the 2016–17 Candlelight Protests," *Mobilization* 25, no. 3 (2020): 365–382; Mobrand, "Prosecution Reform," 276–278.

¹⁹ Sarah Cho and Juheon Lee, "Waving Israeli Flags at Right-Wing Christian Rallies in South Korea," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 51, no. 3 (2020): 496–515.

²⁰ "Rallies Mirror Korea's Division," *Korea JoongAng Daily*, 1 March 2017, <https://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/2017/03/01/politics/Rallies-mirror-Koreas-division/3030468.html>.

From People's Politics to Party Politics

The Candlelight Movement started outside party politics but it created unprecedented connections between the formal and substantive realms of politics. Since the cause for mobilization was a suspected violation of the Constitution, the movement was, in some sense, a defence of the Constitution. According to scholar and senior public intellectual Paik Nak-chung, the movement was a “constitutional moment.”²¹ Paik points out that the movement linked ordinary Koreans to the Constitution in a way that had never been done before. The Republic of Korea Constitution, promulgated in 1948, was full of liberal language that spent decades as decoration rather than substance. The democratic transition of the late 1980s made that language matter much more than in the past but elite control over the constitutional reform of 1987–1988 meant that the Constitution still seemed distant from ordinary people. The movement changed that; the formal order was now useful to correcting a serious injustice. It put the formal and substantive orders closer together.

The Candlelight Movement then made inroads into party and electoral politics. The display of aspirations pushed politicians to respond, just as one would hope in a democracy. Protesters outside the National Assembly complex made themselves heard in December 2016, when legislators convened to vote on Park's impeachment. Once the Constitutional Court confirmed Park's removal from office in March 2017, a presidential election was scheduled for two months later. Party politicians scrambled to select candidates. Moon Jae-in, Park's main opponent in the 2012 election, was the frontrunner for the Democratic Party. Moon's campaign pledges focused on the calls of the movement, as he promised to carry its torch into government.²² He won the election in a landslide.

In these ways, the Candlelight Movement brought substantive and formal politics together. The interaction of those spheres is important to grasp. To say that the Candlelight Movement was a partisan affair, or simply a movement of the left, is to make an egregious mistake. To call it a movement of the “left” misses the organization of the movement and self-understanding of those involved. Party politics responded to the movement, not the other way around.

Under the Moon administration, efforts were made to continue the Candlelight Movement. Some efforts were small but meaningful, such as having a president who was visible and answered unscripted questions from the press. The administration prioritized issues that addressed the concerns

²¹ Nak-chung Paik, “South Korea's Candlelight Revolution and the Future of the Korean Peninsula,” *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 16, no. 23/3 (2018): 1–12.

²² For a list of Moon's pledges, see “What Moon Jae-in Pledged to Do as President,” *Korea Herald*, 11 May 2017, <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20170509000521>.

of the movement. Among the reforms made was a change in the maximum weekly working hours so as to free up more time for family and other endeavours.²³ The administration attempted constitutional reform but did not succeed, and then turned to election reform.

The push to embrace this agenda came not only from the Moon administration or the DP. Another actor was the Justice Party, a minor party in the legislature with roots in the labour movement. In relation to its tiny foothold in the National Assembly, the Justice Party had an outsized influence on public discussion in 2017 and 2018. The charisma of one of its senior leaders, No Hoech'an, who appeared regularly on popular Youtube programs, contributed to this influence. The Justice Party helped hold the DP to account. It pushed for election reforms that would give greater weight to proportional representation, a theme that fit with the Candlelight Movement's emphasis on recognizing society's pluralism. Eventually, an election reform was agreed upon and adopted. The reform, at least in the short term, had some unexpected consequences, including the formation of satellite parties by the major parties.²⁴ The Justice Party ended up losing out electorally after the reform, and then transforming almost beyond recognition in the subsequent few years. (Along the way, the party lost No Hoech'an to death by suicide while under pressure from investigations based on false accusations.)

In 2020, the DP turned even more to the celebratory sensibility. The party took 180 of 300 seats. The Candlelight Movement's pressure on party politics had reached its peak.

Outside of party politics, the celebration of the political continued. Veteran podcast journalist Kim Ŏjun brought his political discussion program to the airwaves on the radio station TBS. With Seoul's buses often tuned to that channel, Kim's program reached morning commuters. Kim's show and those of other podcasters reached huge audiences and found the right mix of entertainment and engagement to keep people listening.²⁵ Legislators took the opportunities to join those programs, giving citizens chances to hear dissection of the latest legislative bill. The level of engagement in politics, on a mass scale, was high.

²³ Sotaro Suzuki, "South Korea Tackles Workaholic Culture with New Labor Law," *Nikkei Asia*, 6 July 2018, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Economy/South-Korea-tackles-workaholic-culture-with-new-labor-law>.

²⁴ Youngmi Kim, "Evolution of political parties and the party system in South Korea," in *The Routledge Handbook of Contemporary South Korea*, edited by Sojin Lim and Niki J. P. Alsford (London: Routledge, 2021): 65–81.

²⁵ On Kim's rise to prominence, see the lecture by Youngju Ryu, "How a Podcast Started a Revolution: New Media and Electoral Politics in South Korea," presentation at the University of Michigan, available online at <https://ii.umich.edu/ncks/news-events/events/conferences-symposia/hallyu-2-0-the-korean-wave-in-the-age-of-social-media/hallyu-program/hallyu-2-0-youngju-ryu.html>.

Anti-democratic forces, including both politicians and flag-waving demonstrators, criticized public figures who were prominent in democratic discussion. The expression of those criticisms might be taken as evidence that the post-Candlelight Movement celebration of politics was just one viewpoint and not broadly shared. To treat that celebration as simply one side of partisan politics not only misrepresents it but also dismisses the energy people put into critical democratic discussion. All the effort that goes into debating and scrutinizing public affairs is treated as insignificant by saying all sides are equally valid.

None of this is to say that the Moon administration perfectly embodied or reflected or consistently championed the Candlelight Movement. Moon had multiple constituencies and considerations. The Candlelight Movement was but one, though an important one. And that is what one hopes for in a democracy—that elected officials feel pressure to respond to mass demands. This position does not preclude Moon from taking actions that are less in keeping with the Candlelight Movement. To suggest that Moon failed to live up to the expectations he set is to engage in punditry, not political analysis.

In late 2021, there was an open field for the DP nomination. The candidate selection process was relatively smooth and participatory, especially given the uneven record of candidate selection politics in the major parties.²⁶ Lee Jae-myung, who has a law background, had gained attention while serving as mayor of Söngnam, in the capital region. He had implemented local economic stimulus and redistribution measures that had proved popular. He was then elected governor of the province surrounding Seoul, where he made similar policies. It is unusual that a politician who has not served in the National Assembly would become a leading presidential candidate. Lee's closest contender was the established DP figure and former prime minister, Lee Nakyön. The latter Lee, who had advocated a year earlier for the release of Park Geun-hye, would have been a candidate closer to the political establishment and further from the Candlelight Movement. In the end, the DP fielded a candidate who seemed to respond more to the constituency for deepening democracy.

The Cynical Backlash

The stories of the Yoon candidacy and the response among legislators in Park's party to their president's fall belong to the same narrative. Yoon's ascent can be first positioned against the crumbling of Park's party. In 2017, the party now known as the PPP was in tatters. Park had an approval rating

²⁶ On candidate selection politics in the earlier years of South Korea's democracy, see Erik Mobrand, *Top-Down Democracy in South Korea* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019), chapter 3.

of 4 percent at one point²⁷—a moment that felt historic. It not only brought her down; it crushed the narrative of her father, Park Chung-hee, and made it impossible to both celebrate Korean democracy and laud her father as the country's modernizer.

The party split. A few wanted to stay loyal to Park; others looked for alternative paths. One option was to embrace a free market ideology and build an identity and constituency around that principle. It seemed possible that the whole party landscape might change. Since the PPP identity no longer made sense, politicians would have had to find a new basis for competing. A new cleavage might have emerged in party politics.

Instead, something else happened. The anti-democratic forces recomposed themselves and sought opportunities to halt the progress of the push for deeper democratization. The key moment came in the autumn of 2019. The Moon administration moved forward with one of its initiatives to rein in elite corruption and privilege by reforming the prosecutorial service. The reasoning was that prosecutors used their discretion to allow selective collusion between business, state, and politics. The prosecutorial service, created during the Park Chung-hee period, stood as a legacy of authoritarianism. Prosecutors were considered tools for controlling society, not simply for upholding the law. The prosecutor's office had not undergone systematic reform since the authoritarian era.²⁸ It had amassed a long list of powers, including both the powers to initiate investigations and to investigate. In the context of this post-authoritarian society, these features made the prosecutor's office a major force in setting agendas. Prosecutors could create scandals or withhold knowledge of wrongdoing.

In August 2019, Moon appointed a criminal law specialist, Cho Kuk, to head the justice ministry and initiate reforms of the prosecutorial authority. At this moment, the prosecutor's office, together with PPP legislators, fought back. Legislators refused to attend the screening hearing for Cho, who resorted to holding his own press conference over eight hours in order to make himself available for media questions.²⁹ The prosecutorial service launched an investigation into Cho and his family. He and his wife were accused of using their privileges (as university professors) to unfairly help their children. Cho was appointed as justice minister, but the allegations impeded progress on the reform program.

²⁷ "Choi-gate: South Korean president's approval rating tanks at 4%," *The Guardian*, 25 November 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/25/choi-gate-south-korean-presidents-approval-rating-tanks-at-4>.

²⁸ Cho Hyŏnyŏn, "Han'guk ūi kwŏllyŏkhyŏng chŏngch'i pup'ae: T'ŭksŏng kwa haebŏp t'amsaek" [Political corruption by the powerful in South Korea: Characteristics and solutions] *Tongbuga yŏn'gu* 16 (2011): 49–51.

²⁹ "Cho chajŏng nŏmgyŏ '8 sigan 20 pun kkŭtt chang hoegyŏn ..." [Cho past midnight, 'a long event lasting eight hours and twenty minutes ...'], *Yonhap News*, 3 September 2019, <https://www.yna.co.kr/view/AKR20190902151453001?input=1179m>.

The issue shook society. Demonstrators turned up in the streets. As in the Candlelight Movement rallies of three years before, mass peaceful demonstrations happened every Saturday evening that autumn. They called for the protection of Cho and were infused with the same celebratory sensibility as the Candlelight Movement. Participants understood that the matter related to justice and democracy.

The episode cooled down when, after six weeks, Cho resigned. Reforms to the prosecutor's office were eventually enacted, albeit in a somewhat watered-down form. What had happened was an attempt to subvert accountable power. It was done in the most cynical way: the move obstructed a mission to make society more fair by accusing an individual of being unfair.³⁰

Through the "Cho Kuk incident," as the print media called it, anti-democratic forces created a narrative about DP politics. President Moon, so the story went, was no different from his predecessor or any other power-hungry president. Once in office, he engaged in the same corrupt practices, such as refusing to allow his appointee to be properly investigated and vindictively lashing out at public servants appointed by presidents before him. The program to "remove evils" (*chōkpye ch'ōngsan*) showed, so the argument went, that Moon was simply out for revenge.³¹ The message, the epitome of cynicism, was that there is no reason to believe in politics because all politicians lie and cheat.

The strategy in building this narrative was to create equivalencies between different things and then mimic the opponents. If Moon and his allies had denounced authoritarianism, then anti-democratic forces would label Moon authoritarian. If removal of evils was the agenda of the day, then that campaign could be targeted back at Moon. In these classic cynical moves, the framers of this narrative dumbed down politics to its basest elements and set aside all questions of the substance of political programs.

There are real differences in political programs, and that point can be made without claiming Moon or any DP representative was a saint. In responding to the aspirations of the Candlelight Movement, the Moon administration sought to de-authoritarianize the state. That task would involve reorganizing parts of the state and shuffling personnel so as to pursue the project Moon was elected to implement. The refrain of "removing evils" captured an aspect of an ambitious and difficult program. Undertaking that program is in no way the same as using office to take revenge against opponents. This point does not require insisting Moon and his colleagues were blameless. It does not even require claiming that the Moon administration consistently pursued the project of de-authoritarianization and democratic deepening. In the case of prosecution reform, the

³⁰ On the prosecution reform episode, see Moberand, "Prosecution Reform."

³¹ On Moon's "aggressive and illiberal measures," see Gi-Wook Shin, "South Korea's Democratic Decay," *Journal of Democracy* 31, no. 3 (2020): 101.

administration's aims were aligned with that project. The cynical backlash sought to block it.

Unfortunately, even external analyses of South Korea's politics have often failed to call out these claims to equivalencies. A common assertion holds that presidents persecute those who came before them. The evidence for this is the dismal record of post-presidential life since the 1990s. The problem with this claim is that not all presidents are the same. Lee Myung-bak embezzled vast sums of money from the state; Park Geun-hye's misuse of power is well documented. Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo, who never faced the punishments delivered by courts, were responsible for violence against citizens at Kwangju in 1980 and committed embezzlement on an extraordinary scale. Roh Moo-hyun, who died by suicide, was investigated over the gift of a watch; it was later revealed that this claim was fabricated in an attempt by his successor to work with prosecutors to harm him.³² There are no parallels to be drawn between Roh Moo-hyun's case and these others. To suggest that all presidents are equally corrupt or that the investigation into Roh was the same as investigations into his two successors is to make a mockery of law, public office, and democracy. The fallacy in claims about presidential revenge is finding an excessively simple explanation for something that is more complex. It also dovetails perfectly with the cynical viewpoint on democracy.

The framing of the prosecution reform episode consolidated a second layer in the cynicism espoused by the anti-democrats. As in the first layer, which involved the mobilization of anti-communist hate against opponents who were clearly not communist, the frame they developed elided substantive engagement with the program of their opponents in order to undermine it.

The face of this resistance against accountable authority was the prosecutor general. He put himself in front of the cameras and was the most prominent figure in those tumultuous months. In essence, he rebelled against the mission of the Candlelight Movement and the Moon administration. The old forces that continue to run Korean society rallied around him. The name of that prosecutor general was, of course, Yoon Suk-yeol.

The 2022 presidential election, then, was about continuing the mission of the Candlelight Movement versus obstructing its progress, about celebrating the political versus cynically impeding democracy. The election was not simply the DP versus the PPP, nor the ruling party versus the opposition, nor right versus left. Yoon represented a particular version of what the PPP might be, just as Donald Trump was a version—and not a consensus version—of what the Republican Party might be. Lee, similarly,

³² Yu Chiman, "Kim Kyōngjun, '2008-yōn susa tangsi "mokp'yo nūn No Muhyōn" irago haetta'" [Kim Kyōngjun, 'They said that "Roh Moo-hyun was the target" during the investigation in 2008'], *Sisa chōnōl*, 31 July 2017, <https://www.sisajournal.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=170641>.

was not the only or main voice in the DP. The candidates were embedded in deeper struggles in Korean society.

The Contest: Cynicism and Mainstreaming Hate

In 2019, Yoon had not yet entered politics. He had helped create a powerful story that might work in politics, at least for a party that had collapsed and was desperate. If that move was to succeed, the PPP would need to find new supporters who bought into the frame. For a party increasingly reliant on the elderly, they turned to an unlikely source: youth.

Young people, including children, had featured prominently in the Candlelight Movement. These youth were trying to figure out how society could be made just. The old formula was that if you studied hard, you could surpass the lifestyle of your parents. That formula justified a lot of struggle and suffering, as children were constantly shuttled from one private tuition centre to the next and told that if they worked hard, results would go their way. That formula cracked. More and more people found that they could not achieve what their parents had, let alone surpass their lifestyle. Youth unemployment reached 10 percent in early 2021,³³ and people struggled to find partners and affordable homes. Beyond the objective level of inequality or the cost of living, what was key was the imagination or interpretation of the problems. Obstacles to building a good life appeared in a society where there was a formula that linked work, education, and parenting to certain outcomes; the system was now broken, and people knew it.

While the Candlelight Movement represented a positive re-imagining of society, on the fringes other imaginations were being constructed. Far-right groups, mostly comprised of young men, espoused anti-feminist ideologies. They blamed women for taking their jobs. They complained that the benefits of compulsory military service were dwindling. They saw the government as giving unnecessary protection to women, who could not only compete with them, but beat them, in the job market. Yet until 2020, these groups were on the margins.³⁴

Grievances raised by far-right groups surfaced more often in the last two years of the Moon administration. The voices became louder in response to specific problems. A crucial one was the skyrocketing prices of residential property, especially in Seoul. The Moon administration claimed to serve ordinary people, and yet young people found themselves only in more difficult circumstances.

The PPP accused the Moon administration of hypocrisy on this issue,

³³ See government statistics at http://www.index.go.kr/potal/main/EachDtlPageDetail.do?idx_cd=1063.

³⁴ S. Nathan Park, "Why So Many Men in South Korea Hate Feminism," *Foreign Policy*, 23 June 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/06/23/young-south-korean-men-hate-liberals-feminists/>.

among others, following the frame constructed during the prosecution reform episode of 2019. In April 2021, by-elections for the mayors of the two biggest cities were held. The PPP mobilized around blaming the DP administration and won those elections by comfortable margins.³⁵ The cynical sensibility had busted its way back into the electoral sphere.

The PPP took another gamble that summer. It embraced the far-right, anti-feminist movement. The move was high risk, because the ideas championed by these groups run counter to what is publicly appropriate. The PPP selected Yi Chun-sök, a man in his thirties, to head the party.³⁶ Yi was known as a spokesperson for the anti-feminist movement, and appeared regularly on a range of media programs. Yi opined that young men were being forgotten in a society focused excessively on women's vulnerability.³⁷ He made it his mission to right that alleged wrong. Through Yi, the PPP sought to win the support of young men in their twenties by mainstreaming anti-feminist hate, as Hannah June Kim and Chungjae Lee explain in their paper in this volume.³⁸ This demonization of feminism was new, even in a society with serious problems of gender inequality. The PPP and the media took fringe ideas and actively normalized them to mobilize a constituency.

Even then, the PPP might not have selected Yoon as their nominee in the 2022 presidential election. Leading contenders within the PPP could not agree on the candidate selection process, delaying the confirmation of a candidate. The PPP had few senior members who could find the breadth of support needed to win a presidential election. Yoon's confirmation as candidate brought the obstruction of Candlelight Movement-inspired reform to the centre of the PPP's presidential bid. With Yoon as candidate, the anti-democrats mobilized three layers of cynicism: anti-communist hate, obstruction of the Candlelight Movement project, and demonization of women.

Yoon and the PPP dug in with the cynical approach. To the delight of the media, they created scandal around Lee Jae-myung. They drew from the same playbook used when fighting former justice minister Cho Kuk. The media seized on trumped-up allegations of wrongdoing in connection with a land deal. Lee confidently answered all questions, and investigations, including by independent journalists, found scant evidence of corruption and instead revealed that Lee had shrewdly helped the city he governed. Yet

³⁵ Choe Sang-Hun, "Election Rout Signals a Shift in South Korea's Political Scene," *The New York Times*, 7 April 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/07/world/asia/korea-mayor-election-moon-oh-sehoon.html>.

³⁶ Mitch Shin, "Can a 36-Year-Old Leader Transform South Korea's Conservative Party?" *The Diplomat*, 14 July 2021, <https://thediplomat.com/2021/07/can-a-36-year-old-leader-transform-south-koreas-conservative-party/>.

³⁷ "Chölmön Yi Chunsük üi panp'eminijüm" [The antifeminism of the young Yi Chunsök], *Han'guk ilbo*, 12 April 2021, <https://www.hankookilbo.com/News/Read/A2021041211050000405>.

³⁸ Hannah June Kim and Chungjae Lee, "The 2022 South Korean Presidential Election and the Gender Divide among Youth," *Pacific Affairs*, this issue.

for cynics, the beauty of the politics of scandal is that the accusation is the only thing that matters.

The country's politics are not as disastrous as local print media and foreign news reports suggest. Scandal is too often read as evidence that all politicians are enormously corrupt, but the relationship between scandal and political engagement is more complex. The appearance of scandal is the effect of an open media landscape, politicized media groups with dubious editorial standards, and opportunistic anti-democratic forces. The presentation of politics as mudslinging avoids the crucial work of distinguishing seriously compromised public servants from cynical efforts at distraction. The difficulty of that work creates opportunity for cynics. Blurring the story makes all politics look bad, but that is a bid for power and not a description of reality. In scandal-focused accounts, the celebration of the political is either missed altogether or inaccurately dismissed as partisan or leftist.

Noting that the allegations against Lee were made for cynical purposes is not to claim that Lee was a perfect candidate. He had a criminal record and received understandable criticism for serving as a defence lawyer in the case of his nephew, who had viciously attacked and murdered his ex-girlfriend and her mother, and left her father hospitalized for weeks.³⁹ It goes without saying that this past is not an admirable one for a president. But neither is an election a search for the messiah. The tactic of pointing to scandal was an effort to distract people from examining competing proposals for the use of governmental power. In this election, there was a gulf separating what the two main contenders represented for the country's future. The anti-democrats disguised that difference.

Yoon and the PPP found a formula, one with a history, and they applied it repeatedly. Deploying tropes of cynicism, they attacked politics itself. They related their story to the shared material circumstances of specific social groups, encouraging them to adopt a cynical imaginary to make sense of their plight. A certain portion of Yoon supporters, especially among those in their twenties, had voted for Moon in 2017, but claimed Moon let them down. The analysis here does not in any way deny that individual voters might have thought in these terms. Linking those sentiments to voting for Yoon gets back to the question of frames. Yoon and the PPP offered a frame, based on cynicism and hate, for courting their support. The result was that Yoon cobbled together an alliance of older voters and young men on the basis of three layers of hate and cynicism.

³⁹ Se-Woong Koo, "Korea's Next President: 'Monster' or 'Vegetable'?" *Korea Expose*, 23 February 2022, <https://koreaxpose.com/koreas-choice-for-president-monster-or-vegetable/>.

Conclusion

Politically engaged political scientists have made a cottage industry of using scholarly framing to laud or criticize an administration. Concepts of democratic consolidation and quality of democracy are regularly deployed for this purpose, alongside only the convenient evidence. A series of articles on South Korea uses those concepts as barely concealed codes for expressing partisan positions.⁴⁰ This is not one of those articles. Concluding that South Korea has, on aggregate, become more or less democratic tells us really very little. Such conclusions are also suspect. It is far more useful to know the forms and techniques of politics that maximize or minimize democracy's potential.

In a sense, the 2022 presidential election worked as one would hope a democratic election would: it absorbed social struggle, giving voters a real choice, and it forced the powerful to take risks in order to win a popular vote. The risks that were chosen are unsavoury and many are surprised they paid off. Nonetheless, that Yoon and the forces he represents had to compete to gain power—and only barely managed to do so—is an achievement of democracy.

The election also showcases a major problem of democracy in South Korea and beyond. Public discussion of democratic politics follows narratives that miss the most hopeful aspects of democracy, whatever the location. In South Korea, lax editorial standards and shoddy reporting turn scandal into a weapon for democratic cynics to fight their opponents and harm democracy. Foreign journalists, oblivious to the politics they engage, repeat what appears in the local press, justifying what they do by saying that the democratic purpose of the fourth estate is to dig up dirt on politicians. The trope of the corrupt politician is all too easy. Academic analyses treat all parties and politicians as if they were the same, creating diagnoses that are as simple for international audiences to grasp as they are blind to whole spheres of political activity and engagement. These habits hurt both democracy and the study of it.

If democracy anywhere is to improve, it would help to move beyond the tropes that play to democratic cynicism. Just because the audience understands the frame readily does not mean the story is right. We need journalists and political scientists who look for new stories instead of telling the familiar ones. Journalists can do more for democracy than muckrake. Political scientists can do more than retreat into a supposedly neutral relativism, insensitive to the substance of contention and oblivious to the theatre of politics. We need more political, power-sensitive modes of analyzing

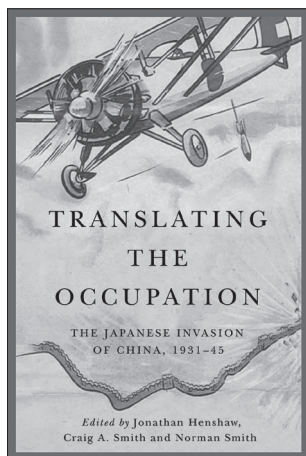
⁴⁰ Hyug Baeg Im, "Faltering Democratic Consolidation in South Korea: Democracy at the End of the 'Three Kims' Era," *Democratization* 11, no. 5 (2004): 179–198; Chaibong Hahm, "Korea's Miraculous Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 19, no. 3 (2008): 128–142; Shin, *Decay*; Andrew Yeo, "Has South Korean Democracy Hit a Glass Ceiling? Institutional-Cultural Factors and Limits to Democratic Progress," *Asian Politics & Policy* 12 (2020): 539–558.

democracy. What we should be learning from South Korea is to celebrate politics. That sensibility brings out the best in democracy. The embrace of the political should give us great optimism for democracy at a time when challenges to it can be found everywhere.

*RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, USA,
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P E R S P E C T I V E

The 2022 South Korean Presidential Election and the Gender Divide among the Youth

Hannah June Kim and Chungjae Lee

ABSTRACT

The 2022 South Korean presidential election was the country's most closely contested election since a democratic direct electoral system was initiated in 1987, with less than a 1 percent difference separating the two major candidates among 34 million votes cast. Despite some parallels with and continuities from previous elections, the 2022 election saw new voting alignments emerge based on one topic: gender equality. In this essay, we explain how and why gender became such a prominent issue during the 2022 election campaign, and how this affected voting patterns, especially among male and female voters in their twenties and thirties. Specifically, we argue that gendered voter behaviour during the election arose from rising anti-feminist sentiments among young men, and that the two main presidential candidates politicized the issue to maximize support from this group. This in turn triggered the consolidation of a young female voting bloc. Using an original survey conducted in January 2022 with an approximate nationally representative sample of 1,017 respondents, we identify two possible causes of rising anti-feminist sentiments among young men: the belief that women receive preferential treatment in employment opportunities and mandatory military service for men. In addition, through an embedded survey experiment run before the election, we proposed that political candidates with pro-gender messages would be less likely to receive support from young men, while candidates with anti-gender messages would be likely to receive more support; these projections were confirmed by the actual voting breakdowns of the recent election. The results suggest that the new administration must handle gender issues with extreme care to ensure that divergent perceptions of the gender divide do not become further polarized over the next few years, since such a development could very well fuel democratic deconsolidation in South Korea.

Keywords: Korean politics, gender, anti-feminism, public opinion, elections

DOI: 10.5509/2022952285

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Introduction

The 2022 South Korean presidential election was held with Yoon Seok-yeol, a political novice with less than a year of political experience, winning against Lee Jae-myung, a seasoned politician with more than 15 years of experience in *realpolitik*. Despite Lee quickly conceding defeat, the election was the most closely contested in the country's history since a democratic direct electoral system was initiated in 1987. The narrowest margin of victory, 0.7 percent, unambiguously exhibits clear signs of division and growing polarization among the public. Indeed, the new administration will be at the helm of a divided nation, in which nearly half the population voted against the party.

Some parts of this election were relatively predictable, as they paralleled continuing issues from previous elections. Old political dynamics such as voter turnout based on regional identity politics, generation gaps, political loyalties, and views on North Korea played a significant role. However, there were some new factors at play that made this election distinct. In particular, the issue of gender equality gained prominence during the election campaigns, and new voting alignments emerged based on this topic. Both candidates from the conservative right and the progressive left capitalized on gender issues and weaponized the dissent surrounding the already contested meaning of gender equality in Korea. Korean presidential history has never before seen mainstream candidates use gender politics to incite division between men and women.

Why was gender equality such a contentious topic in this election? In this study, we examine this question and discuss the growing gender divide in South Korea (hereafter Korea). We explain how and why gender equality became a prominent issue during the election campaigns, and how such a phenomenon affected voting patterns, especially among young male and female voters in their twenties and thirties. We argue that this gender divide has been in part driven by rising anti-feminist sentiments among young Korean men, which in turn has triggered the consolidation of a young female voting bloc. Using an original survey data set we conducted in January 2022 with an approximately nationally representative sample of 1,017 respondents, we identify two possible causes of rising anti-feminist sentiments among young men: the belief that women receive preferential treatment in employment opportunities and the mandatory military service for men. In addition, through an embedded survey experiment run before the election, we proposed that political candidates with pro-gender messages would be less likely to receive support from young men while candidates with anti-gender messages would be more likely to receive support; these projections

Acknowledgement: We would like to thank the editor of *Pacific Affairs* for his helpful comments and feedback.

were confirmed by the actual voting breakdowns of the recent election. The results suggest that the new administration must handle gender issues with extreme care to ensure that divergent perceptions of the gender divide do not become even more polarized over the next few years, since such a development could very well fuel democratic deconsolidation in Korea.

This study makes two major contributions. First, it brings to light the prominent issue of the rapidly growing gender divide in Korea and how the 2022 presidential election may have politicized gender, further inciting division between young men and women. Second, it puts forth and empirically tests growing anti-feminist sentiments in Korea and the implications on the incoming administration as well as the future of the country's democratic progress. While countless outlets have discussed this phenomenon, none have empirically examined it in the manner we propose here.

Divided Youth During the Election

Arguably, Yoon Seok-yeol's success in the recent election, and even the People Power Party's (PPP) win in the by-election in Seoul and Busan last year, came in part from young voters' increasing dissatisfaction with Moon Jae-in's (hereafter Moon) administration. In the presidential election of 2017 following the impeachment of Park Geun-hye, more than 50 percent of the youth population, i.e., young Koreans in their twenties and thirties, voted for Moon. This statistic differed significantly from the voting results of people in their fifties and sixties, where support hovered around only 30 percent. Young people initially placed high hopes on the Moon administration and had faith in Moon's promise to "eradicate unfair privileges and foul play, respect principles and common sense, guarantee fair opportunities for everyone and address discrimination and disparities."¹ Their support was clearly reflected in the high approval ratings during the early years of the administration. However, youth gradually moved away from the administration following a number of scandals, including the sexual harassment case of former Seoul mayor Park Won-soon and the college admission forgery case of the Cho Kuk family. Criticizing the Democratic Party's (DP) alleged elitism, hypocrisy, and abuse of power, this generation, which had voted for the DP consecutively in the 2012 and 2017 presidential elections, developed into a swing block of voters that effectively worked as the decisive force in the recent election. Both Yoon Seok-yeol (hereafter Yoon) and Lee Jae-myung (hereafter Lee) saw the danger of losing this group and actively sought their support by discussing a variety of issues related to their immediate concerns.

Young voters were important to both Yoon and Lee during this election

¹ The Government of the Republic of Korea, *Five-year Plan for the Administration of State Affairs* (Seoul: The Government of the Republic of Korea, 2017), 5.

for at least two reasons. For one, they made up a third of the entire vote, consisting of 14.1 million of the voting population, whereas 16.8 million voters came from those aged 40 to 59 and 12.2 million from those 60 and older.² As such, this swing block of voters would have been most likely to tip the balance of the election. Second, compared to the older generations, they appeared much more flexible with regard to party and regional identification, as they did not appear committed to traditional divides and were less likely to follow the logic of Korean regionalism that is often defined by Honam, a region coinciding with Jeolla Province, for the DP and Yeongnam, a region that coincides with the former Gyeongsang Province, for the PPP. According to a survey conducted in Honam prior to the election, for instance, Yoon secured 46.7 percent of support from men in their twenties living in the region, which was almost double that of Lee's 28.6 percent.³ Indeed, the ideological identity of the young voters is difficult to define as either liberal or conservative, since they often lean conservative on issues related to security and lean liberal on economic policies.⁴ On the one hand, they are more likely to display anti-Chinese sentiments than older voters, and their antagonisms towards Japan and North Korea are also relatively high.⁵ On the other hand, they are similarly jaded in their views on perceived elite-level corruption and frustrated with economic issues such as soaring housing prices, difficult loan opportunities, minimum wage growth, and increasing youth unemployment within Korea.

Yet despite their convergence on these issues, young voters remained starkly divided on the issue of gender. Gender became a salient issue during the election campaigns when both Yoon and Lee made contentious remarks on gender equality in South Korea. During his campaign, for instance, Yoon denounced the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (Yeoseonggajokbu),⁶ contending that "there is no structural gender discrimination in Korea" and

² Se-eun Gong, "Millennial and Gen Z views of South Korea's generation in power shape an election," *NPR*, 7 March 2022.

³ Son Ho-cheol, "Jiyeokjuui-neun payeolhaneunga" [Is regionalism falling apart?], *Kyunghyang sinmun*, 15 February 2022.

⁴ Choe Jong-suk, "'20dae namseong hyeonsang' dasi bogi 20daewa 3040sedae-ui inyeoms eonghyang-gwa jendeouising bigyo-reul jungsimeuro" [Re-examining 'the phenomenon of 20s male': focused on the ideological orientation and gender consciousness of people in their 20s, 30s, 40s], *Gyeongje-wa sahoe* 124, no. 1 (2020), 218.

⁵ Gi-wook Shin, Haley M. Gordon, and Hannah June Kim, "South Korea Votes, Beijing Watches," *American Purpose*, 2 March 2022. It is also worth pointing out that the state education system and its related institutions are no longer the sole producer of these antagonistic sentiments in the context of contemporary Korea. On this, see Jeongsuk Joo, "Transnationalization of Korean Popular Culture and the Rise of 'Pop Nationalism' in Korea," *The Journal of Popular Culture* 44 (2011): 489–504; Emma Campbell, *South Korea's New Nationalism: The End of "One Korea"?* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2016); Chung-jae Lee and Jerry Won Lee, "Translational Nation: Politics and Re-presentation at the Independence Hall of Korea," *Positions* 30, no. 1 (2022): 85–100.

⁶ Korean terms have been romanized in accordance with the revised romanization system.

that discrimination against women is a “relic of the past.”⁷ Yoon did initially attempt to gain some support from young female voters by recruiting Shin ji-ye, a rising feminist politician, but factionalism within the PPP resulted in failure to keep her as a member of the party. Unable to attract young female voters, Yoon ultimately focused on appealing to young male supporters throughout the later course of his campaign.

Lee likewise discussed gender equality from the perspective of the young male population in the early stage of his campaign. He argued that the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family should drop the word “women” from the official Korean language title and shared several anti-feminist posts on his social media accounts, justifying that it was necessary to listen to the voice of young men. Still, he was unable to gain substantial support from this subgroup, since they had already been won over by Yoon’s relatively stauncher anti-feminist position. Lee eventually altered his campaign strategy and focused on young female voters near the end of his campaign by appearing on *.face*, a YouTube platform on feminism, and celebrating International Women’s Day on March 8, a day before the election on March 9.

While Lee ultimately attracted more young female voters than Yoon did, this support did not necessarily come from deep loyalty but mostly out of practicality and an attempt to avoid empowering the anti-feminist movement. In fact, prior to Lee’s more explicit alliance with this demographic, the majority of young women felt marginalized during the campaigns and felt as though their voices were merely appropriated for political point-scoring from both major parties. Even after Lee began to champion women’s rights, many felt he did too little too late.⁸

While the third party candidate Sim Sang-jung (hereafter Sim) enjoyed a relatively solid support base from young women, many voted in favour of Lee for two reasons. For one, Korea uses a first-past-the-post election model with a strong two-party system, and every president has come from that duopoly, indicating that the chances of Sim winning were slim. Sim did vow to put an end to the two-party system, but ultimately was unable to deliver on her promise. Second, Sim and the Justice Party have not been able to fully convince voters that they are ready to bring about a new democracy in Korea, one that is substantially different from the DP’s model. In the 2020 general election, the Justice Party secured only one electorate seat out of 253. For many practical voters, this meant that the party was not prepared to run the country on its own even if Sim had been elected. Thus, many viewed Sim’s party as “a coalition partner of the Democratic Party, rather

⁷ Yun Ji-na, “Seongpyeongdeung mutja seongbeomjoe munjero dapbyeonhan Yoon ‘yangseong pyeongdeung munjero jeopgeun andwae’” [Yoon answered in terms of sex crimes when asked about gender equality, ‘It is not about gender equality,’ Yoon said], *Nocut News*, 10 February 2022.

⁸ Bak Hong-du, “Lee Jaemyeong ‘idaenamppun anira idaenyeo-ege do jjeoljjeol maenda’” [Lee Jae-myung said ‘I am trying to appeal to both men and women in their twenties’], *Kyunghyang sinmun*, 19 January 2022.

than a more reform-oriented left-wing alternative.”⁹ Given the reality that Sim was unlikely to win and the anti-feminist movement was gaining momentum, young women voters resorted to voting for the Justice Party’s “coalition partner” and for the candidate who showed relatively more support for women’s rights, albeit near the end of the campaign.

Seen against this backdrop, the election outcomes are not surprising: 58.7 percent of “*idaenam*,” or men in their twenties, voted for Yoon while only 36.3 percent voted for Lee. In the same vein, 58 percent of “*idaenyeo*,” or women in their twenties, opted for Lee, and 33.8 percent for Yoon. A similar trend was noticeable with young voters in their thirties, but with a smaller margin. Compared to the previous three presidential elections, the gender divide was more than evident.¹⁰

The Push For, and Backlash Against, Gender Equality

Existing studies show that political leaders often attempt to appeal to female voters and campaign for gender equality measures in developed post-industrial countries, such as the United States and Japan, where politicians often link gender equality to security and economic prosperity to express their support for women’s rights.¹¹ These patterns, however, fall short in their explanatory power insofar as the recent election in Korea seems to have focused on the backlash movement against gender equality, women’s rights, and feminism.

According to Jane Mansfield and Shauna L. Shames, backlash, particularly in the context of gender, consists of three elements: conservative reactions to progressive change, coercive power, and the reinstatement of lost power.¹² There is a wealth of literature that describes backlash against gender equality through these measures in areas including the Western world, such as the United States,¹³ various parts of Europe,¹⁴ and even international organizations

⁹ “‘Sexism exists’: South Korean feminist presidential candidate’s lonely crusade,” *Japan Times*, 8 March 2022.

¹⁰ Jeong Han-ul, “Yeoseong-ui jeongchi chamyeo-e daehan ohaewa jinsil” [Truth and misunderstanding of women’s participation in politics], *Hankook ilbo*, 14 June 2021.

¹¹ Michael L. Ferguson and Lori Jo Marso, *W stands for women: How the George W. Bush presidency shaped a new politics of gender* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007); Emma Dalton, “Womenomics, ‘equality’ and Abe’s neo-liberal strategy to make Japanese women shine,” *Social Science Japan Journal* 20, no. 1 (2017): 95–105.

¹² Jane Mansbridge and Shauna L. Shames, “Toward a theory of backlash: Dynamic resistance and the central role of power,” *Politics & Gender* 4, no. 4 (2008): 623–634.

¹³ Kira Sanbonmatsu, “Gender backlash in American politics?” *Politics & Gender* 4, no. 4 (2008): 634–642.

¹⁴ Eszter Kováts, “The emergence of powerful anti-gender movements in Europe and the crisis of liberal democracy,” in *Gender and far right politics in Europe*, eds. Michaela Köttig et al. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan Cham), 175–189; Isabelle Hertner, “Gendering European politics: A story of Progress and Backlash,” *Journal of European Integration* 43, no. 4 (2021): 511–517; Conny Roggeband and Doutje Lettinga, “In defence of gender equality? Comparing the political debates about headscarves and honor-related crimes in France and the Netherlands,” *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 23, no. 2 (2016): 239–262.

such as the United Nations.¹⁵ This backlash is even more intense in the non-Western world, such as predominantly Muslim areas¹⁶ as well as countries in Africa such as Zimbabwe,¹⁷ and various parts of Latin America.¹⁸ That said, backlash against gender equality in Korea differs from these cases both in terms of perception and action in two ways. For one, those involved in the backlash movement against gender equality in Korea are not using coercion to fight against gender equality, since their resentment is expressed through political activity such as voting and finding platforms to address their concerns. Nor are they expecting the reinstatement of lost power or hoping to return to a prior social condition, since this group mostly consists of young men who never had a political or economic platform to begin with, unlike older generations of men.

Second, most countries struggling with gender inequality often deal with culturally entrenched barriers that prevent progress among older generations,¹⁹ yet backlash in Korea diverges from this trend insofar as its recent surge does not pertain to either religionism or traditionalism. Rather this backlash is driven by the young male population that is presumably accustomed to liberal values and whose attitudes towards, and understanding of, feminism belies their adherence to gender equality. From their perspective, while feminism refers to the idea of promoting only women's fundamental rights, gender equality denotes the idea of protecting both men's and women's rights.²⁰ They treat feminism synonymously with anti-gender equality because they believe that it prioritizes the rights of women over men. Accordingly, they self-identify as victims of the patriarchal past, like their female counterparts, and are not willing to accept that the creation of a gender-equal community must begin with supporting women who have been marginalized throughout the nation's history.

Indeed, Korea continues to be one of the most gender-unequal countries in the developed world. Korea has one of the highest gender wage gaps among the OECD countries,²¹ with a 31.5 percent gap in 2020, and ranks

¹⁵ Jelena Cupać and Irem Ebetürk, "The personal is global political: The antifeminist backlash in the United Nations," *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 22, no. 4 (2020): 702–714.

¹⁶ Veronica V. Kostenko, Pavel A. Kuzmichev, and Eduard D. Ponarin, "Attitudes towards gender equality and perception of democracy in the Arab world," *Democratization* 23, no. 5 (2016): 862–891.

¹⁷ Sita Ranchod-Nilsson, "Gender politics and gender backlash in Zimbabwe," *Politics & Gender* 4, no. 4 (2008): 642–652.

¹⁸ Flávia Biroli and Mariana Caminotti, "The conservative backlash against gender in Latin America," *Politics & Gender* 16, no. 1 (2020).

¹⁹ Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris, *Rising tide: Gender equality and cultural change around the world* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris, "Modernization and gender equality: A response to Adams and Orloff," *Politics & Gender* 1, no. 3 (2005): 482–492.

²⁰ Yu Jeong-mi, "Bangyeok-ui 'yangseong pyeongdeung-eseo '(yang)seongpyeongdeung-ui' jaejeongnip-euro" [Redefining 'gender equality' from backlash framework], *Hanguk yeoseonghak* 35, no. 2 (2019): 12–16.

²¹ Yon-se Kim, "Korea to top OECD gender pay gap, again," *Korea Herald*, 16 November 2021.

11th in gender equality out of 20 countries in the region. The World Economic Forum ranked South Korea 102nd out of 156 countries in its 2021 Global Gender Gap Index and only 5.2 percent of Korean conglomerates' board members and just over 19 percent of MPs in the National Assembly are women. Despite some measures implemented to decrease the gender gap during the past few years,²² such as gender quotas to "fast-track" women's political representation,²³ they have only been partially successful due to under-institutionalized parties.²⁴

This apparent discrepancy between existing gender inequalities and growing anti-feminist sentiments in the context of Korea is puzzling, given the evidence that Korea's attempts to improve women's rights have been relatively uneven, resulting in substantive developments as late as the 2000s. According to Na-Yeong Lee, the movement towards a more gender-equal Korea began with Yeogwontongmun, a declaration drafted and promulgated by a group of women in Seoul in 1898 that claimed equal rights in education, employment, and suffrage.²⁵ Yeogwontongmun was not merely an aspirational document but a clear sign of an emerging discourse on gender equality in colonial Korea, which was followed by the first women's magazine, *New Women* (*Sinyeoja*), publishing its first issue in 1920. Leading female activists such as Na Hye-Seok and Kim Hwal-Ran were the vanguards of social progress during the time.

According to Nicola Anne Jones, this emerging concern regarding gender equality in the country was subsumed within the project of national development upon the country's liberation in 1945.²⁶ The push for building a better future revolved around the issue of economic development throughout the 1960s to the 1980s, and as Jones aptly notes, "women's higher education was viewed less as a path for self-development, economic independence, or public sphere achievement than as a mechanism to attract higher status marriage partners and equip women to be 'wise mothers' and supervisors of their children's education."²⁷ While it is difficult to pinpoint an exact event or moment that marked the further development of women's rights activism in postwar Korea, it was around the mid-1980s that feminism began to consolidate itself as a distinct site of struggle separate from

²² Ju-young Park, "Gender Ministry to focus on improving gender equality, supporting parents and teenagers in 2019," *Korea Herald*, 20 December 2018.

²³ Netina Tan, "Gender Reforms, Electoral Quotas, and Women's Political Representation in Taiwan, South Korea, and Singapore," *Pacific Affairs* 89, no. 2 (2016): 309–323.

²⁴ Hyun-ji Lee and Ki-young Shin, "Gender quotas and candidate selection processes in South Korean political parties," *Pacific Affairs* 89, no. 2 (2016): 345–368.

²⁵ Lee Na-yeong, "Hanguk yeoseong undong-ui yeoksa-reul eotteoke gieok hago gyeeseunghal geosinga? -3.8 segye yeoseong-ui nareul maja-" [How should we commemorate and inherit the history of women's rights movement in Korea], *Minjuhwa undong ginyeomsaepoe* 47 (2020): 1–18.

²⁶ Nicola Anne Jones, *Gender and the Political Opportunities of Democratization in South Korea* (London: Springer, 2006), 36.

²⁷ Jones, *Gender and the Political*, 29.

democratization and economic justice.²⁸ Soon after, the first statute regarding sexual crimes, the Act on the Punishment of Sexual Crimes and Protection of Victims Thereof (Seongpongnyeokbeomjoeui cheobeol mit pihaejaboho deunge gwanhan beomnyulw) was declared in 1994, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family was established in 2001 and the family-head system (*hojuje*) was abolished in 2008.²⁹

With these substantial changes came a growing frustration among the young male population, who began to see themselves as victims of intensifying neoliberal competition through disadvantages on the job market, on the one hand, and traditional expectations of men being breadwinners, on the other. Such a victim-consciousness justified the proliferation of misogynist terms, such as kimchi-women (*gimchinyeo*) and soybean paste-women (*doenjangnyeo*),³⁰ on various anonymous online platforms in the 2000s.³¹ Among them, *DC Inside*, a South Korean internet forum notorious for controversial posts and images, became the primary venue for the growth of anti-women discourse throughout the 2010s. Provoked by this misogyny, a group of young Korean women launched *Megalia*, a radical feminist online community, in 2015, to counteract it via the tactics of mirroring, which aimed at mimicking the language men use against women. According to a survey conducted by the Korean Women's Development Institute (Hanguk yeoseong jeongchaek yeongguwon) in 2018, 48.9 percent of young women in their twenties identified themselves as feminists.³²

This growing tension between young men and women escalated into the recent “gender war” in 2016, when a young woman was randomly targeted and murdered in Gangnam Station.³³ The convict had no connection to the victim and admitted to stabbing her because of her gender. This enraged not only radical women activists but the general female population, many of whom had been cautioning against the rise of misandry. In this respect, the #MeToo movement of 2018 was not merely an American import but also represented an endogenous sociopolitical movement originating from Korean women's shared anxiety and concern over gender violence and

²⁸ Lee, “Hanguk yeoseong undong-ui,” 11; Baek Miyeon, “Hanguk mitu undong ihu peminijeum jeongchi-ui jeonhwan: yeondae-ui jeongchi-reul hyanghayeo” [Transition of feminist politics after the Korean #MeToo Movement: toward ‘politics of solidarity’], *Jeongchi sasang yeongu* 25, no. 2 (2019): 82–83.

²⁹ This system stipulates that family heads have to be male, thereby creating discriminatory templates for families without living male family heads.

³⁰ The word “kimchi-women” refers to young women who are perceived to be obsessed with wealth, and the word “soybean paste-women” is a reference to young women who seem to save money for luxury goods by skimping on essential goods.

³¹ Baek, “Hanguk mitu,” 75.

³² Cited in Jeong Seong-jo, “‘Cheongnyeong sedae’ damnon-ui bipanjeong jaeguseong (jendeo-wa seksyueolliti-reul jungsim-euro)” [Critical reconstruction of the ‘youth generation’ discourse: focusing on gender and sexuality], *Gyeongje-wa sahoe* 123, no. 1 (2019), 17.

³³ Lee, “Hanguk yeoseong undong-ui,” 16; Baek, “Hanguk mitu,” 76.

discrimination.³⁴ In an effort to alleviate the protests and the growing resentment felt by young women, the government implemented a set of policies aimed at promoting women's rights and visibility across all socioeconomic strata, the most important of which was the Violence Against Women Act of 2019 (Yeoseong ponguyeok bangji gibbonbeop). Initiated by a group of congresswomen in the DP, this statute was the first in Korean legal history that was tailored to protect women from sexual violence and discrimination.

Given the evidence that more than 90 percent of the victims of sexual assault in 2020 were women,³⁵ it is understandable why the enactment of the Violence Against Women Act was much needed. Some nevertheless asserted that such a "feminist statute" would be discriminatory against men insofar as it was based on an unwarranted assumption that men are potential criminals. In fact, a Realmeter poll last year found that "76 percent of men in their twenties and 66 percent of men in their thirties oppose feminism, and nearly 60 percent of respondents in their twenties consider gender issues the most serious source of conflict in the country."³⁶ To quote from Sung-ho Moon, leader of Dangdangwi, a group that claims to "fight for justice for men," "feminism is no longer about gender equality. It is gender discrimination and its manner is violent and hateful."³⁷

Why Anti-Feminist Sentiments Are Rising among Young Men: The Perceived Male Disadvantage

Recent studies show that opposition to gender equality in Korea, through means such as legislative gender quotas, may stem from feelings of group threat and economic anxiety.³⁸ This may particularly be the case as job opportunities have decreased even more due to the pandemic.³⁹ In addition to this, we believe it is necessary to take into account grievances specifically about young men's status in comparison to that of women, and address the potential repercussions of rising anti-feminist sentiments. We thus propose and test three hypotheses in order to develop a more nuanced understanding of anti-feminist sentiments as they impacted the 2022 presidential election.

³⁴ Linda Hasunuma and Ki-young Shin, "#MeToo in Japan and South Korea: #WeToo, #WithYou," *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy* 40, no. 1 (2019): 97–111.

³⁵ Korean Statistical Information Service [Gukga tonggye poteol], "The age and sex of the victims in 2020 (2021)" [Pihaeja seongbyeol yeollyeong], https://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=132&tblId=DT_13204_501.

³⁶ Jake Kwon, "South Korea's young men are fighting against feminism," *CNN*, 24 September 2019.

³⁷ Kwon, "South Korea's young men."

³⁸ Jeong-hyun Kim and Yesola Kweon, "Why Do Young Men Oppose Gender Quotas? Group Threat and Backlash to Legislative Gender Quotas," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* (2022).

³⁹ Sun-yu Ham, "Explaining gender gaps in the South Korean labor market during the covid-19 pandemic," *Feminist Economics* 27, nos. 1–2 (2021): 133–151.

Perceived Disadvantage of Preferential Treatment for Women

As gender issues come to the fore in deeply patriarchal Korea, there is growing discontent among young men who are worried that they are being left behind. Because gender-equal measures have come about in part from active government intervention in both the private and public sectors, and women's employment rates and income have been steadily increasing since the 2010s, they view these changing gender dynamics as providing women with preferential treatment in employment opportunities. Moreover, they are not willing to accept the burden of the patriarchal past and believe that they are being penalized for problems created by older generations.⁴⁰ As a result, this discontent may be increasing their anti-feminist sentiments.

Hypothesis 1. Young male respondents who believe that women get preferential treatment are more likely to harbour anti-feminist sentiments.

Perceived Disadvantage of Mandatory Military Service

South Korea's conscription system has also increased discontent. Originally established in 1957 as an integral part of national defence against North Korea, the conscription system remained, to a certain extent, uncontroversial up until the country's transition from the military dictatorship to procedural democracy in 1993. Upon entering an era of democracy, however, grievances towards mandatory military service have grown.⁴¹ This is especially the case since soldiers not only lose time to build their careers during service but also are required to participate in service activities. With increasing competition for employment and economic opportunities, along with traditional expectations for men to be breadwinners in a cutthroat job market, this dual pressure may have ultimately fostered resentment against those who are not mandated to serve, i.e., young women. Indeed, a 2017 survey showed that more than 51.3 percent of male respondents agreed with the introduction of female conscription, while only 20.8 percent of female respondents answered positively.⁴² It is thus reasonable to hypothesize that many young men view mandatory military service as a significant disadvantage, relative to young women who can promptly enter the job market without the burden of military service.

⁴⁰ Seo-ho Lee, "Why Did Young South Koreans Ditch the Democratic Party and President Moon?" *The Diplomat*, 9 April 2021.

⁴¹ Seung-sook Moon, "Trouble with Conscription, Entertaining Soldiers: Popular Culture and the Politics of Militarized Masculinity in South Korea," *Men and Masculinities* 8, no. 1 (2005): 70–71.

⁴² Bak Jin-su, "Yeoseong jingbyeongje doibeul dulleossan sahoejeong galdeung-gwa yeoseong chameo hwakdae-reul wihan gukbang gaehyeok: hanguk, noreuwei, seuweden sarye-reul jungsimeuro" [Social conflicts on female conscription and defense reform for enlarging female roles in the national armed service: A comparative study of Korean, Norwegian and Swedish cases], *Mirae jeongchi yeongu* 8, no. 3 (2018): 116.

Hypothesis 2. Young male respondents who believe that mandatory military service puts them at a disadvantage are more likely to harbour anti-feminist sentiments.

Declining Support for Elite Rhetoric on Gender Equality

These two indicators suggest that young men are less likely to support politicians with pro-gender rhetoric. Indeed, one of the most notable changes throughout the Moon administration is that even young liberal men became less supportive of Moon after he declared himself a feminist president and worked to promote gender equality policies during his tenure. Conversely, this group may have felt emboldened by politicians who provided seemingly plausible justifications of anti-feminism. In fact, Lee Jun-seok, the main leader of the PPP, essentially personified the grievances of the disgruntled young men by insisting that affirmative action is no longer necessary, as the “benefits are excessive,”⁴³ and asserted that “radical feminism [is] as toxic as terrorism.”⁴⁴ We thus postulate that relative to other demographic groups, young Korean men who continue to feel disadvantaged would be less likely to endorse a political leader with pro-gender policies and more likely to do so a leader with anti-gender policies.

Hypothesis 3. Relative to others, young male respondents are less likely to support a political candidate with gender-equal policies and more likely to support a political candidate with anti-gender policies.

Data and Results

To test these three hypotheses, we use an original survey that was conducted with an approximately nationally representative sample in South Korea (n=1,017) using Lucid Marketplace, one of the largest platforms for online surveys.⁴⁵ The survey was fielded from January 17, 2022 to January 30, 2022, when the campaign competitions were reaching their peak. The survey included questions that measured attitudes towards anti-feminist sentiments, resentment related to gender, and elite rhetoric, and all the questions were translated into Korean.⁴⁶

⁴³ Se-eun Gong, “As South Koreans go to the polls, a backlash against feminism has become political,” *NPR*, 8 March 2022.

⁴⁴ Hyun-kyung Kang, “‘Radical feminism as toxic as terrorism,’ says politician,” *The Korea Times*, 28 June 2019.

⁴⁵ Lucid constructs a national sample by matching census demographics based on age, gender, and income. For more information on Lucid, please see Alexander Coppock and Oliver A. McClellan, “Validating the demographic, political, psychological, and experimental results obtained from a new source of online survey respondents,” *Research & Politics* 6, no. 1 (2019): 1–14.

⁴⁶ All variables are coded on a 0 to 1 scale.

Variables and Descriptive Results

To measure anti-feminist sentiments, we included a question that asked respondents whether “it is understandable why anti-feminist movements are growing in our country.” We avoided direct questions on support for anti-feminist movements and instead used relatively more indirect measures that would allow us to ascertain whether respondents generally viewed anti-feminism negatively or found it justifiable. The responses show that, during the campaign period, 39 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement.⁴⁷ Of these, a higher proportion of those between the ages of 18 to 29 and those between the ages of 30 and 39 agreed with the statement in comparison to older respondents, at 41 percent and 44 percent respectively. In particular, men in those age groups were more likely to agree as well, with 46 percent in the youngest cohort and 51 percent in the second youngest cohort (see appendix figure 1, page 306 this issue for complete data).

To measure attitudes on perceived preferential treatment, we asked whether respondents agreed with the statement: “The push for gender equality has led to the preferential treatment of women in our country.” In general, 47 percent of the respondents (60 percent of male respondents) agreed with the statement. In addition, we found that a large proportion of men across all age groups agreed with the statement and that the biggest difference between men and women in responses came from the youngest cohort, with 29 percent of female respondents agreeing and 59 percent of male respondents agreeing (see appendix figure 2, page 306 this issue for complete data).

To measure attitudes towards mandatory military service, we asked respondents whether they agree that “women should also participate in mandatory military service, same as men.” In general, 43 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement. In addition, a higher proportion of younger respondents agreed with the statement, with 50 percent from the youngest cohort and 45 percent from the second youngest cohort. When examining different age cohorts among male respondents, a large majority of younger men (64 percent) agreed with the statement while only 36 percent of those 60 and older agreed with the statement (see appendix figure 3, page 307 this issue for complete data).

Regression Results

To test our first two hypotheses, we used multiple regression analyses to see the effects on support for anti-feminist movements among all respondents as well as just young male respondents.⁴⁸ Model 1 and model 2 show the results for the first hypothesis on preferential treatment, i.e., whether those who believe women receive preferential treatment in employment

⁴⁷ Those who stated “strongly agree” and “agree” are included in the descriptive results.

⁴⁸ For young male respondents, we included those in the age groups of 18–29 and 30–39.

opportunities are more likely to harbour anti-feminist sentiments, with model 1 observing all respondents and model 2 observing only young male respondents. Models 3 and 4 show the results for the second hypothesis, i.e., whether those who believe women should also participate in mandatory military service are more likely to harbour anti-feminist sentiments, with model 3 analyzing all respondents and model 4 just looking at young male respondents. Controls in the models include income, education, employment, perceived social class, and marital status.

The results of models 1 and 2 show that, in general, those who believe women get preferential treatment are more likely to support anti-feminist sentiments, with 35.9 and 42.3 percentage points respectively. The coefficient for young male respondents is higher, and both are statistically significant. Models 3 and 4 predict more support for women participating in mandatory military service with more support of anti-feminist sentiments, by 24.9 percentage points among all respondents and 29.2 percentage points among young male respondents. Similar to that of the previous models, the coefficient for young male respondents is higher, and both are statistically significant. The coefficient sizes in all models, and particularly for young male respondents, moreover, suggest that growing grievances against women, in regard to preferential treatment in employment opportunities and mandatory military service, will increase feelings of anti-feminist sentiments, potentially increase anti-feminist movements, and consequentially increase the gender divide.

Experiment Results

In addition, to test the third hypothesis, we embedded a survey experiment to see whether party candidates' active messaging on gender during the election campaign can influence election outcomes. This experiment mimicked events similar to that of the 2022 presidential election prior to the actual election. The experiment included a fictional political candidate, "Politician A," and the politician's message regarding gender equality. The first version of Politician A did not include any message about gender. The second version of Politician A included a message where the candidate spoke negatively about the push for gender equality. The third version of Politician A included a message where the candidate spoke positively of the push for gender equality. The respondents were randomly assigned to one of three groups: the first group (control group), the second group (treatment 1), and the third group (treatment 2).

Respondents were then asked whether they had a favourable impression of the politician they were assigned to read about: the control candidate, the candidate who does not use the gender equality appeal, or the candidate using the gender equality appeal. That is, the question asked: "What is your impression of Politician A?" with five responses from "very favourable" to "very unfavourable," with a "neutral" option included. This serves as the

The 2022 Korean Presidential Election

Table 1

Multiple regression analyses for all respondents and young male respondents only

| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 |
|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Preferential treatment | 0.359*** | 0.423*** | | |
| | 0.031 | 0.081 | | |
| Mandatory military | | | 0.249*** | 0.292** |
| | | | 0.032 | 0.088 |
| Gender | 0.047* | | 0.009 | |
| | 0.020 | | 0.020 | |
| Age | -0.062* | | -0.047 | |
| | 0.033 | | 0.034 | |
| Income | 0.025 | 0.052 | 0.027 | 0.995 |
| | 0.033 | 0.101 | 0.034 | 0.105 |
| Education | -0.006 | -0.015 | -0.027 | -0.014 |
| | 0.055 | 0.155 | 0.057 | 0.161 |
| Employment | 0.049* | 0.027 | 0.057* | 0.037 |
| | 0.024 | 0.066 | 0.025 | 0.07 |
| Class | 0.018 | -0.022 | -0.002 | -0.143 |
| | 0.046 | 0.119 | 0.048 | 0.122 |
| Married | 0.001 | -0.038 | 0.022 | 0.006 |
| | 0.024 | 0.055 | 0.024 | 0.058 |
| Constant | 0.278*** | 0.286* | 0.361*** | 0.391** |
| | 0.044 | 0.112 | 0.045 | 0.116 |
| N | 957 | 176 | 957 | 176 |
| R ² | 0.134 | 0.151 | 0.074 | 0.074 |
| *p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001 | | | | |

Source: Table created by author.

Table 2
Experimental groups for fictional politicians in Lucid survey January 2022

| | |
|--|---|
| Control (N=338) | Politician Lee is a nominee for the presidential election. He is a highly educated politician with multiple years of experience in government. |
| Treatment 1: anti-gender candidate (N=335) | Politician Lee is a nominee for the presidential election. He is a highly educated politician with multiple years of experience in government. Recently, in a presidential debate, he said that Korean society has been preoccupied with gender to the extent that even non-gender-related issues and problems have been “gendered,” and this must be stopped. |
| Treatment 2: pro-gender candidate (N=344) | Politician Lee is a nominee for the presidential election. He is a highly educated politician with multiple years of experience in government. Recently, in a presidential debate, he voiced his concern on the serious and growing problem of gender inequality and said that he will make significant changes to create a more egalitarian society for women. |

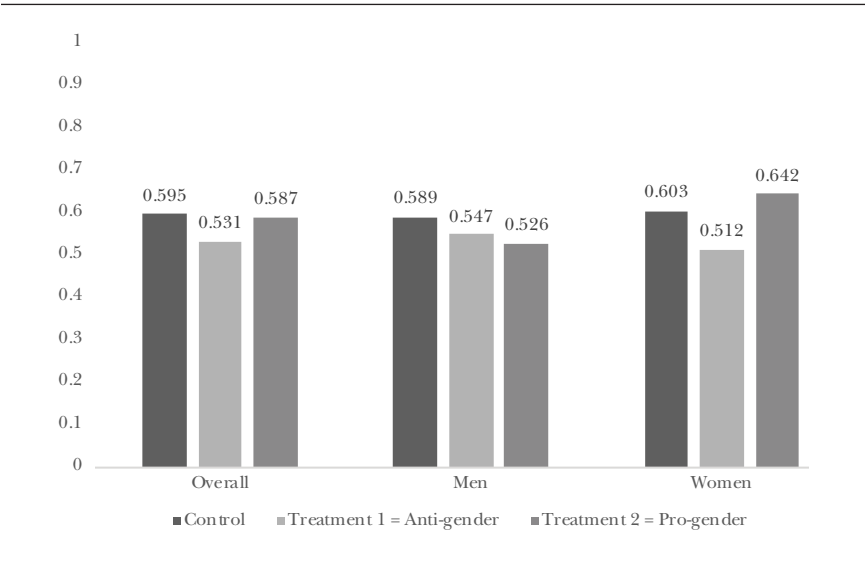
Source: Table created by author.

primary dependent variable used in this part of the analysis. In addition, respondents in the treatment groups were asked “how acceptable or unacceptable do you find Politician A’s statement” in order to analyze whether the statement made them more or less favourable to gender equality.

The results are reported as mean support for Politician A across each group by the entire sample and also by age among just male respondents. Figure 1 presents mean differences in candidate support across all three conditions for the political leader by all the respondents, just male respondents, and just female respondents. Overall, the candidate who used a pro-gender appeal garnered 59 percent of support while the candidate who used an anti-gender appeal garnered 53 percentage points, showing a difference of just 6 percent. Among women, moreover, the candidate who used a pro-gender appeal garnered 64 percent of support while the candidate who used an anti-gender appeal garnered 51 percent of support, with a difference of 13 percent.

Among men, the candidate who used a pro-gender appeal garnered 53 percent of the vote while the candidate with the anti-gender appeal garnered 55 percent of support and the candidate with no appeal garnered 59 percent

Figure 1.
Percentage of respondents who support the control, anti-gender, and pro-gender versions of politician A. Data comes from Lucid survey, January 2022.



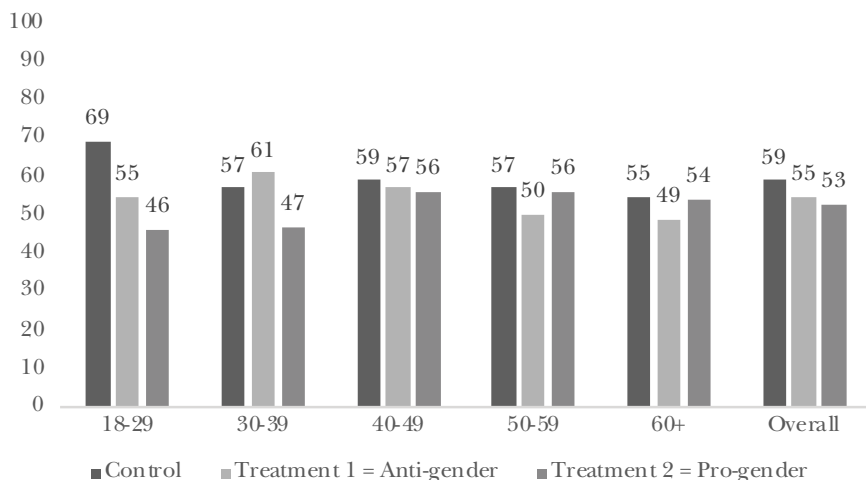
Source: Figure created by author

of support. This indicates that men, particularly in comparison to women, are significantly less likely to support a politician who uses pro-gender appeals and are more likely to support a politician who uses anti-gender appeals. It also suggests that no indication of gender issues may result in favourable views of the candidate.

Among men by age, moreover, the mean support among the two youngest age cohorts of male respondents (18–29 years old and 30–39 years old) was lowest for the candidate who used a pro-gender appeal (46 percent and 47 percent) in comparison to other age groups, in which mean support was over 53 percent. Conversely, support among the two youngest age cohorts of male respondents for the candidate who utilized an anti-gender appeal was relatively high, at 55 percent and 61 percent, respectively. Furthermore, in comparison to the control, we see the biggest difference in the mean scores with the pro-gender candidate among those in the two youngest age cohorts, with 23 points less in the youngest cohort and 10 percent less in the second-youngest cohort. The t-test results indicate that mean differences between support for the candidates are statistically significant in the experiment. This shows that pro-gender appeals can deter support for the politician, particularly among young men in comparison to other age cohorts, but anti-gender appeals may similarly have a mobilizing effect across all age cohorts.

Figure 2

Percentage of male respondents in various age cohorts who support the control, anti-gender, and pro-gender versions of politician A. Data comes from Lucid survey, January 2022.



Source: Figure created by author

These findings suggest that political leaders in Korea may be incentivized to use gender as a political tool and to move away from pro-gender appeals and instead move towards anti-gender appeals, since politicizing gender in this way can appeal to young swing voters, as exemplified by the recent presidential election. This type of rhetoric, moreover, would keep the topic of gender as a prominent point of discussion in Korean politics. However, a growing gender divide may also have significant ramifications for the future of democracy in Korea.

Implications for Democracy in Korea

Existing studies show that there is often a realignment in gender policies in developed post-industrial societies, one that stems from generational shifts.⁴⁹ Due to higher levels of education and increasing exposure to liberal values, younger generations have a stronger engagement with issues related to gender equality and are more likely to push for egalitarian practices while older generations tend to remain more traditional. In this way, young voters increase the chances of a country sustaining its vibrant democracy.⁵⁰ Yet our

⁴⁹ Inglehart, Norris, *Rising Tide*.

⁵⁰ Russell J. Dalton, *The good citizen: How a younger generation is reshaping American politics* (Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press, 2016).

study demonstrates that younger people, and particularly younger men, in Korea have veered away from this causality. The growing number of young men who are becoming more explicit in their anti-feminist sentiments contradicts the value system and cultural change that is often brought on by liberal democracy, and these men seem to feel increasingly empowered while young women continue to feel marginalized. This trend is especially concerning since gender equality is a central component of the process towards democratic consolidation,⁵¹ and countries in which women are excluded from public life are much more likely to become authoritarian.⁵²

While Korea has often been touted as a successful example of a third-wave democracy, like many other countries, it may be following the trend toward democratic deconsolidation.⁵³ Established democracies worldwide are struggling with both growing support for anti-establishment politicians and intensifying dissatisfaction with democracy among the public.⁵⁴ One can observe a similar trend in Korea prior to and during this election, which has been described as “a battle between democratic and anti-democratic forces.”⁵⁵ Korean citizens, regardless of socioeconomic status, have been disposed to realign themselves with hybrid forms of government⁵⁶ and are even likely to embrace autocratic systems.⁵⁷ This is in part due to nostalgic views of powerful authoritarian legacies.⁵⁸ In addition, political leaders in power appear to be further accelerating this deconsolidation process by fusing political polarization and populism, politicizing civil society, and demonizing their opponents during political events.⁵⁹ The legitimacy of democracy as a political regime, along with its democratic norms and liberal principles, is conceivably being threatened by both ordinary citizens and elites in power in Korea.

While widening gender divisions are just one component of this trend of democratic deconsolidation, these divisions are acting as an accelerant. According to our survey, younger male respondents who harbour anti-feminist sentiments are also much less likely to support democratic forms of

⁵¹ Caroline Beer, “Democracy and gender equality,” *Studies in Comparative International Development* 44, no. 3 (2009): 212–227.

⁵² M. Steven Fish, “Islam and authoritarianism,” *World politics* 55, no. 1 (2002): 4–37.

⁵³ Gi-Wook Shin, “South Korea’s democratic decay,” *Journal of Democracy* 31, no. 3 (2020): 100–114.

⁵⁴ Roberto Stefan Foa and Yascha Mounk, “The danger of deconsolidation: The democratic disconnect,” *Journal of Democracy* 27, no. 3 (2016): 5–17; Roberto Stefan Foa and Yascha Mounk, “The signs of deconsolidation,” *Journal of Democracy* 28, no. 1 (2017): 5–15.

⁵⁵ Erik Mobrand, “Cynical and Celebratory Sensibilities in South Korea’s 2022 Presidential Election,” in this issue.

⁵⁶ Doh Chull Shin and Hannah June Kim, “Liberal democracy as the end of history: Western theories versus Eastern Asian realities,” *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics* 2, no. 2 (2017): 133–153.

⁵⁷ Doh Chull Shin, “Democratic deconsolidation in East Asia: exploring system realignments in Japan, Korea, and Taiwan,” *Democratization* 28, no. 1 (2021): 142–160.

⁵⁸ Doh Chull Shin, “The Deconsolidation of Liberal Democracy in Korea: Exploring its Cultural Roots,” *Korea Observer* 49, no. 1 (2018): 107–136.

⁵⁹ Gi-Wook Shin, “South Korea’s democratic decay,” *Journal of Democracy* 31, no. 3 (2020): 100–114.

government and are instead significantly more likely to support authoritarian tendencies, such as having a leader who does not follow rules and disregards checks and balances (see appendix table 1, page 308 this issue). This suggests that democratic deconsolidation is not just coming from those who romanticize the authoritarian past, nor is it coming solely from political elites with populist tendencies; it is also being driven by divisions amongst members of a younger generation that, despite growing up in a democratic setting and being exposed to liberal values and norms throughout their lives, appear to be relatively unimpressed with democratic institutions. In this respect, a divided young generation and its democratic orientations, or lack thereof, will play a critical role in the future trajectory of Korea in years to come.

Conclusion

During the 2022 election, the gender issue and anti-feminist rhetoric mostly focused on resonating with younger Koreans, but this backlash towards gender equality per se is not new. In fact, attitudes towards gender equality overall have dramatically worsened during the past few years in Korea. Data from the World Values Survey from the years between 1990 to 2020, for example, show that the proportion of respondents who agree that “men should have more rights to a job than women” have significantly increased in the past few years, from 32 percent in 2014 to 53 percent in 2020. Unfortunately, existing systemic economic and cultural barriers towards gender equality are often overshadowed by shorter-term manifestations, such as this growing gender divide among young people and rising anti-feminist sentiments among young men.⁶⁰ Presidential candidates appropriating this as an electoral strategy further impedes progress towards gender equality and leads to more obstacles for women.

With the incoming administration’s immediate attempts to make changes to, and possibly abolish, the Ministry of Gender Equality, many Korean women are now concerned about what their future holds. Controversy over the continuation of the ministry, along with a growing and emboldened anti-feminist movement, evinces the clearly growing gender divide in the country. Given that gender equality remains as one of the core properties of a vibrant liberal democracy, the new administration must commit itself to preventing further polarization. Accordingly, Yoon has a lot to overcome. He can no longer circumvent the contentious gender conflict but will need to tackle it head on during his first year in office. In order to do this, he should express support for young women who felt excluded during the election campaigns and as though their voices were merely appropriated for political point-

⁶⁰ Erik Mobrand, “What the Media Might Have Missed About South Korea’s Elections,” *The Rand Blog*, 2022.

scoring. It is also necessary for him to caution against emboldening young male voters who either explicitly or implicitly support anti-feminist movements and seek institutional measures to prevent misogyny. In this manner, Yoon must not simply dismiss their grievances, since these young men have been exposed to societal pressures as well.⁶¹ The new administration will need to listen to, and address the concerns of, both young men and women with extreme care, in order to ensure that gender polarization does not ossify the country.

Since the gender divide in Korea is relatively recent, future research can push our findings in new directions. Our study incorporated an original survey conducted before the election, but future studies should also include post-election surveys to fully ascertain the extent to which these young men may have felt emboldened by elite rhetoric regarding anti-feminism. In addition, interviews of young Koreans who self identify as feminists or anti-feminists should be taken into account in order to develop a more nuanced understanding of the growing gender divide in Korea. With these extended research results, future studies examining the politicization of gender can look beyond Korea to other countries struggling with gender equality, anti-feminist elite rhetoric, and democratic progress.

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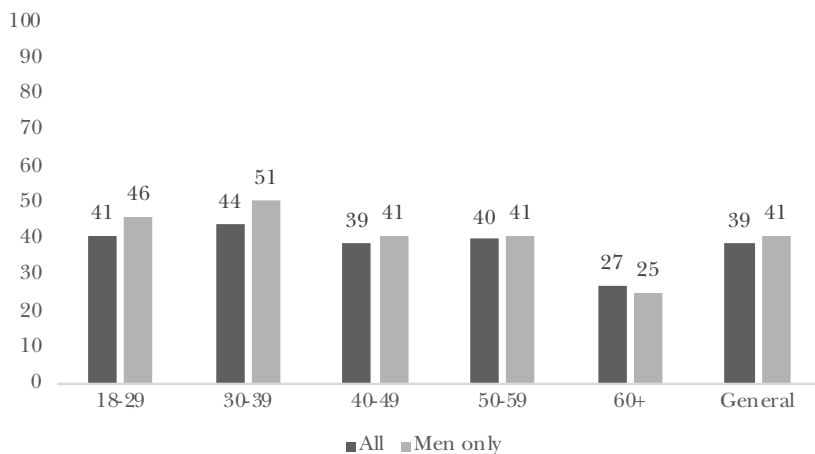
Republic of Korea Air Force Academy, Cheongju-si, South Korea, April 2022

⁶¹ Jeong, "Cheongnyeon," 27.

APPENDIX

Appendix Figure 1

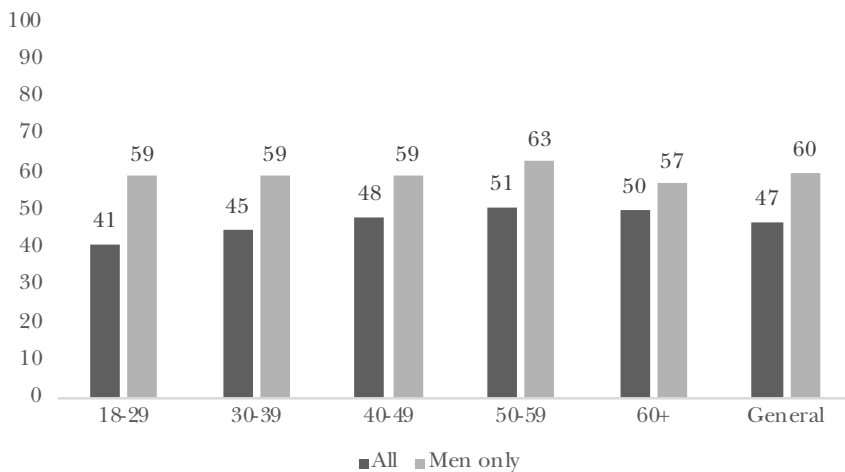
Percentage of support for anti-feminist sentiments, by age in general and men only



Source: Figure created by author.

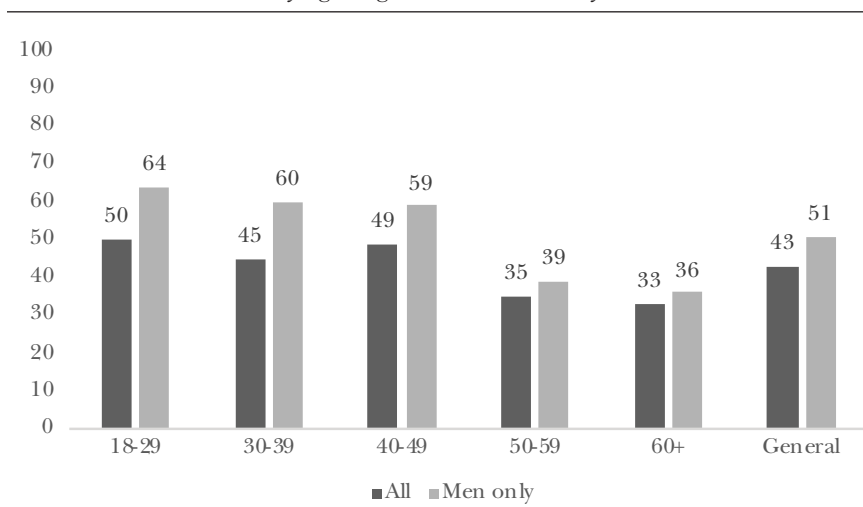
Appendix Figure 2

Percentage of support for preferential treatment of women, by age in general and men only



Source: Figure created by author.

Appendix Figure 3
Percentage of support for mandatory military service for women,
by age in general and men only



Source: Figure created by author.

(Appendix Table 1 next page)

Appendix Table 1
Multiple regression analyses for young respondents
and young male respondents only

| | Model 1 | Model 2 |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Autocratic Support | 0.183* | 0.268+ |
| | 0.078 | 0.150 |
| Income | -0.024 | 0.011 |
| | 0.072 | 0.145 |
| Education | 0.067 | -0.079 |
| | 0.136 | 0.227 |
| Employment | 0.059 | 0.011 |
| | 0.052 | 0.098 |
| Class | -0.121 | -0.368+ |
| | 0.102 | 0.19 |
| Married | -0.031 | 0.031 |
| | 0.06 | 0.114 |
| Constant | 0.521*** | 0.762*** |
| | 0.081 | 0.14 |
| N | 217 | 83 |
| R ² | 0.039 | 0.078 |

+p<0.10 * p<0.05

p<0.01 *p<0.001

Source: Table created by author.

FILM REVIEW ESSAY

Entanglements of Mobility and Immobility:

A Review of Eight Documentaries

Hyung-Gu Lynn

ABANDONED: WAR ORPHANS OF CHINA AND THE PHILIPPINES. *Directed by Obara Hirayasu. K-Project, 2020. 1 video resource (98 mins.). In English, Japanese, Tagalog, and Chinese.*

THE DONUT KING. *Directed by Alice Gu, produced by Farhad Amid, Tom Moran, José I. Nuñez, and Alice Gu. Logan Industry, 2020. 1 video resource (99 mins.). In English.*

FAR EAST DEEP SOUTH. *Directed by Larissa Lam. New Day Films, 2020. 1 video resource (77 mins.). In Chinese and English.*

GEOGRAPHIES OF KINSHIP. *Directed by Deann Borshay Liem, produced by Deann Borshay Liem and Charlotte Lagarde. Mu Films, 2019. 1 DVD resource (82 mins.). 1 online resource (82 mins.). In English, Korean, and Swedish with English subtitles.*

KIM IL SUNG'S CHILDREN. *Directed by Deog Young Kim, produced by Sooyoung Lim and Junhee You. Docustory, 2020. 1 video resource (85 mins.). In Bulgarian, Czech, German, Hungarian, Korean, Polish, and Romanian with English subtitles.*

NOW IS THE PAST: My Father, Java & the Phantom Film. *Directed by Shin-ichi Ise. Ise Films, 2020. 1 video resource (89 mins.). In Japanese, English, and Indonesian with English subtitles.*

SING ME A LULLABY. *Directed by Tiffany Hsiung. Golden Nugget Production, 2020. 1 video resource (29 mins.). In Chinese and English with English subtitles.*

TOKYO LEGACY. *Directed by Chris Humphrey. A+E Networks Japan, SKY Perfect JSAT, 2020. 1 video resource (89 mins.).*

ABSTRACT

Theories and methods to analyze different forms of mobility and related complexities abound. By engaging with eight documentaries dealing with migrations and histories of Asia, this review essay sketches the possibilities of viewing the inextricable linkages between mobilities and immobilities of people, policies, and ideas through the metaphor of quantum entanglement.

The essay explains the viewing environments, summarizes the viewed documentaries, and analyzes the visible entanglements of the seemingly contradictory co-presence of movement and stillness.

Keywords: mobility, immobility, entanglements, diaspora, trauma

DOI: 10.5509/2022952309

Introduction

The “mobility turn” in academia and the ubiquity and the varieties of policy regimes and societal norms regulating our mobilities and immobilities have fostered, among other things, two large questions. First, how can we analyze the *motion or mobility* of objects, ideas, and people; and second, how do we understand the *complexity or intersectionality* of infrastructures, policies, aspirations, class, gender, and race when mobilities occur? For the first question, various “mobile methods,” bearing names such as walking interviews, cycling ethnography, go-along, shadowing, and edgework that are largely variations of participant observation, have encouraged researchers to move with the objects/subjects of interest.¹ For the second challenge, an array of terms such as panarchy and resilience, agencement and assembly, and superdiversity and narratives, have attempted to capture complex systems that contain seemingly contradictory dynamics, whether mobility and immobility or stability and change.² These and other conceptual innovations have encouraged an embrace of heterogeneity, fluidity, indefiniteness, and indeterminacy, rather than reliance on essentialism, totalization, and reification. At the same time, imprecision in the definition of core terms,

DR. HYUNG-GU LYNN is the Editor of *Pacific Affairs* and the AECL/KEPCO Chair in Korean Research in the Department of Asian Studies.

Acknowledgements: He wishes to thank Carolyn Grant, Daniel Kane and Kim Stoker

¹ See for example, James Evans and Phil Jones, “The Walking Interview: Methodology, Mobility and Place,” *Applied Geography* 31, no. 2 (2011): 849–858; Jonas Larsen, “(Auto)Ethnography and Cycling,” *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 17, no. 1 (2014): 59–71; Margarethe Kusenbach, “Street Phenomenology: The Go-Along as Ethnographic Research Tool,” *Ethnography* 4, no. 3 (2003): 455–485; Isabelle Bartkowiak-Theron and Jennifer Robyn Sappey, “The methodological identity of shadowing in social science research,” *Qualitative Research Journal* 12, no. 1 (2012): 7–16; and Deborah Landry, “Are We Human? Edgework in Defiance of the Mundane and Measurable,” *Critical Criminology* 21, no. 1 (2013): 1–14.

² See for example, Lance H. Gunderson and C. S. Holling, eds., *Panarchy: Understanding Transformations in Human and Natural Systems* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2002); Jon Coaffee, “Complexity, Uncertainty and Resilience,” in *The Routledge Companion to Environmental Planning*, eds. Simin Davoudi, et al. (London: Routledge, 2019), 97–98; Kouamekan J M Koffi, “Résilience et Sociétés: Concepts et Applications” [Resilience and Societies: Concepts and Applications], *Ethique Economique* 11, no. 1 (2014): 1–15; Roger Schank, *Tell Me A Story: A New Look at Real and Artificial Memory* (New York: Charles Scribener’s, 1990), 147; Manuel De Landa, *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity* (New York: Continuum, 2006); and John Phillips, “Agencement/ Assemblage,” *Theory, Culture and Society* 23, no. 2–3 (2006): 108–109.

and reliance on suggestive rather than analytical linkages, has spawned criticisms that these and related concepts are on the cusp of sliding into the category of the empty signifier, a term that has become so variable or unspecifiable as to lose utility and meaning.³ More specific to migration and diaspora, scholars have tackled the innate interstitiality and intertemporality of mobility through some innovative inductive concepts, such as “suspension” and “ongoingness.”⁴

This review essay joins the quest to capture mobilities and complexities by serving as a *dessin*, an initial sketch for a more elaborated explanation, for the position that the use of quantum entanglement as a metaphor can help integrate the existence of mobility and immobility of ideas, policies, practices, and people as mutually inseparable and necessary. This is inductively supported through engagement with eight documentaries related to mobilities/immobilities in Asia and the Pacific, and deductively via reading various explanations of quantum entanglement (and beyond).⁵

I will first provide an overview of the viewing environments as meta-contextual reinforcement for the use of entanglements as a mobility metaphor, then briefly summarize the eight documentaries. I then highlight the ways in which these titles embrace or embody the inextricable and incontrovertible ways in which human experiences of mobility and immobility are akin to quantum entanglements, where childhood traumas or calcified clichés move in seeming stasis through time and across space, even as individuals and families experience changes and movements through the same ecologies.

Environments

Flying in large commercial passenger planes invariably involves contemporaneous experiences of mobility and immobility. Even as pilots grapple with a profusion of potential sensory illusions, climatic forces, and meteorological obstacles, airplanes soar above the clouds to reduce resistance and move at great speeds over vast distances.⁶ At the same time, as passengers

³ See for example, Andrew Park, “Beware Paradigm Creep and Buzzword Mutation,” *Forestry Chronicle* 87, no. 3 (2011): 337–344; Demetris Koutsoyiannis and Alberto Montanari, “Negligent Killing of Scientific Concepts: The Stationarity Case,” *Hydrological Sciences Journal* 60, no. 7–8 (2014): 1174–1183; and P.D.D. Milly, et al., “On Critiques of ‘Stationarity is Dead: Whither Water Management?’” *Water Resources Research* 51, no. 9 (2015): 7785–7789.

⁴ Biao Xiang, “Suspension: Seeking Agency for Change in the Hypermobile World,” *Pacific Affairs* 94, no. 2 (2021): 233–250; and Brittany Wheeler, Juno Fitzpatrick, and Kees van der Geest, “The Ongoingness of Migration: Marshallese Well-Being in the United States,” *Journal of Disaster Research* 17, no. 3 (2022): 335–345.

⁵ For details on quantum discord and other measures beyond entanglement, see Alexander Streltsov, *Quantum Correlations Beyond Entanglement and Their Role in Quantum Information Theory* (Cham: Springer, 2015).

⁶ R.D. Campbell and Michael Bagshaw, *Human Performance and Limitations in Aviation*, 3rd edition (New York: Wiley, 2002); and Randy Gibb, Rob Gray and Lauren Scharff, *Aviation Visual Perception Research, Misperception and Mishaps* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

our movements are constricted within tubes woven of aluminium and carbon reinforced plastic, ensnared by the seats and entangled with the images flowing across our personal screens, even as these in turn seemingly transport us into other lives, distant places, and faraway times. Physics can readily explain our perceptions of the co-temporal and co-spatial presence of mobility and immobility via relative motion and reference points, vestibular systems and velocity vector equations, but the tangled skeins persist when we think of the fact that academics travel to conferences to sit in the relative stillness of meeting or screening rooms, while our minds in turn roam from such spaces via interactions with presentations and documentaries, or possibly jet lag-induced hypersomnolence.⁷

The consumption of in-flight entertainment occurs in apparently unusual ecologies, ranging from smaller screens, the requirement for headphones, and the presence of other screens around us.⁸ Nonetheless, heterogeneity of experiences can exist even if viewing the same film on the same plane, depending on whether one travels with young children or whether one is suffering from hypoxia or not. Then there are the infrastructures of wiring, licensing, and transport economics that generate variations in choice of offerings depending on the airline, plane model, route, and class of service. Air Canada, for example, has apparently gained a reputation among some travelers for its eclectic and cosmopolitan menu of films.⁹

But most saliently for our purposes, in a study that debunked as urban myth the phenomenon of excessive and chronic crying while watching movies in airplanes, the so-called altitude-adjusted lachrymosity syndrome (AALS), the authors concluded that incidents of crying while flying stemmed more from the types of genres watched (more drama or family fare selections, less action and mystery) and something the authors called “dramatically heightened exposure”—binge watching more films on a plane in a week (estimated at six, three per leg), than they would in a year in the theatre (estimated at five)—not that people cried in planes at higher rates per title.¹⁰ In essence, perceptions were distorted by a form of selection bias, in that there was highly concentrated exposure to films in terms of frequency (number of titles) and intensity (affective impact of each title) within a short duration. These are the exact same conditions that arise not only in airplanes but also at film festivals or expos, even with the obvious difference of being

⁷ Jeremy Weingarten and Nancy Collop, “Air Travel: Effects of Sleep Deprivation and Jet Lag,” *CHEST* 144, no. 3 (2013): 1394–1401.

⁸ Stephen Groening, “Crying while Flying: The Intimacy of Inflight Entertainment,” *Écranosphère* 1 (2014): 1–17; and Dominik Maeder, “Unmoving Bodies: In-Flight Entertainment, Infrastructural Images and Cultural Techniques of Sitting,” in *Imaged on the Move: Materiality - Networks - Formats*, ed. Olga Moskatova (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2021), 87–105.

⁹ Dina Iordanova, “Global Film at Global Airlines,” *Alphaville: Journal of Film and Screen Media* 14 (2018): 79, 81, 88.

¹⁰ Paul Wicks and Lee Lancashire, “No Tears in Heaven: Did the Media Create the Pseudo-Phenomenon ‘Altitude-Adjusted Lachrymosity Syndrome (AALS)’?” *PeerJ* 6 (2018): e4569.

on the ground instead of in the sky. Thus, while I watched the eight documentaries reviewed in this essay in two spaces, a plane (Air Canada 2021) and at a film expo at an academic convention (Association for Asian Studies 2022), as well as follow-up viewings via screener links for some of the titles, these might be treated as loosely homologous viewing environments.

Documentaries

I summarize below the documentaries in alphabetical order of film titles. All films are in the feature film range as defined by bodies such as the Academy of Motion Picture Arts Sciences (40 mins.) and the Screen Actors Guild (75 mins.), with the exception of *Sing Me A Lullaby*, which at 29 minutes qualifies as a short documentary. All the titles contain inextricable and multiple imbrications of mobile lives, static memories, and palpable traumas. Providing narrative momentums in most cases are the journeys and the efforts of discovery and reclamation that people undertake, whether through activism, legal cases, visits, conversations, or research in archives and museums.

Abandoned: War Orphans of China and the Philippines, examines the activities of the Philippine Nikkei-jin Legal Support Center, an NGO dedicated to assisting the efforts of Japanese war orphans who had been left stranded or abandoned in the Philippines in the aftermaths of World War II in their attempts to (re)gain Japanese citizenship. Throughout, the film compares this group with their closest counterparts, Japanese war orphans who had been stranded in China. The latter began “returning” to intensive media coverage in the early 1980s but later sued the Japanese government for compensation and apologies. In the aftermath of courtroom defeats from 2002 to 2007, this group received monetary support from the government via the interventions of then Prime Minister Abe Shinzo in 2007 and 2015. This contrasts with the continuing difficulties of the orphans from the Philippines, in part because many of the estimated 1,069 left are of “mixed heritage” rather than “pure Japanese,” and because many fled to the mountains after burning their identification documentations to avoid attacks from Filipino guerilla forces that targeted Japanese civilians from 1942 to 1945. The orphans from China also faced difficulties and discrimination in Japan due to multiple barriers hindering adjustment to life in Japan, including language, but the film generally sidesteps ongoing challenges of war orphans from China in lieu of a more uplifting narrative of successful—if painfully slow—return to and recognition in the “motherland” after years spent in statelessness.¹¹

¹¹ For more details on the Japanese war orphans who “returned” from China, see for example, Rob Efrid, “Distant Kin: Japan’s ‘War Orphans’ and the Limits of Ethnicity,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 83, no. 4 (2010): 805–838; on the war orphans in the Philippines, see for example, Iijima Makiko, “Filipin Nikkei Diasupora no Sengo no ‘Kikan’ Keiken to Furusato Ninshiki” [The Return Migrations of the Filipino Nikkei Diaspora: Their Perceptions of “Home” in the Postwar Period], *Bunka jinruigaku* 80, no. 4 (2016): 592–613.

The Donut King is a fast-paced film on the tumultuous life of Ted Ngoy, and the growth of Cambodian-run donut shops in California, where Khmer and Chinese-Cambodian communities, even if not homogenous in politics or lifestyles, have settled.¹² Born Bun Tek Ngoy, Ted, a half-Chinese Cambodian, settled in Tustin, California in 1975 after fleeing the Khmer Rouge with his family as part of the first wave of Cambodian and South Vietnamese accepted by the Gerald Ford administration.¹³ After an encounter with a donut, whose scents and shapes reminded him of the Cambodian *nom kong*, Ngoy underwent a short apprenticeship at Winchell's before launching his own store. Ngoy, his wife, Suganthini, and their three children laboured to make the store a success. Eventually they created a donut kingdom of around 60 stores spread over Southern California by 1985, the stores serving as portals for the Ngoy's sponsorship of over 100 migrant families from Cambodia. Footage from the halcyon days of the 1980s show Ted beaming broadly, someone whose rise from church janitor to business tycoon was the living, breathing embodiment of the immigrant entrepreneurial success story. Foreshadowing of a fall comes in the form of interviews clips of a more elderly Ted, noticeably less boisterous and more reflective than the donut king version, interspersed in the story of rise and expansion. The film's twist comes in the form of a revelation that Ted's severe and sustained gambling addiction led to a rapid collapse of the donut kingdom by 1993, resulting in the divestiture of all the stores, and Ted's infidelity in the aftermath of the fall destroyed his marriage. The documentary enmeshes itself with the present by bringing Ted back to his former stomping grounds the first time in decades. What begins as a linear story about the fulfillment of the American Dream morphs into a story of decline and fall, and then swerves into a parable of loss and atonement, ending with a large degree of absolution and reconciliation.

Larissa Lam's *Far East Deep South* is an expanded version of her 2015 short, *Finding Cleveland*, on Chinese migration to the American South. The film starts as a breezy and entertaining affair, with brisk pacing and regular injections of humour, but turns to memories of absence and abandonment, enforced separations and unresolved pasts in its second half. The camera follows Lam's husband, Baldwin Chiu (aka rapper Only Won), and his family

¹² Erin M. Curtis, "Selling Donuts in the Fragmented Metropolis: Chinese Cambodian Donut Shops in Los Angeles and the Practices of Chinese Restaurants," in *American Chinese Restaurants: Society, Culture and Consumption*, eds. Jenny Banh and Haiming Liu (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), 62–74. See also, Susan Needham and Schroedel Grubb, "Controlling the Opposition Abroad: Cambodia's Extraterritorial Activities in Long Beach, California," *Pacific Affairs* 95, no. 2 (2022): 205–225

¹³ A target of 130,000 refugee acceptance was set by Ford, with 125,000 allocated for South Vietnamese and 5,000 for Cambodians. For details, see Gil Loescher and John Scanlan, *Calculated Kindness: Refugees and America's Half Open Door, 1945–Present* (New York: Free Press, 1986), 111, 163–166; and Sucheng Chan, "Introduction," in *Not Just Victims: Conversations with Cambodian Community Leaders in the United States*, ed. Sucheng Chan (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 20, 31.

in their travels from California to Mississippi to trace the patrilineal grandfather's life. The patriarch of the family, Baldwin's father Charles, had always been taciturn about the history of his side of the family, but does have in his possession one photo of a tombstone of his father (Baldwin's grandfather) in a large cemetery in the small town of Cleveland, Mississippi. The cinematography in the first half combines elements of family trip home videos with interviews of the main family members, which gives way to a more varied mosaic of interviews and archival footage in the second half. The film positions the Chinese in the South as a bridge between white and Black communities in an era of segregation, while they were often cut off from their families in China due to the lingering effects of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. The trials, travails, and triumphs of this community despite the latticework of restrictive and discriminatory regimes of mobility and immobility that they were forced to navigate, reinscribes the largely forgotten migrations and settlements mobilities of Chinese into national, rather than regional, discussion.¹⁴ The stories of cooperation and friendships between Chinese and Black families in particular have a timely resonance amidst the increased frequency of verbal and physical attacks on Asian Americans in the pandemic order.

Geographies of Kinship is the latest documentary on Korean adoptees by Deann Borshay Liem, who has helmed previous titles on the subject. A polished, compelling work that draws a detailed yet accessible account of the history of Korean children sent overseas for adoption, it seamlessly stitches together a wide range of historical footage and interviews with academics to establish the parameters of South Korea's child "export" from the Korean War on, as well as individual stories of adoptees who negotiate the relative stasis of their original abandonment traumas and the contingent fluidity of their senses of self and belonging. Tracing the emergence of the so-called Amerasian problem—children born of unions between American soldiers and Korean women—Borshay Liem outlines the evolution of the practices and industries of international adoption. The film is less interested in condemnation than explanation and exploration, covering the implications of the *hojok* or family registry system (revised in 2008) that required that all people belong to a family or household headed by a man, the role of the child adoption agency Holt International in spurring transnational "export," and the prejudices about economic background and occupation that undergird the reception of some of the adoptees when they return to South

¹⁴ For details on the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, see Andrew Gyory, *Closing the Gate: Race, Politics, and the Chinese Exclusion Act* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988). On the Chinese community in the Mississippi Delta, see James Loewen, *The Mississippi Chinese: Between Black and White* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971); and Robert Seto Quan with Julian Roebuck, *Lotus among the Magnolias: the Mississippi Chinese* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1982).

Korea.¹⁵ Moreover, the film avoids the pitfall of depicting overseas adoptees as objects of pity or as lesser Koreans whose original identities have been irrevocably corroded by foreign upbringing and consequent language handicaps; rather, it captures the more personal journeys of four adoptees as active agents in the construction and maintenance of their own individual identities in relation to their birth and their adopted and re-adopted homelands, with an appreciation and sympathy for their varying choices.

Kim Il Sung's Children, directed by Deog Young Kim, turns the spotlight on an estimated 5,000 North Korean war orphans sent to Eastern European countries during and immediately after the Korean War. The painstaking research over multiple archives and languages is immediately evident in footage of the children's arrivals in Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary.¹⁶ The film is more ambitious in its spatial coverage than two recent documentaries that trace the memories of North Korean war orphans in Poland, *Kim Ki Dok* (2006, directed by Jolanta Kryszewata, who appears in Kim's film) and *The Children Gone to Poland* (2019, directed by Chu Sang-Mi).¹⁷ In fact, during the early-1950s, North Korea sent war orphans to other communist countries, including Czechoslovakia, China, and Mongolia.¹⁸ These children were hosted in boarding schools and attended classes along with local children, forming friendships that lasted until they were all called back to North Korea by 1959–1960 in the aftermaths of the internecine splits within the communist bloc that boiled over in 1956. A second group of North Korean migrants, high school and university students sent from North Korea to study in Eastern European countries, caused additional and apparently unanticipated complications in the form of international marriages and offspring, and in some cases, direct or indirect participation in the anti-Soviet

¹⁵ For details, see for example, Eleana Kim, *Adopted Territory: Transnational Korean Adoptees and the Politics of Belonging* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); and Yoo Hae-Ryang and Lim Chae-Wan, "Haeoe ibyang ch'ongch'esong ch'ongch'i: 'Ppuri ch'atgi undong' chungsimūro" [Identity Politics of Koreans Adopted Overseas: Focusing on the 'Finding Roots Movement'], *Han'guk tongbuk-a nonch'ong* 79 (2016): 149–169.

¹⁶ Bulgaria had received war orphans from the Greek Civil War before the arrival of the North Korean orphans. See Loring Danforth and Riki Van Boeschoten, *Children of the Greek Civil War: Refugees and the Politics of Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 43–84.

¹⁷ For additional details on Poland-North Korean orphan programme, see, Nicolas Levi and Kyungyon Moon, "Historical Relations between Poland and North Korea from 1948 to 1980," *International Journal of Korean Unification Studies* 27 no. 1 (2018): 45–54.

¹⁸ For more on North Korean war orphans in Eastern Europe and Mongolia, see for example, Kim Bogook "Forgotten Era, Forgotten People: The North Korean Diaspora," *Hungarian Studies* 28, no. 2 (2014): 255–273; Kang Chae-Yeon, "1950-nyōndae Pukhan ūi chōnjaeng-kwa ch'ongch'aek: hondon ūi sigi, kŭ nōmō [North Korea's war orphan policy in the 1950s: a period of chaos and beyond], *Han'guk tongbuk-a nonch'ong* 26, no. 1 (2021): 131–152; and Oh Miyoung, "Hanguk chōnjaeng sigi Pukhan chōnjaeng-kwa wa Monggol" [North Korean war orphans and Mongolia during the Korean War: based on documents in the Mongolian archives], *Pukhan yōn'gu hakhoeho* 23, no. 2 (2019): 269–297.

Hungarian Revolution of 1956.¹⁹ Director Kim had originally been inspired to begin exploring the subject in 2004 when he first heard the story of Georgeta Mircioiu, a Romanian woman who married a North Korean teacher assigned to accompany and help care for the orphans, Cho Jeong Ho, in 1957 in Bucharest. The couple moved to North Korea and had a daughter in Pyongyang. In 1962, Georgeta took her daughter to Romania for treatment of severe calcium deficiency, inadvertently resulting in a family separation that lasts to this day, as North Korea has refused her re-entry and provided little or contradictory information about her husband's whereabouts since his last letter in 1966.

In *Now Is the Past: My Father, Java & the Phantom Film*, director Shin-ichi Ise traces his father's footsteps as a filmmaker for the propaganda department of the Japanese military occupation forces in Java during World War II.²⁰ Ise uses his daughter as the narrator via voiceovers to traverse three generations and accent the resonances of the past in the present, while he appears on-screen talking to locals via translators or conversing about his own father with his daughter as his son films. The technique of using ambient sound to set the milieu in Java is particularly effective as the play of sunlight, shadows, and movements in the crowded streets are amplified by the sounds of human voices, birds, and motorized vehicles. The film does not shy away from various interviewees' recollections of the everyday violence and disregard used by the Japanese occupying forces, as well as the horrific conditions of the forced labour (*rōmusha*) programme.²¹ At the same time, the film offers no clear or easy answers on the question of whether Ise's father indirectly shared in the guilt by papering over everyday brutality and violence inflicted on Indonesians by the Japanese Army through his contributions to the production of relentlessly cheerful and hopeful propaganda/documentaries. Nonetheless, through Ise's conversations with his daughter about his ambivalent feelings toward his father's work and reticence in talking about this period of his life, the film effectively portrays the ways in which the past continues to reverberate in the present and the future.

Sing Me A Lullaby covers one extended family's history from 1960 to 2019, focusing on three points in time: 2005, 2006, and 2013. The director Tiffany Hsiung's mother, Ru Wen, born in Taiwan, had been sent in 1965 to a foster

¹⁹ Mózes Csoma, *From North Korea to Budapest: North Korean Students in the Hungarian Revolution in 1956* (Seoul: Jinmoondang, 2016).

²⁰ For more details on Japanese propaganda film during the occupation of the Dutch Indies, see for example, Kurasawa Aiko, "Nihon Gunseika no Jawa ni okeru Eiga Kōsaku" [Japanese film propaganda in Java 1942–1945], "Tōnan Ajia: Rekishi to Bunka" 18 (1989): 41–60. Kurasawa was one of several academics who were consultants for the documentary.

²¹ For details on the atrocities, see for example, Shigeru Sato, War, *Nationalism and Peasants Java Under the Japanese Occupation, 1942–45* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1994); and St Sularto, D Rini Yunarti, and Irwan Suhanda, *Konflik di balik proklamasi: BPUPKI, PPKI, dan kemerdekaan* [The conflict behind the proclamation: BPUPKI, PPKI, and independence] (Jakarta: Buku Kompas, 2010), 72–79.

mother at the age of five, leaving her with a sense of abandonment, even as she raised her own three children in Canada. The director, appearing as the central character in the first section, makes her way to Taiwan in 2005 in search of Ru Wen's biological mother and to find answers to questions that have haunted the family. Overcoming language barriers and the sense of alienation that can accompany diasporic return visits, Hsiung eventually discovers her biological grandmother, and persuades her own mother to travel to Taiwan for the first time in four decades to reunite with her birth family. Ru Wen and her mother take centre-screen in the subsequent section of the film as the family reconciles, reconstructing the past events that led to the separation. It turns out that in 1965 Ru Wen's parents divorced, due in large part to the father's gambling and addiction problems.²² The father sold the children to repay debts, and the mother/grandmother was forced to track down and buy back all her children, except for one—Ru Wen. Grand/mother suffers a stroke in 2013, but the film's overall tone is one of reconciliation, healing, and sacrifice—especially when the film reveals in a voiceover that the grandmother had in fact tracked down Ru Wen in the 1960s, but watching from afar, deliberately kept her distance as she thought that her daughter would have a much better life with her new foster mother.

Tokyo Legacy is an outlier from among the eight films in that it does not focus on diaspora, migrations, or families, but the movement of the city of Tokyo through its recovery from World War II to its rise as one of the world's preeminent megalopolises. The documentary displays considerable breadth in guiding viewers on a fast-paced and eclectic tour of Tokyo's history from 1945 to the present, covering politics, economics, popular culture, and scandals. If prime ministers such as Yoshida Shigeru, Kishi Nobusuke, Ikeda Hayato, and Tanaka Kakuei make appearances, so do Hello Kitty, the famed manga artist and animator Tezuka Osamu, the wrestler Rikidōzan, who was supremely popular in the 1950s, and Lan Lan and Kang Kang, the two giant pandas who arrived at Tokyo's Ueno Zoo from China in 1972 to commemorate normalization of relations between the two countries.²³ This range is potentially dizzying, but the film smoothly weaves together contemporary and archival footage with an array of interviews with academics and industry figures, leading viewers through the intricacies of the Bubble Economy and its collapse to the preparations for the 2020/2021 Tokyo Olympics. The talking heads range in the logic and coherence of their views; as a result, as the film moves closer to the present, the increasing proliferation of sweeping

²² Taiwan's first adoption policies were not implemented until 1973. For details see, Lai Yue-Mi, "Shōuyǎng xīnzhì xià bèi shōu értóng quán'ì bǎohù xīn yìtí zhī tàntǎo" [New Issues Regarding the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Adopted Children under the New System], *Shèqū fāzhǎn jìkān* 156 (2016): 113–126.

²³ For details, see for example, Ken Kawata, "Zoological Gardens of Japan," in *Zoo and Aquarium History: Ancient Animal Collections to Zoological Gardens*, ed. Vernon Kisling (Boca Raton: CRC Press, 2001), 315.

generalizations about “Japanese” traits from some interview subjects and the voiceover narration undermine the evident effort invested into the historical research for the film.

Entanglements

All the films contain evidence of laudable background research, deft fusion of archival and contemporary footage, and for the most part, compelling personal stories. They are filled with insistent and constant entanglements of mobility and immobility manifested in specific forms of migrations and memories, diasporas and dreams, families and friends, development projects and political dramas, and clichés and *idées fixes*. After viewing these films, I was left with the distinct sense that while seeing immobility as an area of lacuna that sits apart from mobility in a countervailing position is a useful start,²⁴ extending the discussion to not only acknowledge but embrace the entanglements would further the analysis of these antimonious elements.

The actual conditions required to create, maintain, monitor, and analyze quantum entanglements are far more complex than the metaphorical invocation I use here, but in short, two objects once entangled become one by sharing the same wave functions, with the properties becoming interdependent.²⁵ Both objects are in states of superposition (the potential to be dead or alive, plus or minus, heads or tails), until a measurement (e.g., of spin angular momentum) is taken. Upon observation, the particle switches from superposition to positive or negative rotation, and in that instant the other entangled object becomes the opposite regardless of the distances between, as they are the same object occupying the same space. While Einstein called this “spooky action at a distance” to critique the absurdity of a non-localized causal chain, there is no transmission of information from point A to B at faster than light speed, since the two objects are not distinct. There are additional details and phenomena, such as types of spin (singlet, doublet, triplet, and radical pairs that oscillate between singlet and triplet), direction of polarization, and entanglement sudden death (ESD) that leads to a rapid and irreversible decay of the entanglement, but as a metaphor, quantum entanglements allow the analysis of the mobilities and immobilities that infuse a concept or a category that might at first glance intersect only with mobility.

For example, other than *Tokyo Legacy*, the other seven films deal with diaspora, which by the very definition of the term, require both mobility

²⁴ Kerilyn Schewel, “Understanding Immobility: Moving Beyond the Mobility Bias in Migration Studies,” *International Migration Review* 54, no. 2 (2020): 328–355.

²⁵ For an overview of the concept aimed at cross-disciplinary readerships, see for example, Jed Brody, *Quantum Entanglement* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2020). See also, Karol Życzkowski, et al., “Dynamics of quantum entanglement,” *Physical Letters A* 65, no. 1 (2001): 1–11.

(migration to another place from a homeland) and immobility (habitation in one place long enough to become involved with a community of co-ethnics in another country) to exist.²⁶ The films also tackle to varying degrees variables and constants across generations within the same family, whether it is an abandonment trauma that remains static and unaddressed until a trip of research or an activism that allows for some degree of resolution (*Abandoned*, *Far East Deep South*, *Geographies of Kinship*, *Kim Il-Sung's Children*, *Sing Me a Lullaby*).

Then there are the persistent stereotypes and clichés that present immobility in the content of the ideas and mobility through time and across linguistic and cultural contexts. *Tokyo Legacy* features among its multitude of interviews one with Jie Ae Han, a Korean owner of a 2D café in the Shin-Okubo area of Tokyo, where there is a Koreatown. She speaks of Tokyo being a city of opportunity for immigrants or anyone with ideas, but the film is nearly insistent in its elision of the fact that Rikidōzan, the wrestler who was the proxy symbol of masculinity for Japan in the aftermath of defeat in World War II, was in fact born a Korean named Kim Sin-Rak. Kim initially arrived in Japan as a sumo wrestler in 1939 and was adopted in 1940 by the stable master and given a fabricated Japanese name and background.²⁷ While he obtained Japanese citizenship in 1951, the elision of this story of colonialism, racism, and diaspora from Tokyo's history as told in an English-language documentary is a recursion of the erasure and denial of Zainichi in popular accounts of contemporary history in Japan itself. The same film features assertions of “the creativity of the Japanese,” by the founder and director of Yokohama Museum of Tin Toys, Kitahara Teruhisa, who has been repeating this statement as an explanation of creativity since at least the 1990s. It is of course not that there is any shortage of creativity in Japan, but attributing membership in an ethnic group or race as a cause for creativity seems an example of problematic logic (i.e., not all Japanese end up becoming manga artists or robotics engineers). More importantly, it shows how the static appeal of the cliché can in fact allow it to move across linguistic and cultural contexts precisely due to its simplicity and superficiality.

Truncated memories and traumatic separations also create stasis and thereby movement. In *Kim Il Sung's Children*, the interviewees in Poland,

²⁶ There are several other conditions required for transnational migrants to become diaspora. See Jonathan Grossman, “Toward a definition of diaspora,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 42, no. 8 (2019): 1263–1282.

²⁷ See Momota Mitsuo, *Chichi Rikidōzan* [My father Rikidōzan] (Tokyo: Keibunsha, 1983); Tanaka Keiko, *Otto Rikidōzan no Dōkoku* [My husband Rikidōzan] (Tokyo: Futabasha, 2003); and Okamura Masashi, *Rikidōzan to Nihonjin* [Rikidōzan and the Japanese] (Tokyo: Seikyūsha, 2002). Momota, who features in the film in several interview clips, was one of the sons from Rikidōzan's second wife, while Tanaka was the third wife. Rikidōzan's Korean ethnicity was openly reported in newspapers in 1940, although it became a taboo subject in later years. Tonomura Masaru, *Zainichi Chōsenjin Shakai no Rekishigakuteki Kenkyū: Keisei, Kōzō, Hen'yō* [Historical study of Zainichi Korean society: formation, structure, transformation] (Tokyo: Ryokuin Shobō 2004), 197.

Bulgaria, and other places recall their childhood North Korean friends and students with enviable clarity despite the passage of 60 to 70 years. In *Now Is the Past* and *Abandoned*, conversations in the streets between the director, translator, and the elderly trigger long-buried memories, wounds, and songs from World War II. Even if neuron networks require constant maintenance and usage for memories to be retained, even people without hyperthymesia can instantaneously recall events and lyrics from suppressed corners of the brain. In *Geographies of Kinship* and *Sing Me a Lullaby*, adoptees who cannot recall their parents with clarity still draw on the fragments of childhood memories to fuel return trips to South Korea and Taiwan in search of explanations. The immutability of memories perfectly ambered by trauma eventually enables their mobility through time and space, across the screen and into viewers' minds.

The entanglement of constants and variables, immobilities and mobilities is also evident in the diffusion of specific policies. For example, the application of film as a propaganda tool, whether as *kulturfilm* of 1920s Germany, "national policy films" of Japan in the 1930s, or propaganda newsreels in Japanese occupied Indonesia of the 1940s, was fuelled by a clear and immobile aim—to shape minds and win hearts, regardless of the reality, which in turn fuelled the transmission and diffusion of this media across the Japanese Empire from the 1920s to the 1940s.²⁸

Conclusion

When a memory, policy, or a cliché moves across time and space, the causal chain is not instantaneous and various individuals and organizations in different time periods and locales do not share the same wave function. This means that the application of quantum entanglements to the study of mobilities/immobilities remains metaphorical given the inapplicability of quantum nonlocality or action at a distance. But the documentaries reviewed depict with clarity how the inseparable interactions of movement and stasis serve as engines for memories that erupt after decades of dormancy, or stereotypes displaying persistent motilities across time and space.

²⁸ For precedents and parallels on the use of film as a political tool within the Japanese Empire, see for example, Pae Pyŏng-uk [Bae Byoung wook], "1920-nyŏndae chŏnban Chosŏn Ch'ongdokbu sŏnjŏn yonghwa chejak kwa sangyŏng [The production and screening of the Government General of Korea's propaganda films in the first half of the 1920s], *Chibang-sa wa chibang munhwa* 9, no. 2 (2006): 183–239; Misawa Mamie, *Zhī mìn dì xià de "yīn mù": Tàiwān zōng dū fú diàn yǐng zhēng cè zhī yán jiū (1895–1942)* [The "Silver Screen" in the colony: film policies of the Government General of Taiwan, 1895–1942] (Taipei: Qianwei chubanshe, 2002); Teshigawara Akira, "Ajiataihei-yō-sen-ki ni okeru Nihon no tai-Futsuin Bunka Kōsaku: tai-Futsuin Eiga Kōsaku to shite no Nihon Eiga Jōei ni tsuite" [Japanese cultural advancement to French Indochina through a movie distribution strategy], *Gengo, chūiki bunka kenkyū* 27 (2021): 403–422; and Imamura Shōhei, *Sensō to Nihon Eiga* [War and Japanese film] (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1986), 297–298.

The additional irony is that we often see humans as fully sentient beings with multiple emotions and labyrinthine histories coursing through them only when they are corralled in the relative immobility of the screen, rather than moving through the peripheries of our own lives. These films in turn allow the world outside the temporal and spatial borders of running times and screen frames to pour in and seep out through the immobility of the screen. We travel to far places to sit immobile in screening rooms, while our minds race like astral projections over time and space. Thus, to know mobility is to appreciate its inextricable and quantum entanglements with immobility.

The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada, April 2022



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BOOK REVIEWS

MARITIME ASIA VS. CONTINENTAL ASIA: National Strategies in a Region of Change. By *Shiraishi Takashi*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2021. x, 217 pp. (Tables, figures.) US\$75.00, cloth. ISBN 978-1-62637-945-9.

In reviewing academic writings, one gets tempted to criticize the outdatedness of their empirical contents. Whatever the fault for the lethal delay in production, original and in-depth analysis could breathe new life into outdated empirical material. Unfortunately, this book fails to offer fresh new perspectives.

The introduction briefly discusses the shortcomings of realist theories and the realist bias in the discussions of hegemonic shifts. The author, Shiraishi Takashi, instead employs analytical “eclecticism,” staying away from hypothesis testing within a single theoretical paradigm. Shiraishi also warns against too much preoccupation with institutions and instead calls for more attention to be paid to key individual leaders.

Chapter 1 presents an overview of the key trends that characterize the ongoing shift in the global power balance. Nothing the author presents here is new. Shiraishi offers the following key variables to be considered for analysis: the relative decline of the United States and other developed countries, the rise of China, how a rising China is perceived, the coming of the “G-zero world,” the middle-income trap for emerging economies, and the rising expectations of the urban middle class. One important argument made by the author is that the United States (and the G7 developed world) does not have much time left to exercise political leadership in the rule-making for future global governance.

In chapter 2 Shiraishi discusses US strategy towards Asia from the post-Cold War to the Obama period and Chinese strategy towards its neighbours and the broader Indo-Pacific. The author’s analysis of China is well balanced, treading a middle ground in the polarized debate (often found in American academia/policy circles) between the China specialists who see numerous weaknesses in China’s ascent and the geostrategic realists who advocate strong containment against China.

Chapter 3 introduces Southeast Asia’s internal diversity at regional, national, and subnational levels, focusing on ethno-religious compositions, growth, urbanization, and income distribution. Key countries’ strategies are discussed, fusing the grand system-level analysis from chapter 1 with an analysis of unique national and domestic factors. The focus of this chapter is a discussion of how post-Asian economic crisis economic reforms and

democratic transitions have interacted in each country and how the prevailing patterns shape that country's relationship with China.

Finally, in chapter 4 Shiraishi discusses Japan's place in the region. Its development focus in East Asia left a network of production that had to endure a major restructuring after the Asian economic crisis. The growing geopolitical rivalry between China and the United States offered an opportunity to realign the Japanese strategy with Obama's Rebalancing to Asia strategy. Seeing Japan as a capable middle power, the author argues it should engage in the politics of power and balancing with the fundamental goal of transforming the US-centred hub-and-spokes system into a network of alliances. On international economic policy, it should play an active role in setting the rules of economic cooperation and free trade based on market liberalization (191–192).

The book is based on four lectures the author gave in Kyoto between May and November 2014. The author's "focus on long-term national strategy alongside the structures and systems of state" (ix) was supposed to minimize the hardship of shooting a moving target when writing about current affairs. Discussion of the long-term strategies of the regional states is placed in the context of the growing geopolitical competition between the United States and China, which by now has become more pronounced than it was at the time of the author's writing. Analysis of the "structures and systems" of state gives nuances to the explanation of the more-or-less hedging regional states under the allegedly bifurcating international system. Perhaps this domestic analysis is where the author could add value, but his strength varies across different states of Southeast Asia. On Indonesia (148–157), for example, the author is smooth, recalling major events without referring to journalistic reports, and offering useful insights. On Thailand (124–133) and Myanmar (133–142), the author relies on the works of other Japanese scholars but adds little to old journalistic commentaries.

The speech-based production of this book has resulted in inconsistent organization, despite some revisions. Some chapters have more rigorous academic referencing, while others have far fewer notes, and there are problematic instances of missing sources for direct quotes (54, 81). The alleged focus on individual leaders (declared in the introduction) is largely forgotten in the following chapters.

One good way to read this book is to excavate the author's predictions and check them against the actual turn of events. In analyzing US President Barack Obama's Pivot (Rebalance) to Asia strategy, the author foresaw trilateralization of the US alliances with Japan and Australia and further growth of networked security partnerships around this core (57). The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (adding India to the three) is not far off the author's forecast. The author's skepticism about the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) playing a robust role in regional security affairs (103) amid the growing Sino-US rivalry was also on target.

Had the book been published in 2016, it would have offered good foresight, although it still would have missed the turbulence in US policy during the Trump administration. By 2021, the book's sound foresights have become realities, and the questions it raises, like about the prospect for Myanmar after the 2015 elections, have been answered in a rather drastic way by the coup in early 2021. We see now that the Biden administration largely draws its Asia policy from the Trump administration's Indo-Pacific strategy. In hindsight, listening to the author's original lectures in 2014 would have been an exciting experience.

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THE NICHE DIPLOMACY OF ASIAN MIDDLE POWERS. *Foreign Policies of the Middle Powers. Edited by Brendan M. Howe. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2021. xi, 148pp. (Figures.) US\$90.00, cloth. ISBN 978-1-7396-2483-3.*

In the edited book *The Niche Diplomacy of Asian Middle Powers*, Brendan M. Howe and the chapter writers seek to make a conceptual and empirical contribution to the growing literature on Asian middle powers and their impact on security and economic issues. The book provides a different perspective to the study of Asian middle powers by associating their behaviour to humanitarianism and the concept of human security.

The literature on Asian security was until recently dominated by the role of the great powers while little attention was given to the perspective and influence of middle power states. Moreover, the study of middle powers was for too long limited to Western conceptual approaches applied repeatedly to a series of well-known case studies that include Canada and Australia while the notion of “middlepowerhood” was insufficiently theorized and studied empirically from an East Asian perspective. In recent years, various academics, including Lee Ji Yun, Sarah Teo, and Andrew Carr, have focused their research on the role of Asian middle powers. This concise and timely book is therefore part of an attempt at filling concurrent research gaps by studying the behaviour of Asian middle powers through an alternative conceptual framework resulting from a different geographic location and epistemological outlook.

The Niche Diplomacy of Asian Middle Powers puts forward an Asian middle power model based on state behaviour rather than size, where actors focus “their niche diplomacy on regional humanitarianism” (3) and not on power balancing or bandwagoning strategies. The Asian middle power model builds extensively on the concepts of human security and non-traditional security and predicts that Asian middle powers are likely to focus their diplomatic efforts on “humanitarian and human-related policy-making,”

with a particular focus on Southeast Asia (11). This conceptual framework leads to the selection of Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand as case studies to the exclusion of Indonesia and Vietnam, as neither are defined in this project as so-called “new normative middle powers” (3). Indonesia is said to want to play a power balancing or bandwagoning role akin to Western middle powers while Vietnam’s success derives from its repressive political regime. While such classifications are debatable, one should also note the work of Ronald Behringer (not cited in this edited book) on the connection between (Western) middle powers and the human security agenda (*The Human Security Agenda: How Middle Power Leadership defied U.S. Hegemony*, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2012).

The Niche Diplomacy of Asian Middle Powers is based on good scholarship and solid research. The introduction and conclusion offer a conceptual overview of the middle power literature and how the concept should be revisited through East Asian perspectives, while the four case studies are rich in content, full of insights and relevant information. The chapter writers switch comfortably from in-depth historical reviews of foreign policy making to the latest economic and security initiatives adopted by their respective countries of study, including responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. The empirical chapters also explore the economic-security nexus and cut across domestic and international politics. This is all significant when studying the foreign-policy initiatives of middle powers, which lack access to overwhelming military might to influence the outcome of events.

Some shortcomings should be mentioned, however. First, the Asian middle power model is discussed in chapter 1, yet it is inconsistently applied throughout the different case studies. While all the chapter writers classify their countries of study as middle powers, the conceptual discussion could have been further elaborated and deepened based on the empirical findings. The case studies shed light on the adoption of non-traditional security policies but insufficiently link such initiatives to the notion of “middlepowerhood,” creating a disconnect between the conceptual and empirical parts of the edited volume. Second, the inclusion of an alternative case study could have strengthened the overall discussion by contrasting the so-called “new normative middle powers” to one middle power still driven by power balancing or bandwagoning considerations. On that note, one may also question the extent to which the behaviour of Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan truly derives from humanitarian rather than geopolitical concerns.

Irrespective of these limitations, *The Niche Diplomacy of Asian Middle Powers* challenges some standard assumptions regarding the role of middle powers in the region and introduces a conceptual lens to focus on their humanitarian objectives, especially in Southeast Asia. The book convincingly examines the importance of Asian middle powers and the impact of their normative foreign policy and niche diplomacy when studying the promotion of peace and human security. It serves as a reminder to all readers interested in Asian

security of the growing role of middle powers in an era still regarded as dominated by rising China-US rivalry that could ultimately lead to conflict.

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RALF EMMERS

WHERE GREAT POWERS MEET: America and China in Southeast Asia. By *David Shambaugh*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. xx, 326 pp. (Tables, maps, figures, B&W photos.) US\$29.95, cloth. ISBN 978-0-19-091497-4.

David Shambaugh's *Where Great Powers Meet* is a fine contribution to a spate of recent books focusing on China, Southeast Asia, and the US. His work is arguably the most policy and foreign policy (narrowly defined) oriented.

The central theme of the book is US-China competition for influence in Southeast Asia. Shambaugh organizes the book into seven chapters, with the real heart of the book to be found in chapters 3, 5, and 6, examining contemporary US and Chinese roles in Southeast Asia (3 and 5 respectively) and Southeast Asian encounters with the US and China (6). As the author notes, chapters 3 and 5 provide an analysis of Southeast Asia from an outside-looking-in perspective, whereas chapter 6 offers an inside-looking-out perspective. The book is based on extensive interviews covering almost all of Southeast Asia and relies on an exhaustive use of written materials. The basic argument is that while China's position in Southeast Asia has notably strengthened in recent years, the US still has a significant presence in the region. Each great power has unique strengths and weaknesses that it brings to the new "great game" in Southeast Asia. At least at the time of the book's writing, neither the US nor China was engaged in a direct tit-for-tat relationship with the other in Southeast Asia.

Among the strengths of the book are Shambaugh's extensive discussion of the full range of US security engagement with Southeast Asia (82–98) and his examination of the seeming failure of Chinese influence campaigns to increase trust towards China among Southeast Asians (159–162). Shambaugh concludes the book by arguing that in recent years, there has been a notable shift on the part of Southeast Asian states towards a (relatively) pro-Chinese position. He offers four scenarios for future patterns of US-China-Southeast Asian relations: further bandwagoning towards China; continued competitive coexistence; hard rivalry and polarization; and more neutral hedging. He makes recommendations for China and the US. China needs to sincerely listen and be attuned to what Southeast Asians want and are concerned about. The US needs to end its episodic engagement with Southeast Asia. It must pay attention and show up regularly.

There are many more insights Shambaugh brings out that make the book a significant source of information on the US-China-Southeast Asia

relationship. There are also elements of his analysis that bear further inquiry. If there are in fact very low levels of trust towards China by Southeast Asian countries, why then have most Southeast Asian states moved to more favourable policies towards China? Presumably this says something about the nature of state-society relations in Southeast Asian states, but how might this affect Southeast Asian states' policies towards China going forward? With his extensive discussion of US security ties with Southeast Asia and his statement that "China would need to substantially step up its game in the security and defense realm to begin to provide regional states with real alternatives to American weapons and training" (248), Shambaugh makes clear his view about the primacy of security (a realist approach to foreign policy). But this raises two issues. Many scholars (including at times Shambaugh himself) argue that the US approach to the world (and Southeast Asia) is too security- (and Pentagon-) focused. Are American security foci a reflection of the problem with US relations with Southeast Asia and not a source of strength? Moreover, as the quotation above indicates, Shambaugh envisions Southeast Asia dealing with considerable security threats. If the US does not help Southeast Asian states address these, China must do so. But are there threats? China's actions in the South China Sea and towards Vietnam in the past make China a security concern. But how serious is this concern? Is it all that pressing an issue for many Southeast Asian states? Even with US help, do they want to confront China? It seems that relative free-riding on the US will continue to be the default mode in Southeast Asian security affairs.

While there is much to learn from this book, there are some glaring factual errors. The two million Cambodians killed in the Khmer Rouge ethnocide were not half the population (47); the US bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade took place in 1999 and not 1997 (56); the EP-3 incident took place in April 2001, not May 2000 (58); Guangxi is not a landlocked Chinese provincial-level unit (220). The full dimensions of some of the facts presented are also not brought out. Shambaugh argues that the US investment presence in Southeast Asia is huge and an underappreciated asset for US influence in the region, with a cumulative stock of US\$334 billion (78). But on page 226 we are told that US investment in Singapore is \$288 billion. In other words, almost seven-eighths of US investment in Southeast Asia is in Singapore, suggesting that while the \$334 billion dwarfs China's approximately \$85 billion investment (168), China may be a larger investor in many Southeast Asian nations than the US. The US advantage in overall investment is somewhat deceptive. Similarly, while emphasizing poll findings that point to very low levels of trust for China in Southeast Asia (19.6 percent trust China, 162), Shambaugh fails to also emphasize that the US isn't all that much better regarded (27.3 percent trust the US). Again, this may suggest Southeast Asians may have trouble trusting great powers in general, simply because they are great powers and act according to the power's interests.

Events since the publication of this book support Shambaugh's argument

for seeing US-China competition in Southeast Asia as a long-term situation. How will COVID-19, the Philippine presidential election, China's seeming partial retrenchment on aspects of the Belt and Road Initiative, and Southeast Asian perceptions of the January 6, 2021 near coup in the United States affect that competition? It is to be hoped that Shambaugh continues to update us.

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DAVID BACHMAN

BUDDHIST TOURISM IN ASIA. *Contemporary Buddhism. Edited by Courtney Bruntz and Brooke Schedneck. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2020. ix, 255 pp. US\$68.00, cloth. ISBN 978-0-8248-8118-4.*

In the realm of tourism, Buddhist attractions draw both believers and non-believers. Religion is deeply entrenched in society, and for any person participating in cultural tourism, it is necessary to make references to religion to understand the values, practices, habits, heritage, and social life of the host society.

Adding up the populations of predominantly Buddhist countries, it is roughly estimated that there are more than 530 million Buddhists around the world. It is unsurprising that Buddhism in Asia is diverse in its manifestations, interpretations, and practices. It has been variously embraced, appropriated, and commercialized into tourism. This diversity—both in breadth and depth—is well covered in this collection.

The book has 12 chapters, including an introduction and cases from Singapore, India, Thailand, China, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, and Japan. The cases are organized into three broad sections, namely, “Buddhist Imaginaries and Place-Making,” “Secularizing the Sacred,” and “Commodification and its Consequences.” Organizing the chapters into these themes is not easy as each chapter could fit into the other themes as well. Regardless, the themes point to the salient issues embedded in Buddhist tourism (or in religious tourism, generally).

Courtney Bruntz and Brooke Schedneck, editors of the book, have provided a succinct introduction that maps the terrain in this volume. They highlight the theoretical issues behind each section, and describe the dominant features of individual chapters. The introduction helps the reader navigate through the contrasting chapters.

In the first section, David Geary shows how Buddhism has been imagined as “peaceful” when history (and current situations in Myanmar, India, and Sri Lanka, for that matter) shows otherwise. And what constitutes Buddhism is thrown into question, as John N. Mksic explores how Chinese folk religious practices and Buddhism are blended not only at the popular Tiger Balm Gardens in Singapore but also in wider Singaporean society. What constitutes Buddhism is subject to discussion even among believers.

The open interpretation of Buddhism is managed differently across Asia, whether that is to protect the religion, to secularize the sacred, or to commodify the religion and make it more attractive to tourists. Authorities in secular China and Singapore see religion as a cultural resource for tourism and economic development that is difficult to forego; Buddhism is easy to sell and is internationally recognized as a tourist product (Can-Seng Ooi, “Branding and the accreditation approach: Singapore,” in *Destination Brands: Managing Place Reputation*, eds. N. J. Morgan, A. Pritchard, and R. Pride, Oxford: Elsevier, 2011, 185–196).

So, will Buddhist interpretations and practices be more strongly policed and regulated in Buddhist countries? Chapter 3 on Thailand, by Brooke Schedneck, provides fascinating insights into how domestic and international visitors in temples behave differently, and are perceived differently by monks. What is considered appropriate behaviour by Thai monks, local laypersons, and international (Western) visitors differs; many monks criticize the Thai public for their lack of interest in Buddhist teachings and focus on merit making, while these monks praise some foreign visitors for their desire to calm their minds and improve their lives. The openness of Buddhism, as Schedneck points out, is defended by monks and that openness embraces differences and permits constant contestations in temple spaces. Arguably, this ambiguity and vagueness in the faith allows for the myriad of believers and visitors to feel included in their contrasting interpretations of the religion.

There are three cases that address China in this collection. The absence in these chapters of any extensive discussion concerning the communist country’s politics and contradictions is notable. Were the authors navigating their scholarship in a politically sensitive arena? The chapters are varied, as they deal with how a sacred Buddhist mountain is invented or claimed (chapter 4, by Justin R. Ritzinger), with the need to modernize Buddhist practices (chapter 7, by Courtney Bruntz), and in finding the middle way between religious practices and commodification (chapter 9, by Brian J. Nichols). Bruntz comes closest to addressing the political circumstances in China by presenting the strategies used by Chinese monks to disseminate the Dharma in new technological and engaging ways, so as to build Buddhist soft power in China. Implicit of the strained circumstances in Tibet, authorities in Ladakh have used Tibetan Buddhism to create the city’s unique selling points (chapter 11, by Elizabeth Williams-Oerberg). The Ladakh example contrasts to the earlier China examples; readers may then draw comparisons between the development of Buddhist tourism in China and the persecution of members of Falun Gong, a banned Buddhist sect, and to the political situation in Tibet.

This collection highlights and documents the variety of interpretations and imaginaries of Buddhism. It addresses dominant tourism-in-society issues, including commodification, bastardization of culture, and authenticity. This volume differs from many other tourism studies books that focus on

business school disciplines. The insights come from diverse social science perspectives and are aligned more closely to contemporary Buddhism studies. As an anthropologist and also a tourism studies researcher, I find the book refreshing, critical, and insightful. The editors have successfully reminded us that Buddhism and tourism practices in Asia must be understood in layered and nuanced ways. This book indicates how a religion has become a commercial resource for tourism, and how tourism has been appropriated, adopted, and embraced for religious practices.

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CAN-SENG OOI

BEYOND PAN-ASIANISM: Connecting China and India, 1840s–1960s.
Edited by Tansen Sen and Brian Tsui. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021.
viii, 494 pp. (Tables.) US\$70.00, cloth. ISBN 9780190129118.

To do justice to all the excellent contributions in this rich, multi-faceted, ambitious 500-page edited volume is a challenging task. As the title suggests, the editors aimed at moving beyond the oft-cited political unity and solidarity to which pan-Asianism supposedly had aspired in the face of Western imperialism. Instead, *Beyond Pan-Asianism* refocuses scholarly attention in two ways. First, the volume reduces the geographical lens from all of Asia to China and India. And second, it expands the focus from the voices of political leaders to a wider cast of religious, philosophical, literary, and political writers, and of journalists and newspapermen, private diplomats, and merchants. Fortunately, this long-needed refocusing relies greatly on extensive documentary and archival research undertaken by all contributors.

The reader of this volume will encounter a rich overview of the intellectual world of Chinese and Indian nationalists. While all these protagonists roughly fall under the pan-Asianist umbrella, their writings and activities reveal conflicting and even incoherent agendas. Hence *Beyond Pan-Asianism* corrects past scholarly perceptions of solidarity and unity by stressing bilateral competition and mutual suspicions. At other times, however, the volume reveals how perceived cultural commonalities and continuities emerged in opposition to Western military power and intellectual influence. Yet, the writings and activities of all these pan-Asianists were still deeply embedded in contemporaneous global discourses on colonialism, anti-imperialism, nation-state building, and various alternatives to Western modernity.

Beyond Pan-Asianism focuses on a period that witnessed not only the highpoint and decline of British imperialism but also the reconnection of India and China through imperial networks of information, communication, and travel. The book's subtitle suggests that the Opium War of 1839–1842 forms the volume's starting point, given that the drug of opium had connected South Asia and East Asia economically for over a century, with

the Sino-Indian War over Tibet in 1962, which marked the collapse of pan-Asian solidarity, being a natural endpoint. Yet, while these periodical boundaries generally make sense, they play a less pronounced role in the overall structure of the volume. The editors wisely decided to divide *Beyond Pan-Asianism* into four thematic parts: literary visions, travel writings, personal encounters, and networks.

Part I on literary visions focuses exclusively on Chinese visions of India, from hostile interpretations of Indian complicity with British imperialism in China's treaty ports (Adhira Mangalagiri) to interpretations of shared religious and philosophical traditions in opposition to Western concepts (Gal Gvili and Viren Murthy). Part II on travel writing includes both sides, with chapters on late Qing travel reports from British India (Zhang Ke), on Hindi-language, pan-Asianist writings about China from the 1880s to the 1920s (Kamal Sheel), and on the sympathetic writings of north Indian intellectuals and vernacular journalists about late Qing China in crisis (Anand A. Yang). Part III centers on personal encounters, like Rabindranath Tagore's conversations with a select number of Chinese philosophers during the interwar period (Yu-Ting Lee), Kuomintang-Congress cultural relations before the late 1940s (Brian Tsui), the Sikh diaspora in Hong Kong (Yan Cao), and Chinese Islamic good will missions to South Asia during the Pacific War (Janice Hyeju Jeong). Finally, Part IV deals with the emergence of networks, such as those by exiled Indian nationalists in Republican China (Madhavi Thampi), Kuomintang relations with British India during the Pacific War (Liao Wen-shuo), Indian and Chinese shipping businesses competing with their British counterparts in Asia (Anne Reinhard), and PRC and ROC spying in Kalimpong from 1947 to 1962 (Tansen Sen).

This wide range of topics covered in this volume pushes the door wide open to a new, multi-levelled interpretation of pan-Asianism beyond the well-known political circuits—be it the Anti-Imperialist League of 1927 or the Asian Relations Conference in 1947. Pan-Asianist activities transcended the circles of self-appointed leaders of national liberation movements—be it the Kuomintang in China or Congress in India. It established deep roots among intellectuals and literate urbanites, who regularly consumed print products published locally and in vernacular languages. On the one hand, this helped to create political mass support for the anti-colonial movements; while on the other hand, also complicating and even undermining their coherence along ideological or religious lines, as seen in the Kuomintang-CCP split or the conflict between the Congress and the Muslim League.

While the editors organized the deeply researched contributions in a sensible manner, many of the chapters are narrow case studies. Hence, *Beyond Pan-Asianism* takes stock of the current state of research, while also formulating an ambitious agenda for the future. Given the development arch from the 1840s to the 1960s, how did popular images of the other change over time? To what degree did immigrants (Indians in treaty ports and

Chinese in South Asia) influence popular perceptions in the host country? How did intellectual visions of commonalities in history, politics, philosophy, literature, art, etc., develop during the span of 120 years, and particularly when relations between the newly created nation states of Republican India and Communist China first blossomed and then collapsed over the course of the 1950s? What influence did British imperial trading, communication, and travel networks have in creating contacts in the first place, and then also controlling and maybe even inhibiting them? And, finally, how would the story look if we included Japan, Southeast Asia, Persia, and the Middle East?

Beyond Pan-Asianism is an inspiring collection of 14 deeply researched case studies. It will hopefully spur more research among area specialists, literary scholars, and historians into both the Sino-Indian relationship outside the well-studied circles of nationalist leaders and Pan-Asianist circles in general.

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LORENZ M. LÜTHI

CHINA'S ENERGY SECURITY AND RELATIONS WITH PETROSTATES: Oil as an Idea. By Anna Kuteleva. London: Routledge, 2021. 164 pp. (Illustrations.) US\$160.00, cloth; US\$50.00, ebook. ISBN 9781003128045.

No other raw material has been as critical for national security as oil, a highly political commodity in international affairs, and a primary driving force for international cooperation and negotiation. With this in mind, author Anna Kuteleva explores China's energy relations with its two neighbouring oil and gas suppliers, Kazakhstan and Russia, in her seminal book *China's Energy Security and Relations with Petrostates: Oil as an Idea*. Employing the lens of discursive construction, Kuteleva argues that the bilateral energy relationship is dynamic and interactive in nature in the sense that discursive practices by powerful agents play a supremely significant role in the formation of bilateral relations. In her view, a state's conceptualization of oil in relation to energy security in its official discourse constructs not only bilateral relations but also national identities. This constructive perspective offers an alternative analytical approach to conventional energy relations studies.

As for her theoretical framework, the author begins with a critique of classic IR theories in international energy research, realism, and liberalism, followed by an elaboration of her constructivist approach to energy relations. She counters the misleading logics of the two approaches—focusing on incentives driven by energy security—by arguing that security issues related to energy are by no means solely founded on material reality, but instead are framed by powerful agents. To bridge the gap, this book provides an alternative approach by exploring how various energy issues are narrated

as matters of security by agents. For instance, by analyzing the intertextual interaction of official and socio-cultural discourses such as government documents and media reports in the three countries, the author illustrates how the notion of energy security is constructed as a fact. Further, drawing on constructive and poststructuralist insights, Kuteleva reveals that agents' identity matters in international energy politics, as identity is seen as a causal variable to explain the logic of appropriateness in energy relations.

As to the content, this book unfolds along two lines, i.e., China's energy paradigm and its bilateral relations with Russia and Kazakhstan. In China's energy paradigm, a stable and sufficient energy supply is essential to development, and so a top priority for China's energy security. Besides, China's energy paradigm is binary, and driven by energy security. At the domestic level, its goal remains to pursue energy self-reliance, with an emphasis on a reliable and self-sufficient production capability. At the international level, China's strategy highlights its win-win cooperation with oil-rich developing countries and champions the fair right to energy sources among developing countries. Other developing countries are viewed as allies who should defend their right to the availability of energy resources, while the Global North is seen as the "other," who should be held responsible for unequal international energy relations. On behalf of the Global South, China strives to be a trendsetter in international energy politics aimed at guarding global energy security. With regards to bilateral relations, on the one hand, China wishes to establish a strategic business partnership with the two other countries for mutual benefit and shared goals of development. On the other hand, Russia and Kazakhstan are vigilant in regards to China's dominant role in their energy sector and see it as a threat to their dominion in international energy politics.

All in all, one of the strengths of this book is that it systemically identifies agents through discourse analysis. The author captures what and how diverse identities are constructed by states to sort out intricate energy relations. Specifically, the realities of energy production and consumption are treated as material referents to label identity as they gain meaning only in the process of narrative-making by agents. In unraveling the agent identities, Kuteleva focuses on narrative-attributing to energy sources, including what is energy/oil and who are "we" and "they" as related to energy/oil? In addition, considering what "we" and "they" are going to do with energy is proposed as a way of examining identity formation, which places it in the context of international relations practice and offers a roadmap for studying energy relations.

This book is also laudable for its intertextual analysis and the author's proficiency in intercultural communication. Kuteleva not only examines official discourse but also cultural discourse, such as films, music, and, poetry in the social contexts of China, Russia, and Kazakhstan, which can embody the interaction of various discourses and the dynamic discursive

construction of the states' identities. Furthermore, she is an accomplished bilingual researcher and well acquainted with three countries' socio-cultural contexts, granting her an unparalleled advantage for comprehensive analysis.

As to limitations, this study could have been strengthened in the following ways. The book only addresses oil, a conventional fossil fuel, in examining international energy relations. But in the age of carbon neutrality, renewable energy should also be taken as a major player in current energy politics. Also, more linguistic analytical frameworks, such as discursive strategies for identity construction and their linguistic realizations, could have been employed as text analysis instruments, which would be more revealing than content analysis. As a whole, this book stands out for its distinctive analytical approach to international relations studies. It disentangles interwoven energy relations and clarifies China's orientation in global energy politics by unpacking the multiple symbolic meanings attributed to oil. It provides a valuable referent for international energy relations studies.

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CENTRAL ASIA: A New History from the Imperial Conquests to the Present. By Adeeb Khalid. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021. xviii, 556 pp. (Tables, figures, maps, B&W photos, illustrations.) US\$35.00, cloth. ISBN 978-0-691-16139-6.

Readers seeking an engagingly written overview of the last two hundred years of Central Asian history need look no further. The author, Adeeb Khalid, who is a professor of history at Carleton College, and who has previously published monographs on Uzbekistan and on Islam in post-Soviet Central Asia, provides an accessible narrative that is solidly grounded in the latest relevant scholarship. This book demands no special expertise from its readers and might very suitably be assigned to an upper-division undergraduate course. At the same time, it should prove useful to scholars who may be more familiar with one or another aspect of Central Asian history, but who would like a better general understanding of developments across the wider region. A very important feature of this book is that it includes consideration of the Chinese-administered Xinjiang region, as well as the post-Soviet states of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.

Central Asia, as a whole, is not an easy region to research or to write about. To begin with, the language demands are daunting. Khalid's proficiency in this regard is reflected in the range of works he cites. In addition to the extensive number of English-language works referenced in the notes, one finds many Russian-language works, as well as works written in French, Italian, Chinese, Uzbek, Uyghur, and other languages including the now extinct language, Chagatai. Additionally, Central Asia's position,

geographic and otherwise, vis-à-vis the Russian Empire/Soviet Union, the Qing Empire/China, the British Empire, and the Islamic world, means that developments within the region can often best be understood in relation to political, intellectual, religious, social, and economic trends emanating from the disparate territories that surround Central Asia. It is no wonder that Khalid concludes at one point that “there often seems to be a clear trade-off between accessibility and quality in works that survey the history of Central Asia” (530). Happily, we can count his contribution as an exception to the above rule, and no other authors have attempted to cover the same period and area.

Khalid’s decision to include Xinjiang in the narrative of modern Central Asian history is well justified. This reviewer is, as I suspect is the case with many readers of *Pacific Affairs*, more familiar with the history of Xinjiang than with the rest of Central Asia, and more familiar with China than with Russia/Soviet Union. Greater understanding of the western Central Asian and Russian/Soviet contexts helps illuminate a number of events in Xinjiang. Khalid’s depiction of the First Eastern Turkestan Republic (1933–1934) as a “Jadid republic” (254), for example, makes sense in light of his earlier skillful discussion of Jadidism, the Central Asian liberal reformist ideology, that competed with other more radical or conservative agendas.

For the period following the establishment of Chinese communist rule in Xinjiang in 1950, and especially after the Sino-Soviet split of the early 1960s, the value of including Xinjiang within the Central Asian narrative lies more in the comparison it provides of Soviet and Chinese Central Asia, than by the delineation of influences across regions. During the 1960s and 1970s Soviet and Chinese Central Asia were relatively cut off from each other, and although Chinese policies regarding the treatment of its “national minorities” were in theory based on the Soviet model, on the ground they differed substantially. Indeed, the comparison of the two administrative approaches may give as much valuable perspective on the Soviet and Chinese systems as it does on the two regions.

Once Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan each declared independence in 1990, the comparison with Xinjiang becomes all the more telling. The post-Soviet states have not fared uniformly well; each is affected by the varying circumstances of available resources, the severity of environmental degradation, and other issues, and all are to some degree hampered politically by differing degrees of corruption and authoritarianism. Nevertheless, Khalid concludes convincingly that, “[t]he Soviet past has been more of a blessing than a curse for the independent states of Central Asia” (474). Despite its many flaws, the federalist approach that guided Soviet policy ultimately resulted in the establishment of independent and legitimately Central Asian nation states.

The contrast with the fate of Xinjiang is expressed in the title of this book’s final chapter, “A Twenty-First-Century Gulag.” Khalid relates here

the tragic story of the systemic suppression of Islamic faith and cultural practices of Xinjiang's Central Asian folk, especially the Uyghurs, and their wide-spread incarceration in political re-education camps. Khalid also describes key features of the "high-tech totalitarianism" (496) that furthers the Chinese state policy of what he flatly calls "cultural genocide" (495, 502). If the policy of Sinicization in Xinjiang continues, as seems likely, there will in the future be less reason to include the Chinese-administered region in studies of Central Asia, but this book ably demonstrates that including it for the period covered is revelatory on a number of levels.

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RICHARD BELSKY

BUDDHISM AFTER MAO: Negotiations, Continuities, and Reinventions.

Edited by Ji Zhe, Gareth Fisher, and André Laliberté. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2019. vii, 355 pp. (Tables, figures, B&W photos.) US\$72.00, cloth. ISBN 978-0-8248-7734-7.

Buddhism after Mao is a long-awaited collection that has finally materialized more than four decades after Mao's death and the publication of Holmes Welch's *Buddhism under Mao* (Harvard University Press, 1972). Diligently following Welch's approach to the period between the late Qing and the Cultural Revolution, Ji, Fisher, and Laliberté state in the introduction that this volume focuses on Buddhist institutions, "from the beginnings of Buddhist revival in the early 1980s through the middle 2010s" (3).

Buddhist institutions "under" Mao and "post" Mao are not the same. The subject matter has changed from "temples, academies, and lay associations" for Welch's trilogy to "temples and monasteries, as places of worship and learning, as tourist sites, and as providers of philanthropy" for Ji, Fisher, and Laliberté (3). Moreover, the context has shifted from modernity and Maoism to that of globalization, neoliberalism, and an ever-expanding party-state. The volume fully recognizes new subject matter while defying an ahistorical portrait of a "new" Chinese Buddhism.

The authors ask: "How has Buddhism re-embedded itself into the Chinese political framework and social fabric, which themselves have been in full transformation since the beginning of the 1980s?" (7). The volume answers this question by examining three institutional aspects: politics, monastics, and space. The state is, by default, present in each of the three aspects. In response to the theoretical approaches to Chinese religions—Yang Fanggang's religious economy, Sun Yanfei's religious ecology, and Adam Chau's five "modalities of doing religion"—Ji, Fisher, and Laliberté propose to build their volume most strongly on Chau's model, as it shifts the analysis "from religion as a cognitive process to an action that one 'does'" (6), with the modification that it is institutions rather than individuals "doing" Buddhism.

While not all 12 contributors incorporate Chau's model, the volume as a whole provides findings on three institutional aspects in the post-Mao era. For the politics of Buddhism, as the state is near pervasive in civil society in China, Buddhist organizations, temples, monasteries, and collective charities together negotiate their post-Mao revivals amid evolving governmental regulations and corporatism. Further, Buddhist space is expanded in the expensive city of Shanghai through a charismatic and savvy abbot, invented over the Internet, and re-invented in the temple courtyard. Perhaps most surprising are the monastic initiatives to resume the tradition of transmission and ordinations, dating back hundreds or even a thousand years, that was disrupted under Mao, and to restart anew, with unprecedented proliferation, the institutional genre of Buddhist academies. In some ways, the state and space are analytical approaches shared across comparative religions, whereas genealogies, ordination, and monastic education concern unique models "of" and "for" Chinese Buddhism.

The book consists of an introduction and 11 chapters, which are sorted into three sections. Each chapter could be a stand-alone article. Part 1 is titled "Negotiating Legitimacy: Making Buddhism with the State," and of the four chapters, those by Laliberté and Nichols are the most institutional. Laliberté illustrates the "incorporation" relationship between the CCP and the Buddhist Association of China (BAC) during the Hu and Xi administrations, an unduly understudied subject. He offers a nuanced evaluation of, among other things, propaganda's effects on cross-Straits reunification that draws on cooperation with Taiwanese Buddhist associations. Nichols provides a typology of paths for temple revivals: first, the path of the "curators," the governmental, secular entities who seek to preserve temples as artifacts; second, the path of the "revivalists," the monastics, lay Buddhists, and worshippers who rebuild temples for religious concerns; and a third, hybrid path "forged through the necessary negotiations between the curators and revivalists" (78). Vidal's chapter is a case study of a Buddhist pilgrimage site, the island of Putuoshan (Mount Putuo). Through the lens of a local power holder, the sacred site of Putuoshan unfolds into a kaleidoscope of governmental administering boxes and a flow chart of donation money. McCarthy focuses on charity, using the Ren'ai Foundation in Beijing, and the life rescue (*fangsheng*) practice, which releases captive animals such as birds or fish, as two examples of "congruence" between charities and the party-state. The former is faith-based, civic minded, and partially secular, whereas the latter is "purely religious," concerned only with merit-making charity (*cishan*), and thus, controversial.

Part 2 is titled "Revival and Continuity: The Monastic Tradition and Beyond." The post-Mao monastic tradition strives to resume and revive the Buddhist orthodoxy. Campo surveys how Buddhist kinship through the private transmission of Dharma genealogies survived the interruption between 1957 and 1981. With substantial documentation of primary sources,

Campo argues that Tiantai and Chan kinships survived because of systematic transmission and prestigious genealogies, as well as by moving abroad to Hong Kong and the United States while still under Mao's rule. Bianchi documents the revived tradition of "triple platform ordination" (*santan dajie*) for both monks and nuns, and the "dual ordination" (*erbu sengjie*) for nuns. Restored ordinations are critical to the monastic status. At the same time, the trend towards standardization and uniformity seems to leave no space for diversity, such as *caigu*, the lay Buddhist women in southeast China, known as the "vegetarian women." Ashiwa and Wank coin the term "laynuns" for *caigu* and document their history and practice leading to the Xiamen local government's special recognition of the laynuns as "religious professionals" in 2012. They argue that the persistence of laynuns ties in to the powerful legend of Miaoshan in the Sinicization of Guanyin. Ji's chapter is an ambitious survey of the proliferation of Buddhist academies (*foxueyuan*) in the post-Mao era and provides insights into the dualism between "study" and "practice" in *sangha* education.

Part 3, "Reinventing the Dharma: Buddhism in a Changing Society," examines three "spaces" for Buddhism and their implications for Buddhism in China. Huang point to the success of the abbot in expanding Jing'an Temple in Shanghai as an example of temple agency. The existence of the somewhat tenured liminal space in the public courtyards of temples in Beijing answers the question of why Buddhists do not have underground movements as do Chinese Christians, according to Fisher. Travagnin examines the online ritual practices of Nanputuo Temple in the pre-pandemic era, and argues that the offline practice is nevertheless "higher" than the online one in the overall hierarchy.

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ZONING CHINA: Online Video, Popular Culture, and the State.

Information Policy Series. By Luzhou Li. Cambridge; London: The MIT Press, 2019. xv, 296 pp. (B&W photos.) US\$40.00, cloth. ISBN 978-0-262-04317-5.

Zoning China provides a comprehensive, rigorous, and enthralling analysis of the development of China's online video industry before 2014, and particularly the logic of cultural zoning in China's audiovisual industries, according to which online video has been subject to more lenient regulation than broadcast television. Author Luzhou Li situates her analysis of online video within a much broader historical—and intermedial—background, going as far back as the 1930s and 1940s while focusing primarily on the post-reform era. To put together her analysis, she draws on a wide array of methods and data, including participant observation of trade fairs, interviews with industry professionals and regulators, and discourse analysis of media

texts. The way she weaves her informants' riveting life histories into the political and economic analysis of China's creative industries not only adds to the appeal of the book, but also vividly shows how different actors resourcefully navigate the complicated and evolving regulatory regime in China and interact with broader political and economic forces to co-shape the online video industry.

Li's analysis contributes to a nuanced understanding of the "guerrilla policy" style that characterizes China's cultural policy making. A central question she tackles throughout the book is why the regulation of online video is lax, investigating whether it is due to the regulators' lack of will or to a lack of capability. Weighing plausible explanations on both sides, she leans more towards the former. To her, multiple factors contribute to the formation of the dual cultural sphere, including the different norms, expectations, and audiences associated with television vis-à-vis online video, as well as bureaucratic rivalry in a fragmentary regulatory regime; yet, most fundamentally, it is the Party-state's attempt to balance economic development and ideological control that gives rise to cultural zoning, a governmental logic that has been revisited and revised since 2014 with the tightening of China's ideological governance.

The book is organized according to chronological order and the dual structure of China's audiovisual industries. Chapter 2 takes a historical detour and sketches out the transformation of China's cultural sphere in broad strokes. Chapter 3 focuses on television drama production after 2000, when it became increasingly market-oriented due to cultural reform and the influx of private capital. The rest of the book concentrates primarily on the development of online video in China. The author traces the shifting configuration of telecommunications infrastructure, investment capital, and government regulations; in particular, Li examines the distinct trajectory of online video's development, which is bound up with piracy and online spoofing culture. Li then looks at the changing copyright regulations that have led online video sites to focus more on the acquisition of intellectual property rights and in-house (co-)production. The book ends with an acknowledgement of the tightening ideological control in the cultural sphere after 2014, leaving room for future inquiries into the post-2014 development of online video.

Li is very cautious in her invocation of the "duality" of cultural production in China; she perceptively maps out the interactions between the relatively formal and informal circuits of media production and, in the concluding chapter, points to the subtle variation within the broadcast television sector. That said, the emphasis on such duality understandably trades off some attention to the heterogeneity within each of the two domains, especially that of the online video industry. With the formalization of the industry and the concomitant concentration of ownership in the hands of a few tech giants, the extent to which online video still reflects a grassroots ethos

is open to discussion; in fact, it depends on which kind of online video(s) one is looking at. Against the mainstreaming of professionally generated content, newer niches and segments within the industry have taken shape and have continued to evolve. On the other hand, as broadcast television stations proactively ventured into the online sphere and created digital spin-offs, their digital productions have increasingly converged, both aesthetically and otherwise, with those made by professionalized online video sites. The continuity between broadcast television and online video warrants further scrutiny in the analysis, which would help strengthen the connection between chapters 2 through 3 and chapters 4 through 7.

Moreover, the fascinating title and cover of the book (an arresting snapshot of urban China juxtaposing skyscrapers and traditional-style bungalows) carry strong geographical and spatial connotations. However, the material spatiality and geographical implication of cultural zoning, albeit mentioned here and there, as in the analogy between cultural and economic zoning tactics, are not adequately addressed in the analysis. The formation of creative clusters within a handful of Chinese metropolises is, of course, not simply a function of national and local policy support, but of the market allocation of resources leveraged by tech giants and aspiring individuals. The geographical distribution of creative clusters further exacerbates the regional disparities in economic development. This trend plays out not only in online video, but also in other emerging sectors such as live-streaming and short-form video.

Overall, this book makes a timely contribution to existing studies of online video and visual culture in China and beyond. Comprehensive in scope and rich in detail, it lays the groundwork for further analysis of the entanglement between Chinese politics and popular culture after the mid-2010s.

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SHENG ZOU

THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY IN MAINLAND CHINA, TAIWAN AND HONG KONG: Sharp Power and its Discontents. *China Policy Series.* By **Andreas Fulda**. London; New York: Routledge [an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business], 2020. xvi, 245 pp. (Tables, graphs.) US\$39.95, paper. ISBN 978-0-367-33490-1.

Andreas Fulda's book is a new addition to the comparative democratization literature that addresses the democratic struggle experiences in three ethnic Chinese societies: the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong SAR, and Taiwan. Fulda uses these three case studies to examine to what extent the particular struggle for democratic transition could be achieved under the three totally different political systems: sustained authoritarian

communist China, decolonialized yet under authoritarian rule Hong Kong, and authoritarian capitalist Taiwan. Instead of the conventional democratic history analysis, Fulda's approach in this book is to compare four significant democratic efforts that occurred in each of the three states and chronicle their respective different fates.

The first critical question about the book is how effective these four efforts are as a way of contrasting the states' histories of democratic struggle. Fulda never provides any particular explanation as to why he chose to examine these particular democratic struggles. It is interesting to note the different starting points for each state's democratic movement: 1989 for China, 1984 for Hong Kong, and as early as 1969 for Taiwan. This demonstrates that the struggle for democracy in Taiwan began much earlier than in Hong Kong and China. The different broader political and social contexts that were accountable for the first rise of democratic struggles should have been explicitly elaborated by the author.

Such details are of great importance to the comparative analysis of democracy in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China, but unfortunately, Fulda does not grasp this and offers no sound theoretical reasons for why the first attempt at democratization took place so much earlier than the others, and why this was possible.

Fulda's ambition to generate what he calls theories of and for political change (TOPC) for a better understanding of the dynamics of the struggle for democracy as advanced by political activists is much appreciated. However, during the course of describing and analyzing the 12 cases, he seems not to be able to apply the TOPC to offer precise theoretical explanations as to which case, in which society, can be fully understood by which approach. Is it the anti-establishment approach, realistic radicalism approach, or trans-establishment approach that most effectively explains this? Without such theoretical elaboration and assessment, it is difficult to systematically verify the utility of the analytical vignettes in shedding light on the respective democratic struggles in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

In addition, for each of the three societies, Fulda discusses the selected four democracy struggles or efforts in historical sequence, but what was the relationship between the four movements? Were they unconnected and isolated events, or cumulative or even dialectic in nature? From the discourse in chapters 6, 8, and 10, the reader can detect that in China, the four movements were not connected in their struggles, objectives, and efforts, and that Hong Kong's democracy struggles were not well interconnected either; however, Taiwan's election-driven and political party democratic struggles were cumulative and accelerating. Furthermore, the reader can also surmise that under the sustained authoritarian rule after the 1989 mass-oriented Tiananmen democracy movement, China's sequential movements have become even more weakened and individualistic in the face of Beijing's tougher repressive control. The Hong Kong case, on the other hand, proves

the failure of a city-wide election strategy that later turned into a sequence of street demarcations ending in the 2014 violent Umbrella Movement. In Taiwan, by contrast, the movement's strategy shifted from individual or collective activists' efforts to nation-wide election tactics, from a new political party establishment to democratic consolidation through regime change, and even to a de-Sinicization push during the 2014 Sunflower Movement, aimed at deepening Taiwanese national consciousness.

In chapters 5, 7, and 9, Fulda hints at different external political limits to the various democratic struggles that took place in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. The struggle for democracy in China failed to produce any achievements due to the complete lack of civil society and the strong resistance from an increasingly repressive communist regime. The democracy movements in Hong Kong also experienced a similar fate due to fragmented civil society organizations and the more repressive approach from Beijing behind and above the Hong Kong SAR government. Taiwan's case, on the other hand, proves that the success of its democratic transformation since the 1980s can be attributed to the joint force of vibrant advocacy civil society organizations and a pro-democracy political party to pressure and force the authoritarian KMT to pursue a path of liberalization and democratization.

Finally, the concluding chapter, "Sharp Power and its Discontents," unfortunately does not offer a convincing theory-driven comparative analysis of the different outcomes of the democracy struggles in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. It is not particularly useful to apply the concept of China's sharp power to examine the success of Taiwan and the failures of China and Hong Kong.

Overall, this new book is nevertheless a welcome addition to the comparative study of democracy, especially in the different ethnic Chinese societies.

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HSIN-HUANG MICHAEL HSIAO

JUNE FOURTH: The Tiananmen Protests and Beijing Massacre of 1989. *New Approaches to Asian History.* By **Jeremy Brown.** Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2021. Xxvi, 266 pp. (Tables, maps, B&W photos, illustrations.) US\$34.00, paper. ISBN 9781107657809.

The 1989 Tiananmen Square protest movement and subsequent Beijing massacre is one of the most globally well-known and oft-referenced events in recent Chinese history, outside of China itself. Its images are iconic, with that of a lone figure stopping a government tank still immediately recognizable today. Even the square itself, a space that has played host to innumerable groundbreaking historical events, usually evokes the 1989 massacre more than the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, or the May Fourth movement

of 1919, both of which unfolded on the same grounds. It was a moment that, as Jeremy Brown personally attests, was globally felt, even capturing the attention of 12-year-old boys in Iowa City concerned more with whether the Chicago Cubs beat the New York Mets than global current events. By beginning his book with his own memory of watching the massacre unfold on BBC as a pre-teen halfway around the world, he provides the impetus for writing this book: everyone knows this moment is important, and an enormous amount has been written about why it is important, yet somehow, so much feels still unknown. Over 30 years later, Brown feels unsatisfied with how this story has been told. We still, in his mind, lack a narrative that weaves together and makes sense of the sheer volume of insight, information, and knowledge that exist in memoirs, documentaries, and studies.

What is missing, Brown explains, is a historian's approach. But what does it mean to view Tiananmen Square as history? In Brown's explanation, it means a more comprehensive narrative that probes the unexplored stories, corrects the misrepresentations, and exhumes the unquestioned presumptions in popular, well-worn narratives, narratives best exemplified by the 1995 documentary *Gate of Heavenly Peace*. In this spirit, Brown's book, over five parts that span from the early 1980s through both the immediate and long-term aftermath of the movement, asks us to reject the presumption that this movement was nothing more than a showdown between idealistic students and intractable government leadership that lasted no more than six weeks. His focus is, instead, on widening our gaze. He wants us to decentre the significance of student protestors, considering how different groups—workers, police, mothers, military—led and drove the movement. He wants us to extend our timeline before and beyond those six weeks on the square; the movement's momentum was years in the making, and the bloody violence that ended it extended weeks, months, and years after June 4. And he wants us to consider that events outside of Beijing, from contemporaneous clashes between Tibetan and Han students in Lanzhou to student demonstrations in Xi'an and Changsha, were just as critical to the movement's unfolding as the heavily scrutinized moments in the square.

Some of Brown's book is a retread of earlier works, leaning in particular on studies by Denise Chong, Louisa Lim, Wu Renhua, and Perry Link, among others. Some chapters centre on relatively lesser-known events. I was particularly riveted by chapter 18, which narrates how earlier protests against communist rule by non-Han citizens, in particular Tibetan demonstrations in Lhasa only one month before the movement in Beijing began, created both impetus and precedent for violent, martial-law crackdowns on unarmed citizens—a causal connection that, because of pervasive Han supremacy in China's coastal cities, few Beijing protestors recognized. But Brown's desire to include both familiar moments and unfamiliar ones sometimes comes at the expense of a clear narrative arc. Switching between quiet conversations in the Great Hall to the personal romantic intrigues of well-known protest

figures to creative, if sometimes a tad perplexing, “what-if” thought exercises about personal decision making that seem to be trying to grasp whether or not violence was inevitable, we get something akin to a Van Gogh painting—a rich pastiche of colour that looks like a recognizable narrative, but upon closer inspection becomes somewhat less clear.

This is not the only way the book is not a traditional monograph. It is not argument-forward, beyond Brown’s desire to correct what he sees as false or misguided presumptions. Brown also makes his positionality plain—he is not, here, the disinterested narrator, but the child who remembers these events unfolding, the friend creating bonds and relationships with the people he interviewed, and the professor trying to figure out the best way to teach these topics to undergraduate students. Because of this, Brown does not shy away from frank assessments of the cruelty of the violence, or the racism and misogyny that affected not only the events themselves but also our collective memory of them. Yet despite all of this, or really *because* of all this, I found Brown’s book thoroughly refreshing. Perhaps this is because he answers so many questions I, personally, have been searching for answers to. I, too, have taught *Gate of Heavenly Peace* every year since I began teaching my Modern East Asia survey, and I, too, find the documentary both compelling and frustrating in the problematic assumptions it subtly reinforces. I thus found myself nodding along to Brown’s characterizations of familiar events and individuals, characterizations that are full of both nuance and empathy. Reading this book felt like listening to a deeply knowledgeable friend explain to me how I might do better by my students. I’m already thinking about how this book will change my class next semester.

In this way, Brown’s book is of a critical underrepresented genre that I think will be of substantive use to many: a clear, nuanced, and comprehensive accounting of an event that so many of us teach but, because of the sheer amount of information and accounts that exist, don’t always teach well. Brown also makes clear that, as we begin to think of Tiananmen as history, that his is not the last word on the subject. I’m not sure I agree with his justification for what historians do, which might, to an ungenerous reader, seem as though all we have to offer are correctives, nuance, and a comprehensiveness that will never be exhaustive. But Brown recognizes that historians have a critical perspective that bears critical insight. I hope that we take up the mantle.

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GINA ANNE TAM

ISOLATING THE ENEMY: Diplomatic Strategy in China and the United States, 1953–1956. *Studies of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute.* By **Tao Wang.** New York: Columbia University Press, 2021. xi, 318 pp. (Maps, B&W photos.) US\$35.00, paper. ISBN 9780231198172.

In his book, *Isolating the Enemy*, Dr. Tao Wang reviews key moments in the diplomatic strategies of China and the United States between 1953 and 1956. Wang effectively uses diplomatic documents from China, the United States, and other countries to outline how the two rivals employed diplomatic tactics to isolate each other in pursuit of their political objectives. Although the book illuminates fascinating aspects of the period's diplomatic history, it unfortunately does not offer much insight into the reasons for the relative success of the contrasting strategies.

Dr. Wang's book is structured around three major events: the Geneva Conference of 1954, the signing of the US-Taiwan Mutual Defense Treaty in late 1954, and the Bandung Conference in 1956. In each case, China and the United States employed diplomatic strategies such as negotiations, backroom deal-making, and propaganda to achieve their respective goals. In the Geneva conferences, China succeeded in mobilizing international support in favor of concluding the French war with Vietnam on favorable terms. In the Taiwan Straits Crisis of 1954, China achieved its goal of avoiding war but failed to prevent the signing of a US-Taiwan Mutual Defense Treaty. In the third case, China succeeded in mobilizing international support at the Bandung Conference to frustrate American diplomatic strategies.

Tao Wang's research challenges the conventional wisdom that has tended to dominate studies of the field. Many scholars have treated China's foreign policy in the 1950s as largely reactive owing to fears of external and internal threats. Dr. Wang's book shows, by contrast, that China's decision-making was often driven by a clear set of goals aimed at weakening and isolating the adversary. Particularly valuable for defense experts is his analysis of the 1954 Taiwan Straits Crisis. As Wang shows, China's military aims were fairly modest, and Beijing had no intention of invading the island. US officials misjudged the situation and greatly exaggerated the threat posed by China, leading them to deploy major combat forces and threaten nuclear war. This finding casts doubt on the widely held assumption that the episode represented a case of successful US deterrence.

A related useful contribution is the author's illumination of the misperceptions and misjudgments that permeated the period's history. In the Geneva Conference case study, US decision-makers misjudged the degree of support that their British and French allies were willing to provide against China, which Beijing deftly exploited to drive wedges between them. Similarly, Mao Zedong misjudged Britain's openness to collaboration when

he proposed London align itself with Beijing against Washington to prevent the signing of a US-Taiwan Mutual Defense Treaty in 1954.

Despite these useful contributions, the book's importance is limited by an insufficient analysis of the reasons for the relative successes or failures of the contrasting strategies. Dr. Wang's book implies that for both sides, success owed itself to the pragmatism and shrewdness of relevant strategies. But the power of diplomacy to shape the policies of other countries can be easily exaggerated. International and domestic factors play as critical, or even greater, a role in shaping the policy choices of decision-makers. Consider a few key features of the tumultuous international situation in the early 1950s. Recovery from the catastrophic World War II had just gotten underway when the Cold War began. The exhausted European colonial powers that had dominated world politics prior to the World Wars had barely begun to rebuild their shattered economies and societies. Sensing their weakness, colonies throughout the world overthrew the dominion of their enfeebled imperial masters. This limited the influence of the European countries and encouraged newly liberated countries to sympathize with anti-imperialist countries like the Soviet Union and China. Moreover, the Soviet Union, having crushed Nazi Germany and overseen an impressive industrialization, was near the height of its powers and had not yet stumbled into the disasters of subsequent years. Similarly, Maoist China, although poor, was also near the height of its prestige, having fought the United States to a stalemate in Korea and routed the Kuomintang in the Chinese civil war. The Mao-led disasters of the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution that irrevocably tarnished the luster of Maoism lay in the future. In short, clever diplomatic strategies may have succeeded so well for China in the 1950s because the moment was so propitious. Once that moment faded, as it inevitably did, diplomatic successes could be expected to be harder to achieve, no matter how clever. Indeed, decades later China found itself fighting its former communist allies, in border clashes with Russia in the 1960s, and the invasion of Vietnam in 1979.

The book's insufficient attention to such factors constrains our ability to draw lessons from Dr. Wang's case studies. This is too bad—such insights could be very relevant today, as China and the United States find each other in another acute rivalry. Taiwan remains a flashpoint, but the South China Sea, technology, and trade have joined the growing list of contentious issues. Competitive diplomacy and geopolitics have risen in importance yet again. But whether either China or the United States can isolate the other is far from clear. China is no longer a weak Third World power, but the second largest economy and a great military power. Many of the countries that sympathized with a poor Mao-led China in the 1950s, such as India and Vietnam, now fear Chinese power, and have instead sought warmer relationships with the United States. Diplomatic strategies matter, but so does context. Finding ways to fuse

analysis of diplomatic strategies with other drivers could better illuminate both histories of the Cold War as well as our contemporary situation. Dr. Wang's book provides a valuable contribution, but more work remains to be done on these important topics.

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MACAU 20 YEARS AFTER THE HANDOVER: Changes and Challenges under “One Country, Two Systems.” *Edited by Meng U Ieong. London: Routledge, 2020. 156 pp. (Illustrations.) US\$160, cloth. ISBN 9780367339708.*

One of the major misconceptions about Macau—the great Asian casinopolis—is that its people are politically apathetic. Far from it, Macau was settled by strong people with strong personalities, from Portuguese *hidalgos* to the refugees of China's fallen dynasties. It was even hometown to Sun Yat-sen: the man who ended that dynastic cycle and founded the Chinese republic. Nonetheless, that misconception has led to less outside interest in local events, including episodes of dissent, unrest, and collective action.

Fortunately, Meng U Ieong, a political scientist at the University of Macau, has compiled a text that challenges that narrative with facts from the ground. It arrives at an important time, when Beijing's crackdown on dissent in Hong Kong—the PRC's other world-facing special administrative region—has reached a critical stage.

This edited volume explores aspects of Macau's reconstitution within the PRC. It includes eight chapters grouped into three parts, although the boundaries of that tripartite subdivision are not always clear cut. The common thread through six of the eight chapters is protest and policing.

The outlying chapters are 1 and 3, which consider international and comparative perspectives. Chapter 1 compares the gaming policies adopted by Macau and Singapore between 2000 and 2020. Whereas Singapore introduced gaming as an economic subsector, the Macau government went all-in. This reflects the different financial and spatial attributes of the two cities, and Edmund Loi keenly observes the resulting impacts: from Singapore's development of more family-friendly resorts to Macau's courting of high-rollers. Meanwhile, Matias dos Santos's chapter 3 illustrates Beijing's vision of Macau. It demonstrates how the PRC leverages Macau's colonial past as a diplomatic tool to promote Macau as the focal point of a Beijing-led multilateral forum of Portuguese-speaking countries as well as a hub in Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative. Portugal, for its part, seems content with such airs.

Most of the remaining essays regard protest. Ironically, while Beijing uses the colonial past as diplomatic capital, the Macau government erases its physical manifestations. Lei Chin Pang's chapter 2 powerfully laments the local government's sacrifice of ancient spaces in pursuit of gaudy

overdevelopment. What's left of historic Macau—the fateful enclave that served as the primary nexus between Europe and Asia for almost 300 years—now requires an expert to trace. Lei recalls how such carelessness led to a robust conservation movement that won the privileges provided by designation as a UNESCO world heritage site. He aptly recognizes that Macau's unique history might be the catalyst capable of framing that long-elusive sense of local identity. Macau could stake a credible claim to being an eternal city, if only its leaders would choose to balance the venerable with the vulgar.

In chapter 4, Lin Zhongxuan shares his personal observations of four local demonstrations, characterizing them into a “playful” and “resentful” dichotomy. He asserts that the organizers of grassroots livelihood protests (say, regarding phone-rate increases) tend to use more positive iconography to attract participants than those demanding transparency in public finance. Even if true, the comparison rings superficial without placing those repertoires in context: one-off events, on the one hand, versus a generational battle against corruption on the other.

Chapter 5, by Jeong and Lio Chi Fai, turns our attention toward labour protests: Macau's most prevalent type. This work is the empirical highlight of the collection, drawing conclusions from a dataset of 554 demonstrations that occurred between 2000 and 2017. Correlating the frequency of these incidents to the pace and character of labour organization proliferation, they record how the Macau government ultimately resolved to tighten the registration requirements for new organizations, thereby assuming greater control of their political voice.

The remaining chapters make important contributions as well. Chapter 6 by Lawrence Ho Ka-ki and Agnes Lam Lok-Fong provides an overview of the structure of Macau's police forces, detailing early efforts to upgrade capacities and enhance cooperation across sprawling bureaucracies. In chapter 7, Jeong and Wang Hongyu present another empirical study on how media choices influenced popular perceptions of the Umbrella Movement among Macau's college students. Finally, Chan Wai-Yin and Edmund Cheng Wai apply historical institutionalism to explain divergent developments in Macau and Hong Kong following the watershed Cultural Revolution era riots that seized both cities in the 1960s.

Given the pace of recent events vis-à-vis the speed of academic publishing, it is not surprising that this work already needs to be updated. That is unavoidable. Yet, some of the chapters are impacted more than others. Chapter 6, for example, does not cite any developments in local police reform post-2014, even though the years between 2014 and 2019 demonstrated the transformation of the Hong Kong police force into a paramilitary organization. Chapter 7 also begs for a follow-up because most of the liberal media that Macau people had access to in 2014 (i.e., *Apple Daily*, *Stand News*, *Macau Concealers*) have since been shut down by the regime.

Yet, on the whole, the text provides a valuable collation of relevant information for sociologists and important context for the legal researcher. Students should be indebted as well, for its shortcomings suggest directions for future research. One lasting impression shines through: that Macau's protest culture between 2000 and 2020 was ongoing but more narrowly issue-oriented than Hong Kong's, leading to smaller demonstrations and easier policing repertoires.

The apathy misconception probably arose from Macau achieving a sustained period of wealth at the same time its media and academia came under the political dominion of the PRC. Material prosperity in exchange for obedience was the post-handover social contract, quietly enforced by Beijing's ability to dissolve Macau's gaming monopoly. The patterns recorded here seem unlikely to reoccur anytime soon, given Beijing's recent imposition of draconian national security laws and disqualification of local democratic candidates, pushing dissent further underground. Nevertheless, the evidence presented here makes a strong case that the Macau people are not politically apathetic, just politically latent.

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JASON BUHI

POLITICS AND CULTURAL NATIVISM IN 1970s TAIWAN: Youth, Narrative, Nationalism. By *A-chin Hsiau*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2021. xiii, 293 pp. (Tables, figures.) US\$35.00, paper. ISBN 9780231200530.

Local Taiwanese identity has been influenced by a diversity of outside powers over the last 500 years, from the Ming dynasty to the Dutch and Spanish colonial powers in the 16th and 17th centuries, to the Qing dynasty, to the Japanese empire, to the Kuomintang (KMT) escaping the Mainland in 1949, and finally to the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) leadership of today. *Politics and Cultural Nativism in 1970s Taiwan: Youth, Narrative, Nationalism* explores the literary trends of post-1949 Taiwan, with particular attention to the 1970s and how they exemplify the evolving cultural identity of Taiwanese during this period, ultimately leading to the democratization and Taiwanization of the island's identity.

Hsiau begins by outlining the key concepts of generation, narrative, and conscientization, citing Karl Mannheim's theory that social conflicts elicit human agency which ultimately creates a shared generational identity. Citing Mannheim's narrative identity theory, Hsiau argues that through the use of literary narratives, particularly those describing the conflicts being experienced by a given people, authors have the power to make an entire generation experience conscientization, essentially awakening to their shared objectives. Such narratives can ultimately inspire a generation to take social or political action to achieve their common goals.

The next four chapters provide a detailed account of the common narratives being published by Taiwanese authors in different periods, starting with the 1960s, when the strict controls and nationalist indoctrination imposed by the KMT under martial law caused political apathy among the first post-war generation. During this period, much of the literature still focused on the Mainland, with authors narrating stories of their parents' birthplaces, exemplifying a shared generational sense of alienation that comes from quasi-exile (i.e., being the children of exiled Mainlanders) and post-memory (i.e., having no personal memories from their ancestral homeland).

The early 1970s saw Taiwan lose its seat in the United Nations to the People's Republic of China (PRC), Japan and the United States shift their diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to the PRC, and Taiwan's claim of sovereignty over the Diaoyutai Islands begin to lose legitimacy. These events gave rise to a movement to defend the Diaoyutai Islands (Baodiao), criticize the older generation for their cultural and political shortcomings, and demand political reforms, all of which became fixtures in literary publications like *The Intellectual*. Ultimately, the calls for reform made by this generation, which Hsiao calls the "return-to-reality" generation, led to the overwhelming acceptance that democratization was necessary in Taiwan, and political activist movements began demanding the right to elect parliamentary representatives.

Next, Hsiao explains how it was during this same period that scholars rediscovered the so-called Taiwanese "New Literature" of the 1920s and 1930s, inspired by Western literature and the Mainland's May Fourth Movement, which sought modernization. Authors of this period, most notably Yang Kui, wrote about resisting Japanese imperialism in Taiwan, and about the cultivation of a uniquely Taiwanese cultural identity, which came to be elevated to the status of nativist literature during the early 1970s by the return-to-reality generation.

In chapter 5, Hsiao describes how the Taiwanese nativist literature came to diverge from Chinese nativist literature, which fostered Chinese nationalism by criticizing Japanese and American imperialism, demanding greater equality and social welfare, and building on shared feelings of humiliation at foreign hands. Taiwanese nativist literature, on the other hand, tended to emphasize a shared local Taiwanese identity, in direct opposition to those who still clung to their ancestral roots on the Mainland. As a result, Taiwanese nativist authors tended to disagree with the KMT rulers, and their publications inspired the formation of a political movement outside of the KMT party (Dangwai), advocating for democratic elections.

Chapter 6 provides an overview of some key literary works of the Dangwai movement, which often criticized the Mainland PRC in an effort to build a shared local Taiwanese identity grounded in democratic values. According to Hsiao, "for the Dangwai, colonial and KMT rule were both oligarchic, the few unfairly overriding the many," and democratization "was necessary in

order for the Taiwanese identity to flourish” (139). The chapter profiles Lū Hsiu-lien (Annette Lu), a leader of the Dangwai movement, whose writings about both Taiwan’s past and future sought to construct a strong Taiwanese nationalist identity, ultimately propelling her to the vice presidency under the first non-KMT government of modern Taiwan, led by Chen Shui-bian and the DPP.

Hsiau’s primary conclusion appears simple: that the collective Taiwanese identity constructed through literature (the narrative identity) in the post-civil war period led to the gradual acceptance of Taiwan’s unique political destiny vis-à-vis the Mainland PRC. This literary narrative inspired the return-to-reality generation to push for “the indigenization or Taiwanization of politics and culture,” ultimately leading to Taiwan’s democratization and a peaceful transfer of power from the KMT to the DPP at the start of the 21st century (173). Though some scholarly fields may disagree with this oversimplification and seek to analyze additional factors which influenced the democratization movement in Taiwan, this work nevertheless succeeds at demonstrating the significant role played by literature therein.

Throughout the book, Hsiau cites the foundational works of major authors of the various sociopolitical and cultural identity movements in post-civil war Taiwan. This monograph provides a broad overview of the literary trends of this era, but only delves deeper into their contextual significance in a select few cases. It may not be particularly useful for experts in this field, as it reduces the influence of various movements in an attempt to address a complex evolution in local identities by analyzing only a narrow range of influential literature, but this book can serve as good introductory reading for students of Taiwanese literature, culture, politics, and contemporary history.

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JAPAN’S AGING PEACE: Pacifism and Militarism in the Twenty-first Century. By **Tom Phuong Le**. New York: Columbia University Press, 2021. xvi, 368 pp. (Tables, figures.) US\$35.00, paper. ISBN 9780231199797.

For years, if not decades, scholars, pundits, critics, and casual observers of Japan have been predicting a coming remilitarization. Some have claimed that Japan would break free from the shackles of its postwar pacifist constitution and “normalize,” while others have pointed to resurgent nationalism and historical revisionism as ideological groundwork to make militarism more palatable to the public. However, as yet, no such remilitarization has occurred. This book begins by asking, “Why not?” and, in exploring the reasons why Japanese militarism has failed to make the expected headway, concludes that such a change is not possible. At the core of this argument is what author Tom Phuong Le describes as an “antimilitarism ecosystem,” a collection

of material constraints and ideational restraints that together place hard limits on the Japanese government's use of force. Le posits that security is an ecosystem in which "the interactions among living organisms and between those organisms and the physical environment" (60)—meaning factors like culture, history, ideology, demographics, and infrastructure—create the rules that govern which policies can and cannot be made. This stands in stark contrast to realist approaches to security studies that dismiss the roles of such factors in favour of rational choice calculations based on the military capabilities of neighbours and rivals.

The introduction elaborates on the book's title, developing ageing as an anchoring concept that can mean weakening or becoming out-of-date, but also evolving or maturing. Chapter 2 then explains the progression of modern Japan through multiple militarisms, demonstrating that militarism as a concept is neither singular nor static. This historical chapter sets the foundation for Le's argument that present-day Japan's antimilitarism "is another type of militarism that emphasizes diplomacy over the use of force, yet finds the use of force *legitimate* in some circumstances" (62; emphasis in original). The book then proceeds to map out the material constraints and ideational restraints that shape and limit the antimilitarism ecosystem: chapter 3 describes the impact of Japan's low birth rate and hyper-aged society on the ability to recruit adequate numbers for the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF). Chapter 4 then discusses the "technical-infrastructure constraints such as an outdated base infrastructure, lack of combat experience, defense-oriented arms procurement and production, and underdeveloped defense sector" (106) that provide further concrete barriers to any significant expansion of Japan's war capabilities. Chapter 5 moves to ideational restraints with an in-depth look at Japanese antimilitarism, its distinctness from pacifism, and how it molds the way Japanese citizens and policymakers conceptualize security and imagine the country's roles and duties toward its wartime enemies and former colonies in the region. Chapter 6 then elucidates the peace cultures and varying strains of peace activism that inculcate social norms that curtail major changes to Japanese security policy. Those changes that have been pushed through, such as increased JSDF involvement in UN peace-keeping operations and disaster relief and the adoption of collective self-defense, are covered in chapter 7, which argues that such developments should not be viewed as remilitarization since they are still bound by the limitations of the antimilitarism ecosystem and do not represent any substantial change in Japan's power-projection capabilities. Chapter 8 concludes the volume with two parts: first, it delves into the security agenda of former Prime Minister Abe Shinzō (2006–2007; 2012–2020), arguing that, though his position was seen by many as hawkish and nationalistic, Abe was unable to move outside the bounds of the antimilitarism ecosystem. Le then takes the field of international relations to task for privileging America-centric, realist discussions of nuclear deterrence and great power rivalries over "topics such

as demographics, the environment, immigration, class, race, and gender” (272) and offers his work as proof that human considerations have far-reaching political ramifications.

Le’s book portrays Abe and his fellow revisionists as paper tigers who are ultimately at the mercy of the antimilitarism ecosystem, stating “change [to security policy] will occur, but the antimilitarism ecosystem ensures that it will be at the margins” (33). However, mirroring Le’s own approach, pro-remilitarization policymakers have incorporated education, human rights, gender, demographics, and Japan’s colonial history into their vision of security as well. Abe and many other revisionist politicians are closely affiliated with Nippon Kaigi (Japan Conference), the country’s largest right-wing organization, which has linked its vision of national security to sweeping constitutional reforms. Nippon Kaigi aims not only to normalize the military, but also to introduce mandatory patriotic education, give heads of household more power over their families, remove all mention of gender equality, and emphasize citizens’ duties to the nation while undercutting individuals’ rights (see for example David McNeill, “Nippon Kaigi and the Radical Conservative Project to Take Back Japan,” *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 13, issue 50, no. 4 [December 2015]). In zeroing in on policies and political rhetoric specifically focussed on rearmament, Le misses the larger-scale efforts to reshape the antimilitarism ecosystem in its entirety.

That being said, the book as a whole represents a bold step away from realist security studies by showing conclusively that any meaningful examination of a country’s security policy must acknowledge the cultural, historical, and demographic factors that inform it. Le also puts his money where his mouth is, engaging with anthropological and sociological scholarship and including ethnography and discourse analysis among his methods. This multifaceted approach makes the book ideal for class use as an introduction to Japanese security studies because it offers clear, thoughtful discussion of Japan’s wartime history and its consequences for present-day international relations and domestic peace movements, as well as showcases cultural, demographic, and ideational issues that are relevant beyond the field of political science. For more advanced students, the book is a convincing challenge to the hegemony of realism that would complement and complicate any course on security studies.

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JESUS LOVES JAPAN: Return Migration and Global Pentecostalism in a Brazilian Diaspora. By Suma Ikeuchi. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2019. xvii, 235 pp. (Map, B&W photos.) US\$28.00, paper. ISBN 978-1-5036-0934-1.

Suma Ikeuchi has eloquently written a theoretically and conceptually engaging book about Japanese descent (*Nikkei*) Brazilians who “return” migrate as unskilled workers to Japan, their country of ancestral origin. Although they are admitted on preferential visas because of their Japanese ancestry, according to Ikeuchi, *Nikkei* Brazilians do not feel they belong in their ethnic homeland and convert to Pentecostalism as a respite from their difficult everyday lives. This book is a welcome addition to the literature, since the religious lives of *Nikkei* Brazilians in Japan remains a relatively unexplored topic. As an anthropologist, Ikeuchi conducted extensive fieldwork and skillfully employs a wealth of ethnographic observations and interviews while drawing conceptual and theoretical insights from anthropology and religious studies. As a result, I consider this the best book on *Nikkei* Brazilian migrants in Japan that I have read, despite some of its structural and conceptual shortcomings.

In order to understand why so many *Nikkei* Brazilians in Japan have turned to Pentecostalism, the first four chapters of the book provide background on their past migration histories as well as their immigrant labour and ethnic experiences in Japan. A well-known history of Japanese migration to Brazil and the return migration of their *Nikkei* Brazilian descendants to the ancestral homeland of Japan is complemented with some interesting material about the accompanying migration of religions between the two countries. Although *Nikkei* Brazilians are positively regarded as modern Japanese “model minorities” in Brazil (despite some negative images), when they migrate to Japan, they become a “backward” Latino minority who are treated as Brazilian foreigners (40–43). Not only do they experience a decline in socioeconomic status as marginalized migrant factory workers, they are ethnically stigmatized as low class, lazy, and prone to criminal delinquency. As a result, Brazilian *Nikkei* do not feel like they live in Japan as they toil away in factories where they must endure tough conditions and long working hours.

Despite initial plans to stay only temporarily, *Nikkei* Brazilians have become a permanent immigrant presence in Japan as many migrate back and forth, unable to establish a middle-class life in either Japan or Brazil, while becoming subject to both global economic forces and changing national migration policies. As a result, they are rendered rootless and feel suspended and trapped between both countries, often with uncertain future hopes and illusions of return to Brazil. Many obtain permanent residence visas in Japan not simply to settle there, but to facilitate their continued transnational mobility as a thoroughly Brazilianized minority who cannot become authentically Japanese. As they live in a state of cultural limbo with

in-between identities, Nikkei migrant families (previous based on perceptions of “Japanese discipline”) have become disorderly and strained through separation, infidelity, divorce, emotional estrangement, and generational cultural and linguistic gaps.

In response, Nikkei Brazilian migrants convert to Pentecostalism in order to engage in a higher type of spiritual work and modern subjectivity that transcends their mundane factory work. Ikeuchi argues that this is a return to the present (the here and now) that enables them to renew their lives through a charismatic temporality (instead of focusing on past regrets or uncertain future hopes). Through the sacrificial blood of Jesus, they cultivate a sense of spiritual kinship and belonging with other Nikkei Pentecostal believers. This transcends the material, ethnic kinship of Japanese blood/descent, which has been insufficient to confer on them a sense of national belonging in Japan because of their lack of Japanese linguistic and cultural competence.

The book then provides us with ethnographically rich and theoretical-informed analyses of how Nikkei Brazilians engage in specific Pentecostal church rituals, namely the renewal of marriage vows and declarations of love as a transcendent emotion, as well as baptism and prayer. In fact, the last two chapters (before the concluding chapter) are less about the actual migratory and religious experiences of Nikkei Brazilians in Japan and more a general, theoretical, and even philosophical examination of religious faith with relevant ethnographic illustrations. Ikeuchi insightfully analyzes examples of individuals engaging in Pentecostal and Catholic religious practices that do not necessarily reflect their authentic inner selves because of diverging private beliefs or rote obedience to (sometimes nonsensical) external forms without personal understanding. Through an interesting comparison with Japanese religious life, Ikeuchi’s conclusion seems to be that such divergences between external practices and inner states can still be religiously sincere if based on relational commitments to social others (a moral, “accompanied self”) (170–175).

While the shortcomings of this book do not detract much from its overall quality, readers will find it hard to figure out where the book is headed because its overall narrative structure remains unclear until the end. There is no summary of the book at the beginning (only in the concluding chapter); the chapters and section titles are very short and abstract (“Contested,” “Of Two Bloods”); and the chapters cover various topics with no transitional paragraphs or sentences. Although the author actually worked in two factories for five months, none of this participant observation appears in the book. The relationship between Nikkei Brazilian and mainstream Japanese is never really explored despite the fact that the latter are being recruited by Nikkei Pentecostal churches in Japan and the religion itself stresses a transnational moral universalism that transcends national and ethnic boundaries (a peculiar omission for an author who is Japanese living in the United States).

Although modernity is a dominant concept in the book, it is utilized too broadly. According to Ikeuchi, Pentecostalism constitutes modern spiritual subjects whose experiences contrast with traditional Japanese religions and arranged marriage practices. However, it also incorporates traditional familial gender roles that are morally compatible with Japanese cultural values. In terms of the temporal aspect of Pentecostal modernity, it not only represents what is recent (the present or here and now), but also what is ancient (patriarchal Christian gender roles); its signature emotion of modern love is also ancient and timeless. If the concept of modernity is deployed too broadly to encompass both the West and the rest, the modern and traditional, and the contemporary and ancient, it may lose its conceptual power.

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REVOLUTION GOES EAST: Imperial Japan and Soviet Communism.
By Tatiana Linkhoeva. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press. 2020.
x, 281 pp. US\$27.99, paper. ISBN 97811501748080.

The Bolshevik coup of October 1917 was the most dramatic event in the twentieth-century history of Russia. A fierce dispute over its historical role has continued ever since. The Marxist radicals in Russia unleashed a civil war, which resulted in terrible atrocities on both sides and the expulsion of over one and a half million people. During Stalin's Great Purge, 750,000 people were executed without trial and over 20 million were sent to gulags. This unprecedented violence unleashed by Marxist radicals against their own compatriots, along with their policies and ideology, inevitably had an influence on neighbouring countries. Tatiana Linkhoeva's book thoroughly examines the influence on Japan of this radical political experiment in the Soviet Union. Her study boldly addresses a broad range of complex issues and carefully unravels the intricate tangle of political currents.

In part 1, the first chapter explores the history of relations between Russia and Japan in the imperial period, identifying Russia's geopolitical rivalry and the mixture of European and Asian elements as two of the most important notions in Japan's understanding of Russia. The second chapter examines how the social upheaval of 1917 was received in Japan. The February Revolution of 1917 was welcomed by many intellectuals in Japan as a liberation from backwardness, but the October coup was met with caution. Linkhoeva analyzes the debate in the Japanese government, surrounding the decision to dispatch troops to Russia in the Siberian Intervention, which she characterizes as "a strange war" with "no clear enemy identified" (65) and an action largely unpopular within political circles and with the public. The third chapter demonstrates how the Soviet communists tried to convince Japanese politicians that the Soviet Union was not a radical state.

Some pro-Soviet politicians and public commentators in Japan believed their Soviet counterparts and pushed for “peaceful coexistence with Soviet Russia in East Asia” (68). The social upheaval in Russia affected Japan’s political thinking and dovetailed with the rise of Pan-Asianist ideology. “Pan-Asianists’ and pro-Soviet politicians’ coordinated efforts” demonstrated that “foreign affairs began to be viewed as the key and only solution to Japan’s domestic issues” (68). Chapter 4 discusses how “concern over the communist threat in the 1920s united disparate groups such as liberals and conservative bureaucracy” (100). Taishō liberals like Yoshino Sakuzō and Fukuda Tokuzō saw the extended franchise and democratic reforms as the only solution “that could unite the nation against the external destabilizing threat” (103) of communism. They believed that the Bolshevik coup “originated in Russia’s peculiar political and social circumstances” (103) and differed from the conventional understanding of socialism. Linkhoeva offers her explanation on the failure of Taishō liberalism and demonstrates that some of its students moved to more appealing left-wing radicalism, but also mentions that even “prominent liberal journalists Murobuse Koshin and Oyama Ikuo ... attacked Bolshevism as another type of autocracy” (104). The author concludes that “the tragedy of interwar liberalism in Japan was that in its keen efforts to distance itself from socialism and communism ... it inadvertently contributed to the emergence of a police state in Japan in the 1930s” (123). The reader may disagree with this point. While liberals in Japan could have possibly acted with more skill to prevent the emergence of a police state, seeing the violence of Bolshevik leaders against their own people and their disregard to human life, they had no other option than to distance themselves from communism.

In this regard, it must be emphasized that, in the interwar period, democracy failed in many parts of the world. However, the complete destruction of democratic institutions in Russia in 1917 had the most detrimental consequences for the country and the world. The impact of World War I was greatly augmented by Russia’s earlier defeat in the war with Japan. Nevertheless, the backward imperial regime in Russia had a chance to gradually and peacefully transform itself into a progressive political system—such reforms had already commenced in 1905, although they advanced slowly. However, the fatal combination of war and economic collapse, the abrupt abdication of the emperor, and the incompetence of the Provisional government led to the October coup.

In part 2, chapter 5, Linkhoeva emphasizes how Japanese anarchists “found inspiration in the terrorist tactics” (128) of Russian populists (*narodniki*). Anarchists in Japan began with a plot to assassinate the emperor, expanded their networks across East Asia, and found new inspiration in the Bolshevik October coup. The struggle with the violence of anarchists “contributed to the emergence of a police state in Japan in the 1930s” (123). Chapter 6 examines the birth of the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) with the

assistance of the Comintern and demonstrates that the JCP did not accept the Russian model for the seizure of political power. Yamakawa Hiroshi, the main theoretician of the Japanese Left, was “faithful to the principles of Marxist orthodoxy” and insisted on a mass proletarian party rather than a party of revolutionaries (160). Chapter 6 shows that the “JCP retained a degree of independence from the Comintern” (160) and Soviet communists. This was inevitable as the persistent internal strife for leadership in the Soviet Union, along with the purges, caused foreign politicians to feel the Soviet Union was still not operating as a normal state. Chapter 7 focuses on the activities and ideas of Japanese thinker Takabatake Motoyuki.

In the book’s conclusion, Linkhoeva argues that the defeat of Japan in the Changkufeng Incident of 1938 and the Nomonhan War of 1939 forced the hand of the Japanese, and the “government chose not to provoke the Soviet Union any further” (216). Undoubtedly, these two incidents were an important factor in making the Japanese military abandon their plan of going to war with the USSR and led them to select an alternative plan: aggression against the United States. This suggests that geopolitical factors did prevail over ideological ones in Japan’s policy toward the USSR and “responses to the Russian Revolution” (3). The Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact of 1941 was Japan’s attempt to defend itself from a potential rear attack in the approaching war.

Linkhoeva also concludes that “Japanese leftists might have altered the course” of Japan’s invasion of China “had their response to the Russian Revolution’s supranational vision been different” (219–220). This argument is highly contested. Japanese leftists were influenced by the Russian revolution, but could hardly adopt the ideology and methods from Russian radicals or cooperate with them in the long term. In this sense, this reader would disagree that “the Russian Revolution ended in 1943, when Stalin dissolved the Comintern” (217). It ended in October 1917, when the Bolsheviks established a dictatorship and began cruelly executing their political opponents. This violence could not be tolerated, and Russian society condemned it in the late 1980s, when the communist regime fell.

Revolution Goes East is a detailed and thought-provoking study of Japan’s Left. It can be recommended not only to professional historians and experts on Northeast Asia and Russia, but to anyone committed to understanding the causes and roots of political violence.

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IGOR SAVELIEV

LIVING TRANSNATIONALLY BETWEEN JAPAN AND BRAZIL: Routes Beyond Roots. *New Studies in Modern Japan*. By Sarah A. LeBaron von Baeyer. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019. xii, 243 pp. (Tables, figures, maps.) US\$95.00, cloth. ISBN 978-1-4985-8036-6.

Japan's major revision of its immigration law in 1990 brought about a rapid influx of *Nikkei* (descendants of the Japanese) Latin Americans, as well as trainees and technical interns, to the country. Although the immigration law revision attracted considerable scholarly attention, resulting in books such as Roth's *Brokered Homeland* (2002) and Tsuda's *Strangers in the Ethnic Homeland* (2003), only a handful of research has been conducted on Nikkei Latin Americans after their massive repatriation following the Lehman shock of 2008 and its effects. In this context, *Living Transnationally between Japan and Brazil* has appeared like a meteor, not only as an update on the scant research but also to prompt paradigmatic change to grasp the nature of migration from Brazil to Japan.

The most salient feature of this book is summarized in its subtitle, "routes beyond roots." It is true that Nikkei are granted privileged visa status, but author Sarah A. LeBaron von Baeyer suggests that their roots as ethnic Japanese is much less important to them than previously considered. According to von Baeyer, the general focus of early studies on ethnicity obfuscates other important elements of migrant lifeways such as gender, family, education, generation, and social class (207). Instead, she introduces "middle-class subjectivity" as the key term to understanding Brazilian migration to Japan: Nikkei go to Japan looking for significant advances in terms of social freedom, material comfort, and financial self-reliance (201), rather than just returning to be in their ethnic homeland. Although Nikkei from Brazil are incorporated into the periphery of Japan's secondary labour market, wherein available jobs are demanding and unstable, they are still capable of enjoying a comfortable middle-class lifestyle through easy access to consumer goods, which is more difficult in Brazil. Although the author hesitantly criticizes the "over-ethnicized" model of previous studies on migration from Latin America to Japan, her argument can be a harsh criticism of them by showing a more pragmatic view of Brazilians in Japan.

The second strength of this book is its research design, which is aptly suited for comprehending the transnational lives of these Brazilian families. Unlike most multi-sited ethnographical works, which tend to end up with a superficial description of several places, the author systematically integrates the transnationally dispersed family lives of Brazilians in both countries. This strategy is especially effective in describing the bifurcated migration trajectories of three families: life between Japan and Brazil (chapter 1), settlement in Japan (chapter 3), and return to Brazil (chapter 5). Rather than being caught between the two countries, von Baeyer concludes that these families are *in* and *of* both Japan and Brazil (207). As a scholar who

has conducted research in this field for more than two decades, I find her conclusion rather optimistic, yet von Baeyer has certainly presented an alternative (or more positive) picture of Brazilian lives across continents.

The third key feature of this book is its elaborate structure. Of the six chapters besides the introduction and conclusion, three odd-numbered chapters provide detailed descriptions of various patterns of migration by the three families, followed by even-numbered chapters analyzing contextual factors such as the labour market (chapter 2), education (chapter 4), and religion (chapter 6). This structure provides a comprehensive picture of Brazilian migration to Japan through a thick description of individual migrants and analyses of the institutional opportunities and constraints surrounding them.

However, there are at least two major points to be elaborated on in future research. First, the author's life course approach fails to link odd- and even-numbered chapters; the migration histories of the three families are described somewhat independently of contextual factors. For example, the Lehman shock had devastating effects on the entire Brazilian community in Japan because approximately half of the Brazilian Nikkei were unemployed by early 2009, while their working conditions worsened and have yet to recover. Nevertheless, it is difficult to determine how the three families were influenced by the global financial crisis, which should have been the main topic of the author's fieldwork conducted from 2009 to 2013, immediately after the economic crisis.

Likewise, the author failed to consider changes in the education of Brazilian Nikkei. On one hand, the number of Brazilian schools in Japan dramatically fluctuated during this time; while such schools steadily increased until 2008, more than half were closed due to the repatriation of students and the economic difficulties facing parents after the Lehman shock. On the other hand, higher education accessibility for Brazilian Nikkei in Japan has been increasing, even though they remain one of the least-educated groups among various national origins. If the author had incorporated these shifting conditions into her analysis, she could have illustrated the educational paths of migrant youth more dynamically. While the author has carefully traced the migration histories of the three families, she has failed to situate their life courses in structural contexts.

The second shortcoming of this book arises from inadequate references to Japanese scholarship on the topic, which also contributes to its first weakness. While Japanese scholars might be poor at communicating in Portuguese or Spanish, and thus weak in analyzing the life world of Latin American migrants, they have a niche in examining structural and institutional aspects that provide structures of opportunities and constraints for their life courses. In addition, Japanese researchers have been updating their knowledge by conducting empirical research on Brazilians' predicaments during and after the Lehman shock. Unfortunately, the author refers to none of these works and thus fails

to access updated research findings since the Lehman shock (she cites only nine Japanese articles and books about Brazilian migration to Japan).

Despite the aforementioned limitations, this book provides readers with a fresh perspective on Brazilian Nikkei migration to Japan. It provides a non-biased view on how “ethnic migrants” perceive what has been labeled as “ethnic migration.”

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MOBILIZING JAPANESE YOUTH: The Cold War and the Making of the Sixties Generation. By *Christopher Gerteis*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2021. ix, 192 pp. (Illustrations.) US\$39.95, cloth. ISBN 9781501756313.

In this original work, Christopher Gerteis examines efforts to mobilize the 1960s generation in Japan by both the Far Left and Far Right. He focuses on how non-state institutions’ leaders shaped youth political consciousness. The book is innovative by focusing on the propaganda produced by these groups with attention to gender, generation, and class. Using the tools of social and cultural historians, Gerteis draws from a fascinating set of materials ranging from Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK) surveys through seemingly benign children’s cartoons to pink exploitation films and everything in between. What emerges is a portrait of the transwar-generation’s leadership in both the Far Left and Far Right, reinforcing rather than challenging gender and class norms that ultimately alienated the very youth they sought to recruit. Moreover, the insights provided about the sixties generation are remarkably relevant to understanding protest politics today.

Gerteis begins with the labour movement. In chapter 2, “Unions, Youth, and the Cold War,” he explores the conflict between the transwar-generation union leaders with young workers in the 1960s. The General Council of Trade Unions’ (Sōhyō) leadership prioritized raising wages while remaining politically neutral during the Cold War. The effect was that high economic growth significantly improved workers’ lives, spurring middle-class aspiration. Yet, the compromise also reinforced socially conservative values by effectively marginalizing women and stratifying male workers’ wages along generational lines through the seniority-wage system. Politically, the opposition to the US-Japan Security Treaty, anti-Vietnam War sentiment, and demands for the reunification of Okinawa caused a rift with younger radical members dissatisfied with the leadership’s nonviolent stance. Through analysis of union propaganda, Gerteis illustrates how the transwar-generation’s outdated notions of gender and class undermined the labour movement’s ability to remain relevant to the youth.

Gerteis next examines Far-Left political violence. In chapter 3, “The

Rise and Fall of the Japanese Red Army,” he surveys how some Japanese activists, inspired by other global radical left-wing youth movements, embraced political violence to hasten their desire for revolution. In the process, activists drew on masculine forms of political agency, essentially reinforcing patriarchal norms. Instead of challenging gendered stereotypes, this undermined female political agency driving a wedge between male and female activists.

There was a sense in the 1960s that social values in Japan were shifting. In chapter 3, “Political Alienation and the Sixties Generation,” Gerteis uses NHK’s national surveys to investigate how attitudes were inscribed in public opinion polls. Through analysis of the statistical data, Gerteis reveals that by the 1970s, attitudes towards such issues as political institutions, social hierarchy, political protest, and the emperor were indeed changing. Yet, it was gender and class that correlated most strongly with these shifting attitudes by challenging the common assumption that generational difference alone was the principal driving force behind the changes.

Notably, Japan’s Far Right was also actively mobilizing youth during the same period. In chapter 5, “Cold War Warriors,” Gerteis presents a fascinating tale of how two prominent right-wing non-state actors in the 1970s, Kodama Yoshio and Sasakawa Ryōichi, sought to mobilize disaffected youth by focusing on traditional moral values and nationalism to counter a feared global Communist threat. Gerteis illustrates how these powerful dealmakers, and convicted war criminals, organized a pact between Far-Right politicians, gangsters, and the US Central Intelligence Agency to suppress leftist radicalism for their personal enrichment and ideological inclinations. However, the Far-Right’s ultranationalist ventures had limited influence, ultimately contributing to the New Right breaking with the older generation.

Japan’s Far Right interpreted leftist activism as a form of moral corruption, and they aimed to reverse it through campaigns emphasizing values, respect for tradition, and nationalism. In chapter 5, “Motorboat Gambling and Morals Education,” Gerteis examines how Sasakawa Ryōichi leveraged his vast wealth—mainly generated through controlling motorboat gambling—to fund moral education programs to normalize Far-Right political values.

Since the bursting of the economic bubble in the late 1980s, economic precarity has profoundly shaped youth experiences. In the epilogue, “Life and Democracy in Postwar Japan,” Gerteis connects the legacy of the sixties generation to the rightward shift in national politics. Once at the vanguard of changing attitudes and values, the sixties generation has grown politically conservative. The consequence, Gerteis proposes, is that while the sixties generation assumed increasing dominance over political institutions, it has undermined younger generations by limiting employment prospects and stifling their political influence. Youth have still mobilized against laws governing privacy, censorship, and the right to assemble, but to limited effect in blocking controversial legislation.

Gerteis' argument that the sixties generation has constrained contemporary Japanese youth's working lives and political potentialities is insightful. I suggest that his argument extends beyond structural constraints in its applicability to further explain current mobilization difficulties at a more granular level. Even with significant public attention about precarity, union efforts to mobilize freeters and other irregular workers in the 2000s largely failed. Despite some limited successes, union politics, rhetoric, and tactics alienated most young irregular workers, squandering an opportunity to attract a new generation to the labour movement. Emergent protest forms since the 2000s using art, music, and dance have attempted to soften the negative and violent associations of street protests associated with the sixties generation. Some have described these tactics as feminized to counter the stigmatized masculine confrontational demonstrations that led to the violence in the sixties generation protests. Yet these more playful forms of protest, meant to attract a more diverse crowd, are frequently derided and dismissed as ineffectual. Even when the Student Emergency Action for Liberal Democracy (SEALDs), as the most publicly visible youth protest movement since the 1970s, attempted to position themselves as regular students taking a stand to defend Japan's constitution from hawkish revisionists, they found themselves relentlessly attacked by both the Far Left and Far Right as being too bourgeois, immature, and disconnected. The Far Right, in particular, displayed extreme misogyny in their online harassment of female SEALDs members. The few examples above suggest that gender, class, and generation continue to bedevil youth mobilization efforts in contemporary Japan in ways not too dissimilar from the past.

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THE KOREAS: The Birth of Two Nations Divided. *By Theodore Jun Yoo.*
Berkeley: University of California Press, 2020. xxi, 328 pp. (Map, B&W photos.)
US\$29.95, cloth. ISBN 978-0-520-29233-8.

Theodore Jun Yoo's new book is a rare multidisciplinary study of the two Koreas from the division of the peninsula in 1945 to the present time. Jun Yoo astutely combines microhistory—in the form of biographies—and macro-history, which take into account the bigger picture (state, society, economy) on both sides of the DMZ. The author also uses narratives from popular culture, including films and songs, to depict and discuss certain socio-economic or political phenomena. Jun Yoo also discusses Korean migration and the diaspora, as he is himself part of the overseas Korean community. The author opens the book with autobiographical notes, tracing his family background both to the North (his paternal grandparents crossed to the South from the North) and the South on his maternal side. His wife's

parents were also from the North (3–8). Jun Yoo's family history explains his more sensible and nuanced approach to the North and the South.

The narrative of Korean division goes back to the period after World War II. Jun Yoo uses a compelling metaphor to describe the international factors at play in the division of the peninsula, describing the Soviet Union and the US as “midwives to the painful birth of the twin nations from a unified Korea” (17). It is worth noting that the author refers to the South and the North as “nations” throughout the book (including in the title), which is a departure from the long-standing view that the two Koreas are separate states within one Korean nation. The study also pays attention to the domestic reasons for the peninsular conflict, such as the Yeosu-Sunchon mutiny and the suppression of the uprising on Jeju Island and the killing of more than 100,000 civilians in the South before the war (21, 23). The author provides interesting examples of the South's recovery and its ties to the US, including the adoption of 200,000 Korean children by American families over a period of 60 years and even addressing the sex industry involving GIs (37, 41). In the North Korean part of the postwar reconstruction narrative, Jun Yoo uses the example of war orphans who were taken care of in ally countries of the DPRK in Eastern Europe. He mentions that some 30,000 North Korean orphans were adopted by families in socialist countries (43). While the figure is basically accurate (a study showed nearly 29,000 children under care of fraternal countries), it would be worthwhile to know the source of such information. Here and in other instances in the book, the lack of citations is an issue. The author decided not to use citations in his book, which is a valid way to prioritize a smoother narrative focused on stories rather than on numbers.

The book addresses the topic of the Korean diaspora in Japan, who are referred to as *zainichi* (57–58). It is interesting to note that a large portion of the Korean community in Japan is linked to North Korea, a phenomenon that deserves further study. Jun Yoo views the South's economic progress through the prism of its political and social costs. The two postcolonial paths on the peninsula—self-sufficiency in the North and normalization (or integration) of the South—were further established in the 1960s and the 1970s, while both Koreas embarked on militarization and isolating each other diplomatically. The narrative addresses social, technological, and cultural phenomena, such as prostitution (101), Nam June Paik's “electronic superhighway” (102), and Myung Moon's Unification Church (104–106), which intersect with domestic and international forces of globalization. On the North Korean side, Jun Yoo discusses the usually understudied issue of North Korea's relations with Africa, offering interesting examples of Kim Il Sung's personal diplomacy and vision of building solidarity with the postcolonial continent (116). Commenting on the 1980s, the author states that while the DPRK maintained its initiatives in Africa and the Middle East, it became increasingly isolated from the Communist Bloc (121). The evidence suggests that during most

of the decade North Korea enjoyed positive relations both with China and the Soviet Eastern Bloc.

In the section on democratization in South Korea in the 1990s, the author connects the trauma of the Gwangju uprising with the TV miniseries *Sandglass*, aired on the national broadcasting service SBS in 1996, which was the first lifting of the taboo on public discussion of the political repressions of the 1970s and the tragedy of the Gwangju uprising (124, 162). The TV drama was an extraordinary social and cultural phenomenon. I viewed *Sandglass* and observed its powerful resonance among South Koreans. Jun Yoo examines the history of the nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula in 1994 (155–158), Kim Dae Jung's Sunshine Policy towards the North (164–169), and the origins of the famine in North Korea in the 1990s. The author rightly points out that the market reforms in the Soviet Union and China were part of the reason for the food crisis in North Korea (limiting the supply of affordable fertilizer, for example) (155–156). It can be added that the collapse of the Soviet Union was the chief international reason for the sudden disruption of the supply of key industrial products to the DPRK. The 2002 FIFA World Cup marked a watershed moment for the Red Devils (the jersey colour of the South Korean soccer team) (178). Hundreds of thousands of Seoul citizens poured into the streets like “red rivers” to watch the matches and celebrate. South Korea felt united like one.

The book examines the transition of power to Kim Jong Un in the North by using the inside stories of Dennis Rodman, the NBA basketball player, and Kenji Fujimoto, a cook of the North Korean leader, to depict Kim's new regime (230–232). The author notes that North Korean IT students in many respects “are no different from college students in South Korea and the United States” (237). I would add that North Korean people in general are not that different from people in other countries, based on my visits to the North in recent years. The author also discusses the obsession with one's physical appearance (such as the “lookism” phenomenon) as further evidence of the enormous social pressures in the South, which have led to poor mental health and suicides (265).

The book's epilogue invokes the film *Burning* as a metaphor of the unease of the young generation in the South about their future (289). The South boasts a vibrant democracy, technological prowess, and soft power, while the North can be credited for its history of survival and opposition to the capitalist order in the world (294). While the epilogue is a compelling portrayal of the contemporary two nations divided, it could have spent more attention on the path forward, drawing on the comprehensive history of division on the peninsula. For example, some elaboration on possible solutions to the problems of division and a path towards peace would be a fitting addition to the conclusion. Overall, the book is a great contribution to Korean historiography, and offers a masterful exploration of the social and

cultural fabric of Northern and Southern societies. The author's interesting examples and personal stories make the book an engaging and moving read.

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FUTURE YET TO COME: Sociotechnical Imaginaries in Modern Korea.
Edited by Sonja M. Kim and Robert Ji-Song Ku. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2021. viii, 274 pp. (B&W photos.) US\$68.00, cloth. ISBN 9780824889197.

Future Yet to Come offers a compelling assortment of articles focused on Korean science, technology, and medicine (STM). Further positioning the collection in alignment with science, technology, and society studies (STS), Sonja M. Kim's introduction notes the relatively recent surge of STS research in the South Korean academy. Following Warwick Anderson ("Asia as Method in Science and Technology Studies," *EASTS* 6, no. 4 [2012]), Kim suggests that STS is "inherently a postcolonial project" (5), bent in any case on discomfiting the received associations of science with Eurocentric modernity—a project that is only redoubled in and through a volume dedicated to Korean phenomena in want of being de-peripheralized against the backdrop of the relative attention paid to Chinese, Japanese, and US science histories (4). Kim also employs Sheila Jasanoff and Sang-Hyun Kim's exploration of "sociotechnical imaginaries" (*Dreamscapes of Modernity: Sociotechnical Imaginaries and the Fabrication of Power*, University of Chicago Press, 2015; "Containing the Atom: Sociotechnical Imaginaries and Nuclear Regulation in the U.S. and South Korea," *Minerva* 47, no. 2 [2009]) to highlight the linkage between STM and the question of possible futures. This orienting gesture underwrites one of the true distinguishing features of *Future Yet to Come* as an STS volume, namely its broad multidisciplinary inclusive of perspectives from the arts. The book is unusual as well in its historical range, which treats the "modern" of its title expansively.

In this vein, Don Baker's overview of Korean sciences during the Neo-Confucian Chosŏn period gets the first section of the book off to a fine start. While likening Chosŏn knowledge practices to natural philosophy and emphasizing the intertwinement of moral, social, material, and cosmological questions in Neo-Confucian metaphysics, Baker nonetheless insists that Chosŏn science was science, insofar as it grasped a world of "natural rather than supernatural forces" (31). Sonja M. Kim's own chapter sets itself against the (Horace N.) "Allen myth" (45) in the history of Korean medicine by documenting continuities in the moral framing of medical practice between the Chosŏn and colonial periods instead of ascribing revolutionary effect to foreign (missionary and colonial) interventions. Presenting his own

reframing of the scandal of Hwang Woo-suk's scientific fraud, Inkyu Kang finds its causes as much in global neoliberal pressures imposed upon scientific research—forces that also potentiated the parallel scandal of Elizabeth Holmes' Theranos (83), for instance—as in any specificities of Korean developmentalism or scientific nationalism.

The second section of the volume begins with Theodore Jun Yoo's examination of the problem of suicide in colonial Korea. Yoo traces the linkage of suicide to a variety of social ills in the Korean press and the colonial Japanese state's view of it as a necessary concomitant to modernization before considering its medicalization by the new field of psychiatry. In two chapters on Cold War interactions of South Korean medical practice with outside actors, Jane S. H. Kim underscores the World Health Organization's view of Korean public health as a means to social stability rather than a goal for its own sake (122), while John P. DiMoia surveys rehabilitative medicine from its wartime origins to its eventual focus on children and civilian patients. Anthropologist Jieun Lee's fascinating chapter considers the emergence of "bio-insurance" and stem cell banking in South Korea. Lee traces the efforts of this new industry to translate existing desires and anxieties to cause Koreans to envision themselves as potential beneficiaries of this new medical technology, which promises "a chance to have a chance" (155) through undefined future treatments.

It is the final section that makes good on the engagement of the collection with more humanistic fields. Hye-ri Oh offers a conjunctural history of the shift of South Korean photography from pictorialism toward realism in the 1950s, one which emphasizes the contextual local commitments of these modes of envisioning. Steve Choe reads important works of the artist Nam June Paik in terms of the phenomenology and "prosthetics" of memory, asking over Paik's shoulder the question of "whether archival images of Korea and Korean-ness can become part of the repertoire of the tertiary memory of universal humanity" (221). Closing the volume, Haerin Shin reads the three-film collection *Doomsday Book* as a departure in South Korean science fiction cinema, one which represents a move away from the dominant recuperative modernism of the genre in favour of a willingness to tarry with alterity (232).

As with any collection, individual chapters will be more to some academic tastes than others, and all the more so, perhaps, given the range of disciplines represented by the authors. I offer two potential critiques of the volume as a whole; both are likewise tempered and in their own ways backhanded. First, notwithstanding the variety of topics and time periods otherwise considered, there is no chapter devoted specifically to post-1945 North Korea. While STS scholarship on that country is to be welcomed, its omission did not for me rise to the level of a genuine absence. Too often the "North Korea chapter" in other Korea-focused collections, included for the sake of "coverage," can be conceptually disconnected precisely to the extent that it is treated as obligatory. Second, it occasionally seemed that Jasanoff and

Kim's "sociotechnical imaginaries," as an organizing rubric for the volume as a whole, was pushed to its breaking point. It is a tool better made for mapping collective cultural or discursive futurisms than for following in detail the agentive translation processes through which some futures are caused to incorporate others, as in Lee's chapter, or for examining the affordances of technological prosthetics, as in Choe's. Such moments would be more in tune with more sociological and materialist versions of STS theory. Still, in ultimately regarding sociotechnical imaginaries as a "heuristic" (6), the introduction at least acknowledges such issues, and it is not the worst problem for a collected volume to have if a framing concept cannot fully contain the multitudinous richness of its chapter selections. *Future Yet to Come* is an important and worthwhile contribution, with many chapters appropriate for both graduate and advanced undergraduate classroom use.

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RIGHTS CLAIMING IN SOUTH KOREA. *Edited by Celeste L. Arrington and Patricia Goedde.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. xvii, 342 pp. (Tables, graphs, B&W photos.) US\$115.36, cloth. ISBN 9781108841337.

Anyone who has studied or, better yet, lived in South Korea over the last three decades will have noticed the contentious nature of its post-authoritarian society. Heteropatriarchal oppression, Japanese imperialism, American and Soviet occupations, national division, capitalist exploitation, and other turbulent histories have created the conditions in which a variety of disgruntled individuals and groups have articulated ideas and programs for ameliorative change. Comprised of 14 research chapters in addition to an introduction and conclusion, this expansive volume, the first of its kind, traces a variety of rights-claiming agents, issues, and processes. It offers sociological, political, and historical studies on how and why different languages of grievance (only recent ones are based in the liberal language of human rights) came into being at particular moments. The volume also investigates the institutional experiences of rights advocates and their detractors in a variety of sectors, including women's social status, victims of state violence, underclass labourers, foreign migrants, North Korean refugees, citizens with disabilities, "sexual minorities," and more.

As one might imagine, holding these disparate groups and their distinctive struggles together as a coherent narrative presents any editor with considerable challenges. Celeste L. Arrington and Patricia Goedde offer a cogent introduction to guide readers through this wide-ranging and ambitious volume. Throughout, they emphasize the interrelated processes of enacting, constructing, and contesting human rights. As such, they are mostly interested in claims-making as a politicized process, rather than on

the wider social implications and/or lived realities of such engagements with institutional power. Especially welcome is the volume's unique "bottom-up" approach which, rather than accept laws as they may appear on the books, follows the contentious process of rights claiming in such disparate spheres as litigation, protest, lobbying, media campaigns, and more. The editors also point to new ways in which activist movements of late have worked to institutionalize, albeit only partially, legal remedies.

Having established the larger framework, subsequent chapters cover "rights in historical perspectives" (chapters 1 to 3), "institutional mechanisms for rights claiming" (chapters 4 to 8), "mobilizing rights for the marginalized" (chapters 9 to 12), and "shaping rights for new citizens and noncitizens" (chapters 13 and 14). The first part mainly focuses on the grievances of women from the Chosŏn dynasty (1392–1910) into the colonial era (1910–1945), showing how these marginalized actors used empowering words and male-dominated institutions to seek remedies to their legal disenfranchisement. Unfortunately, other agents and issues are not covered in the history section, which could have benefitted from a wider variety of actors and topics. Nevertheless, this section prepares readers to examine the main focus of the book—namely, contemporary South Korea—especially how organizational structures enabled and constrained claimants from enacting social change. It also reveals the complex relationship that national institutions, such as the National Human Rights Commission of Korea (est. 2001), for example, maintain with overseas groups and leaders, thereby highlighting the inherent transnationality of human rights discourses and related practices. The third section tackles the position of socially and culturally marginalized citizens. It examines how worker grievances led to rights consciousness, disabled peoples' activism pressed for equal treatment (rather than state paternalism), and the ongoing struggles of LGBTI citizens to enact an anti-discrimination law. The final section, which deals with new and noncitizens, rightly points to the current hierarchy of rights as an unequal structure that determines who can become included in the South Korean nation. Of note here is how race, ethnicity, and international status bear on the processes of legal and cultural incorporation. An overwhelming focus on structures and institutions, however, has its limits in terms of the analysis and conclusions of this and several other sections. One does wonder what a more agent- and subjectivity-oriented analysis would uncover in terms of how individuals consider their relative place in an increasingly multi-ethnic and multi-cultural order, but one that continues to privilege (and marginalize) particular kinds of Koreans in a highly stratified order of relative racial homogeneity.

In the conclusion, the editors return to consider their primary research question: that is, "why and how communities and individuals in Korea have mobilized the law and rights language to express grievances and claim entitlements" (15). They reiterate their processual focus on rights-in-action and the diversity of tactics that various claimants have used to achieve their

goals, with some groups more successful than others. While these frameworks allow readers to understand the contested nature of human rights in South Korea, they do not adequately consider some of the unintended consequences of citizens so actively and aggressively embracing liberal notions of rights, especially regarding individual privacy, in an advanced capitalist, post-authoritarian society. Indeed, even as an increasingly large number of interest groups today share a common language of grievance, their (ab)use of this mode of resolving conflict is causing a number of infelicitous problems. These include growing social fragmentation and animosity *among* marginalized groups, an inability to create cross-group alliances in the promotion of common goals, and a paranoid-like defensiveness toward real and/or imagined outsiders. These exhausting byproducts of several intense decades of rights claiming have left some contemporary critics wondering just how microscopic and scattered human rights issues will become. With this new volume in hand, we have a useful guide through which to observe and perhaps even stymie this troubling trajectory of extreme fragmentation and individualization, which are other facets of rights-claiming in South Korea that deserve our attention.

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TRANSNATIONAL HALLYU: The Globalization of Korean Digital and Popular Culture. *Asian Cultural Studies: Transnational and Dialogic Approaches.* By Dal Yong Jin, Kyong Yoon, and Wonjung Min. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021. 188 pp. (Tables, figures, graphs.) US\$105.00, cloth. ISBN 9781538146965.

Transnational Hallyu begins with an acknowledgment of two unprecedented heights achieved by Korean popular culture that speak for themselves—Bong Joon Ho’s film *Parasite* (2019) and BTS’s album *Map of the Soul: 7* (2020). According to the authors, despite the previous successes of non-Western contraflows such as “Japanese anime, Bollywood cinema, Latin American telenovelas, and Turkish television dramas” (148), the global triumph of the Korean Wave, or Hallyu—including K-pop, games, K-dramas, animation, webtoons, cinema, and more—marks the emergence of a truly transnational cultural flow. This flow goes beyond the common theoretical binaries that dominate cultural globalization studies to date between hegemonic mainstream and marginalized subculture, West and East, core and periphery, North and South, and global and local.

One of the main questions posed by the book is “whether Hallyu is global and, furthermore, a globally hegemonic trend, and Korea has achieved super-power status in the global cultural market” (6). In pursuit of the answer, the book faces several challenges—specifically, to balance the literature of

cultural globalization by bringing forth both structure and agency analysis; to pursue an interdisciplinary research predicated on political economy, cultural studies, and area studies; and to explore macro and micro grassroots and routes of transnational Hallyu in order to redefine the definition of global.

The first three chapters are based on a structural analysis behind the Korean Wave phenomenon wherein the authors historicize it by following the impact of government policies, infrastructure building, and social media platform development from the late 1990s. For instance, given its intense digitalization, Hallyu would be impossible without global platforms such as Netflix and YouTube and Korean-made smartphone technology, such as KakaoTalk and LINE apps, which make it “simultaneously global and local” (10). Such a broad view demonstrates the convergence of digital technologies that fuel “diversified directions of cultural globalization” (9).

Following a wider historical and social context for understanding the environment in which the Korean Wave has flourished, the next four chapters zero in on the empirical testimonies of Hallyu fans in five countries (the United States, Canada, Chile, Germany, and Spain) on three continents outside Asia, and across three languages. Rather than focusing solely on a geographical logic of “Hallyu in place X,” the findings demonstrate transnationalism in action. Fans describe their escape into a hybrid, imaginary, alternative, and kaleidoscopic universe. By translating Hallyu into local languages, contexts, and personal experiences, fans shape “trans” by transcending the notions of nationality, modernity, and reality.

Unlike the initial cultural proximity thesis that rationalized the primary success of Hallyu in Asia on cultural similarity and closeness to Korean culture, the vast geographical and cultural distance from non-Asian countries rendered such a thesis inadequate. Instead, fans were engaged in creative strategies to make Hallyu their own by expressing their transnational affinity to hypermodernity or post-nationality in a futuristic space in which they enjoy and “reimagine their possible lives” (16). For instance, Asian diasporic fans and ethnic minorities have expressed minority solidarity with K-pop success from a peripheral location of “perpetual foreigners” (127); young people have identified with the feeling of being different as a part of their own identity-building, growing together with their favorite idols; Chilean fans have used K-pop fandom to express political resistance to local, oppressive governmental measures; finally, some fans have achieved self-empowerment through intercultural learning and intelligence by studying the Korean language and even enrolling in Korean studies programs, while differentiating themselves from racism, Orientalism, and general ignorance of matters Asian.

Besides the “what” question in defining transnational flow, the authors also deal with the “how” question by following the routes and vehicles that have made it possible. In addition to the above-mentioned global and local digital media platforms, the authors also acknowledge the role that Japanese

animation played in paving the way for Hallyu decades earlier, as many fans mentioned being introduced to Asian popular culture through anime. The authors also mention the brokering role of fans, including diasporic ones, as translators, storytellers, entrepreneurs, and even domestic celebrities engaged in bottom-up transfer of the Korean Wave into local realities.

While the book begins with a celebration of Hallyu's success, its concluding chapter is cautious regarding the future of the wave. In referencing two antithetical examples from interviews taken in September 2019 at the same American network, the American Broadcasting Company, which praises BTS's success on one occasion but marginalizes it on another, the authors point out the fragility and partiality of transnational Hallyu. Whereas its fans promote and fuel transnational experiences, the mainstream public continues to nationalize Hallyu as a peripheral, Asian, and local phenomenon. Future studies would do well to continue to explore this puzzle of coexistent transnationalism and parochialism in redefining cultural globalization.

Transnational Hallyu will benefit students and scholars of cultural globalization who are seeking new theoretical discussions. Besides theorization, the strongest feature of this book is its extensive review of relevant sources, rich examples, multilingual interview data, and up-to-date materials. In addition, the authors take a multi-level approach to examining governments, companies, and individual actors while dealing with structure/agency facets of transnational flow. The book is clearly written and well-structured, even though, as is often the case with multi-authored volumes, it succumbs at times to repetition, and in some places would benefit from comparative analysis between different national cases.

Such comparison could reveal that, despite very different locations, fans everywhere share some distinctive characteristics of questioning the importance of nation and the geographical logic of "Hallyu in place X." For instance, regardless of their specific national belonging, marginalized fans in all five locations—in terms of young age, low income, or ethnic origins—demonstrate the porousness of national borders that fandom transcends by creating an imaginary post-national universe. In sum, in its effort "to imagine globalization differently" (154), *Transnational Hallyu* clearly succeeds in explaining the meaning of "trans," but "national" still awaits theorization.

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SOUTH KOREA'S WEBTOONIVERSE AND THE DIGITAL COMIC REVOLUTION. *Media, Culture and Communication in Asia-Pacific Societies.* By Brian Yecies and Ae-Gyung Shim. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021. xviii, 234 pp. (Tables.) US\$110.00, cloth. ISBN 978-1-78660-635-8.

Not until recently has academic attention been paid to webtoons, an emergent genre of digital comics that has become one of the most economically successful cultural industries in South Korea. A recent search on Google Scholar (February 6, 2022) shows that more than two-thirds of the English literature on webtoons has been written within the last three years, with few comprehensive approaches. This book is designed to address this gap as part of the “Media, Culture and Communication in Asia-Pacific Society” series.

The volume explores almost every aspect of the webtoon world (or simply “webtooniverse” as termed by the authors), investigating the complicated relations between actors and institutions in the webtoon industry—comic artists, platforms, agencies, policymakers, translators, and global readers—while analyzing how the actors and their changing relations have contributed to the transformation of Korea’s media and creative industries ecosystems. Enduring the pain of dealing with the pre-history of webtoons, the book begins its analysis by detailing the rise and fall of the print-comics industry in Korea to explain the background against which webtoons have emerged. It examines how print comics have been restructured into webtoons following a series of debates on the Korean government’s censorship over the content of comics and control over the industry’s illegal pirating/camouflaging of Japanese manga (chapter 2). As webtoons became popular, these problems were slowly resolved by negotiations between the industry and the government, for example, through the establishment of industry associations and self-regulation initiatives (chapter 3). In contrast, a neoliberal government policy stance (with the slogan “support without intervention”) (73) was developed that actively encouraged the industry to expand the commercial value and use of cartoons in a broader industry context, such as delivering transmedia IP or one-source-multi-use content, which was pursued aggressively through web portals such as Kakao (previously called Daum) and, later, Naver (chapter 4).

Furthermore, discussing the emergence of second-generation webtoon platforms (such as KakaoPage and Lezhin Comics) that developed a mixed payment system (for instance, providing “[only] free-if-you-wait” content), the authors tackle the issues of the commercialization of webtoons in reference to a variety of social actors (chapter 5). For instance, the diversification of webtoon platforms has led not only to technological progress, but also to controversy over compensation for creators’ labour. Such an attempt to develop the author’s unique critical perspective is notable, albeit this perspective sometimes could have been richer through adopting a more

comprehensive sample (including, for instance, quasi-monopolistic platforms in the industry such as Naver, which is also in conflict with webtoon creators over unfair labour contracts).

Further, webtoon-related social topics and terms are examined through a focus on the technically innovative (chapter 6), branded webtoons (chapter 7), as well as K-pop webtoons (chapter 8) in the second half of the book. Perhaps a fuller discussion of the terms—for instance, defining branded webtoons outside of soft power theory while comparing similarities and differences across other critical media/communication and/or globalization theories—could have helped enrich what is already a critical evaluation of such concepts.

However, this does not mean—behind the intriguing image of a webtooniverse—that this book simply celebrates the geographical expansion of the reach of webtoons. Overall, it speaks about broader aspects of the relationship between the various institutional elements and actors that make up such a universe. This book should be treated as more than a simple English guide to webtoons. It would suit critical readers and scholars interested in the political and social effects of *culture revolutionary* technological progress in new media ecologies represented by webtoons.

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GUNS, GUERILLAS, AND THE GREAT LEADER: North Korea and the Third World. By *Benjamin R. Young*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2021. x, 218 pp. (figures.) US\$28.00, paper. ISBN 9781503627635.

This is the first academic monograph that provides a comprehensive overview of North Korea's activities in the Third World during the Cold War, and as such, it makes a major contribution to North Korean studies. Earlier publications were either limited to the DPRK's bilateral interactions with selected individual states (e.g., Zimbabwe or Guyana) or to its presence in a specific region (e.g., Latin America, Southeast Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, or the Persian Gulf), or they treated Pyongyang's Third World diplomacy only as a subtopic of the global competition between the two Koreas. In contrast, Young's book seeks to cover each main geographical region of the Third World, and each region is represented by several in-depth case studies (e.g., Southeast Asia by Indonesia and Vietnam, and Sub-Saharan Africa by Angola, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Zimbabwe). This balanced approach enables the author to avoid the pitfalls of focusing on a few states at the expense of the global context or concentrating on the global diplomatic stage and making only passing references to the individual countries. Still, certain regions receive considerably more attention than others. For instance, North Korea's relations with India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh are described far less extensively than its interactions with the South Pacific microstates.

The book's scope is panoramic not only in a geographical but also in a chronological and thematic sense. It investigates North Korea's Third World diplomacy from the Bandung Conference (1955) to the end of the Cold War, with a brief outlook into the post-Cold War era. Each chapter describes a phase in Pyongyang's Third World policy, linking its distinctive features to the dominant elements of the regime's domestic and unification policies in that specific period. This structural concept helps to ensure focus and coherence (see the interesting parallels between North Korea's relations with Indonesia, Cuba, and Vietnam in the 1960s), but it occasionally induces the author to over-state a single factor at the expense of others. For instance, the Rangoon bombing (October 9, 1983) is attributed near-exclusively to Kim Jong Il's penchant for revolutionary violence. This interpretation overlooks the fact that Chun Doo Hwan's trip to Burma was to be followed by a visit in India—a visit that the DPRK had every reason to prevent, as it would have granted Chun legitimacy in the eyes of many non-aligned countries. As early as March 1983, the Indian hosts of the seventh non-aligned summit (to which the book makes only a single indirect reference) rebuffed Pyongyang's insistent requests to place the Korean question on the agenda.

Unlike earlier studies on North Korea's Third World policy, the examined dimensions of interaction are not confined to the diplomatic and military spheres but include economic aid programs, sports training, and propaganda. The author offers a colourful description of the less-than-favourable impression that the DPRK's heavy-handed methods made on the citizens of the Third World countries that Pyongyang sought to win over. The massive factual evidence the author presents in chapters 2 and 4 about these negative impressions is partly at odds with the tone of chapter 1, which places the main emphasis on North Korea's favourable reputation in the Third World.

The book's source base is of a similarly panoramic nature. By amalgamating the reports of US, British, ROK, and Soviet bloc diplomats with North Korean media sources and a wide range of secondary sources, the author is usually able to overcome the inherent limitations peculiar to one or another specific type of source. A particularly successful example of this multilateral approach is the book's description of North Korea's relations with Uganda under Idi Amin, Milton Obote, and Yoweri Museveni.

In some other cases, the author reaches his conclusions on the basis of less solid evidence, with occasional inaccuracies. For instance, he concludes that "the South Pacific remained dominated by North Korean influence and became one of the few spaces where Pyongyang exerted greater influence than Seoul. It was North Korea's financial assistance ... that South Pacific island nations most welcomed" (123). Of the eight relevant South Pacific states, Kiribati, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Tuvalu established diplomatic relations only with South Korea, while Fiji, Nauru, and Vanuatu, anxious as they were to appear even-handed, established relations first with Seoul and later with Pyongyang. Their attitude toward the DPRK showed

little correlation with the extent of their aid dependency: Kiribati, Tuvalu, and the Solomon Islands were desperately poor and highly aid-dependent, whereas Nauru had an extremely high per capita GDP until the depletion of its phosphate mines in the 1990s.

By emphasizing Kim Il Sung's efforts to pursue a course independent from the Communist Great Powers, the author develops a more nuanced narrative than those scholars who presented North Korea's activities in the developing world as mere proxy operations carried out on behalf of the USSR. Actually, the analytical method of placing Pyongyang's Third World diplomacy into the global context of communist foreign policies might have been utilized in some other case studies as well. For example, the author describes initial Indonesian-DPRK relations as follows: "As a developing Asian leftist state that struggled to affirm its nonalignment in international affairs, the Indonesian government gravitated to the proudly independent and socialist North Koreans" (20). In reality, Indonesia, having forged ambassadorial relations with the PRC as early as 1950, established consular-general relations with the DRV in 1955, with Soviet-occupied East Germany in 1960, and with North Korea as late as 1961.

All in all, this monograph is a valuable contribution to North Korean, Cold War, and Third World studies, as it provides detailed factual information on Pyongyang's interactions with over twenty Third World states. Its colourful description of the heavy-handed methods of North Korean diplomacy makes it easier to understand why many non-aligned countries, having initially embraced the DPRK, soon became disillusioned with its behaviour. At the same time, the author also demonstrates that North Korea did manage to retain a foothold in certain developing countries even after a series of regime changes, precisely because of the same opportunistic pragmatism that repulsed some other Third World leaders.

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NORTH KOREA AND THE GEOPOLITICS OF DEVELOPMENT.

By Kevin Gray and Jong-Woon Lee. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. xiii, 288 pp. (Tables, B&W photos.) US\$110.00, cloth. ISBN 978-1-108-84365-2.

In *North Korea and the Geopolitics of Development*, authors Kevin Gray and Jong-Woon Lee interpret North Korea's economic history through the lens of what they call the nexus between development and geopolitical contestation. This is the core theoretical idea of their book, which offers "a holistic explanation of the particularism of the North Korean trajectory of development, albeit within the universality of the late developmental experience" (xi).

The book starts with an eclectic tour de force through the literature

on colonial and post-colonial economic development. The introduction presents about 20 research questions, including: How exactly did Korea's experience of colonization shape the emergence of the North Korean developmental regime? What role did the division of the Korean Peninsula and its locus on the frontline of the Cold War play in shaping the North's project of national development? How did catch-up industrialization in the context of the Cold War shape the subsequent decline of the North Korean economy and its collapse in the 1990s? To what extent can China's deepening economic relations with North Korea be seen as a form of neocolonialism or an emergent form of South-South cooperation? Why have North Korean experiments with market reform been relatively limited compared to those of China? (21, 25).

The eight core chapters address these issues in the context of a chronological discussion of North Korea's economic development from 1945 until about 2018. The final chapter returns to where the book started: the issue of late development as a conscious attempt to achieve security and to overcome the fundamental inequalities of the international system. The success or failure of such attempts and the substantive character of projects of national development can be explained only with reference to their "mutually constitutive relations with broader processes of geopolitical contestation" (245).

To achieve the stated goal of the book, the authors list a number of such factors and conclude that North Korea is not just another case of state socialism, but a case of post-colonial development. Following liberation, North Korea was in a unique geostrategic position that allowed it to pursue a heavy-industry-first strategy due to political support from the Soviet Union. Korea's national division resulted in competitive pressure and a strong motivation to develop, but also led to the desire to channel resources into a military build-up.

Since the 1960s, North Korea had to cope with major shifts and even disruptions within its roster of allies, which contributed to the decision to develop an independent and highly self-sufficient national economy. Competition with South Korea, civil war, and mistrust against their own allies led to the establishment of a domestic political system that helped North Korea survive the collapse of socialism in the late 1980s, and the resulting crisis of the mid-1990s. The marketization measures since the late 1990s are seen as a pragmatic adjustment to new needs and changed realities. A major external factor for North Korea's development is China, but rather than serving as a model to be emulated, it functions as a lifeline for an outdated system. Last but not least, the negative impact of sanctions on economic reforms is an often-overlooked side effect of these punitive measures.

Considering the book's comprehensive approach, the level of detail is remarkable, even though compromises are inevitable. Chapter 4, for example, lists measures that could have developed into actual reforms in

the 1980s, such as the Independent Accounting System, Unified Enterprises, August 3rd Goods, Joint Venture Law, and the first Special Economic Zone. The seismic changes of the 1990s are covered with useful detail as well, including, for example, numbers on the decline in the availability of fertilizer and pesticides. Nevertheless, not every reader will be satisfied with seeing what has arguably been one of the most important and controversial stages of North Korea's economic development being covered in only eight pages.

The book processes much of the available material and scholarship on North Korea's economic development in English and in Korean. What needs to be highlighted is the authors' effort to frequently include North Korean primary and secondary sources despite the many related difficulties—a rare undertaking.

A typical problem of publications on current affairs is that they become outdated the day the manuscript is submitted. The book, for example, covers trade until 2017 and thus does not include the sudden drop (by almost 50 percent) in bilateral trade volume with China in 2018 and the further reduction back to the level of the year 2001 in 2020.

The book keeps a professional and objective tone. Some readers might, however, disagree with the assumption in chapter 6 that a significant number of analysts have tried to explain the limited nature of North Korean reforms—reforms within the system, not of the system—through domestic politico-ideological factors. One could also challenge the notion that many analyses “do not adequately take into account the degree to which economic management and the daily life of the population have already diverged from the principles of the centrally planned economy” (191).

As every author knows, minor errors are inevitable. For example, the Soviet Union declared war on Japan on August 8, 1945, not on August 9 (40). Worldview in German is spelled “Weltanschauung,” not “weltanshchauung” (108), and the dual line is “Pyŏngjin,” not “Pyŏngin” (110). In a hopefully forthcoming less expensive paperback version, these will hopefully be corrected.

This book will be very useful for students, journalists, and others who need a detailed yet concise summary of what is known about North Korea's economic development. It is well suited as the main textbook for an introductory course on that subject. Long-term experts with a more focused interest in North Korea will appreciate the book's value as a reference work.

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DYING TO SERVE: Militarism, Affect, and the Politics of Sacrifice in the Pakistan Army. *South Asia In Motion.* By Maria Rashid. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2020. xiii, 267 pp. (Tables, B&W photos) US\$28.00, paper. ISBN 9781503611986.

Over the course of the last decade, scholarship on the Pakistan Army has proliferated; however, Rashid's *Dying to Serve* stands out because she has done what others have been unable to do: conduct research among and on the enlisted ranks of the Pakistan Army and their families, with a particular focus on the district of Chakwal. That Rashid identified these men as a site of important empirical work is to her commendation; that she devised a suitable research methodology to conduct the work is remarkable.

In the first chapter, "Technology of Rule," she acknowledges that she has privileged access because her father is a "proud, third generation army man" (xiii). This does raise questions of replicability and subject position, which I view as the cost inherent in this work and the other empirical benefits it bestows. In this opening chapter, she describes attending the 2015 *Youm-e-Difāh* (Defense Day), which is "a national military commemorative ceremony" (1). Seated in the press area, she saw a sign "NoK" (Next of Kin), which is where the families of dead soldiers would sit, most of whom came from Pakistan's villages. The show featured music, a colourful stage, and "larger than life screens" (2). Before the finale commenced, the music stopped and the master of ceremonies welcomed the mother of a "martyr" (*shaheed*), which is how the Pakistan Army refers to its slain soldiers. The mother walked on stage and approached the dais, where she stood confidently. "Her eyes glistened with tears as she spoke lovingly of her son ... [When] she spoke her voice did not waver. She spoke with pride and poise, her head held high. Her grief hung in the air, but more touching to watch was her resolve, her ability to stand firm and resolute against the overwhelming loss that this death had brought her" (2). The camera lingered on her, then "swung to the audience, where some watched in awe, while other sobbed or cried silently" (3). One is struck by the "farce-like nature of the spectacle" she describes, and the "impulse of these families to lend themselves to these orchestrations around death" (3).

Rashid's brilliance lies not only in the keenness of her observation and analysis, but also in the captivating language of her exposition. The remainder of this first chapter dilates upon the utility of the mother's grief to the institution to valorize this grief, while also instrumentalizing it to ensure acceptance of yet more grief among an ever-expanding pool of mothers whose sons will die in the various forever wars that Pakistan manufactures. Rashid explains lucidly how the army and its various technologies of rule deploy the grief and sacrifice of these families to maintain the military's hegemonic grasp over the country.

The second chapter, "A Calibrated Dose of Grief," focuses on national

military commemorations, such as the one detailed above. These spectacles are worthy empirical subjects for two reasons. First, they “define the master narrative” through which the army both shapes and cultivates the way in which citizens understand the military and the various functions—constitutional as well as extra-constitutional—the army assumes. Second, these performative ceremonies “represent a site for the examination of relationships—between soldiers, families, and the institution of the military—that lie at the heart of militarism” (24).

In chapter 3, “Land of the Valiant,” her gaze moves from the national stage to Chakwal, which is renowned for producing soldiers and officers. Here she offers a historical discussion of the practices and policies of the British Indian Army and the ways in which they influenced the national recruitment policies of the present Pakistan Army. She pays particular attention to the costs—but also the benefits—these policies have imposed on the families and community of this so-called “martial district.” She finds continuity between pre- and post-independent policies for three interdependent reasons. First, military recruitment is driven by economic motives. Second, enlistment in the army has been normalized as a profession, with “long-term systematic, often generational investment that may mean the difference between a life of penury and a more settled existence with the security of social welfare” (55). Finally, her interlocutors consistently articulated the role of nationalist and religious motivations for their choices.

In chapter 4, “Manufacturing Soldiers,” Rashid explores the ways in which the army renders peasants into soldiers. Here she both studies how the military views its soldier classes and the aspirations it holds, and the fears it carries as well as the kind of soldiers the army seeks to forge. Additionally, through family interviews, she garners insights into the ways in which the soldiers experience these “rituals of transformation and the ways he copes within these regimes of discipline” (88). This is where Rashid’s access—with all of the compromises it may impose upon other aspects of her empirical undertaking—is remarkable. No one has bothered to conceive of, much less embark upon, such a study.

In chapter 5, “Grief and its Aftermath,” Rashid recounts the way in which the dead are received in Chakwal, as well as the compensation policies of the army detailed in the sixth chapter (“The Value of Loss”). Chapter 7, “The Bodies Left Behind,” focuses on disabled soldiers, while the eighth chapter, “Pro Patria Mori,” addresses Pakistan’s ostensible participation in the US-led war on terror as well as its own desultory fight against terrorism. Both chapters 7 and 8 examine the sometimes fraught relationship between the military and the men and families upon which its missions at home and abroad rest. In the final chapter, “A Post-military World?” the author reflects on the different ways the army cultivates the men and families who render its forever wars possible as well as its relationship with the nation it has subjugated for its organizational needs. She also delves into the personal

perquisites the institution bestows upon the men and their families. By more deeply re-examining the affective technologies employed by the army, she aims to both destabilize and mitigate the appeal of militarism to its subject.

There are peccadillos that can be vexing if one perseverates on them. For example, she doesn't challenge Pakistan's own history of militarism, especially the sub-conventional warfare which began in Kashmir in 1947 and in Afghanistan in 1973. Methodologically, this book offers much fodder for discussion among scholars and students alike. In short, this is a brilliantly conceived and executed volume.

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SIKH NATIONALISM: From a Dominant Minority to an Ethno-Religious Diaspora. *New Approaches to Asian History.* By **Gurharpal Singh and Giorgio Shani.** Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2021. 250 pp. (Maps, figures, tables.) US\$89.99, cloth. ISBN 9781107136540.

Gurharpal Singh and Giorgio Shani's book is a major contribution to the study of Sikh nationalism and the nationalism of so-called "small peoples"—that is, ethnic groups or "nations" without their own sovereign states. The book makes important area studies and theoretical/comparative contributions to the existing academic literature on the topic. The book's easy-to-read analytic narrative makes it accessible to the general educated audience, as well as the more specialized academic community.

The book's primary purpose is to decipher and explain the historical origins and evolution of Sikh nationalism. As the authors state, "[t]he central argument of this book is quite simple: we need to move beyond existing tropes, especially religion, that have defined Sikh subjectivities. An integrated approach to nationalism, identity and diaspora offers a more comprehensive understanding of Sikh aspirations for self-determination" (1). As such, the authors acknowledge the various ways to conceptualize the Sikhs: as a "religious community," an evolving political "nation," and/or a "minority group" in both India and the worldwide diaspora. Keeping the analytical task of explaining Sikh nationalism in the forefront, the authors appropriately focus on the second conceptualization—that of the Sikhs as an evolving stateless (or diasporic) "nation." Of particular analytical importance is the authors' methodological choice of avoiding a "critical theory" approach consisting of interpretative "deconstruction," in favour of an "empirical/positivist" macro-historical approach attempting to explain the evolution of Sikh nationalism from the beginning of the community/nation to the present. In fact, the various chapters of the book, except for the introduction and chapter on the Sikh diaspora, are in chronological order.

In taking this empirical/positivist approach, the authors make an

important theoretical/comparative contribution to the study of the nationalism of other “small peoples” of the world. In particular, the authors utilize Anthony Smith’s “ethno-symbolic” approach in structuring their analytic historical narrative (*The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Blackwell Publishing, 1986). This approach accepts that the origins of nations and nationalism are modern, but that “the mainspring of nationalist ideology is located in pre-modern cultural attachments such as *ethnies*” (12). This *ethnie* consists of the cultural antecedents and milieu of a more crystallized “national” identity. Furthermore, the authors argue that the evolution of the nationalism of any “small peoples” cannot be understood without examining the wider political context and authority structures with which they interact and, in fact, came to form a more cohesive political “nation” from a mere *ethnie*. In the context of Sikh nationalism, this entails exploring the centrality of the *Khalsa* identity promulgated by the 10th Sikh guru Gobind Singh in 1699, the symbolic universe surrounding this identity, and its relationship with various political authority structures in South Asia, particularly in the Punjab. These included the various Islamic invaders from the west, the Mughals, the British, and (in more recent times) the postcolonial Pakistani and Indian nation/state-building projects. The latter involves both the “secular” Indian nation/state-building of the Congress Party and the contemporary BJP-led *Hindutva* brand of Indian national identity. Thus, the book’s analytic historical narrative is structured by this “ethno-symbolic” approach in various degrees of cohesion and rigour from chapter to chapter. In some chapters, however, the straightforward recitation of political history relegates the primary analytical framework to the background.

A particularly important feature and strength of the book is how the authors avoid reifying Sikh identity and nationalism into an assumed, unproblematic, and homogenous phenomenon. Thus, within its various chapters, the book explicitly grapples with the existing literature on the Sikhs, including the competing narratives of a religious community, nation, and minority group. The internal complexity within the Sikh “community” or “nation” is also examined in significant detail. This includes internal cleavages involving different degrees of adherence to the *Khalsa* tradition, caste divisions, and sectarian differences. While acknowledging this internal complexity and heterogeneity, the authors do not lose sight of the primary analytical focus of their book—that is, Sikh nationalism. As a result, this internal diversity is appropriately acknowledged and its effects on evolving Sikh nationalism discussed, but the reality and existence of the phenomenon of Sikh nationalism is not lost in this discussion of diversity, as is often done by scholars who tend to simply “problematize” Sikh identity and nationalism, instead of rigorously explaining it. Different political interpretations of Sikh identity and nationalism in the contemporary period are also examined in the book. For example, the authors explore how Sikhs associated with the BJP Party view themselves as a depoliticized part of the larger Hindu community,

those associated with the secular Congress Party see themselves as a distinct “religious community” within the wider Indian nationality, the moderate Akali Dal identify as an “ethnic group” or perhaps “nation” within the broader Indian Union but remain committed to India’s territorial integrity, and more radical/militant Sikhs associate the notion of Sikh “nationhood” with complete political sovereignty and outright “statehood.” The historical interplay of these competing strands of Sikh identity and “people-ness” in the postcolonial era is explored in chapters 5, 6, and 7. In chapter 8, which is particularly innovative, the authors incorporate the growing Sikh diaspora into their analysis, including the possibilities of a “deterritorialized” notion of Sikh nationhood.

In conclusion, the authors end with the assessment that critical theory “offers a critique rather than a fully developed perspective that can adequately explain the social and political dimensions of Sikh nationalism. It is now time to take the study of Sikh nationalism seriously” (218). This book attempts to do just that through an empirical/positivist macro-historical approach utilizing the “ethno-symbolic” framework contextualized in the nation/state-building projects of different ruling regimes in Punjab and South Asia. The product is a magisterial academic study of the historical evolution of Sikh nationalism, which deserves the attention of area studies experts and comparativists alike.

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JUGDEP SINGH CHIMA

**DEMOCRACY AND NATIONALISM IN SOUTHEAST ASIA:
From Secessionist Mobilization to Conflict Resolution.** *By Jacques Bertrand.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2021. xviii, 282 pp. (Tables, graphs, figures.) US\$90.00, cloth. ISBN 9781108491280.

Just as democratic peace suggests that democracies do not make war with other democracies, democratic civil peace suggests that democracy reduces domestic violence by making repression more costly and providing alternative means for political struggle, even if transitions see spikes in violence. Jacques Bertrand’s new book, *Democracy and Nationalism in Southeast Asia: From Secessionist Mobilization to Conflict Resolution*, analyzes how democratic transitions condition secessionism in Southeast Asia. It shows how the turn to democracy reduces violence, managing although not resolving conflicts. Through a fine-grained examination of a handful of cases, Bertrand analyzes variation in timing and outcomes, providing readers with a rich, grounded understanding of how democracy manages minority nationalism.

Democracy and Nationalism in Southeast Asia features eight chapters, including a compelling conceptual chapter and dedicated chapters on five cases, bookended by an introduction and conclusion. Bertrand’s five cases

are Aceh and Papua (Indonesia), Mindanao and the Cordillera region (Philippines), and southern Thailand. A point of departure is why Aceh enjoys meaningful territorial autonomy, with Mindanao doing so later, the Cordilleran struggle rebranding itself in terms of indigenous rights, while Papua continues to see violent resistance with limited autonomy, and southern Thailand was afforded no concessions. Democracy may help to reduce violence and manage conflicts, but this plays out differently across cases, some enjoying concessions while others face simmering violence and repression. To explain variation, Bertrand introduces conditioning factors, including the cohesion of armed groups and minority nationalist movements, states' credible commitments, political institutions, and timing.

One of the book's many important contributions relates to timing. Bertrand differentiates between democratic transitions and democratic stabilization, the latter preferred over "consolidation" given the unsettled nature of democracy in Southeast Asia. In place of the inverted U-shape suggested in other studies, with closed autocracy and stable democracy seeing less violence, but moments of transition enabling resistance, Bertrand makes a compelling case for more of a bell curve. Early on in transitions, we see brief moments of optimism, where civil society groups celebrate the end of dictatorship and armed groups wait and see. But we also see violent flare-ups later on, as democracy stabilizes, especially where national legislatures try to claw back concessions.

In terms of case selection, readers may be surprised to see the Cordillera region discussed alongside more traditional separatist conflicts. Although featuring violent resistance from distinctive ethnic minorities with territorial claims, the Cordillera region was initially linked to leftist insurgents, had fewer demands for separatism (and is less "separable"), and is framed as more of an indigenous movement. Myanmar may offer more comparable separatist conflicts, however it has not seen a clear transition to democracy. The inclusion of the Cordillera region makes for distinctive insights, showing how armed groups can shift to reframe their struggle. It also underlines the nativist flavour of all separatist conflicts, with the potential for indigenous rights framing especially relevant for Papua.

One quibble is that the book focuses not on secessionist conflicts, but instead on "nationalist conflicts." This seems to be what most would understand as separatism: "[n]ationalists are mostly concentrated territorially and make strong demands for self-determination or independence" (238). The author's hesitancy to frame these as secessionist conflicts makes sense, as demands may move from independence to autonomy or other concessions, shifts at the heart of this book. The book's preface offers a thoughtful reflection on the meaning of "ethnic conflict," a term that lumps together varied types of violence and may overpredict conflict. Nationalist conflict emphasizes that the groups in question typically identify not as ethnic minorities, but as nations—almost by definition, a named group

with widespread mobilization for self-government may be seen as a nation. However, the term “nationalist conflict” seems imprecise, since some groups lack a clear national identity, be it fragmented plural indigenous nations in the Cordillera or Papua or ethnic divisions in Mindanao. The book speaks of “nationalist mobilization,” which can be confusing, since it is nationalists (at the country level) that separatist groups must often confront. For many readers, “nationalist violence” suggests actions from national majorities, not those struggling against them, or at least conflicts over national identity across a country. It could also refer to mobilization in communal violence, a blurring that the author criticizes in the term “ethnic conflict.” Minimally, the term “nationalist conflicts” needs the qualifier “minority” to make sense. It seems that separatism might be a clearer term, as it does not assume that the goal is secession, but instead a group governing itself separately.

Bertrand’s study cautions against the idea of such struggles being resolved through democracy, instead noting that democratic systems can better manage minority demands. This is an essential point, consistent with findings in the broader literature on majority-minority relations. Majority groups typically want final resolutions, for instance with indigenous claims, when instead we must see intergroup relations as ongoing negotiations as new challenges and generations emerge. For relations between majority and minority nations, we must speak of managing rather than resolving demands. As a consequence, it will be interesting to see how a decline in democracy will impact these cases. The book is focused on shifts toward democracy, especially in the 2000s. As Southeast Asia sees democratic collapse and erosion, it will be important to analyze how this might reduce the space to manage these cases through peaceful means.

Democracy and Nationalism in Southeast Asia provides a seminal account of how democracy conditions the struggles of minority nations. Democracy enables new forms of mobilization and makes violence more costly for all sides, allowing for minority demands to play out more peacefully. How this plays out varies, and Bertrand’s considerable expertise helps to guide the reader through varied pathways. The book will be essential reading for those familiar with Asian politics seeking to understand conflicts, as well as experts on conflict seeking to understand these cases.

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SHANE JOSHUA BARTER

SHAPING THE FUTURES OF WORK: Proactive Governance and Millennials. *By Nilanjan Raghunath.* Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2021. xiv, 238 pp. (Tables, figures.) US\$95.00, cloth. ISBN 9780228008804.

Nilanjan Raghunath seeks to understand high-skilled millennials, the professionals among the largest generation in workplaces and increasingly their middle managers, facing rapid technological change, trade wars, and pandemics. She offers three linked contributions: that the future of work must be understood as gruelling competition and continuous disruptive change necessitating lifelong employee reskilling and proactive and responsive collaborations of governments, businesses, and networks; a discussion of the human capital implications of two state-of-the-art Singaporean government initiatives designed to build the inclusive policies, roadmaps, collaborations and infrastructure for life-long employee retraining and to catalyze innovations for the digital economy; and a case study of the motivations and prospects of Singaporean high-skilled millennials adapting to rapid disruptive technology change. She argues against a myopic focus on technologically determined futures, suggesting that reskilling and policies focus on people rather than just technologies, with an emphasis on training that strengthens social skills and networking as much as programming skills, and policies that focus on employment and collaboration as much as technological upgrading. This is a welcome stand increasingly common to future-of-work discussions.

Raghunath recognizes that the pace of automation and AI change has accelerated during the pandemic and trade wars, creating many new uncertainties for workers, firms, and governments. Competition in the digital economy is global and fierce and firms must continually adapt to remain competitive and to attract workers who can meet disruptive technological challenges. Even high-skilled workers are anxious about failing to keep up or failing as entrepreneurs. Remote work and trade wars have accelerated automation, straining firms and networks but also impacting a wide array of government policies and systems. Algorithms are penetrating ever more aspects of work and society, forcing firms, networks, and governments to consider a host of new challenges—whether data governance, algorithmic fairness, disinformation, and other factors.

The author discusses how rapid change affects interactions between high-skilled millennials and firms, situating this discussion within sociological literature on organizational culture. According to Raghunath, the relative empowerment of high-skilled millennials and their networks, stemming from rapid and disruptive technological change and fierce competition in which firms are pushed to continually innovate, enables a sort of ongoing open dialogue between millennial workers and firms. These conversations, and the dynamic fuelling them, underpin the familiar flat digital economy firm hierarchies, with open collaborative work and play spaces, agile teamwork,

continual feedback, review and training mechanisms, and large numbers of contract workers as well as the entitlement and churn of high-skilled millennials and their networks. Her discussion dismisses most negative stereotypes of high-skilled millennials. Pandemic, trade war, and regulatory actions in the several years since research for this study was completed might modify elements of this discussion (remote work and layering) but underline others (flexible work, agile teamwork, contractors, churn, and work-life balance).

Taking this discussion of millennials and firms in flux to a wider governance frame, Raghunath posits what she calls proactive governance: government-led collaborations with business people, the media, and intellectuals to anticipate, enable, co-create, regulate, and update policy for future work. Collaborative foresight and response are things many governments attempt, though careful to limit the scope for discretion, regulatory capture, and disinformation, and conscious of the limits of governments *and* industry in anticipating disruptive innovation.

Raghunath suggests that Singapore's emerging governance of the digital economy is an example of proactive governance, focusing discussion on the human capital implications of two Singaporean digital economy efforts: the SkillsFuture Initiative, building inclusive policies, roadmaps, and infrastructure for life-long training for the digital economy; and the Smart Nation Initiative, fostering innovations in very large data generation through sensors, data storage, and associated analytics. From a wealth of Singaporean social, educational, and industrial policies and government, industry, and university collaborations over the last several decades, Raghunath draws out key strengths (meritocracy, self-reliance, social stability, and pragmatism) and challenges (creativity, social skills, and risk aversion) for high-skilled millennials and highlights critical implications for secondary and tertiary education systems.

A case study of the motivations and prospects of Singapore's high-skilled millennials follows. This suggests that, relative to counterparts elsewhere, Singaporean high-skilled millennials are pragmatic, see self-reliance and meritocracy as the routes to economic success, and ethnic integration and family support as central to social stability, strongly echoing long-standing Singaporean narratives. They see technological competence as the baseline whatever their field of endeavour and welcome automation and AI, focusing their anxieties instead on whether they will fail to make something of themselves or contribute to society. These are reasonable findings, though the caveat about counterparts elsewhere is less persuasive given her earlier discussions on organizational culture that suggest similar or equivocal findings on the motivations and aspirations of high-skilled millennials. Readers may be struck by the seeming lack of salience of global networks and communities.

Raghunath tells an optimistic story featuring familiar Singaporean tropes

of pragmatic self-sacrificing families, far-sighted social and industrial policies, and highly competitive education systems shaping high-skilled millennials and secondary and tertiary education systems. Unaccountably she does not draw out implications for technical education or entrepreneurial training systems or for industrial policies, barely sketching the outlines of the deep technology collaborations the Singaporean government has engaged in over decades that have increased global linkages and promoted a national venture capital sector and Singapore as a base for regional headquarters of global technology giants and global universities (Toni Elias, Jamil Wyne, and Sarah Lenoble, *The Evolution and State of Singapore Start-up Ecosystem: Lessons for Emerging Market Economies*, World Bank, 2021). Similarly, she offers welcome speculations about extending proactive collaborations to some Singaporean workplace concerns (aging populations, neuroscience, and fertility) but misses others, such as the reskilling of larger population groups or migration policies. Perhaps such missed opportunities require more complicated tropes.

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STEPHEN J. MCGURK

EMPIRE'S MISTRESS: Starring Isabel Rosaria Cooper. By Vernadette Vicuña Gonzalez. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2021. 219 pp. (B&W photos) US\$25.95, paper. ISBN 978-1-4780-14400-3.

Vernadette Gonzalez's *Empire's Mistress* offers a welcome correction to the common practice of colonial subjects being written out of history. This fascinating book engages with careful archival research—an uphill battle, considering the scarcity and unreliability of sources—to bring attention to the forgotten biography of Isabel Cooper, a Filipina vaudeville and screen actor who acquired a marginal reputation as the temporary mistress of General Douglas MacArthur. Traditionally, Cooper's marginal inclusion in history accounts mostly serves a clichéd Orientalism, bestowing upon MacArthur an image of colonial mastery and exoticism.

Gonzalez's book is decidedly not interested in framing Cooper's biography through the lens of MacArthur, although some sections explain their relationship and eventual breakup. Instead, Cooper is shown as the resourceful colonial subject, making the best of the type of interracial relationship commonly practiced during the US occupation of the Philippines. When MacArthur eventually abandons her after four years of a not-so-secret relationship in Washington, DC, she manages to intervene in the general's libel suit against a journalist by offering up his love letters, forcing MacArthur to drop his suit and pay out US\$15,000 to avoid a public scandal as the chief of staff of the US Army. Gonzalez stresses here the resilient agency of the belittled mistress who will not go away quietly.

After the initial and perhaps required account of Cooper's reputation as MacArthur's mistress, the book opens into wider contexts of US colonial history in the Philippines. Cooper's father, a white Midwesterner, is drawn to the adventure of US colonial expansion and enlists in the army shortly after the acquisition of the Philippines in 1898. He serves US military interests in the pacification of the colony, joining other soldiers who hunt rebels during the day and fraternize with Filipina prostitutes at night and thus defy the existing racial barriers on the US continent. Moreover, prostitution is overseen by the military to regulate the risk of sexually transmitted diseases as an integral part of the military industrial/entertainment complex.

Gonzalez places the formative period of young Isabel Cooper into the context of Manila's post-WW I modernization, the emergence of the women's movement in the Philippines, and its growing entertainment culture emulating Hollywood. Her father, Isaac Cooper, eventually returns with his mixed-race family to Arizona. After a brief stay in the US, her mother Protacia decides to return with Isabel to the Philippines and immediately marries another American soldier. According to Gonzalez, this unexpected decision represents an ironic reversal of the arranged overseas sham marriage, letting US soldiers off the hook upon returning to the US. Gonzalez views the mother's self-determination as making a crucial impression on the young Isabel and her own attempts to retain her independence in an environment marked by a colonial economy of desire, sex, and acquisition.

Isabel Cooper, not misled by the fantasies imposed by the colonizer, embarks on a career as a vaudeville performer in her early teens, entertaining troops with thinly veiled sexual innuendos in coyly delivered songs such as "Has Anybody Seen My Kitty?" Her stage name Dimples underscores a transgressive sexual fascination with young teens, turning Manila's night life into a lurid male fantasy, with Dimples knowingly serving as its mirror. Dimples is eventually discovered by the pioneer of Philippine cinema, José Nepomuceno, and stars in three films, most notably Nepomuceno's *Ang Tatlong Hambog* (1926), featuring a scandalous first on-screen kissing scene.

Whereas the first part of the book highlights Isabel Cooper's savvy engagement of the native colonial terrain and the reality of US military occupation, the second part shows her to be less successful in securing a career in Hollywood, culminating in her tragically committing suicide at age 46. Propelled by her nascent success in Philippine cinema, Cooper sets out for Hollywood in 1927 hoping to be discovered, but to no avail. It would have helped Gonzalez's account to spell out directly the predominant practices of racial casting in Hollywood: namely the substituting ethnic whites for people of colour as demanded by existing Jim Crow laws. For example, despite her international fame, Anna May Wong, the first Chinese-American movie star, could not secure lead roles in the US. Once the Hays or Motion Picture Production Code (1922–1945) was fully enforced in 1934, along with its explicit banning of miscegenation, the doors of Hollywood shut down

almost all opportunities for significant ethnic or racial casting for people of colour. That year also marked Cooper's break-up with MacArthur.

One can only wonder how Cooper's talent would have evolved on the cinematic screen in her native country had she not left for the US with MacArthur in 1930, later finding herself sidelined in minor roles and extra parts in Hollywood and having to perform dutifully the clichés of screen Orientalism. Her final significant film, *I Was an American Spy* (1951), tells the story of a Claire Philipps, an American Filipina, spying for the US during the Japanese occupation of Manila. The lead part, not surprisingly, goes to the director Ann Dvorak and is done in muted yellowface. Cooper is predictably given the subservient bit part of Lolita, the maid.

Cooper, who maintains a critical distance to the colonial exploits of the US military, it appears, finally succumbs to the mirage of Hollywood losing out to its firmly embedded white power structures. Gonzalez's book provides no definitive answers about her tragic end but speculatively engages the excavated materials, such as newspaper clips and publicity write-ups, letters, birth, death, and marriage certificates, as well as beautiful screen stills and promotional photos, on the levels of biography and colonial history. The book is structured in a variation of styles in its attempt to present Cooper's biography creatively rather than just factually. In this fashion, it constitutes a fascinating account of a minor biography intersecting with a major biography and historical events as seen from the colonized periphery.

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DELIA MALIA KONZETT

THE BURMESE LABYRINTH: A History of the Rohingya Tragedy. By **Carlos Sardiña Galache.** Brooklyn, NY: Verso [an imprint of New Left Books], 2020. xi, 336 pp. (Maps.) US\$29.95, paper. ISBN 978-1-78873-321-2.

In August and September 2017, villages in the northwestern Myanmar state of Rakhine burned by the hundreds, and the region's rivers ran with the blood of the thousands of Rohingya massacred at the hands of Myanmar's military. After the smoke cleared, it became apparent that hundreds of thousands more Rohingya had been expelled into nearby Bangladesh. Why? What could explain this paroxysm of genocidal violence, especially at this particular moment, amidst an apparently bright historical juncture as the country appeared to be transitioning from authoritarian military rule to democracy? As importantly: Why did so many Burmese people—from military supporters to leaders of the democracy movement—seem to endorse Rohingya suffering? Carlos Sardiña Galache's book, *The Burmese Labyrinth*, seeks to answer these questions. As he puts it early on, "Understanding the roots of those prejudices became a sort of obsession" (3); hence, the book's apt title. Across 352 pages, Sardiña Galache locates his inquiry at the site

of the violence—Rakhine State itself—yet simultaneously refuses simplistic explanations that might keep him there. Sardiña Galache instead delves both journalistically and historically into the warren of political structures and historical events that might possibly explain the mass violence, at each turn broadening the account until a maze of impressive complexity has been sketched.

The book's journalistic sections (parts I and III) provide insight into the events leading up to and including the mass violence in 2017. While conventional wisdom tells of the hatred pent-up by the authoritarian regime's long control of the country (1962–2011) that was “unleashed” during political liberalization (2011–2021), Sardiña Galache finds instead that animus towards Rohingya was being constructed even as violence against them unfolded, often fomented by putative democrats (48–49). The author's reporting also refutes another platitude of the transition era: that the exclusion of Rohingya could be resolved through granting them liberal rights. Instead, he finds that Rohingya in the Rakhine State township of Myeboun who managed to acquire citizenship documentation were still confined by authorities to camps (83–84). Sardiña Galache argues instead that the “plight of the Rohingya” cannot be understood without exploring other political phenomena roiling the country, particularly the “wars in the borderlands (especially involving the Kachin), and a sometimes deadly Buddhist ultranationalism deploying very narrow criteria about who belongs in the country” (4), which impacted Rohingya's substantive ability to participate in the polity.

To explore the genealogies of war and ethno-religious nationalism, part II delves into Burmese history. It begins from earliest human settlement, with each era of history discussed, again, by zeroing in on how historical formations and changes affected present-day Rakhine State, while factoring in the surrounding domains. This section benefits from Sardiña Galache's interrogation of a significant amount of secondary literature. For instance, take Myanmar's now-infamous 1982 citizenship law. In numerous scholarly accounts, this law is taken as enacting a massive sea-change in policy toward the Rohingya—marking the moment that the country's 135 officially-recognized “national races” were elaborated, and at which point the Rohingya were excluded and subsequently made stateless. Sardiña Galache not only gives the law context (that it was first drafted in 1976; that there were public consultations enacted) and clarifies that it neither enumerated the infamous 135 nor explicitly excluded the Rohingya (189–190). He also follows the actual implementation of the law, finding ambiguous effects: its “enforcement was extraordinarily slow” but it did commence the policy in which identity cards “included the religion and ethnicity of their bearers” (191) in Myanmar.

Such close reading of the citizenship law enables Sardiña Galache to make conclusions that defy both nationalist and scholarly conventional wisdoms alike. Perhaps most critically, the authors's scrutiny of the evidence

of population flows over centuries between what is now Rakhine State and Chittagong in Bangladesh, allows him to refute histories that follow the colonial map and its cloistered ways of seeing Buddhists as “belonging” in what is now Myanmar and Muslims “belonging” in present-day Bangladesh. As he puts it: “Given the migration flows in both directions for centuries, it is perfectly plausible that many ‘Chittagonians’ were descendants of ‘Arakanese Muslims,’ and vice versa” (135). When this is understood, the discourses that insist Rohingya do not exist—that they are “really just Bengalis”—quite literally lose the ground they stand upon (135).

Despite these important contributions, there is a concern that in such extensive efforts to build the Burmese labyrinth, the ability to fulfil the book’s initial motivation—to comprehend the roots of the prejudice against Rohingya—is forfeited. For instance, the reader is shown both the military state’s propaganda campaigns and the polity’s mistrust of that same military: What then allows the people to so easily accept state lies spread about the Rohingya? Could political-economic forces have played into this? While the book is published at Verso, the world’s self-described top radical press, there is no assessment of class dynamics amidst violent campaigns of dispossession and capitalist expansion that were interwoven into Burma’s last three decades, dynamics that may have impacted both ethnogenesis and ethnic conflict in the country.

That critique notwithstanding, *The Burmese Labyrinth* provides an impressive synthesis of historiography and social science texts in Burma studies, all while featuring perceptive reporting that introduces valuable new material.

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ELLIOTT PRASSE-FREEMAN

THE PATCH-WORK CITY: Class, Space, + Politics in Metro Manila. By **Marco Z. Garrido.** Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2019. x, 274 pp. (Tables, figures, maps, B&W photos, illustrations.) US\$30.00, paper. ISBN 978-0-226-64314-4.

Metro Manila historians—Daniel Doeppers, a social geographer based at the University of Wisconsin, the late anthropologist Felipe Landa Jocano, and the late political scientist Manuel Caoili, both from the University of the Philippines—would be thrilled to read Marco Z. Garrido’s book. Following their footsteps, Garrido provides a compelling new read based on careful archival and ethnographic research.

Garrido takes his place in the generation of young transnational scholars working in the fields of geography, urban planning, and urban sociology who are interested in spatial forms shaping class relations and lived experiences of democratic experiments in cities in the Global South.

His book, however, is not just another historical or ethnographic study. It is a very political geography based on an ethnography of class relations and housing conflicts in a metropolitan context. Classed interactions occur organically in highly unequal urban neighbourhoods. In Garrido's account, the urban poor, colloquially called "squatters" living in informal settlements, or slums, have quotidian, regular, and episodic encounters with upper- and middle-class residents of gated communities, swanky condos, and other enclaves reserved for the ultra-rich, the rich, and the wannabe rich. His political ethnography uncovers spatial relations of proximity heightening peoples' awareness of spatial inequalities, categorically and systematically imagined, negotiated, asserted, reasserted, and fossilized.

Like other good social geographers, inspired by Marxist political economy and class analysis, Garrido insists classes must be studied relationally. Using Bourdieu's concept of social classes mapped on to social spaces, he pays attention not only to classes as an "analytical category" mainly "on paper," but also as a "social group" in "real life." Daily social interactions shape spatial boundary impositions and negotiations, particularly around urban housing, or human settlements in the metropolitan inner cities, fringes, and peripheries. These taken-for-granted classed interactions in Manila's patchwork of squatter settlements, middle-class subdivisions, and gated enclaves for the rich are not just about cultural proximity, familiarity, and conflicts. They also shape contentious politics, democratic participation, and social protests. If relational class analysis, made alive and vivid by colourful ethnographic data, is at the heart of Garrido's important research, then feminist, gender, and spatial analysis are its limbs.

Take for example the book's introduction. It recounts how Philippine President Joseph Estrada was elected in 1998 with the widespread support from the C, D & E market classes; then deposed in the 2001 EDSA II people's uprising reprise of 1986's EDSA I, which led to the installation of Vice-President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. Three months later, Estrada's arrest to face corruption charges under the new government was preceded by street demonstrations, known as EDSA III, led by "bathless and toothless" (3) urban poor supporters clamouring for his reinstatement as they barricaded Estrada's mansion. Estrada's rise and fall in these historical events marking the start of "political dissensus," borrowing from Jacques Ranciere, form the opening lens through which Garrido pursues broader theoretical questions about urban class structures, politics, and social interactions.

Divided into two parts with several chapters, part 1, "From Urban Fragmentation to Class Division," examines the urban development process that led to the patchwork of Manila's classed residential housing patterns and formations. In part 2, "From Class Division to Political Dissensus," Garrido shifts his attention towards class conflicts shaping electoral politics and the politicization of classed identities. Accompanying the book is the "Patchwork City Archive," an online addendum offering additional insights into the

research project's trajectory through charts, maps, colour photographs, and short videos, including Garrido's digital ethnography observing Estrada during the 2010 presidential campaign trail.

Chapter 1 contextualizes the book within available mainstream scholarship on urban economic restructuring in global cities since the 1970s. Its analytical approaches draw from Bourdieu's concept of social class, Charles Tilly's work on unequal and hierarchical social relations, and Georg Simmel's studies on class identity and interaction. Drawing on rich ethnographic observations and the intimate details of Manila urban life through in-depth interviews, Garrido gives readers insights into the quotidian experiences of proximate urban relations and the physical-symbolic barriers structuring intra- and inter-community relations in the city.

Patchwork City explains the heterogenous patchwork of Manila's chaotic, inclusive slums and secluded, exclusive enclaves, showing how their interdependent, if not porous, spatial and definitional boundaries are relationally produced. It provides an empirically grounded portrayal of competing perspectives and understandings of spatial orders between slum dwellers or informal settlers (also called squatters) and dwellers in the enclaves of the rich or the gated subdivisions in Manila (also called "villagers" or village dwellers).

Manila's shifting postwar class formations, particularly its rising middle class, have spatially formed and reproduced causal relations of interdependence, proximity, and (un)familiarity between neighbours, strangers, passersby, migrant workers, street vendors, and other peddlers in a "patchwork city" where the "housing divide" is a visible signifier of "class cleavage" (32). This spatial proximity, Garrido argues, has the effect of "altering class relations for the worse" (54), where upper-middle-class enclave residents view their living spaces as under siege (chapter 3) and construct physical and symbolic spatial boundaries for social distancing (chapter 4) long before the COVID-19 global pandemic reached Metro Manila.

The homeless urban underclass (*masa, lumpen*) or urban poor city dwellers (*maralitang taga-lungsod*) experience these spatial boundaries as forms of exclusion, imposition, and discrimination (chapter 5), yet the upper-to-middle classes view members of this demographic as "political dupes" whose constituency votes can be bought by corrupt politicians (chapter 6). In contrast, urban poor people themselves desire recognition from their leaders, whose performative politics (many are popular movie and television actors, such as Joseph Estrada, Isko Moreno, Aiko Melendrez, and Herbert Bautista) may sometimes appear sincere, sometimes coherent, sometimes effective (chapter 7).

Such chaotic local dynamics shape and weaken democratic institutions and electoral politics. Slum residents, Garrido documents, bear stories of stigma, discrimination, and marginalization from villagers who experience fear, insecurity, and spatial encroachment, generating politics of resentment

and frustrations with democracy on both sides of the divide. Thus, it should not surprise readers how these deep-seated inequalities and injustices breed populist authoritarian sentiments searching for security and strong willful rulers.

Edsa III street demonstrations in support of disgraced President Joseph Estrada, following strong allegations of corruption, magnified the class dualisms and divides in the metropolis' politics of dissensus (chapter 8). The book concludes by offering observations on the class dimensions of the affective structures and local experience of democracy, as well as the structural bases supporting the growth of personality-based populism, from the time of Estrada (1998–2000) to the reign of President Rodrigo Duterte (2016–2022).

Patchwork City contributes to urban geography through its political-sociological-ethnographic understandings of space, politics, and urban experiences in a country plagued by persistent urban poverty, stubborn social inequality, and structural unemployment within the Global South. It will interest scholars and general readers, as well as beginner and advanced undergraduate and graduate students in sociology, Southeast Asian studies, political science, political geography, social movement studies, and urban planning studies. More elaboration on the gendered landscapes and dynamics of daily life, and gendered navigation of private and urban spaces in Manila's "patchwork city" would have also made it appealing to feminist geographers and planners within international development and other interdisciplinary studies.

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LEONORA C. ANGELES

GENRE PUBLICS: Popular Music, Technologies, and Class in Indonesia.

Music / Culture. By **Emma Baulch**. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2020. 227 pp. (Coloured photos, illustrations.) US\$24.94, paper. ISBN 978-0-8195-7963-8.

Genre Publics offers an engaging exploration of Indonesian popular music and culture, advancing scholarly discussions of publics, class, consumer citizenship, local-global orientations, impacts of technology, and on one hand, shifts from authoritarian New Order times (1966–1998) into post-authoritarian times (post-1998), and continuities or senses of continuities on the other. The author Emma Baulch explores these issues through the Indonesian "local music boom," an increase in sales of Indonesian pop at the end of the twentieth century that overtook sales of Western popular music and was accompanied by an increased presence of Indonesian pop music and musicians in the public sphere, including advertisements, television, festivals, and competitions (1). Her extensive research spanning 2004 to 2017,

including fieldwork in Jakarta and Denpasar, informs her insightful analysis of the cultural formation of middle- and lower-classness through popular music, its circulation and its consumption—analysis that is attentive to gender and, in chapter 7, ethnicity (181). She draws on interviews with musicians, fans, and producers to analyze a variety of cultural products including song lyrics, letters in magazines, YouTube comments, album art, and artist images.

Conceiving of “genre publics” as “virtual social entities arising from the twinning of particular mediating technologies with particular kinds of address,” she argues that it is the relationship between popular music and its circulation that produces senses of class (5). Central to her study is thus the circulation of popular music through various channels and technologies, such as recordings, television, print media, social media, fan groups, cell phone ringback tones, and t-shirts on mobile bodies riding motorbikes. Consumption through these channels establishes spaces in, by, and through which people imagine affinity with others, communicate with others, and feel a sense of classed belonging (4–5).

Using an inviting narrative style to examine the production of various genre publics, Baulch develops and supports her argument through an introduction, seven chapters comprising three parts, and a conclusion. Part 1, “Technological Paradigms,” contextualizes the local music boom and class formations. Centering the role played by the circulation of the pop music magazine *Aktuil* (1967–1984) in the origins and growth of the Indonesian middle class in the 1970s in chapter 1, “Establishing Class,” she analyzes ways the magazine addressed readers and thereby empowered them through representations of “the female runaway and the young man with a rock sensibility” (27–28). The senses of identity and agency the magazine fostered for its readers established a foundation for rock consumers to be politically active during the late New Order era in the 1990s and in post-authoritarian times (48–49; 172).

Critical to the image of the young man with a rock sensibility, Baulch underscores, is the legacy of the Indonesian *pemuda* figure: the young male revolutionary active during anti-colonial nationalist movements of the 1920s to the 1940s. In chapter 2, “Consumer Citizenship,” Baulch shows that the *pemuda* figure has permeated mainstream pop production since the 1980s, due to television’s expansion, the resultant increased visibility of all-male rock bands such as Slank, and the blurring of pop and rock as genres (172). The New Order’s emphasis on economic development imbued the rock-musician-as-*pemuda* figure with “neoliberal values such as flexibility, mobility, and individuality,” setting the stage for consumer citizenship in post-authoritarian times (53).

Recognizing the contestation of dominant middle-class ideals in post-authoritarian consumer citizenship, Baulch investigates *pop Melayu* music and the positioning of upward mobility for lower-class people through the representation and consumption of this genre in chapter 3, “Hinge

Occupants” (69). One of *Genre Public’s* themes is the tension between lower-class and middle-class subjectivities, which are often constructed in relation to each other. Baulch frames this tension as “a village-metropolis (*kampung-gedongan*) dichotomy,” in which the village/*kampung* calls forth lower-classness while the metropolis/*gedongan* evokes middle-classness (3).

Part 2, “Gedongan,” focuses on the production and representation of middle-classness in the early twenty-first century (22). Chapter 4, “Becoming Indonesia,” considers MTV Indonesia’s 2004 VJ Hunt, images of female pop soloist Krisdayanti, and images of the punk band Superman Is Dead, arguing that the ideal citizen as *pemuda* of the past “who symbolized nationalism and collective action” was replaced by “a new self-determined ‘I’” (107). Chapter 5, “Spinning Pasts,” analyzes the representation of the rock band God Bless in the pop music industry to explore how the New Order is remembered—including ways that obscure the violence of its birth, its authoritarian nature, and rupture between authoritarian and post-authoritarian times—suggesting middle-class senses of continuities between the two eras (111, 125–126).

Baulch deepens her exploration of lower-class cultural formation in Part 3, “Kampung.” In chapter 6, “Television’s Children,” she examines the flow of music through informal and unregulated channels, focusing on the circulation of music by the *pop Melayu* band Kangen Band (discussed in chapter 3) and the activity of Kangen Band’s fan club; she reinforces the importance fans place upon the upward mobility narrative in the band’s music and career trajectory (130). Chapter 7, “Provincial Cosmopolitanism,” spotlights the career and fandom of Nanoe Biroe, a Balinese singer who articulates an unabashed lower-class Balineseness that is at once rooted in local and global sensibilities. The book’s conclusion insightfully brings together its main arguments, themes, and contributions.

Genre Publics succeeds in its goals to demonstrate the critical role popular music in Indonesia has played in the formation of class as the country has moved from authoritarian to post-authoritarian times, and will be of interest to scholars and students in a variety of disciplines, including Southeast Asian studies, anthropology, media studies, and music. The book’s comfortable length makes it feasible to assign in undergraduate or graduate courses, and individual chapters also stand well on their own. Baulch gives readers much to ponder in this work, and I look forward to revisiting her ideas and analyses in my own research and teaching.

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THE DEAD AS ANCESTORS, MARTYRS, AND HEROES IN TIMOR-LESTE. *Edited by Lia Kent and Rui Graça Feijó. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020. 326 pp. US\$144.00, cloth. ISBN 9789463724319.*

While there have been major ruptures in East Timor's recent and past history—with the Indonesian invasion and occupation of 1975 to 1999 proving the most disruptive—one continuity over time persists, namely the way in which the dead are remembered, or made to matter. Yet, as Elizabeth Traube points out in the preface to this volume, there is a difference: the notion of martyrs and heroes hardly figured in local mortuary ceremonies at the time she researched in East Timor, when the country was still under Portuguese rule. However, with the restoration of independence in May 2002 following a United Nations intervention, a new valourization of the fallen in resistance struggles has come to the fore, with the appearance of statues and memorial cemeteries, hence the importance of nation-state in this book. As an edited collection, the tone of the book is set forth in the introduction by Lia Kent and Rui Graça Feijó, who make the observation that the deceased, perceived as “ancestors,” are thought to be able to influence the living. Not only are the dead manipulated by the living for certain goals, but such manipulation can be carried through to the sphere of politics, as with pensions and payoffs to descendants. The dead are treated as social beings, hence the prevalence of mortuary rituals in line with tradition but outside of strict Catholic Church practice, such as has come to dominate in East Timor in recent decades.

The dead-as-ancestors theme touches complex strands of ethnographic research to which some, but not all, of the contributors relate. As such, the book is divided into three parts, albeit somewhat arbitrarily. Impressively, all the contributors have conducted fieldwork in East Timor and, amazingly, they represent all the continents, as was the case with the UN mission that guided Timor-Leste to statehood.

The book's first part, “Ancestors, Martyrs and Heroes,” includes two contributions. Susana de Matos Viegas studies “ancestralship” in Timor-Leste, with a focus on lineage, recalling the work of Maurice Bloch, among other anthropological texts. As addressed in many of the contributions, in East Timor we cannot ignore a broader cosmological worldview that incorporates Catholic elements. Following his interests and expertise, Michael Leach creatively engages changing definitions of martyrdom reaching back to the Portuguese colonial era, suggesting a “memorial landscape.” With national martyrs prioritized over youth who also joined the struggle, he finds the debate on martyrdom to also be complicating the process of nation-building.

The second part of the book, “The Dead in Everyday Life,” includes six contributions. As Alessandro Boarccaech demonstrates through the study of one community on the offshore island of Ataúru, there is a continuity between the living world and the world inhabited by spirits and ancestors,

even if they declare themselves Christians. Visiting a community in Viqueque, Bronwyn Winch exposes ceremonial ancestral practices and reciprocal exchanges between the living and the dead, bringing to the fore the notion of “ancestral omnipotence,” or the way the dead provide an important source of protection for the living. In a reflective essay, Damian Grenfell argues that the liberal assumption behind the UN intervention did not mean the attainment of peace per se but left the East Timorese to mediate their own meaningful peace, mostly outside Western assumptions. Victoria Kamala Sakti focuses on a memorial cemetery in the Oecussi enclave (in West Timor), dedicated to victims of a post-ballot massacre in 1999. Although a site of state remembrance, ritual ceremonies consistent with “bad death” or the unnatural way in which they died, are still adhered to by locals or related kin. Andrey Damaledo explores death rituals among East Timorese living in Indonesian West Timor, especially as many on both sides of the border opt to bury their dead in their respective homes. He claims that such death rituals may even help to expand kinship relations and improve transnational relations. Soren Blau engages the notion of “forensic truth” arising out of attempts to identify skeletal remains found in East Timor. This is a sobering chapter, just as the task must have been daunting for those concerned, whether outside scientists or locals.

A third part of the book, “The Dead and the Nation-State,” brings together five contributions. In a highly useful chapter, Amy Rothschild contrasts the East Timorese “truth commission” approach of highlighting victimhood with the state’s framing of the dead as heroes and martyrs and, in turn, family remembrance of the war dead through the lens of “ancestors.” She rightly critiques the commission’s obsession with seeking to ascertain an objective truth (namely mortality statistics), when, as widely observed, the methodology and circumstances disallowed an objective count (leading to an under-estimation). But the domination of national narrative validating the resistance heroes, she declaims, also sets aside questions of recriminations (as with pursuing culpability issues with the Indonesian state) and so, panders to the leadership. Henri Myrntinen engages masculinities and the invisible gender surrounding the hero or victorious-men-of-action narrative that has dominated in Timor-Leste. On the part of the co-editors, Feijó writes on the theme of “contested memory” on the part of two resistance figures he encountered during fieldwork in Lautem, albeit folded into the national narrative. By contrast, Kent enters the conversation on the valorization of heroes by examining the proliferation of state commissions for the recovery of human remains, contrasted against the active collection of ossuaries by local communities, thus suggesting acts of “nonstate governability.” As Kate Roll demonstrates, the political leadership in Timor-Leste has gone out of its way to care for veteran resistance fighters who fought and died, especially in terms of pensions and other benefits. The branding of founding fathers thus becomes “an important element of state consolidation” (322).

It is hard to find flaws in this collection. Admirably meeting the attributes of “thick ethnography” as set down by Traube in her preface, not only does this work advance our understanding of Timor-Leste’s travails today, but deservedly takes its place in the broader anthropological literature around “ancestralship,” martyrdom, and “bad death.” Still, just how many dead we are talking about in East Timor remains conjectural and perhaps that puzzle could be addressed in cognate studies reading back from the global pandemic to the cholera epidemics and the little wars of colonial times.

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MORNING STAR RISING: The Politics of Decolonization in West Papua. Indigenous Pacifics. By *Camellia Webb-Gannon*. Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2021. xi, 214 pp. (Figures, B&W photos.) US\$68.00, cloth. ISBN 9780824887872.

In this densely written study, Camellia Webb-Gannon unravels the ongoing quest by the West Papuan people for political self-determination, decolonization, and independence. In her introduction Webb-Gannon provides a brief historical setting and sets out a series of events which so far have “guided” the West Papuan quest for self-determination.

The main argument of the book is set out in five chapters (metaphorically linked to the five points of the Morning Star) which read as a multivocal discourse. On the one hand, fragments of a large series of interviews with the West Papuan leadership, on the other, a clever use of quotes from the 1960s–1970s literature on decolonization in Africa, Latin America, and the Pacific. Webb-Gannon also contrasts the present struggle with recent conflicts in Kosovo, South Sudan, and Timor-Leste revolving around self-determination and independence. Webb-Gannon cleverly shapes all this into a consistent argument from a backbone of interview fragments strengthened where necessary with quotes from the literature she uses.

In “Wish upon a Star,” Webb-Gannon traces the origins and basic elements of the central concept, *merdeka*. As a central concept it goes beyond the simple meaning of “freedom,” facing the basic challenges of ethnic tensions, corruption, endemic violence against women, and the like (48).

In “Dreams” the focus shifts to what the West Papuan people envisions as their future. Primarily, they want an end to what they perceive as a (cultural) genocide in slow-motion (51); they see themselves as gradually overrun and disappearing. The solution to this problem—independence—they perceive as a God-given right.

In chapter 3, “Constellations,” Webb-Gannon analyzes the relation between cultural performance and resistance. Cultural expression of the West Papuan identity “ensures the survival of West Papuan politics and

people” (76). Here, too, the countering positions of cultural genocide and survival recur as a theme. The expression of culture in song and dance not only counters the negative influences of constant military repression, pro-Indonesian education, and the like, but also extends the theme of resistance into the diaspora.

The fourth chapter, “Wrestling in the Dark,” provides an overview of a struggle that has lasted for three generations. Webb-Gannon shows how this struggle has not always been united. Different factions have made use of differing, and sometimes opposing, strategies. First-, second-, and third-generation leaders have criticized one another, but this has not led to the movement as such falling apart. This despite differences in opinion between its leaders and varied distrust toward Indonesian attempts in recent years to reach a workable understanding. Interestingly, Webb-Gannon points to a lack of leadership from the youngest—fourth—generation. She suggests this may very well be related to that generation’s reliance on social media as a forum.

The closing chapter, “Stars Aligning,” focuses on the global and increasingly significant role of negritude and indigénitude as themes in cultural identity. This is a wider discussion whereby the West Papua people both as Melanesian and as an indigenous population gain support and substance in its struggle.

In her conclusion Webb-Gannon brings these five perspectives together and formulates a conclusion in which she confronts a number of questions about the feasibility of West Papua’s independence. This boils down to the main questions of “is there enough support—especially in the Pacific—for independence?” and “is the West Papuan population ready to go it alone?” Webb-Gannon’s own opinion that “while...independence...is not probable, it is certainly possible” (182), is in that respect an open verdict.

As far as it goes, Webb-Gannon’s argument is sound and well-written. My problem is that in her strict focus on the political side of the issue, she consistently ignores a series of issues. Firstly, there is the basic perception that failure to achieve self-determination will inevitably lead to cultural genocide. The warning that Indonesian rule endangers Papuan culture dates back to early reports from the mid-1960s. Even then, researchers saw the indigenous Papuans as marginalized socially, politically, economically, and culturally as a result of the Indonesian transmigration. Now, sixty years later, we still hear the same warning, worded even stronger. Nevertheless, the Papua culture remains extremely resilient. Additionally, we need to keep in mind that there is a huge variation of Papuan cultures even though they are in Webb-Gannon’s argument defined by their unity in resisting Indonesian influences. Overall, the West Papuan people have a negative demographic growth rate, but that is not something solved by independence alone.

Secondly, I am missing voices in Webb-Gannon’s multivocal chorus. Webb-Gannon describes the Papuans as Christian but ignores the role the churches play in strengthening indigenous culture. Religiosity consistently

plays a role in the adaptation and change of culture in Papua, whether it be through millenarianism or local congregations. A second aspect in this is the role of the often-Christian NGOs active throughout West Papua. A number of the factions Webb-Gannon discerns in her argument are tightly interwoven with church and NGO, so why the lack of attention? Looking back, it would be useful to extend the voices involved to the Dutch late colonial period with its massive missionary education and the first roots of West Papua political awareness. Similarly, to balance out an analysis it would be good to pay attention to at least the dissonant voices on the Indonesian side, for it is less monotonal than Webb-Gannon seems to suggest.

Finally, I wonder whether Webb-Gannon's argument does not overshoot its target. The focus on the politics of decolonization places its center of gravity among the intellectual elite and leadership. The people of West Papua live rurally, in urban centers in Papua and Indonesia, and in the diaspora. Their needs and priorities are varied and not always met by the effort put into and focus on *merdeka*. Around 1960, the Dutch placed independence for and by the Papuan peoples in the international spotlight in a cynical effort to head off Indonesia's increasingly successful campaign in the United Nations to "re-unite" West Papua with the Indonesian Republic. While it failed miserably as diplomatic ploy, it echoed long and loudly in the subsequent struggle.

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THE ABSENT PRESENCE OF THE STATE IN LARGE-SCALE RESOURCE EXTRACTION PROJECTS. *Asia-Pacific Environment Monograph 15. Edited by Nicholas Bainton and Emilia E. Skrzypek. Acton, Australia: ANU Press, 2021. xix, 359 pp. (Tables, graphs, figures, maps, coloured photos, illustrations.) US\$65.00, paper. ISBN 9781760464486.*

Despite what we may think, the absence or presence of the state is never absolute in natural resource extraction settings. Rather, as Nicholas Bainton and Emilia E. Skrzypek correctly point out, they are two mutually constitutive moments which intertwine over time and in different sections of society.

This comprehensive volume is intended to be a significant collection of ethnographic material for conceptualizing and studying the state "from the advantageous perspective of extractive contexts" (xvii). The case studies cover mainly Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Australia. The editors' aim is to compare "the role of the extractive industries in the development of these nation states and their identity; state sovereignty over mineral resources; and the experiences and expectations of customary landowners" (3). The last chapter on New Caledonia, on the other hand, serves as a test of whether the notion of "absent presence," the focus of this volume, can be also applied in other jurisdictions.

The editors' reference to the tragicomedy *Waiting for Godot* is very well

suited for explaining the concept of absent presence. Just like Godot is the figure upon which the characters' spatio-temporality depends (standing still in one place waiting for him although he never shows up), so the state is the figure the extractive context depends on: being everywhere and nowhere, it orchestrates extractive processes from behind the scenes.

With this Beckettian parallelism Bainton and Skrzypek encourage us to reject the assumption that, in the extractive contexts of PNG and Australia, the state is simply absent. Indeed, the concept of absent presence challenges the classical rhetoric that finds the cause of the state's failures in its ineffectiveness or weakness: these features "can also be reconceptualised and experienced as a form of presence, what we term 'absent presence'" (25). One of the intentions linking the various contributions is precisely to underline how "experienced absences tend to reinforce particular ideas of the state, signalling the interplay between the ideological and the material qualities of the state" (2).

The specificity of this volume is that the essays are constructed on the basis of how the state is perceived, experienced, and encountered by local communities and mining companies. It is not how the state sees its citizens that Michael Main focuses on in chapter 5, but instead how citizens see the state. For the Huli, he explains, the idea of the state becomes concrete with the arrival of the PNG LNG project, and is reinforced in the material absence of the state.

One of the main effects of the lack of interaction between local communities and the state is that the former strengthen their relationship with the mining companies. Often the state gap is filled by the corporation, which is forced to take on state roles and responsibilities (chapters 2, 4) or by local communities assuming social and health risks (chapters 5, 6). This is particularly the case for the Australian state, which appears ambiguous, sometimes taking other forms: police, pastoralists, and other citizens armed by it (chapter 8). In other cases, the state is selectively and strategically engaged for certain groups and not for others (chapters 7 and 8), or it is seen appearing and disappearing at different times in the evolution of mining projects (chapter 9).

The authors strongly emphasize the spatial and temporal dimensions that shape encounters with the state and, consequently, the need to historicize (chapter 3) and contextualize its absent presence. How citizens perceive and experience the presence and absence of government before and after the arrival of the mining industry provides insight into the nature of their feelings, expectations, and disillusionment. As outlined in chapter 9, concerning the Century zinc mine in Queensland, the Australian neoliberal state maintained the "malevolent absence" of the colonial state. But states are not equal; Bainton and Clevacher explain this in their last chapter on the *sui generis* case of New Caledonia, whose collegial government "cannot absent itself" (338) on account of its special form of governance.

In the panorama of mining studies, this volume joins others that focus on the political arena arising from mining projects in Melanesia (Colin Filer and Pierre-Yve Le Meur, *Large-scale mines and local-level politics: Between New Caledonia and Papua New Guinea*, ANU Press, 2017) and on “mining encounters” at large (Robert Jan Pijers and Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Mining Encounters: Extractive Industries in an Overheated World*, Pluto Press, 2018). That said, the strength and novelty of this book derive from the attention that is put specifically on the state and its effects.

Although the book benefits from an afterword that expands the picture with two other case studies contemporaneous with its writing, there is no real conclusion that incorporates the themes discussed or opens the debate to other geographical fields. When the reader reaches the end, she almost feels the need to draw the thread of the discourse by going back to the introduction which, on the contrary, is very rich and detailed and “stands on its own.” From a certain point of view, however, this non-final ending lays the groundwork for investigating numerous questions. One among others: Can the absent presence model also be applied to deep-sea mining in supranational areas where by definition there is no single state but multiple ones?

Overall, I believe that this volume achieves one of the stated goals: to bring out “the incompleteness and uncertainty of the contemporary capitalist state” (5), providing new insights into the anthropology of the state.

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CHRISTIANITY IN OCEANIA. *Edinburgh Companions to Global Christianity.* Edited by Kenneth R. Ross, Katalina Tahaafe-Williams, and Todd M. Johnson. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021. xx, 424 pp. (Tables, graphs, figures, maps.) US\$195.00, cloth. ISBN 9781474480079.

This attractive volume is the fifth in a projected series of eight volumes surveying the current state of Christianity around the globe. Drawing upon 40 authors, the book “offers four angles of analysis” (xi) in its approach to Oceania. The first is a demographic comparison of Christian affiliation in 1970 and 2020, broken down by region, country, and ecclesiastic tradition presented in a series of charts and maps. This is followed by 14 chapters summarizing the history and contemporary status of Christian churches in 21 countries and territories across the region. The third angle of analysis comprises eight essays surveying the presence of “major Christian traditions” as well as the Pacific Conference of Churches, the primary regional ecumenical body based in Fiji. The book is rounded out with 11 thematic chapters, some providing context (e.g., gender, migration, political systems) and others primarily theological.

This is not an academic work in the conventional sense. Instead, it is

written for and largely by clergy, theologians, and lay members of regional churches. While some attention is paid in the essays to the social and political contexts impacting the lives of ordinary Christians, the emphasis throughout the book is institutional: an accounting, first, of the reconfigurations of church affiliations over the past half century; and second, a showcase for Indigenous theologians whose innovative work infuses ancestral spirituality and cultural values into Christian thought and practice. The volume is further shaped by two key editorial decisions. The first is the inclusion of Australia in Oceania (and to a lesser extent the exclusion of Hawai'i and Indonesian Papua, presumably because they are covered in other volumes in the series). While the Australian churches have long and close associations with their counterparts in the Pacific Islands, their situation has much more in common with Western countries—a point made repeatedly in this volume. (The same, of course, is largely true for *pakeha* (white) New Zealand churches, but Indigenous Maori have had a long and significant influence on Christianity in that country, whereas Indigenous Australians have only recently embraced Christianity in large numbers.) A second editorial decision is far more consequential. Remarkably, the 36 essays include no footnotes or citations. Each essay concludes with a brief list of four to five works, which may or may not be mentioned in the preceding essay. One can only guess why the editors elected to source a major reference work so thinly, not least given the immense richness of the literature on Oceanic religion in general, and Christianity in particular. The choice constricts analysis of the individual chapters and diminishes the value of the work for readers who wish to pursue topics and issues further.

As a mainly standalone work, *Christianity in Oceania* provides readers with a reasonably comprehensive if necessarily superficial overview of the history of missions and churches in the region, their current status, and the challenges they face. The individual essays are not written to a common framework and there are wide variations in what individual authors choose to discuss. One also finds variation in the quality of the research and writing—an otherwise serviceable essay on Papua New Guinea, for instance, is marred by careless misspellings of the names of two pioneer missionaries (116)—but in general, the chapters are competently written. One also finds inconsistencies in the regional survey essays between those including Australia and those that focus on part or the whole of the Pacific Islands. Brenda Reed's chapter on Anglicans, for instance, limits itself to Polynesia (including New Zealand), despite that the majority of regional Anglicans live in Melanesia and Australia. A secondary ethnocentrism creeps into several of the thematic essays in which the central South Pacific Island nations are presumed to represent Oceania as a whole. Andrew Williams, for instance, writes in "Migration and Diaspora," "[t]his volume is about people of the sea" (p. 352) ignoring the fact the ocean does not bear the same cultural significance for millions of Papua New Guineans and Australians as it does in the smaller Pacific Islands.

Despite the inclusion of Australia, the thematic centre of gravity of *Christianity in Oceania* is the Pacific Islands, specifically the central Pacific and New Zealand's Indigenous Maori. While Europeans in Australia and New Zealand have been abandoning religion, the islands remain firmly and overwhelmingly Christian. Demographic data, however, show a steady and profound shift from the longer-established mainline churches to newer and more theologically conservative Evangelical and Pentecostal sects. This shift provided the focus for Manfred Ernst's magisterial study, *Globalization and the Re-Shaping of Christianity in the Pacific Islands* (Suva: Pacific Theological College, 2006), a work listed in 11 of the slim bibliographies of *Christianity in Oceania*. A comparison of the two volumes is revealing. In Ernst and his colleagues's systematic survey of Christian organizations in the Islands, drawing upon scores of interviews of church members, the study documented Oceanic Christianity in transition from a handful of largely rural-based denominations that had long-accommodated local cultural orientations, towards a vastly more fragmented field, one distinctly shaped by individualistic values that resonated with the global neo-liberal economic changes sweeping through the region. In short, they argued that the cultural values that sustained Oceanic communities post-European contact were in danger of being swept away along with the churches in which they had become embedded as their members left for individually-oriented sects more in tune with their social experiences and economic aspirations. *Christianity in Oceania* conveys a more hopeful message. The authors acknowledge the challenges Pacific Island churches face with increasing sectarian rivalry and adjusting to the relentless pressures of economic and social change, along with the existential threat of rising sea levels.

Three powerful thematic essays nevertheless insist that the future of Pacific Christianity lies in an informed and creative embrace of Indigenous culture. In "Faith and Culture," Upolu Lumā Vaai draws upon holistic Indigenous concepts to propose an eco-relational theology. Cliff Bird explores possibilities for reconciliation between imported Christian orientations and an Indigenous worldview grounded in the interconnectedness of all life in "Integrity of Creation." And in "Indigenous Spirituality," Cruz Farauti-Fox argues for the decolonization of church practices and styles of worship through the embrace of ancestral stories and the values they convey.

Despite its limitations as a reference work, *Christianity in Oceania* is a welcome and valuable addition to the literature. Drawing primarily upon local and Indigenous authors, it conveys a rare insider's view of Oceanic and Australian church development, challenges, and aspirations during a time of immense and rapid change.

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SALVATION IN MELANESIA: Becoming a New Person in Churches in Fiji and Papua New Guinea. By *Michael Press*. Lanham: Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, 2020. xii, 215 pp. US\$95.00, cloth. ISBN 978-1-9787-0993-5.

In *Salvation in Melanesia*, Michael Press, a pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria, Germany, aims to explore how the concept of salvation is experienced by Melanesian Christians. Press focuses on the Methodist Church in Fiji and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea and builds on archival research and 75 interviews with members of both churches, including pastors and church leaders. During his time as a lecturer at the Pacific Theological College in Fiji from 2002 to 2010, Press conducted studies in the region. In addition, the book makes available in English several themes covered in Press's *Kokosnuss und Kreuz: Geschichten von Christen im Pazifik* (Neuendettelsau: Erlanger Verlag für Mission, 2010).

The book has five chapters, of which chapter 2, on how Christian faith is experienced, is ethnographically the richest. The chapters that follow (chapter 3 on renewal and chapter 4 on Pentecostal ways) fail to build on that richness and chapter 5 wraps up the study with a classical sketch of the contrast between Western secularism and a Melanesian world that is enchanted by spirits and God.

While Press states that the purpose of the interviews was to compare life stories of salvation and conversions (ix), much of the analysis remains abstract and often meanders indistinctly between mission theology, anthropology, and mission history. This shortcoming is largely due to the lack of theoretical framing regarding salvation. Press deliberately grounds salvation in classical theology because he thinks that it still offers guidance to Melanesians navigating a new world (xii). He looks at Melanesia with the assumption that its people live in confusion, between tradition and modernity (xi–xii). According to the pastor, religion for the Melanesians is an interventionist practice that offers a promise of salvation.

The logic of salvation thus becomes the work of God that is committed to guiding the transition from tradition to modernity. But current predicaments of life in Melanesia include poverty, failing health and education services, growing gender inequality, mounting domestic violence, and struggles over regional autonomy that often bring to light the limitations of alternative forms of leadership and governance. Press does not pay much attention to such issues, let alone the variety of local social, political, and theological responses to them.

A recurring theme is that salvation is often seen as the act of being rescued by God from the consequences of wrongdoing. This, as Press highlights in chapter 2, is the result of early missionaries' focus on law, a tendency that continues in the traditional churches they helped to establish. While Press presents some interesting material on people's fear of God, reflecting views

of ethical behaviour that are mostly drawn from missionary teachings, he pays less attention to continuities and discontinuities with pre-Christian and contemporary customary ethics.

On top of that, Press curiously interprets people's fear of God as a result of the incommensurability of the idea of the grace of God in the atoning death of Jesus from the eschatological perspective of the New Testament with the "presence-oriented Melanesian worldview" (65). Press founds this observation on the assumption that people in Melanesia have no conception of an afterlife. "The spirits of the dead were believed to roam around or to live on specific mountain or island areas" (65). Many anthropological studies of Melanesian culture point to the fact that the lives of ancestral spirits exist through their multiple relationships with humans in the past, present, and future. People relate to these spirits as a continuous presence: in mythological times, during contemporary activities, and in the future.

Chapter 4 focuses on the advent of Pentecostalism. Pentecostal theology results from personal encounters with God and often evokes wondrous things that will be fully realized at the end of times, which for many is to happen now, in the time that remains. Where Press sees "a danger in the instability and deceitfulness of emotions" (175), one of these wonders is that through Pentecostal theology and worship a believer can become a new person, in the sense of feeling justified and empowered by the presence of the Holy Spirit. These kinds of conversions have political consequences as well, as illustrated by a recent attempt by Theodore Zurenuoc, the House speaker of Papua New Guinea, to prepare the nation to become a New Jerusalem. Zurenuoc's move was part of the Restoration, Reformation, and Modernization Program of the Unity Team formed by public servants, priests, and professionals, all inspired by Evangelical/Pentecostal theologies.

Finally, in his approach to conversion, Press focuses too much on the event, despite the field of conversion studies having moved towards a more process-oriented, whole-life approach. In addition, conversion does not simply have to refer to a move from one religion to another but can include more subtle changes in religious affiliation and commitment between denominations or even within the same faith group. Some of these subtleties come to the fore in the interview materials reported in this book but are often not constructively taken up by Press.

Though *Salvation in Melanesia* does not provide significant new insights into how people in Melanesia see and live salvation it is still worth a read, especially for regional specialists interested in how mission Christianity reflects on a people's past, present, and future.

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JAAP TIMMER

TULAGI: Pacific Outpost of British Empire. By *Clive Moore*. Canberra: ANU Press, 2019. xxviii, 472 pp. (Maps, coloured photos, B&W photos, illustrations.) US\$65.00, paper; free ebook. ISBN 9781760463090.

Clive Moore, emeritus historian at the University of Queensland, has published another comprehensive and even-handed account of the colonial history of the Solomon Islands—this time through the lens of its initial capital, Tulagi. It might seem malapropos for the narrative to be reviewed here by a Tongan academic, as Tonga claims to be the Pacific realm never colonized. But in fact the UK nearly concurrently dominated both nations under the euphemistic rubric “protectorate,” a status reserved for territories that lacked the resources to merit annexation but whose location had to be withheld from rivals.

So on to Moore’s 500-page chronicle of the British protectorate of the Solomon Islands (1897–1978) from a Tulagin perch: The author’s early pages read like an apology for paternalism. The archipelago’s first supervisor, Charles Woodford, is hardly a gruff colonel but rather a lean naturalist specializing in the study of butterflies. And as there are no natural resources to exploit, Woodford goes sustainable, nurturing plantations of coconut, palm, bananas, and sweet potato. Welcome to Green Colonialism.

Benevolence goes further. Ports are dredged to enable commerce, schools are constructed to train the indigenous, swamps are drained to retard malaria, latrines are built to ensure sanitation, and by 1920 the hospital is finally treating natives. Alas, before the retirement of our botanist-in-chief, even an incinerator is raised to pulverize cans and rubbish.

In the end, though, Moore exchanges apology for exposé, as every historian of colonialism must. We learn British administrators typically viewed Melanesians as a “dying race of cannibalistic headhunting savages, incapable of being ‘civilised’” (410). (One wonders, then, for what the natives were being trained—a Pacific Jonestown?) Conditions of employment are disparaged as “exploitative.” The Tungi Club, with its golf and tennis courts, was restricted to Europeans. The Commonwealth Bank would only extend credit to European and biracial applicants.

And no occupation can ever be complete—whether in India, Kenya, or Samoa—without the *de rigueur* massacre. In the Solomons, such assault inevitably targeted the Kwaio, a Polynesian group on Malaita Island that even today is partially pagan. In addition to resisting Christianity (which of course offended the British), the group opposed taxation and the confiscation of firearms, leading in 1927 to a Kwaio team assassinating an enforcement posse of UK officers and some dozen native assistants.

The protectorate responded with the Malaita crackdown: a collective punishment that terminated some 60 Kwaio and imprisoned some 200, 30 of whom succumbed to dysentery whilst detained. Six of the assassins were

executed—the ringleader in front of his sons to impress local youth with British hegemony.

And yet we learn that racism on the Solomons apparently only focused on *indigenous* people of colour. Moore's meticulous research discovers the biography of George W. E. Richardson (1866–1949), an African-American sailor initially employed by Levers Plantations following his arrival in 1905. After reviewing sources, the author concludes Richardson was “totally accepted” by local Europeans throughout his long life.

Notwithstanding, after the chilling descriptions of racism and carnage, one almost welcomes the Japanese dismantling of Tulagi in 1942. The Kōkūtai—and the US Air Force in retaliation shortly afterward—so thoroughly razed the city that the capital was later moved to Honiara, where the Americans had paved some airports. It's a cliché that—except for the pampered “collectivities” of New Caledonia and French Polynesia and “unincorporated” American Samoa—the Second World War doomed colonialism in the Pacific. Cliché was reality for the Solomons: liberation came in 1978, shortly after it was granted to Tonga and Samoa.

For the patient reader, Moore's monograph eventually exposes the Janus face of the protectorate: paternalist, then oppressive. Yet for the progressive scholar, his early chapter on the Woodford era—however factual—reads, as noted above, like an initial justification for occupation.

Such objection embroils this review in the age-old dispute between positivist and critical history. Positivists have forever held that, just as in natural science, the social scientist must confine research to innocent facts, while their critical counterparts argue that key facts are rarely neutral and by sanitizing them with that credential the positivist risks collaboration with oppression.

There are at least two ways to satisfy the critical challenge: 1) by embedding the facts within a critical perspective; or 2) by prefacing the study with a critical overview. Granted, there's a certain drama to Moore's approach: to impartially recount the Woodford administration, then subvert its legacy with the chauvinism of ensuing events. But a wry introduction regarding the contradictory mien of colonialism might have made *Tulagi* a more dimensional history.

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Pacific Affairs

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and the Pacific Regions**

SSCI score: 1.452

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