

# Pacific Affairs

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— *Special Issue* —

## DEMOCRATIZATION AND COMMUNICATION IN ASIA

Guest Editor: *Caroline Hughes*

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ABSTRACTS

**Public Television and Empowerment in Taiwan**

*Gary Rawnsley and Ming-Yeh Rawnsley*

This paper analyses the development of public television in Taiwan. It argues that media liberalisation and political democratisation were, on their own, insufficient conditions to encourage the growth of media with links to civil society. Democratisation in Taiwan was essentially an elite-driven process (elites in power and in opposition); in turn, Taiwan's elites – political and intellectual – were the agents behind the development of Public Service Broadcasting (PSB), reinforcing the paternal characteristic of the PSB ideal. The development of PSB, promising civil empowerment and enlightenment, became a political issue, and mirrors many of the political debates that occurred over the evolution of democracy in Taiwan.

**The Rough and Rosy Road:  
Sites of Contestation in Malaysia's Shackled Media Industry**

*Graham Brown*

This article examines the politics of state media control in Malaysia, with a particular focus on the period since the economic and political turmoil of 1997 and 1998. It argues that the Barisan Nasional (BN) regime has pursued a two-pronged approach to media control, through a strategy of legislative regulation and corporate ownership. Regulatory controls such as stringent printing permit legislation have been weakened by the rise of the Internet as a form of political communication but the regime also has an array of more oppressive legislation at its disposal which has been used as a threat against Internet organizations that challenge its control. Moreover, the broader political economy of Internet access and the financial limitations of such efforts limit the impact of the Internet as an alternative vehicle of communication. In the realm of corporate ownership, however, the regime has also experienced problems in its media strategy as factional struggles within and between the component parties of the ruling coalition have resulted in 'newspaper wars' between their respective publications, indicating very publicly the limits of the BN's media control strategy, as well as undermining its self-promoted image as a consensus builder. The article concludes that whilst neither of these challenges is sufficiently strong to undermine regime domination of the media industry and push significantly for democratization in the country, they are nonetheless important representations of the limits of the state's control.

**Party Control: Electoral Campaigning in Vietnam in the Run-Up  
to the May 2002 National Assembly Elections**

*Martin Gainsborough*

The article considers the nature of government-voter communication and voter-candidate communication during the election to Vietnam's National Assembly in May 2002. It asks what message the government is seeking to project in relation to the election and explores the extent to which voters and election candidates are involved in a free and frank exchange of views on issues of public policy. The article argues that insofar as voters are provided with far more information about the election than they can possibly digest, it would appear that this information is less about informing the public per se and more about asserting the legal and procedural basis

of the election in order to place it beyond reproach. This, the article suggests, has become more important in a global era that places greater emphasis on “democratic” legitimacy. That is, even though Vietnam’s leaders do not subscribe to liberal democracy, it is of increasing importance that they demonstrate the “democratic” credentials of their electoral process both to their electorate and internationally. Looking at the voter-candidate meetings, the article argues that they are not simply a charade. Candidates are required to stand up and project themselves to the electorate while voters increasingly raise awkward questions. The article considers the ways in which the government seek to ensure the election result it wants but rejects the notion that preferential election coverage for favoured candidates is one of them.

**Candidate Debates and Equity News:  
International Support for Democratic Deliberation in Cambodia**

*Caroline Hughes*

Elections in Cambodia have been characterised by a strong focus on choice and relatively little emphasis on participation in debate. After 1998, post-election protests prompted a wave of demonstrations in which citizens could voice grievances publicly, but these have been restricted since late 2002. In 2003, international agencies attempted to increase public debate during election campaigns by introducing a series of programmes designed to foster public discussion. These included television and radio debates between political party candidates (NDI/RFA), and a foreign-produced news programme for state television and radio. These programmes exemplified the rules of rational policy debate and news coverage. However, they contrasted sharply with the ongoing climate of intimidation, vote-buying and incivility of rhetoric in the villages and on politically-aligned radio stations and newspapers. This raises the question of the place of rational policy debate in a democratizing society – does it drive a wedge of accountability into an oppressive social environment, or does it entrench the distance between policy debate and real life?

**The Discourse of Vote Buying and Political Reform in Thailand**

*William A. Callahan*

Political reform movements have grown up as part of democratic transition in many societies. Liberal political reformers typically seek to change legal and institutional mechanisms in order to “clean up” the irrationality and corruption of the regime. This essay uses the Thai case to critically examine these issues by interrogating the central role that the discourse of vote buying plays not just in Thai politics, but in the project of political reform itself. Indeed, in the 1990s vote buying turned from being one of many campaign tactics into the guiding metaphor of the “political disease” not simply of elections, but of Thai society in general. Rather than seeing vote buying as a coherent “thing,” the essay will examine how this varied practice of electoral fraud has been reduced into a key category of Thai politics - “Vote-Buying.” By demonstrating how vote buying is tied to its opposite – bourgeois democracy – one can better examine how both vote buying and democracy are co-produced in various networks of power relations. The essay examines key discourses to show how the concepts of law, “good and able leaders,” gangsters, the middle class, civil society, and village life are central in defining both vote buying and democracy in popular media and thus the popular imagination. Vote buying is produced in specific relations between political and economic power, urban and rural power, and official and unofficial power; to fight it one needs to challenge the dynamics of these relations.

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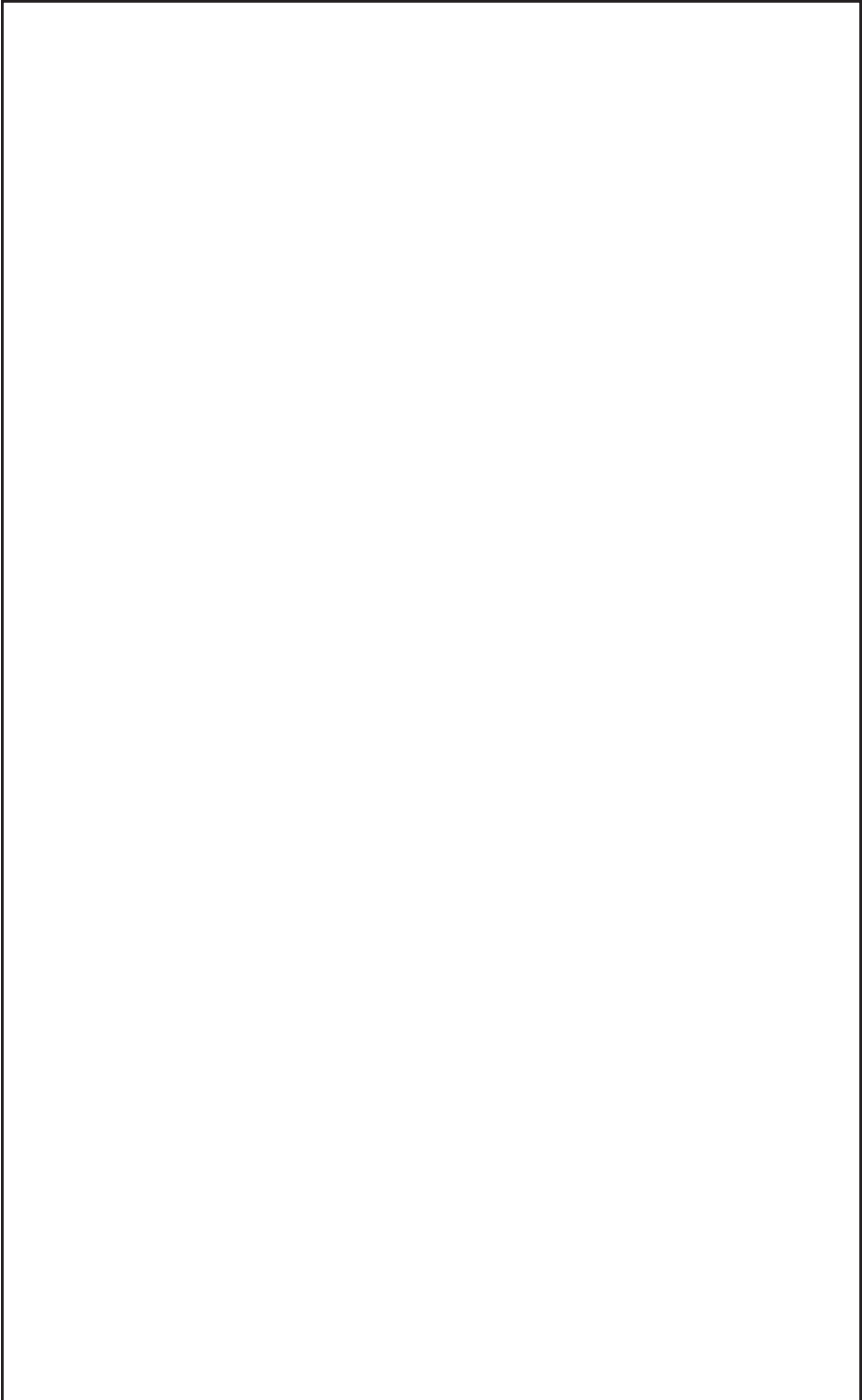
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## *Pacific Affairs*

is pleased to announce the awarding of the third

### **William L. Holland Prize.**

This prize is awarded annually for an outstanding paper published in *Pacific Affairs* during the preceding year that, in the opinion of the Editorial Board, best reflects the ideals of Bill Holland in promoting international understanding of the regions and peoples of Asia and the Pacific.

\*

**The William L. Holland Prize**  
for the best article published  
in Volume 77 (2004-2005) of *Pacific Affairs*  
has been awarded to

**Anita Chan** (Australian National University)

and

**Hong-zen Wang** (National Chi Nan University, Taiwan)

for their article published  
in Volume 77 No.4, Winter 2004-2005, pp. 629-646

### **The Impact of the State on Workers' Conditions – Comparing Taiwanese Factories in China and Vietnam**

\*

Chan and Wang's study applies field research and social science analysis to a pressing contemporary problem in the Asia Pacific: direct foreign investment and the treatment of workers in foreign factories. Their case study comparing experience in Vietnam and China will have value for those concerned with similar issues across the region.

The William L. Holland Prize recognizes the success of this article and serves to honour the memory of Bill Holland's dedication to open and accessible scholarship.

The article may be viewed at our website:  
**[www.pacificaffairs.ubc.ca](http://www.pacificaffairs.ubc.ca)**

*Winners of the third William L. Holland Prize*



**Anita Chan** and **Hong-zen Wang**  
(Australian National University) (National Chi Nan University)

for their article

**The Impact of the State on Workers' Conditions –  
Comparing Taiwanese Factories in China and Vietnam**

*published in Volume 77 No. 4, Winter 2004—2005, pp. 629-646*

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ABSTRACTS

**Ruining and Restoring Rivers:  
The State and Civil Society in Japan**

*Paul Waley*

Rivers have become an important focus of environmental activity in Japan today. In particular, they are a rallying point for a large but disparate number of civil society groups. Faced with a continuing reliance on construction in concrete from many operating within the state and from the construction industry, various key groups have been fighting to win acceptance for a more eco-friendly approach to river re-landscaping. In this paper, I use these groups as a prism for a discussion about the nature of civil society in Japan and in particular its relationship to the state. I take issue with conventional interpretations that see civil society as being locked into a close (but sometimes antagonistic relationship) with the state.

**New Zealand Foreign Policy under the Clark Government:  
High Tide of Liberal Internationalism?**

*David McCraw*

New Zealand's foreign policy for the last four years has strongly reflected the ruling Labour Party's Liberal Internationalist outlook. The government of Prime Minister Helen Clark has emphasized the promotion of democracy and human rights; the strengthening of the role of the United Nations; the advancement of anti-militarism and disarmament; and the encouragement of free trade. Although some of the government's foreign policies have inevitably not been consistent with its outlook, there have been relatively few such discrepancies so far. Indeed, this may well be the most Liberal Internationalist government New Zealand has yet had.

**Between War and Peace:  
Ethical Dilemmas of Intellectuals and Nationalist Movements in Taiwan**

*Zhidong Hao*

This paper examines the complex role of intellectuals in the nationalist movements in Taiwan and, by implication, their role in making war and peace across the Taiwan Strait. Ideal typical organic intellectuals, while following the ethic of responsibility, are willing to use dubious means, including extremisms like distortions, exaggerations and even war, in advancing their nationalist causes. These means can be politically effective, but they are ethically problematic. Professionals want to remain neutral and objective in their study of nationalism, and critical intellectuals want to focus on fairness and justice to all, especially to the disadvantaged groups, in any national developments or arrangements. The professional and critical intellectual groups follow the ethic of ultimate ends, but both are marginalized in the nationalist movements in Taiwan. They largely stand on the sidelines, watching history happen. They are ethical but seldom effective, unless they become partisan and are willing to use dubious means. Such action, however, would turn them into organic intellectuals. These three roles of intellectuals also represent three aspects of intellectuality. They are ideal typically in the sense that intellectuals may transit among the roles. Nonetheless, how intellectuals balance these roles and handle the dilemmas between ethics and efficacy affects the direction of cross-Strait relations, especially with respect

to war and peace in the region. This article is based on a historical-comparative analysis of the role of intellectuals, interviews of intellectuals in Taiwan, and a textual study of their writings. It hopes to shed some light on the nationalist developments across the Taiwan Strait.

**The State and the City:  
1988 and the Transformation of Rangoon**

*Donald M. Seekins*

This article discusses the ways in which the military regime in Burma has used its “vertical power” to constrain the “horizontal power” of the population of Rangoon, the country’s capital and largest city. In March 1988, a small incident between university students and local residents led to student protests, which were violently suppressed by the authorities. The cycle of protest and state violence escalated, resulting in demonstrations that by summer 1988 involved hundreds of thousands of Rangoon residents and crossed class and occupational lines. On 18 September 1988, a new military junta seized power and “pacified” the city.

The post-1988 regime transformed the city, imposing a “strategic redesign” of its public and private spaces to prevent a recurrence of “Democracy Summer.” This included the forced relocation of residents from the city centre to remote satellite towns and the closing down of sites associated with “revolutionary nationalism,” such as the main campus of Rangoon University. At the same time, a post-socialist, commercialized Rangoon emerged, funded by new sources of capital such as foreign investment and laundered “narco-dollars.” In an effort to win legitimacy for itself, the junta also sponsored ambitious Buddhist projects, such as renovation of the revered Shwe Dagon Pagoda. This article calls into question the salience of ethnic politics in Burma, since in Rangoon as in minority areas, the state’s relationship with society is defined by its determination to maintain a power monopoly.

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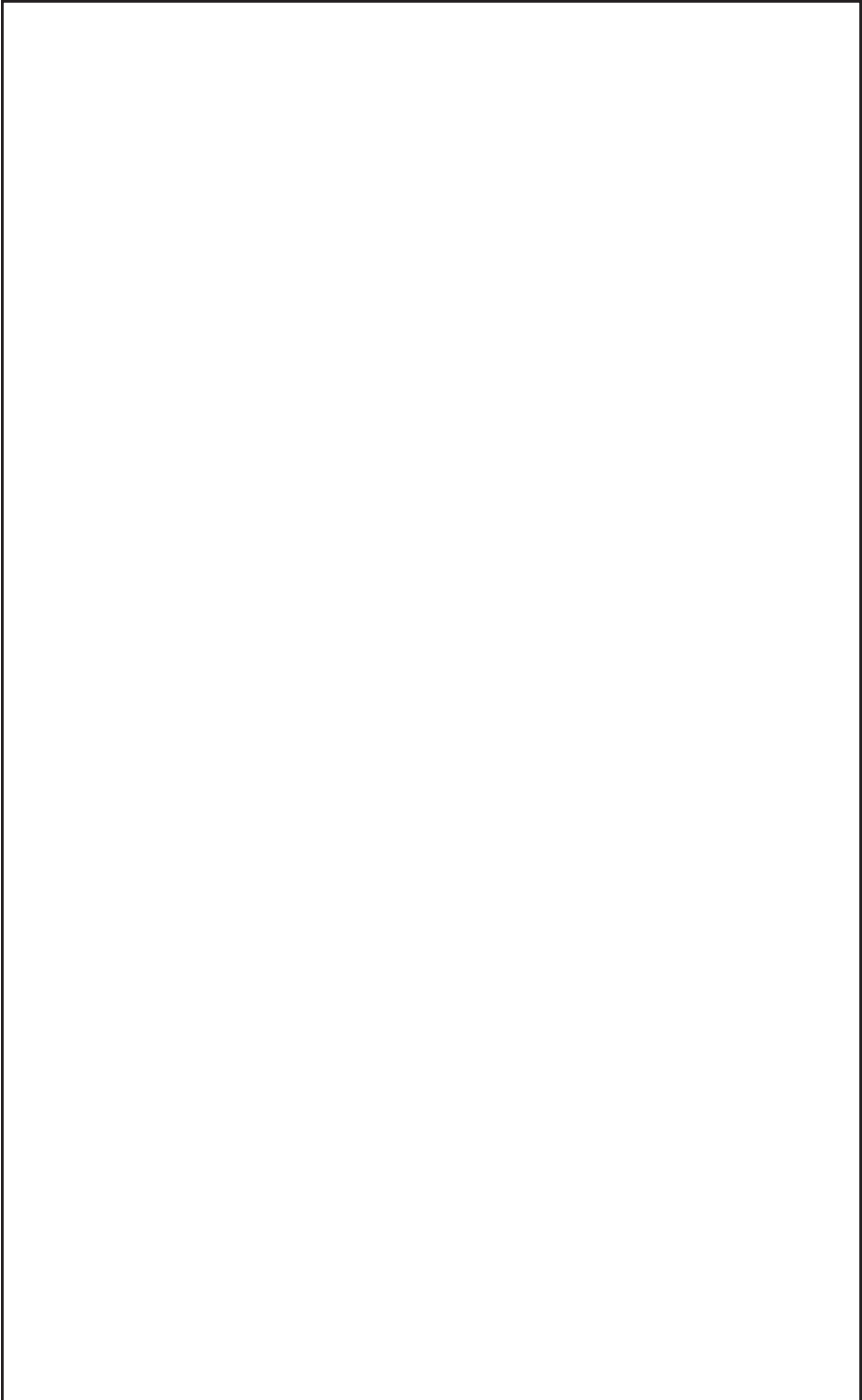
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ABSTRACTS

**“Economics is the Deciding Factor”: Labour Politics in Thaksin’s Thailand**

*Andrew Brown and Kevin Hewison*

The landslide electoral victory of Thaksin Shinawatra and his Thai Rak Thai (TRT) Party in February 2005 means that the most powerful elements of big domestic capital will continue to manage the affairs of the Thai state. In this article, we focus on the relationship between this capitalist state and the politics of labour, with considerable emphasis on the organized elements of the working class. We argue that the TRT, during its first term in office, pursued a clutch of labour-specific policies, with two broad objectives: first, to facilitate the creation of a more flexible and better-skilled labour force, seen as necessary for the development of a restructured, globally competitive capitalism; and second, through the construction of a new social contract, to deal with some of the inevitable tensions that have been generated by structural change and wage labour’s deepening exposure to the vagaries of local, regional and global market forces. The TRT is also embarking on further reforms, the nature of which indicate that, for business and the state, labour’s interests will be further subordinated to the shifting demands of capital accumulation. Now that domestic capital has mostly recovered from the economic crisis, the populism of the TRT’s first electoral campaign, which appeared to reject neo-liberal reform, is being replaced by a populism that accepts neo-liberal restructuring. Most notably, privatization, which the TRT opposed when it was part of IMF-sponsored reform, is now being embraced by the party, and looms as a key area for further tension between organized labour and the government.

**The Changing Politics of Central Banking in Taiwan and Thailand**

*Xiaoke Zhang*

In recent decades the central banks in Taiwan and Thailand—the Central Bank of China and the Bank of Thailand—have experienced contrasting changes in their respective status within the hierarchy of state economic institutions. While Taiwanese central bankers have been largely able to maintain their policy-making independence, their Thai counterparts have failed to do so. The major analytical objective of this article is to explain the cross-national variation in the degree of central bank independence. The central argument to be developed posits that the variation stems from institutional differences between Taiwan and Thailand in the relationship between central and private bankers, the configuration of inter-agency alliances within the macro-economic bureaucracy, and the structure of political party systems.

## **Philippine Defense Policy in the 21st Century: Autonomous Defense or Back to the Alliance?**

*Renato Cruz De Castro*

Using the Philippines as a case study, this article addresses two theoretically relevant questions regarding alliance durability. First, why does a state, given a choice between autonomous defense (by dipping into its own domestic resources for arms build-up) and seeking allies (to provide military resources and guarantees), opt for an alliance? And two, under what conditions will a state favour alliance over autonomous defense? After nearly three decades of security efforts directed at strengthening its alliance with the United States, the Philippines in the early 1990s decided to embark on a modernization programme to provide its armed forces with an autonomous defense capability. However, a lack of financial resources and political will have prevented the Philippine government from implementing the plan. The article maintains that the Philippine government's inability to develop an independent defense posture will bind the country to its alliance with the US, the only viable current option for ensuring its security in an evolving and uncertain international system.

## **Japan's Foreign Aid Policy to Africa since the Tokyo International Conference on African Development**

*Howard Lehman*

Japan has been the only developed country to consistently hold major international conferences on African development. It has held three conferences in 1993, 1998, and 2003. Given that Japan only provides about ten percent of its Official Development Assistance funds to Africa and given the severe economic pressures with which the country has been burdened, the reasons for organizing these major development conferences are not self-evident.

This paper argues that Japan's ODA strategy seeks to create an alternative to the World Bank/Washington Consensus arguments. This article seeks to explain and understand the evolution of Japan's ODA policy towards Africa and the history of the TICAD process by asking two sets of questions. First, in what way does the TICAD agenda attempt to position Japan's ODA strategy and policy as separate and unique from the Western ODA efforts? Second, what did the government hope to gain from financing and organizing these conferences? Why did the government not only put on one meeting but a series of international meetings?

The article concludes by examining how Japan has moved to counter the neo-liberal policy emphasis on structural adjustment with a more nuanced approach emphasizing self-help policies, loans, and poverty reduction through industrial development. Japan itself draws extensively from its perceived model of national and regional economic development as it hopes to influence non-Asian societies as in Africa.

**As China meets the Southern Sea Frontier:  
Ocean Identity in the Making, 1902-1937**

*Ulises Granados*

A study of China's defense of its "maritime frontier" in the period from 1902 to 1937, including the establishment of self-recognized sovereignty rights over the South China Sea archipelagos, provides a good illustration of how the country has dealt with relevant issues of international politics during the twentieth century.

The article intends to show that throughout the period between the fall of the Qing dynasty, the consolidation of power of Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government, and up to just before the Pacific War, the idea of a maritime frontier, as applied to the South China Sea, was deeply subordinated to the political needs arising from the power struggle within China and to the precarious position of the country vis-à-vis world powers. Therefore, the protection of rights over the Spratly and Paracel Islands was not a priority of the Chinese government's foreign policy agenda during the first three decades of the republic. However, in contrast to the probable involvement of Sun Yat-sen in a scheme with Japanese nationals in the early 1920s, intended to yield rights for economic exploitation in the Southern China littorals and islands, the Nanjing government's defense of the maritime frontier in Guangdong province since 1928 marked the first precedent in China's self-definition as a modern oceanic nation-state pursuing her own maritime-territorial rights against world powers that had interests in the region.

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# Pacific Affairs

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— *Special Forum* —

**GLOBALIZATION AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN CAPITAL CITIES**

*Guest Editor: K.C. Ho*

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ABSTRACTS

**Introduction: Globalization and Southeast Asian Capital Cities**

*K.C. Ho*

This paper represents an attempt to show how globalization is interacting with local political and social forces in the shaping of Southeast Asian capital cities. Southeast Asia is known for the political and economic dominance of its capital regions. In the recent two decades, the concentration of government, expenditures, services and amenities in the capital city has been reinforced by new foreign investments and international migration. The paper introduces three papers which examine the tensions and promises globalization brings for the capital city. It concludes with the challenge national governments face to balance spatial policies that strengthen the competitiveness of its capital regions with redistributive policies that are needed to develop subregions in the shadow of globalization.

**Local City, Capital City or World City?  
Civil Society, the (Post-) Developmental State and the Globalization  
of Urban Space in Pacific Asia**

*Mike Douglass*

The rise of civil society and the breach of urban space by global finance and retail capital are creating new dynamics in the capital city as its spaces for local and national social and political life are marginalized by world city formation and commodification of urban space for global accumulation. Case studies show that the active participation of civil society in the public sphere is crucial to sustaining and producing new community and civic spaces in the face of these trends.

**The Cultural Role of Capital Cities: Hanoi and Hue, Vietnam**

*William S. Logan*

Hanoi promotes itself both as a place for foreign investment in urban development and as the 'cradle of Vietnamese civilisation'. Special status is given to places of national heritage significance, and policy makers and planners face challenges of balancing heritage conservation and modern development. By contrast, the former capital, Hue, continues to decline economically relative to other Vietnamese cities and is discovering value in its imperial heritage as a 'vector for development'. These Vietnamese capital cities demonstrate that heritage conservation is a key consideration in government efforts to improve the position of their constituencies in the newly-shaping global and national economic systems.

**Colonial Capital, Modernist Capital, Global Capital:  
The Changing Political Symbolism of Urban Space in Metro Manila,  
the Philippines**

*Gavin Shatkin*

This paper traces the relationship between shifts in state strategies for capital building in Manila and changes in the political symbolism of urban space. It discusses three distinct epochs in capital building strategies in the Philippines during the past century: the American colonial period, the period of Ferdinand Marcos' authoritarian rule, and the Philippines' current integration into the global economy. It argues that the global era has been marked by the privatization of urban development and the degradation of public space, and that this has led Manila residents to seek new forums for political action, with important implications for the country's democracy.

**The Politics of the Dalai Lama's New Initiative for Autonomy**

*He Baogang and Barry Sautman*

In the late 1980s, the Dalai Lama first asserted that he was willing to no longer press for an independent Tibet. Until recently, however, scant progress was made toward negotiations between the Tibetan exiles and the government of the People's Republic of China: the PRC had shown no inclination to negotiate about matters beyond the Dalai Lama's own status, while the exiles had insisted that China renounce all control over affairs in Tibet, except foreign affairs and defense. In 2002, largely in response to external pressures, China invited one of the Dalai Lama's brothers to visit Tibet and in 2002-2005 the Dalai Lama's representatives have visited Tibetan areas of China on three occasions and, most recently, have met with PRC representatives in Switzerland. The Dalai Lama has since gone some way toward accommodating PRC pre-conditions for negotiations. He has acknowledged that Tibet is part of China and Tibetan culture part of Chinese culture, as well as refocusing his concerns away from political demands to questions of cultural and religious autonomy. Formidable obstacles to negotiations remain, including exile demands that they be about unification of all PRC Tibetan areas and the establishment of liberal democracy in Tibet. Compromise solutions are available, however, and China can take a number of steps that would facilitate acceptance of compromise in the exile community and that would substantially benefit Tibetans in Tibet.

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