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BOOK REVIEWS

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Lily Kong, Ching Chia-ho, and Chou Tsu-Lung. 2015. *Arts, Culture, and the Making of Global Cities: Creating New Urban Landscapes in Asia*. Edward Elgar: Chelthenham, U.K.. ISBN: 9781849801768, 272 pp., $112.50 (hardcover).

Reviewed by *George Pomeroy,* Shippensburg University

In studying globalization, one of the most problematic areas of research is in the production and consumption of culture and the arts. Other aspects of globalization, such as flows of people and goods, may be more easily tabulated, measured, tracked, analyzed, etc. Cultural elements, particularly in terms of consumption, are less tangible and difficult to study quantitatively or even qualitatively, making research along these lines especially challenging. *Arts, Culture and the Making of Global Cities* provides an invaluable example of how this can be accomplished and provides an invaluable understanding of the problematic and complex nature of creative production and consumption of culture and the arts.

The book is comprised of twelve chapters and represents a synthesis of ethnographic fieldwork accomplished by the three co-authors. In between the introductory and concluding chapters are two parts of five chapters each. Part I examines the inspiration behind, the construction of, and the consumption challenges encountered with cultural mega-facilities. Ironically, many of the cultural mega-facilities are designed by famous western architects. Part II is devoted to others types of arts spaces, including both those generated more organically and others incubated, and is presented as five case studies. The case study cities, all obvious "world cities" of East Asia, are Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taipei. Each city, to varying degrees, sees the development of creative and cultural arts infrastructure as critical to achieving and sustaining a world city status.

The introductory chapter briefly introduces and discusses the world city concept, then more substantially presents culture in world cities and the spaces of culturally creative industries. This first chapter does very well to provide the reader a strong and general framework drawing upon the appropriate literature. The ethnographic fieldwork underlying the research, incorporating participant observation, is then described. The chapter then offers an explanation of the book's remaining contents which provides the reader a solid sense of what is coming. The chapter closes

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with a clear statement of its intention to address "the shortage of micro-level analyses of creative or cultural worlds at the ground level, and uses this empirical analysis to draw on larger theoretical canvases" (p. 27).

Chapter 2 examines the "discourse and reality" of constructing new cultural spaces of Beijing using a case study of the National Grand Theatre. The chapter highlights several tensions. First, the tension between profit making and public function and second, the tension between its use as space for highly exclusive performances and as a platform for fostering local cultural development. These tensions are heightened given the city's role as a national capital.

Chapter 3 features two projects: the Shanghai Grand Theatre and the Shanghai Oriental Art Centre. The same tensions are present here, along with issues of sustainability as both projects must to some degree compete with one another. The authors note that both projects must be complemented by additional efforts to build local creative and artistic capacity.

Chapter 4 profiles Hong Kong's West Kowloon Cultural District's torturous evolution. Despite various efforts to engage public participation in the face of opposition from assorted stakeholders, the project remains controversial for its role in developing a built environment at the expense of supporting social institutions related to cultural development. Additionally, there are questions about the long term viability of the district socially and financially.

The Esplanade – better known as the "Durian" for its distinctive exterior - was seen as an important project to support Singapore's global aspirations as an independent city state, including its deliberate efforts to develop a creative economy (Chapter 5). However, locals see a partial disconnect between providing performance venues and finding the spaces for rehearsal and other preparatory work. Taipei's story, the subject of Chapter 6, follows the city's circuitous path to building a leading cultural monument and facility in the form of the Taipei Performing Arts Center.

Part II takes each of the same cities in nearly the same order, devoting a chapter to each. A tension across each of the five chapters is, in a strange but accurate sense, how to stimulate "organic" grassroots creative activities in creative districts through top down planning. Those who are seeking a recipe on how to build, incubate, or nurture successful cultural infrastructure and/or cultural spaces will be disappointed, or will at least have a newfound appreciation of how challenging and problematic the task can be. The production and consumption of cultural places and spaces is complex and nuanced; certainty of success in such efforts remains elusive. For example, in discussing Singapore, the authors note "in short, there is no causal relationship between geographical propinquity and the development of positive social relations" (p. 27). That is, some of the assumed benefits of clustering – mutually supportive and synergistic relationships - do not come to fruition as a direct result of clustering. This point is variously restated several times across the text for several of the case studies. There are no guarantees of success in developing world city-scale cultural spaces and settings, even in the context of thoughtful programming, informed policy, and well-funded initiatives. The authors, do, however, have a sense of what factors likely played a role when spaces where successful. Indeed with Beijing's 798 zone, factors such as large spaces and cheap rents, the presence of artistic heavy weights, formation of networks, and sense of community all played a role in developing the cluster (p. 222). Similarly, with Hong Kong's Fotan district a strong core network of artists, local geography (both with location and environment), and self-organization seem to be factors in success (p. 223).

Clearly, the authors know their case studies. Having made numerous visits to four of the five case study cities, this reviewer is especially impressed at how well the authors know the

cultural spaces landscapes and the historical policy context of each. This speaks well to the quality of the ethnographic research in terms of who was interviewed, the content of the interviews, and the background policy research. Indeed, the book is reflective of six years of focused effort by the authors. While the case study cities are hardly reflective of Asia at large (as the subtitle might imply), they are appropriately comparable in terms of developmental level and cultural basis.

The text is well organized in terms of the chapters and the content within each chapter. At first glance it was odd to see each city profiled in a chapter for Part I and again with a dedicated chapter in Part II. However, that organization is sensible when seeing how different the focus is with each of the two sections. The writing is clear and smooth throughout and citations are made most appropriately. It would have been refreshing to see the use of photos and perhaps maps to help provide a sense of both the cultural infrastructure and activities within the various arts districts. Readers who have not visited say, Tianzifang in Shanghai, may not possess a good sense of what activities are taking place there. Indeed, this may be a valid point even for those who visited. Given the content and the lack of jargon, the book may be understood by geographers, urbanists, and planners, whether they be seasoned or students. It is of particular interest and value for those interested in aspects of globalization, culture and the arts, and Asia.

In summary, it is a useful, accessible, and practically framed book that 1) provides a foundational understanding of creative production and consumption of culture and the arts in world cities; and more substantially, 2) specific, particular, and useful insights into the planning for and development of the arts in five leading cities of East Asia.

Matthew K. Kahn and Siqi Zheng. 2016. *Blue Skies over Beijing: Economic Growth and the Environment in China.* Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ. ISBN: 9780691169361, 288 pp., $32.95 (hardcover).

Reviewed by *Yang Zhou,* West Virginia University

In this book, Kahn and Zheng give a very detailed portrayal of the current economic and environmental situations in China. With the help of many vivid examples, the authors manage to reveal the everyday lives of Chinese urbanites. Environmental protection is not some utopian idea in this book, but is comprised of numerous trade-offs every Chinese citizen faces daily. From this book we get to know the real lives of Chinese citizens better: relatively rich and well educated urbanites who desire a better natural environment, poor local urbanites and migrant workers who are still struggling with basic everyday needs, local officials who face a trade-off between economic growth and environmental protection, and workers living in western areas who have to maintain their income rather than live in a better environment with amenities, etc. Environmental issues are the intended and unintended consequences of the trade-offs people in China make every day.

The book has ten chapters, broken down into three sections and bookended by introductory and concluding chapters. For example, Chapter 1 gives a general introduction to China's economy and the resulting environmental issues. The introduction is followed by the first section (Chapters 2-5), which provides a geographic overview of urban pollution production in China. Chapter 2 discusses the worldwide "Made in China" phenomenon, which highlights how economic growth comes with an environmental cost. Most electricity in China is powered by coal, which is a major air pollution source. The demand for winter heating in northern China also exacerbates the haze caused by burning coal. Beyond air pollution, industrialization also leads to other environmental

challenges: water pollution, pollution of the domestic food supply, pollution in the mining cities, etc.

Industrial jobs have attracted hundreds of millions of Chinese to cities, where they can earn a much higher wage than in the countryside. Chapter 3 examines the trade-offs people face in making decisions about where to live, which play an important role in China's environmental future. Chinese cities not only include the first-tier ones like Beijing and Shanghai, but also include the second-tier ones like provincial capitals and third-tier smaller cities. The economic development level and structure of every city varies, thus local governments and citizens face different sets of circumstances. A well-paid citizen in Beijing might prefer to improve amenities in that "consumer city," while a worker for a chemical plant in a third-tier western city might instead want to keep this job regardless of the pollution.

Chapter 4 covers the causes and consequences of Chinese suburbanization using Beijing's growth as a case study. Urban housing demand is very high in China today, and most people seek to buy their own properties. While many urbanites live in compact condominiums and enjoy their lives in the "consumer city," others must live in shabby urban villages called *chengzhongcun*. Industrial parks are the seeds for many "edge cities" in China. Edge cities are connected to the main urban areas by new suburban transportation infrastructure, and Chapter 5 summarizes the state of current transportation systems in urban China. Though public transportation systems are relatively well built in China and the cost of maintaining a private car there is high, the net benefits of owning a private car are still high enough that people opt to buy personal transportation. This contributes to the rising traffic congestion and severe local air pollution. Kahn and Zhen conclude this chapter by discussing a number of public policies intended to reduce the social cost of urban transportation, such as emission taxes, congestion fees, new vehicle-emissions regulation, gasoline refining, smog tests for older vehicles, vehicle quantity restrictions, and subsidizing green car production.

Kahn and Zheng examine the rising demand for green cities in China in the second section (Chapters 6-7). Chapter 6 gets to the core of the pollution issues in China: environmental issues are actually economic development issues. Generally, people care more about the environment as their income rises. They illustrate the demand for green cities from the perspectives of children, adults, and the elderly, respectively. The economic and environmental situation in a city can attract people or drive them out, and improving urban quality of life reduces the risk of brain drain. They provide recent empirical evidence on the demand for lower pollution levels in Chapter 7. Focusing on the demand to avoid local air pollution and the demand to live close to green space, they find that real estate prices are higher in cities that offer amenities like clean air, a coastal location, and a temperate climate. Air masks and air filters are the two common tools Chinese buy to protect themselves from severe air pollution, while the poor cannot afford to spend on these items regularly. Thus, there is not only an income inequality in China but also a broader disparity of "life quality."

The third and final section (Chapters 8-10) discusses how to promote environmental accountability in this one-party nation. Chapter 8 starts by discussing the central government's increased desire to promote environmental sustainability. Kahn and Zheng argue that the main reason the communist regime decided to promote the environment is to enhance their domestic legitimacy and improve their international bargaining power. As nations grow wealthier, they increase their environmental regulations. Although this is a one-party regime, there are different levels of government and different interest groups on each level. While civil society can serve as

a regulatory catalyst in China, they must be careful where they draw the line in order to avoid a political crackdown. Recent environmental activism in China, however, has encouraged the central and local governments to incorporate public opinion into their deliberations. In this country without the rule of law, better environmental litigation and more effective courts are still challenges. However, the rise of a new generation of local officials with more education leads the authors to believe that such challenges can be handled.

Chapter 9 shifts focus to local governments, which must implement policy. Environmental targets are generally linked with long-term benefits, while the current official evaluation and promotion system in China encourages local officials to focus on short- to medium-term targets. The multilayered governance structure in China also creates conflicts of interest. Local officials have difficulty balancing the benefits of economic development with environmental pollution it generates, especially that by privileged state owned enterprises (SOEs) located within their jurisdiction. The "golden goose" for every local government differs, and relatively poor regions give priority to economic development over environmental protection. Corruption in local governments gives mayors significant negotiation power with enterprises, which can thus lead to inefficient environmental protection. Under the current tax and fiscal system, local officials have to achieve the environmental targets set by the central government in order to get transfers from it. With the relaxation of the *hukou* system (under which citizens were divided into occupations and restrained in where they could live), individuals may "vote with their feet;" the associated outmigration could provide additional incentives for local officials to take a green agenda seriously.

Chapter 10 concludes the book. Kahn and Zheng start by comparing two generations of Chinese. The former generation lived in an era suffering economic scarcity, while the younger generation aspires to a western lifestyle. They argue that the environment in many Chinese megacities has improved gradually over the last decade. Thus, as economic development of a city reaches a turning point, the relation between economic development and environment protection turns from negative to positive. With the central government willing to tackle pollution issues and the current improvement in many cities, Kahn and Zheng are hopeful that China will be able to handle the country's environmental issues in the coming decades.

Broadly, this book provides a very vivid description of China's current economic development and environmental challenges. Lively stories of various people in different sectors are told in this book, which gives the reader a strong sense of what is going on in China. Kahn and Zheng manage to explain deep concepts around environmental protection and economic development in a simple way, by focusing on the details of people's lives and providing a general picture of their own empirical studies in China. For those who have not lived in China but want a broad picture of what is happening there, this book should be a good start. The theoretical and empirical analyses in this book are easy to understand, even for those who do not have much economic background.

David Eimer. 2014. *The Emperor Far Away: Travels at the Edge of China*. Bloomsbury Publishing: New York. ISBN: 9781620403631, 336 pp., $28.00 (hardcover).

Reviewed by *Amitrajeet A. Batabyal,* Rochester Institute of Technology

It seems fair to say that most regional scientists think of China as a nation that is essentially a monolithic entity occupied by a single ethnic group, i.e., the Han Chinese. However, the Middle

Kingdom is really a mosaic of the Han Chinese and a multiplicity of ethnic groups that often have little interaction with the majority Han. In addition, many of the minority ethnic groups chafe under the rule of the Han. As a result, many of these minority ethnic groups routinely rebel against the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

What ought to interest regional scientists is the fact that these recalcitrant minority ethnic groups frequently reside in the boundary regions of the vast nation that is China. Given this state of affairs, the primary objective of this book is to shed light on the lives of the minorities and the Han Chinese in four of these boundary regions, namely, Xinjiang, Tibet, Yunnan, and Dongbei. This exercise is instructive because, contrary to what readers might think, to "explore the border regions is to enter a very different China from the glittering mega-cities of Beijing and Shanghai, one that is often lawless and prone to violence" (p. 7).

The first part of the author's four-part journey through the boundary regions of China commences in Xinjiang. Xinjiang is a desolate and largely desert region in China's far west with land that is of limited use for agriculture. Xinjiang is populated largely by the Muslim ethnic group known as the Uighurs. Although the Uighurs are the majority group in Xinjiang, the CCP has been attempting to reduce the proportion of Uighurs in the total population by actively encouraging the migration of Han Chinese into this region. We learn that the Uighurs face real discrimination and that the CCP does all it can to suppress the sad history of the Uighurs. We are told that as "long as the CCP continues to censor all books published in China, the Uighurs have no way of recording their version of what has happened to them. All they can do is pass on the gruesome memories of events such as the Yining slaughter to their children, like a hereditary disease that taints generation after generation" (pp. 45-46). These kinds of activities and mosque closures led to violent protests by the Uighurs in April 1990 and these protests were put down with impunity by the People's Liberation Army (PLA). This "provoked the cycle of repression and resistance that has defined the last twenty-five years in Xinjiang" (p. 57).

Next, the author's journey moves to Tibet, arguably the most romanticized and yet the least understood boundary region in all of China. The author delineates the unique geography of Tibet and, on a saturnine note, points out that as in Xinjiang, the CCP has once again been attempting to diminish the proportion of Tibetans in the total population by actively encouraging the migration of Han Chinese into Tibet. This has created an ironical situation in which most Han "acknowledge how the people and landscapes of Tibet and Xinjiang are so unlike them and anywhere else in China" (p. 110). Even so, these same people "will never admit that those regions have ever been anything but part of the Chinese empire" (p. 110). Because the more populated areas of Tibet are under constant surveillance by the CCP and because the CCP is ready to put down any unrest with force, in the foreseeable future, the author sees plenty of opportunities for prolonged regional unrest with the Tibetans continuing to live under Han domination.

The boundary region of Yunan is where the author makes his third stop. We learn that although Chinese officialdom likes to portray the many minorities living here as "shiny happy minorities," the reality is quite different. For instance, consider the Dai ethnic group. Even though the Dai are superficially friendly to the Han Chinese, there is little cohesion between them. Even so, the dominant Han are friendly to the Dai. Why? This is because, unlike the Uighurs and the Tibetans, the Dai own a lot of a key resource---valuable land---and this gives them bargaining power in their dealings with the Han. As the author perspicaciously points out, the "last thing the CCP wants in Yunan is a repeat of the tension which has polarized the Han from the Tibetans and Uighurs" (p. 173).

The author's last stop is in the northeastern boundary region known as Dongbei. He helpfully explains that in addition to North and South Korea, one can plausibly think of a part of this northeastern region as a third Korea. Unlike the systematically inferior position of the Uighurs and the Tibetans relative to the Han, "China's Koreans enjoy advantages denied to other minorities…" (p. 256). As a result, Koreans are not "as obviously subordinate to the Han as most other ethnic groups…" (p. 256). This notwithstanding, we learn that the rise of faith among Koreans is an unwelcome development to the CCP and hence Koreans have to be careful when they attempt to spread the word about Christianity. As the author lucidly puts it, "the increasing number of Christians is a challenge to Beijing's unspoken assertion that there is no need for God when the CCP already acts as if it is one" (p. 268).

In sum, this book makes a number of worthwhile points about how China's minorities in the boundary regions regard the impoverishment of their regions and the gradual disappearance of their identities as being directly related to the centralized power held by seemingly uncaring authorities in Beijing. The author's informative prose also provides object lessons in how not to craft regional policy that is ostensibly designed to uplift the aforementioned four boundary regions. There are some errors of commission and omission and the author does not always explain why he decided to focus on certain ethnic groups and not on others. This said, there is no gainsaying the fact that this book contains a fine account of the limits of centralized decision-making in a country that is as large and diverse as China. More generally, this book provides a wonderful perspective on the complex mosaic that is contemporary China.

Christopher H. Achen and Larry M. Bartels. 2016. *Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government.* Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ. ISBN: 9780691169446, 408 pp., $29.95 (hardcover).

Reviewed by *Joshua Matti,* West Virginia University

Democracy is a nearly universal ideal. The people are the rulers and any authority given to government is legitimately derived from the consent of the people. People choose leaders who reflect their policy preferences and leaders must be responsive to the demands of their constituents. Given the allure of ideal democracy, the mounting scientific evidence demonstrating the less than ideal function of real democracies has largely been ignored. *Democracy for Realists* by Achen and Bartels is the culmination of their decade-long re-examination of democratic assumptions. It is an ambitious book that sets out to critique existing, ideal notions of democracy before developing and defending a more realistic theory of democracy.

Achen and Bartels review two prominent theories of democracies: the Folk Theory and the Retrospective Theory. In the Folk Theory, people express their policy preferences by electing representatives who are held accountable by the demands of the people. Unfortunately, actual voters fall short of the ideal in the Folk Theory as ordinary citizens are poorly informed, unmotivated, and unable to clearly express coherent policy preferences. Achen and Bartels point out that citizens' policy preferences are sensitive to framing. For example, survey responses of political attitudes towards "welfare" and "assistance to the poor" will yield different results, despite having no substantive difference. Additionally, education levels have risen over the last fifty years, but political knowledge remains the same as people struggle with such basic questions as naming a branch of government. Despite the ignorance of voters, the solution to democratic problems has been more democracy through referenda. The authors spend a whole chapter

outlining the drawbacks and unintended consequences of direct democracy. For example, short-sighted desires for tax limitations can prevent funding for services that the public really does want.

Upon refuting the Folk Theory of democracy, the authors devote four full chapters to demonstrating the failure of the popular ideal theory of democracy. The Retrospective Theory argues that even with imperfect voters having little knowledge of public policy, elections can still hold elected officials accountable for the success or failure of their policies. However, the theory relies on voters being able to evaluate their subjective well-being in response to relevant policy variables. Achen and Bartels point out three reasons why the theory fails. First, citizens have misperceptions about policy-relevant measures of well-being. For example, public perceptions of crime are driven more by media coverage than actual crime data. Second, people cannot separate the effect on their well-being between policy-relevant factors or unrelated factors. The authors spend an entire chapter demonstrating that oil price spikes, droughts, floods, and even shark attacks can negatively affect incumbent re-election. Lastly, citizens have a present bias that only considers recent events. For example, the economy's performance in election years influences incumbents' re-election odds, but economic performance over their entire term does not matter. The authors conclude that citizen retrospection is myopic and confused about cause and effect.

In the final chapters of the book, the authors develop a theory of democracy that more closely reflects the empirical evidence. Their key idea is that groups matter. Throughout history people have formed groups which segment society into "us" and "them" and lead to emotional rather than rational thinking. Groups shape the views of their members; politics is no different. Voters organize around social groups, choosing party affiliation more on who they are than on what they think. Contrary to the Folk Theory of democracy, parties are not reflections of their constituents' preferences but rather the driving force shaping their followers' viewpoints. Citizens alter their views to align with their party rather than the other way around. Achen and Bartels defend their upside-down theory of democracy with empirical evidence. They highlight the 1960 presidential election of the Catholic Democrat John F. Kennedy as a case of social identity being more relevant than policy preferences. Democratic support was 21% below its normal level for churchgoing Protestants but was 15% higher than its normal level for Catholics. Social identity drives party identification which in turn shapes citizens' understanding of even factual matters. For example, Republicans were over three times more likely than Democrats to state that the budget deficit "increased a lot" during the Clinton presidency.

The book presents a dismal, although realistic, view of democracy. Its contribution is two-fold. First, it convincingly critiques existing democratic theories by drawing upon an impressive number of empirical analyses across a variety of time periods. Second, it develops a new theory of democracy grounded in empirical evidence. Young scholars will benefit from studying the authors' new theory of democracy. Although not a book on policy prescriptions, practitioners looking for a sober reflection on actual democratic functioning will find the book valuable. With little technical jargon and easily understandable tables and graphs, the book is also accessible to the educated layman with an interest in social psychology and political science. Given the breadth, depth, and relevance of the book, it is likely to become a deservingly influential study of democracy.