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Introduction:
A Place for Networks in Asian Politics

Khoo Boo Teik* and Onimaru Takeshi**

This volume of essays explores the roles and significance of political networks in a variety of Asian—and particularly Southeast Asian—settings. The essays collectively have four modest aims. First, they set out to show that a "networks" approach can capture the dynamism and resilience of political interactions where actors are operating in different contexts. Second, the emphasis placed on networks of politics in this volume complements the wider attention that analysts based in anthropology, sociology, and economic development have paid to social networks within Asian studies. Third, the volume is intended to demonstrate that certain basic conditions of networks apply to different locales, times, and conditions. For example, communications and technologies, albeit very different in their development or sophistication over decades, remain crucial factors in networks. Finally, the essays collectively emphasize the roles of individuals and personalities in the formation of political networks. In quantitatively oriented network theory, the nodes and links of networks are taken to be interchangeable or display the same character. That does not hold in the realm of politics, where human agency may be uniquely important. Where he or she forms a node, each politician, activist, or comrade has a personal character, different from that of other nodes, such that their human interactions frequently shape the strength, influence, or effectiveness of the links among them. Thus, while two articles in this issue show some direct engagement with ideas developed by Albert-Laszlo Barabasi (2003), the investigation and analysis of actual political networks must go beyond abstract principles of network theories to a critical understanding of the personal peculiarities, ideological tendencies, and even career constraints of the actors involved.

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I Big Pictures and Large Categories

It is not difficult to see why other categories and units of analysis may have been preferred over networks as academic analyses of Asian politics engaged with the social, economic, and political fortunes and misfortunes of states in the region. Once past the 1970s, when struggles for independence, "wars of national liberation," and Cold War conflicts had mostly entered the annals of history, studies of Asian politics were dominated by thematic issues linked to the occurrence of the "East Asian Miracle" (World Bank 1993)[1] in its different subregional and national variations. The foci of research appeared, accordingly, to be redirected toward the political economy of late (export-oriented) industrialization (Amsden 1989; Haggard 1990; Doner and Hawes 1995; Jomo *et al.* 1997), the growing integration of national economies with global markets, regional initiatives in economic cooperation and integration, and so on. With the 1997 financial crises, however, it was evident that even East Asian pathways of hopeful structural transformation could end in painful structural adjustments (Jomo 1998; Robison *et al.* 2000), with both being paved as much with latent contradictions and disruptive conflicts as with the technocratic implementation of rationally formulated policies and plans.

In late twentieth century East Asia, moreover, no less than in other regions at other times, deep and extensive economic transformation produced winners and losers at the same time that it generated growth and development. Besides, winning and losing social classes and groups were liable between them to produce tumultuous surges of anti-authoritarian opposition (Boudreau 2002; Heryanto and Mandal 2004), organized pressures for democratization (Anek 1997; Uhlin 1997; Case 2002), mobilization around populist appeals (Mizuno and Pasuk 2009), and pushes toward many permutations of power realignment and redistribution. Occasionally launched to preempt those political trends but more often conducted in response to them were repressive strikes or military coups in Burma, China, the Philippines, South Korea, and Thailand; exercises in oligarchic reconstitution (Anderson 1998, Chapters 8 and 9; Pasuk and Baker 2004; Robison and Hadiz 2004); and the assertion of different statist or hegemonic discourses of national identity, ethnicity, and religion (Brown 1997; Callahan 2005; Khoo 2005). Many ideological countercurrents and policy directions shaped the course of these political struggles (Chen 2001); they expressed or imposed, now in tandem, now in contention, ideologies of economic nationalism, "Asian values" (Khoo 1999), decentralization (Hadiz 2010), neoliberalism (Rodan and Hewison 2006), Islamism (Esposito 1987; Hefner and

1) For the limited purpose of referring to basic themes of research in this section, the citations given, beginning with this one, are only indicative and not meant to be adequate, let alone comprehensive.

Horvatich 1997; Saravanamuttu 2009), and even prescriptions of good governance, transparency, and accountability (Rodan and Hughes 2014).

To understand such developments of socioeconomic change and politics, the most frequently used units of analysis were understandably states, markets, models of capitalism, regimes, policy frameworks, institutions, social movements and civil society, and the intraregional or international flows of capital, goods, services, and people. Thus, much research and debate were devoted to explaining and distinguishing between the character and capacities of different kinds of states—interventionist, *dirigiste*, developmental, and others (Johnson 1982; Woo-Cumings 1999; Chang 2002). At the same time, the merits and flaws of different types of markets—from loosely regulated to "governed" markets (Wade 2003)—were widely evaluated. The relationships and power balances between states and markets were, moreover, discussed via a strong interest in (Asian) varieties of capitalism that sustained arguments over the sustainability or replicability of an East Asian model of capitalism. In parallel, there was considerable investigation of the peculiarities of (Southeast) Asian hybrid regimes (Jayasuriya and Rodan 2007). The analysis of politics was not far either from research on the contributions of social policy regimes to overall development directions and attainments (Chang 2002; Ramesh 2004; Bangura 2010; Khoo 2012) or the roles played by institutional evolution or degradation in determining paths of success or failure in development (Doner 1992). More broadly, a global research agenda on democratization likewise stimulated diverse research projects on the interjections of social movements and civil society into participatory and contentious politics (Shigetomi and Makino 2009). And, under the growing influence of notions of globalization and its acceleration via advancements in information and communication technology, there was a concomitant concern with intraregional or international flows of capital, goods, services, ideas, and people (Nelson *et al.* 2008; Hau and Kasian 2011) that could sometimes be cast in the mold of "non-traditional security issues" (Caballero-Anthony and Cook 2013).

All this was understandable as academic work strove to keep up with fast-paced developments taking place in what was typically depicted as the most economically dynamic region of the world. This is a roughly hewn outline, not a comprehensive survey, of the milieu of academic studies of Asian politics. Suffice it to indicate that networks might have received less attention than deserved in political analysis, notwithstanding references to lingering patrimonial, patronage, and clientelist practices, and business-politics connections (Searle 1999; Sidel 1999; Gomez 2002). Overshadowed by major themes, big pictures, and macro-level concerns, networks found sporadic incorporation for the micro-level significance that network formation and operations seemed to have in politics. Where it was deployed, networks as an analytical category appeared to be on

its own, placed outside the major paradigms of critical political economy, rational choice, public choice, and neo-institutionalism. To give a notable example, the *Routledge Handbook of Southeast Asian Politics* (Robison 2012), thorough in its treatment of competing (and even discarded) paradigms, makes no mention of networks applied to Southeast Asian politics.

II Networks of Politics

There were two notable exceptions to this overall picture (of Asian studies rather than specifically studies of Asian politics). The idea of networks was crucial to studies of age-old but also contemporary patterns of overseas and transnational Chinese associational activities conducted throughout their fluid relationships with China (Liu 1998; McKeown 1999; Tan 2007). Studies explored kinship, clan, locality, dialect, and other such ties that bonded ethnic Chinese networks in far-flung diaspora. Networks featured prominently also in studies of business practices, organizational models, and entrepreneurial culture widely hypothesized to be bound to networks of East Asian (or Chinese, Japanese, or Korean) "relationship capitalism," which were typically contrasted with Western free-market, rules-based business practices. Claims and counterclaims were advanced: Did interpersonal links suffused with distinctly East Asian, even neo-Confucianist, values and notions of trust and goodwill supply a cultural edge to networks of trade and investment while keeping those impenetrable to (non-East Asian) outsiders? In a way, one might speculate, networks appeared to confer a degree of structure to bridge the seeming opacity of cultural factors and the hard materiality of business operations, such that "the success of Asian network capitalism was not about its ability to bypass the state, but about the indirect forms of cultural, material and strategic support provided by the state" (Meagher 2012, 270).

Political networks can be created and maintained by elites as well as counter-elites, in stable contexts or under unsettled conditions. Over broad terrain, under varying circumstances, and subject to special constraints, as a summary literature review suggests, there is scope for networks in the analysis of the personalities, relationships, and maneuvers bound up with networks that tried to consolidate their positions, increase their influence, vie for power, or, indeed, survive in unfavorable situations. For that matter, networks may become particularly useful as conditions change from one kind to another. One type of condition was likely to arise when elite positions and interests were threatened or unsettled by changing or overturned socio-political parameters. To put it differently, "networks take a prominent role when events are changing rapidly, while

social categories and other more recognizable groups are more salient when people have relatively unchanging social positions" (Buck 2007, 646). For example, radical post-Soviet economic and political restructuring cast the 1990s Russian elites' unity, status, and class positions into "a state of flux." Then, the previously established system of elite affiliation was superseded by a complex of networks that supplied the "crucial resources and markers for selection into the post-Soviet Russian elite" (*ibid.*, 645). In post-authoritarian South Korea, to offset the uncertainty of political careers caused by increased electoral competition, an interplay between politicians, bureaucrats, and businesses maintained elite networks of "parachute appointments" of mostly ex- or unsuccessful politicians and ex-bureaucrats in public and private companies (Lee and Rhyu 2008). Thailand's "fractious multi-party system" (McCargo 2005, 507) was fraught with instability, though, as coups d'etat produced alternating military and civilian governments. From the 1980s, "placing the right people (mainly the right men) in the right jobs" (*ibid.*, 501) became a mode of governance manipulated by Thailand's "network monarchy" as it marginalized institutions and rules.

In the higher strata of society and the political system, the very wealthy, powerful, and influential—for example, tycoons, oligarchs, senior bureaucrats, high uniformed personnel, and community leaders—commonly maintain closely guarded networks that facilitate discreet consultations, confidential negotiations, and private deals to further their interests. For that matter, such elite networks could be the locus for hatching plots against foes, as was the case with the political turmoil that beset Thailand from 2005 onward. Indeed, if "Thai politics are best understood in terms of political networks" rather than "bureaucratic polity, constitutional monarchy, transitional democracy and political reform," then a compelling reason for the 2006 military coup could well have been that the ousted prime minister, Thaksin Shinawatra, had "sought to displace network monarchy with new networks of his own devising" (*ibid.*, 499). In subsequent political developments, it might be suggested that networks of networks—the latter being royalist, military, and judicial—colluded to suppress the threat posed by Thaksin and roll back his populist mobilization (Thongchai 2008).

Networks, however, were clearly not the exclusive realm of elites and their concerns. On the contrary, risk and repression have long compelled diverse counter-elite groups and grassroots activists to organize via networks of varying degrees of transience, adaptability, or stealth. During the interwar years of the twentieth century, for example, a good part of "European Chinese politics" was conducted by nationalists, communists, unionists, seafarers, and students as "the Chinese were connected by networks across borders and even oceans" (Benton 2007, 130). Almost a century later, on the eve of the Arab Spring, political networking was "essential for sustaining protest activities, by pro-

viding activists with opportunities for exchanging ideas and moving from one umbrella and initiative to the other . . . also for allowing activists to escape heavy-handed state control" (Abdelrahman 2011, 415). At counter-elite levels, networks could be formed by different groups, in the country or the city or internationally, depending on the principal sites of political contestation and the types of immediate antagonists involved. It has been observed of Egypt that, faced with intense repression and a lack of political party mobilization,

> the networks for change that emerged in Egypt's countryside from the 1990s onwards have been overall more fluid in nature than urban struggles for political and economic transformation. Opposition to agricultural policy by smallholders, landless and urban allies has taken many different forms and is still in formation. Overall these networks of resistance tend to be loose knit, subject to change and reinvention, but persistent and often effective in challenges to land dispossession. (Bush 2011, 401)

In Burma, urban community networks emerged in the uprising of 1988 and then vanished underground to continue covert and everyday resistance (Malseed 2009, 373), even as rural community networks of "non-compliance" allowed Karen villagers to "evade the state of mitigate the effects of abuse" (*ibid.*, 379) as part of their survival strategies while living "under nominal state 'control' or in a condition of strategic displacement" (*ibid.*, 380). Against the sectarianism of a fragmented Lebanese ruling class "lacking a coherent conception of itself and both unable and unwilling to construct a strong state with strong national institutions" (Joseph 1983, 11), women in a Beirut working-class neighborhood built "networks crossing kin, ethnic, sect, class, and national boundaries" (*ibid.*, 3). Being "neither inherently conservative nor revolutionary" (*ibid.*, 4), these networks

> created a social universe for socializing the young; for integrating new residents and stabilizing older residents; for airing disputes, rendering customary justice, and resolving local conflict; for sustaining a sense of order in an atmosphere of political instability; and for linking the working class to other social classes and the political elite. (*ibid.*, 13–14)

On a different social level and bearing an international dimension, "developmental networks [were] vehicles for collectives of intellectuals to construct and contest the hegemony of global capital" (Henry *et al.* 2004, 846).

Networks have been widely favored as a mode of association because their formation, organization, and operation tend to have attributes such as flexibility, adaptability, informality, fluidity, and trust, all useful qualities for collaboration and reinvention (*ibid.*, 843; Bush 2011, 401), and, where necessary, stealth. A theorist of networks was not wrong to draw attention to some of these attributes, but he surely exaggerated when he

made the following claim: "Today the world's most dangerous aggressors, ranging from al Qaeda to the Colombian drug cartels, are not military organizations with divisions but self-organized networks of terror [that] exploit all the natural advantages of self-organized networks, including flexibility and tolerance to internal failures" (Barabasi 2003, 223). From an organizer's perspective, networks could seem diffuse and yet be coordinated. For underground parties in different countries ("scattered islands, unyielding fortresses, or foundation stones in the mansion of communism"), a Chinese communist organizer recounted, the "progressive seafarers who plied the world's ports" were like "the human nervous system [that] punctually relayed commands" and "the system of veins and arteries [that] transmitted vital forces and nutrients to the cells and organs."[2)]

A more sober if terse comment on networks pointed out that "in an era of globalization, the characteristics attributed to networks, such as flexibility and dynamism, facilitate the dissemination of information, particularly digital information."[3)] Before the 2011 uprising in Egypt, "Nationally based activist groups [were] involved in an ongoing process of exchanging, borrowing and disseminating ideas and experiences with other groups through the internet and other new information and communication technologies" (Abdelrahman 2011, 413).

Such qualities enabled networks to be variously sized. Flexibility could mean self-restraint, as when Indonesian NGOs, students, and other activists mobilizing against Suharto in 1998 "declined to build large networks" and cautiously remained "small-scale and loosely organized" given the regime's record of ruthless repression of dissent (Boudreau 2002, 37). Networks, however, could be integrated into larger structures, such as social movements that were "neither fixed nor narrowly bounded in space, time, or membership" but were "made up of shifting clusters of organizations, networks, communities, and activist individuals" (Whittier 2002, 289). Those "shifting clusters" served as "nodes, hubs and links" that could maintain networks over long periods and distances. Noting that Japanese businesses were linked to "powerful Southeast Asian politicians and their mainly Chinese business allies to ensure the security of their investments, to avoid bureaucratic red tape, and even to retain access to these markets," Takashi Shiraishi (1997, 182) saw them as "complex transnational politico-business alliances . . . often built on networks forged in the 1950s and 1960s." Indeed, that kind of inter-elite networking could prop up a "soft regionalism" inasmuch as institutionalization was weak in Asia. Japan, "a nation of networks," it has been suggested, "create[d] regional integration through networks" as if the "[p]olitical and economic network structures that vitiate[d]

2) Z. Tie, *Liao Chengzhi zhuan* [Biography of Liao Chengzhi] (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1998), pp. 97–98, cited in Benton (2007, 136).

3) Manuel Castells, cited in Henry *et al.* (2004, 844).

the distribution between public and private spheres inside Japan [were] replicated in and externalized to Asia" (Katzenstein 1997, 31).

Finally, networks need not be tightly closed. It is not uncommon that "the official capacities and class positions of elites are often cross-cut by social networks linking different parts of government and class fractions" (Buck 2007, 645). Counter-elite networks could have a similar feature. For instance, "loose domestic networking" in the uprising against Hosni Mubarak in Egypt went together with "interchangeable membership" as dissidents were "active in one of more civil society or political groups, either through their professional careers as members of advocacy NGOs or individual membership in political groups outside of the scope of official politics" (Abdelrahman 2011, 414). Nor need a network be "based on shared values," as was pointed out by Leroi Henry, Giles Mohan, and Helen Yanacopulos (2004, 845). Illustrating this point, a study of the links between prominent Asianists from China, Japan, Vietnam, and the Philippines, and their individual "daydreams and fantasies" from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth, showed that a network "does not imply any uniformity of ideas or consistency, let alone equal intensity, in the level of political (or even personal) commitment" (Hau and Shiraishi 2009, 336). Able to create links with "*minimum* motive[s]—not necessarily ideational, but personal, professional, and even financial" (*ibid.*), networks bear enormous potential for forging "connections between people across territorial and ideological boundaries who have very different ideas" (*ibid.*, 337).

III Structure of the Volume

On the whole, the subjects of this volume range from the ranks of powerful elites to the cells of underground militants whose politics was conducted within networks that struggled for influence, superiority, or sheer survival under varying conditions. The two essays by Pasuk Phongpaichit, Nualnoi Treerat, and Chris Baker, and Teresa S. Encarnacion Tadem track the careers, not to say careerist paths, of individuals who aspired or rose to elite status by accessing the privileges of networking or competing for influence by being the hub of a high-level network. Another two essays, by Khoo Boo Teik and Naruemon Thabchumpon, examine networks that, linked to broad-based movements, participated in open electoral politics, albeit under the strictures of the domestic political systems. The final two essays, by Takeshi Onimaru and Ken Miichi, focus on networks with international connections that operated in stealth.

The creation of elite networks can be explicit and deliberate, especially as a strategy to sustain an oligarchic political system, as Pasuk Phongpaichit, Nualnoi Treerat, and

Chris Baker show in their article. In Thailand, because of rapid economic and social change, there are none of the established, seemingly natural frameworks for networking found in more settled societies. Those hopeful of joining the power elite come from widely differing backgrounds. Paths through education are very fragmented. There are no clubs and associations that can serve as meeting places. Alumni associations have been brought into existence as one major way to meet the demand for a framework for power networking. This particular associational form is familiar and comfortable because it draws on aspects of collegiate life that most of the participants have experienced. The military pioneered this strategy in the 1960s. When the military's power and prestige waned in the 1990s, several other institutions emerged to fill the gap. One of the most successful was the Stock Exchange of Thailand, which created the Capital Market Academy in 2006. The latter offers academic courses, but its main purpose is to create an alumni association that serves as a network linking the main centers of power—bureaucracy, military, judiciary, big business, politicians, and select civil society. Although created in an earlier era, such networks can be effective, for example, in rent-seeking activity, which is one feature of oligarchic politics even during later politically unsettled conditions.

Teresa S. Encarnacion Tadem traces the emergence and eventual collapse of the technocratic network of Cesar E. A. Virata, prime minister of the Philippines under Ferdinand Marcos. The influence of Virata's network rose during the martial law period (1972–86), when technocracy was pushed to the forefront of economic policy making. Applying concepts of networks, the paper attributes the rise and eventual collapse of Virata's network to a three-dimensional interplay of relationships—between Virata and Marcos, Virata and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, and Marcos and the United States. Initially, Virata's close links to social, academic, US, and business community networks thrust him into government, where he shared Marcos's goal of attracting foreign investments to build an export-oriented economy. Charged with obtaining IMF and World Bank loans, Virata's network was closely joined to Marcos as the principal political hub. The former, however, had to contend with the networks of Marcos's wife, Imelda, and his chief cronies. While the IMF and World Bank support offered Virata some leverage, the latter's network could not control Imelda Marcos's profligacy or the cronies' sugar and coconut monopolies. In Virata's own assessment, his network was weakened when Marcos's health failed during an economic crisis in 1981 and after Benigno Aquino's assassination in 1983. In those crises, Imelda Marcos's network and Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Fabian Ver's faction of the military network took power amidst the rise of an anti-dictatorship movement. Tadem concludes that the United States' switch of support from Marcos to Corazon Aquino sealed the

demise of Virata's network.

In Malaysia's 12th general election of March 2008, three opposition parties collectively cracked the hegemony of the ruling coalition, Barisan Nasional (BN, or National Front). They denied BN its customary two-thirds majority in Parliament, won 10 of 11 parliamentary seats in the capital, Kuala Lumpur, and took control of 5 of 11 states in Peninsular Malaysia. As the opposition parties formed a coalition called Pakatan Rakyat (PR, or People's Alliance), a two-coalition system appeared to have taken shape even though PR had not yet won national power. As Khoo Boo Teik shows in his article, one way of analyzing how PR reached that watershed electoral outcome is to examine how the coalition moved from imagining to realizing dissent over a 10-year period. Khoo does not cast imagining and realizing dissent as disparate acts. He treats them as two tasks that were borne by qualitatively different but connected networks that helped PR to overcome its structural, organizational, and resource disadvantages in battling BN. The first networks considered in this article are the cyber-networks that used information and communication technology-sited or -enabled links to construct an alternative media. As PR's cyber-networks wove a web of counter-hegemonic discourses, the alliance's organizers, allies, and supporters could imagine themselves as a community of dissent. PR's second type of network consisted of physical coalitions, that is, groups and organizations of varying degrees of cohesion that linked the PR parties with their allies in civil society and their supporters at large. These coalitions were ground-level networks of people, formed for political actions that included issuing informal appeals for support, joining ad hoc activities, participating in structured events, and making highly organized interventions. Their common objective was to mobilize and realize dissent through electoral contestation. Even after 2008, however, PR lacked a third type of network that would maintain stable links between party structures and social bodies, including trade unions, community organizations, and civic associations. Those "missing links," Khoo argues, rendered PR vulnerable to regime harassments and blandishments that could undermine its parties and networks. By analyzing PR's experiences through the lenses of its networks, Khoo offers a fresh understanding of the travails of constructing a two-coalition system.

Naruemon Thabchumpon investigates the two bitter antagonists in the turbulent politics of contemporary Thailand—the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD), with its members labeled the Yellow Shirts, and the United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship (UDD), or the Red Shirts. Each of the two foes, typically regarded only as a movement, actually has a vast network connecting supporters from many quarters. The Yellow Shirt network was associated with the "network monarchy," military, judiciary, and bureaucracy. The Red Shirt network, organizationally manifest in a series of

electorally triumphant parties, was linked to exiled ex-Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, his proxies, and also groups and individuals who opposed the military coup that ousted Thaksin in 2006. The significance of the two antagonistic networks can be gauged from their different influences on democratic processes over several years. Naruemon uses concepts of political networks to examine PAD and UDD within the socio-political context in which they arose. The article focuses on several aspects of each of the two networks: their political conception and perspectives, organizational structures (for decision making and networking), and the strategies and activities of their members. By critically analyzing key and affiliated characters within PAD and UDD, as well as the functional mechanisms of the networks, Naruemon provides an evaluation of the respective positions of the two networks in contemporary Thai politics.

Small, clandestine political networks trying to survive are often the most difficult of networks to trace, as two articles dealing with networks operating one century apart demonstrate. Such networks critically depend on how individuals in them can build and maintain close links in underground existence against the obstacles of constant state surveillance and police suppression. Takeshi Onimaru reviews the activities of the regional headquarters of the Third International (Comintern) in Shanghai to chart the construction and collapse of the Comintern network, which linked international and regional communist movements in East and Southeast Asia from the late 1920s to the early 1930s. The Comintern had established its Far Eastern Bureau in Shanghai in 1926 and Pan Pacific Trade Union Secretariat in 1927 to supervise national communist movements in East and Southeast Asia, allocate funds, dispatch couriers and agents, and receive local communists who were headed for Moscow. For this work, a liaison network was necessary. Its construction and maintenance were carried out by agents and couriers who had contacts with the Comintern's Shanghai staff and with liaison officers in local communist movements. Within this complex East and Southeast Asian network of international and regional communist movements, critical links were developed between agents, couriers, Shanghai regional headquarters staff, and local liaison officers who acted as the network's nodes. Intriguingly for the operation of this vast network, important roles were played by regional facilitators who spoke European and local languages, were familiar with regional situations, and knew their contacts. By charting the structure of the network, tracing its links—forged or snapped—and identifying its nodes—which emerged or vanished—Onimaru provides an original account of the construction and collapse of the Comintern network over a decade.

Finally, Ken Miichi uses network theories to explore the characteristics of militant Islamist groups in Indonesia that committed or ideologically legitimized violent attacks on those they regarded to be enemies of Islam in times of peace. The basic militant

Islamist network was constituted by the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and its associated groups in Indonesia. Believed to have been responsible for dozens of violent incidents in Indonesia after 2000, including the Bali bombings of 2002 and 2005, JI sympathized with al-Qaeda's ideology, openly supported al-Qaeda and other militant ideologues by translating and publishing their work in Indonesia, and sent hundreds of fighters (*mujahidin*) to Afghanistan for training. Even so, the Indonesian militant Islamist groups were not controlled by foreign entities. Nor did they merely emulate their Middle Eastern counterparts. Miichi shows that JI had its own characteristics, although it shared some features with a broader militant Islamist network. The paper takes as its point of departure Barabasi's characterization of al-Qaeda as a matrix of self-organized networks, not a military organization with structured divisions. In Barabasi's theorization of networks, al-Qaeda appears as a "scale-free network" in which a limited number of persons over years accumulated many nodes in a scattered and self-sustaining web (Barabasi 2003). Hence, JI could be regarded as an organization with a loosely organized yet hierarchical structure divided into small cells that were held together by personal loyalties. Its members were typically recruited through family, school, and other friendly connections. Indeed, when faced with intensifying police arrests and assaults, militant Islamists modified their methods and increasingly fell back on their networks. Using published reports and his own interviews with relevant individuals, Miichi reviews JI's organizational structure and explores militant Islamist networks in Indonesia and its neighboring countries. By focusing on the links and nodes in these networks, the article compares significant aspects of militant Islamist groups with corresponding features of other political and Islamic movements.

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Very Distinguished Alumni: Thai Political Networking

Pasuk Phongpaichit,* Nualnoi Treerat,** and Chris Baker*

The creation of elite networks can be explicit and deliberate, especially as a strategy to sustain an oligarchic political system. In Thailand, because of rapid economic and social change, there are few of the established, seemingly natural frameworks for networking found in more settled societies. Those hopeful of joining the power elite come from widely differing backgrounds. Paths through education are very fragmented. There are no clubs and associations that can serve as meeting places. Alumni associations have been brought into existence as one major way to meet the demand for a framework for power networking. This particular associational form is familiar and comfortable because it draws on aspects of collegiate life that most of the participants have experienced. The military pioneered this strategy in the 1960s. When the military's power and prestige waned in the 1990s, several other institutions emerged to fill the gap. One of the most successful was the Stock Exchange of Thailand, which created the Capital Market Academy (CMA) in 2006. CMA offers academic courses, but its main purpose is to create an alumni association that serves as a network hub linking the main centers of power—bureaucracy, military, judiciary, big business, politicians, and select civil society. Such networks are critical to the rent-seeking activity that is one feature of oligarchic politics.

Keywords: Thailand, alumni networks, Capital Market Academy, military, oligarchic politics

The class that assembled for the first time in Bangkok in March 2010 was not an average group of freshmen students. To begin with, there was Banharn Silpa-archa, a former prime minister and 40-year veteran of parliamentary politics who, at age 77, was hardly in the usual catchment for education. Beside him on the school benches were five other former ministers, one of whom had also been commander-in-chief of the army; two other generals; two deputy police chiefs; the head and two deputy heads of major government agencies; and a sprinkling of judges and MPs. In a class of fewer than 100 students, this concentration of the powerful could not have occurred by chance. Nor was this an ancient

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and prestigious seat of learning. The academy had been founded only five years earlier, and the vast majority of Thailand's population had never heard of it. It was called the Capital Market Academy (CMA), and its stated aim was to educate people, primarily businessmen, about corporate finance and investment.

Of course, the reason why this school's benches groaned under the weight of so much power had nothing at all to do with the content of the coursework or the value of the certificate received on graduation. Rather, it had everything to do with networking. These powerful people were here because the others were too. The CMA[1] is the latest and most spectacularly successful example of an institutional form that has become uniquely important in Thai politics—a quasi-school that exists primarily to form a network among its alumni.

The relatively low level of institutionalization in Thai public life has been noted many times—from the Cornell anthropologists' notion of "loose structure" in the 1950s through to Danny Unger's work on limited social capital in the 1990s (Embree 1950; Unger 1998). The monarchy, military, and bureaucracy are the only organizations with both structure and historical depth. Parliament has been constantly disrupted over the years. With just one exception, political parties are ephemeral. Business associations have only recently acquired more weight. The rapid pace of economic and social change in recent decades has also meant that institution building lags behind social realities. In this situation, the business of forming networks linking different, fragmented nodes of power has become of critical importance. The founding of the CMA can be seen as a deliberate attempt to create a network hub with linkages into several of the dispersed centers of power in Thai society.

This paper examines the rise of the CMA as a window into the arcane background of Thailand's oligarchical politics. The first section of the paper traces the emergence of the political alumni network over past decades. The remaining sections outline the foundation, rapid rise, and immense influence of the CMA.

I The Development of the Political Alumni Network

The original model for the new political alumni networks came from the alumni associations of major universities. Until the 1960s, most recruits into Thailand's elite, other than its military component, passed through one or other of the country's first two uni-

1) In Thai, Sathaban Withayakan Talat Thun. CMA's Web site is www.cma.in.th, accessed January 19, 2016.

versities, Chulalongkorn and Thammasat. Social bonds among students were cemented by hazing rituals, sports, and other campus activities. Alumni associations were formed to preserve these bonds into later life. The resulting networks, particularly those focused on certain faculties (e.g., Chulalongkorn's Faculty of Political Science), were important in the relatively narrow social and political elite of the time, especially in the bureaucracy.

The military adopted and modified this model. Classmates at the Chulachomklao Military Academy and the Cadet School were encouraged to form strong lateral ties and to preserve these ties through alumni activities in subsequent years. As a result, by the 1980s the class groups of certain years had become players in the internal politics of the military.[2)]

Changes in the power structure of the country between the 1960s and the 1980s created a demand to extend this network model to embrace newly emerging nodes of power. The absolute dominance of narrow elites in the civilian and military bureaucracy was diminished as new political forces developed. The bureaucracy itself expanded in size and complexity, particularly with the addition of new technocratic functions. Business groups became richer and more politically established. Provincial centers rose in importance, and their business elites were drawn into national society by improved communications. Parliament and electoral politics emerged as a tentative forum for some of these new forces.

The alumni networks of the old educational institutions gradually became less effective as means to build links among people who mattered. Many of the luminaries of the emerging business world were unable to gain admission to the old universities. Instead, they were trained in new government universities or rising numbers of private universities, with Assumption Business Administration College being especially favored. Often they went overseas, especially to the United States, for the final stages of their education. New provincial leaders often rose through universities in the provinces. Several new alumni networks emerged, particularly focused on Assumption Business Administration College, Ramkhamhaeng Open University, and informal groupings among graduates from favored US locations such as Boston—but overall the trend was toward fragmentation.

Against this background, in 1989 the military made a key innovation: founding a quasi-academic body with a major and perhaps preeminent purpose of building a wider form of the networks associated with alumni.

Earlier, in 1955, the military had founded the National Security Academy (Withayalai Pongkan Tatcha-anajak, Wo Po Or) to give short-course training to civilians in order to instill in their minds the importance of national security and the role of the

2) Most famously, Class 5 of the Military Academy was responsible for the coup of 1988.

military. Students included both military officers and outsiders, mainly civilian bureaucrats. Besides its role as a propaganda vehicle for the military, this institution gradually became important for building informal links out from the military into newly important social groups. In 1989 the military created a new institution to accelerate the development of this networking, the National Security Academy for Government and Private Sector (Po Ro Or). At the time, the military's role in the polity was coming under increasing attack from business quarters. A burning issue was complaints that the military budget was eating into the regular annual budgets, which should have been used for projects to support industries and other businesses. Po Ro Or primarily recruited students from business and other civil society groups. In 2003, it launched an extra program specifically targeted at politicians.[3)]

At these National Security Academies, the educational content was less important than the active encouragement of bonding and networking. Much classwork was in groups. Students made many trips and visits, both within Thailand and overseas, which offered long periods for socialization. Contact in the classroom was supplemented on the golf course and in exclusive clubs and karaoke parlors. Bonds formed during the course were sustained by an active round of alumni activities. Most important, these academies actively inculcated the military culture of unconditional commitment to help colleagues in every possible way. Refusing a request from an old classmate would be bad form.

The National Security Academies were initially highly successful. Many of the most prominent businessmen of the era joined the classes. So, too, did many highfliers in the civilian bureaucracy and some select members of the media and civil society. The resulting links were vital in bridging the gaps between military, civilian, business, and professional groups. For two decades, there was scarcely a major figure in Thai public life (outside royalty) that had not attended one of these programs.

After the political crisis of 1991–92,[4)] however, the prestige of the military was badly damaged and its role in national politics sharply reduced. The attraction of the National Security Academies consequently declined, though not immediately or completely, because their function in network building to some extent existed quite apart from any association with the military. This gradual decline created a demand for further innovation in this area of network formation.

At least three new institutions were launched in the same tradition. Each was ostensibly designed to promote public education. All became important as sites of alumni

3) This program was closed in 2007 in response to criticism that it unduly enhanced military interference in politics.

4) The army took power in a coup but was later forced from power by street demonstrations and was greatly reviled for the killing of many demonstrators.

networking, but one much more spectacularly than the others.

The King Prajadhiphok Institute was founded in the wake of the 1991–92 political crisis with the aim of promoting democracy through research and educational activities among the public at large and among politicians themselves.[5] The institute launched short courses, with students including MPs along with officials, businessmen, and members of civil society groups.

In 1997, the judicial establishment launched its own academy with the twin aims of educating judicial personnel about society and educating the public about the working of the judiciary. It also adopted the format of short courses, with a mixture of judicial personnel along with senior officials and others. By 2010, some 627 people had graduated from its courses.

II The Rise of the CMA

The Capital Market Academy (CMA) was founded in 2005 by the board of the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET). The impetus for this move came from a survey commissioned by SET in 2002 to discover why the exchange, after an initial spurt of growth, had tended to stagnate, attracting little new interest or money from domestic sources. Around that time there were several scandals involving insider trading and stock churning. These scandals affected SET's reputation and made it difficult for the exchange to win support, either in government circles or among the general public, for any innovation. The survey found that people did not invest in the exchange because they did not understand how it worked, believed it to be complicated and non-transparent, and thought it required insider information for success.[6] As a result of the survey, SET launched a slew of activities, including the establishment of a library, regular television programming, publications for students, and regular seminars. It also established CMA with the aim "to create a new frontier in top-executives programs, as its course blends knowledge in the capital market with leadership and ethics. It is aimed at developing top-quality leaders who will play a key role in the Thai capital market."[7] SET believed that a training program that brought together members of the private sector, both inside and outside the capital market, along with figures from government, military, police, judiciary, media, academia, and NGOs,

5) The idea of forming such an institute was mooted in 1993 and brought to fruition in 1998. On the structure and aims of KPI, see www.kpi.ac.th, accessed January 19, 2016.
6) Vichet Tantiwanit, deputy chairman of CMA, interview, March 10, 2010.
7) SET President Kittirat Na Ranong, speaking at the inauguration of CMA's first leadership program on September 3, 2005 (http://www.newswit.com/enews/2005-09-051527-thailand-capital-market-academy-debut-its-leadership-program, accessed June 4, 2012).

Table 1 Participants in CMA Classes 1 to 10 (2005–10)

Class	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*
Total participants	48	51	63	72	77	80	84	92	99	95
SET	**14**	**7**	**7**	**8**	**3**	**1**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**2**
SEC			**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**
Finance and banking	**9**	**19**	**13**	**15**	**17**	**14**	**11**	**6**	**15**	**16**
Other businesses, total	**17**	**9**	**15**	**18**	**22**	**25**	**29**	**44**	**48**	**38**
- Executives	17	9	14	18	21	23	29	38	45	34
- Owners			1		1	2		6	3	4
Bureaucrats, total	**3**	**6**	**9**	**9**	**11**	**9**	**10**	**13**	**8**	**11**
- Undersecretaries				1			3	3	1	2
- Directors	3	5	8	8	8	8	7	9	4	7
- Others		1	1		3	1		1	3	2
State enterprise			**1**	**2**					**1**	**1**
Judiciary	**1**	**1**	**1**	**4**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**6**	**5**	**5**
Police		**1**	**1**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**5**	**2**	**1**	**4**
Military, total	**1**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**5**	**5**	**3**	**5**	**4**	**3**
- Generals			1	3	1	5	2	2	4	2
- Others	1	1	1		4		1	3		1
Politics, total	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**1**	**4**	**5**
Ministers					1	3	2	1	3	3
MPs, senators					1		2		1	2
Others	**5**	**9**	**15**	**10**	**7**	**12**	**12**	**14**	**13**	**9**
Media			1	2	1	1	3	2	2	2
Academics	1	3	8	4	2	3	2	5	2	4
NGOs	2	2	2	1	1	1	1		2	1
Advisers		1	1	2	1	4	4	4	1	
Associations	2	3	3	1	2	2	2	2	3	1
Others						1		1	3	1

Source: Records of the CMA.

Note: Each participant may be classified more than once in the body of the table, e.g., as both a businessman and politician.

would create a better understanding about the roles of SET: "If these people see the importance of the SET for the Thai economy, then they will try to nurture and protect it. They will also facilitate policy changes."[8)]

CMA's "leadership training program" consists of lectures, seminars, case studies, discussions, and study trips. Participants take 60 hours of coursework, attending classes three times a week over a period of four months. There are also trips, seminars, and other activities. The course is divided under three headings: knowledge about the capital market, 50 percent; corporate governance, 25 percent; and leadership roles and social

8) SET executive, interview, March 10, 2010.

responsibility, 25 percent. The content is largely technical, and the sessions are led by experts in the field. Participants have to present a final project paper in order to qualify for a certificate of achievement. The course is free, though participants have to pay for meals and the expenses of study tours. CMA offers the course twice a year.

At first CMA targeted the course rather narrowly at mid-career business executives involved in the financial markets and equivalent personnel in government departments dealing with economic and financial policies, plus a few from media and civil society (see Table 1). CMA recruited by sending invitations to relevant companies (financial firms, listed companies, companies with potential to be listed) and government departments, allowing the company or department to choose the participants. CMA also specifically excluded politicians. It was soon realized that this process failed to ensure that participants were the appropriate people involved in policy making. In addition, some politicians lobbied to be invited.

Thus, from the fourth cohort, in late 2006, CMA shifted its targeting upward to senior people thought to be relevant to policy making or opinion formation, and began directly inviting individuals rather than leaving the choice up to a company or government department. Civilian officials had to be of director level or above, except in the case of officials from the Ministry of Finance, where the bar was lowered slightly in view of the ministry's importance for the financial market. Invitees from business had to be owners or high-level executives. In addition to these two main groups, SET also began to invite key figures from the public sphere, including MPs, senators, ministers, and public figures considered to be important as role models and opinion leaders.[9] Initially the upper age limit for participants had been set at 50, but after this change of policy the average age rose to 55. In each course, SET deliberately contrived to have a mix of participants—some politicians, some judiciary, some military, some civilians, some leading business executives or owners, some upcoming stars.

With this shift in recruitment policy, CMA had the potential to become an important new center for networking. The popularity of the course rapidly rose. At first, each class had been limited to 50 participants, but demand was so strong that the limit was gradually expanded to 100. By 2010, CMA had a backlog of more than 700 applicants wanting to attend the course.

Significantly, many attending the course were already experienced at this form of networking. Of the total of 771 attendees up to early 2010, 364 had already attended the National Security Academy.

9) In 2007 the head of the Stock Exchange Commission (SEC), the body regulating SET, attended the course, and thereafter a senior figure from SEC was regularly invited.

III From Training School to Networking Center

As with other such courses, the importance of CMA as a locus of network formation was present from the beginning, but it expanded markedly when SET broadened the catchment area beyond the financial industry to a more elite level.

The organization of the courses seems designed to promote CMA's network function at least as much as its education. The coursework is conducted three times a week in a SET-owned building, conveniently situated next to a prestigious golf course in Bangkok's inner suburbs. Many participants make a day (and night) of it by playing a round of golf with classmates in the morning, capping that with a sociable lunch, proceeding from class to a group dinner, and continuing for karaoke until late in the night. Each class also has several short trips and at least one (optional) overseas tour of 7 to 10 days (for example, to see the stock exchanges in New York and Tokyo), providing opportunities for extended socialization. These extracurricular activities ensure that participants are able to build strong personal relationships within the four-month period of the course.

As proof of CMA's rapid emergence as a center of elite networking, an alumni organization was brought into being in 2007 after the completion of only five classes. Members of all five cohorts combined to found the Association of Capital Market Academy Alumni with the stated aim to "create network of relations which will be useful for activities in the name of participants, and as a center to get students together to work for the benefits of the society, and to support economic development and the capital market of the country."[10] Emphasizing the key role of networking, this association adopted as its motto "Synergizing Knowledge, Vision, and Leadership." The alumni organization was soon involved in an anti-drug campaign, a youth leadership program, a project to combat global warming, environmental activism, charity works, and public seminars—besides a program of social activities and sports events to sustain the bonds created during the four-month course over many years to come.[11]

The crest of CMA, proposed by the alumni association, is a unity symbol signifying

10) (Stock Exchange of Thailand 2009, 51)

11) Activities included the following: support for the "business for society" program of the Population and Community Association (Mechai Viravaidya); Special Olympics (sports for special persons); anti-drug campaigns in the three southern provinces; a youth leadership project in a village in Amphoe Nang Rong, Buriram; an energy-saving project via a green school room at Yupparat College, Chiang Mai; a global warming reduction project with the Electricity Generating Authority in Chiang Mai; supporting sports equipment for youngsters in Nakhon Ratchasima; supporting a wastewater treatment plant and biogas pit at a school in Chiang Rai; warm blanket projects for 11 remote schools in Chiang Rai; seminars for public knowledge.

Fig. 1 Crest and Logo of the Capital Market Academy

cooperation, surrounded by a blooming lotus with eight petals, encircled by double rings signifying strength, endurance, knowledge, morality, and ethics (Fig. 1).

CMA made some key innovations in the institutional model borrowed from the military academies. Perhaps the most striking is in the form of address among classmates and alumni. In usual Thai practice, people address one another with pronouns that reflect relative age or seniority. The senior is addressed as *phi*, or elder brother/sister, and the junior as *nong*, or younger brother/sister. In CMA, everybody addresses everyone else as *phi*, even in cases where the difference in age and seniority is obvious and marked. Individuals sometimes use this strategy in situations where they are careful to avoid giving offense. But in this case, the universal practice is clearly part of an attempt to reduce the social distance between participants who come from rather varied backgrounds, and thus to simplify and encourage the building of mutual relationships. One graduate, who had initially found it strange being addressed as *phi* by a retired general over 20 years his senior, remarked: "This is to show respect, by way of avoiding the actual hierarchy, making everybody horizontal."

As is traditional among university alumni, classes also stage the kind of clowning around that breaks down barriers. One graduate recalled:

> Mr. . . . [A deputy prime minister, in his 60s] was asked to dress as a woman and dance for everyone to see on the stage. He did it. Once you are in the same class, whatever you are asked to do, you have to do it. It's like *rabop run* [the classmate system at a university or military academy].

CMA also fosters practices to increase contact between members of different classes. Each class member is given a running number and is expected to act as a godfather/godmother to the person with the same number in the next class. In addition, alumni of all preceding classes are invited to appear at welcoming ceremonies for each new class and other key events, such as regular dinner talks. Whereas classes from military academies sometimes become competitors in military and national politics, CMA actively encourages vertical links between classes, as well as horizontal ties among each class's members.

IV The Ties That Bind

Some graduates of CMA genuinely appreciate the opportunity to learn about the operation of the capital market within a short span of time. A few are exceptionally enthusiastic. According to other class members, one MP and former minister "asked so many questions, taking up the time of other people." But generally speaking, most graduates see the major benefits of attending CMA to be the number, variety, and quality of the links that they are able to establish in such a short span of time. One reported:

> As for learning, it may be better to spend time reading for yourself. But from the social perspective, the program is wonderful. It's good for building connections for information and support. It helps widen the worldview. People do think differently. Many people have conflicting views. But this is a chance to talk and exchange opinions. Many of the class members have achieved something in their fields. When they study together in the same class, the conflict is not sharp. Whatever happens, we are still the same class. People avoid extreme views. There are people who are very Yellow, while others are very Red. But they do not show their true colors. The ties that bind are mutual interests.[12)]

These links are especially important to business participants, but they are important also to others, including politicians and journalists:

> Businesspeople benefit in the long run. Meeting politicians such as ministers gives them connections. When someone from their class is in government, they have connections to some extent, creating opportunities for future deals. Politicians also want to connect to businesses. They were the ones who pushed SET to let them in as participants.
>
> For a columnist who writes regularly for a newspaper, businessmen give him business clues and news. There are so many people from the financial world. One of my younger class attendees is a deputy manager in Krung Thai Bank.
>
> My class elder with the same running number is an ex-minister. He talked to me and helped all the time. I can ring him any time. This is a new connection I got from attending CMA. I was also invited to give some lessons in CMA later, after I graduated. If I had not attended, I would not have had these opportunities.
>
> I need some funds for scholarships for my students. I asked for donations from some of the big business people I met. They were helpful.[13)]

Within the short span of five years after its foundation, CMA was seen to have an important function within the elites of power and money. A member of the CMA alumni said:

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12) Interview with an academic member of CMA Class 6. As noted by this observer, such elite networking has existed in parallel with, but separate from, the color-coded street politics of recent years.

13) Interview with a member of CMA Class 8.

> CMA is now a force to be reckoned with. It will effect economic changes in Thailand. It is an economic elite with ties to bureaucracy, and now politicians. It is not an ordinary network.

A CMA instructor summarized:

> People want endless connections. CMA has become a place for people of diverse backgrounds to meet and make deals. Undersecretaries and directors from budgetary offices, judiciary, forestry, revenue, excise, members of state enterprise boards—they are all very useful connections.

V Politicians

The founders of CMA were initially reluctant to admit politicians to the courses, choosing instead to limit recruitment to people directly involved in the capital market. However, from early on, some politicians lobbied for CMA to change this policy and admit them. After CMA agreed, Class 5 (the fifth cohort) in late 2007 was the first to admit politicians, including a long-standing Democrat MP and another prominent MP and newspaper columnist.[14)]

Class 6 in early 2008 admitted several ministers and ex-ministers along with political advisers, leading businessmen, and five army generals.[15)] The political atmosphere at the time was rather tense. In late 2006, the army had overthrown the government of Thaksin Shinawatra in a coup. In December 2007, parliamentary rule was restored through a general election. Prior to this election, the army invested large sums of public money to prevent the return of a government loyal to Thaksin. As part of this effort, the coup generals had established new political parties and lured former pro-Thaksin MPs to join them. The most important of these parties was Phuea Phaendin. At the December 2007 polls, however, these parties performed poorly, and the pro-Thaksin People Power Party (PPP) ended up heading a new government. The Phuea Phaendin Party became a minority partner in the coalition (Pasuk and Baker 2010). Maneuvers to influence the loyalty of individual politicians continued. One member of CMA Class 6 was an MP of

14) Suphatra Masdit and Nitiphum Nawarat.

15) These included Chawarat Chanveerakul, head of a major construction firm and later deputy prime minister; Suwit Khunkitti, former minister; Panpree Phahitthanukon, nephew of former Prime Minister Chatichai Chunhavan and adviser to the deputy prime minister in 2008; and Phichai Naripthaphan, deputy minister of finance in 2008. Several army generals were invited, namely, General Somjet Bunthanom, chairman of the advisory group of the Ministry of Defense; General Theerawat Buyapradap, deputy army chief; General Jiradet Kotcharat, deputy army chief; and General Chainarong Nunphakdi, chairman of the executive board, Nawanakorn company.

the pro-Thaksin PPP. He persuaded two other members of the class to publicly join the PPP. One of these was a Phuea Phaendin MP and deputy minister of finance. The other was a general who had been deputy army chief and head of the Third Army during the coup.[16)]

The incident was widely reported and attracted a lot of comment. It cemented the reputation of CMA as a key center for networking. While the majority of participants in CMA were still drawn from finance-related businesses, later classes included more people from various centers of power. In Class 7, for the first time the participants included bureaucrats of undersecretary level, and in total nine attended over the next four classes. From Class 5 onward, each cohort averaged five generals, seven people from the judiciary, three from the police, and three from politics. Although the numbers from politics were relatively few, the stature of those few lent CMA a certain luster. Class 10 included former Prime Minister Banharn Silpa-archa along with a former acting prime minister, a former deputy prime minister, three other former ministers (one also a former army chief), and a veteran Democrat MP.[17)] They shared the class benches with two deputy police chiefs, two more generals, a deputy attorney general, the secretary-general of the Board of Investment, and a deputy director of the Revenue Department.

VI Influence in Financial Policy

In late 2007, one member of CMA Class 5 wrote a research report titled "Development of the Thai Capital Market: Importance and Approach." The report discussed the problem of the Thai capital market at the time, particularly after the central bank had imposed a controversial reserve requirement to discourage short-term capital inflow. Minister of Finance Surapong Suebwonglee[18)] was invited to attend a discussion on the report, during which a suggestion was put forward to set up a committee on the development of the capital market. The minister agreed and promptly got Cabinet approval. In March 2008, the committee was constituted with 23 members from government departments and the

16) Panpree Mahitthanukon, an adviser to the prime minister, persuaded Phichai Naripthaphan, deputy minister of finance under the Phuea Phandin Party, and General Jiradet Khotcharat, deputy army chief and head of the Third Army during the coup government in 2006–07, to move to the PPP.

17) Police General Chidchai Wannasathit, acting prime minister, April–May 2006; Surapong Suebwonglee, deputy prime minister and minister of finance, 2008; Somsak Prisanananthakul, minister of agriculture and agricultural cooperatives, 2008; Worathep Rattanakorn, minister of finance in the Thaksin government; General Chettha Thanajaro, minister of science, later of defense, 2003–04; Ong-at Klampaiboon, Democrat MP.

18) His wife, Pranee, attended the next CMA class (7).

private sector. Five of the members were CMA alumni, proposed by CMA.[19]

Although there had been much comment on the need to develop the Thai capital market in recent years, nothing concrete had resulted. However, this new committee was able to gain cooperation from many government agencies and come up with unusually wide-ranging proposals in a very short time. The Board of Investment agreed to adjust promotional policies to favor listed companies. The Ministry of Commerce agreed to amend regulations that obstructed listing. The Revenue Department agreed to discuss tax breaks for listed companies. The office overseeing state enterprises was open to proposals for facilitating the listing of more state-linked enterprises. Officers of the stock exchange were very pleased by this result and attributed it in large part to the network links of CMA alumni. Many involved in the process were CMA alumni. Others hoped to attend CMA in the future. A SET official commented, "For small things, now there is no need for calling a meeting. We can ring one another to explain the issues."[20]

One result of this process was the four-year Plan for Development of the Thai Capital Market (2010–13), submitted to the Ministry of Finance.[21] The plan proposed tax reforms to promote share dealing, the development of more financial products to stimulate investment by the public, the development of bond and derivatives markets, and the promotion of long-term savings. The centerpiece of the plan was a proposal to privatize the Stock Exchange of Thailand.

SET is effectively a state agency, governed by an act of parliament, founded with capital from a state finance company. The plan argued that SET was a monopoly, with all the attendant inefficiency, and that privatization was a key strategy for making the capital market more efficient. Not everybody in the financial industry concurred with this view. Some saw the privatization move as an outrageous example of insider trading. One financial executive commented, "Now SET wants to privatize. There is a need to prepare those involved for this change. The people who will be responsible for this privatization are now all involved with SET, either as personnel or as alumni. As all the people who are involved in the process are now in the CMA, so they are all in accord."

Following on from the four-year plan, legislation for demutualization of the stock market was drafted under the Democrat Party-led government (2009–11) and sent for scrutiny by the Council of State. After the Democrat Party was defeated at elections in

19) The committee included directors of the Commerce and Business Promotion and Revenue Departments, the governor of the Bank of Thailand, the secretary-general of the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB), the chairperson of the Thai Banking Association, the secretary-general of the civil service pension funds, the secretary-general of SET, etc.

20) Vichet Tantiwanit, interview, March 10, 2010.

21) These proposals were still on the table in 2015, awaiting government approval and legislation.

2011, the bill was withdrawn. Disagreement over the legislation focused especially on the fate of the 15-billion baht fund for the development of the capital market, part of which was raised as a levy on the fee income of the member companies in the exchange. Under the reform legislation, the fund would be separated from the exchange and constituted as a non-profit juristic person. The member companies, and the government installed in 2011, feared that the fund would be misused. The finance minister also feared that the reforms would transform the stock exchange from a non-profit organization into a business that would fall under the control of a small group of investors, resulting not in greater efficiency but in more conflict of interest. In other words, in the view of opponents, the stock market reform plan that emerged from CMA was an ambitious attempt to alter the distribution of interests and benefits from the stock market.

Conclusion

Thailand's Capital Market Academy is a new institution. The qualifications that it bestows on its students are of minimal value. Yet the academy has a star-studded student body and a waiting list as long as its total enrollment over its five years of existence. People now have to politick and pull strings to gain admission.

The fact that the CMA alumni network has been created out of nowhere is a function of demand—and of a special kind of demand that exists in the oligarchic style of politics found in Thailand and many similar countries. The military, parliament, various segments of business, and various sections of the bureaucracy have their own internal power networks. However, in the increasingly complex political society that has developed in recent decades, a network of links across a variety of key institutions is a prerequisite of power. Because of rapid economic and social change, there are few of the established, seemingly natural frameworks for networking found in more settled societies (alumni associations of select schools and universities, elite social and sports clubs, interlocking directorships, etc.). Those hopeful of joining the power elite come from widely differing backgrounds. Paths through education are very fragmented. There are almost no clubs and associations that can serve as meeting places.

Alumni associations have been brought into existence to serve as hubs in networks that span across the power centers of society. The particular associational form of an alumni network is familiar and comfortable because it draws on aspects of collegiate life that most of the participants have experienced. The military must be credited with elaborating this form into something more useful for political networking. From the 1960s to the 1990s, anybody who wanted to be somebody attended a course at the

National Security Academy.

Two key features of the National Security Academy courses were tailored to the needs of network formation in an oligarchic polity. First, the recruits were drawn from a range of power centers—military, police, business, bureaucracy, banking, judiciary, and politics. Second, admission was exclusive; students were handpicked.

The political crisis of 1991–92 damaged the prestige of the military, yet its academy continued to attract the would-be powerful. More important, the political sphere became much more complex with the growing wealth of business, increased importance of parliament, and new significance of the judiciary. The fact that CMA so quickly became the framework for a new business-political alumni network indicates a demand for something similar to the National Security Academy yet not so closely associated with the military.

The fact that this new network was connected to the stock exchange and the capital market is clearly significant. Similar academies founded by the judiciary and the political establishment (through the King Prajadhiphok Institute) have been much less successful than CMA. This seems to indicate the primary role of business in the Thai oligarchy of power.

Lastly, such networks are critical to the rent-seeking activity that is one feature of oligarchic politics. The proposed privatization of the stock exchange, planned by CMA alumni, is probably yet another scheme to convert public assets into private capital.

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The Rise and Fall of Virata's Network: Technocracy and the Politics of Economic Decision Making in the Philippines

Teresa S. Encarnacion Tadem*

The influence of a technocratic network in the Philippines that was formed around Cesar E. A. Virata, prime minister under Ferdinand Marcos, rose during the martial law period (1972–86), when technocracy was pushed to the forefront of economic policy making. Applying concepts of networks, this essay traces the rise and eventual collapse of Virata's network to a three-dimensional interplay of relationships—between Virata and Marcos, Virata and the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, and Marcos and the United States. Virata's close links to social, academic, US, and business community networks initially thrust him into government, where he shared Marcos's goal of attracting foreign investments to build an export-oriented economy. Charged with obtaining IMF and World Bank loans, Virata's network was closely joined to Marcos as the principal political hub. Virata, however, had to contend with the networks of Marcos's wife, Imelda, and the president's "chief cronies." While IMF and World Bank support offered Virata some leverage, his network could not control Imelda Marcos's profligacy or the cronies' sugar and coconut monopolies. In Virata's own assessment, his network was weakened when Marcos's health failed during an economic crisis in 1981 and after Benigno Aquino's assassination in 1983. In those crises, Imelda Marcos's network and Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Fabian Ver's faction of the military network took power amidst the rise of an anti-dictatorship movement. The United States' switch of support from Marcos to Corazon Aquino sealed the demise of Virata's network.

Keywords: Philippines, Cesar E. A. Virata, technocracy, Ferdinand Marcos, networks

An important network that has emerged in the Philippines is that of technocracy. It was seen in the 1960s during the pre-martial law period (1960–72), but its significance rose rapidly during the martial law period (1972–86), when technocracy was thrust into the

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forefront of the country's economic policy making. In general, the attraction of technocracy to government leaders generally emanates from the system the latter represent, "in which technically trained experts rule by virtue of their specialized knowledge and position in dominant political and economic institutions" (Glassman *et al.* 1993). This paper argues that the politico-economic clout of the technocracy is based also on the strength of its network(s) in connecting with the important centers of power in society. I use Albert-Laszlo Barabasi's (2002) definition of network:

> not just a simple interconnection between two objects, but one which comprises of a complex series of links, nodes, hubs, and clusters, all in varying configurations and density, and differing in strength in terms of their linkages with each other or within themselves.

My article will look into how Barabasi's concept has been applied

> to the study of politics . . . and how these concepts help us understand the dynamics of coalition, compromise or contention among and between actors, parties, movements, and institutions. (Abinales and Onimaru 2010, 1)

I will apply the concept of networks in looking at factors that have strengthened as well as hindered a particular technocracy network in the Philippines, i.e., the network of Cesar E. A. Virata, who during the martial law period was viewed as the "chief technocrat." He was President Ferdinand Marcos's minister of finance, and later on prime minister. The paper aims to trace the evolution of the political and economic clout of Virata's technocracy network as well as the factors that caused the collapse of the network. In particular, it will highlight how Virata's technocracy network was thrust into power by a three-dimensional politico-economic relationship among the following networks: Virata's relationship with the leadership, i.e., Ferdinand Marcos; his relationship with the International Monetary Fund and World Bank; and Marcos's relationship with the United States. These relationships intertwined with each other and highlighted the success as well as the collapse of the Virata technocracy network.

This paper hopes to contribute to the writings on Philippine technocracy as well as the networks approach in Philippine politics. As I write this article, I have not come across any writings on the Philippine technocracy using the political networks approach. This may be understandable, as writings on Philippine technocracy have been sparse and have generally used the political economy framework[1)] or the social/cultural approach.[2)]

1) See Tadem (2012a; 2014, 345–348).
2) See Tadem (2013). My other writing which combine both frameworks are the following: Tadem (2015b; 2012a; 2012b).

This article, therefore, seeks to contribute to the literature on the networks approach in the following manner: (1) it applies this approach to the study of technocracy; (2) it uses political network analysis as opposed to the general trend of major analytical studies in the fields of sociology, anthropology, and communications; (3) it seeks to introduce a Philippine perspective in particular, and a Southeast Asian perspective in general, to the study of network analysis vis-à-vis the more dominant Western-oriented approach; and (4) the article's study of network analysis is applied also to politics in stable situations, i.e., "normal politics" under the authoritarian Marcos regime from a technocrat network perspective.

I Defining the Technocracy and Their Network(s)

Technocrats are situated in a crucial network in society, which is the middle class. The middle class is also referred to as the "intermediate class" in the development process and politics. This network is crucial in the Third World because "middle class personnel occupy the niches of the state apparatus" (Johnson 1985, 15). The particular network of the technocrats is the new middle class, which came about according to C. Wright Mills after World War II, "with the new technocratic-bureaucratic industrialist capitalist economy" (as cited in Glassman 1995, 161). The middle class in the Third World is largely a "new middle class" consisting of technocrats who are salaried employees of large corporations, government bureaucrats, as well as managers and service workers (Glassman 1995, 350).

This new middle class, which the technocracy is part of, is defined also by neo-Weberians,

> who make clear distinctions between the capitalists and the middle-class. For Mills, the new middle-class is the result of the demise of the entrepreneurial capitalism and the rise of corporate capitalism with its army of managers, technocrats, marketers and financiers. The middle-class is therefore the skilled workforce of capitalism and expands with it. (Robison and Goodman 1996, 8)[3)]

The power of the technocracy network is, therefore, found in its middle-class roots, which paved the way for the education and consequent expertise of its members as well as the position it occupies in the state apparatus.

3) In contrast, the lower-level white-collar workers and the declining blue-collar workers make up the lower middle-class segment of the new middle class (Glassman 1995, 307).

This is clearly seen in Cesar E. A. Virata's middle-class family background.[4] His father was a mathematics professor at the University of the Philippines who later became the acting president of the university. He is related to Emilio Aguinaldo, a Philippine national hero. He actually describes himself as coming from a "poor" family despite owning hectares of land.

One could say that Virata's description of himself as belonging to the "middle class" is best seen in the context of which class the technocrats perceived themselves to belong to in Philippine society. Placido Mapa Jr., who served in several positions during Marcos's martial law regime—such as chairman of the Development Bank of the Philippines (1976–79), director general of the National Economic Development Agency (NEDA) and Socio-Economic Planning, and president of the Philippine National Bank (PNB) (1983–86)—viewed himself as belonging to the upper class. This was understandable, as his mother's side belonged to the very wealthy sugar landed elite clan of the Mapa-Ledesma-Lizares while his father's side belonged to the wealthy landed elite family of the Alunans. These families originally hailed from the province of Iloilo and migrated to Bacolod, Negros Occidental.[5] As was the case with the Philippine elites, Mapa attended the boys' schools of De La Salle—run by the La Salle brothers—for his elementary and high school education. For college he went to the Jesuit-run Ateneo de Manila University. Like the other Philippine elite scions whose families paid for their graduate studies in the United States, Mapa went to the United States for his higher studies. He obtained a master's degree in Economics from the Jesuit-run St. Louis University in 1957 and a doctoral degree in Economics from Harvard University in 1962. His class background was unlike that of Virata, who did not have the means to go to private school or a family wealthy enough to pay for his graduate studies in the United States.

Virata, however, would not be considered lower class like another Marcos technocrat, Manuel Alba. Alba, who was the dictator's NEDA deputy director general for planning and policy from 1975 to 1981 and minister of budget from 1981 to 1986, considered himself as coming from the lower class, i.e., from a very poor family. As he pointed out, his father was a municipal treasurer in the lower ranks of the government bureaucracy and his mother was a plain housewife. He was the fourth in a family of 11 children, and the family did not have any landholdings. Like Virata, he was able to take advantage of

4) Virata's father was a product of the public school system and was sent to Harvard University as a *pensionado*. His grandparents owned a fishpond, rice lands, and a coconut farm; and his grandmother made *patis* (fish sauce) (Virata, interview by Yutaka Katayama, Cayetano Paderanga, and Teresa S. Encarnacion Tadem, tape recording, November 21, 2007, RCBC Plaza, Makati City, Philippines).

5) Placido Mapa, interview by Yutaka Katayama and Teresa S. Encarnacion Tadem, tape recording, March 13, 2009, Metrobank Plaza, Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City, Philippines.

the public school system, where he graduated as valedictorian in both elementary and high school. He remembers vividly how he went to school without shoes as his family could not afford them, and how his family members as well as other relatives all pooled their resources to see him through school. His educational background enabled him to enter the elite University of the Philippines (UP), where Virata also studied. For Alba, going to UP was a great achievement as it was considered an iconic institution and being a UP alumnus was a "ticket to everywhere."[6)]

After obtaining a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from UP, he worked in the country's top accounting firm of SyCip Gorres Velayo (SGV). It was after he passed the Certified Public Accountant exam that he joined the faculty of the UP College of Business Administration (CBA) as an instructor. Through the UP CBA he obtained a fellowship from the US Agency for International Development to pursue graduate studies in the United States. In 1961 he obtained an MBA with a specialization in Marketing and Transportation from the University of Minnesota. He later received another fellowship to pursue a PhD in Management Science and Business Administration (with Marketing, Economics, Transportation Management, Operations Research, and Social Psychology as specialized areas) at Northwestern University, which he completed in 1967.

In the case of Virata, his middle-class background enabled him to go to UP, where he gained his technocratic expertise. His ties to the university's academic network were further reinforced when, after graduating with a degree in engineering, he taught at the UP College of Business Administration. His being a UP faculty linked him to another important network of US government fellowships; Virata was able to access a fellowship from the Mutual Security Administration, a forerunner of the US Agency for International Development, which sent him to pursue a master's degree in Business Administration with a major in Industrial Management at the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania. This opened up another vital network for Virata, which was the US academe.

When he came back to the Philippines, Virata added another important network to his social, academic, and US networks. He was recruited into SGV, which brought him into the business community network. He worked full time in SGV until he was called back to teach at UP in December 1965. He went on to become a professor as well as dean at the UP College of Business Administration. Virata then combined two networks that complemented each other, academe and the business community.

6) Manuel Alba, interview by Yutaka Katayama and Teresa S. Encarnacion Tadem, tape recording, December 12, 2008, Third World Studies Center, G/F Palma Hall, College of Social Sciences and Philosophy, University of the Philippines, Diliman.

II The Technocracy Network during the Pre-Martial Law Period

What brought Virata into the technocracy network was his recruitment into government, which was facilitated by his academic network. The latter began in December 1965, when Rafael Salas[7]—who was then UP vice president under President Carlos P. Romulo—invited him to join the Finance Transition Committee and the Agriculture Transition Committee, where he later became a member of the Presidential Economic Staff (PES). For Virata, it was Salas who had a major influence on Marcos with regard to the latter inviting technocrats and academics to join the government.[8] Virata's academic network, therefore, linked him to the government, with no less than President Ferdinand Marcos personally inviting him to be part of his administration. Marcos represents an important hub in the government network for the technocracy. As pointed out by Barabasi, the role of the hub is to connect different communities together, and these hold the system together (Barabasi 2010). Moreover, hubs are defined as the central point of activity, interest, or importance. The most highly connected nodes are the hubs (Barabasi 2009, 192). President Marcos was the hub in government that held together the different political, economic, and social networks of Philippine society, which the technocracy network was part of.

II-1 *Redefining the Technocracy Hierarchy*

Virata's entry into the government's technocracy network may be described as the "new kid on the block" effect, which is most present in networks. This is because there were already other technocrats who were part of the key economic policy-making bodies, namely, the Project Implementation Agency (PIA) and the National Economic Council (NEC). The pre-martial law technocracy hierarchy had Armand Fabella as the director of the PIA and Mapa as his deputy. Fabella, like Mapa, belonged to the upper class of Philippine society, and his family owned coconut lands in Pagsanjan. Their wealth was enough for his father to study at the University of Chicago. Fabella's father became the first Filipino Certified Public Accountant in the United States, where he added to his wealth through engagement in the stock market.[9]

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7) Rafael Salas would become Marcos's executive secretary. Virata's uncle Leonides Virata was at that time the director of economic research with the Central Bank. But this did not seem to play a part in Virata's recruitment into government.

8) Cesar E. A. Virata, interview by Yutaka Katayama and Cayetano Paderanga, tape recording, December 13, 2007, RCBC Plaza, Makati City, Philippines.

9) Armand V. Fabella, interview by Yutaka Katayama, Cayetano Paderanga, Temario Rivera, and Teresa S. Encarnacion Tadem, tape recording, August 11, 2008, Fabella Residence, Harvard St., Wack Wack Subdivision, Mandaluyong City, Philippines.

Virata, on the other hand, was Mapa's deputy when the latter was the head of the PES, which replaced the PIA. Mapa's other deputy was Alexander Melchor. Mapa said that since he could depend on his reliable PES deputies, he could spend most of his time outside the office meeting with congressmen.[10] It was, however, to Virata that Marcos gave the important position of secretary of finance in 1970 and not to his two seasoned technocrats, Fabella and Mapa. One probable reason for this was that Fabella and Mapa originally came from the Macapagal administration, and when Marcos came into power Fabella had to leave as he was Macapagal's PIA director. Another reason in Mapa's case could have been that since he was Fabella's deputy and could stay on with the help of endorsements from family friends and relatives, Marcos may have been wary of him as he came from the upper class, specifically the influential sugar bloc. This bloc wielded a power that Marcos may not have been comfortable with. Moreover, Mapa's family had a political track record, with his grandfather and father having held political positions in government. As pointed out by Mapa, his grandfather was a member of the first National Assembly during the time of President Manuel Quezon, which was the Commonwealth period, and his father was secretary of agriculture and natural resources under President Elpidio Quirino (1948–53).[11]

As for Fabella, his entry into the Marcos administration was facilitated in 1969 by Benjamin "Kokoy" Romualdez, the younger (and said to be favorite) brother of First Lady Imelda Marcos, who saw the need for Fabella's technical expertise. Romualdez asked Fabella to help out in the Marcos government in a program put together by the executive assistant of Vice President Fernando Lopez. He later became a consultant with the Central Bank.[12]

As noted by Onofre D. Corpuz, Marcos's minister of education, as well as by Virata and Mapa, Marcos was not comfortable with technocrats who were "politically threatening." They observed this with Marcos's executive secretary, Salas, who was considered a brilliant "technopol," i.e., a person who had the skills of a technocrat as well as a political strategist and who belonged to the sugar landed elite class. They felt that Marcos was not comfortable with him. Sensing that he did not have Marcos's support in his political ambitions, Salas left the government to head the UN Agency for Population. He was succeeded by another technopol, whom Marcos was also not comfortable with. This was Alejandro Melchor, a graduate of the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis.

10) Mapa, interview, March 13, 2009.
11) Placido Mapa, interview by Yutaka Katayama, Cayetano Paderanga, Temario Rivera, and Teresa S. Encarnacion Tadem, tape recording, March 27, 2009, Metrobank Plaza, Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City, Philippines.
12) Fabella, interview, August 11, 2008.

Corpuz and the other technocrats felt that Marcos was politically threatened by Melchor because the latter was close to the US military. Thus, Marcos abolished the position of executive secretary. As is clear, Marcos was not the type of person who was willing to take chances even with the best and the brightest. Salas was very careful about this—about the rule of power to never compete with your boss—very early in the game. Nevertheless, Marcos still felt threatened by him.[13] According to Horacio "Boy" Morales Jr., who was identified with the "Salas boys"—those who worked closely with Salas—Marcos did not like technopols or political technicians. As for the likes of Virata, Morales felt that they were not true technocrats because they were academicians.[14] Morales believed that since Virata had no political ambitions and did not belong to the upper class like Fabella and Mapa, he was not a political threat to Marcos. In addition, Virata was able to catch the attention of Marcos by having a quality that the latter liked: they both shared the same economic concern of boosting foreign investments in the country as well as encouraging an export-oriented economy.

II-2 *Consolidating the Virata Technocracy Network*

Virata transformed from being a node in the technocracy network into being a hub. He consolidated his relationship with the technocrats of the Macapagal period—Fabella and Mapa—albeit transforming it into a different kind of relationship where he was now "senior" to them because of his position as secretary of finance. According to Mapa, it was Virata who offered him a position in government when telling him about the possibility of the Philippines occupying a seat on the World Bank Executive Board. He offered the position to Mapa and asked him whether he would be interested in going to Washington. Mapa thought it was a rare and excellent opportunity, which he said he grabbed; and so the Philippine government nominated him.[15] Thus, from 1970 to 1974 he was alternate executive director in the World Bank and for a short while also alternate executive director of the IMF.[16]

Virata added other technocrats to his network. These included Vicente T. Paterno as chairman of the Board of Investments (BOI) in June 1970. The BOI was established to provide greater incentives for foreign investment. Another technocrat whom he

13) Horacio "Boy" Morales Jr., interview by Yutaka Katayama, Cayetano Paderanga, and Teresa S. Encarnacion Tadem, tape recording, August 14, 2009, Third World Studies Center Office, Palma Hall, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City; Onofre D. Corpuz, interview by Yutaka Katayama, Cayetano Paderanga, and Teresa S. Encarnacion Tadem, tape recording, January 25, 2008, Corpuz Residence, UP Professors Village, Tandang Sora, Quezon City, Philippines.

14) Horacio "Boy" Morales Jr., interview, August 14, 2009.

15) Mapa, interview, March 13, 2009.

16) Mapa, interview, March 13, 2009.

recruited was Gerardo Sicat, who replaced Filemon Rodriguez as the head of the NEC in 1970. Like Virata, Sicat did not agree that the path to development was through heavy industrialization and protectionism. He was also supportive of trade and export industries.[17] Their other allies in government were Placido Mapa Jr. and Armand Fabella, who shared a belief in Virata's development paradigm. Like Mapa, Fabella was open to dealing with the World Bank and IMF when he was the director of the PIA during the Macapagal administration, and he continued with this role during the pre-martial Marcos administration.

II-3 *Working Closely with Virata*

The technocrats saw the importance of working closely with Virata. For example, Mapa as finance secretary would usually communicate either with Virata or with Central Bank Governor Gregorio Licaros when it came to policy decisions. But many times, he said, he would take his own initiative and just let Virata and Licaros know what he had done. He felt he could do this because he was confident of his relationships with them. In general, they shared the same perspectives in economic planning.[18] Thus, Mapa pointed out that in his position as alternate executive director of the World Bank and IMF, he no longer received direct instructions from Marcos. He got all his instructions from Virata, Licaros, or Marcos's Executive Secretary Alejandro Melchor. He added that if he needed any instruction, he would also route it through them. However, Mapa clarified that although he had a history of communicating directly with Marcos, as a matter of protocol when he was in the World Bank he would be careful to route communications through Virata, Licaros, or Melchor.[19]

The technocrats generally agreed with Virata's suggestions, as well as vice versa. The exception was Sicat, whom Virata described as a hard-core advocate of liberalization, unlike Virata, who saw the need to make compromises to assuage the powerful and contentious Filipino families in the business community. An example of this was Sicat's opposition to the concept of pioneer and non-pioneer industries, which Virata instituted with other fellow technocrats. The measure was intended to find some ways of defining which areas foreign investors could freely venture into and which would be preserved solely for Filipino interests.[20] This was to temper the animosity of Filipino entrepreneurs against foreign competition. The policy stipulated that industries that had not been in

17) Virata, interview, November 21, 2007.
18) Mapa, interview, March 13, 2009.
19) Mapa, interview, March 13, 2009.
20) Cesar E. A. Virata, interview by Yutaka Katayama, Cayetano Paderanga, and Teresa S. Encarnacion Tadem, tape recording, May 2, 2008, RCBC Plaza, Makati City, Philippines.

operation or established in the Philippines would be categorized as "pioneer." They could be 100 percent foreign-owned. But industries that Filipinos had started and were operating—for example, cement—would be called "non-pioneer." Virata had to correct Sicat's view and explain to him that the purpose was to avoid conflict between foreign and domestic investments.[21] Paterno also shared Virata's views. As he pointed out, Sicat and he were not attuned to each other as Sicat was very much concerned with liberalization and market forces while Paterno was more in favor of guided industrial development. For Paterno, market forces were fine for countries that were already established but not for countries like the Philippines, which still had to build up their industrial capability.[22] Both Virata and Paterno point to their engineering background as a cause for their differences with Sicat, who Virata notes was a pure economist.[23]

Virata, therefore, became the hub of this network that defied a scale-free model and had no place for dominant latecomers, i.e., where all nodes were identical (Barabasi 2010). His importance is seen more in a competitive environment where fitness plays a role, as represented by Virata's economic perspective, which was shared by Marcos. For Virata, such a concern was brought about by his SGV or business community network when he traveled around the country while working for SGV. This network brought him also to Taiwan and Korea, whose development very much impressed him.[24] The SGV node of the business community network, and therefore of Virata, gave him a certain development perspective that Marcos also shared. The technocracy network of which Virata was a hub was able, therefore, to link with the crucial Marcos hub of the government network. As pointed out by Barabasi (2009, 64) hubs are special:

> They dominate the structure of all networks in which they are present, making them look like small worlds. Indeed, with links to an unusually large number of nodes, hubs create short paths between any two nodes in the system. . . .

Through the Marcos hub, the Virata technocracy network was linked with another hub of the government sector, which was the Philippine Congress. This was because Virata's initial task as a government official was to help the government formulate and shepherd the passing of the Investment Incentives Act of 1967 to attract more foreign investment

21) Virata, interview, May 2, 2008.
22) Vicente T. Paterno, interview by Yutaka Katayama, Temario Rivera, and Teresa S. Encarnacion Tadem, tape recording, August 15, 2008, 11th Floor Columbia Tower Ortigas Ave., Mandaluyong City, Philippines.
23) Cesar E. A. Virata, interview by Cayetano Paderanga, and Teresa S. Encarnacion Tadem, tape recording, September 30, 2008, RCBC Plaza, Makati City, Philippines.
24) Mapa, interview, March 13, 2009.

into the Philippines. This would be the base for the importance of Virata's technocracy network to Marcos and would give him a prominence over the other technocrats, some of whom had been there even before he came. As pointed out, between "two nodes with the same number of links, the fitter one acquires links more quickly" (*ibid.*, 95). By 1970, Marcos had appointed Virata as secretary of finance and a member of the Monetary Board of the Central Bank of the Philippines.

Virata's economic perspective as well as the task assigned to him by Marcos opened up two crucial hubs for him: the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Marcos would appoint Virata as the point person in trade negotiations and representations in these international financial institutions and Consultative Group[25] meetings.[26] By 1970, he also served as the Philippine governor to the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank.

This opened a vital economic network for Virata, which was propagating an economic paradigm of trade and investment liberalization under a free market regime. Virata's technocracy network acquired a truly central position in the larger network of economic decision making, which Barabasi describes as reserved for nodes that are simultaneously part of many large clusters (*ibid.*, 61). Virata's technocracy network wittingly or unwittingly became an important source of support for the IMF and World Bank. This was highlighted when Virata as head of the NEC replaced the traditionally nationalistic Hilarion M. Henares and his technocracy allies, e.g., Alejandro Lichauco. Henares's NEC during the Macapagal administration (1961–65) was at loggerheads with the economists in the influential PIA, who were pressing for an open-door policy for foreign investments and foreign loans, mainly from the IMF. Marcos's victory in the 1965 presidential election against Macapagal signaled the marginalization and consequent downfall of the nationalist technocracy network of Henares-Lichauco and the domination of Virata's open-door economy technocracy network. What characterized Virata's network, therefore, was the power law degree distribution of a scale-free network, which predicts that most nodes have only a few links, held together by a few highly connected hubs (*ibid.*, 71). Virata was connected to two very influential hubs: the Marcos and the IMF/World Bank hubs.

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25) The Philippines Consultative Group's chairman was from the World Bank. Its membership included representatives from the IMF and major lending countries such as the United States, large private bank consortia tied with the debt package, and the Asian Development Bank. This Consultative Group determines how public and private funds are to be spent as well as decides the country's financial strategy, ranging from taxation policies to anti-inflation programs (Wellons 1977).

26) Virata, interview, December 13, 2007.

II-4 *Technocracy and the Networks of Political Allies*

The nationalist technocratic network, however, would continue to have allies in the Philippine Congress network. This consisted of no less than then Senate President Gil Puyat, who was also the head of the National Economic Protectionism Association (NEPA), an important network of nationalist economists, businessmen, and entrepreneurs. Marcos would, however, provide Virata with the network of allies he needed in Congress; these came mainly from Marcos's Nacionalista Party, a potent political hub. This was the hub that helped Virata and Marcos pass the Investment Incentives Act. Its major members for this purpose were Senator Jose W. Diokno, head of the Senate Committee of Economic Affairs; Senator Jose Roy, head of the Committee on Finance and chair of the Ways and Means Committee; and Congressman Lorenzo Sarmiento, head of the House of Representatives Committee on Economic Affairs, who helped craft the investment bill in 1967. They were also working on replacing the Basic Industries Act of 1961.[27] Virata worked closely with Senator Diokno in particular. They succeeded in having the bill passed despite opposition from Senate President Puyat. Virata relied on the political acumen of Diokno and Sarmiento in talking to their colleagues in Congress and in strategizing on how to have the bill passed. Marcos, therefore, had influential party mates in Congress who shared his, Virata's, and the United States' economic perspective. One of the major results of the Investment Incentives Act was the reversal of laws against foreign participation in the country's vital industries such as rice and corn and other forms of agribusiness. The act also enticed foreign oil companies to enter into service contracts for the exploration and development of Philippine oil fields (Bello and Rivera 1977, 115). In 1970, the Export Incentives Act was tackled and passed. The act allowed foreign-owned firms to export 70 percent of their manufactured goods. All these laws paved the way for the entry of foreign investor networks into the country, something that the IMF and World Bank as well as the US government wanted.

II-5 *The Marcos Hub and the Virata Network*

Marcos, as Philippine president, was an important connector, which is considered to be a significant component of the social network. Connectors are generally described as "nodes within an anomalously large number of links which are present in diverse complex systems . . ." (Barabasi 2009, 56). For the Virata network, this may explain why Marcos was a crucial hub, particularly because of the support Virata received from Marcos's political allies in Congress. Despite the allies in Congress, Marcos's support for Virata's

27) Cesar E. A. Virata, interview by Yutaka Katayama and Teresa S. Encarnacion Tadem, tape recording, November 23, 2007, RCBC Plaza, Makati City, Philippines.

technocracy network would prove to be most vital as it had to rely on the leadership's political acumen against the nationalist network. The latter network was represented by, among others, Senator Lorenzo Tanada, who challenged the entry of Dole Corporation as a major investor in agriculture in the country by declaring the control by transnational corporations of large tracts of agricultural land as unconstitutional. Local capitalists such as Senate President Puyat of Puyat Steel and Manilabank informed Virata that he would not approve the Philippines' entry into the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade prior to the Kennedy Round in 1968. For the United States, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade was an avenue by which it could further liberalize the world economy. In general, Virata said, government policies to allow the entry of foreign companies—such as Lonestar, a cement company from Texas—were met with hostility by their local competitors.[28)]

For Virata, there was an explicit division of labor between technocrats and the political leadership. To seek his guidance, the technocrats would tell Marcos, "Mr. President, you know, we don't know politics."

He would reply, "Do your best in your own field, and you let me know whether we can implement it politically. I will help you in that aspect."[29)]

As far as Virata was concerned, Marcos could deliver. Thus, the strength of Virata's technocracy network seemed to hinge on political support from Marcos. For Virata, one of the reasons why Marcos could deliver was his political network in Congress, particularly with regard to what Virata considered to be the most powerful bloc, the sugar bloc. Virata wanted to impose a 20 percent export tax, which he wished to get passed by Congress as an anti-inflationary measure and to finance government deficit. He knew he could not do it if the sugar bloc did not agree. But he said that Marcos had some room to maneuver as the bloc was not monolithic and Marcos was able to forge alliances with a particular faction in the bloc represented by Roberto Benedicto—Marcos's classmate at the UP College of Law—and the Montelibanos, among others. Marcos also used his powers as president to persuade the other protectionist blocs in Congress to go along with the government's policy of opening up the economy. For example, with regard to logging concessionaires, Marcos could withhold their license to log if they did not support his government policy. Virata viewed Marcos as a strong politician whom people would call a "dictator," and that was even before he declared martial law.[30)]

The pre-martial law period, therefore, highlights the dominance of Virata's technocracy network, which consisted of like-minded technocrats such as Mapa, Fabella, Sicat,

28) Virata, interview, May 2, 2008.
29) Virata, interview, November 21, 2007.
30) Virata, interview, November 23, 2007.

and Paterno. Given his position as secretary of finance, Virata was head and shoulders above the rest, and they worked closely together with him. They were strongly supported by the network of Marcos's political and economic allies in Congress and the business community respectively. What further boosted this support was backing from US networks, particularly the IMF and World Bank hubs, which agreed with the economic policies Marcos and Virata's technocracy network were pushing for. What brought them all together was the shared economic vision of liberalization and the pursuit of an export-oriented industrialization policy. This enabled them to reinforce their relationship with their political and economic allies in the political and business communities.

The Virata network's prominence, therefore, cannot be described by the scale-free model whereby the node's (in this case Virata's) attractiveness was determined solely by its number of links. What emerged as more important was the Virata node's fitness to play a role in a competitive environment (Barabasi 2009, 95). In this way, the Virata node compared to the node represented by nationalist economists, e.g., Hilarion Henares, had the advantages of a fitness connectivity product that is able to link with a higher product, i.e., Marcos and the IMF/World Bank; this, therefore, made it more attractive than the node represented by the nationalist economists. Because the Virata node was able to acquire links following a power law, it was able to develop into a hub as its network displayed "fit-get-rich" behavior, meaning that the "fittest node will inevitably grow to become the biggest hub" (*ibid.*, 103).[31)]

III The Virata Technocracy Network during the Martial Law Period

Given this context, it was not surprising when Fabella observed that Cesar Virata was a rising star.[32)] For Marcos, however, the importance of Virata's network was confined mainly to the economic sector and did not cover the political arena, which apparently was more important for Marcos. This was seen in his declaration of martial law, which did not involve any of the technocrats. The political network that worked with Marcos in the declaration of martial law was the "Rolex 12." This was the collective name for 12 of the closest and most powerful advisers of President Marcos during the martial law years in the Philippines from 1972 to 1981.[33)] The origin of the name Rolex 12 came from a widespread story that each associate received a Rolex watch from Marcos himself,

31) For further details of Philippine technocracy and policy making during the pre-martial law period, see Tadem (2015b).
32) Mapa, interview, March 13, 2009.
33) "Rolex 12," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rolex_12.

although this was allegedly proven to be untrue.[34)]

As Virata pointed out, none of the technocrats were part of Marcos's inner circle, which planned the declaration of martial law. Virata also pointed out that "nobody among us said we wanted martial law." He emphasized, "I had not heard any of my colleagues say that they wanted martial law."[35)] This was understandable because in terms of economic policy making, Virata saw that Marcos could basically get what he wanted and thus there was no need for martial law to pursue the government's economic policies. In other words, Marcos seemed to have the networks he needed to obtain his objectives. The United States, which had strongly supported the Virata technocracy network, was also kept in the dark with regard to Marcos's declaration of martial law. Nevertheless, the United States supported it, and this gave the go-ahead to the IMF and World Bank to continue extending loans to the Philippines through Virata. Thus, the two important hubs that gave the Virata network leverage were in alliance with each other with regard to the declaration of martial law.

During the martial law period, Marcos would be the hub that kept the different and important networks together. Marcos was then a one-person hub supported by various networks, chief among which were the technocrats, the military, and his relatives and cronies. These were also said to be the three legs that propped up the martial law regime, a.k.a. Marcos. All the crucial political and economic networks, which included the United States, had to deal with Marcos. As for Virata's network, it was tasked by Marcos with continuing to deal with the IMF and World Bank. Virata's network did not have links with Marcos's military network.

Thus, for Virata's network, it did not seem a problem that they were kept in the dark on the planning of martial law. The new regime consolidated Virata's technocracy network in implementing, wittingly or unwittingly, the IMF and World Bank's development paradigm of trade and investment liberalization under a free market regime albeit under an authoritarian capitalist state-led economy. With the abolition of Congress, martial law made it easier for Virata to pass economic policies such as the amendment of the Tariff Code, which allowed the Philippines to enter into the Tokyo Round of Trade Negotiations

34) The "Rolex 12" consisted of Philippine Constabulary Vice Chief Tomas Diaz, Minister of Defense Juan Ponce Enrile, Chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines Romeo Espino, Chief of the Philippine Constabulary Metropolitan Command Romeo Gatan, Chief of the Philippine Constabulary Metropolitan Command Alfredo Montoya, Chief of the Intelligence Services of the Armed Forces of the Philippines Ignacio Paz, Chief of the Philippine Constabulary Fidel Ramos, Chief of the Philippine Air Force Jose Rancudo, Chief of the Philippine Navy Hilario Ruiz, Chief of the Philippine Army Rafael Zagala, Chief of the National Intelligence Security Authority Fabian Ver, and Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rolex_12).

35) Virata, interview, December 13, 2007.

in 1974.[36] This was because of the abolition of the power of the nationalist network in Congress. As Virata pointed out, before the declaration of martial law numerous bills were bundled up in Congress but this was no longer the case under martial law, as the bills were cleared by the decreeing powers of the president.

III-1 *The Strength of Virata's Technocracy Network*

The strength of Virata's technocracy network was that it continued to be connected to Marcos as its major hub and from this hub it was given the authority to deal with the IMF and World Bank hub. With this structure, Virata did not see martial law as undermining his network's clout, although for him there was really no need for martial law. Nevertheless, it did not seem to matter for the Virata network whether economic decision making was being undertaken under an "elite" democracy or an authoritarian regime. What seemed to be important to Virata was that he continued to have the backing of Marcos. And more important, this did not hamper the Philippine government's and his relationship with a crucial network, i.e., the IMF and World Bank.

Martial law, therefore, reinforced the relationship, as Virata's importance to Marcos continued with the role he played as the government's point person with the IMF and World Bank. For Virata this role was understandable as he believed that international institutions had better two-way communications with technocrats; he pointed out that technocrats were better qualified than politicians to understand development policies. He and Marcos continued to share the perspective that they needed the IMF and World Bank for further trade liberalization as signified by the Philippines' entry into the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.[37]

It was through Virata's network that the IMF and World Bank were able to take a more aggressive stance in influencing the economic policies of the martial law regime. This was seen in 1979, when the two institutions initiated the "industrial reform program" in the country as the last stage of Philippine export-led industrialization. This plan consisted of the following policies: drastic dismantling of protective tariffs, withdrawal of subsidies from local enterprises, creation of better incentives for foreign investments, and establishment of more export-processing zones to enable multinational corporations to take advantage of low-cost Filipino labor (Bello and Kelly 1981, 3). One network that benefited was the foreign business community, particularly the American Chamber of Commerce (Business International Research Division 1980).

As for Virata's relationship with the technocrats in his network, it was further

36) Virata, interview, May 2, 2008.
37) Virata, interview, November 21, 2007.

strengthened during the martial law period. As Mapa narrated, when he was appointed president of the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) in 1976, when its previous head—Leonides Virata, the uncle of Cesar Virata—passed away, he said that he would follow what Leonides had instituted, which was to informally consult and coordinate or just exchange notes with his fellow heads of economic agencies every Friday over lunch. His fellow heads included the secretary of finance, the Central Bank governor, the secretary of commerce, and the heads of the PNB, DBP, NEDA, and Budget. Mapa felt that Marcos valued their opinions. He observed that the people Marcos had working for him—for example, other Cabinet members and other heads of institutions—would be attuned to his thinking. As Mapa pointed out, what they would try to do first among themselves was to avoid—and to help each other overcome—conflicting positions. Thus, it helped that they got together regularly to coordinate with each other.[38)]

As Mapa noted, there were many policies that were not under their control. He noted that Virata would try to talk to President Marcos about some things but would not always get what he wanted. In some instances, they found themselves on a collision course with First Lady Imelda Marcos. The projects of the First Lady that they opposed included her Cultural Center of the Philippines and the Light Railway transit.[39)]

In Fabella, Virata recognized important traits that could be of use to Marcos. Fabella said that under the Macapagal administration he was a Cabinet member, but under Marcos's martial law regime he was designated in 1980 as chairman of the Presidential Reorganization Committee. Fabella noted that while he was doing the reorganization, Virata and other members of Marcos's Cabinet had the habit of asking him how the proposed changes would affect their respective departments. Noticing this, Fabella said it was Virata who told him that he should be present at all the meetings. For Fabella, this was a tremendous opportunity to find out how things were going. In relation to this, Fabella credits Virata with maintaining some form of balance; he perceived the others as "thieves." It was for the above reasons given by Mapa and Fabella that they and other technocrats expressed their respect for Virata.[40)]

The Virata network during the martial law period was further boosted by the entry of two other technocrats into government; these were Virata's former students at the UP CBA, Jaime Laya and Manuel Alba. Alba was originally brought into the Marcos government by Onofre D. Corpuz, whom Marcos appointed as president of the University of the Philippines from 1968 to 1971 and minister of education from 1975 to 1979. Alba was Corpuz's student in his UP undergraduate years. After Marcos won the 1965 pres-

38) Mapa, interview, March 13, 2009.
39) Mapa, interview, March 13, 2009.
40) Fabella, interview, August 11, 2008.

idential elections, Corpuz set up the Development Academy of the Philippines, which was to provide training for career professionals with the aim of strengthening the bureaucracy. Corpuz also had Alba appointed as executive director of the Presidential Commission to Survey Philippine Education from 1971 to 1973 and founding executive director of the Educational Development Program Implementing Task Force. The task force was created to implement all foreign-assisted projects in education. In 1973, Alba left government to take on the post of director of the East-West Center, Technology and Development Institute, in Honolulu. In 1975, Sicat asked him to be the deputy director general for planning and policy at NEDA.[41] This ushered in Alba's entry into Virata's technocracy network. Laya was also pulled into government by Sicat. He served as Sicat's NEDA deputy director general in 1974. He was also concurrently the deputy governor of the supervision and examination sector at the Central Bank. In 1975 he was appointed as minister of budget, and in 1981 he was appointed as governor of the Central Bank. From 1984 to 1986 he was the minister of education, culture, and sports. While in government, Mapa said that Laya worked closely with Virata and Melchor.[42]

III-2 *Hindrances to Virata's Technocracy Network*

The links of Virata's network with Marcos and the IMF/World Bank were not enough to establish the network as a "winner-take-all" one with no potential challengers. The winner-take-all network as described by Barabasi (2009, 103) refers to one in which the fittest node grabs all links, leaving very little for the rest of the nodes. Such networks develop a star topology in which all nodes are connected to a central hub, in this case the Marcos hub. However, Virata's network faced several challenges.

One was that Marcos compartmentalized his technocrats.Virata had his own network, composed mainly of former UP-based technocrats whom Virata nurtured, such as Sicat,[43] the first director general of NEDA; Alba, minister of budget; Laya, governor of the Central Bank; and those who worked closely with him, such as Mapa[44] and Paterno.[45] What they had in common, with the exception of Mapa, was that they all came from UP.

41) Alba, interview, December 12, 2008.
42) Placido Mapa, interview by Yutaka Katayama, Cayetano Paderanga, and Teresa S. Encarnacion Tadem, tape recording, April 22, 2009, Metrobank Plaza, Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City, Philippines.
43) Sicat was all set to join the Economic Growth Center at Yale University when Virata prevailed on him to chair the National Economic Council (Virata, interview, November 21, 2007).
44) Mapa together with Cesar Zalamea headed the Presidential Economic Staff when Virata was recruited to join this government agency.
45) Paterno said that Virata and Mapa were the ones who recruited him to the Board of Investments in 1969, when he was ready to leave his private sector job in the Manila Electric Company, Meralco (Paterno, interview, August 15, 2008).

Virata was the mentor of Alba and Laya in the UP College of Business Administration. He also sent them abroad to pursue their PhD. These people composed Virata's network, which was responsible for accessing loans from the IMF and World Bank. The recruitment of technocrats into Virata's network can be described as what Barabasi refers to as prior acquaintanceship, which

> allows directors to vouch for prospective recruits. Therefore, the small-world dynamics help the creation of a powerful "old boy network", or corporate elite, that has unparalleled influence in economic and political life. (*ibid.*, 206)

The Virata network had to operate together with other technocrats who had their own networks and worked independently of the Virata network. One was the network of Roberto Ongpin,[46] minister of trade and industry. His strength seemed to lie in his purported ties with the Chinese community, where he was known to have allegedly operated the "Binondo cartel," which was regarded as a de facto Central Bank. Virata did not approve of Ongpin's Binondo cartel, although he agreed with Ongpin's support for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' 11 industrial projects that Paterno did not agree with. Paterno preferred to support small and medium-scale industries. He also was not too comfortable with the big loans being given by the IMF and World Bank, as he believed they would only breed corruption.[47] The other network was that of Geronimo Velasco, minister of energy. This network included the contacts Velasco made during his stint as the highest salaried person in the Philippines when he was an executive in Dole Philippines. Marcos, thus, made sure that the economy was not left in the hands of one technocrat's network, i.e., Virata's. This was also a way of dividing and conquering the technocrats. Ongpin and Velasco, therefore, can be described as "new kids on the block" who were not accounted for in a scale-free model, just like Virata. That is, they had "intrinsic qualities that influence the rate in which they acquire links in a competitive environment" (*ibid.*, 95). More important, they were able to establish a direct and strong link with the potent Marcos hub.

Aside from the disagreement between Virata and Paterno with regard to the 11 ASEAN industrial projects, Virata also had disagreements with Minister for Planning Sicat, who was in favor of a full-blown export-oriented industrialization of the Philippines, unlike Virata. This was exemplified even during the pre-martial law period, when Sicat also did not agree with Virata's concept of "measured capacity," which the Philippine Chamber of Industries was pushing in order to avoid overinvestment and which led to

46) Roberto "Bobby" Ongpin was Virata's deputy in the Presidential Economic Staff. Ongpin also worked in SGV when Virata was with the accounting firm.

47) Paterno, interview, August 15, 2008.

the waste of scarce capital resources. The intention of this was that the BOI had to study market demand, including external demand. The BOI would only approve of capacities with some allowance for a particular industry, so that the economy would not waste Philippine resources. This, of course, went against the principles of the free market economy, which was the reason Sicat did not agree with it.[48] But Virata felt that scale was important for economic progress and that there was a need to reach a certain scale that was economical and competitive if the Philippines was to achieve economic progress. For Virata, the level of protection or subsidy was an important policy to guide Philippine business, and he believed that this was true also for foreigners, whose interest was to secure a share of the market and to exploit the country's resources.[49] With regard to Placido Mapa, Virata did not agree with his opposition to the birth control methods that were being advocated by the IMF and World Bank. Mapa was a member of what was viewed as the ultra-conservative Opus Dei, while Virata was a Freemason and he and his relatives were supporters of the Philippine Independent Church, which was considered more progressive than the Catholic Church. Despite these differences, the members of Virata's technocracy network generally gave in to him. It was because of this that Virata held an influential position in his network, where he could be defined as one of the hubs. Hubs can be likened in the business community to individuals who communicate with more people about a certain product than does the average person. With their numerous social contacts, they are among the first to notice and use the experience of the innovators. Though not necessarily innovators themselves, their conversion is the key to launching an idea or an innovation. If the hubs resist a product, they form such an impenetrable and influential wall that the innovation can only fail. If they accept it, they influence a very large number of people (*ibid.*, 130).

III-3 *First Lady Imelda Marcos*

What seemed to be a formidable obstacle to the Virata network was First Lady Imelda Marcos and her own technocracy network, consisting of, among others, Conrado "Jolly" Benitez,[50] her brother Benjamin "Kokoy" Romualdez,[51] and Roman "Jun" Cruz.[52] One of Virata's many major disagreements with Mrs. Marcos was over the establishment of

48) Virata, interview, November 21, 2007.
49) Virata, interview, November 21, 2007.
50) Conrado Benitez obtained his PhD in Education at Stanford University and was considered to be an Imelda Marcos technocrat and her right-hand person for development projects.
51) Benjamin "Kokoy" Romualdez was known to operate the "real" Department of Foreign Affairs. He took the lead in the negotiations on the bases agreement with the United States.
52) Roman "Jun" Cruz headed the Government Service Insurance System, or GSIS, which is in charge of government employees' pension funds.

her Ministry of Human Settlements. Virata felt there was no need for this, as there was already a National Housing Authority. Virata also felt that the idea of human settlements was just a "U.N.-flavor of the month thing just like the current concern for the environment."[53] He also said no to several of the First Lady's projects, but he believed that she would get her funds from the private sector and from the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) under Cruz. The government, however, would have to pay off all her debts. As he pointed out, he refused a number of the First Lady's requests since her projects were not in the budget, and because of this she called him "Dr. No." Eventually, some of the buildings became government buildings. The loans extended by the private sector and the GSIS to Mrs. Marcos, which went into the establishment of government buildings, had to be repaid by the Philippine government.

Another incident that highlighted Virata's clash with Imelda Marcos's network was when the former, in an attempt to curb corruption in government offices, wanted to put certain safeguards in the GSIS, the Social Security System[54] or the SSS, and the Retirement and Separation Benefits System or the RSBS. One safeguard was to put the GSIS and SSS under the office of the Insurance Commission. Virata said he wanted to do this to preserve the integrity of these pension and insurance funds by having sound investment guidance. He believed that the funds could be subject to abuse. Virata pointed out that Gilbert Teodoro Sr. of the SSS agreed with him but that Cruz of the GSIS would not, because he was very supportive of the First Lady's projects, having extended advance financing to a number of them. Virata said that the president did not approve of his recommendations on the grounds that these institutions had their own charters and trustees.[55]

There was an incident in 1982, when the country was at the height of its rescue operations for collapsing firms, when Mrs. Marcos wanted to appropriate US$12 million from the Cabinet and presidential funds to host a film festival in Manila. Virata put his foot down and refused to accede to this demand; Marcos, realizing the gravity of the country's economic situation, agreed with him. This, however, did not deter Mrs. Marcos from getting US$111,111 from the coffers of the Ministry of Human Settlements, which she headed (Sacerdoti 1983, 48).

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53) Cesar E. A. Virata, interview by Yutaka Katayama, Cayetano Paderanga, and Teresa S. Encarnacion Tadem, tape recording, November 28, 2007, RCBC Plaza, Makati City, Philippines.

54) The SSS took care of the pensions of employees in the private sector.

55) Cesar E. A. Virata, interview by Cayetano Paderanga, Temario Rivera, and Teresa S. Encarnacion Tadem, tape recording, July 29, 2008, RCBC Plaza, Makati City, Philippines.

III-4 *Virata and the Network of Oligarchs and Politicians*

As for the oligarchs, Virata acknowledged that Marcos shielded the technocrats from them by reducing their political and economic powers. But he acceded that Marcos also instituted his new oligarchs because they were his supporters.[56] In relation to this, Virata was also challenged on how to navigate among the politicians, i.e., the government's allies who lost the elections. Virata felt that this was the most difficult part as these politicians thought that the government projects were helping their opponents politically.

III-5 *Virata and the Network of Marcos's Chief Cronies*

Virata accepted that he, and no one else, could interfere in the interests of Marcos's chief cronies, Roberto Benedicto and Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco. For Virata, as far as the technocrats were concerned, his technocracy network was no match for Benedicto and Cojuangco. Aside from the chief cronies having direct access to the president, Virata noted that they had their power base. From Virata's point of view, the technocrats were just interested in finding out what Benedicto and Cojuangco were doing and how these two chief cronies of Marcos were affecting the other sectors. When the technocrats saw that they were taking more than they deserved, that was the time Virata's network spoke up. The leverage of Virata's network vis-à-vis the chief cronies was its link with the IMF and World Bank, ergo the United States, which were not happy in general with the cronies' monopolization of industries. An example was Cojuangco's monopoly of the coconut industry, especially the takeover of US coconut oil processing firms. This went against the IMF and World Bank's economic mantra of free competition and liberalization. To show its disapproval of crony monopolies, the US government even filed a lawsuit against Cojuangco and Juan Ponce Enrile's[57] coconut conglomerate—Granex, Crown Oil Corporation, and Pan Pacific Commercial—for conspiring to create a shortage of oil in order to drive up prices (Bello *et al.* 1982, 191). In general, however, Virata's network was able to stand its ground against these three major networks—Marcos's cronies and relatives, and the networks of oligarchs and politicians—as the IMF and World Bank continued to give loans to the Philippines that Virata's network was responsible for negotiating.

Ironically, however, the technocratic centralization encouraged by the IMF and World Bank allowed for an increasing concentration of power in President Marcos's hands, which translated into further support for crony interests. This was because a

56) Virata, interview, December 13, 2007.
57) Enrile was Marcos's minister of defense.

major consequence of centralization was the lessening of checks on the leadership, which allowed the monopoly of state power by the networks of relatives and friends of the Marcos regime. Members of this ruling bourgeois network used the government as a vehicle to enrich themselves. The crony networks, which are also referred to as "bureaucrat capitalists," greatly benefited from the local technocrats' efforts to attract foreign capital because they had the right connections with the regime to either enable them to enter into joint ventures with multinational corporations or to avail of foreign loans acquired by the state (*ibid.*, 105). Moreover, the technocrats were said to have tolerated Marcos's cronies as they both shared a common concern with bringing the country's major export crops under the control and supervision of the state. Conflict of interest, however, ensued between these two parties on the question of whether or not export crops should become a center of state or private accumulation. The technocracy believed the former, while the cronies believed otherwise. The Virata technocracy network believed that the cronies would use this source of private accumulation to achieve their political ends (Hawes 1984, 238).

This was exemplified in the coconut levy controversy pitting the Marcos cronies led by Cojuangco against Virata. The Marcos cronies imposed a coconut levy on farmers, which the technocracy viewed as a double tax on the latter. Virata argued that the levy should be abolished because it further depressed the already low price paid to farmers for their copra and was not at all beneficial to the coconut farmers (Bowring 1982, 8). Marcos initially sided with Virata and agreed to have the levy abolished but later reversed his decision during a Cabinet meeting while Virata was abroad. Virata is said to have tendered his resignation, which Marcos refused. The former consoled himself by saying that he would not abandon the struggle for economic liberalization (*ibid.*).

The opposition experienced by the Virata network can be described as the manner in which the fitness model "allows us to describe networks as *competitive* systems in which nodes fight fiercely for links" (Barabasi 2009, 106), in this case, the link to the Marcos hub. The Virata network also defies the scale-free model, which "reflected to our awakening that networks are dynamic systems that change constantly through the addition of new nodes and links" (*ibid.*). In the case of challenges to the Virata network, it did not matter how many cronies or technocrats Marcos added to his network; what was important was the nature of the competition they posed to the Virata network. When it came to accessing IMF and World Bank loans, none of them could compete with Virata's technocracy network.

III-6 *The Emerging Political Value of the Virata Technocracy Network*

It is in the area of accessing IMF and World Bank loans for the Philippine government

that the Virata network may be described as the "star" dominating the vast majority of links to the Marcos hub. Opposition from the Imelda Marcos and crony networks further strengthened the Virata network's links to the IMF-World Bank hub, as these two financial institutions saw Virata's network as a bulwark against crony corruption in the Marcos government. The IMF-World Bank group was said to pressure the Marcos regime to lift martial law and declare a New Republic in 1981 headed by a Cabinet composed of World Bank technocrats: Finance Minister Virata, appointed as prime minister; Industry Minister Roberto Ongpin; Central Bank Governor Jaime Laya; Minister of Planning Placido Mapa; and Alejandro Melchor, who served as a Cabinet-rank presidential adviser and executive secretary to Marcos during the earlier years of martial law (Bello *et al.* 1982, 184).

Virata, however did not agree with this perspective. As he pointed out, Mrs. Marcos wanted the position of prime minister, which the Marcoses' colleagues in the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (Movement for New Society, or KBL)[58] nominated her to. He said he was taken by surprise when President Marcos preferred him for the position. When asked in our interviews how true the write-ups were, particularly in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* (Tanzer 1981; Sacerdoti and Tasker 1983), that his selection as prime minister was because of pressure from the United States in general and the IMF and World Bank in particular—as they did not like the corruption of the First Lady and the Marcos cronies—Virata was dismissive, although he said that he was aware of the reference to him as an "Amboy."[59] Whether this is true or not, what is significant is that Virata's ascendancy to the position of prime minister highlighted his value to Marcos. This situation seems to have transformed the Virata technocracy network into what Barabasi (2009, 237) calls the hierarchical modularity or the modular scale-free network, which makes multitasking possible. As elaborated by Barabasi, while the

> dense interconnections within each module help the efficient accomplishment of specific tasks, the hubs coordinate the communication between the many parallel functions. Bottlenecks and slowdowns are inevitable if the same module is simultaneously confronted with several tasks. (*ibid.*, 234)

The United States, through the IMF and World Bank, therefore, was perceived to have pressured Marcos to accord the Virata network not only economic responsibilities but also political responsibilities as well as make sure that crony corruption was kept in check.

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58) The KBL was the political party that Marcos created during the martial law period.

59) "Amboy," an abbreviation for "American boy," is a moniker used for someone who represents the interests of the United States (Virata, interview, November 28, 2007).

A major hindrance to Virata's economic and political responsibilities was the emergence of a consolidation of hubs, epitomized by the KBL political party network. During the KBL caucus early in 1985, Mrs. Marcos bemoaned that some of her projects, such as the Kilusang Kabuhayan at Kaunlaran (Movement for Livelihood and Development), received insufficient funding. This complaint was followed by Marcos's chief crony Benedicto, whose monopoly of the sugar industry was frowned upon by the IMF and World Bank. Benedicto accused the technocrats of allowing the IMF to exert undue influence on the local economy. He urged the KBL not to accede to the demands of these financial institutions. Labor Minister Blas Ople supported this accusation by saying that the country had already given up its sovereignty to the IMF (Bowring and Sacerdoti 1983, 54). Such a situation highlighted how Virata's network clashed with four powerful networks under the KBL umbrella that were all part of the Marcos hub: Imelda Marcos's network of technocrats, Marcos's crony network, Marcos's political allies, and networks of Cabinet officials who were not economic technocrats but believed that they were being undermined by the Virata network under the tutelage of the IMF and World Bank. What occurred here was also an acknowledgment that for the umbrella KBL network, the Virata technocracy network could undermine the hubs it represented thanks to support from the IMF and World Bank.

The growing opposition to the Marcos dictatorship seemed to also favor Virata's network, as this gave it more leverage on Marcos not to support the crony interests. This was seen in 1984, when the political opposition against Marcos called a bank run on government and crony banks, such as the government's PNB and the United Coconut Planters Bank. Virata said Marcos had passed a decree saying that the governor of the Central Bank would be obligated to restore the funds of banks that had been affected. Virata believed it was Cojuangco's group that had crafted that decree. Cojuangco was then head of the United Coconut Planters Bank. Central Bank Governor Jose Fernandez[60] and Virata did not agree with the decree. Virata told Marcos, "Mr. President, this signed decree has no parallel or precedent in international law."[61] He added that when "the Central Bank helps an institution they have to follow certain procedures, like you must have acceptable security, and Monetary Board approval." Virata told Marcos it would not be good if the decree was made public. Marcos instructed his Executive Secretary

60) Fernandez replaced Laya as Central Bank governor. This was because Laya was accused of "window dressing" the dollar reserves of the Central Bank to prevent the IMF and World Bank from seeing that the level of international resources had reached a dangerously low level (Galang 1983, 72). Virata said they needed to get a technocrat who was not identified with the Marcos government, and Fernandez was such a person (Virata, interview, May 2, 2008).

61) Virata, interview, July 29, 2008.

Juan (Johnny) Tuvera[62] not to release that decree.

Marcos's withdrawal of the decree further signified the need for the Virata network of technocrats to access IMF and World Bank loans, without which the country could not survive. Thus, despite opposition from his party members in the KBL, Marcos came out with a statement saying, "[T]he KBL central committee since 1972 has always reviewed all policies and programs adopted by the Party but which are now claimed by new managers." This was his way of signaling to his party members to stop their attacks on the technocrats (Rocamora 1983, 6). The technocrats would go on to take over almost all the crony-owned companies that had been saved by the government during the economic crisis.

At this point, the Virata network may have acquired the status of a star hub in the category of the winner-take-all network, where there seemed to be no potential challenger. As Fabella noted, several of the policies the technocrats were able to pursue were because of Virata. He described Virata as supportive, and Fabella knew his limits and how far he could push. For Fabella, it did not matter if the government ran into a fiscal crisis, as the technocrats knew it was coming and could not do anything about it.[63]

Furthermore, what transpired seems to have destroyed the hierarchy of hubs—the hubs of the cronies, relatives, and political allies—characterizing the scale-free topology and turned the Virata network into a starlike network, with a single node grabbing all the links (Barabasi 2009, 103–104). A probable reason for this is that the cronies and relatives, e.g., Imelda Marcos, Cojuangco, and Benedicto, were also contained within their own specific sectors—Cojuangco in the coconut industry and Benedicto in the sugar industry. And in the case of Imelda Marcos, although she had political and economic power through her Ministry of Human Settlements and as governor of Metro Manila, her access to resources was also dependent on the loans that the Virata network was able to avail of through the IMF and World Bank. All these dynamics, however, were dependent on decisions made by Marcos.

IV The Collapse of the Virata Technocracy Network

All the above factors were not enough to sustain Virata's network, which was brought to an end by the collapse of its most important hub: the Marcos hub. This may be described

62) Tuvera was Marcos's senior presidential assistant from 1978 to 1986.
63) Fabella, interview, August 11, 2008.

as what Barabasi calls a series of cascading failures, which is when a network collapses and its failure shifts loads or responsibilities to other nodes:

> If the extra load is negligible, it can be seamlessly absorbed by the rest of the system, and the failure remains effectively unnoticed. If the extra load is too much for the neighboring nodes to carry, they will either tip or again redistribute the load to their neighbor. Either way we are faced with a cascading event, the magnitude and reach of which depend on the centrality and capacity of the nodes that have been removed in the first round. (Barabasi 2009, 120)

Virata's fellow technocrats in his networks were very much aware of the problems that the First Lady as well as Marcos's cronies were creating for them. In reaction to this, they tried as much as possible to support Virata, whom they regarded as their senior in terms of responsibilities. It was against this background that Virata was appointed as prime minister in 1981. Mapa noted that during this time, so as not to be isolated, he needed to work with other agencies as a coordinator and referee because there were conflicting positions among different ministries and agencies. He said that he would try to do everything through Virata, as he was prime minister. He said that he and his fellow technocrats would support Virata, and many times during Cabinet meetings there would be conflicts, but they would ask for a committee to be formed to referee. Many times, Mapa would end up being the chairman of that committee. As Mapa observed, it was very hard to get colleagues to reconcile their differences. He pointed in particular to Secretary of Energy Geronimo Velasco and Secretary of Trade and Industry Roberto Ongpin, who were difficult to control as they had direct lines to the president. In the case of Velasco, Mapa felt that he sided more with the technocrats but when there were some matters that affected him, he would go directly to the president. In general, however, Mapa felt that Virata was very good in terms of going back to the president and also trying to keep Velasco and Ongpin in line.[64)]

Nevertheless, this cascading failure, as perceived by Virata, could not be stopped due to Marcos's failing health. As Mapa noted, when the president got sick there seemed to be a power vacuum and Virata and Melchor tried to salvage the situation. There were, however, areas where they were not in a position to do anything.[65)] The situation was aggravated by the assassination of ex-Senator Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino on August 21, 1983, which gave tremendous impetus to the growing opposition against Marcos. The assassination of Ninoy Aquino came at a time when the economy was reeling from a world recession and a deterioration of the country's terms of trade, which were gradually causing a number of companies—including crony-owned ones—to collapse. In 1981 the

64) Mapa, interview, March 13, 2009.
65) Mapa, interview, April 22, 2009.

situation worsened further when Dewey Dee, a Chinese businessman, left the country with US$100 million worth of unpaid debts. This adversely affected the financial system and several big business establishments. Another blow to the Philippine economy came when Mexico defaulted on its debt payments in 1982. Virata may have managed to control the situation in the beginning, but after Ninoy Aquino's assassination things got out of hand, particularly because Marcos was sick and not in command of the situation.[66] Imelda Marcos and Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Fabian Ver, representing a faction of the military network loyal to Marcos, took control.[67] This did not bode well with the United States, as it despised the Imelda Marcos-General Ver network. What resulted was that the hierarchy of highly connected hubs was taken out, with Marcos no longer in command. This proved to be the final blow to the networks that were linked to this hub, including Virata's technocracy network.

The situation led also to the loss of support for the Marcos government from a crucial sector, which was the business community, particularly the middle class. With the growing corruption, human rights violations, and socioeconomic inequalities, the business community—led by the Makati Business Club—together with the Catholic Church hierarchy began to voice their opposition against Marcos.[68] The business community initially tolerated the corruption of Marcos's cronies, but when the economy began its downturn and the government used state funds to rescue the crony companies, the business community began to move toward the side of the opposition. Their major complaints were the following: (1) they felt that the government was unable to curb graft and corruption; (2) they said the technocrats were too bureaucratic and arrogant and lacked practical experience; (3) they resented the bailout of crony companies; (4) they disapproved of the technocrats' blind loyalty to the policies of the IMF and World Bank group, which led to the centralization and streamlining of the local economy such that it benefited only foreign investors and not their local counterparts (Bello *et al.* 1982, 191).

The loss of support from the business community, Church, and middle-class networks was significant for Marcos, because the United States viewed these networks as important sources of legitimacy for Marcos's martial law rule. Before the business com-

66) Virata, interview, November 23, 2007.

67) Virata, interview, November 23, 2007. Ver was Marcos's trusted aide. He was Marcos's former driver and hailed from Ilocos Norte, the same province as Marcos. Marcos chose Ver to be the chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines over his own second cousin, Fidel V. Ramos, who was viewed as the next chief with the retirement of Romeo Espino, due to seniority.

68) The Church hierarchy included Jaime Cardinal Sin, who together with Corazon Aquino called for the People Power Revolution in 1986. The Church hierarchy is considered as mainly appealing to the Filipino middle class.

munity and Church hierarchy joined the opposition, the major source of opposition was the mainstream Left, i.e., the Communist Party of the Philippines, its armed group, the New People's Army, and its illegal united front, the National Democratic Front or the CPP-NPA-NDF. Between the mainstream Left and Marcos, the United States would of course support the latter. But the United States could not ignore that the CPP-NPA-NDF was also drawing from the other disenchanted sectors of society, i.e., the lower classes, the marginalized, and even some segments of the middle and upper classes. For the United States, the repercussions of the policies of a technocratic regime were not only economic but political as well. The determination of the technocracy to produce an apolitical and pro-business atmosphere gave the leadership a legitimate excuse to depoliticize the Filipino people. This was implemented in various forms, e.g., the imposition of authoritarian controls on the flow of information, the elimination of leaders of national movements, and the denial of civilian rights (Stauffer 1974, 173). Joint ventures between technocracy-manned state corporations and multinational corporations led to adverse socioeconomic consequences, e.g., the displacement of people. Small farmers, fishermen, and quite a number of the urban poor were forced to evacuate their land and sea locations to pave the way for industrial and agricultural projects such as export processing zones, a copper sintering plant, a nuclear plant, and export-crop plantations (*ibid.*). Tribal Filipino communities were evicted from their ancestral lands to pave the way for infrastructures such as dams to provide electricity and irrigation in order to entice foreign capitalist business ventures into far-flung areas. This led to the cultural genocide of at least 4.25 million tribal Filipinos (Rocamora 1979, 2).

All these developments led to the burgeoning of an anti-dictatorship struggle in the country. With the business community and Church hierarchy networks joining the ranks of the opposition and, more important, the emergence of Aquino's widow, Ma. Corazon "Cory" Aquino, as the leader of the opposition, the United States began to see Aquino as a palatable alternative to Marcos.

The ultimate push for the United States to support the opposition was the defection within the military led by Marcos's Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and his military aide, Col. Gringo Honasan, as well as Philippine National Police Chief Fidel V. Ramos. The three of them with their supporters in the military joined the civilians to wage the 1986 People Power Revolution against the Marcos dictatorship. Virata's network did not have any links with Enrile or Ramos or, for that matter, Marcos's military network. Virata did not even know that his own military assistant, Lt. Col. Angelo Reyes,[69] was a mem-

69) Reyes became secretary of the Departments of Environment as well as Energy under the Gloria Macapagal Arroyo administration (2001–10).

ber of the Reform the Armed Movement of the Philippines.[70)]

The withdrawal of US support for Marcos also severed the relationship of the Virata technocracy network with the IMF and World Bank, since the latter relationship was the basic reason for Marcos's support of Virata's network. Previously, there had been some who defected from Virata's technocracy network: Director General of the National Economic and Development Authority Gerardo Sicat Jr. resigned in 1981 and left the country in 1985 for a World Bank position in Washington, DC; and Vicente Paterno, minister of trade and industry and later on of public highways, resigned from government in 1980.[71)] Both could no longer tolerate working for the Marcos government. There was no problem in replacing them, and their desertions were not drastic enough to break down the Virata network. As pointed out by random theory, when nodes are removed randomly, there are a fraction of nodes that indicate a critical point has been reached whereby the network breaks apart: "If you remove more nodes from the critical fraction, then it would break apart into different pieces" (Barabasi 2010).

Virata knew that the critical fraction had been reached even before the 1986 People Power Revolution. This realization came about when he was in the United States, in the middle of negotiating loans for the Philippines with the IMF and World Bank. He was seeking a debt moratorium because the Mexican default of 1982 had triggered an economic crisis in the Philippines. Such macroeconomic failures, as pointed out by Barabasi (2009, 209), "can throw entire nations into deep financial disarray." Moreover, because the Philippine economy was part of a highly interconnected network of financial institutions, the breakdown of some selected nodes—in this case, the crisis in the Mexican economy combined with the inability of the IMF and World Bank to immediately resolve it—set off a cascade of failures that shook up the whole economic system, especially in the Philippines. It did not help that because of Marcos's growing unpopularity, the issue was not given priority by the two international financial institutions. When Virata sought a meeting with the IMF and World Bank, the institutions told him that they could not field any personnel to talk at that time and that the only window they could give Virata's

70) RAM was the network of Honasan, which staged a mutiny during the 1986 People Power Revolution. It consisted of military officers who were disgruntled over the corruption in the military. RAM, which was nurtured by Enrile, consisted mainly of the lower ranks in the military, i.e., colonels, lieutenants, and others. Virata, who said he appointed Reyes as his director for information for the Office of the Prime Minister to monitor, in particular, intelligence reports, abandoned him during the 1986 People Power Revolution. Virata said he had to seek refuge in Cavite, where the governor was his friend (Virata, interview, November 23, 2007).

71) Paterno left the KBL after calling on the Batasang Pambansa (National Legislative Assembly) to institutionalize reforms such as a freer press, fair elections, and identification and punishment of those behind the Aquinas assassination (Situationer 1983, 152).

economic team was after the World Bank meeting. Finally, they selected October 17, 1983 as the date for the meeting. In the meantime, Aquino was assassinated in August 1983 and the situation took a turn for the worse.[72] At that point, Virata told Marcos he could no longer do his job and he might as well resign, but Marcos told him to stay on.[73]

This seemed to be a recognition by Virata that his relevance to Marcos was dependent on Marcos's relationship with the United States, which determined Virata's relationship with the IMF and World Bank. Virata's predicament can be equated to what Barabasi (*ibid.*, 105) describes as the "fit-get-rich" behavior of scale-free networks, which prevails in the marketplace when there is a hierarchy of operating systems such that the most popular is followed by several less popular competitors. Such a hierarchy is present in most industries. In Virata's case, his popularity and leverage hinged on his being able to obtain the IMF and World Bank loans that the Philippines badly needed. In this respect, Marcos's relatives, cronies, and political allies could not compete with Virata's network. But Virata was gradually losing this network. And, as pointed out by Barabasi (*ibid.*, 110), "vulnerability is due to interconnectivity"; this can be applied to the Virata network's links with Marcos and the IMF and World Bank.

The validation of this claim, as Virata pointed out, came with Ninoy Aquino's assassination, when Virata saw his own relationship with the IMF and World Bank sour. He noted that the two financial institutions were beginning to withhold or tighten assistance. When Virata inquired about economic assistance to the Philippines, the IMF and World Bank would reply that the matter was being processed or considered.[74] Virata blamed this on the United States' diminishing support for Marcos. He observed that the United States was beginning to talk to opposition members and sizing up possible successors, and he noted the continuous bad press on the Philippines in the United States. Virata's dependence on Marcos to access US support, which helped to facilitate World Bank and IMF assistance, may have proven to be the Virata network's Achilles' heel, as described by Barabasi (*ibid.*, 117–118):

> [T]he findings indicate that scale-free networks are not vulnerable to failures. The price of this unprecedented resilience comes in their fragility under attack. The removal of most connected nodes rapidly disintegrates these networks, breaking them into tiny noncommunicating islands. Therefore, hidden within their structure, scale-free networks harbor an unsuspected Achilles' heel, coupling a robustness against failures with vulnerability to attack.

72) Cesar E. A. Virata, interview by Yutaka Katayama, Cayetano Paderanga, and Teresa S. Encarnacion Tadem, tape recording, June 24, 2008, RCBC Plaza, Makati City, Philippines.
73) Virata, interview, November 23, 2007; Virata, interview, June 24, 2008.
74) Virata, interview, November 23, 2007.

Marcos's calling of snap elections under US pressure may have spelled the end of his support for the Virata network. Virata advised Marcos not to call snap elections as he had tenure of office. But he claimed that Marcos called snap elections because the United States was portraying the president as losing control, and that was why he wanted a fresh mandate even though his term had not ended.[75] After the snap elections, which Marcos won by only a slight margin, Virata offered to resign as minister of finance. He suggested to Marcos that since the margin of victory was so slim, perhaps it was time for change. Virata was not yet planning to resign as prime minister, because he wanted the Batasang Pambansa (National Assembly) to be convened so he could personally present his resignation to the legislative body—since the assembly had elected him.[76] He added that he could also be charged with dereliction of duty if he resigned as prime minister. But eventually Virata learned that Marcos had offered Enrile the position in order to stop the People Power Revolution.[77]

The power, therefore, of Virata's technocracy network lay mainly in the support it could get from the US and Marcos hubs, and consequently such support translated into how Marcos needed Virata in order to access loans from the IMF and World Bank. This situation characterizes Barabasi's (*ibid.*, 112–113) failures in random networks, whereby "there is a critical threshold below which the system is relatively unharmed. Above this threshold, however, the network simply falls apart." In this case, the Virata hub's inability to continue performing its task brought down the network.[78]

Conclusion

Cesar E. A. Virata had links to social, academic, US, and business community networks that thrust him into government. In government, he developed his own network; the importance of this network was its link with the Marcos hub, which kept the different political, economic, and social networks together. What strengthened and allowed Virata

75) Virata, interview, December 13, 2007.
76) Virata, interview, June 24, 2008.
77) Virata, interview, June 24, 2008. Cesar E. A. Virata, interview by Cayetano Paderanga and Teresa S. Encarnacion Tadem, tape recording, September 2, 2008, RCBC Plaza, Makati City, Philippines.
78) What brought down the Marcos hub is based on the perspective of Virata as collaborated by secondary materials used in this article. There are, however, other views with regard to this—for instance, that the Marcos hub collapsed because of the strength of the opposition against Marcos led by Corazon Aquino and Jaime Cardinal Sin, which was complemented by the military mutiny of Marcos's Secretary of Defense Juan Ponce Enrile and Philippine National Police Chief Commander Fidel V. Ramos.

to consolidate his own network in government was that he shared with Marcos a common economic concern, i.e., bringing in investments to the country and the pursuit of an export-oriented economy. This economic perspective opened him up to the IMF-World Bank hub. During the pre-martial law period, the Virata network clashed with the network of nationalist economists of the government's National Economic Council (NEC) as well as nationalist politicians and local capitalists, as they were against the open-door policy of the economists in the Project Implementation Agency, where the Virata network was embedded. When Marcos became president, the nationalist economists were booted out and the Virata network reined in the NEC. The Virata network, however, had to contend with the nationalist networks in Congress, i.e., those against liberalization. But Marcos's party members from the Nacionalista Party, who were part of the Marcos hub, supported the Virata network's open-door policy, i.e., liberalization of the economy. This helped the latter to pass the Investments Act and the Export Incentives Act. Marcos's support for the Virata network would prove to be most crucial. Marcos's political strength among the agricultural and industry blocs lay in his network of political and economic allies such as Benedicto, who represented a faction of the powerful sugar bloc. Marcos also made use of his leverage as president to make the other blocs, e.g., the logging concessionaires, behave. Virata's was, therefore, only one of the networks that connected to the Marcos hub. Its importance was its ability to access loans and foreign assistance from the IMF and World Bank for the Marcos hub.

The declaration of martial law highlighted the compartmentalization of the Virata network as an economic network, as the technocrats were kept in the dark about the declaration of martial law. It also highlighted the importance of Marcos's political networks, i.e., those that were involved in the planning of martial law. The declaration of martial law also established Marcos as the major hub in Philippine politics, with which the Virata network was well-connected because of its important role in accessing World Bank and IMF loans. But this would only be the case for as long as the US hub, which the IMF and World Bank were connected to, supported Marcos's declaration of martial law. Thus, the two very important hubs for Virata—the Marcos hub and the US network, or the World Bank and IMF hub—continued to give the Virata network the leverage it needed.

The Virata network, however, would go up against other formidable networks. Foremost was that of First Lady Imelda Marcos, who would use other sources of government funds, thus bypassing the Virata network, to finance her personal projects. Marcos allowed this to happen. The network of oligarchs and politicians who were all linked to the Marcos hub were viewed by Virata also as hindrances to his economic decision making, but they were not as significant as Marcos's chief cronies, Benedicto and

Cojuangco. Virata's leverage vis-à-vis the chief cronies was the support his network received from the IMF and World Bank, which were not happy with the cronies' monopoly over industries since that blocked the entry of foreign, particularly US, companies into the country. Marcos generally sided with his cronies but would later get pressured by the United States as well as the IMF and World Bank to curb crony capitalism by giving the Virata network not only economic but also political power, as seen in the appointment of Virata as prime minister. This was despite the opposition of networks under Marcos's political party, the KBL, which were all linked with the Marcos hub and were up against the Virata network. These included Imelda Marcos's network of technocrats and Marcos's crony networks, political allies and networks, and Cabinet officials who were not economic technocrats. These networks all believed that they were being undermined by the Virata network under the tutelage of the IMF and World Bank. It is ironic that during the pre-martial law period this was not the case, as the Virata network had a good relationship with Marcos's party members in the Nacionalista Party. During the economic crisis in the early 1980s, the Virata network had the upper hand as Marcos needed to get IMF and World Bank loans. Thus, Marcos also told his KBL party mates and their respective networks to stop criticizing Virata and his technocrats.

For Virata, the breakdown of his network was due to the failing health of Marcos during a period of economic crisis that was aggravated with the assassination of Ninoy Aquino. These situations witnessed the takeover of power by the networks of Imelda Marcos and General Ver's faction of the military network. This led to the rapid decline of support for Marcos from the business community and the Church and an increase in support for the CPP-NPA-NDF. Both these networks joined forces to strengthen the anti-dictatorship struggle. The situation did not augur well for the United States, but it found an alternative to Marcos in the person of Corazon Aquino. By then the Virata network had begun to lose its support from the IMF and World Bank, and with the calling of snap elections by Marcos and his offer of the position of prime minister to Enrile, Virata saw the collapse of his network, which had lost its link with its two important hubs, those of Marcos and the United States. The shifting of US support to Corazon Aquino and the 1986 People Power Revolution also prevented the toppling of the US and IMF-World Bank hubs, which were perceived by the Philippine Left as having supported the Marcos dictatorship.

The rise and fall of the Philippine technocracy, therefore, was dependent on four important nodes that were transformed into hubs: the Virata, Marcos, US, and IMF-World Bank nodes. Virata became the hub for the technocracy dealing with the IMF and World Bank. The fate of this hub was also dependent on the power given to it by the Marcos

hub, which controlled political and economic power, and the other hubs that were linked to it, e.g., Marcos's relatives and cronies, the business community, political allies, and the military, among others. The IMF-World Bank hub was the one that extended the loans needed by the Marcos government through the Virata network. The loans, though, needed the approval of the United States. For Barabasi (2009, 211), one way of avoiding the cascading failures that brought about the downfall of the Virata network was to abandon hierarchical thinking, which he points out did not fit the network economy. He elaborates that in

> traditional organizations, rapid shifts can be made within organizations, with any resulting losses being offset by gains on other parts of the hierarchy. In a network economy, each node must be profitable. Failing to understand this, the big players of the network game exposed themselves to the risks of connectedness without benefiting from its advantages. (*ibid.*, 213)

For Barabasi (*ibid.*, 192), the Achilles' heel of the network was the vulnerability of the hubs. In the case of the technocracy network, as well as the other networks linked to Marcos, the Achilles' heel was that they were dependent on Marcos; and when Marcos became ill, he could not stay in command. With the growing opposition to the Marcos dictatorship, the United States began to look for an alternative, and it found one in Corazon Aquino. The only member of the technocracy who joined the opposition was Paterno, who went on to become a senator as part of the Aquino administration's senatorial lineup during the 1988 elections.

Virata's dispensability was further seen after the 1986 People Power Revolution, when President Corazon Aquino appointed technocrats to important positions: among others Jaime Ongpin as secretary of finance and Jose Concepcion as secretary of trade and industry. Jose Fernandez was retained as Central Bank governor. With the exception of Solita Monsod, who was the NEDA director general, they all shared the same economic perspective or development paradigm of the IMF and World Bank. This assured the new Aquino government of continuing loans from these two international financial institutions and, more important, the support of the United States. What emerged is what Barabasi (*ibid.*, 221) calls "a web without a spider," where there is no centralized star network. Instead, there is a

> hierarchy of hubs that keep these networks together, a heavily connected node closely followed by several less connected ones, trailed by dozens of even smaller nodes. No central node sits in the middle of the spider web, controlling and monitoring every link and node. There is no single node whose removal could break the web. A scale-free network is a web without a spider. (*ibid.*)

A web without a spider might have been possible under a democracy, but under an

authoritarian political environment where Virata's technocracy network prospered and later on collapsed, it would have been difficult to attain.

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Networks in Pursuit of a "Two-Coalition System" in Malaysia: Pakatan Rakyat's Mobilization of Dissent between Reformasi and the Tsunami

Khoo Boo Teik*

In Malaysia's 12th general election, in March 2008, three opposition parties collectively cracked the hegemony of the ruling coalition, Barisan Nasional (BN, or National Front). As the opposition parties formed a coalition called Pakatan Rakyat (PR, or People's Alliance), a two-coalition system appeared to have taken shape. This essay analyzes how PR reached that electoral outcome by moving from "imagining" to "realizing" dissent. Imagining and realizing dissent are not treated as disparate acts here but as tasks borne by qualitatively different networks that helped PR to overcome its structural, organizational, and resource disadvantages. The first networks considered are the cyber-networks that used ICT-sited or -enabled links to construct an alternative media linking PR's organizers and supporters in an imagined community of dissent. PR's second type of network consisted of physical coalitions—groups and organizations that connected the PR parties with their allies in civil society and their supporters at large. Their common objective was to mobilize dissent for electoral contestation. Even after 2008, however, PR was vulnerable to regime harassment and blandishments because it was missing a third type of network that would link party structures and social, community, and civic associations. By analyzing PR's networks, this essay offers a fresh perspective on the travails of building a two-coalition system.

Keywords: Malaysia, 2008 general election, Pakatan Rakyat, cyber-networks, two-coalition system

In Malaysia's 12th general election, held on March 8, 2008, 49 percent of the electorate voted for the non-formalized opposition coalition—made up of Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR, or People's Justice Party), Parti Islam (PAS, or Islamic Party), and Democratic Action Party (DAP)—and finally cracked the hegemonic hold of the ruling coalition, Barisan Nasional (BN, or National Front). The opposition made electoral history by winning 82 of 222 seats in Parliament, thus denying the BN its customary two-thirds

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majority. Among the 11 states in Peninsular Malaysia, the principal political arena, the combined opposition that later formalized its coalition with the name of Pakatan Rakyat (PR, or People's Alliance) took control of the state governments of Kedah, Kelantan, Penang, Perak, and Selangor. In fact, the opposition won 10 of 11 parliamentary seats in Kuala Lumpur; but the national capital, by virtue of being a Federal Territory, continued to be administered by the BN-led federal government.

By the standards of Malaysian elections, the regime had been struck by the most destructive wave of voter dissent or the most disastrous convergence of socio-political conditions ever—hence the popular use of the terms "tsunami" and "perfect storm"[1] to depict the outcome of the election. No doubt, the two metaphors had to be used with care. A genuine political tsunami would have swept the BN from power altogether. And a perfect storm would not have completely bypassed Sabah and Sarawak.

Even so, a watershed had been reached and a two-coalition system might finally have taken shape within Malaysian politics. Since 1990, various dissident parties had envisaged and striven to establish such a system (Khoo 2003, 159–164). But only the present opposition—hereafter PR (unless clearly inapposite)—had actually advanced toward that goal in 2008. To put it differently, one might say that PR had progressed from imagining to realizing dissent, no matter that PR had a long way to go before reaching its ultimate goal of supplanting BN in governing the country. To be sure, it would not do to cast imagination and realization as two disparate acts occurring in strictly demarcated phases. But imagining and realizing dissent may be depicted as two principal tasks to clarify certain qualitative differences between the networks that helped PR in its progression to the tsunami in 2008 from Reformasi in 1999, the latter being the inchoate movement of dissent triggered by mass outrage against the maltreatment of Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim—sacked by Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamad on September 2, expelled by UMNO (United Malays National Organization) on September 3, and imprisoned by the regime from September 20 (*ibid.*, 100–108).

The first networks to consider are the cyber-networks, which broadly included the information and communication technology (ICT)-sited or -enabled links between e-mail lists, discussion groups, Web sites, online media, online forums, blogs, text messages, etc. These cyber-networks were able to perform some crucial functions, from gathering information to disseminating reports, from rallying opinion to rebutting official claims, and from questioning mainstream news reporting to constructing alternative media. In

1) The use of the term, exhilarating for some, recalled the utter shock the terrible tsunami of December 26, 2004 held for a nation that had hitherto been spared natural disasters of that kind or scale. For the allusion to a perfect storm, see Steven Gan, Editorial, *Malaysiakini*, March 9, 2010, accessed March 10, 2010.

short, PR's cyber-networks wove a web of counter-hegemonic discourses that helped the coalition's organizers, allies, and supporters to imagine themselves as a community of dissent.

PR's second type of network consisted of physical coalitions. The term, despite its lexical imprecision, refers to various groupings and organizations having different structures and degrees of cohesion, which brought together PR parties, their allies in civil society, and their supporters at large. These coalitions—themselves offline and ground-level networks of people—were formed for a range of political actions that extended from issuing informal appeals to joining ad hoc activities, participating in structured events, and making highly organized interventions. The common objective of these actions was to realize dissent through electoral contestation.

I Cyber-Networks and a Community of Dissent

In the wake of the tsunami, Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi conceded that BN had lost the "cyberspace war."[2] Perhaps Abdullah was being self-serving when he paid that backhanded compliment to PR's cyber-networks, which had battled the pro-state print and broadcast media and sought to offset the structural advantages in electoral competition that BN enjoyed after a half-century's exercise of power.[3] The regime did not earnestly rein in the ICT-based alternative media, notably by threatening to use the notorious Internal Security Act, for several reasons. Mahathir had given a no-censorship guarantee when he launched the internationally targeted Multimedia Super Corridor project in 1996. Moreover, the regime grudgingly accepted that the Internet could not be effectively censored or policed. (Hence, for example, Mahathir merely advised Malaysian Internet users to be guided by their own values when surfing.) Beyond that, BN had overvalued its monopoly of the print and broadcast media, which were controlled via selective ownership of press and broadcasting stations, tight regulation, and constant oversight. As Abdullah admitted, "We thought the newspapers, the print media, the television were important but young people were looking at text messages and blogs."[4] Yet, UMNO had not neglected the Internet. In fact, UMNO had set up a "new media unit" of "cyber-troopers" that "managed to balance the game" against the Opposition

2) "Internet Served a Painful Lesson," *New Straits Times*, March 26, 2008.
3) It was self-serving to the extent that it diverted attention from the non-technological causes of BN's losses. Disgruntled UMNO figures blamed Abdullah's poor leadership and forced his resignation as prime minister and UMNO president a year later.
4) "Internet Served a Painful Lesson," *New Straits Times*, March 26, 2008.

back in 2004, only "to lag behind . . . unaware the landscape had changed in 2008. It was no longer write-ups, there were a lot of slanderous pictures and videos, that's why we got knocked out" (Aw 2012).[5)]

The origins of dissident cyber-networks lay in the politics of Reformasi. Tech-savvy dissidents set up numerous pro-Reformasi e-mail discussion groups, Web sites, and online forums, many linked to one another.[6)] They did this out of compulsion, resorting to new forms of IT-based media, aware that the opposition parties and civil society dissidents had been routinely misrepresented, maligned, or shut out by the state-controlled mass media. But they also did it by choice since their expressions and reports of anti-regime activity as well as state repression could be disseminated far more effectively, quickly, experimentally, and creatively.

Reformasi brought an unintended fulfillment of the regime's slogan, *Cintai IT!* (Love IT!), as the Reformasi-minded and the merely curious surfed the Internet to post information, access materials, and connect with other people. Soon Reformasi Web sites carried countless and diverse postings, including announcements of Reformasi events; reproductions and translations of news reports; unofficial transcripts of Anwar's trial proceedings and transcripts of interviews; press releases and eyewitness accounts of protests and public events; economic and political analyses; summaries of public talks; letters, appeals for support, petitions, and reminders on voter registration; rebuttals of official statements, diatribes against leading politicians, denunciations of senior public officials, and accusations against corporate figures; police reports and copies of official and purportedly official documents; poems, modern fables, photographs, and cartoons; and recordings of speeches and video clips. Of course, not all the material was verifiably correct or honest. How could it be in a climate of heightened politics and spreading anger? Suffice it to note that "[i]mpressions, fears, opinions, and conclusions are all traded equally on the Web" (Ayres 1999, 141). Moreover, an immeasurable amount of Internet material was downloaded, circulated by e-mail, reproduced in what print media existed for the Reformasi movement, and redistributed in the form of facsimiles and photocopies to those not connected to the Internet.

Many characteristics of cyberspace elsewhere probably fit these cyber-networks. Within the cyber-networks, those who chose to could remain unnamed and yet go public, and show no identity but still belong. They included people who managed Web sites with names such as Mahafiraun (Great Pharaoh) or Mahazalim (Great Tyrant) that derided

5) The leader of the UMNO New Media Unit said he had trained "around 1,800 members in social media use since being put in charge in 2010" (quoted in Aw 2012).

6) Tan (2010, 291–296) gives a detailed list of pro-Reformasi Web sites.

their target—Mahathir. Likewise, free of censorship but not liberated from worries of state retribution, some well-known Web sites were anonymously maintained, in Malaysia or abroad. Yet their designations made clear the concerns and objectives of those who maintained, supported, and visited them: *Laman Reformasi* (Reformasi Web site), *Jiwa Merdeka* (Soul of Independence), *Anwar Online*, and *freemalaysia*. Whereas many people might well have been nervous about the risks of ground-level dissident activity, they could probably imagine engaging in dissent on the Internet precisely because, there, to engage was to imagine. The cyber-networks were not wholly faceless, though. There were Web sites of established opposition parties and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Other sites had well-publicized bloggers, such as Sabri Zain (*Reformasi Diary*), and webmasters, such as Raja Petra Kamaruddin (*The Malaysian* and *Kini*). These activists disdained concealing their names or goals; instead, they moved between the Street and the Net, striving to bridge any gulf between the imagined and physical communities.

The connections between the Internet, broadly conceived, and dissident politics since Reformasi have been variously discussed (Abbott 2001; Hilley 2001; Khoo 2003; Brown 2004; 2005; George 2006; Tan and Zawawi 2008; Steele 2009; Tan 2010). Yet, it is crucial here to orientate the discussion in a new direction by noting how dissident post-Reformasi cyber-networks fostered and strengthened a sense of community among those who had diverse motivations for opposing the regime and supporting the opposition as the 2008 general election approached. It may not be necessary to be able to tell precisely "when to apply the label 'community' to . . . resulting [Internet] interactions" (Bimber 1998, 146). But it was essential that the cyber-networks steadily occupied a "continuum of communities, identities, and networks . . . from the most cohesive to the most diffuse"[7] by drawing in and linking to political parties, NGOs, alternative media, different groups, and countless individuals. Besides, those who engaged with the cyber-networks availed themselves of the

> powerful counterhegemonic use of the Internet . . . [its] ability to communicate intersubjective knowledge—as much an attribute of hypertext as innate in the Internet. People from different places, with radically variant experiences, are able to convey a notion of what it is like to be them, to live their lives, via the Net. (Warf and Grimes 1997, 267)

Applied to Malaysia's multi-ethnic society, the Internet's ability "to communicate

7) ". . . [T]he distinction of real and imagined or virtual community is not a useful one, and that an anthropological approach is well suited to investigate the continuum of communities, identities, and networks that exist—from the most cohesive to the most diffuse—regardless of the ways in which community members interact" (Wilson and Peterson 2002, 462).

intersubjective knowledge," facilitated by the surfing quality of Internet exploration, might have reduced sociocultural distances to some degree. Without extensive surveys, however, no one could reliably establish the density of such boundary-crossing networks. Even so, Internet users who habitually moved from one site to a wholly different one, culturally speaking, were likely to have virtually crossed rural-urban, interethnic, and interreligious divides. In the process, their practices had a good chance of moderating the alien feel to the physical communities they met or, just as often, did not meet in everyday life. Such cyber-crossings could diminish with time. At crucial moments of heightened dissent—during Reformasi and 2007–08—they could intensify the sense of belonging to an imagined community of dissent.

Sabri Zain's *Reformasi Diary* was an outstanding example of how to manage "intersubjective knowledge" creatively and responsibly. Entry after entry in the diary recorded how, energized and transformed by Reformasi, "someone like him" could move between the Street and the Net, so to speak, from participating earnestly in protests and demonstrations to uploading eyewitness accounts conscientiously thereafter. On the ground, the crossings of sociocultural divides were daily multiplying in ways almost unimaginable before Reformasi (Khoo 2002). Elderly Chinese read PAS's party organ, *Harakah*; the Selangor Chinese Town Hall Civil Rights Committee forum featured an all-Malay panel; Malays in large numbers attended the "Chinese" DAP forums; dissenting Malays kept a vigil for DAP's Lim Guan Eng, whose defense of an underage Malay girl had led him to prison; and the oft-arrested and severely bashed Tian Chua emerged as a hero to the predominantly Malay protesters (Sabri 2000). On the Internet, as an observer of Reformasi was to say later, the linking of the opposition's Web sites could encourage

> greater interaction and negotiation between supporters of Malaysia's often divided opposition. A PAS supporter in Kelantan may have little inclination or opportunity to engage with the West Coast, Chinese-based DAP. One click, however, can bring him from the PAS Web site to the DAP's. Arguably, this represents the greatest counterhegemonic potential of the Internet for the opposition. (Brown 2004, 88)

Thus, for a civil society easily fragmented along ethnic and cultural lines, the cyber-networks permitted dissidence (and dissidents) increasingly to imagine itself (and themselves) a community unified by dissent rather than one split by dominant, narrowly communitarian narratives that served authoritarian purposes.

Even so, it would be judicious not to overrate the impact of Internet intervention in the political process between Reformasi and the tsunami. The proliferating pro-Reformasi Web sites, tentatively indicative of the opposition's edge over the regime on the Web, failed to win the wired, tech-savvy urban voters to the opposition's cause in the

November 1999 election. Instead, it was the mostly "un-hooked," rural Malay electorate placed at the poorer end of the urban-rural digital divide—and customarily captive to state-owned or -controlled broadcast and print media[8]—that swung heavily against UMNO (Maznah 2003). At the 2004 general election, moreover, despite facing four and a half more years of expanding Internet penetration, growing sophistication of users, and improving quality of counter-hegemonic Web sites, BN (newly led by Abdullah Badawi) gained its largest ever victory. Anwar's party, as some regarded PKR, was reduced to a single parliamentary seat that was retained by his wife, Dr. Wan Azizah Wan Ismail. To compound the dissidents' disappointment, the strenuous, even heroic, efforts of the online Free Anwar Campaign and its kindred Web sites raised domestic and international awareness of Anwar's plight, but he remained in prison for six years.

It might be briefly noted that the Reformasi milieu had been greatly dampened by various developments. In the 1999 election PAS and, to a lesser extent, PKR inflicted considerable losses on UMNO. But the opposition coalition (Barisan Alternative, BA, or Alternative Front) failed to dent BN's domination, principally because DAP made no headway among the non-Malay voters (who rallied to Mahathir just as they had done in 1995). Not only was Anwar in prison, but leading Reformasi figures were swept into detention without trial in 2000. Not long after, growing differences between DAP and PAS, somewhat exacerbated by the worldwide repercussions of September 11, led to DAP's departure from BA, thus leaving the coalition moribund.[9] The Malay cultural revolt that sparked Reformasi failed to ignite a nationwide revolt, thus confining the imagined community of dissent as much as it restricted political dissent as a whole. Between 2000 and 2004, the number of blogs and Web sites grew tremendously without being able to reshape the unfavorable political reality. After all, "[i]nter-networked computers are cultural products that exist in the social and political worlds within which they were developed, and they are not exempt from the rules and norms of those worlds" (Wilson and Peterson 2002, 462). In that political ebb, the prospects for reform having receded, the cyber-networks of dissent that Reformasi inspired lost their vibrancy.

Yet, two nodes were separately formed that helped to lay the basis of a resurgence of the cyber-networks. One node was *Malaysiakini*, the country's first online news portal, which Steven Gan and Premesh Chandran founded on the eve of the November

8) In one of those twists that give the lie to the regime's presumed ability to control the popular imagination at will, this "Malay heartland" was revolted rather than persuaded by the media's incessant and lurid depictions of Anwar's supposed crimes.

9) Just as Gagasan Rakyat expired after the 1990 election, although DAP performed well then whereas Semangat 46 failed to win sufficient Malay support.

1999 general election and positioned as Malaysia's first independent and professional online news service (Steele 2009, 107–108). *Malaysiakini* provided, in its own words, "only the news that matters." Like the proverbial Internet start-up, *Malaysiakini* began with its founders' very limited personal finances and some external funding support. But it had plenty of goodwill from an informal pro-Reformasi network that included a diasporic following. Within about six months of its commencement, *Malaysiakini* saw its average daily number of viewers reach 100,000 (five times its target for the first year). Its peak number of 319,000 viewers was recorded on August 8, 2000, the day of the verdict on Anwar Ibrahim's trial on corruption charges (Tong 2004, 283). Hence, *Malaysiakini* had become an "E-zine news media" Web site that would

> develop and present original content using traditional journalism approaches. Staff editors create some of the core content by assigning fresh news stories or analysis pieces to paid contributors with journalistic training and experience. E-zines may salt this core content with links to other media, streamed audio and video segments, discussion forums, blogs, and so on. (Beers 2006, 117)

By providing space for readers' letters, popular comments, and guest columns, *Malaysiakini* became a hub with expanding links to subscribing readers, freeloading surfers, NGOs, political parties, and, so to speak, other refugees from the controlled mass media. The last named group intriguingly included some mainstream reporters with whom *Malaysiakini* discreetly maintained a symbiotic relationship: those mainstream reporters would sometimes share news materials with *Malaysiakini* reporters (when the latter were shut out of official events) or even supply *Malaysiakini* with copy they could not publish in their own newspapers (Steele 2009, 104). Over time, by adding a TV section loaded with video presentations, *Malaysiakini* became more multimedia. By adding free sections in Malay, Mandarin, and Tamil, it became multilingual, comparatively more national (if not fully Malaysian in the full scope of major languages) than the typical monolingual Malaysian newspaper, and closer to broadcast media having services in different languages. Since it declined to follow the controlled media's proclivity for suppressing news on sensitive issues, dissenting views, and criticisms of the regime, *Malaysiakini* was periodically harassed by the authorities. In one infamous incident, when the editors refused to reveal the name of a letter-writer, the police raided *Malaysiakini* and confiscated all its computers. As so often happens, the petty and futile state harassment only heightened *Malaysiakini*'s credibility and hardened its network's opposition to the regime.

In an instructive ethnographic study of *Malaysiakini*, Janet Steele rejects "the popular belief that it is the Internet that challenges the Barisan Nasional's stranglehold on power"; instead, she concludes that "the norms and values of independent journalism

. . . made *Malaysiakini* such a threat to government authorities" (*ibid.*, 108). But, surely, it was minimally the Internet and independent journalism at work: in the prevailing circumstances, a print or regular broadcast version of *Malaysiakini* was simply inconceivable. In general, it has been argued:

> What makes cyberspace so different . . . from the rest of the capital-intensive, mass media such as television, newspapers, radio, or cinema is not which discourse is dominant—for market-popularity is dominant in all technologically based mass forums—but, rather, that cyberspace alone is very cheap to enter. (Whitaker 2004, 474)

Consequently, "this cheapness . . . renders the Internet, unlike any other mass medium, open to identity-resistance popular activity that is almost unfiltered" (*ibid.*). What made cyberspace attractive elsewhere made it attractive and empowering for the pioneering venture of *Malaysiakini*: relative "cheapness,"[10] and insulation from censorship and suppression. More than that, as the controlled media steadily lost credibility it also lost its former status of an undisputed official voice. Faced with the state's near-monopoly of the media, enforced in various ways, the task for alternative non-state media is

> to somehow circumvent this media near-monopoly by creating an alternative "local media" and an alternative "official voice." . . . Simply creating an alternative "public sphere" . . . and then trying to flood the state or the world with its contrary identity-resistance popularity via "community" owned newspapers and radio stations would not do. (*ibid.*, 491)

In its design (as an online news service), by its practice (of journalistic autonomy), through its association (with anti-government blogging conferred by official harassment), and via its interactivity (with a believing and contributing audience), *Malaysiakini* was "pro-Opposition by default" (Brown 2004, 85) and more. It emerged as an unofficial "official voice" of the cyber-networks of anti-authoritarian resistance.

A second node was formed when Raja Petra Kamaruddin created *Malaysia Today* in 2004. RPK, as a devoted following affectionately later called Raja Petra, ran several series of political analyses and commentaries, namely *No Holds Barred*, *The Corridors of Power*, and *The Khairy Chronicles*. Tireless and prolific, RPK brought to *Malaysia Today* the tough attitude he had demonstrated in running the Free Anwar Campaign. Within the cyber-networks, RPK became a legendary blogger. Yet, he could be more accurately characterized as one of a "small subset of bloggers [who] assign themselves the role

10) That *Malaysiakini* began with very limited financial resources makes this point the more persuasive. Yet, one should not exaggerate the point of cheap entry—at any rate, cheaply sustainable presence—because the commercial threat *Malaysiakini* faced was, arguably, not less than the obvious political one (Brown 2005, 47).

of news source, analyst, and interpreter . . . electronic pamphleteers, self-appointed editor/commentators who use their own highly selective filter to note, deconstruct, annotate, and re-spin news items produced elsewhere" (Beers 2006, 118). It was not reliance on "news items produced elsewhere" that made *Malaysia Today* the most popular blog in Malaysia. It was, rather, RPK's relentless outpouring of exposés of alleged corruption and wrongdoings in high places. By Malaysian standards, RPK had no peer in uncovering plots and revealing conspiracies, naming names and detailing links, and providing documentation that, if genuine, could only have been leaked by deep throats, wherever these were placed. Not only did RPK constantly taunt power that was tainted by scandals, he obstinately dismissed threats of litigation and police action.

An internationally known campaigner for Anwar's freedom who had been briefly detained under the Internal Security Act, RPK asked no one's leave to criticize opposition politicians and leaders, including Anwar.[11] Not for nothing had this half-Malay, half-Welsh scion of a minor branch of Malay royalty been motorcycle-loving in his youth. No other blogger had RPK's attitude: he would bash or mock Malays and Muslims (even though he was one of them) and Chinese (even though his wife was one of them) and Indians or others (even if it was politically incorrect to do so). Yet, he showed something of a libertarian tolerance, albeit spiced with sarcasm and scolding, toward the acerbic, bigoted, or obscene among his followers. As RPK took on an iconic status within the cyber-networks, the blogrolls of other Web sites increasingly linked to *Malaysia Today*. Over time, *Malaysia Today* added news reports from domestic and international media, while several well-known bloggers and guest columnists, writing in English and Malay, linked their output to *Malaysia Today*.

Within two years of its existence, *Malaysia Today* had become the most popular blog, far and away the single most influential blog in the Malaysian cyber-networks of dissent. At heart, RPK's rise to fame bears out the observation that "the irreverent personal voice that tends to thrive on the Internet is well suited to puncturing claims of authority designed to suppress debate" (*ibid.*, 124). But no other dissenting Malaysian of the period—including Amir Muhammad in his sarcastic newspaper column, Sabri Zain through his biting online diary, or Zunar with his furious cartoons—had made such powerful use of such an incorrigibly irreverent attitude! There was a muckraking core

11) At the *Dialog dengan Persatuan-persatuan* (Dialogue with Societies), Sunway Hotel, Penang, June 4, 2006, a member of the audience asked Anwar for his response to RPK's complaint that Anwar had been recently quiet on critical issues. Anwar replied, "Petra supported me via the Free Anwar Campaign, then *Malaysia Today*. Now he makes this bit of criticism. Give him some credit. He has a right to disagree. He represents the kind of media (policy) we should have." This statement is based on the author's notes from the *Dialog*.

to RPK, but there was more to *Malaysia Today* than muckraking. Although it was not a party organ or addressed to organized groups of people, *Malaysia Today* regularly put forth RPK's challenges to his readers and PR supporters to determine and carry out what was to be done to eject the present regime. It has been suggested that "[i]f muckraking asks 'what went wrong yesterday, and who is to blame?' then future-focused journalism asks 'what might go right tomorrow and who is showing the way?'" (*ibid.*, 121). One could say of RPK and *Malaysia Today* that their "future-focused journalism," sharpened by a highly personalized style of dissident discourse, intuitively spoke to the cyber-networks' online anti-regime and pro-change yearnings otherwise burdened offline by impotent rage.

Most certainly, *Malaysiakini* and *Malaysia Today* do not—and cannot—represent the spectrum of views, opinions, and sentiments expressed in the large number of Web sites and blogs that were central to the dissident cyber-networks. But the foci of these two vastly popular sites went to the heart of the dissident discourses of the time: cleanse and reform the public institutions. To put it lightly, if one craved for news that was hidden from public view, one hooked onto *Malaysiakini*,[12] but for the lowdown on dirt in high places, one turned to RPK. Above all, *Malaysiakini* and *Malaysia Today* illustrated the influential roles that two successful nodes performed in keeping the dissident community visible in cyberspace, and imagined to be intact, which was all the more crucial as offline political contestation favored the regime.

II Physical Coalitions

Suddenly the tsunami struck, and evidently a new appreciation of the power of the Internet dawned: "Journalists, commentators, and parliamentarians themselves credited—or blamed—the Internet. With five well-known bloggers elected to Parliament, the election of 2008 seemed to spell an unambiguous victory for online media" (Steele 2009, 91). What had happened to make PR's cyber-networks so seemingly effective now? An important answer lies in their synergistic connection to another form of network—the physical coalition to realize dissent through ground-level mobilization, organization, and contestation.

In 2007, a critical year, three large-scale marches and protests took place in Kuala Lumpur, each the work of a new coalition of dissent and anti-regime protest (Khoo 2007).

12) Thus did *Malaysiakini* successfully compete with the international media for reporting what was not reported by the domestic media.

There was a 2,000-strong "Lawyers' March" to the Palace of Justice, Putrajaya, on September 26. On November 10, there was a 40,000-strong BERSIH (Gabungan Pilihanraya Bersih dan Adil, or Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections) rally that proceeded to the Palace to deliver a petition to the King. Finally, a "Hindu" rally of about 30,000 protestors took place on November 25.

The Lawyers' March was led by the Bar Council and supported by NGOs and opposition parties. The marchers called for the head of the then Chief Justice for his alleged complicity in the manipulation of senior judicial appointments, including his very own. Exasperated with the unabated suspicions of deep corruption within the judiciary, the protesting lawyers and social activists demanded an end to the debasement and subversion of a key institution of state. The BERSIH rally wound its way from different locations in Kuala Lumpur to the Istana Negara (National Palace) to hand a petition to the King. BERSIH and the participants of the rally demanded a cleansing of the electoral system to break the crippling shackles the opposition experienced in every election. The Hindu rally, called by the newly organized Hindu Rights Action Front (HINDRAF), drew its supporters predominantly from Indians (but not necessarily Hindus) who converged on Kuala Lumpur from different parts of the country. Their destination was the British High Commission, where the HINDRAF leaders had prepared to hand a petition to Queen Elizabeth II, ostensibly to appeal for the historical restitution of the rights of Indian indentured labor that the colonial state had imported into British Malaya. In effect, HINDRAF protested "Indian marginalization"[13] and neglect under the present regime.

Each event of protest was organized around an ad hoc network of dissidence. For the lawyers, the Bar Council had traditionally been the hub of the legal profession. On the matter of the reform of the judiciary, successive executive committees of the Bar Council had rallied the profession, strongly supported by many NGOs and the opposition since the first judicial crisis of 1988. The BERSIH coalition was new in name and the specific demands it made. But the coalition's main movers, opposition parties and established NGOs, had been pressing in vain for basic changes to the electoral system that would level the playing field for a long-disadvantaged opposition. Only HINDRAF was truly new. Its protest against conditions of Indian marginalization was not in itself startling: NGO activists, the Malaysian Socialist Party, academics, and even some BN politicians had raised, disputed, and organized around the issue, without agreement on how to frame or resolve it. There was, arguably, even less agreement on HINDRAF's decision to pose the issue as a Hindu matter, but that became a non-issue with non-Hindu

13) Since not just HINDRAF leaders but many NGO activists and politicians use "Indian marginalization" to describe the "Indian condition," this phrase is maintained here although its meanings are not entirely clear.

Indians and non-Indians who chose to support the HINDRAF rally.[14] The HINDRAF demand for the restitution of socioeconomic grievances going back to colonial labor policies was novel for not adhering to the standard, dominant narratives of interethnic socioeconomic inequalities in Malaysia that set assumed Malay political power against Chinese economic power. The newness of HINDRAF lay in its eruption as a social movement, its strong interjection into the political process as almost an Indian Reformasi, and its rejection of the Malaysian Indian Congress as the accepted representative of the Indian community within BN.

The slogans of the Bar Council, BERSIH, and HINDRAF marches varied, and the phraseology of their protests differed. But their underlying messages had much in common: judicial reform, electoral reform, social reform. The marchers came from different backgrounds: mostly lawyers in the first march, mostly Malays in the second, and predominantly Indians in the third. Together, the three marches extended the boundaries of dissent beyond those of Reformasi itself. Now Reformasi experiences were relived. The regime responded to the BERSIH and HINDRAF rallies with police repression and violent assaults on peaceful mass protests. In turn, the popular resentment loosened the BN's hold on the Malay vote that had been retrieved by Abdullah's "de-Mahathirizing" administration, and on the Indian vote. No "Chinese" rally of any size was organized. But, ironically, the Chinese support that had saved Mahathir and UMNO from the Malay voters' revolt in 1999 was fast fading, too. By 2007, UMNO had so brazenly expressed its disregard for non-Malay sensitivities—summed up by its leaders' open boasts that *ketuanan Melayu* (Malay supremacy) would be upheld, that the New Economic Policy would be retained, and that the Malay Agenda was timeless[15]—that Chinese voters were ready to punish BN, especially by drubbing its Chinese-based parties that would not—or could not—curb UMNO's excesses. From then on, the opposition and its dissident allies exploited further advances in ICT to produce more penetrative Internet-based audiovisual media and maintain more densely linked dissident cyber-networks to disseminate the messages and appeals of the opposition and extend its public reach.

As a ruling coalition of ethnic parties, dominating a severely gerrymandered electoral system, BN used to profit from an asynchronous pattern of ethnic opposition,

14) Jeyakumar Devaraj (2007) made a notable case for urging class solidarity with the "marginalized" while criticizing an ethnic appeal to Indians. For a different view of the political significance of HINDRAF, see Khoo (2007).

15) Officially replaced by a National Development Policy in 1991, the NEP, originally scheduled to end in 1990, was never terminated in practice. But with a difficult recovery from the 1997–98 financial and economic crises, Malay political and business elites wanted to keep, and even extend, NEP's "restructuring" that discriminated against non-Malays. As for a Malay Agenda, no one really knew what it meant beyond a chauvinistic assertion of the special position of Malays in the country.

whereby extensive Malay and non-Malay voter disaffection tended to emerge in different elections. Moments of Malay and Chinese electoral revolts converged only once, in 1969.[16] Critically, they did not in 1990 or 1999, when anti-regime sentiment ran very high (Khoo 2003, 160). But by the beginning of 2008, BN's electoral coalition had frayed as never before. As rumors swirled of an early general election, the all-important question was whether a new dissident coalition could form to do serious battle with the BN.

"At certain historical moments and under specific political, economic, and communicational circumstances," it has been suggested, "a certain node attracts many links and becomes a hub, which in turn tends to attract more links" (Hau and Shiraishi 2009, 335). By that imagery of network formation, Anwar Ibrahim, an isolated node upon his release from prison in late 2004, returned to the political scene at the 2007–08 juncture, as a hub "connecting communities of links (i.e., people of sometimes different political persuasions) across time and space, in ways that create the potential for people within the network (who [might] not necessarily know each other) to link up with each other" (*ibid.*). Several factors made Anwar the ideal hub of spreading networks of opposition. He had spent much of his political career leading networks and coalitions of dissent—as a student leader during the Baling protests of 1974, as president of Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia coordinating the anti-Societies Act movement of 1981, and as the icon of Reformasi in 1999 (Khoo 2003, 86–96). In 2008, he was strategically placed to act as the fulcrum about which would turn the opposition parties, the BERSIH coalition, HINDRAF, and the cyber-networks. It was obvious to partisans and observers alike then that only a new second coalition of opposition parties might take advantage of BN's fraying coalition. Not only did Anwar resume formal politics, but in doing so he retrieved for the imagined community of dissent the combative spirit and purpose of Reformasi and supplied the link that BA missed in 1999 precisely because he was in prison. Finally, if ever different tendencies and programs went in search of an ideological hub, those associated with PAS, DAP, PKR, and HINDRAF's political offshoot that called itself Makkal Sakhti (People's Power) found one in Anwar, who now proffered a more inclusive "New Malaysian Agenda" of institutional reform, multiculturalism, and social justice for all.

III Missing Links

In the run-up to the 12th general election, the cyber-networks and the physical coalitions

16) On the whole, Indian voters had been loyal to BN despite the presence of many outstanding Indian oppositionists in the nation's electoral history; by the beginning of the twenty-first century, BN had come to take Indian support for granted.

of dissent campaigned with the full array of tools available in cyberspace—mobile phones, e-mail, blogs, Web sites—and the interventions of an enlarging corps of Web site managers, online professional journalists, bloggers, netizens, commentators, and, simply, mobile-phone owners who were simultaneously angry voters. Between them, these networks and coalitions deployed text messages, e-mail lists, Internet postings, and video clips to overcome the controlled media's reflexive shutout of the opposition. People who had not previously imagined themselves to be dissidents sent appeals for funding, relayed notices of opposition events, forwarded campaign materials, and transmitted calls for volunteer workers and polling observers. Old-school networks were activated and diasporic contacts established through cyberspace. The cyber-networks and physical coalitions converged. At times the meetings were tangential; they merely linked people on the margins of politics to activists they knew personally. For most people, the convergences were brief, as when they attended the opposition's election rallies and events during the campaign period. Nor was it unusual for contacts to remain mostly within cyberspace: many discreet supporters of the opposition transferred campaign contributions via their ATMs to the special bank accounts of specific candidates.

The electoral outcome was startling for a political system used to finding that BN's structural advantages, institutional powers, and incomparably greater resources would somehow end high opposition aspirations at the close of a short but relentless campaigning period. As it turned out, not even *Malaysiakini*'s redoubtable Steven Gan expected anything close to the final results. Overnight, PKR stopped being the one-seat party that UMNO had threatened to send into oblivion after the 2004 general election. Instead, PKR added 30 more to the sole seat held by its official leader, Wan Azizah, and held the highest number of seats within PR. Nor was PAS beleaguered any longer with a precarious one-seat majority in Kelantan (which PAS had ruled since 1990). Not only did PAS have 38 of the 45 seats in Kelantan, but now the party ruled Kedah for the first time, led the PR government in Perak (despite the DAP's larger representation in the state), and formed part of the Selangor government. For the first time, too, DAP (which had contested elections since the mid-1960s) took power in Penang by completely defeating its rivals for the non-Malay votes, namely, the Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (which had ruled or led the government in Penang since 1969) and the Malaysian Chinese Association. With PKR having 31 seats in Parliament to DAP's 28 and PAS's 23, it was even possible to imagine, further, that a second coalition was in the making that could cooperate on less inequitable power-sharing terms.

As such, it would be pleasant to end this account on a euphoric note reminiscent of the night of the tsunami! After all, it took a decade of cyber-activism and coalition building to produce and sustain the cyber-networks and the physical coalitions that reaffirmed

on March 8, 2008 that "the potentials of the Net are realized in articulation with other spaces and flows—the flow of money, goods, and bodies, for example—rather than in a struggle that constructs itself solely through some cyberreality" (Froehling 1997, 304). The realities of political contestation and state power, however, demand that dissent must go beyond imagining and even realizing. Dissent lasts and can be defended to the extent that it is socially and deeply rooted, which requires other networks, too.

Over more than five decades of uninterrupted rule, BN, and especially UMNO, has used state power, resources, and channels to penetrate all strata and areas of society, including all forms of official and semi-official institutions, voluntary societies, business associations, youth clubs, community bodies, etc.[17] The breadth and depth of BN's presence and influence in society has been such that UMNO leaders used to say, complacently, that they might not draw large crowds at election campaign rallies but their supporters would deliver at the ballot boxes.

By comparison, it might be summarily noted, PR's parties generally lack deep or extensive networks that bind them to stable structures in physical communities throughout the country. Among them, PAS has had the strongest and most disciplined party structures and membership. More than half a century of political organization and contestation and about 40 years of experience in state government have given PAS well-developed ties to rural communities, religious schools and related institutions, associations of *ulama*, Islamic NGOs, and university student groups. Most of PAS's networks used to be localized, in Kelantan and Terengganu notably, but in the past two decades they have spread to other states and some of the larger urban centers. In contrast, DAP has always been a cadre party dependent on mass support of a largely unaffiliated kind.[18] Moreover, until the failed experiments with Gagasan Rakyat in 1990 and BA in 1999, not even the staunchest DAP supporters expected the party to take power anywhere. Being a party of protest, therefore, DAP has had a pendulum pattern of fortunes—rising with torrents of dissident Chinese voter sentiment at some elections, and slumping when the sentiments turned pro-regime at other elections. Without mass card-carrying members, and finding that its links to the associations, guilds, and societies of the Chinese communities, once the fixed repositories of dissent, have weakened, DAP would have to construct new and extensive networks if it is to remain a serious contender for power.

17) Many more networks operate at the same time, but there is no space to discuss others, including, say, networks of non-representative institutions of power, such as the nine Malay rulers, the uniformed forces, and the senior ranks of the bureaucracies, with all of whom the regime has long been intimately associated.

18) DAP began as a Peninsular Malaysian offshoot of the People's Action Party (PAP) of Singapore. Yet, on this issue, the two parties could not be more different today. The PAP is, arguably, more rooted in Singaporean society than, say, UMNO in Malay society.

Meanwhile, PKR has had too little time to organize its party structures. For certain campaigns in the past, PKR had to rely on PAS for organizational and other forms of assistance. Anwar's six-year absence and the constant state repression of the PKR leadership left the party without much time to organize itself on a nationwide basis.

From Reformasi to the tsunami, PR resorted to mass protests to reach the populace. It has had considerable success with that strategy. Yet, if PR's strategic goal is to liberalize the political system so that regime change becomes possible on the basis of a two-coalition system, PR suffers from the lack of a third type of network that maintains stable links between party structures and social bodies, including trade unions, community organizations, and civic associations. Missing those links up to the tsunami, PR depended overly on its cyber-networks and physical coalitions. That dependence contained a weakness exposed between 2009 and 2010. For example, detentions and harassments split HINDRAF's leaders and Makkal Sakhti into pro-BN and anti-regime components, with the latter not even clearly pro-PR any more. Then the defections of one DAP and two PKR elected representatives—accompanied by BN's use of royal, bureaucratic, police, and judicial interventions—toppled the PR government in the state of Perak. Additional (mostly PKR) defections at parliamentary and state levels in 2010 threatened to undo PR's 2008 achievement, and to recover for BN a two-thirds majority in Parliament.

It has been observed that a network "does not imply any uniformity of ideas or consistency, let alone equal intensity, in the level of political (or even personal) commitment," but it can create links with "*minimum* motive[s]—not necessarily ideational, but personal, professional, and even financial" (Hau and Shiraishi 2009, 336). If so, PR's overall pre-tsunami network might have relied on links created out of "minimum motives." The motive of the dissident voters was to teach BN a lesson. That of the opposition parties, especially PKR, was to contest, even with candidates they hastily or injudiciously picked—because there was no one else to stand in an election not many thought they could win. But as the defections showed, links with minimum motives, unexpectedly effective in one circumstance, can be predictably severed in another. More attempts to break links and dismantle networks were to come. Just before the Sarawak state election of April 16, 2011, cyber-attacks crippled *Malaysiakini* in what was surely a dress rehearsal in cyber-war for the next general election.[19] At about the same time, the state-controlled television broadcast an interview with the exiled RPK that some said had been heavily "doctored" to show RPK's "turnover" to BN's side (Teoh 2011). And, since June 2008, the hub that is Anwar has been ruthlessly weighed down by renewed

19) See "Malaysiakini Down, Hit by Cyber Attacks," *Malaysiakini*, April 12, 2011, http://malaysiakinicom.blogspot.com/, accessed April 13, 2011.

prosecution for sodomy.

For all that, the regime remains uneasy. The coalition of PR is intact despite many provocations to split the parties and their bases of support along antagonistic ethnic and religious lines. The dissent unleashed by Reformasi and renewed in the tsunami has not abated, and now new possibilities in the dissident use of social media abound. In the end, any further progression toward the realization of dissent might not depend so much on the permanence of particular nodes and hubs and networks, but on their persistence and reinventions.

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Contending Political Networks: A Study of the "Yellow Shirts" and "Red Shirts" in Thailand's Politics

Naruemon Thabchumpon*

This essay investigates two bitter antagonists in the turbulent politics of contemporary Thailand: the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD), with its members labeled the "Yellow Shirts," and the United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship (UDD), or the "Red Shirts." Each of the two foes, typically regarded only as a social movement, actually has a vast network connecting supporters from many quarters. The Yellow Shirt network is associated with the monarchy, military, judiciary, and bureaucracy. The Red Shirt network, organizationally manifest in a series of electorally triumphant parties, is linked to exiled ex-Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, his "proxies," and groups and individuals who opposed the military coup that ousted Thaksin in 2006. The significance of the two antagonistic networks can be gauged from their different influences on democratic processes over several years. Using concepts of political networks to examine the PAD and UDD within the socio-political context in which they arose, the essay focuses on several aspects of the networks: their political conception and perspectives, their organizational structures (for decision making and networking), and the strategies and activities of their members. The essay critically analyzes key and affiliated characters within the PAD and UDD, as well as the functional mechanisms of the networks, in order to evaluate the positions of the two networks in contemporary Thai politics.

Keywords: Thailand, contending networks, People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD), United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship (UDD), Thaksin Shinawatra

In recent years, the explanation for Thailand's democratization has been subject to intense debate. The binary opposition between the "urban elites and middle class people," on the one hand, and the "rural majority" on the other has led the country's democratic transformation into a situation of what I consider a polarization of two influ-

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ential networks: the network of anti-Thaksin protests led by the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) in 2006 and 2008, and the network of pro-Thaksin demonstrations led by the United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship (UDD) in 2009 and 2010. The past 10 years is viewed as a time of contentious politics, the politics of contested political networks.

This paper is an attempt to investigate two contesting political networks in Thailand's politics, namely, the PAD and UDD. Using primary data and interviews with PAD and UDD members in 2009, 2010, and 2014, this paper explores the politics of contestation of the two political networks.[1] While the first network is associated with the monarchy, the military, and the bureaucracy, the second network was led by former Prime Minister Thaksin and a series of his sequential political parties[2] as well as individuals who disagreed with the 2006 military coup. The significance of these two networks can be seen from their politically influential roles in the Thai democratic process in the last five years.

To understand these two networks, the paper will provide a brief background on Thai politics and its contextual conditions with regard to political networks. Second, it will examine both networks in three categories: political conception and perspectives; organizational structure, which includes key decision makers and networking; strategies and activities of network's members. Third, the paper will critically analyze specific characteristics of both networks, their key persons and affiliated members, as well as their functional mechanisms. Finally, the paper will offer a political interpretation of both networks with regard to their positioning in Thai politics.

I Thailand's Politics from a Network Point of View

Following the re-election of then Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra[3] in 2005, Thailand has been caught up in a political contestation between two power networks: the PAD and

1) Interviews with PAD members were conducted twice: in early 2009, after PAD members seized Bangkok airports; and in 2014, at the PAD stage in front of Government House during the People's Democratic Reform Committee's Bangkok Shutdown campaign. UDD members were interviewed in March and April 2010, during the big rally against the Abhisit government. Due to the political situation in Thailand, the interviewees shall remain anonymous.

2) These political parties were Thai Rak Thai (1998–2007), the People Power Party (2007–08), and Phue Thai (2008–present).

3) Thaksin Shinawatra is an ex-police officer and telecommunications tycoon. He was ousted from power in the September 19, 2006 military coup d'état. While Thaksin has been in self-imposed exile, he remains a hugely influential figure on the Thai political scene.

UDD. This section provides a brief background of Thai politics and its contextual conditions with respect to the country's contemporary politics. It will discuss the dynamism of political and economic governances that have an impact on the politics of networking in Thailand.

The Thai political system operates within the framework of a constitutional monarchy, whereby the prime minister is the head of the government and a hereditary monarch is head of state. The judiciary is independent of the executive and legislative branches. The country has a political history of long periods of authoritarianism alternating with periods of "semi-democratic" government. Since the installation of the first representative government in 1932, the military has interrupted the constitutional order more than 18 times, with Thai citizens witnessing more than 20 changes of government and 18 written constitutions after the abolition of absolute monarchy. In May 2014 there was a coup to remove Yingluck Shinawatra, the first female prime minister and youngest sister of Thaksin Shinawatra, who was ousted in the September 2006 military coup by a group known as the Council of Democratic Reform.[4)]

After the September 19, 2006 military coup that removed Thaksin from office, the monarchy-centered network played a dominant role until December 2007, when the People Power Party—a successor of the Thai Ruk Thai party, which was dissolved due to a vote-buying scandal—won the first post-coup election. During most of 2008,[5)] a pro-Thaksin government held office under protracted protests by the PAD. It was judicially ousted in December of that year, when a backroom political deal made Democrat Party leader Abhisit Vejjajiva prime minister without the benefit of an election.[6)] Thaksin supporters regarded Abhisit's premiership as illegitimate and repeatedly pressed him to dissolve parliament and call fresh elections.

According to D. McCargo (2006), there are two modes of legitimacy—electoral and technocratic—that any government that wants to survive in Thai politics has to contend with. The former concerns forming the government: political parties, in order to gain the highest number of seats in the election, targeted mainly rural areas, which were notorious for the practice of vote buying. The latter comes from a party's technocratic expertise in the eyes of the urban middle classes. Both types of legitimacy are closely connected with the project of making the politics of representation work and making the

4) In the beginning, the CDR was self-proclaimed as the Council of Democratic Reform for Constitutional Monarchy. Later, the words "for constitutional monarchy" were removed to avoid international criticism.

5) After returning to Thailand in February 2008, Thaksin went into self-imposed exile that August, to avoid serving an anticipated jail term for corruption-related offenses.

6) Many scholars have argued that the judicial decision was made under pressure from the PAD's political protest, especially with the seizure of Suvarnabhumi Airport.

country's political system more accountable, transparent, and stable.

In the Thai case, however, it can be argued that many political crises have demonstrated the persistent characteristics of Thai politics: a strong military, weak political parties, personalized leadership, a lack of "democratic consciousness" on the part of civil society and the general public, and an important role for rumors and opinions put out by the press. Another unmentionable factor in Thailand's politics is the political influence of the monarchy, created largely since the 1958 coup (Naruemon 2012, 8).

The interventionist role of the monarchy-centered network in the Thai political process and political institutions, especially in electoral politics, has been apparent from time to time and has been clearly seen in the last 10 years. The King is often seen as an important actor for political change and stability in Thailand's politics. While McCargo considers the interventionist role of members of the Privy Council as a proxy network of the monarch, A. Bamford and C. Chanyapate (2006) argue that the action or inaction of the palace was largely seen as a political signal from the monarch to politicians. The problematic and contested nature of democracy in Thailand is abundantly illustrated by the military coup d'état of September 19, 2006, a further example that the rules of the Thai political game remain fluid and that elites still see themselves as having the right to override popular participation for their own ends.

In terms of the political context of both networks, the UDD was formed partly in response to the anti-Thaksin movement known as the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD). Royalist PAD members, donning their trademark yellow shirts, staged anti-Thaksin demonstrations in the early months of 2006, after which they accepted the 2007 election results and disbanded their network. The PAD renewed its protests in 2008, when the pro-Thaksin government attempted to bring back the prime minister. The 2008 protests involved occupying Government House in August and closing down Bangkok's airports in late November and early December. The political conflicts and arguments between the PAD and UDD networks may be viewed as a form of tension between elitist and electoral models of democracy as well as representing two power networks: professionals/technocrats and majoritarian networks.

On the one side, for example, the UDD, representing an electoral majoritarian power network, supported liberal reform advocates who considered democracy as a legalistic and formal process of political institutions (such as political parties, elections, and legislative capacity). On the other side, the PAD, representing an elitist model of professionals and a technocratic power network, favored those who argued that elections were meaningless unless people were aware of the real choices and the meaning of those choices, as well as having full information on policies that would affect them. Both networks argued for the principles of democracy, whether it was seen as government by

elected representatives acting in the name of the people or government by the people themselves.

The differences between both networks in relation to the interpretation of Thai democratic politics have created a polarization among civil society groups. This is evident in various arguments, political discourses, and clarifications over the meaning of democratic legitimacy. For example, the established middle classes and urban-based civic groups, which are PAD's supporters, argue that the priority of the country is to repair the damage done by political corruption and money politics. In comparison, networks of UDD supporters feel that their voices were not considered in formulating state policy up until the 2001 election and decentralization scheme. Even if they acknowledged corruption issues surrounding Thaksin's premiership, the UDD considered Thaksin's time in office as a unique period during which the Bangkok government was genuinely responsive to rural people's needs and concerns. The UDD's preferential treatment can be seen as a political project in the government's economic plan and fiscal policy of boosting consumption and hence the domestic economy. Due to different interpretations and preferences between the two networks, UDD supporters have been anti-PAD since the 2006 coup, when they accused the PAD of supporting the coup. From then on, clashes between supporters of the two groups have taken place from time to time and there has not yet been a reconciliation.

II Understanding the PAD and Its Political Networks

The PAD is a well-organized network, with its own powerful media arrangement—the Manager-ASTV—emerging in Thai politics. Semi-structured interviews with PAD network members involved in the 2008 six-month protests, including members from the Friends of People Group, Federation of State Enterprise Worker Unions (SEWU), Indebted Farmers Network, Northern Farmer Federation, Thai Patriot Network, Council of People's Networks in Thailand, Health Professional Network, Business Society for Democracy, Santi-Asoke Group, and Alliance for Democratic Artists and ASTV media team,[7] yielded the following findings.

According to interviews (2009), this network uses a vertical and unified organiza-

7) Interviews with members of these networks were first conducted between August and October 2009, one year after the PAD seized Bangkok airports. Some groups were then revisited during the People's Democratic Reform Committee's Bangkok Shutdown campaign in early 2014 in order to see the similarities and differences between the networks. The total numbers of expert interviews from the PAD at the time were 30 people from 13 groups under this network.

tional style rather than a horizontal style, with a certain degree of autonomy on political activities. Under the discourse of destroying the Thaksin regime and protecting national institutions, the PAD uses provocative strategies with strong elements of ultra-royalist nationalism. The controversial role of the PAD has generated unsettling discussions on urban politics and the negative role of the middle classes in damaging Thai democracy. With the group being an elitist movement that has not benefited from electoral mass politics, its core members conceive and practice extra-parliamentary politics that go beyond interest group politics. The group's campaigns range from the rehabilitation of indebted farmers to the ousting of the elected prime minister, before going on to the proposal of creating a moral economy with a soft authoritarian style.[8)]

The PAD is a political network comprising elite-urban civic groups in alliance with the military, bureaucracy, middle-class activists, communitarian NGO workers and small-scale farmers, conservative academics, and business entrepreneurs as well as some members of the royal family. The PAD's political activities can be categorized as diffuse issue-based politics. In the PAD context,[9)] resistance takes place within a common framework of action against a common enemy, meaning an anti-Thaksin movement, rather than in accordance with one particular class or geographical identification.

In terms of the collective action of the networks under the PAD, this network redefined and overruled the principles of democracy with its discourse of good governance, anti-corruption, and clean politics to enable the struggles of oppositional groups and street politics to be reframed as a civic activity for direct participation that might take the place of—and be incompatible with—representative democracy.

II-1 *Composition and Key Characteristics of the PAD*

According to interviews with two PAD members (2009), the PAD consists of a political network with a wide variety of professional organizations (such as teachers, medical doctors, lawyers, and government officers), state enterprise unions, fundamental religious organizations (meaning the Santi-Asoke Buddhism and its Dharma Army group), communitarian NGOs, networks of small-scale farmer organizations, and urban middle-class individuals. Key active members of the PAD are from the Asoke Group, Manager-ASTV Media Group, Northern Farmer Federation, Alliance of Democratic Artists, Council Network of People's Organization, Young PAD, and Campaign for Popular Democracy. Members of these organizational networks are key players of the PAD. During the demonstrations, for example, Second Lieutenant Samdin Lerbutr, the presi-

8) Interviews with PAD network members, August 10, 15, and 25, 2009.

9) Interview with PAD leader, October 10, 2009. It was approximately one year after the PAD's street blockades and occupation of Government House in 2008.

dent of the Santi-Asoke Commune, was in charge of food and security for the PAD; and Yuthayong Limlert-watee, from the Manager-ASTV, was the stage manager of the PAD program. Although the PAD is neither a membership-based organization nor an interest group that is concerned only with the benefit of its members, several network members join the PAD because their organizational interests are affected by government policies. For example, the issue of privatization of state enterprise was the rallying issue for state enterprise unions to support the PAD, while primary school teachers supported it because they were dissatisfied over the downsizing and transferring of power and authority over public schools from the central government to local school sub-districts with limited staff under the Thaksin government in 2005. Key players in the PAD include Major General Chamlong Srimuang from the Asoke group and Sonti Limthongkul from the Manager-ASTV Media. It can be argued that both of them have influenced the PAD's arguments on nationalism, communitarianism, and clean politics.

In terms of individual members of the PAD, the key players are those from the royal family and retired or existing military personnel. Members of the royal family or blue blood jet set who support the PAD are grouped under the network called the Truth and Transparency Society (TTS). The TTS's members include Anong Nilubon, MR Rampi-arpa Kasemsri, Tuangtip Veera-vaitaya, Prapai Prasartthong-osod, Benjawan Krajangnetra, and royal family members of Diskul na Ayuthaya.[10] These people did not only join the 183-day PAD demonstrations but also financially supported the PAD campaigns. Although the existing military personnel are difficult to identify, the retired military persons can be seen from members of the U-na-lome Society, whose chairperson is General Pratompong Kaesornsuk. Other key players in the PAD are Seangtham Chunchadatan, a youth leader, and Tul Sithisomwong, a medical doctor at the King Chulalongkorn Memorial Hospital. Seangtham is a member of Young PAD who helped organize the PAD Demonstration School (Sathid Makawan) during the PAD's encampment at Makawan Bridge.[11] He can be seen as a node of the network in the sense that he created a new network called Young PAD, with a Web site and cyber-technology for the release of information, network communication, and mobilization. Tul Sithisomwong is seen as another node in the Network of Citizen Volunteers Protecting the Land (or the Multicolor Shirt movement) since he has organized and led various activities, including the Facebook Movement and a protest rally against Thaksin's corruption scandals.

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10) Personal interview with two members of the TTS, a network of the royal jet set that supports the PAD, June 8, 2010.

11) Seangtham's political role could be seen also during the People's Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC)'s Bangkok Shutdown campaign in 2014. For more details, see http://www.komchadluek.net/detail/20131228/175730.html, accessed October 22, 2015.

The 2010 Facebook Movement, which started through Internet communications (such as sharing pictures, clips, and other documents through online networks) moved on to organize a counter demonstration against the 2010 UDD protest demanding a dissolving of parliament. In this particular case, Tul Sithisomwong, a medical doctor who joined the PAD demonstration before the 2006 coup, can be seen as another node in the cyber network by posting information, before transforming into the hub of another network by being a leader of the Multicolor Shirt network against the UDD demonstration and dissolution of parliament in 2010. Although most members of the Facebook network are not PAD supporters, they are mobilized by cyber information and communication that encourages them to join the Multicolor Shirt network.

II-2 *Political Conception of the PAD*

In the case of the PAD, many intellectual advisers of the network were influenced by ultranationalism and conservatism. Resulting from their experience with vertical lines of command, these leaders turned to the idea of aristocratic democracy and vertical lines of networking at the expense of the internal democracy of the network.

Under "discursive struggles," the PAD's arguments are divided into three debates: nationalism against neoliberalism, communitarianism against populism, and clean politics against money politics. Moralist political discourses were used as the network's motto to support its positioning in Thai politics. As there is no equality of power among civil society members under the umbrella of the network, those who have access to power perceive political strategies and politics in a different way from those who do not have bargaining power. For instance, many voluntary civil society groups were subsumed under the PAD category; they included conservative factions, which had royal family members and retired government officers, as well as more progressive factions, such as the Northern Peasants Federation and the Federation of State Enterprise Worker Unions (SEWU). Their overall struggle was conducted by violent and nonviolent resistance groups. Given the unequal power structure in the case of the PAD, some elitist civil society organizations can be accessories of the state and promote a state-led view of civil society as well as promoting conservative institutional networks, such as the monarchy and military. While the "network monarchy" suggested by McCargo (2005) looks at active interventions in the political process by the palace and its proxies, notably former Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanond—who acted on behalf of the palace to restore political equilibrium in Thailand's power relations with certain elements of liberalism—the PAD and its Yellow Shirt network, in contrast, is seen as a network of middle- to upper-class residents who stand for honest politics with a moralistic political discourse and some elements of patriarchy and nationalism. Members of the PAD network will always uphold

the constitutional monarchy and oppose those they view as wanting to change the monarchy's status.

In terms of the middle class, moreover, it has been argued that most political observers took it for granted since the May 1992 events were viewed as a democratic uprising of the middle classes. Due to the inconsistent role of the middle class in 1976, 1991, and 2006, it can be contended that this class might have played a role in the democratic uprising; but it was not in the forefront when the fighting erupted. Most of those killed and injured during the uprising belonged to the lower classes, and, as Nithi Eawsriwong (2002) comments, the middle class does not necessary believe in either democracy or equality. As K. Hewison (1997, 214) argues, "[T]he inconsistent role of the Thai middle class during 1991 and 1992 should be considered as an unpredictable political factor which was not necessarily animated by liberal democratic values."

The PAD comprises groups representing different sectors and classes, whose alliance is issue-based. Due to its lack of access to electoral and institutional politics, this group prefers to adopt a group-based or occupation-based model of representation, rather than a geographical model of representative politics and periodic elections. It also uses the politics of direct action without engaging in formal processes and institutional channels for political participation.

Reflecting the power relations among network groupings under the PAD, it can be argued that the strongest voices among organizations claiming to be representative of the network have been those of educated middle-class urban residents and white-collar career workers, whilst the poor have become a minority segment or a prop of the political scenery under the PAD discourse. The combined presence but unequal roles of these different classes and social groups demonstrate the wide range of views that appeared in the active citizen participation in Thai politics.

To elaborate on the contested perceptions of various networks under the PAD, a mapping of a wide variety of political and economic positions can be seen through the matrix in Fig. 1. The matrix shows the wide range of political opinions of PAD members, from middle-class activists, professional groups, academic societies, and the media to the community and some sectors of the indebted farmer network. The composition of the PAD network is drawn from different sectors and is cross-class in affiliation and issue-based in orientation rather than being an ideological standpoint or territorial grouping. The common theme that links all members of the PAD is clean politics with a moral order. According to an interview with a PAD member, "Democracy without moral principles cannot fulfill Thailand's political society, and the monarchy is required for peace, prosperity, and stability of the country."

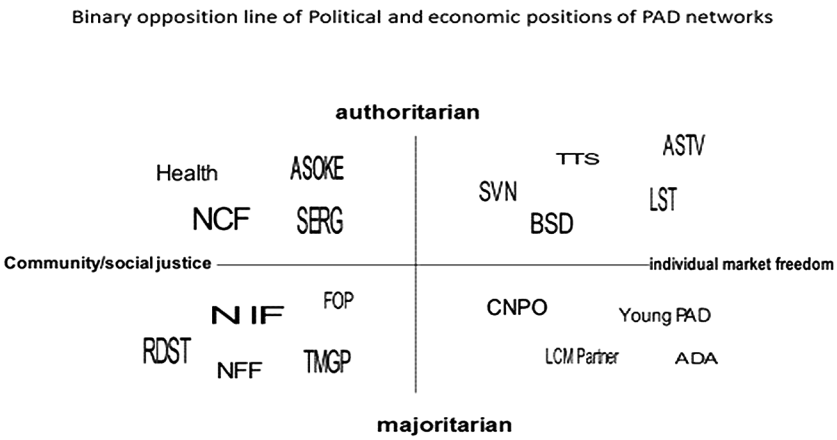

Fig. 1 Mapping of the Position of the PAD in Thai Civil Society

Note: ADA: Alliance for Democratic Artists; BSD: Business Society for Democracy; CNPO: Council Network of People Organization; FOP: Friends of People; Health: Health Professional Network; LCM Partner: Local Community's Member; LST: Law Society of Thailand; NCF: Network of Community's Farmers; NFF: Northern Farmer Federation; NIF: Indebted Farmers Network (Sometime they call themselves Network of Indebted Farmers); RDST: Rural Development in the Southern Network of Thailand; SERG: State Enterprise Railway Group (a core member of the Federation of State Enterprise Worker Unions); SVN: Social Venture Network; TMGP: Thai Media Group for People; TTS: Truth and Transparency Society.

II-3 *Organization and Functional Structure of the PAD*

At the organizational level, the PAD is composed of autonomous networks of mostly elite urban, upper middle class, and other professional groups as well as individual members. As shown in Fig. 1, PAD network members share the idea of expanding the existing democratic system to solve the problems of money politics but may have different views on the strategies and activities of each network and their view of political practices. The PAD's leadership structure consists of five leaders, with another seven as second-in-command who represent the network if the five leaders are arrested. The PAD's adoption of a vertical organizational structure was intended to increase unity and efficiency, which held the risk of building the concentration of power in the hands of leaders (as happened in the case of the 183-day demonstration). The consequent problem, however, was to achieve a balance between democratic legitimacy and organizational effectiveness. The vertical structure of the PAD has been criticized as being undemocratic, detracting from the internal democracy of the organization. The PAD network's vertical structure can be seen in Fig. 2.

II-4 *Political Strategies and Activities of the PAD*

In the case of the PAD's strategy, its agenda ranges from community work and self-help

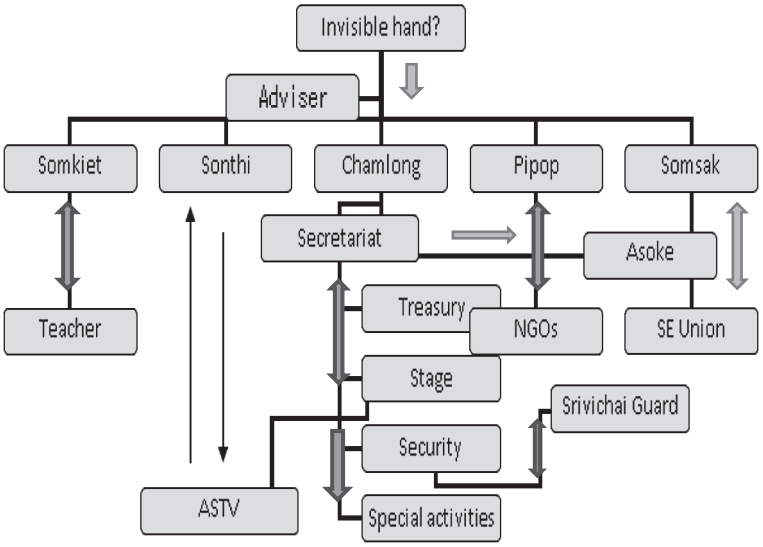

Fig. 2 Organization Chart of the PAD

Note: The PAD's organization chart clearly shows it as an organization rather than a network, due to its militia character during the protests. However, each section has its own diagram network similar to the UDD's, but the central command is still under five leaders who supervise all agendas (personal interview, November 18, 2009).

organizations to the politics of good governance and the building of a moralistic political society. The PAD highlights the notion of transparency and accountability of politicians and the participation of educated and well-informed citizens, in the belief that this will help Thailand survive its political crises. The "good governance" terminology, however, should be seen as a product of the Thai elites' desire to appear to be conforming to international standards while neglecting the problems of the poor.

At the strategy level, the PAD adopts a dual strategy: confrontation and negotiation in all aspects. This network uses the ideology of nationalism and ultra-royalist sentiment in order to attract more members from among the elites. Its campaign strategy stands on an issue-based platform emphasizing anti-Thaksin anti-money politics in order to get support from the middle class and the media. The PAD argues that its version of democracy is linked with the politics of moral polity and a neo-authoritarian developmental state.[12)]

12) Under these circumstances, the state is not just playing the role of a normal developmental state that allocates national resources on selected issues, but it can be considered as a developmental authoritarian state as it puts electoral democracy aside while those in power taking the lead in developing the country's economy are from its trusted networks, while civil society plays a role as a civic state from the patriotic point of view.

Members of the PAD were grouped together as jointly fighting for "new politics." This anti-Thaksin strategy brought together those who were frustrated over existing money politics. Members thus shared the same perspective and were committed to the struggle because of a mutual understanding that derived from their own direct experiences. This sense of solidarity enabled them to continue their struggle in the longer term. According to several interviews with PAD supporters who participated in the 2008 and 2009 demonstrations, perceptions of the power relationship between themselves and other people changed markedly when they became organized. By adopting mass mobilization as its prime source of social sanction, the PAD empowered its members and enabled them to make demands of their local officials, as they had done in the past.

At the level of its activities more generally, according to Uchane Cheangsan (2013, 10–14), the PAD uses the politics of protest and civil disobedience—with its network members advancing their agendas through collective action in order to draw attention to the deficiencies of the state system—to pressure the government and become involved in the public policy process. It engages in provocative activities and disruptive actions to draw the attention of the media and hence return to the negotiating table with increased bargaining power.

Regarding the politics of NGOs associated with the PAD, there has been intense debate about the former's political role in the democratization process and their democratic values (Callahan 1998, 84–129). Thai NGOs have tried to increase people's participation in the policy process by linking their advocacy with community groups and people's organizations. Ironically, the Campaign for Popular Democracy, established by a coalition of NGOs, student activists, academics, and other professional associations during the political crisis of 1991–92, became a core member of the PAD; and its network organizations played a contradictory role against democratic values in many ways.

The PAD's perceptions of democracy can be identified through its argument on "new politics" that aims at a trade-off between procedural democracy and institutional stability under the limitations of representative politics. The quality of the country's democracy, moreover, remains dependent upon the government and its professional advisers, and the reform itself is deeply compromised by institutional deficits. Institutional arrangements and representative mechanisms are unable to take hold. Thus, the guaranteeing of popular rights and participation has turned out to be beset by complicated procedures that reduce the democratic space and direct participation by the people.

There is an incompatibility between the way the PAD practices participatory politics and the way the country's government practices democracy. The perception of the urban middle class toward the problems of the poor is also undemocratic. People from elite groups, such as the media, academic, and urban middle classes, have a relatively power-

ful position from which they can challenge government policy. The poor, however, do not have the power to bargain with the government. Hence, in order for their voices to be heard, the latter have to cooperate with—and even rely on—the middle classes.

III Understanding the UDD and Its Political Networks

The United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship (UDD), or the Red Shirts, was set up as an anti-PAD organization after the 2006 coup, when it accused the PAD of supporting the coup. In the beginning the UDD was seen as a small-scale organization with strength in only a handful of provinces, without the capacity to initiate any large and sustained demonstrations. The UDD network faced a harsh military crackdown before re-emerging in the wake of a controversial February 2010 court decision confiscating the bulk of Thaksin's assets.

On the basis of primary data and interviews with UDD members in 2010, this paper views the UDD network as a set of loose and autonomous rural networks of small-scale organizations with a new style of media channel, namely, community radio and satellite/Internet-based television.[13] In terms of organizational structure, its horizontal, loosely organized, and provincial autonomous organizational style of networking has generated discussions on the issues of rural politics and the political role of rural and peripheral people's networks in Thai democracy. To a large extent, the UDD can be seen as a pro-Thaksin movement. Although some segments in the UDD, such as the network of social and radical activists (namely, the Red Siam group), have an opinion different from the pro-Thaksin movement, they are in the minority.

One way to explain the UDD network is to adopt the concept of oppositional consciousness (Mansbridge 2001, 238) to understand how "the network is created, organised and functioned under a diversity of groups and opinions on organisational strategies and modes of action." Another way is to understand the dynamism of mass politics in the context of Thailand's democratization process, especially after the 1997 constitution.

On the first account, as J. Mansbridge (*ibid.*, 243) comments, the motivation for collective action by a group requires more than just recognizing injustice, understanding a common interest, or identifying the limitations of the existing system; it also involves a commitment to act in order to defend or help support such ideas. In other words, it implies a move from recognizing the need for collective action to a willingness to under-

13) Personal interviews with UDD members were conducted between March and April 2010, before the government cracked down in May 2010.

take such action.

In the case of the UDD, this network redefined the conception of social justice to show how electoral participation was intertwined with political conditions and public policy. It argued that the economic populist scheme provided by politicians benefited the rural poor, especially those belonging to the non-farming sector. In other words, the economic populist platform could be seen as a legitimate way to gain votes through governmental projects using public funds, which is the power of the poor to have a say in public policy decisions. The UDD network was first categorized as a countermovement against the military, the Democrat government, and the PAD. The network has undertaken various forms of resistance. One of its mottos is "anti-aristocrat," in accordance with media technology and geographic networking.

On the second account, the political constraints in Thailand were due to deficiencies in the country's democratic institutional mechanisms, due to which poor people were excluded from effective political participation while the central government controlled local resources, ranging from domestic revenue to natural resources, under the discourse of local interest being subordinated to national interest. While the democratic deficit at the national level came mainly from the failure of formal democracy and the closing of space for public participation, the possibility of achieving greater democracy at the local level was limited also because of the inadequate and slow process in transferring decision-making power to the grassroots and the low quality of local democracy. In the case of the UDD, although local democratic institutions cannot function or are unable to exercise democratic power, members of the network at the sub-district level are able to negotiate and gain some benefit for the local community with regard to poverty reduction projects at the local level and natural resource utilization in their area. Throughout the decentralization process in Thailand, there have been more resources available to local governments; but the central government still has the power and authority on issuing political agendas, providing budgets, and allocating personnel. If the local elites want to enrich themselves with these resources from the local governments, they need to have connections with the center.

Under the UDD's "political educational scheme," the network was able to expand its support base at the local level. Within one year, from 2008 to 2009, the UDD's School Project was created and operated at least 400 schools in 35 provinces across the country. The UDD discourse is placed under three campaigns: electoral democratization, local access to economic liberalization, and putting an end to double standards and bringing about social justice. These discourses are used to support the network's positioning in Thai politics. Members of the UDD network are from a wide variety of groups, both local institutions and individuals. For example, they include local canvassers of politicians,

members of Tambon Administrative Organizations,[14] leaders of community radio programs, self-employed and semi-skilled workers, subcontracted farmers, and low-ranking security officers. They are able to access policy schemes of the state and have expectations from electoral politics. It can be argued that a key character of the UDD network is social frustration. Its key active members or possible nodes of networking are from emerging economic and social classes, especially self-employed people and those who still have natural resources and are able to access commercial markets.

The UDD has a horizontal structure comprising networks of various forms of organizations and individual members. The network comprises various sub-networks, such as People's Television Network members, provincial leaders/organizers, and members of opposition parties. Some 1970s activists have also grouped together and work with the UDD as advisers.[15]

According to an interview with a UDD member, the organizational structure can be seen as a loose network of local sub-networks that consider themselves as the Red Shirts. Its task is to set up working political educational projects based on provincial networks. The provincial networks may control various local networks in order to represent the UDD's network at the national level and make tactical decisions, including holding demonstrations or rallies to pursue the network's campaign. There are varying numbers of group networks at the provincial level: for example, Ubon Ratchathani has 8 local networks of Red Shirts while Chiang Mai has 24. Each local network has its own community radio channel, from 1000 to 3000 MW, to propagate its own music, local folklore, and political issues of the Red Shirts locally and nationally.[16]

In practice, however, there are debates within the UDD about the dominant role of national leaders, especially those from the People's Television Network team and ex-activists, in crafting the organization's political identity and political strategy as well as its agenda through their involvement with the political school project. For example, according to an interview with a UDD member from Chiang Mai, central leaders decided to continue protracted protests in downtown Bangkok while local sub-networks wanted to call off the demonstrations after the violence in April 2010. The creation of an identity of the UDD's struggle as a struggle of "peasants vs. aristocrats" also came from intellectuals at the center (see Fig. 3 representing the organizational structure).

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14) A Tambon Administrative Organization is the smallest unit of local government in rural areas, while urban areas have municipalities. TAO leaders are elected every four years.

15) Some 1970s student activists who work with the Thai Rak Thai party, mostly from the North, can be considered as network members of the UDD. Other activists from Bangkok, such as the Dome Ruam Jai group (Thammasat alumni student activists), consider themselves as sympathizers of the UDD.

16) Personal interview, March 18, 2010. For more details, see McCargo and Naruemon (2011).

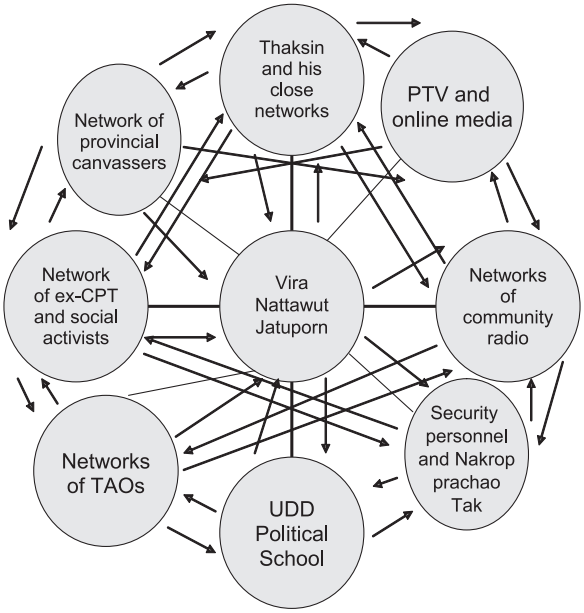

Fig. 3 Organizational Structure of UDD Network

Notes: 1) Although the three leaders of the UDD are Vira, Natthawut, and Jatuporn, Thaksin and his close network are seen as playing an advisory role in terms of decision making for rallies and networking. The financial role is seen to be played by Thaksin and his close ally (personal interview, April 10, 2010).
2) CPT: Communist Party of Thailand; PTV: People Television Network.

Most networks are not membership-based organizations and depend upon outside contributors (especially local politicians and political canvassers) for organizing and financing the network. The UDD's campaign strategies and activities are also seen as political rallies by political society rather than self-governing civil actions by civil society. In the case of the UDD network's organizations, their agendas range from the nonpolitical and nonideological to the idea of political justice in the belief that this would help bring back democracy and possibly former Prime Minister Thaksin.

In the Thai case, the politics of the UDD consists of a loose network of a wide variety of organizations that are not membership-based or made up of interest groups that are concerned only with the benefit of their members. The composition, however, is such that it contains groups representing different sectors and classes, whose alliance is issue-based under the motto of "anti-aristocrat, anti-double standards, and bring back Thaksin though our ballot box." The UDD prefers to adopt a group-based representation as well as geographical model of representative politics and periodic elections. It also uses the politics of direct action without engaging in formal processes and institutional

channels for political participation.

Under Thaksin, the Thai Rak Thai (TRT) used a participatory platform to formulate the marketing of its election campaign in 2001, which has continued to function as a hub of the network for coordination and as a focal point of the UDD. At the time, the TRT organized workshops with farmers' leaders in every region to focus on rural problems and solutions as a starting platform before asking its academic staff and technocrats to analyze the situation and put forward concrete proposals that would appeal to voters. The UDD did the same thing with different audiences before pushing its campaign using these forums as a channel for its provincial publicity and political marketing campaign.

On the issue of widespread and broad-based participation, key UDD players disagreed with the communitarian philosophy that "the people know best." They argued for the practicability and effectiveness of the state system that needed to be taken into consideration, and that public participation was only one among several methods of strategic formulation. In this regard, people needed to understand the concept of social obligations as well as social justice and use institutional channels to present their disagreements through voting in the general election. Thaksin himself did not believe that agricultural production was the way out of poverty, and he sought to eradicate poverty by encouraging farmers to become entrepreneurs by getting loans from the government to open small businesses or selling local products with support from the state.

The UDD still considers local interests to be subordinate to the national interest in the cause of infrastructure development and economic recovery, especially when the rhetoric of sovereignty is invoked. As the agenda of the rural-popular group may be different from that of incumbent politicians, these disagreements create further tensions and conflicts among network members. In the end, local networks of the rural and urban poor may fight against their leaders on several issues that affect their livelihoods, since their definition of social justice goes beyond personal politics to issues of redistribution of land, income, and progressive taxation.

On May 22, 2014, Thailand experienced another military coup. Since then, a military junta, going by the name of the National Council for Peace and Order, has governed the country. An oppressive post-coup political milieu has been one of the most influential factors in limiting the political role of the UDD and even fragmenting its network. The overall political situation from 2014 to 2015 reflected the weakening of Thai democracy and the political networks once active in the process of democratization. The UDD network, in particular, has been placed under considerable threat from the junta, which has used coercive means to deter or prohibit political gatherings of the UDD. For example, the military and the police regularly use Article 44 of the 2014 Interim Constitution to justify investigations, detentions, or any other curbs on the rights of anyone suspected

of participating in activities deemed to threaten the security of the nation. Such repressive actions by the state's uniformed forces have created a climate of fear that has forced UDD members to lie low, suspend their political activities, or go underground. The junta's aggressive enforcement of lèse-majesté laws has also caused widespread anxiety and stifled the freedom of expression online, in print, via the broadcast media, and at public events. After the 2014 coup, new lèse-majesté cases have been brought before military courts that deny an accused person the right to formal appeal. Owing to the secrecy surrounding most lèse-majesté cases, it is unclear how many cases actually went to trial in 2014–15. Those cases, however, are believed to number in the hundreds. Already many people, UDD network members among them, have left Thailand to avoid being tried on charges of lèse-majesté. In short, the UDD has been seriously weakened. It is presently unable to revive its former concerns, let alone challenge the junta openly. Unless new, free, and fair elections take place, UDD members and their supporters are unlikely to be able to regroup and reconstitute their once substantial and influential networks. As long as the junta maintains its repression and threats, the future of the UDD network is rather bleak.

IV Conclusion: Network and Social Changes

To understand the networks of the PAD and UDD, we need to look at the structural design of Thailand's democracy. While some elitists argue that the architecture of Thai political reform needs to address three main structural problems—corruption, inefficiency, and lack of political leadership—others argue for the realization that electoral politics alone cannot defuse conflicts over natural resources, which set the state against the people.

In the case of these two networks, the study demonstrates that both the PAD and the UDD are effectively challenging mainstream conceptions of Thai democracy in a number of ways. At the conceptual level, both networks have contested mainstream views on the link between democracy and participation, thus ensuring that direct participation of the people has been seen as both political and democratic. Their struggles show that democracy is most certainly not about election results alone. It is also about debate and dialogue on public policy decisions, especially when these decisions are related to people's livelihood. The concerns of both networks are related to notions of democracy, the contested meaning of participation and empowerment—especially of people normally excluded from politics—and calls for economic equality and social justice.

Such political conceptions of democracy have been criticized as organizationally

ineffective and threatening to institutional democracy and state power. In the case of the UDD, participatory democracy revealed its tendency toward the local rather than the national. The conception of a political imaginary arises from the macro level to micro-processes of participation and anti-institutional practices. These face stiff competition from alternative articulations of power, such as deal making with ruling politicians. The UDD perception of democracy is thus most profoundly tested when its resultant practices seek compatibility with mainstream political institutions.

Both the PAD and the UDD can be seen as cross-class networks that have adopted a dual strategy: engaging in the issue-based politics of being for or against a particular person or subject matter, and at the same time comprising a social grouping for the betterment of the people. Both networks use the politics of networking in associating those affected by particular political projects or state policies in order to mobilize different networks' members into a common identity. Members of the network share the same perspective and are committed to being more engaged in political struggles because of reciprocal perceptions deriving from direct experiences. According to interviews with individual members who participated in the struggles, perceptions of the power relationship between themselves and the authorities changed markedly.

However, the success of such a strategy turns on the responses by the state. Political conflicts were often regarded as part of the problem of Thailand's dysfunctional power structure, and the ideas of participatory democracy had little force when confronted by trends of authoritarian practice. The role of institutional democracy within existing political institutions thus became the decisive factor in the network's success or failure.

The diversity of networks' membership and the quality of their organizational character suggest that both the PAD and the UDD constitute oppositional politics hinging on particular topics or charismatic leaders rather than particular classes or political identities. In terms of political strategy in dealing with elected politicians, a number of the network members form alliances with political officeholders in order to achieve their demands. This disparity of commitment created conflicts among movements' networks and involved key players at all levels. Using extra-parliamentary politics against mainstream electoral institutions also reflects a negative perception of the established middle classes toward the emerging middle classes. For example, many PAD members believed that the UDD's protesters were being manipulated by Thaksin and his followers, based on political interests.

Since the 2014 military coup, however, Thailand's political networks have entered a critical period of examination. In contrast to other recent military coups, the coup of 2014 saw a particularly strong reassertion toward the creation of a neo-authoritarian state. The military government is represented by nationalist leaders who have tried to establish

a new political legitimacy built upon their control over their bureaucratic subordinates and the mechanisms of state. The government does not only have an authoritarian culture of authority, but it also gains support from non-elected mechanisms, including the bureaucracy, military, and royal elites (Pye 1985, 321–325). It may be argued that this situation is intended to transform Thai politics from a hybrid regime or electoral authoritarianism to a full authoritarian regime. In this context, an organized political network has been set up by the state to protect the conservative wing. In other words, the government and its allies may move from yellow to blue and/or dark green networks.

In the end, critics of both networks would argue that they are essentially interest groups, invoking constructs such as moral politics, new politics, and the serf versus the aristocrat to legitimate their interests. By using the argument that political democracy would help promote socioeconomic equality, both networks were able to unite and turn their members into a political force, since the meaning of democracy becomes related to the issue of access to power by ordinary citizens.

In Thailand's complex and rapidly changing market-oriented society, many social groups have higher expectations of a democratic system. For them, democracy is an electoral method of political competition. They, therefore, conduct themselves as political consumers who can choose between political products or policies offered by competing parties and politicians (Schumpeter 1954, 269-283). In other words, the two contesting networks effectively offered different proposals that actually came from their respective elites. Throughout the study, institutional assumptions of liberal representative democracy are challenged along three dimensions: as contesting perspectives of democracy, as an example of dynamism arriving from initiatives and practices of the networks, and as a case of practical struggle demanding for more participation in mainstream Thai politics. Through the study of the PAD and UDD, this paper provides a deeper understanding of the dynamism and contentious politics of these two political networks and their impacts on Thailand's democratic polity.

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Shanghai Connection: The Construction and Collapse of the Comintern Network in East and Southeast Asia

Onimaru Takeshi*

As East and Southeast Asia's communist parties, founded between 1920 and 1930, strove to promote communism regionally from the 1920s to the 1930s, they were linked in an international network of communist movements formed under the aegis of the Third International (Comintern). This essay focuses on the activities of the Comintern's regional headquarters in Shanghai after the Comintern had established the Far Eastern Bureau in Shanghai in 1926 and the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat in 1927. These two organizations, charged with supervising local communist movements in East and Southeast Asia, allocated funds, dispatched couriers and agents, and received local communists who wanted to go to Moscow. Thus, the Comintern built and maintained a complex East and Southeast Asian liaison network of agents and couriers who developed critical links with the Shanghai regional headquarters staff, and liaison officers in the local communist movements who acted as the nodes of the network. Intriguingly for the operation of the vast liaison network, among those who played crucial roles were regional facilitators who could speak European and local languages, were familiar with regional situations, and knew their contact persons. By carefully charting the structure of the network, tracing its links, which could be forged or snapped, and identifying its nodes, which could emerge or vanish, this essay provides an original account of how the Comintern network emerged in the late 1920s and how it collapsed in 1931.

Keywords: political underground, Third International (Comintern), Shanghai, network, East and Southeast Asian history

Nowadays, especially after the end of the Cold War, communism has lost its appeal as revolutionary thought. Although there are several communist regimes still in existence, nobody except the most committed communists imagines that a communist revolution is possible or historically inevitable. But in the 1920s and 1930s, communism was one of the major political ideologies that inspired revolutionary movements all over the world.

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The success of the Russian Revolution in 1917 was so impressive that those who were inspired by this first successful communist revolution tried to create their own revolutions in their countries.

In East and Southeast Asia, communism was received with enthusiasm by young intellectuals who wanted to liberate their countries from colonial rule or tried to solve social and economical inequalities by way of communist revolutions. They taught communism to laborers and peasants at night schools or by distributing leaflets, and mobilized them to go on strikes and demonstrations. They organized labor unions, peasant associations, and communist institutions. The first communist party in East and Southeast Asia was the Communist Association of the Indies, which was established in the Dutch East Indies in 1920 (and renamed the Communist Party of Indonesia in 1924). The next year the Chinese Communist Party was established, followed in 1922 by the Japanese Communist Party. In 1930, four communist parties were established in Southeast Asia: the Indochinese Communist Party, the Siamese Communist Party, the Malayan Communist Party, and the Philippine Communist Party.

Local communist movements in East and Southeast Asia were led by these communist parties, labor unions, and peasant associations, but there was another important dimension to the communist movements in the 1920s and 1930s. The local parties were linked in a network of international and/or regional communist movements under the aegis of the Third International (Comintern). Moreover, local communists frequently sought to promote communism regionally or to help neighboring movements. While there are a number of studies on country-based communist movements, studies of the international or regional communist movement in East and Southeast Asia in the 1920s and 1930s are not as well done, except for several pioneering works on such topics as the regional and international liaisons of the Malayan Communist Party (Cheah 1992; Hara 2009), those of the Indochinese Communist Party (Goscha 1999; Kurihara 2005), and the Comintern's activities in Asia (McKnight 2002). But these works do not reveal clearly how the regional and international liaison networks in East and Southeast Asia were constructed and maintained, and how they collapsed.

This paper describes the international and regional communist movement in East and Southeast Asia in the late 1920s and early 1930s, focusing mainly on activities of the regional headquarters of the Comintern in Shanghai. In 1926 the Comintern established the Far Eastern Bureau (FEB) in Shanghai, followed by the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat (PPTUS) in 1927. These two organizations were in charge of supervising local communist movements in East and Southeast Asia, allocating funds, dispatching couriers and agents, and receiving local communists who tried to go to Moscow. To conduct these works, it was crucial to construct and maintain a liaison network in the

region. Construction and maintenance of this liaison network was done by agents and couriers who had contacts both with staff of the regional headquarters in Shanghai and with liaison officers in local communist movements. The network of the international and regional communist movements in East and Southeast Asia in the 1920s and 1930s consisted of links between agents, couriers, the regional headquarters' staff in Shanghai, and local liaison officers acting as nodes. This paper shows how this international and regional network was constructed in the late 1920s, how it was maintained, and finally how it collapsed in 1931. Those who played important roles in the construction and maintenance of the liaison network in the region were regional facilitators who could speak both European and local languages and knew regional situations and contact persons. In June 1931 an FEB liaison officer in Shanghai and other regional facilitators were arrested simultaneously, and this roundup caused the collapse of the network.

I Regional Headquarters in Shanghai

The Comintern was established in Moscow in 1919, two years after the Russian Revolution. The Comintern was in charge of supervising communist movements all over the world. Supervision meant the recognition of the establishment of a communist party in each country or colony, approval of personnel appointments in each communist party, allocation of funds for communist movements, dispatching of agents, distribution of directives, receiving and training of communists from other countries, and so on. These activities were conducted through liaisons between Moscow and communist movements in each country (Kurihara 2005, 3, 20–21). The organization that constructed, operated, and maintained these liaisons was the OMS (Otdel Mezhdunarodnykh Svyazey, Department of International Communication), established within the Comintern in 1921. OMS "conducted the clandestine activities of the Comintern abroad, including the distribution of confidential directives and propaganda material, the forging of passports and identity papers for overseas agents and the implementation of espionage operations" (McDermott and Agnew 1996, 22). The activities of the Comintern, especially clandestine activities abroad, were heavily dependent on liaisons operated and maintained by OMS, but it was not easy to maintain liaisons between Moscow and distant places.

The fact that East and Southeast Asian regions were so distant from Moscow led to the establishment of the Far Eastern Bureau of the Comintern in Shanghai as a regional headquarters to facilitate liaison. FEB was set up in 1926, and its original mission was to supervise communist movements in China, Japan, and Korea. But by 1930 its jurisdiction had expanded to Taiwan, French Indochina, the Dutch East Indies, British Malaya,

and the Philippine islands (Kurihara 2005, 57).

There was another organization in Shanghai that was also in charge of supervising communist movements in East and Southeast Asia. It was the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat, established in 1927. PPTUS was under the Profintern (Red International of Labor Unions), and its mission was supporting and promoting labor union movements in China, Japan, Korea, India, and Southeast Asia (McKnight 2002, 104–105).

Although FEB and PPTUS were formally separate organizations, most of their personnel and activities overlapped, so that regional headquarters in Shanghai in fact consisted of these two organizations (SMP Files: D2527/45; Kurihara 2005, 58). A liaison network was constructed from these regional headquarters in Shanghai both with communist movements in East and Southeast Asia and with the Comintern Central in Moscow. In this way, Shanghai became the main arena or hub for regional network making. But why Shanghai?

II Why Shanghai?

David McKnight has identified three reasons why Shanghai was chosen as the place in which to locate the Far Eastern Bureau. The first was the availability of legal protection, the second was that Shanghai was equipped with modern communication systems, and the third was the existence of a large international community (McKnight 2002, 101).

Legal protection was greatly enabled by the existence of extraterritoriality. During the 1920s and 1930s, 14 states could exercise this right in Shanghai: Britain, the United States, Belgium, Brazil, Denmark, France, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland (*All About Shanghai* [1934] 1986, 22). The reason why extraterritoriality mattered was that most staff of the Far Eastern Bureau and the PPTUS were Westerners, who, in case of arrest, could claim such privilege and right.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Shanghai was already well equipped not only with modern communication systems but also with other infrastructure. Radio and cable communications as well as postal services were available and reliable, and thus a person in Shanghai could send and receive messages to and from all over the world (*ibid.*, 97–101). Foreign and Chinese banks had offices in Shanghai. Not only international bank transfers, but also remittances to and from East and Southeast Asia through Chinese local banks and money changers were possible (*ibid.*, 105). As for other infrastructure, gas and gaslights were available from 1865, electric lights from 1882, and waterworks from 1883 (*ibid.*, 29–32). All of this made life in Shanghai "modern" and comfortable, and also promoted economic activities there. Shanghai was one of the largest trading centers in the world

Table 1 Foreigners in Shanghai (1930 Census)

Nationality	International Settlement	External Roads Areas	French Concession	Total
Japanese	12,788	5,690	318	18,796
British	4,606	1,615	2,228	8,449
Russian	3,113	374	3,879	7,366
American	1,145	463	1,541	3,149
Indian (British)	1,758	84		1,842
Portuguese	847	485	267	1,599
German	524	309	597	1,430
French	159	39	1,208	1,406
Tonkinese (French)			941	941
Filipino	356	31		387
Danish	143	43	164	350
Polish	159	28	156	343
Italian	168	29	123	320
Spanish	116	32	73	221
Swiss	93	32	81	206
Dutch	42	40	108	190
Greek	109	12	64	185
Norwegian	84	20	69	173
Korean	139	12		151
Czecho-Slovakian	88	12	39	139
Austrian	64	24	44	132
Swedish	44	43	31	118
Belgian	25	2	61	88

Source: *All About Shanghai* ([1934] 1986, 36)

at this time, and its metropolitan character made it an eminently suitable place for the activities of communists. As a trading center, Shanghai was a hub for flows of money and people, and it was relatively easy to hide fund remittances and movements of agents and couriers in the city.

In 1934, Shanghai was the sixth-largest city in the world and the second-largest in Asia (after Tokyo). Its estimated total population in 1930 was 3,144,805, predominantly Chinese. But there were also a considerable number of foreigners living in the city; in 1930, foreigners totaled 58,607 (Takahashi and Furumaya 1995, 21–22). As shown in Table 1, the foreigners were of various ethnicities (nationalities); and this variety was useful for the communist movements. The activists engaged in communist movements in East and Southeast Asia were also diverse: Chinese, Japanese, Tonkinese, Annamese, Cochinchinese, Javanese, Filipino, Korean, Taiwanese, Indian, Russian, Ukrainian, American, French, British, German, and other Westerners. The ethnic diversity and cosmopolitanism of Shanghai offered these activists not only the opportunity to be at the center of these movements, but also safe houses.

In addition to the above three points raised by McKnight, there were two more factors that were critical in making Shanghai the center of the communist movement in East and Southeast Asia. The first was its geographic position and accessibility. Since Shanghai is located at the mouth of the Yangtze River, it is a center of maritime—primarily river and coastal—transportation. This was much truer in the 1920s and 1930s than it is today. Steamships connected the city with various ports in East and Southeast Asia and beyond on a regular basis. A guidebook published in 1934 described the situation as follows:

> Where next? To the traveller, Shanghai offers a unique advantage; the entire world, literally, is open for his selection. He can go to Europe by going West, or he can go to Europe by going East, with distances, time, and cost showing but slight variation. It may be an exaggeration to call Shanghai the "centre of world" but it looks very much like it on a travel map.
>
> A trip to Europe may be made to the West by sea through the Suez Canal or by train through Siberia and Russia; to the East by sea across the Pacific Ocean, overland across the United States or Canada and across the Atlantic, or entirely sea through the Panama Canal. (*All About Shanghai* [1934] 1986, 195)

Furthermore, around 1930 there were no passport or visa requirements for visiting Shanghai (Sergeant 1991, 2). Agents, couriers, and native communists in East and Southeast Asia could visit and leave Shanghai by sea or by land with almost no restrictions.

The second, and final, point was the division of municipalities. In the 1920s and 1930s, there were three sections in Shanghai: the International Settlement, the French Concession, and the Chinese Municipality. Each section had its own administrative body and its own police force, and the territories controlled by each police force were similarly divided along administrative lines. There was no restriction on movements between the three sections, leading to the creation of gray zones within and between these divisions. A gray zone was a place where a certain degree of ambiguity existed in law enforcement and administrative control; in Shanghai, the division of police territories and the freedom of passage generated such gray zones. Because the existence of these zones was an obstacle to policing,[1] it was a boon for political activism and communist movements. For example, the Chinese Communist Party was established within the French Concession in 1921,[2] and despite suppression by the Kuomintang government in 1927, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party remained in Shanghai until 1933 (Stranahan 1998, 151). When Leftists held their meetings, they did so at a house whose front door

1) One reason why Chinese police could not keep order was the existence of the International Settlement (Wakeman 1996, 8).

2) The French Concession played an important role in the founding of the party. The Provisional Government of Korea was also established in the French Concession in 1919.

opened onto the International Settlement but whose other side faced the Chinese Municipality. In case of a police raid from one side, they could escape through one door to the other, from one administrative zone to another (Nishizato 1977, 86–87).

With its extraterritoriality, modern infrastructure, international communities, accessibility to and from other places, and division of administrations, Shanghai became the hub of the international and regional communist network in East and Southeast Asia. The network was promoted by the regional headquarters in Shanghai in the 1920s and 1930s. Liaisons were established between FEB and PPTUS in Shanghai and local communist organizations, such as communist parties, communist youth associations, labor unions, and peasants associations, and also the Comintern Central in Moscow. How were these liaisons made?

III The Creation of "Liaison Networks" in East and Southeast Asia

When a network is quantitatively or theoretically analyzed, its nodes and links tend to be treated as being similar or interchangeable. But if we want to understand how and why a certain political network is constructed or generated, we need to carefully analyze the personality and character of each node, the ways used to create links among nodes, and the purposes of the political network. And this was true of the "liaison network" constructed by the Comintern in East and Southeast Asia in the 1920s and 1930s.

Liaison making was not a unidirectional activity radiating from Shanghai. Communist parties, labor unions, and other communistic organizations in East and Southeast Asia that wanted to establish contact with Moscow for the purpose of getting directives, obtaining approval of appointed personnel and party missions, and gaining access to funds also tried to construct liaisons with Shanghai. Initial contacts with the regional headquarters in Shanghai or with communist organizations in the region were undertaken by agents dispatched from Shanghai to communist organizations in East and Southeast Asia or vice versa. One question here is how these agents were able to obtain information about contact addresses or persons.

First, information was provided to agents by the Comintern in Moscow. In the 1920s and 1930s, there were East and Southeast Asian students in Moscow universities.[3] When they went back to their own countries, they were given relevant information. For example, the Japanese communist Sadachika Nabeyama (鍋山貞親) was shown photographs

3) They were Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese, Indochinese, Filipino, and Malay (mainly Indonesian) (Kurihara 2005, 56–57, 81–86).

of an agent in Shanghai and provided a contact address there by the Comintern in Moscow before he went back to Japan via Shanghai. Nabeyama proceeded to that address in Shanghai and met with the agent (Tachibana 1983, 178).

The other way to do liaison work was to utilize existing regional links. In the 1920s and 1930s, these regional connections were provided by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which had its own links with communist movements in the Philippines, British Malaya, Indochina, and Siam. The CCP had sent its party members to supervise or do organizing work in the above areas and in turn provided safe houses for political exiles in China. When Nguyen Ai Quoc (阮愛国), who cooperated with the regional headquarters in Shanghai, was in Hong Kong and tried to establish contact with communist movements in British Malaya and Siam in 1930, he asked the CCP to provide him with an introductory letter (Kurihara 2005, 55–56).

The existence of the Central Committee of CCP in Shanghai until the early 1930s was also an important factor in the CCP's playing a bridging role between the regional headquarters of the Comintern in Shanghai and communist movements in East and Southeast Asia. To take another example: in 1929, the Japanese communist Manabu Sano (佐野学) went to Shanghai after attending the Sixth Congress of the Comintern in Moscow. When he arrived in Shanghai, he called the phone number provided by Moscow but could not get any reply. Then he went to the address he had been provided, but again nobody was there. Now at a loss, he went to the antique shop that he remembered had been a contact point of the CCP Central and left a memo there requesting contact. Four days later, he achieved contact with the CCP and met Zhou Enlai (周恩来). Zhou arranged for him to meet a member of the regional headquarters of the Comintern in Shanghai (Tachibana 1983, 320–322).

Once liaisons were established, they were maintained by agents and couriers who were dispatched from and to Shanghai, and by means of mail and telegraph.

IV Maintenance of Network: The Role of Couriers

Couriers played an essential role in local communist movements because it was they who brought directives from Moscow and Shanghai and, especially, much-needed funds. In early 1931, the main route for couriers in East and Southeast Asia was from Shanghai to Rangoon via Hong Kong, Saigon, Bangkok, and Singapore. From Rangoon they reached India and beyond. From Shanghai there were also routes to Moscow via the Trans-Siberian Railway and to the United States via Japan by sea. Other than these main routes, there were several sub-routes, such as from Hong Kong to Keelung in Taiwan

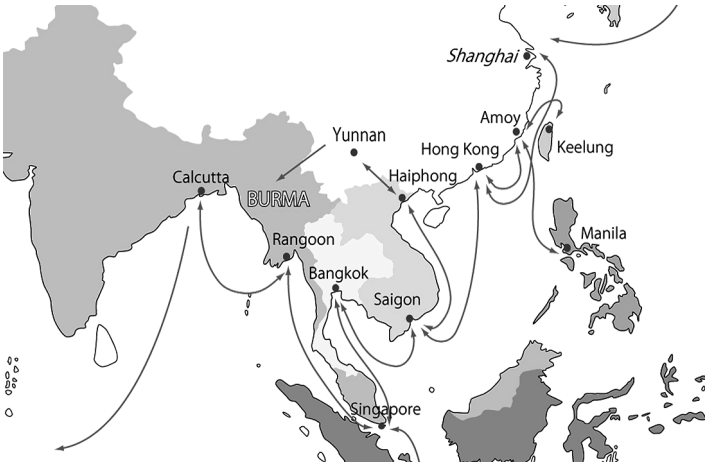

Fig. 1 The Route of Couriers in East and Southeast Asia in 1931
Source: SMP Files: D2527/45

and Manila via Amoy, from Saigon to Yunnan Province via Haiphong, and from Singapore to Batavia. From Yunnan Province, a new route to British Burma was under construction (Fig. 1) (SMP Files: D2527/45).

When a courier arrived at his destined place, he was required to make contact with a liaison officer or an agent there, but in most cases they did not know each other. So how did they meet? Richard Sorge, who was arrested in Japan in 1941 as a spy for the USSR, in his memoir explained the various—and sometimes elaborate—methods of making contact with unknown couriers or agents. According to him, both parties were informed in advance of the date and place of meeting, the other's physical appearance, and methods of achieving contact. The coded methods included the following (Sorge 2003, 53–57):

(1) Exchanging predetermined questions and answers. For example, the question could be "Do you know the person whose name is Ram?" The answer could be "The end of that name is 'Say,' isn't it?"
(2) Showing one half of a torn business card. The other agent then showed the other half.
(3) Showing a $1 banknote numbered 112235. The other agent showed a $1 banknote numbered 112236.
(4) Bringing a book and saying, "I think this book is quite interesting. The most interesting page is . . ." The answer would be, "For me, the most interesting page is . . ." These specific pages were fixed in advance.
(5) Going to a department store and buying a handkerchief at a certain stand. The other agent bought socks from the same stand.

(6) Going to a restaurant and ordering a special dish. The other agent ordered another special dish. The two then talked to each other about these special dishes.
(7) Having a unique pipe in hand at a restaurant. The contact had a big cigar. When the two agents noticed each other, they started smoking at the same time.
(8) Reading a newspaper at a restaurant and folding it in a unique way when the other agent arrived.
(9) Using a newspaper advertisement to make initial contact and deciding on the place and time to meet.
(10) Directly calling the hotel where the other agent was staying.

The above methods were utilized for making contact with couriers. For example, when Nabeyama tried to make contact with an agent in Shanghai, he was instructed by this agent that a courier would come to Kinza, in Tokyo, at a certain date and time. Nabeyama was also told that this courier would have an English magazine in his hand and would bring funds allocated to Japan. After he returned to Japan, Nabeyama went to Kinza at the time stated by the Shanghai agent, and he found a foreigner who actually had an English magazine in hand. He made contact with this courier and was given $2,000. This courier was a consul of some Latin American embassy in Shanghai (Tachibana 1983, 178–179).

Another example was an agent who was dispatched to Singapore from Shanghai to establish contact with a member of the Malayan Communist Party in 1931. Before the agent went to Singapore, he met Nguyen Ai Quoc in Hong Kong and asked him how to contact local communists in Singapore. Upon arrival in Singapore on April 27, 1931, the agent rented an office and waited for local communists to seek him out. On May 15, a letter written in invisible ink was sent by Nguyen Ai Quoc from Hong Kong to the Malayan Communist Party Central. The letter instructed the liaison officer of the Malayan Communist Party to go to the office of the agent. On May 19, the liaison officer met the agent at the latter's office (WO106/5814).

By using these or other methods, the international and regional communist network in East and Southeast Asia promoted by the regional headquarters in Shanghai was established and maintained by couriers with staff in Shanghai and with liaison officers in local communist organizations. But in order to understand not only the maintenance, but also the construction, of this network, we should consider one more factor: the role of "regional facilitators" or human hubs.

V Regional Facilitators as Hubs

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, when FEB and PPTUS in Shanghai tried to establish their own network in East and Southeast Asia, regional facilitators played crucial roles in both constructing and maintaining the network. The regional headquarters in Shanghai relied on regional facilitators because of their skills and abilities, which were in part determined by the nature of the communist network in East and Southeast Asia, the ethnic composition of the staff in the regional headquarters in Shanghai, and the circumstances under which local communist movements were conducted. What were these skills and abilities?

The first and most important ability was language skills. The international and regional communist movements in East and Southeast Asia were not monolingual by nature. Languages used in communist movements in the region included not only Chinese (along with Chinese topolects) but also Javanese, Malay, Vietnamese, Japanese, Korean, and other local languages, along with English, French, Dutch, German, and Russian. These languages can further be classified into three categories: Western, regional Asian, and local.

Western languages—English, French, German, Russian, and Dutch—were used in communist movements both within and beyond East and Southeast Asia. They were essential for making contact with Western comrades who came to East and Southeast Asia as staff in the regional headquarters in Shanghai or couriers and agents. Some of these languages were also used as regional lingua franca among local communists in East and Southeast Asia. For example, some Chinese and Indochinese communists could communicate with each other in French—not only because they had been to France as students, laborers, or soldiers (only Indochinese) in the second and third decades of the twentieth century, but also because in French Indochina there were schools teaching French.

The second category, regional Asian languages, consisted of East and Southeast Asian languages that could connect local communist movements in the region. The languages that played such bridging roles were Chinese (including its dialects) and Malay. Chinese—especially its dialects, such as Cantonese, Hokkien, Teochew, Hainanese, and others—was essential for gaining access to regional links made by ethnic Chinese communists. Malay was useful for communist movements among Malays who were in British Malaya and the Dutch East Indies.

The third category, local languages, was used only within each domestic communist movement in East and Southeast Asia. Languages under this category were Japanese, Korean, Javanese, Vietnamese, Tagalog, and other local languages.

To be a regional facilitator in international and regional communist movements, it was essential to be acquainted with (though with varying degrees of proficiency) several languages under the different categories. These multilingual regional facilitators were crucial for the regional headquarters in Shanghai because they were responsible for constructing and maintaining the regional network in East and Southeast Asia. No staff in the regional headquarters could understand local languages in East and, especially, Southeast Asia. Takashi Tachibana has pointed out that the languages used in FEB were Russian, English, and German, and Japanese communists always had trouble making contact with staff in Shanghai because there were very few Japanese communists who could speak Russian or English and there were no staff in Shanghai who could speak Japanese (Tachibana 1983, 140–141). McKnight also pointed out that there were staff who could speak only Russian (McKnight 2002, 120). Moreover, the ethnic composition of staff in the regional headquarters was completely Western. In early 1931 there were 12 or 13 Western staff in the regional headquarters, and they hired Chinese, Japanese, Taiwanese, and Korean translators for their activities (SMP Files: D2527/45). In this situation, it was necessary to recruit local comrades who could speak local, Western, and/or Asian languages, so that the regional headquarters in Shanghai could construct and maintain its network in linguistically diverse East and Southeast Asia.

But having multilinguistic ability alone was not enough to make one a regional facilitator. In the 1920s and 1930s, communist movements in East and Southeast Asia operated under severe conditions. States and colonial governments in the region, considering communist movements to be threats to their rule, tightly monitored and suppressed their activities. Thus, to conduct underground work successfully, it was crucial for the communists to have knowledge and skill on how to conceal their real identities, penetrate other countries, make secret contacts with other comrades, elude surveillance and arrest, and so on. Such knowledge and skill could be obtained only through actual experience of underground activities in the region.

Comrades who had been involved in communist movements not only in their own country but also in neighboring countries gained some ability in the languages used in these movements, and they forged links with local communists in the region. Moreover, they were acquainted with the situations faced by local communist movements. In the course of their careers, therefore, these comrades became regional hubs in the communist movements of East and Southeast Asia. The availability of these comrades as regional facilitators was crucial for the regional headquarters in Shanghai in making, maintaining, and reconstructing its regional network.

For example, when the Shanghai regional headquarters' links with communist movements were disconnected as a result of severe crackdowns by the police in each state or

colony, or when the regional headquarters tried to expand its liaisons in the region, it had to rely on links and knowledge provided by regional facilitators, who could also be dispatched as agents to the state or region.

Around 1930, several regional facilitators were available for constructing and maintaining the regional network promoted by the regional headquarters in Shanghai. They were Tan Malaka, Teo Yuen Foo (張然和), and especially Nguyen Ai Quoc.

Tan Malaka[4] was a famous Javanese communist in the 1920s and 1930s. He traveled between the Dutch East Indies, British Malaya, the Philippines, and China and could speak Indonesian, Javanese, Dutch, English, German, French, Thai, Tagalog, and Chinese (Mandarin, Cantonese, and Hokkien). He insisted on cooperation among revolutionary movements in Asia, especially among those operating in the Dutch East Indies, American Philippines, and British Malaya. In 1931, when he was in Shanghai, the regional headquarters had a plan to send him to Rangoon as an agent to set up a liaison center there. This liaison center would be a connecting point between India and the Dutch East Indies (McVey 2006, 223; SMP Files: D2527/45).

Teo Yuen Foo was a former member of the Indonesian Communist Party and took part in the uprising against Dutch rule in Java in 1926. After the failure of the uprising, in 1927 he went to Shanghai to study. He could speak Chinese, English, Malay, and Javanese. He was recruited by Nguyen Ai Quoc as an agent because of his language skills and experience in the region. He was dispatched to Southeast Asia in 1931 by the regional headquarters in Shanghai, with the mission of setting up the Dutch East Indies Bureau and then establishing a liaison between it and the Far Eastern Bureau in Shanghai (Yong 1997, 163; Goscha 1999, 83).

Nguyen Ai Quoc was undoubtedly one of the most famous Asian communists in the 1920s and 1930s, with a reputation rivaling—if not surpassing—that of Zhou Enlai and Mao Zedong (毛沢東). "Nguyen Ai Quoc" was one of the aliases used by Nguyen Sinh Cung in his revolutionary career. In 1945 he became the first president of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam under the name of Ho Chi Minh. He was involved in communist movements in French Indochina, France, Moscow, Siam, Southern China, and British Malaya.[5] He could speak Vietnamese, Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), French, English, Russian, and Thai. When he worked in Canton in the mid-1920s, he tried to establish liaisons among radicals who opposed colonial or semi-colonial rule in Asia. After December 1929 he was based in Hong Kong and was involved in the establishment of the Vietnamese Communist Party (renamed the Indochinese Communist Party the same

4) This account of his activities and language skills is based on his memoir translated into Japanese by Noriaki Oshikawa (Tan 1979).

5) The account of his career is based on Duiker (2000).

year), the Siamese Communist Party, and the Malayan Communist Party in 1930 as the representative of the Comintern. He was in charge of maintaining liaisons between Shanghai and communist movements in French Indochina and British Malaya (Goscha 1999, 76–82, 382; Duiker 2000, 122; Kurihara 2005, 55; SMP Files: D2527/45).

The above regional facilitators had multilingual capabilities, experience in local underground operations, and, especially in the cases of Tan Malaka and Nguyen Ai Quoc, a strong commitment to developing regional cooperation among comrades in East and Southeast Asia. They were indispensable not only for the regional network centered in Shanghai, but also for the activities conducted by the regional headquarters in Shanghai. The most important requirement for maintaining this regional network was to prevent them and staff of regional headquarters from being located and arrested by the police. But in 1931 this happened.

VI The Collapse of the Network in 1931

In 1931, the regional headquarters in Shanghai decided to dispatch three agents to Southeast Asia: Joseph Ducroux, alias Serge Lefranc; Wong Muk Han[6] (黃木涵); and Teo Yuen Foo. Ducroux's mission was to investigate communist movements in British Malaya, establish liaisons between the regional headquarters in Shanghai and the Malayan Communist Party Central, and make Singapore a liaison center for communist movements in Southeast Asia and British India. Wong was in charge of reorganizing communist movements in British Malaya, and Teo's mission was as mentioned above (Yong 1997, 99, 163; Kurihara 2005, 135; SMP Files: D2527/45).

While Teo was not identified by the British Political Intelligence Services in 1931, Ducroux, together with Wong, was detected, monitored, and finally arrested by the Special Branch in Singapore on June 1. The Special Branch in Singapore obtained contact addresses in Shanghai and Hong Kong from seized documents, and it sent these addresses to the Special Branch both in the Royal Hong Kong Police and in the Shanghai Municipal Police. Based on information sent from Singapore, Nguyen Ai Quoc was arrested in Hong Kong on June 6. Hilaire Noulens and his wife, the OMS staff in the regional headquarters in Shanghai, were arrested in Shanghai on June 15 (Onimaru 2006).

6) Wong was born on Hainan island. He promoted communism in Penang and was a leading figure in communist movements in British Malaya during the late 1920s. He was arrested by the Straits Settlements Police in September 1929 and released and deported to China the following month. He was again arrested with Ducroux on June 1, 1931. He died in 1932 from ill health during his imprisonment in Singapore (Yong 1997, 99).

After Mr. and Mrs. Noulens's arrest, the Special Branch of the Shanghai Municipal Police seized documents that Mr. Noulens kept at various houses in Shanghai. And from these documents, the Special Branch was able to piece together information not only about the purposes, methods, and current status of international and regional communist movements in China, French Indochina, British Malaya, Japan, Taiwan, Korea, and the Philippine islands, but also about communists and agents engaged in these activities. This information was shared with the relevant countries and colonies. For example, it resulted in the arrest of about 30 communist suspects in Japan (SMP Files: D2527/36; D2527/45).

At the time of the arrest of the Noulenses, Nguyen Ai Quoc, and Ducroux, there were links from Shanghai to French Indochina, Siam, and British Malaya via Nguyen Ai Quoc in Hong Kong. Ducroux had succeeded in forging a link with the liaison officer of the Malayan Communist Party. As for the Indonesian Communist Party, Teo was in charge of liaison making—but it was not clear whether he had succeeded or not. The true identity of the agent in charge of making links with the Philippine Communist Party was not known. He used the code name "Leon," and it is known that he succeeded in contacting the Philippine Communist Party. Figure 2 shows the Shanghai-Southeast Asia liaison network in June 1931. Tan Malaka does not appear in this figure, but there was a plan to dispatch him to Rangoon for establishing links between India and Southeast Asia (SMP Files: D2527/45).

From the network point of view, the severest impact of the arrests of Mr. and Mrs. Noulens and Nguyen was the collapse of the liaison network constructed from Shanghai to communist movements in the region. Both Mr. Noulens and Nguyen were hubs in this liaison network. When they were arrested, links they had established were cut off from the liaison network in East and Southeast Asia, and this caused the collapse, or at least default, of the network. For example, the communist movement in British Malaya was completely disconnected from Shanghai as a result of the arrests of Ducroux, Nguyen, and Mr. Noulens, and it suffered from a lack of funds (*SSPPIJ* Supplement No. 4 1932; Yong 1997, 164, 171).

Although Mr. Noulens and Nguyen Ai Quoc were both hubs in the network, their roles were different. The former became a hub as a liaison officer in the regional headquarters in Shanghai, and the latter became a hub as a regional facilitator. The former type of hubs could be interchangeable, because their links were attached to their roles as liaison officers and could be transferred to a successor. But the latter type of hubs were not interchangeable because they were not only hubs but also regional facilitators, and their links and abilities were acquired through their own careers in the region—so once they were no longer part of a network, it took time to find or develop a replacement.

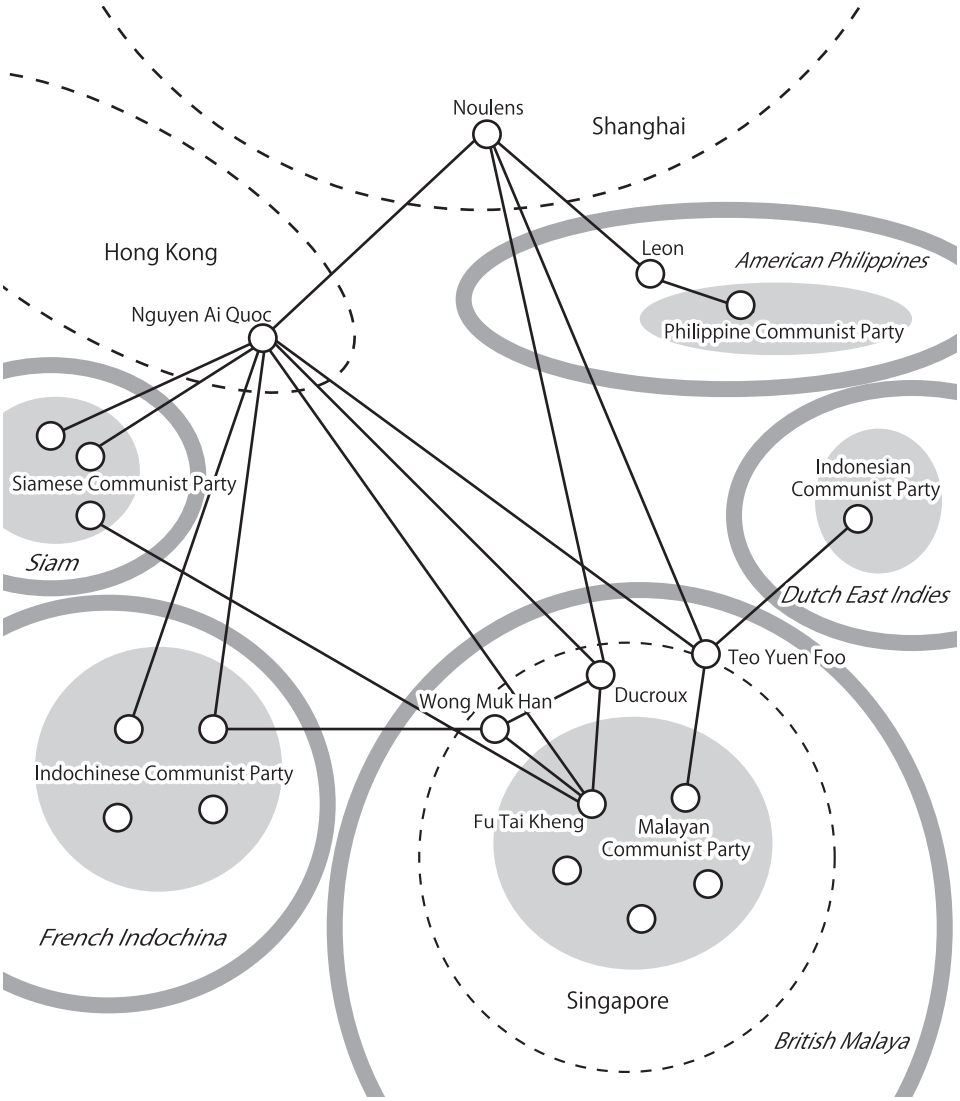

Fig. 2 The Comintern Network in Southeast Asia in June 1931

Notes: Dotted lines: Cities (Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Singapore)
Gray lines: State or colonial territories (Siam, French Indochina, American Philippines, Dutch East Indies, and British Malaya)

These differences in characteristics and roles led to differences in the impacts of Mr. Noulens' and Nguyen Ai Quoc's arrests on the network. Mr. Noulens' untimely arrests prevented them from passing on their links and documents to their successor, but this in itself was not the most salient factor in the disabling of the regional headquarters in

Shanghai. Nguyen Ai Quoc's arrest was far more critical and had a far greater impact on the collapse of the network because he was an indispensable hub, not easily replaceable within the network.

Conclusion

In late 1920s and early 1930s, Shanghai was the center of the international and regional communist movements in East and Southeast Asia. Its extraterritoriality, its modern infrastructure, its substantial international community, its accessibility to and from other places, and its division of administrations made it the vital regional headquarters of the Comintern in Shanghai, the Far Eastern Bureau of the Comintern, and the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat. International and regional communist movements were enabled through liaisons between Shanghai and communist movements in the region. These liaisons were in turn connected mainly by agents and couriers using simple as well as sophisticated techniques for establishing contact with comrades. The international and regional communist network centered in Shanghai was crucial to the establishment of links among the staff in the regional headquarters in Shanghai, agents and couriers, and local communists in the region.

In constructing and maintaining this network, apart from couriers and agents, regional facilitators played quite important roles. Regional facilitators were comrades who had careers not only in their own countries but also in regional or international communist movements. Their experiences in and knowledge of the region, their links with local communists, and their multilinguistic abilities were indispensable for the regional headquarters in Shanghai in constructing and maintaining the regional network in East and especially Southeast Asia.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, there were several regional facilitators who cooperated with the regional headquarters in Shanghai for its activities in the region. Those facilitators were Tan Malaka, Teo Yuen Foo, and Nguyen Ai Quoc; among them, Nguyen played the most important role as a hub in the regional network.

In 1931 the international and regional network centered in Shanghai collapsed as a result of waves of arrests in Singapore, Hong Kong, and Shanghai. The arrest of Nguyen in Hong Kong, and of Mr. Noulens in Shanghai, was critical to the collapse or at least dysfunction of the network, because the removal of these hubs crippled the Asian communist and international network by simultaneously depriving it of its links to the regional headquarters of the Comintern in Shanghai and of its most important regional facilitator. The loss of Nguyen was arguably much more critical than the loss of Mr. Noulens for the

regional network and communist movements, because regional facilitators such as Nguyen were not interchangeable and it would take a lot more time and effort to find, train, and deploy another facilitator of Nguyen's talent and ability.

One might ask what similarities and differences can be detected between the network discussed in this paper, which existed almost 100 years ago, and other contemporary networks in this volume. One crucial difference is definitely to be found in the technologies available. A century ago, communists relied on steamships, railroads, telegraphs, and postal services for their communication. Nowadays all kinds of activists and politicians can use airplanes, mobile phones, and many kinds of information and communication technology to maintain rapid and regular contact with their comrades. These advanced technologies have moderated the centrality of cities in network building to some extent. In the 1920s and 1930s, the Comintern's regional network in East and Southeast Asia was constructed from Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Singapore because these major cities offered ready access to the most advanced forms of telecommunication and transportation technologies of the time. Now, certain failed or fragile states are favorable places to organize clandestine networks because network builders can avoid detection even as they construct their networks by utilizing advanced technologies. Technologies have transformed the ways of making links and the places in which to base networks. Yet there is one unchanged factor in both historical and contemporary networks, namely, the importance of human agency. Political networks, clandestine or otherwise, are organized, maintained, and transformed by human actors within them. A network often collapses when its key figures are arrested, lose interest in the network, or die. Thus, it is necessary to analyze political networks not only by utilizing the findings of network theories and analyses but also by focusing on actors who play important roles in the networks.

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Looking at Links and Nodes: How Jihadists in Indonesia Survived

Miichi Ken*

The major militant Islamist network in Indonesia, comprising the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and its associated groups, was believed to have been responsible for dozens of violent incidents after 2000, including the Bali bombings of 2002 and 2005. Generally JI sympathized with al-Qaeda's ideology, openly supported al-Qaeda and other militant ideologues by translating and publishing their work in Indonesia, and sent hundreds of fighters (*mujahidin*) to Afghanistan for training. The Indonesian militant Islamist groups were not foreign controlled, but they shared some features with a broader militant Islamist network. This essay takes as its point of departure Albert-Laszlo Barabasi's characterization of al-Qaeda as a matrix of self-organized networks, not a military organization with structured divisions. In Barabasi's theorization of networks, al-Qaeda appears as a "scale-free network" of a limited number of persons who had accumulated many nodes in a scattered and self-sustaining web. Hence, JI was loosely organized and yet hierarchical, composed of small cells held together by personal loyalties, family, school, and other friendly connections. Faced with intensifying police assaults, militant Islamists increasingly fell back on their networks. Using published reports and the author's own interviews with relevant individuals, this essay traces the links and nodes of the militant Islamic networks in Indonesia and examines why and how jihadists in Indonesia tenaciously sustained their violent activities.

Keywords: Indonesia, Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), Islamist, jihadist networks, Islamic State (IS)

Introduction

It has been more than a decade since the Bali bombings of 2002, which increased international awareness of militant Islamists, more commonly called jihadists by Western media and security experts, in Indonesia.[1)] Jihadists in Indonesia, represented by an

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1) Islamism and jihadism are political discourses similar to other political discourses such as socialism and liberalism. Islamism attempts to reestablish Islamic civilization and to center Islam within the ↗

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organization called Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), carried out a series of attacks on Western targets such as US-owned hotels and tourist sites over the next few years. Indonesia became the "second front" in the War on Terrorism. Indonesian security authorities arrested or shot down most of the key jihadists and a few hundred other perpetrators and accomplices. JI and related groups became more and more dispersed, and the structures of their organizations dissolved. However, jihadists have survived in different forms with smaller groups and continued their "war on the enemy of Islam." Furthermore, the recent war in Syria and proclamation of the so-called Islamic State (IS) seem to have revitalized their international connections and activities. This paper examines why and how jihadists in Indonesia tenaciously sustained their violent activities.

To examine this, I shed light on JI and related groups in Indonesia by preliminarily applying network theories, mostly those proposed and summarized by Barabasi. There are detailed reports published by Sidney Jones on current militant Islamists,[2] and the historical background and chronological paths have been revealed by ex-activists and Indonesian experts (Abas 2005; Huda Ismail 2007; 2010; Solahudin 2011; 2013; Wildan 2013). There are hundreds of published and unpublished books, booklets, papers, and videos in which militant activists translate and share their ideology for their fellow activists. Using these materials as well as my interviews and discussions with activists, insiders, and experts, this paper tries to extract certain significant aspects of Indonesian jihadists by focusing on the links and nodes in such networks.[3] The significance of this paper is that it reorganizes existing reports and materials with theoretical and comparative views by applying network theories. Through focusing on several key actors or "nodes," this paper especially emphasizes the changing characteristics of the jihadist network in Indonesia, which could not be fully captured by existing studies. JI is an organization with a loosely organized but hierarchical structure that is divided into regional cells. Its members are recruited through families, schools, friends, or other connections.

As organizations weaken because of arrests and police assaults, jihadists modify

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↘ political order. It may involve an ideological struggle carried out by a diffuse strategy of "moral and intellectual reform" (Sayyid 1997; Miichi 2006). Jihadists are those who have given highest priority to armed struggle interpreted as *jihad fi sabilillah*, or "war in the cause of Allah." It should be noted that the usage and employment of the word "jihad" depends on identity. In the general Muslim context, all efforts to propagate Islam are jihad; in the eyes of jihadists, the word has come to signify a holy war against all infidels whom they stigmatize as such (Kepel 2004).

2) Her reports appeared on the Web site of the International Crisis Group (ICG). She founded the Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC) in 2013 and has provided updates on jihadists in Indonesia.

3) I would like to thank Taufik Andre, Nur Huda Islamil, the late Urwah alias Bagus Budi Pranoto, and many other anonymous informants.

themselves and rely more and more on new types of horizontal networks. Most recent violent attacks have been carried out by infamous, small splinter groups. It is not very meaningful to analyze each group or organization separately in this regard, and thus network analysis is useful.

The following sections will first provide the key concepts of network theories. They will then draw on the changing structure of jihadist organizations in Indonesia by briefly describing family and school ties and their international expansions and limitations. The network surrounding the Malaysian jihadist Noordin M. Top and the changes after his death will then be explained, by highlighting three figures. Before concluding, some implications of emerging Internet networks will be discussed.

I Theological Background

Network theories assume that networks are present everywhere. They can be applied to understand issues ranging from how Christianity spread beyond Judaism to the vulnerability of the Internet and the spread of deadly viruses (Barabasi 2003, 7). Some key concepts and theories on networks give us suggestions to analyze social and political phenomena. This paper highlights several ideas for a deeper understanding of Indonesian jihadist networks.

In his influential book *Linked* (2003), Barabasi describes al-Qaeda as a military organization not with divisions but with self-organized networks. It was populated over the course of several years by thousands of individuals who were drawn to its radicalism by religious beliefs and impatience with the existing social and political order. It is a typical scale-free network in which a limited number of persons have many nodes, accumulated over the course of years, yielding a scattered and self-sustaining web (*ibid.*, 222–223). This model can be applied to the current condition of Indonesian jihadist networks, with some reservations.

Mark Granovetter's classical "weak-ties" theory also contributes to an understanding of jihadist networks in Indonesia. The weak-ties theory proposes something that sounds preposterous at first. A natural a priori idea is that those with whom one has strong ties, such as cherished friends, are more motivated to help with job information. In contrast to this, those to whom we are weakly tied are more likely to move in circles different from our own and will thus have access to different information than what we receive (Granovetter 1973, 1371). Weak ties (shown as thin lines in Fig. 1) between small clusters "play an important role in any number of social activities." This weak-ties model describes how militant Islamic activities have been conducted through links to

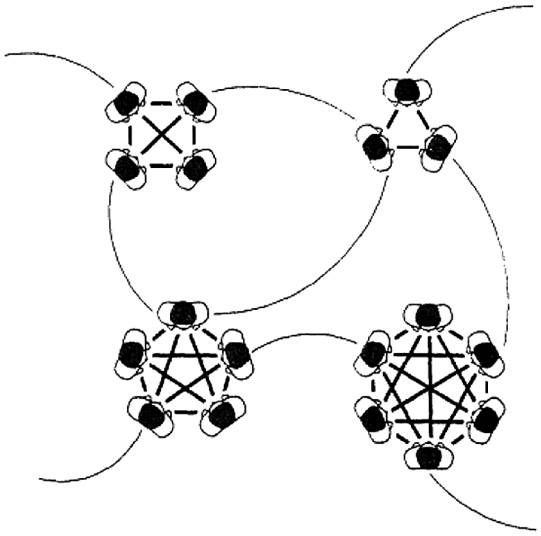

Fig. 1 Strong and Weak Ties
Source: Barabasi (2003, 43)

other, mostly local, groups and networks.

An analysis of Indonesian militants reveals at the same time a weakness of network analysis. This paper suggests what we can and cannot find through network theory and how to overcome the theory's weaknesses.

II From Hierarchical Organizations to Horizontal Networks

JI originated in the Darul Islam (DI) movement, which aimed to establish an Indonesian Islamic State (Negara Islam Indonesia, NII)[4] with armed uprisings during the 1950s. The uprisings were suppressed by the government. DI/NII subsequently went underground, where it divided into small factions. The founder of JI, Abdullah Sungkar (1937–99), was a leading figure of a DI faction and left it to his followers. Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir (b. 1938), his longtime associate, also belonged to the Masyumi party, one of the four major parties participating in the 1955 election, as well as related organizations such as DDII (Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia, Indonesian Islamic Propagation Council).

4) According to the classic understanding of Islamic theology, this world is divided into *dar al-Islam* (house of Islam) and *dar al-harb* (house of war). The Darul Islam (or Dar al-Islam) movement in Indonesia intends to establish Islamic political authority within Indonesian territory and includes the name Negara Islam Indonesia; the name of this group is thus abbreviated as DI/NII.

During the early 1970s, Sungkar and Ba'asyir, along with other preachers, established the Islamic boarding school Pesantren al-Mukmin, known as Pondok Ngruki, in the village of Ngruki near the city of Solo in Central Java. Sungkar and Ba'asyir were very critical of Suharto's authoritarian regime, which intervened in Islamic movements and enforced a basically secular nationalism, and they were charged under the law governing subversive activities.

Sungkar and Ba'asyir managed to escape to Malaysia in 1985 and settled in Johor, where they opened the Lukmanul Hakiem school and organized *mujahidin* (jihad fighters) to be sent to Afghanistan in the late 1980s in order to undergo military training. Influenced by Salafi (Wahhabi) scripturalism, Sungkar was said to be critical of inauthentic customs practiced by Masduki, a DI factional leader. In 1993 Sungkar formed his own group named Jemaah Islamiyah, which means simply "Islamic community" (see Solahudin 2011, 197–224). His political ideology sharpened at the time, from domestic political opposition to global jihad revolution.

> Al Qaeda is so scattered and self-sustaining that even the elimination of Osama bin Laden and his closest deputies might not eradicate the threat they created. It is a web without a true spider. (Barabasi 2003, 223)

The organizational structure of Indonesian jihadist groups changed over time and became closer to Barabasi's al-Qaeda model, though it was more hierarchical in the beginning. In the early years of the twenty-first century, JI was often described as having a central committee and regional branches (see Fig. 2). JI had four regional divisions, called *mantiqi*, which covered the area from the Philippines to Australia. Each of these divisions had a top-down command structure. There were four phases of systematic cadre training: public lectures (*tabligh*), religion courses with small numbers of students (*taklim*), a closed religious study session (*tamrin*), and an advanced stage (*tamhish*) (Abas 2005, 99–100). When a central or regional leader was captured and unable to maintain his leadership, he was quickly replaced. After Abdullah Sunkar, the leader (*amir*) of JI, died in 1999, the co-founder, Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, adopted the position of amir. Several members replaced Ba'asyir after he was captured. Ba'asyir never returned as the amir of JI even after he was released, although he remains an important node.[5] Instead, he

5) Ba'asyir established the Council of Mujahedeen for Islamic Law Enforcement (MMI, Majalis Mujahidin Indonesia) in 1999 and became its amir. MMI is a "legal" organization that aims at enforcing Islamic law in an Indonesian framework. Some JI members who remained underground and did not accept the Indonesian government did not join MMI. Ba'asyir established Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid in 2008 and separated from MMI. After he was arrested again in 2010, he was replaced as amir by M. Akhwan.

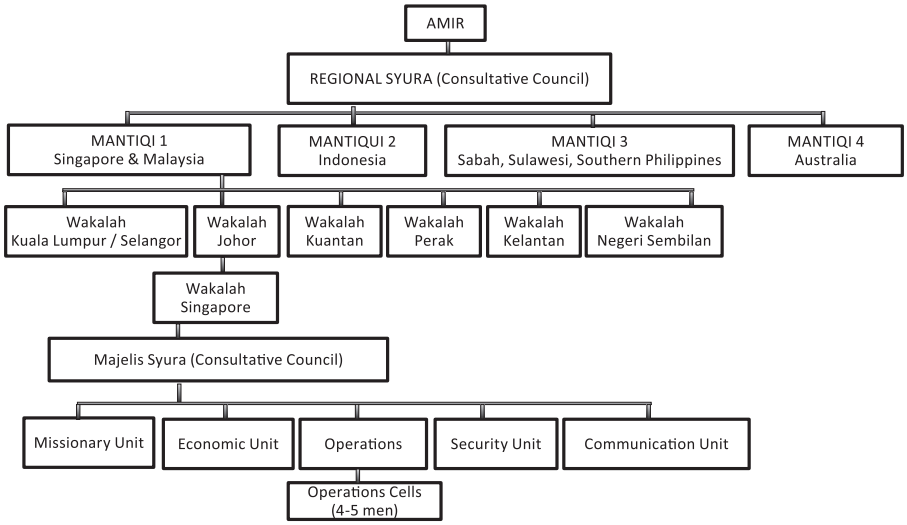

Fig. 2 Organizational Structure of Jemaah Islamiyah, as Described by Singaporean Authorities in 2003
Source: Singapore, Ministry of Home Affairs (2003, 10)

established JAT (Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid) and became its amir in 2008. His religious authority and thus legal judgment (*fatwa*) are recognized even among non-JI and non-JAT members.[6] Nevertheless, the JI and JAT networks can survive without him. As I will describe later, the organizational structure dissolved and came to resemble self-organized webs. Though the earlier form of the organization was very different from the current form, it also can be argued that JI was designed flexibly from the beginning. Membership in JI is based on a loyalty oath (*bai'at*) pledged to the leader. During the 1990s, many members pledged their loyalty to Abdurrahim Thoyib, alias Abu Husna, who acted in a leadership position while Sungkar was away from Indonesia.[7] When JAT was established, members made another oath to Ba'asyir. According to former DI and JI members, a loyalty oath represents a lifetime commitment but does not necessarily entail continuing activity within the organization. Loyalty to the organization is less important than personal relationships, and JI can be described as an organization made up of personal networks.

6) Ba'asyir's statements during his trials were often reported as fatwa by jihadist media. Ba'asyir has also issued open letters from time to time. See, for instance, "Fatwa Ustadz Abu: Kapolri, Jaksa Agung, dan Ketua Mahkamah Agung Murtad!" Arrahmah.com, March 1, 2011, accessed March 28, 2011; and "Inilah Surat Ustadz Ba'asyir dengan 3 Bahasa untuk Presiden Myanmar," VOA-Islam.com, August 1, 2012, accessed March 31, 2015.

7) Abdurrahim Thoyib was captured in Malaysia and deported to Indonesia in 2008.

It should be noted that al-Qaeda itself transformed significantly, especially after the 9/11 attacks in 2001 (see Sageman 2008). It is known that Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, al-Qaeda's leading strategist, wrote *Call to Global Islamic Resistance* with the aim of transforming al-Qaeda from a "vulnerable hierarchical organization into a resilient decentralized movement." He encouraged individuals to play a role without being part of an organization. Though his 1,604-page book predated 9/11, his idea was largely adopted after the collapse of the Taliban (Cruickshank and Ali 2007). Indonesian jihadists, probably intentionally from the beginning, followed al-Qaeda's path.[8)]

III Expanding Family and School Ties

Family and school ties characterize JI's internal network. Initially, most of the mujahidin sent to Afghanistan were recruited from DI families. There were, at the same time, members from non-DI families who were recommended from among Sungkar's close associates (Solahudin 2011, 204–205). Furthermore, Pondok Ngruki had survived during Sungkar's absence, and underground members of JI constantly recruited from among the organization's students and alumni. Because these students were not limited to members of DI families, JI's network expanded. Yet kinship consisted of important links in order to expand and maintain networks and a sense of community.[9)] The 2002 Bali bombings were planned and executed by three brothers—Mukhlas, Amrozi, and Ali Imron—who taught at the Ngruki-related Al Islam school in Lomongan, East Java. Mukhlas married a Malaysian who was a sister of Nasir Abas, a leader of Mantiqi (Region) III. There are ample examples like this.

There are also examples of solidarity and mutual help among widows and orphans of mujahidin who were killed by the authorities. The wife of Dulmatin, a key figure in the 2002 Bali bombings, lived and worked at an Islamic school complex on the outskirts of Solo, where the widow of Imam Samudra, a Bali bomber executed in 2008, and the widow of Urwah, an associate of the aforementioned Noordin, also lived.[10)] There are foundations for families of late mujahidin, such as the Infaq Dakwah Center and Yayasan Rumput, which were established by the jihadist media outlets VOA-Islam.com and

8) Abu Mus'ab al-Suri's book was first published in Indonesian in 2009 by a JI/JAT-related publisher, Jazera, yet some of the activists must have read it much earlier as it was available on the Internet as early as 2004.

9) For how a sense of how community enhances cooperation, see Benkler (2011).

10) "Pindah ke Sukoharjo, Istri Dulmatin Bertetangga dengan Istri Imam Samudra," Detik.com, March 10, 2010, accessed March 31, 2015.

Muslimdaily.net. Abdurrachim Ba'asyir, a son of Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, organizes Muslimdaily.net.

Most JI members were recruited from Ngruki or related schools. Militant doctrines were taught at individual study groups led by teachers or senior students. Kinship and school nodes were correlated and overlapping (see Huda Ismail 2007). Several related schools were established by DI families, and some were established by alumni of Ngruki in the absence of such family ties. Ngruki requires students to intern during their final year by teaching at another school. Thus, students spread to a plethora of schools and add to the links, enabling jihadists to expand and maintain their networks. Most Ngruki graduates do not join the organization but can be cooperative when they are asked for the use of such assets as their houses or motorcycles. As will be explained later, Ngruki-related schools became more important as time passed.

IV International and Inter-organizational Networks

Existing domestic and international injustice systems also created a rich context for the recruitment of Indonesian jihadists. Soon after the political transition as a result of President Suharto's resignation, JI became involved in regional conflicts with the Christian inhabitants of the Maluku Islands and Poso, Central Sulawesi. In these conflicts, the victimization of Muslims was emphasized, and their Christian counterparts were believed to be obtaining financial and material support from transnational Christian movements. JI members worked in these areas with activists from other organizations such as KOMPAK (Komite Aksi Penanggulangan Akibat Krisis, Action Committee for Crisis Management), a charitable body of DDII.[11)]

JI extended its networks to include neighboring countries such as the Philippines and Singapore in addition to Malaysia, where Sungkar and his followers had once been based.[12)] On the other hand, JI failed to coordinate with militants in southern Thailand; there are indications that JI had links in Thailand but never succeeded in establishing meaningful relationships in this area. Southern Thailand conflicts were regional and

11) JI needed KOMPAK in order to access funds that were donated by the public, given that JI was not a well-established or trusted organization (Solahudin 2011, 252–256). See Van Klinken (2007) for comparative studies of regional conflicts in Indonesia after 1998, and McRae (2013) for the Poso conflict, especially how mujahidin related to local militias.

12) DI has had small cells in Sabah, Malaysia, since the 1980s; these should be credited for transactions between the southern Philippines and Indonesia. JI itself has also maintained a support base in Sabah since the mid-1990s (see ICG 2007, 13).

autonomous in nature, and militants were less drawn to the global jihad.[13] In the Philippines, JI initially developed connections to probably a few small factions of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and later established links to the Abu Sayyaf Group. JI moved a training camp to Mindanao, an area under the control of the MILF, after political conditions in Afghanistan became unfavorable. JI members traveled between Indonesia and the Philippines to exchange arms and fighting skills. DI and KOMPAK also established contacts and connections with each other in Mindanao. JI cadres Dulmatin and Umar Patek fled to Mindanao in 2003 after participating in the 2002 Bali bombings. As the MILF entered peace negotiations with the Philippine government, JI withdrew its training camp and Dulmatin and Umar Patek subsequently joined the Abu Sayyaf Group. Dulmatin, believed to have returned to Indonesia in 2007, dramatically reappeared and was shot down by police in 2010. Umar Patek was arrested in Abbottabad, Pakistan, in April 2011. He was arrested where Usama bin Laden was killed a few weeks later. Though we don't know how closely they were connected, JI and its extended networks have maintained links to global jihadist networks represented by al-Qaeda. These links reappeared during the recent Syrian war. JI, JAT, and other smaller groups sent "humanitarian missions" and mujahidin to Syria (see IPAC 2014b). It appears that there were several hundred Indonesians fighting there by the beginning of 2015. At the same time, JI's failure in Thailand and limited success in the Philippines reminds us that links cannot explain everything. Ideological differences between groups that reflect local contexts are important factors to explain the limitations of JI's expansion. As discussed later, the Syrian war and the establishment of IS brought about serious divisions among jihadists in Indonesia based on ideological and strategic differences.

JI has also established links to outside groups that do not necessarily share these familial or school connections, as we have seen in the Poso conflict and Mindanao. JI has temporarily cooperated with outsiders for practical purposes. Organizational affiliation and exclusiveness are not necessarily strict, particularly in areas of conflict, where organizational overlap is not unusual. Such overlap has been strengthened as a function of the passage of time. Because JI and its successor JAT, as organizations, are not currently seeking violent solutions, dissatisfied militant members have extended their cooperative efforts beyond the boundaries of these organizations. Jihadists call each other *ikhwan*

13) JI's former regional chief (the head of Mantiqi I) Hambali was caught in Ayutthaya, Thailand, in August 2003. He attended a meeting with al-Qaeda in Malaysia in 2000. He was the only Southeast Asian detainee in the Guantanamo Bay prison. Terrorism experts such as Rohan Gunaratne and Zachary Abuza have repeatedly warned of the existence of JI members in southern Thailand, but no strong evidence to prove this has been forthcoming. For characteristics of conflicts in southern Thailand, see McCargo (2008) and ICG (2005).

(brother) regardless of organizational affiliation. Indeed, the first internationally recognized 2002 Bali bombing itself was the result of an individual decision made by JI's militant faction, not the official or collective decision of the organization.[14] The 2003 Marriott hotel bombing in Jakarta was similarly executed by a small group led by the Malaysian Noordin, with some help from individual JI members. Annual bombings against Western targets continued until 2005, and the second Marriott and Ritz-Carlton hotel bombings in Jakarta in 2009 were carried out by Noordin's group cooperating with outside groups (ICG 2006; 2009a). After the dissolution of Noordin's group, jihadist militants were further fragmented yet managed to survive by changing to more and more horizontal networks. These paths coincided with the above-mentioned strategies of al-Qaeda proposed by Abu Mus'ab al-Suri.

Besides school and family ties, links and a sense of community among small groups and networks were created during combat experiences primarily in Afghanistan and later in Maluku and Poso. As conflicts in Maluku and Poso almost ceased, Indonesian jihadists have kept base in the former conflict area and held temporary training camps in order to maintain networks, combat experience, and technique.[15] In addition, the continual crackdowns after the Bali bombings made prison an important place for adding links, as I will describe later in the case of Urwah and Aman Abdurrahman.

V Noordin's Network and Thereafter

For about six years, the Malaysian national Noordin M. Top dominated the terrorism scene in Indonesia. He led bombing attacks against Western targets or the "far enemy," meaning the United States and its allies, in Indonesia with a clear awareness of fighting a global jihad.[16] Yet he was "by all accounts . . . not a particularly impressive figure." He

14) There have been internal discussions on the concept of an individual jihad (*jihad fardiyah*) against the United States. It is commonly understood that collective jihad for defense from the enemy is obligatory for all Muslims. Those who promote an individual jihad consider that jihad against the United States does not require the permission of their organization because the country has aggressively invaded Muslim lands (see Solahudin 2013, 196). The concept of an individual jihad leads to individuals attacking their own government (near enemy), which hinders the activities of jihadists and contributes to US aggression.

15) Mujahidin Indonesia Timor (East Indonesian Mujahidin), led by Santoso, has been active in Poso and sporadically attacks local police. Other small splinter groups such as Mujahidin Indonesia Barat (West Indonesian Mujahidin) claim to support Mujahidin Indonesia Timor.

16) This was based on a theory stating that Muslim regimes would never fall as long as their Western backers kept up their support. This led some jihadists to direct their attention to those backers instead of their own regimes. See Gerges (2009) for the origin of the distinction between the near enemy and the far enemy and how al-Qaeda turned to global jihad.

could not speak Arabic, and his religious knowledge was limited. Nor was he was a skilled orator. However, he had a knack for surrounding himself with devoted followers who possessed skills that he did not, and his ability to elude police for so long enhanced his stature (ICG 2006, 1). In this section, I will highlight three figures—namely, Asmar Latin Sani, Urwah, and Aman Abdurrahman—in order to elucidate the nature of jihadist networks in Indonesia. The three all played important roles yet linked the networks very differently. Asmar and Urwah were closely associated with Noordin, whom Aman was critical of. Aman became increasingly important after the death of Noordin, and he began to create a new kind of network.

Asmar Latin Sani, the 2003 Marriott hotel suicide bomber, had connections to important nodes but was apparently of less personal importance to the network. He attended Pondok Ngruki and was one of hundreds of students who left the school with Abdurrahim Thoyib in 1995 as a result of an internal conflict. The school foundation issued a regulation to limit extracurricular study groups, the so-called *harakah*, which brought about a fierce dispute and serious split within the Pondok Ngruki (Wildan 2013, 200–201). Asmar, along with tens of students, subsequently moved to the Darusy Syahadah school in Boyolali, on the outskirts of Solo in Central Java. The Darusy Syahadah is one of the most important JI-related schools, and it may actually be more important than the Ngruki school. Some of those who were involved in violent operations either graduated from Ngruki before 1995 or left in 1995. Several key operatives teach or study at the Darusy Syahadah. Asmar somehow became a member of Laskar Khos (the network's special forces), led by Noordin. Noordin belonged to JI but coordinated suicide bomb attacks against Western targets without approval from the JI central command. In preparation for the Marriott bombing, Noordin and associates moved to Bengkulu, Sumatra, where Asmar was from. Asmar and other JI members in Sumatra helped Noordin arrange for money and explosives. Asmar was chosen as the suicide bomber who detonated the car bomb in August 2003. A few years after Asmar's death, Gungun, his former schoolmate in Boyolali, married Asmar's sister. Gungun was a younger brother of Hambali, known for his strong links to al-Qaeda and the only Southeast Asian detainee at Guantanamo, the United States' controversial prison camp in Cuba. Gungun was known also for belonging to a Pakistani cell that was led by Abdurrachim Ba'asyir. Asmar was closely linked to very important nodes, but his loss seemed not to damage the network at all. Asmar's case seems similar to what Barabasi describes as the situation of Mohamed Atta, the purported mastermind of the 9/11 attacks:

> Despite his central role, taking out Atta would not have crippled the cell. The rest of the hubs would have kept the web together, possibly carrying out the attack without his help. (Barabasi 2003, 223)

After the first Marriott bombing, Noordin distanced himself from JI and relied more on inter-organizational networks. Urwah, alias Bagus Budi Pranoto, was a key figure in modifying networks by linking Noordin to others. His case typically describes how recent jihadist networks form, are maintained, or collapse.[17] Urwah went to Pesantren Al-Muttaqien, a Ngruki-related school in Jepara, on the northern coast of Java, and proceeded to the Ma'had 'Ali An-Nur college in 2000. The An-Nur college was founded by teachers who had left Ngruki in 1995. He chose the college because he had not been accepted by the Institute of Arabic and Islamic Sciences, a Saudi government-sponsored college in Jakarta. He had educational links to the jihadist network from the beginning, but his choice of An-Nur made a difference. He added links during his involvement in conflicts in Maluku and Poso, where he spent a few months each, probably as a JI member. It was Urwah who connected Noordin to important links outside JI, such as Iwan Darmawan, alias Rois, a head of DI's Banten battalion (See ICG 2006). Urwah was arrested in July 2004, before Noordin carried out the Jakarta Australian embassy bombing in September with help from Iwan and other local JI networks.

By his own account, Urwah was further radicalized in jail, where he spent around three years. In prison, he married a woman introduced to him by Abu Bakar Ba'asyir. The families of Urwah and his wife were not involved with DI. Urwah did not participate in the activities of JI or JAT after being released, but he taught at a local mosque and headed a small group probably consisting of around a dozen members. He openly emphasized the need for "terror attacks" in order to fight back against Western, mostly US, aggression against Muslims around the world, which was contrary to mainstream jihadist groups' increasing tendency to give priority to the "near enemy," or their own Muslim regime, which hampered the activities of jihadists and contributed to US aggression. Abu Bakar Ba'asyir even tried to persuade Indonesian political elites to repent for their "sins" before fighting against them.[18] Although Urwah maintained contacts with the leadership of JAT and other existing groups, he often irritated those who refrained from bombing attacks and the publication of Maqdisi's criticism of global jihad that will be mentioned later. Urwah also said during my interview that he wanted to be a martyr soon. For the 2009 hotel bombing operation in Jakarta, Noordin asked for Urwah's help, and Urwah provided his man, Air Setiawan, to assist. Urwah was not directly involved

17) I interviewed Urwah regularly, two or three times a year, in 2008 and 2009. The following description has been reconstructed from published information and my interviews.

18) Though Ba'asyir calls the current Muslim regime *thaghut* (infidel ruler) and justifies fighting against it, as Aman Abdurrahman describes later in this paper, he wrote an open letter to President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and published several books urging political elites to repent. See also Miichi (2007).

in the bombing operation. He remained at his house in Solo as usual until Air Setiawan was shot to death, and then he realized he would be hunted too.[19] He was finally killed by a police squad along with Noordin on September 17, 2009.

It should be noted that organizations have become more fragmented and less important. Networks around Urwah have remained active, but unlike the aforementioned Asmar, Urwah was a capable and important hub. He was like a local bridge, as explained by Granovetter:

> As with bridges in a highway system, a local bridge in a social network will be more significant as a connection between two sectors to the extent that it is the only alternative for many people—that is, as its degree increases. (Granovetter 1973, 1365)

After Urwah's death, his followers dispersed. Some of them joined a group called Hisbah led by Sigit Qardowi. Hisbah carried out minor attacks on small restaurants and bars serving alcohol, more commonly known as "sweeping." Then after Sigit was shot to death by police in May 2011, some of the group members carried out suicide attacks on a police mosque and a Christian church, which invited further arrests and damage to the network. Some Hisbah members fled to join IS in Syria.

Aman Abdurrahman became one of the most important persons among the jihadists in Indonesia after Noordin passed away. An independent jihadist who was never fully affiliated with major organizations such as DI or JI, Aman linked others with weak ties. He was followed by only around 10-odd people who attended his study group on the outskirts of Jakarta at least until 2004. At the same time, however, he was well known among militants and translated many books published by JI-related publishers. His translations include writings of the Jordanian scholar Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, who was the mentor of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq. Maqdisi broke with Zarqawi around 2004 and criticized his strategy of massive suicide bombings in Iraq. He believed that the primary targets of jihad should be Muslim regimes or the "near enemy."[20] Because Noordin admired Zarqawi, Aman's translation was considered to represent criticism of Noordin (see ICG 2010). Aman emphasized that Muslims must fight against the immediate or "near" enemy, the Indonesian government. He believed governments that did not apply Islamic law and oppressed the Islamic movement were

19) See also "Menelusuri Jejak dan Peran Bagus Budi Pranoto Alias Urwah," Detik.com, August 21, 2009, accessed March 31, 2015.

20) Maqdisi also condemned Zarqawi's takfir of entire groups of people. This view coincided with criticism against Aman Abdurrahman and IS among Indonesian jihadists, as discussed later. Thus, there are twists among ideological and strategic opinions. For Maqdisi's thoughts and his relationship with Zarqawi, see Wagemakers (2012).

kafir (infidel) and *thaghut* (*kafir* rulers, literary false gods).[21] A thaghut is an enemy of Islam who impedes the implementation of Islamic law and leads Muslim masses to the "darkness of *jahiliyya*" (pre-Islamic ignorance).

Having no training or experience in Afghanistan or Mindanao, Aman was taught bombing skills by Harun, a JI member. He was arrested in March 2004 after accidentally setting off a bomb (see ICG 2004). In prison, Aman became popular among those who came from the periphery of militant movements such as East Kalimantan and did not have a leader or mentor. He added links from among the detainees. He was released in 2008 and briefly participated in the newly established JAT because his followers had supported this group while he was in jail. However, "his idea on *takfir* [declaring another Muslim as *kafir*] was not suitable to JAT." Aman was too exclusive and strict to accept other Muslims as "true Muslims," and he often condemned others as kafir.[22] What is important here is that Aman's ties to DI, JI, and JAT were weak, but he definitely had links to other militant groups with many nodes. His personal strength was religious knowledge and a fearless attitude that legitimized attacks. His legal judgment and his recorded speeches were released through Web sites. Eventually his statements became as influential as Abu Bakar Ba'asyir's.

In early 2010, Aman emerged as a key person in mediating intra- and inter-organizational disputes through a program known as *lintas tanzim*, which was organized by Dulmatin—who had returned from the Philippines—and his friends to activate a new jihad based on a longer-term perspective than that underpinning Noordin's desperate bombing operations. However, this effort was soon detected by the police and resulted in raids around Aceh and Jakarta. Aman was arrested, and Dulmatin was shot to death in March 2010 (see ICG 2010). This was not the end of Aman, however. His influence again increased in jail. This time it was not through adding personal links; his ideas on legitimate fighting against the government brought about the creation of self-organized networks outside. His fierce sermons in prison were broadcast to other detainees, even in different prisons, through smuggled mobile phones.[23] Several small groups, such as the Abu Omar group and Mujahidin Indonesia Barat (West Indonesian Mujahidin), launched sporadic attacks against police based on Aman's thaghut concept.

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21) There are serious discussions and divisions among jihadists and Salafists on the object of jihad. Though there are differences of opinion among jihadists, they maintain a sense of community as a brotherhood. On the other hand, divisions between Salafi jihadists and Salafi non-jihadists are more profound and intense. Aman Abdurrahman (2012) fiercely criticizes non-jihadi Salafists, who claim the Indonesian government is not thaghut and that they do not have to fight against it. See also Al-Majdi (2012) and IPAC (2014a; 2014b).

22) Interview with a JAT leader, March 6, 2010.

23) Interview with a JAT member, February 6, 2015.

Some of these members were affiliated with JAT or JI, but their continual attacks against police were apparently without order or permission from organizations. Moreover, those who sympathized with Aman formed new groups named Jamaah Aman Abdurrahman (Aman Abdurrahman Community) and Tauhid Wal Jihad (Oneness of God and jihad) in several cities without command from Aman or obvious coordination among them. Jihadist networks in Indonesia evolved to become scattered and self-sustaining webs.

Responding to the proclamation of IS in June 2014, Aman urged jihadists in Indonesia to take a loyalty oath to IS and its caliph, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Abu Bakar Ba'asyir followed and ordered JAT members to make a pledge. However, ideological and strategic differences between IS and the al-Qaeda/al-Nusra Front overshadowed Indonesian jihadists. IS attempted to subordinate the local al-Qaeda branch al-Nusra, but al-Nusra rejected IS. Ayman al-Zawahiri, al-Qaeda's chief, tried to calm the dispute, but IS refused to accept Zawahiri's mediation (Mendelsohn 2014). Although started as part of al-Qaeda, IS seeks territorial rule based in Iraq and Syria, which is different from al-Qaeda's global jihad. Ba'asyir's son Abdurrachim did not agree with IS and instead founded Jema'ah Ansharusy Syari'ah. Remnants of JI and Majelis Mujahidin, which Abu Bakar Ba'asyir formerly led, also did not agree with IS and supported rival al-Nusra. They cast doubt on IS's religious credentials as the caliphate and criticized its harsh implementation of criminal law and *takfir* tendency.

VI Growing Internet Networks and Their Limitations

Jihadists in Indonesia have used the Internet, e-mail, and mobile phones for communication, but until the early years of the twenty-first century print media were much more important for disseminating ideology in the domestic market. Several JI-related printing companies published hundreds of translations of the writings of major Arabic militant ideologues by downloading the original materials from the Internet and translating them into Indonesian. Due to the absence of publication licenses and internal security acts in Indonesia, these companies could publish radical and militant ideology almost freely. They also downloaded and edited videos and sold them as VCDs (see ICG 2008b).

However, the Internet has grown rapidly and been replacing print media. Aman Abdurrahman had published only one thin booklet by 2008, but dozens of his lectures can be read and downloaded on a blog. Even after he was arrested, he made statements through jihadist Web sites. His blog somehow has continued to update his

lectures.[24] Jihadist Web sites cover the latest international news related to the struggles of Muslims and condemn US military aggression. They refer to subordinated Muslim regimes as *boneka* ("puppet" in Indonesian), kafir, *munafik*, and thaghut. Some of these sites are run by individuals who simultaneously operate publishing companies. YouTube has replaced VCDs for disseminating visual content. TV news and interviews of figures such as Abu Bakar Ba'asyir and the late Imam Samudra, one of the masterminds of the 2002 Bali bombings, began to be posted several years ago after involved individuals learned how the Internet worked and how to utilize its scale-free network. When Imam Samudra and two others were executed in January 2009, a video of their burial ceremony was quickly uploaded to YouTube. In 2010, facing police raids, "al-Qaeda of Aceh" posted a video statement. Santoso, who claims to lead Mujahidin Indonesia Timor (East Indonesian Mujahidin), delivered statements urging a fight with the thaghut Indonesian government and its security authorities. More recently, several recruiting videos for IS were released in Indonesian in addition to "official" videos quickly shared and transmitted. Jihadist Web sites propagate these militant messages by reporting them as news.

The emergence of Facebook and other social network services clearly illustrates the characteristics of scale-free networks. Each member of Facebook has an individual page and links with "friends." The network service offers members the ability to display and update their profiles, send messages, join groups, play games, and so on. Abdurrachim Ba'asyir had more than 3,000 "friends." Moreover, Arrahmah.com, the most popular jihadist Web site in Indonesia, has more than 200,000 "fans" who subscribe to daily updates.[25] That is more than most major news sites in Indonesia.[26] Friends and fans are encouraged to visit jihadist Web sites and view the YouTube videos mentioned above.

Networking on the Internet has its limitations and risks, especially for those who want to hide their activities. Exposing personal networks through social networks can be a risk rather than an advantage. Probably concerned by this, Abdurrachim Ba'asyir had closed his Facebook page by March 2011. Facebook management shut down the

24) Aman's writings were posted on http://millahibrahim.wordpress.com/ (accessed March 31, 2015). Previously his writings were uploaded to http://www.ashhabulkahfi.com/ (accessed March 28, 2011), when it was a blog. The latter Web site was shut down but reemerged as a news site in 2014 (accessed April 19, 2014) and was shut down again sometime in 2015. The Indonesian government blocked access to Aman's Web site (http://millahibrahim.wordpress.com/) in the country apparently after IPAC (2015) pointed out the government's ignorance about it.

25) Arrahmah.com was founded by Jibriel Abdul Rahman, a leader of Majelis Mujahidin.

26) Among the usual news sites, Merdeka.com (more than 1 million) and Detik.com (372,000) have the most subscribers on Facebook. The numbers of subscribers of other major newspapers and magazines, such as *Tempo* (235,000), *Kompas* (206,000), and *Republika* (137,000), are not very different from Arrahmah.com. *Kompas*'s Web site, kompasiana.com, functions more interactively than other major sites integrated with blogs (all accessed November 2013).

page for Arrahmah.com in January 2014. The Indonesian authorities arrested M. Fachry, editor-in-chief of the pro-IS al-Mustaqbal.net, and blocked the Web site at the end of March 2015. Internet media also reveals the split and rivalry among jihadists. M. Fachry used to work for Arrahmah.com but left it due to differences over jihad strategy. Arrahmah.com, which supports al-Nusra, has repeatedly criticized Aman Abdurrahman (see Al-Majdi 2012; Ali Akram 2015). Accordingly, pro-IS Web sites fought back.

Though acknowledging the risks, jihadists in Indonesia still—or even more often—use social network services for propaganda, internal communication, and discussions. The perpetrators of the Myanmar embassy bombing in Jakarta in May 2013 plotted the attack on Facebook. They were motivated by reading posts by Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, met and talked with other extremists on Facebook, and learned bomb-making on other Internet sites.[27] Indonesians who joined IS in Syria have been in contact with their friends and families at home and share their experiences via Facebook, and WhatsApp, more recently. Yet, as IS realized, the leaking of information through social network sites such as Facebook posts from Syria became less frequent by early 2015.[28] Overall, scale-free networks of the Internet have contributed greatly to jihadist activities in Indonesia rather than limited them. It should be noted, however, that communication and networks in the real world have been much more important. Lone wolves are still exceptional; the great majority of perpetrators have familial, educational, organizational, or friendly links. The Internet is not enough to create a sense of community among jihadists in Indonesia.

Conclusion

This examination of the links and nodes of militant Islamists in Indonesia has demonstrated how militant Islamists expanded and maintained networks, adapted to difficult organizational situations, and survived by switching to new kinds of networks. Links are created through family, education, ideology, and organization. Shared experiences in conflict areas, training camps, and jails are vital. As their organizations were damaged by arrests and police assaults, militant Islamists relied more on informal and inter-organizational networks. Incidents over the past few years, mostly attacks on police, were conducted by small splinter groups. Though militant Islamists in Indonesia have

27) See "Indonesian Plotted on Facebook to Attack Myanmar Embassy," *Jakarta Globe*, November 6, 2013, accessed March 31, 2015.
28) Interview with a JAT member, February 6, 2015. See also Huda Ismail (2014).

links to JI, JAT, or DI and share a sense of community as jihadists and ideas on changing strategies and targets, there are no hierarchical relations. Their changing forms of networks can explain the persistence and resilience of jihadist networks in Indonesia.

Theoretical and quantitative network analyses have several weaknesses. They cannot explain how Indonesian jihadists developed or changed from hierarchical organizations to vertical networks. They also largely ignore personal strength and ideological differences. JI's inability to expand to southern Thailand cannot be explained through theoretical and quantitative analyses, and the significance of Aman Abdurrahman cannot be fully described by his weak ties. Muslim leaders of important nodes with many links must also have attributes such as outstanding communication skills and strong academic and ideological backgrounds. Scale-free networks of the Internet contributed to spreading militant ideology and enhancing communication among militants, but they did not greatly increase recruitment in Indonesia. Nevertheless, network analysis can be a useful and sufficiently empirical tool if we remain cognizant of its weaknesses.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Dynamics of Religion in Southeast Asia: Magic and Modernity
VOLKER GOTTOWIK, ed.
Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014, 338p.

This edited volume is an integrated and carefully edited collection of informed and ethnographically rich chapters on the relationships between religion and modernity. For me the strength of the volume rests in its detailed ethnographies of spirituality and ritual action. The several chapters emerged from a "scientific network" of early career researchers focusing on the theme of "Religious Dynamics in Southeast Asia." It was supported initially by the German Research Foundation over a period of four years, and then from 2011 the project was continued, expanded, and translated into a "competence network" financed by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). The book gives expression to the scholarly work undertaken by primarily German-based researchers from the universities of Frankfurt am Main (Birgit Bräuchler, Volker Gottowik), Freiburg (Melanie V. Nertz, Judith Schlehe), Göttingen (Peter J. Bräunlein, Paul Christensen, Michael Dickhardt), Heidelberg (Susanne Rodemeier, Guido Sprenger), and the Ruprecht-Karls-Universität, Heidelberg (Annette Hornbacher), along with the coordinator of the BMBF-funded network, Karin Klenke, Thomas A. Reuter at the University of Melbourne, and Martin Slama at the Austrian Academy of Sciences.

The research, in part at least, refers back to the pioneering Weberian-inspired studies of Clifford Geertz on Java and Bali and his conceptualization of religion as a "cultural system," and appropriately in a German context, to Max Weber's masterpieces in the sociology of religion. In this connection Volker Gottowik's book grapples with a major issue which engaged Geertz and Weber and that is the relationship and interaction between religion and modernity. These issues were taken up in various conceptually differentiated ways by Talal Asad in his *Genealogies of Religion* (1993), and in an Indonesian context by among others Andrew Beatty (1999), John R. Bowen (2003), Robert W. Hefner (1985), Webb Keane (1997), and Mark R. Woodward (1989; 2011). The volume investigates "the specific forms that modernity is assuming in Southeast Asia through creative adaptations, which pertain not least to religion" (p. 13), but it confirms that the West is a "symbol" but not a "model" of modernity (p. 172).

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All the chapters, in various intriguing ways, examine the religious or spiritual responses to the processes which are generating "multiple," "plural," "regional," "parallel," or "other" modernities and in particular the reactions to generalized processes of commodification, secularization, rationalization, homogenization, and standardization. There is also a clear concern with the exercise of agency and the forms and patterns of interaction between the human and the non-human or supernatural world.

The volume demonstrates in ample ethnographic detail that there has been a range of spiritual responses in Southeast Asia which engage with, resist, negotiate, and transform the Weberian modernization-religion prospectus; these counterpoints embrace what the volume collectively refers to as "magic" covering such beliefs and practices as witchcraft, sorcery, possession, trance, "faith-healing," and ancestor and spirit worship. These "magical" responses give expression to ambiguity, but also serve to subvert and resist the processes of modernization (p. 22); they also act to defend, reinterpret, rejuvenate, and revitalize what is referred to, perhaps somewhat misleadingly, as "tradition." In addition to magic the other set of responses to modernization are embodied in variants of Islamic reformism which perceives modernity as "multilayered, contradictory and contested" (p. 26). Several of the chapters also examine the ways in which the state intervenes in and attempts to control and direct religious life.

The book is organized into three sections entitled "Modern Spirits," "Modern Muslims," and "Modern Traditions"; "modern traditions" is an oxymoron of significant proportions and the subject matter is probably better captured in Eric Hobsbawm's and Terence Ranger's concept of "invented tradition" (1983). With regard to "modern Muslims" we have to address the phenomenon of radical or fundamentalist Islam and its engagement with modernity; is it "modern"? Even the concept of "modern spirits" is problematical and connects both with modernity and a reinvented tradition in a spectrum of rituals and beliefs which include Philippine passion rituals, self-crucifixion and self-flagellation, Indonesian horse rituals and Rmeet (Lamet) rituals addressing ancestor spirits, and house, village, sky, and forest spirits.

Much of the detailed case material is taken from Muslim Indonesia and especially Java, with some examination of Balinese Hinduism, as well as Christianity in Sumatra and Maluku, and religious transformations in Vietnam and Laos. It is unfortunate that there is very little attention to Theravada Buddhism. Moreover in a volume on the current ideational and active dimensions of religion there are no chapters provided by researchers from Southeast Asia. Had locally-based and -derived field research been included might there have been different conceptualizations of the interaction between religion and modernity and the ways in which tradition is reconstructed and invented? Interestingly in the preface to the volume which outlines the research project and its inputs only one Southeast Asian researcher is mentioned, Goh Beng Lan, a Malaysian anthropologist now based in Singapore. One wonders why there was not a greater level of scholarly exchange between European and Southeast Asian researchers.

Finally, it seems not altogether surprising that in periods of rapid social, cultural, economic, and political change, the human search for meaning and reassurance turns to the spiritual, to domains that are not within the reach of the market and the production of commodities. Nor is it a great surprise that "familiarity with rational-scientific explanations does not necessarily imply the refutation of religious and spiritual interpretations and experiences" (p. 65). Yet the juxtaposition of the twin concepts of magic and modernity does provide a framework which generates some interesting ideas and findings in the examination of the dynamics of religions in Southeast Asia.

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The Historical Construction of Southeast Asian Studies: Korea and Beyond

PARK SEUNG WOO and VICTOR T. KING, eds.
Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2013, xviii+468p.

Before this important edited volume by Park and King was published, I had the pleasure to be invited to endorse it. I wrote the following message, "At a time when Southeast Asian Studies is declining in North America and Europe, this book serves to remind us of the fresh, constructive, and encouraging view of the field from Asia. On behalf of Taiwan's Southeast Asian research community, I sincerely congratulate Professors Park and King for making such a great and timely contribution to the making of Southeast Asian Studies in Asia."

After having reviewed the whole text once again, I am further convinced that this collective

effort made by Korean Southeast Asian scholars and other selected contributors from Australia, the Netherlands, and United Kingdom should be modeled in other Asian countries so as to re-energize and to transform current Southeast Asian studies into a truly new global form of scholarship. Such a paradigm shift is simple: Southeast Asian studies is no longer a field monopolized by Western academics. It is a free and open frontier for rising Southeast Asian scholars to study their own societies and for other Asian researchers studying their neighboring countries. It should also be a fertile land for both Asian (insider) and non-Asian (outsider) theorists to engage in substantive dialogues and discourses to hopefully create more authentic, indigenous, and ground-making knowledge about Southeast Asia. To push further, one can even envision the potential yet significant contribution of a solid and theoretically minded area studies, including a Southeast Asian studies that can lead to a "truly globalized" humanities and social science in the future.

I am not sure if the editors and authors had the above in mind, but certainly the fruitful discussions presented in this volume of institutional developments and the contributions to Southeast Asian studies in South Korea, Japan, China, Singapore, Vietnam, United Kingdom, United States, Australia, and the Netherlands, shed light on the above inspiration and vision.

With the exception of the three chapters on United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Australia that are written by scholars based in those nations, the other six cases dealing with the development of Southeast Asian studies are all written through Korean scholars' observations and interpretations. It is a unique feature of this book, but it also raises a question. Why is it that only three countries are tackled by their own scholars?

Though the region's definition has always been an issue, I tend to agree with the editors not to problematize this particular matter too much. Rather, they have raised a few significant and substantive issues that remain unsolved as a way to draw out some constructive conclusions.

The first one is area studies versus disciplinary research. The various related chapters that focus on Southeast Asian studies in the countries covered are in fact a random mix of multi-disciplinary or single disciplinary perspectives on either regional studies or research dealing with individual countries. No specific rationale is provided on the different cases under review and may be due to accidental reasons that inform research motivations, available funding, and individual scholars' academic training. However, we can observe that in Southeast Asia studying one's own country is the primary mode that constitutes the core of Southeast Asian studies by insiders. Outside the region, however, we can observe a more logical colonial historical legacy, one with strategic concerns or preoccupied theoretical explanations that take up the focus of some specific national studies instead of others. That can be found in the concentration of Indonesian studies in Australia and the Netherlands, research on Singapore and Malaysia in the United Kingdom, and in recent years, the cross-boundary approach en vogue in the United States.

I can understand why this edited volume has no intention to offer specific solutions to the debates listed above, but it would have been more useful for readers if a more solid assessment of

the major accomplishments made by either descriptive-historical area studies in one country or any innovative theorizing achieved in another country were provided in the chapters. In the case of Taiwan, which is not covered in this volume, all the above debatable issues are also prevalent within the Southeast Asian studies community. One pragmatic strategy adopted there from the inception of Southeast Asian studies was to match the specified subject matter with a relevant discipline and keep ongoing theoretical discourses in mind. This may constitute a point of reference for future discussions that engage with the issue of "what area studies is or means by discipline."

The second issue is what happens when Northeast Asia meets Southeast Asia in Southeast Asian studies? As is also quite clearly revealed from the three chapters on Japan, South Korea, and China, it has become an emerging trend for East Asian scholars to engage in area studies of various kinds in Southeast Asia countries. This involves not just individual research activities, but rather more institutionalized and collaborative endeavors in the making. The three chapters have done a fair job in depicting respective histories and their different institutional features of Southeast Asian studies in these three East Asian countries. Readers are informed of the different historical backgrounds and motivations as well as the academic rationale behind the recent enterprises of Southeast Asian studies in each country. These range, for example, from the historical legacy and the remaking of a Japanese national image, business and economic opportunities for South Korea, and China's need to become an aggressive rising power. Though uneven, the three chapters provide a useful primer on the names of scholars, institutions, and centers in this field as well as tables and figures of what has been achieved in relation to Southeast Asia.

The chapter on China points out a biased Sino-centric perspective toward Southeast Asia in Chinese scholarship. This is dictated by a Chinese governmentality and its preoccupation with outdated "blood connections" in researching the overseas Chinese in the region. The chapter on Japan, though overly one-sided with a focus on the study of Southeast Asian history, also comments on the lack of translation of the major Japanese works into English language with many inadequately known to the non-Japanese speaking academics. The chapter on South Korea further raises the serious problem of the under-recognition of Southeast Asian studies by the wider academic community as a unique and independent discipline. Besides the Chinese problem which is an exceptionally political and ideological one, the problems presented by the Japanese and Korean cases are actually quite common and Taiwan is also no exception.

The editors and the chapter authors seem not to be inspired to go deeper and tackle the following important questions. What advantages and disadvantages exist for Northeast Asian scholars to engage in Southeast Asian studies? Have they truly made new discoveries that have been appreciated by local Southeast Asian academics in the same area of research? Are there any differences in the ways and approaches that Northeast Asian scholar employ toward studying Southeast Asia that differ from those employed by Western researchers in previous years? What are the best ways for Southeast Asian and Northeast Asian scholars to collaborate and to learn

from each other to advance scholarship in Southeast Asian studies? Finally and collectively, in which direction should we move in order to develop a new Southeast Asian scholarship that reflects a shift to a more autonomous Asian paradigm of Southeast Asian studies?

Though this current volume does not answer all issues I raise, after having read the book with great interest, I believe it is, nonetheless, a very useful contribution to a new and better understanding of the state of the field of Southeast Asian studies today. As stated at the beginning, it marks a good beginning for a new scholarship of Asian studies of Southeast Asia. I certainly recommend all serious readers in this field to read it and to make an intelligent comparison with previous field review volumes.

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Identity and Pleasure: The Politics of Indonesian Screen Culture

Ariel Heryanto

Singapore: NUS Press in association with Kyoto: Kyoto University Press, 2014, xiv+246p.

At the risk of rehashing the old orientalist clichés we must acknowledge that contemporary Indonesia can be a bewildering place. This holds true both for outside observers and for Indonesians engaged in fashioning the practice of daily life. During my daily motorcycle commute to Universitas Gadjah Mada in Yogyakarta (Jogja) in 2012–13, the massive billboards at major intersections never ceased to fascinate me and make me question what I thought I knew about Indonesia. Advertisements for self-help seminars by Muslim televangelists competed with images of Korean boy bands; Coca-Cola offered itself as the perfect drink for breaking the Ramadan fast; an appliance store suggested buying a refrigerator to celebrate Kartini Day (a national holiday honoring a Javanese princess who promoted education for women); and portraits of political candidates in stock poses blocked the view of Monjali, a massive monument left-over from Suharto's authoritarian New Order which now housed a nightly display of Hello-Kitty-themed paper lanterns. In March 2013, after a bar fight led to the murder of an off duty solider and a commando squad broke into the prison and executed the suspects, banners applauding Kopassus (the elite army special forces) and denouncing *preman* (street thugs) mysteriously appeared at these intersections. I was constantly amazed by what one saw on the street of Jogja. Fortunately, Ariel Heryanto's latest book offers wide-ranging and insightful analysis into Indonesian political culture and cultural politics since the fall of Suharto in 1998. *Identity and Pleasure: The Politics of Indonesian Screen Culture* is a brilliant study of the diverse and seemingly contradictory forces at play in the world's fourth largest nation-

state. This ethnography of urban Indonesian youth and mid-career professionals explains that what I witnessed in the streets of Jogja were public manifestations over the struggle for identity. Heryanto delves into the ways in which his subjects actively negotiate consumerism, Islamicization, social media, and the violent legacy of authoritarianism.

While an important book, *Identity and Pleasure: The Politics of Indonesian Screen Culture* will frustrate some readers. Despite the title, Heryanto is very clear that the book is not a history of Indonesian cinema. Nor is it an encyclopedic account of Indonesian television and film. Rather, the book uses screen culture (television, film, and social media) as a prism to explore post-New Order identity politics. Heryanto analyzes certain films, certain televisions shows, and certain aspects of social media to understand the ways in which certain Indonesians are actively engaged in the construction of their own identity. That his study discusses "certain Indonesians" is seen in his clear focus on urban middle-class young people and mid-career professionals (what Americans used to call "Yuppies": young upwardly mobile urban professionals) in several Javanese cites, including Jakarta, Surabaya, Semarang, Bandung, and Malang. Thus, this is not a study of all elements of Indonesian society, only of a privileged subset. Heryanto states that his analysis is narrowly qualitative rather then broadly quantitative. But the author's admittedly tight focus does not diminish the work's larger significance. Indeed, this may be one of the most useful contributions to the understanding contemporary Indonesia, comparable to John Pemberton's history of the present, *On the Subject of "Java,"* which probed the New Order in the mid-1980s (Pemberton 1994). Perhaps the most striking feature of *Identity and Pleasure* is Heryanto's ability to find meaning in seemingly trivial and mundane aspects of popular culture.

At times Heryanto's description of Indonesian cultural politics can seem pessimistic. Cynical politicians use Islam to garner support from pious voters and Muslim televangelists seem more preoccupied with promoting a path to material wealth than spiritual salvation. If terrorist attacks are rare, the violent thuggery of the *preman* (gangsters) permeates many aspects of urban life from presidential elections to public parking rackets. He suggests that the nation may never be able to come to terms with the bloody history of over three decades of authoritarian rule, human rights abuses, and rampant corruption. Heryanto calls attention to rampant sinophobia, yet acknowledges it is no longer state policy as under Suharto. He repeatedly states that social media, rather than liberating or empowering the average Indonesian, is furthering social atomization and making communication increasing artificial and superficial. He concludes the book by revealing that "[t]he underside of the politics of identity and pleasure are plight, predicament, and pain" (p. 209).

Identity and Pleasure contains eight chapters. In the opening chapter Heryanto sets up his theoretical framework, states his arguments, and defines his parameters. He holds that the social group he is studying is actively engaged in both negotiating and transforming established and traditional identities with the new freedoms of consumer capitalism and potential liberation of web-based social media. The title refers to both the debate over identity and the pleasures of

popular culture. The second and third chapters consider Islamic cultural politics. Heryanto argues for the analytic (not descriptive) model of Post-Islamism for contemporary Indonesia, a model which can include conflict, dissent, and disagreement within the Muslim world. He notes the ways in which politicians, self-help speakers, and filmmakers use Islam for their own purposes. In his discussion of Islamic themed films, Heryanto explains the unprecedented success of the 2008 *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* [Verses of love] as stemming from its depiction of young, hip, and fashionable Muslims. The film and several others that followed demonstrate the ways in which young urban Indonesians are actively engaged in shaping their own identities as both Islamic and modern. Chapters four and five both analyze the difficulties, if not failures, of coming to terms with the violence of 1965. Heryanto persuasively argues that the New Order's silencing of critical voices has effectively destroyed both popular understanding and meaningful historiography of the destruction of the PKI and subsequent reign of terror. These chapters demonstrate how Suharto's silencing of non-New Order narratives of 1965 has made it impossible to have a meaningful discussion about the mass murder of hundreds of thousands of individuals. Indeed, with few people understanding the meaning of the word "Communist" as anything other than a catch-all term for evil, Indonesian political discourse even lacks a terminology to discuss these foundational events. Heryanto charts how New Order screen culture, with its bloody propaganda films, has tainted post-authoritarian Indonesia. He also notes the historic importance of Joshua Oppenheimer's *The Act of Killing* (2012), hoping that this documentary might create the conditions to speak of the events of 1965. Chapter six looks at another silencing, that of the role of ethnic Chinese in the film industry. Once again, contemporary Indonesia has trouble escaping the legacy of Suharto's sinophobic policies. Chapter seven posits the recent K-Pop craze as an avenue for young Muslim women to express agency in public spaces. Heryanto discusses the obsession with Korean soap operas and boy bands (subjects which some scholars might dismiss as trivial and faddish) with the same critical insight he applies to independent filmmakers probing human rights abuses. The final chapter argues that screen culture and reality television shows helped to create the phenomenon of "celebrity candidates" in the 2009 elections. With politicians such as President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono appearing on Indonesian Idol and releasing recordings of his music and local candidates becoming famous for outrageous stunts, Heryanto demonstrates the blurring of the line between politics and entertainment. The 209-page book lacks a formal conclusion.

While a brilliant book, *Identity and Pleasure* is not without its shortcomings. Specialists made be frustrated with the interdisciplinary nature of this collection of essays. Writing in several different registers, which make sense in the context of each chapter, the book as a whole does lack methodological depth and rigor. Sociologists, cultural anthropologists, and social psychologists may agree with Heryanto's theory that as an orally-oriented culture Indonesia has a unique relationship with social media, but this position is merely stated rather than proven with detailed primary or secondary evidence. Elsewhere discussions of research as a participant-observer seem

anecdotal and lack evidence of broad social research. One of the most striking shortcomings is in the discussion of the Chinese and the film industry. Heryanto persuasively shows the importance of ethnic Chinese in Indonesian cinema as producers and actors and contrasts this with the shocking lack of significant Chinese characters in these films. While his linkage of this silence with the New Order's sinophobia is excellent, he fails to make the obvious comparison with the history of American Jews; a vilified minority who were well represented in the Hollywood studio system and as actors who adopted non-Jewish names. This curious missed opportunity does not invalidate the chapter's argument but it left this reviewer unsatisfied.

Much of *Identity and Pleasure*'s genius lies in Herytano's willingness to take the seemingly trivial as serious evidence. This allows him to read significant meaning into flash mobs, cover dances, and adolescent crushes on K-Pop idols, as well as the work of human rights activists, independent filmmakers, and national political figures. Furthermore, such an approach shows his respect for the young urban Javanese that make up the subject of his research. With strong use of selected theory, ranging from Ernst Renan to Marshall McLuhan to the ever-present Benedict Anderson, Heryanto situates these essays in the wider discussions of media studies and the politics of nationalism. *Identity and Pleasure* will be of use to scholars of Indonesia as well as the politics of popular culture in Southeast Asia as a whole. This reviewer found it essential for unraveling some of the daily mysteries of the contemporary Indonesian city.

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Voices from the Second Republic of South Vietnam (1967–1975)

K. W. Taylor, ed.
Ithaca, NY: Southeast Asia Program Publications, Cornell University, 2015, 180p.

"Four decades removed from the fall of Saigon, now is perhaps the right time to revisit the Vietnam conflict, for no longer pressing is the impulse to assign blame, discredit others, or find excuses" (p. 159). So begins Lan Lu's contribution to the collection *Voices from the Second Republic of South Vietnam (1967–1975)*. Edited by Keith Taylor, it consists of chapters by 10 different contributors, each of whom played a role in the administrative, political, and military milieu of the Republic of Vietnam based in Saigon from 1955 to 1975.

The collection can be situated in two different contexts. One is the growing interest in the

Republic of Vietnam and the efforts of scholars to develop more nuanced accounts of the Second Indochina War that situate the struggle in local as well as global contexts and highlight the agency and ideologies of participants on all sides. Key works in this emerging body of scholarship include Ed Miller's (2013) and Philip Catton's (2002) works on Ngo Dinh Diem and Nu-Anh Tran's work on nationalism in the First Vietnamese Republic (2006). An equally important context is the scholarly trajectory of Keith Taylor, Professor in Cornell's Department of Asian Studies and a renowned historian of Vietnam. In a very personal account published in 2004, Taylor described how over the course of his career he came to contest the "three axioms in the dominant interpretation of the U.S.-Vietnam War," namely that the government in Saigon was illegitimate, that the U.S. had no grounds to be involved in Vietnamese affairs, and that the fall of the Republic of Vietnam was inevitable (Taylor 2004).[1] Together with his *A History of the Vietnamese* (Taylor 2013), the present volume can be seen as part of the exposition of Taylor's theses that the Vietnamese are characterized by a fundamental North-South division, that their history is driven not by nationalism or resistance to "foreign aggression," but rather an inescapable connection to the Chinese political world, and that the struggle of Vietnamese and their allies to create and sustain a non-Communist Vietnamese government after 1945 was a just one (*ibid.*, 620–626).

It is an uneven collection, with entries ranging from Bui Diem's 5-page "A Vietnamese Perspective on US Involvement," to Tran Quang Minh's 49-page "A Decade of Public Service." The text could have benefitted from closer editing that would have tightened up some chapters and avoided such things as flights in "beach craft" [*sic.* Beechcraft] airplanes (p. 27). In some places, contributors attempt to gloss 2,000 years of history in a few pages; in others, they veer into questionable attempts to refute commonly-held beliefs about the nature of the regime, as in Nguyen Ngoc Bich's description of the so-called "Tiger Cages" used for solitary confinement in the prison at Con Son island (p. 34).

Nevertheless, the accounts provide important insights into life under the Second Republic, reminding us it was a functioning regime attempting to create institutions, build capacity, and carry on the day-to-day operations of governments everywhere. Over the course of the 1960s and early 70s, the Republic came to be shaped by a new generation of highly trained and motivated young officials and activists. As Tran Quang Minh explains, "The Vietnam War was not all about killing and maiming, battles lost and won, and American and Vietnamese frustrations. . . . It was for us very much about building a nation and changing lives, about social revolution, rural reconstruction, agricultural development, economic improvement, and building a happy future for our children" (p. 87).

Moreover, this new generation achieved results that are often ignored. Programs like the

1) Coming as it did in the context of US intervention in Iraq, Taylor's article sparked a highly charged reply by the scholar Robert Buzzanco (Buzzanco 2005), with their exchange coming to be known in the field as the "Taylor-Buzzanco Debate".

Land To The Tiller Program (LTTTP), the Accelerated Miracle Rice Production Program (AMRPP), and the National Food Administration (NFA), detailed in Tran Quang Minh's chapter "A Decade of Public Service," created millions of new smallholders in the Vietnamese countryside and reintroduced market mechanisms, contributing to an increase in food production so that after years of wartime shortages by 1974 the country was once again largely self-sufficient. Nguyen Duc Cuong points to the combination of planning and good fortune that saw the discovery of oil off the Vietnamese coast and the first moves towards its exploitation beginning in 1973. Their accounts also unintentionally shed light on important ecological changes driven by developments like mechanization, the introduction of hybrid rice varieties, the growing dependence on artificial fertilizer, and the construction of Vietnam's first pesticide factories. Taken together, the book's chapters make it clear that much of Vietnam's economic recovery—and ecological change—beginning in the 1980s was based on the achievements of the Second Republic.

Nevertheless, frequent references to inflation, red tape, entrenched bureaucracies, corruption, and waste all underline the magnitude of the challenges the regime faced and help to temper the uniformly positive image of the Republic that emerges from some chapters. In his chapter "From the First to the Second Republic," Phan Quang Tue makes it clear that despite a veneer of democratic institutions, "the entire system was under the control of the military establishment" (p. 123). It was a military establishment, moreover, that did not flinch from attempting the assassination of opponents like Tue's father. While in this respect the Second Republic differed little from contemporary regimes in places like Thailand, Taiwan, or the Republic of Korea, it does remind us of the need to distinguish between men like Tue who struggled to build a more democratic Republic of Vietnam, and others, including many at the highest levels of the regime, who did not.

In his chapter, Phan Quang Tue points to both the potential and the limitations of this kind of oral history project. He compares the collection to Kurosawa's *Rashomon*, "a fascinating account of the effect of subjective perception on recollection by which observers of an event are able to produce substantially different but equally plausible accounts" (p. 118). In this sense, it is a fittingly democratic volume that mirrors the editor's larger argument about the regime itself. It is also the basis of the collection's greatest value: the way it brings together a range of divergent and often unexpected accounts, shedding new light on the Republic of Vietnam at the same time it suggests topics for future research.

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The End of Personal Rule in Indonesia: Golkar and the Transformation of the Suharto Regime

Masuhara Ayako

Kyoto: Kyoto University Press; Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2015, xviii+286p.

In the revised version of her doctoral dissertation, Ayako Masuhara offers a fine-grained analysis of the collapse of President Suharto's New Order regime (1965–98). The author brings out the paradox that despite Suharto enjoying political patronage from the ruling Golkar party, the party made a 180-degree turn, a measure backed by the parliament and the fragmented reformist forces that compelled the President to resign. In a succinctly written introduction, Masuhara states her argument by throwing down a gauntlet before those political analysts who characterize the Suharto regime as a "sultanistic regime" (Aspinall 2005). Instead, she argues that the New Order regime was a "co-opting-style personal rule" in which the Golkar party accommodated political opponents (pp. 3, 15).

Chapter 1 contextualizes the New Order regime within the broader context of Indonesian and area studies. She categorizes personal rule into four types based on the level of state surveillance and violence within the broader framework of comparative politics with examples from different countries: (i) isolated type, (ii) terrorizing type, (iii) dividing type, and (iv) co-opting type. Masuhara conceptualizes the Golkar party as a political space where vast number of Indonesian social elites competed against each other, paving the way for the rise of soft-liners within the New Order regime that eventually undermined the authority of Suharto. Chapter 2 comprehensively describes how the Suharto regime, as an example of a co-opting type of personal rule, ran the country based on political and economic patronage and violent oppression whereas Chapters 3, 4, and 5 collectively describe how the Golkar established and structured itself as the ruling party during the New Order. In Chapter 6, Masuhara argues that the more Golkar became independent from the Indonesian Armed Forces, the more heavily it had to depend on Suharto, and this reliance eroded the autonomy of the party by the late 1980s. In Chapter 7, Masuhara observes that due to the preference

accorded to Suharto's children in the allocation of political posts within the Golkar, former student activists and Islamic group members within the party were sidelined, leading to a rift within the Suharto regime. Furthermore, the Asian Currency Crisis that began in July 1998 and led to the depreciation of the rupiah only served to expose the differences between the Minister of Finance Mar'ie Muhammad and the President (pp. 190–191).

The conclusion contains one substantial claim by Masuhara that the Suharto regime concluded in a packed transition, that refers to multilateral negotiation between the political elites from the authoritarian regime and the democratic opposition that leads to a compromise (p. 235). From the very beginning of the reformist movement in Indonesia, reformist forces tried to influence the New Order elites through dialogue and negotiation, in an attempt to avoid confrontation. By adopting the strategy of not making Suharto lose his face, the reformist forces won many New Order elites to their side, facilitating a smooth transfer of power.

Masuhara succeeds in answering the question of how the New Order era sought to achieve a delicate balance between personal rule of Suharto and national interest. Every chapter of the monograph is provided with a roadmap and a concise summary of the argument. But the book is not without its shortcomings. I found the author's interpretation of *pembangunan* (development) problematic. During the earlier Sukarno era *pembangunan* stood for multiple possibilities such as national reconstruction and enhancing Indonesia's respectability on the world stage whereas during the Suharto era *pembangunan* was narrowly associated with economic development. It would be erroneous to state that Suharto introduced *pembangunan* to depoliticize a public politicized during the Sukarno era and make them focus on the development targeted by the state (p. 10). The writing style is not always engaging. There are repetition and grammar issues throughout the monograph that make it difficult for the reader to follow the narrative. For example, "The reformist forces led by students and intellectuals started the reformist movement in pursuit of the reform of the political system to overcome the economic crisis" (p. 235). Masuhara's cast of characters is large but she fails to introduce them at the very beginning of Chapter 3, or the role they played in power brokering. Also largely missing from her narrative is the role played by the then Vice President B. J. Habibie in making decisive choices towards the end of the New Order.

The monograph demonstrates the ability to ask the right kind of questions. The systematic categorization of the four types of "personal rule" and situating the nature of the Suharto regime within the perspective of comparative politics enable readers to grasp the uniqueness of political transition in Indonesia in the late 1990s. *The End of Personal Rule in Indonesia* is an indispensable book for historians and political analysts working on change of regimes.

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Les Oracles du Cao Đài: Étude d'un mouvement religieux vietnamien et de ses réseaux [The Cao Dai oracles: Essay on a Vietnamese religious movement and its networks]

JÉRÉMY JAMMES

Paris: Les Indes savantes, 2014, 614p.

This book, which I would describe as monumental, is the adaptation of an academic dissertation. It distinguishes itself from previous work (French and Anglo-American) on the subject because it does not situate that subject in a single isolated perspective: neither that of ethnology nor that of historical sociology. With this book, Jérémy Jammes has responded to the archaeologist Bernard Philippe Groslier, who in 1960 called for a necessary alliance between history and ethnology in the study of Asian countries (Groslier 1960), and he has done so by linking, and even closely intertwining, the ethnological approach with the historical.

The author identifies and highlights three vectors of Caodaism: the historical vector, by inscribing the phenomenon in several religious traditions of the beginning of the twentieth century: a matrix of Sino-Viêt mediums (phoenix writing or *fuluan* 扶鸞) (Do 2003) combined with French-Viêt spiritualism, Freemasonry, and Theosophy; the sociological vector, by describing and analyzing the socio-professional environments (the urban and rural bourgeoisie of southern Vietnam) from which Caodaism originated, as well as the networks of kinship and patronage (somehow nepotistic) that it wove or reinforced in order to take root and spread; finally, the author does not neglect the political vector, in particular French colonial domination and the post-independence period.

Far from contenting himself with an analytical description of Caodaist beliefs and faith, Jammes seeks to grasp their meaning: the affirmation of an original identity while simultaneously claiming equality with the colonial masters. This led the founders, the clergy, and the faithful (whose number swelled to the hundreds of thousands in the aftermath of World War II) to follow the Catholic model with regard to ecclesial organization. These initial goals of the new religion's promoters lent Caodaism a subversive character that made its actors sensitive to the temptation of political engagement—first against the French colonization, then against the communist hegemony within national resistance and today within the reunified nation and state.

Jammes does not limit his historical investigation to the past; he continues it in a history of the present day of the Caodaist religion, a history that has unfolded in time (since 1975) and in the

space of communities that were born out of the dispersion following the Vietnam War—in France, the United States, and Australia. He observes that this expansion was accompanied by an aggiornamento, with the Cao Dai religion emerging refined or renewed from all the trials (bans, persecution, and repression). It cast off its spectacular apparatus of worship to place greater importance on meditation than on oracular spirit-mediumship *séances*. This process has been characterized by a tension between the aspiration for unity and a continued tendency for fission, a tension between the ambition to be a marker of identity (a national religion) and that of acquiring universal scope through missionary activity.

Finally, to take up the appellation of "politico-religious sect" that was popularized by French authors during and since the Franco-Vietnamese War (1945–54), and then in a jiffy borrowed by US scholars and journalists for the next two decades, Jammes demonstrates that Caodaism is a hybrid form, a sect-church alloy. He also convincingly demonstrates that Caodaism is the result of two hitherto underestimated inspirations: that of redemptive Chinese societies (which leads to social commitment for the sake of a universalist modernity) (Goossaert and Palmer 2011) and that of the nineteenth century Western occultist movements (Theosophy, Freemasonry, the spiritualism of Allan Kardec). The millenarian aspect of Caodaism becomes evident in the proclamation of the arrival of a universal god and not that of a Buddha Maitreya.

This book clarifies the ambiguity of the colonial moment, which cannot be reduced to mere economic predation, political humiliation, or the "cataclysmic" clash of cultures. The colonization of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries established spaces of interactions and transactions where the ones being ruled proved to be actors who demonstrated their ability to adapt and evolve. Caodaism illustrates what the historian André Nouschi calls "returned weapons" (Nouschi 2005). At the same time, Caodaism established itself on land that had been occupied until the end of the 1920s by the European missionary Church and the Catholic religion, with the goal of competing with them.

This book is the culmination of long and patient fieldwork. The investigation led the author to stay in a Caodaist community in Vietnam, which, in the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, was quite a feat, given the political context. He conducted numerous interviews on site and overseas (Cambodia, USA, France, Canada). This field research provided him with material that he could compare against archival data (eyewitness accounts as well as administrative and police reports), journalistic sources, and religious texts (the canon, exegeses, and autobiographies). In the work of Jammes, the empirical side goes hand in hand with—and is tested against—theoretical references (in particular Max Weber, Michael Taussig [1993], and Jean-Pierre Laurant [1992]). I consider this remarkable work to be a masterpiece in the domains of Vietnamese studies and Asian religions.

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Yimin guiji he lisan lunshu: Xinma huaren zuqun de zhongceng mailuo 移民轨迹和离散论述——新马华人族群的重层脉络 [Migration trajectories and diasporic discourses: Multiples contexts of ethnic Chinese in Singapore and Malaysia]

YOW CHEUN HOE 游俊豪

Shanghai: Sanlian Publishing Company, 2014, ii+243p.

The Chinese word "Huaren" has been used to refer broadly to Chinese people outside of China, but there is little consensus on the details of the term's definition. FitzGerald (1965) employed the term "the third China," whereas Alexander (1973) called them "the invisible China"; Heidhues (1974) perceived them to be "minorities," but Purcell (1980) continued to write of them as "the Chinese." Recently, scholars in the field seem to prefer the phrase "ethnic Chinese" in order to better reflect the "outside-in" nature[1] of these Southeast Asians with their origins in China.[2] The scientific community's lack of consensus over the definition of the "ethnic Chinese" confirms one belief—namely, that the identity of ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia entails a complex composition. To trace the origin and the impact of such an identity requires multilevel analysis, and that is what the author of this book intends to achieve.

Focusing on the cases of Malaysia and Singapore, Yow Cheun Hoe (游俊豪) discusses the anxiety of the ethnic Chinese in their search for identity: on one hand, the original inhabitants in the two countries push the ethnic Chinese to the margins of the out-group; on the other hand, the ethnic Chinese deny considering themselves as China Chinese. At first glance, this thesis is by

1) The so-called "outside-in" effect refers to the identification of ethnic Chinese Southeast-Asians as outsiders.

2) For further discussion of the terms used to refer to ethnic Chinese, see Suryadinata (1997); Wang (1992, 1–10).

no means novel; nevertheless, the author justifies the book's existence by proposing a new approach to interpret the situation of the ethnic Chinese in Malaysia and Singapore. He compares ethnic Chinese migration trajectories with their diasporic discourses with the aim of elucidating the ethnic Chinese "inner self" and their impact on the society in which they live.

This book is divided into three parts. Part One revisits ethnic Chinese diasporic experiences at a national level. The author scrutinizes the migration trajectories of ethnic Chinese from three perspectives—family, race, and nation. The analysis reveals that ethnic Chinese in Malaysia and Singapore manifest different patterns of diasporic experience. Decades after their immigration, the Chinese in Malaysia experience difficulty as members of a social minority; even after establishing themselves in their host country (Chapter Two), these wanderers still seek an identity. By contrast, even though the Chinese in Singapore encounter structural problems when integrating into Singaporean society, their existence obliges the government to implement economic or even legal reforms in order to achieve a harmonious society (Chapter Three). To illustrate these experiences, the author opts for an unusual approach: Chapter Four evokes the migration trajectories of two representative figures in Singapore—Tan Kah Kee (1874–1967) and Lee Kong Chiang (1893–1967)—whereas Chapter Five probes the construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of cultural signals transmitted by Nanyang University (1955–80) as a way of reflecting the transformation of ethnic Chinese people in an evolving society.

Part Two of the book discusses ethnic Chinese connections with China. This is illustrated by the behavior of emigrant communities (*qiaoxian*) vis-à-vis Fanyu and Xinyi—two townships in the province of Guangdong from which many ethnic Chinese emigrants originated. Fanyu and Xinyi are evoked and compared because they tell different stories with respect to ethnic Chinese contribution and solidarity with their home-towns. In this regard, Fanyu benefits far more from emotional and material returns by its emigrants than Xinyi does. Opposed to traditional views, the author argues that ethnic Chinese attachment to China is not simply driven by kinship; rather, it is a blend of nostalgia, the structures and processes of the host nation, and economic development (p. 71). This is to say that the study of ethnic Chinese attachment to the home country should take both emotional and material incentives into account. Eventually, the rise and fall of emigrant communities may be subject to the pressure of those incentives. These dynamics might in turn reshape the behavior of ethnic Chinese in their (new) home country.

Part Three advances the discussion of ethnic Chinese beyond any physical boundaries by reviewing diasporic discourses in Chinese writings in Malaysia and Singapore. The author is convinced that these Chinese writings are worth probing because diasporic writers' narratives highlight the collective memory of the ethnic Chinese. It is memory which sketches how ethnic Chinese have responded to alien social structures and to their positions within them; it is memory which cries out for empathy, anxiety, resistance, and repression (p. 153). Generally, Malaysian Chinese literatures touch on four issues—the question of Chineseness, the polysystem theory,

the Malaysian-Singaporean relationship, and sinophone literature. The book shows that these works go beyond literary description and reach into the fields of history, sociology, and cultural studies.

Nevertheless, some aspects of this book can be confusing. For instance, if Chapters Three and Four help us to comprehend the situation of ethnic Chinese people from both human and institutional perspectives, the author seems to focus exclusively on the case of Singapore and to leave the case of Malaysia behind. Moreover, it is arguable whether the experiences of Tan Kah Kee and Lee Kong Chiang, notwithstanding their historical importance, can best reflect the "new" immigrants from China in the post-colonial period. The book, although brief, addresses the situation of ethnic Chinese in two countries. Readers might sometimes be uncertain as to which country is being discussed as they turn from one chapter to the next. I suspect that readers would appreciate the book more if the chapter arrangement had been more lucid. Regardless of that, the book offers new perspectives in the study of the ethnic Chinese in Malaysia and Singapore. The author does not merely follow the old discourses in a well-studied subject; instead, he updates relevant information, raises new questions, proposes new explanations, and even presents new knowledge about a neglected topic, notably when it comes to emigrant communities and to Chinese writings in Malaysia and Singapore. I suggest that this book might well complement the classics of ethnic Chinese written by reputed predecessors such as Wang Gungwu (1992).

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Party System Institutionalization in Asia: Democracies, Autocracies, and the Shadows of the Past

Allen Hicken and Erik Martinez Kuhonta, eds.
New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015, xviii+355p.

In pluralist and conservative perspectives, political parties in democracies are important as essential representative links between citizens and the state. In these perspectives, political parties provide a means of collecting, interpreting, and channeling citizen's interests into the political system. Where they fail, democracy is threatened. Yet parties may also be important for authoritarian regimes as many of these hold elections. Authoritarian leaders may also use parties to mobilize people in support of the regime. By all accounts, then, parties are politically significant. That being the case, understanding party and party system institutionalization allows for analytical distinctions to be drawn between regimes, sometimes being used as a proxy measure of political development.

Allen Hicken and Erik Martinez Kuhonta take on party and party system institutionalization in an ambitious and rich collection of 12 country case studies and two theoretical chapters. With an analytical lens focused on Asia, the editors begin by challenging the abovementioned presumed link between democracy and the institutionalization of political parties and/or party systems (pp. 4, 17). They define institutionalized parties as "coherent, adaptable, and complex institutions" that channel citizen demands and hold government accountable (p. 3), and they consider nondemocratic regimes as "particularly important in shaping party system institutionalization" (p. 4). It is because it "provides a sharp contrast" that they see Asia as a useful testing ground for assumptions about institutionalization (p. 4).

The Asian cases presented in the collection suggest several conclusions to the editors. First, that more elections do not necessarily mean enhanced institutionalization (pp. 11–12). Second, they consider the cases in the collection do not suggest any "straightforward general relationship of macro political institutions . . . with institutionalization" (p. 12). Third, they conclude that the assumed relationship between fractionalization and party and political volatility is much more mixed for the Asian cases (pp. 12–13). Fourth, they found that parties that institutionalized earlier tend to have greater longevity and higher institutionalization than parties that were formed later. While this might seem like a tautology, the institutionalist claim is that "path dependence" is critical (p. 13). Fifth, the Asian cases tend to suggest that institutionalization has been greatest where authoritarian "legacies" are strongest (p. 14). This leads to the "somewhat . . . troubling conclusion" that authoritarian antecedents are important (pp. 15–16). These points suggest a need for a reconsideration of party and party system institutionalization to account for the findings on authoritarianism and party system institutionalization (p. 17). These conclusions are taken up in the final, reflective chapter 14, by Scott Mainwaring.

Each of the country cases is crafted by area and country specialists. This might seem logical, and yet it is of some significance when considering the nature of political science research in recent years. Hicken and Kuhonta were both involved in the production of *Southeast Asia in Political Science: Theory, Region, and Qualitative Analysis* (Kuhonta *et al.* 2008), which made a case for area expertise in a discipline that was increasingly dominated by big, comparative, statistics-driven studies. In many ways, this book is meant to demonstrate the insights and learning that are achieved when country specialists bring their in-depth knowledge to bear on a "big" political science question, in this case, party system institutionalization. The overall result is a set of thoughtful and insightful studies influenced by historical institutionalist perspectives that, as noted above, suggest conclusions that might not have been seen if each of the cases had been quantified and manipulated in a large multi-country study.

More than this, each chapter also reflects on shortcomings in the theoretical literature on and conceptualization of party and party system institutionalization. Indeed, in the first country case, on Malaysia, Meredith Weiss points out that the country's political parties bear all the hallmarks of institutionalization, including considerable competition between parties (p. 25). Yet knowing this tells us remarkably little about the forces that shape Malaysian politics. It is remarkable that, for several decades, competitive parties have persisted, yet post-colonial Malaysia has seen no opposition party win an election. The constraints placed on opposition lead Weiss to a call for the deinstitutionalization of parties, seeing institutionalization as an obstacle for democratic development (pp. 26, 45).

Likewise, when Netina Tan looks at Singapore in chapter 3, she sees nothing but People's Action Party (PAP) domination. As a result, her focus is on internal structures of the party and its leadership succession. So hegemonic is the PAP that its "institutionalization" squeezes out other parties to the extent that they become irrelevant to the analysis of party institutionalization. Opposition parties have been unable to institutionalize but this observation is trite without recognizing that their lack of institutionalization and processes of deinstitutionalization have been PAP strategy. The PAP's longevity also allows it to monopolize the state apparatus and manage the law (p. 55).

In limiting dissent and constraining and controlling competition, the PAP has similarities with the communist parties of Vietnam (chapter 6 by Tuong Vu) and China (chapter 7 by Yongnian Zheng). While Vietnam and China are single-party dictatorships, in terms of organizational structure, recruitment, repression, and party institutionalization, the commonalities with the PAP are strong, prompting both Vu and Tan to draw on theoretical concerns first developed by Samuel Huntington. Zheng might easily have drawn on Huntington as well, but prefers to focus on claims that the party has "hegemonized" and institutionalized while managing to accommodate elements of "rising civil society" (pp. 183–185) and still holding onto power (p. 166). These processes, Zheng suggests, make China an evolving political system that is different from the West (p. 185), but

shows "strong parallels" with other Asian cases with dominant parties, mentioning Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Taiwan (p. 168). On Vietnam, Vu considers this variety of single-party accommodation as a struggle to maintain party dominance while also deinstitutionalizing and liberalizing (pp. 142, 158).

Zheng mentions Taiwan as a comparator for China, perhaps thinking of the period of Nationalist/Kuomintang dictatorship. Yet Taiwan is different in that it has achieved a competitive two-party system. In chapter 5, Tun-jen Cheng and Yung-min Hsu explain this process while also observing that this results in challenges, warning that the "highly institutionalized party system seems to have reinforced political polarization . . ." (p. 109). Other examples of recent democratization are discussed in the book. In chapter 11, Joseph Wong hails South Korea as an economic and political success story while noting that there have been and remain challenges for democratization. Not least, the party system is said to remain "uninstitutionalized" (p. 261) and with voters exhibiting little loyalty to parties. Indonesia (chapter 10, by Paige Johnson Tan) is usually considered to be one of the electoral democratization success stories despite a lack of institutionalization (p. 236). The Philippines (chapter 13, by Hicken), has a long history of parties and elections, yet is considered "under-institutionalized," and subject to elite domination, poor governance, and public disillusionment. Taiwan, South Korea, and Indonesia might have problems, yet each has had some democratic successes. Less successful in these terms is Cambodia, discussed by Sorpong Peou (chapter 9), who says that "democratic institutionalization . . . has now given way to authoritarian institutionalization" (p. 232).

The two countries usually identified as resilient and long-standing democracies are Japan and India. Writing on Japan, Kenneth Mori McElwain (chapter 4) emphasizes changes over the long history of political parties in the country. He suggests that party program differences are becoming more significant for voters, meaning that personalism is being reduced. Despite this, the conservative Liberal Democratic Party has held power for all but two relatively brief periods since 1955, suggesting that it has successfully adapted to the changes over the post-War period. Chapter 8 on India by Csaba Nikolenyi begins by engaging in a little debate with the editors. Nikolenyi argues that authoritarianism in India resulted in deinstitutionalization for the leading party; voters are losing confidence in parties; and that India's voting system and anti-defection rules has seen decreased electoral volatility despite an increased number of parties.

The perennial failure in this set of countries—in terms of party and party system institutionalization and democratization—is Thailand, as discussed by Kuhonta (chapter 12). In May 2014, Thailand reverted to a military dictatorship for the second time since 2005. Thailand's 12th successful coup saw it developing its 20th constitution since 1932. In this context, it is hardly surprising that Kuhonta refers to Thailand's political parties as "feckless." Oddly, military intervention is only considered one of five possible explanations for low institutionalization, with Kuhonta favoring an explanation that sees parties as failing to entrench social cleavages in the party system

(pp. 281–282). He locates the "critical junctures" that have allowed the control of parties by elites. Examining the 1930s and immediate post-World War II periods, Kuhonta explains that parties have been dominated by "personalism, factionalism, and feckless organizations" (p. 283).

With such a divergence of experience across the Asian cases, Mainwaring's concluding chapter should be a welcome addition to the collection. However, his conclusion that the main differences in the cases are between competitive, hegemonic, and party-state systems (p. 328) left this reader underwhelmed. While he reasserts the significance of studying party institutionalization, this reader was struck by some of Hicken's words at the end of his chapter on the Philippines: "Why should we care about the level of institutionalization? We can observe differences in the level of institutionalization from country to country, but does it really matter for things we ultimately care about?"

Hicken's answer is that it does matter, for democratic consolidation and good governance (p. 324). After reading this collection, however, I am not so easily convinced. Institutionalists study institutions with such intensity that they sometimes risk losing sight of the societies that give rise to the institutions they scrutinize. This risks missing the ways in which institutions are structured and their relationships with each other. While this is not a criticism of all of the country cases in this collection, it is true that there are too few references to institutions as sites of political struggles. The power of oligarchs and elites are mentioned in several papers and some authors do consider social cleavages, historical trajectories, and critical junctures. Yet the notion that institutions are sites of intense struggle and are shaped by conflicts over social, political, and economic power is curiously lost in discussions of institutionalization.

That basic criticism aside, the country studies of political parties in the Asian region will be useful for readers, especially as there is a theoretical coherence to the chapters, unusual in an edited collection. This adds weight to the idea that country expertise is invaluable when dealing with socially-embedded institutions. The theoretical chapters are likely to be of great interest to party institutionalization aficionados while adding Asian cases to a theoretical literature dominated by Europe and Latin America is as necessary as it is welcome.

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The Lost Territories: Thailand's History of National Humiliation

Shane Strate

Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015, xii+253p.

The notion of the winners being the ones who write history does not always ring true in the case of Thailand. In Thai historiography, loss and humiliation have also found their way into service as a predominant ideological foundation backing up various state strategies, from the preservation of certain political regimes, the creation of faces of the enemy, to the need to construct the nation's identity. *The Lost Territories: Thailand's History of National Humiliation* by Shane Strate discusses the pertinent topic of how national humiliation has been politically exploited, and thus became politically useful, in supporting ethnic chauvinism and military expansion, and in the modern day, ironically, the glorification of Thai monarchs, even when it distastefully reveals the vulnerabilities of the Thai state.

In August 2015, the military government of General Prayuth Chan-ocha completed its mission to resurrect the glorious days of Siam's past kings. The "Rajapakdi Park" (Rajapakdi means "loyalty to the monarchy") houses giant statues of seven Siamese kings from all four dynasties—Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, Thonburi, and Rattanakosin. This is a project eerily similar to that seen in the Myanmar capital of Naypyidaw, which showcases the three great kings of Burma—Anawratha, Bayinnaung, and Alaungpaya—supposedly serving to legitimize the then military government of General Than Shwe. Undoubtedly, the Rajapakdi Park is designed primarily for a similar purpose: injecting a sense of royal loyalty at the time when Thailand is once again in the custody of a military regime.

Refreshing the magnificent past of Siamese kings is not merely about celebrating Siam, or Thailand, as a great nation with uninterrupted independence. As emphasized in Strate's book, "National Humiliation discourse" has re-emerged alongside the well-known "Royal-Nationalist ideology" as a dogmatic tool to sponsor a form of anti-Western imperialism. Whereas the Royal-Nationalist ideology stresses the widely known argument of Thailand being the only nation in Southeast Asia not to be colonized by Western powers, the National Humiliation discourse unveils the dark side of Thai relations with the West, through unfair treaties, extraterritoriality, trade imbalances, and territorial loss. The West was assigned as the "evil other" harboring ill intention to disparage the Siamese national pride. But as history tells it, Siam, either under the absolute monarchy or military rule, has continued to overcome obstacles and threats posed by the evil other. Strate calls it a tragic heroism characterized by suffering and foreign oppression (p. 43).

Strate elaborates precisely on how the National Humiliation discourse has been discursively used to achieve specific agendas of the Siamese state. There were benefits in depicting Siam as a vulnerable state surrounded by big and small enemies in the region. The book focuses mainly on two periods: Siam under the absolute monarchy during the peak of colonialism and Thailand under

the military regime at the turn of the Second World War, including its aftermath. Through these different periods, Siam, while selectively adopting some Western elements, such as its modernity and concept of sovereignty, openly detested its imperialist bullying that paved the way for Siamese heroes to emerge. In other words, national tragedies gave birth to national heroes. But these same national tragedies also allowed such heroes to hold on tightly to their rule, perhaps no less brutal than the bullying West.

Whichever themes one choose to examine—Royal-Nationalist or National Humiliation discourses—they are used to primarily defend the political interests of the Thai elites. For example, following the Thai invasion of French Indochina in 1941, as Strate explains, the Thai aggression was not the result of Japanese prodding, but it was "born out of the military regime's (of Phibul Songkhram) search for political legitimacy" (p. 41). In the process, successive regimes exerted different tactics in highlighting the plights of the nation, not just to legitimize anti-Western policy, but also to arouse public sentiment against Western colonialists. Strate investigates in great detail each of these tactics, from Siam's unequal treaties with the West (among them the Bowring Treaty of 1855), the extraterritorial rights enjoyed by Westerners in Siam (1883–1907), and the loss of supposed Siamese territories, particularly to the French. The author locates the heart of the matter in the Pak Nam incident in 1893 which saw the French fleets attempt to block the Chao Phraya River should Siam not renounce its claim to the left bank of the Mekong. But as Strate argues, the Franco-Siamese crisis was not just reflecting the reality that came out of the power politics at the time; rather, it served as a type of *chosen trauma*—a historical grievance that is the inheritance of every Thai person (p. 11).

For the Thai public, such unequal treaties, and eventually the loss of the supposed Thai territories to Western powers, were unbearably humiliating. They became unforgettable traumatic memories and deep scars within the nation. But Strate also contests such a one-sided view by proposing a reinterpretation of both the unequal treaties with the West and the loss of Thai territories. For example, as argued by Strate, the Bowring Treaty enhanced King Mongkut's position and created a new basis of political legitimacy. "It was proof that the monarchy could preserve Siamese independence by negotiating with Western powers while adapting their technology and practices to local culture" (p. 28). And surely, the loss of the supposed Thai territories also had its usefulness. Strate quotes Thongchai Winichakul who asserts that the loss of territories invented a geo-body of Siam that never existed and projected it into the past (p. 46). In other words, the loss brought about a physical gain for the nation in the past.

The portrayal of Siam's passivity, in turn, acted to justify its aggressive policies, as a sort of revenge against the evil West, through the harassment of Catholics in Thailand in the 1940s, and the Thai-endorsed Pan-Asianism during the Second World War with its alignment with Japan. The Catholics were labeled the "fifth column" and subject to all manner of persecution (p. 64). They were painted as the vestiges of French colonialism, the root cause of Siam's humiliation. Mean-

while, in entering into an alliance with Japan, Siam expected to make use of that alliance to strengthen its authoritarianism at home by identifying itself as part of a greater Asia, led by Japan, in defying the international order set by the Europeans centuries earlier. In so doing, Thailand constructed its new identity based on regionalism. Pan-Asianism with Japan permitted the Thai government to express its sense of nationhood at a regional level. Pan-Asianism was also built principally on Thailand's National Humiliation discourse. But it was another kind of discourse, which stressed specifically how to move away from such humiliation and stand up against the old order. It became a Thai way of introducing a new hierarchical system that would rank Asia as sophisticated (if not more so) compared with the West (p. 111).

Throughout the Cold War period, the binary Royal-Nationalist and National Humiliation narratives continued to influence Thailand's foreign policy, which was driven mainly by domestic political purposes. In this era, one conflict came to redefine the issue of National Humiliation: the Preah Vihear temple. For many decades, the conflict over the ownership of the Preah Vihear (known in Thai as Prasat Phra Wihan), has prevented an improvement in Thai-Cambodian ties. In 1962, the two countries took their conflict to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which in the end ruled in favor of Cambodia. Since then, the loss of Preah Vihear has been a determinant factor in the aggressive Thai policy towards Cambodia, justified by a repeated National Humiliation narrative. Thailand supposedly lost the temple to the French, regained it with Japan's help, and now lost it again to a weaker neighbor, Cambodia. The lost territory discourse was a part of Thai nationalism shaped by the sacredness and vulnerability of territorial integrity, one that is permanently threatened by both internal and external enemies. In 2008, the crisis re-erupted after Thailand offered to support Cambodia's bid to have the temple listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site. The royalist People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) spotted an opportunity to exploit the issue to undermine the Samak Sundaravej government, which was backed by former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. The PAD accused the Samak government of betraying the motherland in trading Thai support for the personal benefit of Thaksin in Cambodia. Particularly, the PAD alleged that the government was willing to sacrifice both the temple and the 4.6 square kilometers area in the vicinity of the temple. Suddenly, the lost territory discourse was brought back into play. And as a consequence, not only was the Thai government under fierce attack, but Thailand decided to declare war with Cambodia, which lasted until the year 2011.

I found this book intellectually stimulating. It is easy to read, although it engages in a number of complicated narratives, which require a solid understanding of Thailand's historical past. My main criticism however, is twofold. First, the author could have brought out more clearly the urge of the Thai state, in exploiting the Royal-Nationalist narrative and National Humiliation ideology, to aid its process of national identity-making. It is true that at the crux of the National Humiliation ideology was the desperate attempt of Thai elites to preserve its political interests based on national weaknesses and vulnerabilities. But this was the same process through which the Thai elites

wanted to identify themselves differently from the West. The Siamese lamb versus the French wolf is another way of creating "We versus Them," even when this may serve the same agenda of defending the elites' power position. Second, the book does not address the issue of Siam being a bellicose victor in wars with its neighbors. The Thai historical textbook traditionally omits this aspect of Siam bullying nearby kingdoms, such as in the sacking of Angkor in 1431—an event that may help boost the Royal-Nationalist narrative but inevitably casts Siam as a devilish villain. Although Strate's book deals mainly with Siam's ties with the West, Siam's complex relationship with neighboring kingdoms, particularly from the perspective of it being an aggressor, may shed light on how the National Humiliation discourse can become disturbingly hollow, discursive, and self-serving.

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Red Stamps and Gold Stars: Fieldwork Dilemmas in Upland Socialist Asia

SARAH TURNER, ed.
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One of the most striking changes observed while working in the uplands of Laos over the past decade is the rapid growth in the number of tourists, as ecotourism and minority cultural experiences become increasingly popular. The opening of these areas to tourism seems to indicate that a significant barrier has been removed in the socialist countries of mainland Southeast Asia. Recognition of the cash income that can be derived from tourism has certainly made the region's landscapes and people more accessible to those who are interested. With political stability and economic opening, researchers' access to these regions has also become easier over the decades. However, as *Red Stamps and Gold Stars: Fieldwork Dilemmas in Upland Socialist Asia* illustrates, the challenges to conducting ethnographic research in this region remain formidable.

This volume's most valuable contribution is the way it unfolds and then fills in the framework of "dilemma." The chapters are a rich selection of the many difficulties that ethnography faces in this region, although the authors come at their studies from primarily anthropology and geography. In addition to the well-known problems associated with spending extended time in places that are difficult to travel to and lack many of the basics that are taken for granted in researchers' home countries, at the center of these personal stories is the political minefield that one must navigate in order to get approval for, carry out, and maintain relationships within, field-based research within the socialist administrative structures of Vietnam, China, and Laos. Here, the uplands means minorities, and this immediately puts us in a politically sensitive landscape of extreme complexity.

Not only is it difficult for researchers to get there and do their work, but also it is risky and dangerous for local people, including both villagers and government officials, to participate in the telling of local stories and writing of ethnography.

Relationships with government officials come out in all stories. In different ways, we learn how "government" quickly loses its salience when we start to approach the field, as the Communist Party and the line ministries often tell us very different things. These two hands of "the government" frequently do not know what each other is doing, perhaps pointing to an inherent tension between the red stamp and the gold star. Indeed, the fact that there is never one monolithic government cannot be emphasized enough in these countries.

Neither is the boundary between government and citizen obvious or reliable. Arriving in the village, our informants often become our friends, and may also be official representatives of some part of officialdom. The way we perceive our roles and responsibilities, across the personal and professional divide, is a source of ongoing stress. The chapters of this book offer new insights on the old question of how one embeds oneself in a community, striving to observe from as close a vantage point as possible, yet struggles to maintain some sort of objectivity in those observations.

The 15 chapters of fieldwork dilemma are organized into three sections, which provide an introduction to the book's approach, an engaging body of case study reflections, and final discussion of the positionality project in this specific region. In Part 1 "Heading to the Field," Sarah Turner sets the stage with "Dilemmas and Detours: Fieldwork with Ethnic Minorities in Upland Southwest China, Vietnam, and Laos," introducing us to tradition of reflexive discussion of the position of the field researcher that has grown and deepened since the 1980s. Jean Michaud then provides a review of minority policies in the three countries in "Comrades of Minority Policy in China, Vietnam, and Laos," taking us through the pre-Socialist, core-Socialist, and reform eras. These chapters are effective in setting the stage for the coming chapters.

Part 2, "Red Stamps and Gold Stars," consisting of 10 chapters, is a fascinating collage highlighting the diverse range of perspectives that a researcher's positionality may project. Stéphane Gros reflects on learning from mistakes in "Blunders in the Field: An Ethnographic Situation among the Drung People in Southwest China," having inadvertently "produced an event" in the research community, underscoring how local power dynamics are situated in history, units of social organization, and pre-existing internal tensions. This "blunder" also shows how the researcher can become a resource for local people within these social dynamics. Magnus Fiskesjö writes about decisions the researcher makes in "Gifts and Debts: The Morality of Fieldwork in the Wa Lands on the China-Burma Frontier" in engaging with local social institutions, and the implications that must be dealt with as a result. In addition to his discussion of joining drinking bouts as "participant intoxification," he raises other seemingly mundane but highly enlightening experiences, such as how local people "bore" intrusive officials out of the community by providing short, uninformative

answers to questions, not offering welcome meals and other subtle means avoidance.

What we bring to the field, for example our young children, has direct impacts on how we are perceived by local people. Candice Cornet explores how her role of mother was highly relevant for establishing relationships with the women of the village in "The Fun and Games of Taking Children to the Field in Guizhou, China." We also bring the baggage of recent history. Jennifer Sowerwine explains her American experience with national identity politics while doing ethnography in Vietnam in "Socialist Rules and Postwar Politics: Reflections on Nationality and Fieldwork among the Yao in Northern Vietnam." Interestingly, gaining competence in a minority language may raise red flags with government authorities. Learning languages inevitably means that friendships are deepened, and the field becomes an emotional place, where the obligations of intimacy push against politically constrained space. Christine Bonnin follows these relationships in "Doing Fieldwork and Making Friends in Upland Northern Vietnam: Entanglements of the Professional, Personal, and Political" through the questions of how engaging in research should or should not aim for political and ideological change.

Frustrating as the permissions required for fieldwork can be, the process of obtaining them can give us valuable insights on how the state works, and in this case how the state sees minorities within the national framework. As Pierre Petit recounts in "The Backstage of Ethnography as Ethnography of the State: Coping with Officials in the Lao People's Democratic Republic," researchers establish relationships with officials as they pursue the necessary paperwork, and this intimacy shines important light on the more subtle and practical matters of making the system work. Indeed, the researcher's experience with the state is not defined by ideology alone. Moreover, it is often unpredictable. Karen McAllister's chapter "Marginality in the Margins: Serendipity, Gatekeepers, and Gendered Positionalities in Fieldwork among the Khmu in Northern Laos" tells how state gate-keepers may in fact open doors, just as research assistants may be making official reports on the research.

Working in the uplands means dealing in politically sensitive social issues, for example shifting cultivation. As we are aware of the importance of socio-economic and political contexts for such issues, we often gravitate to a comparative perspective. Janet C. Sturgeon in "Field Research on the Margins of China and Thailand," reflects on the complexities and dramas of a full-blown, transnational comparative study. The researcher may find herself between opposing political views within the community she is researching, as well. Isabelle Henrion-Dourcy in "Easier in Exile? Comparative Observations on Doing Research among Tibetans in Lhasa and Dharamsala" considers approaches to official and unofficial research, as she immersed herself in the seemingly "safe" topic of Tibetan folklore. At the end of this section, in "The Silenced Research Assistant Speaks Her Mind," Sarah Turner helps give voice to the research assistant, who is of course also steeped in a complex web of relationships and power dynamics, and views the researcher's participant observation through a very different lens.

The final section, "Post-Fieldwork," is comprised of three chapters, each engaging in markedly differing narratives to put the foregoing chapters in a broader timeframe. The researcher will leave the field, but the informants, friends, and officials that work with the researcher carry on life in "the field." Oscar Salemink in "Between Engagement and Abuse: Reflections on the 'Field' of Anthropology and the Power of Ethnography" provides insights on how research findings may be used for unintended purposes, by unintended audiences, with dangerous implications for collaborators. His chapter describes his strategy of anonymization and the further step of engagement with policy makers. Managed skillfully, the relationships formed in the field may endure, even forming the basis for long-term cooperation. Stevan Harrell and Li Xingxing's contribution in "Textual Desert—Emotional Oasis: An Unconventional Confessional Dialogue on Field Experience" is a conversation, taking the form of texts written separately by the authors in Chinese, in which they discuss how their decade-plus of work has been hindered by a blockage preventing the publication of their findings. Exploring their doubts about their authority over the material and their emotional connections to the researcher village, they place their hopes in a "re-humanized framework" to enable them eventually to publish their work. Finally, Sarah Turner in "Red Stamps and Gold Stars on the Margins" recounts the book's contribution to understanding minorities and everyday politics, state surveillance and trust, and the special ethical dilemmas that researchers face when they work with ethnic minorities in authoritarian, socialist countries.

By the end of the book, the intent of the ethnographer's reflections is clear. The reader is left with much food for further thought, especially if he or she is directly involved in this type of field-based research. Yet, one is left with the sense that the researchers are primarily talking to each other, using the shared terminology, frameworks, and analytical methods that they use when writing their own ethnographies. In fact, the narratives seem strangely comfortable, even as they discuss the awkward details of creating, managing, and maintaining relationships in the field. But how familiar is this project to people from other disciplines who may spend time in the field and interact with people in villages, towns, cities, and government offices, perhaps in different modes of operation and collaboration? Another question remaining after reading this book is how to continue to draw out the critical voices of local collaborators—informants, guides, translators, gate-keepers, officials, and maybe even the people who simply observe the ethnographer's work from a nearby porch. The challenge for this discussion will be to ensure that it is always firmly situated outside of the anthropologist's comfort zone.

This book brings honest, critical, and nuanced perspectives to the project of reflexive thinking on the processes and implications of doing ethnography. Because the state is so ubiquitous in Vietnam, China, and Laos, this book provides multiple windows on how complex, subtle, yet powerful that state presence is. The authors' narratives of their relationships with officials, informants, assistants, community leaders, with whom they have often developed intimate and emotional ties, capture the special complexities of their positionality. These stories will be extremely helpful for

young researchers trying to prepare for the unpreparable, as well as experienced fieldworkers who face similar administrative, emotional, and ethical dilemmas in their ethnographic lives.

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