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State and market
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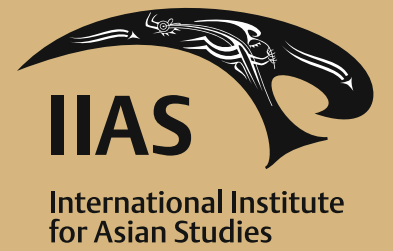
**Dharavi, Mumbai:
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Producing & living
the city in Vietnam

After decades of de-urbanisation under the socialist economic regime, urban growth is now exploding in Vietnam: the country's urban population has doubled since 1980.

This Focus offers a fresh perspective on the production of urban forms, the reconfiguration of local governance, and the renegotiation of daily practices, mainly in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

Our intention is not only to highlight the path-breaking transformations taking place in today's Vietnam, but also to contribute to the 'Asianisation' of urban studies' paradigms through grounded analysis and interpretation, based on extensive fieldwork conducted with local colleagues in Vietnamese cities and neighbourhoods.

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Waterless printing

This issue of The Newsletter will be the first to be printed by our new partner, Eco Print Center (EPC), located in Belgium. EPC uses a unique, innovative and environmentally-friendly printing process called 'dry offset' or 'waterless offset' (i.e., printing without water). Developed in Asia 30 years ago, this waterless printing technology was used until 2000 by only smaller local printers on account of its environmental and quality benefits. 16 years ago the German printing press manufacturer KBA became the first in the world to begin applying this ecologically-sound technology on an industrial scale. In 2006, EPC adopted the technology and has now become a pioneer in promoting waterless offset technology throughout Europe and all over the world.

THE INK MIST created in conventional printing processes, which can cause serious damage to the environment, does not occur with waterless offset. As a result, both the working environment and end-product are a lot cleaner. Importantly, the quality has also been improved with this technique, resulting in sharper images and text.

In short, there are 5 main environmental improvements:
- Water is completely absent.
- Start-up waste is reduced by over 50%.
- There are no ink changes and thus very little ink is wasted.
- The number of cleaning cloths and quantity of cleaning agents has fallen by over 50%.
- The technology has made the development of water-soluble inks possible.

Along with a change in printer and technology we have also decided to produce The Newsletter in 2 sections, like a 'real' newspaper! The second section opens with The Focus, which is compiled by a guest editor(s), thereby giving this feature the special attention it rightly deserves. Besides this change to the layout we have otherwise retained our well-known features, including: The Study, The Review, The Network, The Opinion, and The Portrait.

We hope you enjoy the improved quality of The Newsletter, and appreciate the environmental benefits of our new printing process. We look forward to hearing your thoughts.

Sonja Zweegers,
Managing Editor of The Newsletter

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Recent forms of social contestation with regard to land tenure in Cambodia

Much has been written on land grabbing and deforestation activities in Cambodia, but very little is known about the reaction of the rural peasantries to such activities, those who no longer accept being labeled as mere victims. The existence of independent socio-political movements, operating at the grassroots level and occurring in each province, demonstrates the emergence of a collective desire among a substantial part of the population to take destiny into its own hands. An innovative strategy used in response to land grabbing has been the extension of networks from villages to international agencies, provided that the latter behave as partners and not instructors.

Frédéric Bourdier

Above:
social meeting dealing with land encroachment caused by an international investor having been granted an Economic Land Concession nearby a Kachoh' village, Ratanakiri Province. (Photo by author, 2015)

The ingredients: perverse national policies
For more than two decades, land security and access to natural resources traditionally used by lowland farmers and highlanders – or ethnic minorities – have constituted the two main challenges facing Cambodia. In spite of land titling programs being unequally and questionably implemented by the state, competition for land access is occurring between a vulnerable, dispersed peasantry and a well connected politico-economic elite. The former has almost no legal and social protection to claim its rights, while the latter is affiliated to the ruling political party – the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) – which has controlled land distribution and ownership since the UNTAC elections in 1992.

The scant land tenure conditions that do exist are a hybrid of distinct historical considerations coupled with the recent introduction of market oriented policies and programs. Focusing here on the national land priority is helpful to better understand the emergence of social contestation throughout the country. The 2001 Land Law brought substantial reforms, but not in favor of the poor sections of the rural peasantry. The spoliation of families' agricultural land has worsened for the sake of economic national development, through the granting of Economic Land Concessions (ELCs) on state-private land – the fourth classification of land ownership alongside state-public, private-individual and indigenous-communal land. Restrictions placed on the ownership of state-private land have not been respected, with companies encouraged to invest nearly everywhere (including in populated territories) by acquiring vast portions of fertile soil – supposedly to a maximum of 10,000 ha – mostly for agro-industrial crops such as rubber, sugarcane, soybeans, cassava and cashew-nuts.

Vietnamese, Chinese, and Korean companies have been the main investors, particularly in the north and the north-eastern corner of the country, areas traditionally inhabited by indigenous people who, as a whole, constitute nearly 2.3% of the 15.2 million Cambodian population. It remains difficult to provide an exact figure of the total area of land already taken from indigenous people in Ratanakiri Province, as such data, when available, changes almost on a monthly basis. Provincial estimates are nevertheless possible to make, and reliable

figures provided by the human rights organization ADHOC at the end of 2013 refer to the existence of 26 ELCs (average size being around 7500ha) and 29 mining licenses. Two-thirds of these ELCs are located on the central plateau, where the majority of highlanders live. Most of the mining areas, which cover a much bigger area than the ELCs – each covers an area of 20,000 to 72,000 ha and with the total exceeding 350,000 ha – are located in the two southern and northern national parks, as well as in the central forests, where there were a number of villages located. This data, which has been strongly denied by the government, does not take into consideration that land bought at a cheap price, or even taken illegally, by lowland Khmers, whether absent landowners from Phnom Penh affiliated to the party, or landless peasants from the valleys who have lost property rights in their native areas.[1] This large-scale transfer, representing nearly half of the cultivated provincial area, has occurred to the detriment of the original occupants, as they have received no compensation at all. Villagers tend to find out about any encroachments at the last moment, once an ELC has already been signed. Three ministers are supposed to sign each of these agreements, which make the whole procedure unclear and difficult to track. Such agreements cause tremendous livelihood and lifestyle changes among the local people.

What happens to the ethnic minorities also happens to lowland Khmers, and such an unstable situation among the common peasantry has existed for a long time, from the 1970 coup d'état against Prince Norodom Sihanouk, through the Maoist Khmer Rouge regime when all official documentation was destroyed (the Khmer Rouge abolished the notion of individual property over the period 1975 to 1978), on to the Vietnamese liberation and occupation up to 1989, and finally to the neo-liberalism adopted since the early nineties, when a deregulated economy and "wild liberalism" was introduced to open-up the country, which had been under a political and economic embargo while the Vietnamese were present.[2] The key aim of this recent liberalist period has been to attract investors and encourage trade and exchange with the outside world, as officially encouraged by national decision makers and politicians.

Land remains the single most contentious issue in Cambodia in 2015, as it has been for at least the last 12 years. By the end of 2013, over 2.2 million hectares of Cambodian land had been granted to large firms in the form of ELCs. These concessions and various other land grabs have affected more than 420,000 Cambodians since 2003.[3] Worse, ELCs have become an additional driver of deforestation, which has had negative consequences for the livelihoods of people who rely on forest products. Independent analysts have confirmed that Cambodia is experiencing a "total system failure" in terms of its forest management regime, in the face of the government's widespread and unlawful use of concessions – those aimed at growing crops – to instead allow companies to harvest timber.[4] Forest conditions vary greatly where ELCs are allocated. Drawing on forest-fire data gleaned from US satellite imagery, Forest Trends' analyses mention that the ELCs are clearing some of Cambodia's most valuable forests, challenging the government's claims that it is giving-out only degraded forest land. US satellite data has also shown that Cambodia has the fourth highest rate of deforestation in the world. In Ratanakiri Province, systematic and illegal logging has led to the destruction of protected areas and state forests, those previously occupied by indigenous groups who rely on subsistence farming, foraging and hunting and gathering for a living.

The most worryingly absent characteristics, land security and sustainable access to natural resources, threaten directly – in the absence of any substitution plans or forms of material compensation – the already meager livelihood and survival potential of the rural population, which is estimated to constitute 70% of the Cambodian population. To make matters worse, the government manipulates the law as a tool to oppress, but rarely to provide more equitable or material protection to its deprived citizens. In confusing situations conditioned by recurrent violence, basic human rights violations and endless juridical struggles, it is not surprising to find that Cambodia is a space for emerging conflicts, those driven by land perdition, forest logging, and the progressive loss of natural resources, those which support local livelihood activities such as resin tapping and the collection of non-timber forest products.

The social seeds of grassroots contestations

Collective waves of popular discontentment began to take shape in Cambodia, mostly after the controversial results of the July 2013 national elections, which the opposition party (the Cambodian National Rescue Party or CNRP) seemed destined to win. Protests intensified after the elections, and for the first time rural and urban demonstrators together expressed their desire for political reform. This created a sense of collective hope among the people that, together, they could create a social force powerful enough to not allow the shocking private/public policies orchestrated by the party in power to go ahead, policies unwilling to consider social injustice and land security for the deprived population. Successive, peaceful demonstrations in the capital of Phnom Penh, in which hundreds of thousands of people participated, brought catharsis for a few months, and such resistance percolated down to the local level. Many people (mostly young) joined-in with these protests, realizing they were not alone and that, together, they could raise their voices in a more meaningful and practical way. These public events – officially prohibited by the ruling party – were eventually violently repressed by anti-riot police, who in some cases opened fire on, and killed, protestors. However, this resistance process had been launched, and could not be stopped.

Since the subsequent unrest, new resistance strategies have been formulated, more operational in nature and organized on a larger scale outside Cambodia. Modern media tools such as Facebook and Twitter have become useful at disseminating information, as well as mobilizing and developing national/global networks and partnerships. Up to a few years ago, brutal evictions, repression and physical arrests could be carried out with impunity by the government, because such acts were done in relative secrecy. Such a situation is no more, as deprived and/or repressed populations no longer hesitate to question the established order; organizing social movements at the local level and spreading their ideas regionally and internationally. This is what happened with the Cambodian sugar industry in Koh Kong Province, when forced evictions, widespread seizures of farmland, destructions of property, crops and community forests, and uses of violence and intimidation all took place. Villagers got in touch with law-based NGOs, who then made contact with international bodies like the International Finance Corporation (IFC; affiliated to the World Bank Group), which offers investment, advice and asset management services to private sector developers in developing countries, but based on a public commitment to follow ethical and sustainable practices, plus follows the World Bank's core mandate of ending poverty. After receiving economic pressure and warnings from banks providing loans to investors, the company had to soften its attitude towards local villagers.

Interestingly, more and more of these grassroots organizations, while having a priority to strengthen commitment at the local level, are becoming multi-connected in nature. They look for partnerships, regionally and globally, to make their actions more effective. Such a pragmatic form of engagement, one which implies the use of diligent networking – whatever its frequent fragility and uncertainty at the beginning – is neither spontaneous nor providential and accidental. In most cases, it is well thought-through and calculated, based on a long term expectation that it has to be implemented cautiously using a series of efficient actors who are able to establish links which go from the bottom to the top in terms of higher institutions.

Their stage is becoming global. The number of non-submissive individuals and groups among the civil society in Cambodia is on the rise. Khmer peasants and indigenous farmers do not want to continue living in isolation. To borrow the words of Arjun Appadurai, they have become part of a sociosphere, a mediasphere, and a technosphere, and some have decided – mostly those among the indigenous communities – to act as facilitators or agitators, in order to understand and penetrate the worldwide environment, with the aim to improve the wellbeing of the common people.

Local advocacy and human rights claims have long been promoted by NGOs and the UN, which has a permanent office in Phnom Penh. Experienced local rights groups such as LICADHO and ADHOC have been at the forefront of this movement, and sometimes their members take personal risks to protect a defenseless population. The government does not like any forms of criticism, and public debate is not an accepted practice. A common accusation made by the authorities is that those who disseminate information on human rights issues are acting in an unacceptable manner. Put simply, too much knowledge and awareness may give rise to an 'uncontrolled' liberty, one that could lead to social and political instability. Incitement is the chief accusation leveled at such people, and this term is frequently used as an accusation coming from the ruling party.

A widespread and common sense view places international donors as the most appropriate actors to empower local communities and act as emancipators for the sake of deprived social groups. However, such a view has recently been challenged by independent studies which have revealed that traditional aid is often counterproductive. Grassroots communities contacted and influenced by these dyad government/fundraisers have rarely been in a position to mobilize themselves independently, and one extensive study among 150 community mobilizers, local NGOs and development officers, shows that international donors do very little to empower local communities independently and, at worst, often perpetuate a co-dependent relationship with the Cambodian government.[5] Also, grassroots organizations that formed with little external support coming logistically or financially from international organizations can be the most effective at dealing with their own problems. This is what has happened with the Prey Lang Community Network, which is composed of hundreds of villagers from the four Prey Lang forest provinces in central Cambodia, and is committed to ending rampant deforestation caused by illegal logging, mining activities, and ELCs. The network has allowed widely dispersed communities to successfully collaborate and build a sense of regional solidarity as 'forest people'. Within this network, communal decision-making is reinforced after extensive community consultations, and each element of the network's strategy requires formal consent to be given at the community level. As a result, in 2013 the members of this movement refused to work with NGOs that would not agree to work with it on its own terms, as a wholly independent partner.

Many other social movements in Cambodia attest to the increasing emergence of a collective desire to resist and to struggle. Grassroots movements focused on social contestation – sometimes followed by upheavals – have not been totally absent since the early 1990s. Preliminary, superficial observations given by some political commentators (generally connected with the government) have tended to minimize the impact of these popular reactions, using an exaggerated dogma stating that testimonies of resistance come from poor people who are manipulated and/or who have nothing to lose. The commentators portray these testimonies as last-ditch attempts before becoming totally dispossessed; as unorganized, ultimate acts before losing faith completely, but having no choice thereafter but to accept the 'wise diktats' of the deciders. However, signs of resistance and bravery have not always been repressed in that way, and it would be over simplistic to consider these dynamics as unforeseen, residual and 'lost in advance'. To the contrary, they are structured and are becoming more and more planned – using appropriate strategies, as we are going to see using an example focused on some indigenous Kuy people who live in northern Preah Vihear Province.

Contestation by the Kuy people

Two Chinese companies were granted ELCs to set-up sugar-cane plantations near a commune (a cluster of three villages) inhabited by 600 Kuy families. In 2013, one of the companies started demarcating its boundaries within the village territories. Bulldozers destroyed vegetation, soil was leveled, ponds were dried-up and the inhabitants of a few isolated farms were compelled to leave without receiving any compensation or justification. A costly irrigation system was created, and some local wells in the vicinity were left without sufficient water for domestic purposes. Villagers had not been consulted, and no clear, effective land titling system had been put in place to protect them from the company's actions. It did not take long for the Kuy to realize that this land encroachment had been planned, in spite of the false guarantees given by the local authorities in relation to the protection of local resources (such as trees used for resin tapping, and ponds used by villagers to draw water and to fish).

Two NGOs representing the Kuy cautiously followed these activities as mediators; cautiously because they could not show too much sympathy toward the indigenous population. By 2014, the provincial governor had already threatened one of these NGOs for using "incitement", and had requested that the

Below:
A ceremony at the burial grounds following the premature death of a child in a Jarai village, Ratanakiri Province. (Photo by author, 2015)

Ministry of Interior close it down due to its subversive activities which were "against compliance with development for the sake of the nationhood". The local NGOs thereafter decided to change their strategy by cooperating with the local authorities, a form of cooperation that reduced their actions to technical aspects only, and did not take into account the political dimension and the social interests linked to the Chinese companies. The dissemination of information and networking was nevertheless part of the NGO package. A Kuy woman from one of these NGOs had traveled to the Philippines to meet other indigenous groups, and to the USA for a UN meeting in New-York. The Philippines experience was extremely constructive because she was able to view tools developed by local groups and witness the importance of mass mobilizations based on land issues. Interestingly, this indigenous woman maintained that she was involved in indigenous affairs, not on behalf of her NGO, but as a mother and a villager concerned with what was going on in her native land.

At the end of 2014, bulldozers were excavating soil on land belonging to one village, when a well-organized group of Kuy villagers that included men, women and children forced the two drivers to get down from the vehicles. The bulldozers were confiscated and kept under the surveillance of four female leaders. When I visited the village, the bulldozer had been captured six months prior, but was still there. The company had frequently tried to reclaim the bulldozer but had been unsuccessful. In the meantime, the Kuy had asked for legal advice from jurists and lawyers, and had developed a better understanding of how to proceed and what to do next. They planned to return the bulldozers only once their land had been officially demarcated by the provincial authorities. One day, they received a call from a deputy governor, announcing another round of negotiations. The Kuy asked the indigenous NGOs to join the meeting as observers, and I went with them. When we arrived, a group of twenty women (of all ages) was waiting. A tremendous amount of preparatory work was going on; one lady called two independent media outlets to let them know what was going to happen, while a second had a recorder, a third had managed to get hold of a camera, and a fourth was consulting with human rights advisers over the phone. Furthermore, a religious representative belonging to the Independent Monk Network for Social Justice in Phnom Penh was in attendance. The villagers appointed a man to write-down the minutes and a group of three outspoken villagers joined the commune chief to receive the deputy governor. When the authorities arrived with the police and their escorts, the villagers commenced by refusing to take gifts, and insisted that they would only accept meeting outcomes that aligned with their expectations. More than 100 villagers attended the assembly, without any fear or submission. It lasted one hour. If their grievances were not recognized, as had been the case before, they told the government representative that they would not hesitate to refer what happened, not only to other indigenous groups in Cambodia, but also to regional and international organizations who supported indigenous people's causes. Faced by such determination, the deputy governor adopted a low profile and promised that the government would support the villagers' application for collective land title, a request that had previously been turned down.

Maybe initiatives such as the Prey Lang Community Network and the one from Preah Vihear appear small-in-scale and rather trivial, not yet well organized and not fully mature when compared to other movements around the world. That may be the case, but it would have been difficult to imagine them happening just a few years ago. What is interesting is that these grassroots movements are set-up and run by the people, for the people. Support is minimal and not conditional, and whenever it happens, it is based on people's wills.

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Shifting Ground? State and market in the uplands of Northeast India

Landlessness and rural deprivation have historically been virtually absent in the uplands of Northeast India. Currently, due to the increasing presence of a monetarised market oriented economy, rural destitution is becoming an everyday reality. Previously, *jhum* or swidden cultivation would produce subsistence crops such as rice in abundance, but in many places that is no longer the case. Steep population growth, increasing popular demand for cash and large-scale statist interventions have resulted in a growing pressure on jhum land. Forced by the substantial investments that the commercialization of agricultural production demands, and a need for cash more generally, jhum farmers are increasingly in need of credit, creating indebtedness and even alienation of land.

Erik de Maaker, Dolly Kikon & Sanjay Barbora

Above: Rain clouds at the start of the swiddening season.

IN INDIA, shifting cultivation has been controversial for decades. To administrators, agronomists and conservationists, it has primarily been primitive, wasteful and inefficient. "(…) [A]n extravagant and unscientific form of land use", that is "degrading the environment and ecology", as some critics put it.[1] Even as policymakers point out the precarious nature of this agricultural method, anthropologists and environmentalists have identified shifting cultivation as a technique that is exceptionally well suited for the uplands climate and soil, and ecologically sustainable.[2] Obviously, growing population pressure, and the acquisition of land for other agricultural purposes, has reduced the viability of jhum cultivation. But even as the odds are against it, people make great efforts to continue the practice. Encroaching upon areas that were hitherto uncultivated, jhum farmers move towards steeper slopes, and less fertile plots.

How can this sustained commitment towards jhum farming be explained, particularly since an increasing number of studies also show that subsistence peasants are rapidly becoming landless daily wage labourers or migrant workers in urban centres across India? What can we learn from these developments regarding the radical transformations that the economies and societies of the uplands are subjected to?[3]

The critics of shifting cultivation continue to be vocal and well represented both among policymakers and in the public domain, and quite a few government policies are in place intended to discourage it. Large-scale programmes have been initiated aimed at the expansion of capital-intensive commercial crops, such as rubber and tea, to improve the profitability of upland agriculture. In addition, and to some extent contradictory to these measures, over the 15 years or so several initiatives to sustain and improve shifting cultivation have also gained ground in Northeast India. From the middle of the 1990s onwards, the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) has worked with the North Eastern Council in the North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project for Upland Areas, encouraging community development projects (in Meghalaya, Manipur, and parts of Assam). Comparable projects have started in Nagaland: the Canadian sponsored Nagaland Empowerment of People through Economic Development (NEPED), as well as a large program funded by the UNDP (Sustainable Land and Ecosystem

Management in Shifting Cultivation Areas of Nagaland for Ecological and Livelihood Security). In 2011, the World Bank-supported North East Rural Livelihoods Project (NERLP) started, which aims to improve rural livelihoods in Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura.

These various development interventions draw our attention towards the uneasy equation between shifting cultivators and the state. For decades, contractors, traders, and agents from the Brahmaputra valley and beyond exploited the hills for timber, bamboo, sand, pebbles and other natural resources. Yet, from the perspective of the state, the hills used to be places with little economic value and its societies as self-sufficient and simple. It was only with the large-scale hydrocarbon and hydro-dam projects that the hills were pushed into visibility as a significant economic zone. For example, a huge number of hydroelectric dams are in the process of being constructed (168 dams of 25 MW or more have been scheduled for Northeast India[4]), while mining is likely to expand significantly as well (oil and gas reserves in Manipur and Nagaland). In addition, Northeast India has been and is at the centre of national policies such as earlier 'Look East' and more recently 'Act East', that propose to open up the region as a corridor to forge land-based connections (road, rail, pipelines) between South Asia and China. These developments have a great impact on the uplands in terms of economy, demography, and resource utilization.

The increasing state encapsulation of the uplands of Northeast India has many consequences. As road connectivity improves, private educational facilities develop, and the electrical grid is extended, people increasingly aspire towards modernity. The conspicuous absence of the state as a service rendering entity, notwithstanding its overwhelming visibility as a security force in the region, has resulted in a growing presence of private players. Private health care, educational institutes, loan companies, and consumer agencies have produced a debt culture and rural populations across the hill states of Northeast India are increasingly becoming indebted and are mortgaging homes, jhum lands and crops in order to attend to health emergencies or children's education, or to pay agents for securing jobs in urban centres across India and abroad.

The growing demand for cash is gradually drawing subsistence cultivators from the uplands deeper into a money

and market oriented economy. In this new economy, they are becoming visible as the poor, dispossessed, and the landless. It is within this context that the ongoing state interventions to integrate the jhum uplands need to be examined. Particularly measures aimed at the promotion of plantation economy and the commercialization of crops in the uplands appear to be dangerous since these undermine the political texture of local communities.

Jhum in the uplands

The uplands of the eastern Himalayas and its hilly southward extensions have over the last decades been subject to extensive 'state-making'.[5] This region, a single ecological zone, is criss-crossed by the international borders of India, China, Bangladesh and Burma/Myanmar. These states are actively consolidating their borders, and expanding their political and economic presence in the once semi or 'lightly' administered uplands. Throughout these uplands, shifting cultivation has historically been an important economic activity.

Shifting cultivation, as the name suggests, is a method of farming on temporary fields. Throughout a growth season, which lasts for about six to eight months, the rain-fed fields carry both subsistence crops (such as maize, vegetables, pulses, rice, tubers) and cash crops (such as cotton, ginger, turmeric). The sheer diversity of these crops, and their ripening over a period of several months, spreads the risk of a failed harvest. The seeds are derived from previous harvests (no dependency on seed merchants), and many are unique varieties, that are well attuned to the specificities of soil and climate. The fields are abandoned after one or two years of cultivation, allowing shrubs and trees to grow back. People then cultivate a next plot. The alternation between periods of 'cultivation' and 'fallow' ensures the continuation of a jungle cover that helps to maintain biodiversity.[6] The longer the rotational cycle, the better the harvest. But where this cycle would previously encompass ten to fifteen years, increased population pressure in many places has brought it down to three to four years, or even less. As a result, harvests are becoming less prosperous, and the pressure on the environment is increasing.

A major trend in the region is the creation of small-scale plantations that are permanently cultivated. This triggers the break up of communal land tenure, replacing it by individual

ownership. The privatization of land titles provides individual upland cultivators with a valuable asset (land) that can be mortgaged, sold and bought. Growing income disparities, land alienation, and out-migration are a consequence. On a different note, the growing popularity of new religious groups weakens the redistributive mechanisms embedded in society, resulting in communities becoming increasingly stratified along economic lines.

Although the distribution of resources such as land continues to be based on preceding social patterns, the current economic developments result in a redefinition of terms of entitlement. This is best articulated in those parts of Northeast India that are exposed to a substantial in-flow of capital, be it as part of large scale territorialized resource exploitation (hydroelectric dams, mining), the in-flow of development related money, or the increasing importance of plantation crops such as tea, coffee and rubber. While the initiatives aimed to increase the sustainability and profitability of shifting cultivation mentioned above intend to specifically benefit the rural poor, recent research suggests that even these projects inevitably contribute to the growth of income disparities.[7]

Towards a trans-regional perspective
Compared to Northeast India, shifting cultivators of the Chittagong Hill Tracts have very limited access to capital and markets, resulting in the perseverance of prior social and economic arrangements. The same holds for the Chin Hills of Burma/Myanmar, reputedly one of the most deprived regions of that country. There, people who depend entirely on swidden cultivation tend to be poor, but can nevertheless have a high level of food security (as among the Konyak Naga, or in parts of the Chittagong Hills tracts), due to the variety of crops that can be harvested spread across many months. Does this explain the remarkable commitment of shifting cultivators to absorb 'statist' efforts aimed at controlling their 'traditional' practices, and to continue with these against many odds?

Upland communities, as 'state evaders', have a history of self-governance.[8] Their encapsulation by the states of which they have become part in the course of the 19th and 20th centuries has resulted in complex legal configurations that encompass both customary laws as well as state laws. The extent to which localized customary arrangements are recognized at the state level differ significantly. For instance, official land records exist only for certain parts of the uplands. Where there are no land records, as in most of Arunachal Pradesh, but also in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and the Chin Hills, the state informally recognizes customary arrangements. Such arrangements are vulnerable, since they can easily be challenged when competing claims to land are advanced by commercial companies or the state. The contiguous uplands of Northeast India, Burma/Myanmar and the Chittagong Hills Tracts constitute the 'last enclosure':[9] perhaps the last area in the world that due to its earlier impenetrable terrain has remained outside the realm of state administrations, national laws, and the commercialization of natural resources. Bringing development to the uplands implies their integration in lowland oriented political and administrative schemes, and an opening up of their resources for national if not global extraction.

India, Bangladesh and Burma/Myanmar are advancing hegemonic claims over the uplands that have triggered the emergence of ethnic movements that counter these claims. In turn, this has resulted in (frequently violent) counter reactions from the various states. States have also confronted upland ethnicity in other ways. In India, government policies distribute large amounts of subsidies along 'ethnic' lines (in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and the Chin Hills, ethnicity has not become a vehicle for preferential discrimination). This has resulted in political appreciation for local cultural practices, languages, and social institutions. On the flip side, ethnic politics have contributed to the reification of differences and the reiteration of exclusionary visions and political claims. These have also set the stage for developmentalist interventions in which ethnic elites play a central role.[10] Significantly, the impact of ethnic policies on state-regulated development and capitalist interventions still goes largely unacknowledged, and the political dimensions of ethnicity are urgently in need of being explored.

Above: Bringing in cotton that has been harvested from the swiddens.

Below: Producers selling ginger to merchants at a local market.

All photos by Erik de Maaker.

Conclusions
Jhum farmers in Northeast India face increasing economic pressure, which challenges existing social and political textures. The increasing presence of the modern state in Northeast India and the growth of market oriented monetarised economic activities marginalizes jhum agriculture. Yet, people go to great lengths to continue to cultivate swiddens. One reason for this seems to lie in the fact that this long-proven agricultural technique keeps them – at least partly – outside the realm of the market. While market prices fluctuate, subsistence jhum crops retain their food-value. In addition, jhum cultivation seems to provide much more than a subsistence base, since it also allows for the anchoring of social and political configurations that connect the present to the past. Particularly in this latter respect, the relevance of jhum cultivation has so far remained ill-understood. Gaining better insights in its continuing, yet changing, social and economic relevance is a requirement for a better appreciation of the radical transformations that the Northeast Indian uplands are currently subjected to.

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3 In November 2014 a group of concerned social scientists, NGO-related policymakers and journalists committed to the uplands met at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Guwahati, in an attempt to trace the impact of current developments

on the uplands. Pooling expertise and knowledge beyond the boundaries of discipline and profession, the workshop aimed to locate gaps in the current perspectives on the uplands, and identify themes that demand urgent academic attention. Whereas most of the participants are involved with Northeast India, the presence of scholars working on the Chittagong Hill Tracts (Bangladesh) and the Chin Hills (Burma/Myanmar) allowed for an extension of the canvas to encompass the larger zone that these contiguous uplands constitute. The Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR) and the Netherlands Research Council (NWO) sponsored the workshop under the 'Social Science Scholar Exchange scheme'.

4 Sahgal, B. (ed.) 2003. "Large dams in Northeast India rivers, forests, people and power", *The Ecologist Asia* 11(1).
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6 Northeast India is included in the *Eastern Himalaya Biodiversity Hotspot,* as defined by the influential US based NGO Conservation International (http://www.conservation.org/how/pages/hotspots.aspx)
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8 The peripheral position of upland communities in relation to 'states' need not be seen as a being 'left out' of lowland based civilizations, but rather as the result of a conscious effort to remain as much as possible outside the sphere of influence of such states (Scott, J. 2009. *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia,* Yale University Press)
9 Ibid.
10 For capitalist development in the uplands of Northeast India see Karlsson, B.G. 2011. *Unruly Hills: a Political Ecology of India's Northeast,* New York: Berghahn Books. For Burma/Myanmar see Woods, K. 2011. "Ceasefire Capitalism: Military–Private Partnerships, Resource Concessions and Military–State Building in The Burma–China Borderlands", *Journal of Peasant Studies* 38(4):747-770.

From hyper-capitals to shadow capitals

While the definition of a 'capital' is not as straightforward as it appears, I will follow Ch. Montès in his recent inspiring analysis of American capitals and restrict this short discussion to cities that are the seat of the State's political power.[1] Such capitals as a type have given way to a disparate corpus of research in which two kinds of geographical discourse dominate: the 'critical and analytical scholarly discourse of historical and cultural geography',[2] and the more 'systematic discourse of city and regional planning'.[3] The Korean case seems to be no exception to the trend, as I will discuss in this short essay based on this divergent corpus of work, in which I try to propose a reading of the multitude of capital cities of the 'Korean World' comprising two States (North/South) and a multifaceted diaspora. What is (are) the capital cities of such a fragmented, yet coherent geo-historical ensemble? Beyond the obvious two State capitals (Seoul and Pyongyang), or two well-known historical capitals such as Kaesŏng and Kyŏngju, other cities were once the capital(s) of past kingdoms ruling over the Korean peninsula. Today, in South Korean, the debate over the move of the capital from Seoul has been a long standing one, while speculation over the future capital of a reunified Korea is also not unheard of.

Valérie Gelézeau[4]

MAP 1: Obvious capitals of Korean geo-history, hyper-capitals and legitimising capitals

Scale   100km

Urban population (2010) (millions)

10
5
2
1
0,5

☐ Less than 500 000 inhab.

Types of cities

■ Commanding metropolis
▨ Industrial city
▧ Polyfonctional city
▦ Tertiary city
□ Non-specialized city
▭ Metropolitan city
◆ Technopole
◇ Heavy industrial complex

Regional backdrop

⊠ Rural region
▤ Industrial region
▨ Desakota region
┅┅┅ DMZ

«Legitimizing» capitals of contemporary Korean States

[Silla] Extension and name of the «Three Kingdoms» (Iᵉʳ s. av. J.-C.-VIIᵉ s.)

(★) «Northern» capitals
► « First » unified Korea: Koryo (Xᵉ-XIVᵉ c.)

(★) «Southern» capital
► « First » unified Korea: Great Silla (VIIᵉ-Xᵉ c.)

Map: Aurélie Boissière, 2015. Copyright Institute of Korean Studies, Collège de France. Backdrop: View at dusk along the Taedong River in Pyongyang.

HOW MANY OBVIOUS CAPITALS of Korean geo-history? Incorporating several statistical data such as demographic figures, city functions and transportation infrastructures, *map 1* represents well-known features of the Korean urban network: the density of cities over a million inhabitants (more than a dozen, in an area that covers less than 3% of the territory of the United States), and the opposition of North and South regional networks (the primacy of Pyongyang in the North, and much more complex and megalopolis-like network structures in the South). This geo-economical reading of the Korean urban networks highlights the position of Pyongyang and Seoul, which I call the 'hyper-capitals' of the contemporary States: the two cities cumulate economic, political, cultural and social functions, and are extremely visible on the international scene – albeit in very opposing modes.

Although Seoul is not a *global city* as Saskia Sassen defines cities like London, New York or Tokyo – which are at the summit of an inter-connected global hierarchy, particularly for their financial and informational power – Seoul is certainly a world city. In the North, Pyongyang cannot compare in economic wealth or cultural influence and, although the DPRK is far from a closed country, it is still poorly integrated in the global trade. Yet, as the capital of a State that stands in opposition to the international community (which was illustrated once again by the recent nuclear tests and international reactions that followed in early January) it still is quite visible as a great contemporary capital of the peninsula.

Let us combine this geo-economical and contemporary reading of the urban networks and capitals, with a reading based on historical discourse, which we know are divergent in both Koreas. *Map 1* shows how the Korean case compares with the research of many other former State capitals in historical and cultural geography:[5] instrumentalized by State power, the significance of capitals is measured less by their functionality or material wealth, than by the ideological heritage they convey or the political project they embody; in short, their symbolic nature.[6] Now, among the numerous historical capitals of former Korean States, Kaesŏng and Kyŏngju are each strongly connected to meta-narratives regarding the construction of the contemporary nation-states. Archaeological research shows that, along with a complex geo-history, the kingdoms of ancient Korea had multiple capital cities, and the seat of power would migrate. This feature was reproduced during later pre-modern States such as the Koryŏ and the Chosŏn kingdoms. Yet, in both North and South Korean geo-imaginary, the two historic capitals embody the locus of the 'first' Korean States that ruled over the greater part of the peninsula (Great Silla in South Korean imaginary, Koryŏ in the North Korean one), with the obvious metaphor of the 'pre-modern' unified State functioning as the symbolic origin of the contemporary nation.[7]

In his 2008 book on Kyŏngju, R. Oppenheim, using Latourian translation theory, deciphers extremely well how the South Korean nationalist discourse of the Park Chung-hee era identified Kyŏngju as the capital of the 'first' Korean 'unified' State (Great Silla), conveniently located in the extreme South-East of the peninsula, and how this discourse was then materialized in contemporary politics (from heritage policy, to city and regional planning); in so doing, Kyŏngju also became the 'legitimizing capital': it came to legitimize the contemporary *South* Korean nation itself.[8]

In contrast, in the North, the contemporary discourse on national unification identifies the posterior medieval State of Koryŏ as the locus of the 'first' unified Korean State, and Kaesŏng (which was actually one among several other capitals of the State)[9] as the 'legitimizing capital', located in the North of the peninsula. The considerable efforts made by both Korean States to have those respective capitals listed by UNESCO, appear to be more than just the wish for recognition of unique vestiges of the Korean past; they appear to be a very strong political gesture contributing to the legitimation process of both contemporary Korean States.

In short, these four cities, Pyongyang and Seoul the 'hyper-capitals' on the one hand, Kaesŏng and Kyŏngju the 'legitimizing capitals' on the other hand, seem to be the obvious capitals of Korean geo-history.

'Shadow capitals' of Korean geo-history: from forgotten capitals to secondary capitals in the making
The four cities above may indeed appear obvious, yet others arise in the current discussion on Korean capitals - be it a discussion on past capitals or contemporary ones. Marginalized in the Korean history, or subaltern in contemporary territorial constructions, they remain in the shadows of the four obvious capitals of Korean geo-history.

The capitals of States that were marginalized if not ostracized in the course of post-1948 national construction are good cases of 'shadow capitals'. For example, Puyo or Kongju, the historical capitals of the Paekche kingdom. Although they are both located in current Chungch'ŏn Province, their capitalness refers to a State anchored in the South-West of the peninsula, and whose symbolical heritage is carried by the Chŏlla Province that was
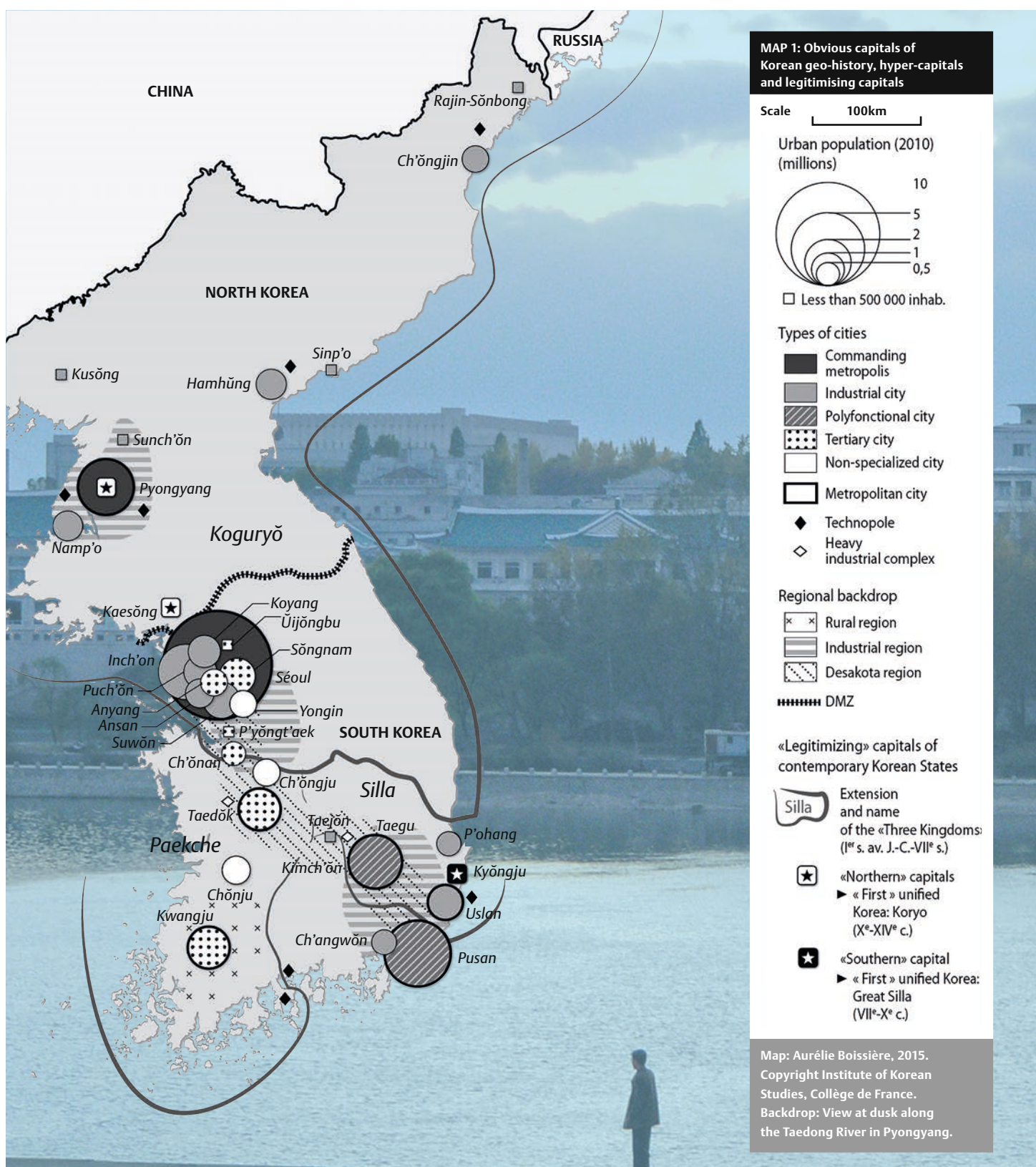
An archipelago of Korean capital cities

discriminated by contemporary South Korean politics. Forgetting or neglecting past capitals symbolic of States marginalized in the contemporary discourse is fully part of the legitimizing process of other capitals, located at the core of past States, which contemporary politics situate at the centre of national construction.

A few studies deal with Suwŏn, which was to become a capital, and was built as Chosŏn's first planned new town during a brief historical episode of the 18th century. But this early project – the transfer of the national capital in South Korean modern and contemporary history – remained unfinished. A conspicuous remnant of this episode, Suwŏn's Hwasŏng fortress, is listed by UNESCO; Suwŏn, however, appears rather as a forgotten capital.

In South Korea, two other cities in the making, and central to contemporary regional planning policies, are also relevant to the discussion of capitalness. The first one is Sejong city, a project that embodies the debate on capital transfer in South Korea. Depending on the social agents and the historical time, various factors are involved: geomantic 'imperfections' of Seoul's site, national security reasons (Seoul's proximity with the border and necessity to move Southward), or the imperative of territorial decentralization.

Similar in scale and temporality, the development of Songdo is likewise a mega-project conceived to reorganize capitalness on a greater scale in the South. Songdo's local architecture appears as a collage of references to other well-known international cities (New York, Sidney, Venice), and the building of the so-called 'international city' *(kukche tosi)* is meant primarily to develop an international hub, in order to reinforce the weight of the Seoul metropolitan region in global networks. Songdo is intended to enhance the global visibility of Seoul, the hyper-capital of South Korea, yet it remains in Seoul's shadow.

Which capital for future Korea ?

The issue of the future capital of a 'reunified' Korea is only sporadically discussed – and then particularly in the more technical literature of city or regional planning. An edited volume published in 2011 after a series of reports by the KRIHS, is an example of such an attempt, in which a South-centric view logically dominates.[10] In it, the assets and disadvantages of several cities (the two 'hyper-capitals', the two 'legitimizing capitals', and Sejong City), that could possibly assume the status of the capital of a future unified Korean State, are categorized according to, among others: situation and localization, functions, architectural and material environment, and symbolic value. Conclusive remarks in the 2011 edited volume state that Seoul is "the most likely outcome", while both capitals in the North are clear outsiders. Kaesŏng would have "some appeal" but with "visionary thinking", and Pyongyang, despite "intriguing aspects" seems a "political non-starter". As a "misplaced detour", Sejong is discarded. To some extent, this speculative research on the future capital, while carefully taking into account the multitude, or plurality, of capitals in the past and the present obvious capitals, expresses the performativity of a vision coming from South Korea where Seoul is the legitimate current capital. However, it doesn't consider plurality as a characteristic of Korean capitalness itself.

An archipelago of Korean capitals?

Finally, the geometry of Korean capitalness is more complex than a mirrorlike or twinlike construction (two States, two capitals), or even a foursome structure (two contemporary State capitals + two historical 'legitimizing' capitals), and seems instead to be shaped like an archipelago of present, past and future capitals. As *map 2* shows, this archipelago not only develops on the territory of the peninsula, it is also connected to the many diasporic capitals of the Korean world; for example, Koreatown or New Seoul in Los Angeles as the capital for the North-American diaspora, and Alma Aty in Kazakhstan for the Korean diaspora in Central Asia. This archipelago of capitals offers an image of the Korean urban geography that is slightly different from the Korean urban network structured by a geo-economic analysis *(map 1)*, which is usually better known.

Regarding the hot issue of a divided Korea and its future, let us note that seemingly innocuous debates on the future capital of Korea in fact have high political significance and consequences. Considering that the capital is a spatial object instrumentalized by State power,[11] the Korean archipelago of capitals is indeed linked to the contemporary political situation of a divided Korea and North/South polarization; I would like to consider the archipelago as one of the spatial and structural expressions (as they stand in scholarly discourse in geography and city planning) of the division system *(pundan ch'eje)*. While the moving of the capital as a political gesture of foundation (for a new kingdom), or even the co-existence of several capitals is far from rare or new in the world, and especially in Asia, the plurality of the capital cities was reactivated and polarized by the Korean division. Extremely strong competition between Pyongyang and

Seoul (as capitals) is one solid factor explaining the economic and demographic weight of both State capitals in their respective nations. At the same time, politicians also present historical capitals to legitimize the contemporary States in historical meta-narratives (Kaesŏng in the North and Kyŏngju in the South).

The Korean case confuses the conception of capital cities as the centre of the nation-state, largely determined by a Euro-centric conception of nation-states with definite borders and a State capital. Triggering a rethink about the longevity of cities and the resilience of former capitals, the plurality of Korean capitals also questions emerging global spatio-economic structures, where *global cities* are actually included in multipolar urban regions (from megalopolis to urban corridors). For geography in particular, and the social sciences in general, the Korean archipelago of capitals offers thus a good opportunity to trigger a general discussion about types of capitals that are seldom studied as specific urban objects with particular properties; beyond the 'hyper-capitals' and the 'legitimizing capitals' that are usually the centre of the analysis, other types of capitals may be discussed, such as 'shadow capitals', as marginalized or subaltern urban objects. This orientation may help develop research on cities other than those that are already over-studied in both Korean and Western research.
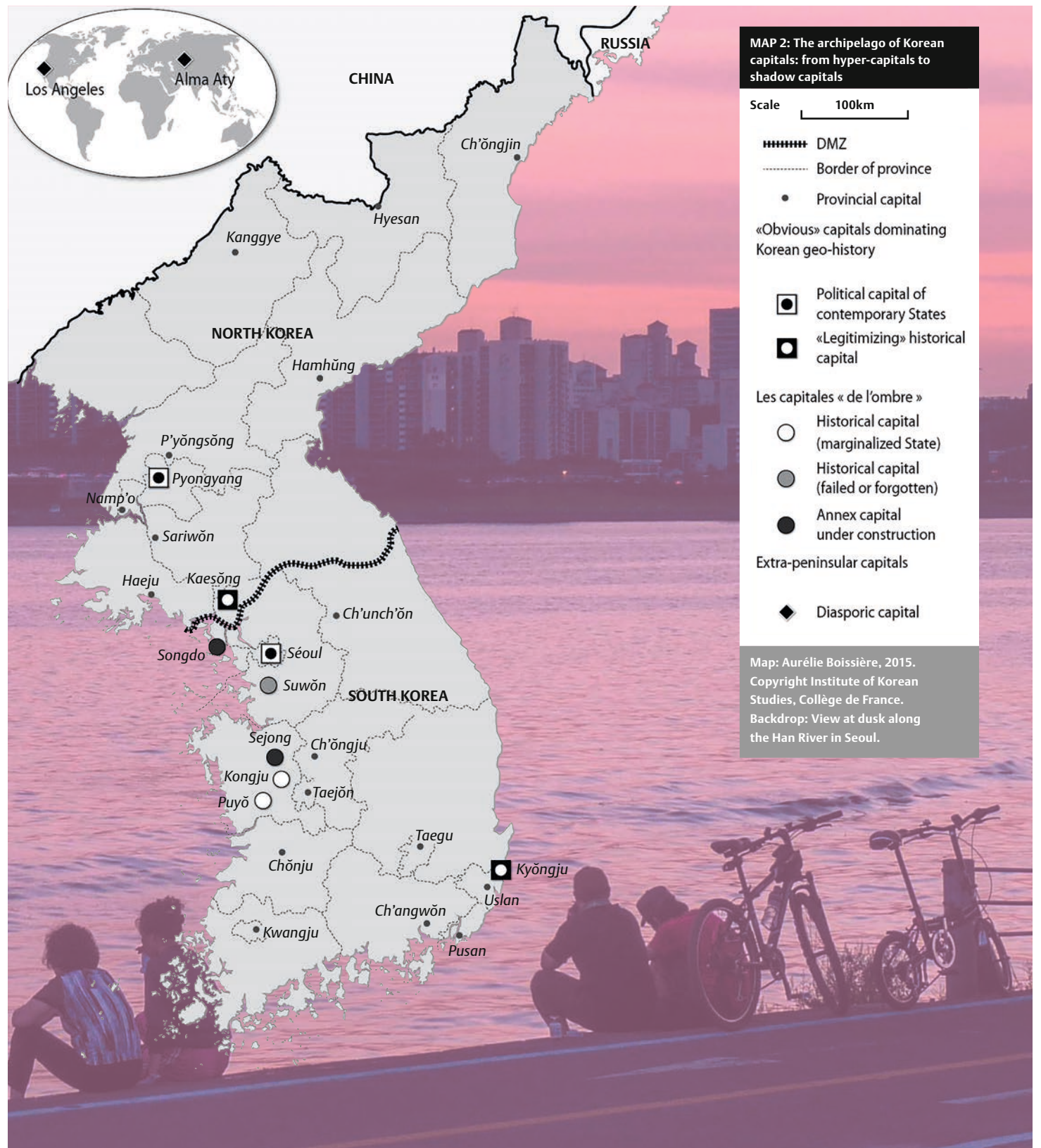
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4 This paper is based on the first chapter of a forthcoming book that was completed during my fellowship at IIAS in 2015: Gelézeau, V. (ed.) *Sŏrabŏl. Des capitales de la Corée,* Paris: Collège de France, série "Kalp'i études coréennes" (forthcoming in 2016).
5 Choplin 2009; Djament 2011; Grésillon 2002.
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10 Bae & Richardson 2011.
11 Choplin 2009.

MAP 2: The archipelago of Korean capitals: from hyper-capitals to shadow capitals

Scale 100km

DMZ
Border of province
Provincial capital

«Obvious» capitals dominating Korean geo-history

Political capital of contemporary States
«Legitimizing» historical capital

Les capitales « de l'ombre »

Historical capital (marginalized State)
Historical capital (failed or forgotten)
Annex capital under construction

Extra-peninsular capitals

Diasporic capital

Map: Aurélie Boissière, 2015. Copyright Institute of Korean Studies, Collège de France. Backdrop: View at dusk along the Han River in Seoul.

Sri Mariamman worship in the Gulf of Thailand

Sri Mariamman (alt. Mariyamman) is generally understood to be a Tamil goddess associated with smallpox. She was in fact cursed with the disease in at least one version of her narrative, and so offerings to the goddess during puja are meant to 'keep her away from your door'. Historically, her festival directly preceded the 'hot season' in Tamil Nadu, which coincides with the season of smallpox and other plagues. In Southeast Asia she was transformed, into an urban goddess of cholera prevention, as well as a 'goddess of the soil' for the Tamil diaspora.

William Noseworthy

MOST SCHOLARS WOULD AGREE that Sri Mariamman worship has its origins in *śaktī* worship, originating in southern India. In this context the goddess herself is generally clothed in green, has a pale complex and holds a dagger, which Younger associated with Kālī imagery.[1] In one story, Paraśurāma 'switched' the heads of Mariamman and an 'untouchable' (Harijan; Dalit) maid. When the heads were switched, the Brahmanic and non-Brahmanic caste imagery became blended, as did the imagery of 'right' and 'left' handed castes.[2] Regardless of the origins of the goddess, the picture that a historicization of records associated with Sri Mariamman worship paints is one where new diseases become associated with her figure, throughout the emergent Tamil diaspora in Southeast Asia in the 19th and 20th centuries.

First, there was already a smallpox vaccine in Southeast Asia that was being used in the 18th century. Although it was initially ineffective, we might rightly conclude that the utility of worshipping a goddess associated with smallpox prevention declined as the disease itself was effectively stamped out. However, mortality rates for smallpox itself remained high into the 19th century. There were still many outbreaks, with mortality rates exceeding 25%, although these outbreaks were increasingly in rural areas. Second, as new urban centers expanded, and disease climates shifted, it became possible to associate the goddess with diseases that *appeared* to afflict individuals in similar ways to smallpox, to have similar mortality rates, or similar causes. In Penang, for example, a cholera epidemic broke out in 1900 and 1911, with the 1900 epidemic resulting in a quarantine of over 2,000 individuals in a small depot that had a planned capacity of only 800.[3]

We should not take accounts as those above as evidence to portray Southeast Asia as 'inherently diseased' the way that some popular portrayals and scholarly works have done. To nuance this perspective, one could also suggest that the European fascination with Thai medical standards is not a 'new' phenomena. A *farang* visitor to Bangkok in the 1830s remarked at the 'surprising cleanliness' of the city.[4] Still, smallpox was the number one complaint in the city for that decade; while cholera, smallpox and 'the plague' remained the most common deadly diseases in the city throughout the 1840s. Then, even though the cholera vaccine was instituted quite effectively in the 19th century, compared to other Asian and many European centers, outbreaks of cholera remained common in Bangkok until the vaccine was made mandatory after the 1911-1912 epidemic. Nevertheless, a trans-regional outbreak that centered on Malay ports in southern India 'halted' migration from South to Southeast Asia in 1919. In other words, although smallpox became less of a concern, cholera remained a concern for medical officials into the 20th century. This helps to explain Aiyappan's assertion that the worship of the goddess in Cochin State (southern India) was related to the prevention of both smallpox and cholera, as well as Mialaret's assertion that Sri Mariamman, during the middle of the 20th century, had become associated with the prevention of smallpox, cholera, and even chickenpox.[5]

Indianization and localization

From her origins in Tamil Nadu in the first millennia, as a goddess associated with smallpox, to a goddess who became popular throughout Southeast Asia, it is clear that certain local conditions impacted Sri Mariamman worship throughout the epochs. Scholars of South and Southeast Asia tend to examine these trends on spectrums of 'localization' and 'Hinduization,'[6] although I would assert that we should continue to include

discourses of 'Indianization'[7] and 'Re-Sanskritization' within this discussion as well. Here, for simplicities sake, 'Indianization' refers to the cultural influences of the greater subcontinent cultural zone (including what is now Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and India) on Southeast Asia. To presume the subcontinent as one cultural zone is problematic, and 'sub-continentization' may be more accurate, although an even more clunky neologism.

By contrast 'localization' tends to refer to any *active* Southeast Asian adaptation of 'Indian culture'. For example, the Balinese goddess Dewi Majapahit is clearly a local adaptation of Sri Mariamman who brings 'the gift of the gods' – smallpox – to the Balinese. Local treatment of the disease includes lifting the afflicted – usually children – above the shoulders of those in a procession devoted to Sri Majapahit, and addressing 'the children' – or the afflicted – with the title 'God' (Dewa) or 'Goddess' (Dewi) for nine days, as a means of appeasing the goddess. Since Majapahit is also the name of the classical Javanese empire that ruled much of insular Southeast Asia, from the 13th through the 15th century, we may hypothesize that this particular localization involved a cheeky response to the Javanese conquest of Bali, under the auspices of Majapahit's expansion and conquest of Bali in the 1340's.

It is not clear if other *highly* localized forms of Sri Mariamman appeared in Southeast Asia throughout the epochs, although it is clear that Sri Mariamman worshippers were not set aside from the other major trends that influenced religious people throughout the region. For example, as modernist-traditionalist debates swept throughout both Buddhist and Muslim communities around the Gulf of Thailand, during the early part of the 20th century, it does not seem that Tamils worshipping Sri Mariamman were exempted from these questions, as a full report (dated 6/1/1924) of events

Below:
Sri Mariamman temple in Singapore. Image reproduced under a creative commons license, courtesy of flickr.

at the Kuala Lumpur temple indicates that positions of those in the temple in such debates were aligned between those who supported the senior *panchayat* ('senior priest'), and a 'populist' group that sought to make an appearance in front of the 'electoral board' (the *urar*).[8] However, due to the lack of investigation by existing studies, into a broader 'regionalist' frame of Sri Mariamman temples in the Gulf of Thailand, we have little further knowledge about the particular policies under debate. Meanwhile, there is ample evidence to support the 'Hinduization', 'Sanskritization', and 'Re-Indianization' of Sri Mariamman temples in the later part of the 20th century.

For one, Sinha, who has published two studies of the Sri Mariamman temple in Singapore,[9] points to the particular ways that new worship of Sri Mariamman in Singapore's cosmopolitan atmosphere is tied to a broader trend of Hindu revivalism. These trends, however, are not precisely 'new' but rather 'ongoing', with a burst of enthusiasm that re-emerged during the past decade. In the 1960s, for example, in addition to the *Thai Poosam* ceremony, the Sri Mariamman temple boards ensured that the *Mariamman Thiruvali ceremony*, specific to the veneration of Sri Mariamman herself, was held at "all state temples" in Malaysia and Singapore. An example of 'Sanskritization' occurred each year, according to Mialaret's account,[10] as during the ceremony of Thimithi (roughly October) – in Singapore at the very least, and perhaps at other peninsular temples – the Mahabaratha is recited in Sanskrit; although at least one individual remains employed to act as a live translator to translate the epic into Tamil. In more contemporary times, the Singapore temple has become even more an example of 'cosmopolitan syncretism'. Sinha, for example, describes the 'Hinduization' of Chinese deities such as Guan Yin and 'the Laughing Buddha', as an expression of "everyday religiosity in practice", identifying specific sites, refreshing historical memory, and adopting other ubiquitously Daoist deities. However, inasmuch as the particular examples of Guan Yin (a Chinese, gender shifted, adaptation of the classical Boddhisattva, Avalokitsvara) and 'the Laughing Buddha' (Pu Tai; a manifestation of a historical event wherein many Chinese became convinced that a monk was indeed the 'next Buddha of our kalpa', Meitreya) are Chinese adaptations of Buddhist figures, these adaptations represent a 'Re-Indianization' of Meitreya and Avalokitsvara, which also involves their re-incorporation into the accepted pantheon of South Indian Hinduism.

Tamil-Gulf of Thailand, and global networks

The Sri Mariamman temple in Singapore is just one example of the 'new trends' that are associated with the worship of what we may now better term, 'the goddess of urban disease'. Sri Mariamman has been historically important outside of Southeast Asia, in other South Indian diasporic communities, in South Africa, Guyana and the Caribbean. In South India itself, Sri Mariamman was less and less attended as a 'village goddess', and more and more associated with 'urban elites'. For some, this was because 'the goddess' as a figure brought common perceptions of "sanctity and prosperity" in the face of rapidly increasing class tensions and "rapid social change".[11] The prosperity helped the central Sri Mariamman temple in Tamil Nadu become one of the three richest temples in India. Now nationalized as 'Indian' and hence less regionalized as 'Tamil', Sri Mariamman temples were built in London's Tooting neighborhood [1996], Soneleigh [Sri Rajarajeswary Amman], and in the United States. However, the earlier mention of the 'modernist-traditionalist' debates that circulated the greater Gulf of Thailand and Indian Ocean networks throughout the 20th century, are now found in reference to these neighborhoods as well. "As recently as 1997", Waghorne recorded that she was "told by an educated [individual] well settled in Britain that the less educated were, of course, continuing to build temples to Kali, Durga, and other such goddesses".[12] The implication is two-fold: 1) that education eliminates the need for the construction of temples, and 2) that Sri Mariamman is understood in a direct parallel to consorts of Siva, because of the 'hot' goddess connection.[13] The point adds weight to the most bold claim of this short research piece: that the exact trends that Younger and Waghorne have found as the 'urbanization' and the 'Brahmanization' (so to speak) of the goddess Sri Mariamman, have their roots in the Tamil diasporic urban enclaves of late 19th and early 20th century Southeast Asia.

The building of Sri Mariamman temples in Southeast Asia is linked directly to the spread of migrant Tamil urban enclaves. Furthermore, there is one family, the Pillai, who appear to be responsible for strongly encouraging the spread of the goddess. The 19th century 'Gulf of Thailand revival' begins with the Georgetown shrine in 1801. The Pillai then sent one of their sons, Naraina Pillai with Raffles to Singapore in 1819. There were no other Tamils present in Singapore at the time. Four years later, however, Naraina was responsible for organizing a land grant, donating the land to the Sri Mariamman temple board, which completed the Singapore temple just four years later, with thanks to predominantly convict labor. The Pillai were then responsible for upgrading the original shrine in Penang in 1833 [renovated in 1933]. The Pillai lineage in Singapore, however, continued to grow as well. Born in

Above:
Sri Mariamman temple in Ho Chi Minh City. Image reproduced under a creative commons license, courtesy of flickr.

Singapore in 1850, Thamboosamy Pillai [Singlish alt. sp.: Pillay], became one of the founding members of the Kuala Lumpur Sri Mariamman temple board in 1873. At the same time, the Pillai also reshaped Tamil migration for British Malaya. Recruiting in South India was only done through two firms, and one of them was the 'Ganapathi Pillai and Co.' firm. In other words, the spread of Sri Mariamman worship into Southeast Asian urban enclaves was intimately tied to the desires of one of the, if not the most elite Tamil clans. It follows that the subsequent construction of Sri Mariamman temples in Bangkok [1879], in Saigon [1870s-1890s] and Medan (Sumatra, Indonesia) [1881] were all intimately tied to the spread of urbanized migrant labor and capitalizing cosmopolitan Tamil elites.[14]

Although Tamil migration was initially encouraged by British policies, explicitly to counter balance the power of Hokkien, Hakka and other overseas Chinese in the Straits Settlements, encouraged migrations would wane in the 1920s. At the same time, nationalization and 'Indianization' ran high as anti-Imperialist sentiments mounted. There were, however, a few explicitly Tamil responses of the day. *Tamilaham* was a Tamil weekly that was published out of Kuala Lumpur. The serial actively discouraged Tamils from taking positions on British rubber plantations, and emphasized above all else the consolidation of Tamil (not *Indian*) identity in the straits. As an explicitly *Tamil* goddess, therefore, Mariamman continued to gain followers, with temples being constructed in Singapore at 126A Mandai Road [1947, by families of Nee Soon village], at Dunearn Road at the 6th milestone of Bukit Timah [1954, for the employees of the Turf Club] and on Coronation Road, as well as a secondary shrine at the Subramanian temple of Singapore Naval Base [shortly after 1966]. The placement of the Sri Mariamman temples initially followed what Younger highlighted as a practice of establishing 'village shrines'. Younger draws from an earlier Anthropologist, Becker, who claimed that the 'village shrines' were indicative of the non-Brahmanical 'right hand' Sudra-landowning caste practice, of blessing new land with new temples.[15] In other words, through worship in Southeast Asia, the goddess Sri Mariamman underwent another transformation, from a 'hot' goddess to a 'goddess of the soil'.

Sri Mariamman's own transformation has included an alteration in the worshipping community and of practices in urban Southeast Asia. The emphasis on the willingness of worshippers to undergo extreme pain appears less common in the temples in Bangkok and Ho Chi Minh City, for example, strongly contrasting with observations regarding Tamil celebrations, particularly centered around the Thai Poosam festival. Devotees may insert hooks into their body, suspending weights from them, connected to wires. These ceremonies remain common throughout the temples of Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore, as well as to a lesser extent, Bangkok. Thai Poosam is a much more modest occasion in contemporary Ho Chi Minh City. Furthermore, the Bangkok temple has been nationalized through the inclusion of adorning decorations that feature the Thai royal colors and, yes, statues of Buddha and Thai style mini-Brahmanical shrines. On any given day, the worshippers at the Thai temple are more of a mix between Thais and Tamils. In Ho Chi Minh City, all of the worshippers surveyed over the course of several visits during three years were either Vietnamese or Khmer Krom. Spirit possession is occasional, but rare.

In the case of Vietnam, the temple is furthermore not examined, generally, as an 'active' site, but rather as an example of the city's 'colonial past' – of a once present Hindu population that has now virtually disappeared. It is, in other words, commonly recast through that Orientalist lens that viewed the Hindu towers dotting the Vietnamese coast as purely antiquities. Contrast this with the local revivals of Sri Mariamman worship in Singapore in the 2000s, recorded by Sinha, and the 'nationalization' of Sri Mariamman temples in the Gulf of Thailand in Southeast Asia becomes even clearer. While the temples in

Singapore and Malaysia are ever present examples of one of the four acceptable forms of diversity (Tamil/Indian; Malay/Muslim; Mandarin/Chinese; and English speakers), the temples in Vietnam and Thailand have been incorporated into Vietnamese goddess worship (Thanh Mau) and a particularly Thai strand of Brahmanism, respectively.

Conclusion

In summary, the narrative of the spread of Sri Mariamman temples in Southeast Asia and the Gulf of Thailand challenges existing notions about the dynamics of mono-directional cultural influences extending between South India and Southeast Asia. The dynamics of Sri Mariamman as an emergent urban, elite, goddess, rather than a 'village goddess' were already present in Tamil urban communities in Southeast Asia in the 19th century. The association of Sri Mariamman with these communities further shifted the properties of the goddess. Originally associated with the prevention of smallpox, in the 19th century the goddess became associated with the prevention of cholera as well. By the 20th century, chickenpox was added to the list. Occasionally Southeast Asians have worshipped potentially localized forms of Sri Mariamman, such as in the case of the Balinese goddess Sri Majapahit; or have adapted, variously toned down, and nationalized practices of Sri Mariamman worship, such as at the temples in Bangkok, Ho Chi Minh City and Singapore. Southeast Asia has also been a site where Hindu temples have been able to '(re)Indianize', '(re)Sanskritize', or '(re)Hinduize' Chinese Buddhist deities, just as well as presentations of Tamil ceremonies, all of which are conformed to ideas about what it means to be 'Tamil' and 'Hindu'. In this way, the case of Sri Mariamman worship in Southeast Asia in the 19th and 20th centuries, virtually turns the meaning of 'diaspora' on its head. From many identities and locations in the sub-continent, the Tamil diaspora emerged into the singular network in the greater Gulf of Thailand area, centered on the worship of a goddess who might have just been able to fend off the most feared urban diseases of the day.

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Cultivating Orientalism

Although the transplantation of Chinese gardens to the Western world over the past few decades might appear far removed from the topic of Edward Said's classic study, the cultural essentialism of which it partakes shares much with Said's original conception of Orientalism. But this is a form of Orientalism in which the power relationship has shifted dramatically.

Stephen McDowall

IN JUNE 1664, John Evelyn took an opportunity to view "a Collection of rarities" shipped from China by Jesuit missionaries and bound for Paris. Among the astonishing sights "as in my life I had not seene" were rhinoceros horns, rubies, and "Divers Drougs that our Drougists & physitians could make nothing of." An "exquisitely polished" type of paper, "exceedingly glorious & pretty to looke on" caught his eye, while especially remarkable were the "Glorious Vests, wrought & embroidered on cloth of Gold, but with such lively colours, as for splendor & vividnesse we have nothing in Europe approches."[1]

The material manifestations of Sino-Western exchange have long been a source of fascination for Western viewers, and if the success of last year's exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art is anything to go by, that fascination remains as strong as ever. *China: Through the Looking Glass,* the result of a collaboration between the Fashion and Asian Art departments at the Met, opened on 7 May 2015 and by late August had already become the most viewed exhibition in the history of the Costume Institute, eclipsing attendance numbers for the hugely popular Alexander McQueen display of 2011. Self-consciously repositioning fashion within the discourse of Orientalism, curator Andrew Bolton was explicit from the outset that his exhibition was "not about China per se but about a China that exists as a collective fantasy." Thus it proposes a "less politicized and more positivistic examination of Orientalism as a locus of infinite and unbridled creativity," which, Bolton argues, "instead of silencing the other ... becomes an active, dynamic two-way conversation."[2]

The curious life of the Chinese garden in the modern West, of which the Met's very own Astor Court is a notable example, both supports and challenges Bolton's reconceptualization of Orientalism. It suggests that while the power to define and represent the Chinese garden in the West has changed hands, the result has been quite the opposite of "infinite and unbridled creativity."

Early Chinese gardens in the West

The garden as a key site of cultural exchange between East and West has a long history. Sir William Temple's (1628-1699) praise of the designed irregularity of Chinese gardens was highly influential to a generation of scholars, and precipitated an intense interest in Chinese gardens and garden architecture that peaked during the mid-eighteenth century.[3] A visitor's record of 1738 describes "a house built on piles, after the manner of the Chinese, odd & Pretty enough" at Stowe, while a 'Chinese House' appears on a Woburn estate map of the same year.[4] Chinese garden features were in place at Marybone and at Shugborough Estate by 1748. By 1757 the style had already become all too clichéd, as Robert Lloyd's (1733-1764) poetic send-up of that year suggests: "The trav'ler with amazement sees / A temple, Gothic, or Chinese, / With many a bell, and tawdry rag on, / And crested with a sprawling dragon; / A wooden arch is bent astride / A ditch of water, four foot wide, / With angles, curves, and zigzag lines, / From Halfpenny's exact designs."[5]

Eighteenth-century observers were generally aware that such garden structures were cultural hybrids. One visitor to the 'Chinese House' at Old Windsor described it as "half-gothic, half attick, half Chinese, and completely fribble."[6] A correspondent to *The World* in 1753 had it that:

> According to the present prevailing whim, every thing is Chinese, or in the Chinese taste: or, as it is sometimes more modestly expressed, partly after the Chinese manner ... [W]ithout-doors so universally has it spread, that every gate to a cow-yard is in T's and Z's and every hovel for the cows has bells hanging at the corners....[O]n a moderate computation, not one in a thousand of all the stiles, gates, rails, pales, chairs, temples, chimney-pieces, &c. &c. &c. which are called Chinese, has the least resemblance to any thing that China ever saw... [O]ur Chinese ornaments are not only of our own manufacture, like our French silks and our French wines, but, what has seldom been attributed to the English, of our own invention.[7]

Granted, not everyone was content to lose himself in the fantasy. The stated objective of *Designs of Chinese Buildings* (1757) by William Chambers (1723-1796) was to "put a stop to the extravagancies that daily appear under the name of Chinese."[8] But Chambers' designs disappointed his contemporaries

precisely for their lack of exoticism. As Oliver Impey has observed, "people knew exactly what they wanted a 'Chinese' building to be, light, frivolous, immediately pretty and gaily coloured, and they had no use for Chambers' solemn pronouncements on inaccuracy."[9]

Chinese nature

In later accounts, Chinese gardens become entangled with ideas about racial qualities of the Chinese people, a link made explicitly in J. C. Loudon's *Encyclopedia of Gardening* (1834), in which "Chinese taste in gardening...partakes of the general character of the people, and is characterised by their leading feature, peculiarity."[10] A curator at the South Kensington Museum (now the V&A) could similarly claim in 1872 that "a Chinaman can recognize and appreciate the beauties of a landscape, and will so order his building that its lines fall in with those already existing in nature; but he is incapable of the higher art by which western peoples have imposed new lines on the horizon and made surrounding nature harmonise with their conceptions."[11] Here the issue of taste has been entirely removed from the analysis. The Chinese designer is *incapable* of the higher (Western) art, which is unproblematically presented as the normative standard to which he must aspire. Twentieth-century accounts have tended to make the same implicit (or explicit) association. A landscape architect could observe admiringly in 1964 that "Chinese restraint in gardening is inborn, and Chinese patience we can scarcely apprehend, much less attain; for it endures from generation to generation, contentedly watching a lone plum tree grow from youth to maturity and from strength to age."[12]

Such statements are now all too obviously part of the system of knowledge-production we have come to know as 'Orientalism' following the publication of Edward Said's highly-influential work in 1978.[13] Whether in awestruck admiration or in casual dismissal, the garden is co-opted into the service of a narrative that places a traditional, static, passive East in opposition to a modern, dynamic, active West. Here Oriental culture stands in opposition to Occidental history – and the Chinese garden thus becomes 'timeless'. This timelessness allows, for example, the art historian Hugh Honour to use (in 1961) a nineteenth-century description to discuss an eighteenth-century garden, for, he observes, "few changes in the style of gardening are likely to have been wrought within the space of a century in China."[14]

The authentic garden

The opening of the Astor Court in 1981 marked the beginning of a new phase in the global dissemination of Chinese garden culture that has shown no signs of abating. After close consultation with the eminent Chinese garden historian Chen Congzhou

(1918-2000) in the late 1970s, the design team had proposed that the 'Late Spring Abode' *(Dianchun yi)* in the western section of the 'Garden of the Master of Nets' *(Wangshi yuan)* in Suzhou be recreated at the New York site. A long-defunct imperial ceramic kiln was reopened, a special team of loggers dispatched to the province of Sichuan to source appropriate timber, and a full-scale prototype constructed in Suzhou. The garden was then meticulously assembled in New York early in 1980 by a team of Chinese experts, after a ritual exchange of hardhats with their American counterparts, before being officially opened to the public in June 1981.

As if anticipating the "locus of infinite and unbridled creativity" that Bolton wants us to see at the Met, Chen Congzhou claimed that the opening of the Astor Court "served to promote the ever deepening trend towards the intermingling of the garden cultures of China and the rest of the world."[15] In fact, although the number of Chinese gardens constructed in Western cities has grown exponentially and continues to rise, an ever-increasing emphasis on cultural authenticity has come to dominate their construction and display. From Vancouver to Dunedin, Chinese gardens are now routinely constructed by Chinese labourers using 'authentic' techniques and materials, and their proud claims suggest a sense of rivalry in this regard. The construction of the Astor Court had been characterised by "rigorous adherence to traditional techniques" according to its accompanying press release.[16] The 'Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden' in Vancouver is "an authentic representation of an age-old garden tradition" and "the first of its kind outside of China." The 'Lan Su Chinese Garden' in Portland was "built by Chinese artisans from Suzhou and is the most authentic Chinese garden outside of China."[17]

From a historical perspective, this 'authentic Chinese garden' is a rather more problematic concept than such statements would suggest. Like those of Europe, late-imperial Chinese gardens, whether constructed or imagined, responded in their designs to specific social and political circumstances and to specific local contexts. The export process has tended to privilege one particular type – the so-called 'scholar' garden of Ming-dynasty Suzhou – at the expense of other regional variations that once characterised a much richer garden heritage than the one we are now able to behold. The process of mutual reinforcement by which this type of garden has become the traditional Chinese garden in both China and the West has been astonishingly rapid. Yet most 'classical' gardens even in Suzhou are in fact nineteenth- or twentieth-century constructions, and there is little evidence to suggest that that city's unchallenged reputation as garden city *par excellence* predates the twentieth century. The pervasive image of the garden as sanctuary for the lone, impoverished scholar contemplating nature does not stand up to recent critical scholarship by Craig Clunas and others.[18] Poor men simply did not own gardens in late-imperial China, and garden owners knew the social value of their properties too well to cloister themselves away.

Most significantly, the only known garden design treatise from the late-Ming period, *The Craft of Gardens (Yuan ye)* by Ji Cheng (b. 1582), repeatedly stresses that a designer "cannot stick too closely to convention," as "skill in landscape design is shown in the ability to 'follow' *(yin)* and 'borrow from' *(jie)* the existing scenery and lie of the land." For Ji, "you must use whatever structure is appropriate to the particular circumstances, and not confine yourself to a single design."[19] One can only imagine what he might have made of the idea of meticulously reassembling a garden on the other side of the world.

Below:
The 'Chinese House'.
c.1748. Shugborough,
Staffordshire
(photograph by
the author).

Above: The Astor Court. 1981. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (courtesy of the museum)

Appropriating Orientalism

In her 1952 autobiographical novel *A Many Splendoured Thing,* Han Suyin has her British protagonist reflect on the relationship between tourism, culture and preservation:

Anglo-Saxons are muddled with wishful thinking about your country. To us it is still a wonder land of hidden wealth and subtle wisdom. We suspect that it may not be true, but we go on hoping, for we are sentimentalists. Our tourist minds are intent on preserving old customs in other countries, exotic manifestations of natives of other lands. We like to dream of Eastern nations drawn up in picturesque pageant, a perpetual durbar, wrapped in gold brocade and gorgeous embroidery and charming rags, practising old magic dances by moon and torchlight; and especially being very photogenic. We say with complete disregard of them as human beings: "How awful of you to give up those dear old customs, that wonderful family system we admire so much (since we did not have to live under its yoke). It's not you we want, but your traditions, your culture, your civilization." We are museum-haunted, collectors of a glass-encased past labelled: 'Do not touch'.[20]

It is tempting to view the entire project of transplanting Chinese gardens to the West as an Orientalist preservation exercise, with the implied message that We can safeguard your cultural heritage better than You can. Indeed, what could be *more* reminiscent of nineteenth-century Orientalist practice than the placement of a Chinese garden within a Western museum? In this context it serves as a souvenir, carefully labelled and categorized, an object that "allow[s] the tourist to appropriate, consume, and thereby 'tame' the cultural other" in Susan Stewart's thoughtful phrase.[21]

But in the case of the Chinese garden, the Western authority to view, represent and create the Oriental 'Other' in a Saidian sense can no longer be taken for granted. Consider the anxiety expressed by a New Zealander involved in the creation of the Dunedin Chinese garden in 2008:

I was very concerned that we would do something that was amateurish and that would reflect European ideas of Oriental gardens. And, I knew enough about Chinese gardens [to know] that no European could ever build a Chinese garden. There is far too much history, far too much culture that we simply don't understand that goes into the[ir] making.[22]

This statement comes close to the "delicious surrender to the unremitting exoticism of total illegibility" that David Porter observes of the eighteenth-century passion for chinoiserie.[23]

The Chinese garden, and by implication Chinese culture more generally, has once again become ancient, mysterious, unknowable.

Instead, Chinese garden culture has now been entirely reclaimed by Chinese actors, a process that signifies not powerlessness but rather China's newly-acquired confidence within a global context. The dramatic economic transformation of the People's Republic of China since 1978 and its re-engagement with the Western world after a period of relative isolation has seen something called 'traditional Chinese culture' become a marketable commodity once more. The Chinese state increasingly presents itself as guardian of the nation's culture, and in this context, 'classical gardens of Suzhou' have become an authenticated category of cultural heritage, with nine being added to the UNESCO World Heritage List between 1997 and 2000.[24] As the landscape photographer Zhong Ming observed in 1991, "it has taken the attention of the West to bring home to contemporary Chinese the need to preserve historic gardens and to restore them in an authentic way, rather than simply rebuilding either in a contemporary idiom or with an unscholarly contemporary idea of what a classical garden should look like."[25]

As Said described it, one of the key components of nineteenth-century Orientalist practice was cultural essentialism, or the ahistorical tendency to represent societies by a set of internally-coherent cultural characteristics "bound together by a spirit, genius, Klima, or national idea."[26] The self-Orientalizing process that led to the invention of the 'traditional' Chinese garden in the late twentieth century is perhaps not adequately explained by Said's one-directional model, but the end product – an elegant stereotype – is not a million miles away from his original Oriental fantasy.

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Dialogues with memory: three conversations on heritage

The tension between urbanisation and cultural heritage is acute in India, where the country's urban population has doubled from 100 million to 200 million in the twenty years between 1991 and 2011, and is envisaged to reach 500 million by 2041. Urban change, whether through rapid urbanisation or urban redevelopment initiatives, has historically posed real challenges and opportunities for cultural heritage. Indeed, within many countries, heritage legislation has been developed as a result of a fear that urban change will erase the history of places.

Surajit Sarkar

Memory and urban heritage

As urbanisation expands and the rural is incorporated into the urban, the pace and scale of urbanisation has often been called destructive. However, the continuing resilience of the urban populations, the adaptation and accommodation of urban informalities, makes it better to consider urbanisation as a complex churning of temporal and spatial layers of cultural heritage, resulting from the historical and contemporary fusion of incoming migrants with existing populations. Besides, rather than 'freezing' heritage into particular time periods, or genres, memory and place studies show how incoming migrants bring with them their own intangible heritages that shape the physical and mental urban landscapes in conjunction with existing populations.

Conceptualising heritage as fluid rather than static is central to understanding how heritage can survive in the age of contemporary globalisation. The contrasting approaches of 'formal planning' and the 'organic self-generated informal' can usefully reframe thinking on 'internally generated place' versus 'designed public spaces', or even 'aesthetic' versus 'kinetic'. Similarly, cultural heritage can be situated within its ecological and environmental contexts, which include crafts and vernacular heritage, and the ways this works with geography.

Memories, both collective and individual, are crucial for the understanding of who and what we are. When people preserve their heritage they are actually reinventing their past in order to interpret their present. The sense of a past consolidates an existence in the present and forms the basis of identity and social wellbeing.

Even though memories are within our minds, the physical environment plays a key role in creating and sustaining them. The urban heritage is the soul of the city and is created in the conjunction of memories and space, merging with the physical environment into what we usually refer to as 'place'. Visible modifications to the urban environment are indicative of a broader relationship between culture and place. Urban landscapes can be approached in terms of this relationship, constituted and sustained through a series of informally institutionalised practices.

Every city and town contains fragments of historical landscapes intertwined with its current spatial configuration. When decoding these layers of time, the city becomes legible and 'place' makes sense. Cultural heritage is not just about old things. New or newly altered objects, places and practices are just as much a part of cultural heritage, in that they hold cultural value for today's generations.

The city in their heart – a personal map of memories, experiences and expectations that define relationship with the surroundings – is something that all residents have. By provoking an articulation of the imagination, this mass of interacting ideas, emotions and preferences can be stimulated into defining the urban space as residents see it.

Sharing and collecting urban heritage – creating neighbourhood occasions

The three "Scenes" on these pages come from a number of events organised in the context of the Neighbourhood Museum Programme in Delhi. Such programmes of documenting the history of everyday life and its diversity, in a city where the margins and peripheries are spatially located within (in the form of the old city and the hundreds of urban villages), are of vital importance to discover how the city is imagined and perceived. Unplanned additions continue to mark the character of Delhi, since they represent the oldest continuously inhabited areas of the city, besides being home to the majority of its citizens. A large number of monuments, from ancient to medieval, are also located in such areas, which in turn define perceptions of the city's historic identity. In human terms as well, Delhi's peripheral spaces function as a safety valve for the residential and the small-scale industrial needs of the capital.

Because the size and diversity of the city makes centralised collection, which focuses on diversity and the multiple layers of urban life, a difficult task, the Centre for Community Knowledge at Ambedkar University Delhi has initiated a multi-year Delhi Citizens Memory Programme, currently in its third year. Called the Neighbourhood Museum Programme, this multi-year research and documentation initiative travels around different neighbourhoods of the megacity, with each local event accompanied by an exhibition and public memory sharing forum. With a mandate to document the 'lived everyday' in Delhi, it does so by using memory, local history and the communication arts. Designed to make local heritage a local spectacle, these exercises in provoking multiple narratives of a shared place in a public setting are designed to make layers of meaning visible. By introducing oral (contemporary) and written narratives from history about the diverse experiences of place, the relational and dialogic take precedence over the static, in what is an attempt to transfer agency to the residents of the city.

The emphasis on public sharing emerged out of previous experiences by the author of this paper,[1] as such sharing allows space for dialogue and discussion. As a cultural exchange and communication process, the exercise occurs on the border between art and life, as a performance with no boundary between performers and audience. The organisers of these events walk a tightrope in their attempts to explore diversity, rather than to simply consider it 'different'. The main questions facing the Neighbourhood Museum Team include – What marks the neighbourhood? What is to be collected (memory, image or artefact) and from whom? How is this exploration to be done? Keeping in mind the question, "Who have you met before me?", is not a formality but a move on the chessboard of local social relations; and an important question emerges: Who from the neighbourhood will introduce the team in the locality, so that every person approached will actually engage with the questions?

The comments in Scene 1 and Scene 3 emerged during public sharing at the Neighbourhood Museum events at Nizamuddin (South Delhi) and Shadi-Khampur (West Delhi). The comments in Scene 2 came forth at a workshop on local urban heritage in the neighbourhood adjoining Ambedkar University.

A moment in the memorialisation of heritage

Despite the relative isolation of village societies, the cultural patterns of a pre-industrial India showed a larger complex society. Across rural South Asia, the duality of traditions can be seen, for example, not only in some common forms of folk religion, but also in a stratum of beliefs and rituals that can be traced to a different past. This was explained to me once by a group of Korku tribal children from central India, playing in the sand in the hill town of Pachmarhi in Central India. Replying to my obviously ignorant questions, they pointed out the path one of them had traced in the sand, from her maternal village across the valley, and the walk along the

ridge into town. A sand hill decorated with leaves and flowers located beside the village were not part of their recital, so I inquired about it. In return, they giggled, before the eldest explained to me that it was the hill of Bara-dev where they had offered a floral tribute before they came to town. And before I could say anything else, another stepped in to say, "You won't understand it. You live in Pachmarhi, not in the village." Then the first girl explained, "In town the Gods are found in images at home and carvings in temples, but in the village the Gods stay in the forest. So that is why we go to the hill to pray."

Tales like this are common across South Asia, as they are in some other parts of the world. Despite the existence of local deities, the uniformity of the shared cultural heritage follows patterns of market integration. Here, patterns of buying and selling, personal acquaintance, marriage alliances, the existential basis of agricultural life, and the travels of the carriers of specialised knowledge (bards and storytellers, blacksmiths, healers and others), among other factors, culturally integrate the hinterland of a given market centre. The peoples of village society borrow from and contribute to a common larger tradition, while the existence of a long standing permanent economic surplus makes possible the development of a distinctive urban-elite tradition and cultural heritage.[2]

The historical development of an 'authorised heritage discourse' (AHD) in India consequently reveals that the uses of heritage are often bound up with power relations, and specifically the power to legitimize and de-legitimize cultures. The transformation of a glorious past into a unique commodity that (after a little cosmetic touch-up) will do good business on the international tourism market, presupposes that the present only matters. The market can monetise every asset and liability, so heritage exists independently from its components, as the origin of assets and liabilities disappear.

It is, consequently, no wonder that the heritage value of urban cultural landscapes continues to be seen largely in terms of material artefacts. Arising from long-standing concern with the conservation of built heritage, this has several limitations when applied to the city. A city is more than a collection of pretty old (or new) buildings, squares, and parks. Urban space is also a reflection of the configuration of productive and social forces. Whose city is this? To whom does it belong? As a private, homogeneous entity, the answer is sadly obvious: to the people with money and power. Heritage in such a discourse tends to exclude understandings that are not focused on material assets but on people's attachments, identities or sense of belonging.

Dialogism, alternative voices, and contested heritages

Culture is the basis of all social identity and development, and cultural heritage is the endowment that each generation receives and passes on. There is a wide variety of cultural heritage. It can be tangible, such as buildings, landscapes and artefacts; and intangible, such as language, music and customary practice. It is not just old things, pretty things, or physical things and it often involves powerful human emotions.

This means that heritage emerges as a relational idea: it is about how individuals and groups actively take up positions in relation to sites, buildings, events, histories. It becomes 'a way of knowing and seeing'. In engaging with heritage, people are constructing a sense of their own identities, one that may be in opposition to, in concordance with, or simply remain outside the terms of the 'authorised discourse'. These positions are not reducible to the simple question of divergent opinions and values; it is rather about how people are caught up in a range of activities that involve remembering, forgetting, communicating, asserting identity, and so forth, as well as cultural values.

Lefebvre indicates how humans create the space in which they make their lives; it is a project shaped by interests of classes, experts, the grassroots, and other contending forces. Space is not simply inherited from nature, or passed on by the dead hand of the past, or autonomously determined by 'laws' of spatial geometry as per conventional location theory. Space is produced and reproduced through human intentions, even if unanticipated consequences also develop, and even as space constrains and influences those producing it.[3]

Our heritage is an inescapable part of our existence. It serves as an intangible structure, encompassing our behavioural patterns and conceptions, enabling some actions while making others unimaginable. Heritage is a bit like Felipe Fernandez-Armesto's description of history, "the more you shift perspective, the more is revealed. If you want to see her whole, you have to dodge and slip between many different viewpoints".[4]

Keeping in mind the notions of 'space' and 'place', we can look at the city as belonging to dual categories. On the one hand, it is a geographical entity; however, the city can also be recognised as a space upon which many different categories like modernity, progress, urbanity, citizenship and technology are inscribed. It is therefore, necessary to understand that the space we talk about is related to several other spaces that might not be obviously implicated.

"This domain of lived experience is, I believe, full of contradictions and seeming opposites … If we try to conceive of it or translate it into discourse by mapping it we change it. If we try to perceptualize lived experience we change it as well. It can only be understood on its own plane of lived experience in the here and now. It then becomes both/and as opposed to either/or …" [5]

Urban heritage for urban lives
If heritage has to matter to the people who inhabit its landscape, heritage definition and actions must integrate elements, patterns and practices, and encompass the complexity, richness and layers of meaning in urban life today. To conclude, for a definition and practice of heritage wherein people matter, it must:
- belong to communities and its diverse publics with an emphasis to include those whose voices are unheard, not only of experts, institutions or governments;
- concern itself with the whole urban condition, and incorporate places, landscapes, traditions, memories, stories – all aspects critical to a community's cultural and social fabric;
- be present-centred – with more focus on local history and identity, social inclusion and cultural vitality;
- diversify, thereby broadening the approach, and rethink what is meant by maintaining heritage successfully.

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Scene 1

Neighbourhood Museum Exhibition, Nizamuddin East Community Centre, New Delhi, India, April 2015
Like many other parts of India, Nizamuddin is a mix of class, religion and archaeological heritage. The older Western section is poorer and predominantly Muslim, and home to medieval religious heritage. The Eastern section, a post partition residential colony, is more middleclass Hindu, and is centred around the twin foci of monuments and the railway station, a gateway to Delhi for trains from the south.

The local exhibition at the Neighbourhood Museum included evening cultural performances and public discussions by residents as part of the temporary exhibitions on memories and history of the neighbourhood. Made by a mix of local residents, local civic associations and institutions working in the locality, the temporary neighbourhood museum became a platform to describe the converging diversity and share the unique individual memories of physical space, monument and everyday life.

A young tourist guide living in the neighbourhood and working at the monuments of medieval Nizamuddin, could not stop commenting at the gathering of local residents: "I wish the two Nizamuddins could meet more often like this". It was a feeling shared by many at the cultural evening organised by the *Hum Sab Nizamuddin* (We are Nizamuddin) Neighbourhood Museum group.

Scene 2

Workshop on local heritage, Ambedkar University Delhi, Kashmere Gate, Delhi, April 2014
Finding a free moment at the workshop, Sarla, a boatman's wife from the adjoining Yamuna riverfront said with a smile on her face, "The guards at the university gate did not want to let me come in, so I showed them your invitation. We are neighbours after all, aren't we?"

This rhetorical question invoked a notion of shared ownership of the riverbank and the adjoining section of the old city of Delhi, harking back to a time in living memory when residents of the old city used the riverbank around the clock, from religion and ritual, to riverine trade, seasonal flood plain farming, or simply for relaxation, health or for drinking water.

Reconnecting the tangible and intangible in the urban landscape, aligning the different ways of seeing the structures of everyday life that connect city and river, allows us to identify Delhi's transforming imagination of the river. Since the mid-twentieth century in Delhi, this has moved from active use by humans and animals alike, to one of apathy, and then as real estate.

Today as commodity aesthetics change the riverfront from a neglected 'non-place' – riverbed flood plain to a high value riverside destination for private and public corporations – it imagines a value by excluding the 'non-consuming people' from the river. While at one level the contestations can be seen as 'enclosure of the commons' or 'accumulation by dispossession', the eco-cultural landscapes of the river remember the periodic floods that overwhelm the riverbanks. Nature's way of reiterating ecological limits, emphasising that the floodplain of the Yamuna continues to be a place that defies commodification.[6]

Scene 3

**Neighbourhood Museum Exhibition at the Studio Safdar Theatre, Shadi-Khampur, New Delhi, March 2013**
Having moved into the neighbourhood and set up a theatre studio a year ago, the group wanted to establish a connection to the locality despite being a recent arrival. For three months, the studio space was transformed into a neighbourhood museum, with images, artefacts, printed panels and audiovisuals, highlighting and sharing memories from this mostly overlooked and lesser known part of the city.

A team member and local resident pointed out that the exhibition showed how "Common people have a history worth recording, worth telling, worth documenting, worth showcasing, and everybody who comes in here feels that. Some people just come in for that one photograph of their house, but those who read the panels are impressed by how many different aspects, how many different levels, how many different layers we have gone into. When locals visit, putting the social diversity of the neighbourhood in the same room forces them to engage with it. The engagement began unexpectedly, as life stories tell of a known and shared history of urban development, but the voice was of a neighbour otherwise unremarkable and invisible because of their low caste and social status" *(Sudhanva Deshpande, Theatre Director and Co-Curator).*

Bollywood dreams: far beyond Indian shores

Even as Bollywood – the oft-repeated but trivialized moniker for the Hindi film industry based out of the megapolis, Mumbai – increasingly emerges as the site for social and political research given its massive following in the subcontinent, various pockets of cultural influence are being identified, distinguished and subjected to academic investigation.

Roshni Sengupta
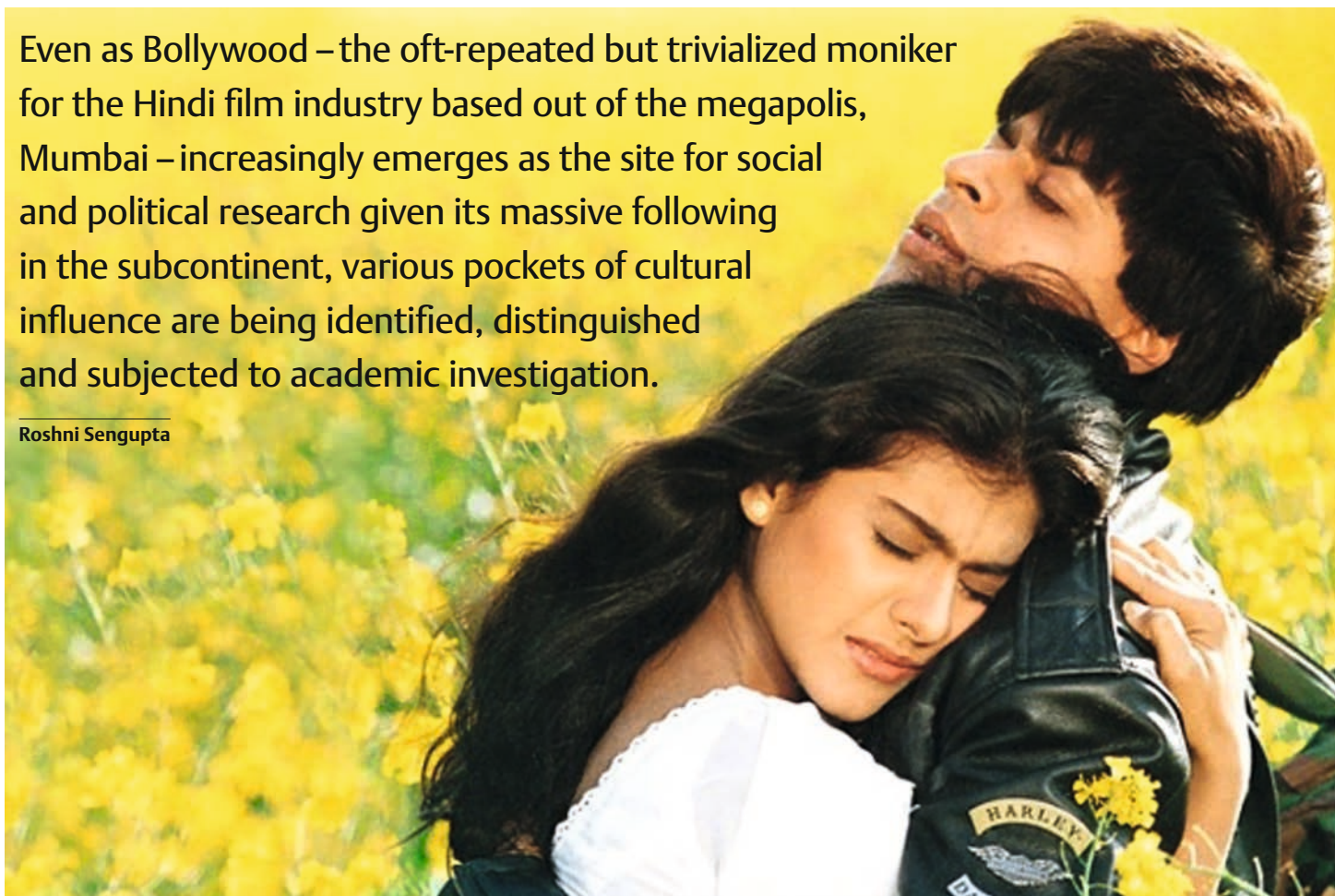
THAT THESE POCKETS EXIST outside the primary periphery of cultural influence makes the extent of the outreach fascinating indeed. For instance, the estimate of 50,000 viewers of Bollywood films in Austria and Switzerland is quite impressive if you consider that the group is local, and non-diasporic.[1] Further, the Korea India Film Association – boasting 14,000 members and counting – and the sporadic but important Bollywood-crazed individuals from countries as diverse as Germany, Finland and Japan are curious illustrations of an emerging pattern of the globalization of Bollywood.

The rapid movement of cultural flows across the world in an age of growing multi- and transcultural ideologies, and the advent and consolidation of a largely inter-connected and magnified media industry, appear to have been the harbingers of a perhaps unexpected cultural revolution through the visual idioms and motifs of the popular Hindi film. Through international film festivals, film tours and international premiers, co-productions, global film-based channels or even multiplexes, the enhancement in the scope and reach of Bollywood cinema has occurred with tremendous rapidity in the past two decades. It's not, therefore, uncommon for a non-diasporic legion of German fans to welcome Shah Rukh Khan in Berlin, or Sufi worshippers in Nigeria to sing praises to Allah by adapting some famous Hindi film qawwalis.[2]

With the burgeoning Indian market attracting investors and world leaders alike, the blooming Bollywood story does not seem to be misplaced. What elicits specific interest, however, for scholarly investigation at least, remains the cultural ramifications of this visual expansion. Given the great pull of the overseas market, a completely new genre has emerged on the Bollywood landscape: NRI[3] films or cinema that is tailor-made for Western audiences, as well as the growing Indian/ South Asian diaspora worldwide – cinema that specializes in peddling traditional Indian values to the West and eliciting nostalgia among the diasporic communities. Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayege (Dir: Yash Chopra) started it all in 1995. With an overtly melodramatic storyline set in the United Kingdom, parts of Europe and Punjab in India, the tale of young romance between a spoilt, rich NRI boy played by Shahrukh Khan and a reticent British Punjabi girl, the film set the ball rolling for successors like Dil Toh Pagal Hai (1997, Dir: Yash Chopra), Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam (1999, Dir: Sanjay Leela Bhansali), Kal Ho Na Ho (2003, Dir: Karan Johar), among several others, promising rich dividends for Bollywood film producers and a ready stream of nostalgic visual material for the South Asian diaspora. Subsequently, visual extravaganzas like Don (2006, Dir: Farhan Akhtar) sought to bridge the gap between Western film genres and Bollywood by employing the expertise of technicians from Hollywood, resulting in the films garnering massive response among Western viewers. Somewhere between the revenue-happy movie mandarins of Mumbai and the nostalgic diasporas in the Western world, popular Hindi cinema started carving out a niche among young Western audiences providing Bollywood with an hitherto unforeseen visibility and legitimacy.

Transcultural audiences

Moving away from the West, the mainstreaming of Hindi-language cinema from India in diasporic bases such as South Africa fuels the assumption that the phenomenon of a globalizing Bollywood is indeed a reality.[4] The impact of Hindi films on 'crossover audiences' not only in the United Kingdom, United States, Canada, Australia and European nations with sizeable ethnic Indian/South Asian populations, but also in Africa and the Caribbean, further strengthens the argument in favour of a rapidly expanding visual and cultural language, which is being consumed with immense interest. Brian Larkin[5] and Sudha Rajagopalan[6] have written about the adoption of Indian (read: Hindi) film styles in Nigerian Hausa 'video films', the developing taste for Hindi-language cinema in post-Stalinist Soviet Russia, and the ever larger fandom for Bollywood cinema in Japan.

As a vehicle of transcultural movement, the Indian culture industry of which popular Hindi film remains the centrifuge, has succeeded in combining extensions and/or marginal reflections of this central element such as theatre, fashion, and media at large to create an assemblage that has relegated textual meanings and viewing pleasures to the background, while foregrounding forms of production and consumption derived from Bollywood visual matrices. These forms have been transfused into local cultures and histories to generate a new, hybridized cultural landscape. The corporatized Hindi film industry based in Mumbai has over time constructed a global cultural regime that brings these financial and cultural flows together, thereby positing the visual text as a by-product of a fusion of cultures – Indian and foreign. Raj Kapoor's fan following in Russia, therefore, is the stuff of legend, while Amitabh Bachchan and (surprisingly) Akshay Kumar remain top draws among Afghans, in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

Indonesia – a country with a meagre diasporic population of 120,000 ethnic South Asians – reports a steady increase in video rental parlours dishing out the latest Hindi films for a fawning audience. A video of a Jakarta traffic policeman dancing to the tune of Chhaiyya Chhaiyya went viral on the Internet making media pundits sit up and take notice of this new wave of interest in Bollywood cinema in South East Asia.

The deep inroads that popular Hindi cinema has made outside Indian shores became evident during a recent discussion with exchange students and young scholars from China, Indonesia, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. As the Chinese student expressed his ignorance of Indian screen idols like Amitabh Bachchan, the Indonesian student remarked, "It's rather strange that you do not know Amitabh Bachchan", and saying this she ticked off titles of Bachchan films she had watched. In another chat with a group from Gambia and Somalia, I was pleasantly surprised at the comparatively extensive knowledge they had of Bollywood films, and at their recall of names like Rajesh Khanna and Hema Malini.

These exchanges might not be conclusive but they certainly illustrate the spread of the Bollywood universe, and the roots of any further and comprehensive scholarship on the global outreach of popular Hindi cinema as a cultural product lie in these pools of interest that the visual material has been generating, especially since 1995. The liberalization regime of the early 1990s impacted functional and financial systems in the film industry, opening up more lucrative vistas for the dream merchants of Mumbai. Production houses like Yash Raj Films and Dharma Productions – currently two of the biggest enterprises in Bollywood – owe their initial success to the designer romance-NRI films they produced in the mid-to-late 1990s, which took the Indian diaspora, steeped in nostalgia for the homeland, by storm; not only establishing a sub-genre of films that catered specifically to Indians/South Asians living on faraway shores, but also exposing Indian idioms, tropes and motifs to the mainstream audience.

A song and dance

The Hindi film song could be considered as a cultural vehicle that has played a prominent role in this ongoing process of globalization of the Indian culture industry. When Ghar aaja pardesi tera des bulaye re [Come home O foreigner, your country calls you] played as the background score of Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge, there was barely a dry eye. Or when ghazal maestro Pankaj Udhas sang Chitthi ayi hai watan se chitti ayi hai [A letter has come from your homeland, a letter has come] in Naam (1985, Dir: Mahesh Bhatt), the impact was momentous. The enormous reach of the Hindi film song is inseparably linked to the global appeal of Bollywood films.

Nowhere is the impact of the Hindi film song more visible than in the emergence of dangdut music in Indonesia.[7] The dangdut is a form of hybrid pop music popular with the working class and youth, which incorporates elements of Western pop, Indian film song and indigenous Malay tunes. In the Indonesian mediascape, therefore, Hindi film tunes perform a major cultural function, even shaping the birth of a local popular music genre. Subsequent to the airing of the Indian mythological serials like Ramayana and Mahabharata on Indonesian television and the 'Kuch Kuch Hota Hai Fever' that gripped the country in 2001, the meteoric popularity of dangdut music elucidates the depth of the cultural mainstreaming of Bollywood in Indonesia. In 1996, Israel's national television network aired a couple of commercials in which characters were dancing to the tune of the old Hindi hit song Mera Naam Chin Chin Chun [My name is Chin Chin Chun], which apart from the fact that it exemplified the Israeli state's decision to eschew its own symbols in favour of appropriating the cultural motifs of the 'other', also solidified the wider acceptance of the popular Hindi film genre.

Aided by the song (and dance), Bollywood cinema has made its presence felt on the global platform, evolving as an alternative visual culture and at the same time assimilating itself in the local folk genres, thereby attaining legitimacy and acceptance. The hybridization of cultures remains one of the most significant contributions of popular Hindi films to global cultures. While it still could be described as fledgling, when compared to the reach and influence of Hollywood, celluloid dreams from Mumbai are sure to catch up soon.

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Above: A still from the film Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge, starring Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol.

Below; A Bollywood dance performance in Bristol, UK.

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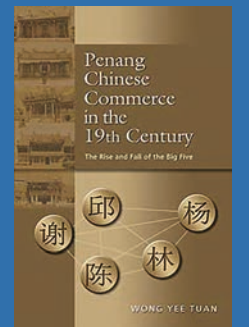
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Five facts about the ASEAN Economic Community

Sanchita Basu Das

EVEN WITH THE ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) now formally in place, there is still a lively debate over whether ASEAN is really an economic community or if the AEC should be seen as a work in progress. The majority belongs to the former group and feel that the AEC's deliverables, namely an integrated production space with free movement of goods, services, and skilled labour have not yet been achieved. These broad statements have some merit. But we must also ask what ASEAN wants in terms of economic community. Even if ASEAN cannot deliver on the AEC, who is accountable for that? To answer these and more, I will attempt to explain five crucial facts about ASEAN economic cooperation.

FACT ONE, the AEC was not developed to accord with the European Union (EU) model, though there are some learning experiences to be gleaned from this process. Since the early days of ASEAN, the sovereignty of nation states and non-interference in domestic matters were its key principles. Economic cooperation was sought in areas where it was felt to be necessary, such as to provide economies of scale to multinationals doing business in Southeast Asia or to anchor the production networks (i.e., a single good is not produced in one but across multiple countries) that were already developing in the broader Asian region. ASEAN economic cooperation is envisioned as a gradual process with long term aspirations, rather than as a mechanism with strict rules that apply irrespective of the economic nature of member economies and changing global conditions.

FACT TWO, although AEC is a regional initiative, its implementation is carried out by the national economies. Initiatives like tariff cutting, removal of non-tariff barriers, services sector liberalisation, national treatment of foreign investors, customs modernisation, and many others have to be adopted in domestic law and policy decisions. At the national level, implementation faces institutional difficulties as each initiative is not the sole preserve of any one ministry, but rather multiple government ministries and other agencies. The AEC also generates proponents and opponents of integration at the domestic economy level, slowing down the pace of implementation further.

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Thailand

Brunei Darussalam

Philippines

ASEAN Member Countries

Laos

Singapore

Malaysia

Vietnam

Cambodia

Indonesia

FACT THREE, AEC is not the sole cause of increasing competition. It is important to note that the vision for the AEC was developed with an awareness of current global economic trends, such as production fragmentation, China's accession to WTO, developments of the EU and the NAFTA and the 1997-98 financial crisis. The ten countries of ASEAN realised that WTO membership by itself was not helpful as there are 150 countries at different levels of economic development involved; and the concerns and objections of small economies like the ones in Southeast Asia are not likely to get heard. ASEAN is a small grouping where the member economies will consider the interests of all and may also accord flexibility for a short period. Of course, this is likely to slow down the process for the establishment of the AEC, but advanced member countries (like Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand) are not restricted to this framework only. They have pursued bilateral Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with their own key trading partners. Thus, for any single country, heightened competition is a part of the globalisation process and there are other trade frameworks – bilateral, regional and multilateral – that further economic liberalisation.

FACT FOUR, ASEAN economic cooperation is a top-down initiative and hence awareness among stakeholders is low and uneven. ASEAN was instituted in 1967 to promote peace and stability and economic cooperation came much later – in 1976 in fact – onto the agenda. Slowly, by the 1990s, economic cooperation had become a form of diplomacy and most often was carried out in foreign ministries in consultation with the commerce or trade ministries. This led observers of trade agreements to say that economic regionalism in Southeast Asia is a subject for political elites, with almost no involvement from other stakeholders. This has been accompanied by a generalized low level of awareness of relevant economic cooperation measures, particularly among the end-users. The advocacy for trade initiatives is not unanimous in nature and is often driven by the relative strength of particular firms that bring in foreign direct investment to the country.

FACT FIVE, AEC should be seen in conjunction with the ASEAN Political-Security Community and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community. An economic community in ASEAN entails increased economic cooperation, delivering on free flow of goods, services and investments, equitable economic development and reduced poverty. The political security community works towards regional peace and stability and the socio-cultural community encompasses regional cooperation in areas like protection of the regional environment, limiting the spread of contagious diseases, combating transnational crime, and cooperation in responding to natural disasters. It is hoped that all this put together will eventually cultivate a sense of regional identity. Hence, AEC should not be seen in isolation when judging whether ASEAN can deliver on its community-building commitments.

In summary, the AEC should be seen as a work in progress. It is an immense task that started only in 2003. It is trying to bring together ten diverse economies, who are not only facing constant global challenges but also domestic resistance and antagonism from protectionist groups. These are bound to slow the progress and hamper the goal of a 'single market and production base'.

Nevertheless, now, more than ever, is the time when the ten countries can come together to strengthen the economic community. The global economy has been in a constant state of flux since the 2008 crisis, and the exponential growth of the social media has meant that every event is instantly transmitted and discussed all over the world. In such an environment, any form of cooperation among the ten small countries is warmly welcomed.

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News from Southeast Asia *continued*

The ASEAN chairmanship: duties, obligations and challenges

Tang Siew Mun

THE ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING (AMM), the organisation's workhorse, met for the 48th time on 4 August 2015. The leaders discussed and reviewed ASEAN's many activities and initiatives, including updates on the three pillars of community-building and relations with external parties, but it was the South China Sea (SCS) disputes that hogged the limelight. Its lengthy 28-page joint communiqué bears testament to the AMM's comprehensive mandate and responsibilities.

Malaysia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs missed the deadline in releasing the communiqué, which led to much media frenzy and speculation about the reasons for the delay. In the end, however, the ignominy of the Phnom Penh debacle, where ASEAN failed to agree on a joint communiqué for the first time in its history, was averted. This episode was nevertheless instructive in two aspects. In the first instance, it reaffirms ASEAN's spirit of compromise, collegiality and consensus, which has been its hallmark since its formation in 1967. It is no secret that some member states would prefer to dilute or dispense altogether with any mention of the South China Sea, but acceded to the larger interest of the group and respected the positions of the ASEAN claimant states. Secondly, it underlines again the critical role played by the ASEAN Chair. Malaysia's statesmanship shone most brightly in building the consensus document under extra-ordinary circumstances.

Malaysia's objective dispensation of its chairing duties was all the more commendable considering that it faces certain Chinese displeasure and rebuke. This is no small feat as China is Malaysia's largest trade partner. According to Malaysia's Department of Statistics, in 2014 China accounted for 12% and 16.9% of Malaysia's exports and imports respectively. The two-way trade has exceeded the US$100 billion mark. China may have understandably felt a tinge of disappointment with Malaysia, which it considers a close friend, for not having considered Beijing's interest when crafting the communiqué. Only last year, Prime Minister Najib Razak had retraced the footsteps of his father, who as prime minister in 1974 visited China and paved the way for the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Based on these solid economic and political foundations, China would have expected to find a sympathetic friend in Malaysia as the ASEAN Chair.

If the Chairman's Statement of the 26th ASEAN Summit and the Joint Communiqué of the 48th AMM are any indication, Malaysia successfully insulated its chairing responsibilities from its national positions and kept external influences at bay. Whenever an ASEAN state assumes the chairmanship, it has to balance its national interest with that of the regional association's. It wears both a national hat and regional hat. The chair has to be mindful that the bigger ASEAN hat comes with the trust of member states and the obligation to put the common regional good at parity with that of its national interest.

Subduing one's national interest in favour of regional concerns flies in the face of conventional wisdom. Holding true to this unconventional precept, however, is key to ASEAN's centrality. ASEAN would risk irrelevance if the chairmanship is used by the holder to pursue its national interest or to allow itself to be influenced by outside parties.

The Chair performs three duties: (a) being spokesperson for the ten member regional organisation, (b) being 'chief executive' in chairing and facilitating official meetings and task forces, (c) tabling new initiatives and programmes to advance regional cooperation. However, it is the Chair's informal role as a consensus builder that is its most important (and often overlooked) tasking. ASEAN's high threshold of unanimity requires all round agreement and requires the Chair to exhibit leadership and diplomatic acumen to find common ground among diverging views.

Malaysia's dispensation of its duties as ASEAN Chair is a case study for future Chairs that share the strategic predicament of having a relatively high degree of economic dependency on external parties. Malaysia was able to perform the role of consensus builder by exercising the principles of neutrality and independence, which provide the Chair with the diplomatic cover to minimize blowback from external parties. It is vital for the Chair to recognize that its actions represent ASEAN's collective will and interest, and not its own.

It is also important for external parties to understand and respect the role of the Chair as a facilitator and consensus builder. ASEAN's credibility will be put into question if the Chair is seen to privilege one party over another or bows to external demands. An impartial Chair enhances ASEAN credibility by facilitating intra-ASEAN consensus building and serving as an effective interlocutor with external parties.

As ASEAN inches closer towards pronouncing a community, which will draw heightened interest from the major powers, it is in its best interest to reaffirm and strengthen the impartiality and independence of the Chair to avoid being pulled in different directions by external parties. ASEAN centrality is predicated on it being relevant to itself and to external stakeholders. Malaysia has led by example in taking a principled stand that may be painful in the near term, but it held its head high and refused to let ASEAN down. The bar has been set for Laos who will chair ASEAN in 2016.

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SIGNING CEREMONY
ASEAN COMMUNITY
KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA | 22 NOVEMBER 2015

ASEAN's transboundary issues:
a hazy lining to regional solutions?

Moe Thuzar

ASEAN HAS A LONG LIST of responses to transboundary issues in the region, including haze, pandemics and natural disasters. ASEAN has learned from these crises by putting into place workable regional mechanisms to coordinate responses across borders and departmental jurisdictions. Still, there are gaps and challenges, requiring ever flexible adaptation to new or emerging realities.

Serious episodes of smoke haze from peatland forest fires affected countries in maritime Southeast Asia throughout the late-1980s and 1990s, worsening to a then-unprecedented level in 1997-1998. Recurring regularly since then, 2015 is seeing the worst spreading of haze from Indonesia's Sumatra and Kalimantan provinces to major cities in Malaysia and Singapore and other ASEAN shores including Thailand, the Philippines, and Vietnam.

The outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003 followed by the H1N1 Avian Flu spread rapidly across the borders of several ASEAN countries, requiring flexible arrangements to sovereignty in tracking and containing the spread of the virus across borders. The social and economic costs of SARS induced the ASEAN Health Ministers to convene special meetings with their counterpart from China (the country of origin) to receive full information and updates on the SARS situation there.

The devastating impact of the Indian Ocean tsunami on coastal cities in Indonesia and Thailand in 2004, the 2008 Cyclone Nargis humanitarian crisis in Myanmar, and Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2013, have shown that regional collaboration can catalyse or facilitate better responses.

This is nowhere more evident than in the spate of haze that has periodically occasioned bilateral tensions between Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia. From July to October 1997, ASEAN countries including Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore were badly affected by the smoke haze from fires in Sumatra and Kalimantan. When the ASEAN environment ministers convened their regular meeting in Indonesia in September 1997, President Suharto, who gave the opening speech for that meeting, apologised for the haze but blamed natural causes rather than deliberate land-clearing for commercial purposes by slash and burn efforts. ASEAN environment ministers again met in Brunei Darussalam in April 1998 and spoke candidly (but not publicly) on the need to punish the irresponsible plantation companies involved in igniting the forest fires and causing the haze.

The haze crisis in 1997 affected millions of people and caused losses in the transport, tourism, construction, forestry and agriculture sectors.[1] This compelled the ASEAN environment ministers to set up a special ministerial meeting, re-activate a moribund regional haze action plan, and seek external assistance in tackling the issue on the ground.

The ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Haze (supported by a Haze Technical Task Force) adopted a Regional Haze Action Plan at its first meeting in Singapore in December 1997. This action plan was unique among ASEAN mechanisms at the time, as it had an operational focus that required monitoring by the ASEAN Specialised Meteorological Centre based in Singapore. ASEAN members were also required to develop national plans to prevent and mitigate land and forest fires. Sub-regional fire-fighting arrangements were institutionalised to ensure coordination among national fire-fighting responses to the haze. Following the adoption of the Regional Haze Action Plan, the Asian Development Bank approached ASEAN with an offer of technical assistance to strengthen ASEAN's haze monitoring and response efforts, to which the governments of Australia and United States contributed. Canada assisted with the Southeast Asia Fire Danger Rating System (handed over to the Malaysian Meteorological Service in 2003). These efforts set in motion the move for developing a region-wide agreement on transboundary haze pollution, which was adopted in 2002. The agreement entered into force in November 2003, after six ratifications.[2] Indonesia was the last country to ratify the agreement in September 2014, after haze levels spiked again in 2013. Until September 2014, Indonesia was the single remaining ASEAN country that had not ratified the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution. But even after the Indonesian ratification, and despite the commitment of President Joko Widodo and some members of his administration, Indonesia's decentralised government structure has shown weak enforcement of the agreement's provisions.

The haze crisis in 2015 shows unprecedented levels of air pollution that continue to hover between the unhealthy to hazardous range. But no special meetings of the ministers on haze have been convened, although bilateral meetings have taken place among ministers of Indonesia and Malaysia, and Indonesia and Singapore. The haze has also affected President Joko Widodo's attempt to be more hands-on in tackling this issue; his planned visit (in September) to the 'ground zero' areas in Sumatra and Kalimantan had to be cancelled due to the haze causing poor visibility below the legal minimum. Yet, local authorities have been reluctant to declare states of emergency in the affected areas, and seem more concerned with 'looking good' in the upcoming regional elections.

This highlights the political nature of regional responses and the reality that ASEAN countries will be more responsive to their domestic priorities over collective regional interests. ASEAN-wide initiatives have thus had limited success in managing the problem. Consequently, Singapore took the unilateral action in 2014 to enact the Transboundary Haze Pollution bill as an alternative solution. But ASEAN countries, most notably Singapore and Malaysia, have also bolstered their participation in regional initiatives by offering bilateral assistance to Indonesia to support

responses in the affected provinces. Regionally, all ASEAN members are involved in peatland management strategies under the environmental cooperation framework.[3]

At the time of writing, Indonesia has accepted the offer of help from Singapore (among other countries offering assistance) after earlier refusing overtures from these countries when the haze started spreading westward. It seems that bilateral or sub-regional negotiations between the affected parties may be the way to go. A hitherto unexplored area is to engage civil society organisations (CSOs) more in public awareness and support initiatives. A Singaporean CSO recently travelled to Kalimantan, to offer respiratory masks to the local populace who were suffering the brunt of the haze pollution.[4] The humanitarian aspect of the haze situation and its nexus with natural disasters is also worth examining, as ASEAN members can consider formally engaging the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) as a platform to assist the communities in need. To this end, more flexible application of ASEAN's non-interference policy may be necessary, as all offers of assistance are still subject to domestic acceptance on the recipient side.

A significant difference between the haze situations of 1997 and 2015 is the immediacy of information and analysis shared via social media platforms and networks. This, if anything, has the power of nudging policymakers, private enterprises, and people towards practical responses.

What are the key takeaways from this recent haze saga?
• Bilateral and sub-regional responses among the countries most affected/concerned seem to have replaced the convening of special ASEAN ministerial meetings of the past.
• Even as responsibility lies at the national level, the political factor plays an important part in each national government's responsibility to meet its regional commitments, or lack thereof.
• The role of the mass media, especially social media, has become evident in 2015, in providing information and context to the issue.
• Non-governmental organisations may have an important role in monitoring and reporting activities related to environmental degradation; they can also work with local communities to assist these communities cope with the situation.
• The humanitarian assistance role of ASEAN to assist communities at the source of the haze pollution has not yet come into play.

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References
1 Estimates calculated some years later placed the total loss at about US$9 billion.
2 The ratification process for the regional haze agreement followed that of the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty of 1995, which required 7 ratifications to enter into force. The motivation for a faster timeline for the haze agreement to enter into force was due to concerns by the environment ministers that implementation of the agreement would be delayed if it required all ASEAN members to ratify it.
3 The ASEAN Peatland Forests Project funded by the Global Environment Facility (2009-2014), and the EU-funded project on Sustainable Management of Peatland Forests in Southeast Asia.
4 At 'ground zero' in Kalimantan, the air pollution level was ten times more than what Singapore or Malaysia experienced on the Pollution Standard Index.

Visiting Fellowship in Buddhist Studies

Visiting Fellowship at the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre of ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore

THE NALANDA-SRIWIJAYA CENTRE (NSC) of ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute (ISEAS) in Singapore pursues research on historical interactions among Asian societies and civilizations prior to the 17th century. NSC is now accepting applications for Visiting Fellowship positions from scholars at all ranks who wish to undertake research and writing under the following themes:
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The Visiting Fellowship will be for one year, with a possibility of extension. Post-doctoral applicants are also welcome but should have graduated with a PhD no longer than three years prior to their successful appointment at NSC. Commencement date will be from June 2016.

Responsibilities
Successful applicants are expected to complete a paper on the proposed topic (to be published in a peer-reviewed journal), organise or contribute to a workshop, and give a public seminar hosted by ISEAS. They are also expected to contribute to the intellectual environment of NSC and assist in developing NSC's publications series where possible.

Fellowship benefits
Successful applicants will receive a monthly (all-inclusive) stipend that is commensurate with his/her rank and experience. A round-trip economy airfare between the home country of the researcher and Singapore will also be provided (applicable to non-Singaporeans only).

Application
Applicants should include with their application a cover letter, a full CV, two reference letters, and a research proposal of not more than five pages (double spaced). The proposal should discuss the topic to be examined, plans for any fieldwork, project time frame, and envisaged output. The preferred period for the fellowship should also be indicated.

The deadline for applications is 31 March 2016
Applications should be sent to the following address:

ATTN: Buddhist Studies, Post-Doctorial/Visiting Fellowship Application
Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre,
ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute,
30 Heng Mui Keng Terrace,
Singapore 119614

Only short-listed candidates will be notified.

Enquiries
Please contact Mr Ang Swee Loh, Deputy Head of Administration (sweeloh@iseas.edu.sg)
Tel: (65) 67 78 09 55

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Dharavi, Mumbai: a special slum?

Dharavi, a slum area in Mumbai started as a fishermen's settlement at the then outskirts of Bombay (now Mumbai) and expanded gradually, especially as a tannery and leather processing centre of the city. Now it is said to count 800,000 inhabitants, or perhaps even a million, and has become encircled by the expanding metropolis. It is the biggest slum in the city and perhaps the largest in India and even in Asia. Moreover, Dharavi has been discovered, so to say, as a vote-bank, as a location of novels, as a tourist destination, as a crime-site with Bollywood *mafiosi* skilfully jumping from one rooftop to the other, till the ill-famous Slumdog Millionaire movie, and as a planned massive redevelopment project. It has been given a cult status, and paraphrasing the proud former Latin-like device of Bombay's coat of arms "Urbs Prima in Indis", Dharavi could be endowed with the words "Slum Primus in Indis". Doubtful and even treacherous, however, are these words, as the slum forms primarily the largest concentration of poverty, lack of basic human rights, a symbol of negligence and a failing state, and inequality (to say the least) in Mumbai, India, Asia … After all, three hundred thousand inhabitants live, for better or for worse, on one square km of Dharavi!

Hans Schenk
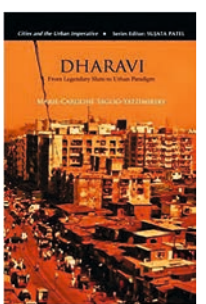
Reviewed publication:
Saglio-Yatzimirsky, M.C. 2013.
Dharavi from Mega-Slum to Urban Paradigm,
New Delhi/Abingdon: Routledge,
ISBN: 9780415812528

Dharavi's leather workers

Several socio-scientific studies on Dharavi have been written as well, most of these since the turn of the century and by researchers from all over the world. The book of the French anthropologist Marie-Caroline Saglio-Yatzimirsky forms to some extent a good example of this scholarly attention. Her book gives a detailed account of many aspects of life in Dharavi and of the changes that have taken place in the slum. Her study, however, actually reads like two books telescoped into one another: the core of the imaginary first one is largely a monograph on the workers and their dependants in the leather industry in Dharavi, based on ample fieldwork in the 1990s, well before the slum attracted most domestic and foreign scientists. It has been translated and updated from her French publication in 2002 (Parts II and III, following a broad introduction in Part I). The second imaginary book is concentrated around an analysis of dramatic changes that took place with regard to the slum during the 1990s and the 2000s (roughly Part IV). In the first study the living and working conditions of the several communities of workers and their families in the leather industry, their mutual relations, migration histories, their ways and degrees of integration in new urban setting, etc., are described and analysed in much detail. The leather workers are mainly sub-groups of untouchables (Dalits, Harijans) in (or rather outside of) the Indian caste system, who migrated from a variety of regions (Tamil Nadu in S.India, nearby Maharashtra, Bihar in the North of the country) to Mumbai, and hence Saglio-Yatzimirsky has given a welcome brief introductory exposé of the caste system and the place of untouchables in Indian society in her comprehensive first part of the book. Similarly, her overview of the usage and the meanings of the often misleading, but so convenient, term 'slum' and its local Indian equivalents is useful.

The mentioned 'construction' of two telescoped books also matters because the focus on Dharavi's population and its workers (Parts II and III) is almost completely restricted to its leather workers, while in Part IV the focus is almost completely on external pressures on the whole of the population of the slum. The leather workers are, as the author states: "the best example to gain an understanding of the interconnections between Dharavi's migrants, residents and workers and the rest of Mumbai" (p.25). This is understandable, but they constitute only a quarter of Dharavi's population. A bit more information

on other categories of the population, in terms of work, caste, region of origin, relations, etc., would have yielded a more balanced picture of the heterogeneous and complex society of Dharavi. Nevertheless, this well-written monograph on the leather workers in Dharavi forms interesting reading, and results in a lively portrait of their communities. Unfortunately, the author is rather vague in the account of her database, apart from an impressive pile of written sources. She writes about participatory observation, surveys and interviews in general words only (pp.22-23), but whom did she observe, survey and interview and what did she discuss and ask?

Redeveloping Dharavi?

Part IV is different. It covers in a thrilling account the interferences from a variety of outside actors with the slums of Mumbai in general and with Dharavi in particular, and has a much broader coverage than the leatherworkers in the earlier parts. Apart from some earlier slum clearance attempts, Mumbai's slums were successfully discovered as vote-banks since the 1990s. The Hindu-nationalist and populist Shiv Sena party won elections in the 1990s with the promise to build decent houses for slum dwellers. A 'Slum Rehabilitation Scheme' included a public-private partnership: private investors were invited to build market-oriented apartments in parts of Dharavi in exchange for the construction in situ of small high-rise apartments to be given free of charge to those slum dwellers who owned a house/hut. Those who could not prove to have lived there before a dividing cut-off date and tenants, i.e. most dwellers, were supposed to depart to the urban fringes. However, the scheme faded away before noticeable implementation: just 100 inhabitants of Dharavi were finally covered by it. This failing scheme was followed by a more grandiose 'Dharavi Redevelopment Project' (DRP) along similar lines of public-private partnership in the 2000s, and introduced with more top-down vigour, since Dharavi was gradually located in the centre of expanding Mumbai and very close to a new central business district in the making. Hence, the value of Dharavi land rose rapidly and (foreign) investors were expected to come and turn the city into a 'world class metropolis' "like Shanghai" (p.298). It was estimated that about one third of Dharavi's population would be rehoused in situ and free of cost.

The schemes caused much opposition among the Dharavites and NGO's working on housing, etc., in Mumbai, notably on the planned exclusion of a majority of the inhabitants while those included also protested against the planned forced separation between working and living spaces: their shops and workshops next to huts and houses were not foreseen in the world-class apartment towers! The world economic crisis of the late 2000s, the swelling protests, and (perhaps) the worldwide media, students, social scientists and town planners' coverage brought

the plans to the doldrums.[1] Under these conditions a new plan was developed that took the demands of the inhabitants of Dharavi into account. A pro-poor, bottom-up and to be implemented incrementally plan, according to Saglio-Yatzimirsky, and an example of "new forms of 'right to the city' demands" (p.326). Her book ends with this euphoria that is also expressed in the sub-title: "From Mega-Slum to Urban Paradigm".

This account of Dharavi comes to an end in about 2012, but events do not stop. The redevelopment of Dharavi is back in motion. In the Spring of 2015 a revised and 'final' DRP was published. In January 2016 private developers were formally invited to submit a bid for sector-wise redevelopment. Eligible inhabitants will each get 25 square metres in high rise buildings, while developers may place 40,000 apartments for sale on the market. Now, as the die is cast, it has yet to be seen whether the neo-liberal hunger for profitable urban land and up-market apartments will now defeat the combined resistance of a huge local society helped by NGO's, planners and scholars. Yet, the point remains that the inhabitants of Dharavi (and for that matter of all slums) deserve better living conditions than the state has (and should have) provided for them in the course of decades. It was half a century ago that the Bombay administration observed that "Private enterprise moved by profit motive is seen to restrict itself mostly to housing of higher income groups leaving the ones that need it most."[2] This lesson should not be forgotten when assessing the latest attempts to redevelop Dharavi.

Marie-Caroline Saglio-Yatzimirsky deserves praise for bringing in detail, the social, economic and political dimensions of the attempts to redevelop Dharavi to the fore. Her book matters also for planners, professionals and especially inhabitants of many more slums, in Mumbai and elsewhere.

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References
1   Quite a few MA and MSc students from all over the world did their fieldwork in Dharavi. A large scale involvement was from the Development Planning Unit, London, involving over 80 students and many staff, in writing about and re-designing parts of Dharavi for their Masters' degrees, in collaboration with concerned community organisations and some of the most influential NGO's of the city. See: Boano, C., Hunter, W. & C. Newton. 2013. *Contested Urbanism in Dharavi*, University College London.
2   Municipal Corporation of Greater Bombay. 1964. *Report on the Development Plan for Greater Bombay 1964*, Government Central Press, p.85.

How popular culture defines identity

Indonesia is often referred to as one of the countries in which social and visual media and their users play a key role in the formation of society and politics. But these media have also been influential in how Indonesian people, especially the young and urban based, see their own cultural identity.

Patrick Vanden Berghe

Take 1: Spring, 2008

Looking for some last-minute presents for those at home, I ran into a long queue at the movie theatre in one of the many shopping malls in Jakarta. My friends tell me that I should have made up my mind earlier about visiting the mall because then we would have had time to watch the absolute film hit of the year. They are talking about *Ayat-ayat cinta* (Verses of love), a romantic religious drama based on the bestselling novel with the same title by Indonesian author Habiburrahman El Shirazy. The movie turned out to be an instant success. Later I learn that it will be the best selling Indonesian movie ever until the release of *'Laskar Pelangi' (Rainbow warriors)* in 2009.

The movie owed its popularity to its fulfilment of a long-standing desire among the young Muslim Indonesians, to define a position between the militant Islamists and the over-zealous, pious and submissive Muslims. *Ayat-ayat cinta* features some male and female youngsters with a moral conscience and industriousness, who feel at ease with both their religious background and a Western way of life, full of modern equipment. The people that flocked to *Ayat-ayat cinta* are those that have been waiting for a long time to see their own aspirations of being young, pious, hip and materialistic mirrored in a feel-good movie. These people that don the veil while gazing at expensive clothes and bags in shopping malls, where western music alternates with the regular calls to prayer, are the main focus of Ariel Heryanto's *'Identity and pleasure'*. In this book he looks into the role of media and screen culture (film, digital appliances ...) in the life of young, urban-based Indonesians living in the first decade of the 21st century and how the use of these media has helped them to redefine their identity.

Post-Islamist piety

In order to manage this Heryanto starts with some theoretical explanation of how Islamization has recently shaped the Indonesian society after the fall of the Suharto-regime. In fact Heryanto proposes not to use the term Islamization for several reasons. First, because already during the last years of the declining Suharto's new order, top officials tried to incorporate Islamist ideas in their government in order to rescue their power. Secondly, the term has led to conflicts between those who referred to the commercialization of Islam (Islam being domesticated by commercialism and globalism) and those who see in it the triumph of Islam by slowly penetrating Western culture. Heryanto prefers the use of *Post-Islamist piety* as it draws closer to the formation of a new group of modern (and modernist) Muslims, who tend to redefine what it means to be Muslim in a global, secular world. As examples of this Heryanto refers to recent changes in Iran, Egypt and the Middle East. The new status of these young (and mainly) middle-class Indonesians has generated new needs, politically, culturally as well as in religious domains. In this context it suffices to look at the popularity of television preachers who combine their messages with the use of a new style of communication. Unlike the Middle-East (where people were weary with the idle promises of Islamist regimes) this post-Islamist piety in Indonesia has not developed out of a crisis, but it has emerged in an organic way to become a trend even before any Islamist rule had been set up. Using movies and serials as examples Heryanto tries to show how this Post-Islamist piety is reflected in popular culture.

Take 2: Spring 2014

In my hometown I am waiting to buy a ticket for a movie I have been eager to see for quite a while. I am not surprised to see that most people around me are queuing for the blockbusters, while ignoring the movie I want to see. Two hours later, I find no difficulty recognizing the people that sat through the same movie as I did. While most people leaving the theatre are cheerful and smiling, only those having watched *'The act of killing'* show frowns of aversion and bewilderment. Joshua Oppenheimer's magnum opus has let none untouched, even those that have no link with Indonesia. The topic of this documentary has been commented on in many media and should not be repeated in this article although it features at length in Heryanto's book, as an example of how recent documentary movies have destabilized familiar notions of opposites. *'The act of killing'* was produced in a time in which Indonesia slowly tied to bring together opposing parties in a schism that has run through the nation for decades.

As this book shows (and many others have, time and time again) no study of recent Indonesian history (be it politically, sociologically, culturally,...) can ignore the events of 1965 when violence of previously unseen vigour swept through many parts of the country, following the abduction and murdering of some high-level generals. *'Identity and pleasure'* stresses the importance of film as a means of forces within Indonesian society to gain control of power and legitimacy. On the one hand, film is used in a propaganda style as the compulsory watching of the state-sponsored film *'Pengkhianatan G30 September/ PKI' (The treachery of the 30th September Movement)* by millions of students for decades has shown, while on the other hand younger generations of independent documentary makers have recently tried to counterbalance the official narrative. Heryanto notices that the attempts of this second group of people have neither been numerous nor always very successful in terms of appreciation or cinematographic quality. Not only because the new generations are rather indifferent to facts that happened half a century ago, but also because any attempt to produce an attractive movie or documentary on the 1965 happenings, faces numerous problems, such as the need to provide enough historical context as most people have limited knowledge of their past, and the dilemma of addressing the question of what really took place in 1965. As Heryanto shows in a different context, maybe the most problematic issue is whether the filmmaker will be able to conclude his project since many parties still oppose any attempt to rewrite official history. If *'The act of killing'* challenges this general remark, it is because it is unique in its approach. In the movie the faces and voices of those responsible for killing real and supposed members of the Indonesian communist party are shown. In fact, they are the leading characters of the film, not only describing but also showing (in order to visualize this, Joshua Oppenheimer uses the technique of making a movie within a movie) how they carried out the killings and executions. It is this grotesque aspect of the movie that has drawn large numbers of spectators to its screening (evidently more abroad than in Indonesia).

The beginning of Indonesian film

A complete chapter is dedicated to the position (and lack of visibility) of Chinese people in Indonesian film history. Using a sociological approach Heryanto claims the Chinese to be an ethnic minority under erasure. While their position and realizations in almost any field is swept away, traces of their ethnic identity are continuously brought to surface for ongoing discrimination. For Heryanto this is the result of the colonial concern with labelling people in clearly defined categories. This labelling renders discrimination and stigmatization normal. As a result the position of the Chinese in film history results from a narrow, almost racist view, based on an ethnical segregation by Indonesia film experts. The best example is the pre-occupation of film experts with the beginning of Indonesian film history. While many (especially Chinese) film makers have made movies in the first years of Indonesia's independence, officially Indonesian film started in 1962 only, with the shooting of *'Darah dan doa' (Blood and prayer).* In order to justify this stance the term *Indonesianness* was coined, but without clearing the vagueness of this term. In reality, the choice for this movie as the official beginning has more to do with the fact that it was the first movie to be produced and directed by 'true' Indonesians only. Fortunately, the leading roles and contributions of the

ethnic Chinese (and other social groups not considered full blood Indonesians) to the early developments of screen culture have recently been valorised. In this sense the renewed interest in the role of the non-pribumi in cultural matters may be the trigger for an unbiased examination of Indonesia's history!

The rise of recent popular culture does not only reflect the social empowerment of clearly defined religious or ethnic groups, it represents as well the emancipation of Indonesian middle-class women. The popularity of Korean Pop (a generic term for popular culture originating in mainly South-Korea and surrounding countries) has gone side-by-side with social mobility of urban middle-class young women. This becomes clear in Korean movies which, unlike Indonesian-made serials, feature female protagonists that struggle to overcome the various battles resulting from living in an strongly patriarchal culture as second-hand citizens due to gender. This mirrors the attempts of Indonesian female Muslims to find peace with their position in society. Recent studies have shown the priority these girls give to job security and financial independence. It is obvious that the depiction of this battle has struck a chord with urban middle-class female spectators. The popularity of soap operas and reality TV can – in their most basic manifestation – be seen in the lives of many Indonesians who light heartedly imitate the behaviour and speech of actors in popular movies and television shows. One may also wonder – and this is a question that Heryanto does not address – if the role of the government in bringing cultural phenomena to the surface is not crucial. While the Korean government has supported K-Pop extensively in an attempt to promote South-Korea among foreigners, Indonesia has never invested much in its culture for the last two decades, although experts have pointed at the genuine power of (among others) Indonesian dance and *wayang* theatre.[1]

Democracy according to reality TV

Finally Heryanto shows how increasing access to popular media has influenced the unpolitical masses in a political way. For this he compares the periods of elections during and after the New Order. It is no surprise to see how the sham elections during Suharto's government drew on the mobilization of huge crowds who were granted some temporary power. The government allowed what were meant to appear as opposing parties to take to the streets and show their support for any of the three allowed political parties. Within the restrictions set up by the government, popular culture during election time was synonymous to waving multi-coloured flags and driving around the main cities on motorcycles. In Heryanto's opinion these actions should be considered as utterances of power, subversion and hyper-obedience. Unfortunately as the book draws closer to its end, the author's attempts to elaborate on these ideas get poorer and this theory is not really defended in a convincing way.

Of course the popularity of digital media has changed the way in which people participate in elections. For this it suffices to look at the elections of 2009. Two characteristics come to the surface: the role of celebrities and the emergence of the independent candidate campaigning with some self-made propaganda tools. As a result the election campaign attained a high level of entertainment in which popular culture (song, dance, theatre) played a key role. Together with the feminization, the 1999 elections were a turning point in the way Indonesian people got involved in this democratic process. It is still unclear if this change will bring positive results. Anyway, what we have seen (an issue Heryanto's book missed because it was published earlier) is that during the recent presidential elections in 2014, social media proved to be essential instruments in mobilizing people, disseminating information and commenting on results.

For Ariel Heryanto this preoccupation of Indonesian people with items that come to them through screens, should not be seen separate from the fact that Indonesians have been raised for decades in an orality-oriented society. As such, Indonesians are less inclined to read long texts that are presented through computers, word processors, and so forth. Even in his own academic world, Heryanto sees an eagerness among Asian researchers to communicate from person to person. Although I am not sure of this distinction between the orality-oriented societies (The East) and the textuality-oriented ones (The West) – think how young people in the West tend to adhere to their screens – Heryanto has a point when stating that in Asian countries popular culture defines personal identity in a more forceful way.

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Film poster of *Ayat-Ayat Cinta.* An example of movies depicting ways in which young urban Muslims link their faith to modernity.

References
1 The lack of interest in *wayang* by the government is reflected in this book since Ariel Heryanto does not study the role of *wayang* (which is also presented on a screen) as an example of popular screen culture.

The making of India's modernity

In terms of thematic exploration, David Arnold's book on technological modernity in colonial India, which covers the period between the 1880s and the 1960s, is seminal. In the current historiography, there is hardly any book which includes sewing machine, bicycle, rice mill, and typewriter in one single account that tells us the story of modern India that unfolded at the intersections of technology, state and society.[1]

Nitin Sinha

Photo courtesy of Eric Parker on flickr.

Reviewed publication:
Arnold, D. 2015.
Everyday Technology: Machines and the Making of India's Modernity,
Chicago: The University of Chicago Press,
ISBN 9780226269375

TWO IMPORTANT ASPECTS related to the theoretical positioning of the book need brief comments. One relates to the scale of technology; and two, the scale of history and history writing.

Technology: A function of scale & site of social issues
On the first: the book makes a very pertinent claim that "Technology did not need to be big to be significant, audible, visible, and everyday" (10). Arnold claims that much of the existing historiography in South Asia has remained focussed on railways, irrigation (and very recently on telegraph) as main technological movers of the nineteenth century. Against this, he presents his justification of studying "everyday technologies" because "they frequently possessed an intimacy, a companionable association with family life and domestic existence, which bigger machines lacked" (11-12).

Arnold rightly observes that the little that exists on the history of technology, which includes his own earlier works, has remained focussed on big-scale technology. They explore the big politics of imperialism, nationalism and capitalism. There is, therefore, a need to look at small-scale technologies. However, intimacies, domesticities, and other such quotidian markers/formations are not necessarily a function of the scale of technologies. If a group of girls riding on bicycles sang away, quite literally, their free-spirited pedalling across the serene landscape as one towards love and freedom which no one should try to stop (the famous song *main chali, main chali* from the movie Padosan, 1968) then almost two decades earlier a song picturised in a railway carriage amusingly chronicled the enactment of some other everyday practices such as sleeping, playing cards and not least eating (the song *rail mein jiya mora* from the movie Ankhen, 1950). Further, Bhojpuri folksongs from the early twentieth century on railways and steamships (the big technologies) very vividly depicted the intimate everyday relationship around conjugality, family life, and domestic existence (or lack of it).

The argument that technology did not need to be big to be significant is absolutely valid, but equally true (and I assume Arnold will agree as he himself uses Nirad Chaudhuri's reminiscences of the sound of steamers, pp17-18) is that the 'everyday' does not need to be necessarily located in something that is plebeian, subaltern, and small. Everyday is not a function of scale. Railways and sewing machines were both part of the same everyday – at individual and social levels. And the colonialists/corporatists displayed the same kind of prejudices in relation to both: as Singer agents thought Indians incapable to use their machines, so did the agents of railway companies a few decades earlier. If Singer claimed to have helped Indians move towards better civilization, so did the power of steam.

Influenced by the 'social construction of technology' theory (SCOT), Arnold's second theoretical intervention is to rescue the social history of these technologies, which were all imported in their provenance, from an instrumental relationship of transfer and diffusion from the West to the East. This relates to the scale of history and history writing in which he admits of not looking at the technical make-up of the machine, but in exploring how they became part of the social and political processes of change in specific localities; how in India they became carriers as well as sites of issues such as race, class and gender (12).

All technologies and commodities covered in this study were global in their reach and introduced in India largely but not exclusively through the network of imperialism, but their 'creative appropriation' in different settings gave them context-specific meanings. It is the context of the social which is at the heart of this book, which ties the global, the imperial and the local in an un-formulaic way. Given the ascendancy of formulaic ways of doing global history through connections and comparisons, I find this approach of not letting the 'social' go adrift refreshingly important (see the brief comment on 38). Once again, it must be stated that the cultural adaptation of technology is not specific to small or big.

Global technologies & colonial state
The foreignness of these technologies invariably leads Arnold to raise the question of their relation with colonial state power. Most of the big and small technologies were thought of first serving the state power. He says, unlike western societies where commerce, industry, and civil society played a more dominant role in fashioning technological modernity, in India the colonial state remained the leading user and publicist of these technologies (148).

The making of Mongolian Buddhism

As I was reading through *A Monastery in Time,* it occurred to me how the publication of this book, and the more recent volume *Mongolian Buddhism in History, Culture and Society,*[1] suggests that Mongolian Buddhism is slowly becoming a meaningful academic study, quite distinct from the Tibetan Buddhism from which it initially developed. Scholars of religion and history, as well as individuals and organizations involved in cultural preservation, are ever more focused on understanding how Buddhism in the Mongolian ethnic region (including areas that are nowadays considered politically part of Russia and China, in addition to Mongolia itself) has morphed, over the centuries and under many diverse influences, into what it is today. Such scholarship, moreover, contributes to an enrichment, not only of our understanding of the past, but of our involvement in the contemporary development of Inner Asia.

Simon Wickhamsmith

Reviewed title:
Humphrey, C. & H. Ujeed. 2013.
A Monastery in Time: The Making of Mongolian Buddhism,
Chicago: The University of Chicago Press,
ISBN 9780226031903

CAROLINE HUMPHREY AND HÜRELBAATAR UJEED'S book seeks to answer a fundamental question: "What does it mean to be a Buddhist in a Mongolian way?" (p1) Their site of enquiry is the monastery at Mergen, in the southwestern region of Inner Mongolia. The book traces multiple trajectories through time and history, mapping the lived experience of Mergen's community of monks and their relationship with the complex spiritual and cultural meanings of Buddhism, within the personal and social contexts of religious practice. The authors' study is based upon two decades of fieldwork, and its value lies squarely in their intimate relationship with the community and in the profound reach of their ethnography.

The ideas that unfold over the course of the book's ten chapters are presented through an approach which, while personal, allows the subjects to speak directly to the reader. Thus we have a cast of characters – people, deities and spirits, religious texts and artifacts – through whose stories the greater story and key questions surrounding the monastery's historical and religious development are explored.

Bicycles were distributed to help policing, typewriters in government offices and courts to speed up administrative work and efficiency, cars and telephones to speed up the movement of administrative personnel and information. The state was not the producer; in fact, within the ironic relationship between imperial protectionism and laissez-faire, American products (Singer sewing machines, Remington typewriters and Ford automobiles) dominated the Indian market. But the state significantly benefitted from this. These technologies strengthened the 'inner life of the state'. And they did so in phases. During the Second World War, for instance, the expansionary nature of the state in terms of being able to regulate the usages of these technologies was quite marked.

Yet this is only one part of the story. The social and political re-calibration of these technologies to either subvert the state power or to question the existing social identity was equally important and forceful, which Arnold lucidly demonstrates. Women working for communist organisations and low-caste villagers using bicycles, typewriters used for disseminating anti-colonial nationalist aspirations – they all point at colonial control that was leaky if not absent. They all show that the life of technology was beyond the simplistic control of the state. They all indicate that different social groups used these technologies to articulate the idea of modernity and modern self-hood.

Nature of technological modernity
What are the axes and scope of this technological modernity? Exploration of race, gender and class is obviously one way of knowing the nature of this modernity, which this book like many others especially on a colonial society, does. Numbers definitely are not on the side of showing the 'quantitative' axes of this modernity. In spite of the rapidity with which these commodities became part of Indian life, they were still used rather sparsely if compared with figures of other countries. Arnold is aware of this dilemma and hence the way out for him is to underscore the social, experiential and utopian articulations of this modernity. The mix of social life captured through visuals, literary works and films is interesting. The articulation of this modernity is tied to the manifold effects these different technologies produced on diverse social groups and classes.

Moving beyond the state and the enterprising initiatives of some Indians selling, part manufacturing, repairing, and assembling these products, Arnold leads us into the world of users and consumers. Did new technology such as sewing machines and typewriters require new skills? Who were the people that moved in to operate them? Did they lead to displacement of existing groups and skills? One gets glimpses of answers into these questions. Bicycles empowered rural folk and elite women; typewriters mainly remained within the confines of Anglo-Indian women in offices and scribal Indian men outside the courts; rice mills took away the work of poor women; and sewing machines tapped into the existing skills of *darzis,* but also became part of the reformist discourse of 'new women/new domesticity' of the late nineteenth century. The last enlarged the scope of domestic work for women.

Yet, many of the answers to the question of modernity are just about at the exploratory level. Bicycle races fitted into the notion of Bengali manliness, but did it also contribute to the emergence of a new sensibility and aesthetics of landscape, space and movement, and if yes, how? Did the new modernity based upon widespread use of sewing machines create a new culture of mass production and consumption? Was it linked to, if any, the emergence of new 'modern' fashion? How did the earlier individualized notion of work which darzis performed on the veranda of their masters/employers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries transform into a shop based work culture of the later period, in which these people were not the owners of their tools? Did technological modernity bring alienation and firmer labour control? Passages from literary sources on sewing machines (141-42), and work-related changes brought about by rice mills (134-40), are illuminating sections.

Typewriters brought bureaucratic utility and speed; it "transformed bureaucratic work regimes"; transformed the "ways in which novelists, journalists, politicians, and administrators pursued their daily work", but exactly how is not clear (56-7). I would imagine for a long time the typewriter functioned as a 'copying machine' producing the 'fair' and 'official' version of hand-written letters, petitions, judgements, news, and even academic theses. In fact, this was true for early day computers as well (people wrote on the paper and got it 'typed' with the only but significant difference of editing on the screen, which theoretically meant fewer errors in the final print, but only theoretically). It has only very recently happened that the machine has become an accompaniment of the user in the same way as her lunch box or smart phone are. The question remains how did the typewriter change, or not, the processes of thinking, reading, writing, and reporting. *Everyday Technology* can mark the beginning of a more systematic tapping into sources to unearth the complex social relationships around these technologies.

Conflict and resistance
If modernity is a product of conflictual claim and counter-claim making, then the history of technological modernity should also reflect the same – conflicts between social groups and classes. Arnold says that "there is little evidence of significant cultural resistance to sewing machines" (49), but what about resistance based upon capital and skill? Did the traditional catchment of darzis' work and clientele suffer because now women started sewing at home (and quite massively, with vernacular magazines publishing essays on how to sew different types of materials) or did the expanding market compensate for it (pp. 50-51)? The competitive clerical job market revolved around the skill of typewriting; what kind of social conflicts did it lead to? Arnold prefers to look at the history of interaction between technology and society through assimilation and acculturation; I wonder if there is more to be said about conflicts and dissonances; to be fair, they are not absent (most directly to be seen in the sections on traffic and roads, 162-64 and 167-71), but not adequately presented either.

Based largely on the biases for big technologies, Arnold revisits the temporal divide of technological modernity in India. For him, seemingly it was not the period of the 1830s-1850s that saw railways, steamers, and telegraph creating a modern India (a bias that has its obvious origins in colonial claims), but rather the period between 1905 and 1914 – marked by the Swadeshi movement – that constituted the technological watershed. Not only had the influx of everyday commodities started in this period but also the imaginaries of modern India. It is this extensive engagement with technology in both its supporting and opposing viewpoints (ranging between Saha and Nehru on one side and Gandhi on the other), that Arnold sees the constitution of modernity. The study of India's modernity – derivative or otherwise – is being constantly traced from the times of the 'Bengal Renaissance' to that of the railways, Macaulay, census, *ghore/bahire,* and hybrid Bengali cuisines. Now it has reached the shores of everyday machines, technologies and commodities. If it is a mere addition to the set of ideas on how Indians thought of themselves to be 'modern', or a potential new framework that would recast the historiographical thinking, is too early to say.

Make in India
Finally, at least in two ways, this book reverberates with contemporary Indian politics over technology, and the social perception of Indian skill, and thus unwittingly adds an interesting historical layer to it. Foreign capital and the current governmental slogan of 'Make in India' are not very far from how American firms like Dunlop promoted their products as "made in India, by Indians, for Indians" (100). There is no dichotomy between nationalistic manufacturing boost that this present government is spearheading (with the logo of the lion) and the inflow of foreign capital. In fact, the mechanical robust lion can only survive with a financial begging bowl in his mouth. Arnold's treatment of the Swadeshi phase shows historical antecedents. Second, from repairing cycles on street pavements to that of fixing typewriters (and in the current age of unlocking and repairing all sorts of mobile phones), this book tells us that there is a serious history to be told about how India has achieved its worldwide status of *'jugaad* economy'. The production of many a commodity was stifled under colonialism – is this the reason that the skill got channelized into fixing, assembling, repairing and selling, but not innovatively producing?

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References
1   The reviewer has not looked into Wickramasinghe, N. 2014. Metallic Modern: Everyday Machine in Colonial Sri Lanka, New York: Berghahn Books, which also looks at some of the technologies covered in Arnold's book.

The expression of time in the title relates not only to the unfolding of history, but also to its collapse in day-to-day terms in the lives of these characters. The immanence in the ongoing experience of the monks today of religious leaders such as the Mergen Gegen (1717-1766), who was closely associated with the Mergen monastery, and whose Mongolian-language history of Buddhism *Altan Tobchi* is central to the monastery's self-aware preservation of Buddhist rituals in Mongolian, renders time – and so history, and so manifestation itself – a somewhat slippery study. Indeed, in their discussion of the concept of *sülde* (the 'spirit of invincibility' – see also the discussion of the translation of this term on pp.185-186), the authors show how this one word not only signifies several ideas – it "is associated with a radical vision of military power, with light and air, and with the aristocracy as the integrating skeleton of society" (p199) – but that it is also in some sense the verbal manifestation of relationships with entities such as the local deity Muna Khan or Mergen Gegen himself, and thereby (through the use of ritual) with the individual's sense of self. Through the telling of local legends and personal anecdotes, the authors are able to trace the development of several such disparate ideas, and so present a beautifully structured yet necessarily incomplete understanding of how Mongolian culture (including its pre-Buddhist shamanic culture) has framed and shaped Mongolian Buddhism. In this understanding, moreover, is revealed the significance of the conceptual and social distance that exists between the Tibetan and Mongolian manifestations of Buddhism.

The recent history, however, of both Tibet and Inner Mongolia has placed them equally and together at the center of the Chinese government's ongoing campaign against the Dalai Lama. Humphrey and Ujeed's treatment of the political difficulties faced by the Mergen community, both during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) and latterly amid the adapted strictures against religion in general and the Dalai Lama in particular, highlights the ways in which everyone involved with the monastery has been taking part in a process of cultural and spiritual negotiation. The two lamas whose stories are central to the book's narrative, Sengge Lama and the current Chorji Lama Mönghebatu, had both severely "struggled" during the Cultural Revolution, and both now keenly grasp their places in relation to the complex nexus of history, religious practice and culture that is Mergen Monastery's ongoing experience. Sengge Lama in particular offers a striking commentary on this experience when he says, "A person who becomes old must place his history in safekeeping" (p286). This realization of the importance of preserving history, of preserving local and cultural knowledge for future generations (just as, Sengge Lama implies, Mergen Gegen himself had) appears as the intellectual bedrock upon which the book was originally conceived. Nonetheless, while the existence of this book cannot make up for the dearth of knowledgeable lamas of which Sengge Lama speaks (p286), its publication is at least a small step towards the awareness of western scholarship of Mergen Monastery's unique heritage.

But there is another aspect to this urge to "place … history in safekeeping". Right at the book's close, the authors point out that even those aspects of the culture of Mergen Monastery that might have seemed central to them, and which are indeed central to their book – "such as the great morality-infused structure at the center of Mergen Gegen's *Altan Tobci,* the nobles' cult of *sülde,* the mausoleums of heroic ancestors, or the relics of the 8th Mergen Gegen" (p385),

or even the primacy of the Mongolian language at the monastery as a medium for religion – nonetheless change, and are transformed over time by the currents and fashions of history. So the urge to preserve culture is itself recognized as an aspect of culture, and the wish of devout and culturally-aware practitioners and scholars to "safeguard" what they regard as significant should properly, I believe Humphrey and Ujeed subtly be saying, be seen as ephemeral, like the illusory play of water bubbles or rainbows mentioned in Buddhist teaching, and as ultimately representing the "creative tension between dispersion and centralizing acts of concentration" (p386).

This book seems destined to be a key text in the discussion of Mongolian Buddhism, and of the cultural history of Inner Mongolia during the present century. I would have welcomed more pictures to complement the vivid and descriptive writing style, and a more extensive and more topic-specific index, but such cavils should not detract from the fact that this is a most important and exciting contribution to the field of Mongolian Studies.

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References
1   Wallace, V.A. (ed.) 2015. *Mongolian Buddhism in History, Culture and Society,* New York: OUP. For full disclosure, I should admit here that I have a paper in this collection ("A Literary History of Buddhism in Mongolia"). The reader's attention should also be drawn to Christopher Kaplonski's important study *The Lama Question: Violence, Sovereignity, and Exception in Early Socialist Mongolia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014).

Public space in urban Asia

Public Space in Urban Asia gives a compelling insight into the research conducted by the *Asian Urban Lab.* The lab, as led by chairman William S.W. Lim and co-directors Sharon Siddique and Tan Dan Fengh, is an attempt to allign "the best local and international thinking on spatial justice to the particularities of various specific Asian conditions" (p.11).

Sander Holsgens
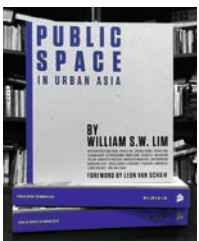
Reviewed title: Lim, William (ed.) 2014.
Public Space in Urban Asia,
London: World Scientific Publishing,
ISBN 9789814578325

IN ORDER TO PURSUE THIS AMBITION, this edited work offers ten case studies in which urban phenomena in Asia are explored in a multidisciplinary manner. Because of the researchers involved, Singapore can be considered as the focal point of this volume, but there are also contributors analysing Chongqing, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta. What's more, the second half of the volume offers a handful of commentaries on the case studies, as well as four thought-provoking essays by William Lim.

Hawker centres in Singapore
In specific, there seems to be an interest in the ethnography as research output. One example of this is Randy Chan and Jolene Lee's chapter, called *Hawker Centres: Siting/Sighting Singapore's Food Heritage.* In this chapter they explore how the term hawker centre "has become an iconic part of the Singapore landscape" (p.91). The centres offer low-cost and convenient meals, based upon street hawking – a way of selling affordable products, without having a fixed location. In the years preceding Singapore's independence, street hawking was common, "for it allowed the unemployed to find a means of livelihood" (ibid).

Chan and Lee claim that precisely because street hawking became an integral part of Singapore's economy and culture, it was eventually formalised. From the 1960s to the late 1980s, hawkers were offered a centralised shelter, so that sanitary conditions could be maintained and the businesses could be controlled if necessary. These shelters grew into hubs for small food businesses. What is present here is a narrative of the multi-generational hawker family: "the hardworking heartlander is able to forge a good living for his or her family, representative of the success of the Singapore story" (p.97).

For Chan and Lee this predominantly monetary success is, ironically, the biggest threat of the hawker centre. Indeed, a vital part of this success story is that the children of these hawker families receive good education. While some hawkers eventually pass their food stall to their children, most of the times the children opt for different jobs. Or, reversely, the parents prevent their children from working in a hawker centre, for reasons "that range from not wanting their child to have to work as hard as they did, to not being able to find a worthy disciple to pass their recipes on to" (p.98).

This is not to say that hawker centres are actually disappearing. On the contrary, the new generation of hawkers "are aspiring entrepreneurs who see the hawker centre as a starting point in their foray into the food and beverage industry due to the low entry cost" (p.101). Because of this, the hawker centres might change – their designs might become better and may look 'spiffier'. But the core experience, namely one of affordable, hygienic food in an inviting and familiar public space, will be maintained.

Local and experiential
Chan and Lee's research is emblematic of *Public Space in Urban Asia,* for two reasons. First, this volume is concerned with the particularities of specific urban phenomena, cities, and public spaces. So even though the geographic scale of the volume suggests otherwise, the various chapters are concerned with regional cases and local phenomena. In so doing, generalisations about a continent, a country, or a culture are kept to a minimum. There is an implicit emphasis on the notion of difference – one of the strengths of this volume.

Second, Public Space in Urban Asia is primarily concerned with the lived experiences of urban space. One example of this is Lim Teng Ngiom's chapter *Thick Crust of Time: Kuala Lumpur,* which explores the ways in which the quick urban transformation of Kuala Lumpur is experienced. In this ambitious case study Lim argues that cities are, up to a certain extent, shaped by time. Over time and because of time, dynamics of everyday spaces morph and transform.

In Kuala Lumpur this has led to a so-called thick crust of time, which consists of layers of memories. It is 'thick', not because of the linear age of the city, but because of "the number of times [the city] changes and renews itself. Kuala Lumpur has a thick crust, with its thick narrative of changes and renewals" (p.155). These continuous, frequent, and perpetual changes or transformations affect the ways visitors and inhabitants experience Kuala Lumpur. Or, in other words: the Malaysian city is experienced in relation to temporality.

Multidisciplinary, reflective, and relevant
In line with Lim Teng Ngiom's *Thick Crust of Time: Kuala Lumpur,* most chapters in *Public Space in Urban Asia* are both thought-provoking and considerate. This can also be said about William S.W. Lim's essays. There is, however, one remark to be made. Especially in the essays *Spatial Justice and Happiness and Change We Must,* Lim's tone of voice differs on a fundamental level from the other contributions. Instead of merely exploring urban phenomena, Lim seems to be more concerned with the things that need to be done in and about public spaces in urban Asia, and more specifically: in Singapore. The essays communicate a sense of urgency, in particular with respect to the notion of sustainability. In order to mobilise younger generations and to secure "a genuine comprehensive sustainability for their communities" (p.255), some form of change is required. This change takes place on the level of values and lifestyle and is necessary to bring about a 'true' form of sustainability.

In this sense, Lim's essays could have been better aligned with the other contributions. The inclusion of commentaries, in which Jane M. Jacobs, H. Koon Wee, and Lilian Chee individually respond to the ten case studies, are more successful in this regard. Not only are these short essays in dialogue with earlier chapters, they also contextualise these case studies in a relevant manner. Moreover, the fact that the *Asian Urban Lab* has brought together not only architects and urbanists, but also historians, documentary makers, journalists and sociologists, underscores the volume's diversity and appeal. It is a multidisciplinary work that operates on multiple levels and within a variety of disciplines, yet it remains specific and reflective.

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Human Trafficking in Colonial Vietnam

Sex trafficking is a hot topic in international politics today. Millions of dollars of international monetary and in-kind aid flows into Southeast Asia to stop the trade in women and children. Yet the literature on trafficking in Southeast Asia tends to treat it as a modern development and, as a result, some aspects of forced migration and forced prostitution have been grossly misunderstood.

Christina Firpo
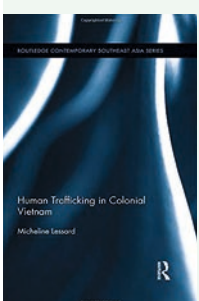
Reviewed publication:
Lessard, M. 2015.
Human Trafficking in Colonial Vietnam,
London and New York: Routledge,
ISBN 1138848182.

Human Trafficking in Colonial Vietnam is the first in-depth historical study of trafficking in Vietnam. Drawing on a vast base of empirical evidence from 19th and early 20th century missionary reports, military documents, newspaper stories, diplomatic correspondence, and reports from the domestic colonial government, Lessard exposes large scale trafficking networks that sold women and children within Vietnam or to China and Hong Kong, where they would ultimately be sold into marriage, prostitution, or domestic servitude. Lessard argues that while trafficking networks predated French colonial rule, colonialism exacerbated the trade. War, state monopolies on goods and opium, and social norms in which women and girls were both "prized and preyed upon" (xv) beget conditions in which a black market that traded kidnapped women and girls flourished.

The first chapter explores missionary experiences with human trafficking networks. Lessard contextualizes missionary writings on trafficking in a time when Catholic priests aggressively sought converts and the French government launched colonizing missions and established a border with China. Conflating Catholic missionaries with colonial forces, rebel forces raided Catholic villages, kidnapped converts and sold them up into China. Missionaries, heavily influenced by the European abolitionist movement, aimed to stop slavery and the sale of women and children. Their solution was to purchase slaves and adopt them into the missionary community. For all their good intentions, as Lessard shows, their efforts were ill executed. Missionaries focused on saving only Christians and they were driven by misconceptions about Vietnamese culture and gender relations. Missionaries operated under the assumption that children would fall victim to infanticide and women would be negatively influenced by what they judged to be a promiscuous Vietnamese culture, as a result Catholic missionaries refused to return trafficking victims to their home villages.

Chapter 2 investigates kidnappings and trafficking that occurred within the context of the pacification of Tonkin in the second half of the 19th century. Lessard draws on military accounts, newspaper stories, and travelers' memoirs of their experience with trafficking in Tonkin, a politically volatile region during this time period. Trafficking of women and children, she shows, was a byproduct of political and military activity in the area. Hostilities between highlanders and ethnic Vietnamese fueled the kidnappings, and victims were sold into the opium trade. After the Tai Ping rebellion in China, bandit groups migrated into northern Vietnam and attacked villages for survival. The Nguyen government eventually coopted some of the bandits and used them to vex the French military as it took over Tonkin. Within this context, kidnapped women and children proved to be valuable commodities that were easily traded for opium and weapons.

The third chapter focuses on trafficking incidents discovered by the French consulate to China or discovered by merchant marine vessels or customs and borders agents, both of which were accountable to the command of the consulate in cases of human trafficking. The French consul was then responsible for repatriating victims, yet, as Lessard shows, repatriations caused diplomatic problems when Chinese men claimed rights to Vietnamese women and children. The French consul attempted to stop the trafficking of Vietnamese women by strictly regulating departure permits for Vietnamese or Chinese women traveling to China and checking ships that departed from Hanoi for trafficked stowaways.

The final chapter examines the pressures that human trafficking placed on the colonial government in Indochina. With newspapers reporting horrifying cases of beheadings and victims being thrown overboard, France's inability to stop traffickers from crossing borders or using colonial ports and coastland embarrassed the French colonial government. Vietnamese intellectuals criticized the colonial state for the hypocrisy of justifying colonialism with claims to 'protect' its subjects. As much of the trafficking trade was run by Chinese gangs, these discussions fed into anti-Chinese fears and claims that the colonial state was too soft on the Chinese community.

Human Trafficking in Colonial Vietnam is a thorough investigation into the political, diplomatic, and economic context in which the market for women and girls flourished during the colonial period. With its incredible detail drawn from an array of sources – some known to historians and many previously undiscovered – Lessard proves that human trafficking is not a modern concept in Vietnam and indeed has a long history in Indochina. One of the strengths of this book is that the author is never simply satisfied that her sources corroborate information; instead, Lessard asks hard epistemological questions of her sources. As she approaches the topic of trafficking from the viewpoint of missionaries, military men, the consulate to China, and high-ranking colonial authorities, she is careful to critique the biases of these sources as well as to evaluate how likely a source was to have experience was with trafficking networks or victims themselves. This book will prove essential for the study of human trafficking – both academic and applied. It will be useful for both undergraduate and graduate courses in Asian history, French history, and gender studies. It should be a mandatory read for aid workers who focus on trafficking in Vietnam and China.

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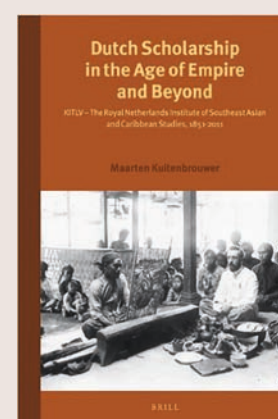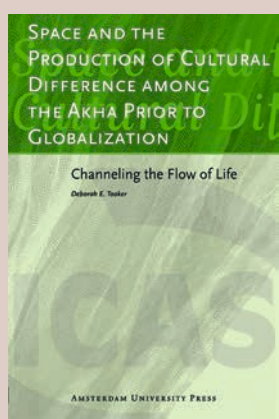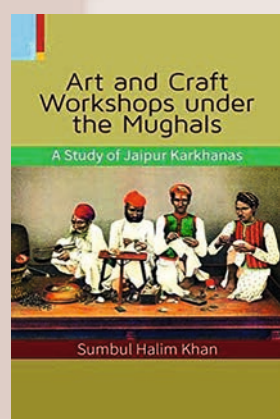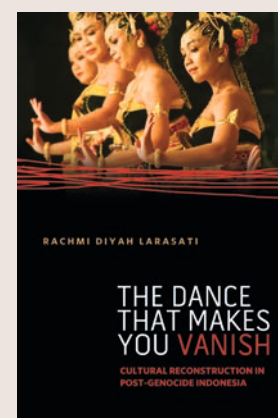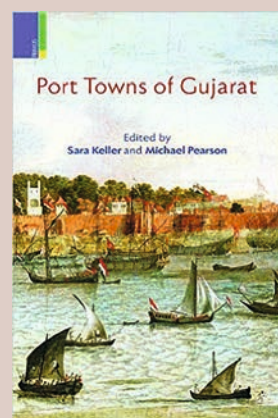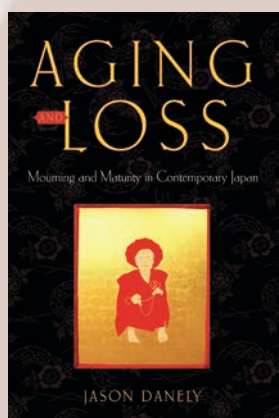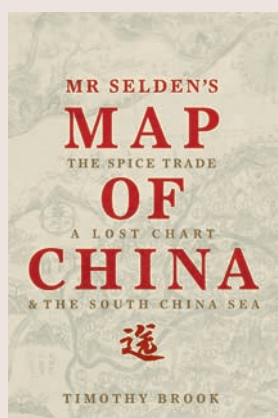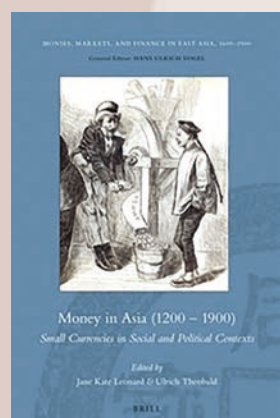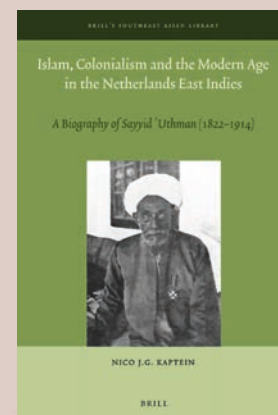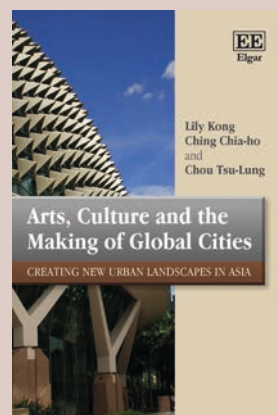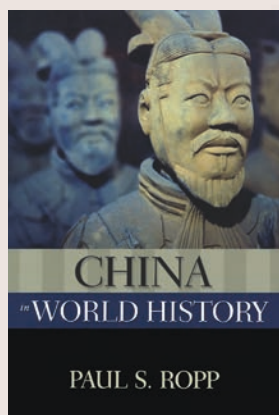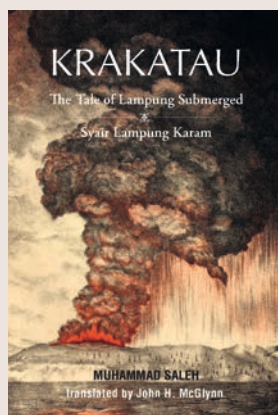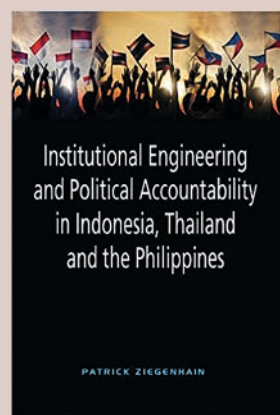
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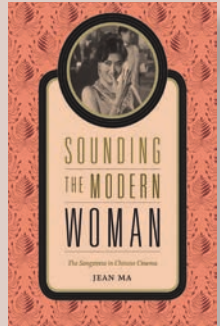
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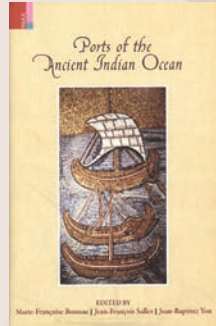
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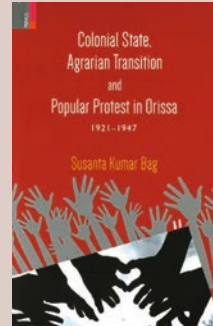
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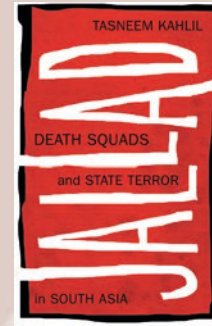
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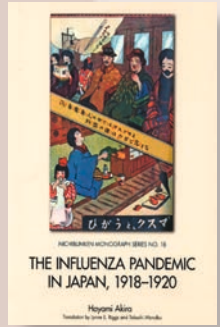
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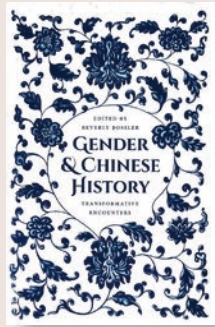
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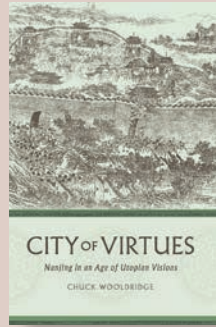
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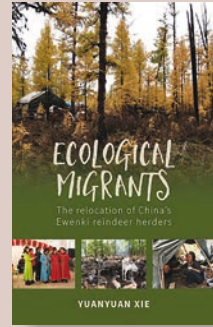
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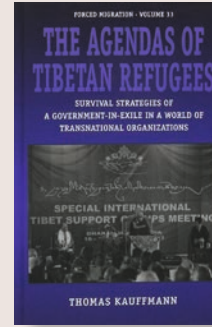
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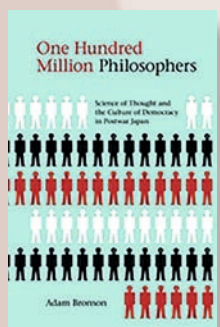
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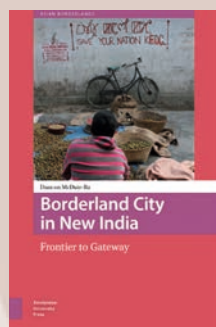
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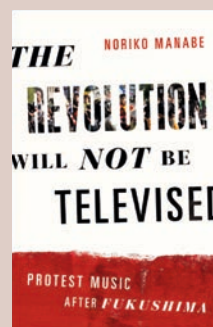
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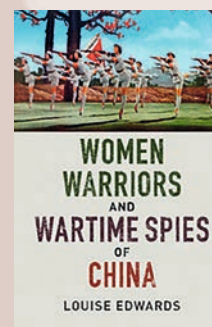
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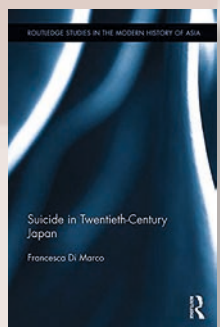
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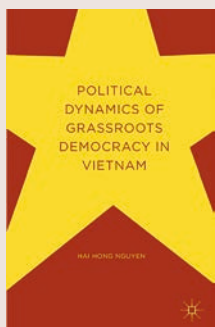
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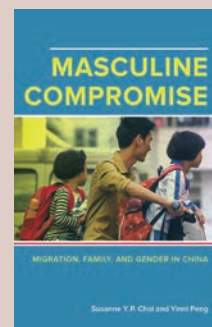
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A couple drinking sugarcane juice at Me Tri (The Manor), a new urban area west of Hanoi (photo by Vincent Bertholon).

Producing & living the city in Vietnam

Engaging with the urban field in Vietnam: crossing approaches

In a world where more than 50% of the population lives in cities,[1] Vietnam and its current 34% of urban dwellers[2] remains associated with rurality in the global imaginary. But this last figure should be put into perspective: after decades of de-urbanisation under the socialist regime the national urban growth is now exploding; the country's urban population has doubled since 1980, with an official average growth of 3.4% per year.[3] Beyond this steady demographic development, urbanised areas multiplied by 4 between 1995 and 2010.[4] Most of the urban growth takes place in and around Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), even though secondary cities are also engaged in a rebalancing process.[5] Today these two main metropolises of the country have respectively 7 and 7.9 million inhabitants.[6] In addition, since the introduction of *đổi mới* reforms in the mid-1980s,[7] cities have been officially recognised as the engine of national economic growth by the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), which leads the country.

In this renewed context, our *Focus* offers a fresh perspective on the production of urban forms, the reconfiguration of local management, and the renegotiation of daily practices in Vietnamese cities. Our intention is not only to highlight the path-breaking transformations taking place in Vietnam today, but also to contribute to the 'Asianisation' of urban studies paradigms through grounded analysis and interpretation,[8] and to discuss an alternative theoretical framework, based on extensive fieldwork in Vietnamese cities and neighbourhoods.

Marie Gibert, Clément Musil, Emmanuelle Peyvel and Juliette Segard

Engaging with the urban field in Vietnam: crossing approaches *continued*

Unfolding the layers of the Vietnam urban fabric

If contemporary urban transformations are taking place in increasingly globalised contexts, they should also be understood by considering the long-term urban history that explains the distinctiveness of the Vietnamese metropolises' 'art of being global'.[9] Furthermore, their contemporary 'openness' echoes the previous international links these cities kept during the historical contexts of Chinese Diaspora trade, French colonisation and the socialist bloc-cooperation period. Thus, after experiencing colonisation, decades of war, socialism and de-urbanisation,[10] followed by the national reunification of 1976 and *đổi mới* reforms, different Vietnamese cities reveal different urban trajectories.

In that regard, the literature has contrasted Hanoi and HCMC for a long while: HCMC is usually depicted as the country's liberal and international vanguard, while Hanoi is often associated with bureaucracy and Party enhanced control. Hanoi, as the national capital city, is indeed the place where decisions are taken, while HCMC is considered to be the potential economic engine of the country. The different places they occupy in the urban hierarchy continue to influence the understanding of Vietnam's urbanisation, even though this dichotomy is becoming less significant these days. The two metropolises are now engaged in a similar trend of opening-up and metropolisation, which leads to a progressive 'convergence process'. Thus, while concentrating mainly on these two leading cities – thereby also reflecting the reality of the academic production today, as far as urban Vietnam is concerned – this Focus will go beyond the simple juxtaposition of two competing cities, by highlighting the complementarities of their two 'worlding paths'.[11]

Metropolisation: towards a reading of the 'worlding paths' of Vietnamese cities

With the adoption of a 'socialist-oriented market economy' and the opening-up to international financial flows, major Vietnamese cities, as well as secondary ranking cities like Danang located in economic development corridors,[12] are stimulated by a common metropolisation process.

In this *Focus,* metropolisation is understood as a process that affects a city both in its forms and functions, and is characterised by a concentration of population, activities, and wealth. This phenomenon cannot, however, be reduced to its demographic dimension only. Its originality relates to the diversification of the activities, to the concentration of strategic economic functions, and to the attractiveness of and accessibility to communication networks at various scales. In particular, metropolisation integrates cities into the networks of the global economy.[13] While they take part in this tendency, Asian cities display specific features. The *desakota* pattern defined by McGee suggests that metropolisation leads to the assembling of territories that combine agricultural and non-agricultural activities.[14] In addition, by using cheap means of transport, such as motorbikes, transportation of goods and people is facilitated between inner cities and their fringes.

In Hanoi and HCMC the early signs of metropolisation appeared with the arrival of the first Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) at the beginning of the 1990s. Though buildings of more than ten storeys were already built in HCMC during the 1960s and 1970s, Vietnamese cities generally remained quite 'low', until the FDI triggered the construction of the first high-rise buildings. This paved the way to the verticalisation and 'super-sizing' of the city. The construction of the New World Hotel in HCMC in 1991, and the Hanoi Tower in 1996 (that combines service apartments, hotel, offices and retail functions), embodied the first international functions and vertical shapes. On the outskirts, FDI materialised through the construction of rescaled industrial zones and factories (see the article by *Trần Khắc Minh* in this Focus section). For instance, the Japanese firm Honda settled its first motorbike assemblage chain in the North of Hanoi nearby the international airport in 1997.

In addition, urban sprawl has progressed rapidly. In the last 20 years, in both cities, an average of 1,000 hectares per year of agricultural land has been urbanised. As a result, the inner cities and their outskirts (i.e., the peri-urban areas) were densified. Noteworthy landmarks of this trend are the experimental residential areas, known as 'new urban areas' *(Khu đô thị mới),* which city authorities initiated in the early 1990s. Both Hanoi and HCMC started to develop their iconic projects in 1996, with Ciputra in Hanoi and Saigon South in HCMC. These two projects represent the kick-start of large scale urban projects in Vietnamese cities (over 400 hectares) located at the cities' outskirts, where private and foreign investors and developers are involved (see article by *Segard*). Furthermore, there has clearly been a shift from an organic growth of the city to 'project-based development' (see article by *Gibert and Phạm Thái Sơn*).[15]

In this context, the construction of new mass rapid transit systems became a major issue (see article by *Musil* and *Vương Khánh Toàn*). Furthermore, while cities deal with planned adjustment phases to frame the construction of modern economic infrastructures, urban spontaneous developments also continue.

A reordering of stakeholders: urbanisation as a political process

Spaces are changing; so too are the stakeholders. Even though the economic transition and international opening-up have been orchestrated by the Party, the Regime has evolved, influenced both from the 'outside' (regional powers, international donors, Western countries) and from the 'inside' (intellectuals, Party branches, religious groups, inhabitants, etc.). The current production of the city, governance issues and power relations, all illustrate the complexification of the political, economic and social life of the country.

Stakeholders involved in planning, construction, acquisition of land or renovation of urban cores are much greater in numbers nowadays, and they keep diversifying. Public authorities have kept hold of the driving seat, controlling the land use system, investments licences or Official Development Assistance targets. However, they are now being challenged. On the one hand, private entrepreneurs (both domestic - notably the recomposing State-Owned Enterprise - and international) have growing expectations in terms of land availability, flexibility, incentives and enabling business environment. On the other hand, inhabitants are progressively being emancipated from rigid structures of control and mobilisation. Thus, they now participate in the production of the city 'from the bottom-up' and contribute to the emergence of a new urban society, with the wish to benefit from the country's development in general.

Even though the narrative of 'the rights to the city' is not claimed, people are negotiating, questioning policy goals, encroaching the rules every day to have a say in their city's evolution, to be recognised as urban citizens, and to participate, even on the margins, in decision-making. Thus, power relations and structures are transforming as a result of every stakeholder's attempt to find his or her place in an evolving system, through economic competition, negotiation or protest. In fact, everyone contributes to these changes – no matter their social status, gender, origin or age – because their influence also lies in daily practices, ritual customs (see the articles by *Pannier* and by *Ngô Thị Thu Trang*), or leisure activities (see the article by *Peyvel* and *Võ Sáng Xuân Lan*) that are not always politicised, but which do nevertheless shape the global evolution of the country and society.

Practical development choices, growth policies and urban models have to be formulated and developed by the authorities. Concretely, the Party-State faces both short-term and long-term challenges: housing production and service provision, the climate change threat to river delta regions (already subject to floods), congestion issues and pollution, heritage preservation (see the article on urban heritage preservation policies in this *Focus* section) and promotion of 'modern' urban products, such as shopping malls or condominiums.

What is crucial now for the Regime is to decide how to manage developments, which arrangements to adopt, and how to mediate between economic interests and political /social stability. In other words, how to make the system work? For the authorities, the objective is to keep control and power over urbanisation while largely delegating, or privatising, the production of the city.

A street scene in Phú Mỹ Hưng, a new urban area in HCMC, with the Bitexco Tower, a city landmark, in the background (photo by Marie Gibert).

A view from the corner of Lý Chính Thắng and Trần Quốc Thảo streets in HCMC (photo by Marie Gibert).

It is important to bear in mind that the Regime's stability relies on its ability – more or less – to ensure growth and to improve living conditions for a majority of its people. The Party-State carries a strong developmentalist discourse and its members position themselves as 'state-craft thinkers', who have to, and can, turn the country from a 'latecomer state' into an 'advanced country', by making adjustments inspired by exogenous Western or Asian models.[16] But growth has slowed down and inequalities are increasing, especially in urban contexts, leading many to question the legitimacy of the 'socialist and communist' Regime.

So far, pragmatism and flexibility have been key to mitigate shocks and react to emerging demands, internal or external, from the local 'civil society' or from the private sector. The Party-State has demonstrated its ability to adapt and react subtly by postponing unpopular or sensitive reforms, by co-opting potential sources of opposition, by adopting new rules or by taking a step back from urban or peri-urban projects that provoke local conflicts.

Beyond the 'black box'

Walking through the city, from the coffee shop on the corner of the street, past private homes, official offices, city departments and police stations, our findings result from extensive fieldwork, exploring urban and peri-urban areas, engaging with people, and producing a collective effort to circulate information and perspectives.

Beyond the documentation of Vietnamese urban mutations in their various forms, this *Focus* also wants to offer a renewed perspective on urban studies' tools, from the specific context of Vietnam today. Following the track of the Southern Turn,[17] we have strived to tackle the inadequacy of the Western conceptual framework in urban studies. Applied out of its context, this hegemonical toolbox of globalized urbanism has become a 'black box',[18] invisibilising the specificities of Vietnamese cities. We therefore explore the possibility of transcending 'the West and the Rest' categorisation, inherited from colonial times.

Indeed, Vietnamese cities undergo combined forms of rigid categorisation: economically speaking, they are 'emerging cities', that is to say threatening for European and North American countries;[19] from a socio-spatial perspective, they are 'Southern' and 'developing' cities;[20] and politically they are considered to be 'opening-up', designated with the prefix 'post', to indicate both the end of colonialism and socialism. For all these reasons, the recurring discourse of 'transition' is dominant in the analyses of the production of contemporary Vietnamese cities.[21]

This *Focus* intends to show how the intersectionality of Vietnamese cities is fertile ground for rethinking the position,

methods and concepts of the researcher – especially when he or she is not Vietnamese. The making of this project was therefore thought to disrupt the 'black box'. As a group, we were particularly keen on a symmetrical research practice in a post-colonial perspective. This involves decentring the researcher's gaze to balance the power plays that govern the production of knowledge. We therefore sought to work *with* – rather than *instead of* – Vietnamese researchers. To do that, we functioned either in pairs (comprising both a French and a Vietnamese researcher) or we put French and Vietnamese perspectives, on objects such as heritages and rituals, side by side. This innovative working process allowed for a continued presence in the field over many years, for shared fieldwork, contradictory readings of the findings, and for co-writing processes. We were therefore able to overcome challenging practical issues such as the scarcity of statistical data, accessibility of sensitive places and stakeholders, and matters of understanding local narratives, thus contributing to a comprehensive approach to the city, and articulating macro and micro scale analyses.

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Understanding the Vietnamese urban fabric from the inside

Narrow lane, small street,
my home is there
In my dreams,
I still remember this … [1]

Once low, dense and organic cities, Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) are now engaged in a steady-paced verticalisation process, especially in the new urbanised areas flourishing at their edges *(khu đô thị mới).* But beyond iconic new urban projects and glittering business districts, the everyday city production still takes place in the interior of their specific urban pattern, namely their alleyway neighbourhoods.

Marie Gibert and Phạm Thái Sơn

Above:
An alleyway in HCMC (district 3) in the morning (photo by Marie Gibert).

THESE ANCIENT NEIGHBOURHOODS are characterised by the 'smallness' of their plot division and by the very high density of population they foster (more than 80.000 inhabitants/km² in some central areas of HCMC; in district 10 for instance). Although lacking official recognition from the urban authorities, the urban network of alleyways still houses about 85% of city dwellers in HCMC, and 88% in Hanoi.[2] As such, it remains an important ingredient of the Vietnamese urban identity. Reading the contemporary production of metropolitan spaces through this lens provides insights not only into the evolution of the inherited spatial apparatus, but also into the social and political dimensions of the urbanity. It allows one to embrace the ethnographical turn in metropolitan studies that Ananya Roy and Aiwha Ong call for, in order to fully integrate "the diversity of urban dreams, project and practices [...] in emerging world regions" in the field of urban theory.[3]

Hanoi's alleyways: the evidence of a rural palimpsest
The widespread existence and the typical small width of alleyways in Hanoi are not an accidental phenomenon; they are the historical result of the urban development process. Most of Hanoi's alleyways have been developing based on the spatial structure of ancient rural villages *(làng),* after some structural and dimensional restoration. The main alleyways were established from the ancient road pattern leading to the village hamlets *(thôn):* the pathway between ancient rice fields or along the edge of large ponds, once existing almost everywhere in ancient villages. The smallest alleys were created more recently, during the densification process of urban villages; either through organisational subdivisions, or through the auto-division of original private land.[4]

In the beginning of the 1990s, Hanoi's local authorities distributed land – including vacant lots, lakes, ponds and rice fields – surrounding the city centre among public groups. The receiving organisations then divided these areas into several single plots of 30-40m² and allocated them to their staff. The small alleyways were designed as straight passages, of approximately 2-2.5m wide, between the plots of land. The second mechanism mentioned above is the common phenomenon of auto-division of private land in urbanised villages surrounding the city. With the construction of new homes, or the need for familial financial resources (garnered through selling land), original land owners divide their garden, court or pond into many small plots of 30-50m², leaving

small passages of only 1-1.5m wide. Such alleys can be winding or straight, depending on the number of times a plot has been divided, and the division method of subsequent owners.

The mechanisms of alleyway development, together with the city-wide phenomenon of illegal encroachments by house construction, explain the extremely narrow width of the alleys. In Hanoi, 90% of the alleys are less than 4m wide, with a significant disparity among the different urban areas: the further from the city centre, the larger the alleyways. As a result, most alleys are inaccessible to cars.

HCMC's alleyways: the pragmatism of city dwellers during uncertain historical times
In HCMC, the very dense network of alleyways was born mainly out of the city dwellers' pragmatism during uncertain times. Only the colonial grid-pattern covering district 1, a part of district 3, and the historical structure of the Chinese neighbourhood of *Chợ Lớn,* at the West of district 5, were planned and calibrated during the 19th century. At that period the street networks were considered to be the matrix of the urbanisation process. But beyond the production of these historical neighbourhoods, urban growth took place following a spontaneous and linear logic, first guided by the main trading axes, and later by a process of densification.[5]

The further we get from these structuring main streets, the more random the alleyway grid becomes, revealing the historical interweaving between the planned and the spontaneous in HCMC's urban production. The different morphological patterns of the alleyways answered the variety of local situations: like a palimpsest, their spatial organisation often reveals the ancient frame of rural paths, paddy fields or embankment systems, that structured the territory many decades ago. As a result, HCMC's urban structure is notably based on the juxtaposition of different composite urban fabrics.

Each alleyway benefits from strong interactions with its adjacent plots of lands. This spatial apparatus constitutes the basic unit of the urban matrix. The heart of this apparatus comprises the 'shop house', today often reinterpreted as the 'tube-house' *(nhà ống).* Its shape is rectangular, very narrow and deep (around 3-4m wide and 15-25m deep), perpendicular to the street, onto which it opens directly (on one side only), and it occupies the entire plot of land. The high prevalence of this urban form helps to explain the high density that HCMC fosters, despite its low morphological profile.

Both in Hanoi and HCMC, low-rise urban fabric allows for direct street access to a maximum of residents. Indeed, trading functions have historically driven the format of urban housing in Vietnam. Alleyways directly connected to commercial streets are the most valued. Furthermore, within this urban texture, the different blocks and neighbourhoods are not structured around any central plaza. The idea of centrality is linearly embodied by the main alleyway, which constitutes the backbone of the local structure and which is the most socially and commercially dynamic place in the neighbourhood. In Vietnamese spatial practices, the built environment itself is structured by and according to the street: it is the distance to the street that orders the layout and the functions associated with each room in the house, through a succession of ranked thresholds. The entrance room, which opens directly onto the street, constitutes the pivot of this spatial apparatus: it allows an efficient interface between public and private, commercial and domestic. Thus, Vietnamese alleyways offer a relevant example of an integrated urban apparatus, where interrelations between the form of places and their practices are obvious.

Alleyway households as self-organised communities
Alleyway neighbourhoods are divided into several resident groups *(tổ dân phố)* of 50-100 persons. Each group is led by a head person, who represents the neighbourhood at the ward level. The groups organise monthly meetings, in which they inform residents of administrative news, discuss local policies, and mediate household conflicts. Thus, alleyway households proactively participate in the management of their daily lives and the development of their surrounding space and landscape.

A good example of the willingness of urban residents to participate in the production of their space is the local project that (re)constructed alley pavements and underground sewers. To carry out the project, each household contributed to the budget; so too did the Ward People's Committee, in accordance with the principle *Nhà nước và nhân dân cùng làm* [the state and people work together]. Resident groups relied on their 'head person' to supervise the work, but each resident also kept an eye on work done in front of their own home. Most residents were satisfied with the outcome and the quality of work; more so than with projects that are totally financed by the public sector, in which cases they do not have any right of supervision or participation. Another example of urban

A view from Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City alleyway neighbourhoods

Hanoi's alleyway neighbourhoods facing the building of Ring Road No1 (Ô Chợ Dừa and Xã Đàn sections) between 2005 (above) and 2015 (below). Courtesy Google Earth.
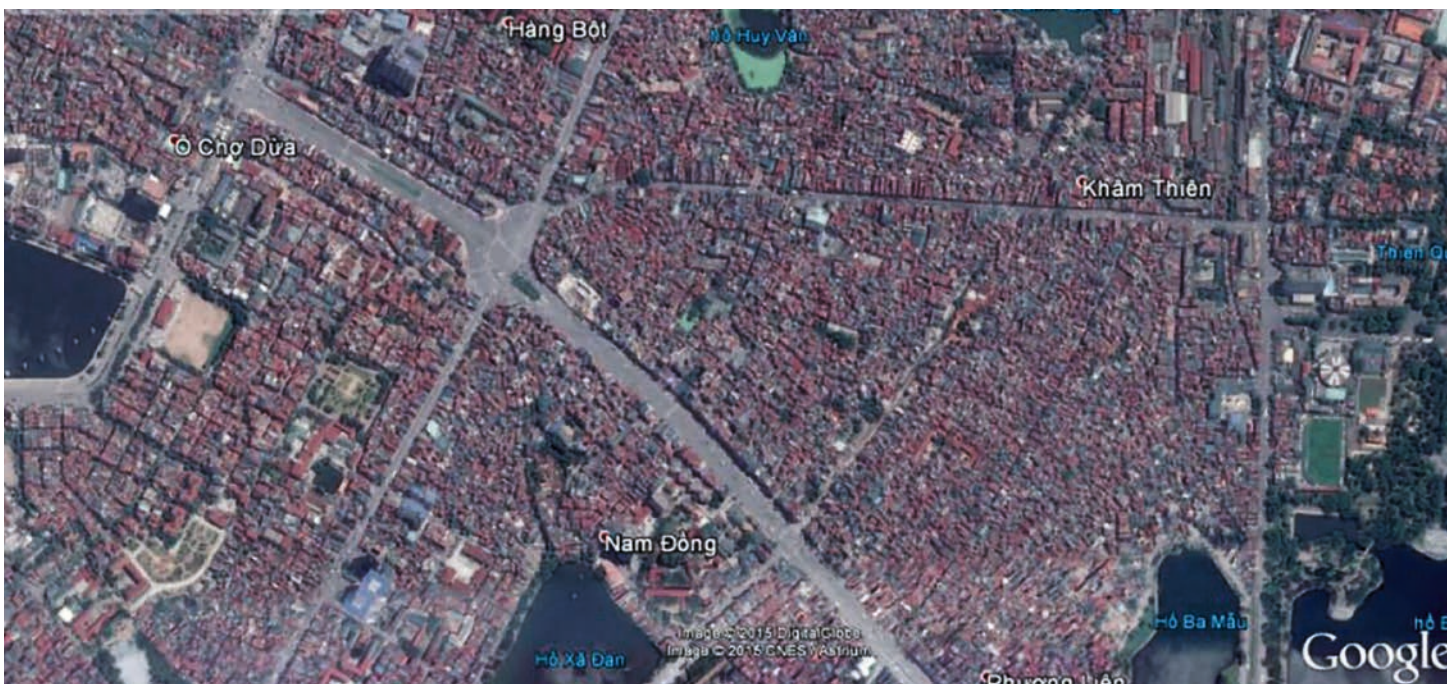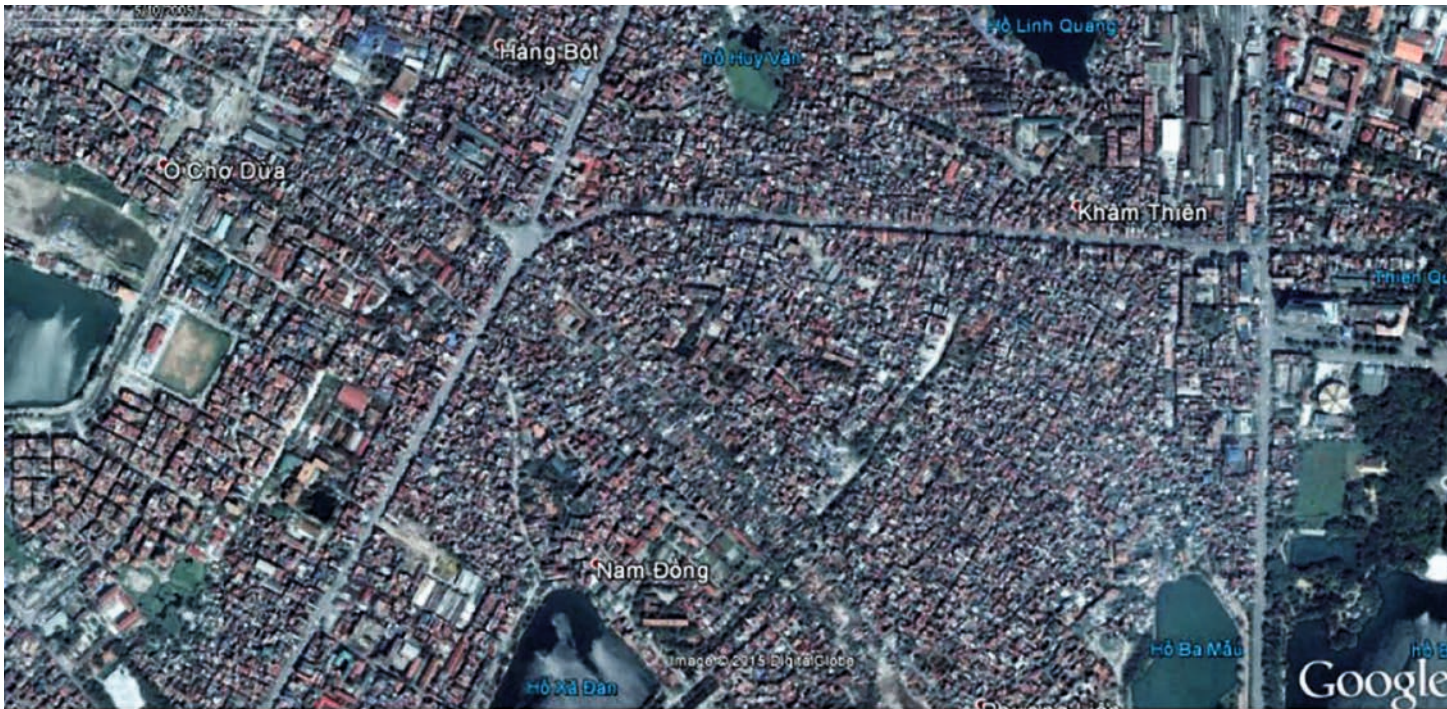
self-management can be found in a small alley on *Giải Phóng* street in Hanoi. Residents were unhappy with their very narrow alley (only 1.2m), and so decided to expand its width to 2m by all contributing a part of their private land.

These examples confirm that urban residents are not passive actors in the city production, but active participants in urban morphology, the evolution of technical services and the creation of everyday public space. Daily life in the alleyways illustrates very well the traditional Vietnamese saying *bán anh em xa mua láng giềng gần* [selling far brothers and buying near neighbours]. The intimate interactions among alley residents create a strong sense of community and a shared memory, as Le Vinh describes in his famous song "Hanoi and me", quoted at the top of this article.

Alleyways as vibrant public spaces

A detour via a semantics study allows for a better understanding of the particular concept of the street within Vietnamese culture. The Vietnamese language provides a categorisation of the world characterised by the use of classifiers for nouns, according to whether they are living things (con) or inanimate objects *(cái).* Interestingly, the common word for 'street' is *con đường* and not *cái đường.* In Vietnamese, the street is perceived as an active being and a 'circulated space', shaped by the different types of traffic flows that go through it everyday. This notion acknowledges that social practices contribute to the street's identity and take part in its metamorphoses.

Moreover, streets are considered to be resources intuitively used to meet various needs. Not only is the alleyway a place of business, but residents also treat their doorstep and street as a natural extension of their own home.[6] As a result, various domestic activities, such as cooking, doing one's laundry, installing ornamental plants or burning votive objects, take place in the alleyways of Hanoi and HCMC. Trading on the street or on one's doorstep has also been one of the most shared ways to earn a living in post-reform Vietnam, a time at which many people lost their state sector positions. The renewal of the private sector in the Vietnamese economy is thus strongly characterised by small businesses. The capacity alleyways have to welcome such a diversity of activities can be explained through a temporal analysis: the rotation of each type of activity during the day allows for increased access to the street for a larger number of urban dwellers.

Beyond the antagonism of the public/private duo inherited from the Western conception of urban spaces, Vietnamese alleyways offer the richness of the buffer zone of its intermediate semi-public spaces, at the interface of the tube-house and the street. In Vietnam, the level of publicness of a space varies depending on the time of day, and day of year. This remark invites us to re-think the notion of public space from the perspective of Hanoi and HCMC alleyways, in order to fully integrate the urban practices and conceptualisations of the global South in the field of urban theory.[7] The anthropological exploration of the daily functioning of ordinary alleyways also provides an invitation to acknowledge the social value of ephemeral public spaces, which are constantly renewed by residents' uses and interchanges. These fluid and shifting spaces allow for a great reversibility in urban functions and illustrate the idea of the street as a 'capital for experimentation' and the fruit of a social agreement continuously renewed over time, which allows both for the permanence of a spatial form and the modification of its parallel uses.[8]

Alleyways in the course of the metropolisation process: current challenges and ongoing mutations

In the course of *metropolisation,* the alleyways of Hanoi and HCMC tend to more and more be considered as necessary connectors within larger road systems.[9] This trend leads to a progressive disconnect between circulatory and residential functions, which used to be the dominant frame of the Vietnamese urban fabric.

After decades of *laissez-faire* regarding the city growth, the metropolitan authorities have come up with new priorities, beginning with the need for traffic fluidity, which reveals the rise in power of a neo-functionalism perspective concerning urban planning in Vietnam today. Beyond this concern, the inherited organic system of the alleyways is accused of challenging urban safety, fire risk for instance. These are the two main official arguments to justify the necessity of a vast alleyway enlargement programme in both cities. But it is easy to decipher other unofficial – but at least as powerful – reasons for challenging the low-rise urban pattern of alleyway neighbourhoods; think for example of the hygienist's vision of a modern city.

The metropolisation process comes hand-in-hand with a tremendous increase in demand for land and land prices during the last decade. Within urban contexts, where the price of land is, among other variables, linked to the accessibility of

the street, enlarging an alleyway both maximises the value of the plot and allows residents to build higher. Thus, increasing the land's profitability is undeniably one of the most powerful engines of urban renewal of the vernacular neighbourhoods.

And so is the urban authorities' will to control and regulate the daily practices of the urban population. The figure of the street seller is among the most threatened. Despite his central place in the everyday nature of the urban fabric, his presence is more and more perceived as contrary to the 'worlding' ambitions of Hanoi and HCMC. At the interface of network and territory, both fixed and on the move, the street seller is an interesting pivot of the street socio-spatial apparatus in Vietnam. Yet the street seller tends to be evicted in favour of traffic. In this context, there is a growing convergence of views between the urban authorities and the urban middle class owners. This convergence can be explained by the growing worry of middleclass members to protect and mark out the boundaries of their newly acquired properties by promoting a clearer distinction between public and private urban spaces. The urban authorities officially support this growing distinction, by promoting the intended edification of what is called a 'civilised and modern' city *(đô thị văn minh, hiện đại).* Official poster campaigns urge urban dwellers to follow new urban rules of civilisation, such as no trade on the sidewalk, in order to build 'cultural neighbourhoods' *(khu phố văn hóa).*

Furthermore, the current evolution of each neighbourhood depends greatly on its relationship with the emerging and renewed 'metropolitan centralities'. In HCMC, wards 22 of *Bình Thạnh* district and 13 of *Phú Nhuận* district are among the most integrated in the official renewal projects. Interestingly, despite their advanced level of metropolisation, these two wards show different trends as far as alleyways are concerned. Most alleyways of ward 13 in *Phú Nhuận* have been enlarged and renewed over the past five years, whilst those in ward 22 in *Bình Thạnh* district will soon be replaced by new vertical urban forms, along rescaled transport infrastructures. These infrastructures are already abruptly cutting up the ancient urban fabric, reflecting perfectly a common effect of 'project-based urbanism'.

The alleyway, a matter of function

Hanoi and HCMC street patterns are characterised by an endless network of alleyways. These alleyway neighbourhoods have already shown a great capacity for transformation over the past decades, especially through the various creative interventions by residents, who make full use of the alleyways on an everyday basis. Alleyways remain core elements of the urban identity and are still the most common form of public space, even though current infrastructure developments are leading to new, very distinct, articulations between public and private spaces, which were once very blurred categories in the Vietnamese urban context.

The organic growth of the urban and social network appears to be challenged today. Despite its modest local ambitions, the current project of alleyway enlargement operates within a broader development of infrastructure by the metropolitan authorities. In the current metropolisation process, movement is privileged above the production of local territories. In this perspective, the street is envisioned as a single-function urban object, entirely dedicated to transit traffic, while it used to be highly multifunctional.

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Filling the urban transport infrastructure gap

As a consequence of their economic take-off and rapid urbanisation, the two major Vietnamese metropolises, Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), saw a tremendous increase of private vehicles (motorcycles and then cars) in their streets, leading today to severe traffic congestion. To address this critical issue, the cities have two responses. On the one hand, they build new roads to satisfy the emerging middleclass that can afford private vehicles. On the other hand, they attempt to modernise public transit networks, especially by developing large scale mass rapid transit systems. While the latter is considered an appropriate response to solve urban problems (e.g., traffic congestion, atmospheric pollution, and urban sprawl), the local authorities are facing various constraints that could jeopardise the construction of the expected public transit facilities. Hence the transportation sector provides another perspective to the challenges of the metropolisation process in both Hanoi and HCMC.

Clément Musil & Vương Khánh Toàn

IT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME since electric tramways were carrying people in Hanoi and HCMC's streets. This urban snapshot actually belongs to two different past periods. The Northern metropolis operated its tramway network until the early 1990s. Decades after the American bombing campaigns that heavily damaged Hanoi's transport infrastructures, the tramway was finally dismantled because of a lack of financial resources to maintain it. In the Southern metropolis, that back then was called Saigon and was the capital of the Republic of South Vietnam, the tramway only ran until the mid-1950s. The then president of South Vietnam, Ngô Đình Diệm, decided in the name of modernity to remove the trams to make room for imported cars as well as scooters and motorbikes.[1] Despite different trajectories regarding urban transportation, both cities do not yet have other collective transit services (apart from bus lines); while today private vehicles increasingly clog the cities arterials.

The ongoing urban transport transition
Due to a rapid economic development that has driven the country since the mid-1980s, and its positive consequences for the population, city dwellers started to have the financial resources to drop bicycles and abandon inefficient public bus services in exchange for individual motorbikes. Because this transport mode proved to be very compatible with the network of narrow alleyways in the two cities, Hanoi and HCMC quickly became two so-called 'motorcycle dependent cities', in the same way as other South-East Asian metropolises.[2] As a result, in 2015, the capital city had nearly 5 million registered motorbikes for an estimated population of 7 million; while the Southern metropolis counted more than 8 million inhabitants with 6.5 million registered motorbikes.[3]

Although the motorbike modal share is on average 80% (and less than 10% for public transit) in both cities, the dependency is evident today with inhabitants merging with their motorbikes like Centaurs with their horses, on a never-ending commute through the city. Whereas motorbikes dominate the streets, cars emerge and appear as a strong competitor in terms of desirability, status and scarce road space. Even though the number of cars can still be considered low,[4] it is rising by more than 10% every year in both cities.

The increase of vehicles has at least two most undesirable, yet well known, consequences: congestion and pollution. Congestion leads to an annual shortfall of USD 1.2 billion for the economic stakeholders in HCMC.[5] In an effort to tackle congestion-related problems, to improve the environmental quality for city residents, and to cope with climate change-related adverse effects, the Government plans to fill the urban transport infrastructure gap by carrying out two sets of measures in each city. The strategy aims at expanding the existing road network (widening major axes, building ring roads, elevated highways and flyovers) on the one hand, and building extensive mass transit systems composed of metro lines and bus rapid transit corridors on the other. Urban transport is thus transitioning from being purely individual, to a transport system that provides public transit as an alternative.

The expected urban transport transition
Stimulated by vibrant economic growth (more than 8% on average this last decade) and by a rapid increase in population (between 3-3.5% since 2009), Hanoi and HCMC recently adopted ambitious public transit development plans. The 'Capital City Master Plan to 2030 and Vision to 2050', approved in 2011, foresees building eight metro lines (a total of 331 km), three monorail lines, plus nine express bus routes. In the south, HCMC adjusted its transport plan in 2013, which suggested that by 2030, the city would be equipped with eight metro lines, plus one tramway and two monorail lines, for a total of 216 km (see map 1) and will count six bus rapid transit corridors that bring an additional 100 km of public transit. The objective set out for both cities is a modal share of public transport reaching 25% of city travel by 2020.

However, between what the plans target and what is being realised today, there is a significant gap. Hanoi has two metro lines under construction (No.3 and 2A, of 12.5 km and 13 km respectively), a 15 km bus rapid transit corridor, and two other metro lines (No.1 and 2) in the detailed design phase. HCMC is building its first metro line (No.1) of 20 km, and line No.2 plus a section of line No.5, with the first bus rapid transit corridor barely in the detailed design phase. According to the Ministry of Transport, the first mass rapid transit that will run in Vietnam should be metro line No.2A in Hanoi; for which the opening ceremony is expected by the end of 2016 – though all projects commonly suffer critical delays and significant cost overruns.[6]

Even if construction of these public transit systems is slow, the process has been triggered. Consequently, the urban landscape in both cities will soon radically change. The new infrastructures will be built mainly with viaduct sections, and underground sections applied in high density areas only. Regarding their spatial orientation, these facilities will connect the inner city cores to their suburbs, where the local governments plan to develop satellite cities and new urban areas. These facilities will also bring ambitious and large-scale estate developments such as high-rise offices, housing, and shopping malls.

These urban development and renewal patterns are not unfamiliar in South-East Asia. In the era of globalisation, the construction of these new transportation systems confirms that the urbanisation process in Vietnam joins the 'single urban discourse'.[7] This trend is also reinforced by the involvement of powerful private domestic real estate developers (e.g., Vingroup, Bitexco, Dai Quang Minh) who are investing in areas surrounding future metro stations and who manage to bypass the rigid public planning process.[8] Both the transportation network and property development are features of 'urban convergence' observed since the late 1990s in the South-East Asian region. Today Vietnam is definitively part of this tendency with new mega-infrastructure projects underway. However, these projects are functioning under several constraints that could jeopardise the development of the expected mass public transit systems.

Constraints to the development of cities' public transit systems
Apart from technical issues that delay the construction of the metro lines and bus rapid transit corridors, the final realisation of the overall transport plans are challenged by various additional obstacles in both cities, namely financial issues and land acquisition difficulties.

Although the Vietnamese Government aims to develop modern public transit systems, the authorities face a severe lack of financial and technical resources. The authorities mainly lean on Official Development Assistance (ODA) provided by international donors, and secondarily on private sector capital. However, because public transit projects are today both costly and sophisticated,[9] and it is uncertain whether they will generate any profit (all over the world public transit systems are mainly in deficit and subsidised), ODA mostly co-funds these initiatives. The Government contributes up to 20% of the construction costs of each project.

Today the situation seems to be troublesome and fragmented. Among all the projects that are under construction and in the detailed design stage (i.e., 9 in total), there are 9 different international donors involved. The Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) co-funds metro lines No.1 and 2 in Hanoi and No.1 in Ho Chi Minh City; the Chinese Government finances one line in Hanoi (No.2A); the French Government and its cooperation agency *(Agence Française de Développement)* teamed up with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the European Investment Bank (EIB) to co-fund metro line No.3

Below left:
Hanoi daily traffic jams (photograph by author).

Below right:
Ho Chi Minh City metro line No.1 under construction (photograph by Clément Musil.

The challenge of building mass rapid transit systems

in Hanoi; the German and Spanish Governments also joined the ADB and the EIB to co-fund two metro lines in Ho Chi Minh City (No.2 and 5); and the World Bank grants loans to build the first bus rapid transit corridors in both cities. Despite this multitude of donors, the financing of numerous additional planned projects still requires confirmation, and although other donors, such as South Korean bilateral cooperation, as well as private investors have expressed certain interest, little discussion has been concluded and uncertainty remains.

While the Government is in need of financial assistance, ODA donors are in a comfortable situation to offer, and also to compete against one another. This is explained by the benefits that each ODA supplier can gain in granting loans to Vietnam. In fact, each donor imposes particular conditions for granting their loan. The Japanese assistance, which has the most attractive financial offer, is mainly characterised by a 'tied' financial aid. This means that the loan is conditioned by the use of Japanese technology and expertise. On the other hand, for facilities in which multilateral donors are involved, the financial aid is considered to be 'untied'. The development banks allow open tenders for which both foreign and local contractors can submit their bids. However, these donors impose other strict requirements such as respect for ethical, social and environmental rules when implementing the project. The Vietnamese Government has then to meet conditions like minimising the project's adverse effects on the environment and population, particularly when resettlement is required.

Diversified financing sources are certainly an advantage to the cities, helping them with access to required funds for project implementation. In return, however, these loans weigh heavily on the country's debt and the authorities are made to comply with each donor's conditions.[10] They are often forced to depend on various foreign techniques and technologies, which may not be totally compatible with each other. Furthermore, diversification of financing parties has the effect of partitioning the projects. This approach could be counterproductive, as the goal is that all public transport facilities form a unified system in order to challenge private vehicles.

In addition to the financial aspect, access to land has been a major obstacle in every urban transport project initiated so far in Vietnam. Problems in accessing land increase the overall costs and delay the completion of the works. Expropriation, compensation and resettlement procedures are the most difficult stages in the project implementation. Unlike road building projects, the first studies on metro and bus rapid transit corridors seemed to have little impact on the land (as was the city authorities' understanding). Indeed, metro lines are built off-ground and appear to be less land-consuming. As for bus corridors, they are integrated in enlarged road arteries and thus do not directly need land acquisition.

However, since works started in Hanoi and HCMC, the land issue has re-emerged as a major concern. Whereas the need for land acquisition is limited, resettlement is inevitable,

especially for works on train depots, access to stations, roads and other network deviations, installation of ventilation shafts and safety systems in underground sections. For instance, in the case of metro line No.2 in HCMC, more than 22 hectares of land located in urban districts are to be acquired and 400 households will be relocated and compensated, with the total cost estimated at USD 115 million. With such conditions, the local governments face two major challenges when building other public transit facilities: the establishment of land reserves and the management of resettlement procedures.

Although cities in Vietnam do not have the 'urban pre-emption right' to establish land reserves, both cities do have a Land Development Centre. This kind of public body is in charge of acquiring plots and compensating land users. However, they have had little room to operate so far since they have limited financial resources and land use planning is unclear. In this context, those Centres are in an unfavourable position to establish land reserves and to provide plots for building the expected infrastructures. Moreover, the land located around the future metro stations, where high land value increase is predicted, has already been acquired, notably by well-informed property developers.

Resettlement procedures related to public transport infrastructures pose another problem for the authorities. Whilst public transport projects are developed in the name of public interest, most of the land users who are affected by the projects are reluctant to transfer their rights to the administration.[11] Though land users do not oppose the legitimacy of the operation, they contest the amount of proposed compensation. Actually, land prices are often undervalued, while both cities periodically experience uncontrolled land price increasing.[12] Furthermore, from the first land assessment until the government's request for site clearance, which may take several years, land prices may have surged, causing fresh disagreements with disaffected households. Moreover, opposition is stronger and more violent with households who do not have regulated land use rights. The administration estimates that the latter are only compensated for their lost property but not for the land, and the compensation amount for the building is often ridiculously low compared to the amount paid for the land. Hence, the progress of urban transport projects poses a critical issue of equity of households to administrative procedures, and questions the transparency of resettlement regulations.

The future of public transit depends on pragmatic policies

Due to Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City's rapid urbanisation, building modern mass transit systems is a priority to ensure sustainable and liveable urban development in the coming decades. To break with current practices of city travel mainly by motorbikes, the Government has no option but to invent a new way of mobility based on fast, efficient and attractive public transport, ensuring that commuting is viable across the entire metropolitan areas.

To cope with this challenge, the cities do have ambitious plans. But because of lacking financial resources and the sophistication of planned facilities like the metro lines, the future of the metropolitan public transit systems depends on foreign financial technology and aid. Challenges in land acquisition, tardy resettlement procedures, and land disputes have slowed down the completion of works. Furthermore, issues in governance of such on-going projects have tested the authorities. They are now pushed to design a suitable institutional architecture to ensure that facilities under construction may later function as a unique system.

Given these constraints, it is doubtful that urban public transit systems will be built faster than the road networks, in spite of the pledged construction of the first metro lines in Hanoi and HCMC. Regarding the metropolitan road network evolution in both cities, the local governments have technical know-how at their disposal without being reliant on foreign technology. They are also able to raise funds through partnerships involving the private sector based on proven and successful mechanisms. Moreover, a growing slice of the population that can afford a car will expect the development of road networks. The challenge that the authorities face does not only concern financial and technical aspects, but also its capacity to convince the citizens that public transport, instead of private vehicles, is the future of a modern metropolis.

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4 Respectively with more than half a million cars registered in each city in 2015, this amount represents half of the private cars in circulation nationwide (op.cit).
5 See Vietnam Net (09/16/2014), *"Kẹt xe gây thiệt hại 1,2 tỷ USD/ năm cho TP.HCM"* ["Traffic jams cause damage 1.2 billion/year for HCMC"].
6 Regularly the local press reports news concerning the reassessment of both cost and schedule of the projects. As an example see following articles: *Tuổi Trẻ* (27/10/2015) "Chinese-contracted railway project in Hanoi suffers 57% cost overrun"; *Thanh Niên* (13/09/2014) *"Metro vốn tăng 'phi mã', tiến độ 'rùa bò'"* ["Metro: cost increases with the speed of a galloping horse, project progress at the pace of the tortoise"].
7 Without denying the local specificities, Dick and Rimmer (1998) in an article entitled "Beyond the Third World City: the new urban geography of South-East Asia", suggest that since the late 1980s, and after the colonialism period, the process of urban convergence has re-emerged. (i.e., "South-East Asian cities are on the way to become more like Western cities")
8 Based on the case of Metro Manila, a similar trend has already been analyzed by Shaktin (2008) in "The city and the bottom line: urban megaprojects and the privatization of planning in Southeast Asia".
9 Depending on the technology and the contractors, building a metro line costs between USD 70 and 165 million/km. For instance the cost of the 20km line No.1 in Ho Chi Minh City is over USD 2.5 billion.
10 Vietnam's public debt is approaching the limit of 65% of the country's gross domestic product, which is considered by the international donors as a threshold to review the grant loans' conditions.
11 It should be noted that there is no private land ownership in Vietnam. According to the 1992 Constitution, all land belongs to the People, and the State is responsible for its management. Since the land law promulgated in 1993, land users are supposed to have a land use right regulated by the administration. This right can be revoked by authorities to implement projects that are part of the city's master plan and land users have to be compensated.
12 For instance, on the land market in HCMC, one square meter on the outskirts costs around USD 500, and in central districts, the price reaches USD 4,000. But to calculate compensations, the administration refers to the official land price framework, which is irrelevant and lower than the market price. In recent years the gap between the administrated prices and real market prices has tended to decrease.

The production of the city: reshaping state-society relation

The Vietnamese Party-State, characterised by its communist affiliation, enduring centralisation and lasting authoritarianism is nevertheless evolving. The city production and reproduction mechanisms actively contribute to reshaping State-Society relations and local political structures.

Juliette Segard

URBANISATION IN VIETNAM, both in its nature and modalities, can be seen as 'colonising' peri-urban and rural areas, as local stakeholders (from the public authorities to the inhabitants) are excluded from the planning and decision-making processes. This sprawl takes place without fully considering the existing situation, by dismantling territories and progressively imposing a new political and administrative order.

Urbanisation is presented as an inevitable step for the modernisation and the industrialisation of the country. The urban forms produced reflect urban utopia mainstreamed in many official discourses: cities have to be modern *[hiện đại]* and have to symbolise the power of the Nation. Unplanned and endogenous urbanisation doesn't fit these categories whereas international 'products', from shopping malls to condominiums, are desirable emblems of Vietnam's worldwide integration.

More pragmatically, the dynamics and ways of extension allow both personal and structural accumulation of wealth for the established powers as well as for the *nouveaux riches.* Considering the 'land fever' and on-going speculation, public-private growth coalitions are progressively shaped, between public authorities and private (domestic or foreign) entrepreneurs.

The scale and pace of projects have increased tremendously in certain regions, as in the Red River Delta,[1] bringing urbanisation an all new level, especially since infrastructures have been developed and migration rules loosened, allowing people to move more easily. For instance, both urban-dwellers and rural migrants resettle in peri-urban areas, the latter to fill unqualified and low-paid positions in industrial zones or to work in the construction sector. Urban fringes are thus profoundly transformed by these material, demographic and social evolutions, which hybridise territories and communities.

But the situation is not that one dimensional, and the city production or reproduction mechanisms actually contribute to reshaping State-Society relations and local political structures. Dynamics of urbanisation renew tensions, create new tensions or even cause uproars. The popular resistance is multi-shaped and has various roots: it goes from protecting cultural heritage or natural resources at the provincial-scale, to defending a few hectares of agricultural land in a village.

Resisting the exogenous nature of urbanisation
In numerous villages surrounding Hanoi, local resistance to recovery of lands for urbanisation purposes is triggered by several grievances: the protection of local livelihoods that rely either on pluriactivity or on agriculture, the defence of the community 'threatened' by the arrival of a non-native population, the feeling of injustice and the perception that projects are harming the common good, the uncertainty and privation of reliable information, the precluding decision-making processes and, prosaically, the insufficient amount of compensation.[2] Some arguments can be stronger in some villages than others, but generally speaking, all resistance encompasses these elements one way or another.

The imposition of a project or unfavourable policy contributes to ad hoc coalitions of opposition that can bring together various stakeholders: the village as a whole, only a few households, the hamlets adjacent to the future project, local authorities, mass organisations, head of hamlet, local communist party members, etc. Of course, on the decision makers' and promoters' side the goal is to prevent the formation of these collectives and to fragment the front, using threats, and moral or financial incentives to 'surrender' first.

Local authorities, torn by their dual mandate and accountability – as representatives of their constituencies and as the agents of the State – flip from one side to the other depending on leaders' personality, situation, grading of the project on the injustice scale or pressure put on them. Whereas in some villages they can be the 'intermediary' negotiating and even promoting a project, in others they can lead the opposition or advocate for adjustments. The palette of resistance 'tools' also varies from one conflict to another; similar to Scott's "everyday forms of resistance", it ranges from propagating rumours to lodging a formal complaint to the higher levels of authorities.[3] The last resort is to physically and vocally confront a project, with very strong risks of being beaten or jailed.

These actions need to be contextualised in a movement of the liberalisation of association rights, as long as they are not subversive of or challenging to the Party's interests. Far from democracy, freedom of speech and association, this nevertheless opens new ways of creating groups that fall outside the traditional mobilisation structures, i.e., mass organisations.[4] Both NGOs and leisure associations, which can be spaces of exchange, debate and awareness raising, are multiplying in size and number. Some of these groups actually advocate for change, in policies or practices, while others are much more local, yet still in favour of helping to build a community.

The Regime pragmatism: containing the crises
The Regime, while powerful and authoritarian, is also well aware of people's opinions and is careful to use the proper amount of repression on the one hand and leniency on the other, to take divergences of opinion into account or to limit their expression.[5] The production of the city and planning regulations are good examples of the iterative process, between State and Society, of designing and adapting the law and even institutions, so that the Party-State is not threatened. Adjustment to reality and pragmatism are key, and in that sense the Regime and its powers are well suited to quickly reacting and adapting.

For instance, while division and coercion manoeuvres can sometimes succeed, especially when public forces are involved, villagers' coalitions can also manage to halt a project, challenge it and, in any case, participate in a larger movement that influences law-making, rules, procedures. Bypassing traditional structures of 'representation', their arguments emerge in the public realm. Newspapers, blogs or oral transmission contribute to raising awareness on planning and land-related conflicts: people know what happened in other villages and methods of resisting are spreading through the peri-urban areas. At the same time, people are better informed

Above: Area of Nam Trung Yen, a new urban zone on the outskirts of Hanoi (Courtesy of François Carlet-Soulages/ NOI Pictures).

of rules and rights; in some urban districts citizens have utilised the justice department and have started legal trials. Nevertheless, even if there is a clear accumulation of resistance and 'hot-spots', it would be misleading to interpret this as the creation of a common front or a wider social and political movement.[6] Conflicts are predominantly local, contingent with local affairs and rarely go beyond that.

However, in recent years in the Red River Delta, for instance, examples of shifts in public policies or implementation decisions have been numerous. Following the 2008 change of administrative and territorial boundaries of the capital, the city's authorities – under central government – decided to suspend most investment and construction licences, officially in order to check their relevance for the Master Plan. But it was also a way to benefit more directly from the extension of Hanoi, both politically and economically, and to 'freeze' and then cancel some projects that triggered popular resistance.[7] This cut-down reflected the multiplication of projects that didn't respond to any needs and which only revealed district /province entrepreneurial positioning or speculation.

Nowadays, reconversion of uses and revocation of licences for industrial parks that have been announced by the Prime Minister show the central authority's pragmatism: withdraw support to projects, sometimes locally selected, that are neither justifiable nor efficient and that may or have caused local resistance. Institutional and legal frameworks are also evolving by partly taking into account citizens' claims, nationwide. For instance, following the 1997 rural uprisings in Thái Bình, Thanh Hóa and Đồng Nai, which were linked to corruption and collusion, the Grassroots Democracy Decree was adopted, introducing new information, control and participation procedures to take local decisions. More recently, the revised Land Law was adopted and entered into force in 2014. Some articles clearly address opacity and haziness of procedures; e.g., while the payment of compensation is set to take place 30 days after the recovery of land, councils need to be implemented by the president of the People's Committee at the provincial and communal levels, in order to evaluate the local circumstances and suggest compensations accordingly.

Obviously, there is a major disconnect between the legislative framework and its implementation on the ground, and these laws or decrees are issued to a great extent in order to present a more democratic and voluntaristic face to the public opinion, but also to the international community and the private sector, even if it is not backed by strict enforcement. Nevertheless, the legislation and the administration evolve, so does the Regime, and citizens sometimes actively contribute to these dynamics.

Control over natural resources and urban planning question both structures and individuals, public authorities and citizens: how they position themselves, what to protect, which limits to impose, what matters. Production or renovation of cities challenge power and in Vietnam's case it actually contributes to 'negotiating' the Regime's authoritarianism, as a growing number of citizens rally to defend either their livelihoods and interests, or the common good.[8]

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Migrant workers in suburban HCMC: towards an emergent autonomous activism?

In HCMC's metropolitan area, suburban areas are home to a significant concentration of population and industrial estates. Essentially funded by foreign companies, HCMC's industrial parks are hubs for export activities and flows of internal migrant workers.[1] This concentration leads to various social and economic issues, including the temporary and incomplete integration of migrant workers into the community. Mostly coming from rural areas, Vietnamese migrant workers suffer various social and economic difficulties essentially due to a restrictive and obsolete internal residency permit system known as the *hộ khẩu* system. In response to such a precarious situation, Vietnamese migrant workers establish multiple individual and collective adaptation strategies. Furthermore, the dynamics linking the suburban areas, industrial estates and worker dormitories, create a new dominated social class eager to claim social rights and seek recognition from the authorities.

Trần Khắc Minh

From economic insecurity and social stigmatisation to adaptation strategies

Migrant workers' integration into the city is complicated for several reasons, both material and immaterial. Firstly, the majority of migrant workers live in poorly equipped dormitories, sharing small rooms of 15-18 square metres.[2] Migrant workers' consumption patterns and lifestyles are also characterised by the rationalisation of essential expenses, leaving aside leisure expenses. Their working lives are monotonous and exhausting, yet they are poorly paid, with monthly wages ranging from 100 to 200 euros per month.

Alongside the economic insecurity, migrant workers in HCMC also suffer from social stigmas, reflected clearly in a restrictive residential registration system and a widely held anti-migrant mentality in the Vietnamese urban society. The majority of migrant workers in HCMC only own short-term residency permits (KT3 or KT4), which have many administrative constraints: owners of these residency permits are unable to access the housing market, to send their children to public schools or to benefit from the local healthcare system. Furthermore, the administrative process to obtain permanent residency permits for migrant workers is particularly slow or even deliberately delayed by local authorities.[3] The anti-migrant mentality pervasive in the Vietnamese society leads to inferiorisation of the migrants.[4] Finally, the relationship between migrant workers and the local suburban population could be described as an identity conflict between a young and dynamic urban world, inspired by modernity, and a declining ancient rural world.[5] Industrial zones in Vietnamese metropolises are a perfect theatre for these oppositions to flourish, and in doing so, they contribute to the production of 'unequal cities' in Vietnam.

Spatially segregated and socially stigmatised, migrant workers in HCMC suburban areas develop a large range of adaptation strategies to facilitate their integration into the city. Community support networks, tightly linked to worker dormitories, represent the most primitive form of these adaptation strategies. They are strictly based on regional affiliations of migrant workers. They are also characterised by their omnipresence and versatility: community networks are able to disseminate information and to provide daily and financial support to migrants. Despite their unquestionable importance, these networks have many structural weaknesses. As they rely mainly on workers' dormitories and regional affiliations, they create a new communitarianism that aggravates the segregation between local population and migrant workers, and also between different migrant communities.

Emergence of a new, autonomous, decentralised and spontaneous worker activism

The collective dimension of migrant workers' adaptation strategies relies less on community support networks than on the development of an autonomous, spontaneous and decentralised worker activism. The *đổi mới* reforms marked the beginning of an important liberal turn of the State on labour questions with a withdrawal from the negotiations between workers and employers. Consequently, tensions between workers and companies have progressively increased, leading to intense worker mobilisations from 2006 to 2008. Since then, a new worker activism has emerged.

Struggle and opposition methods are sophisticated. Based on local migrant communities, workers' mobilisations are spontaneous and decentralised; waves of actions are organised from one industrial zone to another. The leaders of these movements are usually kept anonymous,[6] as their organisational roles are essential for these mobilisations.

A typical worker dormitory in a suburban area of HCMC (district Binh Tân) (Photo by Marie Gibert).

Ways of resisting are particularly diverse, combining soft methods such as collective petitions, and hard methods such as collective resignations or abandonment of work to paralyse the production line. The degree of intensity of these strategies depends on the employer's reaction; without meaningful results from soft methods, hard strategies will be initiated to force employers to engage in negotiations.

State withdrawal from labour issues and the crisis of the Vietnamese trade union

Before the *đổi mới* reforms, labour issues were entirely in the hands of the State. To protect workers' interests, the Vietnamese government established its own executive organism – the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA). The Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) had also created a unique national trade union, the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL), to take charge of labour issues.

After the *đổi mới* reforms commenced, the role of the State in labour protection issues became more and more obsolete. Today, the VGCL and the MOLISA are particularly weak in protecting workers. The slow legal procedures when organising a strike and the inefficiency of VGCL's local cells cannot provide a strong framework for workers' mobilisations. Essentially remaining under the control of the CPV, the VGCL appears to be a simple propaganda tool.

The diminishing role of the State in labour protection issues has led to the emergence of worker activism. The development of a new worker activism is essentially based on the emergence of a new political actor, 'the informal workers' leaders', who coordinate the movement at a local level. The relation between this new political actor and the State is particularly conflictual. For example, the VGCL and the MOLISA exclude all informal workers' leaders from labour issues negotiations. According to the State, the informal workers' leaders are considered to be reactionary and politically incompatible with the communist party.

Confronted with the erosion of its legitimacy, the State has recently undertaken a set of policies aiming to improve workers' living conditions and to reform the VGCL. In 2005, a new household registration procedure was created with a simplification of the criteria for obtaining permanent residency permits.[7] In 2007, a new residence law was enacted that allowed 230,000 migrants in HCMC to obtain their permanent residency permit.[8] As a consequence, the household registration system is becoming less and less of an administrative constraint for migrants trying to settle in the cities. The State has also established policies to improve migrant workers' living conditions through new bank loan systems, to encourage the construction of affordable low-income housing and micro-credit systems, with the help from NGOs and international institutions.

To better protect migrant workers, multiple stakeholders are involved: media, provincial authorities, informal workers' leaders, the State, etc. Henceforth, provincial authorities manage worker issues by conducting negotiations between companies and workers. In 2007, a revision of the Labour Law defined a solid framework for workers' mobilisations. Consequently, the VCGL has been attached to provincial authorities, while its local cells have been involved in companies' management. In HCMC, different initiatives have been conducted to integrate informal leaders into the protection of workers: the number of labour inspectors has increased from 7 to 100 since 2006, and self-managed worker groups have also been organised.[9] Nevertheless, under the supervision of the VCP, the VCGL is categorically opposed to this change, as it considers informal workers' leaders to be reactionary agents. In 2014, the anti-China worker riots in Binh Duong province threatened the involvement of the State. The government decided to oppress worker activism, condemning anti-China riots as a reactionary movement. In conclusion, the relationship between the State and worker activism is extremely ambiguous and fragile. By tackling political issues, contemporary activism appears to be directly opposing the VCP hegemony.

Despite the State's attempts to pacify the situation, the recent policies present several weaknesses. Firstly, the majority of migrant workers are still excluded from permanent residency because companies commonly refuse to sign long-term contracts, which is one of the most important criteria to obtain permanent residency permits.[10] Secondly, microcredit and social housing are scarce and hardly accessible to migrant workers. Finally, migrant workers do not show a strong will to integrate. Migrant workers' careers are unstable, temporary and unsustainable, which does not encourage hope for permanent settlement in HCMC. The intention to return to their native provinces is rooted in many migrant workers' mentality.

In conclusion, the integration of migrant workers to HCMC is essentially characterised by a fundamental economic and social insecurity, despite various individual and collective adaptation strategies. Migrants remain second-class city-dwellers who cannot afford, and are not given the opportunity, to integrate – spatially, economically or socially. On top of this exclusion, their citizen's rights are denied as they cannot participate in the local agora, councils and branches of mass organisations included, while their representation in the work sphere is limited. In order to challenge this situation, workers have started to organise, progressively constituting a new 'class' of workers, but also of inhabitants. The State clearly needs to encourage migrant integration and to tackle the issues of worker protection. A radical reform of the VGCL would be essential to better embed the contemporary informal worker activism that is arising. A balanced power relationship between workers, companies and authorities is a prerequisite for the integration of migrants in the suburbs of HCMC, and society at large.

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Tourism, urbanisation and globalisation in Vietnam

Vietnamese cities are key in the regional positioning of their country's tourism sector. The authorities have encouraged this role, aiming for a stronger urban hierarchy. From the local to the international level, tourism participates in the material and symbolic production of Vietnamese cities. It is a significant factor in urban growth and architectural changes, but tourism also fosters global integration.

Emmanuelle Peyvel & Võ Sáng Xuân Lan

IN 2014, THERE WAS A RECORD NUMBER of 38.5 million domestic tourists and 7.87 million international visitors in Vietnam, generating 7.3 billion euros.[1] According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), that amount represented 9.3% of the GDP and 7.7% of total employment in that same year (including jobs indirectly supported by the industry).[2] This mobility is fast growing: in 20 years, domestic tourism has multiplied by a factor of 11 and international tourism by 8. While the growth of international tourism in Vietnam is impressive, we should keep in mind that it only represents a third of the visitors to Thailand and a seventh of those in China. Nevertheless, this country is an ever-more popular destination in Pacific Asia, which remains one of the most dynamic touristic regions in the world: this region received less than one hundredth of the international tourism flow in 1950, it now receives almost a fifth. By 2030, the World Tourism Organization (WTO) forecasts an average annual growth rate of 3.3% worldwide, 4.9% in Asia-Pacific. Therefore, Asia is today a center of gravity in the global tourism system, in which Vietnam fully belongs. Tourist nationalities reflect both regional and international links with the past: the Chinese, Korean and Japanese respectively occupy the top three places, the USA comes in 4th, Russia 6th and France 11th.

The growth of tourism is a consequence of the urban transformations in the country since *Đổi Mới*. Indeed, tourism and cities entertain a privileged relationship: cities are both gateways for international tourism and transit points structuring the tourist map of the country, but they are also destinations in their own right. For all these reasons, tourism is an essential actor in Vietnamese urbanisation, both materially and symbolically. It is a factor of urban growth and architectural transformations, but also fosters global integration with its associated flows of people, capital, practices and imaginary.

Tourism also contributes to urban lifestyles. It shows us the types of city-dwellers that the Vietnamese are becoming, the expression of their individuality, their aspirations and the meaning they assign to wealth. Tourism is a good way to understand how the Vietnamese society builds its relationship with time, both past and future. The Vietnamese city is increasingly valued for its emblematic places of both modernity – embodied by buildings and shopping malls –

Above: Tourism as a vector of globalisation: a Hmong woman in front of a pub at the Sapa Hill Station in 2007 (photo by Emmanuelle Peyvel)

and historical depth – with active heritage policies, and now 8 properties inscribed on the UNESCO List of World Heritage that contribute to an international recognition of the country.

We will study these transformations from a geographical perspective to better understand how tourism is actively involved in contemporary spatial changes in Vietnamese cities. This work was conducted by delving into French colonial archives, planning documents and official statistical sources, with participative observations made during long term fieldwork in Vietnam. At the national scale, we demonstrate that tourism is a factor of urban growth and ex nihilo constructions. At the regional scale, we highlight the role of cities in the structuring of major tourist regions. At the local scale, we analyse the role of tourism in the globalisation of Vietnamese cities.

Tourism as an urban and colonial creation
The history of tourism in Vietnam reveals the complexities of globalisation. Recreational mobilities, such as hydrotherapy and pilgrimage, are not new: travelers' tales echo Chinese aesthetics of landscape and body. However, the modern understanding of tourism appeared with French colonisation and the construction of the first infrastructures dedicated to tourism:[3] 7 seaside resorts (*Hòn Gay, Đồ Sơn, Sầm Sơn, Cửa Lò, Cửa Tùng, Nha Trang* and Cap St Jacques, renamed *Vũng Tàu*), and 5 hill stations (*Đà Lạt, Bà Nà, Tam Đảo, Mau Son* and *Sa Pa*). Those places were chosen for aesthetic and landscape considerations. However, the proximity to big cities, where settlers were concentrated, is essential in understanding the location of those stations and resorts. Indeed, those places were created for the rest and recreation of city dwellers.[4] In the North, Hanoi commanded three hill stations (*Sa Pa, Tam Đảo* and the small station of *Mẫu Sơn*) and four seaside resorts, that were directly dependent on medium-sized towns: *Cửa Lò* in connection with *Vinh, Đồ Sơn* and *Hòn Gay* with *Hải Phòng* and *Sầm Sơn* with *Thanh Hóa*. In the South, Sài Gòn's dwellers could enjoy the seaside resort of Cap Saint Jacques and the hill stations of *Đà Lạt*. They also gradually invested in seaside resorts such as *Phan Thiết* and *Nha Trang*. In the Centre, the settlers of Tourane (today *Đà Nẵng*), and to a lesser extent of *Huế* and *Faïfo* (*Hội An* today), could visit the hill station of *Bà Nà* and the seaside resort of *Cửa Tùng*.

In the colonial context, these stations were outstanding, not only for the physical landscape, but also in the way they were conceived. Recreational landscape transgressed both the spiritual function traditionally given to the mountains by the Kinh people, and the livelihood function assigned to the sea by the fishing culture. Both the mountain and the sea were feared. That explains the extent to which hotels, sport fields, hiking trails, panoramas and belvederes that were built in the mountains, or seafronts and beaches developed along the shoreline, constituted profound spatial innovations. At that time, the practices and representations associated with these infrastructures were totally new to the Kinh people. Tourism was therefore not only a populating activity, it also participated in the circulation of urban practices into rural places such as *Đà Lạt*, on the mountainous plateau of Lang Bian, where phones, running water, electricity and even cinemas suddenly made their appearance with the first tourists.[5]

Tourism-driven urbanism has been sustained despite decolonisation, war and the *Bao Cấp* period; none of the recreational destinations have disappeared. Today, all of them still live off tourism, and three have even experienced demographic growth and economic diversification, giving them a complete city status. Vũng Tàu and Nha Trang now exceed 400,000 inhabitants; their economy is being diversified with oil and fishing, and even academics in Nha Trang. *Đà Lạt* has over 214,000 inhabitants living mainly from tourism, horticulture and academics today. Tourist conurbations have been built, particularly between *Phan Thiết* and *Mũi Né*, and between *Đà Nẵng* and *Hội An*. Mainly fuelled by big resorts, this phenomenon has led to the privatisation of the coastline, which can lead to conflicts with the local people who see their access to the sea increasingly restricted.

Urban hierarchy and the regional structuration of tourism
Today, cities are key in the structuring of tourism in the country. This function was encouraged by the Vietnamese authorities in their first development plan, for the period 1995-2000. This plan initially identified four tourism regions: North, Central, South Central and South of the country, each structured by a regional capital and a well identified urban network. The Northern region, stretching from *Hà Giang* to *Hà Tĩnh*, was arranged around Hanoi and secondarily by *Hạ Long* Bay, and by the seaside resorts *Sầm Sơn* and *Đồ Sơn*. Hanoi also gives shape to tourism by means of tours to 'ethnic minorities' in the Northern mountains, mainly through the town of *Lào Cai*. The Central region, stretching from *Quảng Bình* to *Quảng Ngãi*, was arranged around *Huế* and *Đà Nẵng*, and differentiates itself through visits to historical sites related to the former imperial capital *Huế*, to war heritage (with the DMZ) and to the Cham civilisation (with *Mỹ Sơn*). *Hội An* has continued to gain traction in this region, particularly since its UNESCO classification in 1999. More recently, the third and fourth regions were merged. Initially formed by the South of the Centre and the South, this entity now extends from *Kon Tum* to *Minh Hải*, and has been arranged primarily around HCMC, but secondarily also *Nha Trang* and *Đà Lạt*.

Even today, land use and development plans still confirm the central role of Hanoi in the North, the urban trio of *Huế, Đà Nẵng* and *Hội An* in the Centre, and HCMC in the South. Acting as the capitals of their regions, they can be a driving force for their territory. The inner suburbs of Hanoi benefit from increasing tourism, especially in some craft villages and remarkable pagodas.[6] This phenomenon is also striking in the Mekong Delta, where ecotourism is now well developed in *Bến Tre, Cần Thơ, Sa Đéc, Vĩnh Long* and *Mỹ Tho*. Tourism is in constant progression in the region of *Long Xuyên* and *Châu Đốc* with the normalisation of the Cambodian border. The State officially recognises a number of national tourism regions (*Khu du lịch quốc gia;* KDLQG); these are regions whose infrastructures have welcomed at least 1 million tourists per year, in an area larger than 1000 hectares. Today, there are 21 KDLQG (an estimated 39 by 2030), mostly located near big and medium-sized cities, because they have a recreational function for city-dwellers. The State recognition of these areas confirms the urban predominance.

Tourism contributes to the strengthening of the Vietnamese urban hierarchy: its flows, infrastructures and revenues are more concentrated in the East than in the West of the country, that is to say the most urbanised part of the country. While the provinces of Hanoi, *Quảng Ninh* and *Hải Phòng* alone account for over 15% of the country's hotel rooms, those of *Bà Rịa, Vũng Tàu* and HCMC have over 18%. However, the Centre region is more fragmented, resulting from the dual influences of both Hanoi and HCMC. Hanoi and HCMC together account for over 80% of the five-star hotels in the country. It is also in these two metropolitan centers that the leading structures of tourism are concentrated: between 2000 and 2009, Hanoi and HCMC together accounted for 67% of the country's total tourism turnover (see the map).
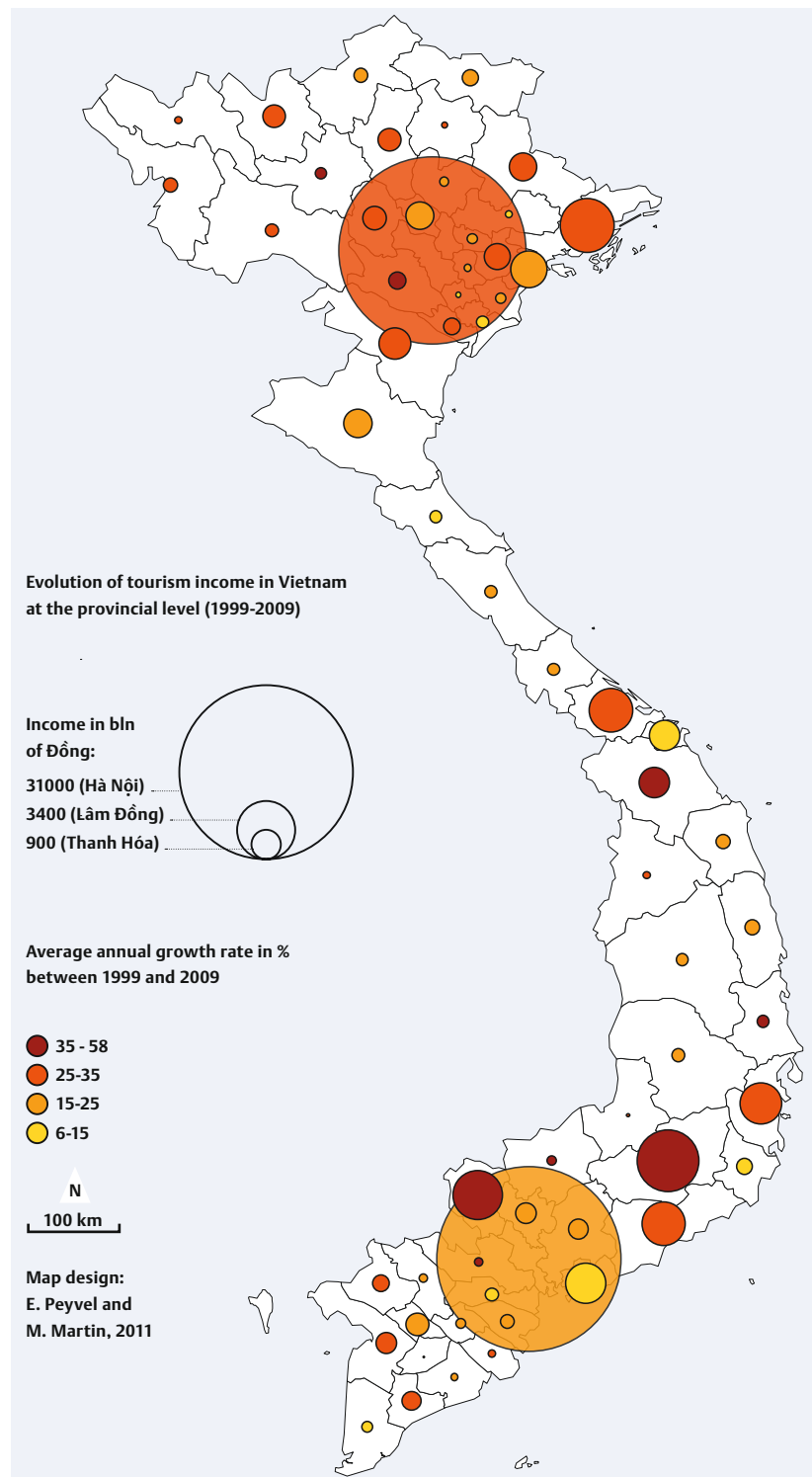
Tourism, a means of globalisation for Vietnamese cities
For Vietnamese cities, tourism is also a powerful means of integration into the global economy, since they are the main target of foreign direct investment. Global companies are established in the country, such as Accor, the world leader in hotel management, which has been authorised in the country since 1991. Less than 25 years later, it manages 16 hotels, representing more than 4000 rooms. However, this global capitalism follows a specific Vietnamese format, due to socialism.[7] The State remains a strategic player in the tourism sphere. Rather than pulling out of business abruptly for the sole benefit of the private sector, it has restructured its practices. It still oversees the development of tourism through laws, development plans and investments, especially in transport and training. The current investment plan, running until 2030 and amounting to 94.2 billion dollars, aims to deliver infrastructure upgrades, train the personnel according to international standards, and to align tourism with the discourse of sustainable development. Public actors are therefore essential, from the central to the local. *Saigontourist*, a company built in 1975 and revamped in 1999 under the control of the popular committee of the city, is a good example of the new modes of action of the State. With a total capital of over 152 million dollars, it acts as the owner, manager or investor in catering, accommodation, transport, sport and culture. In 2015, *Saigontourist* owned 54 hotels (including some luxury hotels of HCMC), 8 travel service companies, 13 resorts and 28 restaurants, making it the biggest tourism company in Vietnam.

The different transport modes used by tourists also confirms the urban predominance: cities are both hubs for national tourism and destination themselves. According to the results of the tourist expenditure survey (2013), if cars and minibuses are the most popular mode of transport, fostering a real spread of tourism across the country, airplanes are specific to large cities, with the exception of areas that have benefited from a strong-willed transport policy, such as *Điện Biên Phủ, Đà Lạt et Ban Mê Thuột*. In this perspective, it is interesting to note that tourism could legitimise the opening up of certain areas, such as the island of *Phú Quốc* and the *Côn Đảo* archipelago in the South of the country. As international and national hubs, big Vietnamese cities present the most varied modes of transport for tourists. While the train is slowly declining due to its slow speed and comparative cost, it is still present wherever airport connections are not yet effective (as in the axis Hanoi/Lào Cai). It also constitutes a popular mode of transport to domestic seaside resorts, as in the province of *Nghệ An*. Vietnamese cities act as tourist hubs, with one notable exception: they are not cruise cities, despite Vietnam being a coastal country. As a means of transport, the boat is still ignored, and the cruising market is almost inexistent, despite significant potential. The authorities are keen to develop the sector, especially in HCMC; by 2030, it aims to become a Southeast Asia tourist center by hosting cruise ships.

Producing the Vietnamese cities through and by tourism
At the local scale, tourism affects the architectural changes of Vietnamese cities. The seaside resorts built for this sole activity are organised according to the waterfront. Since the sea has

Evolution of tourism income in Vietnam at the provincial level (1999-2009)

Income in bln of Đồng:
31000 (Hà Nội)
3400 (Lâm Đồng)
900 (Thanh Hóa)

Average annual growth rate in % between 1999 and 2009
- 35 - 58
- 25-35
- 15-25
- 6-15

N
100 km

Map design:
E. Peyvel and
M. Martin, 2011

become a landscape, resorts stretch along the coastline. Now, this landscape determines the land value: the further away from the seaside, the less the land costs, and the less the city is dense. Socialism has profoundly changed urbanisation in these seaside resorts and the access to land. The Northern seaside resort of *Cửa Lò*, that depends mostly on domestic tourism, is a good example of this land functioning: the largest and most central locations are owned by the State, which built accommodations parallel to the sea. As a consequence, the most recent private accommodations are forced either to fit into the existing urban discontinuities, within the tubular forms perpendicular to the sea, or they are relegated to the edges of the resorts, where the land necessary for the most ambitious projects, such as golf courses, is located. In the bigger seaside resorts, like *Vũng Tàu, Nha Trang* and *Hạ Long* City, where international tourism increases the land pressure, the State can sell its well-located properties at high prices.

In the cities that tourism has not created, but where it was introduced, architectural and functional transformations also take place. Neighborhoods can revolve around tourism, especially in HCMC, with the backpacker area of *Phạm Ngũ Lão*, in Hanoi (36 Streets area) or in Nha Trang (between *Nguyễn Thị Minh Khai* and *Tuệ Tĩnh* streets, along the seafront promenade *Trần Phú*). The architecture and the functioning of these neighborhoods result from a hybridisation typical of globalisation, between local characteristics and globalised consumption patterns of leisure. Indeed, it is quite common in Vietnam for a district to specialise in an economic activity. In such areas, tourism is inserted into the existing grid of roads, made up of major arteries connected to a dense network of alleyways that are well-suited to tubular houses, and adapted to the land pressure, which tourism also favors.

The urban landscape is also specific because of billboards, neon signs, advertisement – often in foreign languages, mainly English, but also Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Russian and French. They create a cosmopolitan atmosphere, especially recognisable at night. Dedicated to pleasure, these neighborhoods have an exceptional concentration of bars, restaurants, travel agencies, nightclubs, spas and nail salons. Recognised as particularly cosmopolitan and permissive, they can be frequented by young and wealthy Vietnamese mingling with

travelers. They participate in the development of an urban rest and recreation culture (having a drink with friends, dancing, partying, etc.) that modifies the bodily and behavioral norms, visible in the outfits, alcohol and drugs consumption, and the presence of prostitutes, although formally condemned as social vices by the socialist regime. The entwinement of tourist and leisure practices also characterises the gamification of city centers, where festivals and exhibitions are more and more numerous. Closely associated with the event policy of major cities, tourism has become a matter of economic development and cultural influence for the authorities, as the example of the *Huế* festival shows us. As a result, many facilities have been redeveloped, especially on the waterfront (like in *Vũng Tàu* or in HCMC, with the *Nhiêu Lộc* canal) and major urban parks, like the Lenin Park in Hanoi or the *Bình Quới* Park in HCMC.

Staging Vietnamese cities: tourism and the construction of national identity, modernity and authenticity
Finally, tourism contributes to the symbolic staging of the city. This function is primarily political, imposed by the socialist regime: regional and national capitals are privileged places for national building. It is there that one finds most of the museums, in particular those that specialise in history, war and national heroes. The most frequented museums are the *Hồ Chí Minh* Mausoleum and the museum of ethnology in Hanoi, and the War Remnants Museum and the Reunification palace in HCMC, two hot spots for both domestic and international tourism.

Vietnamese cities also have a symbolic role in the country's relation to time: today they embody both modernity and heritage. They provide a spectacle of modernity that by itself justifies a visit, as evidenced by the growing phenomenon of sightseeing from tower-tops (like the Bitexco Tower in HCMC, or the Lotte Center Skyscraper in Hanoi), but also by the increasing popularity of bars, restaurants and hotels with rooftop terraces. Shopping malls, as a quintessential urban activity, also constitute a destination for tourists. HCMC and Hanoi in particular guarantee access to certain products, especially imported or luxurious ones that can't be found elsewhere. Since 1997 and the opening of the Saigon Center (District 1), HCMC has added no less than a dozen major malls, all of them located in the city center (like Vincom Center in the Dong Khoi emblematic street, or Diamond Plaza, strategically located behind the cathedral) or in new centralities such as Saigon South. Visiting new buildings and shopping is an experience of urban modernity both for tourists and city dwellers who participate in the globalised circulation of leisure models and consumption patterns.[8]

At the same time, some cities in the country build on consensual Vietnamese tradition and identity. Vietnamese heritages are the subject of specific protection and care. Among the 8 properties inscribed on the UNESCO List of World Heritage in Vietnam, 4 are in cities: the *Huế* Monuments since 1993, *Hội An* ancient town since 1999, the imperial citadel of Hanoi since 2010 and the citadel of *Hồ* dynasty since 2011. Interestingly, HCMC is still struggling to play a significant role in the development of heritage in of the country.

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Drafting and implementing urban heritage preservation policies

After decades of war and destruction, followed by the reunification of the country in 1976, the new Socialist Republic of Vietnam gave right of way to social and economic reconstruction and development. Architectural and urban heritage preservation did not appear as a priority *de facto*. However, in 1984 a first decree related to the preservation of historical and cultural relics was issued. This first step was followed during the 1990s by a broad inventory, led by the Ministry of Culture, to identify Vietnam's heritage throughout the country. Eventually, the first law regarding cultural heritage was adopted in 2001 to protect monuments, notably in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC). Through these key stages, the increasing interest for architectural and urban heritage matched the new urban dynamics that took place, namely the metropolisation process and the development of tourism. On the one hand, metropolisation implies the increase of private investments that contribute to reshaping the urban landscape. On the other hand, the development of the tourism industry pushed the authorities to think of ways to value places of interest, in order to attract visitors. These trends constitute a first step towards urban heritage thinking.

Clément Musil

TODAY, THE OUTCOMES of the heritage preservation policies are, however, contrasted between Hanoi and HCMC. Though both cities have urban heritage assets to value, especially traditional, religious and colonial heritage, the capital city Hanoi has received much more attention from the Government. The trailing situation in HCMC allows for the exploration of what urban heritage in Vietnam is today, and how to consider and preserve it. To address these issues, this paper gives three different stakeholders concerned by urban heritage policies in HCMC the opportunity to deliver their viewpoint.

The viewpoint of an international cooperation stakeholder
Fanny Quertamp (Co-director of PADDI-HCM City Urban Development Management Support Centre),[1] interviewed by Clément Musil.

In 2010, UNESCO inscribed Hanoi's Imperial Citadel on its World Heritage list. Prior to that, numerous international organisations, namely Japanese and French bilateral cooperations, and especially the French decentralised cooperation of the city of Toulouse and the Île-de-France Region (Paris metropolitan area), had conducted joint projects with the Hanoian authorities to identify and preserve remarkable architecture and specific neighbourhoods. In HCMC, however, no international institutional organisations besides your own (PADDI) are engaged in the urban heritage field. How do you explain the singular position of your institute?

Originally, the cooperation between the Lyon metropolitan area, Rhône-Alpes Region (France) and HCMC, of which PADDI is today an operational instrument, started in the early 1990s and was initiated by urban heritage issues. At that time, the Lyon metropolitan area was providing technical support to the city to launch its first heritage inventory. Further to a request from HCMC's technical departments, and since 2010, PADDI provides specific expertise concerning inventory methods as well as the drawing up of urban heritage preservation policies and tools.

There are great differences between Hanoi, Huế, and Hội An on one hand, and HCMC on the other, regarding their historical and architectural heritage. There are also differences concerning the measures adopted by the central and the local governments to preserve urban heritage. Hanoi is the capital of the country with a broad history; the city celebrated its millennium in 2010. Huế was the imperial capital of the Nguyễn dynasty from the early 19th century and Hội An is a harbour that foreign sailors have visited since the 17th century. The urban fabric of these cities has been shaped by their administrative and political functions and also by external influences that they absorbed.

HCMC, which was renamed after the reunification and was initially composed of two urban cores, namely Saigon

and Cholon, started to see urban settlement in the late 18th century. This is why HCMC is today considered to be a young city that welcomed several waves of migration, notably during the Indochina and Vietnam wars (refugees) and nowadays (workers), and is seen as a melting pot with a plural identity. Unlike Hanoi, HCMC cannot claim to have a consistent urban heritage area as the *phố cổ* (old quarter). The old quarter of Hanoi receives particular attention from the Government for being part of the urban heritage that is considered purely Vietnamese without any foreign influence and thus contributes to shaping a national identity. By contrast, HCMC is seen more as a city dedicated to the country's economic development. Its metropolitan area is today the main economic engine of the country as well as the gateway for Foreign Direct Investments. Moreover, its architectural and urban heritage is fragmented and spread out across the urban territory, and the city does not have a vast heritage area or any major iconic cultural buildings.

During the 1990s, HCMC compiled its inventory list as other cities did. Monuments, historical and architectural sites were identified, including buildings inherited from the colonial period. In other cities, however, such inventories led to the adoption of concrete measures (e.g., in 1996, Hanoi approved a preservation plan for the Hoàn Kiếm Lake area and in 1998 the Old Quarter Management Office was created), while in HCMC listed buildings were approved only occasionally (e.g., pagodas and monumental public buildings). Until today, the main target of the authorities is to develop HCMC as an economic hub. However, internally, within the municipal departments, urban heritage becomes an insistent question of debate: how to combine urban and architectural preservation while the economy is booming? Today, those departments do not have any clear and detailed regulation at their disposal to preserve urban heritage, whereas it is disappearing increasingly. This preoccupation was recently put to the forefront of public debate because of the demolition of iconic buildings like the Eden Quarter and several villas inherited from the colonial period, with currently more villas severely threatened by demolition.

Often it is stressed that there is a gap between western and eastern consideration regarding urban heritage. In this field in particular, do your local partners share the same values as you?

Actually, our concern is mostly to support our partners in the implementation of their tasks. Today, on their part, there is a real shift from a cultural and monumental approach to heritage, to a more urban approach. This is particularly a consequence of the involvement of different institutional partners. This shift is promising with regard to the preservation of buildings as well as authentic neighbourhoods. Among our partners, the Department of Culture, for instance, has a 'monumental' approach to urban heritage. It isolates the

Located at 190 Nguyễn Thị Minh Khai Street, this villa in a dilapidated state is sandwiched between two towers (photo by Clément Musil).

building's historic and aesthetic value without considering its surroundings and the dialogue that a building has with its urban environment. In 2009, however, the city approved a decision to produce a revised inventory of existing villas built before 1975, putting the Department of Urban Planning and Architecture in charge. This Department pushes to refine the concept of heritage, going beyond the building and its monumentality, and focusing on the relationship with the urban environment. Today, it is precisely in this aspect that PADDI assists the Department, notably to support the development of a methodology of the inventory work.

Currently, it is a major challenge to overcome the 'monumental' heritage approach. The value of a monument is not only linked to its history and its authenticity, but also to its contribution to the urban identity. In addition, there is a real preoccupation concerning a wide acceptation about heritage such as urban landscapes, or urban infrastructure such as canals and river banks. Adopting a broader sense of urban heritage is also in line with the definitions set by UNESCO in 2011 regarding historic urban landscape.

Although there is real effort and willingness to give meaning to the urban heritage as a whole, local authorities lack the tools to assess, define, classify and regulate urban heritage. PADDI is today supporting the authorities in developing new inventory tools, which will enable them to adopt new and more comprehensive regulations to preserve architectural and urban heritage in HCMC.

The viewpoint of a local expert
Nguyễn Trọng Hòa (High-ranking official from Ho Chi Minh City, former director of the Department of Architecture and Urban Planning and former director of the HIDS-Ho Chi Minh City Institute for Development Studies), interviewed by Clément Musil and translated by Đỗ Phương Thúy.

In the context of Ho Chi Minh City's rapid urbanisation, what does the notion of urban heritage mean for the municipality?

Whereas Ho Chi Minh City and other cities in Vietnam are developing rapidly, the notion of urban heritage is still under discussion and remains controversial. Currently, among the local and central authorities there is no consensus regarding this notion and there is clearly a lack of definition. For instance, some issues remain concerning the pool of villas built in HCMC before 1975, such as how to even determine the year of construction, because some villas have been modified and divided many times by the occupants, mostly after the reunification of the country.

As HCMC is driven by fast economic growth, the will persists to make room for modernity, which means replacing old buildings with modern ones. As preserving historic and architectural heritage is today a wish of the municipality, it is essential to extend the notion of heritage from a single building to its geo-

A 'trial and error' approach for Ho Chi Minh City

graphical location. Urban heritage should not be reduced to an individual construction, but must include its context and other features, such as gardens, fences, trees, as well as landscapes, including the surrounding canals and river banks, and even the whole neighbourhood with its 'immaterial' heritage. But above all, it is necessary to emphasise that the urban heritage issue is first of all a matter of preservation that excludes demolition.

Today, even though Vietnam has a heritage code, its application is complicated. It is especially difficult to enforce the law for private buildings. Classifying a public building, despite it being a time-consuming process, remains feasible because the city's technical departments can access the plot and the archives (when they exist), and implement surveys. When the land belongs to a private owner or an organisation such as the Army, conducting an assessment becomes a real challenge. And in the case of private residential edifices, it is difficult to convince the owners and to involve them in the preservation process. From a private owner or developer perspective, because land values in the inner city are so high, it brings more benefits to demolish a villa and build a high-rise, rather than to preserve it.

Until now, what has been done by the municipality regarding preservation policies? And why does urban heritage today appear as a critical issue for the city authorities?

Until the early 1990s urban heritage was untouched. For instance, only a few villas were demolished, and most of them were only partially modified. Since 1990, with the economic take-off, the municipality needed land to attract foreign investors and to produce new buildings such as office towers or luxurious hotels to generate profit. That is when the first villas located on attractive plots started to disappear. As this economic pressure increased, the first awareness from the authorities occurred. In 1998, with the celebration of the 300th anniversary of the city, several architectural inventories were conducted. However, the detailed inventory concerning urban and architectural heritage has never been formally approved and turned into regulation; also part of this work has been lost.

From the early 2000s, the economic pressure was so strong that the urban and architectural heritage started to be seriously affected. Informally, the issue of heritage preservation was pushed into the background, and priority was given to the economic development. Not only was heritage damaged, but the work of researchers was 'badmouthed'. The physical impacts of this property development became evident in the city. The number of destroyed villas increased sharply and this became too 'visible'. That triggered the kick-start of a second period of urban heritage conservation efforts.

Since 2009 a new inventory has been in progress. Its purpose is not directly to classify but to identify in detail the urban heritage content. However, the city lacks methodology. This is why PADDI is today supporting the municipality in this task. The purpose of this inventory is not only preser-vation, but also to provide a tool to the city departments to regulate and manage urban heritage assets on the city scale. Unfortunately, progress is slow. Local experts and foreign colleagues undergo miscommunications. Not everything old will be preserved; it is likely that only exceptional buildings will be preserved as they are. Other villas, less remarkable, will be conserved due to their landscape assets, but their functions will change, as will their interiors. While the city departments try to design better regulations, villas continue to be demolished and the assets of the ancient *Perle de L'Extrême Orient* slowly disappear. Today if a building is not classified, nothing prevents its owner from demolishing it.

The viewpoint of a foreign historian

"From the Heart. How the memories inhabited by Saigon's cityscape are being erased", by Philippe Peycam (Director of the International Institute for Asian Studies).

"If you fire at the Past with the violence of the guns, it will fire back at you with canons." It was with these words, borrowed by "an author from Daghestan", that the famous southern historian Sơn Nam (1926-2008) concluded his contribution to a book celebrating Ho Chi Minh City's multifaceted heritages.[2] Sơn Nam, like other contemporary intellectuals from the South, knew the importance of heritage as material incarnations of popular collective memories, whether these memories invoked painful or happy moments. 'Collective memories as connections to a local place' is perhaps the most democratic definition of the always ambivalent notion of heritage. Southern Vietnamese intellectuals like Sơn Nam strove to keep localised genealogies alive, drawing influence from Địa chí, the traditional Vietnamese literary genre of local monographs, giving life to people and stories of the past, of a hamlet, a 'country', a region, and by extension, a city, however miscellaneous and interwoven that local past might be. It is the southern Saigon spirit and its mix of contradictory emotions and imaginations – including political ones – that these authors and their readers sought to preserve and transmit to the millions of Saigonese, old and newcomers.

This visceral attachment to the land (and water ways), and its multiple layers of histories, echoes the presence of the early Khmers (Saigon was once called Prey Nokor), the early Vietnamese *(người kinh)* and Chinese *(người hoa)* settlers, the marks and scars left by later groups including the French, the Americans, the new Chinese and Vietnamese immigrants, but also followers of the Buddhist, Caodai, Catholic, Evangelist, Hoa-Hao and Muslim faiths, the Chams, the Indians, the Hindus, the post-1975 Vietnamese returnees, the new northern Vietnamese migrants, etc.

Somehow, this need to nurture a distinctive Southern – Saigonese – way to be Vietnamese has been encapsulated in the words and acts of two revered former southern communist revolutionary figures from the first and second liberation wars: Trần Văn Giàu (1911-2010), an early anticolonial activist and historian, and Trần Bạch Đằng (1926-2007), the leader of the Saigon resistance against the Republic of Vietnam and its American backers. For as long as these two figures of modern Vietnam were alive they continued to hold high the flame of a distinct southern Vietnamese cultural integrity and a desire to locate Saigon in its historical continuity. When I was a doctoral student in Saigon in the 1990s, I learned how these two major local figures, however complicated their past political actions had been, stood as protectors of free-minded southern intellectuals like Sơn Nam, and how they continuously supported micro initiatives aimed at uncovering and rehabilitating bits and pieces of the Saigon historical human puzzle. They stood firm, though they often found themselves powerless to oppose mindless urban projects put forward by the bureaucrats who controlled the city.

Already in the 1990s, blatantly destructive projects were put forward. For instance, the neoclassical French-built Peugeot building behind the Cathedral, from where Vietnam's Independence was proclaimed on 2 September 1945 (by Giàu), was demolished by a coalition of interests involving the South Korean Chaebol Posco; and a Singapore-Malaysian investor hoping to build a modern high-rise building in the historical heart of the city (today the Sheraton Hotel) undermined the foundations of the adjacent 1930s Indian-built central Mosque. The ends of Giàu and Đằng's public lives were increasingly devoted to expressing public outcry against nonsensical projects that one after the other wiped out parts of old Saigon. Regrettably, they were already too frail to pick a fight when the banks of the Chợ Lớn (Chinatown) Canal were bereft of their original – sometimes three-stories high – Chinese shop houses, the highest in Southeast Asia.

More was to come and the two men were no longer present when a new wave of unprecedented attacks on the historical fabric of the city was recently unleashed, such as the shady Vincom real estate company project that pulled down the Eden cinema complex and its surrounding block on Đồng Khởi Street, a block that housed more than 200 families, rich and poor, including the legendary Givral café. Surely, there should have been ways to keep elements of this central memory-rich landscape of the city. The speculative interests of Vincom, allied with the murky practices of the city's leaders, sought another path. A few months later, the 213 Đồng Khởi Street building, the first concrete-built Art Deco high-rise in the Indochinese peninsula, still in good condition, was also wiped out along with a public park where so many of the city's couples once spent their afternoons on a public bench in the shade of almost fifty-metre high trees. These landmarks

of Saigon's public popular culture have been demolished and replaced by half-empty shopping malls where exclusive luxury stores have replaced what were essentially public spaces – spaces where everyone was entitled to live and share the city. This list can easily be extended as no local memory-charged urban spaces have been spared.

Today, the old naval construction complex of Ba Son, the most important site of anticolonial industrial struggle in the collective memory of the country, owned by the Vietnamese army, will soon be replaced by yet again another exclusive, mega-project with a huge footprint that will have no connection with the rest of Saigon's urban landscape. In the words of urban sociologist Saskia Sassen, these mega-projects not only "raise the density of the city, they actually de-urbanise it." What we now see is a systematic process of corporatisation of the metropolis's urban landscape, which will "inevitably kill much urban tissue: little streets and squares, density of street-level shops and modest offices, and so on."[3]

Despite punctual efforts carried out by members of the municipality's technical departments to classify elements of urban heritage, the questions that remain for everyone who love(d?) this city are: why such a blindness on the part of the leaders? Can this be explained by a disconcerting lack of historical and cultural education? Or is it just basic, mediocre greed and collusion with big national and international corporate interests at the expense of all other concerns? Or else, is there some naïve idea of 'progress' in their mind to think that Đồng Khởi Street should become the Orchard Road of Saigon – with, like so many leaders of Asia, a blind admiration for the top-down corporatised Singaporean state model?

In the Vietnamese context, one thing is certain: this state of mind does not just betray a surrender of responsibility to the forces of global corporate interests vis-à-vis the people the Party represents, it also serves a political purpose. It connects with a past when Saigon dared to be more than a simple economic emporium for the country, when the city held the potential to represent an alternative way 'to be and feel Vietnamese'. It leads indeed to the effective annihilation of the spirit of a rebellious city and its people; a city where people no longer are allowed to have roots and attachments. A city divided between those who have and those who don't, of transient dwellers, of salary-men/women and consumers, of refugees in their own city; a corporate de-urbanisation in the service of a cultural erasure of Vietnam's South. Is this what awaits Vietnam as a whole, forty years after winning her unification at the price of millions of lives?

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1 Founded in 2006, PADDI is an innovative decentralised cooperation project between the Lyon metropolitan area and the Rhône-Alpes Region (France), and Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam). Under the Ho Chi Minh City municipality supervision, its goal is to assist the city's technical agencies in various fields of urban management.
2 NXB TPHCM. 1998. *Saigon 1698-1998, architectures and urbanism.*
3 Sassen, S. 2015. 'Who owns our cities – and why this urban takeover should concern us all', The Guardian, 24/11/2015.

Nam Mansion located at 110-112 Võ Văn Tần Street is one of the largest colonial residences in the city (Courtesy of PADDI).

Worshipping ancestors in a peri-urban context

Beyond the visible development of its built environment, it is enlightening to read the current socio-spatial evolutions of a place through the lens of domestic and cultural urban practices. For example, the way in which different categories of urban dwellers organise their ancestor worship is a revealing object of study, standing at the crossroads between geographical and anthropological approaches. This perspective offers an intimate understanding of the ways in which urban dwellers – in their growing diversity – negotiate urban mutations on a daily and private basis. Focusing on ancestor worship is also an enlightening way to appreciate the settlement of new populations in the area, both in its reality and symbolically, as both the living and the dead migrate in the process.

Ngô Thị Thu Trang

A heterogeneous district in the making

Bình Tân district is one of the areas that best illustrate the steady pace of urban development and the polymorphous mutations of Ho Chi Minh City today. Still classified as a rural district *(huyện)* until the year 2003, Bình Tân is now the most recent urban district *(quận)* of the Southern Vietnamese metropolis. The area is a strategic gateway between HCMC and the Mekong delta region. Its location is embodied by the presence of major infrastructures such as highways and transportation nodes – in particular *bến xe miền tây,* one of the most important metropolitan bus stations – and rapid industrial development over the last ten years. This urban context involves high migration rates and radical mutations of the district's spatial organisation. The population of Bình Tân district increased by 60% between 2004 and 2012 (today reaching about 630,000 inhabitants), and about 50% of the population growth is linked to rural migrations, mainly from the Southern Vietnamese provinces.[1]

Once mainly inhabited by rural families who owned typical low-rise detached houses with small gardens *(nhà vườn),* Bình Tân district today welcomes numerous new housing developments, mainly dedicated to the urban middleclass. Furthermore, the growing industrial zones of the area attract many migrant workers, on a more temporary basis. These dwellers often stay in collective dormitories or rent individual rooms within existing homes. Thus, this migratory trend leads to social stratification and spatial reorganisation in the district. The current inhabitants of a once quite homogenous rural district are becoming progressively more diverse, now experiencing varying attachments to the district. The original dwellers relate Bình Tân to the land of their family ancestors; new inhabitants tend to consider the place as a recent fruitful investment; and migrant workers see this district as nothing more than a temporary and non-specific location. The appropriation of local space is thus quite different from one category of dwellers to another.

The evolution of the most fundamental ritual act in Vietnam [2]

Ancestor worship is considered to be "the most fundamental ritual act in Vietnam" and its practice transcends the different religious affiliations that exist in the country.[3] This practice is not only a domestic ritual dedicated to the dead, but it is also a way to place every individual within a community, through the idea of lineage and kinship. This practice contributes to the production of strong social networks, by connecting places of birth and places of death. It honours not only the family ancestors on a regular basis, but it also stresses and reaffirms the family's links with the so-called 'ancestor land' *(quê nhà /đất hương hỏa).*[4] With the recent urbanisation trend and intensification of migration, the production of such networks faces new challenges, but continues to adapt.

This worship works on different temporalities. On a daily basis, it consists of placing flowers, incense and fruit on the ancestors' altar. This small domestic altar is present in nearly every Vietnamese home. In addition to this daily practice, ancestor worshipping is put on stage on special dates, such as the first, second, fifth and tenth anniversary of a direct (patrilineal) ancestor's death *(ngày giỗ).* On these occasions, a bigger ceremony is organised, to which the family at large, and even neighbours, are invited. This time and money-consuming ceremony is an occasion for the family to reaffirm its anchorage within its neighbourhood and to show its wealth and its material success. Depending on the family religion, these two main temporalities of worship can be complemented by a third, which consists of celebrating the 1st and 15th day of each lunar month. This Buddhist practice is performed inside the house, around the ancestors' altar and does not involve neighbours.[5]

Dealing with ancestor worship in a peri-urban context

Ancestor worship tends to take less time and occupy less space in urban areas today, whatever the category of urban population is concerned. Even indigenous dwellers tend to worship their ancestors in a less conventional manner than before. The most obvious changes with regard to the death anniversaries include the following: the altar has become smaller and simpler, and its votive objects less precious, although its location is still carefully chosen according to *feng shui (Phong Thủy)* precepts; while historically celebrated by sons in the context of a patrilineal cultural context, these ceremonies are now equally performed by daughters and daughters-in-law; urban dwellers in Bình Tân district no longer feel it to be appropriate to invite neighbours to the ceremonies; and a lack of space in the urban context means that ceremonies are becoming increasingly modest, and more often than not are held indoors.

Mr. Long, an elderly original inhabitant of Bình Tân district, explained that he sticks to some traditional rules, but tries to adapt others: "Every year we have to organise the *ngày giỗ,* but the way we are doing it is partially descended from our previous countryside practices. Only few guests are invited. We maintain the worship just to make sure that our kids do not forget our custom within the family". The *ngày giỗ* is still considered an occasion for a family gathering, where adults can teach children how to worship the ancestors, but it is less and less a broader social and neighbourhood event. Only close neighbours are invited, those who have been family friends for a long while. Mr. Long revealed that he would be reluctant to invite his new neighbours, those who recently moved to the area. The sense of collectiveness in an increasingly socially diverse area is challenged and thus gradually recomposed. The family cell has become the more appropriate unit with whom to perform worshipping rituals, reflecting the diminishing effect of the neighbourly community as a social and cultural structuring factor.

Not only the old, but also the new inhabitants and owners of Bình Tân's tube houses display a high degree of simplification in their worshipping practices, and most of the families never invite their neighbours. They wouldn't want to 'bother' them and think it inappropriate in an urban context. Mrs Dau, a new dweller, of an advanced age: "I usually worship the anniversary of my husband's death and my parents-in-laws' anniversary. However, next year, I will organise these celebrations together on one single day and I am not sure I will invite a lot of people. My children are too busy to help, and so are my neighbours. Here it is not like in the countryside; if we do a celebration party, it will disturb the neighbours." The organisation of a single worship day for all the family ancestors has become a matter of convenience and appropriate social behaviour in an urban context.

A lack of space in the urban context may also play a role in the simplification of the worshipping practices. Without gardens or courtyards, and legal permits required for making use of public spaces, death anniversary ceremonies are increasingly often kept indoors, and thus celebrated with a reduced number of guests.

Migrant workers, who have recently settled in Bình Tân, generally continue to participate in ceremonies held in their rural hometowns, where worshipping remains quite a traditional practice. For celebrations, notably death anniversaries, large numbers of kin including those living in town are invited, together with people from the neighbourhood. Mrs Nga explained: "For every anniversary of one of my husband's ancestors, we travel back to his hometown. It is very tiring because it involves inviting our kin, and the neighbours also. We have to prepare the celebration a few days in advance. This means baking cakes, preparing the chicken and all the others dishes for the guests. Very demanding and tiring! Especially because we come from far away now … it requires a great deal of organisation and leaving our workplace for a few days as well." Despite her complaints, Mrs Nga still cares a lot about the proper organisation of her family's ancestor worship and she explained that Bình Tân district is in no way her 'heartland'; to worship her ancestors in HCMC would make no sense. Even though some migrants have now been settled in Bình Tân district for many years they still don't embody their 'sense of belonging' through a too meaningful ancestor worship.

As a result, peri-urban areas such as Bình Tân district can be seen as a laboratory of transitional practices in the Vietnamese urban context. Family celebrations are still organised, but in a simplified manner because of the practical lack of space in an urban environment, an overall decrease in the links between the place of abode and the so-called ancestor lands, and a diminishing significance of belonging to a neighbourhood in an urban context.

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Below: Worshipping ancestors in the home of a new dweller in Bình Tân District (HCMC). Located on the third floor, the ancestors' room is dedicated to ceremonies, but is also used as a temporary storage room (courtesy of Clément Musil).

Wedding gift-giving: a glimpse on evolving sociability practices

The strong urban dynamics that have been occurring in Vietnam over the past decades have led to a reshuffling of social practices, especially in the field of social exchanges and ritual activities. This paper gives a glimpse at evolving urban sociability through the lens of gift-giving practices during wedding ceremonies, both in Hanoi and in a rural commune of the Red River Delta, named Giao Tân.

Emmanuel Pannier

'Non-commercial flows' in Vietnam

Social exchanges, also called 'non-commercial flows', are understood as transactions (of goods and services) occurring outside the market and state channels. Because they are based on personal ties and affect social relationships, they also constitute significant indicators of sociability; in this case we are looking at contemporary Vietnam. 'Non-commercial flows' encompass a wide variety of transactions, in various guises, with different ways of transference. Underlying this diversity, there are nonetheless common principles.

A 'typical system of non-commercial flows'[1] can be defined as a ceremonial gift-giving system based on mutual aid *(giúp đỡ)*, reciprocity *(có đi có lại)* and moral indebtedness *(nợ; tình nghĩa)*. The system is embedded in strong moral and social obligations that bind the participants' relationships. As far as they fulfil economic and social functions, social exchanges widely contribute to the production/reproduction process of communities at local levels. Hybridisation of practices and traditions surrounding wedding ceremonies in the Red River Delta is a meaningful indicator to apprehend the evolution of society, especially in urban contexts.

According to a 2005 survey held in rural provinces (both in the Red River province of Bắc Ninh and in the Mekong Delta province of Long An), the expenses related to wedding gifts represent an average of 13% of a family's income.[2] A study conducted in Hanoi indicates that respondents participate in an average of 25 celebrations a year and spend 6% of their budget on gift-giving.[3] Furthermore, many informants complained about these expenses, especially during the wedding season, from October to March. A quarter of respondents said they have to borrow money in order to fulfil their financial obligation for ceremonies. Even though city-dwellers attend fewer celebrations than village-dwellers, social exchanges remain intense in an urban context. However, in contrast with countryside practices, many transformations can be observed. The study of gifts and transfers during weddings celebrated in Hanoi provide important clues to these changes.[4]

Unpacking wedding gift-giving practices in an urbanising society

Despite the social heterogeneity of urban dwellers in Hanoi, some general patterns concerning wedding gift-giving practices are identified. Among these trends, when attending a wedding in the Capital city, guests commonly bring a cash-gift in an envelope and put it in the appropriate box before entering the ceremony room. These gifts are called *mừng*, which means 'to congratulate'. Donors carefully write their name on the envelope and specify to whom they dedicate it: the parents or the married couple. In return, they will receive similar cash-gifts, generally of a higher amount, when they themselves organise such a ceremony. The monetisation

Above: 'Modern style' gift during a wedding ceremony in a village in Nam Định province (2008). Courtesy of Emmanuel Pannier.

of wedding gifts runs parallel with a broader monetisation process of non-commercial transactions in cities, brought about by the urban economical context and needs. Although monetisation of gift-giving also occurs in the rural commune of Giao Tân, it happened earlier in Hanoi, where it is also much more widespread.

During weddings in the Giao Tân rural area, even if gifts in kind still occur, most of *mừng*-gifts are in cash, but without any envelopes or boxes. The name of the donor and the amount of money are directly registered on a gift-list held by a family member. The transaction occurs in public, unlike in Hanoi where *mừng* are delivered within an envelope, reflecting the primacy of the 'bilateral relationship', without many external social controls; in rural areas, the bilateral relationship is also significant but much more deeply embedded in local society, where reputation and dignity *(face)* are at stake.

Other distinctions between rural and urban weddings highlight the specific feature of urban sociability. In the countryside, villagers usually organise the wedding ceremony at home, and the bride's and groom's personal celebrations are hosted separately. But in Hanoi, since the 1990s, new trends have appeared. Many more ceremonies are hosted in restaurants and even at luxurious wedding venues, if the family can afford it. At such events, the two families often gather their personal guests at the same banquet place. Consequently, wedding preparations are not performed by relatives and neighbours for free anymore, within a reciprocal scheme called *giúp đỡ* (mutual aid). People who choose to rely on service providers in the market instead of their relatives argue that contractual relationships "are more reliable and controllable than personal relationships, which are based on sentiment."[5] By contrast, in Giao Tân, even if some villagers share this opinion, most of them continue to lean on personal networks, both for economic reasons and for social obligations.

These variations illustrate urban social trends where market exchanges are being substituted for non-commercial transactions and where impersonal-contractual relationships are – in some circumstances – preferred to emotion-based bonds framed by strong moral and social obligation. City dwellers tend to emancipate themselves from moral debts-bonds, which are a central ingredient in sealing social ties in rural areas.

Consumption and wedding ceremonies in Hanoi

The increasing consumption of commercial services for weddings, linked to the increasing standards of living in cities, leads to higher expenses for urban weddings than rural ones. My survey in Giao Tân indicates that wedding expenditures ranged from USD 250 to 1,000 between 1998 and 2009. A previous case study of a middleclass family wedding in Hanoi in 1996 revealed that a total of USD 2,000 was spent to host 800 guests.[6] Nowadays in Hanoi, organising a banquet in a 4-star hotel costs a minimum of USD 25 per guest; renting a place and

hiring catering services for a medium quality banquet costs an average of USD 100 for a table of 6. Taking the average income of urban dwellers into account (USD 150/month in 2012), these amounts are substantial investments. A lot of people have to borrow money in order to hold a worthy wedding celebration.

Wedding costs increase in an urban context, but so too do the value of the gifts. *Mừng*-gifts are viewed as a contribution to the event. Thus, if organisers spend more for the ceremony, so do guests. The amount of the gift varies according to the closeness of the relationship, but also according to the place and type of ceremony. For a 'normal relationship' *(quan hệ không thân thiết)*, not an intimate relation (i.e., colleague, neighbour, distant kin), guests will give between USD 15 and 25 at a wedding in Hanoi; close friends and relatives will give a minimum of USD 35. In the countryside the average gift amount is less than half of this.

Organising a wedding or being invited to a wedding in Hanoi can definitely be a significant financial burden. This explains the Government's attempts to contain the increase of wedding costs,[7] especially by forbidding lavish banquets, by limiting the number of guests, and by discouraging prestige competition or status display. Locally, the Hanoi authorities even issued a decision (No. 07/2012/QD-UBND) prohibiting ostentatious excesses and indirectly targeting Party members.

In Giao Tân, except for when children migrate and organise their own weddings in a city, wedding costs are generally covered by the parents. Helping their children to start their lives is a strong moral duty that leads to many transactions from parents to children, and thus to strong moral debts for children who are expected to reciprocate when necessary. In Hanoi, more and more couples finance their weddings themselves, especially when they are in a better economic situation than their parents. These changes reflect broader shifts in child-parent relationships in an urbanising context, where reciprocal duties have been modified. The moral and legal responsibility of parents to support their children decreases, and obligations for children to take care of their parents when they get old, or when a parent dies, may also decline.

Gift-giving practices as a window into urban sociability

Looking at wedding gift-giving practices both in Hanoi and in a rural commune of the Red River Delta provides a glimpse of sociability changes that occur within a fast urbanising context. Principles of 'non-commercial flows' are quite similar in both environments, but their expressions present distinctive features. The control of local society on the fulfilment of obligations is much stronger in the countryside than in Hanoi, where bilateral relationships, contractual relationships and utilitarian consideration seem to occupy a more important place. The practical utility of gift-giving tends to override its social function. Although the reality is more subtle, in general we can state that the flow of financial resources sustain social relationships in the countryside, while in Hanoi, social relationships sustain resource flows. But, as long as state and market regulations (i.e., contractual, impersonal and formal relationships and exchanges based on law) cannot produce enough trust to ensure cooperation and are not sufficient to support the production/reproduction of society, 'non-commercial flows' and personal relationship networks remain central issues for urban dwellers.

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IIAS announcements

Winner of the 2015 IIAS National Master's Thesis Prize in Asian Studies

NORA WILDENAUER is a Visual Anthropologist and documentary filmmaker, who shot her first film on Flores, Indonesia. On 16 December 2015, IIAS awarded Wildenauer the 2015 IIAS National Master's Thesis Prize in Asian Studies for her multi-media thesis: 'Development brokers in a relocation project in Flores. A multi-media thesis about translations, interpretations and contestation' (supervisors: Metje Postma and (late) Steef Meyknecht, Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology, Leiden University). An integral part of Wildenauer's thesis is the documentary film 'Fighting for Nothing to Happen' for which she also received the award 'Best Graduate Student Film' (American Society for Visual Anthropology, AAA). For more information about Nora Wildenauer's work, see: www.visualdevelopment.eu.

Researching brokerage with visual methods – turning development into a category of practice

Nora Wildenauer

WHEN THE VOLCANO Gunung Rokatenda on the island Pulau Palu'e in eastern Indonesia erupted and caused five deaths in August 2013, some islanders were given shelter in temporary refugee camps in the district capital Maumere on Flores. The government of Sikka and local NGOs wanted to permanently relocate the Internally Displaced People (IDPs) to other places in the region. One of these relocation projects was planned on the neighbouring island Pulau Besar, supported by a local Christian NGO.

I entered this field to investigate how development brokers translate interests between different actors, entities and scales, and how these translations influence the brokers' positioning towards the government. I included audio-visual methods in my research design to gain additional insights about relocation practices and performative translations. Since I had been in contact with the Christian NGO before my departure, my expectations and research proposal were based on the understanding that government and non-government organizations collaborated under clearly assigned responsibilities, and that the IDPs were about to be relocated to the island of Pulau Besar. However, when I arrived with my camera in Flores,

I soon discovered that this information was a reflection of global development discourses such as 'good governance', but not an appraisal of the actual situation. Instead, the relocation was heavily contested and constituted an area of conflict. There was little coordination within government departments, between different levels of government or between government and non-government actors. Moreover, farmers of the host-community on Pulau Besar claimed the land to be theirs while the regional Forest Ministry declared that the site was situated within a conservation area and therefore belonged to the state. Furthermore, government money seemed to have disappeared and monitoring of the project was difficult. In short: the project was stagnating, and frustrated IDPs waited for the clearing of the land under bad conditions in temporary shelters. In this contested setting, my main informant, a Catholic priest and employee of the Christian NGO, negotiated the politics of relocation by creating networks out of heterogeneous actors, and by unifying supporters to push the project forward.

Methodology

Choosing an actor-centred and non-normative approach that used audio-visual methods to focus on relocation practices and acts of translation turned out to be a wise decision: I was able to connect with and understand the agendas of various important actors within the discursive arena of *relokasi* without constructing and reinforcing homogeneous discursive categories. To acknowledge the individual agency of my informants within networks, while showing that those networks are connected with external power structures such as the discourse of 'good governance', I combined the Actor-Network-Theory (ANT) promoted by Bruno Latour with

Michel Foucault's discourse analysis. Further, the combination of audio-visual methods with other modes of anthropological knowledge production allowed an understanding of brokerage that did not refuse contradictions, complexities and multiplicities.[1] The use and analysis of audio-visual material also revealed that, whereas scholars might be able to distinguish rationales behind certain realms into dichotomous categories which then unfortunately are studied separately – such as development and religion – practices overlap and categories merge.[2] Consequently, by mapping various entry and exit points to my research through the insertion of sequences of the documentary film, additional clips, photographs, maps and emails in the text of the multimedia-PDF, I allow the user of my thesis to make circular, layered connections between multiple interpretations of the film, the topics, and historic and socio-political contexts and thus pay attention to points of connection and heterogeneity in the discursive arena of *relokasi*.

The careful analysis of my material revealed important findings about brokerage in particular and development in general. My research showed that ambivalence between discourse and social 'reality' produces political actors who cannot claim fixed positions. Instead, positions are constantly fought over, ascribed and denied.[3] In his roles – broker and priest – my main informant and protagonist was able to tie together many diversely positioned actors, himself serving as an example for the capacity of brokers to operate between shifting, unset categories. The position of brokers is thus a tenuous and fluctuating one, and brokerage and translation processes do not entail a "coherent set of practices but a set of practices that produces coherence".[4] Constrained by external, even global, discourses such as 'good governance', all actors – and not only brokers – within the development encounter are able to evade these constraints through a series of different translations, strategies and shifting identities. In other words, the agency of actors within networks is shaped by discourses but simultaneously reshapes these discourses by transforming them so that they fit their own objectives. Since development brokers are operating on the boundary between the grand discourses of governments or international agencies and the realities of life on the ground, focusing on their central role can provide some major insights into development. The good reception of my thesis proves that following an empirical pathway that recognizes and responds to the complex situations and positions brokers are entangled in, combined with audio-visual methods, provides a legitimate way to do so.

Nora Wildenauer
(www.visualdevelopment.eu)

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Photo © Ania Blazejewska

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IIAS welcomes Professor Cheng-tian Kuo, latest incumbent of the Taiwan Chair of Chinese Studies

FROM FEBRUARY UNTIL JUNE 2016, IIAS will be enjoying the company of Professor Cheng-tian Kuo, the latest incumbent of the Taiwan Chair of Chinese Studies. Prof. Kuo is teaching a course on religion and politics at Leiden University while working on his book manuscript on Democratic Theology of Ecology at IIAS.

IIAS supports professorial fellowships allowing Asian scholars to come to the Netherlands to teach in the Dutch BA and MA programmes in Asian Studies. IIAS currently supports two chairs at the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies (LIAS). One of these is the Taiwan Chair of Chinese Studies, which is the result of an agreement between IIAS and the Ministry of Education of Taiwan.

Teaching Religion and Politics in East Asia
Prof. Kuo is teaching a course for the third year of the Leiden BA in Chinese Studies, entitled 'Religion and Politics in East Asia'. In addition, he will be convening a two-day international seminar in April 2016 under the title 'New Religious Nationalism in Chinese Societies' (see announcement on this page).

Researching Democratic Theology of Ecology
Prof. Kuo's main research interests lie in the areas of Asian Political Economy and Asian Religious Politics. Currently, he is working on a three-year research project, entitled Democratic Theology of Ecology. This research combines theories of economics, sociology of religion, religious politics, religious hermeneutics, and cognitive psychology, to challenge what he calls 'three false consciousnesses' (i.e., green economy, deliberative democracy, and green consumption) of contemporary ecological theories in economics, political science, and sociology. At IIAS, Prof. Kuo is working a book manuscript under the same title, which will include cases of ecological religions from East Asia and Western Europe.

Cheng-tian Kuo, short bio
Professor Cheng-tian Kuo holds the position of Distinguished Professor of Political Science, and Joint Professor of the Graduate Institute of Religious Studies, at National Chengchi University in Taibei, Taiwan. In addition, he is currently serving as a Member of the Advisory Committee on Religious Affairs of the Ministry of the Interior.

Prof. Kuo's research covers seven Asian Societies: Japan, South Korea, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and the Philippines. His research activities have resulted in more than one hundred conference papers, book chapters, and journal articles, as well as six single-authored books, including *Religion and Democracy in Taiwan* (State University of New York Press, 2008) and *The Democratization of Nationalist Theologies: Taiwan and Mainland China* (National Chengchi University Press, 2014).

Prof. Kuo holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Chicago, an MA from the University of Texas at Austin, and a BA from National Taiwan University.

For more information see
www.iias.asia/profile/cheng-tian-kuo

New religious nationalism in Chinese societies

Seminar dates: 21-22 April 2016
Venue: Pavilion, Museum of Ethnology,
Steenstraat 1, Leiden, the Netherlands

ORGANISED BY Professor Cheng-tian Kuo (Taiwan Chair of Chinese Studies), IIAS and Leiden University, and co-sponsored by the Chiang-Ching Kuo Foundation for Scholarly Exchanges (Taiwan).

During this seminar, participants from various countries will apply philosophical, religious, historical, political, and/or cognitive approaches to explore the relationship between religion and (national) identity formation in Chinese societies (China, Taiwan and Hong Kong).

For more information and registration,
see www.iias.nl/religious-nationalism

East Asian video frames: shades of urbanization

Exhibition dates: 12-28 August 2016
Venue: Pori Art Museum (www.poriartmuseum.fi/eavf)

Artists: AI Weiwei, Chim↑Pom, HAM Yang Ah, HAYAKAWA Yumiko, HUNG Keung, KATO Tsubasa, MAN Phoebe, MIYANAGA Akira, Okin Collective, WU Mali
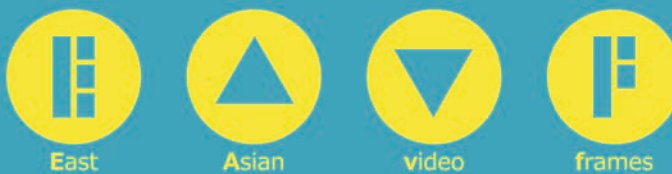
Curator: Minna Valjakka

In co-operation with The Bamboo Curtain Studio (WU Mali)

URBANIZATION IN EAST ASIA has had a sweeping impact in all spheres of visual art. The repercussions are evident in agency, aesthetics, languages, themes, styles as well as in the policies, production, evaluation, and consumption of art. The reciprocal relationship between the city and the visual arts has provided new realms to interpret, envision and assess the city. Since the 1980s East Asian artists have actively engaged in investigating transformations of the urban space and issues associated with urbanization, such as dislocation, social discrepancy and environmental deterioration. The new artistic practices developed by artists and artist collectives, also in collaboration with NGOs, NPOs and urbanites, allow new forms of civic agency to emerge. At same time, the diversity of socially engaged art projects is reshaping and reclaiming cityscapes through their critical commitment to the urban space and urban communities.

Engagement with the city through participatory and community art practices has been a common feature in Euro-American art scenes for decades. Such practices were less prominent in East Asian cities up to the end of 1990s, although the first experiments did emerge in Japan by the Gutai group already in the 1950s. The history, styles and forms of such engagement vary greatly from city to city. The focus of this exhibition, however, is on video works and documentaries created in the 21st century in order to demonstrate how artists are examining new ways to understand everyday life and its challenges today in a situation in which more than half of the world's population lives in cities.

Balancing between the importance of solidarity for liveable cities and the threat of alienation and growing inequality, the artist address a variety of questions such as the horizontal vastness of Beijing, the vertical hierarchy of Hong Kong, the social norms of Tokyo, the competitive life of Seoul, and the environmental issues of Taipei and Fukushima. The multiple perspectives resonate and complement each other, illuminating the shared concerns and hopes of urban dwellers and artists alike in the midst of the growing demands of globalization. They respond to Henri Lefebvre's (1996: 173) call for the capability of art to serve the city not by prettifying the urban space with works of art but by becoming 'praxis and poesis on a social scale: the art of living in the city as work of art.' The exhibition elucidates the major themes of the previous three-year video project (started in January 2013) and is the final, additional part of it.

East Asian video frames

City & society: the care of the self
A comparative examination of Eastern & Western practices from Confucius to Foucault & beyond

Seminar dates: 18-19 May 2016
Venues: Wednesday 18 May: Leiden University,
Gravensteen, Pieterskerkhof 6, Leiden,
the Netherlands
Thursday 19 May: Pavilion, Museum of Ethnology,
Steenstraat 1, Leiden, the Netherlands

This is the eighth annual seminar organised by IIAS and the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment at Delft University of Technology (Netherlands).

WHAT INFORMS THE THINKING behind this multi-disciplinary seminar and project, is the understanding that cities are people and their networks of interaction. A healthy city should enjoy a symbiotic evolutionary relationship with those who inhabit it; a healthy city should embrace change. How to achieve this change, and make it beneficial, can best be determined by proper examination of the elements that go into the making of a city, and the society that inhabits it. During the seminar, contributors from various disciplines will present their papers, from which a selection will be gathered into a peer-reviewed publication. While the seminar is intended as a bottom-up research endeavour, people who take an interest in the subject matter are welcome to register as a listener.

For more information and registration, see http://www.iias.asia/city-society

Language, power & identity in Asia: creating & crossing language boundaries

Conference dates: 14-16 March 2016
Venue: National Museum of Antiquities,
Rapenburg 28, Leiden, the Netherlands
Organised by IIAS in collaboration with LeidenGlobal and the Language Museum in Leiden.

THIS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE will explore the interrelations between language, power and identity in Asia. The conference aims to explore language policies that impact related speech communities separated by national borders, and the role of policies and legislation in identity formation. It will also address such topics as the position of small-scale linguistic communities within larger empires and nation-states, and within a rapidly globalising world.

For more information and registration,
see www.iias.nl/language

Heritage as aid & diplomacy in Asia

Conference dates: 26-28 May 2016
Venue: Leiden University Academy Building, Small Auditorium, Rapenburg 73, Leiden, the Netherlands

IN MAY 2016, IIAS will be hosting a conference focusing on the role of international organisations and global heritage activism. It will address the relevant international and transnational actors as objects of study and will engage in a threefold exploration:
1. Knowledge production 2. Geopolitics of heritage as diplomacy 3. Ethnographies of international agents and 'cultural experts'.

This conference will be the last in a series of three, jointly organised by IIAS; Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica, Taiwan; and the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) in Singapore.

For more information and registration,
see www.iias.nl/heritageaid

Indian medicine: between state & village

Workshop dates: 23-24 June 2016
Venue: Leiden University Faculty of Humanities,
Lipsius Building, room 148, Cleveringaplaats 1,
Leiden, the Netherlands

THIS WORKSHOP TAKES the sensibilities of Indian medicine as its point of departure, focusing on themes such as Indian medicines as tangible and intangible heritage, Indian medicines as health security for the poor and Indian medicines as identity markers. The workshop is organised by IIAS and convened by Dr Maarten Bode (University of Amsterdam and the Institute of Transdisciplinary Health Sciences and Technology, Bangalore, India).

For more information and registration,
see www.iias.nl/indianmedicine

In Memoriam: Mario Rutten

On 26 December 2015 Mario Rutten, professor of Comparative Sociology and Anthropology of Asia at the University of Amsterdam, passed away. Mario was well-known for his extensive and long-term research involvement in Gujarat, with a particular interest in questions of labour relations, entrepreneurship and migration. Besides India he also conducted research in Indonesia (Central Java), Malaysia (Kedah State) and London. Mario was not only an incredible researcher whose relationship with some of his informants sometimes spanned decades and involved multiple generations, but also an exceptional colleague, supervisor and friend.

Michiel Baas

Encountering Mario

Mid-2005 on a rather cold and grey day I picked up Mario from Tullamarine, Melbourne's main airport. At the time I was doing PhD research among Indian student-migrants in Melbourne and he had come to visit me in the field for a week. He had flown in from India where he had visited another PhD candidate, Ward Berenschot, who at the time was doing research on political clientelism in the capital of the state of Gujarat, Ahmedabad. By the time we got to the car Mario was already halfway several stories energetically switching between an account of the *pol* in which Ward was busy conducting fieldwork and the distinct architecture of Ward's house, and stories of the latest developments at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Amsterdam among which the recruitment of a new professor of anthropology that Mario was particularly excited about. When he entered our apartment just off Chapel Street on Dandenong Road, he enthusiastically shook hands with my partner as if he were an old friend (he had in fact never met him) and buoyantly pointed at the (fold-out) couch saying: is that where I will be sleeping the coming days?

The following days Mario and I went on a whirlwind tour of the city and what I considered 'the field'; for Dutch standards unusually large campuses, suburbs that had the nightmarish quality to disappear in the horizon, and all these spaces 'in-between' where informants might be expected to hang-out. Every time we met one of my informants Mario would vigorously shoot off some questions to get down the basics, conducting the kind of 'mapping' that struck me as vaguely Indian; making sure he knew where that person was from, what his background was, might he be married, just stopping himself short of asking for his 'good' name. Meanwhile Mario would nudge me as if to say: you know all this too, right? And indeed, deftly I had noted it all down during many lengthy interviews and conversations before, making sure I knew exactly 'everything' about my informants, as Mario had pressed upon me before I left for the field.

It has now been more than ten years since I finished my fieldwork in Melbourne and have since moved onto different topics. However, in typical Mario-like fashion I remain in contact with quite a few of my informants. When I recently met up for dinner with one of them, now married, with a three year old daughter and firmly settled in one of Melbourne's inestimable suburbs, he casually inquired how 'my supervisor' was doing and if he was still asking so many questions. When I assured him that we 'anthropologists' rarely ever stop asking questions, my friend (I have long stopped thinking of him as an informant) laughed heartily, and casually asked if I still carried these silly black notebooks with me everywhere, and in which he assumed I still dexterously scribbled down everything I learned. He had no doubt I would do the same after dinner had finished.

When I read Mario's most recent book *Anthropological Encounters* (AMB publishers, 2015) I was struck by how much my own approach to research had been influenced by his dedicated, long-term involvement in his informants' lives. By means of short vignettes Mario discusses the way anthropological researchers become part of and at some point even an undeniable presence within their own research field. By the same token, spending time with informants, engaging in their daily lives and sharing worries, moments of happiness and otherwise, often has a tendency to impact the anthropologists personal life even back home as well; lives become interwoven, friendships cemented, and in some cases it almost feels like one has become family. As we learn from the first few chapters in the book, Mario considers some of his initial informants *like* family, though he admits that it is not without limitations giving his 'adopted' status (p. 2).

His 'brother' Santudas, who also dons the cover of the book, photographed next to Mario (a full head taller) somewhere in rural Gujarat, is now incontrovertibly part of Mario's family, to whom chapters are dedicated: his wife Rienke, daughter Lisa, nephew Vishal, son Daan, sister Utpala and brother Huib.

Mario's extended family

Mario first met Santudas in 1983 when he was conducting fieldwork for his MA degree in sociology among large farmers in the Kheda District of Gujarat. The research would subsequently give impetus to his PhD research as he realized that although there were "numerous references to the aspect of economic diversification among the upper stratum of rural society in India," there had "hardly been any systematic research" on the subject.[1] It would lead him to undertake a study on what he would later label 'capitalist entrepreneurs' (large farmers and rural industrialists) for which he undertook fieldwork in two villages in Central Gujarat (1986-1987). Shantudas A. Patel's family[2] was one of two who assisted him with the research at the time. While the family was relatively well-off, with a good amount of irrigated land, a tile factory and a potato trading business to which a cold storage unit was added at some point, substantial losses in the potato trade early 2000 started weakening their financial condition. Unable to get credit to buy cement, production in the tile factory declined and by 2011 there was hardly any production at all. Mario offered to lend the family money, but this was flatly refused. To Santudas, Mario is his brother and he had said: "I will not take money from you, we have known each other for 30 years already and I do not want to jeopardise our relationship by borrowing money from you." (p. 12)

The fraternal bond also becomes apparent in day-to-day relations. While Mario tries to convince Santudas to reduce his liquor intake (he likes to drink whiskey in large quantities, as do most men in the village so it appears), Santudas makes

sure that Mario, who he considers his *younger* brother, cleans his room, dresses properly and is home before dark. The amount of familiarity and closeness that exists between Mario and some of his informants would also surprise his daughter Lisa when she accompanied Mario on a visit to Gujarat a few years ago. During this visit Santudas was turning 63 and Mario had brought him streamers, flags and other party decorations from the Netherlands. Dryly she had observed: "Here you have plenty of time for family and you even like going to weddings and ceremonies, yet in the Netherlands you sometimes do not even like dealing with birthdays of family members." (ibid)

Doing things differently

In the next section Mario reflects on his encounters with migrants from India, some of whom are directly related to the families he studies in Gujarat, and who initially came to London as international students. It is a topic he would also turn into a well-received documentary film titled *Living Like a Common Man* (2011) together with Isabelle Mackay and Sanderien Verstappen, the latter one of Mario PhD students and co-author of several publications with Mario. The project is in a way exemplary for Mario's passionate approach to research as well as his interest in disseminating results and insights in such a way that it does not only cater to an academic audience. As such he would often forego the idea of a 'high impact factor', so much de rigueur when it comes to academic publications these days, and opt for a more inclusive approach that would invite the opinions and observations of those outside academia. A project that he describes in the chapter on his (actual biological) brother and professional photographer, Huib, was executed in this spirit as well. The goal was to make visible that globalization doesn't just concern western influences in India, but that increasingly Indian influences in the Dutch social-cultural

Colleague-supervisor-friend

Above:.
The filmmakers from left to right: Sanderien Verstappen, Mario Rutten and Isabelle Makay

Below:
Still from the 'globalization in mirror images' project.

landscape can be felt as well. The pictures were beamed onto the glass front of the ARCAM building – the Amsterdam Center for Architecture – at night as part of a city-wide India-themed festival in 2008, inviting passer-by's to develop an alternative perspective to globalization and their own place in the world. Four of the pictures were also enlarged and hung up in the Common Room of 'Het Spinhuis', the 17th century building that until recently was the home of the department of sociology and anthropology in Amsterdam.

It was at this building that I would meet Mario on a bright and sunny summery day in 2014 for the last time. Sitting on an old wooden bench next to the entrance of the 'Spinhuis' we would watch colleagues enter and exit the building, some carrying boxes, as it was what had come to be marked the final day of sociology and anthropology at this location; the department was moving out of the building and to a new faculty building on the east side of town. It was the end of an era but also the start of a new beginning and Mario, at the time chair of the anthropology department, was closely involved in documenting the process, by means of a documentary film, together with students and colleagues.

Nursing a mug of tea Mario inquired about my recent research projects and publications, but it wasn't the place or time to go into much detail with a sound system being tested, former colleagues and students arriving on beaten-up bicycles, and a general somewhat celebratory atmosphere in the air, though thick with *saudade* and the distinct feeling that a somewhat elusive something would soon be lost forever. It is not easy to think of that moment in the summer sun, music drifting through the open doors into the courtyard, the first bottles of beer being opened, as the final one we would talk, but at the same time it is a happy memory: in habitual energetic and occasionally somewhat enigmatic fashion Mario was in

conversation not just with me but with many arriving and departing at the same time, endlessly curious about what was going on, boisterously full of questions, and vivaciously full of plans; documentaries to make, publications to finish, and ideas for future research to share. Sure, the move was not ideal, the old building would be missed, but it also presented new opportunities and, in a sense, life would go on.

New beginnings

Ever since we learned that Mario did not have long to live he would frequently and often unexpectedly come up in conversations at conferences and otherwise across the globe. Having dinner with a friend in Brasilia in December 2015 I remarked that he must have heard that Mario wasn't doing well, news which hadn't reached him but which shook him visibly. Mario had been his thesis supervisor and he fondly recalled the many discussions he had had with him about oddities such as 'non-western sociology', a field of inquiry which was still taught in Amsterdam, and which he as a Brazilian could never quite reconcile himself with. It is therefore perhaps no surprise that when *Anthropological Encounters* was launched in November, in both a Dutch and English edition, with a riveting speech by Mario himself, over two hundred people were in attendance.

Mario was a true inspiration, a force of life who departed way too soon. He will not only be remembered for being an inspiring academic, with a very distinct vision and opinion about scholarly research and the academic profession, but also because he was a true friend to many. It resonates throughout the book I have discussed here and so it does through much of his other work. Characterized by long-standing and intimate relations with his informants his work was quintessentially the product of asking questions and, once answered, asking even more questions. Students will immensely appreciate *Anthropological Encounters* for the down to earth-ness that percolates through the pages, making visible, legible and understandable what anthropology and in broader sense the academic world is, or perhaps ought to be, about. Colleagues and friends will undoubtedly return to it to reconnect with what Mario stood for and what made him such a great colleague, supervisor and, ultimately, friend.

Michiel Baas

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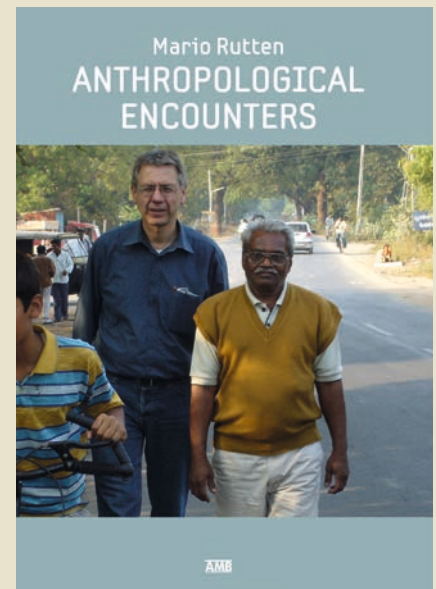
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LIVING LIKE A COMMON MAN
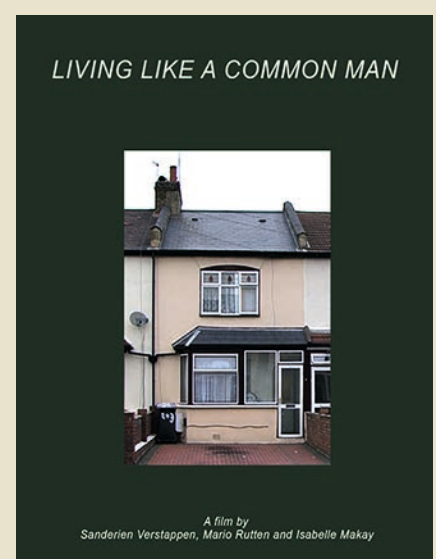
IIAS Reports

Towards an autonomous academic Africa-Asia framework

Philippe Peycam (IIAS Director)

Looking back on the conference Africa-Asia: A New Axis of Knowledge, Ghana, 24-26 September 2015.

IN SEPTEMBER 2015, the Association for Asian Studies in Africa (A-Asia), in cooperation with IIAS and the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS), organized what was the largest social sciences and humanities international conference on Asia-Africa, entitled 'Africa-Asia: A New Axis of Knowledge'. The event brought together over three hundred participants from forty countries. Hosted by the University of Ghana (Legon, Accra) the conference included 55 panels and roundtables. The three-day meeting focused on the interactions between Asia and Africa. During the conference, participants from Africa, Asia and beyond, with different academic backgrounds in the humanities and social sciences, enjoyed the rare opportunity to exchange their ideas and approaches across many subjects on Africa-Asia, sixty years after the historic Afro-Asian Bandung Conference of 1955. Since Bandung, the Africa-Asia axis of knowledge has grown in relevance in today's rapidly changing geopolitical and economic global landscape.

One of the main reasons for organizing this event was the realization that the current academic discourse on Asia-Africa relations seems to only exist as a research field for its contemporary 'relevance', primarily in geo-political and economic terms, with often little reference or knowledge of their deeper historical and cultural significance. In Accra, topics of current concerns indeed occupied an overwhelming place in all the discussions. For instance, issues related to China's massive economic and political influence in Africa dominate the Asia-Africa academic landscape, and with it, questions related to migration, development aid, commercial competition, government-to-government relations, etc. Not surprisingly, there is an over dependency on macro rather than micro forms of knowledge with, as an epistemological consequence, an over reliance on colonial and post-independence Western categories, such as those of the Nation-State or of neo-imperial geographical ensembles. Categories such as 'the Africans', 'the Chinese', 'Ghana', 'China', 'West-Africa', 'Southeast Asia' are indiscriminately used, opposed to references to more localized histories through which other forms of agency and connectivity can be appraised. Even when keeping to this macro configuration of the Africa-Asia axis, moreover, some essential geographies of human agency are neglected: North-Africa, the Mediterranean, Indian Ocean, the Arab World, Islam, but also the role of more specific diasporas, or urban centres, or historically determined communities that are equally important methodological prisms to 'read' Asian and African realities.

The 'new field' of Africa-Asia
This generalizing attitude is often wrapped in a developmentalist ideology, whereby political scientists, economists and international relations and development studies 'specialists'

play the important role. Consciously or not, their ahistorical approach not only dominates the main Africa-Asia narrative, it tends to prescribe a linear road to progress, keeping the West as the point of reference. In this same discourse, Africa is prescribed to 'catch up' with the rest of the world and follow the Chinese and Japanese examples on the path of 'development' and 'modernity'. Asian actors – i.e., states – are mainly described as providers of new modernization paradigms and as alternative players to their European and North American counterparts. This ideology, it should be stressed, is not only propagated by Western institutions and academics, but has also been adopted by large numbers of policymakers and academics in Africa and Asia, many of whom trained in Western universities.

The new Africa-Asia 'field' has become a 'hot' subject among many social scientists for which institutional money is readily available. The discourse, if it posits that 'Africa' or Africans are now given the opportunity of balancing their hitherto exclusive relations with Europe and North America with a new configuration where Asia becomes an alternative to Europe or North America, remains inscribed in an epistemology where Europe/the West is the historical reference. It is rarely cognizant of the fact that an alternative scholarship has long denounced this Eurocentrism and the shallow bases of its scientific foundations (see the works by E. Said, W. E. B. Du Bois, J. Needham, E. Wolf, J. M. Hobson, L. Abu-Lughod, J. Goody, etc.).

The current Africa-Asia institutional meta-discourse in fact fits well with the neoliberal ideology, according to which Africa's further integration into the global capitalistic economic division of labour – following that of Asia – is seen as the sole path to Africa's emancipation. At the academic level, the same narrow neo-liberal ideology prioritizes hard, ahistorical social sciences at the expense of long-term, reflexive, historically informed scholarship, ultimately leading to the marginalization and extinction of a gratuitous, speculative and potentially subversive knowledge tradition, in favour of a utilitarian, narrowly segmented field that can be filled with interchangeable 'experts' whose works abide to the 'Audit Culture' highlighted by some anthropologists. The high number of scholars of African or Asian backgrounds studying in or working in contemporary 'social sciences' programmes at Western institutions – in which no language skills are required and for which funding is usually attached to tightly delineated projects – makes sure that the field remains a fundamentally 'dominated' one, in the West but also in most Asian or African universities when these scholars return to teach there.

The challenge to the sustainability of this institutional Africa-Asia 'field' and its capacity to test traditional hierarchies borne out of the domination of the neo-liberal Northern academic model therefore lies in the very structure of this model, with its ability to truncate human phenomena and subject them to artificial epistemic, temporal, utilitarian agendas. These epistemological and institutional limitations offer little chance for interactions to flourish. As it is increasingly the case, the 'new field' of Africa-Asia as it has established itself in a number of universities thus bears the risk of falling prey to a few self-serving circles, mainly in the West, with a few African and Asian antennae. The 'field' can continue to be artificially shaped with few alternative perspectives, and the absence of a critical mass of African

and Asian participants *from* Africa and Asia – because their works or profiles may not 'fit' into the narrow framework of the field, or simply because there is no money to involve them, their home institutions are weak, their language ability limits them from accessing information, or from publishing in US and Europe-based peer-review publications, etc.; just to list a few of the usual barriers that ultimately bind an area of academic investigation.

No silo mentality
It is this tendency to crystalize subjects of study into institutionalised, funded, academic programmes, with their generic sets of assumptions, references, their internal hierarchies and dynamics, their 'gurus', their sociological economy of academic knowledge, that the Accra conference organisers sought to challenge. When drafting the programme, the organisers tried to incorporate the submitted abstracts and the discussions they entailed into broader thematic sessions, so as to try to open up segmented topics into a more complex texture of interlaced factors and genealogies. In this way, they sought to avoid a 'silo mentality'. Six sessions were thereafter set up: Transcontinental Connections and Interactions; Economics, Aid and Development; Intellectual Encounters; Arts and Culture; Migration and Diasporas; Asian Studies in Africa, African Studies in Asia. When possible, debates were integrated into broader genealogies so that, even when framed for their contemporary relevance, they could benefit from wider humanistically informed discussions, the objective being to question the Asia-Africa axis as a set of multiple temporalities and locations, beyond temptations of over-generalization.

There is no room here to discuss the sessions and panels individually, but some remarks can be made that illustrate the basic philosophy of the Accra event. The two thematic sessions 'Intellectual Encounters' and 'Asian Studies in Africa, African Studies in Asia', directly engaged with the question of knowledge production. Significant were the exchanges between two types of area studies scholars: those already specialised in Africa-Asia subjects, and those versed in knowledge particular to one of the two regions. An example for the latter was a French-language panel entitled 'Towards a comparative history of Christian Missions in Africa and Asia'. At this panel, three historians, two from West Africa and one from France, working on indigenous responses to the European Catholic missions in Japan and the Western coast of Africa, had the opportunity to exchange their views and share their knowledge. These people had never met before. The depth of their knowledge on local agencies against a common experienced phenomenon – the involvement of Catholic missions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – contributed to a high quality discussion that somehow resulted in focusing less on the European parts of the Missions, but more on what their intrusion in both regions revealed in terms of localized grass-roots forms of agency and their different expressions.

Another panel discussing early connections between southern India and Ethiopia through early Arabic, Muslim, Christian and Jewish mediations, also sought to confront different localized contextualized knowledge experiences. There were also two Leiden University-sponsored panels on 'Political Agencies in the Colonial and Post-Colonial Global: Convergences and Contrasts of African and Asian Contexts', which saw historians confront their approaches and methodologies over the connected subject of colonialism as experienced in localized contexts in the two continents.

An axis of knowledge
It is this effort to historicize and culturally contextualize Asia-Africa that at the end may give the field its true intellectual legitimacy and its expanded potential to itself transform other axes of knowledge. Thanks, moreover, to the inspiring mediation of those who already pioneered the (re-)discovery of numerous forms of Asia-Africa transcontinental connections, without compromising localized contextualized knowledge of places, we can expect an increasing number of striking intellectual parallels, links or 'bridges' to be brought to the fore.

It is hoped that if humanistic area studies in their multiple articulations are substantially represented in future Africa-Asia discussion frameworks, the dialectical relation between Comparison and Connection, which was so powerfully at play in Accra, may ultimately serve as the most effective matrix capable of re-shaping and re-centring the field. Only then can a process of autonomization of the Africa-Asia 'axis of knowledge', the one envisaged by the organisers of the conference, flourish. No doubt this process will take long to shape into an autonomous academic Africa-Asia intellectual framework. This is why, major events like Accra are important, especially if they are held in Africa or Asia with a critical mass number of Africans and Asians, for what they can do to accelerate this development.

www.iias.asia/asian-studies-africa
www.africas.asia

Ocean of Law: Intermixed Legal Systems across the Indian Ocean world

Leiden University, 7-9 December 2015

THE MOBILITY OF LAW across the Indian Ocean world is a relatively new field of research. Recent studies have greatly added to our knowledge of the cultural mechanisms of law within or beyond imperial and colonial structures in early-modern and modern times. The international conference 'Ocean of Law: Intermixed Legal Systems across the Indian Ocean world, 1550-1950' that we organized at Leiden University in December of 2015 brought together scholars from different fields and disciplines, interested in the cultural mobility of law.

The three-day-conference was generously funded by the Leiden University Institute for History, Leiden University Centre for the Study of Islam and Society (LUCIS), Asian Modernities and Traditions (AMT), Leiden University Fund, and the journal *Itinerario*.

The first day of the conference started with a keynote speech by Prof. Paul Halliday (University of Virginia) who pointed out the importance of the tension between legal formalism and 'longing for certainty' on the one hand, and the uses of legal pluralities and the uncertain practice of law on the other. The second keynote speech, delivered by Prof. Engseng Ho (Duke University and National University of Singapore), demonstrated the cross-cultural specificities and hybridity of law in the making of Indian Ocean communities, especially that of Islam.

The eight panels spread across three days were chaired by Nira Wickramasinghe (LIAS), Petra Sijpesteijn (LUCIS), Egbert Koops (Leiden Law Faculty), Adriaan Bedner (Van Vollenhoven Institute), Jos Gommans, Manon van der Heijden, Esther Zwinkels, and Alicia Schrikker (all from the Leiden Institute for History). No particular themes were given to the panels, as all papers were closely connected to each other. We only kept a macro- and micro perspective in arranging the panels.

Many of the presentations and resulting conference discussions turned out to focus on the spatialization of law rather than on developments in time. In this spatial context, the papers explored the encounters of legal traditions, which often travelled long distances (by textual genealogies or personal encounters) and the consequences of this for the development of local practices and legal pluralities. Theoretical frameworks and approaches originated from such diverse fields as law, history, area studies, philosophy, literature, and Islamic studies.

Looking at the English legal device 'Power of Attorney' and its Dutch equivalent *volmacht*, Nurfadlizah Yahya (National University of Singapore) demonstrated how the British, Dutch and Islamic legal systems were intertwined by the Arab merchants of Southeast Asia. Similar to this re-articulation and exploitation of changing law in Southeast Asia, Joel Blecher (Washington and Lee University) explained how the hadith-scholars from nineteenth-century India responded to the changing legal administration under the British rule. He analysed the different interpretations proposed by the Muslim scholars, taking the case of discretionary punishment. Mahmood Kooria (Leiden University) subsequently took the case of adultery from the Mogharaer

Code of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in 1750, juxtaposing it with the Islamic and Javanese legal texts in order to question the legitimacy of assumed 'Muhammadan law-book'. The Dutch scholarly attempts to construct a *Shāfiʿī* law canon since the mid-nineteenth century were also discussed in the contribution by Léon Buskens (Leiden University), who surveyed numerous handbooks and translations produced by Dutch professors.

An earlier case of Islamic legal pluralism as expressed through the trajectory of *Shāfiʿī* school was presented by Fachrizal Halim (University of Saskatchewan), who argued that the canonisation of the school happened later than was previously thought. He looked at the works of Yaḥya al-Sharaf al-Nawawī, who lived not so long after Gratian, the canonist. Taking the examples of canonists like Gratian and Islamic scholars together with early modern Protestant authors, Gijs Kruijtzer (Vienna University) illustrated the commensurability and shared routes of legal encounters between the Islamic and Christian worlds. Stewart Motha (University of London) presented the symbols and banners of sovereignty in which sovereign solitude (like the fantasy of 'No human footprints') is a recurrent theme in law's archives as it is exemplified in a series of cases from the Chagos Islands. In a similar vein, Seán Donlan and Mathilda Twomey (University of Limerick) demonstrated the legal *métissage* of the Seychelles, which once were uninhabited and thus lacking an 'indigenous' legal system.

The continuity in legal administration of Java between eighteenth and nineteenth century was articulated by Sanne Ravensbergen (Leiden University). Looking into criminal justice, she argued that there was continuity in the practices of law despite repeated attempts to alter the system. Elizabeth Lhost (University of Chicago) focused on the discontinuity in the functions of *qāḍi* under the British rule of Bharūch in the nineteenth century. Nadeera Rupesinghe (Leiden University) articulated the everyday lives of pluralistic law introduced by the Dutch in eighteenth century Galle where the Dutch legal regime had to encounter not only acceptance, but also rejection and manipulation. Similar cases of rejection of and resistances against Islamic law were portrayed by Kirsty Walker (Harvard University) by focusing on moral policing cases from early-twentieth century British Malay related to *khalwat* (illicit intimacy). Nathan Perl-Rosenthal (University of Southern California) also presented the everyday intersections of law by offering a compelling case related to the pillage of British East Indiaman Osterley at French Mauritius.

Such issues of maritime law had a long history. Hassan S. Khalilieh (University of Haifa) examined the influence of Prophet Muhammad's and Quran's conceptions of freedom of navigation and free sea on the early modern approaches of Southeast Asian Muslim rulers towards the sea. Arthur Weststeijn (Koninklijk Nederlands Instituut te Rome) spoke about the possibility of provincializing Grotius in the historiography of international maritime law by looking at a Malay treatise titled *Tāj al-Salāṭīn* of Bukhārī al-Jauharī, a contemporary of Grotius. The reflections on the maritime laws with regard to piracy and pirates and the literary

representations were taken up by Stephanie Jones (University of Southampton). Investigating voices of dhow-captains involved in the Muscat Dhows Case between 1890 and 1905, Fahad Bishara (College of William and Mary) demonstrated the complications of patronage regimes in the competing and multiple legalities of the Indian Ocean. Nikitas Hatzimihail (University of Cyprus) presented the ways in which hybrid legal traditions of this oceanic rim crossed its boundaries to the Mediterranean world. He took the case of Indian Penal Code of the colonial British Empire and its 'new life' in the judicial administration of Cyprus.

Renisa Mawani (University of British Columbia) followed the multi-dimensional journeys of Gurdit Singh who cut across many imperial regimes in the early twentieth century. Although he was outlawed by the British colonial authorities, he used the same imperial legal structures to fight his case against the racial injustice and for the independence. The collaboration between Dutch and Indian officials and brokers in the seventeenth-century legal space in Bengal was dealt with by Byapti Sur (Leiden University). Taking two cases from the VOC archives, she questioned the monolithic categories, such as Asia and Europe, dominant in the early modern historiography. Similarly, Guo-Quan Seng (University of Chicago) demonstrated that the prevalent Sinologists' translations of legal practices never satisfied the ground realities of jurists. He articulated this argument based on an investigation of Chinese women's inheritance rights in Java between 1862 and 1892. In British Malabar too, the misunderstandings and contradistinctions between the dominant *Ḥanafī* school of Islamic law and the ground reality of *Shāfiʿīte* textualism created hassles for the early colonial administration, as argued by Santhosh Abraham and Visakh Madhusoodanan (Indian Institute of Technology Madras). Naveen Kanalu (University of California, Lose Angels) elucidated on an earlier South Asian legal devise of *firman* and its genealogy, function, and transformation in the Mughal administration, especially in the Deccan region.

After the panels, the conference concluded with a roundtable moderated by Carolien Stolte (Leiden University, Managing Editor of *Itinerario*). Major themes and issues that had come up both in the keynote speeches and presentations – such as texts and translations, cross-cultural hybridity and pluralistic practices – were discussed once more. In the ensuing discussion, participants responded to the possible unique characteristics of 'Indian Ocean Law' with regard to its many cross-cultural and transregional intermixtures of legal systems, as discussed across the presentations. The three-day event was extremely enriching to our knowledge of global legal historiography, especially with regard to the Indian Ocean world. The presentations' emphasis on spatial mobilities and hybridites of law was substantially supported through the interdisciplinary focus of the conference. We are planning to bring out a special issue of *Itinerario* as its proceedings.

**Mahmood Kooria and Sanne Ravensbergen,
Leiden University Institute for History.**

Announcements

New perspectives on late Tang maritime trade?

Roderick Orlina and Eva Stroeber

Above left:
Jars from the Princessehof collection.

Inset:
The inscription on the large olive green glazed jar, prominently featuring the letter *ghamal.*

Above right:
The collector Nanne Ottema.

A collection of storage jars in the Princessehof Museum, the Netherlands

WITH MORE THAN 120 storage jars, the collection at the Princessehof Museum, Leeuwarden, is one of the most important and varied worldwide. Most of the jars were found in Indonesia during the first half of the 20th century, when Indonesia was a Dutch colony. Nanne Ottema (1874-1955), a notary from Leeuwarden and founding director of the Princessehof Museum, collected Chinese ceramics and built up a very important collection, particularly of Ming export wares. But it was his friend and partner, Anne Tjibbes van der Meulen (1862-1934), who acquired these jars. Even after the death of Ottema, jars continued to be added to the collection, collected mostly by the Ottema-Kingma Foundation. From 1977-1987, Barbara Harrisson (1922-2015) served as the director of the Princessehof Museum. Her pioneering work on jars, *Pusaka. Heirloom Jars on Borneo,* was published in 1986.

The oldest jars in the collection date from the Tang dynasty (618-907); these were made in kilns in southern China. Later, groups of jars include those from the Song (960-1279), Yuan (1279-1368), Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties. The Princessehof collection also includes jars from Cambodia from the 13th century, a number of jars made in kilns in Thailand and Vietnam, and *martabans* made in the kilns of Burma, now Myanmar. This traditional term for storage jars refers to the old harbour of Martaban, Myanmar, from where many of these jars, used on ships, were exported.

A group of Tang jars and the 'Maritime Silk Road'

A group of around 20 jars from the Princessehof collection dates from the 8th-10th century, the late Tang dynasty. Many of these jars were excavated in Central Java near Borobudur, an important Buddhist centre, and acquired there by van der Meulen in the early 20th century. They are thickly potted of light coloured clay, of globular or ovoid shape, with a short or rolled neck, and four or six lug-handles on the shoulder. Some jars also have small spouts. The wood ash-lime glazes are a light brown, yellow, or olive green. All jars are glazed on the exterior as well as inside. These types of jars were made in several kilns in the province of Guangdong in southern China. The distribution of the excavation sites of Chinese Tang storage jars suggests that they were used in seaborne trade. During the late Tang dynasty there were two great trade routes connecting China with the Middle East and the Mediterranean: the traditional route, known and travelled for centuries since the Han dynasty (206 BC-220 AD), was the Silk Road through the deserts of Central Asia. The Tang dynasty marks the beginning of the *Maritime* Silk Road.

A shipwreck with a spectacular cargo discovered in the waters off Belitung Island, Indonesia, in 1998, dramatically brought the Maritime Silk Road to the attention of an international public. The Belitung shipwreck was a sensation: a Persian or Arab ship sunk on its way to West Asia, its cargo consisting of tens of thousands of pieces of Chinese ceramics, gold and silver. A date on a Chinese bowl suggests that the ship probably sank shortly after 826.

Jars with inscriptions

Two jars in the Princessehof collection bear inscriptions, in both cases below the lip on the shoulder. The inscriptions were incised under the glaze when the jars were made, not added later. The inscription on the large, olive green glazed jar was identified as possibly Manichean. The letter *ghamal* features prominently, overshadowing a smaller unidentified letter. Manichaean script, read from right to left, was devised in the 3rd century and was used exclusively by the followers of Manichaeism, a Persian religion, up until the 10th century. The other jar, of about 40 cm high, has a whitish glaze. It contains an inscription that has yet to be deciphered.

The inscriptions on the Princessehof jars are not the only ones in known existence. Hundreds of jars of the olive brown glazed type were recovered from the Belitung shipwreck, and two of those also have inscriptions. How do we relate the epigraphical information on the Princessehof and other jars found on the Maritime Silk Road jars to the historical context of Tang international trade in the 9th to 10th century?

Trade on the Maritime Silk Road

The collection of Tang dated jars at the Princessehof Museum in Leeuwarden, particularly the ones with inscriptions, and the comparison with shards with inscriptions on the sites of the Maritime Silk Road leads to two questions. The first refers to the historical sites on Java, close to Borobudur, holy territory, where some of the jars were found. Was it a coincidence? It is reported that metal vessels were inside the jars when they were excavated. Why? Could there be a connection with ritual use in Buddhist ceremonies, depicted on the stone reliefs of Buddhist or Buddhist-Hindu temples of Southeast Asia, like the Borobudur on Java, Angkor Wat in Cambodia and Pagan in Myanmar (Burma)? Second, and in reference to the inscriptions on the jars: was the late Tang international seaborne trade between China and West Asia still dominated by the trade network of Persians and the Central Asian trade by the Sogdians?

The authors, Roderick Orlina, an epigraphist and historian, and Eva Stroeber, sinologist and art historian working as curator for Asian ceramics at the Princessehof Museum, Leeuwarden, will develop this inter-disciplinary project into a more comprehensive article, to be published by the end of 2016.

IIAS Outreach Lecture

Dr. Eva Stroeber will give a lecture on the collection of jars: *A Thousand Years of Jars – The Collection of Stoneware Jars in the Princessehof Museum.* After the lecture there will be an opportunity to see and discuss the jars.

**Saturday 5 March 2016, 2 pm
Atelier of the Keramiekmuseum
Princessehof
Grote Kerkstraat 11
Leeuwarden
Netherlands**

The entrance to the lecture is free, but registration is required at: h.m.van.der.minne@iias.nl

The powerful and the powerless

**13th Annual Conference of the European Association of Taiwan Studies (EATS)
Prague, Czech Republic, 30 March–1 April 2016**

POWER RELATIONSHIPS, broadly understood, pervade society on many levels and in many guises. They may be explicit or implicit, acknowledged or hidden, based on outright coercion or, instead, on more subtle forms of coaxing, manipulation, and indoctrination. They can involve individuals as well as collectives. In different contexts such as faith, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexual orientation, they can render people susceptible to the effects of power in different ways. Participants will engage with the phenomenon of power in their respective area of research, be it social sciences or in the humanities, and focus on the relationship between those who wield power on the one hand and those who are affected by the decisions of the powerful on the other. By investigating the strategies, conventions, and tensions underlying the interactions between the two sides, we hope the papers of this conference will offer novel insights into such issues as persistence and change in power relationships over time; the shifting positions and multiple roles individuals as well as groups can assume in different contexts and vis-à-vis different counterparts; the significance of symbolic representations of power; historical, moral, religious, and political justifications of inequality; strategies employed in contesting existing power relationships; formal and informal structures established with the purpose to create, enforce or perpetuate hierarchical relationships; the scope of individual and collective agency in the face of the limiting effects of power. In this way, we hope to expand our knowledge of powerful and powerless in Taiwan and to enrich the discipline of Taiwan Studies.

For further information about the EATS Conference and EATS, please check the website: http://eats-taiwan.eu

EATS
EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF TAIWAN STUDIES

An Asianist's eye on the digital

Jacqueline Hicks

The deeper the internet infiltrates our daily lives, the more interesting it becomes to study. With universities now introducing courses in Internet Studies and Digital Culture, they are effectively defining a new digital 'place' that requires a unique set of skills and knowledge to understand it. But if the online environment really is a new place, where does that leave area studies specialists interested in the digital? Does it make our region-specific knowledge redundant? Or is it precisely the careful attention to power and place which defines area studies scholarship that this growing field needs?

Conference date: 24 May 2016
More information: www.kitlv.nl/digitalasia

ASIAN STUDIES AND THE DIGITAL are in some ways strange bedfellows. While the internet is sometimes described as a 'new internet world', with its own global culture,[1] Asianists trade in references to local and specific cultures. But, as recent research has shown, there is much promise in an approach that looks at the interaction of these two 'worlds'. Investigating the way the internet is assimilated and understood in different parts of the world, Miller and Slater, for example, argue that it is best seen as embedded in other social spaces, rather than situated in a "self-enclosed cyberian apartness."[2] With figures showing that Asians already dominate in terms of worldwide internet users (Fig. 1), and with much more room to grow given the current penetration rate of just 40%, those who study the digital in this region should have plenty to occupy them in the coming years.

Political and economic disruption
What internet-related topics may be relevant for Asianists? The most prominent research has so far been about online political discourse. Calculating the level of Chinese government censorship of blogs, highlighting the role of twitter in spreading political protests in Thailand, and the use of social media by up and coming political figures in Indonesia, exemplify this type of research.

While these topics continue to offer rich insight into the political dynamics of Asian countries, they are increasingly joined by others with equally interesting social and political implications. Worldwide, some of the most popular internet platforms are lauded as 'digital disruptors', connecting people in ways that both undermine whole sectors of the economy and create completely new ones.

In addition to China's massive e-commerce site, *Alibaba,* there are other huge successes around Asia. Indonesia's motorcycle ride-hailing app, *Go-Jek,* already has 200,000 drivers on its books just one year after its launch. But such rapid growth also has the potential to stoke social tensions in the country's informal economic ecologies.

These same platform technologies are also key to changes in the global marketplace for labour. 'Crowd-work' labour platforms, such as *Amazon Mechanical Turk* and *ClickWorker,* mediate the buying and selling of labour for very small tasks like matching images and product descriptions on commercial websites. As Asians find such opportunities to transcend their local labour markets, the implications for workers' rights as well as Asian states are as yet poorly understood. Do such platforms offer unprecedented opportunities for workers in different parts of the world? Or do they represent a continuation of global patterns of exploitation? How do they impact the ability of national states to collect taxes or protect workers' rights? Such questions can only be answered with reference to careful offline context-specific ethnographic research of the type that area studies scholars are trained to perform.

There is also scope for looking at the ways the internet catalyses social change, entrenches power asymmetries or shapes cultural practices in our region. How people construct their religious identities online or what we can learn from the internet about the development of language are all proving fruitful avenues of enquiry. But there is also room for an Asianist eye on a more esoteric field of enquiry that is specific to the online world: information retrieval.

Information politics
As we increasingly turn to the internet to understand the world, we rely more on the computational techniques that sift, summarise and otherwise prioritise the information we seek. If we introduce a concern with the diversity of voices that are found using these techniques, information retrieval techniques become political.

As an Asianist who has worked for the past few years on a 'digital humanities' project, I have frequently attended some highly technical talks. One presented an established web service that automatically summarises news content from across Europe and the world primarily for European Commission officials and policy-makers. It is a great service with a host of useful tools and I often encourage those interested in such techniques to visit and play around. (emm.newsexplorer.eu). Some of the features of this service use a computational

Above: Presentation of 'Good Morning Mr. Orwell' at the Kitchen Gallery, New York, on 8 December 1983. Photograph Copyright Lorenzo Bianda. Reproduced with permission of the Nam June Paik estate.

technique called 'named entity recognition', which automatically extracts names from the news for further analysis. But people's names are messier than you might imagine, and depending on the source can be spelt differently, use different parts of a multiword name, or the same name can refer to two different people. So, to help resolve some of these ambiguities, this web service excludes names that only use one word.

This makes sense technically, and has no effect in cultures where most people have at least two words in their name. But in Indonesia, parts of South India, and elsewhere around the world, it is common to use just one name (mononym), which means that such people are automatically excluded from the news summaries that the people using this website receive.

The implications of this particular example are small, and there are much more significant barriers to the representation of Indonesian or Indian voices in these news summaries, such as language and source selection. But it illustrates the point that a seemingly innocuous and largely invisible technical decision can have real effects on the diversity of voices that show up in the information we receive. More broadly, it points to a role for the knowledge of non-Western language specialists in the development of computational techniques.

More frequently, the politics of information retrieval concerns the functioning of search engines, and here too there is scope for an area studies perspective. The Oxford Internet Institute, for example, has produced some interesting research on the 'information geographies' of the internet that looks at how different areas of the world are represented in google searches or on Wikipedia (geography.oii.ox.ac.uk).

A concern with the diversity of information available on the internet can also work the other way to consider structural influences on the information received by those living in Asia. Censorship by national governments is one element of this type of research, but as Facebook's *internet.org* is rolled out in Asia, questions are also being asked about the influence of corporations.

With its vision of connecting people in less developed countries to the internet for free, internet.org's *Free Basics* programme offers users of some telecom companies a limited number of websites and apps without charging data fees. Its critics say that it violates the tenets of net neutrality – that no matter where you are in the world, you should be able to access, or provide content on, the internet without discrimination. At the time of writing, this is a serious enough concern to warrant the Indian Telecom Regulatory Authority to temporarily block *Free Basics* in India.

The fear that corporate interests may dictate access to information is compounded by the fact that large numbers of people, particularly in developing countries, believe that Facebook *is* the internet.[3]

An emerging research agenda
As with all technological developments, there is a discourse of novelty surrounding the internet and related digital methods that sometimes sounds like overstatement. Are digital technologies unique enough to warrant a new field of study? In some ways we have seen it all before, and we could say that the internet just represents another change to the medium, like the printing press did before it. But all mediums have their own particular character, affecting our lives and behaviour in very particular ways that need further enquiry to understand.

I have presented here a very small selection of issues for Asianists interested in the digital – ones that particularly reflect my own interests in political and economic power. Until now, the trend has been for this newly developing research agenda to take place in skills-based projects and general internet focused institutes. But this is changing. Books are now being released (*Asian Perspective on Digital Cultures,* 2016), journals established (*Asiascape: Digital Asia*), and even degree programmes set up (*Emerging Digital Cultures in Asia and Africa* at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London), bringing a concern with the digital into area studies departments.

Asia (48.1%)
Europe (18.1%)
Latin America/Caribbean (10.1%)
Africa (9.8%)
North America (9.4%)
Middle East (3.7%)
Australia/Oceania (0.8%)

Fig. 1: Internet users in the World by World Regions, 2015
Source: www.internetworldstats.com

"Uber, the world's largest taxi company, owns no vehicles. Facebook, the world's most popular media owner, creates no content. Alibaba, the most valuable retailer, has no inventory and Airbnb, the world's largest accommodation provider, owns no real estate. Something interesting is happening."

Tom Goodwin, TechCrunch, 3 March 2015

On 24 May 2016, KITLV in association with Leiden University will dedicate a whole conference to the topic of digital disruption in Asia (www.kitlv.nl/digitalasia). With speakers coming from Asia, North America and Europe, we will look at both the impact of internet technologies on Asian lives, and the use of digital research methods in scholarly work. It is free to attend and all are welcome. We hope to see you there!

Jacqueline Hicks is a researcher at the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies in Leiden (hicks@kitlv.nl).

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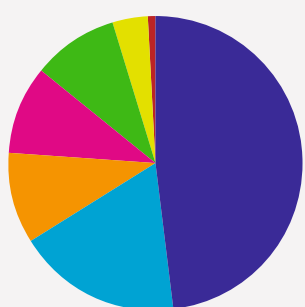3 Mirani, L. 2015. "Millions of Facebook Users Have No Idea They're Using the Internet", *Quartz* (http://tinyurl.com/FBusers-millions).

Nirajan Kafle

The Alumnus

I was working on a text called *Niśvāsamukha* for my PhD thesis.
To work on this text itself was a challenging job as we had only a
single surviving manuscript, and the language, Sanskrit, employed
to write the text is different from the standard one. On top of that,
the text was also unpublished. For these reasons, it was taking
a long time. Most of the preparatory work for my thesis was already
completed during a research stay (2008-2010) at Pondicherry
under the direction of Prof. Dominic Goodall (EFEO, Paris/Pondicherry)
and at home in Kathmandu. When I came to IIAS it was all about
a final revision and writing a proper introduction and conclusion
under the joint direction of Prof. Peter Bisschop (Leiden) and
Prof. Goodall. I had already prepared the critical edition, annotated
translation of and basic introduction to the *Niśvāsamukha,*
and an edition of the five chapters (chapters five to nine) of the
Śivadharmasaṅgraha for an appendix. In addition to this, I had
prepared verse indices of both texts, and bibliography.

Nirajan Kafle

WHEN AT THE Nepal Research Centre/Nepal German
Manuscript Project (NRC/NGMCP), from 2011-2014, I was
engaged in cataloguing Nepalese manuscripts and reading
Sanskrit texts. This was a very good position for work and
reading experience, but my PhD thesis was put on hold.
Prof. Dominic Goodall then put me in touch with Prof. Peter
Bisschop at Leiden University. Prof. Bisschop showed a keen
interest to take me on as his doctoral student and helped me
enrol at the University. Although we started our cooperation
through Skype, it soon became clear we would need to meet
in person. And so he suggested that I apply for the Gonda
Fund. I did so, and fortunately the scholarship was granted.
As soon as I received this news, I prepared for my journey,
travelling from the highest mountain to the lowest country,
the Netherlands.

As I prepared the necessary documents for my visa, my
wife also expressed her desire to accompany me. And so we
planned our trip together; the whole process proved to be
very complicated and tiresome. I had to go through several
governmental offices, and the Dutch embassy in Kathmandu
had stopped granting visas, which meant we had to travel to
Delhi. Then, exactly one day before our journey to Delhi, my
wife collapsed and lost consciousness. The doctors could find

no immediate explanation and declared that she would be
fine – but I was hesitant to leave the next day. But in the end,
of course we decided to go. Our visit to the embassy in Delhi
was successful, and after seeing a bit of the city we headed
for the Netherlands.

As soon as we reached Leiden, via Schiphol Airport, we
forgot all the troubles and complications that we had gone
through. Leiden is such a small, clean and beautiful city,
without much traffic, crowds or noise. Parts of the city are
interned with tree-lined canals. It was the month of Sept-
ember when we arrived and the trees were full of autumn's
yellow leaves. This made the city even more beautiful.

We arrived on a Sunday; IIAS was officially closed, but
the institute had kindly arranged the apartment keys for us.
Our apartment was located in a building where many other
scholars closely related to IIAS were staying. The apartment
also was a place to meet many international scholars. Every
now and then we would have dinner and lunch meetings,
during which we could learn about various cultures and
customs of different people. The apartment was located
conveniently; just a short walk to IIAS, the University and the
markets, and also easily accessible by bus from Leiden Central
Station. In addition, nearby there was a well-kept, beautiful

garden. I went there several times for walks. There were big
trees with beautiful branches, a green meadow, and a small
house for birds. Going there was quite refreshing.

On the first morning, I was invited to the *Skandapurāṇa*-
meeting (reading of the text) by prof. Bisschop at University
of Leiden. The plan was to read and prepare a critical edition
of the text. Prof. Bisschop's project had been going on for
some years, and I had never had the opportunity to read this
text before. I was delighted to start my stay in Leiden with
the *Skandapurāṇa* reading, which went on to last a week.

On that first day I also went to the IIAS building on the
Rapenburg. Sandra van der Horst showed me around the
institute, introduced me to the staff, and informed me about
the facilities. I was thrilled to hear I would be permitted to
stay at the office and work until midnight if I so wished.
I had never enjoyed such a facility before. And so I settled
into work; generally I would work from home in the mornings
and then go to IIAS and work until I became tired for the day.
After a while I noticed that no one really registered my
comings and goings, and so I asked why this much freedom
was given to the scholars at IIAS? One of the staff members
replied: you are a grown-up and you know what to do and
what not to do. I realized that the freedom we received in point
of fact made me more responsible for my work and duties.

IIAS would also organize different academic, historic
and cultural events. Every month there would be a lecture,
giving scholars the opportunity to present their work. I was
particularly helped by the training session that IIAS organized
for its fellows, to help them present their own research to
a large audience. As I had never before received such training
in my life, it was very interesting and helpful for my academic
life. I highly praise this innovative activity. Every so often,
excursions to the Museums in Leiden and Amsterdam were
arranged. For me, this sort of event provided much know-
ledge about the history and culture of the Dutch people.

After the first week of reading the *Skandapurāṇa,* I also
started meeting with Prof. Bisschop to read my thesis. During
my 6-month stay in Leiden we met on a regular basis. He went
through, patiently and carefully, my entire thesis with a tireless
dedication and made many insightful changes to the text.
In particular he devoted special care to the arrangement and
argument of the introduction. As a result of which, I was able
to submit my thesis to Leiden University in June 2015. I later
returned to Leiden to defend my thesis. IIAS financially helped
me to make this visit, and many staff members attended
the event. I am extremely grateful to IIAS and its staff, from
whom I acquired much more than I had ever expected.

Looking back on my stay in Leiden, I can certainly say that
it was an amazing experience, academically, socially and
culturally. Leiden University's excellent library facilities
are lacking in my country Nepal, where I would never have
been able to complete my thesis. I am now looking forward
to my next challenge: working again with Prof. Bisschop,
on his new project called 'From universe of Visnu to universe
of Siva'. I am already looking forward to going back to Leiden.

**Nirajan Kafle, Research Scholar, Ecole française
d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO), Centre de Pondichéry
(nirajan.kafle@gmail.com).**

IIAS Research and Projects

IIAS research and other initiatives are carried out within a number of thematic clusters in phase with contemporary Asian currents – all built around the notion of social agency. The aim of this approach is to cultivate synergies and coherence between people and projects. IIAS also welcomes research for the open cluster, so as not to exclude potentially significant and interesting topics. Visit www.iias.nl for more information.

Global Asia

THE GLOBAL ASIA CLUSTER addresses contemporary issues related to trans-national interactions within the Asian region as well as Asia's projection into the world, through the movement of goods, people, ideas, knowledge, ideologies and so forth. Past and present trends are addressed. The cluster aims to expand the understanding of the processes of globalisation by considering the various ways Asian and other world regions are interconnected within a long-term historical framework. Acknowledging the central role of Asia as an agent of global transformations, it challenges western perspectives that underlie much of the current literature on the subject and explores new forms of non-hegemonic intellectual interactions in the form of 'south-south-north' and 'east-west' dialogue models. In principle, any research dealing with Asian global interactions is of interest.

Asian Borderlands Research Network (www.asianborderlands.net)
The Asian Borderlands Research Network focuses particularly on the border regions between South Asia, Central/East and Southeast Asia. The concerns of the ABRN are varied, ranging from migratory movements, transformations in cultural, linguistic and religious practices, to ethnic mobilization and conflict, marginalisation, and environmental concerns. The ABRN organises a conference in one of these border regions every two years in co-operation with a local partner. Next conference: Dynamic Borderlands: Livelihoods, Communities and Flows; Kathmandu, Nepal, 12-14 December 2016.
Coordinator: Eric de Maaker (maaker@fsw.leidenuniv.nl)

Energy Programme Asia (EPA)
The EPA-research programme is designed to study the effects of global geopolitics of energy security on the one hand, and policy to increase energy efficiency and estimating the prospects for the exploitation of renewable energy resources on the other. EPA's current and second joint comparative research programme with the Institute of West Asian and African Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences is entitled *The Transnationalization of China's Oil Industry: company strategies, embedded projects, and relations with institutions and stakeholders in resource-rich countries (2013-2017)*. Involving various Chinese and Dutch research institutes, this programme will analyse China's increasing involvement with governments, local institutions and local stakeholders in the energy sectors of a number of resource-rich countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, notably Sudan, Ghana, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Venezuela, and Brazil. It seeks to determine patterns of interaction between national institutions and Chinese companies, their relationships to foreign investment projects, and the extent to which they are embedded in the local economies. This programme is sponsored by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Social Sciences (KNAW), the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) and IIAS.
Coordinators: M. Amineh, Programme Director EPA-IIAS
(m.p.amineh@uva.nl or m.p.amineh@iias.nl),
Y. Guang, Progamme Director EPA-IWAAS/CASS
Website: www.iias.nl/research/energy-programme-asia-epa

IIAS Centre for Regulation and Governance
The IIAS Centre for Regulation and Governance in Asia, is engaged in innovative and comparative research on theories and practices – focusing on emerging markets of Asia. Its multi-disciplinary research undertakings combine approaches from political economy, law, public administration, criminology, and sociology in the comparative analysis of regulatory issues in Asia and in developing theories of governance pertinent to Asian realities. Currently the research projects fall within the following interlocking areas: State licensing, market closure, and rent seeking; Regulation of intra-governmental conflicts; State restructuring and rescaling; and Regulatory governance under institutional voids.
Coordinator: Tak-Wing Ngo (t.w.ngo@hum.leidenuniv.nl)

Asian Studies in Africa
Since 2010, IIAS and other partners from Africa, Asia and the USA have been working on an initiative to promote the study of and teaching on Asia at African universities and, equally, to promote African Studies in Asia. The initiative constitutes a first attempt to sustain a humanities-informed South-South knowledge platform with connections between other academic centers in Europe and North America, but also Latin-America and Oceania.
    In 2012, a roundtable in Chisamba, Zambia, led to the establishment of the pan-African 'Association of Asian Studies in Africa' (A-ASIA). A-ASIA's development is headed by a steering committee of scholars, mainly from Africa and Asia. In September 2015, A-ASIA held its three-day inaugural conference, in Accra, Ghana, called 'AFRICA-ASIA: A New Axis of Knowledge'. It was the first conference held in Africa to bring together a multidisciplinary ensemble of scholars and institutions from the continent and the rest of the world with a shared focus on Asia and Asia-Africa intellectual interactions.
Website: www.africas.asia

Asian Cities

WITH A SPECIAL EYE on contemporary developments, the Asian Cities cluster aims to explore the longstanding Asian urban "tradition", by exploring the origins of urbanism and urban culture in different parts of Asia and linking the various elements of city cultures and societies, from ancient to modern (colonial and post-colonial) times. Through an international knowledge-network of experts, cities and research institutes it seeks to encourage social scientists and scholars in the humanities to interact with contemporary actors including artists, activists, planners and architects, educators, and policy makers. By bringing together science and practice, IIAS aims to create a platform for scholars and urban practitioners focusing on Asian cities 'in context' and beyond traditional western norms of knowledge.

Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA)
Consisting of over 100 researchers with affiliations at 17 institutes in Europe, China, India and the United States, the Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA) represents the largest global academic network on Asian cities. UKNA's objective is to nurture contextualised and policy-relevant knowledge on Asian cities, seeking to influence policy by contributing insights that put people at the centre of urban governance and development strategies. To this aim, the programme hosts a variety of research projects through the exchange of researchers of the participating institutions, focusing on the three research themes:
1. Ideas of the city;
2. Cities by and for the people; and
3. Future of the cities.
    UKNA is funded by a grant awarded by the EU and runs from April 2012 until April 2016. IIAS is the coordinating institute in the network and administrator of the programme.
    The success of the UKNA synergy has encouraged the network's partners to carry on with their joint effort and plans are underway to expand the network and broaden its research agenda.
For a full list of UKNA Partners please refer to the UKNA website (www.ukna.asia)
Coordinators: Paul Rabé (p.e.rabe@iias.nl) and Gien San Tan (g.s.tan@iias.nl)

Asian Heritages

THE ASIAN HERITAGES CLUSTER critically addresses cultural heritage practices in Asia. It explores the notion of heritage as it has evolved from a European-originated concept associated with architecture and monumental archaeology to incorporate a broader diversity of cultural forms and values. This includes the contested distinctions of 'tangible' and 'intangible' heritages, and the importance of cultural heritage in defining one's own identity or identities vis-à-vis those of others. It addresses the variety of definitions associated with heritage and their implications for social agency. It aims to engage with the concepts of 'authenticity', 'national heritage' and 'shared heritage' and issues pertaining to the political economy of heritage. Attention is also given to the dangers of commodification of perceived endangered local cultures/heritages, languages, religious practices, crafts and art forms, as well as material vernacular heritage.

Graduate Programme in Critical Heritage Studies
Over the last few years, IIAS has been intensively engaged with the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies (LIAS) and tar-geted Asian partners, in the development of a special MA track in the field of 'Critical Heritage Studies'. The uniqueness of this initiative is that the MA in Leiden is combined with a parallel set of courses at a number of Asian universities, allowing for the students to obtain a double degree at the end of their training. To date, the Asian partners involved are National Taiwan University in Taiwan and Yonsei University in South Korea, and contacts with other possible Asian partner institutes have been established. Students can already opt for the focus on 'Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe' within the Leiden MA in Asian Studies, but can also engage in a Double Degree, offered by Leiden University and one of the Asian partners. The programme is supervised by Dr Elena Paskaleva (IIAS/LIAS). Prof. Michael Herzfeld (Harvard) is a guest teacher and the Senior Advisor to the IIAS Critical Heritage Studies Initiative.
Contact: Elena Paskaleva (e.g.paskaleva@hum.leidenuniv.nl)
or Willem Vogelsang (w.j.vogelsang@iias.nl)
Website: www.iias.nl/critical-heritage-studies

Indian Medical Heritage Research Network
The Indian Medical Heritage Research Network wants to stimulate social-cultural and social-historical research on Indian medical traditions such as Ayurveda, Unanitibb, Siddha, Yoga and Sowa Rigpa. Of special interest is the integration of Indian medicine in Indian public health and its role as second resort for middle class Indians and Europeans. The network offers a virtual space on Facebook (www.facebook.com/IndianMedicalHeritage) for collating research findings and other information about India's medical heritage covering diverse perspectives, interests and backgrounds. A workshop, entitled, 'Indian medicine: Between state and village' will take place in Leiden, The Netherlands on 23-24 June 2016.
See: www.iias.nl/indianmedicine.
Coordinator: Maarten Bode (m.bode@uva.nl)

Rethinking Asian Studies in a Global Context

A research network supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
With the objective of reshaping the field of Asian Studies, the three-year pilot programme (2014-2016) 'Rethinking Asian Studies in a Global Context' seeks to foster new humanities-focused research. In practice, this means adapting Asian Studies to an inter-connected global environment built on a network of academics and practitioners from Asia, the Americas, Europe and Africa. Educational opportunities are created by selecting cross-disciplinary methodological questions likely to shift scholarly paradigms as they pertain to Asia. In the process, the initiative seeks to shape academic communities around new themes of research, emphasising the inclusion of young and aspiring scholars from the four world-regions and beyond.
    The initiative is coordinated by IIAS, in collaboration with numerous institutions in Asia, the United States, Europe and Africa, and is funded with a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in New York. The pilot programme includes a range of scholarly activities such as workshops, conferences and summer schools in five topical areas, or fora, that cut across regions and disciplines:

1. Artistic Interventions: Histories, Cartographies and Politics in Asia
2. Uses of Culture and Cultural Heritage
3. Asian Spatialities: the Indian Ocean World, Central Eurasia and Southeast Asian Borderlands
4. Idea of the City in Asian Contexts
5. Views of Asia from Africa

Coordinator: Titia van der Maas (t.van.der.maas@iias.nl)
Website: www.rethinking.asia

IIAS Fellowship Programme

Along with the research fellows who are attached to one of the IIAS research programmes, the Institute yearly hosts a large number of visiting researchers (affiliated fellows) who come to Leiden to work on their own individual research project. In addition, IIAS also facilitates the teaching and research by various professorial fellows as part of agreements with Dutch universities, foreign ministries and funding organisations.

CURRENT FELLOWS

Rosalina Abu Bakr
Social interaction in the Malay manuscripts
1 Nov 2014 – 31 Oct 2016

Hajime Akitomi
The comparative study of labor, employment & globalization labor between the Netherlands and Japan
1 Apr 2015 – 1 Apr 2016

Mehdi Amineh
Coordinator 'Energy Programme Asia (EPA)'
Domestic & geopolitical challenges to energy security for China and the European Union
1 Sept 2007 – 31 Mar 2017

Nachiket Chanchani
The construction of sacrality in the Central Himalayas
10 Jan – 10 Jul 2016

Manuela Ciotti
1 Mar – 31 Jul 2016

Daniela De Simone
Mauryan antiquities of Pāṭaliputra
1 Sept 2015 – 30 Apr 2016

Marie Helene Gorisse
Indology
1 Apr – 30 Sept 2016

Haoqun GONG
Practising (Patibad) Buddhism: Body techniques & religious publicity in urban Thailand
1 Aug 2015 – 20 Jun 2016

Nur Hidaya
Islamic feminism in contemporary Indonesia: Past, present, & future trajectory
1 Dec 2015 – 28 Feb 2016

Pralay Kanungo
Visiting Professor,
India Studies Chair (ICCR)
Indian politics
1 Sept 2013 – 30 Jun 2016

Irina Katkova
Early Malay letters of VOC documents
1 Feb – 29 Feb 2016

Aarti Kawlra
The politics of craft, culture & technology
18 Feb – 18 Jun 2016

Cheng-tian KUO
Visiting Professor, Taiwanese Chair of Chinese Studies
Asian religious politics/Democratic theology of ecology
20 Jan – 20 Jul 2016

Jian LI
Global production networks & their development in China
1 Dec 2015 – 29 Feb 2016

Tak-wing Ngo
Coordinator 'IIAS Centre for Regulation & Governance'
IIAS Extraordinary Chair at Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam
State-market relations & the political economy of development
1 May 2008 – 30 Apr 2017

Bal Gopal Shrestha
Religiosity among the Nepalese diaspora
1 Jan 2015 – 30 Jun 2016

Amanda Shuman
'No one can deny our achievements': The politics of socialist athletics in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1966
1 Sept 2015 – 30 Jun 2016

Emilia Sulek
The 'caterpillar fungus boom' and its socio-economic consequences for Tibetan pastoral society in Golok, Qinghai Province, China
1 Oct 2015 – 31 May 2016

Lidia Szczepanik
Searching for the beginnings of dūtakāvya – an analysis of the Candradūta, Ghaṭakarparakāvya and Meghadūta
1 Oct 2015 – 31 Mar 2016

Mayuke Tanabe
The socio-cultural impact of Japanese-Moroccan cooperation in the fishing industry
1 Jan 2016 – 31 Dec 2016

Minna Valjakka
Seeds of hope: Urban creativity in Hong Kong
1 Nov 2015 – 31 Oct 2016

Shu-li WANG
The Politics of China's cultural heritage on display: Yin Xu Archaeological Park in the making
1 Sept 2015 – 1 Sept 2017

Chuanhong ZONG
Yangtze River Delta Megalopolis
1 Dec 2015 – 28 Feb 2016

Gonda Fellowships for Indologists

FOR PROMISING YOUNG INDOLOGISTS at the post-doctorate level, it is possible to apply for funding with the J. Gonda Foundation, to spend three to six months doing research at IIAS. Please send your application to the J. Gonda Foundation by the appropriate deadline below. The J. Gonda Foundation of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) supports the scholarly study of Sanskrit, other Indian languages and literature, and Indian cultural history. In addition to enabling Indologists to spend time at IIAS, the foundation offers funding for projects or publications in Indology of both researchers and scientific publishers, as well as PhD grants.

Application form: www.knaw.nl/en/awards/subsidies/gonda-fund
Application deadline: 1 April and 1 October every year

KNAW

ASC-IIAS Fellowship Programme

A joint fellowship offered by the African Studies Centre and the International Institute for Asian Studies

THIS FELLOWSHIP is intended for researchers specialising in Asian-African interactions. It aims to attract researchers whose work is informed by current theoretical debates, in the social sciences and humanities, on global connectivities and who are able to critically engage with shifting paradigms in 'area studies' beyond the ways in which these have traditionally been conceived in the West. We are particularly interested in receiving fellowship proposals that go beyond a mere analysis of current issues associated with African-Asian comparative economic developments or Chinese investments in Africa – although none of these themes, if appraised critically and for their societal consequences, will of course be excluded. Our definition of Asia and Africa is broad and inclusive, Asia ranging from the Middle-East to the Pacific Coast, and Africa from North-Africa to the southern tip of the continent.

Application deadline: 15 March and 15 September each year. For more information and application form, go to: www.iias.nl/page/asc-iias-fellowship-programme

African Studies Centre

IIAS
International Institute for Asian Studies

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Daniela De Simone

Mauryan antiquities of Pāṭaliputra

MY RESEARCH PROJECT AT IIAS deals with Indian archaeology of the Early Historic period. I am compiling a catalogue of the antiquities of the Mauryan period (321-185 BCE) found during excavations at Pāṭaliputra (modern Patna). This study is a follow-up to my PhD research 'Mauryan Pāṭaliputra: An Assessment of the Archaeological Evidence', which focused on the emerged structural remains.

Pāṭaliputra was the capital of the first Indian empire and the seat of the Mauryan dynasty, of which Asoka, the first Buddhist king, was the most famous member. Excavations started in the 1890s and went on, discontinuously, until the end of the 1950s. Remains of wooden structures (a defensive wall and what appear to be water pipelines) were unearthed at different sites around Patna, along with a stone-pillared hall that was discovered at Kumrahar, a residential area of the modern city. Several antiquities, including elaborated terracotta figurines, early punch-marked coins and inscribed glass seals, were recovered during excavations.

The excellent research facilities provided by Dutch academic institutions, in particular at Leiden, are the main reason for conducting research in the Netherlands. When it comes to South Asian studies the country ranks among the main research hubs on the subject. The access to the Kern Institute collection of excavations reports, secondary archaeological and art historical literature, and academic journals – among the largest in Europe – at the Main Library of Leiden University is crucial to the successful completion of my research project. Extremely valuable for my study is also the access to the photographic archives of the Kern Institute and of the former Institute of South Asian Archaeology of Amsterdam (now integrated into the Kern digital archives).

The Netherlands has a long and outstanding history of studies on South Asia, particularly on Buddhism and its art. H. Kern, J.Ph. Vogel and J.E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw have greatly contributed to the advancement of the discipline. Contemporary Dutch scholars are among the most influential specialists in the current debate on South Asia. Such an intellectually stimulating environment is proving very beneficial for the ultimate outcome of the project. I am greatly benefiting of the support of the Leiden Institute for Area Studies (LIAS), particularly of that of Dr. Ellen M. Raven, Lecturer for South Asian Arts and Material Culture, and one of the main European experts of early Indian art.

The immediate outcome of my research project will be an article that archaeologically and historically contextualizes the Mauryan finds of Pāṭaliputra, containing a descriptive catalogue, with old and recent photographs and new maps recording the sites in Patna where Mauryan antiquities were found, which were identified by means of a GPS device during my PhD fieldwork. The results of the study will be integrated into a planned, larger publication on Mauryan archaeology. The research will also be presented at the 23rd Biennial Conference of the European Association of South Asian Archaeology and Art to be held in Cardiff in July 2016, the most important international meeting on South Asian Archaeology. At the end of my fellowship at IIAS, I will join the British Museum as Junior Curator of the Department of Asia.

Minna Valjakka

Seeds for hope: the power of aesthetics for urban creativity in Hong Kong

I AM WORKING ON A MONOGRAPH, *Seeds for Hope: the power of aesthetics for urban creativity in Hong Kong.* Through an interdisciplinary research at the nexus of Asian Studies, Art Studies and Urban Studies, I examine the intricacies of the reciprocal relationship between the city and urban creativity. Even if the wave of urban creativity made to support the 'Occupy Central with Love and Peace' movement in 2014 is the most well-known example of Hongkongers' ability to voice their concerns through artistic methods, various other projects and initiatives reshaping the urban public space have occurred before and after the movement too.

The forms of urban creativity are extremely varied and they bring forward new manifestations, agencies, motivations and aesthetics. In Hong Kong the evolvement of urban creativity is interrelated with the discourses of post-colonialism in its specific forms of de/recolonization and mainlandization. However, the socio-spatial practices along with the global trends in alternative artistic and creative practices are also reflected in urban creativity. As a result, urban creativity is not only responding to the transformations but is inevitably modifying the cityscapes. To analyze the particularities between different nations, cities and neighborhoods, I propose a comparative approach based on site-responsiveness, which takes into account the local, regional, national and global discourses and trends.

My study derives from a broader research question: the impact of urbanization on visual arts. I am also co-editing a volume, *Visual Arts, Representations and Interventions in Contemporary China: Urbanized Interfaces,* with Dr Meiqin Wang, submitted to the Asian Cities series of IIAS/AUP (Amsterdam University Press). The ten papers examine in detail the interrelations of urbanization on official propaganda, contemporary art, artistic interventions, films, and documentaries in mainland China.

I greatly enjoy the interdisciplinary working environment IIAS provides. The continuous exchange with the staff and visiting scholars offers new perceptions and helps me to elaborate the theoretical frameworks. Similarly, the inter-action with the scholars working on Asian arts and on 'arts in society' at Leiden University, offers a fruitful sounding board. Especially inspiring have been the programs organized by the Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA). Even before my fellowship, I had the pleasure to join the 'Asian Cities: Colonial to Global' seminar and contribute to the resulting book with the same title, edited by Dr Gregory Bracken. Later this year, I will continue with a new project as Research Fellow at the Asian Research Institute of the National University of Singapore. My aim is then to develop new initiatives for both UKNA and IIAS in terms of research on alternative artistic and creative practices in East and South East Asia.

IIAS FELLOWSHIPS

The International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) in Leiden, the Netherlands, invites outstanding researchers to apply for a fellowship to work on a relevant piece of research in the social sciences and humanities.

WE ARE PARTICULARLY interested in researchers focusing on one of the Institute's three thematic clusters. However, some positions will be reserved for outstanding projects in any area outside of those listed.

Asian Cities

The Asian Cities cluster explores modes of urban development, and deals with cities and urban cultures with related issues of flows and fluxes, ideas and goods, cosmopolitism and connectivity at their core, framing the existence of vibrant 'civil societies' and political micro-cultures. Through an international knowledge network, IIAS aims to create a platform for scholars and urban practitioners focusing on Asian cities 'in context' and beyond traditional western norms of knowledge.

Asian Heritages

This cluster focuses on the politics of culture and cultural heritages in Asia. It addresses a variety of definitions associated with cultural heritage and their implications for social agency. In general, the cluster engages with a broad range of concepts and issues related to culture and cultural heritage, and their importance in defining one's identity vis-à-vis those of others.

Global Asia

The Global Asia cluster examines examples of and issues related to multiple, transnational intra-Asian interactions as well as Asia's projection in the world. Historical experiences as well as more contemporary trends are addressed.

Research projects that can contribute to new, historically contextualised, multidisciplinary knowledge, with the capacity of translating this into social and policy relevant initiatives, will be privileged.

**For information on the research clusters and application form visit our website:**

www.iias.nl

IIAS
International Institute for Asian Studies

Journey to Dunhuang: Buddhist art of the Silk Road caves

During World War II, James C. M. Lo 羅寄梅 (1902–1987), a photojournalist for the Central News Agency, and his wife Lucy 劉氏·羅先 arrived at Dunhuang. James Lo had taken a year's leave to photograph the Buddhist cave temples at Mogao and at nearby Yulin. Lucy was also a photographer, and together they made the arduous journey in 1943. They systematically produced over 2500 black and white photographs that record the caves as they were in the mid-20th century.

FOONG Ping
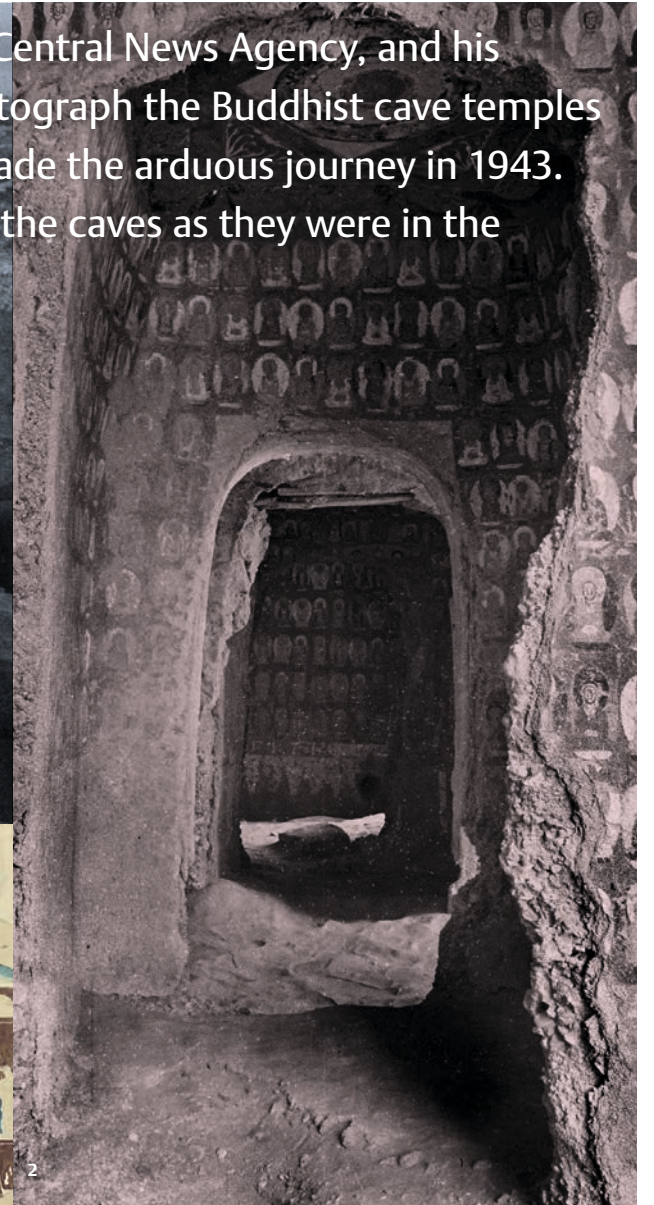
Seattle Asian Art Museum, Foster Galleries
5 March – 12 June 2016
Journey to Dunhuang is organized in cooperation with the Princeton University Art Museum and the P.Y. and Kinmay W. Tang Center for East Asian Art

THE LO PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE is a feat of ingenuity, organization, and sheer courage. Over the course of 18 months, the Los worked without electricity or running water. By day the couple used a system of small mirrors and cloths to reflect adequate light into the caves. By night they developed negatives with water from a nearby stream. Their photographs are historically very valuable since many of the views recorded no longer exist today. They are also of unusual artistic importance and reflect the Los' remarkable aesthetic sensibilities (fig.1 & 2).

This exhibition brings us the visual splendors of Dunhuang's cave temples through the eyes of James and Lucy Lo, with a selection of their photographs, their collection of Dunhuang manuscripts, and life-size reproductions of the Mogao murals painted a decade later by young artists whom the Los inspired in Taiwan. While color publications and 3D digital models record Dunhuang with current technological sophistication, we are reminded of how the unwavering commitment of two people adds immeasurably to our deeper understanding of Dunhuang.

Manuscripts and Zhang Daqian
The ancient documents that James and Lucy Lo collected while at Dunhuang reflect the Los' broad interests in unusual scripts and their appreciation of various painting techniques.[1] Some are a direct result of their meeting famed Chinese painter

– and infamous forger – Zhang Daqian 張大千 (1899-1983), who was at Dunhuang repairing and making replicas of Mogao murals. He helped the Los form their collection of manuscript fragments and a few carry both their seals. For Zhang, Dunhuang represented a pure Chinese past and was key to reenergizing the Guocui 國粹 or 'National Essence' group.[2] Zhang's copies of the Mogao murals were exhibited on a world tour in Paris and at other venues. He even mined Dunhuang imagery to create a master forgery that he sold to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, as an ancient work.

Multicultural Dunhuang
Located at the convergence of the northern and southern routes of the Silk Road, Dunhuang was a multicultural desert oasis. Many languages were spoken there, including Chinese, Tibetan, Uyghur, Tangut and Hebrew. Several multilingual texts in the Lo collection attest to this diversity. They include two Yuan-dynasty sutras on display: written in Old Uyghur (Old Turkic) language and script, interspersed with Chinese; and printed in Tangut, a near extinct Sino-Tibetan language of northwestern China's Xi Xia dynasty (1038–1227). Impressed on the latter is the Chinese seal of monk Guanzhuba 管主巴 (Tibetan: bKa' 'gyur pa, active 1302), an official of either Tangut or Tibetan descent who oversaw the printing of Buddhist texts in Chinese, Tangut, and Tibetan scripts.

Two manuscripts in the exhibition demonstrate a connection between Dunhuang and Chang'an, the capital of China in the Tang. They are test papers on the Confucian classics, likely from a local school in Dunhuang or Turfan. They represent aspirations to sit for the official exam-inations: the military conquests of Emperor Taizong 唐太宗 (r. 626–649) made it possible after the mid-7th century for the cultural values of central China to be transmitted to the western frontier through Confucian education. Since paper was precious, the manuscripts were later recut into a distinc-tive U-shape to form the upper part of a burial shoe (fig.3).

Artist renditions and recording damage, old and new
After moving to Taiwan in the 1950s, the Los became part of a community of artists and scholars. They invited a group of young artists to produce life-size copies of the Dunhuang murals, based on the Los' slides and Lucy's meticulous notes (fig.4). Some were displayed at the 1964-65 World's Fair at Flushing Meadows in Queens, New York, at the China pavilion. These facsimiles are indeed comparable to Zhang Daqian's celebrated copies, and similar in their impulse to perpetuate knowledge of the ancient past through acts of reproduction.

Fig 1 (above left): View of the Northern Mogao Caves, Photograph taken in 1943–44, The Lo Archive.

Fig 2 (above right): View North From Mogao Cave 268 Into Adjacent Caves, Photograph taken in 1943–44, The Lo Archive.

Fig 3 (below left): Examination paper, reused for the upper part of a funeral shoe. Manuscript fragment; ink on paper. Chinese, Tang dynasty (618–907), from Dunhuang or Turfan. The East Asian Library, Princeton University.

Fig 4 (above inset): Landscape: Parable of the Illusory City. Ink and color on paper. James C. Lo Workshop, 1958-63. Copy after Mogao Cave 217, High Tang dynasty (704–781). Princeton University Art Museum, gift of Lucy L. Lo.

By the end of the Tang dynasty, the cliff face at Mogao was completely covered with caves. Since no new caves could be opened, donors paid for existing ones to be redecorated and their portraits would sometimes be added to the cave walls. Some Lo photographs document how walls were deeply scored during renovations, in preparation for a new, smooth surface of white gaolin clay; to James these scorings formed patterns of intrinsic visual interest. Using his black-and-white photographs of one such destroyed mural in Cave 13 – of its donor, the Lady Wang – an artist recreated a full color portrait by supplying details like her hair accessories and diaphanous shawl. Two huge artist renditions from the Lo 'workshop' depict the processions of Cave 156's donors, General Zhang Yichao and his wife. These images record disfigurements from the relatively recent effects of over 900 White Russians living in the Mogao caves in the 1920s after fleeing Russia's civil war. They left graffiti, and their cooking fires charred walls and blackened statues.

The Eugene Fuller Memorial Collection
This exhibition also presents an opportunity to view objects from the SAM's collection. One is an impressed-clay votive tablet depicting a Buddha with pendant feet. The twelve-character inscription establishes a Tang dynasty date, around the 7th to 8th century, given the calligraphy's proximity to the style of Tang courtier Chu Suiliang 褚遂良 (596–658). The previous owner, Ye Changchi 葉昌熾 (1849–1917), late Qing scholar and bibliophile, claimed that it originated from Dunhuang. And on display for the very first time are two wall painting fragments from the Kizil caves in Xinjiang province that were amongst many artifacts brought to Germany by explorers Albert Grünwedel (1856–1935) and Albert von Le Coq (1860–1930) from their Silk Road expeditions around 1905 to 1914.

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References
1 Comprising about 80 documents total, the Lo manuscript collection forms the largest U.S. collection, now held at Princeton University's East Asian Library and the Gest Collection. See the International Dunhuang Project http://idp.bl.uk, a comprehensive digital repository of Dunhuang manuscripts, paintings, textiles, and artifacts, and archaeological sites of the Eastern Silk Road.
2 The *National Essence Journal* 國粹學報 published in Shanghai in the late Qing dynasty was an important platform for a group of poets, painters, and scholars. They engaged in sensitive discussions about art and literature, dealing with the nation's uncertainties following devastating losses in the first Sino-Japanese war and the Boxer Rebellion.