

Thailand and Myanmar today make his work a recommended reading for analysts, academics, activists, and investors who are seeking to understand the interests, institutions and individuals that influence the political economy in these countries.

Political analysts and investors will find Simpson's introduction chapter, his detailed and thoughtful discussion of the political landscape in Thailand and Myanmar in Chapter 3 (which provides the backdrop to environmental politics and activism in these countries), and the situation update provided in the additional Postscript chapter most relevant to their interests. Those who study environmental politics and governance will certainly find Chapter 2 an important point of reference. This is where the author presents his case for adding to or expanding on the Doyle and Doherty model (2006) of environmental governance, by seeking to fill the gap in geography and applicability for environmental politics of the South. As Simpson highlights, "illiberal governance and highly unequal resource ownership" (p. 32) mean that environmental movements are confronted with being branded as opposing development. However, environmental activism serves as the voice for marginalized communities, especially in the borderland areas, where transnational resource projects affect their lives and livelihood.

Simpson's impressive fieldwork is evident in his discussion of four such transnational projects (Chapters 4 through 6): the Yadana Gas Pipeline; the Thai-Malaysian Gas Pipeline; the Shwe Gas Pipeline; and the Salween Dams. Although the suspension of the Myitsone Dam has become a reference point as Myanmar's *cause celebre* of standing up to China, in a first-ever instance of environmental activism influencing policy decisions, it is useful for those watching Myanmar's political economy to cast an eye on the efforts of environmental activists regarding the Yadana, Shwe and Salween projects. The response to Myitsone did not happen out of the blue; and the suspended nature of its continued suspension today points to geopolitics as well as strategic political engagement of local communities. For example, Simpson's empirical experience of EarthRights International (Chapter 5) shows that international norms and principles—usually advocated by the North—can find some traction and expression in deeply local communities in the developing South.

However, challenges remain. Activists and local communities in Thailand and Myanmar today continue to find themselves mired in complex emerging situations influenced by geo-economics and domestic centrifugal forces. This well-structured and deeply researched work has laid important groundwork in exposing some of the transnational links that further complicate these evolving situations. Political elite in Thailand and Myanmar today seem to have both progressed and regressed in responses to activism in their countries; the two states are also hard-pressed for investment inflows to shore up flagging performance legitimacy. Simpson's incisive analysis illuminates how far back these problems go, and indicates how much farther the road ahead lies.

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DOI: 10.1355/ae36-2i

***The State and the Transnational Politics of Migrants: A Study of the Chins and the Acehnese in Malaysia*, by Sheila Murugasu.** London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. Pp. 228.

This book is a welcome addition to the literature on transnational migrant politics, refugee and migrant life in Malaysia and on two migrant communities—the Chin and the Acehnese. With the exception of a handful of studies, there have been few scholarly works on these two groups in the country.

The objectives of the book are to identify the ways in which these transnational migrants interact with the Malaysian state, how they engage in transnational politics and how these state-migrant interactions may be conceptualized. The author succeeds in fulfilling these goals and provides us with a nuanced study of how these two migrant groups have been able to carve out space to mobilize politically in the harsh and challenging environment that the Malaysian state has created for undocumented migrants. In addition, the comparative nature of the work sheds light on the ways in which these two groups differ in their transnational political activity and the way in which the Malaysian state treats them. At a broader level, this book helps us to better understand the transnational politics of migrants in non-OECD countries, adding subtlety to the ways in which migrant transnationalism is conceptualized. In these respects, the book goes a long way to plugging gaps in the current literature.

The book is roughly divided into two parts. The first, consisting of Chapters 2, 3 and 4, sets out the context in which the Chin and Acehnese live and mobilize in Malaysia. Chapter 2 provides an overview of migration policy in Malaysia, showing that a variety of factors—religious affinity, ethnicity, labour needs, state relations with neighbours and neoliberalism—have shaped the Malaysian state's policy on migrants. The Malaysian state has its own logic for dealing with immigration and deploys a fragmented strategy so as to maximize the flexibility of its workforce in the context of a global economy. This sets the context for the author to delve deeper into the micro-level interactions between the two groups of migrants and the state in the chapters in the second part of the book.

The nature of political transnationalism carried out by the Chin and the Acehnese in Malaysia is set out in Chapters 3 and 4. These chapters flesh out the way the two communities carry out political activities, providing some points of comparison between them in the context of domestic and external Malaysian concerns.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7, on the other hand, highlight the ways in which these two communities interact with the Malaysian state. Chapter 5 describes the nuances in the Malaysian government's handling of these communities' political activities, showing that these have changed in accordance with economic exigencies, and the relationship between the Indonesian and Burmese states. Malaysia's deliberately ambiguous position towards the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) has been shaped by various periods of tension with Indonesia. With regard to the Burmese state, Malaysia has used an "official/unofficial position" (p. 140) to advance foreign policy goals. Thus, the interests of migrant political actors intersect with those of the Malaysian state during different time periods. Consequently, the author points out that the conclusion that states are at odds with the political activity of transnational actors is too sweeping in nature.

The next chapter focuses on the everyday survival of these two communities, and argues that the Malaysian state is a disaggregated one with differing institutional agendas. Through a study of state agents and transnational actors' quotidian interactions, she asserts that the state officials' actions often conflict with official policies. These contradictions provide space for migrant actors to survive and mobilize politically in circumstances where the threat of arrest and deportation is pervasive. In addition, strategies such as negotiation, gift-giving, and mimicking the state help mitigate some of the state's depredations.

Following from this, Chapter 7 looks at the way that identities and political belonging shape the migrants' dynamic with the state, illustrating how state-sanctioned identities, migrant community cards and UNHCR cards help to create flexible boundaries on the part of the communities and the state. The book concludes with a restatement of the main points of each chapter.

This book has made a good argument for considering the nature of state-migrant relations in a context of a non-liberal democracy. Unfortunately, this is a missed opportunity in contributing to the wider conceptual and theoretical literature on power and governance. There is ample material to consider issues of state power, in the form of governmentality in the vein of Foucault for example, and (non)citizen responses to this, in the form of resistance and negotiation. Stronger engagement in these theoretical

tools would have provided the readers with a critical analysis of the dynamics of power in a context of transnational politics, migration, labour and neoliberalism.

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DOI: 10.1355/ae36-2j

***Governing Cambodia's Forests: The International Politics of Policy Reform*, by Andrew Cock.**
Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2016. Pp. 302.

Examining forest management issues from a political economy perspective is useful because political forces often interact with economic drivers to influence how forests are managed and used. The focus on Cambodia is vital, too, as no extensive or systematic academic work has been undertaken on this country before. Given this background, *Governing Cambodia's Forests* takes an important step in exploring pressing environment and forest conservation issues in the country.

Forest exploitation rarely occurs in a vacuum; there must be an international market that places demand on forest goods; there are also “actors” or stakeholders that feature strongly in the exploitation, consumption, or preservation of forest resources. Importantly, the whole outcome also needs to be placed in a particular setting: a clear set of property rights governing the extraction, conservation and protection of forest resources, with enforcement of such rights by courts and the state. In his book, Andrew Cock develops such a framework that looks at the “dynamics of external-internal interaction”, the interaction between the local elites/politicians and international organizations (notably, the World Bank) that subsequently influenced the type of policy reforms, institutional changes, and the outcome that occurred. His findings suggest that deforestation in the country worsened when multilateral and bilateral aid started focusing on policy reforms to manage forests.

In this book, forest management and exploitation is placed in the context of international politics, specifically the influence and pressure exerted by international organizations on the country's rulers. In Cambodia, global bodies have long endeavoured to work with the local authorities to manage forests in a sustainable manner, both economically and environmentally. More often than not, however, these organizations simply parcel out policies that they would like the Cambodian authorities to adopt. Failure to follow these guidelines would result in threats to stop funds or aid money from being disbursed to the country. These insights are particularly interesting because the author has the “insider's” view to forest management issues in the country, given the history of his policy advisor position at the NGO Forum.

The book is divided into seven chapters that highlight different aspects related to the management of Cambodia's forest landscape. Tropical forest management in the context of a global states system is discussed in Chapter 2. Economic analysis has become central towards understanding, examining and resolving the problem of deforestation, and also the prescription of policies that are likely to lead to improved forest management practices. In the following chapter, the focus is brought to the country's ruling class. Cambodia is often viewed as a patrimonial state where the ruler depends on the support from key sections of the political elite to stay in power. In turn, the ruler wins the subjects' loyalty by satisfying their material interests and needs. State power is directed at channelling rents to these political elites, and forest resources in Cambodia have traditionally been an important means to achieve this end.
