SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES

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CONTENTS

Roles of Marriage Matching, Land, and Education in the Rapid Deagrarianization of Cambodian Rural Youths during the 2010s

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This study, using data on ever-married children aged 23–39 of household heads in four rice-growing villages in Cambodia, examines the mechanism underlying the rapid decrease in agricultural sector employment, or "deagrarianization," among younger Cambodians during the 2010s. Special attention is devoted to the effects of increased marriage matching at the migration destination (MM), educational attainment, and decreased land availability. The stability of the deagrarianization process is also assessed.

Results of the descriptive and econometric analyses indicate that deagrarianization increased through the migration of younger people outside their home province to work as manual laborers in non-agricultural sectors. MM and decreased parents' land endowments contributed significantly to deagrarianization, especially in villages where rice farming was an attractive occupation. Changes in parents' land transfer behavior were not the cause but the result of deagrarianization. These findings suggest that changes in norms related to marital partner selection also underlie deagrarianization and that increased MM accelerated deagrarianization in Cambodia during the 2010s.

Data also indicate the low stability of non-agricultural employment, implying that deagrarianization in Cambodia might stagnate if its economy is impacted by even minor unfavorable shocks.

Keywords: deagrarianization, education, labor migration, land transfer, marriage matching, occupational choice, rural youths

I Introduction

Structural transformation related to the share of agriculture in value-added and employment decline, or "deagrarianization" (Bryceson 1996), is a phenomenon common in the economic development of developing countries. Deagrarianization is an outcome as well

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as a causative factor of economic development. Therefore, understanding how it occurs is important for comprehending the mechanisms of economic development.

Cambodia experienced rapid deagrarianization in the 2010s.[1)] The GDP share of the agricultural sector (including forestry and fishery) decreased from 34 percent to 21 percent from 2010 to 2019. In the same period, not only did the sector's employment share decline from 57 percent to 35 percent, but the absolute size of the agricultural workforce also decreased from 4.7 million to 3.2 million persons. That annual rate of decrease, –4.3 percent, was the highest among mainland Southeast Asian countries.[2)] Agricultural employment decreased in tandem with the adoption of labor-saving technologies such as agricultural machinery. Thus, agriculture's labor productivity in Cambodia increased at an annual rate of 5.6 percent in the 2010s, also the fastest in the region.[3)]

This study aims to identify the factors behind the recent trend of deagrarianization in Cambodia, particularly among the married younger generation. The focus is specifically on the effects of parents' land endowment, level of education, and mode of marriage matching. The validity and significance of setting such a research topic are discussed below.

Deagrarianization in Cambodia has been driven by an expansion of the construction and manufacturing industries, especially the garment industry.[4)] The large increase in the wage rates of those industries is likely to have attracted workers from the agricultural sector.[5)] Because non-agricultural employment opportunities are concentrated in the capital city of Phnom Penh and its suburbs, deagrarianization has been accompanied by an increase in the proportion of the urban population: from 27 percent in 2008 to 39 percent in 2019 (Cambodia, National Institute of Statistics 2022b).

Understanding how and why deagrarianization occurred and increased is indispensable for understanding the mechanisms and processes of industrialization, agricultural development, and urbanization in Cambodia. In this regard, the explanation that the

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1) Data in this paragraph are based on the World Bank's World Development Indicators (World Bank, various years).

2) The figures for other countries are: Thailand –2.3 percent, Vietnam –1.7 percent, Myanmar –0.6 percent, and Laos 0.6 percent.

3) The figures for other countries are: Vietnam 4.8 percent, Thailand 3.6 percent, Myanmar 2.1 percent, and Laos 1.8 percent.

4) According to the population census of Cambodia, during 2008–19 employment in the manufacturing industry increased from 0.43 million to 1.14 million and in the construction industry from 0.14 million to 0.45 million.

5) According to data collected by the Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI), the daily earnings of garment factory workers and unskilled construction workers in 2018 were approximately 30,000 riels, doubling in real terms from 2010 (CDRI, various years).

development of urban non-agricultural sectors caused deagrarianization is a kind of tau-tology. We should answer the question of what factors prompted rural farm households or individuals to leave farms and take up non-agricultural jobs. This question, however, has not been addressed by earlier studies. Jiao Xi *et al.* (2017) found that education, ownership of physical assets, and access to infrastructure increased the likelihood of households choosing remunerative livelihood strategies. Yagura Kenjiro (2018a) found that land parcel sizes and productive assets negatively affected the likelihood of rural household members migrating for work. This implies that a lack of physical assets pro-moted deagrarianization, since migrant workers were engaged mostly in non-agricultural jobs. The above studies, however, did not specifically examine the occupational choice of rural youths, even though globally—as in Cambodia—deagrarianization is observed mainly among younger generations (Porzio *et al.* 2022). According to the 2008 and 2019 Cambodian population censuses, of the increase in non-agricultural workers of 1.97 million during 2008–19, 43 percent were under 24 years old as of 2019; 46 percent and 15 percent were, respectively, in the age groups of 25–34 years and 35–44 years.[6] For the age group of 35–44 years as of 2019, non-agricultural employment increased by 0.3 million, while agricultural employment decreased by 0.25 million. This indicates that the labor force of this generation experienced a strong shift from agriculture to non-agricultural sectors during the 2010s. Another notable observation is that the proportion of those employed in non-agricultural sectors increased especially among married people under the age of 39: from 26 percent in 2008 to 51 percent in 2019. Overall, the share of married people engaged in non-agricultural jobs rose from 43 percent to 50 percent.

Studies in other countries have also examined the factors behind the deagrarianization of rural youths. The results of those studies indicate that limited access to farmland discouraged rural youths from choosing or continuing farming as an occupation (Bezu and Holden 2014; Kosec *et al.* 2018; Nag *et al.* 2018). Availability of farmland has decreased also in Cambodia, especially in populous lowland regions of the country, where unculti-vated arable land is scarce.

Higher educational attainment has been identified as another factor promoting deagrarianization (Bezu and Holden 2014; Porzio *et al.* 2022), presumably because eco-nomic returns on education tend to be higher with non-agricultural jobs than with farm-ing (Tien 2014; Herrendorf and Schoellman 2018). This holds true for rural youths in Cambodia, where educational attainment increased among younger people in the 2010s.[7]

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6) The sum of these figures exceeds 100 because the change in non-agricultural employment for respondents who were 45 and older was negative.

7) According to population census data, for the age group of 25–34 years, the proportion of those who attained secondary or post-secondary education increased from 27 percent in 2008 to 40 percent in 2019 (Cambodia, National Institute of Statistics 2022a).

The above studies on deagrarianization have certain limitations. First, they all used data on households or individuals from rural villages. There was no data on people who had left the villages, which would have been indispensable for examining the causes of deagrarianization among rural youths since deagrarianization tends to entail migration from rural villages.

Second, earlier studies did not examine intertemporal occupational changes of individuals from agricultural to non-agricultural jobs. They did not consider whether or not deagrarianization resulted from the expansion of stable and long-term non-agricultural employment. If increased non-agricultural employment opportunities are generally unstable, people need to change frequently between agricultural and non-agricultural jobs. In that case, deagrarianization might stagnate even with minor economic shocks. Such a situation may be observed in northeastern Thailand, where rural household livelihoods continued to rely on farming as well as non-agricultural jobs because of the unstable, low-income nature of the latter (Rigg *et al.* 2014).

Third, earlier studies did not address the relationship between occupational choice and marital partner selection, both of which are important life events that most young people experience around the same time. Deagrarianization among rural youths mainly entails migration from rural to urban areas. Several studies have found that rural young migrants working in non-agricultural sectors in urban areas, if they are still single, tend to marry other migrants they meet at the migration destination in Cambodia (Derks 2008; Yagura 2012; 2015), China (Fan and Li 2002), and Vietnam (Bélanger and Haemmerli 2019). Such marriage matching is designated as "marriage matching at the migration destination" (MM). This is discussed in detail in the next section, but briefly: those who select their marriage partner through MM are predicted to choose non-agricultural jobs after marriage.

Some studies have examined the effects of premarital labor migration of rural youths in Cambodia (Yagura 2015; 2018b). However, these studies merely examined the effects of geographical exogamy on land transfer from parents to their married children. They did not specifically examine MM and occupational choice or deagrarianization. After analyzing data on unmarried young migrant workers in Phnom Penh, Yagura (2012) found that those who did not expect to receive farmland from their parents were more likely to consider someone they met in Phnom Penh as a future marital partner. This finding implies that limited availability of farmland, and hence a stronger deagrarianization tendency, is associated with MM. However, the study did not examine the effects of MM on deagrarianization.

If the positive effects of MM on deagrarianization are identified, three important implications arise. First, MM can accelerate deagrarianization because it is also a result

of deagrarianization among rural youths before marriage in the form of migration to work in urban non-agricultural sectors. This observation suggests that an increase in MM can explain why Cambodia has experienced rapid deagrarianization in recent years. By contrast, limited access to land and an increase in the educational status of rural youths are less likely to accelerate deagrarianization because the effects of these two factors are theoretically predicted to decrease as deagrarianization progresses. Land scarcity diminishes as an increasing proportion of rural young people select non-agricultural jobs. Return on education, or an education premium in non-agricultural sectors, also decreases as an increasing number of rural youths with higher educational status enter the non-agricultural labor market. Second, if MM does indeed foster deagrarianization, it could serve as one contributing factor to the observed rise in deagrarianization among married people in Cambodia in recent years. Third, because MM becomes common only when parents in rural areas allow their adult children to freely choose their marital partner, changes in social norms related to marriage also underlie deagrarianization.

In order to fill these gaps, this study examines how and why deagrarianization among young people progressed in the 2010s in Cambodia. Special attention is devoted to whether—and the extent to which—an increase in MM and educational attainment and decreased access to land caused deagrarianization. Whether deagrarianization was accompanied by the expansion of stable non-agricultural employment is also examined.

To achieve its research objective, the study uses data on ever-married children of household heads residing in four rice-growing villages. The data cover both adult children residing in the villages as of the survey year and adult children who left the villages. National-level large-scale household surveys administered by the Cambodian government cannot be used for this study because they do not include such data. As a result, this study cannot provide a comprehensive picture of Cambodian deagrarianization in recent years. Despite this limitation, the study makes a unique contribution to deagrarianization research: it shows that MM is a potentially important factor in Cambodia's rapid deagrarianization and highlights the importance of sociocultural factors underlying deagrarianization.

II Methodology

Sample
This study uses data collected through household surveys organized by the author in four villages. Prosrae in Prey Veng Province and Poulyom in Pousat Province were surveyed in 2009 and 2020. In the following sections, "2009 sample" and "2020 sample" for Prosrae

and Poulyom respectively refer to data collected in 2009 and 2020.[8] The two other villages, Svay and Trapeang Ang, are in Takeo Province, and the surveys there were conducted in 2014. The distances from Phnom Penh, are approximately 60 km for Prosrae, 170 km for Poulyom, and about 100 km for the two villages in Takeo Province.

For the surveys, all households in these villages except those from which adult members were absent were assessed using structured questionnaires. The 2020 survey was conducted from February to early March, before Covid-19 impacted the households' economic situation.

When investigating the impact of socioeconomic changes on the course of deagrarianization, only data from Prosrae and Poulyom were used because that inquiry needed data from at least two time periods. Data on Svay and Trapeang Ang were available only for 2014 and therefore used solely to examine the effect of socioeconomic factors on occupational outcomes of sample children as of 2014. As it happens, a survey was conducted in these two villages in 2002. However, since it was not intended for research on the deagrarianization of rural youths, the data necessary for this study were not wholly collected.

For the surveys, research assistants interviewed the heads of households in the villages to collect data on the households and household members as well as the household heads' children. The children included those who had migrated abroad as well as those who were no longer household members at the time of the survey, such as those who had established their own household after marrying within or outside the village. Information on the spouses of the married children, such as whether they received land from their own parents, was also collected.

To examine the effect of MM on deagrarianization, this study used data on household heads' adult children aged 23–39 who had been married one or more times (i.e., who were married, divorced, or widowed) at the time of the survey. Adult children younger than 23 years were excluded because some of them were still studying at university and hence unsuitable for this research. The upper age limit was set as 39. Older individuals could not be regarded as belonging to the younger generation, and they were unsuitable for analyses of the effects of MM because only a few had migrated before marriage, especially in the 2009 samples from Prosrae and Poulyom. Also, in these two 2009 samples, some adult children older than 39 might have received farmland from the government after the dissolution of collective farming in villages in the 1980s, after the fall of the Pol Pot regime.[9] Therefore, parents' land endowment, a key variable representing the availability of land for ever-married children, did not affect the children's choice of occupation.

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8) Data collected in 2009 were used also for earlier studies (Yagura 2015; 2018b).
9) Yagura (2015) presents details of land allocation processes in the two villages.

At the time of the surveys, rice farming was the primary economic activity in these villages. Other crops were not grown on a large scale. No arable land had been left uncultivated in these villages by the 1990s. However, the number of households increased afterward. As a result, the area of farmland per household decreased in these villages, at least during the 2000s and 2010s. The average area of farmland owned by the surveyed households decreased from 0.73 to 0.56 hectares in Prosrae and from 2.13 to 1.97 hectares in Poulyom during 2009–20. In the two villages in Takeo, the area of farmland per household decreased from 1.36 to 0.87 hectares in Svay and from 0.68 to 0.57 hectares in Trapeang Ang between 2002 and 2014. Nationally, the average size of farmland per agricultural household was 1.6 hectares as of 2013,[10] indicating that Poulyom was relatively land rich while the other three villages were relatively land scarce.

In Prosrae and Poulyom, irrigation facilities became available in the 2010s and farmers started growing rice twice a year in the same fields by 2020, which indicates that land constraints had been virtually lifted in these villages. In Svay there were paddy fields where rice could be planted in the dry season, but they were flooded and could not be used in the rainy season.

By 2020, rice farmers in Prosrae and Poulyom had adopted labor-saving technologies such as agricultural machinery, including tractors and combine harvesters, as well as direct seeding of rice instead of transplanting. The situation was the same in Svay in 2014. These technologies became commonplace in the 2010s, which suggests that deagrarianization among younger people induced labor shortages. However, the technological changes also reduced labor demand for farming. They therefore might have sped up deagrarianization among young people.

None of the surveyed villages were located along main roads or had markets. There were no factories nearby. As a result, non-agricultural employment opportunities for villagers were limited mainly to small family businesses within the village, such as grocery stores. Due to the scarcity of non-agricultural employment opportunities, increasing numbers of young people from these villages migrated for work.

The reasons for choosing Prosrae, Poulyom, Svay, and Trapeang Ang for this study are as follows. First, all these villages are located in the Central Plain zone or provinces surrounding Tonle Sap Lake, where Cambodia's rural population is concentrated.[11] In

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10) This figure is based on the agricultural census conducted in 2013 (Cambodia, National Institute of Statistics, 2015).

11) The provinces in the Central Plain zone are Kampong Cham, Kandal, Prey Veng, Svay Rieng, Takeo, and Tboung Khmum; and those surrounding Tonle Sap Lake are Battambang, Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Thom, Poursat, and Siem Reap. As of 2008, 72.4 percent of Cambodia's rural population lived in these provinces (Cambodia, National Institute of Statistics 2009).

addition, the main characteristics of these villages—rice being the major crop, no room for expanding farmland, and a scarcity of non-agricultural employment opportunities— were also common to most villages in the regions mentioned above. Thus, the findings from this study were expected to apply to most of Cambodia's rural population. Second, as shown above, these villages have all experienced decreasing access to land and increasing out-migration of the younger generations. These are conditions that the sample villages for this study had to satisfy to enable an examination of the effect of decreased access to land and MM on deagrarianization. Population outflow was also considered to be a common feature of the Central Plain and Tonle Sap Lake regions because the population growth rates between 2008 and 2019 of all the provinces in these regions were below the national average.

Finally, there are some socioeconomic differences among the four villages, such as distance from Phnom Penh, the major destination of migrant workers from these villages, and the average size of farmland per household. This allows us to grasp the effects of the differences as well as examine conditions under which the key variables exert an influence on deagrarianization.

Key Variables
   (1) Land Endowment
Following Yagura (2015), land availability is represented by the land endowment of the parents of the sample ever-married children before the children were married. It is defined as the size of farmland that the sample children's parents owned at a specific time before the children's marriage, divided by the number of children of the parents (i.e., the number of siblings of the sample children).

For Prosrae and Poulyom, the number of children of a specific age range was used as the denominator. The age range was set as younger than 40 for the 2009 sample and younger than 50 for the 2020 sample, because adult children older than that were likely to have received farmland from the government in the 1980s and therefore unlikely to impact the availability of land to be given to younger children. The area of parents' farmland as of 2009 was used for the 2020 sample because the data collected through the 2009 survey could be used. For the 2009 sample, the area of farmland parents had owned immediately before giving farmland to any of their children for the first time after having received it from the government in the 1980s was used. This data was also collected through the 2009 survey.

Based on the definition of parents' land endowment above, for analyses using the parents' land endowment for Prosrae and Poulyom, sample children of 2020 were limited to those who had married after 2009 because the land size as of 2009 was used

to calculate the parents' land endowment. This sample is designated as the "2020(B) sample." Sample children of 2020, including those who married in or before 2009, are designated as the "2020(A) sample," for which parents' land endowment data is lacking. Therefore, the sample size of the latter is larger than that of the former. It is also clear that the 2020(B) and 2009 samples do not overlap, but some 2020(A) sample children are included in the 2009 sample. It is important to note that the 2009 and 2020(A) samples do not constitute a single set of panel data, for two reasons. First, the 2020(A) sample includes those who were married after 2009 while the 2009 sample does not. Second, those whose ages were between 29 and 39 as of 2009 are included in the 2009 sample but not in the 2020(A) sample, because they were 40 years or older as of 2020.

For Svay and Trapeang Ang, the area of parents' farmland as of 2002 was used to calculate parents' land endowment because this data had been collected through a survey in 2002. Based on this definition, only data on adult children who married after 2002 were used for analysis in this study. For the number of children used as the denominator, those who married before 2002 were not included because many of them were likely to have already received farmland from their parents by then. Thus, the number of children who married before 2002 would have no significant impact on the land allocation from parents to children married after 2002 if parents' land endowment was evaluated based on the area of farmland as of 2002.

In earlier studies (Bezu and Holden 2014; Kosec *et al*. 2018; Nag *et al*. 2018), land availability for young people was represented by the actual or expected size of the land parcel received from their parents or the size of land they owned after the land transfer from their parents. However, the effects of land availability on deagrarianization of young people could not be captured by examining the relation between those variables and choice of occupation. This is because parents might tend to bequeath land to adult children who decide to choose farming as their occupation. In such cases, lack of land is not the cause but the result of deagrarianization.

Parents' land endowment before the adult children's marriage as defined above is unaffected by the children's occupational choice after marriage if parents give land to their adult children after marriage, as is true of Cambodia. It can still affect whether the adult children receive land from parents or the size of land given. Therefore, it can affect the adult children's occupational choice after marriage.

 (2) Educational Attainment
Educational attainment, represented as a categorical variable, is based on the highest level of school in which the sample child enrolled.

  (3) Migration History and Mode of Marriage Matching

To analyze MM effects, the categorical variable Migration History and Mode of Marriage Matching (MHMM) was defined with three categories: those who did not migrate before marriage (NN), those who migrated before marriage and met their marital partner at the migration destination (MM), and those who migrated before marriage and met their partner in another way (MO).

    MM is taken to promote deagrarianization through three types of effects. "Skill effect" is applicable when both husband and wife (i.e., an adult child and his or her spouse) have skills for the non-agricultural jobs in which they are engaged at the migration destination where they met. Using those skills, they can earn higher incomes in non-agricultural jobs even after marriage. For example, according to a sample survey in 2016 and 2017, garment factory workers in Cambodia received an annual wage increase of a few dollars for each year they continued to work in the same factory (International Labour Organization 2018). This included the legally mandated seniority allowance (an additional USD 1 per year) as well as incentives reflecting the workers' skill, such as the difficulty and output of the job. Therefore, continuing with non-agricultural jobs is an economically better choice for the couple than farming in their home province, even if they receive farmland from their parents.

    "Geographical exogamy effect" is the tendency for couples matched at a migration destination to be geographically exogamous—to have different places of origin—because a migration destination attracts young people from different regions throughout the country. Even if both husband and wife receive farmland from their respective parents, geographically exogamous couples are discouraged from farming because their farmland parcels are located in their respective places of origin, potentially far from each other. The disparate locations make it difficult for the couple to manage their farmland parcels efficiently. In addition, such couples have difficulty receiving help for farming from one or the other set of parents.

    "Land transfer effect" applies when marriage partners who meet at a migration destination receive little or no farmland from their parents after marriage, which makes it difficult for such couples to earn a living by farming. Their likelihood of receiving land from parents is small because young people who migrate to work are more likely to come from households with small land endowments and feel a greater need to support their family through labor migration (and remittances).

    These three types of MM effects indicate that meeting a marriage partner at a migration destination can be predicted to induce deagrarianization. However, those who experienced labor migration before marriage but met their partner in some other way (MO) are also predicted to be more likely to choose non-agricultural jobs after marriage

than those who did not migrate before marriage (NN) because the labor migration experience would foster their non-agricultural job skills.

Effects of Key Variables on Changes in Farming Rate

Using data from Prosrae and Poulyom, this study assessed the factors underlying changes during 2009–20 in the proportion of ever-married children engaged in farming, or the "farming rate." This study defines "those engaged in farming," or "farmers," as people whose primary or secondary occupation was farming in the year preceding the survey year based on information provided by sample children's parents (i.e., household heads).[12] This means that for the 2020 sample, the occupational situation in 2019 was used for analysis; therefore, the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic that were felt in 2020 can be ignored.

The effects of the three key variables on decrease in farming rate were examined using the following procedure. First, "farming functions," or the logit model that determined the probability of sample children engaging in farming, were estimated. The model was estimated separately for each sample (2009 and 2002[B]) for each of the two villages. Data on the two villages were not pooled because the villages had different socioeconomic environments and therefore the effect of each variable on sample children's occupational choice was also thought to be different.

The dependent variable is a dichotomous variable F, which takes a value of 1 if an ever-married child was engaged in farming and 0 otherwise. Explanatory variables include the above three key variables and other attributes of the child and their parents, such as the child's gender and age and the parents' average age,[13] which were considered to affect the child's occupational choice.

With $P[\cdot]$ standing for probability, the logit model is expressed as the expected probability of an ever-married child i in sample year y to be engaged in farming, as shown below:

$$P[F_{yi}=1]=\frac{\exp(G_{yi})}{1+\exp(G_{yi})}\equiv \Lambda(G_{yi}) \cdots \text{(eq. 1)}$$

Therein, the following are used:

$$G_{yi}=a_{(y)}+\sum_{s=0}^{S}\beta_{s(y)}E_{s(y)i}+\sum_{t=0}^{T}\gamma_{t(y)}L_{t(y)i}+\sum_{u=0}^{2}\delta_{u(y)}M_{u(y)i}+\boldsymbol{x}'_{yi}\boldsymbol{\theta}_{y}$$

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12) People whose occupation was agricultural wage labor are not regarded as being engaged in farming, but in fact there was no such ever-married child in the sample.

13) If there was only one parent in the household at the time of the survey—that is, if one parent had died or the parents were divorced—the age of that parent was used.

Also, $E_{s(y)i}$, $L_{t(y)i}$, and $M_{u(y)i}$ respectively denote educational attainment, parents' land endowment, and MHMM. x'_{yi} is the vector of explanatory variables except the three key variables, and $a_{(y)}$, $\beta_{s(y)}$, $\gamma_{t(y)}$, $\delta_{u(y)}$, and θ_y are associated coefficients.

The three key variables are expressed as categorical variables. Educational attainment is categorized by the child's highest educational attainment: no schooling or primary education, lower secondary education, and upper secondary or higher education. Parents' land endowment is categorized by the size of land (less than 0.25 ha, 0.25–0.50 ha, 0.5–1 ha, and 1 ha or larger). MHMM is categorized into three states (MM, MO, and NN), as mentioned above. A variable is categorical if it is made up of several dummy variables, one of which has a value of 1 and the others all have a value of 0 for each sample. For example, if ever-married child i's educational attainment is lower secondary education, then $s = 1$ and hence $E_{1(y)i} = 1$ and $E_{0(y)i} = E_{2(y)i} = 0$. The value of the parents' land endowment $L_{t(y)i}$ for each child is also assigned similarly. With regard to $M_{u(y)i}$, $u = 0$, 1, and 2 respectively stand for the MHMM statuses of NN, MM, and MO.

Second, the baseline farming rate, FR_{yv}, for each year and village is derived as the average of the expected probability of $F = 1$ over the sample children:

$$\mathrm{FR}_y = \frac{1}{N_y} \sum\nolimits_{i=1}^{N_y} \Lambda\left(\hat{G}_{yi}\right) \cdots \text{(eq. 2)}$$

Therein, $\hat{G}_{yi}$ is derived from G_{yi} by replacing parameters with estimated values from the logit model. N_y represents sample size.

Third, the probability of engagement in farming was calculated under the assumption that the value of one key variable takes a specific value for all sample children. For example, the farming rate under the assumption that all sample children's educational attainment is lower secondary education (i.e., $s = 1$) is derived as shown below:

$$\mathrm{P}_y^{E1} = \frac{1}{N_y} \sum\nolimits_{i=1}^{N_y} \Lambda\left(\beta_{1(y)} + z'_{yi}\hat{\mu}_y\right) \cdots \text{(eq. 3)}$$

Therein, z'_{yi} is the vector of explanatory variables other than educational attainment and $\hat{\mu}_y$ is the vector of estimated parameters. Hypothetical farming rates of this kind were calculated for each value of each of the three key variables, and for each year and village.

Fourth, a combined hypothetical farming rate was calculated for each of the three key variables for each year and village, which represents the farming rate in 2009 (or 2020) when the distribution of the key variable was that of the 2020(B) (or 2009) sample. For example, the combined hypothetical farming rate in 2009 if the distribution of educational attainment is that of the 2020(B) sample was derived as shown below:

$$\mathrm{FR}_{09}^{E20} = \sum\nolimits_{s=0}^{S} \mathrm{D}_{20}^{Es}\mathrm{P}_{09}^{Es} \cdots \text{(eq. 4)}$$

In eq. 4, D_{20}^{Es} is the proportion of children in the 2020(B) sample for whom educational attainment is categorized as s. The combined hypothetical farming rate in 2020 with respect to educational attainment was also derived by replacing the distribution of the educational attainment of the 2020(B) sample with that of the 2009 sample.

$$\mathrm{FR}_{20}^{E09} = \sum\nolimits_{s=0}^{S} \mathrm{D}_{09}^{Es}\mathrm{P}_{20}^{Es} \cdots \text{(eq. 5)}$$

Finally, the effects of a change in the distribution of each key variable on the change in the farming rate during 2009–20 are defined as the difference between the combined hypothetical farming rate and baseline farming rate. For example, in the case of educational attainment, its effect based on the 2009 sample is as follows:

$$\mathrm{FR}_{09}^{E20} - \mathrm{FR}_{09} \cdots \text{(eq. 6)}$$

Its relative contribution to the change in farming rate was calculated as shown below:

$$\left(\mathrm{FR}_{09}^{E20} - \mathrm{FR}_{09}\right) / \left(\mathrm{FR}_{20} - \mathrm{FR}_{09}\right) \cdots \text{(eq. 7)}$$

For Svay and Trapeang Ang, it was not possible to analyze the effects of changes in the distribution of the key variables because data were obtained only for 2014. Therefore, the farming function (logit model) was estimated and the marginal effect of each key variable on the probability of engagement in farming was analyzed. Data from the two villages were pooled to estimate the model because the sample size for each village was too small to obtain reliable results of the logit model if the models were estimated by village.

Effects of Land Endowment and Educational Attainment on MHMM
Educational attainment and parents' land endowment may also affect MHMM: changes in the distribution of these two variables between the two time periods may indirectly contribute to a decline in farming rates by changing the distribution of MHMM. For example, if parents' land endowment is small, their children may be more likely to migrate to work before marriage to supplement their low agricultural income. As a result, parents' land endowment may be negatively correlated with the probability of NN and positively with the probability of MM or MO. Also, if parents have a small land endowment, their children will expect that the probability of receiving farmland after marriage

is low or that the area of farmland they receive will be small. They may then decide, even before marriage, that they will not engage in farming after marriage. Thus, they do not need to avoid MM, which may be disadvantageous for farming due to its geographical exogamy and land transfer effects as described above. As a result, they may be more likely to choose MM. Similarly, if higher educational level promotes non-agricultural employment, there may be a positive correlation between educational attainment and MM.

Therefore, an examination was also made of whether and to what extent these two variables affected MHMM. The multinomial logit model was estimated using MHMM, a multinomial variable with three states, as the dependent variable and educational attainment, parents' land endowment, and other variables as explanatory variables. For Prosrae and Poulyom, similar to the logit model, the model was estimated by village and separately for the 2009 and 2020(B) samples. Using the 2009 sample as an example, the probabilities that a sample child would choose NN, MM, and MO are expressed by the following equations, respectively:

$$Q_{09}\left[NN\right]_{09} = 1 - Q_{09}\left[MM\right] - Q_{09}\left[MO\right] \cdots \text{(eq. 8)}$$

$$Q_{09}\left[MM\right]_{09} = \frac{\exp\left(H_{09}\left[MM\right]_{09}\right)}{1 + \exp\left(H\left[MM\right]_{09}\right) + \exp\left(H\left[MO\right]_{09}\right)} \cdots \text{(eq. 9)}$$

$$Q_{09}\left[MO\right]_{09} = \frac{\exp\left(H_{09}\left[MO\right]_{09}\right)}{1 + \exp\left(H\left[MM\right]_{09}\right) + \exp\left(H\left[MO\right]_{09}\right)} \cdots \text{(eq. 10)}$$

Where,

$$H_{09}[U]_{09} = \alpha_{09U} + \sum_{s=0}^{S} \rho_{s(09)U} E_{s(09)} + \sum_{t=0}^{T} \tau_{t(09)U} L_{t(09)} + \boldsymbol{x}'_{09}\boldsymbol{\varphi}_{09U},$$

$U = MM$ or MO, and α_{09U}, $\rho_{s(09)U}$, $\tau_{t(09)U}$, and $\boldsymbol{\varphi}_{09U}$ are coefficients or vectors of coefficients to be estimated.

Based on estimated coefficients, the predicted probability that the MHMM of sample children would be NN, MM, or MO when educational attainment or parents' land endowment took a specific value was calculated. For instance, the predicted probability that the MHMM of a sample child would be MM when their parents' land endowment was in category 0 (i.e., less than 0.25 hectares) was calculated by retaining $L_{0(09)}$ and removing $L_{t(09)}$ ($t \neq 0$) from the terms consisting of $H_{09}[MM]_{09}$. Similarly, predicted probabilities were computed for other categories of parents' land endowment values, and probabilities of choosing NN and MO were also calculated.

Based on the predicted probabilities of each parents' land endowment value, the

predicted probabilities of each MHMM state for the whole sample were calculated based on the distribution of parents' land endowment for the 2009 and 2020(B) samples by the following equations, respectively:

$$Q_{09}\left[U\right]_{L09} = \sum_{t=0}^{T} D_{09}^{L_t} Q_{09}^{L_t}\left[U\right]_{09} \cdots \text{(eq. 11)}$$

$$Q_{09}\left[U\right]_{L20} = \sum_{t=0}^{T} D_{20}^{L_t} Q_{09}^{L_t}\left[U\right]_{09} \cdots \text{(eq. 12)}$$

In these equations, $D_{09}^{L_t}$ is the proportion of children in the 2009 sample for whom parents' land endowment is categorized as t, and $D_{20}^{L_t}$ is that of children in the 2020(B) sample. $Q_{09}^{L_t}\left[U\right]_{09}$ is the predicted probability that the MHMM of a sample child is U(= *NN*, *MM*, or *MO*) when their parents' land endowment is in category t based on the estimated coefficients for the 2009 sample.

Next, the percentage contribution that a change in the distribution of parents' land endowment made to the change in MHMM status U between 2009 and 2020 was computed:

$$\left(Q_{09}\left[U\right]_{L20} - Q_{09}\left[U\right]_{L09}\right) / \left(D_{20}^{U} - D_{09}^{U}\right) \times 100 \cdots \text{(eq. 13)}$$

The denominator $D_{20}^{U} - D_{09}^{U}$ is the actual change in the proportion of each MHMM state between 2009 and 2020. Based on the definition of the contribution in the above equation, if the value of the contribution is negative, it means that changes in the key variable affected changes in the distribution of MHMM in the opposite direction to the actual changes.

Similarly, the multinomial model for the 2020(B) sample was estimated, and using the estimated coefficients the contribution of changes in the distribution of parents' land endowment was calculated. Following the same method, the contribution of changes in the distribution of educational attainment was calculated. For Svay and Trapeang Ang, only the multinomial model was estimated; the contribution could not be computed because data on only one time point were available.

The multinomial logit model presented above is based on the assumption that MHMM is endogenously determined. The problem here is that if MHMM is included as an exogenous explanatory variable in the farming function, the estimation results may be biased. A bias arises when factors not included in the model as explanatory variables are correlated with both MHMM and farming status—that is, when MHMM is considered endogenous in the logit model. For example, the child's farming skill, which is unobservable and not included in the model, can be correlated negatively with both the probability

of choosing MM and that of being engaged in farming after marriage if those who had lower farming skill levels were more likely to migrate before marriage.

To check the endogeneity of MHMM in the logit model, the model developed by Partha Deb and Pravin Trivedi (DT model) (2006) was applied. The DT model simultaneously estimates a multinomial logit model with a multinomial variable as the dependent variable and an outcome function with the multinomial variable as one of the explanatory variables. In our case, the multinomial variable is MHMM and the outcome function is the farming function specified as the logit model. The DT model allows us to test the endogeneity of a multinomial explanatory variable in the outcome function, and to obtain unbiased estimation results even when the variable is endogenous.

However, when an attempt was made to estimate the DT model separately for Prosrae and Poulyom, it was not possible. That is, the likelihood functions failed to converge. Therefore, an attempt was made to estimate the DT model by combining the data on the two villages, but it was still impossible to estimate for the 2020(B) sample. For the 2009 sample, the model was estimable only if the outcome function was specified as a linear probability model instead of logit model. According to the estimation result, the exogeneity of MHMM could not be rejected. For Svay and Trapeang Ang, the DT model could not be estimated. From the above results, although the possibility of MHMM's endogeneity could not be completely ruled out, the estimation results of the logit model with MHMM as a simple exogenous explanatory variable were used.

Tests of How MM Worked

Whether the detected correlation between MM and farming rates reflected MM's promotional effect on deagrarianization was verified, and the way in which MM induced deagrarianization was identified. To that end, a check was made on whether the correlations between variables satisfied the necessary conditions for MM to have each of the three types of effects mentioned above.

For a skill effect, the condition is that among sample children or their spouses who received farmland from their parents, those whose MHMM status is MM (MM children) are less likely to be engaged in farming than other sample children. This is because they can earn more from non-agricultural jobs than from farming, even if they have farmland to cultivate.

For a geographical exogamy effect, the following two conditions need to be fulfilled: (1) the proportion of geographical exogamy is higher for MM than for NN and MO children; and (2) among MM children, the farming rate is lower for geographically exogamous than for geographically endogamous children. In this study, a marriage is regarded as geographical exogamy if the couple's provinces of origin mutually differ.

For a land transfer effect, the following two conditions should be fulfilled: (1) among those who were not engaged in farming (non-farmers), the proportion of sample children whose spouse received farmland from their parents is lower for MM than for NN or MO children; and (2) among MM children, the farming rate is lower for those whose spouse did not receive farmland from their parents than for those whose spouse did receive farmland. In the first condition, those who were engaged in farming (farmers) were not considered because they needed farmland given by either their own or their spouse's parents, irrespective of MHMM status. Therefore, the land transfer status reflects occupational choice in addition to the spouse's parents' land endowment.

Tests for geographical exogamy and land transfer effects can also detect whether the observed association between MM and farming reflects the effects of MM or the effects of unobservable factors. This is because in those two tests differences in farming rates between MM and the other two MHMM statuses (NN and MO) were not directly compared.

Effects of Key Variables on Occupational Change
The effects of key variables on individual-level occupational change during 2009–20 were analyzed for Prosrae and Poulyom using data on children from both the 2009 and 2020 samples, designated as the "panel sample." Specifically, changes in their occupation—farmer or non-farmer—between the two years were examined and two indicators were constructed. The first was "farming to non-farming transition rate," defined as the percentage of farmers as of 2009 who were non-farmers in 2020. The second was the "non-farming continuation rate," defined as the percentage of non-farmers as of 2009 who were still non-farmers in 2020. Then, the association between each of the two indicators and the key variables as of 2009 was examined.

Farming to non-farming transition rate and non-farming continuation rate respectively capture the delayed effect and persistence of the effect of the key variables on deagrarianization. These two indicators are predicted respectively to be negatively associated with parents' land endowment and to be positively associated with educational attainment if decreased land availability and increased educational attainment promoted deagrarianization. If MM promoted deagrarianization, then the value of these indicators would be higher for MM progeny.

Through the non-farming continuation rate, the stability of non-agricultural employment was also examined, with a higher non-farming continuation rate indicating greater stability in the sense that a larger proportion of sample children continued to be non-farmers during 2009–20.

The non-farming continuation rate is predicted to be lower for older sample children

(that is, they are predicted to be less likely to continue their non-agricultural jobs) for two reasons: (1) the major non-agricultural jobs of sample children were manual jobs, such as factory and construction work, which are more suitable for younger workers; and (2) as the children grow older, so do their parents, and therefore the children need to return to their home village to care for their elderly parents. To assess age effects, the association between non-farming continuation rate and the age of the sample children was examined.

Effects of Change in Parents' Land Transfer Behavior
To elucidate the effects of decreased land availability on deagrarianization, it is necessary to also examine the relation between occupational choice and the status and size of land transfer from parents. For example, if farming rates among those who received land from parents decreased between the two time periods, then decreased availability of land was unlikely to constrain the ever-married children's engagement in farming.

In this regard, it is worth examining whether parents' land transfer behavior has changed and whether the change has promoted their ever-married children's deagrarianization. In the case of Cambodia, "equal division" was the norm—parents gave land to all their children irrespective of gender and birth order, at least in the late 2000s (Yagura 2015). If an increasing proportion of parents deviated from the equal division norm irrespective of their children's needs or wishes, then an increasing proportion of their ever-married children were forced to engage in non-agricultural jobs. However, if an increasing proportion of ever-married children were willing to choose non-agricultural jobs for any reason, then in response parents would give land only to those ever-married children who wanted or intended to engage in farming. Consequently, the change in parents' land transfer behavior would be not the cause but the result of deagrarianization.

This study also examined changes in farming rate among those who received land from their parents and changes in the proportion of parents (household heads) who followed the equal division norm. This analysis was conducted only for Prosrae and Poulyom because it required data from two time periods.

III Socioeconomic Changes between the Two Periods

Occupational Changes
Table 1 shows the distributions of the occupations of sample children and their workplaces. The farming rates decreased from 2009 to 2020: from 70 percent to 39 percent in Prosrae and from 88 percent to 66 percent in Poulyom. The decreases were attributable mainly to decreases in the proportions of full-time farmers. The farming rates were

Table 1 Distributions of Occupations and Workplace Types and Non-agricultural Jobs

	Prosrae		Poulyom		Svay	Trapeang Ang
	2009	2020(A)	2009	2020(A)	2014	2014
Distribution of Occupation (%)						
Farming Only (f)	49.0	24.6	84.8	48.8	53.8	16.5
Non-agricultural Job Only	28.9	61.4	11.0	32.8	46.2	76.3
Both Farming & Non-agricultural Jobs (b)	21.1	14.0	3.4	16.8	0.0	7.2
Farming Rate (f + b) (%)	70.1	38.6	88.3	65.6	53.8	23.7
Type of Non-agricultural Job (%)						
Self-employment	29.6	17.4	41.4	25.4	n/a	n/a
Employed Worker	70.4	82.6	58.6	74.6	n/a	n/a
Construction Worker[a]	28.6	28.4	20.7	24.6	27.3	31.2
Factory Worker[a]	28.6	39.4	10.3	28.7	45.5	22.1
Jobs Requiring High Educational Status[a,b]	8.2	7.1	3.4	6.6	0.0	3.9
Workplace of Non-agricultural Jobs (%)						
Outside the Home Province	n/a	85.1	n/a	81.4	95.5	83.3
of which, Phnom Penh	n/a	76.2	n/a	49.7	50.0	47.4
Thailand	n/a	1.0	n/a	15.8	40.9	28.2

Notes: "n/a" denotes that data are not available.
[a] The figures indicate the proportion of sample children engaged in each category of job among those who are engaged in non-agricultural jobs.
[b] Including schoolteacher, medical professional, public officer, and office worker at a private company.

low also in Svay (54 percent) and Trapeang Ang (24 percent). The data demonstrate that deagrarianization of the younger generation occurred in the surveyed villages.

The data also suggest that deagrarianization progressed through the migration of younger people outside their home province to work as employees in non-agricultural sectors, not because of thriving non-agricultural self-employed businesses in the villages nor because of the development of non-agricultural sectors in rural areas. The following observations support this finding. First, those engaged in both farming and non-agricultural jobs were a small minority, indicating that becoming a part-time farmer who also ran a business such as a grocery shop or small-scale trade was not the major form of deagrarianization. Second, most of the sample children's non-agricultural jobs were employed work. A large proportion of the sample children were workers employed in construction or factories. Other types of employed workers included restaurant waiters and craft workers such as electricians. Third, more than 80 percent of the sample progeny engaged in non-agricultural jobs in 2020 were working outside their home provinces,

especially in Phnom Penh or Thailand.

An increase in educational attainment of young people, if any, was unlikely to be a major force of deagrarianization in these villages, for two reasons (see Table 1). First, in the sample of children engaged in non-agricultural jobs, a small minority had occupations requiring high educational backgrounds, such as schoolteacher, public officer, and office worker at a private company. Second, the proportion of such children did not increase during 2009–20 in Prosrae; it increased in Poulyom but only slightly.

Changes in Socioeconomic Attributes
Table 2 presents changes in the socioeconomic attributes of the sample children. In both Prosrae and Poulyom, the sizes of parents' land endowment decreased by around 40 percent during 2009–20 on average. The decreases resulted from large increases in the number of people whose parents' land endowment was smaller than 0.25 hectare. Consistent with the decreased land endowments of parents, the proportion of sample children who received farmland from their own parents decreased considerably, especially in Prosrae. The average area of farmland received also decreased. It is particularly interesting that for those who received farmland from their parents, the average area of farmland received did not change much between the two years: around 0.2 hectare in Prosrae and 0.8 hectare in Poulyom. This lack of change suggests that parents avoided land fragmentation in order to ensure the economic viability of farming for the next generation. In Svay and Trapeang Ang, parents' land endowments were also small, and only around half the sample children received farmland from their own parents.

The proportion of sample children whose spouse received farmland from their parents (parents-in-law of the sample children) also decreased in Prosrae and Poulyom. As a result, especially in Prosrae, the proportion of those who received farmland from either their own or their spouse's parents decreased to a greater degree.

The farmland parcels received from parents, especially by sample children from Prosrae, Svay, and Trapeang Ang, were not large. Therefore, non-agricultural jobs would provide these children with a higher income than rice farming even if their spouse also received farmland and even if double cropping were feasible. According to data on 2021 collected from Prosrae by the author, the estimated net income from growing rice in one season was around 0.9 million riels per hectare.[14] If a couple received 0.2 hectare of

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14) USD 1 was about 4,000 riels in the 2000s and 2010s. The figure of rice farming is based on the plot level data of rice farming in Prosrae village in 2021. Gross income is calculated using the median value of yield and selling price of rice. Cost (expenditure) was defined as the sum of the median value of the fee for hiring plowing services by tractor and harvesting and threshing services by combine harvester, as well as expenditures for chemical fertilizer and rice seeds, each of which was the product of the median value of the amount used and the price.

Table 2 Socioeconomic Attributes of Sample Children

	Prosrae			Poulyom			Svay	Trapeang Ang
	2009	2020(A)	2020(B)	2009	2020(A)	2020(B)	2014	2014
Sample Size	150	188	114	121	211	124	91	99
Parents' Land Endowment								
Average Area (ha)	0.35	0.20	0.21	0.99	0.55	0.61	0.46	0.19
Distribution (%) by Size (ha)								
0	0.0		2.6	0.0		6.5	8.8	10.1
<0.25	36.7		66.7	3.3		19.4	36.3	69.7
<0.50	46.7		22.8	24.8		25.8	35.2	15.2
<1.00	13.3		7.9	33.9		28.2	17.6	5.1
1.00=<	3.3		0.0	38.0		20.2	2.2	0.0
Farmland Received from Their Own Parents								
Proportion of Those Who Received Farmland (%)	91.3	58.5	55.3	89.3	74.9	69.4	53.8	52.5
Average Area (ha)	0.21	0.12	0.12	0.73	0.61	0.59	0.15	0.10
Average Area for Those Who Received Farmland (ha)	0.23	0.21	0.22	0.81	0.82	0.85	0.29	0.20
Farmland Received from Their Spouse's Parents								
Proportion of Those Whose Spouse Received Farmland (%)	91.3	46.3	39.5	78.5	61.6	51.6	56.0	39.4
Proportion of Those Who Received Farmland from Their Own Parents or Whose Spouse Received Farmland from Their Parents (%)	96.7	73.4	65.8	93.0	88.2	84.7	69.2	65.7
Distribution by Educational Attainment (%)								
No Schooling	2.7	1.1	0.0	4.1	1.4	2.4	29.7	2.0
Primary	56.7	68.1	63.2	60.3	59.7	50.8	60.4	55.6
Lower Secondary	30.0	18.6	21.9	30.6	24.2	26.6	7.7	33.3
Upper Secondary	10.0	9.6	10.5	5.0	13.3	17.7	2.2	6.1
Higher	0.7	2.7	4.4	0.0	1.4	2.4	0.0	3.0
Distribution by MHMM (%)								
NN	70.7	47.3	44.7	90.1	66.8	58.9	48.4	12.1
MM	16.7	36.2	39.5	5.0	18.5	22.6	18.7	54.6
MO	12.7	16.5	15.8	5.0	14.7	18.6	33.0	33.3
MM/MO	1.3	2.2	2.5	1.0	1.3	1.2	0.6	1.6
Provincial Exogamy (%)	10.7	34.0	42.1	21.5	33.6	41.1	22.0	54.5

Note: Parents' land endowment was not defined for the 2020(A) samples of Prosrae and Poulyom.

farmland from each of the husband's and wife's parents and grew rice twice a year, the net annual income from rice farming would be 0.72 million riels. However, the annual wage income for a garment factory worker was at least approximately 9.2 million riels.[15] Even for sample children from Poulyom who received 0.8 hectare of farmland from each of their own and their spouse's parents and who grew rice twice a year on that field, the net annual income from rice farming was estimated at 2.2 million riels per hectare per season—about 7.1 million per year in all—based on data on farming in 2020.[16] Although the income per working day from rice farming was not small, due to the adoption of labor-saving technologies such as direct seeding and use of machinery, these figures indicate that for most sample children it was more lucrative to migrate to work as a factory or construction worker for a year.

Educational attainment clearly increased in Poulyom: the proportion of sample children with upper secondary education increased considerably. In Prosrae, the increase in educational attainment was reflected by only a small increase in higher education. In Svay and Trapeang Ang educational attainment was generally low.

With respect to MHMM status, in both Prosrae and Poulyom the proportions of those who did not migrate before marriage (NN children) decreased to a large degree; the proportion of MM children increased as a result. The proportion of MM children was high also in Trapeang Ang, exceeding 50 percent, as a result of a very low proportion of NN children. The ratio of MM to MO (MM/MO) increased especially in Prosrae, indicating that MM became more common among those who migrated before marriage in the 2010s. An increase in the proportion of MM reflects the increase in migration of unmarried youths to a specific destination such as Phnom Penh because it expands the pool of possible marital partners in the migration destination.

Norms of marital partner selection might also have changed. According to data on household heads in the two villages in 2009, 79 percent of their marital partners were selected by their parents. Since then, although data is lacking, parents might have become more likely to accept their children's choice of partner. Alternatively, an increase in the migration of unmarried children might affect parents' attitudes about their children's partner selection.

Reflecting the increase in MM, and consistent with this study's hypothesis on the geographical exogamy effect of MM on deagrarianization, the proportion of sample

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15) This figure is based on the statutory minimum wage for garment factory workers in 2021 (USD 192).

16) The estimated net income from rice farming in Poulyom was greater than in Prosrae thanks to the higher yield and higher selling price of rice, as explained in the next section. Differences in price levels between 2020 and 2021 (rice prices were generally higher and fertilizer prices were lower in 2020 than in 2021) also contributed to differences in the estimated incomes.

children whose marriage was regarded as provincially exogamous increased also in Prosrae and Poulyom. Although not shown in Table 2, for MM children from these two villages with provincially exogamous marriages, only 13 percent of their spouses were from Phnom Penh; 87 percent were from other provinces, indicating that most MM children married migrant workers from other provinces.

Farming Rates by Key Attributes

Table 3 shows farming rates by the values of the three key variables. It is worth noting that the farming rates shown in the table represent simple correlation between each of the key variables and farming, without correcting for the effects of other variables. Therefore, it is not possible to conclusively assess the effects of the key variables on deagrarianization.

With respect to parents' land endowment, in Prosrae and Poulyom farming rates tend to be higher for sample children whose parents' land endowments were large in 2009. The same tendency was observed also in Svay and Trapeang Ang. However, in Prosrae and Poulyom, the farming rates had decreased for almost all size classes of land

Table 3 Farming Rates (%) by Value of Key Attributes of Sample Children

	Prosrae			Poulyom			Svay	Trapeang Ang
	2009	2020(A)	2020(B)	2009	2020(A)	2020(B)	2014	2014
Parents' Land Endowment (ha)								
<0.25	69.1		30.4	50.0		40.6	34.1	19.0
<0.50	64.3		26.9	83.3		65.6	68.8	21.7
<1.00	80.0		22.2	87.8		71.4	68.8	33.3
1.00=<	100.0		n/a	91.3		68.0	100.0	60.0
Educational Attainment								
No Schooling or Primary	69.7	35.4	23.6	87.2	73.6	62.1	56.1	22.8
Lower Secondary	64.4	48.6	44.0	83.8	72.5	72.7	28.6	30.3
Upper Secondary or Higher	81.3	30.4	29.4	100.0	48.4	44.0	50.0	0.0
MHMM								
NN	77.4	46.1	29.4	89.9	83.7	76.7	65.9	50.0
MM	48.0	19.1	22.2	50.0	30.8	25.0	23.5	14.8
MO	52.6	51.6	44.4	66.7	54.8	56.5	53.3	27.3

Note: "n/a" denotes that data are not applicable.

endowment by 2020. Differences between the size classes had diminished by 2020. It is particularly interesting that the 2020 farming rate in Prosrae was lower for sample children with large parental land endowments. The data suggest that decreases in parents' land endowment were not a major driving force for the decrease in farming rate in Prosrae.

Regarding educational attainment, in Prosrae and Poulyom, farming rates for those who attained upper secondary or higher education were higher in 2009 than in 2020; but in 2020 their farming rates tended to be lower than those for people with lower educational levels. In Trapeang Ang, those who attained upper secondary or higher education were all engaged in non-agricultural jobs. These data suggest that an increase in educational attainment induced deagrarianization. However, the effect of educational attainment is unlikely to be significant because a large majority of non-agricultural jobs of the sample children did not require a high level of education in either 2009 or 2020, as mentioned above.

Farming rates by MHMM status were consistent with the prediction that MM induces deagrarianization, because the farming rate for MM children was much lower than that found for NN or MO children.

IV Results of Analyses

Effects of Key Variables on Farming Rate Changes
Tables 4a–4c present estimation results obtained from the logit model. Specifically, the tables show the marginal effects (M.E.) of explanatory variables on the probability of engagement in farming. For categorical variables, M.E. is calculated for each category and is defined as the difference in the predicted probability of engagement in farming for that category in comparison with that for the reference category (R) of the categorical variable. For a continuous variable, M.E. is defined as the change in the predicted probability attributable to one unit of change in the variable.

For land endowment and educational attainment, some categories completely predicted farming choices (called "perfect fit"), and coefficients could not be estimated. In such cases, the category was merged with the adjacent category to estimate the model. Such categories included the "1.0 ha=<" category of parents' land endowments for Prosrae and Svay and Trapeang Ang (this was merged with "0.5 ha<"), and the "upper secondary or higher education" category of educational attainment for Poulyom (this was merged with "lower secondary education").

The results can be summarized as follows. First, in Prosrae, the probability of

Table 4a Estimation Results of Farming Function (Logit Model) (Prosrae)

Variable	2009 ($N = 150$)			2020(B) ($N = 114$)		
	M.E.	(s.e.)	P^x_{09PS}	M.E.	(s.e.)	P^x_{20PS}
Parents' Land Endowment (ha)						
<0.25 (R)			0.70			0.30
<0.50	−0.04	(0.10)	0.66	−0.02	(0.12)	0.28
0.50=<	0.09	(0.11)	0.79	−0.02	(0.12)	0.27
Educational Attainment						
No Schooling or Primary (R)			0.69			0.24
Lower Secondary	−0.004	(0.08)	0.68	0.16	(0.13)	0.39
Upper Secondary or Higher	0.07	(0.13)	0.75	0.14	(0.15)	0.37
MHMM						
NN (R)			0.76			0.29
MM	−0.23	(0.11)**	0.53	−0.08	(0.09)	0.22
MO	−0.19	(0.15)	0.57	0.19	(0.13)	0.49
Age (Years)	0.002	(0.009)		−0.005	(0.012)	
Female (R)			0.67			0.42
Male	0.06	(0.08)	0.72	−0.22	(0.09)**	0.19
Average Age of Parents (Years)	0.01	(0.01)		0.01	(0.01)	

Notes: "M.E." stands for the marginal effects of variables on farming.
"s.e." stands for standard errors for M.E.
P^x_{09PS} and P^x_{20PS} are the predicted probabilities of engagement in farming at each value of variable x.
(R) represents the reference category on which the marginal effect of the variable is estimated.
Statistical significance: * 10%, ** 5%, *** 1%.

engagement in farming did not differ significantly by the size of parents' land endowment in either 2009 or 2020. In Poulyom as well as in Svay and Trapeang Ang, the probability was significantly lower for the size class of less than 0.25 ha than for larger size classes. These results suggest that parents' land endowments affected their ever-married children's occupation choice in these three villages.

Second, educational attainment did not have a significant correlation with the probability of engagement in farming in Prosrae and Poulyom in either 2009 or 2020. In Svay and Trapeang Ang, primary education had a significant positive effect on the probability of engagement in farming, but educational attainment higher than primary education did not have a significant effect. These results are consistent with the fact that non-agricultural jobs of sample children mostly did not require a high educational level.

Third, except in the 2020 sample of Prosrae village, the probability of engagement in farming was significantly lower for MM children than for NN children even when

Table 4b   Estimation Results of Farming Function (Logit Model) (Poulyom)

Variable	2009 ($N = 121$)			2020(B) ($N = 124$)		
	M.E.	(s.e.)	P^x_{09PY}	M.E.	(s.e.)	P^x_{20PY}
Parents' Land Endowment (ha)						
<0.25 (R)			0.41			0.46
<0.50	0.40	(0.27)	0.81	0.23	(0.14)*	0.69
<1.00	0.50	(0.26)*	0.91	0.19	(0.13)	0.65
1.00=<	0.48	(0.26)*	0.89	0.16	(0.17)	0.63
Educational Attainment						
No Schooling or Primary (R)			0.87			0.62
Lower/Upper Secondary or Higher	–0.002	(0.07)	0.87	–0.02	(0.10)	0.60
MHMM						
NN (R)			0.90			0.76
MM	–0.42	(0.23)*	0.48	–0.49	(0.10)***	0.27
MO	–0.27	(0.21)	0.63	–0.20	(0.11)*	0.56
Age (Years)	–0.005	(0.007)		0.02	(0.01)*	
Female (R)			0.83			0.64
Male	0.08	(0.07)	0.91	–0.07	(0.08)	0.57
Average Age of Parents (Years)	0.01	(0.01)		–0.001	(0.007)	

Notes: See notes for Table 4a.

controlled for other variables, including the size of parents' land endowment. This result suggests that the association between MM and farming was not a mere reflection of the association between MM and parents' land endowment but that MM itself adversely affected engagement in farming. The effect of MM also differed from the effect of migration experience per se, for two reasons. First, differences between MO and NN children in terms of their probability of engagement in farming were not significant except for the cases of Poulyom village in 2020 and Svay and Trapeang Ang. Second, the differences observed in these cases were much smaller than the difference between MM and NN children.

Table 5 presents the relative contributions of changes in the distributions of the respective key variables to changes in the farming rate during 2009–20 for Prosrae and Poulyom. Two values of contributions were calculated for each variable: one based on the estimated parameters of the logit model for the 2009 sample, and the other based on that for the 2020 sample.

The contribution of change in the distribution of parents' land endowment differed significantly by village. In Poulyom, the change contributed 45 percent of the decrease

Table 4c   Estimation Results of Farming Function (Logit Model) (Svay and Trapeang Ang)

Variable	2014 ($N = 185$)		
	M.E.	(s.e.)	P^x_{14ST}
Parents' Land Endowment (ha)			
<0.25 (R)			0.29
<0.50	0.21	(0.09)**	0.49
0.50=<	0.26	(0.14)*	0.55
Educational Attainment			
No Schooling or Primary (R)			0.28
Primary	0.16	(0.07)**	0.44
Lower Secondary	0.08	(0.12)	0.36
Upper Secondary or Higher	–0.17	(0.13)	0.11
MHMM			
NN (R)			0.55
MM	–0.34	(0.08)***	0.21
MO	–0.16	(0.08)**	0.39
Age (Years)	0.02	(0.01)**	
Female (R)			0.37
Male	0.02	(0.07)	0.39
Average Age of Parents (Years)	0.00	(0.00)	
Svay (R)			0.43
Trapeang Ang	–0.10	(0.10)	0.33

Notes: See notes for Table 4a.

Table 5   Relative Contributions of Distributional Changes in Key Variables to Changes in Farming Rate

	Based on the Estimated Parameters for:	Prosrae	Poulyom
Parents' Land Endowment	2009 sample	–1.1	45.2
	2020(B) sample	–1.6	13.3
Educational Attainment	2009 sample	–1.0	0.1
	2020(B) sample	2.1	0.8
MHMM	2009 sample	13.6	44.0
	2020(B) sample	3.4	42.5

Note: The relative contribution is defined by eq. 7 in the main text. Its positive value indicates contribution to decrease in farming rate.

in farming rate based on estimated parameters for the 2009 sample. However, the contribution was only 13 percent when the estimated parameters of the 2020 sample were used for calculation. This is because the marginal effect of parents' land endowment was smaller for the 2020 sample than for the 2009 sample in Poulyom (Table 4b). In Prosrae the contributions were negative, although their absolute values were small. This finding reflects the fact that while the share of the less than 0.25 ha class increased significantly during 2009–20 (Table 2), the predicted probability of farming for the smallest size class was not smaller than that for other classes (Table 4a).

The relative contribution of change in the distribution of MHMM, or the increase in MM, was as large as 40 percent in Poulyom. That large contribution reflects the large negative marginal effect of MM on the probability of farming (Table 4b). In Prosrae the relative contribution of MHMM was 13.6 percent based on the parameters for the 2009 sample, which was the largest among the three key variables. However, the contribution was only 3.4 percent if it was derived from parameters for the 2020 sample. The small contribution resulted from the fact that no significant difference was found between NN and MM in the predicted probability of engagement in farming for the 2020 sample (Table 4a).

Change in the distribution of educational attainment did not make a sizable contribution to change in farming rate in either village.

It is worth noting that, in contrast to Poulyom village, no key variable made a large contribution to the decrease in farming rate in Prosrae if the contribution was calculated using the parameters for the 2020 sample. This finding suggests that the deagrarianization of youths in Prosrae in the 2010s was caused not by socioeconomic changes among the young people or their households but mainly by pull factors such as increased employment opportunities and wage levels in non-agricultural sectors in Cambodia.

A possible reason for the lack of a significant association between the key variables and engagement in farming in Prosrae is that, for most of the youths in Prosrae, farming is economically much less attractive than non-agricultural jobs, irrespective of MHMM status and size of farmland received from parents. This is indicated by the fact that net income from rice farming per hectare per season was much lower in Prosrae than in Poulyom, as noted in the preceding section. The higher income from rice farming in Poulyom resulted from higher yields (4 vs. 3.5 tons/ha) and a higher selling price of rice (1,020 vs. 800 riels/kg). The latter was due mainly to differences in the rice varieties grown in each village (high-priced aromatic vs. low-priced non-aromatic rice). This argument implies that for youths from villages where farming is an attractive occupation, such as Poulyom, changes in land endowment and MHMM status can be anticipated to be a major driving force of deagrarianization.

Effects of Land Endowment and Educational Attainment on MHMM

Tables 6a–6c show the predicted probabilities of each MHMM state by value of parents' land endowment and educational attainment based on the estimated coefficient of the multinomial logit model. Although the multinomial logit model was estimated including

Table 6a Predicted Probabilities of MHMM Based on Multinomial Logit Model (Prosrae)

	2009			2020(B)		
	NN	MM	MO	NN	MM	MO
Parents' Land Endowment (ha)						
<0.25 (R)	0.73	0.15	0.12	0.46	0.42	0.12
<0.50	0.68	0.21	0.11	0.41	0.25	0.34**
0.50=<	0.71	0.04*	0.25	0.31	0.57	0.11
Educational Attainment						
No Schooling or Primary (R)	0.71	0.18	0.11	0.48	0.34	0.18
Lower Secondary	0.64	0.16	0.20	0.30	0.43	0.27
Upper Secondary or Higher	0.85	0.15	0.00***	0.45	0.55	0.00***

Note: Asterisks indicate that the difference between the probability for that category and the probability for the reference category (R) is significant. Similar to the farming function, categories that yielded a perfect fit were merged with the adjacent category to estimate the model. Statistical significance: * 10%, ** 5%, *** 1%.

Table 6b Predicted Probabilities of MHMM Based on Multinomial Logit Model (Poulyom)

	2009			2020(B)		
	NN	MM	MO	NN	MM	MO
Parents' Land Endowment (ha)						
<1.00 (R)	0.85	0.08	0.07			
1.00=<	0.98***	0.00***	0.02			
<0.25 (R)				0.44	0.41	0.16
<0.50				0.47	0.33	0.20
<1.00				0.75*	0.11**	0.15
1.00=<				0.68	0.07***	0.25
Educational Attainment						
No Schooling or Primary (R)	0.93	0.03	0.04	0.59	0.18	0.23
Lower Secondary or Higher	0.84*	0.09*	0.07	0.57	0.30*	0.13

Note: See note for Table 6a.

Table 6c Predicted Probabilities of MHMM Based on Multinomial Logit Model (Svay and Trapeang Ang)

	NN	MM	MO
Parents' Land Endowment (ha)			
<0.25 (R)	0.26	0.43	0.32
<0.50	0.32	0.28	0.40
0.50=<	0.39	0.28	0.33
Educational Attainment			
No Schooling (R)	0.36	0.21	0.43
Primary	0.26	0.41**	0.33
Lower Secondary	0.29	0.34	0.37
Upper Secondary or Higher	0.50	0.50**	0.00***

Note: See note for Table 6a.

Table 7 Contribution of Changes in the Distribution of Key Variables to Changes in MHMM

	Prosrae			Poulyom		
	NN	MM	MO	NN	MM	MO
Actual Change in the Proportion of MHMM Status between 2009 and 2020(B) Samples	−0.26	0.23	0.03	−0.31	0.18	0.14
Contribution of Change in the Distribution of Key Variables (%)						
Parents' Land Endowment						
Based on the Estimated Parameters for:						
2009 Sample	−5.4	−2.0	−30.1	7.4	8.3	6.2
2020(B) Sample	−9.9	11.6	−166.6	19.3	43.4	−11.9
Educational Attainment						
Based on the Estimated Parameters for:						
2009 Sample	−4.5	0.0	−37.7	3.2	4.1	2.1
2020(B) Sample	−5.1	0.8	−48.0	0.7	7.5	−8.1

Note: The contribution is defined by eq. 13 in the main text.

the same explanatory variables as for the farming function, only the results for the two key variables are presented in the tables.

As shown in Tables 6a and 6b, when parents' land endowment was relatively large, the probability of MM was significantly low for the 2009 sample of Prosrae and the 2009 and 2020(B) samples of Poulyom. Conversely, when parents' land endowment was small, the probability of MM was relatively high.

However, for the 2020(B) sample of Prosrae and for Svay and Trapeang Ang, there

was no significant correlation between parents' land endowment and probability of MM. It should be noted that in these cases, the probability of NN was lower than in Poulyom even when the size of parents' land endowment was large (i.e., more than 0.5 hectare). In other words, sample children in these villages were more likely to migrate to work before marriage regardless of the size of parents' land endowment. This suggests that it was more difficult to make a living from farming in these villages or that conditions were more conducive to migrant work. In fact, compared to Poulyom, these villages are closer to Phnom Penh, the main destination for migrant workers.

With respect to educational attainment, the probability of MM tended to be higher for those who had a relatively high educational background in Poulyom, Svay, and Trapeang Ang. However, as shown in Tables 4a–4c, the probability of engagement in farming after marriage for highly educated people was not significantly lower than that for low-educated people. Therefore, the observed correlations between educational background and probability of MM appear to be unrelated to differences in occupational choice by educational background.

Based on the estimation results of the multinomial logit model, the contribution of changes in the distribution of educational attainment and parents' land endowment to changes in the distribution of MHMM between 2009 and 2020 in Prosrae and Poulyom were calculated (Table 7). The focus was on the contribution to the change in the proportion of MM, which had the effect of lowering farming rate. The contribution of changes in the distribution of parents' land endowments was large in Poulyom when it was computed based on parameters estimated for the 2020 sample. It corresponded to 43 percent of the increase in the proportion of MM (0.18). In addition, as shown in Table 5, the contribution of changes in the distribution of MHMM to decrease in farming rate was large in Poulyom. Therefore, in Poulyom a change in the distribution of parents' land endowment, especially an increase in the proportion of those with smaller land endowments, indirectly contributed to deagrarianization by changing the distribution of MHMM.

On the other hand, the contributions of changes in the distribution of educational attainment to changes in the proportion of MM were small in both villages. Combining this result with the data shown in Table 5, one may conclude that changes in educational attainment did not contribute significantly to the decline in farming rate in these two villages, either directly or indirectly.

How MM Worked

The types of effects MM exerted on the occupational choice of young people from the two villages were examined by ascertaining whether the data satisfied the conditions for each effect presented in Section 2. The analysis in this section did not need parents' land

endowment data. Therefore, the 2020(A) sample instead of the 2020(B) sample was employed for the analysis of Prosrae and Poulyom in 2020. The former lacks parents' land endowment data. However, due to its larger size compared to the 2020(B) sample, the 2020(A) sample was better suited for statistical hypothesis testing.

(1) Skill Effect

The existence of a skill effect was found for both the 2009 and 2020 samples from Prosrae and Poulyom and the sample from Svay and Trapeang Ang (Table 8). In fact, the farming rate was significantly lower for MM children than for NN or MO children among the sample children who received farmland from their own or their spouse's parents. Migration experience before marriage, however, also seems to have deterred engagement in farming after marriage for the 2009 sample of Prosrae, because the farming rate for MO children was also significantly lower than that for NN children.

(2) Geographical Exogamy Effect

A geographical exogamy effect was observed only for the 2009 sample of Prosrae village: the proportion of provincial exogamy was significantly larger for MM children than for NN or MO children; for MM children, farming rate was significantly lower for provincial exogamy than for provincial endogamy (Table 9). For the other samples, no significant difference was found in farming rates between provincial exogamy and endogamy for MM children. For the 2009 sample of Poulyom, no geographical exogamy effect could be inferred because there was no case of provincial endogamy among MM children.

(3) Land Transfer Effect

Except for the 2009 sample of Poulyom, the existence of a land transfer effect was indicated by the following two facts: (1) among non-farmers, the proportion of sample

Table 8 Test of the Skill Effect of MM

MHMM	Prosrae		Poulyom		Svay	Trapeang Ang
	2009	2020(A)	2009	2020(A)	2014	2014
NN	77.4**	54.8***	93.4***	86.0***	87.9*	50.0*
MM	54.6	24.4	50.0	37.9	57.1	18.8
MO	50.0	52.0***	80.0	64.3**	69.6	28.0

Notes: The figures show the farming rate (%) for children who received farmland from their own parents or whose spouse received farmland from their parents.
*, **, and *** respectively denote significant differences from MM at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels.

Table 9 Test of Exogamy Effect of MM

	Proportion of Provincial Exogamy by MHMM Status (%)		sig. (1)	Farming Rate (%) by Matching Status		
				Provincial Endogamy	Provincial Exogamy	sig. (2)
Prosrae (2009)	NN	3.8	***	78.4	50.0	
	MM	48.0		69.2	25.0	**
	MO	0.0	***	52.6	n/a	
Prosrae (2020[A])	NN	13.5	***	49.4	25.0	
	MM	72.1		15.8	20.4	
	MO	9.7	***	50.0	66.7	
Poulyom (2009)	NN	18.3	***	91.0	85.0	
	MM	100.0		n/a	50.0	
	MO	0.0	***	66.7	n/a	
Poulyom (2020[A])	NN	24.8	***	90.6	62.9	***
	MM	66.7		30.8	30.8	
	MO	32.3	***	61.9	40.0	
Svay (2014)	NN	2.3	***	0.0	67.4	
	MM	88.2		26.7	0.0	
	MO	13.3	***	25.0	57.7	
Trapeang Ang (2014)	NN	33.3	***	50.0	50.0	
	MM	83.3		13.3	22.2	
	MO	15.2	***	20.0	28.6	

Notes: "n/a" indicates that no children were included in that category.
　　　"sig. (1)" indicates the statistical significance for the difference in the proportion of provincial exogamy between MM and other matching statuses.
　　　"sig. (2)" indicates the statistical significance for farming rate between provincial exogamy and endogamy for each matching status.
　　　Statistical significance: * 10%, ** 5%, *** 1%.

children whose spouse received farmland from parents was lower for MM children than for NN or MO children; and (2) among MM children, the farming rate was lower for those whose spouse did not receive farmland from their parents (Ls = 0) than for those who did (Ls > 0) (Table 10).

In summary, effects of all three types were observed in at least one of the four villages. Moreover, MM was found to have at least one type of effect for each of these four villages and in both 2009 and 2020 for Prosrae and Poulyom. The existence of geographical exogamy and land transfer effects also suggests that the negative association between MM and the probability of engagement in farming found by the estimation of

Table 10 Test of Land Transfer Effect of MM

		Prosrae		Poulyom		Svay	Trapeang Ang
		2009	2020(A)	2009	2020(A)	2014	2014
Proportion of Non-farmers Whose Spouse Received Farmland by MHMM Status (%)[a]							
NN		95.8***	45.8**	54.6	47.8**	26.7*	16.7
MM		46.2	25.5	66.7	18.5	0.0	26.1
MO		88.9**	60.0**	50.0	64.3***	42.9**	54.2**
Farming Rate by MHMM and Land Transfer Status (%) [b]							
NN	Ls > 0	77.7	53.2	93.0	88.5	86.2	75.0
	Ls = 0	66.7	38.1	78.3	73.3**	26.7***	37.5
MM	Ls > 0	64.7	36.4	50.0	58.3	100.0	29.4
	Ls = 0	12.5**	10.9**	50.0	18.5**	0.0*	8.1*
MO	Ls > 0	52.9	50.0	80.0	59.1	66.7	27.8
	Ls = 0	50.0	53.9	0.0	44.4	33.3	26.7

Notes: [a] Asterisks indicate the statistical significance for the difference in the proportion between MM and other MHMM statuses.

[b] Ls > 0 and Ls = 0 respectively indicate those whose spouse received farmland from their parents and those whose spouse did not receive farmland. Asterisks indicate the statistical significance for the difference in farming rate between the cases of Ls > 0 and Ls = 0.

Statistical significance: * 10%, ** 5%, *** 1%.

the logit model was not explained solely by unobservable factors correlated with both MM and farming; hence, MM itself was found to have a significant effect on the progeny's occupational choice, as explained above.

Effects of Key Variables on Occupational Change

Table 11 presents the farming to non-farming transition rate and the non-farming continuation rate of the panel sample by the values of the key variables. The data of Prosrae and Poulyom villages were combined because the sample size was too small to conduct statistical tests. The data indicate that, consistent with the results of the analysis presented above, smaller parents' land endowment and MM promoted deagrarianization. For farmers as of 2009, farming to non-farming transition rate was high among those whose parents' land endowments were small or whose MHMM status was MM, which indicates that they were more likely to switch their occupation from farming to non-

Table 11   Transition of Occupation for Panel Sample by the Values of Key Variables in 2009

	Farmer in 2009		Non-farmer in 2009	
	N	Farming to Non-farming Transition Rate (%)	N	Non-farming Continuation Rate (%)
Total	158	19.6	50	60.0
Parents' Land Endowment (ha)				
<0.25	37	32.4	20	60.0
<0.50	46	15.2	20	70.0
0.50=<	61	9.8	5	0.0
(sig.)		**		**
Educational Attainment				
No Schooling or Primary	121	20.7	40	55.0
Lower Secondary	19	10.5	7	5.0
Upper Secondary or Higher	18	22.2	3	100.0
(sig.)		–		–
MHMM Status				
NN	137	15.3	29	51.7
MM	9	55.6	16	68.8
MO	12	41.7	5	80.0
(sig.)		***		–
Age Group (as of 2020)				
34–39	75	17.3	29	62.1
40–44	44	27.3	13	61.5
45–50	39	15.4	8	50.0
(sig.)		–		–

Notes: "N" denotes the number of children in each category.
   "sig." denotes the statistical significance of the differences among the categories of key variables based on Pearson's chi-squared test or Fisher's exact test.
   Significance level: – not significant, ** 5%, *** 1%.

farming during 2009–20. In the case of non-farmers as of 2009, smaller parents' land endowments were significantly associated with higher non-farming continuation rate, which means that ever-married children with small parents' land endowment were more likely to continue to be non-farmers during 2009–20. However, educational attainment did not have a significant association with either farming to non-farming transition rate or non-farming continuation rate.

   The data also suggest that non-agricultural employment was not very stable: the

non-farming continuation rate was 60 percent for the sample as a whole; in other words, 40 percent of non-farmers as of 2009 had become farmers by 2020. It is reasonable to infer that employment in non-agricultural sectors was temporary for many adult children because the major non-agricultural jobs of the sample children were unskilled factory work and construction work, in which layoffs were not uncommon. The low non-farming continuation rate was not a result of age, because non-farming continuation rate had no significant association with the age of sample children.

Nevertheless, although it is not shown in Table 11, the farming rate of the panel sample decreased from 76 percent to 71 percent during 2009–20. This was because the number of sample children who switched employment from farmer to non-farmer (31 persons) was larger than those switching vice versa (20 persons). This finding also reflects the fact that the major non-agricultural jobs for sample children were unskilled manual jobs, which were easy for young people to get.

Effects of Changes in Parents' Land Transfer Behavior
As shown in Table 12, during 2009–20 the proportion of household heads, or the proportion of parents of sample children, who gave farmland to all their ever-married children decreased in Prosrae and Poulyom. The proportion of those who had not given farmland to any of their ever-married children increased, irrespective of the size of land endowment in both villages. These data suggest that parents of the younger generation came

Table 12 Percentage of Household Heads (Parents of Sample Children) by Land Transfer Status

| | Size of Parents' Land Endowment (ha) | Giving Farmland to: | | | | | |
| | | All Ever-Married Children | | Some Ever-Married Children | | No Ever-Married Children | |
		2009	2020	2009	2020	2009	2020
Prosrae	<0.25	66.7	30.1	29.2	20.6	4.2	49.3
	<0.50	82.8	35.5	17.2	9.7	0.0	54.8
	<1.00	80.0	58.3	20.0	0.0	0.0	41.7
	1.00=<	75.0	100.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Total	76.1	35.0	22.4	15.4	1.5	49.6
Poulyom	<0.25	25.0	25.0	25.0	19.4	50.0	55.6
	<0.50	58.3	44.4	41.7	18.5	0.0	37.0
	<1.00	84.2	52.2	15.8	30.4	0.0	17.4
	1.00=<	73.9	58.8	26.1	5.9	0.0	35.3
	Total	70.7	41.8	25.9	19.4	3.5	38.8

Note: Data on household heads with more than one married child aged 23–39.

Table 13 Farming Rate (%) by Status and Area of Farmland Received from Parents

	Prosrae			Poulyom		
	2009	2020(A)	Change	2009	2020(A)	Change
Those Who Received Farmland from Their Own Parents	73.0	39.1	–33.9	90.7	85.4	–5.3
By Size of Farmland Received from Parents (ha)						
0.0	30.8	34.6	3.9	53.9	24.1	–29.8
<0.25	74.5	37.9	–36.5	100.0	50.0	–50.0
<0.50	68.3	38.9	–29.4	90.0	100.0	10.0
<1.00	100.0	50.0	–50.0	84.4	77.8	–6.6
1.00=<	n/a	100.0		94.1	94.5	0.4
Those Who Received Farmland from Their Own Parents or Whose Spouse Received Farmland from Their Parents	71.0	43.5	–27.6	90.4	78.5	–11.9

Note: "n/a" denotes that no children were in that category.

to limit land transfer to fewer of their married children, which apparently promoted deagrarianization among young people.

However, the change in parents' land transfer behavior is unlikely to have caused the deagrarianization of their ever-married children. The reason for this is that, as Table 13 shows, the farming rate for sample children who received farmland from their parents (or their spouse's parents) decreased in both villages in most cases. In other words, an increasing proportion of sample children chose non-agricultural jobs even though they had farmland to cultivate.[17] These data indicate that it was not a decrease in the proportion of sample children who received farmland from their parents that induced deagrarianization among young people. Rather, the data suggest that parents gave farmland to fewer of their married children because a decreasing proportion of their children chose farming as their occupation after marriage and because parents came to give land only to those children who had some intention of starting farming after marriage.

V Conclusion

This study used data on ever-married children of household heads in four rice-growing villages to examine the deagrarianization of Cambodian rural youths in the 2010s. Special

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17) Because of a lack of data, we do not know the situation of farmland that the progeny did not cultivate.

attention was devoted to the effects of increased marriage matching at the migration destination (MM) and educational attainment as well as decreased land availability. The stability of the deagrarianization process was also assessed. The major findings of the study and their implications are summarized below.

First, deagrarianization in the sample villages was induced not through the development of non-agricultural sectors in rural areas nor through self-employed businesses in these villages but rather through the migration of younger people beyond their home province to work as employees in non-agricultural sectors, especially as unskilled construction and factory workers in Phnom Penh and Thailand.

Second, increased MM made a considerable contribution to deagrarianization mainly through its skill and land endowment effects. This finding suggests that because MM was induced by the deagrarianization of rural youths through labor migration before marriage, an increase in MM was the reason why deagrarianization accelerated especially among married people during the 2010s in Cambodia. This finding also implies that norms regarding marital partner selection changed, with parents coming to respect their children's initiative in choosing a partner, and that the change in norms might also have induced deagrarianization among young people.

Third, decreased parents' land endowment contributed significantly to deagrarianization, especially in the village with larger land endowments (Poulyom). In Poulyom, a reduction in the size of parents' land endowment also promoted deagrarianization by increasing the probability of MM. It is worth noting, however, that even sample children who received farmland from their parents became less likely to choose farming as their occupation. Therefore, deagrarianization was a result of the children's own initiative in choosing non-agricultural jobs rather than a consequence of decreasing availability of land because of changes in the land transfer behavior of their parents.

Fourth, the results of the analyses suggest that the effects of both MM and parents' land endowment were not significant when farming was economically a much less attractive choice than non-agricultural employment. In such cases, deagrarianization was caused mostly by pull factors such as increased opportunities and the higher wage rates of non-agricultural jobs.

Fifth, consistent with the fact that the major non-agricultural jobs of ever-married children involved unskilled manual work, increased educational attainment did not cause deagrarianization to an appreciable degree. This finding suggests that increasing the educational level of rural youths will not promote industrialization in Cambodia without the development of industries requiring an educated workforce.

Finally, reflecting the fact that common non-agricultural jobs involve unskilled manual work, the stability of non-agricultural employment was not high: not a few of

those who once chose non-agricultural jobs returned to farming within a decade. This finding implies that deagrarianization in Cambodia might stagnate if its economy is hit by even a minor unfavorable shock.

The limitation of this study is that its findings cannot be extrapolated to rural Cambodia as a whole because they are based on data from a few villages. However, they are likely to be applicable to most of the rural population of Cambodia because the surveyed villages have characteristics in common with most villages in the Central Plain and areas surrounding Tonle Sap Lake, where Cambodia's rural population is concentrated. Furthermore, the results of this study may apply to both relatively land-rich and relatively land-poor areas because the surveyed villages include both types of villages.

Nevertheless, it cannot be argued that this study's findings may apply to areas where parents' land endowment is much larger and where there is room for expanding farmland. Such situations seem to have existed in the 2010s especially in the northern and northeastern parts of Cambodia. Particularly the major finding that MM and decreased parents' land endowment promoted deagrarianization is unlikely to apply to such areas. Farmers can earn a high income from farming alone if their land endowment is large, and therefore their children do not need to migrate to work before marriage. This means a lower likelihood of children marrying through MM. Also, if farmland can be expanded by clearing land, the scale of farmland that adult children can obtain after marriage will be less constrained by the land endowment of their parents. In that case, parents' land endowment will not have a significant effect on married children's occupational choice.

To clarify the extent to which the findings of this study can be extrapolated to rural Cambodia in general and to unveil the characteristics of regions to which they can apply, further research is needed which uses nationwide data encompassing a broader spectrum of geographic areas.

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Migratory Aspirations of the New Middle Class:
A Case Study of Thai Technical Intern Training Program Workers in Japan

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For decades, the migration of unskilled and low-skilled migrant workers from Southeast Asia to various destinations has continued to increase. Japan, which has long depended on Southeast Asian migrant workers, recruits workers through the Technical Intern Training Program (TITP). Migrant workers in this program undertake low-skilled 3D (dirty, dangerous, and difficult) tasks for lower wages and fewer rights than other foreign-worker groups. However, a closer look at their socioeconomic background prior to migration reveals they are often not simply unskilled labor. Using the case of Thailand, this paper shows that many belong to a newly configured middle class who, in terms of income, occupation, and educational attainment, have achieved certain levels of social and economic capital. Through ethnographic research on Thai TITP workers in Japan, this paper examines the relationships between migrants' socioeconomic backgrounds in their home countries and their aspiration to migrate as unskilled labor. It clarifies how migration aspirations are shaped by their experiences within a new middle class through global cultural flows between Southeast and East Asia.

Keywords: international migration, migratory aspirations, Thai migrant workers, new middle class, Technical Intern Training Program

I Introduction

Since the 1970s, Southeast Asians have been migrating to participate in labor markets overseas (Asis and Piper 2008). The Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, and more recently Vietnam are among the major source countries of migrant workers for many economies, particularly in the Middle East, East Asia, and even Southeast Asia (e.g., Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei). Many of these workers perform unskilled and low-skilled or 3D (dirty, dangerous, and difficult) jobs, primarily to fill positions that citizens of the

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destination countries avoid. However, a closer look at the workers' socioeconomic background before migration shows that this is not simply the flow of unskilled labor from developing to more developed countries. Many migrants have completed secondary or even tertiary education and held non-labor jobs in their home countries.[1)] They are not necessarily poor but rather part of a new middle class with upward mobility. This constitutes the principal question of this study: How do the dynamics in the migrant workers' home countries affect their aspirations to migrate overseas for menial jobs?

In recent years, Japan has become a top destination for Southeast Asian migrant workers. Many documented unskilled and low-skilled workers are recruited through the Technical Intern Training Program (TITP).[2)] Previous studies (e.g., Shipper 2010; Tanyaporn 2011; Kamibayashi 2013; Piyada 2021) suggest that TITP is a channel through which the Japanese government has engaged foreign workers as "trainees" to supply the labor market since 1993. Since its implementation, TITP has been criticized for serving as a channel for Japanese small and medium enterprises to hire foreign workers for 3D tasks at lower wages than other foreign workers and with limited professional and personal rights. There have been several cases of TITP workers fleeing their employers due to abuse, poor pay, and inability to switch employers or seek advice (Sunai 2019). Scholars have shown that TITP workers have limited contact with Japanese, since their Japanese-language skills are insufficient for communication at work or in society (Shitara 2021). Despite these criticisms, TITP workers in Japan have continuously increased, reaching more than 370,000 by 2020, even though the Covid-19 pandemic temporarily slowed cross-border travel that year, causing the number to drop slightly (see Table 1). Vietnam, China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Myanmar, Thailand, and Cambodia account for the majority of TITP workers. Previous studies have noted that the reasons for TITP workers migrating to Japan include the desire to earn a higher income and experience life abroad. Yet scholarship has not clarified the relationship between their socioeconomic background back home and their migration.

Incorporating class into the study provides an insight into TITP workers' migration decision making based on the capital available at home. Disparities in the workers'

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1) See, for example, the cases of Filipino workers in Canada (Kelly 2012) and Vietnamese workers in Japan (Shitara 2021).

2) The Technical Intern Training Program (TITP) was officially established by the Japanese government in 1993 to allow Japanese employers to hire foreign workers as "trainees" and "technical interns." In the 2009 amendment of Japan's immigration law, the dual status of trainee and technical intern was replaced by the "technical intern training" residence status. Today, TITP workers are permitted to work in Japan for three to five years. They are employed in agriculture, fishery, construction, food manufacturing, textiles, and machinery, among other areas. The Japanese government plans to discontinue TITP and replace it with a new scheme, which is expected to be implemented by 2027. TITP workers are able to come to Japan until the new system is fully implemented.

sources of social capital have a differential effect on their aspirations for migration (Pendergrass 2013). The perspective of class also provides an understanding of the influence of socioeconomic structures on the subjectivities of social agents, such as thoughts, perceptions, expressions, and actions. Pierre Bourdieu (2013) proposed that class habitus, as homogeneous systems of agents' dispositions under homogeneous conditions, produces the subjectivities of social agents belonging to that class. This focus enables an understanding of migratory aspirations as emerging from subjectivities created by the socioeconomic circumstances shaping migrants' lives and choices at home.

 This paper focuses on Thai migrant workers in Japan under TITP and examines changes in their socioeconomic status—specifically, how their social class transformed and how this impacted their migratory aspirations. From the program's inception, the trajectory of the number of Thai TITP workers increased in tandem with the total number of TITP workers (see Table 1). The ratio of female-to-male workers also constantly increased (see Fig. 1).[3] Thailand's current labor outflow coincides with its own demand for unskilled and low-skilled labor. Socioeconomic changes over the past

Table 1 Number of TITP Workers in Japan between 2015 and 2020

Nationality	Year					
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Vietnam	57,581	88,211	123,563	164,499	218,727	208,879
China	89,086	80,857	77,567	77,806	82,370	63,741
Indonesia	15,307	18,725	21,894	26,914	35,404	34,459
Philippines	17,740	22,674	27,809	30,321	35,874	31,648
Myanmar	1,978	3,960	6,144	8,432	13,118	13,963
Thailand	6,084	7,279	8,430	9,639	11,325	10,735
Cambodia	3,106	4,865	6,180	7,424	9,516	9,970
Mongolia	624	774	1,099	1,484	2,123	2,310
Sri Lanka	223	265	341	487	740	839
Laos	321	394	429	480	555	521
Others	605	584	777	874	1,220	1,135
Total	192,655	228,588	274,233	328,360	410,972	378,200

Source: Compiled from the change in the number of mid- to long-term residents with the residence status of "Technical Intern Training (i)," "Technical Intern Training (ii)," and "Technical Intern Training (iii)" between 2015 and 2020 (Japan, Immigration Service Agency 2020, 182; 2021, 184).

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3) Between 2009 and 2021, the ratio of Thai female to male TITP workers increased. Particularly in 2021, when only a small number of workers were permitted to cross borders due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the proportion of female TITP workers exceeded that of males.
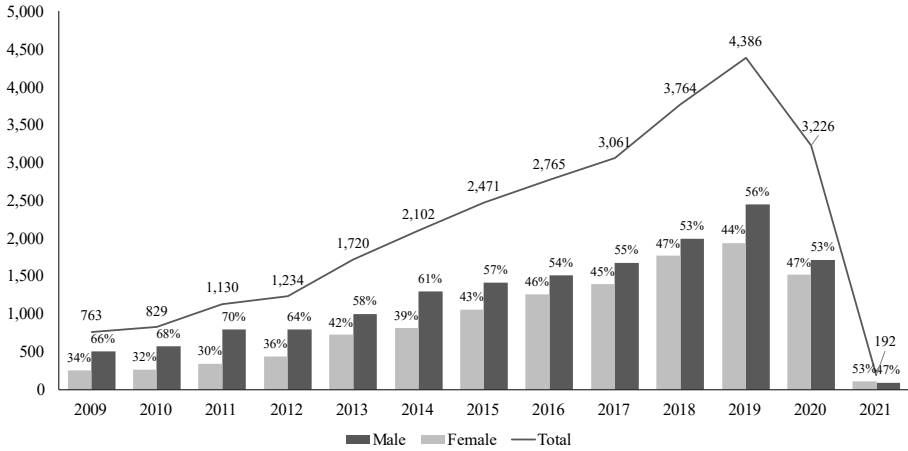
Fig. 1 Estimated Number and Percentage of Thai Male and Female Workers Permitted to Work in Japan under TITP from 2009 to 2021

Sources: Thailand, Department of Employment (2010; 2011; 2012b; 2013; 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019; 2021; 2022)

Note: The number of Thai TITP workers is estimated based on the number of job seekers permitted by the DOE to work in Japan, channeled through the DOE and recruitment agencies.

three decades have resulted not only in a shift in the labor market but also in the configuration of a new class. This makes Thailand an important case study for examining the socioeconomic and cultural dynamics of migrants' home countries and their influence on labor migration.

This paper is based on qualitative and quantitative data collected through fieldwork between July 2020 and June 2022 in Miyagi, Saitama, Aichi, Shiga, Mie, and Kumamoto Prefectures, with a total of 29 TITP workers (18 males and 11 females) from various sectors.[4] Most participants were from Thailand's northeastern provinces (20), with the rest from the northern (7), central (1), and eastern (1) regions. Most were aged 26–30 (12) and 21–25 (11) years, while the remainder were 31–35 (3) and 36–40 (3). They were introduced through the Thai network in Japan and the snowball sampling method. The ethnographic interview technique was used to elicit narratives from the workers regarding their lives before migration, their experiences working in Japan, and their expectations for the future. Additionally, questionnaire surveys were distributed to all 29 interviewees and an additional 19 respondents introduced through interviewees and the network of Thai. These consisted of multiple-choice questions designed to collect data on income, occupation, education level, and reasons for migration. While the sample sizes were relatively small, the results were compared to prior research on Thai migrant

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4) Each participant is provided a pseudonym in the Thai nickname fashion to maintain their anonymity.

workers abroad, particularly to gain an insight into the present economic situation of such workers.[5]

II Formation of the New Middle Class in Thailand

Thailand's middle class has been identified differently by scholars in accordance with the country's socioeconomic dynamics. Members of this class do not directly govern either the country or the peasantry (Nidhi 2011, 55), yet they are politically, economically, and culturally influential. The formation of this social class can be attributed to elements such as socioeconomic dynamics, regional development, nationalism, territorialization, and racialization. These processes, not always concurrent, have contributed to the upward mobility of different groups at different times. Previous studies suggest that the middle class consists of multiple groups of people from different ethnic and social backgrounds; thus, their consciousness is not always unified (Funatsu and Kagoya 2003; Nidhi 2011; Kanokrat 2021). This study differentiates between the old middle class, formed before the 1990s, and the new middle class, which emerged during the three subsequent decades.

Before the 1960s, Thailand's middle class consisted of a small group of people such as bureaucrats and ethnic Chinese businessmen (Nidhi 2011, 55–58). The former had close historical ties to the ruling elites during the absolute monarchy. The latter were immigrants who, while barred from participating in administration due to their ethnicity, accumulated capital and forged ties with the state to safeguard their businesses. However, thanks to the nationalist policies during the 1910s–1940s, ethnic Chinese could assimilate into Thai ethnoideology (values, attitudes, and precepts that constitute Thainess) and increase their role in Thai politics in the following decades (Kasian 1997). Educational expansion in the 1960s and 1970s at the secondary and university levels led to the growth of the middle class. This benefited assimilated Chinese descendants the most, as it allowed several to enter the state bureaucracy (Anderson 1977, 17; Shiraishi 2008, 4–5). It also raised the social status of people from varied social backgrounds who had access to education, predominantly in urban areas (Funatsu and Kagoya 2003, 251–257). Thailand's economic progress due to global finance and foreign direct investment from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s led to an increase in the number of people

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5) The limited number of narratives lead to some limitations in this paper. It is difficult to fully incorporate an analysis from other perspectives, such as gender, as they were not explicitly reflected in discussions with informants. The intersection between class and gender will form the basis of future research to pull out a more nuanced analysis.

working in the private sector as professionals, technicians, executives, managers, and white-collar office workers (Shiraishi 2008, 4–5).

In addition to their common educational and occupational traits, the Thai middle class of the 1990s shared consumption practices. Cars, condos, electronic gadgets, and fashion became the "standard package" representing their cultural identity (Shiraishi 2008). Most people possessing these forms of economic, social, and cultural capital lived in urban areas, particularly the Bangkok metropolitan area, where development was centered; rural areas, where most of the population were farmers, lagged behind.

From the 1990s, rural areas experienced significant social and economic development, which contributed to the emergence of a new middle class outside of the urban areas. In the 1990s, younger generations in rural areas moved to metropolitan areas to take up non-agricultural jobs. Traditional farmers, older people who relied on remittances from their migrant children, no longer engaged in full-time agricultural activities, thus diminishing their contribution to Thailand's agricultural sector. Machinery-dependent farmers' importance grew, and they became part of Thailand's newly configuring middle class (Apichat *et al.* 2013; Fujita 2018).[6] Over the years, they transformed from farmers to entrepreneurs at several market levels, including farmers who relied on wage labor for production and sales, owners of small agricultural product processing facilities, and intermediaries in the sale of agricultural products. As demand grew in rural areas, new occupations such as construction contractors, beauty salon owners, retailers, grocery store owners, and motor vehicle and agricultural machinery mechanics emerged (Attachak 2016). In the 2000s, most of the rural population comprised middle-income individuals earning more than 50 percent above the poverty line (Walker 2012, 36–44).

Another key factor affecting rural socioeconomic development and the background of Thai migrant workers was educational development. In the 1990s, the Thai government promoted secondary education in order to increase skilled labor. The 1997 Constitution and the 1999 National Education Act changed the requirement of six years' compulsory education (primary school) to nine years (junior high school). Basic education was established at 12 years of attendance, the equivalent of high school. Thailand's decline in fertility resulted in a smaller number of youngsters receiving schooling. Simultaneously, Thailand's economic growth increased the government's capacity to invest in education. Consequently, enrollment in Thailand's educational system increased

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6) Apichat *et al.* (2013) identified a new middle class in Thailand by using an income indicator of 5,000–10,000 baht (about USD 147–295), while the average monthly income of Thai people was 6,239 baht (about USD 184) in 2009 (Apichat *et al.* 2013, 42–45). They noted that traditional farmers and laborers were the only two occupations that could not be classified as middle class because their incomes fell below that threshold.

at all levels. The average duration of schooling increased from four years in 1967 to nearly 12 in 2007 (Michel 2010, 33–34). In short, improved access to education elevated rural people's social and cultural capital—they now had degrees or certifications that qualified them for employment.

People in rural Thailand may be classified as middle class, but they have fewer educational, skill, and capital resources as well as fewer social and economic opportunities than urban dwellers. The income gap remains huge.[7] Many in the emerging middle class work in the informal sector, such as household businesses and work for hire, with unsecured income (Apichat *et al.* 2013, 44–45). Some are employed in the public and private sectors but in low-level positions (Apichat and Anusorn 2017, 77–79). This socio-spatial disparity in prosperity is not only a result of the country's uneven economic structure but also intersects with racialized territorialization on the domestic level. As a result of nation building throughout history, the formerly Lao ethnolinguistic population in rural Thailand's Upper North and Northeast (Isan) as well as the Muslim population in the South have been subordinated to a lower position than Bangkok's population (Glassman 2020). Thus, it can be said that the new middle class consists of predominantly ethnolinguistically inferior rural populations that are climbing up the socioeconomic scale with limited economic, social, and cultural capital.

This perspective on class formation in Thailand under an unequal socioeconomic and cultural structure is crucial to comprehending the migration of rural Thai today. Overseas migration is seen by the rural-based newly configuring class as a tool to overcome limitations at home.

III Thai Migrant Workers between the 1970s and 1990s

In migration studies Thailand is not depicted as a significant source of overseas workers, though Thai workers have participated in the migratory flow for decades. This section identifies the structural factors behind Thai workers, primarily from the agricultural sector, migrating as unskilled labor to Thai cities or abroad since the 1970s: these factors include social and economic conditions in Thailand, government policies in Thailand and destination countries, and the international political and economic situation.

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7) According to the National Statistical Office of Thailand (2020a), the average monthly income per capita in 2019 was 9,450 baht (USD 284). The highest income group, comprising 42.7 percent of the population, had an average monthly income of 25,894 baht (USD 776), while the lowest income group, comprising 7.7 percent of the population, had an average monthly income of 2,890 baht (USD 86).

In the 1960s, demographic changes along with counter-communist development projects in rural areas increased the domestic migration of rural Thai workers. The construction of roads connecting Bangkok with rural areas, particularly in the Isan region, enabled villagers to migrate to metropolitan centers. With the population growth in rural areas exceeding the capacity of the agricultural sector in the 1960s and severe constraints on the expansion of commercial agriculture and sale of local products during the following decade, both male and female villagers followed their relatives to Bangkok in search of work. Charles Keyes's 1963 survey in an Isan village found that almost 30 percent of men under the age of 20 had experienced migration to Bangkok for a few months or years (Keyes 2012, 348–353).

While infrastructure development increased rural-to-urban mobility, the global economic and political situation in the 1970s created the first wave of international migration of Thai workers. The 1973 oil price increase necessitated the employment of migrant laborers, primarily from South and Southeast Asia, for massive construction projects in Gulf oil-producing nations (Amjad 1989, 3–4). Conversely, in Thailand the oil price increase caused economic stagnation. In addition, unemployment rose after 1975 with the withdrawal of American military bases that had employed many Thai, particularly in lawn care and labor services. The Thai government adopted a labor export policy for the Middle East in the early 1980s to alleviate economic stagnation (Baker and Pasuk 2014, 303). Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, and Libya accounted for more than 80–90 percent of Thai migrants abroad—mostly unskilled laborers in the construction and production industries (Wipawee 1988; Charit 1989; Surapun 2001). Previous studies on the first wave of rural Thai migrating overseas revealed that they came from a relatively low socioeconomic background in terms of income, occupation, and educational attainment. Most came from agricultural backgrounds, while others had worked as laborers, janitors, carpenters, bricklayers, and drivers. Almost 75 percent had completed primary schooling (Wipawee 1988, 95–100).

However, in the late 1980s growth in the Gulf countries began to slow. This, in conjunction with the Gulf War of 1990–91 and the global recession in the early 1990s, led to a decline in the demand for migrant workers. Also, Saudi Arabia, the largest labor market for Thai workers at the time, downgraded its diplomatic ties with Thailand following the theft of a Saudi prince's jewels by a Thai worker as well as the murder of four Saudi diplomats and the disappearance of a Saudi businessman in Thailand in 1989 and 1990.[8] Therefore, neither new nor reentry visas were issued to Thai workers for

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8) See Thailand, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2009).

Saudi Arabia. Due to these economic and political constraints on both the international and bilateral levels, the flow of Thai workers to the Middle East decreased from the beginning of the 1990s. As a result, Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore, which had begun industrializing in the 1970s and 1980s, became new destinations for Thai workers as they encountered labor shortages, particularly in construction and manufacturing (Kang 2000; Tsay 2000; Wong 2000).

Despite its earlier industrialization, Japan became one of the most popular Asian destinations for Thai migrant workers in the 1990s due to labor shortages there. To balance its need for migrant workers with its anti-foreigner sentiment, Japan refused to officially accept unskilled migrant workers. Instead, it created two "side doors": for Japanese descendants or Nikkeijin from Latin America, and for TITP workers mostly from Southeast Asia and China (Higuchi 2019). Thus, TITP was the only official entry route for unskilled Thai workers—though, due to regulatory issues, the initial number of Thai TITP workers permitted to enter Japan was limited (Jessadakorn 2022). During the 1990s, most Thai workers in Japan were undocumented and had been smuggled in or overstayed their visas. In 1993 there were over 55,000 Thai overstayers in Japan,[9] most of whom had become undocumented laborers. Women outnumbered men, most of them working in the sex and entertainment business. Males were generally employed at construction sites, manufacturing plants, stores, restaurants, and sex and entertainment facilities (Suriya and Pattana 1999; Pataya 2001).

A review of the history of Thai migrant workers suggests that labor shortages in destination countries, on the one hand, and the unemployment rates and labor export policy of the Thai government, on the other, historically involved Thai workers from rural areas in the labor migration flow both within and outside the country. The flow of Thai workers, particularly from rural areas, continues. The demand for migrant labor is increasing in many industrialized nations where depopulation is increasing, such as Japan. However, there have been numerous changes in Thailand during the past three decades that must be considered when studying the migration of Thai workers today.

IV Thai Migrant Workers Today as the New Middle Class and Their Migratory Aspirations

In the 1970s and 1980s, most Thai migrant workers overseas came from the rural agricultural sector and relatively poor socioeconomic backgrounds. Even though many

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9) See Japan, Immigration Bureau (2003).

Thai migrant workers today, particularly TITP workers in this study, come from rural areas, they have greater cultural and economic capital than the previous generation. Several belong to Thailand's new middle class, which has emerged over the past three decades. Table 2 shows that none of the informants worked in agriculture or as laborers back in Thailand. Apart from the new graduates, who had never worked before, most informants had been employed as office workers, factory workers, service staff in food and beverage establishments, and electricians. Three male informants also had prior experience working abroad (in South Korea and Taiwan). With respect to income before migrating to Japan, all had earned more than 8,000 baht (approximately USD 240) per

Table 2 Occupations, Incomes, and Educational Backgrounds of Interviewees Before Coming to Japan

Occupation/Income/Education	Participants		
	Male	Female	Total
Occupation			
Office worker	2	5	7
Factory worker	3	1	4
Food & beverage store/department store employee	4	–	4
Household business/self-employed	–	1	1
Electrician/maintenance worker	3		3
Student	4	2	6
Others (cook, NGO employee, company intern, overseas worker)	4	–	4
Monthly Income			
Over 25,001 baht (USD 750)	1	–	1
20,001–25,000 baht (USD 600–750)	–	1	1
15,001–20,000 baht (USD 450–600)	3	–	3
10,001–15,000 baht (USD 300–450)	5	4	9
8,000–10,000 baht (USD 240–300)	3		3
Student/not available	6	6	12
Education			
Bachelor's degree	6	7	13
High vocational diploma	8	4	12
Vocational certificate	2	–	2
High school	1	–	1
Not available	1	–	1
Total			29

month,[10] excluding new graduates. The minimum monthly income earned was around 8,000–9,000 baht (USD 240–270), while the maximum was 25,000–30,000 baht (USD 750–900). Half the informants earned more than the national average—9,450 baht (USD 284)—in 2019. Three of them earned approximately 1,000 baht (USD 30) less. Since the three were newcomers to their respective jobs at the time, presumably they would have earned more in the future.

A report based on 2011–12 labor market research by the Department of Employment (2012a) revealed that most Thai technical intern trainees had a high vocational diploma, technical diploma, high school diploma, bachelor's degree, or vocational certificate. This study found that most of the informants had completed tertiary education, with either a bachelor's degree or a high vocational diploma. The university graduates' majors were primarily in a business field, such as retail business, marketing, and hotel and tourism management. Vocational institution graduates had studied electronics, computers, plastic molding, etc. A 2019 labor force survey by Thailand's National Statistical Office (2020b) showed that most bachelor's degree students were employed in the wholesale and retail trade, motor vehicle and motorcycle repair, and manufacturing sectors, earning 7,500–20,000 baht (USD 224–598) per month. These results are similar to Wasana La-orngplew's study (2018) on Thai migrant workers in the late 2010s, particularly in Australia and South Korea. While both generations of migrant workers performed unskilled labor, Wasana (2018, 55–56) noted a distinction between the educational backgrounds of the older and younger workers. The former were predominantly males from agrarian backgrounds with only a primary education, while the latter—children of these older-generation migrants—had at least a high school education. More than half held a vocational certificate or bachelor's degree.

According to the questionnaire survey (see Fig. 2), the most frequently cited reason for migration was "To earn a high income/enough to save." Since TITP employees are economic migrants, undeniably one of their primary reasons for coming to Japan is to earn money, despite having to work 3D jobs requiring more physical strength than they were used to in Thailand. Many are motivated by the desire to gain overseas living experiences and interact directly with Japanese culture. These economic and cultural motives correspond with findings from previous studies on TITP workers from Thailand and other nations (e.g., Shitara 2021; Piyada and Piya 2022). Nonetheless, I propose that their migratory aspirations should be treated as more complex than that. They should be understood as a spectrum of aspirations ranging from earning money and establishing opportunities for future careers to experiencing life in a different country.

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10) Based on 2021 exchange rates, this paper converts USD 1 to approximately THB 33 and JPY 112.
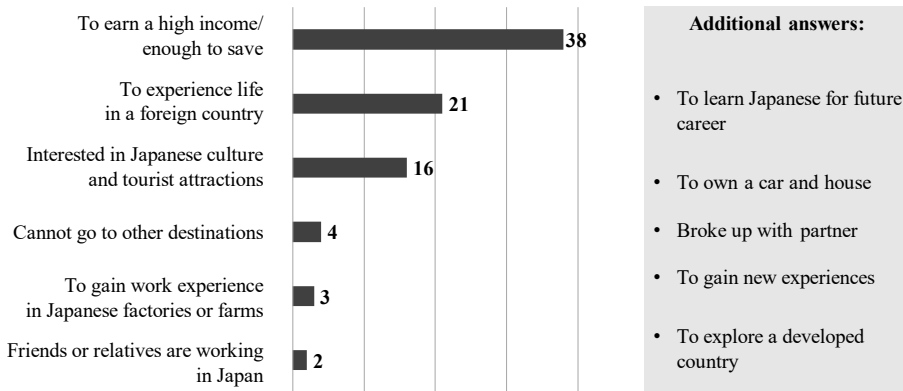
Fig. 2 Aspirations of TITP Workers with Regard to Coming to Japan
Note: Based on questionnaire survey responses from 48 Thai TITP workers.

These aspirations manifest to varying degrees and overlap into multiple layers, and their structure can be examined along with the workers' social mobility, class anxiety, and cosmopolitanism.

V Structure of the New Middle Class's Migratory Aspirations

V-1 *Mechanism for Socioeconomic Mobility and Economic Independence*

At one end of the aspiration spectrum, the desire to earn more suggests that the income disparity between Thailand and Japan remains relevant in explaining migration. Nevertheless, migration must also be examined through the lens of the workers' class status back in Thailand. Also, there is a need to consider not only the income disparity between the home and host countries but also the disparity in socioeconomic structures in the home country. With their lower economic, social, and cultural capital, young workers use migration as a means to achieve social mobility back home by amassing a sum of money that is difficult to attain in Thailand. This is illustrated through the experiences of Oat and Pim.

Oat was a 23-year-old TITP worker from Udon Thani Province whose parents were sugarcane and cassava farmers. He graduated from Panyapiwat Technological College in Bangkok, after which he worked for a 7-Eleven store in Bangkok, earning approximately 10,000 baht (USD 300) monthly. Oat is a member of the emerging class who mobilized upward from his parents' generation. Still, his income was insufficient for him to achieve his goal of starting a cow farm. Consequently, he quit his job and

applied for a job in Japan in 2019 through a recruiting firm in Udon Thani. He was hired by a construction company in Miyagi Prefecture, earning 150,000–160,000 yen (USD 1,336–1,425) monthly. Although Oat earned significantly more than he had done back home, his transition from convenience store worker to construction worker was difficult. He explained why he chose to come to Japan despite knowing the difficulties:

> I want to accumulate some money. I want to own a business in my hometown engaged in agriculture. Coming to Japan provides an opportunity to raise money for this purpose. I'm interested in starting a cow farm or something similar.

Oat introduced me to his friends who had applied for jobs through the same recruitment agency and were employed by the same construction company as him. Two of them expressed similar reasons for migrating: to save money to invest in land that they already possessed, where they wanted to cultivate commercial trees and other crops.

Thus, workers sometimes migrate to a country with higher pay in order to improve their status back home. The money they receive in exchange for their labor in the destination country is required for future businesses, and their experiences can help create further social and economic opportunities. In the case of Oat and his friends, a lack of capital hindered them from implementing their projects. In the past, when rural culture played a vital role in maintaining order and relationships among community members, a network of families and relatives could have resolved such issues. However, as Attachak Satayanuruk (2016) argues, socioeconomic changes have transformed rural communities such that they can no longer be characterized as the "tightly structured society" they once were.[11] The decreasing reliance on kinfolk and the local community forces rural Thai to shoulder their entire economic burden independently. Thus, money enhances their socioeconomic status and economic independence.

Twenty-three-year-old Pim's account reveals an alternative motivation for migrating. She graduated from a vocational school in Udon Thani Province with a high vocational diploma, after which she became a quality checker at a factory in Ayutthaya Province, earning more than 10,000 baht (USD 300) monthly. Although the job was not difficult, the salary was insufficient for Pim's lifestyle, which included frequent *pai thiao* with friends. *Pai thiao* is a Thai term meaning "hanging out, going out, seeking entertainment outside, shopping, or traveling."[12] Added to her accommodation and food

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11) The term "tightly structured society" is used in contrast to "loosely structured social system," which was coined by John Embree (1950) to characterize the individualistic nature of Thai culture. Embree described Thai society as lacking in regularity, discipline, and neatness. In the 1970s, many scholars argued against Embree's claim by emphasizing the importance of Thai culture in controlling community members, which Attachak refers to as a "tightly structured society."

12) For men in particular, it sometimes also implies going for commercial sex (see also Mills [1999]).

expenses, Pim's *pai thiao* expenses made her feel her income was insufficient. After seeing her friend earn well working for a flower farm in Japan, she applied to TITP through a recruitment agency, the same one as Oat. She became employed on a vegetable farm in Aichi Prefecture, earning approximately 140,000 yen (USD 1,246) monthly. Pim anticipated that this income would enhance her lifestyle in Thailand, even though her living conditions in Japan were constrained.

Thus, it is anticipated that migrants' higher incomes in Japan will improve not just their economic situation, as in Oat's case, but also their social and cultural conditions back home. Especially for women, whose traditional gender role is closely tied to the domestic sphere (Whittaker 1999, 45–47), the capacity to *pai thiao* signifies sociocultural mobility in terms of growing independence.

V-2 *Anxiety of the New Middle Class*
The social mobility of rural dwellers indicates that their livelihoods have become closer to those of people in urban areas. Nonetheless, their inferior economic, social, and cultural capital compared to the urban middle class creates anxiety. This is related to the awareness of class formation and manifests itself in migration aspirations shaped by a sense of failure or lack in others' eyes. Anxiety emerges from a distressing state of self-consciousness brought on by the sudden recognition of a discrepancy between certain norms and values and those considered superior (Felski 2000, 39). Due to their limited capital, young workers cannot enjoy the entire spectrum of the middle-class package, whether materially or culturally, which results in an experience of lack and motivates them to migrate as a coping strategy. This is evident from the narratives of Pat and Gift.

After graduating from a four-year university in Bangkok, 25-year-old Pat returned to his hometown in Sakon Nakhon Province and worked as a manager at his cousin's coffee shop, earning approximately 15,000 baht (USD 450) monthly. However, Pat found his income insufficient for his life goals of a house, a car, a business, and financial independence. He sought a means to work abroad, as his father had previously done. He initially considered Korea, but his girlfriend, a Japanese-language teacher, suggested Japan. Pat applied for a position in Japan through the Department of Employment (DOE) and found a job at a Saitama Prefecture metal sheet pressing company, where he was responsible for pressing automobile components. His heavy work included cutting, pressing, and welding metal sheets. Pat earned approximately 100,000 yen (USD 890) per month after housing, pension, and health insurance expenses. He said that working in Japan for three to five years would allow him to achieve his goals in Thailand.

Pat's aspiration to become a TITP worker can be explained by his pursuit of socio-

economic mobility through migration. He emphasized concrete goals: "to have a house, a car, a business, and financial independence after graduation." Sai Hironori (2021) has suggested that the social dynamics in rural areas, which make lifestyles more consumerist amidst rising living costs, have generated a gap between the desires and incomes of young rural dwellers. However, material objectives may not be simply the result of rural areas transitioning to a market economy; they may be strongly tied to the standard middle-class package mentioned above. Rural workers' limited capital makes it difficult for them to attain these objectives, resulting in a cultural gap between the new and old middle classes. Obtaining possessions and money or modern commodities such as a new iPhone—which many participants purchased while in Japan—serves to alleviate anxiety. Therefore, TITP workers' engagement in migration can reduce the gap not only between their desires and income but also between the new and old middle classes.

Traveling abroad, whether for work, leisure, or temporary living, is regarded as part of the middle-class culture and frequently shown in Thai media. The film *One Day* (Thai: *Faen de . . . faen kan khae wan diao*), for example, tells the romantic story of two coworkers during a company trip to Hokkaido. It was a huge box office success in 2016 (Matichon Online 2017). Limited capital prevents young workers from enjoying this aspect of middle-class culture, but becoming an unskilled laborer in Japan can help, as expressed in Gift's narrative. Gift was a 28-year-old TITP worker from Sukhothai Province who earned a bachelor's degree in English literature from Kasetsart University in Bangkok. With no previous work experience, she applied for a job in Japan and was employed by a metal sheet pressing factory in Aichi Prefecture. Gift was motivated by her acquaintance Pear, who received a scholarship to study in Canada and posted details of her life there on Facebook:

> You are a Facebook friend of Pear's? I was acquainted with her younger sister. Pear is very talented, right? She won a scholarship to study in Canada. When I was younger, I was often envious of her. I also desired to travel overseas, just like she did. This was the dream of a rural girl. Indeed, Pear was my inspiration. Yet, I am not as talented as she is. Additionally, my family is not wealthy. As a result, I sought a way to travel abroad and found this program. It was simpler, and I was also able to earn money.

Like Gift, many participants explained that they came to Japan to work as laborers because their families were poor. It is reasonable to assume that their feelings stemmed from an aspiration for intergenerational social mobility. While the participants mobilized themselves, their parents' social positions remained the same. In addition to the participants' limited capital, their perception of being poorer than others made the culture of traveling abroad difficult for them to access. Migration helped to alleviate their anxiety by allowing

them to travel internationally despite their inferior socio-occupational standing in the destination country. Being abroad—the consumption of foreign locations and cultures—helps to elevate social status (Kelly 2012, 175). It exposes migrants to the culture of developed countries and is viewed as a form of upward social mobility in and of itself.

V-3 *Life Beyond the Boundaries of Local Communities*

While the aspiration to go abroad can be partly explained by status anxiety, it should also be understood with reference to rural people's cosmopolitan characteristics. Keyes (2012) coined the term "cosmopolitan villagers" to characterize rural people's livelihoods in the late 2000s and early 2010s. Family members' migratory experiences as well as information exchange via social media have led rural people to view themselves as part of a world larger than the one bounded by their home communities' borders. With the global cultural flow—people moving, technological configurations, global capital disposition, electronic capabilities for producing and disseminating information, and ideological links—social agents experience and simultaneously mold a social space that Arjun Appadurai (1990, 296–297) termed the "imagined world," the multiple worlds formed by the historically situated imaginations of individuals and groups across the globe. Thai rural people's actual and imagined lives are more intertwined in social spaces than in Bangkok (Pattana 2014, 29).

A cosmopolitan life, or living in an imagined world, indicates at least two categories of rural people's aspirations for migration. On the one hand, the connected spaces enabled by technology, notably the Internet and (mainly social) media, provide information about the migratory route to becoming TITP workers. On the other hand, as rural dwellers see themselves belonging beyond the confines of their local community, they may envision themselves migrating overseas for work, travel, experiencing life in other countries, skill development, or even self-discovery. For instance, Cake and Gift wanted to enhance their Japanese-language skills.

Cake was a thirty-year-old TITP worker from Loei Province, where her family ran a rubber farm. She graduated from Loei Rajabhat University with a bachelor's degree in marketing, following which she worked as a general affairs staff member for Siam Denso Manufacturing, a Japanese company in Chonburi Province. After a year she moved to Musashi Paint, another Japanese company based in Chonburi Province, where she worked as a logistics officer, earning approximately 20,000 baht (USD 518) monthly. She learned about TITP through colleagues who were ex-TITP workers; they recommended she apply through the DOE, as this was cheaper than using a recruitment agency. However, Cake was unable to clear the DOE's selection process. She then applied through a recruitment agency, paying approximately 200,000 baht (USD 5,180) in fees.

In Japan, she was employed by an outsourcing company in Mie Prefecture that sent employees to automobile factories and warehouses for packing jobs. Her work was challenging, requiring her to move and wrap heavy automobile components. She explained her reason for coming to Japan:

> I believe that everyone comes to Japan [as a TITP worker] for better pay. . . . We earn more money in this country than in Thailand, but my job in Thailand was far better. Additionally, the payment was fine. I came to Japan because I want to improve my Japanese skills to get a higher wage when I return to Thailand and apply for a job with a Japanese company. . . . Moreover, coming to Japan allows me to travel through the country. I always wanted to visit Japan, and because living in Thailand at the time was boring, I took the opportunity to come to Japan.

Gift described how she wanted to discover herself in Japan and worked to attain her ambition. She applied and prepared well for the DOE's physical examination but failed the interview due to her lack of work experience. During the interview, Gift explained that she wanted to go to Japan to learn Japanese. As a fresh graduate, she was also eager to experience life abroad. However, the examiners said they would rather send candidates to work than to study. After the disappointment, Gift found a private recruitment agency, financially supported by her partner. However, the couple broke up when Gift extended her stay in Japan to five years. She explained her migratory aspirations as follows:

> I chose this path because I wanted to continue discovering myself, and I believe that if he truly loved me he would have waited; I probably watched too many dramas. I have discovered what I value the most. My wage is lower than that at other companies, but I am satisfied. TITP is very similar to the Summer Work Travel Program,[13] except that we are required to work in Japan for longer periods. My goal is to pass the JLPT N1[14] and communicate fluently in Japanese, just as the Japanese do. This may be far-fetched. Returning to Thailand to work as an interpreter is not my objective. I enjoy my life in Japan, from watching anime to freely traveling across the country and having Japanese friends. If possible, I will apply for an extension of my stay using the Specified Skilled Worker visa.

Cake's and Gift's accounts exemplify how young workers from rural areas are inspired to migrate owing to global cultural flows and how they regard their capacity constraints. While they are inspired to imagine themselves in a larger social sphere, they are aware

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13) The Summer Work Travel Program is operated by the US Department of State. It allows overseas university students to live and work in the United States for up to four months, working low-wage jobs at hotels, restaurants, supermarkets, amusement parks, etc. (see Bowman and Bair 2017).

14) The Japanese-Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) is a twice-yearly test conducted worldwide to evaluate and certify non-native speakers' proficiency in Japanese. The exam levels vary from N5 (needs the least linguistic proficiency) to N1 (requires the greatest).

of their limitations and hence choose to become migratory laborers to realize their aspirations. Migration is, therefore, a way of fostering social mobility, bridging the social gap for the new middle class and expanding their opportunities and capabilities beyond the structural constraints of their hometown and home country.

When exploring the cosmopolitan imagination, we should keep in mind that many participants chose Japan because they were familiar with it, as evident from the survey results and Gift's and Cake's narratives. In the survey questionnaire, "Interested in Japanese culture and tourist attractions" was one of the main responses (Fig. 2). Cake also explicitly stated her wish to visit Japan. Although Gift preferred Korea, she was familiar with Japan's tourist attractions and anime, which made her appreciate living in Japan. This imaginary familiarity with Japan can be attributed to the transnational flow of Japanese culture, particularly popular culture, which has been accelerated throughout East and Southeast Asia since the 1990s with media globalization (Iwabuchi 2002). Japanese music, animation, manga, video games, and other consumer technologies have infiltrated the lives of not only the old but also the new middle class. These cultural products—which offer the emerging middle class a prism through which to imagine life in Japan (Appadurai 1996, 53–54)—might not directly attract Thai workers to move to Japan, but they have increased the presence of Japan in Thai's cosmopolitan imagination.

VI Relationship between the Emergence of the New Middle Class and Their Migratory Aspirations

Incorporating a class perspective into examining migrants' experiences reveals connections between socioeconomic and cultural structures and migratory aspirations. Over the past three decades, rural development in Thailand has changed people's economic, social, and cultural lives. Contemporary young migrants can be characterized as the newly configured middle class in the Thai social structure. Inequality in the country's development has created a disparity between the old middle class, who reside mostly in urban areas, and the new middle class, who come mostly from rural areas. The capabilities of rural people today are superior to those of the economically disadvantaged villagers of the past, but they still remain inferior to those of the urban population. Class anxiety and social mobility are, therefore, ingrained in the experiences of rural Thai workers. Cosmopolitanism—the ability to see and experience life outside the confines of one's country—is growing among rural Thai workers as globalization continues to penetrate rural life. Within such complex class formation, migration aspirations manifest themselves as a spectrum of desires, such as earning higher income, seeking

new opportunities, and experiencing life overseas. Overseas migration has emerged as a potential strategy for young workers from rural areas to navigate the limitations of Thailand's sociocultural structure.

Through migration, Thai workers as social agents negotiate their identity and power in multilevel social spaces—their household, local community, and imagined world. Migrants and their families can elevate their socioeconomic status by using remittances to purchase new products and services, build new houses, invest in their businesses, etc. They can improve their opportunities upon returning home with new experiences and skills. They are more able to possess the same things or engage in the same activities as the old middle class, which helps alleviate their sense of lack. Migration also enables people to negotiate a superior social status in their home communities thanks to remittances from overseas. As evidenced by the cases of *pholiang nok* or Thai male migrant returnees—similar to *balikbayan* or Filipino returnees—the superior economic capacity and distinctive lifestyles of migrant returnees give them greater prestige within their communities (Nagasaka 2009; Panpat 2009). Migration enhances the sense of superiority that comes from experiencing the wider world (Aguilar 2018, 107–109), enabling a subjective upward mobilization and creating a distance from people lower down the social scale.

Migration also enables Thai workers to deal with the psychological changes that come with social and cultural changes. Mary Beth Mills's (1999) study of Thai women's rural-to-urban migration in the 1990s, for example, indicated that migrants' needs, values, and concerns extended beyond family and economic survival to engagements with modernity. This prompted their desire for modern consumer commodities and stimulated their imagination regarding the urban employment possibilities created by migration. The emergence of the new middle class has increased rural people's aspirations, especially with respect to educational attainment, accessibility to new media, and income (Appadurai 2004).

In a way, migration to low socio-occupational positions entails class descent, especially in terms of deskilling and deprofessionalization: for example, Oat, Pat, and Cake held more menial jobs in Japan than they had in Thailand. Some university graduates, such as Pat and Gift, could have used their degrees to get non-menial jobs in Thailand; instead, they put up with a deterioration in self-esteem while striving to attain their aspirations.

However, class should be examined transnationally. While migrants may have a low socioeconomic position in their destination country, they sometimes belong to a higher social class in their home country (Kelly 2012). Therefore, their class consciousness applies to both settings. In their narratives, Thai TITP workers acknowl-

edged the downward mobility inherent in their migration but saw it as a means of achieving their goals, whether in terms of money or experiences that would aid in their upward mobility in Thailand. In addition, as with Nikkeijin workers who came from a more affluent socioeconomic position in their home country (Tsuda 2003), this deskilling and deprofessionalization was viewed as temporary. In other words, the migrants anticipated returning to a new middle-class life with more capital after their sojourn as menial workers in Japan.

Thailand is not the only nation where a new class is emerging. The phenomenon can be observed also in the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, and other Southeast Asian labor-exporting countries. As others (see, for example, Rigg 1998) have shown, rural and urban boundaries in Southeast Asia are becoming blurred. Younger rural dwellers, in particular, move between their hometowns and metropolitan workplaces. Agricultural activities in Southeast Asian households have been substituted by non-agricultural activities that often propel rural livelihoods into higher incomes or even into the rural middle class—what this study calls the new middle class. The lives of migrant workers from rural areas become, in many ways, closer to those of the old middle class in their home countries. However, this does not mean that all rural people can gain wealth and generate high income or invest in education through migrating.[15] Migratory aspirations, such as the desire to accumulate money, build a future career path, or experience a foreign culture, can be viewed as dispositions of the new middle class to pursue mobility, tackle status anxiety, and deal with the global cultural flow outside of the constraints imposed by the uneven structures at home.

VII Conclusion

Examining the relationships between migrants' socioeconomic background in their home countries and their aspirations to migrate as unskilled labor provides an opportunity to reflect on the choices available to young Thai. A study of socioeconomic conditions in rural Thailand, where most Thai migrant workers come from, shows that the conditions for pioneer Thai migrant workers before the 1990s and those for migrant workers today are significantly different. Before the 1990s, rural areas were largely remote and people subsisted primarily through agriculture; migrant workers were surplus laborers in the agricultural sector. However, as villagers have progressed from being poor peasants to being part of the new middle class, their lives have become intertwined

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15) See, for example, Rigg (2016, 23–53).

with the market economy and an imagined world that stretches beyond the confines of their local communities or even Bangkok. Many migrant workers today are better off than their predecessors in terms of income, occupation, and education. Yet their economic, social, and cultural capital is less than that of the old middle class, which emerged earlier in urban areas and established Thailand's middle-class culture. In this sense, we need to keep our analytical lens on the migratory aspirations of Thai workers through the formation of the new middle class.

The spectrum of aspirations—from economic benefits to personal fulfillment, such as self-discovery and emancipation from old surroundings—is shaped by class mobility, class anxiety, and cosmopolitanism. Migration offers a chance for the new middle class to overcome class anxiety and gain upward mobility through accumulating economic, social, and cultural capital. Imagining life as part of the new middle class takes them beyond their communities through engagement with the global cultural flow.

Development in Southeast Asia has enabled the emergence of a new social class with a certain amount of social and economic capital, albeit less than the older middle class. It is members of this class that migrate overseas as unskilled and low-skilled workers. Leaving Thailand is a product of their agency in shaping desired identities and accessing power within their social spaces back home. By examining how migrants from Southeast Asia negotiate their class-related social status at home while migrating to low socio-occupational status in the destination, we can rethink the dynamics that shape their aspirations in the first quarter of the twenty-first century.

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The Politics of Economic Development in Cambodia: Making Cakes without Flour?

Michiel Verver,* Heidi Dahles,** and Clarissa Danilov***

The emergence of "authoritarian capitalism"—economic development under authoritarianism—across Asia challenges Western ideas of liberal democracy as the acclaimed pathway to prosperity. Cambodia, which is the focus of this paper, witnessed impressive economic growth and rigorous marketization under the authoritarian rule of former Prime Minister Hun Sen and his Cambodian People's Party (CPP). In this paper we critically assess the effects of Hun Sen's authoritarian capitalism on economic development in Cambodia between 1993 and 2019. In doing so, we use Joe Studwell's study *How Asia Works* (2014), in which the author draws on the historical development trajectories of various East Asian countries to argue that economic development hinges on the implementation of effective government policy in three economic sectors: agriculture, manufacturing, and finance. Using Studwell's framework as a benchmark and drawing on an extensive review of secondary sources, this article examines the impacts of the CPP's development strategy on these three sectors. Ultimately, this article aims to debunk the "strong growth" discourse, arguing that even though the CPP fosters short-term growth, in the long run its patronage-based development agenda merely serves the get-rich-quick purpose of a narrow elite but is not reconcilable with sustainable economic development.

Keywords: Cambodia, economic development, authoritarian capitalism, patronage, political economy, Cambodian People's Party

Introduction

The rise of authoritarian regimes seems to coincide with notable economic growth and prosperity in many Asian countries where the state has advanced and managed economic

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capitalism. In pushing far-reaching deregulatory measures intended to facilitate private sector activities and foreign direct investment (FDI), state actors not only accelerate marketization but also disrupt democratic processes in favor of strong government to legitimize such economic restructuring. This interaction of political authoritarianism and economic capitalism is captured by the concept of authoritarian capitalism (Bloom 2016). In embracing marketization and neoliberal principles whilst harboring authoritarian regimes, the economic rise of Asia challenges Western ideas of liberal democracy as the acclaimed pathway to the prosperity of nations (Einzenberger and Schaffar 2018). Economic development without democracy presents itself as a paradox to advocates of the Washington consensus who insist that democracy and "good governance" are prerequisites for economic development. In Asia many countries seem to develop economically without a functioning democracy, and often despite serious deficiencies in public sector management.

We will zoom in on Cambodia, a Southeast Asian nation that—on the surface—is proof that economic development and political authoritarianism go hand in hand. Having risen from a post-conflict country in disarray in the early 1990s to a successful economy with its eyes firmly fixed on attaining upper middle-income status by 2030 and with pre-pandemic GDP growth consistently around 7 percent since 1994, Cambodia has been celebrated by the World Bank as "a global leader in reducing poverty" (Ly 2016) and was elevated by the Asian Development Bank to the status of "Asia's New Tiger Economy" (ADB 2016). This widely applauded progress occurred under the rule of the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) and its former leader Hun Sen, who rose to power after the ousting of the Khmer Rouge. Widely branded as a neo-patrimonial state (Hughes and Un 2011), Cambodia shares a lack of political reform with its Southeast Asian neighbors. Hun Sen built his rule on a pervasive network of patron-client relationships, the political ramifications of which have been intensely debated by observers of Cambodia (Un 2019). The dismantling of the opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party and the closure of media outlets critical of the government in 2017 are considered the final blows to Cambodia's crumbling democratic institutions (Wright 2017).

Raising the question of the dynamics underlying Cambodia's authoritarian capitalism, this article aims to question the implicit yet persistent assumption that authoritarian patronage-based rule and economic development go hand in hand in the Cambodian context. We turn first to Joe Studwell's study titled *How Asia Works* (2014). Studwell presents a thought-provoking analysis—written for a general audience but based on solid academic knowledge of Asian economies—on the development trajectories of various East Asian countries. In doing so, he argues that ultimately economic development hinges primarily on the implementation of effective government policy in three economic

sectors: agriculture, manufacturing, and finance. In contrast to mainstream scholarly work that advocates in-depth, context-specific analyses, his bold three-tiered road map is "good to think with" across regions.

Using Studwell's framework as a heuristic device to guide our investigation into the Cambodian case, this article will debunk the "strong growth" discourse, arguing that even though the CPP fosters short-term growth, in the long run its patronage-based development agenda is not reconcilable with economic development. We ground our analysis in an extensive review of secondary sources—mostly academic, but also from diverse media outlets, NGOs, and international institutions. This review will focus on the 1993–2019 period, from the departure of the United Nations peace-building forces to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic (the economic impact of which requires a separate analysis). As our analysis reveals, Cambodia's much revered economic success is built on a neoliberal path of rigorous marketization that serves the get-rich-quick purpose of a small business-state elite while intensifying disparities in prosperity and amplifying urban-rural inequalities (Brickell and Springer 2017). Authoritarian capitalism in Cambodia is growth without development, boasting distinct extractive or parasitic practices, while widely applied growth indicators such as GDP are nothing but smoke and mirrors hiding some inconvenient truths. We will argue that—as a popular Khmer saying goes—the CPP and their cronies are "making cakes without flour," which implies the "act of obtaining something without effort, often through the exploitation of others" (Milne 2015, 201). Although in the short run, government-business covenants may line the pockets of a small elite through the exploitation of the population and the environment, similar to the practical impossibility of producing cakes without flour, long-run sustainable development in Cambodia cannot be achieved without disciplined and autonomous development policies. Coinciding with the resignation of Hun Sen and the transfer of both the CPP leadership and the office of prime minister to his son Hun Manet in 2023, this paper is also a retrospective of Hun Sen's legacy in light of long-running discourses of economic development.

The structure of this paper is as follows. The next two sections outline the theoretical and analytical concepts underlying this study. Then, the dynamics of Cambodia's patronage system are contextualized against the backdrop of Cambodia's post-conflict development, after which the CPP's development agenda and its effects on agriculture, manufacturing, and finance are elaborated and analyzed in light of Studwell's prescriptions. The epilogue briefly reflects on the consequences of the pandemic crisis as a possible game changer and its implications for Cambodia's political economy post-Hun Sen.

Authoritarian Capitalism and the New Politics of Development

Guiding this paper theoretically is the concept of authoritarian capitalism. Literature on the rise of political authoritarianism all over the world argues that the "authoritarian turn" seems to coincide with the process of economic liberalization spawning hyper-marketization—implying a notable contradiction (Bloom 2016). Commonly defined as "the process by which a national economy becomes more market oriented, profit driven and placed within private hands," the concept of economic liberalization is typically associated with "the right of private property, wage labor, reduced state intervention into the economy and the relatively unregulated buying and selling of goods on the market" (Bloom 2016, 8). The transition leading up to such a system is known as marketization. As modernization theory postulates, economic liberalization is a pre-condition for democratization; and, combined, the two provide an effective counterforce to authoritarianism. The theory projects a pivotal role for the emerging middle classes, who—owing their prosperity to the market economy—would challenge authoritarian rule and act as catalysts for liberal democracy (Gilman 2018).

However, evidence implies that the complementary relationship between economic liberalization and democratization is up for revision. Examples show that more and more national governments—in their pursuit of marketization—resort to measures that undermine the welfare and prosperity of the general population for the purpose of consolidating the wealth and power of the political and corporate elite. Pushing sweeping deregulatory measures to facilitate private sector activities and FDI, such regimes seek to disrupt democratic processes in favor of strong government, giving rise to political authoritarianism (Bloom 2016).

Regimes based on authoritarian principles stay in power by employing a range of formal and informal exploitative practices, among them patron-client relationships. Such relationships are commonly embedded in a spoils system where favors are exchanged as a reward for the support and loyalty of followers (partisanship), friends (cronyism), and relatives (nepotism). This exchange of favors is critical for both patron and client as they exchange disparate goods and services. Patronage arrangements, whilst reciprocal, are based on asymmetrical power relations in favor of the patron on the one hand and the proximity of their interrelation on the other. Beyond purely contractual arrangements, patronage relationships are coated with trust and friendship and sustained by informal sanctioning. Patron-client arrangements conflict with the development of formal authority structures such as bureaucracies, democracy, and the rule of law and give rise to corruption and fraudulent practices (Scott 1972). Such patronage systems typically develop in weak states ruled by strongmen and act as a trailblazer

for authoritarian capitalism (Verver and Dahles 2015).

Patronage systems cement the power position of strongmen, who in turn are inclined to provide political stability—the perfect condition for marketization to thrive and ultimately ensure the success of neoliberalism (Demmers *et al.* 2004). From a global perspective, it is in the interest of major international institutions—be they powerful states, multinational corporations, or international development organizations—to encourage measures that put or keep such strongmen in power. Political stability has come to be viewed as a vital element of good governance. Whilst at its inception the modernization narrative was linked to ideas of decolonization, democratization, and human rights, it has shifted more and more to imply processes of neoliberalization: "good governance is currently a hegemonic idea," wrote Peter Bloom (2016, 135). In the 1980s and 1990s, resonating with the modernization narrative, international organizations such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) involved themselves more and more in the domestic affairs of developing economies, demanding "widespread market reforms, including privatization, a competitive labor market and the sharp reduction of public spending" (Bloom 2016, 140). Subsequently, many nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), in implementing World Bank and IMF-financed programs—often with the best of intentions—began to interfere in national politics, combining lending with conditionality and eventually prioritizing extensive regulation of the political and public domain (Doornbos 2003). The "new politics of development" (Bloom 2016, 154) advocated by the leading international organizations paradoxically paved the way for the rise of the authoritarian capitalist state.

As oligarchy and the patronage-based regimes of developing nations are often endured in the name of preserving political stability conducive to economic growth, authoritarian rulers are rarely toppled by Western powers. Moreover, as it turned out, the neoliberal reforms under the auspices of the global organizations did not deliver the promised prosperity for all—despite impressive GDP growth—bringing into question the role of marketization as a driver for development and undermining the authority of both these organizations and Western nations at large. Challenging the interference of global organizations in domestic politics gives authoritarian regimes, particularly the strongmen heading them, legitimacy in the eyes of their population at home—strengthening their position even more. The next section will expand the above discussion to address the success and failure of economic development models in the Asian region.

Economic Development in Asia: An Ideal Type

Studwell (2014, xxv), in conducting a historical analysis across different countries in Asia—excluding Cambodia—teases out prerequisites of economic development, concluding that "the development destiny of a nation is in its government's hands." More specifically, he describes a set of government policy interventions in the market—targeting agriculture, manufacturing, and finance—that foster economic development. He argues that where these interventions have been employed most effectively—in Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, and more recently China—they have brought about "the quickest progression from poverty to wealth that the world has seen" (Studwell 2014, xiii). In contrast, countries with governments that failed to sufficiently employ these interventions—Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Malaysia—have witnessed unsustainable growth. Studwell notes that, at least for a while, it seemed that the neoliberal laissez-faire policies propagated by developed world institutions—notably the World Bank, IMF, and US Treasury—were appropriate also for the developing world. After all, the Southeast Asian countries that had adopted these policies had witnessed rapid growth in the late twentieth century. The 1997 Asian financial crisis, however, left Southeast Asia suffering from currency depreciation, inflation, and reduced growth, while Northeast Asia came out relatively unscathed (see Rasiah *et al.* 2014).

By pointing out this contrast between Northeast and Southeast Asian neoliberalization, Studwell (2014), albeit implicitly, nuances authoritarian capitalism, distinguishing two different models with very different development outcomes. The "developmental state" model that inspires Studwell's prescriptions is characterized by a focus on long-term economic development and a powerful elite of bureaucrats directing development through state support and disciplining of the private sector. Developmental states balance liberalization and protectionism of the economy, "taming domestic and international market forces and harnessing them to national ends" (Öniş 1991, 110). In contrast, in "neo-patrimonial states" patrons use their access to state resources to secure the loyalty of clients, thus benefiting narrow elites around the ruler rather than the broad public interest. On paper, legal-rational entities are in place, but in practice the public-private division is blurred, and particularistic interests and nepotism undermine the autonomous functioning of the state apparatus (Fukuyama 2014). Both the Northeast Asian developmental states and the Southeast Asian neo-patrimonial states are under forms of authoritarian capitalism, but the former have been much more effective in the "catch-up phase" (Studwell 2014, xv) of economic development than the neo-patrimonial states that have characterized much of Southeast Asia (with the notable exception of Singapore). Studwell (2014) thus draws on Northeast Asian development

experiences to identify effective policy interventions in agriculture, manufacturing, and finance, which are outlined below.

The first phase in Studwell's threefold development prescription—and arguably the most crucial in initial poverty alleviation (Christiaensen *et al.* 2011)—is the maximization of output from small-scale farming. If rapid economic expansion occurs from a low level of development, agrarian yields tend to stagnate or fall as population growth soars and the majority of the population is employed in agriculture. This is because the demand for farmland increases, implying that landlords make easy money by leasing out land at the highest possible rents. In combination with high interest on loans, tenant farmers' profit margins decrease—and, facing insecurity of future tenure, farmers cannot risk investment in yield-improving measures. Consequently, the output per unit of farmland decreases substantially (Drescher *et al.* 2001). To offset this inherent market failure, which plagues many developing countries, governments should do two things: first, implement reforms to distribute land more equally, so that each household owns a plot of farmland; and, second, arrange support in terms of training, marketing, and the provision of credit, machinery, fertilizers, and seeds. Under such conditions of land security and guidance, households are incentivized to invest their resources in productivity optimization, thereby creating labor-intensive "garden-style cultivation" (Studwell 2014, 49). In contrast to the claims of both neoliberal and Marxist economists, such small-scale household farming proves much more efficient than large-scale agriculture in the initial development stage. Successful examples include China, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, which distributed ownership or usage rights for equal parcels of land to the farming population and offered additional government support (see, for example, Zhang and Donaldson 2008). Agriculture is crucial also in light of the next stage of economic development: manufacturing. After all, farmers' surplus increases rural household savings, which help finance industrial investment and raise rural consumption of manufactured goods. Additionally, in the absence of welfare payments, the possibility of returning to the family farm presents a safety net for industrial migrant workers (Christiaensen *et al.* 2011; Yagura 2015).

Following agricultural reform, Studwell argues, economic transition requires infant industry support that is directed specifically toward the export of manufactured goods. Manufacturing plays an important developmental role because, in employing machines, it absorbs the initial lack of skilled human labor, while a surplus in cheap unskilled labor presents a competitive advantage for developing countries that compensates for the low productivity during the start-up phase. Moreover, manufactured goods are easily tradable—more so than services—and trade creates feedback and competition that result in further industrial learning (North 1990, 74–78). The successful examples of Japan

and South Korea—and, in fact, most other developed countries (Chang 2003)—show that the government's role becomes to protect and support national infant industries through subsidies, public-private research, high tariffs on imports, and assistance in technology acquisition. However, government protection should go hand in hand with punitive measures, especially for rent-seeking, that is, "the propensity of entrepreneurs to concentrate their efforts on obtaining protection and subsidies (rents) from the state without delivering the technological progress and competitiveness that economic development requires" (Studwell 2014, 61). As Studwell argues, this is most effectively done through "export discipline," which denotes the process of coercing domestic producers to export and making subsequent state support conditional on their ability to sell produce abroad. International sales then provide feedback on performance, effectively allowing governments to "weed out losers" rather than having to embark on the more daunting task of "picking winners" (Studwell 2014, 62; see also Öniş 1991; Booth 1999). It was thus that, for example, Hyundai and Kia emerged from an initial handful of South Korean car manufacturers under the watchful eye of the country's powerful Economic Planning Board.

Studwell's third and final prescription for economic development consists of government interventions in the financial sector to direct the economy's limited funds to their developmentally most efficient use, that is, to agriculture and manufacturing (credit for farmers, subsidies for infant industries, etc.) (see also Chang 1993). It takes time, however, for such investments to pay off, which means that there is a need for "patient capital" that accepts low near-term returns to build a national economy that delivers higher returns in the future. Yet, private investors or banks tend to seek more immediately profitable investments that do not involve a learning process and hence are developmentally futile, such as in real estate speculation, the import of consumer goods, or natural resource exploitation. Worse, entrepreneurs who own banks may squander household savings by investing in other branches of their own business groups (Studwell 2010; 2014). The solution, Studwell (2014, 139) argues, lies in a "short leash" on both domestic and international capital flows. This translates into close control or even the nationalization of banks, which allows governments not only to direct funds for development policy but also to maintain low interest rates on household savings despite high inflation, thereby opening up more funds. It also means limitations on cross-border capital flows to retain domestic capital for development planning and prevent foreign capital from disrupting development. If FDI is not limited, local industry tends to turn into a processing industry for foreign manufacturers, which does not push for technological upgrading to the same extent as the development of an indigenous manufacturing sector does.

To sum up: "A historical review of east Asian economic development shows that the recipe for success has been as simple as one, two, three: household farming, export-oriented manufacturing, and closely controlled finance that supports these two sectors" (Studwell 2014, 223). As we endeavor to examine the extent to which the Cambodian development experience under CPP rule reflects Studwell's prescriptions, we acknowledge that applying these prescriptions as a benchmark is not uncontroversial. Considering that historical conditions—such as colonial legacies (Kim 2009), external threats, or initial levels of human capital—strongly shape development outcomes (Booth 1999), one may question the degree of leverage governments have to effectively duplicate previously successful development policy in another context. Moreover, considering the sacrifices in terms of working conditions and well-being that entire generations had to make in the name of national development, one may also question the desirability of the kind of rapid economic transformation that has occurred in Northeast Asia. Lastly, Studwell's academic credentials have been questioned. While he is certainly an academic (with a PhD from Cambridge Judge Business School), he is also a business journalist and best-selling author writing for a general audience, and as such his approach has been widely criticized for its sweeping generalizations across Asia and its prescriptive approach to economic development (see, for example, Sternberg 2013).

Despite these caveats, we find Studwell's framework rather suitable to assess the Cambodian government's track record in economic development because it is a comprehensive and well-researched review of the economic growth policies pursued in Asia, based on actual historical experiences and focused on the role of state actors. Besides, Hun Sen himself repeatedly expressed his "commitment to transform Cambodia into an upper-middle-income economy by 2030 and a developed country by 2050" (Cambodian Office of the Council of Ministers 2017), which arguably necessitates targeted policy interventions in key economic sectors—such as Studwell recommends. The next section elaborates on the Cambodian context which Studwell's measures would encounter.

Cambodian Development under CPP Rule (1993–2019): Patronage and Pragmatism

After the ousting of the Khmer Rouge in 1979, Hun Sen—a former deputy Khmer Rouge regimental commander who had fled to Vietnam in 1977—swiftly climbed the ranks of power. A member of the politburo of what would be named the Cambodian People's Party, he served as Cambodia's foreign minister in the Vietnamese-occupied government. He became Cambodia's prime minister in 1985, a position he held until

his son Hun Manet took over in 2023. He then began serving as the president of the Cambodian Senate. Hun Sen's consolidation of power—he also took on CPP leadership in 1991—arguably hinged on his ability to establish a social hierarchy based on patron-client relationships among interdependent layers of high- and lower-ranking politicians and administrators, foreign and domestic businesspeople, and the rural electorate. Dubbed as an "elite pact," this patronage system is the embodiment of corruption as much as the backbone of peace and stability in present-day Cambodia (Hughes and Un 2011, 8–9).

Patronage is crucial to understanding the CPP's approach to development as well as Cambodian society in general. Patron-client relations have long formed the basis of social life in Cambodia (Milne 2015). Under Hun Sen, there are two major manifestations of patronage: a personalized and a mass patronage system. First, exchanges within the Cambodian elite are organized through a personalized network including CPP top officials, business tycoons, and military generals. This network takes the form of a patron-client pyramid with Hun Sen—as unrivaled "strongman of Cambodia" (Deth and Bultmann 2016, 87)—at the top. In state-business interactions, the patronage-based elite pact is reflected in the honorary title of *oknha* (Verver and Dahles 2015), once bestowed upon those who offered exceptional service to the throne, but since its reintroduction in 1994 awarded to businesspeople who champion substantial financial support for development projects in the name of the CPP. Thus, a number of businesspeople in key positions have been able to develop large and multilayered business groups. The rise of *oknha* is the chief manifestation of the patronage system within the ruling elite (Verver and Dahles 2015). The extremely lucrative deals that are part and parcel of Cambodia's integration into regional and global markets are shared within the impenetrable pact of Cambodia's ruling elite, dubbed as the "*oknha* economy" (Ear 2013, 53).

Second, the CPP elite has created a mass patronage system that arranges exchanges between the state and the general population (Un and So 2011): CPP representatives distribute material inducements in exchange for political support. From the 1990s, in the eyes of rural communities, the legitimacy of the regime at home has relied on Hun Sen's ability to sustain political stability and peace but also to convince Cambodians that they benefit economically from this stability (Un 2011). For the urban middle classes, the current regime provides the fundamentals to pursue their neoliberal dream of affluence (Brickell and Springer 2017, 3). The rural population, on the other hand, is wooed with development projects that—whilst commonly sourced from state coffers, *oknha*, or international donors—seem to emerge directly from the ruling party or Hun Sen's own pocket (Ear 2011). At the same time, however, gift-giving events and Hun Sen's speeches "mobilize a powerful sense of surveillance and menace" (Hughes 2006b, 472),

as there is always the threat that CPP patronage will be withdrawn and development projects abandoned should citizens vote for the opposition. In all, through personalized and mass patronage arrangements, Hun Sen has cemented the position of the CPP from the national down to the village level, effectively creating a one-party state while also maintaining an "independent power base which affords him a position above party control, with personalized networks that permeate and supersede state institutions" (Un 2011, 553). As such, the Cambodian polity is often described as "neo-patrimonial" (Hughes and Un 2011).

The peace and stability created under Hun Sen's neo-patrimonial state is of a different caliber than the social order that the architects of the 1991 Paris Peace Accords—marking the official end of the Cambodian-Vietnamese War—had in mind. The peace agreements, implemented by the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia, put in place processes to develop the economy and build civil society, including a political system founded on democratic principles. Cambodia became the recipient of substantial development assistance from a variety of foreign donors—amounting to about US$1 billion as of 2019 (World Bank 2024a) and accounting for up to 28 percent of government expenditure (Johnson 2022). The constant influx of donor money generated an exponential growth in the number of international and local NGOs, from just a few in 1992 to more than five thousand registered organizations in 2019. NGOs play key roles as development agents, employers, and providers of business opportunities for local companies, thereby contributing significantly to the economy and alleviating poverty in Cambodia. This gave rise to a foreign-dominated donor-dependent economy (Ear 2013). Yet, Hun Sen's development agenda was built on pragmatism—basically accepting development aid, donor money, FDI, and trade from institutions and nations around the world but rebuffing the West's making support conditional on his government maintaining proper democratic processes and institutions.

As Cambodia's recent transition to single-party authoritarianism is widely viewed as a collapse of the democratization process (Dahles 2018), the question must be raised as to the impact of this political fiasco: will it put an end to Cambodia's economic rise? So far, as economic analysts expected, the 2017 political instability has had only limited, short-term effects. Immediate ramifications came in the shape of economic sanctions and withdrawal of donor money by Western countries, including a partial ban from the European Union's Everything but Arms (EBA) preferential trade agreement (Dahles 2018). Increasingly relying on China to compensate for the loss of Western donors and markets, the Cambodian government was not impressed by these measures. Nevertheless, Cambodia's economy—despite its notable track record in GDP growth—was not as solid as the country's ruling class wished to believe. For once, it became

questionable whether long-term sustainability and prosperity would materialize from China's investments (Heng 2018).

In the remainder of this paper, we will assess the developmental impact of the Cambodian patronage system based on the analytic framework provided by Studwell's study.

The *Oknha* Economy: The Developmental Impact of CPP Rule

In the three subsections below, we assess the impact of CPP policymaking on the development of the Cambodian economy between 1993 and 2019. In doing so, we use secondary sources, including academic literature, reports and data from NGOs and international institutions, and English-language media.[1] We disregard Khmer-language sources due to our inability to read Khmer. Drawing on these sources and in line with Studwell's argument, we will discuss agriculture, manufacturing, and finance.

Agriculture

Cambodia's economy is an exemplary case of Studwell's developmental framework, where the greatest initial economic returns can be achieved through agricultural productivity gains. Some 76 percent of the population is rural, yet agricultural sector production contributed to only 21 percent of national GDP in 2019 (World Bank 2024b). Also, the Cambodian population has more than doubled in size since 1980, and therefore growing resource needs are anticipated to put additional pressure on domestic production in the foreseeable future (Scheidel *et al.* 2013). Accordingly, the government has acknowledged that agriculture and agro-industry can "serve as the dynamic driving force for economic growth and poverty reduction" (RGC 2004, 13). However, with inadequate state support, the productivity of small farms remains low. Rural income growth has resulted from higher rice prices and earnings generated outside the farms rather than productivity gains (World Bank 2015). The government has not only failed to allocate state land toward household farming but has deprived rural communities of arable land by reallocating large areas to domestic and foreign actors. Per the 2001 Land Law, land can be reallocated in the form of economic land concessions (ELCs) to

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1) Cambodia used to have two independent English-language newspapers, the *Cambodia Daily* and the *Phnom Penh Post*. In the run-up to the 2018 elections, the *Cambodia Daily* was banned under the pretext of a tax issue. After the elections, the *Phnom Penh Post* was sold by the Australian owner to a Malaysian media firm with purported ties to the CPP. For more on Cambodia's media landscape, see Strangio (2017).

"allow the beneficiaries to clear the land for industrial agricultural exploitation"—including the cultivation of acacia, eucalyptus, palm oil, cassava, sugarcane, corn, rubber, teak, and cashew—for a period of up to 99 years (RGC 2001, 14; see also Padwe 2011). Relatively few Cambodians hold land titles—a legacy of the Khmer Rouge campaign to destroy landownership records—and thus as much as 80 percent of all land in Cambodia is classified as "state land," which can be sold off to corporations or allocated as ELCs. Over 2 million hectares have been designated as ELCs, amounting to as much as 50 percent of Cambodia's arable land (Vrieze and Naren 2012).

The CPP government as well as the World Bank have favored ELCs, under the expectation that these offer surplus production, local employment, and up- and down-stream economic opportunities in addition to more state revenue as a result of easier taxation (Diepart 2015). However, these supposed benefits have not materialized. The short-sighted cultivation of rubber and sugarcane monocultures poses the threat of environmental degradation, such as acidification or the deterioration of soil fertility (Xi *et al.* 2015). The actual number of jobs created is limited. Employment opportunities tend to be given to outside workers rather than the local smallholders whose lands have been dispossessed; and in cases where evictees are employed, their wages fail to compensate for the loss of prior household income from that land (Scheidel *et al.* 2013). Also, the substituted large-scale plantations do not lead to the development of substantial local forward linkages or processing, because of intra-company processing and the export of unprocessed crops (World Bank 2015). With regard to tax revenues, the agriculture minister reportedly said that the 173 concessions (or 1.4 million hectares) under his control generated as little as US$5 million in 2015 (Baliga and Vong 2016). While hardly contributing to state coffers, the ELC policy exacerbates the likelihood of financial loss, impoverishment, and loss of cultivable land and livestock holdings among small-scale farmers, as a random survey in 15 villages indicated (Xi *et al.* 2015).

The ELC policy is rooted in the flawed assumption that while smallholders appear merely capable of maintaining self-sufficiency, large-scale industrialized agriculture will enable surplus production. At the same time, however, the push for ELCs can hardly be blamed on a miscalculation by the CPP: the process of ELC allocation and exploitation offers ample opportunity to capture profits for state-business elites (Diepart 2017). ELC holders are local *oknha* with known ties to the CPP as well as foreign—mostly Chinese and Vietnamese—investors (Vrieze and Naren 2012). It is estimated that these beneficiaries pay US$500 in informal fees per hectare of ELC to get approvals from government officials at different levels (Un and So 2011), which is in stark contrast to the US$5–10 annual formal tax (Baliga and Vong 2016). Also, despite the law limiting concessions to a maximum of 10,000 hectares, there are examples of beneficiaries

acquiring much more by registering multiple adjacent concessions under the names of family members, and of concessions that are simply much larger, spearheaded by *oknha* and CPP Senator Lao Meng Khin, who holds one of 333,000 hectares (LICADHO 2024). In many cases, land granted is already occupied and cultivated by rural dwellers. Although—per the 2001 Land Law—these people have strong legal claims to ownership of the land if they have been living there for five years (Un and So 2011), they are often driven off their land by force or offered housing on slum-like resettlement sites (Springer 2015). Finally, because the ELC framework allows the clearing of land before developing plantations, it is used to bypass the 2002 logging ban (Diepart 2017). These logging operations, which often proceed beyond the ELC boundaries (Global Witness 2009), are detrimental for rural livelihoods since the exploitation of forests can constitute up to 30–50 percent of aggregate household income in addition to farming (Xi *et al.* 2015).

The "epidemic of dispossession" (Springer 2015, 140) has already displaced hundreds of thousands of households, while many rural Cambodians lack secure land titles and thus risk future displacement (Hughes 2008, 71; Un and So 2011). Land titling processes remain incomplete, and processes of land commodification and marketization uproot local institutions for governing commons such as forest resources (Padwe 2011). In economic terms, as Studwell emphasizes, insecure land rights reduce productivity-enhancing investments by smallholders. Moreover, instead of countering the effects of population-growth-induced land scarcity, ELCs intensify this process (Padwe 2011). Rural landlessness has been rising, and landownership continues to be concentrated in a small fraction of the population—from a nearly egalitarian distribution in 1989 to 64 percent of the total land area being owned by the richest 10 percent (and 20–30 percent by the wealthiest 1 percent) of the population by 2006 (Hughes 2008). The resulting higher cost of farmland makes it less likely for families to be able to afford renting land, or it reduces their profit margin and thus lowers their ability to invest in output-increasing measures. This results in a vicious cycle: ELCs reduce smallholder access to land and, for lack of compensating economic opportunities, decrease household income. Because of food insecurity and high health-care costs, greater poverty leads to frequent distress sales, which further reinforce poverty and landlessness.

While the ELC framework aimed to diversify agriculture, rice paddy fields continue to occupy some 75 percent of cultivated land (World Bank 2015), and thus the rice sector merits attention. Annual yields in Cambodia are the lowest in the East Asian region, although the Tonlé Sap area and Mekong Delta are very fertile and hence there is room for output-increasing measures. Traditionally, Cambodia's rice processing sector comprises many small rice millers that lack the technology, financial capital, and storage facilities to export. Hence, unprocessed surplus paddy is exported to Thailand and

Vietnam, which is a huge loss for the Cambodian economy (Thavat 2011). Cambodia gained an important competitive advantage over its neighbors when, in 2009, the European Union included milled rice in its EBA system of preferential duties. In response, the government pledged to increase paddy production, raise milling to international standards, and seek out export markets (RGC 2010). In addition to the usual symbolic acts—a Cambodia Rice Forum was staged, and a Technical Working Group was set up—there were some tangible accomplishments, including concessions on the import of machinery, new certification, a single window for export facilitation, and the conclusion of deals with foreign governments (Kelsall and Heng 2014). Exports rose sharply as a result of new investments and existing rice millers upgrading their plants. While these efforts were sufficient to get rice exports off the ground, government policy seems to have fallen short in the long run: electricity and logistics costs remain high; training facilities, the provision of seeds, storage facilities, and low-interest loan arrangements remain underdeveloped; and rice millers face unhelpful and rent-seeking officials (Kelsall and Heng 2014). In 2010 the government set an export target of one million tons of processed rice by 2015, but with some 691,000 tons this target was not nearly met even by 2020 (Vireak 2021). Although some rice mills are owned by *oknha*, including one that supplies rice to the army (Becker 2011), relatively few *oknha* seem to invest in the rice sector, both because of fierce competition from neighboring countries and because they typically prefer to invest in businesses that yield instant profit (Ear 2011; Verver and Dahles 2015).

Since the 1990s, and particularly since the prioritization of rice export in 2010, the government has attempted to turn Cambodia's lowland regions—the area around the Tonlé Sap and Mekong Delta—into an "export-oriented industrial paddy zone" (Diepart 2017, 38). To the extent that this has been successful, which it has if we consider paddy rather than milled rice, it has also led—unsurprisingly, considering Studwell's argument—to land concentration. The land squeeze in the lowlands has in turn prompted rural dwellers to migrate to the upland regions (and to Thailand), where they have no land tenure security and fall victim to the many ELCs (Diepart 2017). In all, the CPP government has done the opposite of what Studwell prescribes: support for farmers has been meager; and instead of facilitating equal land distribution to support household farming, land policy is dominated by privatization and the ELC framework, leading to unequal distribution, landlessness, and ineffective large-scale plantations. This reveals the CPP's pseudo-developmentalism: while claiming to generate employment and develop agriculture, in fact the patronage system has laid the foundation for low yields, landlessness, and the continuation of rural poverty.

According to Studwell's "recipe" for successful economic development, land reform

and nurturing the agricultural sector must precede moving into the manufacturing sector (for Cambodia, see Baird 2014; Yagura 2015; Chhuor 2017). Clearly, this has not happened in Cambodia. While in most developed countries "land was left without farmers" because of opportunities in urban industries, in Cambodia "farmers are left without land" and hence have no other option but to seek work elsewhere (Scheidel *et al.* 2013, 348). Irrespective of the underlying causes, while in 2000 some 9 percent of Cambodians worked in industry and 73 percent in agriculture, twenty years on the two sectors each account for roughly 30 percent of employment (World Bank 2024c; 2024d). In the next section we consider how this rapid development of the industry sector has unfolded under CPP rule.

Manufacturing

Let us start by considering garment manufacturing, which accounts for some 80 percent of Cambodian exports and has been the focal point of industrialization since the 1990s (Arnold 2021).[2] The garment sector took off around the turn of the millennium when the US and EU granted privileged access for Cambodian goods under the Multi-Fiber Agreement and the EBA agreement, respectively. The exemptions from duties and quotas in the US and EU for garments bearing a "Made in Cambodia" label attracted many garment manufacturers from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and South Korea, who acted as subcontractors for international brands, including H&M and Levi's. As of 2018, the garment sector generated employment for up to one million Cambodians, 80 percent of them women (ILO 2018). As such, the sector's importance as a job creator, especially to offset rural poverty and landlessness, can hardly be overstated (Yamagata 2006). Also, most workers enjoy formal employment, a minimum wage (of US$170 in 2018; see ILO 2018), and factory monitoring regimes that were established by an ensemble of representatives from the government, unions, garment manufacturers, and international institutions, culminating in 2001 in the "Better Factories Cambodia" program run by the International Labour Organization, which promoted Cambodian garments as an "ethical niche" (Arnold and Toh 2010, 401). Whether or not the sector has lived up to ethical standards can be debated, especially since it has become highly politicized (Arnold 2021). What is more important for our purpose, however, is the observation that beyond job creation, the benefits for the Cambodian economy remain limited. The garment sector creates few local subcontracting linkages because almost all inputs are imported: Cambodian factories are merely involved in the "cut, make, and trim" (Ear 2011, 79) phase, while fabrics are imported—mostly from China. The sector

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2) This includes footwear manufacturing.

generates little revenue as the inputs and finished goods enjoy extensive tax exemptions when traveling through Sihanoukville Port; profits are largely repatriated, as only around 7 percent of factories are Cambodian owned; and most jobs in the sector are low-skilled, while people from the owners' home countries are typically hired for management or expert positions (Arnold and Toh 2010; Ear 2011; Arnold 2021).

Recently, the manufacturing sector has been diversifying beyond garments and footwear. Companies from Europe, China, and especially Japan are gradually moving into Cambodia to set up factories producing bicycles, electronic appliances, furniture, and car parts (World Bank 2017a). To attract such manufacturers, the government has promoted the establishment of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) throughout the country (RGC 2015). Legal and logistical arrangements are provided within these SEZs. Many SEZs are owned by *oknha*, sometimes as joint ventures with foreign companies (Verver and Dahles 2015), and are complete with "one-stop" government services that house representatives of all relevant ministries (RGC 2015; Warr and Menon 2016). The SEZs are effectively designed as economic enclaves that lack many of the deficiencies of the broader economy, such as poor infrastructure, costly regulations, and rent-seeking officials. In 2014, some 68,000 Cambodians were employed in 145 factories across nine SEZs (Warr and Menon 2016). Compared to garments, the more recently established factories in SEZs produce higher-value-added goods that require higher-quality investments and more skilled workers. Therefore, according to the World Bank, Cambodia "appears to be on the verge of climbing up the manufacturing value chains" and may be shifting from nondurable to durable consumer goods and, in time, to capital goods manufacturing according to the "flying geese" model (World Bank 2017a, 18).

However, it appears that the World Bank is overly optimistic here. Following Studwell, moving up one tier—let alone becoming the front goose—is very hard to do if local industry remains dependent on foreign manufacturers (Kasahara 2004). Besides, Cambodia has "lacked a strong government industrial promotion policy" (Yamagata 2006, 1). Partly because of this, the factories occupying the SEZs source almost all their inputs from abroad, while few are involved in research and development: they are "linked to the international economy but not to the domestic economy" (Warr and Menon 2016, 284). Critical observers thus argue that low-skilled manufacturing has failed to serve as a stepping stone to higher-value-added manufacturing: diversification has "failed to materialize," and "opportunities to escape this 'low-income trap' are very limited" (Arnold 2021, 6). In all, Cambodia's role as an export-oriented processing and assembly zone for foreign firms has meant that per capita value added by the manufacturing sector remains among the lowest in the region (Chhuor 2017), while limited prospects have been provided for learning.

Shifting our attention to local industry, a first observation is that few *oknha* are involved in manufacturing. *Oknha* are involved in agro-industry relying on their ELCs (as seen in the previous section) as well as in the construction industry capitalizing on Cambodia's real estate boom. Businesses in these industries, however, do not provide great prospects for technological advancement and learning (Studwell 2014). Overall, *oknha* are hardly incentivized to produce goods with the potential for export beyond cash crops, timber, or minerals. After all, this would require long-term investments, which they are not willing to make as long as their CPP patrons allow them to make short-term profits by way of ELCs, import monopolies, informal tax exemptions, and public contracts (Ear 2011; Verver and Dahles 2015). Without doubt, the CPP elites also stand to gain financially from the short-termism of the *oknha*, and thus they show no sign of encouraging—let alone disciplining—the *oknha* into export-oriented manufacturing.

Meanwhile, Cambodia's small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which due to their flexibility are a potential site for entrepreneurial innovation, industriousness, and diversification, fail to develop (OECD/ERIA 2018). According to 2013 data, 97.6 percent of Cambodian businesses are micro enterprises (fewer than 10 employees), only 2.2 percent are SMEs (10 to 100 employees), and 0.2 percent are large firms (more than 100 employees) (IFC 2019). In the manufacturing sector there are roughly 70,000 micro enterprises, 1,500 SMEs, and 400 large firms (Cambodia, NIS 2015). The Cambodian private sector is thus characterized by a "missing middle" between the many micro enterprises and the elite business conglomerates, indicating that there are considerable obstacles for SMEs and micro enterprises to grow (OECD/ERIA 2018). First, it is excessively costly and time consuming to have to deal with permits, regulations, and taxes (World Bank 2017b). In the Doing Business index 2020, Cambodia is ranked 144th out of 190 countries, attaining especially low scores for starting a business (187th), dealing with construction permits (178th), and enforcing contracts (182nd) (World Bank 2020). As many as 75 different licenses may be required by SMEs, issued by many ministries and many of which cannot be applied for online (OECD/ERIA 2018). On the 2020 corruption perception index of Transparency International, Cambodia is ranked 160th out of 180, and there is ample evidence of rent-seeking across state institutions (Kelsall and Heng 2014). Second, entrepreneurs experience informal competition as a major business constraint (World Bank 2016). In 2017, the government attempted to reduce the number of informal enterprises by offering a two-year tax holiday to SMEs registering voluntarily. Despite initial enthusiasm, however, SMEs were reluctant to take advantage of the incentive because of rumors that registered businesses were still required to pay tax and worries about penalties and back taxes

(IFC 2019).

The government does very little to remove these obstacles as it "does not currently have an SME development strategy in place" (OECD/ERIA 2018, 236). In its Industrial Development Policy 2015–2025 (RGC 2015) the government pays lip service to the SME sector, and already in 2004 an SME subcommittee was established, which subsequently crafted an SME Development Framework focusing on regulations, finance, and support activities for SMEs, but to no avail. The committee has "limited operational autonomy and limited resources" (OECD/ERIA 2018, 236). Research and development are grossly underfunded, and the National Productivity Centre of Cambodia was allotted a budget of merely US$100,000 (OECD/ERIA 2018, 244). Government support for SMEs that aspire to export their products remains limited to soliciting technical assistance from development partners such as the US Agency for International Development or the Japan International Cooperation Agency (OECD/ERIA 2018; Sok *et al.* 2020).

Partly because of insufficient government support in export promotion, SMEs lack the information and knowledge to make use of free trade agreements such as the ASEAN Economic Community (Thangavelu *et al.* 2017). The government claims to foster the integration of SMEs into global value chains by way of the SEZs (RGC 2015), but there have been few concrete government efforts in this direction and there are few linkages between local SMEs and SEZ-based foreign manufacturers, as we saw earlier. Other basic support services for SMEs—such as legal and logistical infrastructure for e-commerce or laboratories for product inspection—remain underdeveloped and under-resourced (OECD/ERIA 2018). Lastly, government expenditure on education was a mere 2.2 percent of GDP in 2017 (World Bank 2024e; see also OECD/ERIA 2018). Moreover, the commercialization of higher education has rendered both public and private institutions dependent on tuition fees, which has meant few resources for research, fostered corruption among teachers, and undermined the relevance of programs: while Business Studies is the most popular program, the private sector needs graduates from science, mathematics, agriculture, and health-related studies (Khieng *et al.* 2015). Thus, Cambodia faces "huge skill deficits even for relatively light-skill-intensive sectors" (Khieng *et al.* 2015, 23).

All in all, the CPP government has failed to implement an effective industrial agenda but instead—as in agriculture—has done the exact opposite of what Studwell proposes: it has established export-oriented processing zones for foreign manufacturers and provided monopolies and other benefits to *oknha* in industries that provide immediate profits but hardly any opportunities for learning and human skills upgrading. Meanwhile, these two hallmarks of CPP-led development—trade liberalization and the *oknha* economy—have curtailed the development of SMEs engaged in manufacturing:

they are hard pressed to profit from access to foreign markets because they lack resources and government support, while in the domestic market they face competition from imported consumer goods, which enter the country with low tariffs due to *oknha*-held import monopolies. In the next section we examine the financial underpinnings of the CPP's development model.

Finance

The CPP government directs insufficient taxpayer money toward developing household farming and infant industry, as has been made clear above. The government's priorities are reflected in ministerial budgets: in 2016–20, expenditure on the military and police forces combined (Ministries of National Defense and Interior) hovered around 25 percent of total expenditure, which was in stark contrast to developmentally relevant ministries such as Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (1.6 percent), Rural Development (1.1 percent), and Industry and Handicraft (0.3 percent) (PIC 2019, 17). Irrespective of its priorities, the government does not have a lot to spend in the first place. Tax revenues have long been small because neither the *oknha* business groups nor SMEs pay much formal tax: the CPP's top officials allow their client *oknha* to evade taxes in return for under-the-table money, while rather than collecting taxes destined for the state coffers, lower-level officials top up their meager salaries by extracting informal payments from small-scale entrepreneurs (Verver 2017). Informal revenue streams and a weak formal tax system go hand in hand in Cambodia, and the resultant budgetary deficits are offset by donor money, especially in social services (Ear 2011; 2013). More recently, and partly due to diminishing donor funding, the government has broadened the revenue base through reforms of the taxation and customs and excise departments, doubling revenue as percentage of GDP from roughly 10 percent in 2009 to 20 percent in 2019 (World Bank 2024f). While this has propped up state coffers, the government's fiscal space (budgetary leverage after fixed expenses) remains limited: with a bloated work-force and a rising minimum wage in the public sector—from US$50 in 2012 to US$250 in 2018—some ministries spend the bulk of their budget on wages (Feridhanusetyawan 2014). In all, rather than being used for development, public expenditure under CPP rule seems to serve as a tool to retain the loyalty of state, police, and army personnel.

State loans for agricultural businesses are channelled via the Agricultural and Rural Development Bank (ARDB), which claims to have disbursed some US$245 million to rice millers, exporters, and other agro-businesses in 2020 (Hin 2021). In that year, the SME Bank was established to cater to non-agricultural businesses and mandated to distribute an initial US$100 million (IFC 2019). Although the establishment of these two state-owned banks is a positive development, there is also cause for concern: the

SME Bank allegedly subjects business owners to cumbersome application procedures and high collateral requirements (Sok *et al.* 2020), while there have been reports of funds misuse at the ARDB (Kelsall and Heng 2014, 36). More fundamentally, in view of an estimated US$7.7 billion difference between supply and demand for SME financing (IFC 2019, 53), the efforts of the ARDB and SME Bank hardly suffice. Beyond these two state-owned banks there have been few government initiatives to create financial space for businesses. The government has not put in place alternative instruments, such as credit guarantee schemes or programs to support export financing (OECD/ERIA 2018), nor has it created financial space for industrial development by lending money abroad, instead emphasizing the importance of maintaining "macroeconomic stability" (Feridhanusetyawan and Ree 2014).

By and large, the government thus surrenders businesses and farmers to private sector financial institutions. For SMEs, loans are hard to acquire due to high interest rates and collateral requirements (OECD/ERIA 2018; IFC 2019). Interest rates on SME loans range from 11 percent to 16 percent, and these loans are typically short term because local financial institutions have limited capacity to offer longer loan terms due to their reliance on short-term deposits (Sok *et al.* 2020). Survey data show that a lack of financial capital is the main impediment to business expansion: while banks point to poor financial records or business plans on the part of would-be borrowers as well as difficulties in enforcing agreements due to the weak judiciary system, at the same time they seem to have few incentives to provide loans to potentially viable manufacturers because they can realize better short-term profits elsewhere (in sectors like real estate and import-export) (IFC 2010). Notably, women entrepreneurs, who represent most business owners and tend to have better saving habits and awareness of their expense obligations, are especially poorly served by banks, also because of negative gender stereotypes (IFC 2019). The result is that as much as 96.3 percent of investment is financed internally by Cambodian businesses and only 2.5 percent by banks, supplier credit, or equity or stock sales (versus 71 percent and 23.2 percent, respectively, in other lower-middle-income countries) (World Bank 2016).

For smallholder farmers, in contrast, credit is readily available through private microfinance institutions (MFIs). However, taking out credit from MFIs presents a threat rather than a solution for cash-strapped rural families (Norman 2011; Green 2020). This is because such credit is collateralized by land titles, which allows MFIs to coerce smallholders who are unable to repay loans into land sales, debt-driven migration, or even child labor (IFC 2015; LICADHO 2019). As a result, rural dwellers become, for example, brick kiln workers catering to the construction frenzy in Phnom Penh, who may aspire to return to their land but often cannot because they are debt bonded (Natarajan

et al. 2019). While intended as a poverty reduction project—and still perceived that way by the Cambodian government and many Western development agencies (Norman 2011)—microloans have become big business: Cambodia's largest MFIs reportedly made US$130 million profit in 2017. In 2019 some 2.4 million Cambodians together had US$8 billion in outstanding loans, averaging around US$3,370 debt per borrower, which is the highest in the world (LICADHO 2019, 1).

Despite reckless lending by MFI credit officers and a sprawl of licensed and unlicensed MFIs, the National Bank of Cambodia has not put in place meaningful oversight to protect consumers, nor does the court become involved—as stipulated by law—when clients default. Instead, commune chiefs tend to serve as arbiter, which is problematic because they often also receive payments from MFIs to settle debts, while commune councillors—who represent multiple villages—enforce regulation that directly "contributes to household indebtedness by encouraging multiple borrowing, rural out-migration and land repossession" (Green 2020, 1429). The government did impose an 18 percent annual interest rate cap on loans, but MFIs worked around this by requiring up-front fees. Rather than regulating MFIs, in what seemed an attempt to dissociate from the sector, Hun Sen initiated a campaign to inform Cambodians that MFIs were not state run and ordered MFIs to change their logos if these vaguely resembled those of government institutions. In general, high interest rates on loans—be they from MFIs or from rice traders, for example—render rural families highly vulnerable, to such an extent that unexpected costs such as an illness in the family can force people to sell their land (Yagura 2005; LICADHO 2019).

While financial support for farmers and manufacturers is lacking, the CPP government has implemented a very liberal banking regime. Hosting as many as sixty banks—in part due to a low minimum capital requirement of US$75 million—by all accounts Cambodia is overbanked (Mekong Strategic Partners 2020). The banks include foreign institutions—such as Chinese banks financing Chinese-run infrastructural or tourism projects—and local banks such as ANZ Royal, Vattanac, and Canadia that are owned by *oknha* close to Hun Sen. Government and nongovernment data show that banks—including *oknha*-owned ones—extend loans and credit mainly to the trade, construction, and real estate sectors and, to a lesser extent, to manufacturing and agriculture (World Bank 2017b; National Bank of Cambodia 2019; Mekong Strategic Partners 2020; Sok *et al.* 2020, 14). This suggests that the *oknha* seek out not only more immediately profitable sectors but also sectors in which they themselves are active. Indeed, examples abound of *oknha*-owned banks or their subsidiaries investing in other businesses of the same *oknha* (see, for example, Hor 2018).

A similarly liberal regime applies to money flows into and out of the country. When

looking at value-added tax (VAT), corporate tax, or excise tax, Cambodia has highly competitive rates in a regional comparative perspective. On top of this, various tax incentives are provided, including tax holidays and exemptions from VAT and import duties (Feridhanusetyawan and Ree 2014; World Bank 2017b). While these excessive tax incentives in general imply a loss of state revenue, tax holidays in particular hamper development because they incentivize foreign corporations to invest in short-term profitable projects rather than stimulating long-term investments (Feridhanusetyawan 2014). Even the World Bank (2019) advised the government to limit tax holidays. Moreover, inviting investment implies that Cambodia has turned into a processing zone for foreign manufacturers, as discussed in the previous section. Lastly, as much as foreign investment flows into Cambodia almost unbridled, so have affluent Cambodians encountered few restraints in siphoning their illicit money out of the country. According to a report by the think tank Global Financial Integrity, some US$14.6 billion was secretly moved offshore between 2004 and 2013 through trade misinvoicing, with the annual amount increasing from US$374 million to nearly US$3.9 billion in that same period (Kar and Spanjers 2015). There is also evidence of Cambodian elites buying real estate abroad or operating shell companies in tax havens, either to hide wealth or as part of an escape plan (Peter 2018).

In sum, Hun Sen's CPP has made few attempts at directing financial resources to developing small-scale agriculture and the domestic manufacturing sector, as Studwell (2014) advises. The government has other spending priorities, most notably developing the armed forces and retaining the loyalty of state officials. As a result, Cambodians who should have been central to development policy are neglected. Small-scale farmers have fallen victim to MFIs, and local manufacturers are hard pressed to acquire credit or loans. Meanwhile, through financial liberalization the CPP has unleashed those who seek short-term profits—foreign investors and *oknha*—thereby inhibiting investments of patient capital in developmentally more relevant activities that allow human skills upgrading and learning.

Discussion and Conclusion

"Thanks to rapid and sustained growth, Cambodia has become one of the world's leaders in poverty reduction and shared prosperity," declared the World Bank (2017b, 12). As this study demonstrates, however, economic growth does not necessarily bring prosperity to many in a sustainable fashion. Instead, our study emphasizes that economic growth and development are two different things. In the Cambodian case, economic

growth is elite centered rather than broad based and short-term oriented rather than sustainable. Cambodia's wealth is kept mainly within its ruling class—at great social cost. Long encouraged by Western neoliberal agendas and more recently emboldened by China's support, Hun Sen has used his political power to push for increased marketization to bolster Cambodia's export-driven economic growth. In what Katherine Brickell and Simon Springer (2017, 5) dubbed as the "hostile takeover of the Cambodian economy by Hun Sen's family," the state claimed forested land for logging, granted concessions to extractive industries and enterprises involved in the large-scale production of agricultural commodities, pursued reforms in property relations to free up public assets for sale, and pushed the construction of large-scale infrastructures, including hydroelectric dams—at severe environmental cost. International organizations' advice was followed, resulting in the establishment of SEZs and liberalization of banks (ADB 2001; World Bank 2004), which ironically accelerated the extraction of wealth by the political elite at home.

In terms of Studwell's virtuous circle, where economic development hinges primarily on the implementation of effective policy in three economic sectors—productivity increase from small-scale agriculture, protection of national infant industries, and strict control of national and international money flows—the Cambodian government has been doing exactly the opposite, creating the vicious circle of the neoliberalized *oknha* economy. Agricultural land reform and support for farmers are lacking, while accelerated land clearances and escalating land conflicts have left many farmers without land. Similarly, in the manufacturing sector the CPP government has invited foreign manufacturers while hampering local SMEs, and so industry continues to deliver low-skilled and low-paid jobs with little prospects for learning. Meanwhile, the finance model underlying Cambodia's economy—which hinges on FDI and development aid—does not support robust middle-class development, innovation, and prosperity for all Cambodians. The government fails to allocate financial resources to developing small-scale agriculture and domestic manufacturing. The alternative for a functioning tax system—rounding up development funds from *oknha* and other affluent loyalists—is no alternative at all as such measures amount to mere political symbolism that meets the electoral ends of the CPP and reinforces the pervasive patronage system. It is no substitute for effective developmental investments.

Following Studwell (2014) we have focused on agriculture, manufacturing, and finance, but our argument applies to the services sector as well. In contrast to the Northeast Asian developmental states where a strictly controlled financial sector gave rise to a plethora of highly sophisticated domestic service enterprises—producer services such as insurance companies, IT firms, and accountancy, consultancy, and law firms

(Dahles 2003)—such spin-offs have been largely lacking in Cambodia. Instead, low-value consumer services are flourishing. The epitome of Cambodia's services industry, the largely foreign-owned tourism sector, bears many similarities with the garment sector: it provides mostly low-skilled and low-paid jobs with few opportunities for upward mobility; it is highly vulnerable, as the Covid-19 crisis painfully revealed (Haffner *et al.* 2021); and profits are often repatriated by foreign owners. Moreover, like ELCs, large-scale resort development takes up much land but provides little employment, putting pressure on the growing population (Scheidel *et al.* 2013).

Optimistic discourse about economic development in Cambodia is flawed. Whilst there has been growth and poverty reduction, it is not as impressive as it seems bearing in mind the "ground zero" where Cambodia came from. Considering the administration's poor performance in governance, reports by international organizations typically urge the Cambodian government to engage in "institutional capacity-building" (IFC 2019, 23) and "enhance state effectiveness" (World Bank 2017b, 31). Indeed, the "elite pact" undermines the emergence of necessary development policies and institutions. What these reports fail to recognize, however, is that while poor governance may be cumbersome for most Cambodians, it serves the elite well. As the narrow circle around the Hun family benefits from the short-term exploitation of Cambodia's riches, the kind of autonomous development policies that Studwell proposes would undermine their interests. After all, the elites rely on informal arrangements among themselves as well as the loyalty of lower-level state, police, and army officials, which in turn hinges on officials' ability to top up their meager salaries by extracting informal fees from small-scale entrepreneurs and other Cambodians without political "backing" (Verver 2017). Thus, CPP-sanctioned rent-seeking has "not merely reduced the efficiency of the civil service but has actually transformed civil servants into obstacles to economic activity" (Hughes 2006a, 73).

In the final assessment, the Cambodian elites are "making cakes without flour," and this creates an unsustainable model of economic development. Democracy may not be a precondition for development, as the Northeast Asian developmental states exemplify, but good development policy is long-term oriented with a focus on the national economy rather than merely enriching the elites. Sustainable development cannot be achieved without well-organized and autonomous development policy (Studwell 2014). The final section speculates about the implications of our findings for a post-pandemic economy in a post-Hun Sen future.

Epilogue

The global economic downturn triggered by the pandemic hit Cambodia's economy hard. The Covid-19 outbreak overwhelmed Cambodia's public health system and profoundly affected people's livelihoods, work, businesses, and investments (Haffner *et al.* 2021). Throughout this crisis, the Cambodian government and global financial institutions alike indulged in often overoptimistic scenarios for Cambodia's economic recovery, relying on projections of increasing exports of rice, continuing demand for manufactured goods, and solid foreign exchange reserves (Dahles 2022b). Yet, Cambodia's Post-Covid-19 Economic Recovery Plan 2021–2023, launched in 2021, while identifying agriculture and manufacturing among other sectors as growth-driving sectors, failed to offer any structural changes to persisting land issues and foreign ownership of key industries.

While rice exports suffered setbacks due to supply chain disruptions as a direct result of Covid-19 and unprecedented increases in transport and international freight rates, reliance on this sector for economic growth remains high, due to good harvests, secure demand from Europe and China, and government support for farmers, including various funding and development schemes (Kunmakara 2022). Beyond the rice sector, the government is trying—by way of the Agriculture Services Programme for Innovation, Resilience, and Extension (ASPIRE), in 2022 renamed the Agriculture Services Programme for an Inclusive Rural Economy and Agricultural Trade (ASPIRE-AT)—to increase productivity and diversification in small-scale farming with financial, logistic, and technical support (ASPIRE 2015). However, more effort is needed to advance sustainable and resilient modes of farming. Emerging income diversification practices in rural farming communities, including high-value crop production and garden-style cultivation, make Cambodian farmers less vulnerable to market volatility than large-scale agricultural production and more attuned to the growing international demand for responsibly sourced quality food (Ham *et al.* 2023). Pushing this style of cultivation and keeping the population on the land requires land security and an end to the ongoing land grab.

Expectations are that manufacturing will take a larger share of GDP growth over the next few years as a result of the strong growth in exports of manufactured goods. However, experts also caution that Cambodia's competitive advantage in this sector will evaporate due to rising labor costs, the loss of trade preferences, and rising social and environmental compliance costs (Kunmakara 2022). Consensus is gathering that to sustain growth, Cambodia should diversify its manufacturing sector to reduce its dependence on garment exports and invest in education and training to raise the skill level of the Cambodian workforce (Freedman and Menon 2022; Kunmakara 2022). While

economists push for the strengthening of SEZs and industrial parks to encourage agglomeration effects (Freedman and Menon 2022), one should be aware of Cambodia's vulnerability to foreign investors and exploitation by the *oknha* economy. Instead, measures should be implemented to protect domestic industries through subsidies, higher tariffs on imports, and technology acquisition and to encourage start-ups in the new technology sector and advanced producer services to give a boost to the "missing middle" in business. Over the past decade, generational succession has come to affect the Cambodian economy. Particularly in the cities, the younger generation are gifted with better education, more knowledge of information and communications technology, and more global and intercultural connections than their parents, allowing them to establish businesses in upcoming sectors, such as the digital economy and sustainable tourism (Van Merriënboer *et al.* 2023). The Cambodian government has come to offer support and resources to SMEs, particularly to start-ups initiated by young people, such as in its Industrial Development Policy 2015–2025, which prioritizes the development and modernization of SMEs and aspires to link them to global value chains (Dahles and Verver 2023).

As the pandemic crisis evolved, Cambodia witnessed robust growth in both loans and deposits in 2021 (Kunmakara 2022). The National Bank of Cambodia introduced a package of regulatory measures anticipating severe financial impacts springing from the pandemic (Freedman and Menon 2022). Among such measures was a loan restructuring program, enabling banks and microfinance institutions to suspend loan interests and repayments. As applications for new loans kept increasing during the crisis, concerns rose about over-indebtedness, more so as many locally owned banks had substantial stakes in the ailing real estate sector. Financial advisers called for authorities to exercise close control on national and international capital flows and intervene as needed to maintain financial sector stability (Freedman and Menon 2022).

Upon another unsurprising "landslide win" of the CPP in the 2023 general elections, everything was in place for Hun Manet, Hun Sen's eldest son, to step up to the role of prime minister. In this role, he not only faces a revitalized opposition (Haffner 2022) but also has to deal with a faltering economy. At the same time, the transition of power may offer a unique opportunity to break with the fallacies of Hun Sen-style authoritarian capitalism and undertake the long-overdue structural overhaul of those key economic sectors that push socioeconomic development. While it is too early to expect any noticeable change, it is worthwhile to speculate on what the transition may imply for class relations and politics in the near future. On the one hand, the new Cambodian middle classes—with their historical predecessors eliminated under the Khmer Rouge—remain small in size and narrow in composition (Un 2019). Without a sizeable middle class, it is

unlikely that an effective push for political change will occur among Cambodia's swelling urban populace any time soon. After all, the political revolts of the 1980s and 1990s in Asian countries as divergent as the Philippines, South Korea, China, Thailand, and Indonesia have been widely understood as challenges to established elites, fueled by the frustrated ambitions of the middle classes to see their rising economic power reflected in their civil rights and political participation (Robinson and Goodman 1996). On the other hand, the CPP should not underestimate the rising discontent with the lack of real economic development as struggling Cambodians see foreign businesspeople, particularly recent arrivals from China, thrive (Dahles 2022a). Impoverishment of Cambodia's rural population undermines—even destroys—the rural base of the Hun family and the CPP and consequently threatens the very fundament on which their power is built. With widespread landlessness and systemic dispossession of the poor, disparities in wealth are once again weighing heavily on Cambodia, and dissatisfaction is brewing among the population, starting to pose a threat to the "elite pact" (see, for example, Deth and Bultmann 2016).

With authoritarian capitalism firmly in place and democratization out of reach for now, what is the second-best course for Cambodia to take? It remains questionable whether a patronage-based governance system would be able to successfully transition to a developmental state model. Some analysts would argue that a "political settlement" (Kelsall and Heng 2014) between technocrats and rent-seekers within the "elite pact" may balance support to genuine growth industries with the quest for profit for CPP patronage projects—an "elite-plus pact," so to speak, that may pass for "good enough governance" (Ear 2011, 71). Nevertheless, to end on a hopeful note, the young generation, of which the new prime minister is an exponent, may have the potential and drive to work toward a more diversified, inclusive, and sustainable economy and a brighter future for all Cambodians.

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Digital Political Trends and Behaviors among Generation Z in Thailand

Wisuttinee Taneerat* and Hasan Akrim Dongnadeng**

With online media having become influential socially, economically, and politically, there is a tendency for people—especially Generation Z—to engage in political behavior digitally, particularly on social networking sites. The current research is a mixed-method study on 1,000 respondents from a Generation Z sample group in Southern Thailand. The findings show that the sample group relies mostly upon the online media platform X (formerly Twitter) to consume political news, followed by Facebook and Instagram. Most of the respondents have expressed demands for governmental transformation. The Generation Z group display their political behavior by expressing opinions and criticisms to those close to them who are not parents or relatives (friends, lovers, and special persons), sharing their opinions on social networks, or deciding not to express any political views. In addition, the Generation Z group agree that using social networking sites to express political views is rightful, legal, and free for Thai people, as provided in Chapter 3 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2560 and part of the national democracy system.

Keywords: trends, political psychology, political behavior, digital political behaviors, Generation Z

Introduction

When an individual's beliefs and principles determine their political behavior, it can be considered political expression. Political behavior consists of various political activities that may effect political change. Patterns or trends of political behavior at the personal

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level may be seen in the form of political participation both nationally and locally, such as the behavior of political leaders, voting in elections, assisting in political parties' campaigns, running for election, engaging in demonstrations against the government, choosing a political party to support, and selecting a political ideology (Campbell 2013; Dimitrova *et al.* 2014; Jati 2020). In the Thai elections on May 14, 2023, it was found that many political parties used social media to communicate with their target audiences. In a nutshell, values shape political behavior, which is a form of political expression at the individual level (Purawich 2023).

Undoubtedly, globalization and the driving force of technology have had a significant impact on social values. The same is true for political behavior. Globalization and technology have transformed political behaviors such as posting messages to express opinions about government policies, accessing political opinions online, and criticizing the work of the government. These forms of behavior are regarded as democratic political participation. In addition, politicians and political parties use digital technology as an open communication channel for publicity purposes, both to push their general agenda and during special occasions such as elections and political campaigns (Ahmad *et al.* 2019). On the other hand, political expression may have darker consequences such as inequality, division, and exploitation. Its results may further extend to dangers such as cybercrime, cyberterrorism, and cyberwarfare, which involve not only the hacking of information systems but also the disruption of weapons and national defense systems, espionage, and the dissemination of fake news, such as seen in the UK referendum to leave the European Union and the 2016 US presidential election. When it comes to political content, the Internet is still mostly wide open (Gibson *et al.* 2005).

Due to the easy accessibility of various social media platforms and websites, there are several channels through which government policies can be criticized. And politicians themselves utilize social media to communicate with their target groups. Therefore, political behavior via social media is a topic of interest to many. It is easy today for people to express their political views digitally, especially those in Generation Z, who were born between 1995 and 2015. This generation is regarded as a group who grew up with abundant resources and have the ability to use technology and learn quickly. They also tend to have been raised in nuclear families. In addition, people in Generation Z tend to be addicted to the online world (Sen and Murali 2018, 1–5). Therefore, when it comes to social drive, this group of people emphasize equality and a way of thinking that encompasses all groups of people in all aspects. These individuals want everyone to feel equal regardless of age, ethnicity, or gender. They also wish to be at the center of innovation, feel constantly challenged, and develop themselves for new problem solving. They are not easily satisfied, which can lead to a lack of self-respect. They do not

confine themselves to a specific definition, which gives them freedom and a desire to learn and experience new adventures while gradually growing into themselves. Thus, they have different identities, but they do not see these differences as reason for conflict. Generation Z people are generally prepared to place themselves in new encounters, and they tend to understand people and situations that are different (Cho *et al.* 2020; Farrell and Tipnuch 2020).

A range of nonverbal cues, gestures, and actions have become part of Gen Z's means of expressing opinions (Suthida 2019). Popular social media case studies in Thailand involving Generation Z individuals between 15 and 18 years old have included them tying white bows, running, singing the song "Hamtaro," and raising the three-finger salute while singing the national anthem (Khemthong 2020; Phattarapan and Karisa 2023; Phrakhrusamusuwan 2023). When groups of Gen Z individuals from various institutions organize flash mob activities to demand democracy, at certain points participants sing "Hamtaro" with modified lyrics. Youth groups have adapted the lyrics of the song to parody the government. In the modified lyrics the favorite snack is no longer sunflower seeds, and Hamtaro is not just sleeping everywhere. At one point the lyrics state, "Come out and run, run Hamtaro, wake up from your den, run Hamtaro, the best snack is . . . the public tax" (in Thai: "*Aow . . . aok ma wing wing na wing na Hamtaro tun aok chak rang wing na wing na Hamtaro Khong aroi teesud kor ku pasi prachachon* เอ้า ออกมาวิ่ง วิ่งนะแฮมทาโร่ ตื่นออกจากรัง วิ่งนะวิ่งนะแฮมทาโร่ ของอร่อยที่สุดก็คือ . . . ภาษีประชาชน"). Such behavior does not necessarily indicate a lack of respect or an unwillingness to acknowledge the sanctity of the Thai national anthem, as perceived by the older generation. It has become increasingly clear that the three-finger salute originated from certain individuals within the group, and it reflects sentiments toward fundamental institutions that Thai people love and cherish (PhraNatthawut *et al.* 2022). Such behavior diverges from that of previous generations, who were taught that the national anthem was sacred and should be sung with respect, and that individuals were expected to stand upright with composure while it was being sung (Phattarapan and Karisa 2023). Even political rallies have changed, from predominantly offline events to online gatherings; in addition, communication is increasingly done through online platforms (Attasit *et al.* 2022).

Based on demographic data from 2023, Generation Z made up Thailand's largest population group, 26.5 percent; baby boomers accounted for 18.7 percent, Gen X 23.2 percent, and Gen Y 21.8 percent (Thailand, National Statistical Office 2023). Thus, Generation Z will be important in the country's economic and social development over the next twenty years since they will be of working age (Thailand, Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council 2020).

In Southern Thailand, where people take politics seriously, politics is shaped by a combination of broad public politics—akin to a coffee council, where people sit around and talk about politics in a lively way—and open criticism of the work of national and local governments (Chareon 2018, 20). The southern region continues to have long-standing unrest and smoldering conflicts despite persistent efforts by the government to resolve these problems. From the perspective of youths in the area, they also desire a resolution and thus place great importance on political awareness and expression (Adizin 2017; Attasit *et al.* 2022). Political expression today is not limited to older age groups; Generation Z are also interested in and critical of the government's work: fighting for justice (Khemthong 2020); dynastic democracy, which often leads to corruption; nepotism (Kritdikorn 2023, 375); the need for politicians who genuinely work for the people; and so on. Therefore, if Generation Z have political ideologies or behaviors that are inappropriate or unproductive, it could potentially impact the future direction of Thailand. In the May 2023 election the Future Forward Party emerged victorious, gaining widespread support despite being a relatively new political party. Many scholars have attributed this success to the party's policies and the favorable image of its candidates, which resonated well with the younger generation (Phattarapan and Karisa 2023; Purawich 2023). However, in the end the Future Forward Party could not successfully lead the formation of a government because it did not pass the vote in the joint session of Parliament in two rounds. This was due mainly to its attempt to revoke Article 112 of the criminal code, which deals with offenses against the Thai monarchy—an extremely sensitive issue in Thai society (Phrakhrusamusuwan 2023).

Generation Z use social media—Facebook, Instagram, X/Twitter, Clubhouse, and many more platforms—as an important tool for expressing opinions. They account for 27.8 percent of the population in Thailand's southern region (Thailand, National Statistical Office 2023). Thus, the behavioral model and approach for promoting constructive digital political behaviors among Generation Z in the South becomes an intriguing political arena to investigate. There have been studies on various aspects of Generation Z behavior (Wanwilai 2019; Parin and Jirawate 2020), such as their good organizational membership behavior (Nuchchamon *et al.* 2019), work behavior (Chenin 2020), and media exposure behavior (Pongsavake 2019). However, there is still a lack of research on the digital political behavior of Generation Z, which is believed to be a crucial issue in the current environment because various events arising from such behavior reflect the mental vulnerability of children and youths in this group. Therefore, this research aims to (1) study trends of digital political behaviors among Generation Z, and (2) compare Generation Z's digital political behaviors in various categories.

Literature Review

Theoretical Basis of Political Psychology

Political psychology is a cross-disciplinary field that focuses on the study of politics, politicians, and political behavior through a psychological lens. It delves into psychological processes within sociopolitical contexts. The association between politics and psychology is viewed as reciprocal: psychology serves as a tool for comprehending politics, while politics serves as a tool for understanding psychology (Carmines and Huckfeldt 2003). As an interdisciplinary domain, political psychology draws insights from various fields, including anthropology, economics, history, international relations, journalism, media, philosophy, political science, psychology, and sociology (Mols and 't Hart 2018).

Political psychology aims to grasp the intricate connections between individuals and their surroundings with respect to beliefs, motivations, perceptions, cognition, information processing, learning strategies, socialization, and attitude formation. It examines how psychological factors influence political behavior, attitudes, and decision-making processes at both the individual and collective levels. This interdisciplinary field seeks to understand the psychological processes that shape political opinions, ideologies, leadership, voting behavior, and the dynamics of political groups (Cottam *et al.* 2010; Huddy *et al.* 2023). Theories of political psychology are used by political scientists to study and understand political behavior, to understand beliefs, attitudes, cognition, perception, motivation, emotions, and socialization and why people behave the way they do in political contexts: how they engage in political behavior, make voting decisions, or exhibit leadership behaviors. Political behavior encompasses the behavior of leaders as well as other individuals (Dimitrova *et al.* 2014).

Theoretical Basis of Political Behavior

Political behavior encompasses a combination of democratic attitudes and orientations that recognize individuals as crucial contributors to the advancement of democracy (Coleman and Norris 2005; Campbell 2013; Lidén 2015). It includes formal political participation as well as extra-parliamentary activism. Formal political participation includes voting, having the right to contest for any office or position at the state or national level, and membership in political parties, pressure groups, civil societies, labor unions, market unions, and humanitarian advocacy groups. Extra-parliamentary activism includes protests and unconventional forms of political engagement such as strikes, demonstrations, petitions, and rallies in order to attract attention to the electorate's most pressing demands and needs regarding government policies for the benefit of the

general public (Ruqayya *et al.* 2022).

Through synthesizing documents and related research, this study concludes that political behavior has three components: political observation, political participation, and political partnerships (see Table 1 and Fig. 1).

Sociopolitical change is inevitable, and sociopolitical phenomena are dynamic and open to interpretation. Individual behaviors are connected with larger societal processes: the dynamics of political behavior, along with the conditions influencing them, are manifestations of broader social changes (Taufik Alamin *et al.* 2020). Therefore, studies on political behavior often incorporate social and cultural contexts.

Theoretical Background of Digital Politics

Åke Grönlund (2003) and Stephen Coleman and Donald Norris (2005) stated that "digital politics" is the use of information technology to advance democratic processes and structures. The above definition is consistent with Gustav Lidén's (2015) explanation that digital politics is the use of information technology in political processes involving information, debate, and decision. In other words, digital politics is the use of information technology to exchange information and accommodate political debates and decisions in virtual form on various platforms.

There are two important components of digital politics: (1) the use of information and communication technology, and (2) citizen participation. Relevant entities such as the government, representatives, media, political parties, interest groups, civil society organizations, international organizations, citizens, and voters use information and communication technology to enhance civic engagement (Veera 2016). Roman Gerodimos (2005) identified four components of citizens' participation in digital politics: (1) accessibility, in which citizens have access to information and communication technology equally and universally; (2) political participation with a sense of attachment, in which citizens are motivated, confident, and well versed in politics, leading to a historical connection and political participation with a sense of commitment and genuine willingness; (3) consultation, in which citizens with differing viewpoints and ideas can meet and discuss issues with the aim of finding a common solution; and (4) linkage between the government and citizens, with the government opening communication channels to listen to criticism, opinions, and suggestions from the public in the policy process.

Research on digital politics is something that scholars prioritize in order to explain patterns of transformative digital phenomena in politics. For example, Sahana Udupa *et al.* (2020) conducted a study on digital politics in "millennial India." They proposed that members of millennial India (those between late Gen Y and early Gen Z) shed light on digitalization as a distinct sociopolitical moment, bringing forth new conditions of

Table 1   Key Components of Political Behavior

Component	Details	Sources
(1) Political Observation	Following political news, political policies, government performance, and behavior of politicians; discussing politics with surrounding people; and showing interest in political activities	Campbell (2013); Bronstein and Aharony (2015); Mols and 't Hart (2018); Saksin *et al.* (2019); Ruqayya *et al.* (2022)
(2) Political Participation	Exercising the right to vote, persuading others to choose candidates that one supports, persuading others to vote, attending speeches by politicians, and disseminating political news	Coleman and Norris (2005); Hatemi *et al.* (2009); Somit and Peterson (2011); Saksin *et al.* (2019); Ruqayya *et al.* (2022)
(3) Political Partnerships	Expressing opinions about political policies, making political demands, becoming a member of a political party or organization, running an election campaign, attending meetings of political parties, offering financial support for a political party, fundraising for a political cause, cooperating with government officials in policy implementation, participating in political protests, nominating candidates for political elections, and holding political positions	Hatemi *et al.* (2009); Campbell (2013); Bronstein and Aharony (2015); Lidén (2015); Mols and 't Hart (2018); Taufik Alamin *et al.* (2020); Kanokrat (2022)

Source: Wisuttinee and Hasan Akrim
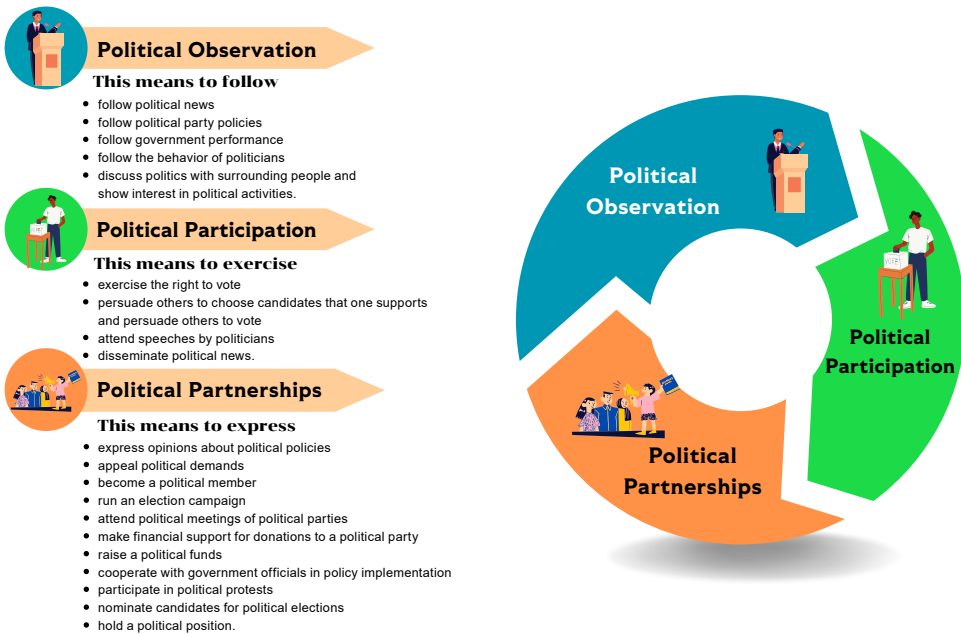
Fig. 1   Components of Digital Political Behavior of Generation Z

Source: Wisuttinee and Hasan Akrim

communication, and explored the significance of millennials who turn to digital media to express political concerns. Digitalization has contributed to the democratization of public participation, facilitated by the self-driven engagement of online users. From research conducted in 38 African countries, it was found that Internet usage and democracy were highly interrelated (Evans 2019). The findings suggest that at the macro level, Africa is moving toward a new stage where the Internet will lead to increased levels of democracy and digital politics. In the case of Thailand, it has been observed that despite government attempts to control inappropriate websites and the flow of information, there is increased political activism among youths using online media (Kanokrat 2022).

Methodology

Research Context
The multi-stage random sampling method was used to determine the research area. Step 1 was to conduct stratified random sampling in the four geographic regions of Thailand identified by the Ministry of Interior: the Northern, Central, Northeastern (Isan), and Southern regions. Based on the results, the South was identified as having relatively high political participation by the Gen Z population. Step 2 was to apply cluster random sampling according to provinces in the Southern region and divide the provinces into three groups: (1) Andaman coastal southern provinces, (2) Gulf of Thailand southern provinces, and (3) southern border provinces. The research context was to determine the area for data collection by selecting a province that met the following requirements: (1) a large number of people in Generation Z as a percentage of the total population, and (2) a large number of people in Generation Z who were interested in politics and wanted to get involved. Thus, the following provinces were identified as target areas for the study: (1) Trang Province (southern Andaman coast), (2) Nakhon Si Thammarat Province (southern coast of the Gulf of Thailand), and (3) Pattani Province (southern border). Step 3 was to apply simple random sampling.

Respondents
To analyze the population, data from the National Statistical Office (2023) pertaining to Generation Z in the three target provinces—Trang, Nakhon Si Thammarat, and Pattani—was used. These provinces had a total of 871,191 people, and stratified random sampling was used to obtain a sample group of 1,000 people representative of each targeted province (see Table 2). The simple random sampling method was used to

Table 2 Population and Sample Sizes

Province	Population (People)	Sample Size (People)
Trang	181,054	210
Nakhon Si Thammarat	424,805	490
Pattani	265,332	300
Total	871,191	1,000

Source: Thailand, National Statistical Office (2023)

choose samples based on the following criteria: (1) individuals domiciled in the target area, (2) individuals aged between 18 and 28 years, and (3) individuals with the ability to communicate in Thai. If an individual failed to meet any of the above criteria, they were not considered for the questionnaire and a new individual was randomly selected.

After obtaining quantitative data on the digital political trends and behaviors of Generation Z, qualitative research was conducted via in-depth interviews with this group of people who engaged in driving political activities on digital platforms. A group of 30 informants was selected through purposive sampling, with the following selection criteria: (1) individuals domiciled in the target area, (2) individuals aged between 18 and 28 years, (3) individuals who played a role in driving political activities on digital platforms, such as expressing opinions about political policies, submitting a political demand, being a member of a political party, participating in election campaigns for candidates, and many more.

Research Instrument

Concepts, theories, and relevant research results were considered to form and develop a conceptual framework and research instrument. The tools used in the study were a questionnaire and interview.

  Data Collection

Initially quantitative research was carried out, using the survey research method through a questionnaire, as a large sample was required in order to generate a comprehensive summary of information, including the opinions of people in the sample. Subsequently, qualitative research was conducted by delving into important findings from the quantitative research and further analyzing information from members of the target group who were specifically selected as Generation Z people involved in driving political activities on digital platforms, in order to obtain in-depth information on the reasoning behind trends of digital political behavior.

For data collection, the researchers ensured that all ethical guidelines and principles

for human research subjects were strictly followed. Before initiating data collection, the researchers went through the Human Research Ethics Review process in order to seek approval from the Center for Human Research Ethics Committee, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Prince of Songkla University. Once approval was granted, the questionnaire and interview form could be distributed to collect data (Certification Code: PSU IRB 2021-LL-Cm028).

With regard to the rights and confidentiality of informants, a research invitation letter was distributed with details about data collection and an informed consent form if the informants agreed to participate. This was to ensure that the privacy and confidentiality of informants was protected. Upon the completion of data analysis, the raw data provided by informants was destroyed immediately; this was carefully handled, as it is a fundamental right of informants to be protected.

Data Analysis

For quantitative data analysis, data that had already been tested for completeness was entered into a statistical package program. The statistics used in data analysis consisted of descriptive as well as inferential statistics. The differences were compared using a multiple comparisons test tool to investigate the levels of opinions and digital political behavior of the Generation Z group classified by general characteristics, together with an application of the least significant difference method to determine differences in pairs of means at significance levels of 0.05 and 0.01.

For qualitative data analysis, after completing interviews with all 30 informants, the researchers transcribed the tapes word for word and cross-checked for accuracy by listening to the audio recordings again, ensuring clarity and addressing any unclear or missing information. The data providers were coded and divided into two groups: students (S) and employees (E). The three research provinces were coded as Trang (T), Nakhon Si Thammarat (N), and Pattani (P). For example, "ST" means "student from Trang." Content analysis was used for data analysis.

Results

General Characteristics of Respondents in Quantitative Study

The general characteristics of the Generation Z individuals in the sample of 1,000 people were that more than half were female (58.5 percent), followed by male (38.1 percent) and LGBTQ+ (3.4 percent). The general characteristics of the respondents can be found in Table 3.

Table 3   General Characteristics of Generation Z Group (N = 1,000)

	n	% of Sample
Gender		
Male	381	38.1
Female	585	58.5
LGBTQ+	34	3.4
Age (Years)		
18–20	407	40.7
21–23	451	45.1
24–26	142	14.2
Religion		
Buddhists	661	66.1
Muslims	320	32.0
Christians	13	1.3
Nonreligious individuals	6	0.6
Education Level		
High school (studying)	144	14.4
Bachelor's degree (studying)	714	71.4
Bachelor's degree (graduated)	122	12.2
Master's degree (studying)	20	2.0
Occupation		
Student	798	79.8
Employee	202	20.2
Monthly Income (Baht)		
Below 3,000	449	44.9
3,001–6,000	221	22.1
6,001–9,000	150	15.0
More than 9,001	180	18.0
Domicile		
Nakhon Si Thammarat	490	49.0
Pattani	300	30.0
Trang	210	21.0

Source: Wisuttinee and Hasan Akrim

Background Information on Respondents in Qualitative Study
The key informants consisted of students and employees who engaged in driving political activities on digital platforms. Most of them were women aged between 19 and 26 years. The respondents had education levels ranging from currently studying in high school (14.4 percent) and pursuing a bachelor's degree (71.4 percent) to graduating with a bachelor's degree (12.2 percent) and currently pursuing a master's degree (2 percent).

Behavior of Generation Z in Political Media Usage
Most of the respondents used X/Twitter (54.2 percent) to keep up with political news online. Facebook (22.5 percent) and Instagram (11.5 percent) came in second and third, respectively. The behavior of the study sample can be found in Table 4.

Level of Digital Political Behavior of Generation Z
The average and standard deviation of the digital political behavior of Generation Z are at moderate levels (A = 3.20, SD = 0.76), where political behavior in the form of political observation (A = 3.49, SD = 0.75) has the highest average, followed by political participation (A = 3.41, SD = 0.81) and political partnership (A = 2.69, SD = 1.09), respectively. Table 5 summarizes the descriptive statistics.

Based on in-depth interviews, an interesting phenomenon was observed in the online media usage behavior of Generation Z: Generation Z individuals often create new accounts or choose to join closed groups to express their political opinions, as the expression of such opinions in Thai society is still restricted, even with family and friends. Some student interviewees gave the following explanations:

> *"I chose to create another Facebook account specifically for expressing political opinions. I did this to avoid having to answer questions and to avoid problems with my parents and close friends. I think politics is still a relatively sensitive issue in Thai society."* (SN1)

> *"Adults usually think that I am arguing and showing aggressive behavior, even though in reality I just want to express my own opinion only."* (SP5)

> *"I know that my parents, grandparents, and I have different political preferences. Therefore, we choose not to discuss this matter with each other."* (ST2)

The above statements are consistent with the comments of Generation Z employees who were interviewed:

> *"When I want to express my political opinions, I choose to use Twitter over Facebook or IG because some of my parents and my boss may not use it. The main reason is that I choose to only let my friends*

Table 4   Behavior of Generation Z with Regard to Political Media Usage (N = 1,000)

	n	% of Sample
Most Popular Online Social Media Platform		
X/Twitter	542	54.2
Facebook	225	22.5
Instagram	115	11.5
Other (Line, Clubhouse, etc.)	118	11.8
Fastest Social Media Platform for Following Political News		
X/Twitter	441	44.1
Facebook	381	38.1
Instagram	178	17.8
Most Effective Platform for Reaching Political Target Groups		
X/Twitter	468	46.8
Facebook	325	32.5
Instagram	207	20.7
Time Spent per Day on Social Media to Follow Political News		
1 minute–1 hour	395	39.5
More than 1 hour–4 hours	212	21.2
More than 4 hours	393	39.3
Political Behavior Social Media Usage		
Reading political news		
- Blogs	391	39.1
- X/Twitter	375	37.5
- Other (Facebook, Line, Instagram)	234	23.4
Following politicians or political parties on social media (X/Twitter, Facebook and YouTube)		
- Do not hit the "follow" button on any politicians or special political activists	738	73.8
- Hit the "follow" button on any politicians or special political activists (new-generation Thai politicians or political activists/foreign politicians or political activists)	262	26.2
Expressing opinions or critiquing politics on topics of interest		
- With close ones (friend, lover, and special person)	350	35.0
- Through social media	335	33.5
- Not expressing any opinion	315	31.5
Desire for Government Transformation Led by a New Generation		
- Accept	889	88.9
- Not accept	111	11.1
Using Social Media to Express Political Views Is a Rightful, Legitimate, and Constitutional Freedom		
- Accept	735	73.5
- Not accept	265	26.5

Source: Wisuttinee and Hasan Akrim

Table 5   Digital Political Behaviors among Generation Z Group (N = 1,000)

Form of Political Behavior	Average	Stand. Dev.	Intervals
Political Observation	3.49	0.75	High
1. Staying alert when dealing with politics and perceiving that politics is an important matter in life	3.76	0.84	High
2. Using the influence of online media to respond to and express political views	3.61	0.96	High
3. Keeping up with local and national political news through online social networks	3.59	0.88	High
Political Participation	3.41	0.81	High
1. Exercising voting right every time in the past	4.11	1.01	High
2. Prioritizing elections and viewing them as a duty of every citizen to participate in	4.01	0.99	High
3. Using the influence of online media to engage in politics	3.58	1.07	High
Political Partnership	2.69	1.09	Medium
1. Using social networks as a tool for expressing opinions, judging, and criticizing politics	2.87	1.23	Medium
2. Following political news through online social networks, e.g., by following live broadcasts on Facebook and YouTube, enabling one to decide whether to participate in a protest for political demands, such as a rally	2.84	1.27	Medium
3. Once an instance of unfairness in politics is recognized, expressing one's opinion by posting pictures or messages online	2.83	1.24	Medium
Total	3.20	0.76	Medium

Source: Wisuttinee and Hasan Akrim

or close ones see the parts of me that I want them to see. Because I don't know how people will feel when we express our political opinions." (ET2)

"In the workplace, expressing political opinions is a sensitive issue that requires special caution." (EN3)

"In the working world, everyone must show maturity. Therefore, giving importance to political behavior is crucial." (EP4)

Thus, to express their opinions freely with like-minded people who share the same perspective, Generation Z often choose to comment only on things that others want to hear about and discuss, even if it goes against their own thoughts and beliefs.

"I want there to be a reform in the country. I'm tired of politicians who deceive the nation, tired of the political system, and tired of the current state of Thai society. However, I can't discuss these matters with my parents or colleagues close to me. That's why I choose to have a presence in the online world instead because I feel a sense of freedom, and this is my safe zone." (EP5)

"I have to pretend to support a politician whom my parents admire, even though in reality my feelings are opposite. Because I hardly see that politician doing anything beneficial for our province." (ET4)

"The expression of differing opinions is something that cannot be openly revealed in Thai society." (EN1)

"I've heard that some of my long-time friends are in disagreement due to differing political views. I don't want to be caught up in that kind of situation, so I choose to express my opinions in a closed group where people share similar interests instead." (SN3)

"I'm also one of those who choose to speak about things that others want to hear, even though I may not agree with the truth." (ST3)

"Thailand should reach a point where everyone is free to express their true political opinions without reservation." (SP4)

Results of Objective 2: Comparison of Digital Political Behaviors Classified by General Characteristics of Generation Z

This study analyzes the forms of Generation Z's digital political behaviors, comparing these forms across various demographic factors: gender, age, religion, education level, occupation, income, and place of residence. Differences in the digital political behaviors of Generation Z are statistically significant at the 0.05 and 0.1 levels. With regard to political observation, the views of Generation Z with clearly different digital political behaviors are ranked the highest, followed by political participation and political partnership, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6 Comparisons of Generation Z's Digital Political Behavior, Classified by Demographic Factors

Form of Political Behavior	Demographic Factors						
	Gender	Age	Religion	Education	Occupation	Income	Domicile
1. Political Observation	✓ (F = 3.23*)	✓ (F = 19.58**)	✓ (F = 7.23**)	✓ (F = 7.58**)	✓ (F = 2.52*)	✓ (F = 2.25*)	✓ (F = 18.40**)
2. Political Participation	–	✓ (F = 14.09**)	✓ (F = 4.97**)	✓ (F = 5.96**)	✓ (F = 2.68*)	✓ (F = 2.30*)	✓ (F = 18.38**)
3. Political Partnership	✓ (F = 11.82**)	✓ (F = 9.32**)	–	–	–	✓ (F = 2.28*)	–
Total	✓ (F = 4.41*)	✓ (F = 17.46**)	–	✓ (F = 2.41*)	✓ (F = 2.37*)	✓ (F = 2.56*)	✓ (F = 10.37**)

Source: Wisuttinee and Hasan Akrim

Note: ✓ means the difference is statistically significant at the 0.05 or 0.01 level.
      – means the difference is not statistically significant at any level.

Discussion

Discussion of Research Objective 1:
The world is going through major political, economic, and social changes, with technology playing a big role. Political behavior has changed with the proliferation of digital technology, evolving into "digital political behavior." Particularly Generation Z, who have grown up with a variety of technologies, are familiar with all forms of digitalization (Dolot 2018; McCann Worldgroup 2022). They use technology with such agility that it is almost part of the body (Kununya 2022). No matter what information this group needs, it is usually available online (Farrell and Tipnuch 2020; Klinger 2023).

Political observation means becoming politically aware and realizing that politics is an important part of life. This is something the new generations care about. With the Thai government regulating the flow of information, Generation Z Thai have become more politically conscious, regarding politics as a crucial aspect of life. This has had an impact on political movements in various forms (Kanokrat 2022). Interestingly, the results of this study show that political opinions can still not be freely expressed, even though Thailand has a democratic government. Generation Z have found a solution by expressing political views through various forms of online media (Gidengil *et al.* 2016). They are comfortable using technology and are more likely to be exposed to a variety of political views online. They are also less likely to fear reprisals from their parents, their friends, or the government, while some may choose to express themselves by being silent and not expressing any opinion at all (Miller 2016; Sen and Murali 2018; Attasit *et al.* 2022).

Political participation: Thailand had its first constitution (Provisional Governing Constitution Act of Siam, B.E. 2475) in 1932. It has been governed as a democratic system with the king as the head of state for almost a century. But within the Generation Z group there is a perception that the country is not a democracy: they see that the government has not granted full freedom to the people, especially during the administration of General Prayuth Chan-o-cha, spanning more than eight years. Therefore, Generation Z place great importance on elections, as can be seen from the elections on May 14, 2023. Voter turnout was as high as 75.71 percent (Thailand, Office of the Election Commission of Thailand 2023), which is believed to be the highest proportion of eligible voters ever recorded. This indicates the interest and enthusiasm of the public in exercising their rights, not just as a civic duty specified in the constitution but as an expression of the desire for change through the electoral process. It also reflects

the power of social media, which played a role in shaping the perception and political participation of the public both before and after the elections, including during the political party campaigning period. Social media is considered a crucial tool that helps drive election trends and at the same time has transformed the political landscape from traditional paths. It has enabled the emergence of "natural canvassers" and conversations about political change through Twitter hashtags, as well as information dissemination through various other platforms (Purawich 2023).

Political partnerships: The Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, B.E. 2560 (the twentieth and current constitution) stipulates in Chapter 3, Section 34, the rights and freedoms of Thai people to express their opinions and rightfully criticize the government's work; thus, such behavior is legal within the framework of the constitution. Such rights are also consistent with the provisions of Section 9 of the Official Information Act, B.E. 2540, which stipulates that government agencies have a duty to provide official information for the public to access and assess, such as policies, plans, and projects; annual expenditure budgets; duty manuals or instructions for government officials that affect the rights and duties of the people; and concession contracts. Therefore, Generation Z in Thailand perceive Section 9 of the Official Information Act, B.E. 2540 as sanctioning a form of political behavior that includes expressing opinions, making judgments, and criticizing politics through online media (Turner 2018). However, the reality is the opposite, as the government has historically restricted various forms of political behavior. As a result, Generation Z express themselves symbolically in various ways such as tying white bows, running, singing "Hamtaro," and raising the three-finger salute—all of which have become viral trends across online platforms (PhraNatthawut *et al.* 2022; Phattarapan and Karisa 2023).

Despite a growing trend toward openness in political behavior, particularly among Generation Z youths, such behavior might still be seen as bold or disrespectful because there are cultural and societal norms that discourage or frown upon certain forms of political expression, especially from the younger generations (Nawapon 2022; PhraNatthawut *et al.* 2022; Phrakhrusamusuwan 2023). Therefore, it is essential for the government and policymaking agencies to adjust perceptions toward the older generations and foster an understanding of the differences between generations. Recognizing such differences does not equate to passing judgment. Since older individuals often have an influence over Generation Z, there may be a need to establish constructive avenues for expression, providing space for Generation Z to express themselves freely within appropriate boundaries (Attasit *et al.* 2022; Kanokrat 2022).

Discussion of Research Objective 2:

Gender: Gender equality is a popular topic of discussion around the world. It is one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a set of global development goals endorsed by the 193 member states of the United Nations (United Nations 2023). Thailand's Gender Equality Act, B.E. 2015 (Thailand, Secretariat of the Cabinet 2015) was enacted as an alternative to protect and preserve the rights of people who are treated with unfairness and discrimination while promoting equality between men and women as well as people of diverse genders. This was Thailand's first legal instrument for protecting gender diversity (Section 3 of the constitution) and came into force on September 8, 2015.

Generation Z is a truly diverse group, both in terms of gender and in terms of acceptance of gender differences (Howe *et al.* 2008; Hatemi *et al.* 2009; Gil de Zúñiga and Chen 2019). Although Thailand has a law on gender equality, there are still many concerns that remain to be addressed, such as marriage equality (Jirayut and Nakorn 2020) and change of title in official documents to match gender change (transgender). Marriage equality and marital rights is regarded as a crucial issue in Thai society, particularly among Generation Z. This is evident from past Thai elections, where it was used as one of the key policies to garner support by several political parties, including the Pheu Thai Party (Sudarat 2023), which was a leading force in the formation of the current government. In fact, many countries have already enacted marriage equality laws—the Netherlands, Belgium, Brazil, the United States, the Republic of China, and many more.

Age: There is empirical evidence that Thailand's Generation Z—youths, adults, and working-age people—place importance on political behavior through the use of online media. This is considered a positive phenomenon as it indicates they are paying attention to the unfolding of their own political situation and expressing themselves in a way that differs from the past, when political behavior took offline forms such as protesting in front of democracy monuments (Somkiat 2022; Kasit 2023). Thus, in the past political behaviors were typically limited to certain groups of people. However, digital technology has broken down barriers, making political expression easier and convenient for more people (Khemthong 2020; Attasit *et al.* 2022). On the other hand, digital technology has also created a more vulnerable group: while Generation Z are adept at using digital technology across various platforms, they lack the critical thinking skills to effectively filter information. When there is a discrepancy between the reality and the group's understanding of political issues, it may lead to inappropriate behavior that can spread and have a wide impact. This is because Generation Z pay attention to equality, do not

confine themselves to a specific identity, and are independent and keen to learn and take on new challenges. Therefore, if there is any issue Generation Z disagree with or view as incorrect, they are ready to protest in order to make their point (Sen and Murali 2018). Sensitive social issues, such as those related to institutions, politics, beliefs, and traditions, carry a higher risk of creating problems. When such sensitive issues are misunderstood or misrepresented, it can lead to heightened tensions and potentially result in conflicts within the community or society at large (Kritdikorn 2023).

Religion: The teachings of all religions are aimed at cultivating good individuals. As for the digital expression of political views, this is a personal affair as it depends on one's interests, lifestyle, faculty, or the discipline that one is exposed to, as well as social conditions and trends. There is a need to pay special attention to the unique circumstances of the southern border provinces (Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat) when discussing the digital expression of political behavior. These provinces have a culturally diverse society made up of Muslims, Buddhists, and others, which may influence how political behavior is expressed and perceived. The region has received special attention from the government because of its unrest, referred to as the "Southern Conflict," for several years. The conflict is a sensitive and complex problem with regard to its social, psychological, economic, political, and governance aspects, especially given the mutual misunderstanding and suspicion between the people and government officials. This explains the greater interest in politics among Generation Z in the southern border provinces compared to other areas (Jati 2020; Nipapan 2020; Nawapon 2022).

Education level is believed to have a strong influence on digital political behavior (Campbell 2013). Political participation is a common concern among Generation Z, who are currently students at university and high school, in terms of expressing their opinions through various online media platforms. X/Twitter is a popular social media platform among young people around the world, as in Thailand. Through the use of hashtags (#) on X/Twitter, Generation Z often engage with social and political movements such as "#เยาวชนปลดแอก" (*#Yeawachon plodxaek*, Free Youth), one of the student movements that played a significant role in the 2020 protests. Free Youth is believed to have the largest following among all the movements (Wichuda and Theetat 2021), with over 1.9 million followers on its Facebook page as of November 2023 and nearly 400,000 followers on Twitter. Such groups mostly use social media for political awareness and information. They also believe that political efficacy plays a significant role in influencing political activities (Ahmad *et al.* 2019), as has been explained by Kanokrat (2022) in the context of Thailand. However, the flip side of the coin is that certain people may attempt to

manipulate Generation Z by providing false information and use such groups as tools to influence social movements and political behaviors. Social media is a double-edged sword: in addition to being useful it can cause harm.

Occupation: Members of Generation Z in each occupation show different digital political behaviors depending on their knowledge, attitude, values, experience, and social refinement. For example, civil servants and government employees may engage in more formal and policy-focused online discussions, while private company employees might participate in debates related to business and economic policies. High school and university students, on the other hand, are often more vocal about social justice issues and educational reforms. In this study, occupation is found to be related to income: Generation Z individuals of working age (civil servants, government employees, state enterprise employees, and private company employees) are observed to have higher incomes than those of school age (high school students, university students, and new graduates/unemployed). Higher income can provide access to better technology and more time for online engagement, which influences digital political behavior. In addition, parenting styles in Thai society tend to be more authoritative and permissive than authoritarian as in the past (Haerpfer *et al.* 2022). This shift in parenting style has led to positive social outcomes since parents are still somewhat in control of their school-age children. Most of these children are still being raised and financially supported by their parents, which forces them to have a narrower worldview and viewpoint than people in the working-age group of Generation Z (Gidengil *et al.* 2016; Rungrat 2020). Although digital political behavior varies from person to person, those with a broad worldview who continuously follow up on information and are exposed to news are more adept at understanding and interpreting political messages, rhetoric, and discourse, including the use of language in communication.

Domicile: The Generation Z group selected to participate in this research reside in the southern part of Thailand, a region with strong political participation. All Thai governments pay attention to the southern border provinces (Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat) since they are far from the capital and adjacent to neighboring countries such as Malaysia, which have similar cultures—social, religious, or traditional. The area is unique in that it is a "multicultural society" (Adizin 2017; Thailand, Office of Strategy Management, South Border 2023). The southern border provinces are also regarded as a conflict area, with the government having established the Southern Border Provinces Administration Center (SBPAC) to play an important role in formulating policies for it. As defined in Section 9 of the Southern Border Provinces Administration Act, B.E. 2553, the SBPAC

has the following roles and missions: (1) implementing strategies for the development of the southern border provinces; (2) protecting rights and freedoms, providing justice, providing remedial assistance to those who have been impacted by the actions of government officials, promoting the participation of people from all sectors in tackling problems in the southern border provinces; and (3) serving as a bridge between the development strategy of the southern border provinces and the strategy of the Internal Security Operations Command.

Conclusion

Online media, with its benefits and disadvantages, plays a role in determining values and behaviors, especially the political behavior of Generation Z—children, youths, adults, and people of working age. Therefore, it is important to study the digital political behavior of Generation Z (see Fig. 1). This generation is vital in determining Thailand's future: Generation Z individuals will be the ones driving the country forward in the next twenty years. Thus, it is necessary for the government to formulate policies promoting constructive digital political behavior among this generation, to act as guidelines for social harmony. It is a crucial duty of government agencies to guide and direct people's values, patterns, and behaviors. This is part of the development and empowerment of human resources as stipulated in the "20-year national development strategy [2018–37]" (Thailand, Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council 2020).

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A Century of Media Representations of Muslim and Chinese Minorities in the Philippines (1870s–1970s)

Frances Antoinette Cruz* and Rocío Ortuño Casanova**

The act of nation building has often stood at the center of postcolonial efforts to consolidate the governance of multiethnic and multireligious groups brought together under colonial regimes. In the Philippines, unresolved structural and cultural differences during colonialism can be seen in the vacillating treatment of ethnic or religious minorities such as Chinese and Muslims in the construction of the nation. This paper investigates the discursive exclusion of these identities in Philippine textual production, arguing that early postcolonial political assertions of plurality failed to align with continuing forms of discursive othering that aligned with colonial strategies and objectives. Subsequently, exclusivist narratives in the media were unable to reflect the inclusivist rhetoric in politics and academia on national unity. This is demonstrated through an empirical mixed-methods textual analysis involving word embeddings and collocations of identity discourses in digitized archives of multilingual periodicals dating from 1872 (the latter part of the Spanish colonial period, from the Cavite Mutiny to the Treaty of Paris) to 1972 (the end of democratic rule through the implementation of Ferdinand Marcos' martial law in the Philippines after independence). These representations foreshadow the impact of antecedent narratives on contemporary efforts at imagining the nation.

Keywords: national identities, Philippines, Moros, Chinese, colonialism, print media, word embeddings, postcolonial

I The Exclusivist Idea of Nationhood in the Philippines

In 1975 the Moro National Liberation Front leader, Nur Misuari, voiced his concerns with the following words:

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> Even if we turn back the pages of history, it is impossible to find any single moment in our existence as a people where we were ever a part, let alone a possession, of the Filipino government. Ever since, our people have always zealously maintained their distinct character and identity as a nation. (Misuari 1975, cited in Stern 2012, 26)

Conceptual linkages can be drawn to an opinion column titled "Why Filipinos Distrust China" (Collas-Monsod 2018), in which the political loyalties of Chinese Filipinos were questioned in light of the rise of China as a regional and global economic power. Both collectives, Muslim Filipinos and Chinese Filipinos, with particular differences that will be elaborated upon in the following sections, were variously excluded from the construction of the nation despite the initial intention of cultural inclusivity. Isabelo de los Reyes (1899, 1) proposed such cultural inclusivity by saying that all the different cultures in the country, including Moors, Chinese-Malay, and *negritos*[1] (see Mojares 2006, 470), were effectively brothers and sisters.

De los Reyes's perspective was not, however, the most widespread among the Ilustrados, the Philippine educated class during the late nineteenth century. De los Reyes was born in Ilocos but defended the concept of national identity from the time of his first articles being published at the end of the nineteenth century on the defense of Luzon against the pirate Limahong (Mojares 2006, 290) to the time when he published a history of his region while building an "archive" about it (Mojares 2006, 306) or edited the first newspaper in the Ilocano language.

Oscar Evangelista (2002, 12) blamed the absence of a sense of nationhood in the Philippines precisely on regionalisms, and he distinguished between two sensibilities around the end of the nineteenth century and the configuration of the Philippine national idea: on the one hand, he identified the independence aspirations of the propagandists or Ilustrados, which were more in line with European romantic nationalist aspirations; and on the other, he drew on the work of Reynaldo Ileto[2] to distinguish the nationalist perception of the native masses, who instead aspired to a return to freedom and life before the arrival of the Spaniards, a condition characterizing their notion of the Inang Bayan (motherland) (Evangelista 2002, 10). This version of popular nationalism, however, leaves out Chinese and Muslims, who were not part of the native pre-Hispanic utopia in which there were no invaders or foreign presences.

This conception of nationhood, which excludes ethnic but also social groups, aligns

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1) He disregarded the Aetas in the multiraciality of the Philippines by saying that they were too few. Thus, he could defend his point that, being homogeneous, Filipinos were ready for self-government despite the arguments of the US government to the contrary.

2) He referred to Ileto's book *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840–1910* (1979).

with Benedict Anderson's (1991) explanation of the conception and formation of nationhood in his book *Imagined Communities*. Using as an example the opening pages of the novel *Noli Me Tangere* (Touch me not, 1887) by the Filipino writer José Rizal, Anderson speaks of how its description of a group of people unfamiliar with one another, but who nevertheless believe themselves to be a community existing in a certain place at a certain time, demonstrates the "we-ness" of a nation. Therefore, the exclusion of Chinese and Moros from the idea of the "Filipino nation" is also the exclusion of these two communities from the networks which the Ilustrados aspired to (Anderson 1991, 26–27). In line with this, Evangelista (2002, 12) notes that during the US invasion of the Philippines following the revolution, nationalist aspirations lacked a common archipelago-wide interest, worldview, and concept of the "national," despite the existence of a flag and anthem.

This problem parallels that of other formerly colonized countries that excluded some ethnic-cultural groups from the idea of the nation in the name of forming a coherent national identity. Ignacio López-Calvo (2009, 18) gives the example of Cuba, where the national independentist heroes sought to build a nation based on a *mestizaje* (mixed ethnic ancestry) between blacks and whites, leaving out the significant Chinese population of the island. The exclusion in the Philippines is rooted in some historical reasons: while Christianized Filipinos formed a common identity around Catholicism during Spanish colonization, Moros and Igorots resisted invasion until the 1870s (Evangelista 2002, 8). According to the historian Onofre D. Corpuz (2005, 596–597), the Spanish had never effectively occupied Muslim territory, and thus the Muslims developed separately from the Christian population during the first Western colonization. For this reason, when Spain sold the archipelago to the United States for $20 million, it was in reality selling as a part of it, Moro lands it had never possessed.

Renato Constantino (1969, 298) points out that in 1903, at the beginning of the US colonization, when a new way of nationalism was being forged, Governor Taft enacted the policy of "the Philippines for the Filipinos," implying the necessity of improving the standard of living of Filipinos and of giving them the benefits of an American education. The policy excluded the Chinese population, which had at the same time been marginalized and expelled from the archipelago with the extension of the Chinese Exclusion Act to Hawaii and the Philippines in 1902, but it also excluded the Muslims: Corpuz (2005, 602–609) highlights the various forms of violent resistance to the Americans by the Muslim peoples of the South from 1902 onward. Only in 1916 was Moro territory incorporated as a senatorial district into the Philippine government and covered under the recognition of religious freedom (Corpuz 2005, 611–612). In sum, neither Muslims nor Chinese were well integrated into the Philippine national imaginary in the early

twentieth century, and they were similarly not seriously taken into account during the two main periods of nation formation: the Reform movement (1872–1896) (Agoncillo 1974, 2) and the first half of the twentieth century, when the United States proposed a national model for the Philippines.

Even as the Philippines gained independence from the United States in the 1940s, in a context characterized by regionalism and regional linkages, elites grappled with colonial-era discourses of belongingness and the nation-state. For the political elites and intelligentsia, this effectively meant addressing the question of whether the nation could transcend the models upon which previous colonial regimes had been built. From the 1970s, nationalist discourse further attempted to situate the belongingness of Moros into the Philippines by asserting a common anticolonial character. However, this justification has been criticized by scholars for its narrowness of scope, obscuring the fact that the anticolonial struggle was a common one among colonized peoples in the immediate region (Majul 1966), or, conversely, for its use of broad strokes to co-opt a struggle that did not resist Spanish occupation under a comparable framework to the nationalist discourse of the Christianized population (Abinales 2010).

In this article we argue that the representation of the Chinese and Moros in the given time frame reflected an exclusion from the idea of Filipino-ness, and we ask to what extent the Philippine media's representation of these two groups was similar though the circumstances of exclusion were different. This leads us to posit the existence of a national hierarchy reproducing heavily racialized power hierarchies that were inherited from the colony until well into the first decades of independence.[3] As we limit ourselves in this paper to a digital text analysis of the mid-nineteenth century in newspapers published by Spaniards in the Philippines until the end of the Third Philippine Republic in 1972, we lay the groundwork for future studies that investigate the development of minority identity discourses in the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries through computer-aided discourse analytical techniques.

II Moro and Sangley Representations

As the analysis of religious and ethnic representations has become a way to understand how political agents are configured (see Angeles 2016), it also allows for a "vertical" perspective in understanding how historical forces shape particular agents, of which

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3) Aníbal Quijano (2000) warned of the reproduction of colonial hierarchies of power and imaginaries after the independence of the Latin American republics and included these dynamics under the term *Colonialiad del poder* (coloniality of power).

representation is but one manifestation. This is particularly salient in national imaginaries of postcolonial states such as the Philippines, which has in recent history found itself navigating the contemporary geopolitics of the rising economic power of China and the "global war on terror" while articulating the ambivalent outlines of its own national identity, an identity that is particularly prone to politically driven ebbs and flows of tolerance toward Chinese and Muslim minorities, as shown above. While some strands of Filipino nationalist thought were keen on incorporating disparate societal groups into a common discourse of national unity (Thomas 2016), these often eschewed a critical interrogation of the endurance of divisive discourses on groups of people living under the same colonial regime.

One of the key differences between the colonial treatment of Indios on the one hand, and Chinese and Moros on the other, lies mainly in the intersection of religious conversion and (proto-)racial ontologies. Representations thus centered on a "bifurcated image" of the Indios as either "simple children of nature who would be receptive to tutelage in civilization and Christianity" (Fredrickson 2002, 36) or outright hostile and therefore deserving of violent countermeasures. Whereas the Moros were treated as Muslims, who in Europe were believed to have "been exposed to the gospel and rejected it" (Fredrickson 2002, 37), they were also treated as hostile Indios. On the other hand, the Chinese were tolerated as both foreign as well as "'an entrepreneurial minority'—the kind of group that is likely to be deeply resented and readily turned into a scapegoat when conditions are unstable and times are hard" (Fredrickson 2002, 92).

II-1 *Methodology for the Study of Representations*

While there have been valuable studies employing a close reading of films, literature, and other media to map the representations of Moros and Chinese in the Philippines (Chu 2002; 2023; Gutoc-Tomawis 2005; Hau 2005; Angeles 2010; 2016), this paper employs a computer-assisted mixed-methods analysis of a digitized corpus of periodicals in the Philippines to provide quantitative insights into how the identity terms "Moro," "chino," "Chinese," "Intsik," and their associated morphological forms were represented in media discourses. The quantitative results are supported with a close reading of text excerpts with the target terms. The present corpus is constituted of Philippine newspapers in three languages (Spanish, English, and Tagalog) and spans the colonial and early independence eras (1872–1972) in three stages:

(1) From the Cavite Mutiny, which showed for the first time an archipelago-wide attempt at an anticolonial and national conscience (1872), until the end of Spanish colonization (1898);

(2) From the beginning of the Spanish-American War (1898) to the end of the US colonization of the Philippines (1946); and finally,

(3) From the beginning of the Second Philippine Republic, and therefore democracy and independence in 1946, to the end of democracy in 1972 with the beginning of the martial law promulgated by Ferdinand Marcos.

Our hypothesis is that, despite the fact that regime change supposedly implied a shift in social hierarchies from Spanish to US colonialism, and from the latter to an independent democratic government, the reality is that these hierarchies persisted with respect to the perception of Chinese and Muslim minorities. This raises questions about the link between representation and power distribution in the Philippines. The article explores the methodological possibilities and empirical support for diachronic analysis of identities in large corpora.

Our aim is therefore to compare the representation of Chinese and Muslims in the media over the three periods and across the languages in the study in order to highlight the repetition of colonial models over time, demonstrating their continuity well into the Philippines' independent period in the 1970s.

II-2 *Historical Roots of the Spanish and Philippine Representation of Muslim and Chinese Populations in the Philippines*

II-2-1 Spanish Colonial Period

Writing on the history of Muslims in the Philippines, Cesar Adib Majul (1966, 306) described Spanish colonial policy as "deliberate" in its resolve to keep non-Christianized peoples separate from Christianized, colonized subjects of the Spanish Crown, as it dispatched Christianized soldiers from strongholds in the North to aid in subduing Muslim-held territories in Mindanao (see Fig. 1).

For the Spaniards, the presence of Muslims evoked their history of conflict with the Moors on the Iberian Peninsula (Rodríguez-Rodríguez 2018, chap. 5). Mutual antagonisms based on "Moros" vs. "Christian" subjects in the Philippines thus began to take root, in terms of both official state policy and cultural expression. Historically, the term "Moro" was coined to refer to a class of Islamized Indios based on categories appropriated from the Spanish experience with the Moors (Rodríguez-Rodríguez 2018, chap. 5). One of the most enduring forms of cultural representation of the relationship between Islam and Christianity is the Philippine theatrical form of the *komedya*, also called *Moro-moro*, which depicts the triumph of Christians over Muslims and the latter's conversion to Christianity (Tiongson 1999, cited in Angeles 2010). This is further reflected in the work *The Roots of the Filipino Nation* (2005) by the Filipino academic
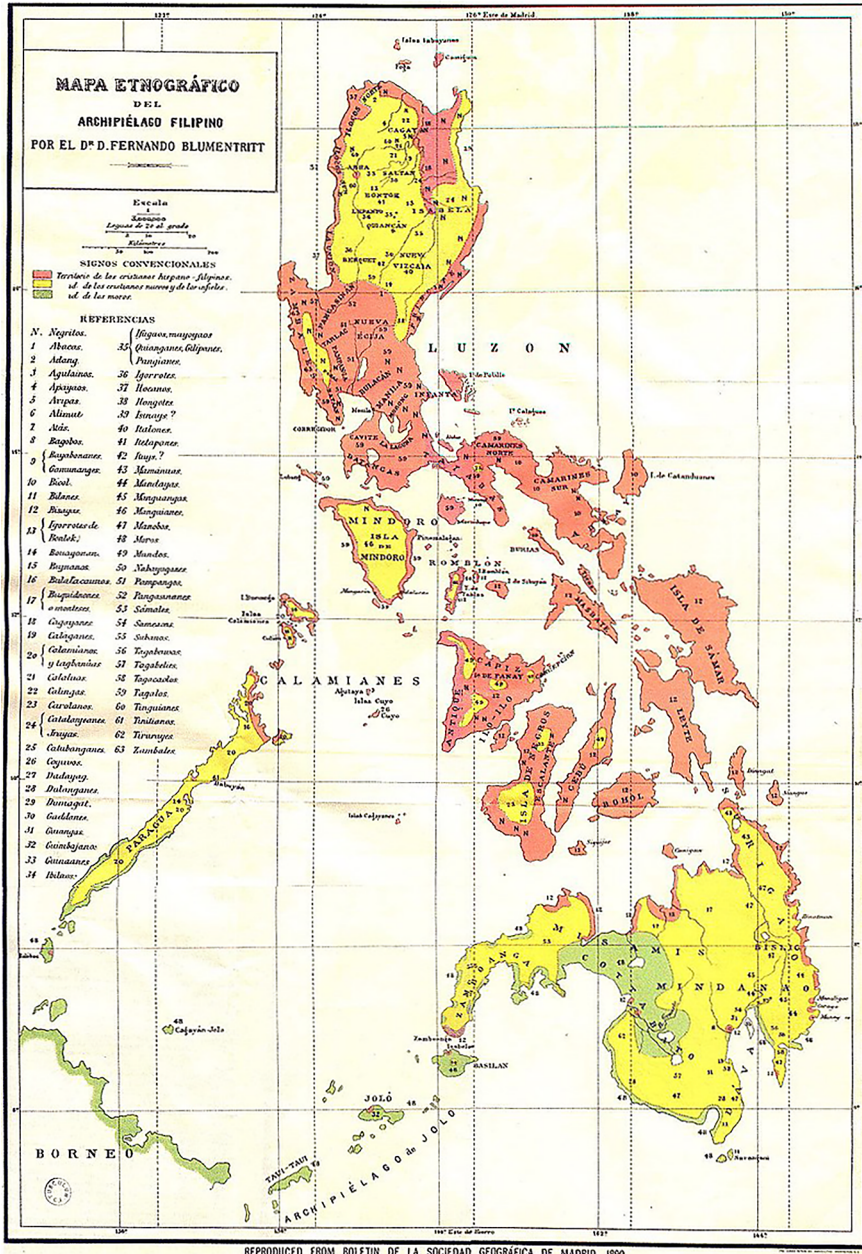
Fig. 1 Map of the Philippines: Christianized Areas Cover Large Sections of Luzon and the Visayas (darker), while Majority Muslim Areas are Found in the Southwest of Mindanao.

Source: Blumentritt (1890)

Corpuz, which cites the reproduction of a medieval narrative as a basis for national identity: the conflict between Muslims and Christians in Europe and the Middle East is both alluded to and extended in order to incorporate the national origins of the Philippines.

It is important to note that the spread of Islam in the Southeast Asian region posed challenges to the colonial aims of proselytizing and dominating trade links to Islamic Southeast Asia; the Chinese were similarly seen as a target of religious conversion and as a threat to Spanish interests in trade.[4] In other words, Spanish colonial forces realized that the key to securing lucrative and monopolized access to the Spice Islands and China was by way of controlling the capacities of Chinese traders and merchants as well as the Moros, who were geographically closer to the Moluccas than the colonial capital established in Manila (Scott 1985, 47). Both the Chinese and Moros were well versed and well situated in the maritime trading routes of Southeast Asia.

The Chinese came to play a crucial role in the colonial economy, drawn by the galleon trade between Acapulco, China, and Manila (Chu 2002). As Edgar Wickberg (2000, 9) put it, "taxation, control, and conversion" were the main components of Spanish policy regarding the Chinese. Growing settlement of Chinese peoples in the Philippines during the Spanish colonial era was met with ethno-legal classifications and their attendant tax duties, which were higher for those of Chinese descent than for Indios (Elizalde 2019, 345), particularly since the Spaniards associated greater trade and economic prospects with Chinese in the Philippines, who dominated commerce and had created new occupations and services (Wickberg 1997, 155). Some of the concrete outcomes of the policies were: (1) segregation, through the creation of the *parián*, an area that acted as a marketplace and residential area, where some Moro merchants were also placed (Crailsheim 2020); the *parián* in Manila was built next to Intramuros, the walled city that acted as the colony's seat of government and was home to Spanish-run churches, schools, and colonial functionaries; and (2) the creation of ethno-specific administrative roles: the Spaniards appointed a Christianized Chinese mayor in 1603 to facilitate relations with the Chinese in Manila. Christianization functioned as a similar aspirational civilizing strategy for the Moros, as it was believed to be a way to ensure

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4) The degree to which the Chinese were perceived by some Spaniards as willing to be Christianized is referenced in newspaper articles during Spanish colonization. Felipe de Govántes, for instance, wrote in *La ilustración del Oriente* on religious syncretism during the Feast of Saint Nicholas, observed also by non-Christianized Chinese in the Philippines: "In [St. Nicholas'] Church, each one offers [St. Nicholas] a thick incarnate candle, masses, and other tokens of faith, which on the one hand is painful to see as [these offerings lack] a true foundation, and on the other hand demonstrates how these people are called toward [the faith] and to increase the Christian republic" (De Govántes 1877, 3).

Catholic subjects loyal to the Spanish Crown (Wickberg 2000, 15).

These policies triggered mutual tensions. Fears of a Chinese invasion and the corresponding breakdown of trust culminated in the Sangley Rebellion in 1603, with up to 25,000 Chinese residents being massacred (Wills 1998, 358). This episode was followed by revolts in 1639 and 1686. After the uprising in 1686, the Chinese community was expelled from the archipelago by the Spanish government. Expulsions were repeated in 1744, 1749, 1754, and 1766 due to different reasons.

With residential segregation, geographic mobility restraints within the islands for non-Christian Chinese, and quotas infrequently imposed on the Chinese population in Manila (Wickberg 1997, 156), a policy of ethnic-based social regulation was implemented in the day-to-day governance of the colony. The Spanish desire to Christianize the Chinese was further reflected in changing ethno-legal labels, such as the labels of *Sangley Cristiano* and *Sangley infiel*, which distinguished between Christianized and non-Christianized Chinese, respectively, and *Sangley invernado* and *Sangley radicado*, referring to resident and transient Chinese (Chu 2023, 10). Conversion efforts continued throughout the Spanish colonial era, culminating in the Sangleyes being given the option in 1840 to become naturalized Spanish subjects (Wickberg 2000, 155–156).

Conversely, the Spanish could not easily initiate social change or secure access to crucial trading routes without assuming territorial control over Muslim strongholds in the South. Even with nearby Spanish fortifications, such as Fuerte del Pilar in Zamboanga, they were not able to maintain control of Islamized groups and territories in the South, with only sporadic attempts at peace that rarely encompassed the entire territory. Treaties between the Sultan of Sulu and Spain were signed, for instance, in 1646, 1726, 1737, 1805, 1836, 1851, and 1878, with those of 1737, 1836, and 1851 being regarded as a "capitulation" (Wright 1966, 474). The Sultanate of Sulu was merely one amongst a number of Muslim polities in Mindanao and as such not representative of all the area's inhabitants.

II-2-2 US Colonial Period

After the Philippines was ceded to the United States following the Spanish-American War, lingering questions about the status of the Moro territories and Chinese in the Philippines were inherited by the new colonial administration. For one, Moros and Chinese continued to be distinguished by differences in their political status from Christianized Filipinos of Austronesian descent, particularly with the new US concept of citizenship that distinguished between Filipinos and aliens, which impacted the latter (Chu 2023). These societal categories that had political and legal consequences in the colony came against the backdrop of pervasive racial discourses in the US itself (Kramer

2006, 185). On a political level in the Philippines, distinctions were made between areas that had been urbanized and assimilated into Spanish rule, for which the Americans established a civil regime, and areas such as the Cordilleras and "Moroland," which fell under a military regime (Abinales 2010). While the Americans continued their attempts to assimilate Moros into the administrative structures of the colony, through measures such as the payment of land tax and obligatory military service, the Chinese were included as part of the extended Chinese Exclusion Act in 1902, which encompassed the overseas territories under the control of the US and placed limits on Chinese immigration. However, Filipino opinions were divided, as some intellectuals and politi- cians had started—since the end of the nineteenth century and during the first decades of the twentieth—to highlight the cultural connections between the Philippines and China as well as the Chinese population in the Philippines, and to look toward the latter for support in their anticolonial aspirations (Ang See and Go 2015, chap. 6; Ortuño Casanova 2021). Philippine intellectuals saw in the "yellow peril" discourse that had spread over Europe and the Americas (Dower 2012) a justification to perpetuate the Western dominion of Asia and took the opportunity to distance themselves from this discourse and look for affinities and connections aiming for an Asian identity. This attitude can be seen in works written in Spanish by prominent intellectuals such as Rizal, but also in the biography of Sun Yat-Sen written by Mariano Ponce in 1912 with an introduction by Teodoro M. Kalaw condemning the treatment given to Chinese in the Philippines and laying the blame on Western colonization (Ortuño 2021). A similar attitude was expressed by the first president of the Second Philippine Republic, Manuel L. Quezon:

> There seems to be an impression that we Filipinos are prejudiced toward these Oriental brothers and sisters of ours. We should not be; it would be ridiculous for the Filipino who is Oriental to pretend to look with a certain tone of superiority upon the other inhabitants of the Far East who are of the same color as himself. . . . When these more or less temporary relations which unite us with other countries of a different race from our own are broken, it is those relations imposed by nature itself and by geography which will remain. (Quezón 1926, translated from Spanish)

II-2-3 Identity Markers After Independence

It was only in the twentieth century that the appropriation of the term "Moro," which long held connotations of uncivilized peoples in faraway islands, and the coining of the term "Tsinoy" (in 1987) by Kaisa Para Sa Kaunlaran, a civic organization promoting the integration of ethnic Chinese into the Philippines, would eventually occur (Chu 2023). "Moro" has come to mean peoples with a shared history and become a term associated with Muslim resistance to colonialism and the dominant Christian culture in

the Philippines. "Tsinoy/Tsinay," "Filipino Chinese," or "Chinese Filipino" is often used as an alternative to the Tagalog *Intsik*, a word derived from the Hokkien *in-chek*, meaning "his uncle,"[5] to distinguish settled Filipino nationals of Chinese descent from recently settled non-nationals or expatriates from China (Chu 2023).

Contemporary images of Moros and Tsinoys in film and literature reveal a continuing dialogue and reinterpretation of the cornerstones of Philippine national identity. In the decades following independence, new visions of what it meant to be "Filipino" were promulgated through print media and academic writings and implemented through policies. For instance, the mass naturalization of Chinese Filipinos in the 1970s

> entailed a shift in the discourse of nationalism away from monoculturalist and melting-pot claims of assimilation toward a strictly political definition of national belonging, which held that ethnic or minority groups could be integrated into Philippine society while preserving their cultural identities. (Cariño 1988, 47, cited in Hau 2005, 497)

Alongside calls for social integration and greater cultural tolerance within Philippine society, discourses that draw on old stereotypes of Moros and Chinese in the Philippines resurface in media, politics, and intellectual discourses.

III The Corpus

The periodicals used in this study form part of the PhilPeriodicals project, an initiative to digitize over twelve thousand issues of periodicals published more than fifty years ago in the Philippines (Ortuño Casanova, n.d.). The present study utilizes print media from three time periods: the Spanish colonial period (1872–December 10, 1898), the American colonial period (December 11, 1898–July 4, 1946), and independence (July 5, 1946–1972) (see Appendix 1). Twelve periodicals in English, 12 in Tagalog, and 31 in Spanish from the collection were selected for study (see the language distribution in Table 1). Thematically, the collection is diverse to reflect a wide contextual scope for representation: from news and features (e.g., *Graphic, Excélsior*) to religious matters (e.g., *Apostle, Ang Ebangheliko*), military activities (e.g., *Khaki and Red*), literature (e.g., *Ilang-Ilang, Bulaklak*), and commerce (e.g., *American Chamber of Commerce Journal, Boletín de la Cámara de Comercio Filipina*) (for a list of journals, see Appendix 2).

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5) This term carries pejorative connotations (Chu 2023).

Table 1   Summary of Corpus Word Counts

Subcorpus	Number of Words	Percentage
English	2,018,178	37.39%
Filipino	568,886	10.54%
Spanish	2,810,644	52.07%
Total	5,397,708	
Per Time Period		
SCP	579,932	10.74%
ACP	3,657,000	67.75%
IP	1,160,776	21.50%
Total	5,397,708	

Note: SCP: Spanish colonial period; ACP: American colonial period; IP: independence period

IV Methodology

One approach to discourse analysis has emerged from the study of the forms and functions of language using digitized corpora (Partington *et al.* 2013, 5), which came about as technological developments facilitated storage capacity and machine reading. The way "big data" is produced, stored, and read has posed new challenges for researchers, who consequently "need theories and methods that are [cap]able of accounting for the emergence of meaning in the different social, historic, and textual contexts, in which phenomena become meaningful and therefore can become social" (Scholz 2019, 11). Thematically, these methods have found an important intersection with questions on the regulation of bodies and identities, in the sense of "uncovering, in the discourse type under study, of what we might call non-obvious meaning, that is, meaning which might not be readily available to naked-eye perusal" (Partington *et al.* 2013, 11). The linguistic subcorpora of this study are formed based on the primary language of a periodical, in order to identify ideological or cultural views about a referent object that emerge through the comparative analysis of subcorpora in each language.

   We thus apply techniques such as word frequency extraction, collocation analysis, and word embeddings and support them with close readings of relevant excerpts identified by quantitative tools on the present corpus of digitized periodicals to determine time-bound and language-bound semantic fields associated with Muslims and Chinese in the Philippines. These digital methods for text analysis serve to test hypotheses and have been useful in tracing the changing content of signifiers. For instance, William Hamilton *et al.* (2018) used word embeddings to visualize historical semantic change in words such as "broadcast" and "gay," and Li Ke and Zhang Qiang (2022, 176) investigated

articles in the *New York Times* on Islam, emphasizing stereotypical depictions such as "unacclimatized outsider" and "turmoil-maker." Seen in this way, quantitative approaches to text analysis serve to validate hypotheses generated through qualitative studies for a large volume of texts and to provide empirical bases for the strength of particular discourses as opposed to others.[6]

Historical texts, which can now be studied en masse with digital methods, were not only crucial in ascertaining the social categories of Moro and Sangley as deserving of a distinct treatment from Indios but used to inform social policies of successive regimes. The idea that power is inextricable from the processes of naming and the regulation of bodies—what Michel Foucault (1978, 139) would call biopolitics—foregrounds the following analyses, as subjectivation through language and practice may persist well beyond the formal cessation of policies based on ethnic distinctions. Depictions in literature and similar media further demonstrated the relationship between power and identity, as noted in the exoticized treatment of Islam and the Orient in the arts during the colonial era: depictions of the Orient could not be understood separately from the binary construction of a European identity, of which the Oriental was the negative counterpart (Said 1979; Hall 1997, chap. 4). However, linguistic binaries are only one means of othering and may be too limited in their capturing of meaning, in the sense that binaries often represent the two ends of a spectrum of possibilities (Hall 1997, chap. 4). Studies such as this can provide greater insights.

This study's method involves first gathering word frequencies and co-occurrences, or collocations in particular contexts. Collocational analysis identifies words used within a defined window around the target word to determine contextually derived meanings. In this study, we further make use of word embeddings to provide a "macro" lens for identifying common themes in the corpora before closely examining individual instances of a term in context. Word embeddings are representations of words as vectors that are trained by machine learning techniques and can be used to derive semantic similarity. A popular method, represented here by Word2Vec (Mikolov *et al.* 2013), involves the identification of semantically similar words through the generation of a multidimensional vector space from a large corpus of text. Each vector in this method represents a specific word, while the closeness of one word vector to another (calculated by measuring the cosine distance between vectors) represents the similarity of linguistic context. Countries or ethnicities, for instance, may be used in similar contexts to one another,

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6) Whether or not quantitative approaches can generate novel findings is highly dependent upon the size and contents of the corpus under study. Nevertheless, as corpora of digital texts increase, so too do the opportunities to replicate methods on larger and more diverse corpora to confirm or challenge hypotheses.

which can be detected and represented mathematically. In order to visualize the data, this paper makes use of t-distributed stochastic neighbor embedding (t-SNE) (Van der Maaten and Hinton 2008), a machine learning algorithm that reduces the results gathered from Word2Vec into two or three dimensions.

We first performed a layout analysis on the texts using Transkribus's print block detection module (Kahle *et al.* 2017) and converted the texts to a readable format using a customized Optical Character Recognition model. The model was based on a training set of 157 manually annotated pages that included samples from each of the target languages, and a validation set of 15 pages. Transkribus further employs a character error rate (CER), which "compares the total number of characters . . . including spaces, to the minimum number of insertions . . . substitutions . . . and deletions of characters" (Transkribus, n.d.). The CERs for the model used in the study are 1.94 percent (training set) and 1.87 percent (validation set).

The texts were then pre-processed to eradicate numbers, punctuation, and stop words, which include function words such as articles, pronouns, conjunctions, and particles, among others. Stop word lists were taken from Sedgewick and Wayne (2020) (English), Diaz (2016a) (Tagalog), and Diaz (2016b) (Spanish) and refined based on further function words[7] or orthographical errors that appeared in the corpus. Due to the presence of multilingual periodicals, a combined stop word list was built from the main languages in the study (Filipino, English, and Spanish) and applied to the dataset. Subsequently, the appearance of words related to identities was studied through examining word frequencies and word collocations appearing in each subcorpus through the use of Gephi and AntConc (Anthony 2019).[8] The collocations mentioned below were identified on the basis of the mutual information score that measures the probability of a keyword occurring next to a collocate, relative to the number of times each word occurs in total (Stubbs 1995). As mutual information scores tend to be higher for infrequently occurring collocates, the frequency floor for this corpus was set to three occurrences and above. The searched words were drawn from the literature on Moros and Chinese Filipinos (e.g., Angeles 2010; Chu 2023). Due to the multilingual nature of the corpus, collocations were identified for all possible morphological forms of the target word across languages, e.g., moro|moros|mora|moras|morong|morang[9] and

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7) References to time, measurements, reporting verbs (such as "told," "said," "stated," etc.), and parts of a person's name were also excised.

8) Diacritics in Tagalog/Filipino are not applied consistently over the texts and are no longer employed in contemporary orthography. All diacritics were therefore removed from texts in the English and Filipino corpus.

9) The morphological forms appear in lower case due to the way the text was standardized through pre-processing for analysis.

chinese | chino | chinos | china | chinas | intsik.[10]   English collocations centered around the words "moro" and "chinese" were first gathered by AntConc (Anthony 2019) and assigned a mutual information score, as described above.   Only those collocations with mutual information scores greater than zero with a frequency floor of three were considered in the analysis due to the relatively small (Davies 2019) and particular nature of the corpus.   Collocations of up to five words on each side were then collected per target word per subcorpus, while Word2Vec (Mikolov *et al.* 2013) was used to determine words occurring in a similar semantic space to each target word.

V Analysis

V-1 *Word Embeddings*

Word embeddings were created using Word2Vec (Mikolov *et al.* 2013), which can be used with a cosine similarity measurement to estimate the semantic difference between two words used in similar contexts.   As the selected corpus is relatively small, comprising just over five million words, all time periods and languages were entered as input for the measurement of similarity.   For the terms "Moro" and "Moros," which are shared amongst all three languages, embeddings included words with implications along the binary dimensions of savagery/civilization and rural/urban—"forest," "illiterates," "*nativos*" (natives), and "barrios"—as well as terms related to operating outside of the law, such as "outlaws," "prisoners," and "insurgents"; while chinese | chino | china included "*prisionero*" (prisoner) and "*crimen*" (crime) (Fig. 2).   The results for the terms chinese | chino | china | intsik revealed associations with other places and nationalities, trade and commerce, and otherness, found in the terms "foreign" and "*dayuhan*" (foreigner).   Furthermore, both target terms (words relating to Moros and Chinese) were found in similar contexts to words indicating armed forces or government positions, such as "*gobernadorcillos*" (governors) or "military," and maritime transportation—"ship" and "*barco*" (boat).   It is worth noting that there were notably positive embeddings found in Spanish and Filipino, such as "*simp[á/a]tico*" (nice), "*kasiglahan*" (liveliness/ cheerfulness), "*galak*" (joy), and "*puri*" (praise) for the Chinese-related terms (Fig. 2).

   We can thus surmise that the multilingual semantic fields for Chinese and Moros come together in their foreignness and nonconformity to law, yet it is only in the Spanish

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10)   While several nation-state-related terms were included due to the polysemy of the word "China" (the Spanish feminine form for Chinese), they are nevertheless of interest due to the ambiguous nexus in the corpus of the term "Chinese" and a particular place.   The nouns referring to people are nevertheless the focus of the close readings below.
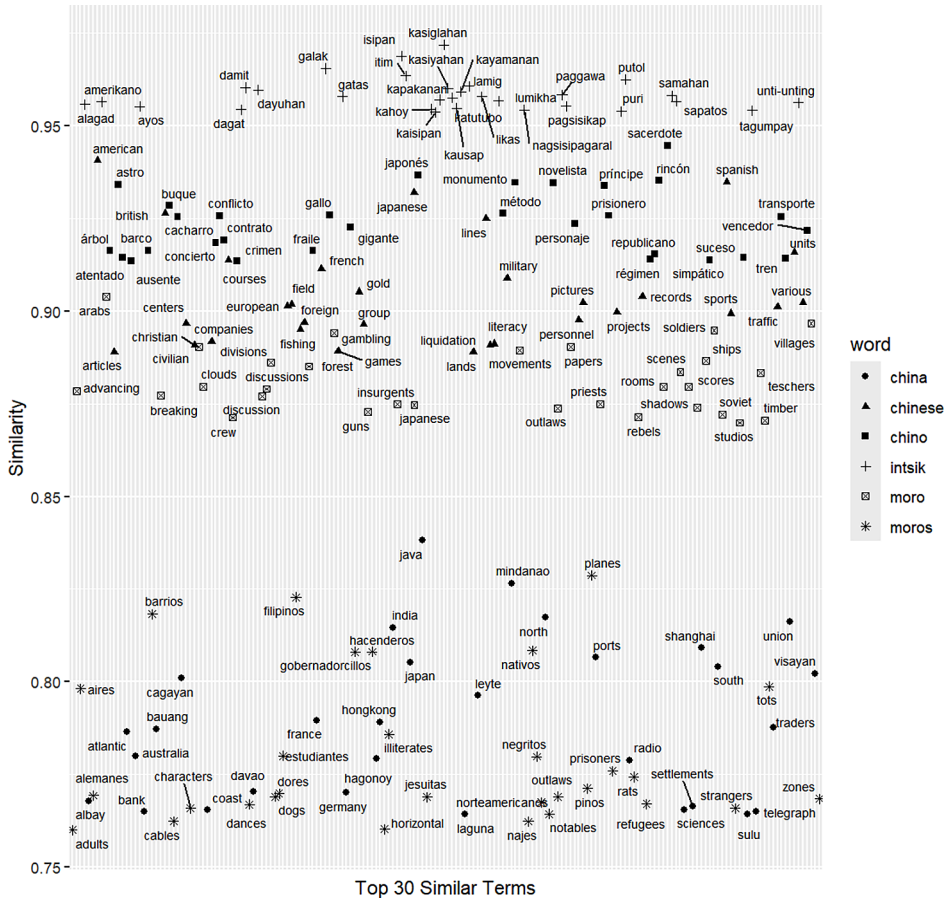
Fig. 2   Word2Vec Similarity Results for Target Terms

Source: Generated by Cruz

Note: Other variants of the target terms, such as *chinos* and *chinas*, have not been included in this visualiza-
tion for more clarity. For the code to the embeddings, as well as the vector visualization of the top
thirty target terms, see Cruz and Ortuño Casanova (2022).

and Filipino texts that positive (as opposed to negative or neutral) terms are found. In
the following section, an overview of the per-language collocations of the target terms is
provided (for a summary of term distribution, see Tables 2 and 3).

V-2 *Collocation, Frequency, and Close Reading Analysis per Language Corpus*

Collocations, as opposed to word embeddings, take a closer look at non-function words
in the immediate vicinity of the target terms. In the English corpus, the adjective
"Chinese" was often employed in conjunction with known landmarks in Manila, such as
the "Chinese Cemetery" and the "Chinese General Hospital," but also to describe

Table 2 Frequencies of Keywords per Language Corpus

Language	Target Terms	Frequency	Percentage of Relevant Subcorpus	Individual Occurrences
English				
	moro | moros | mora | moras | morong | morang	273	0.01	mora 8 moro 144 morong 7 moros 114
	chino | china | chinos | chinas | intsik | chinese	724	0.04	china 404 chinese 314 chino 6
Filipino				
	moro | moros | mora | moras | morong | morang	14	0.00	mora 2 moro 7 morong 5
	chino | china | chinos | chinas | intsik | chinese	41	0.01	china 5 chinese 1 intsik 35
Spanish				
	moro | moros | mora | moras | morong | morang	228	0.01	mora 47 moras 12 moro 67 morong 15 moros 87
	chino | china | chinos | chinas | intsik | chinese	646	0.02	china 313 chinas 14 chinese 19 chino 161 chinos 139

Table 3 Frequencies of Target Words per Time Period

Time Period	Target Terms	Frequency	Percentage of Relevant Subcorpus	Individual Occurrences
SCP				
	moro | moros | mora | moras | morong | morang	67	0.01	mora 16 moras 2 moro 7 morong 12 moros 30
	chino | china | chinos | chinas | intsik | chinese	167	0.03	china 95 chinas 1 chinese 48 chino 11 chinos 6 intsik 6
ACP				
	moro | moros | mora | moras | morong | morang	373	0.01	mora 34 moras 9 moro 167 morong 9 moros 154
	chino | china | chinos | chinas | intsik | chinese	1,051	0.03	china 550 chinas 8 chinese 286 chino 98 chinos 80 intsik 29
IP				
	moro | moros | mora | moras | morong | morang	75	0.01	mora 7 moras 1 moro 44 morong 6 moros 17
	chino | china | chinos | chinas | intsik | chinese	193	0.01	china 77 chinas 5 chino 58 chinos 53

Note: SCP: Spanish colonial period; ACP: American colonial period; IP: independence period

places where ownership or patronage comprised mostly people of Chinese descent, such as "Chinese school" or "Chinese store." The corpus further revealed collocations with terms related to trade and goods, such as "store" (12), "dealers" (11), "demand"

(7), "business" (5), "merchants" (5), "sari" (from sari-sari store) (4), "market" (4), "trader" (3), "crop" (3), "silver" (3), "rice" (6), and "sugar" (4) (see Figs. 3 and 4).

Apart from the ambiguity between Chinese who were resident in the Philippines and Chinese from mainland China, the use of the word "Chinese" and its collocations did not distinguish itself among previous Spanish social categories that indicated the
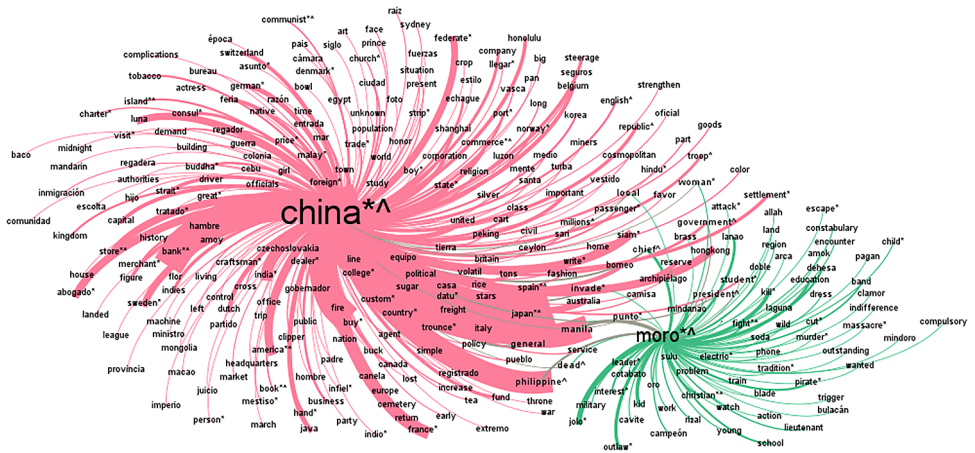
Fig. 3   All Collocations of moro|mora|moros|moras|morong|morang and chinese|chino|chinos|china|chi nas|intsik (MI > 0; frequency floor ≥ 3; * = lemma; ^ = appears in more than one language)
Source: Generated by Cruz
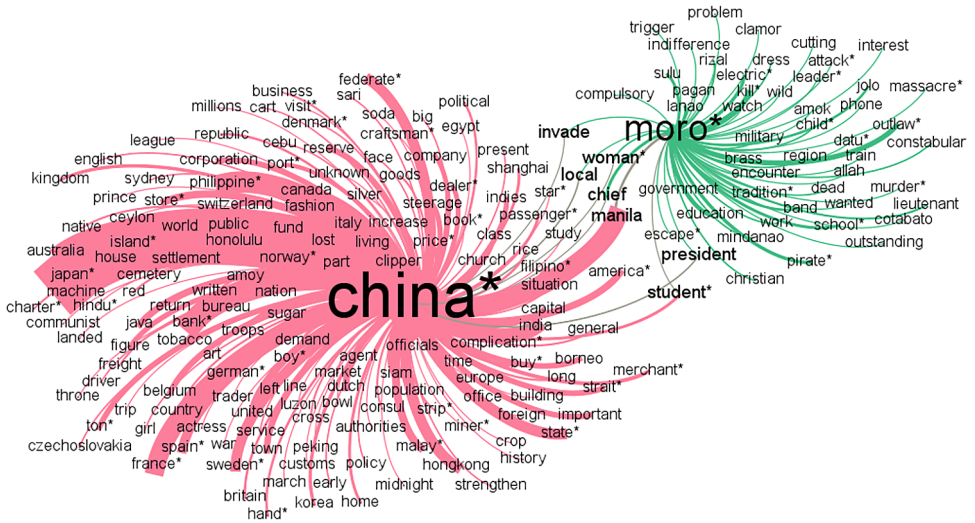
Fig. 4   English-Language Collocations (MI > 0; frequency floor ≥ 3; * = lemma)
Source: Generated by Cruz

duration of settlement in the Philippines or ethnic mixing with non-Chinese, such as *Sangley invernado* or *mestizo de Sangley*. This ambiguity was further demonstrated in blanket statements such as "Chinese in Davao" or "Chinese in Manila," as well as the following:

(1) *"Chinese who control the greater part of the industry . . ."* (*Khaki and Red*, October 1949, 13)[11]

(2) *"Those Americans who recall Manila life . . . remember the entire dominance of the Chinese in retail trade . . . The Escolta was a Chinese street. . . . Today it is predominantly Filipino. . . . The Filipino is gradually taking over retail trade."* (*American Chamber of Commerce Journal*, March 1929, 1)

Each of these excerpts presumes a presence of Chinese in the country, but without simultaneously explicitly asserting that they are Filipino, or "local" in any way. The distinction overlaps with the strict ethnic division seen in other texts, such as the third excerpt, which distinguishes "Malayan" from "Chinese" inhabitants:

(3) *"The culture of Lilio is quite purely Malayan, influenced only by the Spanish church. Chinese don't live there."* (*American Chamber of Commerce Journal*, September 1929, 4)

Terms such as "foreign" (4) and "mestizo" (2) are shared with the Filipino corpus, in the case of "*mestisong*" (4) and "*dayuhang*" (3) (see Fig. 6). Apart from emphasizing the dominance of the "Chinese" in business and commerce, the third excerpt above points toward ethnic rivalry in retail ownership. In the fourth excerpt (below), "Chinese" who have maintained a long presence in the Philippines are not associated with "Filipino." The fifth excerpt shows the different ethnicities of people within the Philippines who speak Tagalog. For all the emphasis on a national language, it is not implied that linguistic proficiency equates to national belonging. In this regard, the sixth excerpt shows displeasure at the situation of illegal migrant "Chinese" against whom the law is on the "warpath," yet it does not otherwise provide any further information on what constitutes national belonging or "Chinese" who are "legally" in the Philippines. But the presumption that there are legal "Chinese" in the Philippines or "Chinese" who are not entirely "foreign" is implied in the seventh excerpt, in which the term *dayuhang instik* (foreign Chinese) appears.

(4) *"The Chinese here in the business for centuries have not been able to do that."* (*American Chamber of Commerce Journal*, December 1929, 11)

(5) *"Samantalang . . . may mga intsik, hapon, bumbay, at ibang pang nagsasalita ng aming matamis na wikang Tagalog"* [However, there are Chinese, Japanese, Indians, and others speaking

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11) The references per text citation from the corpus are listed in Appendix 1, while Appendix 2 contains a list of all periodicals contained in the corpus.

our sweet Tagalog language]. (*Ang Wika*, October 16, 1921, 13)

(6) *"The law is now on the warpath against all Chinese who entered this country illegally."* (*Khaki and Red*, June 1949, 13)

(7) *". . . na sa mga dayuhang intsik na pumasok dito sa Maynila ay nakabilang ang isang babae . . ."* [. . . that among the foreign Chinese that entered Manila there was a woman . . .] (*Ang Wika*, November 1, 1920, 2)

Nevertheless, the term "Filipino Chinese" does indeed appear in the corpus, such as in the proper names "Northern Filipino Chinese Chamber of Commerce" or "Filipino-Chinese Anti-Communist League," though only as self-attributed names and not a fixed expression in discourse. Terms such as "Filipino-Chinese" do not appear in the Spanish texts, which employ terms such as *"los mestizos de Sangley"* instead, or in the Tagalog/Filipino texts, which do not seem to go beyond implying that there are "local" Chinese as opposed to *dayuhang Instik* (foreign Chinese). Related to views on the economic role of the Chinese in the area are Spanish collocations with "chino," such as "banco" (9) or "canela" (cinnamon) (6) (see Fig. 5).

On the other hand, with regard to Moros, the English-language corpus features references to "Moro" as violent outlaws, bandits, or criminals—"killed" (13), "outlaws" (12), "pirates" (8), "band" (6), "encounter" (4), "dead" (4), "blade" (3), and "datus" (ruler) (3) (see Figs. 3 and 4)—and attempts to socialize them into the institutions of the colonial regime or, alternatively, the Philippine government:

(8) *"The moro then seized him by the throat, . . . each trying to cut the other's head off. The moro, an expert with cutting weapons, the kriss [kris] and the barong . . ."* (*Khaki and Red*, August 1935, 16)

Following the revolutionary period (1896–1901) came what the nationalist historian Teodoro Agoncillo (1974, 2–3) called "'suppressed' nationalism" (1901–10), "Filipinization" (1910–21), and the Commonwealth (1935–41). It was during the latter period that US-American sociopolitical and territorial consolidation and control over the colony supported the promotion of a broad spectrum of American sociocultural and political norms through institutions such as public schools, banks, and government agencies. Throughout this period, the colonial regime retained elites from the Spanish colonial era while preparing a new set of bureaucrats and educators, or *pensionados*, through scholarship programs in the US (Francisco 2015; Lumba 2022). This became clear in the introduction of the English language through public schooling, and thus the emergence of English-language discourse during the American era, which was used as a tool for upward mobility in American-ruled "Moroland" as well as to facilitate Moro-led adaptation and propagation of the norms of the regime:
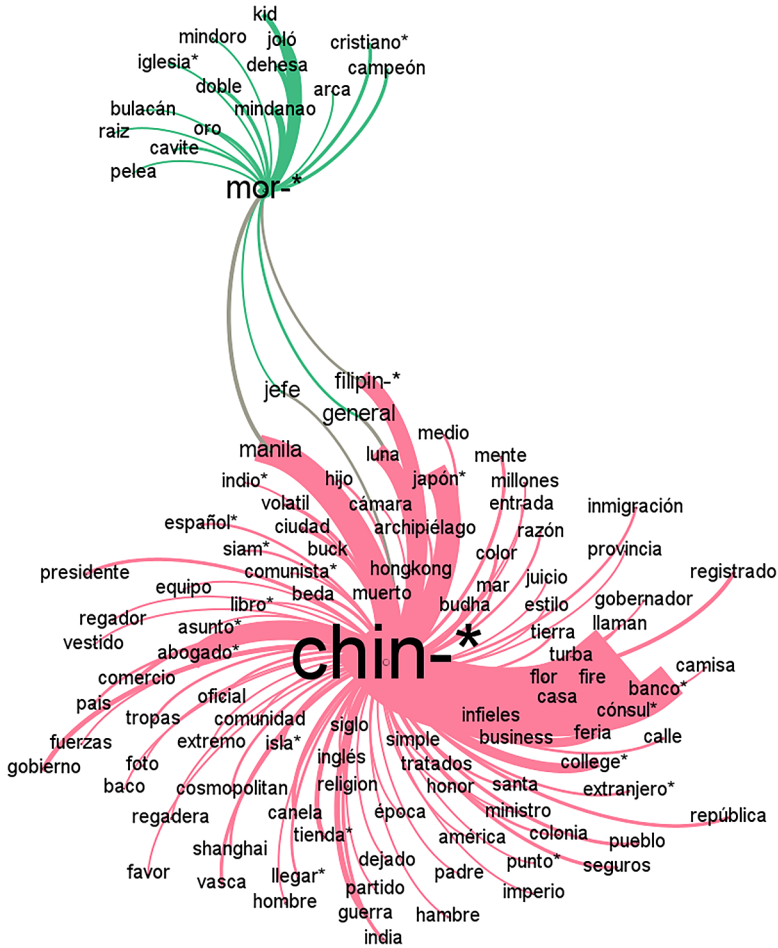
Fig. 5 Spanish-Language Collocations (* = lemma)
Source: Generated by Cruz

(9) *"The young men of the Moro and Pagan tribes who lived in contact with the government during their one or more enlistments acquired a respect for and understanding of the government . . ."* (*Khaki and Red*, August 1935, 51)

(10) *"Datu Mariga Alonto also believes that the best way to solve the Moro problem is to educate the Moros because 'in this way they will learn their duties and obligations to the government.'"* (*Graphic*, January 30, 1936, 46)

The Moro as both "outlaw" and "law-abiding citizen" served to draw a binary between "educated"/positive and "violent"/negative Moros based on compliance with the regime. As students, law-abiding citizens, and teachers, Moros were positively represented in

discourse, yet their "violence" was always portrayed as outside of and against colonial aims (and therefore "criminal"), or an inherent feature of their culture.

These descriptors can be seen having some continuities with Spanish-language discourses, characterized by their pessimism, distance from Moros (excerpt 11), and monolithic views, in contrast to a majority of English-language discourses, particularly during the American period, which demonstrate more social contact, optimism, and binarism. In the Spanish corpus, collocations over the frequency floor include "kid" (for Kid Moro, a boxer) (8), "general" (4), "*cristianos*" (Christians) (4), "filipino" (4), "*pelea*" (fight) (3), "*oro*" (gold) (3), and "*iglesias*" (churches) (3), reflecting underlying religious thematic foci (see Fig. 5).

(11) *"Hoy como ayer, los moros levantiscos de Joló han vuelto a hacer una sonada. El Gobierno ha tenido que enviar un buen golpe de soldados constabularios para sofocar la 'rebelión' . . . Y el 'hueso' moro seguirá tan duro de roer como siempre lo ha sido"* [Today, as yesterday, the Moorish rebels of Jolo went on the rampage again. The government has had to send in a good contingent of constabulary to put down the "rebellion" . . . And the Moorish "nut" will be as tough to crack as it has always been]. (*Excélsior*, October 20, 1932, 1)

Associations between Moros and violence can also be inferred from a discussion on the resolution of the continuing "problems":

(12) *"La primera es el 'problema moro' que continúa sin resolverse, pues los 'rebeldes' o remontados no cejan ni se rinden . . ."* [The first is the "Moorish problem," which remains unresolved, as the "rebels" or "remontados" do not give up or surrender]. (*Excélsior*, November 20, 1932, 1)

Absent from the English corpus but supported by historical data on immigration to Mindanao is another solution—the settlement of "Filipinos" to *terra incognita*. Mindanao is seen in an example of Spanish-language discourse below as worthy of settlement, which assumes the eventual social incorporation of Moros into the nation by virtue of belonging to the same race:

(13) *"Y así como los microbios sostienen la lucha por la existencia, deben emigrar a la Morolandia elementos sanos de las demás regiones del Archipiélago magallánico, . . . , en fraternal convivencia con los naturales de las mismas, quienes, arrollados por la avasalladora corriente de la civilización, acabarán por asimilarse las saludables instituciones sociales de sus hermanos de raza, se confundirán con ellos en unos mismos usos, hábitos y cos[t]umbres, y respirarán una sola alma nacional, sin distinción de credos políticos, clases sociales ni creencias religiosas"* [And just as microbes sustain the struggle for existence, healthy elements from the other regions of the Magellanic Archipelago must emigrate to Morolandia . . . in fraternal coexistence with the natives of those regions, who, overwhelmed by the sweeping tide of civilization, will end up assimilating the healthy social institutions of their brothers of race; will mingle with them in
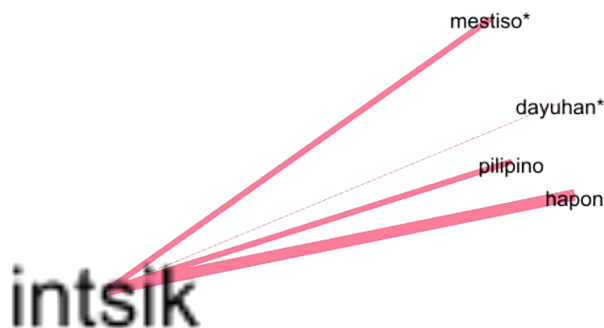
Fig. 6   Filipino/Tagalog-Language Collocations (* = lemma)
Source: Generated by Cruz
Note: Only one word, "kid," was found for "moro" collocations.

the same uses, habits, and customs; and will breathe a single national soul without distinction of political creeds, social classes, or religious beliefs]. (*Excélsior*, October 30, 1932, 27)

The Filipino/Tagalog corpus had the lowest number of occurrences of the word "moro," with no collocations with a frequency greater than or equal to three, although "suntukan" (fistfight or boxing) and "kid" (referencing Kid Moro) but also "*kris*" (a type of sword) and "*alipin*" (slave) were among the collocations found, terms which evoke traditional and precolonial representations. On the other hand, "*Intsik*" features various identity categories associated with the Chinese (Filipino, foreigner, and mestizo) (see Fig. 6).

All in all, the word embeddings were able to reveal the possibilities of Spanish and Filipino target terms being found in similar contexts to positive terms, whereas the terms in the immediate context of the target terms showed mostly negative and neutral word associations and little to no high-frequency positive terms. Although it is difficult to separate the languages from the respective eras in which they were used, it is worth noting that during the American colonial period, when Spanish was still used in print media, ideas of an unsettled Mindanao were deemed necessary to communicate to Spanish-speaking audiences. However, the Spanish-era focus on religion, missions, and conversion did not necessarily carry over into English-language materials. Furthermore, it appears that identity-related issues mostly did not appear in periodicals in Tagalog/ the Filipino language at this time, which indicates not only their relative paucity in terms of volume, but also that social and political media discourse on identities in the time period covered by this study were conducted instead in the languages of power and prestige, circulated between and amongst educated elites. Having determined the era-driven characteristics of language use, we turn to diachronic word associations.

V-3 *Collocation, Frequency, and Close Reading Analysis per Time Period*
  V-3-1 Spanish Colonial Period
The Spanish colonial period shows representations of Moros almost exclusively in the context of conflict with the colonial regime, and confined to certain areas of Mindanao. While there are not many mentions of "moro," it is clear that Moros are presented as both an obstacle to the colony and incommensurable with Christianity (excerpt 14).

> (14) *"No hay fusión posible entre moros y cristianos; ya lo han dicho en España siete siglos de encarnizada lucha"* [There is no possible fusion between Moors and Christians; seven centuries of fierce struggle in Spain have already said it]. (*El Diablillo Suelto*, June 15, 1893, 2)

The theme of continuing struggle, or *lucha*, can be further seen in *La Puya*, where fictionalized dialogues were sometimes employed as a device to discuss current events. In one such dialogue, the incompatibility of the Moros' existence with peace and order for the rest of the country is emphasized:

> (15) - *". . . ha habido un ataque entre moros y nuestras tropas habiendo estas matado cuatro moro[s] y hecho muchos heridos"* [There has been an attack between Moros and our troops, the latter having killed four Moro[s] and wounded many].
> - *"Y te lo tengo dicho, Goyo—mientras en Mindanao quede un solo moro tendremos de esos casos á diario"* [And I have told you, Goyo—as long as there is a single Moro left in Mindanao we will have such cases every day]. (*La Puya*, February 1, 1893, 239)[12]

The lack of social encounters with the Moros due to their resistance to the Spanish occupation stands in contrast to the discourses on Chinese, who maintained a long-standing presence in the major cities of the Philippines. More than simply containing references to the economic role of the Chinese, as can be gleaned from the word embedding and frequency results, periodicals of this time focused on attributing the Chinese with a lack of civilization, particularly with regard to discounting their sincerity in religion, one of the main cornerstones of Hispanic civilizing discourse. China was not only cast as a place of non-religious peoples:

> (16) *"Las supersticiones y aberraciones del espíritu, constituyen un curioso estudio en la vida de los chinos. Aquel pueblo no es religioso. no concibe en elevada esfera la existencia de Dios, ni cree en los destinos del alma, redimida por la penitencia, salvada por las buenas obras"* [The superstitions and aberrations of the spirit constitute a curious study in the life of the Chinese. Those people are not religious. They do not conceive in a high sphere the existence of God, nor do they believe in the destiny of the soul, redeemed by penance, saved by good works]. (*La Puya*, November 1, 1892, 147)

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12) "Goyo" is a common short form in Spanish for the proper male name "Gregorio." It is nevertheless not a reference to General Gregorio del Pilar, who rose to prominence in the late 1890s.

The othering of Chinese living in the Philippines was based on their insincerity in matters of faith, as seen in excerpts 17 and 18 below.

(17) *"Así los chinos solo van á los templos cuando tienen necesidad de pedir algo á Dios"* [Thus, the Chinese only go to temples when they need to ask God for something]. (*La Puya*, November 1, 1892, 147)

(18) *"Todos llevan consigo la estampa de San Nicolás y apenas hay un chino infiel en Manila que no la tenga en su casa, colocada con gran veneración, al lado de Confucio"* [Everyone carries with him the prayer card of St. Nicholas, and there is hardly an infidel Chinese in Manila who does not have it in his house, placed with great veneration, next to Confucius]. (*La Ilustración del Oriente*, October 21, 1877, 3)

V-3-2 American Colonial Period

The depiction of either a natural or strategic form of (in this case, religious) insincerity on the part of the Chinese to appease dominant society is a trope which has been referenced in pejorative US-American depictions of Asians, such as those showing them as "manipulative, with a tendency to use natural wiles and treachery to achieve their own ends" (Lippi-Green 2012). Self-serving attitudes toward religion were similarly used as a basis of othering in the Spanish era, during which Christianization acted as a measure of loyalty to the colonial regime and its objectives (Wickberg 1997). Subsequently, during the American colonial period, "othering" by imputing disloyalty would diverge from the religious dimension: instead, economic and political alignment would come into question (for a critique of opinion columns questioning Tsinoy allegiances, see Hau 2018). As the Americans eschewed previous ethno-legal categories of the *mestizo de Sangley* and *Sangley*, they instituted citizenship based on a binary of Filipino vs. alien (Chu 2023). The racial basis of how such an idea was put into practice can be gleaned from the discouragement of mixed marriage (see below), which clearly marked the Chinese as a different "race" from "Filipinos," further conflating nationality and race while reviving old stereotypes and fears of Chinese attacks on Philippine communities:

(19) *"I am not in favor of mixed marriage. I am not saying this with particular reference to the Filipinos, but also to Japanese, Chinese, and others of a different race marrying American girls."* (*Graphic*, June 4, 1936, 12–13)

(20) *"The walls served the republic, such was the community designated, well on many an occasion; and at least once they served to preserve the city from annihilation at the hands of the Chinese, who had either been scared into revolt or had plotted the city's destruction."* (*American Chamber of Commerce Journal*, June 1929, 7)

We can also observe in the data that ethnic roots of division between "Chinese" and "Filipinos" that extended to the provision of services were already established discursively

(excerpt 21):

(21) *"Será uno de los objetivos principales de ese Banco ayudar a los pequeños comerciantes chinos que no encuentran ningún apoyo de los e[sta]blecimientos bancarios 'no-chinos' que operan en estas Islas. ¿Cuándo seguiremos el ejemplo los filipinos?"* [It will be one of the main objectives of that bank to help small Chinese traders who find no support from the "non-Chinese" banking establishments operating in these islands. When will we Filipinos follow suit?] (*Estudio*, April 7, 1923, 15)

On the one hand, there was at least implicit recognition during this period of Chinese longevity in Philippine society, as evidenced by residency or the ownership of schools, stores, and hospitals:

(22) *"He eulogized the splendid treatment accorded the Chinese residents in Cabadbaran and expressed the hope that there will always be a peaceful relationship between the natives and the Chinese aliens in this part of the country."* (*Graphic*, January 4, 1934, 51)

(23) *"Recently, all the Chinese and Chinese mestizo students of the Southern Institute formed an organization, the main purpose of which is to foster better relationships and understanding among themselves and to do something good for their Alma Mater."* (*Graphic*, September 3, 1936, 44)

While the Chinese were represented as alien residents, the American colonial period marks a transition in the representation of Moros in the sense that violence and backwardness are depicted as consequences of a Moro unsocialized into the US-American form of modernity, as discussed in Section V-2. Through this juxtaposition, the Americans and Filipinos of the time lauded Moros who were educated in the American-established school systems and conformed with the requirements of the national government, while dismissing those who fought against American rule as barbaric, rebellious, or criminals. In contrast to the Chinese, who were associated with the settings of urban life and the civilization of mainland China, the Moros, despite maintaining close trade links with the rest of Southeast Asia and entering into international treaties through the Sultan of Sulu, were not represented through an equivalent civilizational lens.

(24) *"The survey revealed the deplorable conditions of the Moros in Cotabato and Lanao, particularly in the latter where the rules of hygiene and sanitation are entirely unknown to the Mohamedan Filipinos. Th[e] Moro houses need more ventilation and more windows. The plan of the Offic[e] to modernize the social lif[e] of the Moros appears to be a real need to effect the necessary changes in their ways of living."* (*Adult Education*, June 1939, 27)

(25) *"Moros who have had a taste of education in the public schools, however, give an opposite opinion. They are heartily for the National Defense Act."* (*Graphic*, February 27, 1936, 48)

(26) *"For years, the indifference of Moro parents toward the education of their children was the chief drawback of their own progress. Only the persistent striving of the government has made possible the conquest of that indifference."* (*Graphic*, January 4, 1934, 9)

(27) *"It seems, it is said, that Moros cannot seem to bring themselves to recognize a woman as their leader because the Moros have antiquated beliefs with regards to the place of women in religion, in the government, and in society."* (*Graphic*, July 2, 1936, 17)

Furthermore, while the citizenship of Moros was already recognized at this point, the presence of moderate voices advocating for acceptance of the Moros (excerpts 28–30) did not allay the tension that existed as a result of the desire of the Americans to rapidly assimilate the Moros into the Philippine state. Tensions that came with accepting Christian Filipino judges or authorities did not dissipate easily, as can be seen in the Moros' preference for an American governor and their distrust of courts (excerpts 29–30).

(28) *"But what kind of people are Moros anyway? . . . Are they not, as proven, willing to lend a helping hand in the molding of the Philippines for a sound and secure future? . . . Take away your regional prejudice and be friends with them. Moros are also true-blooded Filipinos, and were born in the same archipelago where Rizal was born."* (*Graphic*, February 6, 1934, 24)

(29) *"The assemblyman-datu believes the time inopportune for the appointment of either a Christian Filipino or a Moro governor as one would arouse the antagonism of the Moros and the other would intensify the existing factional enmity there."* (*Graphic*, September 3, 1936, 5)

(30) *"Give the Moro incontrovertible proofs that he can be sure of justice at the hands of his Christian neighbors and the greater part of the so-called Moro problem will disappear."* (*Graphic*, January 4, 1934, 56)

V-3-3 Independence Period

Noteworthy characteristics of Philippine nationalism during the American period can be said to have stemmed from both the "official nationalism" of the US (Quibuyen 2008) and various attempts at Filipinization to counter US cultural dominance, which in its syncretic sociocultural expression consisted of selected reconstructed precolonial practices and values and Spanish-era religious expression and beliefs (Francisco 2015). Scholars such as Allan Lumba (2022) argue that this period presented a continuation of the conditional decolonization of Filipino nationalists that resulted in little structural reform to the economy or to ethnic categories—what Samuel Tan (2010, 69) would cast as neocolonialism, an "ideological brew [that] is a blend or synthesis of colonial and Filipino values including the justification of colonial prejudice against the non-Christian communities."

The independence period is thus marked by a continuous sense of ambiguity in the use of the terms "Chinese," "*chino*," and "*Intsik*." However, rather than indicating a domestic-oriented policy of conversion, the use of "Chinese" is associated with events in mainland China, as news began to encompass foreign affairs and developments of the Cold War, in association with an outward-looking vision of religious conversion.

Other usages of the term pertaining to local affairs show the Chinese continuing to own businesses and various properties in the Philippines, with the term "Chinese" being increasingly combined with "Filipino" (Filipino-Chinese) in business and organization names. The corpus does not, however, cover the mass naturalization of aliens in 1975, which heralded the legal inclusion of Chinese migratory backgrounds in the concept of "Filipino."

With regard to Moros, the independence period corpus distinguishes itself from the American-era corpus through eschewing the previous dichotomy between "educated" Moros and the "tribal" or "violent" other. The loss of the Americans and the political bargaining position that prominent Moros enjoyed while under American occupation meant that the Moros came under the rule of a majority Christian state, or *gobirno a sarwang a tao* (government of a different people) (Gutoc-Tomawis 2005, 11). For the Moros, it was a state which had considered Mindanao through a colonial lens, such as through Legislative Act 4197, the Quirino-Recto Colonization Act, which provided for the establishment of agricultural colonies on the island. The absence of particular collocations in the corpus is about as revealing as their presence. What was referred to by the Americans and Spanish-speaking elites as a Moro "problem" was left unmentioned in discourse, leaving two discursive possibilities: either the "problem" was considered "resolved" by the time of independence, or the notion of a "problem" ceased to emerge as a common way of speaking about Muslim Filipinos—in other words, the "problem" became symptomatic of the Philippine state. Christian settlers moved into Mindanao with the discourse of claiming "virgin" territories, and new settlers became a source of renewed conflict within the region. With the eschewing of the dichotomy aimed toward creating moral valuations based on the degree of regime acceptance, the discourse reverted to orientalist framing and a return of violent narratives.

(31) *"He travelled far and wide and learned much about the land and its people, the Moros and the settler[s] from the Luzon provinces who came to claim virgin territory."* (*Graphic*, August 28, 1948, 32)

(32) *"I walked down Pershing Plaza looking for Moros. I was told they were very peaceful people, although occasionally one gets jilted by a ranee, after which he goes home to take a bath, then runs through the streets shrieking in an unspeakable manner, hewing at the Christians with a gleaming kris. He generally continues this routine until he stops a dozen Constabulary bullets, at which point he goes home."* (*Ateneo Quarterly*, August 1950, 34)

(33) *"The Moro espied him and rushed at him with fiery, bloodshot eyes, swinging his glistening 'kris' which, Mr. Flores saw, was already stained with blood at the end."* (*Graphic*, August 28, 1948, 7)

VI Conclusion

Both the quantitative and qualitative approaches employed here determined common features of minority representations in the discourse of "Moros" and "Chinese" that highlighted the persistence of stereotypes in print media throughout different colonial regimes and in the period from Philippine independence in 1946 to the 1970s. Such ideas were reflected mostly in media written in languages associated with power and upward mobility, such as Spanish and English, yet nuances were determined largely by era rather than linguistically. In particular, the results per time period reveal that even as different discourses developed with regard to Moros and Chinese in the Philippines, their signifiers retained a relatively stable core with shifting meanings depending on the nature of the political regime. This sensitivity of cultural representation to political tides was noted also by Vivienne Angeles (2016, 15), such as in the "fierce" Moro warriors depicted in the American-era films *Brides of Sulu* (1937) and *The Real Glory* (1939) vis-à-vis modern films in which Moros are "no longer isolated and confined to the south," and was more determinant of changes in discourse than language-based attributions, with the possible exception of Filipino/Tagalog due to the paucity of digitized periodicals available for the language.

Semantic shifts between both colonial eras and the immediate independence period were not necessarily punctuated by a shift in discourse, even when somewhat conciliatory excerpts were to be found in American-era periodicals. Rather than a continuation of the dichotomous goal-oriented representation of the Americans, the image of the violent, strange, and uncivilized Moro persisted in discourse found in periodicals after 1946, albeit without the fatalism of the Spanish era. Instead, independence came with at least a tacit acceptance of the Moro as national fact, yet monolithic in character. The element of proximity is perhaps interesting to note in these representations: Chinese maintained a constant presence in urban centers of the country,[13] while the Moro cultural communities were discursively separated geographically and politically from larger cities, where many of the periodicals' publication offices were situated. Chinese representations were nevertheless noted for reproducing stereotypes and colonial attitudes. The portrayals were ambivalent: Chinese were lauded in an aspirational sense as rivals to "Filipino" businesspeople, recognized for their rootedness in the Philippines through adapting the language and setting up businesses, yet distrusted precisely because of their association with wealth and their perceived political or religious loyalties (Hau

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13) Christianized Chinese were allowed more freedoms within urban spaces than non-Christians, who were confined to the *parián* (the area where the Spanish colonial government required Chinese to live; it often transformed into a de facto marketplace).

2005). The discourses on minority identities until the 1970s demonstrate not only the twin role of colonial discourses and languages in shaping the contours of the national imaginary until well after formal colonialism, but the way in which ethnic and religious identities become essentialized through the repetition and reproduction of particular associations through discourse.

While this study does not cover nuances within its periodization or in the years following the 1970s (for contemporary discourses, see Gutoc-Tomawis 2005; Hau 2005; Angeles 2016; Chu 2023), the increased availability of digitized material and archived Internet sites brings ample opportunities for future studies to examine representations through time and text type. Recent years have brought a degree of resignification of Chinese mestizoness, in order to identify with the affluence of rising East Asian economies on the one hand, while increasing social and cultural capital for Chinese Filipinos on the other (Hau 2005, 521). Yet if the identification with "Asian-ness" serves as the epilogue to this story, it comes with limitations. While the corpus contains multifaceted references to China and its civilizational and economic status through references to art, political events, and trade, the Moros are not afforded a civilizational-material discourse—whether through references to the maritime trade network of Southeast Asia, Islamic civilization, or the Muslim *ummah* that stretches from Southeast Asia to the Middle East and North Africa. This suggests that the modern identification and recognition of regional "Asian" power is fraught, not only because of aspirational middle class identification with rising (East) Asian economies but because connections with Moros continue to be expressed in media through a lens that views the Philippine nation as bound with images of Christian and Muslim conflict and social incompatibility, insurgency, and colonialist narratives regarding the Southern Philippines. Resignification of Moro identities in the decades following World War II thus did not carry the implications of economic connections or regional affinities with ASEAN states with significant Muslim populations, and instead it reproduced colonial-era identity narratives that emphasized security issues, religious conflict, and geographical or cultural remoteness. In the conclusion of his book *A Nation Aborted*, Floro Quibuyen (2008, 383) forwards an interpretation of the Ilustrado writer José Rizal that eschews the outlines of the colonial chauvinism of the nation-state: Rizal's exile serves instead as a community-building project that promoted an ethical national community anticolonial in the sense that it imagined a form of coexistence that went against the very definitions of the modern nation-state, not being based on a one-nation, one-language ideology or exclusivism. As far as minorities in the Philippines go, interrogating the colonial character of representation suggests an accompanying need to critically examine the continuity of political and material forms of oppression and exploitation that accompanied their genesis in the first place.

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Appendix 1   List of Sources for Direct Quotations

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2	Anonymous. 1929. Dawn of New Day. *American Chamber of Commerce Journal*. March, p. 1.
3	Anonymous. 1929. A Pleasant Philippine Prospect. *American Chamber of Commerce Journal*. September, pp. 3–4.
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5	Garcia, Frederico B. 1921. Mga Talsik sa Larangan ng Panitikang Tagalog [Gaps in Tagalog literature]. *Ang Wika*. October 16, pp. 13–14.
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7	Anonymous. 1920. Kung bakit dapat mahalin ang Sariling wika [Why you should love your own language]. *Ang Wika*. November 1.
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9	Stevens, Luther R. 1935. The District of Southern Mindanao. *Khaki and Red*. August, pp. 48–52, 67.
10	Biteng, Tome N. 1936. Mohammedan Youths Seek Improvement of Moroland. *Graphic*. January 30, p. 46.
11	Anonymous. 1932. Mosaico Decenal [Decadal[1)] mosaic]. *Excélsior*. October 20, p. 1.
12	Anonymous. 1932. Mosaico Decenal [Decadal mosaic]. *Excélsior*. November 20, p. 1.
13	Ramirez, Manuel. 1932. Apostillas de la Decena [Decadal accounts]. *Excélsior*. October 30, pp. 27–28.
14	Merino Walls, M. 1893. Notas Politicas: Los Moros de Mindanao [Political notes: The Moros of Mindanao]. *El Diablillo Suelto*. June 15, p. 2.
15	Pimentita. 1893. Revista de la Decena [Decadal magazine]. *La Puya*. February 1, pp. 239–241.
16	Anonymous. 1892. Notas de So-baco [Armpit's notes].[2)] *La Puya*. November 1, pp. 147–150.
17	Anonymous. 1892. Notas de So-baco [Armpit's notes]. *La Puya*. November 1, pp. 147–150.
18	De Govántes, F. 1877. Santuario y Convento de Guadalupe [Sanctuary and convent of Guadalupe]. *La Ilustración del Oriente*. October 21, p. 3.
19	Morante, P. C. 1936. And Never the Twain Shall Meet. *Graphic*. June 4, pp. 12–13, 16, 46.
20	Anonymous. 1929. Historical Spots in Manila. *American Chamber of Commerce Journal*. June, pp. 6–8.
21	Anonymous. 1923. Semana [Week]. *Estudio*. April 7, p. 15.
22	Anonymous. 1934. Weekly News Digest: National Affairs. *Graphic*. January 4, pp. 49–53.
23	Cachuela, Rogelio L. 1936. School Section. *Graphic*. September 3, p. 44.
24	Philippines, Division of Literacy and Citizenship. 1939. The Director Went South. *Adult Education*. June, p. 27.
25	Quibranza, Luis A. 1936. No Compulsory Military Training for Moros. *Graphic*. February 27, pp. 9, 48.
26	Silao, Iluminado. 1934. Moros Now Clamor for Education. *Graphic*. January 4, pp. 9, 47.

Appendix 1   Continued

Citation Number	Source
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28	Layton, Vivencio. 1934. What if They're Moros? *Graphic*. February 6, p. 24.
29	Anonymous. 1936. Wants Fugate in Former Post. *Graphic*. September 3, p. 5.
30	Anonymous. 1934. Comments: Innocent Moros? *Graphic*. January 4, p. 56.
31	Dagdag, Purificacion A. 1948. Mr. Flores' Problem. *Graphic*. August 28, pp. 6–7, 32.
32	Lachica, Eduardo D. 1950. Southward Ho! Or Forty Thousand Leagues Under Normal. *Ateneo Quarterly*. August, pp. 31–35.
33	Dagdag, Purificacion A. 1948. Mr. Flores' Problem. *Graphic*. August 28, pp. 6–7, 32.

Notes: [1] Every ten days; in this case, published three times monthly.

[2] *Sobaco* is a colloquial word for "armpit." The word is used here satirically as a pen name imitating Sangley names.

Appendix 2 Titles of Periodicals Used in the Study

For the complete list of periodicals and issues used in this paper's corpus as well as details pertinent to the publications (rightmost column), see Cruz and Ortuño Casanova (2022).

Adult Education in Action	*Gossips and Scandals*
American Chamber of Commerce Journal	*Graphic*
American Oldtimer	*Guerilla*
Ang Ebangheliko	*Himagsikan*
Ang Espiritismo	*Ilang-Ilang*
Ang Tanglaw	*Kayumanggi*
Ang Wika	*Khaki and Red*
Ateneo Quarterly	*La Ilustración del Oriente*
Bangon	*La Jurisprudencia*
Boletín de la Cámara de Comercio Filipina	*La Juventud*
Boletín Oficial de la Cámara de Comercio Española en Filipinas	*La Malasia*
	La Patria
Bulaklak	*La Pavera*
Damdaming Bayan	*La Puya*
Domus Aurea	*La Solidaridad*
El Arte Taquigráfico	*La Verdad*
El Bello Sexo	*Las Noticias*
El Diablillo Suelto	*Minerva*
El Heraldo de la Revolución	*Revista Historica de Filipinas*
El Mensajero	*Sandata*
El Mercurio	*Semana*
El Nacionalismo	*Silahis*
El Oriente	*The Apostle*
Estudio	*The Freeman*
Excélsior	*Yugo*
Filipinas ante Europa	
Flying News	

CℓEℓℓ

Malaysiakini and the Power of Independent Media in Malaysia
Janet Steele
Singapore: NUS Press, 2023.

Janet Steele's *Malaysiakini and the Power of Independent Media in Malaysia* provides a timely chronicle of modern Malaysian history, seen through the eyes of *Malaysiakini*—"arguably Malaysia's most important independent news organization" (p. 2)—beginning roughly with the political milieu of its founding in the late 1990s and ending with Malaysia's election of a government led by the once political prisoner and former deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim in November 2022. In her introduction, the author astutely observes that "much of the academic work on Malaysia focuses on politics and elections" (p. 4), with scholars and analysts feverishly churning out studies that seek to diagnose the meaning and implications of electoral results as well as prognosticating future trends for the country. Steele's work looks instead to the past:

> This study takes a different approach. It looks at the history of modern Malaysia through the lens of *Malaysiakini*. By focusing on significant moments in *Malaysiakini*'s history, it illustrates how seemingly intractable problems get worked out within Malaysia's only truly independent newsroom. (p. 4)

These "intractable problems" become the substantive topics for her ethnography and history in subsequent chapters, namely, citizenship (Chapter 6), race (Chapter 7), religion (Chapter 8), and politics (Chapter 9).

The first five chapters of the book focus on the founding origins and inner workings of *Malaysiakini* as a news organization operating in a national media landscape dominated by pro-establishment print media. The latter are owned mainly by political parties and individuals belonging to or supporting the decades-old, long-standing ruling coalition, Barisan Nasional (National Front), which is dominated by United Malays National Organisation. A major deterrent and source of frustration for individuals or groups wanting to enter the country's news journalism sector is the existence of highly coercive laws regulating news publishing, most dating back to the British colonial era. These include the 1948 Sedition Act, the 1984 Printing Presses and

Publications Act, and the 1972 Official Secrets Act (p. 35). The 1990s, a time of rapid capitalist economic development and technological change, culminating with the eruption of the Reformasi protests in Malaysia precipitated by Mahathir Mohamad's sacking of his deputy, Anwar Ibrahim, provided two non-Malay Malaysians—Steven Gan and Premesh Chandran—an opportune moment for founding an online news portal. *Malaysiakini* was set up in 1999. Mahathir, in his quest to attract foreign investment into Malaysia for high-tech and digital industries (the Multimedia Super Corridor project), pledged a "no internet censorship" policy (p. 5). These conjunctural factors enabled the birth of *Malaysiakini*.

Steele's accounts of Gan's and Chandran's personal and familial backgrounds—Gan an ethnic Chinese from Ketari, Pahang, and Chandran of Indian descent from Petaling Jaya, Selangor—and their involvement in student activism at university in Australia give the reader some sense of the formative experiences that shaped the political outlook and values that the two sought to embody and articulate through *Malaysiakini*. Steele's highly readable writing provides colorful and memorable accounts of the founders' origins and significant events in their early years (Chapter 1); their journalist and activist careers in the 1990s (Chapter 2); and the political events and protests that inspired and birthed the Reformasi Generation (Chapter 3).

At the heart of the book is the story of *Malaysiakini*'s unshakeable commitment and embodiment in the Malaysian context of what Steele has termed the norms and values of "independent journalism and the ideology of professionalism" (pp. 6, 68). How *Malaysiakini* operationalizes the putatively universal principles of "good journalism," such as independence and objectivity, in the day-to-day workings of its newsroom in Kuala Lumpur is further developed in Chapters 4 and 5. For example, "Although *Malaysiakini* journalists seldom use the word 'objective,' they frequently use the word 'independent,' by which they mean factual, non-partisan and outside of government control" (p. 69). Elaborating on journalistic norms, the author makes the further claim that "*Malaysiakini*'s equation of independence with non-partisanship and 'covering both sides' is rooted in the specifics of Malaysian political culture" (p. 70), what Gaye Tuchman (whose work the author references) would call "objectivity" in the United States. The historiographical assumptions behind the author's deployment of these norms in her stated purpose of writing "a cultural history" of *Malaysiakini* (p. 2) will be subjected to critical assessment below.

Chapter 5, titled "Independence," provides an intriguing account of how *Malaysiakini* began with some initial start-up capital before an infusion of funding from MDLF (now MDIF, or Media Development Investment Fund), an organization that funds "independent media in developing democracies" (p. 84). MDLF/MDIF funding, crucial to *Malaysiakini*'s survival in its early years, led to virulent attacks from the ruling Barisan Nasional regime, culminating with the infamous police raid on *Malaysiakini*'s premises on January 20, 2003, a landmark in its history. *Malaysiakini*'s political persecution by the government burnished its reputation of independence and gained it much support from readers, particularly among an increasingly politicized and largely urbanized,

multiethnic middle class in West Malaysia. Gan estimates that soon after the 2011 Bersih protest in Kuala Lumpur, the number of subscribers hovered around ten thousand and "many of the subscribers were 'hard core supporters'" (p. 156). Implicit in this chapter's account is the author's glowing evaluation of *Malaysiakini*'s practice of economic and financial independence, a fundamental capitalist virtue, only now performing the silent function of a normative yardstick for how media businesses should be independent in Southeast Asia.

Given that Steele's work is intended to be read as a cultural history of *Malaysiakini*, a history that intersects with the broader historical trajectory of modern Malaysian politics, this review critically evaluates the work's historiographical assumptions and what they mean for history writing on Malaysia more generally. The present critique seeks to pose the following two questions: the question of the nation and the subject of history, and the question of the politics of chronology or temporalization (Hirano 2018).

To gain an understanding of these historiographical matters, there are a couple of particularly revealing lines in the author's admission that

> the history of *Malaysiakini* is difficult to write, because in many ways the news organization has not changed at all since its founding—it is Malaysia that has changed . . . In 2018, it was Malaysians who . . . changed the government for the first time since independence. One could even argue that these changes are in large part due to the dogged efforts of *Malaysiakini* journalists. (p. 10)

The author's ruminations on the idea of change and continuity provide two keys to understanding the implicit assumptions on the nature of history and historical knowledge in her book. First, who is the historical subject in Steele's narrative? *Malaysiakini*, the news organization (its corps of journalists and editors, especially its founding protagonists, Gan and Chandran), is the putative historical subject, or the agent of history, "unstoppable as a force for change" (p. 175) in shaping modern Malaysia, practicing "its ideology of independent journalism" in an electoral authoritarian or semi-democratic country. *Malaysiakini*'s role as historical agent also serves as the avatar and microcosm of the larger historical narrative of the Malaysian nation. However, given the binary nature of the competing notions of the imagined national community that still prevail in Malaysia today, one that Donna Amoroso (2004, 215) has insightfully diagnosed as Malaysia's seemingly interminable entrapment "in the logic of Malay vs. Malaysian nationalism," it is worth ascertaining which side of the national story *Malaysiakini* and its founders identify with.

Chandran, with the utmost clarity, observes: "the birth of Reformasi crystalized this idea of a nation, and *Malaysiakini* played a critical role . . . to channel this rethink of the nation . . . without that movement we wouldn't have succeeded, and without us they wouldn't have succeeded" (p. 168).

Malaysiakini's role as historical subject is intimately tied with the social and political ascendancy of the urbanized, multiethnic middle classes in West Malaysia, which drove the Pakatan

Harapan (Alliance of Hope) coalition to electoral victory in 2018. Steele goes so far as to say, "there was a 'path' connecting Reformasi with the landmark electoral victory of the opposition in May 2018, and we can trace this same path at *Malaysiakini*" (p. 145). In other words, *Malaysiakini*'s story is the story of the recent ascendancy and political victory of "Malaysian nationalism" over "Malay nationalism," as the country continues to be locked into this unending bipolar national, ideological tug-of-war.

Second, what kind of temporality is employed by Steele's history, and what are its political consequences for readers of Malaysian history more generally? The kind of chronology employed by Steele is a historicist one, "an understanding of time in which all human societies, despite their historical differences and diversities, follow the exact same linear path of progress" (Hirano 2009). The historical avatar for the realization of the author's "universal" values of liberal, democratic, free market capitalism of the American variety can be likened to the image of Russian nesting dolls: *Malaysiakini*'s narrative as the outer figure for the narrative of a pluralist, multiethnic story of the Malaysian nation underneath, with the universal history of American values as its innermost figure. What this chronology conceals is precisely what Walter Benjamin (2003, 392) forewarned of: "there is no document of culture which is not at the same time a document of barbarism." It is possible to read the events recounted in Steele's book from the perspective of the oppressed classes of people in Malaysia's past, the silenced historical subject. This critical historical account is woven out of countless memories of police violence against protesters in numerous demonstrations between 1998 and 2012 (Chapters 3 and 9), the destruction and eviction that accompanied urban capitalist development (Chapter 6), the deaths of migrant workers in immigration detention camps (p. 37), and the undocumented "bodies . . . piled up three-deep in the morgue" (p. 123) on May 13, 1969, among others. What Steele sees as "intractable problems" connected by "a chain of events," the oppressed classes see instead as "a single catastrophe" (Benjamin 2003, 392), that of people living and dying under the systemic violence of the modern Malaysian capitalist nation-state. The epistemic violence committed by historians sustains this catastrophic course of history indefinitely.

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The Khmer Rouge Tribunal: Power, Politics, and Resistance in Transitional Justice

Julie Bernath

Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2023.

The Khmer Rouge genocide, a historical tragedy that continues to resonate in Cambodia's politics, underscores the importance of understanding the country's social and political dynamics. Julie Bernath's *The Khmer Rouge Tribunal: Power, Politics, and Resistance in Transitional Justice* offers a comprehensive examination of transitional justice in post-conflict Cambodia, providing a rich empirical foundation. The book delves into the establishment and impact of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), also known as the Khmer Rouge Tribunal Court, in facilitating transitional justice in Cambodia. Employing the concept of "resistance" as a guiding framework, Bernath has structured the book into four chapters, with the first one examining the background of the Khmer Rouge regime and the three subsequent chapters discussing the three forms of resistance to transitional justice. The three forms of resistance encompass senior members of the ruling party, victims of the Khmer Rouge regime, and marginalized groups who have suffered under both the Khmer Rouge and contemporary regimes.

The first chapter provides an overview of Cambodia's long-term conflicts and multiple regime changes from its independence from France in 1953 to 1998. Through these decades, Cambodia experienced a range of transformations—from a brief period of prosperity in the 1960s to successive political upheavals and violent conflicts in the 1970s and 1980s, followed by an era of experimentation with liberal values in the 1990s. These shifts were driven by power struggles among ruling elites influenced by both Eastern and Western powers. The prolonged process of reconciliation and peace negotiation in the 1990s, prioritizing negative peace over accountability, delayed the establishment of an ad hoc tribunal to address the Khmer Rouge crimes until October 2004. This delay, with the tribunal being set up twenty years after the Khmer Rouge regime's collapse and Hun Sen's successful consolidation of power with many former Khmer Rouge defectors, led to criticisms that the ad hoc ECCC tribunal resembled a "show trial"—akin to the People's Republic of Kampuchea's People's Revolutionary Tribunal, which was set up shortly after the fall of Democratic Kampuchea in July 1979. The ECCC's limited impact in delivering justice for the victims stemmed from two major factors: first, the operational delays caused by many disagreements within the hybrid trial chamber between the United Nations and the Cambodian government judges; and second, a race against time to try aging Democratic Kampuchea leaders

and survivors, with many responsible figures, such as Pol Pot, dying before the ECCC's establishment, and others, like Nuon Chea, passing away during the trial. Consequently, only a few cases were concluded by the time of the ECCC's dissolution in 2022.

In Chapter 2, Bernath discusses empirical findings and analyzes the process through which the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) government strategically and effectively controlled the narrative by resisting in-depth accountability to the ECCC. Drawing from diverse and credible sources—such as public statements made by Hun Sen and senior CPP officials, interviews with ECCC personnel and donor country representatives, trial monitoring, media coverage, declassified ECCC documents, and academic works—Bernath exposes the party's resistance. In this chapter, the author shows that the ruling party's senior members' resistance to tribunal accountability went beyond mere power consolidation and legitimacy pursuits; it aimed to shape a personalized peace narrative portraying Hun Sen as the "father of peace" or "savior of the nation from the genocidal regime" (p. 67)—credited to his 1998 win-win policy leading to the reintegration of remaining Khmer Rouge soldiers (Post Staff 2024). Bernath shows how, led by this personalized narrative, the CPP strategically utilized forms of resistance, including the practices of patronage, coercion, and co-option of all three branches of government, while selectively engaging with legal proceedings. This approach aimed to ensure a balance between maintaining power dominance, keeping a clean image for defected senior Khmer Rouge CPP officials, upholding international respectability, and facilitating the continuous flow of aid into the country. Bernath also identifies two key challenges to comprehensive transitional justice facilitated by the international aspect of the tribunal. First, the UN's Office of Legal Affairs, tasked with ECCC oversight, displayed limited interest in pushing for deeper trial accountability. Second, the individual interests of the ECCC's international donors impacted the proceedings, exemplified by Japan's "off-hand diplomatic" stance despite criticisms of irregularities attributed to concerns over Cambodia's increasing reliance on China (p. 101).

Chapter 3 examines Khmer Rouge victims' resistance through the ECCC proceedings and their engagement as civil parties in two distinct spaces—the "invited" and "invented"—to seek transitional justice (p. 111). The "invited" space, exemplified by the highly regulated ECCC courtroom, adheres to predefined rules. Conversely, the "invented" space refers to a place that is less formal and more open to liberal interpretations of transitional justice, such as a training workshop for representatives of civil parties organized by nongovernmental organizations. This space-based approach helps the author critically analyze the civil parties' struggles and perspectives on the transitional justice process in Cambodia. Drawing from surveys and qualitative interviews with Khmer Rouge victims, Bernath uncovers insights into how victims navigated justice amidst Cambodia's authoritarian regime and their own trauma despite the existence of the ECCC and support from many NGOs. The fear among victims participating in the ECCC trials as civil parties stemmed primarily from distrust of Cambodia's ruling CPP government and

the lack of judicial independence. This distrust was exacerbated by the lingering effects of international actors prioritizing negative peace, which facilitated the CPP's consolidation of power in the late 1990s through the reintegration of Khmer Rouge officials and cadres into government positions. This integration instilled fear in many survivors, discouraging a majority of them from participating in and testifying during the ECCC trials. The small number of victims who participated did so as an act of personal courage and resistance to fight for justice: it showed their readiness to face any risks that came with fighting for justice. In this chapter, the author differentiates the experiences of victimization according to whether "one held any [low-level] positions during the Khmer Rouge regime, such as chief of a communal kitchen unit or a former militia—basically, the victims of order from the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK) government" or "if one was forced to work in the rice field in a starving and torturing condition" (p. 124). This constitutes the question of whether the "victim of order" or the "victim of torture" deserves justice. Besides analyzing the challenges faced by victims in participating as civil parties, Bernath also discusses the lack of adequate reparations from the ECCC for victims who dared to participate in the trials—especially those who came from rural areas and poor economic backgrounds.

Chapter 4 focuses on another form of resistance—nonparticipation—by marginalized groups that were victims of both the Khmer Rouge and the current authoritarian regime in the context of political violence. Bernath has selected three marginalized groups as case studies: those affected by forced displacement, those affected by land disputes, and those who participated in the mass protest at Freedom Park in Phnom Penh following the contested 2013 election. In addition to enduring the violent past trauma, these groups continued to face human rights abuses in modern-day Cambodia, perpetrated by a government comprising many former Khmer Rouge officials. Discouraged by the oppressive and corrupt regime and recognizing their own powerless position, many in these marginalized groups expressed their discontent and resistance by not participating in the ECCC trials. Their nonparticipation reflected a deep distrust of the Cambodian judiciary's ability to deliver justice to impoverished and vulnerable individuals like themselves.

The concluding chapter emphasizes the author's intention for the book to contribute to a better understanding of the politics of transitional justice in a specific political context. Bernath highlights the three sites of resistance to transitional justice: the ruling party, civil parties, and the nonparticipation of citizens affected by contemporary political violence. Through empirical case studies of the three sites, Bernath reveals the complexity of the transitional justice process for Khmer Rouge crimes, shaped by long-standing contestations over justice, peace, and political order. Her findings further highlight the way in which the ECCC emerged as a central site of struggles over the interpretations and directions of the country's social, economic, and political transformations.

Overall, the book provides an impressive breadth of knowledge and insights into the study of resistance in relation to transitional justice in the context of political violence. Bernath's extensive

research on ECCC tribunal proceedings and the experiences of Khmer Rouge survivors sheds light on the intertwined dynamics of temporal governance between the ECCC and the ruling party in connection with time and justice. This complex tribunal process included the CPP's hegemonic influence over the Cambodian judicial system, which undermined the ECCC's neutrality. In addition, the pragmatic approach of international actors and donors contributed to the ECCC's failure to deliver optimal justice to the Khmer Rouge victims.

Finally, while this study offers valuable insights into the inquiry of resistance and transitional justice in authoritarian regimes, it would have benefited from further investigation into how the opposition party, the Cambodian National Rescue Party (CNRP), leveraged the flaws of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal to provoke resistance and mobilize support during the 2013 election. More important, it could have explored how the CNRP engaged both Cambodian diasporas, many of whom are refugees who fled the Khmer Rouge regime, and marginalized communities, predominantly the poor and working class, in response to present-day political violence. There is more to say about the significance of the ECCC in shaping and reversing Cambodia's political trajectory. The opposition party has often criticized and equated the inefficiency and truncating of the ECCC's judicial process to the non-independent and corrupt domestic courts controlled and used by the ruling CPP to stamp out perceived threats to the ruling regime (Sam 2022). According to a statement by the CNRP, "Cambodia's reversion to one-party rule following the CNRP's dissolution in 2017 and arrest of its senior leaders is reminiscent of the Khmer Rouge era of which Hun Sen and many senior CPP officials had their political development" (Lipes and Yun 2018). Without a thorough analysis of how the opposition CNRP reacted to the political violence imposed by the ruling CPP, a comprehensive understanding of the transitional justice struggle in post-conflict Cambodia remains elusive.

In Chapters 3 and 4 Bernath explores various factors that dissuaded Khmer Rouge victims from participating in the ECCC as civil parties. These factors included the influence of Buddhism, which emphasizes good karma (non-revenge and forgiveness), and the victims' ability to forgive and coexist with former Khmer Rouge cadres in rural villages. However, the author makes limited references to existing literature on social memory following the Khmer Rouge era. For instance, engagement with Eve Zucker (2013), a cultural anthropologist who studied morality and trust within a village community in Cambodia's southwest—a former Khmer Rouge base— could have added nuance to the analysis. This broader engagement would have enhanced under-standing of why many victims opted out of participating in ECCC transitional justice, going beyond a mere distrust of the judicial system and lack of information about the tribunal. Nevertheless, Bernath's broad approach to understanding transitional justice through the lens of resistance proves useful beyond Cambodia's case, offering important lessons for socio-legal studies scholars and practitioners advocating for respect for human rights and transitional justice in post-conflict societies.

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Electrifying Indonesia: Technology and Social Justice in National Development
Anto Mohsin
Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2023.

In his seminal article "The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture," Benedict Anderson (1972, 22) likened the concept of Javanese power to a lamp radiating light outward with a "gradual diminution of radiance from the bulb." Anderson called this an "exact metaphor" for the structure of the state, its center-periphery relations, and territorial sovereignty. He went on to note:

> The cone of light's luminosity expands as the ruler is able to force the submission of rival rulers and demote them to the status of provincial notables; it contracts as provincial notables free themselves from the center and establish their own independent areas of rule. (Anderson 1972, 35)

In *Electrifying Indonesia*, Anto Mohsin writes literally of light bulbs via the broader subject of the electrification of the Indonesian Archipelago. And while taking a notably different approach, he also delves into notions of political and social power in Indonesia. Mohsin brings together two fields, science and technology studies and Indonesian studies, and in their articulation produces a fascinating account that is both deeply empirical and theoretically engaging.

Through in-depth fieldwork and extensive archival research, Mohsin explores how ideas of social justice, development, and nation building came to be woven into the project of electrification, making it much more than a techno-scientific enterprise and one embedded in the transformation

of politics, the economy, and society. Mohsin's core argument is that "the patrimonial New Order government shaped how Indonesia was electrified, and its electrification program, in turn, fashioned how the regime envisioned sociopolitical order" (p. 10).

It was the Dutch who introduced electricity in their colony in the late nineteenth century. Chapter 1 shows how early electrification benefited Dutch companies and industry at paper mills, rubber factories, tea companies, and various mining enterprises. The Dutch sought to claim their colonial possession not just politically but also technologically. But anticolonial leaders also saw the potential of technology, including electrification, as a tool for national unity. After independence, President Sukarno, an engineer by training, called on Indonesians to shift from a "water-minded" (agricultural) nation to an "electricity-minded" (industrial) one, emphasizing the importance of technology to state-led and socialist development (p. 40).

If Sukarno saw electrification as a way to promote national unity, Suharto saw its potential for regime consolidation. Chapter 2 shifts to the New Order regime, borne of the violent mass killings of 1965, which sought electrification as a way to garner rural electoral support for the state party, Golkar, and Suharto specifically. Mohsin calls this "patrimonial technopolitics," the use of technology to disburse patronage for political ends (p. 54). The electrification campaigns helped create and reinforce the narrative that Golkar and the New Order regime were synonymous with development, thereby endowing Suharto's rule with a kind of performance legitimacy. Mohsin carefully documents his findings in a number of ways, including through records of various speeches and banners at electrification ceremonies that explicitly express gratitude to the New Order and Suharto.

Chapter 3 explores the bureaucratic apparatus of electrification, the Perusahaan Listrik Negara (PLN) or the State Electricity Company. In line with the technocratic emphasis of the New Order most famously embodied by the "Berkeley Mafia," the PLN also moved to develop technical expertise. For higher-level and management positions, the PLN recruited and hired from the nation's most prestigious universities, with some employees even attaining advanced degrees abroad. For most other positions, the PLN recruited graduates from technical high schools and sent them to training centers in Jakarta. Mohsin points out that the PLN was not just peddling electricity. As a social institution, it also channeled the New Order government's largesse to its employees and village residents through patronage, grants, and a variety of other social programs. The PLN also served as an ideological conduit for the regime's own interpretation of Pancasila, the national ideology.

Chapter 4 explores the well-known geographic distinction in Indonesia between Java and the "Outer Islands." Java, the central and most populous island, has been historically favored by leaders, including Suharto, while residents in the less populated, less developed, and peripheral regions of the archipelago have tended to feel more neglected. Mohsin shows how electrification reflected that dichotomy despite the rhetoric of social justice and equality espoused by the New

Order government. In other words, "a lopsided Java-centric development" not only persisted but was exacerbated by the New Order government's electrification campaign (p. 91).

Chapter 5 shows how the PLN bureaucracy sought not just the technical knowledge and capacity to deliver power but also the social knowledge of rural life, including how rural communities used energy. The government invested heavily to produce this knowledge, but, as Mohsin observes, the discourses that emerged were highly motivated; and critics pointed out how government studies overestimated the degree to which electricity provision would reduce inequality, for example, rather than reproduce and exaggerate such inequalities.

Chapter 6 tells the story of an alternative vision of electricity provision in Indonesia through the cases of three rural electricity cooperatives. While such cooperatives appealed to supporters of community-led electricity generation, all three cooperatives, which had been supported by USAID, ultimately failed due to a lack of government and PLN support, perceived mismanagement by their own members, and a lack of enthusiasm from the villagers. Mohsin observes that transporting rural electricity cooperative technologies from one place to another proved "messy and unpredictable" in the context of a new location and landscape such as Indonesia (p. 154).

For scholars of Indonesian studies, *Electrifying Indonesia* offers a nuanced understanding of the New Order authoritarian regime, which was founded in violence and ruled with the proverbial stick but also dangled plenty of carrots throughout its rule. Suharto is still often referred to as the "father of development" and remembered fondly by many Indonesians today. *Electrifying Indonesia* helps us understand why this is the case. While many studies of the New Order focus on the elite-centric nature of Suharto's patrimonialism, Mohsin highlights the role of villagers and rural communities that were embedded in the techno-political patrimonial system. As a result, *Electrifying Indonesia* also helps us understand the New Order regime's relative durability and longevity.

For students of politics more broadly, this work helps to expand our conceptualization of the political. Mohsin argues that technology is both a site and an objective of politics and that "techno-politics is the strategic practice of designing or using technology to constitute, embody, or enact political goals" (p. 54). By marrying the analysis of traditional political institutions such as elections, political parties, and bureaucracies with techno-science, he offers new ways to think about political power, authority, and legitimacy.

Finally, for scholars of science and technology studies, this rich historical case study of Indonesia brings in examples from a region less explored. Furthermore, by highlighting the process of importation and articulation, the study underlines how techno-scientific artifacts are reshaped by different regimes in different locales to achieve profoundly diverse outcomes.

In that vein, in the specific context of techno-politics in Indonesia, one question that arises is about the electoral effects of electrification. Mohsin convincingly demonstrates that New Order elites clearly and urgently perceived the connection between electrification and election.

Furthermore, Golkar did win disproportionately at the polls in rural areas, including in the villages that the government electrified. But did Golkar experience losses—or at least narrower wins—in villages where electrification was forgone? It may be that this level of fine-grained data is not available, but if it were, it would further strengthen the argument of the electricity-election link.

A mark of any good scholarship is its ability to change how we see the world, and by that measure *Electrifying Indonesia* succeeds wonderfully. Whereas Anderson encouraged us to view the light bulb as a metaphor for power, Mohsin shows us how political and social power came to be intertwined with electricity.

Finally, it is worth noting that while Mohsin's study is focused primarily on the past, it also hints at the present. In one interview, a former PLN employee recalls the "aura" of rural electrification and how that aura disappeared "after the Orba" (New Order government). But the interviewee quickly adds "Although it seems to start again" and cites an electrification ceremony in Bali in 2012, during the Yudhoyono presidency (p. 62). Techno-patrimonialism, it seems, may still be alive and well.

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Global Anti-Asian Racism
Jennifer Ho, ed.
New York: Columbia University Press, 2024.

Racism is a core problem of our times, yet we have only just started to tackle its different dimensions. While some progress has been made, not least due to some important academic contributions and participation in public debates, the more fundamental underlying dimensions of racism are still dawning on us. Because of the urgency of the problem, which manifests in daily reports about racist violence and discrimination, I was very keen to read *Global Anti-Asian Racism*, edited by Jennifer Ho. I was intrigued by the concept of bringing together a range of voices and perspectives from different parts of the world but also by the format of the intervention: brief essays. Having read the volume closely, I am left with rather mixed feelings. While some essays are well crafted and truly insightful, others read more like an assemblage of interesting but

unordered thoughts and unidirectional complaints.

In her foreword, Christine R. Yano states that "Racism has been taboo in intellectual approaches to Asia because the subject strikes too close to non-Asian home" (p. xi). This very bold claim ignores a whole range of critical research within and outside Asian studies rather than acknowledging the subject in a fruitful manner, as a quick search in any scientific databank would reveal. Given that it is seemingly all too easy to dismiss previous publications on the subject, Yano promises that "this historic volume" (p. xii) will therefore "dispel that taboo" (p. xi). The exaggerated advertising language, however, does not do the book any favors.

In her introduction, Ho, professor of ethnic studies, uses similarly confusing claims to elevate the significance of the volume. Without stating who exactly she has in mind, she writes, "While many believe that anti-Asian racism erupted in March 2020, global anti-Asian racism has been around for centuries" (p. 2). Given that this book is aimed primarily at an academic audience, Ho writes, "I am very proud to share this collection of essays on global anti-Asian racism because this is the volume many people have been looking for" (p. 3). I find it rather risky of her to underestimate the readership and their academic horizons. When it came to selecting the essays presented here, Ho had a tough job having to choose ten from more than four times that number of submissions. Intending to have the contributions cover not only a variety of disciplines and writing styles, including a graphic narrative by Rivi Handler-Spitz, but also centuries and conti-nents (except Antarctica, as explicitly underlined on p. 8), Ho brought together a broad range of "scholars who identify as Asian and who share their personal experiences with anti-Asian racism before and after the global [Covid-19] pandemic" (p. 12). In her ponderings, Ho states at the end of her introduction: "Yes, there is global anti-Asian racism. But there is also global anti-racism resistance and resilience. There is violence, but there is also beauty and hope" (p. 12). If I had not committed to reviewing this book, the banality of this finishing statement might have made me put it aside right here.

But I am glad I continued reading. I was moved by Rahul K. Gairola's testimony about being hit by a stranger, which was a complete surprise; less of a surprise, perhaps, was that no bystanders came to his help. While he was lucky not to suffer permanent physical damage, he was "damaged in other ways" (p. 18), including in relation to his personal safety but also in his trust in the Australian police. Although the perpetrator was never arrested, the police closed his case. In his analysis, to understand what happened to him, Gairola reminisces about the many remnants of the White Australia policy, which dominated Australia's exclusionary immigration policies for decades. Specific ideas of mateship, under which racism can easily be reframed as humor and insult as hypersensitivity, further contribute to the downplaying of discriminatory behavior.

In her essay, Sara Djahim deals with migrant organizations' resistance to racism in Germany. In particular, she ponders the (un)usefulness of the term "Asian Germans" in their struggle against racism, as none of the many existing organizations for Asians in Germany can properly

claim to represent the entire Asian community there (p. 35) and many people with Asian family connections feel rather uncomfortable with it (p. 37). Sadly, Djahim does not only refrain from offering a definite answer, but in her ponderings she makes several references to German institutions and abbreviations (e.g., NSU, documenta), which should have been translated and explained properly.

Despite the editor stating up front that it is "overly simplistic to say that all anti-Asian racism boils down to white supremacy" (p. 3), this shortcut somehow keeps reappearing in several chapters throughout the volume. In their essay, Érika Tiemi W. Fujii *et al.* trace the question of "how Asian people are integrated [in Brazil's] racial dynamics" (p. 47). Pointing to both the "racial democracy myth" and "whitening politics," they note that Japanese Brazilians are left to choose from only two options: "an alliance with whiteness or anti-racist solidarity" (p. 47). After explaining in more detail the history of Japanese immigration to Brazil, the writers end the essay with a powerful yet rather puzzling statement: "To destroy colonialism, we must look into ourselves as Asian Brazilians" (p. 52). I wish the writers had elaborated on what that actually implies.

For me one of the most astute contributions is the one by Richard Aidoo on the political economy of anti-Asian discrimination in Africa. Aidoo shows, in particular, how some African politicians instrumentalize discrimination mainly against Chinese populations for their own political and economic interests. Rather than simply pointing out colonial histories in Africa, Aidoo includes also the postcolonial nation-building projects in Ghana, Uganda, and Nigeria, making clear that fueling popular anger against Asians started long before the more recent entry of Chinese capital, labor, and entrepreneurship that contributed to the high indebtedness of African states and unemployment amongst the African populations. Aidoo is very convincing in arguing that the recent "anti-China rhetoric is often grafted onto the discourse of anti-colonialism" (p. 67) but also "that this anti-Asian discourse has real economic implications" (p. 68).

Xuening Kong's essay on China's response to the anti-Chinese movement in Mexico (1928–37) is quite an eye-opener, as it shows how racialization was practiced from afar at a time when China was in great political turmoil and depended on ethnic allies abroad willing to dedicate remittances to political struggles in the homeland. This need, as Kong argues, was so strong that it nurtured an ignorance of how overseas Chinese in Mexico were suffering from racism and detracted from the responsibility the Mexican government and society bore for stirring up racist sentiments and violence.

Equally intriguing for me was to learn more from Irmak Yazici about the political discourse and treatment of Uighurs in Turkey. Yazici shows how the pre-pandemic anti-Asian violence and vandalization of seeming Asian-owned businesses were directly related to the developments in China's Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. By discussing the interlinkages between religious identity and foreign policy, and how both shaped negative attitudes toward Asian people in Turkey, Yazici reveals also a number of ambivalences and contradictions. While Turkish President

Erdogan can, on the one hand, criticize the oppression of the Uighurs in a very explicit manner and portray himself as their protector, the Turkish state has, on the other hand, carried out arrests and extraditions of many Uighur activists. China has been one of Turkey's most important money loaners throughout the latter's ongoing economic crisis.

Kong's and Yazici's chapters, in particular, make me wonder to what extent their findings may be applied also to Southeast Asia and the long-standing Sinophobic sentiments prevalent across that region, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. In fact, I wonder why Southeast Asia as well as Southeast Asians globally have not received more attention in this collection. Especially when it comes to intense Chinese investments and national indebtedness, there are presumably a number of parallels that may be detected. However, the need for—or should I say lack of—political asylum for Uighurs, and their subsequent deportations, warrant more academic examination.

The remaining three essays are, in my view, less insightful. Kimberly D. McKee sheds light on the microaggressions Asian adoptees have had to endure in white families "that failed to acknowledge racism" (p. 121). Relying on her own experiences and two video documentaries, McKee details discomfort, marginalization, and accusations in a unidirectional way but does not offer any way out of the "false promises of adoption" (p. 130). Eileen Chung reveals very personal experiences that attest to the hypersexualization and fetishization of Asian women, driven first and foremost by "that Western hegemonic discourse [which] has been internalized by other non-Western cultures" (p. 138). By relating her travel experiences in Cuba and Greece that included a lot of unwanted attention by local men, she seeks to underline the truism that "taken in sum, the lethality of racialized and sexualized violence toward Asian women is rooted in the horrific histories of exclusion and imperialism" (p. 139). Chung ends her essay with two lessons learned from her mother to resist the effects of discrimination: first, one ought to be selective about one's educational and emotional labor to avoid burnout; and second, self-care is not selfish. While there is certainly some conventional wisdom in these suggestions, it remains unclear to what extent the advice helped the writer through her previous travels and, perhaps, will help in her travels to come.

Finally, Jennifer Hayashida draws the reader's attention to the importance of translations for resisting racism. The chapter is written in a more experimental and also poetic style, often leaving big gaps between paragraphs and sections that make it difficult to follow the author's line of thought. In fact, I fear that the key message might have been lost on me. Instead of ending so abruptly, ideally the collection should have included an afterword attempting to sum up the key messages and the remaining questions for others to engage in more profoundly.

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Anwar Ibrahim: Tenacious in Dissent, Hopeful in Power
Khoo Boo Teik
Petaling Jaya: Strategic Information and Research Development Centre, 2023.

This book, as its title clearly states, focuses on Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim (2022–present). More precisely, it analyzes Anwar's evolution ever since he first burst onto the scene as a student leader in the 1960s. To this end, the veteran scholar Khoo Boo Teik has put together a total of nine chapters covering themes as wide ranging as Anwar's personal charisma and his concept of a "humane economy" in a highly engaging fashion. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the book is "neither a proper biography nor a full study of his politics and ideas" (p. xiv). Rather, *Anwar Ibrahim: Tenacious in Dissent, Hopeful in Power* draws on and synthesizes an eclectic mix of materials to illustrate how the incumbent prime minister shaped and was shaped by the broader political system. The book also taps into the expertise and insights of numerous sources, including several prominent figures in the Malaysian political and intellectual spheres.

Chapter 3 discusses the centrality of Islam to Anwar's brand of politics. Much has been written on how Anwar advanced or betrayed Islam. Recent critiques challenge his 2023 decision to welcome a controversial Indonesian preacher, claiming that it contradicted the principles of moderate Islam (Mohd Faizal and Afra 2023). On the other hand, Anwar has also been criticized for supposedly underfunding Islamic-related programs and religious schools since becoming prime minister (Danial 2023). According to the logic outlined in Chapter 3, Anwar has had a rather long career, during which he has faced various challenges and ideological demands, leading him to come up with a matching Islamic approach or discourse. Rather than harping on some of his supposed missteps, it would be more astute to keep a proportionate perspective on the sociohistorical circumstances that he has had to contend with. Chapter 3 rightly highlights that the perception of Islam across the world (particularly in the West) has shifted noticeably over the years. For example, the international media has changed its depiction of Anwar from a "charismatic leader of an Islamic fundamentalist group to a globalist liberal" (p. 86). To shed light on this issue, the chapter analyzes five key phases of Anwar's career. I am especially impressed by the research of Anwar's time in Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM, or the Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement). The effort devoted to retrieving and perusing Anwar's speeches dating back to the 1970s is praiseworthy.

Parallel to the above is Chapter 4's examination of Anwar's economic management philosophy. As the chapter points out, very few analysts remember Anwar's ideas on the economy and wider state-business relations during his first tenure as minister of finance (1991–98). Instead, perspectives centered on the political upheaval of the 1997–98 Asian Financial Crisis, which saw Anwar falling from grace, tend to be of a binary nature. Certain groups criticize Anwar for not only misunderstanding the nature of the downturn but also promoting a series of

unnecessarily deflationary policies that worsened the situation. Anwar's supporters see things differently: they argue that he was made a scapegoat for attempting to rid the system of a series of malpractices. Chapter 4 bridges this intellectual gap, going through a series of documents to unpack what was in Anwar's mind when he captained the Ministry of Finance. A personal favorite is its analysis of Anwar's budget speeches, where sagely advice from the likes of Ibn Khaldun and Wang An Shih is frequently cited. In the latter half of the chapter, other sources, including the oft-cited *The Asian Renaissance* (Anwar 1996), are scrutinized, contributing to a more balanced perspective on what is termed a "humane economy."

Those interested in Malaysian economic affairs will likely find contradictions between the discussion in Chapter 4 (and, by extension, the other chapters) and what Anwar has actually achieved since ascending to the prime ministership in late 2022. For instance, the early June 2024 decision to cut blanket diesel subsidies can be interpreted as a move that is less than humane or caring toward the underprivileged segments of society (see, for example, Hadi 2024). Another common complaint is the lack of traction of the much-touted Menu Rahmah, whereby food eateries are encouraged to offer meals at RM 5 targeting low-income earners. Launched by the Anwar administration in early 2023 with great fanfare, the budget meal scheme seemingly fizzled out within months (Amir and Bedi 2023). It is, of course, unfair to lay the blame squarely on Anwar. Much has changed between Anwar's heyday of the 1990s and the contemporary era. While the Malaysian prime minister must bear some responsibility for the issues raised by the electorate, some of the headwinds—such as the worldwide inflation caused by supply chain disruption in Eastern Europe and the Middle East—are ultimately exogenous in nature.

Notwithstanding its various merits, *Anwar Ibrahim* is not an easy read. It almost certainly assumes that the readership already possesses a fairly advanced understanding of Malaysian politics and history. At times, the chronology also intersects between different periods, which might confuse readers. The fluid timeline, in turn, is a result of the book's organization: its chapters are curated along rather broad themes. For those interested in Malaysia's (and, by extension, Anwar's) role in international affairs, such as this reviewer, it is a pity that there is no dedicated chapter on this topic. It would have been intellectually rewarding to understand how Anwar views developments such as an increasingly assertive China and the fragmenting global economic architecture, for instance. Exploration of the latter is especially intriguing, as Anwar proposed the establishment of an Asian Monetary Fund, seen in certain quarters as a geostrategic move to reduce reliance on the Global North-led Bretton Woods institutions, during his visit to China in March 2023. His proposal was well received not only by the Chinese financial authorities but also by their counterparts in the Global South (Lim 2023). More recently, Anwar has signaled an intention to join the BRICS grouping of emerging economies, of which China is a founding member (see Al Jazeera 2024). While it is too early to assert that these actions will eventually lead to an overdependence on China, some preliminary analysis is still valuable.

In summary, *Anwar Ibrahim* deserves plenty of credit as it offers an enriching perspective on an individual who is occasionally termed a "chameleon" (p. 48). Despite some minor gaps, which are understandable in undertakings of this sort, the book is a recommended source of information for both general and specialist readers interested in Malaysian, and even Southeast Asian, politics. Perhaps more important, it builds on Khoo's (1995; 2003) earlier works on Mahathir Mohamad, Malaysia's longest-serving prime minister (1981–2003, 2018–20). In view of both Mahathir's and Anwar's stature in Malaysian politics, it would not be outlandish to claim that these works rank as some of the most foundational for aspiring analysts seeking to make sense of how Malaysia has ended up at the current juncture, in addition to the nation's future trajectory.

For aficionados interested in more contemporary scholarship, *Anwar Ibrahim* is best read alongside two other freshly released monographs: *The End of the Nineteen Nineties* (Hafiz 2023) and *Sang Kancil: A Tale about How Ordinary Malaysians Defied the Odds* (Chai 2023). These two monographs might not pack the same intellectual or theoretical punch, but they offer a complementary (not necessarily contradictory) perspective to Khoo's latest study. With Khoo devoting much attention to Anwar, it is inevitable that ordinary Malaysians are shunned in the analysis. If one were to be cynical, it could even be said that the side effect of focusing on the supposed "victors" of history is an effacing of the stories of underdogs, the easily overlooked people who have made a huge impact in Malaysian politics. Some of them might have been inspired by the likes of Anwar, but many are simply earnest believers who kept showing up, no matter what the circumstances may have been.

These people clearly matter, pushing change in their quiet, often unspectacular, ways, as noted by Hafiz Noor Shams (2023) and James Chai (2023). Chai's (2023) down-to-earth storytelling, which explores the lives of seven ordinary Malaysians and how their ideals resonate with fellow citizens, is especially noteworthy. The seven people's struggles and why and how they eventually overcame their challenges are heartwarming, simply because these people are as ordinary as one can get in the broad canvas that is Malaysian society. The gripping nature of their tales is reflected only occasionally in Khoo's depiction of the prime minister, although one can argue that it is not the main driving force behind his motivation to write the book. The overarching point here is that whatever one might feel about the current (parlous?) state of affairs in Malaysia, it is undeniable that the Southeast Asian nation has achieved remarkable socioeconomic progress, surpassing that of most former developing economies. The impetus for such transformation emanates as profoundly from elites like Anwar as it does from the general populace.

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Indigenizing the Cold War: The Border Patrol Police and Nation-Building in Thailand

Sinae Hyun

Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2023.

The massacre of leftist student protesters at Thammasat University on the morning of October 6, 1976 is one of the most infamous events in modern Thai history. Thais and international journalists at the time were shocked by the extreme violence inflicted on the students, which included the use of snipers, anti-tank weapons, and M79 grenade launchers. Bodies of some of the dead students were burned and mutilated; one was even hung from a tree and beaten by a mob. Yet, strangely, in the Thai popular imagination the details of the event are rather blurry. Some Thais refer to the event as "16 October," a confused eliding of this event with the earlier

pro-democracy student mass protest of October 14, 1973. It is often mistakenly thought that Thailand's powerful armed forces—who carried out a coup later that day—were the instigators of the violent crackdown on students. In fact, the key actor in the massacre was not the army but a police unit, the Border Patrol Police (BPP). Who were the BPP, and why were they at Thammasat University on that day? These are the questions that Sinae Hyun sets out to answer in her provocative book *Indigenizing the Cold War: The Border Patrol Police and Nation-Building in Thailand*.

In addressing these questions, the book also aims to make a theoretical contribution to the burgeoning field of Cold War studies. For decades our understanding of the Cold War was of a global ideological confrontation between two superpowers, the capitalist United States and the communist Soviet Union. It was "cold" because the two superpowers never came into direct military confrontation. Rather, the kinetic aspect of the confrontation was experienced by the superpowers' proxies in the Third World. Recent research on these countries, often carried out by "home scholars" with a better understanding of local political dynamics as well as access to local sources in local languages, are changing our understanding of the Cold War (p. 7). As one of the great Cold War scholars, John Lewis Gaddis, himself conceded, the superpowers "were never super enough to operate at full strength everywhere" and small powers "were often in a position to influence the actions of their larger counterparts" (p. 7). As historiography globally has moved to emphasize the agency of non-Western powers in their own history, Hyun's book argues that we need to "indigenize" the Cold War, that is, to understand how local political elites adapted and transformed powerful foreign or external factors in pursuit of their own political agendas. In the case of Thailand and other Southeast Asian political elites, Hyun argues, the main political agenda was postcolonial nation building (p. 2).

The author conducted almost two years' fieldwork in Thailand, carrying out research at the BPP General Headquarters in Bangkok, the Third Regional Division Headquarters in Chiang Mai, and camps in the 17 provinces of Northern Thailand. She visited 54 BPP schools and interviewed 123 BPP teacher-officers. She was also given access to the private collections of records of BPP officers.

Hyun dates the origins of the BPP to the 1940s and 1950s, the heyday of the Thai police force, when it was a powerful rival of the military. At the time, the police fielded more men under arms than the military. Its personnel were heavily armed, with armored cars, machine guns, and even artillery (p. 28). Police received superior training to regular armed forces units, including in psychological operations and unconventional warfare. The head of the police, Pol. Gen. Phao Siyanon (1909–60), was in the early 1950s perhaps the most powerful man in Thailand. He was supported by the anti-royalist prime minister Field Marshal Phibunsongkhram, who saw the police as a counterbalance to the increasingly powerful army. The BPP was formally established in 1955 as a paramilitary intelligence unit under the auspices of the CIA, which itself had only

just been founded but which would famously go on to play a crucial role in supporting anti-communism in Third World countries.

Hyun shows that despite having such powerful patrons, the BPP had anything but a smooth rise. Just two years after the BPP's founding, the conservative head of the army, Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat, carried out a decisive military coup which began a long period of military dictatorship. The coup was a disaster for the BPP. Phao and Phibun both had to flee the country, never to return. Immediately following the coup, Thailand's CIA station office "spent the night burning documents and most advisers left the country soon after fearing Sarit's revenge" (p. 36). The 1957 coup thus removed Phao and the CIA as the BPP's chief patrons. Sarit moved to defang the BPP, withdrawing much of its funding, confiscating its heavy weaponry and transferring it to units in the armed forces, and demoting the BPP to bring it under the administrative control of the Provincial Police. Sarit appointed himself director general of the Police Department (pp. 37–39).

The story of the BPP might have ended there, had it not been for the fact that the police unit found a new patron. It was none other than the Princess Mother, mother to the young king Bhumibol Adulyadej (1946–2016), and the royal family who took the orphaned BPP under their wing. During the Phibun era, when the monarchy was politically weak, the royal family had tried to build an image of benevolence. They took a particular interest in the development of the border regions in the north. It was there that the Princess Mother, herself a trained nurse, encountered the BPP and learned of their development activities with the ethnic minorities. Later the BPP gained the support of the United States Agency for International Development, or USAID, which had been set up by President Kennedy in 1961. In the same year the royal family built a palace just outside the northern capital, Chiang Mai, close to the BPP's development projects. From this time the Princess Mother became the patron of the BPP, often referring to its officers as her "children." From the 1960s to 1980 she made more than 260 trips to BPP events such as school openings and Village Scout initiation ceremonies, often dressed in combat fatigues and a beret. These visits climaxed between 1973 and 1975, with 53 trips in 1975 alone (pp. 140–141). The key argument of this part of the book is that over the course of the 1960s the BPP became the armed forces unit with the closest relations to the monarchy.

By 1962 the Border Patrol Police had complemented its role as a paramilitary intelligence organization with a "civic action" function in Thailand's northern border region. Civic action included building schools and medical clinics, providing medicine, improving sanitation, and providing agricultural training. Schools attended by ethnic minority children who often could not speak Thai played a central part in the BPP's civic action role. The BPP acted at once as centers of development, institutions for assimilating the ethnic minorities, and nodes of intelligence gathering. Its civic action work laid the foundation for the famous Royal Development Projects, overseen by the king and members of the royal family, which started up in 1969. As the prestige of the monarchy and particularly King Bhumibol grew, the military regime relented in its earlier

opposition to the BPP. Crucially, in the early 1970s the royalist PM Gen. Thanom Kittikachorn removed the BPP from its position under the Provincial Police and restored its status as an independent organization (p. 59). By the 1970s it was effectively overseen by the royal family.

Besides civic action, the BPP continued its counterinsurgency role. A BPP subunit, the Police Aerial Reinforcement Unit, or PARU, which had also been set up with CIA assistance in the early 1950s, was deployed to Laos in the 1960s to participate in the CIA's covert operation, the famous "secret war in Laos." PARU was the main Thai force in Laos's civil war. It assisted the CIA in training the special guerrilla units of Wang Pao's famous Hmong army. PARU units fought against both the Communist Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese Communist forces, losing 2,500 men by the early 1970s. Also, since the 1950s PARU had been assigned to provide security for the royal family (pp. 87, 127).

The BPP was heavily involved in counterinsurgency activities in Thailand's own rural areas. The most famous BPP initiative of this era was the founding of the Village Scouts movement in the early 1970s (pp. 110–123). This became the largest and most popular anti-communist movement of the Cold War era, a central part of the BPP's "psychological warfare" operations (p. 120). In 1972 the king officially placed the Village Scouts under royal patronage (p. 116). The Village Scouts were both anti-communist "village vigilante groups" tasked with rooting out communism at the village level, and a "vehicle to promote the BPP's and the royal family's anticommunist nation-building projects" (p. 111). Besides the Princess Mother, King Bhumibol, by this time increasingly public in his anti-communism, also took a special interest in the Village Scouts, supporting them financially and even providing a set of regulations for how their activities should be conducted (p. 119).

Hyun argues that from the BPP's origins as an anti-communist paramilitary intelligence organization originally set up by the CIA, by 1975 it had effectively become "an arm of the Thai royal family intent on building a royalist nation" (p. 1). In Chapter 4 Hyun returns to the infamous massacre at Thammasat University on October 6, 1976. A crucial question concerns who gave the order for the BPP and PARU units, the Village Scouts, and other right-wing militias to go to Thammasat University that morning. While the book does discuss the roles and backgrounds of the various commanding officers at the time of the massacre (pp. 126–128), the question is not definitively resolved. But Hyun believes that "the presence of BPP, PARU, and the Village Scouts . . . reasonably provokes suspicion about the indirect and direct involvement of the monarchy in the massacre and coup on that day" (p. 133). Precisely because of the question of the monarchy's involvement, the BPP, PARU, and Village Scouts have been reluctant to speak about—or indeed commemorate—their role in the massacre (p. 133). In an interview one of the founders of the Village Scouts, Somkhuan Harikul, denied that the Village Scouts had even been at Thammasat University that morning (p. 124). The ambiguity surrounding the history of the October 6, 1976 is thus directly related to the lack of clarity surrounding the role of monarchy on that day.

The remarkable story of the BPP in Thailand's experience of the Cold War provides strong support for Hyun's indigenization argument. While the BPP may have been the brainchild of the CIA, the monarchy and its conservative supporters skillfully used it as a political tool to reshape Thailand's postcolonial political order in their own image. This is an important book which will change the way we understand the history of the Cold War in Thailand.

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Innovation, Style and Spectacle in Wayang: Purbo Asmoro and the Evolution of an Indonesian Performing Art
Kathryn Emerson
Singapore: NUS Press, 2022.

In the 1970s, an influential Indonesian arts administrator was trying to introduce serious reforms in the centuries-old Javanese shadow play (wayang) tradition. Humardani, the head of a music, dance, and puppet conservatory in Solo, Central Java, railed against the hidebound conventions of nightlong performances that were filled with long, talky scenes in which the plot barely advanced, comic interludes that distracted from anything to do with the narrative at hand, musical accompaniments with little or no emotional valence, and an invariant structure that prevented any shaping of the performance for the purpose of conveying a message.

Having traveled to Europe and the US, Humardani was clearly influenced by Western ideas about artistic expression, messages, originality, concision, and dramatic effectiveness. He set about developing a new, "condensed" version of a shadow play performance (*wayang padat*). A puppeteer would not generate characters' words extemporaneously but rather memorize a carefully crafted script. He would not improvise jokes or puppets' movements sitting in front of the screen but rather plan out, in concert with a team of associates, every moment of the performance: what musical pieces to play, what scenes to perform in what order (omitting most or all of the conventional ones), what words to have each character pronounce in order to generate dramatic tension. Furthermore, he would get everything wrapped up in about two hours. Humardani was adamant that his goal was not to make performances shorter so that people could get up and get to work in the morning. Instead, he wanted to make a shadow play a focused, dramatically compelling event in which the audience's attention was unwavering and their minds stimulated. He wanted, in sum, to make of a puppeteer an artiste.

Carried out within the confines of the conservatory, creating *wayang padat* performances

preoccupied a number of students: some clearly were deeply intrigued by Humardani's suggestions (or demands) for aesthetic control in service of communicative power. *Wayang padat* did not catch on among wayang's fans, however, whether casual fans who most enjoyed comic interludes or more sophisticated and experienced enthusiasts who found it dense, often obscure, and generally dissatisfying.

One young man among the students at the conservatory in Solo was Purbo Asmoro. He shared Humardani's sense that dramatic focus should be a puppeteer's central concern. Yet after graduating, he made the surprising move of adapting the principles of condensed wayang and applying them to full-length, nightlong performances. It was as though he had boiled the water off a big pot full of ingredients but was still left with considerable quantities of a very pungent sauce.

According to Kathryn Emerson, Purbo Asmoro stunned an audience made up largely of fellow puppeteers who gathered frequently at the home of Solo's most famous puppeteer of the late 1980s, the golden-voiced Ki Anom Soeroto, by performing a known story in accordance with the strictures of *wayang padat*—and holding everyone's attention all night. Instead of the expansive but often disorganized, jokey, and only occasionally compelling sort of performance everyone was used to, Purbo Asmoro demonstrated, by virtue of his careful preparation, the dramatic possibilities that inhered in the genre but had been either largely forgotten or simply never fully exploited.

Since that night in 1989, Purbo Asmoro has worked, in Emerson's telling in *Innovation, Style and Spectacle in Wayang*, with single-minded devotion to developing the genre in such a way as to make it still true to its venerable past and yet adapted to the current age. Emerson refers to Purbo Asmoro's trademark style as "contemporary-interpretive" (usually shortened to "interpretive"), translating a Javanese term (*garap*) suggesting working something up, shaping or forming something. Topmost among Purbo Asmoro's aims is to make every performance dramatically engaging by highlighting conflict and debate. He wants to make sure that a performance has an impact on its observers—even if they attend only the first few hours of it. In a classically conceived performance, so much of that segment of a performance, lasting until about midnight, would consist of conventional elements that a spectator would come away with nothing to reflect upon. So little of anything distinctive about the performance would have come up, except perhaps for new jokes in one of the comic interludes, that the performance would seem to be like any other: a long initial scene in which any plot point would be revealed only about forty minutes in and would soon recede in favor of conventional segments of no narrative specificity.

On the last page of her book, Emerson cites Purbo Asmoro's reference to film as he explains how audiences have come to bring rigorous expectations to a performance. His own aesthetic illustrates his effort to satisfy the demand for compelling storytelling, dramatic intensity (a phrase that comes up often in remarks made by and about Purbo Asmoro), and deliberate planning in pursuit of both. In all of these respects, the effects of moviegoing appear powerful, and Purbo Asmoro comes to resemble a deeply thoughtful and original writer-cum-director of the best of

international cinema.

At the same time, though, much about contemporary shadow plays responds to the opposite pull of a different but powerful medium: toward TV talk shows and their grab bag of comedy (often lame and mostly sexual, indeed, misogynist), pop music, and unrehearsed chatter. Great portions of virtually every performance now incorporate some measure of these elements. Humardani would cry foul, but the onslaught of light and inconsequential entertainment seems unstoppable and overwhelming.

Purbo Asmoro's efforts to follow out but expand upon Humardani's instructions for ways to make wayang compelling have, according to Emerson, proved highly influential, inducing a number of younger puppeteers to imitate his approach to performance to one degree or another. The author believes that the glitzy, gimmicky, and vacuous performances so popular in the 1990s (think Las Vegas, not Broadway, let alone the Actors Studio) have been largely left behind. As a longtime fan, I hope that she is correct, and I must yield to her vastly greater knowledge of the genre's recent history. Yet I am somewhat less sanguine: the most popular puppeteer in the Jogjanese style, Ki Seno Nugroho, prior to his untimely death in 2020, made comic banter absolutely central to his performances, crowding out narrative development, or interest, almost entirely. Even the greatly respected Anom Soeroto, considered the dean of the Solonese tradition, has lent little attention to dramaturgy in his performances, favoring light and accessible entertainment. Purbo Asmoro appears willing to buck that trend, but only so far. He still includes long comic interludes in his performances, saying that he knows many in his audience want comedy over dramaturgy and he must oblige them in their preferences. These segments of his performances can indeed be entertaining, but they run counter to his desire to establish and sustain narrative tension: such shenanigans contravene Purbo Asmoro's lofty artistic aspirations.

Emerson is James Boswell to Purbo Asmoro's Samuel Johnson: chronicler, admirer, and interlocutor. Indeed, when foreign spectators are expected in an audience, whether in Indonesia or abroad, she has provided running translations of his performances for many years, projecting onto a screen English text instantaneously matching his narration and dialogue, a remarkable feat attesting to both her absolute command of the Javanese language and her typing speed(!). She also enters into conversation with Purbo Asmoro during comic interludes, becoming an invited performer like stand-up comics and singers who may liven up many shadow plays in present times—an unheard-of innovation in a tradition that for over a thousand years featured only one, dominant, performer.

Emerson's knowledge of all facets of wayang is simply incomparable, at least among non-native Javanese observers. (I suspect she could hold her own against a great many Javanese puppeteers as well, any one of whom would know his regional version well but lack her comparative knowledge of several different regions and even specific lines of kin-linked puppeteers.) The stories themselves, the entire repertoire of the gamelan orchestra, the finer points of narrative

divergences: Emerson can spot any variant or innovation and reflect on their implications with complete assurance. Purbo Asmoro is extremely lucky to have found in Emerson such an able and discerning intermediary between him and an English-speaking world.

Emerson's attention to detail as a researcher is nothing short of jaw-dropping. To take one particularly striking, but hardly exceptional, example: late in the book she provides graphs analyzing the timing of different elements of performances by ten different contemporary puppeteers—how much time was taken up for narrative or "interpretive" sections, for comic interludes, for battle scenes, etc. We're talking *seconds* here, not just minutes. Working up these graphs has to have taken extraordinary amounts of very patient work, but the results are indeed enlightening, providing an easily legible comparison of performance practices among the most famous puppeteers of the day. Emerson appears also to have taken careful notes on every performance she has attended (over 1,500 of Purbo Asmoro's alone) and all the many interviews she has had with performers and commentators.

The contrast between this meticulously researched, highly informative, and lucidly written contribution to the field of wayang studies, on the one hand, and a great deal of what gets published in performance studies today—poorly edited, poorly copyedited, and providing only clichéd analyses—on the other, is striking.

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Strangers in the Family: Gender, Patriliny, and the Chinese in Colonial Indonesia
Guo-Quan Seng
Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2023.

Despite extensive scholarship on Indonesia's Chinese minority, *Strangers in the Family* offers a wholly fresh perspective. Spanning from the latter days of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) to post-independence Indonesia, this elegant monograph reexamines the Chinese families of Java's northern coast through a focus on gender, sexuality, race, and the ways these aspects intersected and evolved under Dutch colonialism. While previous studies have emphasized Confucian patriliny as a defining aspect of Chineseness in Southeast Asia, Guo-Quan Seng foregrounds the women—often of Indigenous or multiracial ancestry—within creolized Sino-Southeast Asian families. By doing so, he introduces a much-needed gender dimension to the histories of overseas Chinese. The author shows that mothers, daughters, grandmothers, wives, concubines, widows,

and even enslaved women, despite their subordinate positions, actively "spoke back" and defended their interests within the constraints of a patriarchal society. Thus, he casts a novel light on the moral landscape of the Sino-Javanese community from these women's perspectives.

Focusing on the archetype of the stranger, Seng argues that Indigenous concubines and their multiracial daughters were strangers in their own families; they were expected to raise children in a culturally Chinese patrilineal milieu in which they effectively remained outsiders. He also challenges the long-standing sinological tradition of viewing Southeast Asia's Chinese communities through a purely Chinese lens and dismissing any discrepancies as aberrations. The book takes a different path, scrutinizing Chinese-Indonesian history through the overlapping prisms of Chinese masculinities, Indigenous Indonesian family structures, and their co-evolution under Dutch rule. It demonstrates in rich detail how VOC rule permanently altered Chinese marriage practices and how ethnic boundaries were repeatedly reconfigured during the colonial period as a result of changing policies on race management.

In addition to the introduction, the book consists of four parts, each containing two chapters. The first part discusses the formation of Java's creolized Chinese society, highlighting the agency of Indigenous and multiracial women and the prevailing marriage systems. Part 2 examines how these women challenged patriarchy through divorce pleas and other means of protecting their interests. Part 3 focuses on reformers' efforts to create new discourses on love, sex, and marriage. Part 4 explores Western-influenced notions of gender equality, the backlash they caused, and the introduction and aftermath of colonial birth registration. In the conclusion, the author makes broader comparisons with other Chinese-descended communities in Southeast Asia and discusses the long-term effects of this specific history in contemporary Indonesia.

Chineseness as an exclusionary racial identity traditionally pivoted around the continuation of the paternal family line and adherence to Confucian marriage traditions. However, by focusing on women's agency, this book uncovers several unique dynamics along Java's northern coast. Its emphasis on West Java and Batavia stems primarily from source availability, as the archive of the Chinese Council (Kong Koan 公館) of Batavia has survived while those of Semarang and Surabaya have not. Intriguingly, this archival source reveals that women in Sino-Javanese families had greater agency in initiating divorce trials than their peers in China and Europe. In contrast with China, they maintained strong ties with their natal families, practiced bilateral wealth succession strategies, and followed patterns of concubines living separately from wives. This likely reflects the influence of local Islamic practices.

By the early twentieth century, local, regional, and global developments had significantly reshaped Chinese-Indonesian family structures. While Malay had come to serve as the dominant language, most families preserved Chinese religious practices, albeit in localized forms. Under the influence of Western education, a dynamic moral discourse centered on Confucianist revival established itself in Java, aiming, among other goals, to modernize the institution of marriage.

Facilitated by print capitalism, discussions on sexology, romantic love and courtship, monogamy, and sexual liberation could now be articulated and disseminated in vernacular Malay. Reformists also attempted to bring about legal equality between Chinese people and Europeans, thereby sparking discussions about the benefits of implementing Europeanized family law and the novel concept of civil law marriages. At the same time, as the book details, the Chinese feminist move-ment in Java faced strong societal resistance whenever westernization seemed to advance too quickly.

The author has a keen eye for the ironies that marked the lives of women in Chinese families. He highlights how Indigenous concubines and their multiracial daughters ensured the continuation of Java's Chinese community, learning Confucian marriage rituals and traditional matchmaking in the process, all while remaining marginalized within the ethnopatriarchal structures they helped keep alive. In the 1890s, they suddenly lost their right to hold and transact properties. The underlying legal reforms reflected the advice of Dutch sinologists, many of whom placed greater emphasis on prescriptive Confucianist doctrines than on locally evolved practices. Colonial regulations also solidified the racial divide between Chinese and Indigenous Indonesians. For one thing, the mandatory civil registry of births in 1919 sparked an obsession with genealogies. Most Chinese fathers eventually complied with this requirement, thereby gaining official recogni-tion of their patrilineal naming system. (Few felt the need to also register their marriage.) Paradoxically, this element of colonial bureaucracy made people of Chinese descent more identifi-able as non-natives, thus perpetuating their long-standing plight of discrimination and alienization in postindependence Indonesia.

The book boasts numerous additional merits that vie for attention. It is innovative in its focus on inter-Asian colonial encounters, prioritizing them over those involving Western actors. It also utilizes a diverse array of primary sources, encompassing both archival and published materials, in Chinese, Malay, and Dutch. The author is a skilled writer with a profound grasp of the relevant literature, genealogies, lived experiences, and legal and economic conditions. The result is a comprehensive and nuanced portrayal of a frequently overlooked demographic segment, further enhanced by photographs, biographical sketches, and illuminating fictional accounts.

Several chapters draw from the Chinese minutes of the Batavia Kong Koan meetings, now published in 15 volumes by Xiamen University Press. Unfortunately, the corresponding Malay minutes (1912–64) are excluded from this extraordinary series—arguably reflecting the enduring liminality of the Sino-Malay heritage—though scans of this handwritten material are accessible through Leiden University's Digital Collections portal. Their added value to a study like this would be twofold. First, since the Chinese minutes ceased to be recorded after 1920, the Malay material is among the few available sources for later periods. Second, the colloquial Malay language better reflects the heterogeneity of Java's Chinese-descended communities. For instance, the romanized names Lie Kong Foe (August 4, 1913), Tjong Foeng Njong (September 6, 1916), and

Lie A Foeng (March 4, 1918) are immediately recognizable as belonging to Hakka individuals, whereas the corresponding Chinese minutes simply use 李光匏, 張芳娘, and 李亞鴻, without any indication of their ethnolinguistic origins.

As someone with a background in linguistics, I found the hybrid names of certain women in Sino-Javanese families particularly intriguing. The book presents several combinations of Chinese surnames, Malay nicknames, and/or the element Nio (娘), such as Jap Kapak Nio, Tjiam Molek, Tan Paginio, Certi Nio, and Nie Bales. Such gendered, translingual naming practices, also evident in the Malay Kong Koan minutes and Sino-Malay publications, hold significance for the study of Chinese-Indonesian family history and, as the author terms it, "inter-Asian intimacies" (p. 5).

I have two minor quibbles, also pertaining to linguistics. First, while the author has made efforts to maintain the original spellings of Malay words in direct quotes, many examples display a slightly awkward mix of colonial and modern orthographies, sometimes using the Malaysian rather than the Indonesian standardization. (One could no doubt argue that this orthographic diversity mirrors the plurilingual, creolized history depicted in the book.) Second, I disagree with the identification of *hartawan* as an early twentieth-century neologism (p. 122). This word already featured in classical Malay texts and was likely borrowed directly from Sanskrit (*arthavān*). This does not diminish the author's insightful analysis of the *hartawan* as a cultural and literary archetype, representing Java's morally corrupt economic elite whose era, according to a new generation of thinkers, had ended.

Finally, I suspect that *Strangers in the Family* could serve as a catalyst for further discussion on the paradigm of creolization within the context of multiracial families in Southeast Asia. The author employs the term "creole" as a more analytically impartial designation compared to its Malay counterpart *peranakan*. In academic discourse, this label has traditionally been applied to Chinese-descended Southeast Asian communities because they speak creole languages (cf. Skinner 1996, 59–61). However, there is a certain circularity in this reasoning, as quite some linguists in turn differentiate creole from non-creole languages on the basis of sociohistorical rather than language-internal factors. Southeast Asianists may wish to engage on a more empirical and theoretical level with "archipelagic" notions of creolization (see also Mandal 2018; Kabir 2023). One intervention might be to explore whether creolization existed in Java, the Straits of Malacca, and other parts of Southeast Asia prior to the European presence in those regions, and if so, whether this would necessitate a fine-tuning of the term. In such a discussion, Seng will certainly be an important voice.

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Corrigendum

In Chai Skulchokchai's "Smirking against Power: Cynicism and Parody in Contemporary Thai Pro-Democracy Movement (2020–2023)" which appeared in Volume 13, Number 2, August 2024 of *Southeast Asian Studies*, there are two errors. Page 323, first paragraph, the 7th sentence should read "Later, Pavin Chachavalpongpun, an exiled pro-monarchical-reform academic," and the 15th sentence should read "Somsak Jeamteerasakul, another exiled pro-monarchical-reform critic activist-scholar."

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