

to lead and going with company. Nowhere is this more challenging than in America's efforts at coalition-building in the war against global terrorism following the 11 September terrorist attacks on the United States — the significance of which, for East Asian security, was just beginning to sink in at the time the book went to press. There are brief references to the impact on and implications for U.S. security policy towards the region. Indeed, the index contains only three entries under "war on terrorism". Today, one would expect the spectre of global terrorism to hang heavily over the regional security discourse. More importantly, the current war on terrorism also raises serious questions over the heavy American emphasis on military response as well as Washington's management of its relations with the moderate Islamic constituencies, particularly in Southeast Asia. This is not to suggest, however, that another "defining moment" in history has overtaken the book, although the author himself recognizes the hazard of writing about foreign and security policy in East Asia. As he says in the Preface, "changes come with such frequency and, often, unpredictability that one week's writing is next week's garbage" (p. ix). The main underlying injunction of the book, to think "comprehensively" about the human dimensions of security, is as relevant as ever in the war on terrorism. Above all, the collaborative effort at meeting this new threat (as well as responding to the previous challenge of the East Asian economic and financial crises) also puts into perspective the so-called softer "Asian way" to managing security. The question for security planners who would prefer a more robust co-operative response must be: if the Asian way is necessary, is it quite enough?

CHIN KIN WAH

*Institute of Southeast Asian Studies  
Singapore*

***The Politics of Multiculturalism: Pluralism and Citizenship in Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia.* Edited by Robert W. Hefner. Honolulu, Hawaii, USA: University of Hawaii Press, 2002. 319pp.**

Southeast Asia has long been noted for its ethnic and religious pluralism. While studies since the colonial era have commonly focused on state policies to build coherent, stable nations out of this diversity, the contributors to this volume consider pluralism from the perspective of non-state or sub-state actors. In considering how actors from four social

fields — religious organizations, business and labour, locally-based non-governmental organizations (including the arts community), and political organizations — contribute to political culture in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore, this volume makes a valuable contribution to the literature on the changing shape and significance of pluralism in state and society.

The volume comes out of a Ford Foundation-sponsored research and training project from 1998 to 2000. The duration and iterative approach of the project is reflected in how polished the individual chapters are, even if all do not address the central themes of the volume equally well. The approach is qualitative and many of the chapters rely upon an impressive array of interviews and other data. Hefner presents an introductory chapter laying out the premise and background for the volume, followed by five chapters on Malaysia, two on Singapore, and four on Indonesia, arranged more or less thematically. The uneven attention to the three countries and somewhat obscure ordering of chapters, as well as a few misstated names and typographical errors, are minor quibbles in an otherwise quite coherent volume.

Hefner frames the project as growing out of the enduring pessimism on whether democracy is possible in plural societies. He asserts a need to explore the heterogeneity of civil society and consider whether and how associations are shifting away from old lines of cleavage and towards universal citizenship. Hefner offers a review of relevant pre-colonial characteristics and colonial developments (crucial to crystallizing a system of ethno-religious segregation), then considers the impact of post-colonial policies to develop nations and markets on the colonial pluralist legacy. As Hefner describes, the differing nation-building challenges and ethno-religious balances of the three countries in question have resulted in the emergence of different core cleavages and state attempts to manage or mitigate diversity. It also argues that civil society not only provides space for self-organization and voluntarism, but also contributes to changes in political culture, including ideas and practices of citizenship, group, and individual rights, and participation in the public sphere.

On Malaysia, Abdul Rahman Embong presents the “big picture”, and the other authors home-in on particular sectors. Abdul Rahman’s main point — which he and others have made before — is that the growth of a new middle class among both Chinese and Malays since the introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1971 has fostered greater cross-ethnic interaction and accommodation amidst both material and ideational changes. Importantly, Abdul Rahman discusses not just market-based interactions and their influence on ideas and behaviour, but also such factors as the increasingly inclusive language used by

*dakwah* groups, Islamic parties, and its effect on non-Muslims' perceptions of them, as well as the countervailing impact of competition among élites of different ethnic groups. Abdul Rahman also makes an effort to extend his analysis beyond the usual discussion of peninsular Malays and Chinese, giving a truncated but useful overview of where Siamese and *orang asli* fit into Malaysia's shifting pluralist framework.

The chapter by Shamsul A.B. picks up on some of Abdul Rahman's points, detailing a shift away from the colonial legacy of racial and religious categories and towards "interest-based" concerns, including a focus on social justice and inter-civilizational dialogue, and the increased pluralization of the public sphere. The new politics remained fragmented by cause and along the lines of old ethnic and class cleavages throughout 1997. Then, with the sacking of Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim and the launch of the *Reformasi* movement, these fragments were united and the new politics moved towards the centre and became entrenched — although the more recent dissolution of the opposition coalition and the rise in the ruling National Front's fortunes suggest that Shamsul may have been overly optimistic in making his case.

The chapters by Sumit Mandal, Francis Loh Kok Wah, and Zainah Anwar fill in the details. Mandal investigates the role of the arts community in producing and representing political culture, comparing across generations and subgroups to see how perspectives vary with history, personal experiences, and memory. He finds that the older, prewar generation is generally ethnicist or pragmatic in orientation; the *Merdeka* generation (born around the time of Malaysia's independence in 1957) is inclined to work together co-operatively; and the NEP (New Economic Policy) generation (born between 1969 and 1975) is critical of ethnicism, seeing possibilities in pluralism. Members of the arts community present alternative views of Malaysian society and history, as through theatre and literature, and seek to remake political culture by challenging the *status quo*.

Loh examines how changes in political culture are reflected in and reinforced by the appeals and actions of elected representatives, or *wakil rakyat*. He scrutinizes a predominantly Chinese parliamentary constituency in Penang and the three state seats it encompasses. All four representatives are from parties in the ruling Barisan Nasional (National Front) coalition. Loh concludes that a decline in ethnicism does not necessarily entail its replacement by democratic discourse. Rather, it is developmentalism that has taken hold among both Malays and, more recently, Chinese. The consolidation of a political culture of developmentalism, in which the emphasis on receiving amenities and services from *wakil rakyat* rather than on the social and political problems of the people, or broadening participation in decision-making,

has actually posed limits to the counter-discourse of democracy, despite cultural liberalization in the 1990s.

Zainah also explores a very specific niche in her study, but makes less of a clear link between developments in this one sector and the polity at large. Zainah focuses on the case of Sisters in Islam, a small but vocal group that has challenged the injustices against women, brought about by the rise of a conservative strand of Islam. The group seeks to counter a perceived trend towards inequality and undemocratic change. The chapter that follows Zainah's, by Siti Ruhaini Dzuhayatin, completes the argument. Siti Ruhaini examines the place of women in modern Indonesian political culture. She supplements her empirical argument with a useful review of how gender can be situated within a discourse on pluralism: women's activism (such as that of Sisters in Islam) contests the hegemonic ideology, power, and influence of men in a patriarchal order, forcing a rethinking of categories presumed essential, and acknowledging women's rights and status as citizens. All the same, despite the chance for a revision of notions of gender presented by the *Reformasi* movement, Siti Ruhaini finds that even relatively well-educated women are generally reluctant to talk about or engage in politics.

The other chapters on Indonesia are also comparatively narrow in focus, though as a whole they cover much ground and present unusual and worthwhile angles on the questions at hand. Mohtar Mas'ood, S. Rizal Panggabean, and Muhammad Najib Azca examine the role of Yogyakarta's dynamic sultans, Hamengku Buwono IX and X, in fostering a more dynamic, tolerant, open political culture since the 1940s. They discuss discourses and practices of citizenship in Yogyakarta in four spheres — religion, civic organizations, politics, and business — to highlight how the discourse of civility of the 1970s and 1980s paved the way for mobilization around more pluralistic politics in the 1990s. An interesting question left hanging in their account, suggested by the contrast with the chapters by Rahman Embong and Shamsul A.B., is why business has not developed in such a pluralist direction as the other spheres have.

Vedi Hadiz considers the shifting cleavages in Indonesia's labour movement, and particularly, the remarkable absence of inter-religious hostility in the movement in the 1990s. (A comparable chapter on Malaysian workers might have been a useful contribution.) Hadiz suggests that the recent establishment of religious-oriented labour unions is partly due to state élites' strategies of selective mobilization, but that, in fact, labour has not gained significant access to state power and is not a strong or coherent enough force for any major party or group of élites to seek to co-opt more systematically. The chapter is particularly

relevant to the volume for its tracing of cleavages of class, religion, and ideology and how pluralism plays out in the labour movement and in different political climates. Hermawan Sulistiyo addresses some of the same issues in his discussion of ethno-religious divisions in the Indonesian armed forces. Military training by the Dutch, then Japanese, developed a corps of officers with a sense of common identity, despite their varying backgrounds. Later, factionalism and inter-élite rivalries, whether among the armed forces, communists, Muslim organizations, and Soekarno in the 1960s, or between “green” (Muslim) and “red-and-white” (nationalist) officers in the 1990s, revealed the dangers of ethno-religious sentiments in the armed forces, and sparked a series of policies to erode such loyalties. More recently, the most significant divide in the military has been between *pro-status quo* and reformist forces. All the same, internal policies such as the maintenance of meritocracy and external goals, such as upholding national unity, reflect the armed forces’ pluralist vision.

Finally, Singapore receives less space in the volume than the other countries, but the chapters by both Chua Beng Huat and Kwok Kian-Woon, and by Sharon Siddique, are excellent and especially well-tailored to the overriding concerns of the volume. Like Abdul Rahman on Malaysia, but more comprehensively, Chua and Kwok consider the broad sweep of Singapore society, studying an unusual but apt set of segments within the public sphere: the theatre community, voluntary welfare organizations, women’s organizations, and feminist voices, the Muslim and Tamil communities, Christian and Buddhist groups, Chinese-educated intellectuals, the gay voice, “the working committee” of young civil society activists, and the Roundtable (a political commentary group). What is particularly interesting about this set of segments is that Chua and Kwok consider pluralism from various dimensions, and take no set of cleavages for granted. Some of these sectors are defined by race or religion, others by gender, others by economic or cultural function. They find that Singaporean society is less blindly consumerist and politically acquiescent than often presumed, with the desire for individuality and availability of resources to achieve it increasingly evident since the late 1980s. The authors document a panoply of voices and processes of social differentiation behind the façade of People’s Action Party (PAP) hegemony. Ultimately, however, they conclude that the prospects for democratization remain “rather bleak”, at least in the medium term, despite increasing tolerance for diversity in individuals’ choices at the level of the political culture of everyday life.

In evaluating the development of the Association of Muslim Professionals (AMP), Siddique further elucidates why political

liberalization seems unlikely in Singapore. She describes a model of “corporate pluralism” (concordant with, for instance, the stance of the voluntary welfare organizations that Chua and Kwok describe) in which Singapore Inc. is geared as a whole towards maximum efficiency and competitiveness, as reflected in the common worldview of the state and its “subsidiary”, the AMP. As long as the majority of Singaporeans find the present “management” to be in their economic best interests, they will continue to support it. However, that management must continually reinvent itself and modify its strategies to sustain popular support. In short, pluralism is a positive force for requiring Singapore to be dynamic and inclusive.

Overall, these contributions suggest that the nature, political impact, and social significance of pluralism has been changing in all three countries. Most notably, the salience of particular lines of cleavage has shifted, with ethnicity, religion, gender, generation, and other categories jostling for influence or integration. This volume makes a noteworthy attempt to describe and spark further reflection on the shape and practice of multiculturalism in contemporary Southeast Asia, without losing sight of the historical roots of the present order.

MEREDITH L. WEISS  
*Department of International Studies*  
*DePaul University*  
*Chicago, Illinois, USA*

***Fear and Sanctuary: Burmese Refugees in Thailand.* By Hazel J. Lang.** Ithaca, New York, USA: Southeast Asia Program Publications, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 2002. 240 pp.

Despite a 1995 ceasefire agreement between Burma’s SLORC (State Law and Order Restoration Council) and the New Mon State Party (one of several ethnic separatist groups), the deep-seated problems that have caused massive civilian displacement still linger, argues Hazel J. Lang in *Fear and Sanctuary: Burmese Refugees in Thailand*. In a broad, interdisciplinary study, Lang addresses the historical, political, and economic circumstances surrounding the predicament of Burmese refugees along and within the Thai border. Specifically, the work explores the nature and causes of refugee displacement in Burma while investigating the ways in which these communities have adjusted to and been affected by the shifting geopolitical circumstances of the