

A code of openings and boundaries makes possible both internal relationships of fertility and external relationships with states and neighbours.

The combination of rich detail and analytical coherence in this book bears testimony to the successful rapprochement of local and academic models. The volume is thoroughly and coherently infused by its theoretical point of view: a pragmatic, dynamic and culturally sensitive structuralism that goes back to Edmund Leach and Stanley Tambiah, and is enhanced by a current-day awareness of history and the embeddedness of communities in regional contexts. This is the best ethnographic account of one of the most conspicuous and well-known upland groups in Southeast Asia. It is an excellent contribution to the study of space, ritual and cosmology in this region and beyond.

#### REFERENCE

Scott, James C. *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.

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*INTRACO: Blazing a Trail Overseas for Singapore?* By Faizal bin Yahya. Singapore: World Scientific, 2015. xiii+164 pp.

This pioneering assessment of the failure of a leading Singaporean government-linked company (GLC) is a noteworthy achievement, as books assessing the fall of major state-owned enterprises in Southeast Asia are rare. This volume is also an interesting read because it addresses a compelling question: how could Singapore's first and principal trading company, INTRACO, fail in a country that adopted export-oriented industrialization to drive economic growth?

By providing an historical assessment of INTRACO's rise and fall, the author offers numerous crucial insights into how the ruling People's Action Party (PAP) cultivated and promoted GLCs. One core issue examined is that of the ownership and control of GLCs. While there were evident layers of interlocking ownership and control involving INTRACO, it was also tied to another GLC, the Development Bank of Singapore (DBS). Noting this tie, the book draws attention to the link that Singapore's government created between a financial concern and a trading enterprise as a means to nurture a major transnational company involved in the trading of key commodities. While DBS had a say in the appointment of INTRACO's senior management, the PAP evidently also had significant decision-making powers when such appointments were made.

The book's reading of INTRACO's growth reveals how the PAP adopted different models of development as the economy evolved. The government first operated as a strongly interventionist state, employing what has been classified as the developmental state model, before becoming increasingly neoliberal in orientation through the promotion of policies such as privatization. One crucial transition involved the development of an economy driven by GLCs into one in which small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) were actively nurtured and supported to drive economic growth. The government compelled GLCs to venture abroad, as this would help diminish the idea that these enterprises were "crowding out" SMEs at home. Privatization would emerge as a mechanism to help develop SMEs, even though this policy hindered the development of GLCs, which were by the early 1990s still leading corporate players in this economy.

This study offers other important contributions. For example, we learn how the PAP, specifically its founder Lee Kuan Yew, viewed Singapore's entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial capacity. When Lee, as prime minister, began his country's industrialization process, he did not actively involve Singapore's leading private enterprises because he saw their owners as mere traders, with few or no skills to foster technological upgrading. Neither did Lee believe that Singapore had

sufficient people with entrepreneurial skills who could be nurtured to drive industrialization, given the country's small population size. Interestingly, when INTRACO, led by senior bureaucrats, initially failed to take off, Lee turned to the prominent Indonesian-born businessman-cum-trader Goh Tjoei Kok to help this GLC establish itself as a regional trading enterprise. Goh would be scathing in his criticism of bureaucrats who were trying to function as entrepreneurs, referring to INTRACO's management as people who were "earning expatriate salary and doing small Chinese business" (p. 50).

INTRACO's ultimate failure can be attributed to one leading issue: it had to fulfil contradictory goals — that is register high profits while performing "national service". When undertaking national service, the pursuit of high profits was inevitably undermined. One national service that INTRACO undertook entailed breaking-up rice trading cartels and stockpiling the commodity. This was to guarantee that Singapore had a sufficient supply of rice as well as to ensure that the price of the product was not unduly raised by unscrupulous traders. After cornering the rice trading market, INTRACO would be subjected to serious criticism that it had undermined the development of domestic private enterprises. Another national service provided by GLCs entailed responding to foreign policies and the government's endeavour to create a transnational investment regime. For example, when Singapore established cordial ties with China, GLCs were required to invest in the mainland's economy. The venture of GLCs into China would prove detrimental to the interests of these companies, a point that the PAP would later publicly acknowledge.

The author notes another essential reason that cumulative learning within INTRACO did not occur. Senior management who played important roles in nurturing INTRACO were nominated to run as PAP candidates during general elections, and their replacements were seldom selected from the company's second echelon. This led to the exodus of INTRACO's management, who had cultivated experience as traders, to private trading enterprises in competition with the GLC. Meanwhile, some of INTRACO's new senior executives were hardly competent to lead a major trading enterprise.

One unfortunate drawback of this book is its conclusion; it lacks a thoughtful, multifaceted analysis of the lessons learnt from this historical review of INTRACO. Having broached the topic of state–business alliances, the author should have assessed more deeply different manifestations of GLCs, how they were employed differently at important points in Singapore’s history, how privatizing strategies were to remain compatible with historical patterns of state-driven ownership and whether the state’s decision to develop SMEs in order to nurture domestic entrepreneurial firms ultimately undermined the development of these government-owned enterprises.

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*Haunting Images: A Cultural Account of Selective Reproduction in Vietnam.* By Tine M. Gammeltoft. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014. 315 pp.

When Tine Gammeltoft conducted an ethnographic project on intrauterine devices in northern Vietnam during the early 1990s, ultrasound scanning was still reserved for special circumstances. Ten years later, she found that women at the Obstetrics and Gynaecology Hospital in Hanoi had an average of 6.6 ultrasounds during their pregnancies. Sonograms — the digital image created during an ultrasound examination — have become a source of joy and wonder for the people who produce and consume them, even as the possibility that they will detect abnormalities in foetal development elicits dread. Vigilant for signs of trouble, many pregnant women are unsettled by the spectre of malformed foetal bodies submerged beneath the actual images of the normally developing babies that are presented to them.

An ethnographically rich study of selective reproductive technologies that encourage or discourage the births of different types of individuals and the controversies that follow in their wake, *Haunting*