Political-Cultural Developments in East Asia: Interpreting Logics of Change
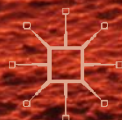
P.W. PRESTON

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Interpreting Logics of Change

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PROLOGUE

The classical European tradition of social theorizing is centrally concerned with the elucidation of the dynamics of complex change in the unfolding shift to the modern world; these intellectual resources comprised a distinct and specific inheritance and they make no claim to an unrestricted universality, and this being the case, those working within and with reference to the tradition can only consistently aspire to a restricted, critical and dialogic engagement with the denizens of other traditions. The chapters in the collection unpack this idea and offer interpretations of the unfolding trajectories of countries in East Asia; they do not claim or aspire to any authoritative status; rather, they are proffered as moves in conversation, open exchanges with scholars working with other inheritances and other agendas; optimistically, such conversations provide an opportunity for mutual reflexive learning.

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The classical European tradition of social science centres upon the interpretive–critical elucidation of dynamics of complex change.[1] The tradition has its origins in the response of social theorists to the unanticipated, unplanned and disorienting creation during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries of a natural science-based industrial-capitalist form of life. A sequence of theorists endeavoured to make sense of this new and developing situation and the standard canon of founding fathers runs (say): from the theorists of order, Hobbes and Locke; to the theorists of Enlightenment reason, Rousseau, Saint-Simon and the like; through to

the political economists of the nineteenth century, David Ricardo, Karl Marx and J.S. Mill; and thence to those more recent figures who are now treated as having helped establish discrete disciplines of social science, Emile Durkheim for sociology, Stanley Jevons for neo-classical or marginalist economics, E.H. Carr for international relations and so on.

The list could be extended, but the detail of the later years of the twentieth century produces difficulties for any such simple tale; in particular the shift in economic, political and cultural power from Europe across the Atlantic Ocean to the USA. Over this period, many distinguished and influential American social scientists emerged, and their work, unsurprisingly, reflected local, that is, American cultural[2] habits and concerns.[3] And so, notwithstanding the intermingling of ideas during the long years of American Cold War-era dominance, this type of material should not be confused with the interpretive–critical work of the classical European tradition. Such work paradigmatically is turned to the deployment of critical and engaged arguments within the public sphere, and work continues in this diverse tradition; thus, to note, Jürgen Habermas for political philosophy, or Pierre Bourdieu for sociology, or Eric Hobsbawm for history or Zygmunt Bauman for cultural criticism—and so on.

This text works within and with reference to the European tradition. The materials of this tradition offer the resources for an interpretive, reflexive[4] and critical engagement with the politics of European countries and the means to a critical dialogue or conversation[5] with those scholars working within other traditions. The text operates in a procedurally unsystematic fashion, hence the strategy of discrete chapters[6]; they are means to dialogue and the goal is to illuminate the logics of political–cultural forms of life that have plotted their own distinct routes to the modern world, forms of life outside Europe, forms of life grounded in the cultures of East Asia. It might be added, of course, that grasping the forms of life of others is simultaneously a way of illuminating our own form of life and disturbing otherwise taken-for-granted ideas and practices; this point is pursued in the final piece in this collection.

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The shift to the modern world can be understood as an ongoing process that enfolds the particular forms of life of discrete communities. It is the world we inhabit and within which we make our own lives. The unfolding shift to the modern world (for the process is both contingent and open

ended as there is neither a master plan nor a fixed destination) is driven by the innovative dynamics of human reason, in particular, in pride of place, the natural sciences, understood as a particular cultural achievement, and these in turn find practical expression in the context of the system of industrial-capitalism and the production of ever greater volumes of material goods. The system is dynamic, restless and intrusive, producing domestic or core intensification and external or peripheral expansion.

The system has its historical roots in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe, and it was exported around the planet, in particular via the violent imposition of a system of state-empires. In this process, existing forms of life were remade as they were drawn into the industrial-capitalist system. Long-established civilizations, which comprised wide swathes of the planet, experienced peripheral incorporation within systems dominated by cores located in Europe. The resultant economic, social and cultural change was pervasive, and this experience provided the route to the modern world for these territories via a mixture of exploitation, development and learning. The state-empire systems encompassed vast areas, but they were inherently fragile and, in retrospect, deeply implausible constructs and were swept away in the general crisis of the twentieth century. As state-empire territories dissolved away, local elites claimed power and fashioned a spread of new nation states. At a global level, two important cores emerged: Washington and Moscow/Beijing, and a Cold War ensued, but that too came to an end and a period of nominal uni-polarity followed as one model of natural science-based industrial-capitalist modernity was celebrated, the end of history was announced[7] and the evident continuing diversity of available forms of life was disregarded as a future of globalization was announced.

Yet the system is nothing if not dynamic, and as the twentieth century turned into the twenty-first, a number of factors emerged which together implied further change: first, the American and European financial crisis of 2008–10 saw the neo-liberal model of unregulated financial capitalism undermined as states rescued the banking system (loading the costs onto taxpayers via bail-outs and austerity); second, the period's agreed hegemon failed in a series of neo-conservative-inspired brutal interventions against weak states containing poor people in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and, recently, Syria; and then, third, a new set of powerful centres emerged in the long successful countries of East Asia, in particular China, the sometime historical regional core power. The region is home to long-established civilizations, offering intellectual and moral resources to local

agents; these territories have made a series of discrete routes to the modern world. The first exchange with the modern world was in the period of their subordination to foreign state-empires, yet this episode ended and their trajectories continue to unfold, and they are doing so in terms of their now long-established trajectories; thus they are neither replicating the trajectory of the West (the claims of modernization/globalization) nor are they endeavouring to copy it (as urged by some [Wall Street/ Treasury/IMF complex[8]]) for their polities continue to work within domestically established trajectories, creating discrete novel paths to a still unfolding modern world.

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East Asia's shift to the modern world began with the irruption into the region of European traders; at first, as just one more group of traders, easily accommodated within extant thriving regional trading networks, then later, through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as Europe itself shifted from an essentially agrarian-based feudalism to a natural science-based industrial-capitalism, the later generations of traders presented new demands and thanks to the system within which they operated were able to insist upon their acknowledgement. So trade and violence and colonialism went hand in hand for the peoples of East Asia, elites and masses, and generated a multi-layered experience of exploitation, development and learning: in sum, the local variant of the wider business of the shift to the modern world. But now, at the start of the twenty-first century, East Asia is rich and prosperous, and the region's recovery over the post-1945 period has slowly re-ordered the wider global system; that is, there are now three powerful regions within the global system: North America, Europe and East Asia. That said, the details of the character of this new era are unclear, but the task for the social sciences ordered in terms of the classical European tradition is—as ever—the critical elucidation of these evident dynamics of complex change.

A number of pieces offer overviews of the region. The opening chapters recall the outline of the shift to the modern world in East Asia, the construction of systems of colonial holdings, the ways in which they functioned, both locally (trading ports, plantations, ethnic hierarchies, urban segregation, etc.) and internationally, plugging local holdings via sea-borne trade to distant metropolitan centres. These early chapters also recall the

processes of the collapse of these colonial holdings as both metropolitan and peripheral territories drift into violence,[9] a catastrophic period which draws to a close with the re-ordering of these systems, in particular, for this text, the creation of novel modern nation states in East Asia. Over the years, the region has been spectacularly successful and somewhat paradoxically faces problems of success, a part of which is coming to terms with the history that the region has had during its now successful shift to the modern world.

These wide-ranging discussions are followed by a number of chapters focused on individual countries, detailing their historical trajectory and resultant current political logic: Singapore (with its variant form of liberal-democracy, dominated by the People's Action Party, elitist, heavy-handed and successfully committed to the goal of national development); Thailand (with its conservative elite-dominated politics, combining the bureaucracy, the army and the monarchy, fuelling a long-running unresolved conflict between this entrenched elite and a wider dis-enfranchised mass); China (with its party-state system embracing the entirety of formal political life, ordering the rapid development of the country and confronting problems of corruption pollution and popular disenchantment); and Hong Kong (with a quasi-colonial political system revolving around small-circle elected Chief Executive with the sophisticated population effectively dis-enfranchised and noticeably disenchanted). In all these cases, the chapters offer an interpretation of the historical trajectories of the polities in question, their domestic politics and contemporary problems, in most cases, problems of success or adjustment to the directions of travel implied by recorded success.

Finally, in the Afterword, these intellectual machineries are turned to the historical trajectory and political–cultural logic of the UK, this author's home patch, for one aspect of this form of comparative political analysis is the light enquiry throws upon one's home country. Here, against the foolish claims to exemplary democratic status lodged by the elite, we find a system, recently described by one conservative commentator as oligarchic[10] and comprising an entrenched albeit enlightened elite dominating the executive and only restrictedly held to account by, on the one hand, a parliament whose members are selected through a structurally corrupt electoral system and, on the other, a richly developed if generally ineffective civil society.

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Notes

1. A longer statement is given in P.W. Preston 2009 *Arguments and Actions in Social Theory*, London, Palgrave.

2. On American nationalism, A. Lieven 2004 *America Right or Wrong: An Anatomy of American Nationalism*, London, Harper Collins.

3. In order the draw this broad (exception rich) distinction: on the trajectory of the social sciences in different places, see G. Hawthorn1976 *Enlightenment and Despair*, Cambridge University Press; on the impact of American work on mainstream political analysis, see C. Hay 2002 *Political Analysis*, London, Palgrave; for an appreciation of the sweep of European work, see S. Pollard 1971 *The Idea of Progress*, Harmondsworth, Penguin; for a way of drawing the distinction between positive and critical traditions, see Z. Bauman 1987 *Legislators and Interpreters*, Cambridge, Polity.

4. After the style of the English cultural critic Richard Hoggart 1958 *The Uses of Literacy,* Harmondsworth, Penguin, we can assert that scholars are citizens, and so who we are shapes how we think, and that being the case, reflexive self-embedding in those processes we seek to understand is a necessary condition of scholarship.

5. After the style of Richard Rorty 1989 *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, Cambridge University Press—language is the vehicle of social identity—it is the medium within which and with reference to which we create our social identities and our social forms of life—neither self, nor social life, nor language have any extra-social or extra-linguistic grounding—language and social life are radically contingent—social theorists thus participate in an unfolding conversation—oriented, for Rorty, to the amelioration of human distress.

6. The intellectual ground of these chapters is given in P.W. Preston 2009 *Arguments and Actions in Social Theory*, London, Palgrave.

7. F. Fukuyama 1992 *The End of History and the Last Man*, London, Hamish Hamilton.

8. On the financial power of the USA, see Wade and Veneroso Wade, R. and Veneroso, F. 1998 'The Asian Crisis: The High Debt Model versus the Wall Street—Treasury—IMF Complex' in *New Left Review* 1/228; on the 2008–10 financial crisis, see P.W. Preston 2012 *England After the Great Recession: Tracking the Political and Cultural Consequences of the Crisis*, London, Palgrave.
9. In respect of the Great War, see C. Clark 2013 *Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914*, London, Penguin.
10. Ferdinand Mount 2012 *Mind the Gap: The New Class Divide in Britain*, London, Short Books.

PREFACE

The material in these chapters deals with the historical development trajectories and contemporary political logics of a number of countries in East Asia. The discussions have it in common that they are interpretive, they have it in common that they are concerned with the ways in which polities evidence deeply embedded political–cultural logics and they have it in common that the countries discussed here are all places with which I am familiar (to put it no stronger than that).

The material presented here is taken from articles and talks produced over recent years, and it argues that different histories produce different polities, or more elaborately, that the different historical trajectories sketched out by discrete territories in the unfolding shift to the modern world of natural science-based industrial-capitalism have the effect of embedding different political logics in their machineries of governance. The modern world does not seem to require any specific political architecture; indeed, the pattern of extant polities shows great variation in forms of organization.

An appreciation of these differences can be folded into the expectations carried in the classical European tradition of social theorizing with its concern with the unfolding shift to the modern world; thus it can be reported that there are diverse routes in the unfolding shift to the modern world; yet clearly such reports are always partial, bound by the assumptions lodged in the tradition, so they are presented in dialogic mode, addressed

to commentators lodged in other cultures. Such comparative work lets us learn about other cultures and reflexively about our own, and whilst such enquiries are unlikely to issue in definitive agreement, this is not a problem, for scholarship is always provisional, part of its enduring pleasure.

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Acknowledgements

Over the years, I have been fortunate to be able to live and/or work in a number of countries in East Asia. I have enjoyed living and working outside Britain as this experience has offered a mix of escape from the class-bound conceits of its elite with their ever more ludicrous claims to first rank international status along with pleasure at the slow partial discovery of other cultures. In recent years, I have discussed the issues dealt with in these chapters with friends, colleagues and students in Hong Kong, Bangkok and Beijing, and I have learned much from these exchanges, and as ever, I offer my thanks.

Contents

Social Science: Making Sense of Change

The classical European tradition of social science is (formally) an inter-pretive–critical exercise turned (substantively) to the elucidation of the dynamics of complex change. It takes its initial and enduring form in the efforts of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century social commentators to comprehend the sweeping changes that enfolded their inherited forms of life, changes which in retrospect have been labelled the industrial and democratic revolutions, and these intellectual resources (sets of concepts, available explicit theories and the particular lessons offered by unfolding events) together comprise a living tradition. The tradition is diverse and continually made and remade in debate, and it provides a largely taken-for-granted intellectual apparatus. It is one that European social theorists by default inhabit (which is not to say that they cannot work within and with reference to other traditions, thus, obviously, for British scholars, American work, but to do so requires an active process of intellectual/ cultural relocation). The tradition is a local tradition, and it does not make claims to universality, but it can and does make claims to generality; that is, the inherited conceptual apparatus can be writ-large, and it can offer read-ings of the patterns of lives of others. But such procedures are of restricted intellectual value as the resources of the tradition unpack more directly

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A full-length treatment of the theoretical arguments made here is given in P.W. Preston 2009 *Arguments and Actions in Social Theory*, London, Palgrave.

and plausibly as an interpretive–critical invitation to dialogue; that is, one local culture can reach out to other local cultures.

The discussion in this introductory chapter will comprise three areas of somewhat disparate reflection which together sketch the outlines of a view of the character, status and possibility of social science: first, some notes on the philosophy of social science by way of intellectual grounding, that is, identifying the formal basis of social theorizing; second, some remarks on the available social science traditions, that is, locating and characterizing the practical nature of social theorizing; and then finally, third, a discussion of how the intellectual resources identified might be put to work. In this last noted, it will be argued that the core tradition which Europeans inhabit is centrally concerned with elucidating the dynamics of complex change, those processes associated with the unfolding project of modernity in all its complexity, and that whilst these resources are routinely put to work to read the contemporary situation in Europe and they can also be deployed dialogically in regard to events in other cultures and these matters will be illustrated with reference to recent episodes of change in China, Hong Kong, Thailand and Singapore.[1]

Debates about the nature of the social sciences are well established; indeed, there has been extensive debate about the fundamental nature of social theorizing, its intellectual status and its practical utility. In respect of the formal character of argument in social sciences, three significant strands of reflection can be identified, each of which offers a distinctive view: first, arguments from the natural sciences to a positive social sciences; second, arguments from language/meaning to an interpretive social sciences; and finally, third, arguments from political life to a critical social science.[2]

The discussion presented here will begin with the natural sciences; note their marvellous accomplishments and utter centrality to the modern world and go on to suggest that familiar arguments that move from the natural to the social sciences are flawed and unhelpful. It will be argued that a better starting point can be found in reflections on both human language and the nature of social life. Yet these approaches also have limitations. It will then be proposed that a richer appreciation of the nature, status and utility of the social sciences can be found in ideas of critical social science. Finally, it will be suggested that a reflexive appreciation of the inherited resources of the local European tradition is a necessary condition of an effective interpretive–critical dialogic exchange with the denizens of other equally local cultures.

Social Science: Character, Status and Utility

The three readily identifiable lines within the social sciences offer different answers to the trio of questions in respect of the character, status and utility of the social sciences[3]; they each have different schedules of preferences in respect of methods of enquiry,[4] and those offering arguments from natural science make the strongest claims.

Arguments from Natural Science

The modern world revolves around a clutch of ideas and related practices, in simple terms, ideas of reason, science, industry and progress. The core elements can be debated, but one way or another, a central cultural achievement, in the sense of an historically wrought accomplishment, is to be found in the realm of the natural sciences; absent the natural sciences there would be no modern world.

Reflection upon the character of the natural sciences has been extensive (and continues): an exchange with religion (from theistic to materialist schemes, from revelation to empirical investigation and from the pursuit of certainty to an appreciation of accumulating piecemeal improvements); an exchange with other areas of human intellectual and creative endeavour (arguments to the role of a social science—pursued here—or discussions of the purpose of the arts and humanities); and discussion of how the sciences impact ordinary life in terms of both the impacts of unfolding modernity (changes in forms of life) and the perceptions of the sciences within ordinary life.

It is within the realm of ordinary life, our common quotidian culture, that we have a particular idea of the nature of the natural sciences, and it has been characterized as the 'received model'.[5] It is a complex package, involving a mixture of naïve realism (what we see with our sense is what there is) coupled with naïve induction (gathering precise facts of particular cases and then generalizing in pursuit of universal laws).[6]

These ideas are also familiar within the social sciences. An image of the natural sciences is copied across to the business of the social sciences and the result is often tagged as 'positivism',[7] and the idea of the social sciences affirmed unpacks as a preference for authoritative, technical policy work. It is a complex package of commitments: social scientific research produces objective knowledge (accurate, reliable); such knowledge can inform policy (objective knowledge informs authoritative interventions in

the social world) and so the policy analyst stands in the same relation to his or her field of intervention as does the natural scientist to theirs and intervention is technical (not value informed).

Recent debates about the natural sciences have included early twentieth-century logical positivism (the work of the Vienna Circle along with Karl Popper's contributions built around the idea of 'critical rationalism'[8]), the innovative history and sociology of science associated with Thomas Kuhn, plus, more recently, the sociology of knowledge treatments of natural science as a thoroughgoing social product.

These discussions illuminate the nature of the natural sciences but they remain a poor starting point for discussions of the nature of the social sciences. The received model systematically misleads. The social sciences are not unitary (just as there is no one scientific method, so there is no one social science), rather they are home to many diverse voices; the social sciences are not technical and nor are they neutral, rather the resources of inherited tradition can be deployed to inform many diverse interventions in the social world (schematically, politics, policy and scholarship); and nor, finally, do they deal with a mute sphere of objects, for their concern is with people, who, notoriously, are often minded to respond to claims of authority by asserting their own opinions.[9]

It is true that the work of policy analysts can be and often is thoroughly sophisticated but their central stance, that is, to the provision of technical, value-neutral, causal (or causal type) knowledge of a given social world,[10] is incoherent. The knowledge is not available and nor is the social world a mute unresponsive sphere, and their claims to a detached scientific stance are false, for policy analysis and its associated prescription is a discrete mode of social theoretic engagement, essentially, arguments on behalf of state and corporate world planners or managers. And as with an easy admiration of the work of the natural sciences, so too with policy analysis; there are lots of reasons why it is a good idea to have the 'trains running on time', but that achievement does not grasp the richer core of the received classical European tradition.

Arguments from Human Understanding

A second stream of reflection upon the nature of the social sciences—their nature, status and utility—has found expression over the last century in a preoccupation, initially on the part of philosophers and historians, with the nature of human language: language as the clue to the

word of God, language as the vehicle of forms of life and language as the most fundamental characteristic of human life.[11] When these materials are deployed in the territory of the social sciences, they offer a distinctive approach, an interpretive social science. The business is no longer the provision of putatively value-neutral technical causal knowledge; rather, it offers its audiences, its users, novel ways of comprehending their social circumstances and thus the possibility of a richer engagement with their social world. This orientation to the work of the social sciences has found particular expression in the realms of anthropology and sociology, plus the earlier noted philosophy and history. It has also found expression in what would ordinarily be tagged as economics, thus economic anthropology or economic sociology, both concerned with the diverse patterns of the social production of livelihood (as opposed to familiar mainstream tales of universalistic liberal competitive marketplaces); or as political science, thus novel approaches concerned with the intersecting patterns of understanding of active players[12]; or most directly as borrowing, the recently fashionable work of international relations specialists concerned with social constructivism.[13] All these approaches have it in common that they redirect analytic attention away from looking outwards to the realm of facts available for description and inwards to the sets of inherited concepts with which human agents constitute both their ordinary lived experience and their more explicit sets of reflections upon those patterns of life.[14]

This interpretive approach is diverse. It embraces the early work of hermeneutics (initially matters of theology, recovering the true meaning of sacred texts), and within historical enquiry it can be cast in quasi-psychological terms, thus the recovery of states of mind of actors, but it can also be cast in terms of a concern for language, patterns of meanings informing the understandings and practice of agents where these are inevitably social and carried in language. This is true of the work of Wilhelm Dilthey, but the key figure amongst English-speaking analysts has been Ludwig Wittgenstein and here an early concern to spell out the fundamental simplicity of language, cast in terms of picturing facts, a preoccupation rooted in the contemporary cultural scene in fin de siècle Vienna[15] (and mis-read by his British hosts as a contribution to an empiricist characterization of the nature of natural science), gave way to an elucidation of the nature of human language that was social through and through and which fused language and human practice: thus, language-games informed forms-of-life. Peter Winch[16] took these

ideas and deployed them directly in the sphere of the social sciences, and he linked philosophy and the social sciences by urging that the elucidation of concepts was simultaneously the elucidation of forms of social life, and he showed that interpretive work was quite different from the causal analyses found in the natural sciences, not a matter of causes in a natural system but rather a series of meaningful exchanges in a conversation—a social science thus understood was in the nature of a series of contributions to the multiplicity of ongoing conversations that together comprised ordinary social life.

The final point in this posited sequence is provided by the philosophical hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer with its three core claims: human social life centres on meanings, and meanings are carried in language, and language is social. In this scheme, human beings and their social world are social through and through as all experience is enclosed in language. Thereafter, the social sciences are one set of strategies of self-conscious interpretation of patterns of life that are already suffused with meanings/interpretations; these in turn are lodged in wider culture, and these again are lodged in history. Hermeneutic enquiry is open-ended, reflexive and dialogic. Inherited ideas suffuse our thought and action, and reflexively grasped, they are the basis for contemporary conversations, and they inform the conversations built around novel experiences, or any exchange with agents outside our familiar local sphere, including those of other cultures.

The theorists of language carried meanings established the basis of an autonomous social science, and if these arguments are granted, then it is not necessary to look to or copy the supposed procedures of the natural sciences. Social science is not a species of natural science; rather, it is a dialogic reflection upon human social practices. However, the approach, if granted, is open to one line of criticism; that is, it neglects to attend to differences amongst social agents; in particular, it neglects the centrality within social relationships of the exercise of power. Such exercises are both generic (power relations suffuse social life—thus, say, patterns of assertion and deference within the ordinary social world) and structural (i.e., they belong to a particular form of economic life—in the context of industrial-capitalist modernity, these matters are grasped in terms of the idea of inequality). Critics sympathetic to hermeneutics have asserted that an understanding of power is necessary to any understanding of social life, and proponents of critical theory have pursued this matter.

Arguments from Political Life

The idea of a critical theory of society—or a critical social science—is usually traced back to the work of the Frankfurt School of critical theorists, but from this point, it can be broadened so as to include other lines within the general Marxist canon, thus the young Marx of the Paris Manuscripts or the work of Georg Lukács or Karl Korsch or Antonio Gramsci. And it can also be lodged within wider intellectual history, in which case the idea of 'critical' approaches is available within continental philosophy, hence Kant or Hegel, theorists who attended to the detail of the social creation of patterns of thinking.

In its classic guise, so to say, critical theory belongs to the late 1920s and early 1930s, the period of the Weimar Republic[17] and the period of the initial work of the Frankfurt School,[18] whose theorists, working within the broad Marxist tradition, reached back to the critical work of the young Marx and, from this intellectual and political starting point, confronted both the intellectual realm of positivistic Marxism and the world of contemporary twentieth-century industrial-capitalism. They reinstated a holistic political-economy, one concerned to critically unpack the logics of contemporary forms of the social pursuit of livelihood; that is, they rejected standard disciplinary territories in order to critically apprehend the nature of contemporary economic, social and cultural life. A particular concern was with the cultural sphere, again, as with hermeneutics, the realm of socially created meanings and action. All this opened up a route to a critique of the cultures of contemporary industrial-capitalism, the ideologies of the ruling groups (celebrating liberal-democracy, or later, in Europe, the surge of right-wing conservatism expressed as fascism) and the concomitant spheres of non-elite culture, the ordinary culture of working-class communities (and others) and the popular culture peddled by the commercial media, and this latter eventuated in the notion of 'repressive tolerance'.[19]

The work was influential, but it was interrupted by the rise in Germany of National Socialism and its leading practitioners went into exile. But the School was reconstituted in the years following 1945, and in this second iteration, the key figure turned out to be Jürgen Habermas; his work was oriented towards the task of a 'politics adequate to the present',[20] that is, both reliably grounded and practically engaged.

Habermas has been concerned to create a critical theory that would inform a politics that was both effectively grounded, that is, demonstrably

reliable, not just another ideological stance—and practical, that is, one that directly informed practice, not just another source of noisy ineffective commentary upon passing events. This ambitious objective has found two forms: the first, cast in terms of deep-seated cognitive interests,[21] produces a Freudianized historical materialism which provides the critical theorist with a way to offer emancipatory interpretations of the contemporary scene to class-based audiences in society; the second, cast in terms of a universal pragmatics,[22] sets of claims about the fundamentals of human language carried communication, works similarly to offer a reliable base for criticisms of contemporary society whereby its substantive and moral evolution will be enhanced. Thus, both statements coincide in the presentation of a critical theory, which can read the contemporary industrial-capitalist society and do so in a fashion that opens up routes to the future. More directly, Habermas offers a criticism of contemporary society cast in terms of the demands, which the productive system makes upon the life-worlds of individuals. The system is irrational as its logic points to ever more consumption, inequality and regimentation (including contemporary variants of repressive tolerance, or media-vehicled consumerism), and the solution, underpinned by the logic of human language itself, free communication and its substantive contexts, is the pursuit of democracy,[23] the curative to the demands of corporate and state officialdom.

A parallel line of commentary is turned to the work of mainstream social science. It is characterized as technical-rational; it is a discourse of social manipulation and political closure. The mainstream social sciences borrow from the natural sciences, and the social world is read as a quasi-natural realm and the knowledge claimed is cast as technical and interventionist. But all this serves to veil the political orientation of all corporate and state official actions; they run agendas, and claiming that they are 'scientific' is disingenuous, and claiming that criticism in the public sphere is merely subjective opinion is similarly disingenuous.[24] Again, Habermas advertises the role of the public sphere in advancing demands for democracy that—finally—are grounded in human language itself.

Argument Making in Social Science

Overall, in sum, interpretive–critical social science can be understood most directly as a strategy of making arguments. These arguments are the expression of a complex exchange—schematically, context, theorist and audience—together shaping the presented argument. Another way

of putting this is to speak of modes of social theoretic engagement, that is, different ways of making arguments oriented towards different audiences, producing, in total, a diverse spread of modes of social theoretic engagement. This view embraces the realms of public politics, it embraces policy analysis as one type of argument making (one liable in its practice to MacIntyre's strictures) and it embraces the realms of scholarship (argument concerned to 'get the story straight' or, in Habermasian terms, oriented towards the reconstruction of the public sphere of democratic dialogue); in brief, politics, policy and scholarship.

The range of possible arguments is vast. Making sense is an activity generic to humankind, and the realms of self-conscious sense making are also diverse; nonetheless, the diversity of modes of engagement is restricted as theorists inhabit traditions, and these intellectual machineries are the ground for new exercises in making sense. For Europeans, the central inherited tradition—the classical European tradition—is concerned with elucidating the dynamics of complex change in the ongoing shift to the modern world. This tradition is internally diverse and admits of various practical engagements,[25] and it is a rich tradition, and it shifts and changes with internal debates and the demands of wider patterns of change.

The tradition has a characteristic set of lines of analysis, namely:

- A concern for the detail of social processes (the ineluctable core of social life, i.e., relationship, structure and change).
- A concern for historical–structural analysis (tracing out the development trajectories of particular territories or countries).
- A concern for conjunctures (the ways in which a given territory or country is located within wider patterns of power).
- A concern for phases in development trajectories (the periods of relative stability in structural patterns and agent responses).
- A concern for disjunctures (breaks in development trajectories, the episodes of complex change—generated either internally—novel political projects—or generated externally—changing circumstances demanding responses).
- A concern for the political–cultural projects of elite agents, the institutional vehicles of such projects and for the business of popular mobilization and the legitimation of elite projects.
- And finally, a concern for the resultant global pattern—the global non-system—the world that we have—the contingent out-turn of all these several and diverse processes.

It all feeds into interpretation rather than legislation.[26] The European tradition offers: first, a sophisticated and demanding analytical machinery; second, it offers a subtle and complex substantive analysis; and third, it offers an ambiguous practical message, that is, that deciphering and ordering (to the extent it can be) social change is a thoroughly awkward business; simplicity and clarity are rarely available.

The culture that contemporary Europeans inhabit has been shaped by these resources: in its popular form, it is the story of the evolutionary achievement of progress, a Eurocentric official truth. However, in recent years, there has been a wealth of critical material displaying the multiple errors of this stance; in particular, the omissions flowing from creative remembering and forgetting,[27] and analogously the stereotyping deployed in respect of other cultures.[28]

All this opens up a series of problems for scholarship. First, it is necessary to acknowledge that the contemporary world, for all its increasing inter-connectedness, is home to diverse voices, and to different ways of reading the intermingled common history of humanity. Second, it has to be acknowledged that European scholars face problems in reconstructing a plausible narrative of the intermingled history of the ongoing development of the modern world. And here social theorists can neither take the historical experience of Europe or the West as the unitary model of the historical experience of all peoples, nor accept claims to the identification of a universal model to which all peoples must necessarily defer. Recent celebrations of modernization-cum-globalization are intellectually untenable.[29] In similar vein, more creatively, one strategy recently advanced suggests the substitution of a 'global-centrism' for outmoded 'Euro-centrism',[30] but once again it is not possible to escape the bounds of received culture. The work of the classical tradition must be read reflexively with strategies of analysis located within those processes, which they seek to elucidate.[31] Thus, a more plausible stance looks to the contingent creation of the modern world—an unfolding process—and the machineries of critical interpretation created to read these changes, and presents the resultant intellectual tradition, with its expectations of reason, progress and so on as the given frame for the possibility of dialogic exchanges with denizens of other cultures.

The upshot of these reflections is a view of the nature of social theorizing that makes the following claims: firstly, the business of making sense of the social world is generic to humankind; secondly, social scientific theorizing is one way of making sense, and the spread of familiarly social scientific

arguments is intellectually diverse and admits of a variety of engagements (we may speak of discrete modes of social theoretic engagement); thirdly, the familiar materials of European social scientific work constitute a tradition, the intellectual/practical environment which sustains contemporary practice; and fourthly, the core of the received classical European tradition involves the interpretive–critical analysis of complex change, around which divergent modes of social theoretic engagement can be ordered (and within this core, there are the materials necessary to develop a rich technical vocabulary); and finally, these materials are the inevitable frame for exchanges with denizens of other cultures as the inbuilt expectation is for interpretive–critical work oriented towards dialogue.

OTHER CULTURES, OTHER LOGICS[32]

There are particular difficulties when dealing with other cultures: there is no neutral point from which to engage; there are difficulties of cultural translation, and sets of expectations about understanding and action (the concerns of social science) are embedded within elaborate cultural codes, so what seems clear to one agent may be entirely obscure to another.

First, as there is no context-free point from which the social world may be viewed, enquiry into other cultures will at first inevitably be cast in terms of available domestic resources. It is impossible simply to step outside the culture one inhabits as there is nowhere to step to; enquiry will be cast in terms of the ideas current in the discipline the scholar inhabits, the ideas current within the community the scholar inhabits—the ideas current in the tradition within which the scholar works, and all these add up to a wealth of taken-for-granted assumptions (these can be made partially/intermittently accessible to critical self-inspection but not neatly set aside[33]).

Second, within these complex sets of ideas and practices, there will be deep-seated sets of assumptions in respect of substantive matters—'general theories'; these are not empirically produced statements, rather, they are implied by the machineries used to make sense of the world, and they are projections or artefacts, but they do work to structure overall enquiry: thus, for Europeans, ideas of reason, science, progress and democracy (and all these can be variously unpacked in national traditions, disciplinary traditions, state policies, etc.); but notwithstanding their elusive character, they act to frame enquiry.

Third (substantively), it is possible to look for analogues in other cultures. Thus as all communities have to be ordered somehow: all complex communities will have their political-economies, their social-institutional structures and their politics; all will be embedded within unfolding historical trajectories; and all will be cast in terms of the long exchange between local ideas and those current within the wider global system. Cast in these terms, it is not unreasonable to look for the local logics of local politics.

Fourth (formally), however, these logics are likely to be lodged deeply within forms of life, and some work can be done by arguing by analogy (as above), but unpicking the detail of the logics of other cultures requires a subtle interpretive grasp. Two closely related strategies can be deployed: ethnographic work and thick description of patterns of life, thereafter interrogated to pull out underlying logics via dialogue with local agents. Such dialogue requires a reflexive awareness of the assumptions brought to these exchanges; in other words, both the questioner and the questioned have to be alive to the assumptions running through their heads/cultures (a process clearly creating much scope for mis-communication).

Fifth, a central element of the 'general theory' carried in the classical tradition is the notion of the shift to the modern world—unfolding, embracing other cultures and constructing an interconnected global system—one that requires their elites read and react. In brief, received intellectual tradition insists that all polities must deal with the demands of the modern world, and in this way, thereafter, the resources of European traditions can be put to work. The overall image (or set of assumptions) is that of numerous local trajectories embodying their local models being drawn into the unfolding project of the shift to the modern world. It is one more 'local model', and it orders enquiry.

By way of a gloss on these remarks, first (procedurally)—argument by analogy—it is not possible to step outside inherited cultural frames, but it is possible to contrive very general 'assumption-lite' approaches to enquiries that seek to engage with other cultures; thus it can be asserted that although forms of life are diverse, all such forms must accomplish a set of fundamental goals, that is, sustaining human biological life and securing human social reproduction; thus denizens of the European tradition can look at how other cultures secure their livelihoods, order their social worlds and manage their relationships. It is a framework—a 'ritual truth'.[34] Second, accumulating ethnographic material, that is, thick description of the patterns of life of other cultures, relies on fieldwork or case study, and from the accumulated descriptions, the analysts can offer

a characterization of the logic of that culture. It is an iterative process. And as argument by analogy posits that all communities must organize themselves, then they will have a political logic or something analogous, a distinctive logic. Thick description is one way of accessing such local understandings. Ethnographic material can be linked with, third, dialogic understanding, and this can be sought of the lives of others and the historical trajectories of their polities—an exchange between agents in one culture and those in another. In this way, knowledge of the political logics and shifting historical trajectories of other communities can be uncovered: the jumbled trajectories of multiple diverse polities whose elites read and react to enfolding change in the ongoing shift to the modern world.

And fourth—(substantively) general theory in interpretive–critical work plays a distinctive role. Interpretive–critical work carries deep-seated assumptions not only about humankind or natural science or social science but also about the character and historical development trajectory of the culture that underpins the reflection, that is, Europe. General theory functions to order enquiries. It is not an outline of an empirical research project, and in this sense, the general theory informing interpretive–critical work—and this text—is the idea of the ongoing shift to an ever-unfolding modern world: reason, science, progress and democracy. This framework embraces all particular analyses, and the framework is taken for granted in proffered dialogues with representatives of other cultures, and those working within and with reference to the classical European tradition of social theory are thus disposed to look for change and agent response as part and parcel of an unfolding process, the shift to the modern world.

In sum, for European analysts, social scientific enquiry is shaped by assumptions taken from the European classical tradition, which is concerned to elucidate the dynamics of the unfolding shift to the modern world: it offers a way of reading the logics of discrete polities; and it offers ways of reading the historical development trajectories of discrete polities. It requires reflexive understanding, turned initially to one's own culture for there are no universal models; rather, there are only local models,[35] and those models that claim to be universal are just one more local model.[36] Critically inspecting received domain assumptions[37] is a necessary condition of scholarship. Thereafter the classical tradition offers intellectual mechanisms whereby the logics of other cultures might be accessed. It offers an image of the resultant global system as the out-turn of all these discrete political trajectories; it is contingent,[38] and it has no overall logic,

but the interconnections between the various polities are many and deep: in sum, as with 'world music', there is 'world politics'.[39]

Putting Social Theory to Work: Private and Public

C.W. Mills[40] argues that the key location of scholarly work is to be found in the notebooks that scholars keep, filled with ideas, cuttings, reviews and snippets of material drawn from everyday encounters. Mills adds that sometimes these materials are reworked in formal guise—an essay or a book or similar. Mills argues that the scholarly imagination is sparked by the intersection of private concerns and public issues, and in this way, there is an irreducible personal, idiosyncratic element to scholarship, or, put another way, a quasi-biographical aspect. Cast in these terms, having illustrated the nature of social science, the ideas can be put to work in respect of comparative analysis of those countries with which the author is acquainted; thus places visited, trajectories uncovered, questions provoked, enquiries pursued and, finally, lessons learned.[41] All this produces a series of lessons taken from encounters with other cultures, and these countries can be roughly characterized: China, where local party-state logics diverge sharply from those current in Europe; Hong Kong, where local logics recall those of Europe but are at odds with those of its new 'distant master', China; Thailand, where local logics appear retrograde to European eyes; and, finally, Singapore, which has secured a distinctive place within the modern world and whose local politics are easily recognized by Europeans.

Our formal social science is interpretive–critical, a matter of making arguments, for a wide variety of possible audiences. The arguments we make are bound by context; they are partial finite pieces of interpretive–critical enquiry. The central preoccupation of the scholarly tradition that we inhabit has long been the elucidation of the dynamics of complex change, the unfolding dynamics of ongoing routes towards an ever-receding modern world. These structural dynamics are the environment within which people make their ordinary lives. In this context, political communities can be regarded as projects, always in process of making and remaking. In the case of China, the experience of vanguard-led reform has entrenched an elite inhibited by its own record (of success) and rhetoric (of 'scientific socialism'); in Hong Kong, the experience of having managed a distant colonial master is now disrupted by a new master; in Thailand, the experience of reform-from-above has entrenched a reaction-

ary elite seemingly minded to deflect the demands of the modern world; and, finally, in Singapore, an energetic elite that has embraced modernity and has pursued national development with great success. These experiences can be noted here, and they are variously pursued in the chapters in this text.

China: A State Socialist Route to the Modern World[42]

Qing dynasty China met the demands of the modern world in the guise of British traders. These traders were buoyed up by the vigour of nineteenth-century industrial-capitalism, its economic and military strength, but their initial attempts at opening trade relations with the Qing dynasty were rebuffed, and they were restricted to trading through one port—Canton—in the far south of the empire, and they also found difficulties in identifying trade goods that could be sold into China. The trader's great success was opium, but its import was resisted by the Qing authorities; however, the British authorities were confident in their ideology of trade, and also confident of their military, and on this basis, they provoked the Opium War.[43] The settlement allowed trade through a number of ports, but further violence ensued,[44] and later a second war was contrived, and further ports were opened. Other European powers joined these adventures, so too the USA and so too, finally, Japan. The cumulative impact of these depredations was the fatal weakening of the Qing government. The authorities proved unable to comprehend the scale of the challenge the foreigners posed and nor were they able to effect thoroughgoing domestic reforms and so attempts at response were piecemeal and support ebbed away.[45] The last few years of the nineteenth century proved disastrous: the First Sino-Japanese War cost the Qing treasure and territory, and the Boxer Rebellion cost more treasure and territory. The empire was slowly falling apart under the impact of foreign powers, domestic regional powers and shifting class loyalties (as the opportunities of the modern world opened up to groups in China). At the turn of the twentieth century, domestic critics no longer sought reform, rather, they sought the removal of the Qing government and the empire system.

In this way, the way was opened to domestic critics and reformers; however, success was elusive. The rebellion against the Qing began in central China with a dispute over railways and the rebellions spread. A Republic was declared in 1912, but it could not assert its authority over the whole country, and by 1916, the country lacked any central authority as local

groups asserted their authority and warlords took power through many parts of China. There were multiple groups and many wars. The Republic reasserted itself in the 1920s, but conflicts between the Kuomintang (KMT) and Chinese Communist Party (CCP) dissolved into civil war, and these problems were compounded in the late 1930s as the Japanese presence in China—one more foreign empire—drifted into open inter-state warfare. China thus found itself embroiled in civil war, inter-state regional war and finally the Pacific War. The costs to the country in deaths, population displacement and material loss were enormous, and the losses were compounded following the end of the war in the Pacific, as the civil war resumed.

The military exchange between the KMT and the CCP, both with external backers as the cold war took shape, was resolved in favour of the latter and the People's Republic of China (PRC) was established. The party inaugurated sweeping reforms—economic, social and political; a variant state-socialism took shape, and the party-state provided the political and administrative structure of the polity. At first, policy was peasant centred and there were early success, but later there were severe problems. Mao was displaced and Deng Xiaoping took power, and reforms were inaugurated in the economy and society; in brief, domestically, movement towards using competitive marketplaces, and internationally, opening up Special Economic Zones (SEZs), engineering normal relations with America and embracing the East Asian developmental state model of state-directed export-oriented development. The result was a period of dramatic economic growth, sweeping social reform and hesitant reforms to the party-state system. The country celebrated its successes in the Beijing 2008 Olympics, and the country is now regarded as a great power in the making, yet the government confronts severe domestic problems: pollution, corruption and the tasks of economic reform (towards domestic consumption), social reform (upgrading welfare systems and expanding cities) and political reform (to party and state structures).

Hong Kong: Borrowed Place, Its Own Place[46]

The British seized Hong Kong in the wake of the Opium War. The scatter of islands they obtained had a population of around 6000 with an economy comprising agriculture, fishing and stone quarrying. The island was integrated into the trading networks of the Pearl River delta. It was never, as was claimed, an empty rock. It attracted a flow of inward migrants. In

the early years, there were European traders, plus local Chinese coastal traders. The colonial authority established law in respect of land, laid out a city, built trading operations, and slowly the territory prospered. More slowly, the resident and growing Chinese population were drawn into the administration of the colony. The system comprised a London-appointed governor, assisted by a civil service staff and two committees: Exco, his immediate advisors, and Legco, drawn from the local expatriate population. The Chinese ordered themselves via family, clan, language group plus a few key successful figures and local organizations, temples and a hospital. It was only around the turn of the twentieth century that the Chinese were acknowledged with places in the two committees serving the governor.

The colony prospered. It was never the brightest jewel in the imperial crown: a second-tier settlement overshadowed by Shanghai to the north and Singapore in the south; nonetheless, it was a success. Yet, then, like other places in the region, it was devastated by the events of the Pacific War and its population fell. It was a dilapidated place when the British rushed to return in late 1945 and colonial rule was resumed, elite-level consideration of democratization quickly abandoned. There inward flows of migrants, burgeoning success, and later as China reformed, Hong Kong capital was deployed across the border and both sides prospered. However, there was local political trouble because notwithstanding the prosperity of the colony, little was done for the local people: riots and protests produced a change of policy, and a local variant of the welfare state was introduced. Many new towns were built, and from this time, a strong sense of Hong Kong grew and local people understood themselves in those terms. But in 1997, the territory reverted to China. The Sino-British Agreement guaranteed Hong Kong's distinctive form of life, Beijing wrote a Basic Law and the political notion of one country, two systems was set to order both Hong Kong and its relations with its new distant master in Beijing. It has proved to be an awkward arrangement: economic integration with the Pearl River delta advances, but social integration is slower, but not absent; the politics remain divided and divisive inside Hong Kong and between sections of Hong Kong population and the mainland authorities. These tensions were exacerbated by Beijing's autumn 2014 announcement of an electoral system for the Chief Executive (CE) apparently designed to block any chance of representation by non-Beijing-oriented groups. The mutual adjustment required to ensure Hong Kong's long-term future remains elusive and the suspicion grows that Beijing's agenda is long-term

absorption of Hong Kong so that the city becomes just one more Chinese city in the economic powerhouse of the Pearl River delta.

Thailand: Managing and Deflecting the Demands of Modernity[47]

The British sought trading links with Siam early in the nineteenth century. At first they were rebuffed, but later links were made. The Siamese elite sought to maintain its independence and to that end organized a top-down process of reform. It was an elite-led shift to the modern world, and it was successful. In the 1930s, an army coup removed the absolute monarchy and ushered in a new development trajectory, inventing the Thai nation and renaming the country Thailand. The elite-level civil service, plus business, plus the army ruled the country. The Pacific War obliged the elite to accommodate the demands of the Japanese. In the years following, America became influential and during the Indo-China wars Thailand became a front-line state, but development continued informed by the national ideology of King, land and nation. The politics of the country continued to revolve around the Bangkok-based elite, and foreign academic discussion of the Thai polity noted the dominant role of the elite and the notion of 'Thai bureaucratic capitalism'[48] was advanced. The approach reported that political power was concentrated amongst elite figures—the bureaucracy, army and monarchy—and that this elite managed the development of the country. The masses were simply not involved. The public politics of the country were dominated by repeated military governments typically installed via a military coup, and the post-war period saw numerous coups, and there was some haphazard concern for development; the King made rural development an interest, but broadly speaking, the elite ignored the rural and urban poor.

However, the country was not static and the economy did advance, but fatal errors were made during the 1980s when the bureaucracy and sections of business community bought into available tales about neo-liberal globalization. Hot money flowed in. Hot money flowed out. The Asian financial crisis disturbed the system, and new forces that had emerged during the years of relative prosperity now emerged, including provincial business and rural farming people. These structural changes culminated in the emergence of new political groups, and they cut across the interests of the established elite. Representatives of these new forces took parliamentary power in 2001, and the new government paid attention to the needs of the long-disregarded poor—health care and rural development were

stressed—upgrading the entire Thai economy was mooted. Malaysia and Singapore were mentioned as models of state-led rapid national development, but the established elite were unimpressed, and after a period of acquiescence, the elite moved against the new coalitions of agents; unable to win open elections, they resorted to colour revolution-style tactics of rolling street demonstrations, relentless negative criticism and inchoate demands for reform. Parliamentary parties sympathetic to the elite found new linked allies in practitioners of street politics; nonetheless, the new forces gained re-election in 2005, but elite-sponsored attacks gained strength, and they were supported by the Bangkok middle classes. A military coup was staged in 2006—it failed—that is, it was neither competent at the business of governance, nor did it eliminate the new political groups that it opposed, and after a period of military rule, these new forces regained power via open elections. Again, the elite resisted and a number of governments were variously ejected from power, but these tactics failed and a further coup took place in 2014. Foreign observers expressed outrage, but the local population adjusted—the country has seen numerous such army take-overs; these latest were accomplished without bloodshed, a distinctively Thai form of regime change. For commentators, the question becomes whether the conservative authoritarian mode of rule is a genuine local model—distinctively Thai—or whether the elite's reaction is better judged to evidence a fundamentally failed shift to the modern world, a partial movement, untenable and destined to fail as progress resumes.

Singapore: Elite-Directed Mobilization for National Development

The history of Singapore can be analysed in terms of a series of discrete phases as ruling groups have read and reacted to enfolding circumstances, pursuing a series of projects, all built around trade: Johor–Riau Sultanate, East India Company (EIC) and then British colony. That territory was seized by Imperial Japan in 1942, relinquished in 1945, and thereafter the territory moved hesitantly towards independent state-hood. As the Pacific War came to an end, the British re-occupied their former colony. A confused period followed as various contending groups sought to fashion an independent route to the future. In 1959/1965, an independent government of Singapore emerged and the People's Action Party (PAP) inaugurated its drive for growth and welfare. The shifting patterns of structural power, which enfold the Singaporean polity, have reconfigured in recent years. The context within which Singapore operates is sub-regional

(Association of Southeast Asian Nations [ASEAN]), regional (East Asian, centred on Japan) and thereafter global. The political elite's response to the dynamics of regionalization and globalization has been expressed in a series of popular slogans: the goal of the establishment of a 'regional hub economy', the objective of 'going global', with the optimism and concern together summed in the anxious expression 'Hotel Singapore'.

The role of the political elite and their state machine in fashioning contemporary Singapore is central. The political commitment to rational advance is quite striking. The state has been active in fashioning the particular pattern of economic, social and cultural development secured in the wake of independence. Having come to power in alliance with a Chinese-speaking socialist mass movement, the technocratic, professional English-educated core of the PAP then engaged in a series of battles with these radical elements to secure control of local politics. Their control was quickly secured and has remained free of effective challenge ever since. The support of the mass of the population was sought via successful economic development policies, which relied on inviting in the multi-national companies, and the provision of basic welfare in the form of housing, schooling and health. It is an extensively interventionist system with decisions are made at the top and passed down. Local commentators have spoken variously of depoliticization, an administrative society, an Asian communitarianism or, most recently, of an 'air-conditioned nation'.[49] The process has generated the idea of a Singaporean; the project has been adopted, internalized and routinized by the population. What is clear is that the rule of the PAP has to be seen in terms of an active political elite deploying their state machine to make the population and resources of the state (its geography by and large, and the history of linkages to the capitalist centres) maximally involved with the wider currents of the world capitalist market.

One aspect of this achievement has been its technocratic managerialist style. The social sciences have been put to work. One might ask how the claims made in respect of the role of the state in the development of Singapore fit with my wider claims about social science (that it is not neutral or disengaged or context-free or powerless, that it lies at the heart of the European modernist project). How can social science be yoked to a political project? Policy science is not like natural science (a report on a given reality). It is instead the advice of experts in respect of the achievement of goals specified by others (we can argue on behalf of the planners). But this is not to say that social science is like natural science; clearly, argu-

ments on behalf of planners are arguments on behalf of essentially political goals. In Singapore, social science has been yoked to the political project of the government. The government has long had a coherent political goal, pursued its goal single-mindedly (as evidenced in urban planning, social engineering and economic management). The government's project has involved a mix of coherent development goals, mobilization and repression (only very limited dissent is tolerated). In Singapore, change is continuous, there is no closure, the future is open. Yet virtue is an ambiguous goal, and the role of social science equally ambiguous (but clearly not technical). One could recall Frederic Jameson[50]—we do not need the market, or planning, rather a great collective project; in Singapore over the years of PAP rule, they could be said to have had such a project.[51]

Conclusion: Continuing Concerns

The classical European tradition of social science—diverse and fluid—is concerned with the dynamics of complex change in the unfolding shift to the modern world; it is an interpretive–critical enquiry, and its resources are available for both a critical grasp of the logic of its home countries—Europe—and an interpretive–critical dialogic exchange with the denizens of other cultures—one local culture engaging with other local cultures. In this text, these materials are turned to the logics of polities in East Asia—a burgeoning region, one that made its shift into the modern world via a long exchange with European powers, one that now reveals diverse development trajectories, some running along lines familiar to Europeans, whilst others striking out in other directions, less intelligible to observers from Europe.

Notes

1. After C.W. Mills 1970 *The Sociological Imagination*, Harmondsworth, Penguin—public and private intermixing to spark enquiry—these countries constitute this author's 'Asia'—more particularly, rich sophisticated cities—Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Bangkok and Singapore, along with Tokyo—the manner of their unfolding shift to the modern world is the key to the comparisons offered in this text.
2. See Richard Bernstein 1976 *The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory*, London, Methuen.

3. See G. Delanty and P. Strydom eds 2003 *Philosophies of Social Science: The Classical and Contemporary Readings*, Maidenhead, Open University Press.

4. See, for example, D. Marsh and G. Stoker 2010 eds 3rd ed *Theory and Method in Political Science*, London, Palgrave; P. Burnham, K. Gilland Lutz, W. Grant and Z. Layton-Henry 2008 2nd ed *Research Methods in Politics*, London, Palgrave; C. Hay 2002 *Political Analysis: A Critical Introduction*, London, Palgrave; B. Flyvbjerg 2001 *Making Social Science Matter*, Cambridge University Press—all stress the theory-driven character of enquiry— all note a spread of methods-as-technique—however, it can be added that these are always deployed in the context of making arguments—so the different strands of argument making have display preferences for methods-as-techniques.

5. A. Giddens 1979 *Central Problems in Social Theory*, London, Macmillan.

6. A.F. Chalmers 1982 *What Is This Thing Called Science*, Open University Press.

7. Chris Bryant 1985 *Positivism in Social Theory and Research*, London, Macmillan, has discussed the varieties of 'positivist' social science.

8. On Popper, see M.H. Hacohen 2000 *Karl Popper: The Formative Years 1902–1945*, Cambridge University Press.

9. A point neatly made by Alasdair MacIntyre 1985 2nd ed *After Virtue*, London, Duckworth.

10. Anthony Giddens has referred to the work as informing 'the orthodox consensus'—the naturalistic study of industrial society—see Giddens 1979.

11. Key names: W. Dilthey; L. Wittgenstein; H.-G. Gadamer—and for English-language students, preeminently, Peter Winch; for general treatments, see Z. Bauman 1978 *Hermeneutics and Social Science*, London, Hutchinson; Joseph Bleicher 1980 *Contemporary Hermeneutics*, London, Routledge; Joseph Bleicher 1982 *The Hermeneutic Imagination*, London, Routledge.

12. M. Bevir and R.A.W. Rhodes 2003 *Interpreting British Governance*, London, Routledge.

13. A. Wendt 2011 *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge University Press.

14. Ambitiously, these ideas are extended to the realms of natural science—this author is agnostic—it is enough to get the sphere of the social sciences straight—after Paul Feyerabend, we might say that the natural sciences do not need our advice.

15. A. Janik and S. Toulmin 1973 *Wittgenstein's Vienna*, New York, Simon and Schuster; see also C. Brandstatter ed. 2006 *Vienna 1900 and the Heroes of Modernism*, London, Thames and Hudson.

16. Peter Winch 1990 2nd ed *The Idea of a Social Science and Its Relation to Philosophy*, London, Routledge.

17. On Weimar, see E. Weitz 2007 *Weimar Germany: Promise and Tragedy*, Princeton University Press.

18. Martin Jay 1973 *The Dialectical Imagination*, Boston, Little Brown.

19. Unpacked in Freudian inflected terms by Herbert Marcuse.

20. An expression I take from Thomas McCarthy 1978 *The Critical Theory of Jurgen Habermas*, London, MIT Press.

21. J. Habermas 1971 *Knowledge and Human Interests*, Boston, Beacon Press.

22. J. Habermas 1984 *Theory of Communicative Action*, Volume 1, London, Heinemann; J Habermas 1987 *Theory of Communicative Action*, Volume 2, Cambridge, Polity.

23. J. Habermas 1989 *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Cambridge, Polity.

24. A similar critique is made by MacIntyre 1985—there can be no successful manipulative social science—the mainstream misses the chance to engage with a social world reduced to an exchange between futile claims to expertise and subjective liberal claims to rights—a degraded exchange—better to seek effective participation in renewed community.

25. I have noted above how we can map the diversity, but in addition, or more usually, one can identify national strands (the broad dispositions of nationally constituted communities) (G. Hawthorn 1976 *Enlightenment and Despair*, Cambridge University Press)—one can identify class-based strands (the traditions of Marxism or liberalism)—or, to make the history in a different way, one can look to the progressive exchanges of intellectuals lodged within different traditions (S. Pollard 1971 *The Idea of Progress*, London, Penguin).

26. Z. Bauman 1987 *Legislators and Interpreters*, Cambridge, Polity [Bauman was the dominant figure in sociology in Leeds. A Polish Jew, thrown out of Poland in the late 1960s, he arrived in Leeds via Israel, dominated the department and enthralled his students (me included)].

27. Tony Judt 2008 *Reappraisals: Reflections on the Forgotten Twentieth Century*, London, Penguin.

28. See Edward Said 1985 *Orientalism*, London, Peregrine—the key text in an area of cultural criticism that has developed extensively in recent years.

29. Modernization theory belonged to the 1950s—it generalized the experience of the USA—it came to grief in financial crisis and war—globalization theory belonged to the 1990s—it too generalized the experience of the USA—it too came to grief in financial crisis and war—history repeating itself, etcetera.

30. Björn Hettne 1990 *Development Theory and the Three Worlds*, London, Longman; see also Chris Bayly—widespread 'industriousness' amongst diverse communities—in place of the particular European 'industrial revolution'.

31. Thus can we acknowledge the ways in which the processes of the social construction of knowledge shape those knowledge claims we would make.

32. This section is a brief summary taken from Preston 2009 pp. 139–45; an earlier statement was made in P.W. Preston 1996 *Development Theory*, Oxford, Blackwell pp. 315–48.

33. Hence—reflexivity—émigrés—sojourners—and so on—all procedures/practices give critical distance—but they do not add up to a neutral context-less point of view.

34. The idea of a 'ritual truth' is from the anthropologist A.P. Cohen 1994 *Self-Consciousness*, London, Routledge; it points to an idea around which a group can order its activities—also this idea is clearly redolent of the UNDP idea of 'basic needs'—in this text, the gesture is to ways of making arguments—the UNDP in contrast is a vast international bureaucracy—a quite particular environment within which the idea runs.

35. An idea taken from S. Gudeman 1986 *Economics as Culture*, London, Routledge.

36. Recently, for example, 'globalization', which is merely the view of the Anglo-American neo-liberal corporate world.

37. M. Polanyi 1962 *Personal Knowledge*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul—focal and tacit knowledge—the latter opens up issue of domain assumptions.

38. On contingency—Richard Rorty 1989 *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, Cambridge University Press.

39. Andy Kershaw—forget Western definitions of what counts as popular music—instead, travel and find out what counts in a multiplicity of locales—the collection can then be tagged—hence 'world music'.

40. Mills 1970.

41. A similar procedure is used by P. Bourdieu 2007 *Sketch for a Self Analysis*, Cambridge, Polity who details the contextualized development of his approach to sociology.

42. For my generation of academics, China was a matter for either expert Orientalists or those nominally committed to socialism—for many others, China was allocated to the category of 'special case'—it is only lately that I have begun to achieve some sort of rough imaginative grasp of the nature and scale of the country—scale as geography and history—the China that I know is restricted to large cities—Beijing, Shanghai, Chongqing. All large, all with wide streets, dusty, busy—Shanghai with areas from the concession period—European-style buildings—Beijing with many spectacular new buildings—Chongqing built along the ridge dividing two rivers—pretty university—steps—the burgeoning success of the place is evident—so too negatives, thus, noted by local as well as foreigners, the pollution that has attended rapid growth.

43. C.A. Trocki *1999 Opium, Empire and the Global Political Economy: A Study of the Asian Opium Trade 1750–1950*, London, Routledge; J. Lovell *2011 The Opium War: Drugs, Dreams and the Making of China*, London, Picador.

44. R. Bickers 2011 *The Scramble for China: Foreign Devils in the Qing Empire 1832–1914*, London, Allen Lane.

45. B. Moore Jr 1966 *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, Boston, Beacon.

46. I visited Hong Kong in the last days of colonial rule—the only immediately visible evidence of the colonial power was a shop sign visible from the Peak Tram which read 'British Dry-cleaners'—otherwise the city, to my eyes, was Chinese. Later, living and working there, I came to realize that Hong Kong people had worked a

particular magic—they had not merely learned how to live with their distant master, but they had absorbed and turned to the benefit of their lives some of the traits of that foreign ruler—habits of civic virtue, a clean public service, a well-ordered city—that plus, later, a spread of welfare organizations—but never, to the everlasting shame of the colonialists, had they managed to secure a fully functioning democratic politics.

47. I have visited each year for around a decade—the Bangkok that I know is a small suburban area—more or less a territory that can be walked—I have watched the area being redeveloped—at first the main street was lined with wooden shacks selling beer and snacks—behind them lay a wide area of traditional housing—low level, metal roofs—informal but clearly a thriving community—today, ten years later, the shacks have been replaced with shopping malls—lately made after local architectural style, high roofs, verandas, with only the shop and cafe units enclosed and fitted with air-con—and the informal housing areas are slowly giving way to condominiums—some large scale, mostly three or four storeys—plus business premises and two hotels—I have also watched the politics—the excitement generated by Thaksin and the resolute opposition of the elite—lately the second military coup.

48. F. Riggs 1966 *Thailand: The Modernization of a Bureaucratic Polity*, Honolulu, East West Centre Press; J.L.S. Girling 1981 *The Bureaucratic Polity in Modernizing Societies*, Singapore, ISEAS.

49. Cherian George 2000 *Singapore: The Air Conditioned Nation*, Singapore, Landmark.

50. F. Jameson 1991 *Postmodernity, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, London, Verso p. 278.

51. In the UK—arguably a coherent goal in the early days of the welfare state—never fully accepted—the neo-liberalism of the 1980s/1990s was a long-available reaction—with Tony Blair we seem to have only J.G. Ballard's airport shop culture—in this situation, the (putatively) neutral policy advice given by civil servants (administrators) should not be confused with argument on behalf of the planners in pursuit of a political goal—one could say—you can chop and change policy, but you cannot chop and change political projects with mobilized populations.

Sitting on the Dock of the Bay: Partial Views of Change—Singapore, Tokyo and Hong Kong

These three cities are new; they belong to the modern world; they belong to Asia. All were prosperous in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and after the destruction of the Pacific War, they continued to grow rapidly. The vigour, malleability and outward-directedness of their urban life are manifest (it is clear, up on the surface, not disguised by zoning laws which protect historic centres and banish industry/commerce to the suburbs and motorway networks as in Europe). The cities are the results of political projects; they have their elites, they have their masses and the differences in power, wealth and status are visible: clearly in Singapore and Hong Kong, somewhat less so in Tokyo. In the years since the end of the Pacific War, these elite projects have been driven forward and evidence an optimism about the future which has been only intermittently visible in my home patch in England (thus after the Second World War, there was much optimism about the welfare state and the mixed economy, enshrined, for example, in new modern architecture and new towns, both now unfashionable as the neo-liberal reorientation of the 1980s put in place a preference for the pragmatic accumulation of money, a partial copy of the USA [the ethic of their corporate world, not their democracy] and along with it motorways, cars and out-of-town commercial facilities).

Otis Redding 1967; lyrics available at <lyricsdepot.com> accessed 22 06 2006. This piece has already been published—*Inter Asia Cultural Studies* 2008 9.1; it is reprinted directly to save for the correction of a few errors of grammar.

These trajectories, noted through fragments,[1] reveal that urban dynamism comes with a price tag; indicate that such dynamism informs/underpins a remarkable transience (urban forms are routinely remade); and shows that people are creative, animating these scenes, making their own lives.

* * * * *

Cities are human constructions, literal and figurative: collections of buildings and streets, the infrastructure of urban living and places where people make their lives. Cities embrace the lives and projects of their people, and all are transient: people, projects and cities. In 1945/1949, elites confronted varieties of ruin: the ruin of war; the ruin of received ideas; and the Europeans, Americans and Japanese confronted the ruin of empire, as practice and ideal. There were a series of instances of East Asia's Stunde Null. The indigenous elites looked to build for the future: new projects, themselves unfolding (contingent accumulations); these projects remade their cities, and they remade the lives of the inhabitants of these cities. The post-war history of these three cities catches *macro-change*: domestic projects within shifting regional patterns. European empires are fatally disturbed by war and indigenous nationalists take their chance: Singapore becomes independent, and the new ruling elite drive forwards their project; the Chinese civil war displaces people and sees Hong Kong grow as a new centre of trade; and the military defeat of Imperial Japan by the USA is attended by the widespread ruin of Japanese cities, including Tokyo, largely reduced to ash, followed by rebuilding as economic nationalism is the elite's route forwards. These changes find expression at a *micro-level*: individual people occupy the cities only briefly; we dwell within them for a short time; our personal involvement is temporary, whilst our habitation transitory. The cities are more enduring, yet the cities as social organizations and urban forms continually change: their populations change, the buildings change and the uses to which they are put also change. The patterns of life of the inhabitants of these three cities reflect macro structural change, the evolving projects of the elites and the responses of ordinary people in making their routine lives: in Singapore, building a nation; in Japan, affirming an economic nationalist recovery; and in Hong Kong, adjusting to the demands/opportunities of living at the edge[2] of two rapidly reconfiguring empires.

So, we have three cities: three histories, three elite projects and three characteristic patterns of ordinary life. These patterns shift and change

down through time. The character of these places could be grasped in various ways; here they are grasped in three fragmentary images, carried in memory, accessed in the soft introspection offered by caffeine and sugar. Each image offers an illustration of the place (project/people); each image is limited (to a time and place), restricted [it offers a quite particular insight, not a general view (whatever that might be)] and partial, shaped by the observer [expectations, ideas, values—and aesthetic sensibilities (or not)]. The set recalls the creativity and transience of human settlement; it underscores the fragmentary nature of reflective insight.

The Old Canteen of the World Trade Centre, Singapore

Tanjong Pagar is the main container terminal of Singapore. It is an energetic place, with multiple giant stacks of shipping containers, ranks of yellow cranes and an endless procession of trucks, arriving and departing the dock gates; adjacent to all this activity is the downtown area of high-rise offices, active during the day, quiet in the evenings; and also lying close-by is Keppel Harbour. The harbour used to be busy, but the area is changing its character, and in recent years, major shipping activity has been moved away. What had been a key port, a resource which helped underpin the territory's global trading role, one of those facilities which had been the bedrock of Singaporean wealth down the generations, has been changed into a modern service centre. The World Trade Centre is located in Keppel Harbour. It is separated from the container complex to the east by a new bridge that runs to Sentosa Island, once a military base and occasional holiday destination; it is now a pleasure park with a monorail, a scatter of hawker centres, some reconstructions of war-time fortifications, a long beach and a couple of hotels. An oddly unattractive place, Singaporeans use the name as an acronym, 'so expensive, and nothing to see'; it is now slated, perhaps appropriately, to be the site of an American casino complex. To the west, there are some shipyard repair facilities, a spreading collection of condominium buildings grouped around no longer used dockyard basins, and further away on a narrow precipitous strip of land between the roadway and the sea is the Keppel Club golf course. The World Trade Centre is housed in an imposing solid block of a building. It is several storeys high and emphatically cube-shaped. A cable car links the highest floors to Sentosa Island and the nearby Mount Faber Park. The

World Trade Centre is surrounded by exhibition halls, the familiar giant sheds of modern commercial architecture. The building houses shops and offices. There is a ferry terminus, from which fast ferry boats serve the nearby Indonesian islands. There is a centre for holiday cruise ships. There was also a canteen.

In the early 1980s, when I first visited, the canteen occupied the side of the building adjacent to the harbour. The space was plain. Along one wall was a long serving counter. It had a rail along which a tray could be manoeuvred. A series of local dishes, drinks and snacks were on offer. The room was filled with simple tables and chairs. As the space was quite large, there were a lot of these tables. Along one side, a glass screen wall offered an uninterrupted view of the harbour and a few hundred metres away Sentosa Island. At either end of this huge window with is delightful view hung large black speaker-boxes. In the late afternoon, on one visit, around six, as the sun went down, a few people gathered: some children, occupying a scatter of tables, their surfaces covered with school exercise books; a table of four businessmen, resting presumably from their work in the exhibition halls, drinking a jug of beer; a couple of youngish women with children, eating snacks. It was an unhurried scene—the homework, the beer drinking and the snack eating proceeded quietly. And from the two large speaker-boxes adjacent to the window—now opening onto the rapidly gathering dusk of a tropical evening—came the offerings of Radio Heart—a string of pop songs, with one a firm favourite. I do not know the name of the singers, or the title of the song, and all I can recall is the chorus: 'We built this city, we built this city, we built this city on rock and roll'. It seemed like an anthem. At the end of the day, at the end of a period of nation building, one can take one's ease, work quietly and enjoy undoubtedly beautiful surroundings. Yet, the building and rebuilding continue.

The pace of change in Singapore can be disconcerting; the island has been made and remade in the nearly 50 years of PAP rule. The first generation's project was shaped by the experience of inter-war and post-war political radicalism, the collapse of colonial empires and the cold war. It was shaped by Fabian socialism, conditioned by the legacy of the colonial era and recent war. Their arena was a colonial seaport with a shifting population, all the disruption of occupation and all the difficulties of post-war reconstruction. The PAP looked to union with the Malay Peninsula, as this had been its hinterland; Singapore had developed along with British Malaya; the Straits Settlements were integral to this colonial sphere; and an independent Singapore was not on anyone's mind in 1945. Yet the

difficulties of the crystallization of prospective new nations from the disintegrating territories of colonial empires were severe; Lee Kuan Yew wept on TV as Singapore emerged in 1965 as an independent nation state. The subsequent PAP development project involved a deal: the population were invited to support the party and in turn the party undertook to provide growth and welfare; it was a familiar post-colonial political arrangement. In Singapore, the party was ruthless and effective; it suppressed local dissent and invited in the multi-nationals, becoming an offshore export-processing zone. The key to progress rather than merely processing for others was the continual drive to upgrade the economy: better skills, better infrastructure, more advanced industry and ever more sophisticated linkages with the wider global economy. It worked. Singapore evidenced all the traits of an Asian Tiger. The second generation continued in the established path: more upgrading; now finance, now science-based industry; and sometime in the 1980s in terms of the familiar indices, Singapore became 'developed'. Thereafter advance continued; by the twenty-first century, Singapore was as rich as Europe or America or Japan. In 2004, the third generation moved into power, but a change of direction, the pursuit of new projects, seems for the present unlikely.

The Singaporean elite pursuit of development is attended by incessant change; manifest in 'upgrading'; the endless anxiety for competitiveness and urban renewal. It can be thought of in terms of winners/losers, or more subtly the displacement of the poor, or, one step further, the curious process of 'losing-as-you-win'.[3]

In 1982, the last of the old lighters which moved goods from ships lying offshore to the town's warehouses, and which used to fill the Singapore River, were moved to new anchorages. The curve of the river adjacent to the commercial centre and civic heart of the city was left free of commercial traffic. A long process of upgrading began: a line of shop-houses along Boat Quay was retained and renovated, now a string of restaurants; further up river, new hotels and condominiums were built. On the shore opposite, around this time, there was a hawker centre, Empress Place, dating from the 1960s/1970s, not an original construction but rather an instance of early upgrading, one of the vast spread of urban renewal projects undertaken by the PAP. The hawker centre sat on the banks of the river adjacent to the parliament building and a rather grand colonial concert hall. The centre comprised around 50 stalls, each offering one or two local dishes, fixed tables with equally fixed small stools. Customers ordered food, picked a table and paid as the food was served. There was

also a beer stall. At this time, it was run by an old couple, man and wife. They served Tiger Beer and Anchor Beer. Lemonade might also have been available. Regular customers were given special plastic chairs, preferable to the uncomfortable stools adjacent to the tables near their stall. In the evening, local people gathered; the stalls nearby sold Chinese food and Malay food; the Malay stall was popular: long-haired young Malay boys would gather, rake combs in their back pockets, pretty girls in attendance, and they would stand around their motorcycles talking whilst alongside the river Chinese boys would fish. As the light fell, the restaurants along the opposite shore were illuminated with strings of coloured lights; it was pleasant to sit, drink a beer and watch the world go by as ordinary Singaporeans took their ease. But in Singapore, change is continuous, and, inevitably, the whole area was upgraded in the 1990s. The parliament building was extended and re-oriented, no longer looking towards the river and the sea, rather sitting square to an undistinguished commercial road. The old colonial concert hall has been extensively reconstructed, now a Museum of Asian Culture. And the hawker centre, the place where Singaporeans gathered? It has been swept away; the site now is graced by banal international-style cafes.

The Singaporean elite project has unfolded down the years; the goals of the first generation were clear, so too those of the second, but the current project is unclear; the elite speak of a regional hub and a gracious city, yet the city form resembles the politics—an internationalized elite and a firmly controlled domestic (and domesticated) population, the out-turn of the odd mixture of socialist planning and corporate capitalism. Down the years, I have marvelled at Singaporean development, but in 2003, for the first time I was unsettled: the visible nature of money and power was still there, so too the inequality, so too the good level of living of ordinary Singaporeans, but the elite were speaking about home-landers, those who lived in the Housing and Development Board (HDB) housing estates, and to me it signalled their loss of contact (else why pick them out as a group). The elite continue with the theme of vulnerability, self-reliance and hard work, and they continue to preach upgrading, but to what end? The country is rich. One often gets the feeling that the ordinary Singaporeans are pushed aside when it suits the developers, and they lose these familiar established stylish places; it is true that the new facilities are there for all, and one can visit the new shopping malls and buy the coffee lattes, but what costs 80 cents in the local hawker centres now costs three or four dollars in cafes that could be in any city anywhere. Ordinary Singaporeans

are relocated in the ever-expanding system of new towns—out of the way—making their lives in the HDB flats, local schools, leisure facilities and shopping centres; re-civilizing the sites; but shopping mall blocks are unsympathetic to the inherent untidiness of human informal creativity.

The elite continue; they read and react to change; the polity located on the island shifts and changes; its footprint within the global system changes; and it is change that is the given. But the old canteen at the World Trade Centre is no longer there, a victim of the Singaporean government's energetic commitment to upgrading. The beer stall at Empress Place exists only in memory. I assume the Malay boys gather elsewhere. I assume the schoolchildren have found somewhere else to do their homework. But for me, it's a pity; it's a pity the hawker centre is gone; it's a pity the canteen has gone.

The Coffee Shop of the Tokyo Edo Museum, Tokyo

In the evening, around six or seven, in the fifth-floor coffee shop of the Tokyo Edo Museum, one can sit on a high stool at a narrow counter looking out over the town. There are some five or six of these stools. The window reaches to the ceiling, two or three metres high. It is a clear open view. The line of sight is to the south-west, down the line of the Sumida River towards Haneda Airport. In the evening, viewed this way, the sky darkens slowly, seemingly becoming clearer and still before finally losing light—it is shot with streaks of illuminated cloud—dark red—and one can watch the airliners dropping down into Haneda. As one's eyes move downwards, bringing the middle distance into view, one comes across the first indistinct lines of streets. These streets fill the space between the horizon and the foot of the Tokyo Edo Museum—row after row of buildings—row after row of three-, four- and, occasionally, five-storey buildings—row after row of dun-coloured concrete constructions. The scene is unrelievedly urban—buildings upon buildings—and at the foot of the museum, there is an urban railway line—with commuter trains arriving and departing the local station every few minutes. As the light fades, the windows and street signs begin to shine out and the dense urban texture takes on a new less substantial form; it is patterned, clearly human settlement, but now all shadows and lights.

Close up, the urban texture is distinctive; it is small-scale, two- or three- or maybe four- storey, buildings; cut through with railways, their engineering visible, occasional heavy iron bridges, many simple level crossings,

pedestrians in narrow streets and lanes stand only metres away from fast commuter trains; there are decorated shopping streets; occasionally, larger roads; more rarely, major highways raised on concrete pillars high above the street scene. There are few public spaces, some parks, occasional temple grounds; and all the time, the pattern is repeated; walk for ten minutes out of one's home patch and discover not somewhere else, a place, but more of the same; Tokyo is a simple urban pattern repeated across a vast area.

<div align="center">*****</div>

I lived for a whilst near the centre of the city: a ten-minute train ride from one large downtown shopping district; the area was described as 'popular', which meant it was ordinary; the buildings were mostly two or three storeys, occasionally more, mixing residential, commercial and some light industrial uses. The small area which I brought within the grasp of my imagination was marked by a couple of railway stations, a shopping street split halfway along its length with a level crossing and a rather indeterminate collection of undistinguished street corners which together signalled the edge of my territory. The shopping street was the main axis, about 400 metres in length, wide enough for a car; pedestrian space was marked by white lines at the sides of the roadway; and lined with small shops, often run by families and with their business concerns clearly delimited one from another. During the Sumo festivals, in the evenings, as the early rush hour crowds moved homewards, one could walk along the street from shop window to shop window and stand with the crowds watching the matches one by one on TV sets; the locals were amiable, asking if I needed directions, asking if I understood Sumo, and once asking if I was German. At one end of the shopping street was the new underground railway station, Shin Sakuradai, recently opened; and adjacent to the level crossing which divided the street stood the surface line Ekoda station. It dominated this little area; heavy fast commuter trains ran every few minutes; the structure was functional; the engineering visible; and it managed to be both efficient and ramshackle at the same time, like an English garden shed. At one side there was a small square, pachinko parlours, lanes with restaurants, bicycles stored in hundreds by the commuters; and to the other side was a precipitous set of stairs leading down from the platforms to a lane just wide enough for vehicles which ran alongside the tracks to the level crossing; the lane itself was lined with shops; they were a few metres from

the tracks; one sold nice cakes. It was a pleasant place to live; intelligible within its narrow bounds; a small area, lost within the vastness of Tokyo.

The density of the urban pattern is striking, not just a few streets but kilometres of them, stretching into the distance; the dun-coloured urban form as quasi-natural landscape. It is typical of Tokyo, extraordinary scale; and it is in the maze of streets, people make their lives. In all this, it would be difficult to know what to miss; it would be difficult to pick anything out as particularly meaningful, much less permanent; the urban form is made and remade but remains to outside eyes a pattern, endlessly repeated.

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Tokyo looks so densely made that one assumes it must be long standing, the product of years or generations, but it is all relatively new. The new buildings, like the new museum, are products of the years of economic nationalism, the energetic rebuilding undertaken by the Japanese in the years following the end of the Pacific War.

Tokyo was largely destroyed in 1945 by the US air force; the Americans staged fire bombing raids; in one, some 80,000 people were killed, mostly burned to death. The museum houses an exhibition of these years, and although it is only a part of the longer history of Edo to which the museum is dedicated, it is an eerie feeling to review the collection of images and artefacts from this period. Wars generate multiple memories, each a way of grasping, interpreting and accommodating to present understanding events increasingly remote in time: the US memory of the Pacific War is of virtuous struggle, its methods closed to debate; for the British, the war is largely forgotten, associated with an empire long gone; and for the Japanese, it remains a mixed legacy where nationalists steadfastly refuse to acknowledge events, and the peace movement revolves around the catastrophe of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the majority track a forgetful route between these opposites.

Yet the reconstruction of the city can be recalled; it began with people embracing defeat amongst the ruins, planting vegetable gardens in Shinbashi[4]; and contemporary Tokyo can be described: the urban form, the people, the consumption, the way the place plays within the debates of intellectuals[5] and its presentation in popular art forms.[6] The urban scene is evidence of human energy: it is created and sustained by the activities of people; it shapes their lives and is shaped by them. As with Singapore, the energy and creativity is evidenced in the informal ordinary settings.

It is also an urban scene quite different from my own familiar world, the England of northern industrial towns and prosperous southern small towns. The view from the window of the museum coffee shop in the evening light recalls the opening scenes in Ridley Scott's 1982 film *Blade Runner*, the dystopia conjured from Ray Bradbury's novel, with its theme of illusion embraced, but Tokyo is no imagined dystopia, rather a functional, beautiful city, even if its underlying logic is sometimes not obvious to the outsider.

The Fast Ferry from Central to Hung Hom

Victoria Harbour lies in the centre of Hong Kong; a large natural harbour with Hong Kong Island on one side and the Kowloon Peninsula on the other—maybe a mile across, three or four long. It is filled with ships passing to and fro: ferry boats, container lighters, police launches, some pleasure craft and even the occasional warship; lying to the west are the main container ports; to the east alongside the old Kai Tak airport runway, groups of ocean cruise liners are moored. The harbour is lined with high-rise apartment blocks, flatted factories, commercial premises and offices; the buildings crowd shorelines edged with elevated roadways; the buildings sketch out contour lines on the hills behind; it is the product of human endeavour; it is a dazzling and beautiful sight.

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The fast ferry from Central to Hung Hom ran through Victoria Harbour, took about five minutes and cost a few dollars. It was an exhilarating ride at any time of day, but leaving Central in the early evening as the lights of the office towers begin to burn offered a stunning reminder of the brilliant creativity of humankind. It was not a domestic or pretty view; it did not invite one to linger, to wander and enjoy; it comprised a collection of office towers stacking up the hillside of Hong Kong Island, indifferent to the observer; an austere illustration of the power of human culture, and, one might add, in this case, money.

The ferry was modern; it had two decks, a lower enclosed air-conditioned space filled with rows of seats, aircraft style, and an upper deck with a few widely spaced seats that was open to the breeze. Here one could stand against the rail and, steadying oneself against the pitch and roll, watch the scene unfold. At first the ferry backed away from the pontoon landing stage, turned

through 180 degrees and then began its journey across the harbour. As the ferry pulled away, it accelerated noticeably, leaving a broad white wake. The speed of the ferry created a continually changing perspective that opened out as the ferry accelerated into the waters of the harbour. As the shore receded, one's visual field was filled with office buildings—at first, close up to the shore, one saw only the bases of the blocks by the ferry terminal—two or three buildings, half a dozen floors—then the view broadened, four of five buildings, a dozen floors. As the ferry pulled away, the view broadened again, slowly taking in the whole of Central, the core of the business district of Hong Kong Island with row upon row of office towers, individual, elegant, stylish, all illuminated, the neon signs tens of metres high. After a few minutes, the ferry reached the centre of Victoria harbour and turned to run across to the opposite shore; the track was through the centre of the harbour, before turning into the Hung Hom terminal; the waterway was filled with ships, and one saw both sides of the harbour, lined with buildings, filled with light.

It is a staggering sight, a brilliant human achievement; the buildings were made, and they shape people's lives, but the scale is vast the urban texture is dense, the work of generations. One adjusts, one fits in; the money and wealth and weight of population evidence indifferent to any one person; it is only as one disembarks the ferry that a familiar human scale returns. Central is upmarket, whilst Kowloon side decidedly down market, but both are full of shops, cafes and people.

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Hong Kong is home to some seven million people; the port is the key to its existence and prosperity, and many of these people live within sight of Victoria Harbour. Hong Kong Island was ceded to the British after the Opium War in 1842: its function was a trading city accessing China. The colonial elite attended to their interests, the local Chinese elite attended to theirs, and the distanced collaboration built the city; the local people, migrants mostly, made their own lives as the elites attending their own concerns paid scant attention to those of the local community.[7] The Imperial Japanese occupation of Hong Kong was a disaster; reconstruction was rapid; in 1949, the UN embargoes trade with China; there is incoming flight capital as Shanghai industrialists relocate; and light manufactures develop/recover.[8] Hong Kong grows along with East Asia—in 1978, SEZs are located in Guangdong Province and commerce, industry and trade expand.

The role of government has been distinctive. The nineteenth-century colonial government affirmed the ideal of laissez faire; the 1960s regime justified minimum attention to monetary/financial regulation, plus health, housing and education as positive non-intervention. Hong Kong is often presented as an open marketplace with a minimum state and an energetic business community; however, others see a system centred on business/state alliance oriented towards trade exercised via the administrative state. If the character of state is distinguished from the project pursued by state, then the state character is central like other East Asian countries (the state does exist, it is powerful and it does act), but the state project has not been national development; until 1997, it was the servant of a colonial/local commercial trading elite, and the relationship with China was managed to satisfaction of all groups; after retrocession, the relationship with China was open to reworking; it is a crucial exchange, thus far quite awkward.

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Sadly, the ferry closed down at the end of 2005; a variant celebration of the commercial heart of Hong Kong is available on the Star Ferry; rather differently paced as these 1950s ferries run ponderously across the narrow stretch between Central and Tsim Sha Tsui; here through 2005 and into 2006, reclamation and construction moved ahead: new land, repositioned ferry terminals and more commercial development; creative destruction is exhilarating (it made Central) but unsettling (popular anxiety now finds expression in multiple harbour preservation groups); presently, debate rages about building in Central, the old Kai Tak airport site and the large West Kowloon project; these raise an interesting issue: how can one generation know when to call a halt on the very commercial vigour that created the urban scene in the first place?

The elites and peoples of Hong Kong have long experience of dealing with circumstances where they must adjust but lack direct power to order responses; the colonial authorities cared only for a seaport and the Beijing authorities have their own agendas; the elites and masses of Hong Kong must adjust as best they can; the city has competitors in the Pearl River delta and in Shanghai, and it must bid for influence in Beijing, but on the other hand, it is now part of a large, strong country, China.

Any Lessons?

In an urban area, all we ever see are fragments; the whole is not available to us (except in the particular guise of maps or photographs from the air). The fragments might be accumulated, the fluid shifting experience of urban life ordered through our routines; this provides a larger fragment; it also provides a sense of place, an element of our own locale. I suspect fragmentary insight is the real stuff of experience and order is subsequently made; in social science, all we ever see are fragments, the whole is not available to us; in the social sciences, the fragments are tidied up and put into their Sunday best and the results are maybe useful but also misleading, where the ordering is the start point for system building—positivistic being particularly favoured—at which point (recalling Alasdair MacIntyre[9]) we have lost all insight and moved into the realm of the claims to official truths of officialdom.

In Singapore, Tokyo and Hong Kong, the nature of the form-of-life is inscribed in the urban form; these are rich cities, instances of the long period of East Asian developmental success. It is a remarkable story; these are remarkable cities; they have an austere functional beauty; they are continually remade; elites drive their animating projects; ordinary middle-class and working-class inhabitants adjust as best they may, making their lives amongst ever-changing urban forms.

Notes

1. The approach adopted in this piece is—as the editor's kind readers noted—non-standard. This is deliberate. I wanted to sketch something of the rich detail of those exchanges between events and analyst which C. Wright Mill pointed to in his 1970 *The Sociological Imagination*. The approach taken is informed by hermeneutic-critical work: for this piece, two proximate inspirations are Ludwig Wittgenstein and Richard Hoggart, with the former pursuing a radically unsystematic approach in his 1953 *Philosophical Investigations* and the later using the detail of his own life to illuminate the culture of the class from which he came in his 1958 *The Uses of Literacy*. More detailed (standard) comments on my intellectual orientation can be found in P.W. Preston 1997 *Political-Cultural Identity: Citizens and Nations in a Global Era*, London, Sage.

2. An idea taken from J.M. Carroll 2005 *Edge of Empire: Chinese Elites and British Colonials in Hong Kong*, Harvard University Press.

3. Thus the work of local critics: see Lily Kong and Brenda S.A. Yeoh 2003 *The Politics of Landscapes in Singapore: Constructions of "Nation"*, New York, Syracuse University Press; see also Brenda S.A. Yeoh and Lilly Kong eds 1995 *Portraits of Places: History, Community and Identity in Singapore*, Singapore, Times Editions—the built environment is extensively remade; areas are swept away—for the critics, a Singaporean instance of Joni Mitchel's 'you don't always know what you had till it's gone'.

4. John Dower 1999 *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Aftermath of World War II*, London, Allen Lane; the particular photograph is on page 95.

5. J. Clammer 1995 *Difference and Modernity: Social Theory and Contemporary Japanese Society*, London, Kegan Paul International; John Clammer 1997 *Contemporary Urban Japan: A Sociology of Consumption*, Oxford, Blackwell.

6. The cliché examined—Peter Carey 2005 *Wrong About Japan: A Father's Journey With His Son*, London, Faber—also Sofia Coppola's delightful 2003 film *Lost in Translation*.

7. S. Tsang 2004 *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, Hong Kong University Press.

8. Ngo Tak Wing ed 1999 *Hong Kong's History: State and Society under Colonial Rule*, London, Routledge.

9. A. MacIntyre 1981 *After Virtue*, London, Duckworth, chapter eight.

The Historical Development Experience of East Asia: Growth, Regional Networks and the Developmental State

The collapse of the system of foreign-controlled state-empires in East Asia saw a spread of local elites taking their chance, advancing claims to territory, creating states, building nations and thereafter pursuing various projects, each a local mix of elite plans, subaltern expectations and the shifting demands of circumstances. A number of lines of intellectual commentary and policy advice emerged. Outsiders looked to the recapitulation of the models with which they were familiar. Europeans looked to Keynesian informed growth theory, Americans to modernization, later globalization and, running in parallel, free market theorists simply celebrated the power of the competitive marketplace to maximize all human benefits. All described ways in which new states could adopt available models and join in the existing system. But the replacement elites had their own concerns and these ran with outside expectations only fortuitously; replacement elites sought their own embedding within regional and global networks and what they came up with has subsequently been tagged the devel-

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opmental state. It is available in varieties. Japan gave the lead, the Asian Tigers followed; later the strategy was picked up in Southeast Asia and finally another version has been created in the historical core of the region, China. It can be understood as a distinctive way of reading the history, circumstances and available futures of the countries of East Asia.

As indicated, the debate about development in East Asia is a contested one with participants taking up differing positions[1]: *early growth theorists* analysed problems in terms of the idea of the elite construction of effective nation states—that is, elites were taken to be committed to the creation of liberal market economies plus liberal democratic polities; this work was later subsumed within the broader framework of *modernization theory*, which looked to the elite-managed process of the shift from traditional to modern societies; thus once again the end-point was taken to be a mix of liberal markets plus liberal democracies. The idea was rehearsed later in the guise of *globalization theory* and once again the end-point of development was to be a variation on the theme of America.[2] At the same time, *state-socialist theories* of development were advanced which stressed the state-directed, collective, equitable, provision of goods and services necessary to successful life in the modern world.[3] And, running alongside these discourses, yet in contrast, *liberal market theorists*, who were influential within North America and parts of Europe, offered an enthusiastic affirmation of the power of the free market,[4] and adherents of these views explained the success of East Asia in these terms,[5] claiming that the policies of local elites were market-conforming and that in due course any state involvement would fade away as liberal markets plus liberal democracies took shape. All these theories had their adherents and all were influential. However, notwithstanding the insights of these lines of argument, an examination of the record in terms informed by the classical tradition of social theorizing reveals a much more complex story of global structural changes and local agent responses as elites created a distinctive model of development, now often celebrated in terms of the core idea of the East Asian developmental state.[6]

THE SHIFT TO THE MODERN WORLD IN EAST ASIA

The modern world revolves around science-based industrial-capitalism; the out-turn of a complex series of intellectual, moral and practical changes that in total ensured the supersession of the hitherto extant agrarian, theocratic and feudal system.[7] It was invented by accident by Europeans, spread

around the globe and has drawn in most parts of the world.[8] The core logic of this form of life or civilization is change as patterns of livelihood are continually remade. The community of natural scientists continually produce new knowledge and technologies, producers generate new goods and services that are fed into an ever-shifting series of marketplaces and social groups read and react and either prosper or fall by the wayside. As one noted European theorist had it: 'the bourgeoisie continually revolutionize the means of production … all that is sold melts into air'.[9]

The political logic has revolved around the machinery of the state.[10] In Europe, the early Westphalia system (1648) ushered in a system of sovereign states; thereafter, the system was elaborated through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as core states contrived nations[11] and overseas accumulated peripheral territories until a network of full-fledged state-empires emerged, in particular Dutch, British, French, American, Japanese, German and others.[12] At a macro scale, the system has been configured first as a Eurocentric system of state-empires and then from the 1920s onwards, as the system waned, it slowly turned into an American-centred system of alliances that confronted a double-centre of state-socialism during the period of cold war. In the wake of the end of the cold war, the nature of the system is now debated, and some see a unitary global system (globalization), whilst others argue that it seems to be a tri-regional system with three powerful elements in America, Europe and East Asia.[13] From the perspective of East Asia, the thesis of regionalism seems plausible, but the system is not static and it continues to change.

In East Asia, the shift to the modern world was both difficult and suffused with violence. The incoming traders[14] were not dealing with empty lands or peoples without civilization or, where the evidence of civilization was too obvious to ignore, moribund civilizations[15]; indeed, the reverse was the case. East Asia was home to long-established forms of life, and the region was criss-crossed with extensive trading networks; in brief, East Asian polities were both ordered and wealthy, with the last noted being the occasion of the interest of foreign traders.[16] The arrival of traders presaged a lengthy process of local reconstruction—economic, social and cultural and also political—and where trade links were resisted, the incoming traders were able and willing to deploy technically advanced violence[17]; the violence was extensive, drawn out and routine.[18]

In all this, four phases can be characterized: *first*, early trading contacts, which saw small numbers of Europeans joining extant East Asian networks of trade as just one more minority group; *second*, the deepening of the

foreigners' involvement such that small numbers became larger and larger just as demands upon host forms of life became more and more onerous, a process eventuating in the construction of formal colonial empires; *third*, a period of general crisis which saw a multiplicity of conflicts within and between state-empires, leading into extensive, drawn-out warfare that saw these empires collapse and new local replacement elites take power; and *finally*, a long post-colonial period of development during which local elites fixed their countries firmly in place within the modern world as they variously pursued state making, nation building and development.

Pre-contact Civilizations and the Colonial Era

Prior to the arrival of European traders, East Asia was home to a number of rich, successful long-established civilizations; in very broad terms, there were three: a Chinese cultural sphere comprising China, Korea, Japan and Vietnam; a Malay cultural sphere comprising mainland Indo-China and the very large archipelago to the south; and, finally, located to the west, an Indian cultural sphere centred on the sub-continent and including modern-day Pakistan, Bangladesh, India and thence to the Arab lands of the Middle East. These three cultural spheres were distinctive, sophisticated, economically advanced and linked by extensive trading networks.

A number of recent theorists have considered the macro-historical situation of pre-contact Asia.[19] It is widely granted that the region was economically and culturally active; that is, contrary to familiar characterizations cast in terms of tradition versus modernity,[20] these civilizations worked. As noted, A.G. Frank[21] offers a complex argument on this; in brief: first, that circuits of trade and money linked the countries of South, Southeast and East Asia; second, that before the rise of modern Europe, the centre of the global economy was in Asia; third, that Europeans joined in these existing flows of trade and money; and, finally, fourth, slowly the Europeans became prosperous by virtue of their participation in these Asian flows of trade. Thereafter, as the domestic European situation improved, these states became expansionist, and in time, as they slowly subordinated local economies to the logic of their system, they constructed state-empire systems and thus in the peripheral areas became colonial powers. Or, in short, the Europeans created state-empire systems and became rich by participating in existing regional flows of trade, and Asia as a consequence enters

the modern natural science-based industrial-capitalist world via this historically specific exchange with European, American and, later, Japanese colonialism.

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After the Spanish and Portuguese invasion of Central and Latin America in the sixteenth century and the exploitation of indigenous supplies of precious metals, there was more money available in Europe, and this increased the supply of credit. Historians report that it funded excess consumption, thus, castle building, along with more productive investment in Spain/Europe, and it also funded further colonial expansion across the Pacific.[22] The Spanish reached the Philippines in the sixteenth century, and their early trade exchanged silver for Chinese goods, and later, after the Spanish–American War, traders in the islands turned to participate in the by now British-ordered trading sphere in China.[23]

After this and other early contacts made by the Portuguese in China and the Dutch in the archipelago, European and later American traders began to participate routinely in the established Asian networks of trade. At first, they were only minor figures within the established trading network: a few ships visiting a few ports in order to exchange a limited spread of specialist products. At first, the traders came in small numbers and they set up trading bases or factories with a few dozen people. The existing patterns of East Asian trade could accommodate their demands, but as numbers grew and their demands increased, the situation altered; slowly the incomers became important players. Thereafter, the change from mercantile capitalism to natural science-based industrial-capitalism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries caused further pressures on indigenous forms of life, and slowly they were subject to great changes as their economies and societies were brought into conformity with the demands of the European-centred industrial-capitalist system.

The science-based industrial-capitalist economy was a powerful and dynamic system: the innovative and competitive logic of the system drove the search for ever-greater efficiency in domestic markets (intensification) and the search for new markets overseas (expansion). As industrial-capitalism took shape, European traders had a growing schedule of demands in Asia: *first*, they turned from the output of traditional producers to the output of modern mines and plantations; and *second*, they turned from small markets for specialist trade goods to large mar-

kets for manufactures. As their economic impact deepened, so did their political demands: small factories turned into large treaty ports; seasonal trading (monsoon winds) turned into all-year trading; and they began to change the local economy with new imports, new exports and new trading partners. At first the trading companies handled the politics. So from the outset, the European trade was organized via large state authorized companies: notably, the EIC and the Dutch East India Company (VOC). They not only organized trade but also signed treaties and organized armies. However, by the mid-nineteenth century, as a result of assorted failures, they had been superseded by direct British and Dutch state involvement. And, around this time, the French state also became involved, and at the turn of the twentieth century, the American state also became involved. The Japanese also established an empire. East Asia was drawn into the system of state-empires, and in the region, formal colonial regimes were created and the economies were organized according to the policy decisions of the metropolitan elites; thus core–periphery relationships were established, creating ambiguous mixtures of exploitation and development.

The state-empires were different in character but had some basic similarities: peripheral colonial holdings were run from metropolitan centres; the nationals of these centres were privileged within these peripheral territories; there were elaborate status hierarchies; often there was a racial divide; and the whole system was legitimated with ideas of the superior civilization of the peoples of the metropolitan colonial power. However, the exchange between incomers and local people was not one-sided. The state-empires could not have succeeded without the cooperation of local people in peripheral territories: local rulers who adjusted to new circumstances, local traders who benefited from new business opportunities and many ordinary local people who had new life chances to pursue. The confused patterns led to subtle exchanges between various agents groups. There were winners and losers. And simple stories of active/progressive Westerners overcoming the passive/moribund East, or alternatively of the harmonious stable East being overcome by aggressive outsiders, are false as expansion was an active exchange involving multiple agents. The modern world was not simply transplanted and reproduced in new locations, but rather when agents of change arrived in a new location, there was a long exchange with local power holders and what emerged was a novel variant of the modern form of life.

General Crisis: The Failure of the State-Empire System

The system of state-empires reached an apogee in the years before the Great War when, in retrospect, extraordinarily, most of the geographical territory of the planet had been absorbed administratively by one or other of the major European-centred state-empires. These European powers were joined by America and Japan. At this time, other broadly premodern empires were in decline, and thus the Qing, Ottoman and Czarist Empires. In this situation, elite denizens of core territories took themselves not unreasonably to be rich and secure; they understood themselves as exemplifying the power and status of European modernity, and populations generally went along with these claims.[24] The masses in peripheral territories mostly accommodated themselves to their circumstances, as they had little choice, but elites were less amenable, variously seeking alternatives.[25]

However, whilst the system seemed stable, it was nonetheless subject to manifold pressures; there was competition between core elites,[26] and there were concerns amongst peripheral elites for membership on equal terms of the modern world (or, in some cases, rejection of that modern world) and there were various calls from subaltern groups throughout system for reforms to ameliorate their particular diverse circumstances.[27]

The system collapse began in both periphery and core in the early years of the twentieth century. In China, there was a rebellion against the Qing authorities; there were proto-nationalist movements in India; there were ongoing colonial wars of control.[28] There were also aspirations to state-empire status amongst some latecomers, including Italy, Japan, Germany and the USA. And from 1914, there was open warfare amongst the core powers in Europe.[29]

The violence marked the start of the process of collapse of the state-empire system, and a sequence of interlinked wars followed in Europe and in East Asia. These wars came to involve most of the contemporary states or state-empires either as combatants or in related subordinate roles, such as supplies or raw materials and so on. The military operations were confined to Europe and East Asia, and these two areas suffered great loss of life and material destruction. The wars ran on until the late 1940s, and the upshot of the general crisis was that the broad political map was radically redrawn.

The End of the Colonial Episode: Fixing New Polities Within the Modern World

The Pacific War destroyed the state-empires in East Asia: for the Dutch, British and French, it marked the starting point of a fairly rapid retreat from all overseas colonial holdings. The war also saw the destruction of the state-empire system constructed in Northeast Asia by Japan. However, America emerged from the war years much more powerful than before: militarily, economically, politically and culturally. They played a key role in both dividing East Asia into cold war blocks and helping to rebuild and remake the American-oriented grouping of countries, but they did not actively help rebuild pre-war-style colonial holdings, and in these territories, security, development and democracy were the new ideals/slogans; the first pair were linked,[30] the last optional. For the USA, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan were their key preoccupations.[31]

However, in most parts of East Asia, after the catastrophe of the war with its millions of casualties, extensive damage to infrastructure and colossal social disruption, and with the grip of sometime colonial powers fatally weakened, local nationalist elites took their chance, sought power, created a series of new states, whereupon they made nations and pursued development. It was not a smooth process. There were numerous small wars as incoming elites battled amongst themselves and with soon-to-be-departed colonial powers. In addition, cutting across this process, the American-inspired cold war occasioned two lengthy, highly damaging large-scale wars, one in the Korean Peninsula and the other in Vietnam and its neighbouring states. Nonetheless, setting these problems to one side, it remained the case that a series of nationalist elites were free to organize states, create nations and pursue development.

After the war, development experts were pessimistic about the future of East Asia, but, in practice, whilst the physical damage was extensive, it was relatively quickly repaired, and by the early 1950s, economic outputs, in general, had recovered to pre-war levels.[32] The key factor in determining the future trajectory of these countries in 1945 was not the extent of the destruction of their economies, but rather it was the character of the dislocations and elite responses. The pre-war system of state-empires collapsed: domestic patterns of economies changed; there were new power holders; international patterns of economic linkages changed with new relationships/divides; and the social/political environment in East Asia was radically transformed as throughout the region domestic nationalist

elites were able to seize power. The detail shows many variations, but the overall pattern is clear: it is one of recovery.[33] In respect of sometime holdings of state-empires, as these dissolved new elites emerged, laid claim to territory and established independent countries focused on the pursuit of national development[34]; in the case of Japan, occupation modulated into renewed economic advance; and in China, the sometime core of the region, recovery was cast initially in state-socialist terms, later the country embraced a variant of the East Asian model and change swept the country.

There was great success in Japan, the Asian Tigers and later in Southeast Asia. In China, an autarchic state-socialism was established, and then in the late 1970s, a new policy was inaugurated producing rapid economic advance, social change and political tension. By the middle of the 1980s, economic advance within the region was apparent to many observers. The various countries had large industrial sectors, extensive natural scientific research capacities, major universities and a growing middle class. There were deepening economic, social, cultural and political linkages throughout the area. Commentators began to speak of the distinctiveness of the developmental state and the creation of an East Asian region.[35]

Japan and the Developmental State

The modern world arrived in feudal Tokugawa Japan in the form of traders: the Americans in 1854 in the form of Commodore Perry; the Russians in 1855 in the form of Admiral Putiatin; a little later, the other European powers followed.[36] Perry sought trading links, and he was both insistent and well-armed.[37] The foreign powers obliged the Tokugawa authorities to agree a variant form of Treaty Port System. However, there was much local opposition, and under pressure and unable to formulate a clear response to the demands of the foreigners, the governing elite collapsed. Thereafter, there was a brief civil war, which produced the 1868 Meiji Restoration, which brought to power a modernizing elite oligarchy, which, once in power, undertook sweeping reforms to the economy, society and polity.[38]

By the late nineteenth century, Meiji Japan had become a powerful country, and as they took their place in the European-dominated global system, 'late development' was followed by 'late imperialism' as the elite began to construct a state-empire system in Northeast Asia. Around the turn of the twentieth century, the elite expanded their colonial holdings through wars against the Qing[39] and Czarist[40] Empires, later in the 1930s

and 1940s through military campaigns in China, incursions in Indo-China, invasions of Southeast Asia and war against the USA. The Japanese military were thus involved in a drawn-out land-war in China, where they defeated the armies sent against them but could not end the war, and a sea-borne campaign against the Americans in which both their merchant marine and navy were largely destroyed, leaving the home islands without effective defence.[41] The industrial and military imbalance between Japan and the USA had made defeat inevitable. The USA occupied Japan and began to implement a wide range of reforms.[42] However, in the late 1940s, the start of the cold war brought changes in American policy, reforms were scaled down or abandoned and Japan became a business-dominated conservative anti-communist ally of the USA.

The brief modern history of Japan is full of dramatic changes, yet throughout the period, the Japanese elite have consistently followed a project of national development. A number of key features of this project can be noted: it is state directed; it is business friendly; the politicians are subordinate but active participants; the population is highly disciplined; and the focus of these efforts is to create and maintain a first-class economy.[43]

Debates: The State, the Economy and the Society

The record has been impressive and has attracted much attention, and commentators have called attention to various features of the system, in particular, the character of the state, the particular sociological make-up of the economy and the habits of thought current in society.

(i) The State Machine

In regard to the state machinery: commentators have noted that this has been the vehicle for an alliance of elite bureaucrats, elite politicians and elite business. After the war, the key organization was Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI),[44] and the country was mobilized for the pursuit of economic growth. Commentators spoke about an iron triangle, which linked bureaucracy, business and politicians who collectively took responsibility for the family of Japanese people who in turn affirmed the ideal of harmony.[45] The nature of the state machinery has been widely debated.[46] A number of lines of debate can be noted: the strength of the state (weak/strong), the economic policy effectiveness of

the state (effective/ineffective) and the international trade role of the state (interfering/directive).

So in the first place, the issue of the power of the various elements involved and the extent to which they are able to pursue a collective goal: thus the ministries are powerful and independent minded; there are numerous parties (communist, socialist, liberal and those associated with religious groups); and ministries and parties link up with business. One noted analysis of the resultant pattern suggests that these agents spend most of their time manoeuvring against each other, thus the Japanese state is, somewhat paradoxically, weak.[47] However, cutting against the claims of this line, it seems that overall the system is both committed to national development and successful.

Then, in the second place, this successful record has given rise to a long-running debate about the effectiveness of the state. Here, on the one hand, mainstream liberal market economists regard the state as an administrative and judicial mechanism with a restricted function: its job is to maintain social order (establish and police the security of persons) and protect property rights (establish and police property law) as these are the minimum requirements for making contracts and thus sustaining liberal competitive markets which thereafter can be left to their own devices as they will act automatically to maximize both individual and social benefits. Cast in these terms, the Japanese state is liable to cronyism and the economy is in urgent need of liberalization. This is a familiar line in European and American financial commentary. Yet, the system continues. Political economists take a different view and argue that the state is an interlinked set of institutions each with power/authority over a restricted sphere. The state machinery is available for elite groups to use in order to pursue broad political projects, and this entails forging an effective alliance of players, envisioning a route to the future and mobilizing the population accordingly. So cast in these terms, the Japanese elite has contrived effective machinery for the pursuit of national development, hence the 'developmental state'.

And then, in the third place, as indicated, there is a related debate about the business of trade. Here mainstream liberal market economists affirm two key macro-economic ideas of 'comparative advantage' and 'free/fair trade' and argue that if international markets are left to their own devices, then everyone will end up richer. The political economist David Ricardo is the original theorist of the idea of comparative advantage. The idea is that if countries focus on those activities for which circumstances best

fit them, then they will be able to produce goods and services and trade in the global marketplace by selling their goods and services and buying those of others. Thus, comparative advantage plus free trade means that everyone ends up richer. Cast in these terms, the policy stance of the Japanese state can be read as trade-distorting (blocking the smooth functioning of global trading mechanisms) or, more severely, as mercantilist, that is, actively seeking to override market mechanisms in favour of narrow national advantage.

In the nineteenth century, the theory of free trade suited the British elite. It justified their role as core high-tech industrial producer trading with raw materials suppliers and low-tech manufacturers. Wealth moved to the metropolitan core country. In other words, the theory justified a structural imbalance: rich countries stayed rich and poor countries stayed poor. However, in the late nineteenth century, the general free trade line was challenged by the rising industrial powers of America, Germany and Japan. The key theorist was Friedrich List who argued that any state, which wanted to industrialize in a global context where industrial economies had been established, had to protect its infant industries (with quotas and tariffs on imports) and encourage these infant industries (by providing infrastructure, training, tax breaks, etc.). This was the theory of 'late industrialization'. In all this, the key agent was the state.[48] In East Asia, the Japanese state followed this strategy. The model has been variously repeated throughout East Asia.[49] It is now called the developmental state. It is still contentious: hence the long-running debates about regulating international trade, where neo-liberal proponents of free trade argue for global economic integration, whilst more sceptical theorists look instead to negotiated managed trade (acknowledging particular interests), and in the meantime, states act pragmatically to secure agreed advantage for local interests.

(ii) Economic Sociology: Firms and Markets

In regard to firms and markets: here some commentators have focused on the nature of firms and the market.[50] In Japan, a dual economy developed which both allowed competitive international companies to thrive and allowed an inclusive domestic economy to prosper.[51] First, there is a world-class corporate sector. Here large conglomerates or keiretsu dominate: these comprised a network of related companies that supported each other. Each company is organized after the style of a family, with flat hierarchies, secure employment and corporate mission statements.

Management strategies include ideas of continual improvement, just-in-time production and flexible specialization. The corporate sector includes big-name companies plus numerous construction companies, which are notorious for money politics, but also serve as a vehicle for Keynesian-style economic development projects. Second, there is a high-quality small family firm sector: it includes suppliers to the big companies with long-term relationships; it also includes a large retail sector with many small family run shops, which is heavily protected by local authorities from open competition; and the small firm sector also includes farms which are small and heavily protected with prices much higher than world market. The small firm sector creates employment, assists the corporate sector (through supply chains) and acts as a buffer for large firms (who can off-load burdens of adjustment during difficult trading periods).

(iii) Patterns of Thinking

In regard to patterns of thinking: here commentators have argued that religion and culture more generally foster discipline and obedience. Thus, firstly, the 'Confucian work ethic' mirrors the Western 'Protestant work ethic'. The argument was briefly influential—but any idea that religion translates directly into practice is difficult to defend. Max Weber was concerned to illuminate the role of ideas in human social practice against then current mechanical Marxist positions—hence the references to religion—hence the discussion of labourers moving from the East—but the logic of his arguments about Protestantism are not clear—what he did not say, as later vulgarizers have claimed, is that Protestantism caused capitalism (plus, like others, he saw Confucianism as conservative, not progressive). Relatedly, secondly, on culture, there is much commentary[52]—some commentators have spoken of 'groupism', but another theorist points to the social ethic of 'harmony'.[53] There is also an indigenous literature—Nihonjinron[54]—that does celebrate the racial or ethnic special-ness of the Japanese. However, as noted, the relationship between culture and economic activity is interesting but difficult: the relationship is not causal. Culture shapes understandings and interests. If agents must read and react to structural change, then they read and react in terms of the ideas available to them, the ideas passed down in tradition and reinforced and amended in practice; in other words, ideas count, but how they count depends on local circumstances.

The Four East Asian Tigers

The group of countries often labelled the four tigers offer distinctive variations on the Japanese theme of the developmental state turned to the goal of national development. However, the quartet is not all of apiece as two were colonial territories of Imperial Japan and two were trading ports within the British Empire. Thus the broad geo-strategic and geo-economic environment has been important.[55] The state has been a key factor. Thereafter, American policy and general influence were crucial: first, providing aid (financial, military and technical); second, opening its markets (to the exports of these countries); and third, expanding the global marketplace into which the four tigers could expand by virtue of its own vigorous domestic economic growth. The tigers comprise, firstly, South Korea and Taiwan—sometime colonies of Japan, which have pursued state-led development within the direct context of cold war tensions; then, secondly, the sometime colonial port cities of Singapore and Hong Kong, now successful trading cities. Their record has been noted and much debated.

In Northeast Asia, the Japanese colonial holdings were re-ordered. So, *first*, the war-time great powers the USA and USSR decided to divide Korea,[56] and this produced the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK), or, more usually, North and South Korea. The two Korean leaderships were hostile to each other, and in 1950, after numerous mutual provocations, the North invaded the South. In 1953, after an inconclusive and catastrophically destructive war, an armistice was agreed and the division was fixed in place: in the North, the leadership turned inwards and built a Stalinist state-socialist system,[57] whilst the South followed a different path and, after a period dominated by elite rent-seeking, turned to the model of Japan and deployed the machineries of the state to encourage technically sophisticated industrial conglomerates as the economic base of national development. Then, *second*, in 1949, at the end of Chinese Civil War, the KMT set up Republic of China (ROC) in Taiwan. There were serious conflicts with the indigenous Taiwanese, who retreated from political life. The Nationalist elite accepted American advice, determined to build successful economy after the fiasco on mainland and sought local legitimacy via economic advance. Thus there is a strong political drive to economic development, and the territory's elite creates a version of the developmental state and pursues a variant of national development.[58]

In Southeast Asia, in Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew and the PAP inherited control of the port city from the colonial power and, in 1965 after a failed merger with Malaysia, assumed the leadership of an independent sovereign state. The PAP embraced the pursuit of national development. The government put economic growth at the centre of its concerns, and it mobilized the population, repressed political opponents, established a planning apparatus, organized the formation of locally rooted development bank[59] and encouraged multi-nationals (thus EOI from the outset with local entrepreneurs left to their own devices in retail and services). The government routinely intervenes in the economy to support and encourage business sector: it upgrades infrastructure, it upgrades the regulatory framework, it continually remakes the urban form and it also looks to upgrade people as one more aspects of the local economy. The deal for population is material welfare: employment, housing, schooling, medicine, pensions, leisure facilities and overall social stability. It has been successful, and the country is now a regional–global hub linked to ASEAN and the USA.[60]

Finally, in Hong Kong, in 1945, the colonial power reoccupied the territory. There was a brief discussion of democratization, but this was quickly cast aside.[61] In 1949, as the cold war began, the UN embargoed trade with the PRC. The effect on Hong Kong was positive, as the city not only received flight capital, but also became a key entry point for foreign trade with China. In the 1960s, Hong Kong becomes a wealthy city: it has a trading port, local industry and a growing financial centre. As East Asian development accelerates, so does that of Hong Kong. Then, around this time, local people demand reforms and the colonial state begins to organize basic welfare (housing, schools, new towns, etc.). There is a further boost to the local economy from 1978. As China reforms, much Hong Kong industry is relocated into Guangdong Province and the economy grows along with the economy of southern China. In 1997, the territory is retroceded to China. The Pearl River delta is now a global centre for manufacturing, China's economy is developing and Hong Kong is heavily involved.[62]

The success of the four tigers attracted attention. There have been many debates about the reasons for their success; often they overlap with debates about the Japanese record. So one line of argument casts matters in cultural terms; thus East Asia offers a 'Confucian capitalism' with obedient, hard-working people. But whilst it is true that the region has its 'own culture'—as does everywhere else—a number of more prosaic fac-

tors in the region's success can be mentioned. Structural factors have been important: first, the role of USA in providing aid and demanding reforms to domestic structures; second, the economic implications of American cold war military expenditures in the region[63]; and third, the role of long post-Second World War economic boom, which provided a friendly economic environment for the pursuit of national economic growth. And then, domestic elite factors have been crucial: first, the role of national elites in charge of competent state; then the contribution of energetic local business marketplaces[64]; and finally the particular nature of developmental state.

In brief, the four tigers have been ruled by elites oriented towards the pursuit of national development, and their record in the years following the Pacific War has been remarkable, where development experts anticipated low-level growth, the reverse has been the case, sustained rapid growth plus sweeping change within their respective societies.

Southeast Asia and Indo-China

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, European and American colonial regimes were established throughout most[65] of Southeast Asia and Indo-China.[66] The otherwise loosely integrated region (trade, culture and historical practice[67]) was divided by the new colonial powers, and spheres of control were established. Local rulers were displaced or co-opted or radically remade according to colonial specifications. Economies were re-ordered to colonial specifications. Populations were re-profiled with flows of migrants moving in from other parts of the empire territories or from China in particular. Europeans came in relatively small numbers, as sojourners not settlers. And novel colonial boundaries were established and new polities were formed. A number of colonial trading cities were developed which linked the colonized spheres with the global system. In these ways, the peoples of the region were drawn into the modern world. It was not an entirely one-sided process as local elites and peoples adjusted, accommodating the demands of foreigners, finding new opportunities and often prospering. A kind of stability was created. However, the comfortable world of European and American colonial rule was shattered by the expansion of the Imperial Japanese Empire. The Pacific War made foreign empires untenable, and, in various ways, they dissolved away. New elites made new states and new nations and pursued various projects, nominally

national development. There are many successes,[68] but there is still extensive underdevelopment.[69]

(i) The British Sphere: Burma, Malaysia, Brunei and Thailand[70]

After the Pacific War, the British colonial sphere in Southeast Asia was dismantled and several states were formed: Burma/Myanmar, Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei. A related territory was Thailand: prior to the war, it had been linked to the British Empire, but after 1945, it became closely linked to the USA. All these territories were marked by their colonial legacies: they had economies geared towards a narrow set of external requirements for primary products (tin, rubber, rice and other tropical products); they had weak industry; they had weak finance; they had societies shaped by colonial practices (often multi-ethnic) as a result of easy inward migration and exhibiting ethnic/economic sectors (thus particular ethnic groups were often associated with particular economic activities); and they had cultures and polities influenced by colonial-era ideas/practice creating hybrid cultures and polities. This was the starting point for post-empire development: Singapore and Malaysia pursued national development; Thailand continued along its path of elite-specified development; Brunei was an oil-rich monarchy; and Burma/Myanmar turned inwards to a variant of state-socialism.

(ii) The French Sphere: Indo-China—Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia

After the Pacific War, colonial elites and local nationalists found themselves embroiled in extended wars of liberation plus cross-cutting cold war proxy conflicts. Indo-China has only recently emerged from decades of war. It is only recently that the familiar goal of national development [with its multiple practices (and evasions)] has been embraced by local elites. These elites have in addition faced the demands of economic restructuring consequent upon the inter-related processes of economic transition (the market-oriented reforms widely adopted in the wake of the collapse/reforms in Eastern Europe) and East Asian economic success (which has provided an attractive positive model). Indo-China remains generally poor, but for the first time in a generation, it is neither at war nor threatened by insurgencies, plus it is increasingly well linked to the global economy. So national development finally does make some sort of sense as an elite policy orientation. Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia are now members of ASEAN.

(iii) The Dutch Sphere: The Archipelago

Prior to the colonial era, a number of Malay maritime empires flourished throughout the archipelago; these made up a political/trading region; the colonial systems of the Europeans divided the area; and then decolonization produced new nation states, later regional re-integration via ASEAN. The Dutch East Indies embraced territories across a broad collection of islands. Dutch control was broken in 1942, and later attempts supported by the British failed. Indonesia emerges as a sovereign state in 1948—thus, broadly speaking, Indonesia entered the modern world via the long experience of Dutch colonial rule. After independence, the elite was committed to national development but its economic policy was incoherent. A military coup in 1965 changed matters: the new elite reaffirmed a commitment to national development and was successful. An informal alliance of Indonesian politicians and local Chinese business made attempts to upgrade the economy. A primary product economy was broadened to include manufactures; oil revenues helped the process of diversification and the maintenance of elite-level stability. However, the economy was severely damaged by the 1997 crisis. The long-established elite was displaced, and thereafter, there was an occasionally uneasy continued stability and a slow recovery of the economy.

(iv) The American Sphere

The Philippines archipelago was linked to Malay world prior to European contact: in the seventeenth century, it became a colony of Spain: the colonizers established landed estates, with landowners plus peasants existing in a patron–client system; they introduced Catholicism; and they built an economy around primary product exports. At end of nineteenth century, an indigenous independence movement was successful, but American colonial invaders in pursuit of domestic ideals of great power status intervened and conquered the territory.[71] American rule reinforced the established pattern; there was little economic and social development; however, the colonial authorities did add an American-style administrative and electoral system. The country has landed estates, primary products, some manufacturing industry and tourism. The country is also a major exporter of its own people, whose remittance money is vital to the domestic economy. Outside commentators remark that the country is less developed than it might be, pointing to the narrow concerns of a narrow elite.

(v) The Historical Recovery of Southeast Asia

Amitav Acharya[72] argues that Southeast Asia had a coherent regional identity in the period before the arrival of colonial powers: there was a regional economy of trade, regional social linkages and common cultural traditions. The incoming foreign powers disturbed this integrated system, creating, in its place, discrete colonial spheres, each oriented towards the metropolitan core country. The extent to which such externally oriented systems penetrated local level forms of economic life must be in question—but, in respect of the modern sectors of these economies, such official redirection could not but have an accumulative impact.

By the same token, the removal of these colonial powers opens up new opportunities. In particular, ASEAN has functioned as the vehicle for a renewed/reinvented regional coherence. A cooperative Southeast Asia now exists in significant measure: elite-level relationships are good; diplomatic and security cooperation is deepening; and trading links are developing. The region weathered the storm of the 1997 Asian financial crisis.[73] Overall, the region is increasingly integrated. It is successful. It has created its own patterns of political life.[74] An important component of the success has been the organization ASEAN, although an integrated Southeast Asia remains a nominal goal and a work in progress. ASEAN functions to provide an overarching goal for the region—prosperity of one sort or another—and as one plan date approaches, another, more distant, is embraced, and so for ASEAN, the future is an ever-receding horizon.

China and the Modern World

Over the course of the nineteenth century, the various agents[75] of European and American industrial-capitalism slowly undermined the Qing dynasty; the authorities in Beijing made belated efforts to respond, but failed, and finally their rule collapsed; the empire fragmented; and recovery and national development were very difficult.[76] In summary, the Chinese people make three attempts to join the modern world: *first*, the 1911 revolution of Sun Yat Sen, which struggles with warlordism and civil war before attaining a measure of success during the Nanjing Decade before suffering foreign invasion; *second*, the 1949 revolution of Mao Zedong, which initially is successful but thereafter declines through the hundred flowers movement, the great leap forward and the Cultural Revolution into the clique-ridden confusions of the final years of the chairman's life; and *third*,

the piecemeal accumulative market-oriented reforms of Deng Xiaoping, which had begun in 1978, sustained over 30 years and have achieved great material success at the cost of deepening social and environmental problems. China's record was celebrated at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Chinese elite faced the task of fashioning a coherent response to the demands of rapid change which had been precipitated by the incursions of European and American traders, armies and politicians. Elites struggled to come to terms with these demands. Chinese intellectuals stressed the importance of maintaining Chinese culture whilst borrowing useful modern ideas such as state, nation and progress. Domestic politics became fractured and the empire began to disintegrate into multiple centres of power/authority. In 1911, allies of Sun Yat Sen overthrew the Qing dynasty. It was the beginning of a modern republic in China. Sun Yat Sen advocated the three principles of nationalism, democracy and the people's livelihood. It was a political programme designed to make China a modern state and nation. However, the republic was quickly overtaken by events as China dissolved into numerous conflicts: between warlords, between nationalists[77] and communists, and between China and Japan. Yet the period did see the first post-empire independent state; recalled by historians as the 'Nanjing Decade', it was finally destroyed by Japanese invasion in the late 1930s.

The republican period had great achievements and some notable failures: the state recovered control of concession areas and trade tariffs; there was some deepening of the reach of the state, that is, its ability to raise taxes and make investments in the country; there was extensive development in urban areas with Chinese capitalists and foreign capitalist expansion; but against this, rural areas remained traditional with a mix of peasant farmers, landlords and rural gentry; and throughout the country, there were continuing problems of underdevelopment, corruption and war—and the last noted progressively overwhelmed all other considerations.

The Russian Revolution was influential amongst subaltern classes not only in the core states of the state-empire system but also in many peripheral territories—including China. The CCP was formed in 1921. There were debates amongst elite cadres about how to interpret the lessons of Marx and the Soviet revolution. The USSR offered advice and Chinese cadres travelled to Moscow. However, Mao[78] after early defeats for the party—in particular in Shanghai—revised European ideas of communism. In place of the familiar Marxist stress on the role of the urban industrial proletariat, Mao stressed peasant vitality/agency, moral action and nation-

alism. This perspective produced a peasant-focused, egalitarian, nationalist path towards development. These ideas informed policy strategies of collectivization, mass mobilization and heavy industrialization. The early years of Mao's rule were successful: peace was established, foreigners removed, popular land reform instituted and a measure of prosperity created for the general population. However, there were problems, in particular, Mao's commitment to the energy/creativity of the peasantry feeds into major mistakes: the political relaxation of the late 1950s—the hundred flowers period—creates opposition which is repressed, thereby silencing many experts and professionals; the great leap forward looked to advance development quickly but produced confusion and famine; and the experiment of the great proletarian Cultural Revolution produced widespread disturbances throughout society until the army moved to suppress the experiment.

The Maoist period had great achievements and some failures: first, crucially, the unification of China and expulsion of foreign powers of all kinds; then, relatedly, the formation of a stable effective state oriented towards national development; thereafter, the implementation of rural land and agricultural reforms through collectives plus urban industrial development through state-owned industries; however, against these, the costs of the hundred flowers plus anti-rightist campaign, plus the costs of the great leap forward (and the creation of large-scale communes), and then finally the costs of the great proletarian Cultural Revolution.

In 1978, Deng Xiaoping took control, rejected Maoist utopianism and opted for pragmatism in economic policy making—black/white cats. The leadership stressed learning from the modern world; knowledge and technology were embraced and reforms inaugurated to copy the East Asian development model; the programme is technocratic, piecemeal, developmental and national; the party/state system is maintained; market mechanisms are developed in agriculture, industry, finance and the consumer sphere; and there is headlong economic growth plus widespread stresses and strains in the economy, society and polity. The new policy entails the slow dismantling of a state-socialist economy—reform focuses on economic change whilst holding political system stable—a stance reaffirmed after the 1989/1991 events in Eastern Europe—following problems in China itself, ideas of nationalism play a greater role within society. The reform trajectory has been pursued for over 30 years—it has been a success—although there are problems of mis-development. The 2008 Beijing

Olympics signalled the recovery of the country, which is now recognized as a great power in the making.

The Reform Era: The Achievements and Contemporary Problems

The reform programme borrowed from the experience of East Asia—the state-directed pursuit of national development. The reform programme was very ambitious: the state-socialist system was distinctive, as the party-state directed all aspects of economy and shaped citizens lives; however, there was flexibility in the translation of theory into practice, and there were many inefficiencies and resistances. Nonetheless, the state was inter-mingled with the economy, and disentangling the two was difficult. It involved creating a marketplace with law, firms and consumers. It involved creating social welfare systems with health, education and housing. It involved renovating the political system in order to legitimate the new arrangements.[79] The economic reforms and consequent social impacts/reforms have continued.[80]

The period of opening and reform has seen sweeping changes and great success. However, there are still multiple problems: corruption in the key political structure, the party/state machine; analogous corruption in business; mis-alignments in planning between capital and provinces; inequality between coastal and inland China; rural/urban migration and related inequality in urban areas; and severe widespread and unsustainable environmental degradation. But, more positively: China has seen export industries move up the technology ladder; has seen growth of domestic consumer market continue; has seen growth of a middle-class support base for government; is rebuilding cities and building infrastructure; and is an increasingly significant regional and global power.

East Asia: Model, Values and Crisis

In 1945, development experts thought that East Asia had rather poor prospects: it had many peasant farmers; it had few modern industries; it had limited sources of capital; plus it had been extensively damaged by decades of warfare (thus: deaths, injuries, displacements plus material losses, with cities and resources destroyed). Yet against these expert expectations, the actual record has been quite different. The countries of the region have recorded great success. The reasons have been much debated, and scholars, policy analysts and political commentators have all

tried to discover the secret of success: the central area of debate has been the idea of the developmental state (or East Asian model[81]); a related idea is that of Asian Values; there was some discussion about the Asian financial crisis; and a recent influential area of debate looks to the idea of regions.

The debate about the developmental state or Asian model began in the 1970s[82] amongst development theorists, and the issue was how to explain the success of Japan and the East Asian tigers because their success was in sharp contrast to perceived stasis or failure in other parts of the Third World. Society and culture were mentioned, but the role of the state was picked out as important. The debate grew in scope in the 1980s as Japan/USA trade problems grew and numerous scholars and policy analysts considered the record. However, by now the debate had become somewhat intemperate as strong positions for or against were adopted.

First, some asserted that there was nothing special about East Asia as the economies were merely undergoing a process of catching up with the developed West, and mainly this entailed bringing into use factors of production otherwise neglected, thus the shift from mainly rural to urban living and production.[83] Then second, some asserted that there was nothing special about East Asia; they were merely pursuing mercantilist policies to advance their trade at the expense of others and that these policies should be resisted.[84] And third, some granted that there were some novel features in East Asian economies such as the role of state, the nature of systems of financing and the widespread elite-level habit of long-termism, but then added that all these novelties were merely supplementary to fundamental market functioning.[85] Then, finally, fourth, some asserted that there were significant differences between East Asia and standard Western versions of modern industrial-capitalism and that these differences merited study, in particular the role of the state was crucial.[86]

As these debates ran on, albeit without clear resolution, a parallel conversation began around the idea of Asian Values, and here the debate shifts from matters economic to the realm of culture and politics. The debate emerges in the 1980s/1990s and is associated with Lee Kwan Yew and Mahathir Mohamad who used the idea in response to American and European criticism of their governments and polities. Lee and Mahathir spoke of the values lodged within their own cultures (hence Asian Values). They insisted that there was a difference between American and European liberal individualism and Asian ideals of community. On this basis, Lee and Mahathir rejected foreign criticisms of failing democracy and rising authoritarianism—in place of such imported models, both authors urged,

countries should look to the resources of their own countries, their own cultures and their own histories.

The idea of Asian Values has been much discussed. Affirming the notion entails one strategic formal claim and then a trio of key substantive claims (but there are varieties amongst proponents). The key formal claim is that human values (ethics, ideologies and routine social mores) are thoroughly social; that is, they are established by social groups over time through routine social practice, or, put briefly, values are lodged in cultures, and these, as a matter of simple report, are various in their ideas and practices and different from one another[87]; the key substantive claims are that Asian Values encompass (1) a communitarian ethic,[88] (2) a strong commitment to the pursuit of national development and (3) general social agreement that these objectives should be organized by a responsible elite coupled to a disciplined populace.

Lee and Mahathir used the ideas polemically in public disputes with foreign critics, but their arguments carried a plausible claim to the context-bound nature of social rules, to the particularity of forms of life and to the irreducibly local core of the political life of communities. It is easy to see why they annoyed those American and European commentators disposed to affirm the universality of their own liberal or Enlightenment (or simply nationalist) ideals.[89]

As before, debate was inconclusive, but this notwithstanding, the arguments were restated during the 1997 Asian financial crisis. The broad background to the crisis involved decades of rapid growth (the East Asian miracle[90]), an increasingly integrated regional economy that lacked an overarching mechanism for coordinating policy and on the part of the countries of the region limited state capacity to deal with unforeseen problems (knowledge, personnel and law). More directly, during the 1980s, the rise of influential neo-liberal ideas of globalization plus the development of new credit facilities by Wall Street meant that pressure mounted on East Asian states to deregulate, liberalize and borrow money. The global system was awash with credit/money. Neo-liberal ideas and the credit and the optimism all fed into country-level business, and there was heavy borrowing for investment. A private sector bubble economy developed—however, circumstances moved against the debtors and credit facilities suddenly disappeared. The bubble burst: financial speculation undermined local currency values; these problems spilled over into the wider financial system and from there into the real economy. At the same

time, problems, which had begun in Thailand, spread throughout the region as speculators attacked other regional currencies.

The crisis began with speculation in forex markets against the Thai currency; these markets were able to overwhelm Thai central bank attempts via intervention in markets to protect the established exchange rate; the local currency collapsed in value; a *cascade* began as problems in the financial markets spilled over into the real economy; as firms went bankrupt, unemployment rose generating social problems; and finally, these problems spilled into the political sphere. A related *contagion* began as speculators moved from one regional currency to the next looking for speculative gains. East Asian countries suffered significant damage to their development objectives: critics of the developmental state and the ideas of Asian Values took themselves to be vindicated—speaking of 'crony capitalism'; forty years of economic development and associated social and political advance was thus dismissed; a region that had been celebrated as a success was now damned as having been always corrupt; political economists disagreed offering a nuanced tale cast in terms of the intersection of distinctive local financial environments with that of Wall Street—with the former easy prey for the latter[91]; as the immediate crisis abated, local policy elites drew their own political conclusions and moved pragmatically to protect their economies—better regulation plus a build-up of foreign reserves and currency swap agreements so as to be able to block any repeat of such destructive speculations against their currencies or the equally destructive attentions of the IMF.

There was a sharp debate about the crisis involving multiple voices and many intemperate claims. First, neo-liberal free market thinkers diagnosed 'crony capitalism'. The problem lay in badly functioning East Asian markets, and this was due to political interference, and the solution proposed was to fix the markets, that is, deregulate.[92] Second, institutional economists diagnosed a mix of domestic and international problems. The deregulation had been ill-advised and domestic banks were unable to deal with the inflow of money and nor could they deal with forex speculation. They 'lacked institutional capacity'. The solution proposed was to upgrade banking regulation. And third, political economists diagnosed 'premature liberalization'. The problem lay not with the domestic economies or policy mixes which had served the countries well for 30 years; rather the problems all began when national governments allowed their banking and private sectors to suck in available foreign credit which exposed the

domestic economies to speculative attack by forex dealers. The solution proposed was to re-regulate and control credit flows.[93]

In respect of the East Asia model, values and crisis, the links between these debates were many, but there were two crucial matters: first, the issue of characterizing the experience of East Asia; and second, the issue of the response of existing powerful regions, in particular North America, home to the machineries of the Bretton Woods system, the Washington Consensus and Wall Street.

The Idea of an East Asian Region

The debates about models and values plus the experience of the 1997 financial crisis heightened the sentiment amongst East Asian elites of belonging to a distinct region, a region with its own concerns (and problems) and with its own place in the world. It is likely that these ideas will gain further traction in the ideas/actions of elites, and regional links and identity are likely to strengthen. The experience of the 2008–2010 financial crisis has reinforced these trends: America and Europe were severely impacted. The collapse having its origins in the deregulated light touch financial sector established in particular in Wall Street and the City of London at the behest of the very same neo-liberal ideas whose adoption[94] had prepared the ground for the 1997 crisis.[95] Faced with these problems, there has been talk about increasing coordination: in finance (issues of managing regional financial links and common problems); in manufacturing industry (issues of deepening trade linkages); in social concerns (further exchanges ranging from tourism, through language institutes and student exchanges to discussions over difficult issues in collective memory of conflicts); and in the political sphere (building confidence, establishing institutional mechanisms and deepening trust). It is likely that these conversations will continue and issue in policy initiatives.

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It may seem that these debates are of no great moment, and the territories of East Asia have moved from poverty via the activities of the developmental state to the status of a powerful region, and it is a marvellous record, and although many people are still poor, East Asia continues to advance. But the debate matters, for both scholars and policy agents.

Thus, in the first place, the debate matters for scholars because there is an intellectual issue, for if it is granted that East Asia is special, then a new set of problems emerge, namely, how to grasp the multiple logics of the global system. If there is a single integrated global system, then the task of grasping its logic is straightforward, as the historical experience of the presently advanced economies offers a model that can be taken to be general (modernization/globalization). But if there is no single global system, then the issue of how it works is made much more awkward. If it is made up of separate elements, it is necessary to grasp their discrete logics. If there are multiple local models,[96] then it is necessary to grasp their logics and relationships one with another, and this entails interpretive and dialogic work.[97]

Then, in the second place, the debate matters to policy analysts and political actors. Thus for policy analysts, the issue is one of power; who gets to set the rules governing global trading in the twenty-first century? One possibility is that there will be a continuance of the 1945–1989 American hegemony, embodied in the Bretton Woods liberal trading system. Another possibility is an agreed post-1989 multi-polar system (EU, East Asia and the USA) with a continuing role for the institutions of the Bretton Woods system (IMF, World Bank and WTO). Or more dramatically, the system could begin to 'de-globalize', and in some measure, this inclination was reinforced by the 2008–2010 crisis, in which case, rules will be set for Europe and North America, but for East Asia, matters might be more problematic as there are tensions within the region (a resurgent China confronting its neighbours to the north, Japan (invoking history), to the west, Taiwan (leftover issues from civil war) and to the south, ASEAN (lodging claims to the South China Sea))—and there are tensions that reach outside the region, in particular the response of the USA to the rise of China.

NOTES

1. Reviewed in P.W. Preston 1994 *Discourses of Development: State, Market and Polity in the Analysis of Complex Change*, Aldershot, Avebury; P.W. Preston 1996 *Development Theory: An Introduction*, Oxford, Blackwell.
2. On the theory, see P. Hirst and G. Thompson 1992 2nd *Globalization in Question*, Cambridge, Polity; for a celebrant, F. Fukuyama 1992 *The End of History and the Last Man*, London,

Hamish Hamilton; on American nationalism, A. Lieven 2004 *America Right or Wrong: An Anatomy of American Nationalism*, London, Harper Collins.

3. Diverse strands—political economists whose work looked to J.M. Keynes, or in Latin America, the tradition of dependency theory and the role of the state were central in most poor countries, and it was also ideologically central in countries such as the USSR, India and China.

4. Those groups who were from the 1980s onwards tagged 'neo-liberals' had in practice been active since the Second World War—they resisted 'planning', whether it was state-socialist or Keynesian-inspired or Christian socialist; they argued that it was both technically impossible, morally wrong (individualism being preferred) and politically dangerous (tending to authoritarianisms of one sort or another).

5. See The World Bank 1993 *The East Asian Miracle*, Oxford University Press.

6. An idea presented by Chalmers Johnson and pursued by other theorists such as Robert Wade and Alice Amsden and discussed recently by Linda Weiss.

7. Themes familiar in the classical European tradition, back to Ferdinand Tönnies and Émile Durkheim; they were mis-read by theorists of modernization and later globalization such that the post-Second World War USA both exemplified the modern and indicated the end-point of the process—for an egregious example, see W.W. Rostow 1960 *The Stages of Economic Growth*, Cambridge University Press.

8. Contingency entails rejecting essentialist claims to the superiority of European or Western civilization—it was just different—the difference being natural science—the expansion of the system was secured by a mix of trade and violence—the demands made by core powers upon peripheral units created a multiplicity of novel forms of (industrial-capitalist) life—on this, see Peter Worsley 1984 *The Three Worlds: Culture and World Development*, London, Weidenfeld; on the abstract issue of contingency, see R. Rorty 1989 *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, Cambridge University Press.

9. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels 1848 *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*.

10. On this, see Ernest Gellner 1983 *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford, Blackwell; elites needed the organizational form of the state, and they put it in place, and thereafter it was legitimated in terms of the idea of nation—see also Benedict Anderson 1983 *Imagined Communities*, London, Verso; Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger 1983 *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press.

11. Gellner 1983; Anderson 1983.

12. In Europe—the Russian Czarist Empire and the Austria-centred Hapsburg Empire; in the Middle East, the Ottoman Empire—all three disappeared at the end of the Great War.

13. A noted technical critique of the claims of globalization theory was given by P. Hirst and G. Thompson 1992 *Globalization in Question*, Cambridge, Polity; in historical sociology of knowledge terms, as the American-centred 1950s gave us modernization, so the American-centred 1990s have given us globalization.

14. Later settlers—thus Australia and New Zealand (on the former see R. Hughes 1988 *The Fatal Shore*, London, Pan)—plus inter-peripheral flows of people, sojourners, whose patterns of life also impacted host societies (see, e.g., contemporary Malaysia).

15. The fate of more than a few countries in the region—thus India—thus China—in the last case, an example of 'blaming the victim' as the British imported opium—on the wars designed to facilitate the sale of opium, see J. Lovell 2011 *The Opium War: Drugs, Dreams and the Making of China*, London, Picador.

16. The key to the argument advanced by A.G. Frank 1998 *Re-Orient: Global Economy in the Asian A*ge, University of California.

17. Both the science-based apparatus of warfare, in particular guns and sails (C. Cipolla 1966 *Guns, Sails and Empires: Technological Innovation and the Early Phases of European Expansion 1400–1700*, New York, Pantheon)—and the organizational forms of state-ordered violence (large armies or navies coordinated over time and over distances)—later, tagged, logistics.

18. On this, see, for example, Victor Kiernan or Richard Gott—both offer synoptic overviews—on China, see R. Bickers 2011 *The Scramble for China: Foreign Devils in the Qing Empire 1832–1914*, London, Allen Lane—roughly, the invading foreigners were rapacious unprincipled scum.

19. Frank 1998, J. Hobson 2004 *Eastern Origins of Western Civilization*, Cambridge University Press.
20. A long and undistinguished trajectory—recently, globalization; previously, modernization; and before that, the race-inflected opinions of early twentieth century and so on (A. Bonnett 2004 *The Idea of the West*, London, Palgrave)—the classical European tradition of social theorizing is internally diverse—today we select—a 'disciplinary collective memory'.
21. Frank 1998.
22. Frank 1988 and Hobson 2004 both discuss flows of precious metals, the basis of currencies in the early modern period.
23. On Hong Kong, see S. Tsang 2004 *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, Hong Kong University Press; J.M. Carroll 2005 *Edge of Empires: Chinese Elites and British Colonials in Hong Kong*, Harvard University Press.
24. A recent debate has revolved around extent to which domestic populations bought into ideologies of imperialism—the process was likely not straightforward—elite ideas coupled to popular media ideas coupled to direct experience of peripheral territories would together suffuse the public sphere—resultant local mixes would be various—support or opposition or sympathy or hostility—for an overview of some recent debates, see S. Howe ed 2010 *The New Imperial Histories Reader*, London, Routledge.
25. Resistance began early—it took many forms—it was only from the mid-1930s that it gathered force—in the 1940s, it had its chance.
26. Christopher Clarke 2012 *The Sleepwalkers* argues that Europe's slide into the Great War began with a mix of Italian aggression against the declining Ottomans—in Libya—and this was an example for Balkan states to follow—local nationalisms eventually gave rise to the assassination in Sarajevo.
27. See, for example, Bill Warren 1986 *Rickshaw Coolies: A People's History of Singapore 1880–1940,* Oxford University Press.
28. These could include wars in Burma and Indo-China and later the Dutch in Aceh.
29. Clarke 2012.
30. The influential New Deal generation read the conflicts with which they had become acquainted as the result of unequal development and material deprivation—poverty caused political radicalism—the idea was run on into the cold war—hence 'communism was just a

reaction to material poverty'—the policy implication was thus clear—it later found accommodative expression in 1960s 'convergence theory'—it found aggressive expression in some texts on modernization—see W.W. Rostow 1960 *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*, Cambridge University Press.

31. B. Cummings 1999 *Parallax Visions: Making Sense of American-East Asian Relations at the End of the Century,* Durham, Duke University Press.

32. Data of course shows great variation—Japan recovered quickly, the Korean War aiding its recover and that of other countries in the region—Korea did not advance—the Philippines recovered and then faltered—Indonesia faltered and then advanced—and so on—the point here is that experts looked to a ruined area, with no resources or capital and had expectations of low-tech primary producing economies—in the event, the region has become a global powerhouse.

33. This development history can be told in several ways—the cold war can be prioritized, see M. Yahuda 2004 *The International Politics of the Asia-Pacific*, London, Routledge—the process of the dissolution of state-empires and the associated construction or reconstruction of states in the region can be prioritized, see P.W. Preston 2014 *After the Empires: The Creation of Novel Political Cultural Projects in East Asia*, London, Palgrave, or a more standard development theory treatment can be given—so first, Japan, then the Tigers, then ASEAN and lately China—this last is followed here.

34. On the collapse and concomitant success of nationalists—B.N. Pandy 1980 *South and Southeast Asia 1945-79*, London, Macmillan; J. Pluvier 1977 *Southeast Asia from Colonialism to Independence*, Oxford University Press; C. Bayly and T. Harper 2004 *Forgotten Armies: The Fall of British Asia 1941-45*, London, Allen Lane; N. Tarling 1993 *The Fall of Imperial Britain in Southeast Asia*, Oxford University Press—on the subsequent record, for Southeast Asia, see the sequence of discussions from the 'Australian school of political economists'—R. Robison, R. Higgot and G. Rodan.

35. On regions, regionalization and regionalism—see M. Beeson and R. Stubbs eds 2011 *Routledge Handbook of Asian Regionalism*,

London, Routledge; on American perceptions, see P. Katzenstein 2005 *A World of Regions: Asia, Europe and the American Imperium*, Cornell University Press; P. Katzenstein and T. Shirashi eds 1997 *Network Power: Japan and Asia*, Cornell University Press—see also J. Zysman 1996 'The Myth of the Global Economy' in *New International Political Economy* 1.2; and M. Bernard 1996 'Regions in the Global Economy' in *New International Political Economy* 1.3.

36. The Dutch had arrived early but had been restricted to Deshima in the south—the settlement is treated in a novel—David Mitchell 2011 *The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet*, London, Sceptre.

37. He arrived in modern iron-clad steam-driven warships—new to the Japanese—the threat was thus apparent—see W.G. Beasley 1990 *The Rise of Modern Japan*, London, Weidenfeld, pp. 26–34.

38. For a concise sketch, see Beasley 1990.

39. First Sino-Japanese War—1894–1895 over access to Korea.

40. Russo-Japanese War 1904–1905 over access to Manchuria.

41. Max Hastings 2008 *Retribution: The Battle for Japan*, New York, Alfred Knopf.

42. John Dower 1999 *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Aftermath of World War II*, London, Allen Lane.

43. The Japanese elite sought to run a 'first-class economy' ever since they joined the modern world at the time of Meiji. On the historical development trajectory of Japan, see Barrington Moore Jr 1966 *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, Boston, Beacon Press; on the politics, see Chalmers Johnson 1995 *Japan: Who Governs?* New York, Norton; on the political economy, see K. Sheridan 1993 *Governing the Japanese Economy*, Cambridge, Polity; an overview of the history is available from Ann Waswo 1996 *Modern Japanese Society*, Oxford, Opus.

44. Discussed, famously, in the work of Chalmers Johnson.

45. John Clammer 1997 *Contemporary Urban Japan*, Oxford, Blackwell.

46. On this debate, see R.P. Appelbaum and J. Henderson eds. 1992 *States and Development in the Asian Pacific Rim*, London, Sage; S. Haggard 1990 *Pathways from the Periphery: The Politics of Growth in the Newly Industrializing Countries*, Cornell University Press; and in reply to the neo-liberals, L. Weiss 1998 *The Myth of*

the Powerless State: Governing the Economy in a Global Era, Cambridge, Polity.

47. Karel van Wolferen 1989 *The Enigma of Japanese Power,* London, Macmillan.

48. Sheridan 1993 reports that Tokyo University revised the syllabus of its economic degree—ditching British-style free market ideas in favour of List and the doctrines of late industrialization.

49. Kyoko Sheridan ed. 1998 *Emerging Economic Systems in Asia*, St Leonards, Allen and Unwin; Steve Chan 1993 *East Asian Dynamism: Growth, Order and Security in the Pacific Region*, Boulder, Westview.

50. Ron Dore.

51. Critics suggest it serves the ordinary people poorly—see Sheridan 1993, 1998.

52. Notably, for an American or European audience, Margaret Mead 1946 *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*—on Mead, see *London Review of Books.*

53. John Clammer 1997 *Contemporary Urban Japan: A Sociology of Consumption*, Oxford, Blackwell.

54. K. Yoshino 1992 *Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary Japan*, London, Routledge.

55. On wars and war-related American policy and spending (bases, supplies and the like), see R. Stubbs 2005 *Rethinking Asia's Economic Miracle: The Political Economy of War, Prosperity and Crisis*, London, Palgrave.

56. At the end of the Pacific War, the Japanese authorities in Korea handed power to local nationalists who established a provisional government: in the South, the Americans disregarded this—violently—the Soviet Union was more subtle in supporting its allies in the North—on all this, see Bruce Cummings 1997 *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History*, New York, Norton.

57. In North Korea, Kim Il Sung ruled an autocratic Stalinist state-socialist country until his death in 1994 when he was succeeded by his son Kim Jong Ill. The elite sought self-reliance. The country has been largely closed off to the outside world. It has withdrawn into a variant of Stalinist state-socialism (autarchic, central plan, authoritarian plus leadership personality cult), now widely regarded as an historical dead-end. Reform seems to be urgent but does not appear to be imminent.

58. Robert Wade 1990 *Governing the Market*, Princeton University Press.
59. A compulsory savings fund—CPF—provided a flow of funds—see M.G. 1985 *Forced Saving to Finance Merit Goods,* Canberra, ANU.
60. Carl A. Trocki 2006 *Singapore: Wealth, Power and the Culture of Control*, London, Routledge.
61. Mentioned in P. Snow 2004 *The Fall of Hong Kong: Britain, China and the Japanese Occupation*, Yale University Press—as war-time governor emerged from internment, he floated the idea of democratization—the incoming governor squashed such talk.
62. Sung Y.W. 2005 *The Emergence of Greater China: The Economic Integration of Mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong*, London, Palgrave.
63. Richard Stubbs 2005 *Rethinking Asia's Economic Miracle: The Political Economy of War, Prosperity and Crisis*, London, Palgrave.
64. In Japan—a dual economy where many small firms contribute; in Korea, with powerful conglomerates; in Taiwan, many small firms, encouraged to be ambitious by the state; in Hong Kong, a multiplicity of small firms, largely ignored by the state, lately relocated to other parts of Pearl River delta; and in Singapore, local business activity but restricted by virtue of invited MNCs to real estate and domestic services—in other words, the role of market-based private firms was context bound—the state came to the fore.
65. Thailand was never formally colonized, though it was drawn into the modern world within this time period—a species of conservative reform from above—ordered by an absolute monarchy—see C. Baker and P. Phongpaichit 2005 *A History of Thailand*, Cambridge University Press.
66. Milton Osborne 1995 *Southeast Asia: An Introductory History*, St Leonards, Allen and Unwin.
67. Amitav Acharya 2000 *The Quest for Identity: The International Relations of Southeast Asia*, Oxford University Press.
68. Kevin Hewison et al. eds. 1993 *Southeast Asia in the 1990s*, St Leonards, Allen and Unwin; Richard Robison and David Goodman eds. 1996 *The New Rich in Asia*, London, Routledge.
69. Jonathan Rigg 1997 *Southeast Asia: The Human Landscape of Modernization and Development*, London, Routledge.

70. Singapore has a British colonial history—but the city-state is often picked out as a 'tiger' notwithstanding that it is part of Southeast Asia.
71. Historians report some 200,000 local dead in a vicious war of conquest.
72. Acharya 2000.
73. The 2008 financial tsunami has impacted the region—the financial system seems sound—supply chains feeding America and Europe or other regional suppliers have been hit—export-oriented development is one weakness of the East Asian 'developmental state' strategy.
74. For good detail (coupled to unhelpful general labels), see William Case 2002 *Politics in Southeast Asia*, London, Curzon.
75. Traders, missionaries, administrators, camp-followers, adventurers and the like—on this, see Bickers—he is often scathing about the Europeans incomers.
76. B. Moore Jr 1966 *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, Boston, Beacon, makes the classic historical sociological argument—by the time the Qing realized that change was necessary, they did not have the necessary social support base.
77. Jonathan Fenby 2005 *Generalissimo: Chiang Kai Shek and the China He Lost*, London, Free Press.
78. Philip Short 2004 *Mao: A Life*, London, John Murray.
79. But on the communist party, see David Shambaugh 2008 *China's Communist Party*, University of California Press.
80. Wang S. and Hu A. 1999 *The Political Economy of Uneven Development: The Case of China*, New York, M.E. Sharpe.
81. A key text in initiating widespread debate came from World Bank—World Bank 1983 *The East Asian Miracle*, Oxford University Press.
82. Gordon White ed. 1988 *Developmental States in East Asia*, London, Macmillan.
83. Paul Krugman 1994 'The Myth of Asia's Miracle' in *Foreign Affairs.*
84. Popular amongst American government policy advisors running the 'Washington consensus' line.
85. World Bank 1983.
86. Key theorists are Chalmers Johnson, Ron Dore and Robert Wade.
87. The argument is 'relativist'—on this, see, for example, E. Gellner 1987 *Relativism and the Social Sciences*, Cambridge University

Press and C. Geerz 2000 *Available Light: Anthropological Reflections on Philosophical Topics*, Princeton University Press—presenting opposing views and for this author's money, Geerz is correct.

88. In respect of Singapore—see Chan Heng Chee's piece in the collection—R. Bartley et al 1993 *Democracy and Capitalism: Asian and American Perspectives*, Singapore, ISEAS; see also the work of Chua Beng Huat 1995 *Communitarian Ideology and Democracy in Singapore*, London, Routledge; on communitarianism see Alasdair MacIntyre 1985 *After Virtue*, London, Duckworth.

89. In the opening chapter, I wrote about 'general theory'—in this sense the legacy of the Enlightenment comprises a set of expectations about how things ought to be—it offers a frame for analysis—it is not, as these critics of Asian Values have it, a claim about the essence of humankind and thus a model against which others can be ranked and judged.

90. Theorists celebrated, then mourned the region's success—see F. Godement's books—see also R. McLeod and Ross Garnaut 1998 *East Asia in Crisis: From Being a Miracle to Needing One*, London, Routledge.

91. Robert Wade and Frank Veneroso 1998 'The Asian Crisis: The High Debt Model versus the Wall Street—Treasury—IMF Complex' in *New Left Review* 1/228—see also Wade and Higgot.

92. McLeod and Garnaut 1998.

93. Robert Wade and Frank Veneroso 1998 'The Asian Crisis: The High Debt Model versus the Wall Street—Treasury—IMF Complex' in *New Left Review* 1/228.

94. In respect of Thailand—problems began with specialist advice to deregulate finance—hot money flowed in—then it took fright—as it flowed out it collapsed exchange rate, then stock exchange and then real economy.

95. On the crisis in the core, see George Soros 2008 *The New Paradigm for Financial Markets: The Credit Crisis of 2008 and What It Means*, New York, Public Affairs; also George Cooper 2008 *The Origins of Financial Crises: Central Banks, Credit Bubbles and the Efficient Markets Fallacy*, New York, Vintage; on East Asia, see Anonymous 'Turning their backs on the world' in *The Economist*, 21 February 2009; also Anonymous 'Troubled Tigers' in *The Economist*, 31

January 2009; for an overview of events and debates, see 'Special Edition' of *British Journal of Politics and International Studies.*

96. Stephen Gudeman 1986 *Economics as Culture*, London, Routledge.
97. P.W. Preston 2009 *Arguments and Actions in Social Theory*, London, Palgrave.

The Surprising Costs of Success: National Identity in East Asia and Europe

In the years following the end of the Second World War, Europe and East Asia have seen their situations transformed from catastrophic ruin to global prominence. Success has brought many benefits to the respective populations. Success has also brought novel problems, in particular with regard to identity, the ways in which political communities think of themselves and their neighbours. Today, both regions confront the task of re-imagining their political identities. On the one hand, the project of the EU was inaugurated in the wake of the disaster of the long period of warfare in Europe and, along with national-level welfare states, has proved to be surprisingly successful. One unexpected consequence of this success is that deepening integration is raising questions of identity, not just national identity but also European identity. On the other hand, East Asia after a number of ruinous wars has emerged as one of the global system's most powerful regions: first, in Japan, later in the four 'tiger economies' and more recently with China, whose reform programme, looking to the East Asian model, has generated rapid development. Once again, success creates its own novel demands: local nationalisms have been constructed, their unfolding relationships

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This piece is derived from a paper presented to a conference at the University of Hong Kong in June 2009; it has been extensively revised in order to update and clarify the line of argument, and these issues have been pursued at greater length in P.W. Preston 2010 *National Pasts in Europe and East Asia*, London, Routledge.

intermittently problematic, so too the wider issue of the identity of an East Asian region and its general place within the modern world. The ways in which European and East Asian polities deal with these questions will shape not only their domestic self-understandings but also their relations with local neighbours and other major regions within the global system.

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All political elites confront the task of managing change. Elites must read and react to enfolding structural change, plot a route to the future and organize their population. International relations theorists have addressed these issues in three main ways: realism (rational state actors must respond to shifting power relations), liberalism (rational actors can respond to mutually beneficial opportunities in the global marketplace) and social constructivism (socially embedded actors reflexively grasp their circumstances to inform action in respect of diverse goals).[1] This last noted approach brings international relations theorists into contact with scholars from many disciplines within the social sciences and humanities, for example, historians, sociologists and cultural critics. All this opens up the issue of identity. Here, in brief, there are three key concerns: identity (the ways in which individuals understand themselves as members of an ordered collective, i.e., a political–cultural identity[2]); collective memory (the ways in which a community sustains identity[3]); and the national past (the way in which a polity sustains its identity[4]). The latter is of particular relevance: a national past is a provisional contested compromise between official elite ideas and the diverse opinions of the masses, and it offers a summary view of the nation, recording its past, detailing its present and sketching out a route to the future.[5] Seen in this perspective, the relations between Europe and East Asia are not simply pragmatic, that is, shaped by the immediate demands of political events or economic contracts, but they are also shaped by a great depth of shared experience. This prompts several questions: what is the nature of this shared history, what are its legacies for today and how does it shape contemporary thinking?

Shared History: The Record of the Twentieth Century

The twentieth century was one of great violence: civil wars, inter-ethnic wars, class wars, inter-state wars[6] and a long-drawn-out, destructive and extensively violent cold war.[7] These conflicts in one form or another

embroiled many if not most countries in the global system; however, the direct violence was concentrated as it embroiled most of Europe and most of East Asia. It was in these two geographical areas that the greater parts of the total casualties were experienced: in brief, both areas were ruined. The recovery has been impressive, although not the same in the two areas, and now as regional integration advances in both Europe and East Asia, these polities face questions of coming to terms with their own distinctive albeit shared histories.

Europe is sometime presented as home to a model of human social life to which the rest of the world might aspire: prosperous, stable and tolerant.[8] However, the early part of the twentieth century involved a long sequence of interlinked wars; the conflicts were many running from the 1914–1918 Great War through to the confusions of the autumn 1989 changes in Eastern Europe, which, to recall, culminated in the violence of the Romanian Revolution in the Christmas of that year. The death toll of these conflicts was enormous, usually measured at around 50 million[9] killed plus many more injured or otherwise hurt as a result of loss of family or home or country. Most recently, European history has been shaped by the episode of the Second World War, and these events have been read into collective memory and national pasts, where these are the out-turn of reiterative social processes that involve both active remembering and equally active forgetting.[10]

Throughout Europe, national pasts were more or less extensively reworked: the British elite claimed a moral victory, affirmed a spurious continuity with pre-war arrangements and began the task of making a welfare state[11]; the French elite accommodated the shocks of military occupation by celebrating resistance whilst reaching back past Vichy collaboration to an older ideal of a unified republic[12]; and the German elite in the Federal Republic began the process of accommodating to the material, political and moral catastrophe of the National Socialist years and recovering the broader civilized history of the people of Germany.[13] The division of Europe saw imported overarching official ideologies deployed with local elites adjusting as best they could, creating the idea of the free west and its eastern European counterpart in state socialism. However, in the western parts of Europe, the institutional apparatus of the EU slowly took shape and the end of the cold war saw its rapid movement to the centre of European politics. It has become the contested and incomplete framework within which Europeans, governments and citizens think about their future. And at the present time, a number of histories of the continent are available, addressed to national audi-

ences, inflected still by the demands of the official truths of bloc-time. They are selective. But what is now in prospect is a European national past.

In East Asia, viewed at a general level, the period from the first Chinese Revolution through to the end of the Third Indo-China War (thus 1911–1991) was one of intermittent warfare, where, as with Europe, there was no single conflict; rather, there were multiple interlinked struggles. Recalling these events reveals something of a cascade, as one conflict opened the way to the next. There were two main axes of conflict: a general revolt against foreign state-empires, then dominant in the region, which began in Qing China but found echoes throughout Southeast Asia; and a cross-cutting set of tensions surrounding the aspirations of the Japanese elite in respect of their state-empire territories in Northeast Asia. The conflicts in China unfolded in revolution, warlord conflicts and civil war,[14] and these domestic troubles were compounded by interference and later outright invasion from Japan. This last noted developed into wars against both European powers, via attacks on their largely undefended[15] state-empire holdings in China and Southeast Asia, and America, where a more direct military challenge was made; thus, from 1941, the region became embroiled in the Pacific War, itself an element of the wider Second World War. And within the region after 1945, there were numerous wars of colonial retreat,[16] which, in several cases, were made more difficult by the cold war concerns of the USA whose domestic politics fuelled geo-strategic anxieties informing an unrelenting anti-communist containment strategy. In East Asia, this produced catastrophic warfare in Korea and Vietnam plus covert violence in other countries. The costs to local peoples of these conflicts, which, in total, extended over some 80 years,[17] can be estimated at around 30 million[18] killed plus many more injured or otherwise hurt. Thus, in brief, the contemporary pattern of states and nations emerged only recently and with great difficulty.

These episodes comprised a number of different kinds of war: civil strife, inter-state warfare, anti-colonial struggles, class-based insurrections and cold war proxy conflicts, overt and covert. These wars were typically fought using modern weapons—some of them recycled from the stocks of colonial powers, whilst others introduced during the Pacific War and later provided by supporters of the various shifting proxy forces. These wars were pursued at great cost to those civilians unlucky enough to be caught up in the fighting, as the modern weaponry was highly destructive and the armies using them generally indifferent to civilian losses. These

wars involved multiple participants: not merely the soldiers of one country fighting those of another, but armies made up of multiple ethnic groups, fighting in places remote from their home areas in armies often commanded by leaders from outside the area for nominal causes of which they might well be ignorant or indifferent. What was clear was the destruction wrought upon extant forms of life.

In East Asia, the general crisis has been read into official and popular consciousness in a number of ways. However, these matters are not yet settled domestically, where competing memories amongst given peoples are readily available,[19] and nor are these matters settled internationally, as it is possible to point to a number of competing national pasts, and these have been the occasion for international tensions between states, accompanied on occasion by popular protests.[20] Thus as the violence subsided, the newly empowered elites pursued various projects. There were common themes. There was a clear desire to establish clarity in respect of new territorial arrangements; thus where Europeans sought a measure of unity,[21] elites in East Asia sought clarity of difference[22]; but, thereafter, most elites sought development in the guise of economic growth and social welfare. It took multiple forms. Thus in Northeast Asia: in Japan, an understated economic nationalism; in North Korea, policies of self-reliance coupled to prioritizing the military; in South Korea, an authoritarian national development; in Taiwan, national development clouded by unresolved civil war; and in Hong Kong, a curious re-colonization coupled to accidental outward-directed economic development. Then in Southeast Asia: in Thailand, progress was clouded by numerous military dictatorships; in the Philippines, elite rule was the norm; in Indonesia, there was guided democracy and development; in Malaysia, ethnic-centred corporatism; and an energetic state-led development in Singapore. In Indo-China, war continued into the 1970s; thereafter, further variants of the pursuit of national development took shape. And in China, the success of the communist party in liberating the country was tarnished by utopian excess before the reforms of the later years of the century saw sweeping changes and the creation of one more variant form of state-led national development.

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The intermingled histories of Europe and East Asia run back over several centuries, and these exchanges have left their marks on polities in both regions—economic, social and cultural. The general crisis that engulfed

both regions in the twentieth century saw widespread destruction, and it wrought a dramatic change. The state-empire systems of the Europeans and Japanese dissolved away whilst America's colony attained a formal independence as their erstwhile masters attained an unexpected post-war prominence. Today, an examination of Europe and East Asia's shared histories offers a route to a better grasp of contemporary identities and, hence, in principle, better-informed praxis.

LEGACIES: COMPARING AND CONTRASTING THESE EXPERIENCES

The interlinked histories of the regions could be unpacked by tracking the economic relations (trade, colonialism, neo-colonialism and, lately, joint participation within an increasingly internationalized global system[23]); social relations (flows of people moving around the territories of state-empires and, recently, the emergence of novel patterns as flows of migrants, both legal and illegal, move around the internationalized system creating trans-state diaspora and local hybrid communities); cultural relations (mutual influences involving languages, religions, arts and letters, plus buildings, foods and the like, plus more recently shared commercially available sports, mass tourism, etc.); and the political relations (the legacies of the period of interlinked unfolding modernity, i.e., the laws, the institutions, the party systems, the public spheres, along with the presently available collection of national pasts).

Once unpacked, these exchanges would admit of shifting comparisons across a range of time periods, involving numerous issues and producing a bewildering spread of commonalities and differences: the experiences and memories of the shift to the modern world, the experiences and memories of the crisis which remade the system, the concerns respectively for unification and differentiation, the situated logics of contemporary national pasts, and the nature of regional identities.

As such enquiries would cover a vast range, here three aspects can be underscored: *first*, the extraordinary violence experienced by the peoples of the two areas during the twentieth century; *second*, the ways in which elites and masses in the two areas have attended to these matters—not thoroughly, not systematically and certainly not with any claims to finality in respect of the lessons learned; yet, *third*, two areas have advanced, so in Europe, elites and masses have turned to the business of some

sort of *unification* where this has entailed addressing these problematic records, whereas in East Asia, elites and masses have focused on *differentiation* through state making, nation building and development, and have sketched out a different trajectory, attaining in recent years a measure of regional coherence and thus raising the issue of addressing received memories.

One: Complex Intertwined Histories

The shift to the modern world of natural science-based industrial-capitalism was begun by accident in Europe, and the system proved to be dynamic with internal upgrading coupled to external expansion. Social theorists lodged within this system endeavoured to make sense of it: the central preoccupation was with elucidating the dynamics of complex change, and they inaugurated the intellectual tradition, which forms the mainstream of European social theorizing.[24] Cast in these terms, the long episode of the shift to the modern world provides the baseline material for contemporary national pasts and, metaphorically, the deepest layer of received meanings. Three aspects might be noted: the institutional forms adopted, the pre-occupation with trade and the locally transformative exchange with East Asia.

First, the shift to the modern world took political–institutional form in the guise of state-empires. These state-empires were the out-turn of elites reading and reacting to the demands of structural change, and they were the fruit of elite political–cultural projects, created and recreated in routine social practice. They were contingent achievements, transient: for example, Linda Colley[25] spells out in detail the business of contriving the political–cultural project of Britain, showing that it was a context-shaped elite creation. These state-empires embraced large geographical territories and thus were inhabited by multiple ethnic groups. They were ordered in multiple hierarchies: economic (a broad functional division of labour throughout the state-empire sphere), social (a detailed social status hierarchy), perhaps also functional (ethnicity and economic role could be linked), cultural (an overarching great tradition was affirmed surrounded by local traditions) and political (a hierarchy of control running from metropolitan centres down to subsidiary centres and thence to the local-level peripheries). And then, the state-empire ideologies served to discipline populations. They are like nationalisms; however, the arguments work differently. Nationalism can run reductive arguments: rhetorically, nations

are removed from the social world and placed in the natural world (via ideas of race or ethnicity) or the realm of history (and thus the asocial very long run) or the realms of culture (which are carried in discrete traditions or languages). And no matter the form deployed, the reductive manoeuvre turns the contingent into the given[26] and the ongoing social processes of the construction and reconstruction of social identities are veiled. But state-empire ideologies cannot run reductive arguments as subject populations are diverse and claims to common ethnicity or history or culture or language are manifestly false. State-empire ideologies work differently: they lodge a claim in respect of the present, to the effect that the imposed institutional machineries work to secure inter-ethnic respect,[27] and they offer a promise about future prosperity, such that the state-empire is distanced from the perhaps messy contemporary social world and its realization is lodged safely in the future. The elite's core claim is that progress flows from state-empire membership, material, social, cultural and political, and these promises are to be redeemed in the (perhaps distant) future.[28]

An abstract formal sequence can be posited in respect of the development of political institutions: in the shift to the modern world, trans-European religious-royal forms gave way to state-empires, which in turn gave way to nation states. Of course, these claims are an amendment to the more familiar contemporary tale of the creation from extant feudal patterns (trans-European religious authorities embracing local royal households) of states (geographically bounded institutionally ordered units recognized as sovereign within their borders) that thereafter invented nations (the putatively natural communities of people properly inhabiting these territories).[29] However, the sequence that includes the crucial episode of state-empires is clearly descriptively more plausible.[30] In sum, the shift to the modern world of natural science-based industrial-capitalism created the first state-empires, which comprised more or less clearly defined geographical cores, plus wider ever-shifting peripheries along with state-empire citizenship.

Second, European state-empires expanded first within the boundaries of Europe; that is, state-empires fought over local borders: the French, German, Czarist, Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman state-empires all fought wars before their borders were (more or less) settled. Some of these conflicts found external expression in peripheral areas. Thus as state-empires sought to expand within Europe, at the same time they sought to expand externally: the driver was trade, and the richest trading area was in Asia, from Northeast Asia through Southeast Asia and into South and West

Asia, and the heart of this system was China. The mechanisms to secure trading links included: trade relations, based on barter or local currencies and organized for mutual benefit; political manoeuvring, involving elite-level exchanges designed to profit those dealing; and routine violence, thus where simple trade or politics were insufficient, violence was available and put to use to serve the incomers.

Third, in East Asia, the process of the expansion of the modern world entailed the radical reconstruction of extant patterns of life and political institutions: thus existing economies were reworked in line with the demands of global natural science-based industrial-capitalism and the extent of the reach of modern economic practices varied from place to place for there was no simple process whereby forms of economic life were extinguished in favour of market-based activities.[31] The interchange was long drawn out and the interactions formed endless permutations; thus existing social relations were reworked and new forms of economic life entailed revised forms of social life; thus cultural practices changed; and existing polities were absorbed within state-empires.[32] And in all these territories, state-empire ideologies were promulgated, and whilst their reach within local populations varied [thus some groups affirmed the ideas whilst others ignored them, and some bided their time, learned the lessons and, in time, lodged their own counter-claims (variants on the ideas on offer)], they shape the local exchange with the irresistible demands of the modern world.

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Overall, the shift to the modern world is an ongoing open-ended process. The core of the process is to be found in the dynamics of natural science-based industrial-capitalist forms of life. It was inaugurated in Europe, and it intensified its local demands; it expanded, and other extant civilizations have been absorbed and remade. It took the institutional form of state-empires, and this long period provides the baseline materials of contemporary national pasts.

Two: General Crisis—The System Re-ordered—Contrasting Views[33]

The system of state-empires was centred on Europe. In the early twentieth century, competition amongst European powers for advantage precipitated warfare, and in the following 31 years, there were numerous inter-

linked wars. These were paralleled by further conflicts variously located in the peripheral areas of these state-empires as denizens of colonial territories sought ends to foreign rule; projects cast in terms of independent statehood, nation building and development. In general, these movements failed; however, the decision of the Japanese elite to extend their state-empire holdings deep into China precipitated war in East Asia. And conflicts in both the core and periphery fed the system-wide collapse. The European-centred system of state-empires disappeared: in Europe, nation states appeared—some built around the metropolitan cores of the earlier state-empires, whilst others around what earlier had been only regional units; and in East Asia, nation states appeared, built around the aspirations of replacement elites or, more particularly, those who could successfully lay claim to part of disintegrating empires; not all could.

The crisis involved multiple wars. The wars of the crisis era involved multiple participants. These wars produced multiple memories (indicated in their different names). And there is no simple history to be recorded: that is, there is no simple carry-over into contemporary national pasts, yet there are significant carry-overs, but these are the result of elaborate (and ongoing) processes of active forgetting and remembering.

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Overall, the period of general crisis resulted in the disintegration of European-centred state-empires. The system was radically re-ordered. It was through this process of violent change that the contemporary pattern of nation states emerged. These events were read into national pasts: in Europe, often in terms of shame and regret; and in East Asia, often in terms of progressive projects turned to the future.

Three: Elite Concerns for Unification and Differentiation

The Second World War in Europe came to an end in May 1945; the Pacific War came to an end in August 1945; and the civil war resumed in China, running on until 1949. The formerly extant state/empires were either gone or un-recoverable, notwithstanding some further wars of colonial withdrawal and where there had been a number of state/empires embracing territory in the geographical areas of Europe and East Asia what now appeared were sets of nation states within areas which were to become separate regions within the overall global system. Thus reforms took place across a series of scales: global, regional and domestic. And these process

of nation state and regional re-ordering were further inflected by novel cold war conflicts: in Europe, the continent was divided with the eastern areas looking to the leadership of the Soviet Union whilst the western areas looked to the USA; and in East Asia, the territories were divided into a state-socialist core around China and a state capitalist littoral oriented towards the leadership of the USA. The particular scale formerly occupied by state/empires disappeared.

What then of events in Europe, East Asia and China? In Europe, elites are disposed to unification or at the very least cooperation (and where they are not their respective bloc-leaders oblige them to cooperate); hence NATO and Warsaw Pact or European Economic Community (EEC) and Comecon, plus a multiplicity of other organizations interlinking nation states in Europe. In East Asia, elites are disposed to differentiation. As the state-empires dissolve, replacement elites emerge concerned with state making, nation building and development; thus replacement elites are concerned to establish their control and their collective identities, and this disposes them to differentiation, to carving out distinct nation states; thereafter, varieties of international cooperation are not resisted, as with, for example, ASEAN, or the defence linkages of Taiwan, South Korea and Japan to the USA, but they follow the prior concern for state making. And in China after 1949, elites are concerned first to establish a state on the territory of the former Qing Empire (hence border wars).

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The years following the wars, East Asia saw dramatic institutional changes in politics as novel states and nations were created and lodged variously within wider regional patterns. The period of intense rapid change fed into contemporary national pasts; replacement elites were marked by war; the populations of new nations were similarly marked; and the episode provides a further set of resources to be invoked and read into contemporary national pasts.

Four: Situated Logics of Contemporary National Pasts

Contemporary national pasts inhabit different contexts and play different roles. Thus in Europe, the passing of state-empires gives rise to nation states which are first subsumed within blocs and later within the overarching contested unclear framework of the EU. The line of travel is towards unification; at first, perhaps, imposed from outside, but thereafter chosen

by domestic elites with the support (or acquiescence) of the masses. And in East Asia, the passing of state-empires allows the formation of novel states, which thereafter pursue nation building and development. The line of travel is towards nation state differentiation,[34] and whilst there are various regional bodies, none have aspirations towards supra-national organization, hence state sovereignty is formally affirmed.

In Europe, national pasts embrace the resources of baseline ideas and thereafter are suffused with reflections upon the period of crisis, collapse and occupation. The necessity of reconstruction is also embraced. In significant measure, European national pasts come to revolve around remembered war as something to be acknowledged, an occasion for remembering and mourning the dead, and an episode to be recalled in shame—thus, nationalism flows out of the routine experience of Europeans.

However, in contrast, in East Asia, national pasts embrace the resources of baseline ideas and thereafter are dominated by the period of crisis, but it is read differently. The crisis gave aspirant replacement elites their chance and they took it; they seized control of particular parts of the territories of disintegrating state-empires and turned them into states pursuing nation building and development. Notwithstanding the violence and loss, the experience could be read positively as the achievement of independence, and thereafter, regional cooperation was available in the form of varieties of networks. So nationalism flows into the routine experience of peoples in East Asia.

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National pasts in Europe and East Asia involve significant elements of remembered war, occasions when action made a difference; in the case of Europe, the difference made was loss of state-empires and the achievement of nation states disposed to pursue unification; and in the case of East Asia, the difference made was of the loss of overarching state-empires and the opportunity for rule by those co-cultural with relevant populations, or, in brief, what was tagged independence, the basis for subsequent network carried co-operations.

Five: The Idea of Regions

A region is not a natural given, but it is a construct; it is the out-turn of the interacting projects of diverse national agents; one aspect of all this will be the ways in which these agents tell the story of the region; turning to the

rhetorics of region, it is possible to identify a multiplicity of agents, offering diverse arguments addressed to a multiplicity of audiences. Region might be understood as discourse; a shifting admixture of agents, arguments, actions, institutional vehicles and explanatory/justificatory commentary (including scholarship); the ensemble will revolve around the substantive projects pursued by elite agents; the elites are thus key; however, there are several ways in which the story of a region might be told: different agents making different arguments for different audiences.

There are a number of ways in which the discourse might run. The central arena of these discursive constructs is memory, understood as an active social process of the creation of meaning. First, political talk (projects/political rhetorics) will involve: identifying the players who are involved (co-operators/competitors); it will require constructing the idea of a region; it will need institutional vehicles (the organizations which both carry and embody the project/rhetoric); and it will require popular dissemination (thus, the ASEAN summit photo-opportunities and perhaps the ASEAN gift shop at Changi). Second, state planning talk (projects/policy rhetorics) will involve interpreting the demands of political masters, turning politics into policy; it requires drawing up plans, schemes for what can be done; and it will involve drawing lines on maps, both proposal and style of planning agency reflection, and preparing schedules/contracts of actions; and it will involve statements asserting the value of the planned actions and exhorting popular support. Third, corporate planning talk (projects/instrumental rhetorics) will involve picking out a market, for example, the European or American market; thus an audience is identified and advertising and product can thereafter be tailored and delivered, and corporate videos made and broadcast. And fourth, popular talk (accommodations/prejudices) will be both passive, that is, accommodating the demands of political, state or corporate worlds, or active, that is, deploying available popular ideas to identify and characterize a region; in either case, external demands are read in terms of the resources of the local little tradition, and quite how they will be read is dependent on the particular tradition and the ways in which external demands unpack in practice.

In respect of East Asia, a region can be identified and carried in economic, social and cultural interlinkages. However, political tensions left over from the long-troubled episode of the shift to the modern world inhibit moves towards regional organizations or a common regional identity: there are valuable organizations (thus bi-lateral free trade agreements [FTAs] or currency swap agreements), and there is a wealth of talk about Asia, which in

some measure overrides current political tensions within the region and asserts a macro-cultural identity. Such reflection has long-established roots: one might be local resentments at foreign intrusions, thus Chinese elite talk about the century of humiliation; one might be local resentment at unwanted foreign lectures, thus notions of Asian Values; another might be the contemporary residues or variants of late nineteenth-century-created ideas of Pan-Asianism; and one way or another, these ideas assert an Asian identity, but as yet little follows by way of collective action, although it might be that this does not matter so much because as the region continues its economic advance, regional interlinkages deepen automatically.

In respect of Southeast Asia, there are clearer signs of regional integration/identity; Amitav Acharya[35] makes this argument; he argues that region-ness can be a part of identity: *first*, beginning with pre-contact Southeast Asia (mandala, galactic and theatre state forms), region-ness looks somewhat implausible, but then came commerce and colonialism, where the former did act to integrate the region and the latter cut through these patterns linking discrete parts of the area to their respective metropolitan cores; *second*, the period of decolonization saw an intermingling of continuing links to colonial cores, region-ness understood in terms of pan-Asianism or Third Worldism and the ambiguous impact of the cold war; and *third*, it is only with ASEAN that a local project to build a region begins, and it turns out to be successful, with its most recent expansion presented as completing the project. Acharya comments that the ASEAN identity is in place, but the organization faces problems in the future as it adjusts to post–cold war situation.

And, finally, in respect of Europe, discussion revolves around the project of the EU. The debate begins in the intellectual territory of international relations. Theorists asked if the EU was an inter-governmental or supra-national organization, but as debate has moved into the wider spheres of the social sciences, commentary suggests it is neither, and many would now regard it as a polity-in-aspiration, that is, a nascent political community, necessarily with an identity.

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In the case of Europe and East Asia, the material taken variously into memory looks to the long experience of colonialism, general crisis and collapse/recovery. It is these patterns of events that provide the materials to be read into a series of national pasts. The national past is a subtle con-

struction that serves to link individuals to the ordered political realm. As such, it is a matter of intense concern to elites, and any revisions to a given national past are likely to have not merely domestic but also intra-regional and trans-regional ramifications.

Contemporary Thinking: Some of the Ways in Which the Past Runs into the Present

Identities are both fragile (identities are constructed and reconstructed; i.e., they are contingent) and persistent (linking self, society and history, they are not lightly revised or changed). Hence, change is unsettling. And systemic complex change to forms of life, including institutional arrangements, economic and social practices and political–cultural expectations, is doubly unsettling. Communities in Europe and East Asia now confront problems of unsettling success. Some recent episodes can illustrate these matters.

Unsettled: Mourning/Remembrance

The rededication of the Frauenkirche in Dresden was marked on 30 October 2005 . The church had been destroyed along with the city in a series of air raids in early 1945. The destruction of the city has become a contentious issue amongst historians and commentators. Many have suggested that the attacks could not be justified. Prior to the rededication, there was some speculation surrounding a visit to Germany of the British Head of State that an apology would be offered. In the event, it was not. The episode remains an unsettled contested memory.

Also, 4 June 2009 marked the 20th anniversary of the incidents in Tiananmen Square. In Hong Kong, there was a large gathering and a march, and a number of figures from overseas travelled to Hong Kong to participate, and some were admitted whilst others were refused entry. The anniversary saw the publication of memoirs prepared by Zhao Ziyang, which offered an insider's view of events. The anniversary was not marked in China. The events remain an unsettled contested memory.

Unsettled: Protest/Complaint

In summer 2008 in the run-up to the Beijing Olympics, two inter-related evens caught the attention of many commentators: first, the riots amongst

ethnic Tibetans in parts of Tibet and adjacent provinces; second, the dem-
onstrations in favour of Tibet which accompanied the symbolic journey
of the Olympic torch, in particular in Europe. There was much unhappy
debate as these episodes marked unresolved conflicts.

In June 2009, the EU held elections for its parliament and the results
drew commentary for a number of reasons: the generally low turnout
amongst eligible voters; the broad consolidation of the mainstream par-
ties of the political right; plus the emergence of a number of minority
parties complaining about migrant communities, thus for example, in the
Netherlands, Geert Wilders and the Party of Freedom, or in Britain, the
British National Party, or in Hungary, the Jobbik party.[36] Both the low
turnout and the appearance of minor right parties signal unresolved con-
flicts. These issues were revisited in the 2014 elections—when minority
parties did comparatively well.

Unsettled: Doubts/Unease

In Hong Kong, amongst sections of society, there is a long-running debate
about the future of the territory within China. It has run on since 1997.
The debate has numerous participants, and various issues are addressed:
one issue is that of identity; thus participants debate what it is to be a
'Hong Konger' and how this identity relates to that of 'Chinese' or 'citi-
zen of the People's Republic'. These debates flag a continuing unease
about the present combined with inchoate doubts about the future.[37]

In Britain, there is a long-running debate about the future of the polity
within the EU. It has run on since 1992. The debate has numerous par-
ticipants, and a variety of issues are addressed: one issue is that of identity;
thus participants ask what it is to be 'British' or 'English' or 'Scottish'
and how such an identity could relate to being 'a citizen of Europe' or 'a
European'. These debates indicate continuing unease about the present
combined with inchoate doubts about the future.[38]

Unsettled: Baseline Memories in Question

In Europe, the 'allied scheme of history' offers an explanation of the
Second World War, which reduces events to the moral victory of the
Western allies, the heroism of the Soviet armies and the responsibility
of the National Socialists. Norman Davies[39] argues that this systemati-
cally misrepresents events, eliding the actual confusions of war and post-

war and offering a convenient story for elites and masses to affirm (ritual truths). Today, the problem is that much historical research shows this official tale is unsatisfactory, and the passage of time allows this to be widely acknowledged and so received ideas are undermined.

In East Asia, there is no simple analogous tale. In respect of China, the Anti-Japanese War links up nationalism, communism and the establishment of the People's Republic. In respect of the American-oriented littoral, the tale seems to be one of the recoveries of Japan from its unfortunate experiment with fascism coupled to the similar recovery of the tiger economies in a benign alliance with the USA. But these tales are too simple: the post-1949 history of China is replete with conflict, and post-1978, the theme of nationalism has come to the fore; in respect of Japan (the key country in the American-oriented sphere), the tale is similarly more complicated and the overall tale of smooth modernization gone wrong can be rejected, so too the clichéd tale of contemporary indifference to the wars in Asia. Once again, received ideas are in question.

Unsettled: Positive Elite Prospects on the Future

Elites must read and react to enfolding change. It is a simple given of political life. Such responses are varied: schematically, reactive (as events rush onto the political agenda) and prospective (where elites can fashion ideas and institutions and shape the trajectory of the polity).

Prospective action amongst elite actors inaugurated the project of the EEC with the 1957 Rome Treaty; the project and its institutional apparatus have continued to advance with the 1985 Single European Treaty, the 1992 Maastricht Treaty and the 2008 Lisbon Treaty. Social scientists have made extensive commentaries on the EU: early work read it as an international organization, but more recent work has read it as a nascent polity.[40] The project implies a new layer of identity for those who dwell in Europe, but matters are unclear as identities are contingent and contested. The notion of European is not settled and nor is it likely to be in the near future; indeed, in the period 2010–2014 with the euro-crisis ongoing in the run-up to the elections, support for the project, as indicated in opinion polls, fell away sharply in most member states, and this prompted several theorists to issue calls to support the ideal.[41]

In East Asia, the pattern is different. Prospective action amongst elite actors inaugurated the project of ASEAN, and more recent elite and corporate activities have shaped a network of linkages amongst countries

within East Asia, in particular linking Japan, the four tigers and a now peaceful Indo-China. In China, elites speak of peaceful rising or peaceful development. In general, commentators do now speak of an East Asian region, but its institutional machinery is slight, and there are many inherited anxieties likely to inhibit any rapid movement in institution building.

So, these two areas can be called regions, but they are not the same. A familiar summary distinction is between a region with an institutional framework, Europe, and a region based on networks, East Asia. But that said, exchanges between Europe and China will be informed by these resources of identity—the memories lodged in the culture of the two regions.

Conclusion: One Key Lesson?

A national past offers a story. It tells a political community where they come from, who they are and where they might expect to be in the future. National pasts are compounded of elements taken from the historical experiences of the communities in question; indeed, the tales told help bind possibly otherwise non-integrated groups into communities.

National pasts are elaborate constructions. Their elite-specified function is to discipline and mobilize a given population, to weld otherwise disparate groups into a nation and so they are highly political. That being the case, they are highly contested: such contestation may be overt or covert; it may be vigorous or subdued; but these constructions are intrinsically contested, and any extant formulation will represent a contested compromise between the ideas/projects of elite power holders and the ideas/concerns of the masses to whom elites address themselves.

National pasts are usually cast in reductive terms: elites will make claims about the essential nature of the nation; it will be represented as asocial. This is a familiar way of up-rating the intellectual/moral grip of the nation upon the imaginations of the population. If the nation is grounded in ethnicity or deep history or language, if the nation is a given, if it endures, then acquiescence can be represented as rational. But this claim is false. The strategy is misleading because nations are constructs and so is the national past. It is one aspect of the elite's continuing task of reading and reacting to the demands of enfolding structural change. As the world changes around a polity, then the elite must respond, and one aspect of that response will be a re-ordering of the national past the better to order collective action oriented towards the future.

In Europe, as the project of the EU advances and the general disposition towards unification deepens, familiar national pasts must accommodate to the slow construction of a European national past. In East Asia, where the recent record has been one of success, the processes of regional integration are slow, but such integration has advanced in recent decades and familiar national pasts stand in need of revision. In China, the post-1978 record of economic advance is well known, so too the attendant stresses and strains—one further issue is the matter of the national past: thus as claims to socialism fade, new ideas in respect of material advance and the nation will move to the fore.

The interlinkages between Europe, East Asia and China are many as these territories inherit a rich common history, and it is worth unpacking the detail in order to inform richer contemporary exchanges. In all these cases, scholarship has a role. Many social actors present arguments in order to inform action, but scholarship can concern itself with abstract general concerns and a critical engagement with the resources of extant national pasts can help work through received claims: the orientation is towards getting the story straight, thus does scholarship contribute.

NOTES

1. Neatly reviewed by C. Hay 2002 *Political Analysis*, London, Palgrave.
2. P.W. Preston 1997 *Political Cultural Identity: Citizens and Nations in a Global Era*, London, Sage.
3. Maurice Halbwachs 1992 *On Collective Memory*, University of Chicago Press.
4. Agnes Heller 1984 *Everyday Life*, London, Routledge.
5. See, for example, Patrick Wright 1985 *On Living in an Old Country*, London, Verso.
6. See, for example, on Europe, Mark Mazower 1998 *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century*, London, Allen Lane; on the ways in which these events are read into memory in East Asia, see Preston 2010.
7. These conflicts included open warfare (Korea, Vietnam), interventions (Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Afghanistan), covert warfare (Indo-China), covert interventions (Indonesia, Eastern Europe, Latin America), subversion (Iran) and proxy manoeuvring through-

out the Third World—anti-communism was deeply rooted amongst American and European elites—these patterns of understanding were given practical expression in the late 1940s—conventional work is available from J.L. Gaddis *We Know Now: Rethinking Cold War History*, Oxford University Press; and M. Yahuda 2011 *International Politics of the Asia Pacific*, London, Routledge; a novel critical work is available from Patrick Wright 2007 *Iron Curtain: From Stage to Cold War*, Oxford University Press.

8. A conceit that took shape in the late nineteenth century—the shift to the modern world occurred first in the continent, so self-confidence was to be expected; however, along with this came hubris—it is a habit that in some measure continues—thus the EU advertises its 'soft power'—culture, institution, law and so on; for popular texts tackling these sorts of arguments, see L. Thurow 1992, New York, Morrow and Co.

9. The figures in this piece are mostly taken from Norman Davies 1977 *Europe: A History*, London, Pimlico, p. 1328; the figures for Soviet Union are greater in Davies, but this is ideologically fraught territory—to these figures should/could also be added the deaths in Europe following political upheavals attendant upon at the end of Great War, plus impact of flu pandemic, helped along its way by the conditions of the trenches, plus Spanish Civil War, plus deaths in run-up to Second World War; see also Norman Davies 2006 *Europe at War 1939–1945: No Simple Victory*, London, Macmillan.

10. On this, Tony Judt 2008 *Reappraisals: Reflections on the Forgotten Twentieth Century*, London, Penguin.

11. P.W. Preston 2014 *Britain After Empire, Constructing a Post-war Political Project*, London, Palgrave.

12. See Rod Kedward 2005 *La Vie en Blue: France and the French since 1900*, London, Allen Lane, chapter 11 and Judt 2008 chapter 11.

13. In the German Democratic Republic, or East Germany, the communist leadership celebrated the defeat of fascism and the construction of socialism—the population were not subject to the allied scheme of history—blaming the Germans—thus the national past in East Germany worked differently—the problems, so to say, were those of fascism and militarism and capitalism—the individual responsibilities of German citizens were not pursued—nor was anti-Semitism made central.

14. A list of China's wars could be made—see Bruce A. Elleman 2001 *Modern Chinese Warfare, 1795–1989*, London, Routledge, and E.L. Dreyer 1995 *China at War 1901-49*, London, Longman.

15. European state-empire holdings in the region belonged to the Dutch, French, British and American—in late 1941, the Netherlands and France were occupied by National Socialist Germany—the armed forces of the British were overstretched—and the American forces in the Pacific region were—in the event—unprepared and taken by surprise—the last noted recovered very quickly, but events had passed beyond the reach of the sometime European powers—notwithstanding subsequent attempts to re-establish their holdings (discussed in P.W. Preston 2014 *After the Empires: The Creation of Novel Political Cultural Projects in East Asia*, London, Palgrave).

16. B. Anderson 1998 *The Spectre of Comparisons*, London, Verso, remarks on this; Southeast Asia secured its independence via a series of wars.

17. From Chinese Republican Revolution 1911 through to end of Third Indo-China War in 1991.

18. As before, these are estimates—they should be read as indicating 'scale'.

19. Thus, in brief: in Japan—nationalists, ordinary Japanese and left-wing hold different memories; in Malaysia—different memories run alongside ethnic differences; in China, those associated with Nationalists would have quite different memories to those associated with CCP—and so on.

20. Some of these are familiar in press, for example: North Korea/South Korea, China/Japan, China/Taiwan.

21. On the motivation and early moves in respect of (what is now) the EU, see N. Davies 1977 *Europe: A History*, London, Pimlico.

22. On this, see Amitav Acharya 2000 *The Quest for Identity: International Relations of Southeast Asia*, Oxford University Press.

23. On internationalization in contrast to globalization, see Hirst and Thompson 1922 *Globalization in Question*.

24. Sketched out in P.W. Preston 1996 *Development Theory: An Introduction*, Oxford, Blackwell.

25. L. Colley 1992 *Britons: Forging the Nation*, Yale University Press; recently returned to these issues—see L. Colley 2014 *Acts of Union*

and Disunion, London, Profile—here the author seems to be backing away from the contemporary political implications of her earlier analysis—that is, what was manufactured at one point in time cannot reasonably be expected to endure unaltered—precisely the ideological claim of elite with their idea of 'continuing Britain'.

26. Anderson 1998 makes a similar point.

27. A clear example is given by J.S. Furnivall 1939 *Netherlands India: A Study in Plural Economy*, Cambridge University Press; or with Britain, where conventional political discourse speaks of the 'four home nations' whilst reserving power almost exclusively for the elite in London; on Britain and its nationalism, see B. Anderson 1982 *Imagined Community*, London, Verso; it is an elite crafted identity and has served to override potential popular English identities (see K. Kumar 2003 *The Making of English National Identity*, Cambridge University Press).

28. One contemporary expression might be found in American nationalism itself expressed in familiar ideas of globalization and the subject of active proselytizing by neo-cons and the like (see, e.g., the discussions of democracy presented by Freedom House—or the text from F. Fukuyama 1992 *The End of History and the Last Man*, London, Hamish Hamilton; see the earlier effort from W.W. Rostow 1960 *The Stages of Economic Growth*, Cambridge University Press); on American nationalism, see A. Lieven 2004 *America Right or Wrong: An Anatomy of American Nationalism*, London, Harper Collins.

29. Ernest Gellner 1983 *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford, Blackwell; Eric Hobsbawm Hobsbawm and T. Ranger eds. 1983 *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge, Canto.

30. On Europe's macro-history, Norman Davies 1997 *Europe: A History*, London, Pimlico—the actual track and the discussion of those communities which, so to say, did not make it.

31. P. Worsley 1984 *The Three Worlds: Culture and World Development*, London, Weidenfeld.

32. Worsley 1984.

33. The issue of historical memory is pursued in P.W. Preston 2010 *National Pasts in Europe and East Asia*, London, Routledge.

34. Acharya 2000.

35. Acharya 2000.

36. On this issue, see *The Economist* 'Swing Low, Swing Right' 13 June 2009; see also *The Economist* 'A Nasty Party' 20 June 2009.

37. On this, see chapter nine 'Hong Kong: Living with Distant Masters'—in the run-up to the NPCSC August announcement of the crucial mechanism for the nominating committee (a Beijing vetting mechanism). Hong Kong public politics became both polarized and febrile—in the event, the announcement was pretty much as expected—a kind of recipe for an electorally validated local oligarchy obedient to Beijing.

38. One aspect of these debates came to be centred on Scotland—a referendum campaign asking if the country wished to be independent of the UK ran through most of 2014—the initial response of the London-based elite was casual scorn, but as they realized that many in Scotland were at the very least prepared to entertain the idea, the London-based elite launched a sustained negative campaign—the strong impression was that the very possibility of Scottish independence and the associated campaign for that independence had deeply offended the London elite—broken through their enormous self-regard—in the event, the drive for independence received a setback—but not, many commentators noted, a fatal reverse.

39. Davies 1997, p. 39.

40. On the EU's development, see, for example, Ben Rosamund 2000 *Theories of European Integration*, London, Palgrave.

41. D. Levy, M. Pensky and J. Torpey eds. 2005 *Old Europe, New Europe and Core Europe*, London, Verso; J. Habermas 2009 *Europe: The Faltering Project*, Cambridge, Polity.

The Enduring Costs of Forgetfulness: Europe, Asia and the Wars of the Twentieth Century

The modern histories of Europe and East Asia are deeply intertwined, and three macro-phases can be identified: *first*, the business of European expansion, which saw early trade missions entering established regional economic, social and political networks, using a repertoire of means, such as trade treaties, collaborations with local traders, violence as necessary against opponents; *second*, the construction of extensive colonial empires, whereby distant powers ordered local polities the better to secure access to economic and trade resources; and *third*, in the early years of the twentieth century, a general crisis,[1] a general failure of established institutions and procedures, a collapse into confusion that was attended, quickly, by extensive multi-centred violence, which saw these empires dissolve away to be succeeded by a spread of new nation states lodged within a radically reconfigured international system.

The general crisis was grounded in a number of changing circumstances, including: competition amongst metropolitan powers, analogous exchanges amongst some peripheral powers and throughout these last noted territories the rise of a multiplicity of groups oriented towards political settlements other than empire (including pan-Islamic, pan-Asian and nationalist independence movements of the sort which were to become

familiar and influential in the 1940s and 1950s). The process of the dissolution of state-empire systems was not peaceful. On the contrary, the general crisis spawned numerous conflicts: inter-ethnic conflict, civil wars, inter-state wars and finally a set of more general wars which engulfed the better parts of both regions, and which, thereafter, were followed by wars of colonial retreat and proxy wars associated with cold war bloc-competition. These episodes of conflict accompanied the political process of determining the shape of the successor to the state-empire system. As these large-scale multi-ethnic political units dissolved away, replacements had to be found, new forms of political communities, and the available model was that of the nation state, but the pattern of state formation was far from clear. These processes too were long drawn out, often violent. The various outcomes of these conflicts underpin the political–cultural world of today: in Europe, a widespread disgust at the violence of the wars in Europe and a decisive turn towards the pursuit of unification, in East Asia, amongst the dissolving remnants of state-empire systems an overriding the concern for post-colonial differentiation, for clarity in respect of discrete states and nations.

These events also provide a rich stock of resources, intellectual and practical, which might be either studied for their own sake or plundered for contemporary lessons. In the latter case, two lessons are immediately available; the *first* relates to the business of war, the decisions to undertake such actions and their costs; the *second* concerns the ways in which events are subsequently read into the collective record. There are many twists and turns in these processes, but presently, it might be suggested, first, that some members of elites in Europe and in East Asia (the British[2] and French following the Americans into the confusions of the Middle East or the populist nationalists in China, Japan and South Korea speaking stridently about otherwise trivial island groups) have rather lost sight of the astonishing costs of such warfare. And, second, thereafter, such conflicts admit of a variety of understandings. As Tony Judt[3] points out, memory is a mix of active remembering and equally active forgetting. Seen in these contexts, returning to the available history in order to recover the detail might be a useful exercise.

Elite, Popular and Scholarly Recollection

The collective apprehension of war finds various expressions, from the celebratory characterization of heroism and sacrifice[4] through to the condemnatory identification of crime and waste.[5] Such expressions vary both

within particular communities, with age or class or ethnicity,[6] and between communities, where certain generic aspects of understandings can be identified,[7] the consequences of discrete historical trajectories. As might be expected, reviewing common discourses amongst both elite and mass uncovers little by way of general agreement about these issues.

Against this, a sceptical or scholarly report[8] could begin by noting that the record of the general crisis of the twentieth century in Europe and East Asia reveals the scope or cultural reach of the associated wars. These wars were very large scale, covering vast distances, drawing in huge numbers of people and reaching deep into the ordinary lives of very many communities. So, the wars of the general crisis, in sum: in *duration*, running over some 60-odd years (in Europe, from the 1914 outbreak of the Great War through to the 1945 end of the Second World War, or the 1989 end of the cold war; in East Asia, from the 1911 Chinese Revolution through to the 1975 reunification of Vietnam[9]); in *form*, assuming multiple varieties as in inter-empire wars, inter-state wars, civil wars, inter-ethnic violence, wars of colonial withdrawal plus cold war proxy conflicts; in *scale*, killing, displacing and traumatizing millions; and in *current presence in collective memory*, as multiple wars with diverse participants find expression in multiple memories.[10]

The record of the wars of the general crisis reveals the utter contingency of war. It has a pattern only in retrospect. It has putative meaning bestowed only in hindsight. The record reveals the diversity and subtlety of personal and popular memory; personal recall is often surprisingly accurate, albeit inevitably local to place and time[11]; but it is also true that elisions amongst the memories of groups are routine; sometimes these are shocking,[12] but most recollections might be expected to encompass an element of authenticity; that is, ordinary people do not ordinarily lie.[13] But against this, the record also displays the extraordinary flexibility of official memory: denial, evasion, dismissal and, perhaps more subtly, ritualization via memorialization.[14] Elites are disposed to find positive meaning in these conflicts, to record, one way or another, that the good guys won, that things were better afterwards than before; but this is part conceit (as the elite fool themselves) and part deceit (as they fool others). Elites are concerned with immediate practice and reason of state flags unconcern for truth; it is a matter for others.[15] But, as noted, such truth has been pursued and scholarship has accumulated a wealth of material, including empirical details, lines of argument and ethical judgements, so knowledge of the wars of the twentieth century is widely disseminated amongst Europeans, so too amongst people in East Asia.[16]

GENERAL CRISIS: SYSTEM FAILURE AND THE COLLAPSE INTO WARFARE

In the early part of the twentieth century, European elites controlled vast state-empire systems. These units interacted in cooperative and competitive ways: in the former via trade, diplomacy, solidarity against so-called native peoples and so on; in the latter, they sought comparative advantage through territorial expansion, alliance building, treaty making and also war. This last noted had been a familiar element in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century expansion of state-empire systems. Thus, they manoeuvred against each other quite routinely. And in the autumn of 1914, they drifted into inter-state war; commentators point to the reluctance of the dominant power Britain to accommodate the aspirations of a newly powerful Germany, plus much accident in the exchanges between the various players. The upshot was war. The European system of states was undermined, and, more broadly, these conflicts disturbed the global state-empire system.[17] In the East Asian peripheral regions, some state-elites chose war, dissenting groups rebelled and in many places local nationalist groups also took their chance and lodged bids for statehood, producing a further round of wars. The general crisis destroyed the pattern of state-empires, re-drew the map of Europe, swept away overseas colonial territories[18] and ushered a spread of new states onto the global political scene: in Europe, matters did not return to the pre-1914 peaceful pattern until 1989/1991; and in East Asia, the analogous processes of state-empire collapse, war[19] and rebalancing ran on until the 1990s.

In Europe, the twentieth century involved a sequence of interlinked wars[20]:

1914–1918	Great War
1917–1922	Russian Revolution and Civil War
1918	Collapse of Hohenzollern monarchy
1918	Collapse of Hapsburg Empire
1919–1920	Russo-Polish War
1936–1938	Spanish Civil War
1991–1933	Weimar Republic
1938	Austrian *Anschluss* and Munich Agreement
1938	Invasion of Czechoslovakia
1939–1945	Invasion of Poland and war in the West
1941–1945	Invasion of Soviet Union and war in the East

1941–1945	USA joins war in Europe
1945	Occupation of Germany and Japan
1946–1949	Greek Civil War
1947	Cold war inaugurated
1949	NATO founded
1955	Warsaw Pact founded
1955	Hungarian Uprising
1968	Prague Spring
1989	Opening of Berlin Wall

Resultant death toll was high[21]:

Great War	8,000,000
Inter-war conflicts	3,500,000[22]
Second World War	41,000,000
Total	52,500,000

This long sequence of violence has been read into European history in a number of ways: typically, these events are not treated as an interlinked sequence; rather, they appear as somewhat disconnected events; and, predictably, typically, these events have been read in terms of the histories of states and nations. These encompass not merely collective memory but also the narrower territory of national pasts: thus the British elite recall these events in terms of a claim to victory in a virtuous war; the French elite recall events around notions of defeat, collaboration and eventual recover; German elites must deal with the dominant role in memory played by the holocaust. Against such readings, it is preferable, for scholarship, to treat these matters as a linked sequence of episodes within one overarching general crisis: hence, as noted, duration, form and scale.

In East Asia, the twentieth century involved a rather longer run of interlinked wars:

1911–1914	Chinese Revolution
1914–1916	Yuan Shikai Interval
1916–1926	Warlord Era
1918–1941	First-Phase Anti-Colonial Movements
1926–1928	Northern Expedition
1927–1937	First Chinese Civil War
1931–1934	Jiangxi Soviet
1931–1932	Japanese Invasion of Manchuria

1932–1937	Japanese Expansion in Northern China
1937–1945	Sino-Japanese War
1941–1945	Pacific War
1945–1950	Indonesian Revolution
1946–1951	Huk Rebellion
1946–1949	Second Chinese Civil War
1946–1954	First Indo-China War
1948–1960	Malayan Emergency
1950–1953	Korean War
1965–1968	Indonesian Coup
1954–1993	Cambodian Wars
1954–1975	Laos Conflicts
1954–1975	Second Indo-China War
1978–1991	Third Indo-China War.

The casualties were high[23]:

Warlords and civil war 1916–1937	4,000,000
Chinese civil war 1945–1949	2,500,000
Sino-Japanese and Pacific War	12,600,000
Southeast Asia Occupations	5,000,000
Korean War 1950–1953	2,800,000
First Indo-China War 1945–1954	600,000
Second Indo-China War 1960–1975	2,700,000
Indonesian Regime Change 1965	500,000
Third Indo-China War 1978–1991	1,500,000
Total	31,200,000

These episodes, in a similar way, have been read into the history of the countries of the region and as before there are wide variations in the treatment of these events: for the USA, victory in a virtuous war against an aggressor; for the Japanese, defeat and the necessity of national reconstruction; for China, the optimistic emergence from wars and revolution, and for the former colonies, given the historical trajectory of these countries, that is, their recent creation from the disintegrating territories of state-empires, a concern to write national histories that served elite projects of state making, nation building and the pursuit of development. But, whilst this is all understandable, once again, the wider integrated sequence is rather pushed into the background and it is clear that the crucial issue

was precisely the slow, chaotic, multi-aspect process of the dissolution of state-empire systems.

More generally, setting aside the realms of official memory, where the immediate demands of the state can override not only the tales told by scholars but also the memories of those more directly involved, several familiar intellectual strategies, whereby these matters of great violence can be grasped, are available: indirection, approaching the business sideways in literature[24]; softly, approaching the business through art[25]; appropriating, approaching through claims to victim-hood[26]; sugared, approaching through popular entertainment[27]; or grittily direct, when placing arguments in the public sphere approaching the business with feigned insouciance.[28] Specimens of all these strategies are available in respect of the wars in Europe and East Asia as successor generations attempt to deal with the legacies of conflicts.

In both Europe and East Asia, such episodes of war produce unexpected problems for survivors and successors. For the former, there is the task of coming to terms with events: the ongoing adjustment to the shock of the experience[29]; or, more subtly, problems attached to the contingency of survival.[30] And for the latter, it is not easy for successor generations to engage with the business of extensive quasi-ordered killing[31]: those who succeed those who killed have distinct problems; those who succeed those who were killed (and in the case of the more recent wars, these would be people murdered, i.e., targeted directly, not 'collateral damage') also have distinct problems. Both sets of people have to deal with unwished-for legacies, to work out how to deal with the events in question. Turning to further detail, the legacies of war, for successors, can be unpacked a little by considering casualties, trauma and (again) memory.

Casualties: The Dead and Injured, the Displaced and the Damaged

The scale of the catastrophe of the general crisis of the twentieth century escapes any simple grasp: a count reveals the numbers of dead, injured, displaced and damaged; such commentary provides a starting point.

The dead and injured were concentrated in Europe and East Asia, and their numbers were measured in millions, predominantly civilians[32]; the raw figures have been given above; they are conservative and when considered directly they beggar belief.[33] Many of the dead belonged to the

armed forces of the various participants, but most of the victims were from civilian populations. There is a deeper change working here: in the periods before the rise of industrial societies, warfare was restricted to soldiers, and it was these soldiers who suffered the casualties. However, with the rise of industrial society, two changes occurred, first, that the power of armed forces depended quite directly on the productive power of an economy, and second, changing military doctrines acknowledged the importance of the productive base (all the talk about 'logistics') and turned this base into a target. So the industrialization of warfare made killing not only more efficient, increasing the numbers of dead, but also drew in the civilian populations. Thus, the wars of the general crisis evidenced a general indifference to civilians, whose casualties increased dramatically.

Such disregard of civilian life encompassed: *casual informal violence*, thus, for example, the Nanjing Massacre, where Japanese soldiers rampaged through the city immediately after its capture leading the commanding general to comment that his men had 'done terrible things',[34] where such violence is common, part and parcel of the radical social disorder of war fighting, a characteristic of all participant armies[35]; *casual organized violence*, thus, for example, the early ethnically informed semi-systematic killing in Eastern Europe[36] or the *Sook Ching* in Singapore[37] or the process of the recapture of Manila, an unnecessary battle, causing around a million civilian casualties[38] or the revenge attacks of newly liberated populations on those identified or suspected of collaboration[39] or the 1968 Mai Lai Massacre, where troops opted for killing villagers[40]; and *very carefully organized violence* (the later systematic quasi-industrial ethnic killing in Eastern Europe[41] or the flooding of the middle Yangtze River valley[42] or the allied area bombing campaigns directed against Japanese and German populations/cities[43] or more recently the massacres carried out by the Pol Pot regime).

The wars produced large numbers of displaced persons. These were people who had lost homes, families and communities and had become refugees in either their home country or those of neighbours. These people were concentrated in Europe and East Asia,[44] and their numbers measured in millions. And in both Europe and East Asia, at war's end, these people were in great difficulty. So, first, *there were displacements throughout Europe*, in particular in the East where these initially took place during and immediately after the Great War, with invasion, revolution, imperial collapse and state formation (the mixture of power politics [armed force] and the elite political drive to put nations into states [drawing lines, allocating

populations[45]]); and there was a further round of displacements during and immediately following the Second World War, occasioned first by the German drive for empire in the East and then the project's collapse followed by all the subsequent population movements.[46] Then, second, *there were displacements in China* consequent upon an almost unbroken sequence of wars from 1911 onwards, involving revolution, imperial collapse, warlords, civil war, inter-state war and revolution (again) plus utopian grassroots mobilizations, which impacted, at one time or another, most parts of China.[47] Relatedly, in the 1940s, *there were displacements throughout the European and American state-empire holdings in East Asia*. As these territorial holdings collapsed in the face of the military forces of Imperial Japan, existing foreign elites were swept away (killed in battle or fled or interned), local collaborators found their hitherto relatively privileged positions awkward to manage and local people were subject to novel demands (thus, semi-forced labour of one sort or another[48]). Displacements could be both physical, moving to a new place, or, more subtly, social, that is, relocation to a new social status, for as empires collapsed, familiar social structures failed[49]; thus 'we are the masters now' seems to be a rather familiar declaration. Later, in the 1940s, *there were more displacements as sometime colonial powers sought to reassert their authority*; such efforts provoked further wars,[50] and yet further rounds of elite and civilian displacements, perhaps local, attendant upon ongoing conflicts with minority groups, for example in Burma or Mindanao or Western Papua, and perhaps trans-oceanic as with Ambionese moving to Holland, French Algerians (*colons* or *pieds-noirs*) relocating to France, or Vietnamese boat people heading to Europe and American, or, most recently, following the 1997 reversion of Hong Kong to China, rich and middle-class citizens shifting their domiciles to Canada, Australia and maybe Britain. And, last to note, but involving millions, later in the 1940s, there were *displacements amongst the Japanese in Northeast Asia* as their colonial holdings collapsed and nationals were relocated to the home islands.[51]

Finally, those damaged socially or psychologically, the many millions who suffered more or less directly from warfare; for example, with the deaths of family members, or the experience of the ruin of home cities, or related disasters such as the 1918 flu epidemic,[52] or the widespread hunger[53]; in brief, all the consequences for ordinary people of radical social upheaval, consequences that run on down into the present day.

Such experiences do not simply end with the cessation of warfare; their impacts run on; most immediately, in the wake of the end of fighting when

they shape social expectations,[54] giving rise to new patterns of ideas and actions; which, in turn, can offer forward-looking elites an environment within which novel political departures can be pursued.

Trauma: Social, Political and Cultural

Once again, it is difficult for successor generations to adequately grasp these matters, but it is clear that the direct impact of war upon those involved is only the start of the trouble because people and communities are traumatized by the experience. There is perhaps a temptation to treat trauma as primarily an individual psychological issue, but the damages caused by warfare also runs much more widely. The record of the general crisis of the twentieth century reveals extensive trauma[55]: social, political and cultural.

Social trauma involved, as noted above, the deaths, injuries, displacements and suffering. All this created problems down the decades for the survivors[56]: *sometimes obvious* (disabled soldiers plus their reserved seats in public places[57]); *sometimes curiously non-obvious* (in Europe, disregarded camp survivors before the invention of the Holocaust[58]); *sometimes sadly predictable* (in Europe, surplus women making lives as spinsters in the years after the Great War); and *sometimes heart-rending* (in Europe, the inter-war recourse to spiritualism in order to contact lost loved ones). In addition, more broadly, there were problems of dealing with *the less obvious costs of social disruption*: the loss of local networks; the loss of community; or the falling away of routine order in social collapse, thus France in spring and summer 1940 or Shanghai in the period 1937–1941 or Singapore in 1941–1945.[59] And finally, there was the business of how to deal with all those pragmatic accommodations that had been made to radically novel demands (occupation or evacuation or compulsory labour or any of the other myriad consequences of crisis).[60]

Political trauma flowed from the sweeping consequences of conflict and collapse. First, the *loss of those routines of ideas/actions associated with familiar institutional structures.* State machines and the demands they make upon their subject populations are not fixed; they can alter: *state machines can mobilize* populations, for example, conscription or direction of labour, as in much of Europe during the Great War and the Second World War; *state machines can be corrupted*, as in Qing or Nationalist China in the early parts of the century or a little later in National Socialist Germany, a period now read as a criminal regime; or *state machines can be radically reconfig-*

ured, as in the business of what in hindsight is labelled 'occupation'[61]; or in the extreme, *state machines can be destroyed*, as in Poland and large areas of Soviet Union in early 1940s or in Germany a few years later, or in China in the period following the military victory of the Communist Party. Second, the *loss of familiar patterns of ideas/actions associated with the established civil society and public sphere*: thus disruptions to routine social interactions and analogous confusions within hitherto ordered parties and associations. As the confusions of war rolled through political communities, sets of established ideas/practices were impacted: the taken-for-granted ideas/practices of settled communities were called into question, and as familiar authorities disappeared, so too did established rules/practices, sometimes obviously as in overt collaboration, sometimes subtler; thus in the 1940s in occupied Europe, gender relations were put under stress as men were controlled, and later, after the war, women deemed guilty of horizontal collaboration were ritually humiliated.[62] Third, the *loss of any familiar sense of citizenship (the 'political self') consequent upon confronting the novel, urgent and chaotic demands of unfolding circumstances*: thus for some polities, circumstances produced collaboration or resistance (and the subsequent debates),[63] whilst for others, circumstances produced profound yet indirect loss, most obviously of territories of empire (creating subsequent conflicts and further intellectual/moral confusions[64]).

Cultural trauma included not only the costs of the conflicts, the death and destruction,[65] but also the challenges to received ideas: thus in the summer of 1914, Europeans could and did claim the status of advanced civilizations, but in 1945, they were ruined, divided and occupied, and any claims to the evident superiority of their civilization would have been absurd.[66] The exemplary cultural and moral collapse was that of Germany, which for 13 years was controlled by a criminal regime, but the experience ran through the whole of Europe; as state-empires failed, polities confronted the shock of core warfare and peripheral loss.[67] In East Asia, the picture was mixed. By 1945, the political–cultural project of an Imperial Japan had failed, accumulated territories had been shorn away, European state-empire systems were dissolving as decolonization rolled through the region, yet China, the historical core of the region, continued embroiled in violence. In the later 1940s, it was clear that the state-empire world was fading rapidly, but it was not clear what might come next. Received ideas were changing and so accommodating or criticizing the demands of empire was no longer necessary, but quite how the post-colonial scene might be conceived was not so clear. Later, hindsight, in particular as it

found expression in elite-sponsored national pasts, reworked the period as one of the achievement of liberty, thus, positive; but this elides the sheer unpredictability of change and its unplanned costs. States and nations were contingent creations and so whilst victorious new elites prospered, other groups did not; there were winners and losers. Such loss could be clear, as with minority groups in Burma,[68] but the trauma could be subtle, thus Singaporean authors now produce a literature of heritage, noting the lives of ethnic minorities now fading from view.[69]

Memory: Remembering and Forgetting

Given the extensive killing and trauma associated with the general crises in Europe and East Asia, it might have been thought that reflection would have been routine, a pervasive social habit. It is true that collective memory is rich, that is, the general understanding of the mass of the population (and here it is possible to speak of individual memory, family memories, community memories and organization memories); but this does not hold at elite level where the record is quite different; here, recollection of the general crisis of the twentieth century reveals extensive editorial work, active forgetting and remembering, in the pursuit of a politically usable national past.[70]

These matters have been widely discussed, but in retrospect, the forgetting is often striking in its reach/scale; elites can be heroic forgetters. In Britain, for example, the single greatest military defeat experienced by the armed forces, the fall of Singapore, is more or less invisible in current public recollection; or again, from 1941 to 1944 and in the run-up to the 1944 allied invasion of Normandy, 70,000 French civilians were killed by allied bombing, a figure more or less the same as those killed in the London Blitz, yet in Britain, these deaths are largely un-remarked.[71] In Japan, an obvious example, discussions of the war years are either stylized, as in the realms of the elite where there has been a studied disinclination to engage with the history of the 1930s and 1940s, or reserved for the informally constituted critical work of various social groups.[72] Or again, relatedly, it seems that ordinary people in the USA are not yet judged ready by various lobby groups to confront the reality of the area bombing of Japanese cities.[73] Many have noted that public recollection is a mix of active remembering and equally active forgetting,[74] and that national pasts are elaborate constructs; however, in the matter of war, all this seems to radically understate the intellectual and moral flexibility of elites.[75]

Elite forgetting is available in varieties. Thus, first, the familiar habit of *neglect/indifference*, as matters are set aside as of no great contemporary interest: thus the British evasions noted above; thus the government of China disregarded the Nanjing Massacre for many years as it had happened to a Nationalist city and the Communist government found no reason to make official note (something that changed in the 1980s). Or, *evasion/suppression*, as matters are set aside for present convenience: thus the contemporary conflicts between Britain and American about how the wars in Europe and East Asia should be run or how post-war economic regimes should be constructed.[76] And then direct *refusal/denial*, as sectional interests refuse to treat issues which subsequently are rejected for contemporary debate: for example, American veterans groups and the matter of the bombing of Japanese cities,[77] or right-wing groups in Japan disinclined to acknowledge war-time error, or marginally more subtly, the British elite's seemingly enduring refusal to acknowledge the collapse of the state-empire system in which they were embedded. And on the other hand, the counterpart, elite remembering, also comes in varieties. It can be *stylized and unreliable*, as in the elite contribution to the creation of the national past,[78] with highly selective versions of the past, where such selections were shaped by present intentions and disciplined by popular collective memory.[79] It is an unstable and contested form or remembering. Or again, it can be *clichéd and false* as with the elite ideological confections of official memory, the statements and declarations made for various reasons of state (where, as noted, the affirmation of reason of state drives ideas/action that have no intrinsic links to any notion of truth).[80] Or it can fall away to the *simply banal* as with the instant commentary upon events, acknowledged and promptly forgotten.[81]

Popular forgetting also comes in varieties. There can also be forgetting produced by other groups within the broad social world, perhaps running along with the grain of elite wishes, or maybe cutting against official views: thus the *positively intended elisions* of popular efforts to 'turn the page' or 'get on with life' or 'not dwell on the past'. This particular response generates a division of lines of argument in Germany: letting the past go versus continually revisiting and deepening enquiries into the years of National Socialism, where the former tends to be seen as politically right wing, the latter, left wing.[82] And finally remembering produced by groups within the broad social world includes, as noted by many, a number of elements: *subjective and accurate*, as with personal recollection or memoir; *stylized and reliable*, as with collective memories; *stylized and clichéd*, as in media

representations of remembered war; and *scholarly*, with the work of professional and non-professional historians.[83] It is only this last noted group who affirm a central concern with getting the story straight.

Misremembering War

One aspect of the collective memory of war, more especially official or national past variants, is the routine misremembering of war. As the activity is radically contingent, it can only be subject to the process of making sense after the event; so all interpretations are made in retrospect; and war seems to induce systematic mischaracterization: both the experience and the political lessons.

In respect of the intellectual/moral experience of war, misremembering is familiar. In Britain, remembered war is understood as marking moments when 'action made a difference'[84] and the idea belongs, in particular, to those with experience of the Second World War. The characterization is not entirely inapt as familiar routines were disturbed, yet the style of memory is odd as the crisis was systemic breakdown, and so whilst actions may or may not have made a difference in general, they were shaped by circumstances. Action was local and highly situational (the 'fog of war'). This particular style of misremembering seems to be liberal/romantic: recollection is cast in terms which suggest that people had choices and could act effectively, thus they could behave heroically or shamefully, or they could contribute to the war effort or not, but this is misleading as most people, most of the time, had no choices. A familiar phrase is 'caught up in the war'. Choices were deferred until 'after the war'. Circumstances were shaped by systemic breakdown, plus rational organizations oriented to the fundamentally irrational business of war fighting, and as people were simply caught up in events, action was local and perforce had limited aims. One often discussed example concerns the survivors of camps; they have been read as heroic/victims, but this is false; they were just survivors; that is all they did, because it is all they could do at the time.[85]

In respect of politics, war is read routinely in hindsight. Elites of newly created states could look at war and see positive benefits, that is, the process of dissolution of empire and the achievement of statehood, but all such changes were contingent; war was systemic collapse, not a scheme to create independent states, and each achievement of statehood was highly contingent, often contested. It may well be true that independence is a good thing; that is, one can argue that the political form of a state is

preferable in terms of the notion of democracy to membership of a state-empire,[86] but it is an error to point to the war period as a contributory factor, as if somehow it could be read positively. The war years created a space into which aspirant replacement elites could move, the creation of states was contingent, aspirant replacement elites contested boundaries and lines were drawn on maps, but they were not drawn easily. War is also read in hindsight by those superseded; the elites of state-empires rationalized the end-time of empire in terms of the realization of those promises inherent in the relationship to progress, to civilization, to the discharge of a duty of care. Mostly hypocritical nonsense, the collapse of empire was contingent; it was not a process of realization of deep-seated goals.

General Crisis: The Available Lessons

Overall, the scale of the catastrophe is such as to defeat the imagination: millions died, millions were displaced, millions suffered damage and the consequences of the contingent violence of war run down the generations. Remembering and forgetting are the interlinked processes whereby successor generations endeavour to make sense of the episode: for elites, mostly an instrumental matter; for social groups, the realms of collective memory where instrumental concerns give way to matters of identity as communities endeavour to come to terms with events, often slowly, as in Europe, or, partially, as in East Asia.

In East Asia, polities have run down distinctive tracks; polities are discrete; national pasts are discrete; there is no analogue to the EU, and there are significant international tensions: the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is tempted to bellicose statements in respect of Taiwan, Japan and the USA[87]; Japanese elites wonder about amending the peace constitution; the Thai military recently staged a second coup aimed at the parties backed by the party leader deposed in the original coup; and in Myanmar, a military dictatorship has impoverished the country and has only recently began the process of stepping back from politics. The historical trajectory of the countries of East Asia has shaped the political concerns of their elites: thus, most centrally, securing states, building nations and pursuing development. Elites have constructed national pasts oriented to the service of these goals, and whilst this is understandable, it also cuts against the creation of histories adequate to the experience of individual countries and of the region as a whole.[88]

In contrast, Europeans have learned at least some of the lessons of the general crisis; again a product of their particular historical trajectories. The catastrophe of the general crisis has meant that the inter-empire competition of the metropolitan core elites has burned itself out; there are no empires; there are no desires to acquire them; and notwithstanding the persistence of individual national pasts, the affirmation of the inevitable and desirable power of states and the importance of the abstract idea of nation are fading. A continent-wide institutional machinery of cooperation is in place. It is a curious apparatus, subject to much debate and no little criticism, but it has endured for some 50-odd years, sustained by emphatic elite commitment, supported by rather less fulsomely articulated popular agreement. European elites and masses are aware of the costs of war; indeed, it requires only a passing acquaintance with the history of the continent over the twentieth century.

All this, of course, makes some recent elite failures the more surprising: thus the behaviour of the Serbian elite in the processes of the dissolution of Yugoslavia attracted condemnation; the intellectual/political antics of some nationalists in Eastern Europe has attracted criticism[89]; the recently fashionable doctrine of 'humanitarian intervention' has been called into question[90]; and the ill-considered posturing of the British[91] and French governments in respect of North Africa and the Middle East in the wake of the 'Arab Spring' has attracted widespread criticism.

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Returning to the starting point—recent debates about war—it might be said that there is no excuse for ignorance of war, the chaos, destruction and pain. And moreover the history of the twentieth century in both Europe and East Asia, even when subject to the most cursory examination, offers clear lessons for contemporary elites. Thus the record of the general crisis of the twentieth century offers an unambiguous reminder that war marks a catastrophic breakdown of ordinary economic, social and political relationships. War is not one more policy option; it is not politics by other means; it is not a regrettably inevitable part of human life; it is not a descent into an otherwise unfortunate inherent barbarism; rather, it is a direct consequence of intellectual and moral failures on the part of elite actors.

NOTES

1. After Antonio Gramsci (see Antonio Gramsci 1973 *Selections from Prison Notebooks* [edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith]) and Hugh Trevor-Roper 1959 'The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century' in *Past and Present*, Vol. 16.

2. In all this, three lines of professional commentary seem to be available, and they can be illustrative and noted in the following: (1) it is inevitable to prepare (C.S. Gray 2005 *Another Bloody Century: Future Warfare*, London, Phoenix); (2) it is perhaps going to continue but only on a small scale (Rupert Smith 2006 *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World*, London, Penguin); and (3) it is perhaps useful to do to others to help them upgrade themselves (Paul Collier 2009 *Wars, Guns and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places*, London, Bodley Head).

3. T. Judt 2002 'The Past is Another Country: Myth and Memory in Post War Europe' in J.W. Muller ed. *Memory and Power in Post War Europe*, Cambridge University Press.

4. Some of this is official ritual (politicians), some of it is popular ritual (the semi-spontaneous popular honour guards for returned coffins in the town adjacent to the receiving UK airbase) and some of it is adolescent war-pornography (thus war and death are read as an excitement perhaps analogous to a video-game (a line pandered to by the military—thus General Schwarzkopf's press briefing remark about the luckiest man in Iraq who saw the munitions coming up in his rear-view mirror when the Americans bombed a bridge)).

5. Pragmatic (war is not worth it) or moral (war is wrong) and here pacifism would be one expression; see Nicholson Baker 2008 *Human Smoke: The Beginnings of World War II, the End of Civilization*, London, Simon and Schuster.

6. Anecdotally: social class (e.g., in an interview on British television of people involved in the sinking of the *Scharnhorst* interviewed around the time of the rediscovery of the wreck on 10 September 2000, an officer remained grim in recollection of duty, whilst a rating expressed sympathy for the sailors killed); age (survivors vs. hobbyists); or ethnicity (thus there is a Jinnah Street near to where

I live in England and there is a Subhas Chandra Bose airport in India).

7. Different historical trajectories carry different collective memories—the positive way in which Americans refer to war—the German preoccupation with National Socialism coupled to a philosemitism—French and British delusions of continued grandeur/greatness—China's references to a century of national humiliation—the Japanese declarations for peace associated with memories of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

8. After the style of Jürgen Habermas, it can be asserted that scholars 'make arguments on behalf of humankind in pursuit of a reconstructed public sphere'.

9. Dates encompassing the start of the dissolution of state-empires and running to their definite end—the dates could be varied, and they are different for different contemporary countries; the point here is that these processes of dissolution were drawn out.

10. The conflicts were overlapping and cross-cutting but also restricted—that is, for participants, there were different wars in different places involving different participants and producing different memories.

11. As with, say, oral histories, or memoirs, personal, yes, but capable of accuracy/authenticity; for example, Robert Graves 1960 *Goodbye to All That*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, or in different register, Traudl Junge 2004 *To the Final End: Hitler's Last Secretary,* London, Phoenix.

12. As with, say: some figures in the city of Passau portrayed in the film. M. Verhoeven 1990 *The Nasty Girl*; or the popular memory of the British in respect of bombing where the myth of the heroic precision of *The Dam Busters* is preferred to the reality of bureaucratically ordered industrialized slaughter on which, see A.C. Grayling 2006 *Among the Dead Cities: Was the Allied Bombing of Civilians in World War Two a Necessity or a Crime*, London, Bloomsbury or Jorg Friedrich 2006 *The Fire: The Bombing of Germany 1940–1945*, Colombia University Press; or the disinclination of Japanese elites to acknowledge war-time crimes such as forced prostitution or germ warfare tests—on the former, see, for example, Yuki Tanaka 2002 *Japan's Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery and Prostitution during World War ii and the US Occupation*, London, Routledge.

13. A sociologist's observation: humans are thoroughly social; they are social first, individual thereafter, and so lying is not an available option open to a discrete (liberal) individual; rather, it is a practice parasitic upon a general routine adherence to collective social rules/practices.

14. For example, the retreat of the Red Army from the Jiangxi Soviet in the fact of Chiang Kai Shek's fifth encirclement campaign has been re-read—a desperate retreat becomes a heroic counter-march and then a foundation myth for the state—see Sun Shuyen 2007 *The Long March*, London, Harper Perennial.

15. Crucially, scholarship—as noted above with Jürgen Habermas—but on the classical European tradition in general, see P.W. Preston 2009 *Arguments and Actions in Social Theory*, London, Palgrave.

16. Not, however, in the same way: Europe's wars commanded attention as they collapsed state-empires, that is, the costs were evident; East Asia's wars also commanded attention, but the collapse of state-empires made political space for replacement elites, and so it was easier to tell a tale of the successful achievement of independence; plus thereafter, Europeans moved towards unification, whereas East Asians concerned with state making and thus border drawing and nation making moved towards differentiation; in sum, war and memory work differently in the two regions.

17. The political units were empires comprising in familiar terminology a core plus a periphery—this was the basic unit—integrated—hence 'state-empire'.

18. For an insight into the scale of the collapse of the British Empire in Asia, see Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper 2004 *Forgotten Armies: The Fall of British Asia 1941-45*, London, Allen Lane.

19. There are several lists that could be made—first, a list of wars of colonial expansion—second, a list of ongoing colonial pacification—third, a list of wars of colonial withdrawal—and fourth, a list of cold war-related conflicts, overt and covert—the last noted pair could be taken to be a part of the general crisis (rather than something following on afterwards).

20. The rhetorical strategy of the list is taken from Norman Davies 1977 *Europe: A History*, London, Pimlico; and for the scale of the contribution of various participants to the Second World War, see Norman Davies 2006 *Europe at War 1939–1945: No Simple Victory*, London, Macmillan.

21. Taken from Davies 1977, p. 1328; the figures for Soviet Union are greater in Davies, but this is ideologically fraught territory; and to these figures should/could also be added the deaths in Europe following political upheavals attendant upon end of Great War, plus impact of flu pandemic, helped along its way by the conditions of the trenches, plus Spanish Civil War, plus deaths in run-up to Second World War.

22. Estimates vary widely; a high of 9,000,000 on website 'Source List and Detailed Death Tolls for the Twentieth Century Hemoclysm' on http://users.erols.com/mwhite28/warstat1.htm accessed June 2009; the figure listed here comes from Davies 1997, p. 1329 and on the Spanish Civil War (500,000) from 'Secondary Wars and Atrocities of the Twentieth Century' on http://users.erols.com/mwhite28/warstat1.htm accessed June 2009, and these are sourced to the historian of Spain Hugh Thomas and include war dead plus subsequent Francoist executions.

23. A rough estimate of the war casualties is around 30 million plus a rough estimate of famine-/politics-related deaths in Maoist China is around 20 million (estimates here vary widely)—sources: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_wars_and_anthropogenic_disasters_by_death_toll (accessed 2 April 2016); necrometrics.com/wars19c.htm; E.L. Dreyer 1995 *China at War 1901–1949*, London, Longman; S.C.M. Paine 2012 *The Wars for Asia 1911–1949*, Cambridge University Press.

24. Hence Gunter Grass 2003 *Crabwalk,* London, Faber, a sideways movement towards discussion of the nature of German losses; or in a different fashion, Kurt Vonnegut 1969 *Slaughterhouse Five,* New York, Dell; or in slightly different register, Joseph Heller 1961 *Catch 22,* New York, Simon and Schuster.

25. W.G. Sebald 2004 *On the Natural History of Destruction*, Harmondsworth, Penguin; or Pablo Picasso's 1937 painting *Guernica*, or Claude Lanzman's film *Shoah.*

26. On victim-hood as industry: N. Finkelstein 2000 *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering*, London, Verso; R. Hughes 1993 *Culture of Complaint: The Fraying of America*, Oxford University Press.

27. Thus, Richard Attenborough's 1969 satirical film *Oh! What a Lovely War* or rather differently films from Stephen Spielberg.

28. Norman Davies' lists.

29. This could be medical as with post-traumatic stress disorder, or it could be literary as with say Robert Graves 1960 *Goodbye to All That*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, or stylized/nostalgic, hence the post-war British 'holiday camps'.

30. Thus, for example, Primo Levi's work.

31. See, for example, Sebald 2004; S. Zizek 2009 *Violence*, London, Profile; D. Faust 2008 *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War*, New York, Alfred Knopf.

32. That killing civilians is routine in war is pursued by Hugo Slim 2007 *Killing Civilians: Method, Madness and Morality in War*, London, Hurst and Company.

33. One informal way to approach the scale of these wars is to recall the ways in which current media report on 'disasters'—floods, or car crashes, or earthquakes somewhere or other—then try to imagine raising the scale to encompass millions.

34. Now widely discussed: for a scholarly treatment, see T. Wakabayashi ed. 2007 *The Nanking Atrocity 1937–38: Complicating the Picture*, Oxford, Berghahn Books.

35. Recently discussed in respect of the Red Army, part scholarship and perhaps part propaganda, and also discussed in respect of the British and American forces in Western Europe—see W.L. Hitchcock 2008 *The Bitter Road to Freedom*, New York, Free Press.

36. Widely discussed, see, for example, C.R. Browning 1993 *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*, New York, Harper; see also the novel by Jonathan Littell 2009 *The Kindly Ones*, London, Chatto and Windus.

37. Japanese occupation authorities purged the Chinese population immediately after taking control, and an estimated 5000 men were killed (Bayly and Harper 2004).

38. Max Hastings 2008 *Retribution: The Battle for Japan, 1944–45*, New York, Alfred Knopf.

39. The war-occasioned replacement of one system of authority by another involves collapse and reconstruction, and the organizational gap allows private- or local-level actions—thus revenge killings in Eastern Europe and in Western Europe—on the latter, see Hitchcock 2008.

40. In August 2009, Lt Calley was reported in the press as having acknowledged and apologized for his role in this episode; see *Daily Telegraph* 22 August 2009.

41. Z. Bauman 1989 *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Cambridge, Polity.

42. As nationalists retreated in June 1938, Chiang Kai Shek ordered dykes on the Yellow River to be opened to slow the enemy advance, and this killed an estimated 500,000 Chinese civilians; see J. Fenby 2003 *Generalissimo: Chiang Kai Shek and the China He Lost*, London, Free Press.

43. Jorg Friedrich 2006 *The Fire: The Bombing of Germany 1940–1945*, Columbia University Press; A.C. Grayling 2006 *Among the Dead Cities*, London, Bloomsbury; Bruce Cummings 1999 *Parallax Visions: American-East Asian Relations at the End of the Century*, Durham, Duke University Press; see in particular chapter two.

44. Although there were population movements in South Asia and Africa and the Middle East which were areas of military recruitment or supply (in Africa, the British trained pilots, and this was picked up by Doris Lessing in her early novels).

45. And—of course—creating minorities—themselves maybe problems for host nations but also the occasion of irredentist claims from neighbouring states.

46. Davies 2006; A.M. de Zayas 1979 2nd ed. *Nemesis at Potsdam: The Anglo-Americans and the Expulsion of the Germans*, London, Routledge.

47. A visual impression of the nature of life in China which displays the violence is available in Jonathan Spence and Annping Chin 1996 *The Chinese Century: A Photographic History*, London, Harper Collins; in the case of Anti-Japanese War, one example of how local-level suffering could unfold is given in respect of one small town in D.P. Barrett and L.N. Shyu eds. 2001 *Chinese Collaboration with Japan, 1932–1945: The Limits of Accommodation*, Stanford University Press.

48. Malays were recruited to work on the Siam/Burma railway or Korean women were recruited to work as 'comfort women'.

49. Brenda Yeoh and Kamalini Ramdas 2000 'Remembering Darkness: Spectacle, Surveillance and the Spaces of Everyday Life in Syonan-to' in P. Lim and Diana Wong eds 2000 *War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, Singapore, ISEAS, write about the occupation of Singapore with new schedules of social status where locals were obliged to acknowledge these rules (or face violence)—such an experience shaped the young Lee Kuan Yew (see his memoirs).

50. Bayly and Harper 2007 discuss the situation in Southeast Asia in late 1945—thus in Surabaya, a British army comprising mainly Indian soldiers fought against local Indonesians in order to return to power the Dutch—in retrospect, foolish and shameful—there is now a memorial to the fighting in Surabaya (pp. 175–189).

51. John Dower 1999 *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Aftermath of World War II*, London, Allen Lane, pp. 48–53, reports that at the end of the war, 6.5 million Japanese were scattered around Asia of which 3.5 million were armed forces; there were 2.6 million Japanese in China; there were 1.1 million in Manchuria; and an estimated 245,000 died after the capitulation, predominantly civilians.

52. This killed millions, and the epidemic had its core in the populations of soldiers in the trenches of the Western Front.

53. The social collapse attendant on warfare impacts civilians both directly via destruction and indirectly via disruption; thus hunger problems in Eastern Europe (after both wars) and throughout East Asia from 1911 onwards; one such episode being the Bengal Famine of 1943 with some three million dead—see Bayly and Harper 2004, pp. 282–91; another example, Maoist utopianism in the Great Leap Forward.

54. A common theme in post-Second World War reflection in Germany, but see also the critical film by Rainer Werner Fassbinder *The Marriage of Maria Braun.*

55. This points to the actual impacts of events; the semi-routinized culture of complaint which focuses in part on the Second World War years is another type of social phenomena (see Robert Hughes 1993 *Culture of Complaint: The Fraying of America*, Oxford University Press); so too the ritualized business of the holocaust industry (see Norman Finkelstein 2003 2nd ed. *The Holocaust Industry*, London, Verso).

56. Perhaps for successor generations, that is, those children raised by those who suffered, however, this is awkward territory as many now claim victim-hood at second or third hand, and money is one clear motive (on the art world variant, see Norman Rosenthal 2009 'We Must Live in the Present' in Speigel Online 9 April 2009 www. spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,druck-618399,00. html accessed 13/04/2009).

57. France after the Great War; see Rod Kedward 2006 *La Vie en Bleu: France and the French Since 1900*, London, Penguin.

58. See Norman Finkelstein 2000 *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering*, London, Verso.

59. One area of recent study being the collapse of order in France in May 1940 with refugees flooding the roads and going nowhere in particular; on Shanghai, see B. Wasserstein 1998 *Secret War in Shanghai: Treachery, Subversion and Collaboration in the Second World War*, London, Profile; on Singapore, see Yeoh and Ramdas 2000.

60. One lesson of the history of the Second World War in Europe is the extensive dislocation of hitherto settled patterns of life with people moving around in great numbers; Davies 2006 deals with the armies and the casualties in the East; and A. Tooze 2006 *The Wages of Destruction: The Making and Breaking of the Nazi War Economy*, London, Penguin, gives some idea of the scale of movement associated with forced labour.

61. Elites can have problems—Petain—Laval—Quisling—Wang Jingwei—Henry Pu Yi—the issue has been recently examined in film in respect of Shanghai, see Ang Lee 2008 *Lust, Caution*.

62. Shaving heads—see Kedward 2005.

63. In respect of Europe, debated around the particular experience of France, see Kedward 2005, and in East Asia, less discussed, but on Sino-Japanese collaboration, see Barrett and Shyu 2001.

64. Sometimes in respect of those who backed the wrong side; the ambiguities of responses in respect of Britain are pursued by Kazuo Ishiguro 1989 *The Remains of the Day*, London, Faber, but more explicit regrets are found in Japan; see, for example, the Kazuo Ishiguro 1986 *An Artist of the Floating World*, London, Faber.

65. For example, looting with European art treasures scattered around or Chinese treasures taken from the Palace Museum recently put up for auction or more recently the damages to the museums in Baghdad.

66. Thus book titles, for example, Mark Mazower 1998 *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century*, London, Allen Lane.

67. Another way in which the 'allied scheme of history' (Davies 1997) misleads.

68. Some minority ethnic groups had been favoured by the British, and as the post-independence civil war was slowly resolved in

favour of the Burmese, minority groups lost status; one casualty may have been Aung San who might have been assassinated with the help of sometime British special forces affirming a loyalty to Christian minority groups.

69. Such as Straits Chinese or Eurasians.

70. Collective memory—lodged in the wide social world; the national past—a history of the polity—contested—elite/mass—the national past lodges the polity in history.

71. Indeed, the wider issue of the bombing campaigns are largely un-remarked—thus in recent years, a statue has been erected to 'Bomber Harris' and in 2012 a large memorial was erected to the dead of Bomber Command (not a memorial to say 'all the victims of bombing').

72. Unpacked by Franziska Seraphim 2006 *War Memory and Social Politics in Japan, 1945–2005*, Harvard University Press.

73. See, for example, the argument surrounding the Smithsonian Institute's wish to contextualize the display of the Enola Gay—veteran's groups stopped the proposal.

74. See Tony Judt 'The Past is Another Country: Myth and Memory in Post War Europe' in J.W. Muller ed. *Memory and Power in Post War Europe*, Cambridge University Press.

75. One particular area where elite opinion unpacks is in school history, that is, the matter of the syllabus; it is a familiar area of debate in respect of Japan, but see also Britain where history teaching has been criticized in so far as it deals with Germany for being unable to see anything other than the National Socialist period.

76. C. Thorne 1978 *Allies of a Kind*, Oxford University Press; R Skidelsky 2001 *John Maynard Keynes: Fighting for Britain 1937–1946*, London, Papermac.

77. For example, the disinclination of American veterans plus allies to discuss the bombing of Japanese cities in 1944 and 1945—see Smithsonian Museum debates.

78. Davis 1997 on the 'allied scheme of history'—allocating key players to stereotyped roles, obliterating thereby much of the detail of the whole business.

79. American elite/popular recollections of the Pacific and European wars—attitudes attaining caricature form in Hollywood movies celebrating 'America winning the war'—against this, see Clint

Eastwood's 2006 *Flags of Our Fathers* and 2006 *Letters from Iwo Jima*.

80. For example, the UN designating 27 January as 'International Holocaust Remembrance Day'—recollection declines into absurd cliché.

81. British government ministers commenting upon—say—events in Africa where the tone adopted is quasi-colonial: another conflict, another expression of patrician regret.

82. See, for example, J. Knowlton and Truett Cates (translators and editors) 1993 *Forever in the Shadow of Hitler? Original Documents of the Historikerstreit, The Controversy Concerning the Singularity of the Holocaust*, Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey, Humanities Press.

83. Clubs and societies, visiting battlefields, conducting excavations, making memorials, setting up websites—all may be noted after Raphael Samuelson as amateur historians.

84. A central notion imputed to the population by Patrick Wright 1985 *On Living in an Old Country,* London, Verso.

85. See, for example, J.G. Ballard 1984 *The Empire of the Sun*, London, Gollancz; J.G. Ballard 1994 *The Kindness of Women*, London, Harper Collins; J.G. Ballard 2008 *Miracles of Life: From Shanghai to Shepperton: An Autobiography*, London, Fourth Estate.

86. A point made by Ernest Gellner 1964 *Thought and Change*, London, Weidenfeld, who argued that elites are legitimate if they are co-cultural with the ruled and committed to development.

87. American forces are based in Japan and South Korea, and the American navy routinely puts ships aside the coast of China, and occasionally there are low-level clashes—these later could be read as provocative on the part of the USA as the Chinese do not place ships off-shore from the West Coast; Beijing routinely decries 'hegemonism', meaning the claims to pre-eminence of the USA.

88. The task will become urgent as the countries become more closely integrated—the logic of the success of the last 20-plus years.

89. In respect of the 70th anniversary celebrations of the outbreak of the Second World War, the pernicious equation of Nazism and Stalinism; see Seamus Milne 'This rewriting of history is spreading Europe's poison' in *The Guardian* 10 September 2009 or Ian Traynor and Luke Harding 'Bitter Row over war blame marks Gdansk Day' in *The Guardian* 2 September 2009.

90. See, for example, Rory Stewart 'The Irresistible Illusion' in *London Review of Books* 31.13 9 July 2009.
91. David Marquand in *New Statesman*, 10 March 2003, on Blair's letter writing in the run-up to the invasion of Iraq; Blair could have chosen Europe, but instead he chose America, destroying thereby both his reputation and his premiership.

Singapore and the Pursuit of National Development

The late former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew insisted upon social discipline amongst Singaporeans, often casting the matter most directly in terms of the vulnerability of the small island within the wider potentially hostile Malay world of Southeast Asia,[1] and thereafter, more prosaically, the territory's exposure to the putatively chill winds of the wider world of global commerce.[2] Lee cast the role of the PAP in analogous terms, averring that the party was responsible, pragmatic and honest and thus uniquely fitted to lead.[3] Lee also unpacked these claims in generational terms, suggesting that whilst his own generation could remember and appreciate the struggles of the early days of Singapore, younger citizens only had the experience of living in a prosperous, rapidly developing city. This group were tagged 'post-65ers', born after independence, those who had benefited most clearly from the country's success.[4]

It is a familiar anxiety; the old leader recalls the struggles of his youth and casts doubt on the abilities of the comparatively easy living young to take up the burden. However, in this case, there is an identifiable basis for the anxiety because Lee and his generation did live through a period of violent change. For some 25 years, from the start of the Pacific War through to 1965 when Singapore attained its unexpected independence, the territory was repeatedly swept up in violence: the Imperial Japanese invasion, the returning armies of Britain, civil insurrection, inter-ethnic violence and all the tensions and confusions of pro-independence movements within the local population.

Lee was 18 years old at the start of this sequence of events; he was immersed in them and was repeatedly obliged to respond at first as a private citizen and then as a political leader to the urgent practical demands of sweeping changes.[5] In this, his experience resembles that of many of the first-generation leaders of independent states, which had been carved out of the peripheral territories of disintegrating state-empire systems. All faced analogous tasks—whether engaged with the Dutch, French, American or British systems; aspirant replacement elites had to lay claim to a territory, secure its control, build a state-machine and seek legitimation amongst those whom they presumed to rule. In the case of Lee, he inherited a prosperous if dilapidated colonial seaport, a key nexus in regional and global flows of trade—this was the start point for the pursuit of national development.

General Crisis: Scale and Costs

In the early part of the twentieth century, the global system was dominated by European, American and Japanese state-empires.[6] At this time, European elites sought advantage with regard to their metropolitan competitors through war. And in 1914, European powers stumbled[7] into a domestic, that is, mainland European war, which was to prove devastating and the prologue to a series of conflicts that ran on until 1945, at which point, unsurprisingly, the continent was ruined.[8] In East Asia, some local elites also chose war: Japan sought to protect its state-empire in East Asia through warfare against its neighbours, China, and against the territories held by Western powers. So both Europe and East Asia were engulfed in warfare. In all the confusion, numerous local nationalist groups in both core and periphery took their chance and lodged bids for state-hood, producing thereby a further round of wars of independence. In both the core and the periphery, the system of empires was fatally undermined. The general crisis destroyed the pattern of state-empires, re-drew the map of Europe, swept away peripheral colonial holdings in East Asia and ushered a spread of new states onto the global political scene. In Europe, matters did not return to peace until 1989–1991, whilst in East Asia, the analogous processes of collapse, war and rebalancing ran on until the 1990s, and whilst overt violence ended in 1991, with the end of fighting in Indo-China, tensions abounded between states and the region was host to the sole remaining heavily militarized Cold War border, that between North and South Korea.[9]

The Interlinked Wars of State-Empire Collapse: 1911–1991[10]

1911–1914	Chinese Revolution
1914–1916	Yuan Shikai Era in China
1914–1918	Great War
1916–1926	Warlord Era in China
1917–1922	Russian Revolution and Civil War
1918	Collapse of Hohenzollern Monarchy
1918	Collapse of Hapsburg Empire
1918–1941	First-Phase Anti-colonial Movements
1919–1920	Russo-Polish War
1926–1928	Northern Expedition in China
1927–1937	First Chinese Civil War
1931–1934	Jiangxi Soviet
1931–1932	Japanese Invasion of Manchuria
1932–1937	Japanese Expansion in Northern China
1933	Collapse of Weimar Republic
1936–1938	Spanish Civil War
1937–1945	(Second) Sino-Japanese War
1936	Re-occupation of Rhineland
1938	Austrian *Anschluss* and Invasion of Czechoslovakia
1939–1945	Second World War
1941–1945	Pacific War
1945–1950	Indonesian Revolution
1946–1951	Huk Rebellion
1946–1949	Second Chinese Civil War
1946–1949	Greek Civil War
1946–1954	First Indo-China War
1947–1989	Cold War in Europe
1949–1991	Cold War in East Asia
1948–1960	Malayan Emergency
1950–1953	Korean War
1954–1975	Second Indo-China War
1955	Hungarian Uprising
1965–1968	Indonesian Coup
1978–1991	Third Indo-China War

Resultant death toll was high[11]:

Great War 1914–1918	8,000,000
Inter-war conflicts Europe 1918–1939	3,500,000
Warlords and civil war 1916–1937	4,000,000
Sino-Japanese and Pacific War 1937–1945	12,600,000
Second World War 1939–1945	41,000,000
Southeast Asia Occupations 1941–1945	5,000,000
Chinese civil war 1945–1949	2,500,000
First Indo-China War 1945–1954	600,000
Korean War 1950–1953	2,800,000
Second Indo-China War 1960–1975	2,700,000
Indonesian Regime Change 1965	500,000
Third Indo-China War 1978–1991	1,500,000
Total	83,700,000

Intra-imperial competition triggered a general crisis which unfolded into multiple wars across two continents over a period of some 30 or more years; viewed in hindsight the loss of life, both military and (mostly) civilian, along with the related destruction of material resources in cities, towns and villages, are difficult to grasp, and even more difficult to credit for it is easier to set aside any search for reasons and judge that elites simply went mad.[12] At any event, these matters bore most heavily on one generation, those directly caught up in events; and these survivors faced daunting problems, as they were the generation that perforce had to come to terms with events.

Southeast and East Asia: Wars of Collapse and Withdrawal

The colonial holdings of the foreign powers dissolved away in the years surrounding the Pacific War, and whilst there had been pre-war calls for change, it was the years 1941–1945 that fatally undermined these state-empires, and after 1945, a number of wars of colonial withdrawal finally produced an end to these systems.[13] Aspirant replacement elites sought and finally attained power, and these elites made states, constructed nations and pursued a variety of political–cultural projects typically centred on national development.[14] The sometime colonial holdings were

transformed into a number of new states; there was no crucial intrinsic determining logic to these processes of state formation, no recipe[15]; it was a contingent matter, and a novel unplanned pattern emerged. It was an untidy process attended by domestic, regional and international conflicts where aspirant replacement elites had to deal with their inherited populations, organized local groups, departing colonial interests, neighbouring elites and the demands for alliances of one sort or another associated with the nascent great power Cold War.

Over the period, the British, Dutch, French, American and Japanese empires disappeared, and in their place, a number of new states emerged: Burma, Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei; Indonesia; Laos, Cambodia, North Vietnam and South Vietnam; the Philippines; and North Korea, South Korea and Taiwan. At the same time, in China, the long-running civil war was resolved. All this, of course, is well known, and it is rehearsed here in order to underscore the aspect of violence: evident in the wide and lengthy process of state-empire dissolution, more familiarly available in the guise of histories of open warfare and also present in the long-drawn-out departure of colonial powers. All these matters are routinely read out of the collective memory of sometime colonial powers[16] and only ambiguously acknowledged in the official national pasts of now sovereign states.

Wars of colonial collapse and withdrawal included[17]:

- Burma, 1941–1948—war-time Japanese invasion and colonial British re-invasion/occupation, followed by an overlapping process of independence and civil war as the Burmese core asserted itself against an ethnically diverse periphery.
- Malaya, 1941–1957—war-time Japanese invasion and colonial British re-occupation, followed by inter-ethnic tensions, class-based insurrectionary guerrilla warfare, nascent Cold War proxy conflicts (in the guise of anti-communist anti-guerrilla containment operations) and eventual independence.[18]
- Singapore, 1941–1965—war-time Japanese invasion and colonial British re-occupation, followed by pre-independence local elite-level conflicts, popular anti-colonial civil unrest and violence, plus a failed merger with its neighbour Malaysia followed by an unexpected independence.
- Indonesia, 1941–1949—war-time Japanese invasion, Dutch colonial (British-assisted) re-invasion/occupation, plus drawn-out political

manoeuvring amongst core and peripheral players and two brief anti-colonial wars leading finally to independence.

- Philippines, 1941–1946—war-time Japanese invasion and American colonial re-invasion/occupation, followed by the re-instatement at the behest of the colonial re-occupiers of a collaborationist elite regime, opposed by popular forces and leading to independence accompanied by enduring violent class/ethnic rebellions.
- Indo-China, 1940–1954—Vietnam—war-time Japanese occupation and French colonial (British-assisted) re-invasion/occupation, followed by local civil divisions and both guerrilla and open anti-colonial warfare overlain and sustained by a Cold War proxy war (American anti-communism), in total producing a catastrophically costly but finally successful war of independence—analogous trajectories issued in independence for Laos and Cambodia.
- Northeast Asia, 1945–1953—Imperial Japanese defeat was followed by the loss of those state-empire peripheral territories gained since Meiji era—islands to the north were transferred to the USSR, Manchuria reverted to China, Korea attained independence, the Okinawa Islands were transferred to the USA and Taiwan attained independence.
- Korea, 1945–1953—Japanese colonial withdrawal followed great power occupation, formal partition, local rebellions in the south, continuing civil conflicts culminating in civil war, renewed external interventions and multi-participant cold war proxy war.
- Taiwan, 1945–1949—Japanese colonial withdrawal followed by American occupation and then occupied by defeated Nationalists plus domestic conflicts and cold war great power support—in all, creating an unanticipated independence.
- China, 1945–1949—the final phase of the civil war along with external interventions in the context of nascent cold war, ended by the declaration of PRC, thereafter domestic reforms (attended by extensive class-based violence), and there were minor conflicts in border regions, in respect of Taiwan and in Tibet, plus a more problematic large-scale intervention in Korea.

Following the Pacific War, the end of the various state-empire experiments was chaotic[19]: in Southeast Asia, the aspirations of sometime colonial powers to recover control of their former peripheral territories provoked

further rounds of political confusion and violence, but states were newly minted and thereafter nations were created; in Northeast Asia, the collapse of the Imperial Japanese state-empire was followed by local conflicts and war in Korea; and in China, the final phase of the civil war saw military campaigns beginning in the north and running down into the south of the country, and thereafter the newly empowered elite tacked the business of establishing order within the newly reunited territory, plus there were further wars defining borders.

An overarching feature of the period of general crisis was the collapse into warfare with civil war, inter-state war, wars of colonial withdrawal/independence and the various expressions of the subsequent cold war, including local rebellions, foreign meddling (overt and covert) and a number of highly destructive proxy wars. Events gave rise to a contingent process of the creation of replacement elites and new states, and thereafter a variety of elite projects were pursued, nominally centrally national development, but there were numerous exceptions as local elites looked to their own concerns, some intelligible, others disreputable and a few wholly obscure.[20]

The End-Time of Colonial Rule: Violence Experienced and Remembered

The experience of violence was overwhelming: in the early phases of the Pacific War, the colonial holdings of the Europeans and the Americans were swept away as their armed forces were defeated, obliging any remaining authorities to submit; later, there were years of occupation, and later still the end-time of empire.

The military campaigns came first: colonial armies were in retreat, later in captivity, whilst civilian colonial nationals found themselves interred[21]; and as local civilian populations were caught up in the fighting, some were bombed, displaced and made refugees, whilst others stayed where they were as large parts of these territories were rural and managed the best they could, and here the violence of war flowed over them and around them, and as the fighting died down, all were obliged to acknowledge the new authorities.[22]

The business of occupation followed: a number of responses were available, and reactions varied along with personal and family circumstances, ethnic group or political loyalties. Some joined resistance groups; oth-

ers joined independence movements, whilst most simply kept their heads down. All had to survive and that entailed sustaining where possible ordinary patterns of life. In Europe, immediately after 1945 and for an extended time thereafter, the polar concepts of collaboration and resistance were used to characterize the experiences of people in war-time. Similar arguments have been applied to the experiences of people in East Asia.[23] But recently, both categories have been revisited, and critical reconsideration plus empirical research indicates that the experiences of war-time people rarely fell into either of these neat tidy categories.[24] So there were many responses to occupation: heroic, shameful and mundane. The categories were not exclusive, and whilst active collaboration was rare, reluctant pragmatic acquiescence familiar.

And these populations included not merely those who might now be described as ordinary people but also those who were to become post-war political leaders. Many were young and responses varied: admiration of the occupiers, hence 'collaborationism'; hatred of the occupiers, hence resistance; psychological hardening plus tactical and strategic opportunism, hence some first cooperated, then shifted their ground as defeat for the occupiers loomed.[25] Those who were concerned for the future, perhaps considering active politics, in some form or other, had multiple constituencies to manage/consider: extant occupation authorities, extant local groups (overt/covert), actual/potential local followers, overseas links to allies and supporters and the likely continuing concerns and intentions of former colonial powers and their variously influential groupings and publics.[26] None of this was clear-cut, and none of it was straightforward, and all of it was suffused with violence; nor did the end of the Japanese occupation see an end to the confusions, as returning colonial powers had to be confronted, peacefully if possible, but more often not, violently; and neither were these pre-independence conflicts simple, as there were many aspirant post-colonial leaders whose linkages to local and overseas players were also multiple. Unsurprisingly, in this swirl of players, outcomes were wholly contingent.

The formal ending of the Pacific War did not end the violence.[27] The re-ordering of Northeast Asia continued: Manchukuo was re-absorbed into China,[28] the post-Qing civil war raged on for four more years and the establishment of the People's Republic saw further smaller-scale conflicts, in particular with Taiwan (over the islands of Quemoy and Matsu[29]) and in Tibet. In Southeast Asia, the wars of colonial withdrawal continued and a number of cold war proxy conflicts were inaugurated[30]; one way

or another, these wars continued for decades until in 1975 Vietnam was reunified; but later there were further conflicts in other parts of what had been Indo-China. Decolonization and cold war proved to be overlapping sources of conflict, and they helped sustain environments of insecurity for replacement elites. Such problems were accentuated by certain local domestic activities: the coup-habit of the Thai military; the manoeu-vring for advantage of the elites in the Philippines; periodic instability in Indonesia; Maoist-style peasant revolutionaries in Cambodia and Laos; plus all the problems of state making, nation building and the pursuit of national development. Overall, instability and violence have been part and parcel of the contemporary experience of polities in East Asia.

These episodes have been fed into the collective memories of the peoples involved, and these resources in turn have been reworked into national pasts.[31] The creation and maintenance of these constructions centre on the processes of active remembering and active forgetting amongst key social agents: the claims[32] of authorities, secular and sacred; the work of scholars, its nature and audiences; the nature of the media, supine, critical or hysterical; the flows of common opinion amongst the masses; and thereafter, crucially, the extent of public debate, critical or otherwise. The result is an ever-shifting contested compromise, a set of ideas in respect of the polity to which elites and masses will, if only provisionally, give their assent.

There are discrete strands:

– Participants—those more or less directly involved, and thus personal, family and community memory (thus there are many recollections and memoirs, with soldiers involved in fighting, administrators watching collapsing systems along with ordinary people caught up in events outside their control and perhaps comprehension).
– Victims—those who suffered loss directly, whether personal or family or community (again, testimony is available), supplemented here with the records of post-war tribunals and war-crimes trials, plus people who found themselves in 'other places' and 'other times' (hence there is much writing on the experiences of American and European soldiers and in particular the situation of those who became prisoners of the Japanese[33]).
– Later generations, where the experiences are at second hand, the stories perhaps told by relatives and friends, the claims made by new figures in authority (as memory moves down generations, it gets

remade and re-remade, perhaps softened or perhaps reworked and redeployed in newer circumstances[34]).
– Polities—collective memories, also formulated in national pasts, various.[35]

In the case of Lee Kuan Yew and his generation,[36] the tale is one of the collapse of familiar certainties, the experience of radical upheaval and at some periods direct personal danger. Such experiences cannot but leave a mark. And for Lee, there was one more experience found in the period of occupation, and it took the form of a lesson, and in his autobiography, he recalls that the episode taught him the utility of violence.[37] Yet for subsequent generations, including the 'post-65ers', the claims to Singapore's vulnerability and so on are familiar, but increasingly, they are claims relating to a period fading into the past, available only in the specialist work of scholars, or, more broadly, in the formal claims of the national past, present in official memory and exhortation.

Navigating General Crisis, Singapore 1941–1965

In regard to Singapore, three issues could be identified: first, the business of armed invasion and the dramatic collapse of a long-established colonial regime; second, the business of occupation where the local people had to accommodate the demands of their new Japanese rulers; and third, the process of post-war reform and reconstruction. This last noted entailed two intermingled processes: colonial control was re-established along with the slow untidy formation of a replacement elite (with the colonial power managing both the formation of a replacement elite and its own withdrawal as best it could); and thereafter the local elite with its shifting make-up[38] and fluid agendas[39] sought to reconstruct the city, later polity.

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In the late 1930s, the British Empire in Asia was extensive; there were large indirect holdings in the Middle East,[40] formal colonies in South Asia and in Southeast Asia, an arc[41] of possessions running through Burma and down the Malay Peninsula to Singapore and the adjacent territories of North Borneo. Singapore was a colonial seaport of global significance; it was an entrepôt linking the hinterland of the peninsula to the metropolitan centre; minerals and tropical agricultural crops were exported, whilst man-

ufactures were imported, and, significantly, the tin and rubber production of the peninsula also flowed out across the Pacific to the markets of the USA.[42] In the 1930s, the port retained its status as one link in the chain of colonial possessions that reached from the metropolitan centre to British India and thence via Hong Kong and Shanghai into the heart of China.[43]

Links in the Chain of Empire

Singapore was an important centre for the British Empire; metropolitan power holders understood its importance, and its potential military vulnerability and improvements were made to its defences. But there were serious problems. Defence planners faced a strategic dilemma: the rising power of the Imperial Japanese plus the demands of the home islands meant that resources were stretched and so a strategy of reinforcement only in time of emergency was adopted. This was a risky stance for if the country found itself dealing with enemies both in Europe and Asia, it could not work. Defence planners also faced a technical military logistic dilemma: notwithstanding the lacunae in the overall strategy, it required considerable expenditures on base facilities, and these were significantly upgraded as a network of airfields was built in the peninsula and the naval facilities of Singapore were improved.[44] The strategic doctrine required that there were available aircraft and ships in the event of any military exchange with the Japanese, but as events unfolded, the demands of the Second World War in Europe denuded the British forces, and as the effective military strength of Imperial Japan was also under-rated, it meant that there was no effective reinforcement.[45] Defence planners also confronted a familiar colonial security dilemma; that is, the difficulties of recruiting and arming local people where colonial authorities inclined to the view that once armed, they were prospectively benefit and risk.

In the event, the outbreak of the Pacific War saw imperial defences quickly overwhelmed: the concession in Shanghai was indefensible; the Hong Kong colony could not be effectively defended and was seized within a few days[46]; and Malaya, which was defensible, was taken by the Japanese in a matter of weeks.[47] In all this, Singapore was nominally a fortress, the military key to British power in the region, yet the debacle in Malaya culminated in the loss of the island to a numerically smaller attacker,[48] and this opened the rest of Southeast Asia to the invaders. To the immediate south, the Dutch East Indies were overrun; to the west, Burma was occupied and the borders of India placed under threat,[49] with the Japanese advance halting only because their forces had outrun sup-

ply lines[50]; and finally, in the south, in Australia, the city of Darwin was bombed, causing great anxieties about the threat of an imminent invasion.

Collapse and Occupation

The attack on Malaya began on 7/8 December with the Japanese forces making successful landings in southern Thailand and northern Malaya, and thereafter their armies moved steadily down the peninsula until on 7 February the Japanese commander General Yamashita attacked Singapore island with a numerically weaker force down to its last reserves of ammunition; the invasion of the island was a kind of bluff.[51] The British surrendered on 15 February. Singapore was occupied. The European population was interned, Malay soldiers were demobilized, Indian soldiers invited to join the Indian National Army and the local Chinese population subject to a brutal purge directed primarily at young men of military age. The island was then absorbed into the Imperial Japanese system, but if the intention had been to develop the territory, then the reality was of war-time dislocation, with former social patterns of the colonial era up-ended, as opportunistic business speculators and black-market players proved the more adaptable whilst people struggled to comprehend their circumstances and survive.[52]

The occupation had a number of elements[53]:

- In February 1942, an initial assertion of control with prison camps for soldiers, internment camps for foreign civilians, plus general humiliation of Westerners and later their use as labour, followed a little later by the far more serious *sook ching* directed at local Chinese men of military age which saw at least 5000 executed.[54]
- In March 1942, the establishment of a Japanese occupation authority which was faction ridden and confused as to role/future of island.[55]
- Thereafter the assertion of a Japanese political–cultural identity in the spheres of ordinary life,[56] thus renaming buildings and roads, the announcement of the Greater East Asia New Order, the issuance of Japanese occupation currency, the inauguration of Japanese festivals and so on, plus requiring the establishment of local collaborative ethnic organizations, to all of which the local population adjusted as best it could.
- Plus the task of integrating the local economy into the Japanese war economy with the extraction of resources plus half-hearted

drives for local self-sufficiency with the inevitable result that the economy of what had been a major trading city spiralled quickly downwards.
– And then in 1943 from mid-year, conditions deteriorated further; as a result of the exigencies of war until by August, the situation was very poor and so migration from island was encouraged.
– Until November 1944 sees first USAF air raids.
– And then on 5 September 1945, the island was re-occupied by British armed forces, and 12 September sees the formal surrender of the occupying Japanese forces.

As with large parts of maritime and mainland Southeast Asia, Singapore was occupied at the time of the Japanese surrender and a period of confusion followed as the territory was re-occupied. British military forces returned only after the Japanese surrender. The British Military Administration (BMA) was established; it was a chaotic period as the returning colonial power sought both to re-establish its authority, attend to the immediate needs of the city and initiate a programme of recovery, matters made more difficult as the BMA was widely seen as incompetent and corrupt. Military rule continued until April 1946, and then the Malayan Union was established on the peninsula and Singapore became a Crown Colony. But as the territories were slowly reconstructed, the process of dissolution of the state-empire system unfolded and multiple groups were active with differing agendas, but in time, both territories—Malaysia and Singapore— became independent states.

Shaping the Replacement Elite

At the end of the Pacific War, the situation of the British Empire was parlous; the eastern empire had been either overrun or put in direct threat during the years of warfare, and the experience had encouraged nationalist groups: many had acted in alliance with the nominal colonial power, some in opposition, whilst others, such as Aung San or Chandra Bose, had organized pro-independence armies. Now the metropolitan centre was economically, financially and politically weakened,[57] and new emergent great powers in the USA and the USSR were variously unsympathetic to the notion of empire. The British elite could half-appreciate that the time of empires was over, but in 1945, they could not anticipate the speed with which this would happen, or its violence.

Wars of colonial withdrawal, 1945–1965

1945–1950	Korean civil conflicts
1950–1953	Korean War
1945–1946	Colonial re-occupation of Vietnam
1946–1954	First Indo-China War
1944–1946	Colonial reconquest of Philippines
1946–1954	Huk Rebellion
1945–1946	Colonial re-occupation of Dutch Indonesia
1947	First Dutch Police Action
1948–1949	Second Dutch Police Action
1945	Colonial re-occupation of Malaya
1948–1958	Malayan Emergency
1954–1975	Second Indo-China War
1963–1965	Konfrontasi
1965	Suharto's coup

The end of the British state-empire was not a neat and tidy process; change swept through core and periphery[58]: in Asia, the disaster of partition unfolded in the Indian sub-continent, and Burma collapsed into civil war; and in Malaya, a destructive war was fought against erstwhile wartime allies (and, a little later, a low-level quasi-war was fought with the new state/nation of Indonesia[59]). In all this confusion, an independent state emerged unexpectedly in Singapore, and the leader who emerged from this period of confusion and manoeuvring was Lee Kuan Yew.[60]

Lee Kuan Yew, the PAP and the Achievement of Modern Singapore

The violence and dislocation of the period of the collapse of state-empires impacted millions: casualties, displaced people, refugees, prisoners and so on. It was the environment within which aspirant leaders moved. In the case of Lee,[61] the period from 1941 to 1965 was chaotic; and the man had to re-invent himself several times as the world changed around him: beginning with a privileged childhood in the colonial era, thereafter accommodating himself to Japanese rule, working in the black market, navigating the turbulent politics of decolonization, dealing with the brutal

tasks of state making and nation building, plus finally assuming the role of 'father of the nation'.

It might be speculated that the early experiences helped shape both his fundamental political dispositions, that is, as many have noted, the ruthlessness, the intolerance and the inclination to overemphatic repression of opponents, and his political agendas, in particular, the single-minded affirmation of an authoritarian project of elite-led national development. This is not a matter of cause and effect, rather the subtle impacts of circumstances, issues picked up in the tradition of the sociology of knowledge and here, rather more specifically, after the style of Peter Winch and the like,[62] a matter of learning a new concept. In the present case, as noted, 'the utility of violence', both deployed against oneself (obliging a response) and deployed against others (to secure their acquiescence). Later, there are other changes in the presentation of self as Lee's public persona shifts,[63] but these may be regarded as variations on a theme already established. Yet, reviewing these circumstances, it would be extraordinary if these early experiences had not marked Lee.

* * * * *

Lee, born in 1923, was a member of a privileged Anglophone[64] elite group within colonial Malaya: his family were Straits Chinese,[65] and they had been wealthy, but there had been difficulties, and so during his childhood years, they were recovering their position; nonetheless, Lee had a clear social location. Lee was a schoolboy in 1941, and records[66] that the invasion overturned both his settled world and his future plans. The shock of the immediate occupation process, along with its great risks to any young Chinese man in the context of the Japanese *sook ching* killing spree, was followed by the somewhat more drawn-out experience of the formal reordering of the colony as the Japanese occupation authorities established their administrative structures and deployed their police forces, effecting thereby the measured repression of the local population, in particular the Chinese.[67] Lee, like the rest of the population, adjusted.

Many have argued that collaboration was something of a necessity in militarily occupied territories, with such accommodations ranging from passive avoidance through to active association with the nominal objectives of the occupiers.[68] Lee, too, had to come to terms with the new situation, and he records in his memoir[69] that this was a self-conscious choice, a matter of avoiding trouble and making a living. The first move, in May

1942, was to enrol in Japanese-language classes. Later he found work as a clerk with a Japanese firm, Shimoda and Co., and after that another job as a clerk followed in an organization responsible for controlling essential foods. Lee recalls that in late 1943, he answered an advertisement in the local paper and became a translator for the Japanese occupation authorities' propaganda department and worked monitoring American and other allied news agencies. He stayed there until late 1944. Thereafter, having left the employ of the occupation authorities, he worked as a trader buying and selling in the black market, or in other words, surviving. Lee goes on to report the lessons learned, not those routinely offered by those writing histories after the event of cooperation in hardship, or resistance in extreme adversity, but of the fragility of political systems, the need for people to get on with their ordinary lives, the success of the nimble-minded and the efficacy of political violence.[70]

When the British re-occupied the territory, the social world was again reconstructed—Japanese soldiers and other nationals removed, signs taken down, statues demolished, regulations abrogated, new currency issued and so on—and Lee navigated a further episode of social relocation and was quickly able to travel to the metropolitan centre to study law in the elite universities of London and Cambridge. It was in the distinctive ambit of post-war elite universities with their returned soldier undergraduates and the general political–cultural preference for sweeping social and political reform secured via expert-informed planning[71] that Lee began to attend to formal political matters, that is, the future of the peripheral territories of the now dissolving state-empires. Returning to Singapore, he moved into the fluid social world of pro-independence politics, becoming a lawyer-politician working within the particular environment of the end-time of colonial empire. Many groups understood that they had a stake in shaping the future, and there were a number of locally formed political parties, plus active trades unions, plus high school students. Lee was part of this scene, but it is only after the failure of the project of merger that he emerges as the leader of an accidentally independent Singapore.

State-Empire Collapse: Managing Elite-Level Change

It was within the particular context of war and colonial disintegration that the territory of Singapore emerged as a discrete political unit: in 1958, internal self-government was established (independence was not anticipated); in 1959, the first direct elections to the local parliament were held;

in 1963, the territory became a part of Malaysia (ushering in a further confused period of domestic political and ethnic problems, plus another round of violence, this time relatively low level, but damaging to any easy ideas of a political community embracing Malaya and Singapore); and in 1965, it became an independent state.

Civil Conflicts in Singapore, 1945–1965

1945	Re-occupation
1945	BMA, September 1945–April 1946
1945	Release and repatriation of internees and prisoners
1945	War crimes and trials of collaborators, 1945–1947
1945	General Labour Union formed, clashes with BMA
1945	General Strike, January, clashes with BMA
1946	Crown Colony re-established
1947	Further strikes
1947	Singapore Progressive Party formed
1948	Elections to Legco—limited popular representation
1948	Chin Ping and Communist Party opt for armed struggle
1949	Revolution in China inspires local protests
1950	Maria Hertogh riots
1951	Election to Legco—SPP advance
1953	Rendel Committee opens route to an eventual independence
1954	PAP and Labour Front formed
1955	Paya Labar bus depot strike
1955	Election to Legco—Labour Front and PAP win
1955	Hock Lee Bus riot
1956	Riots in schools and city
1957	Lee Kuan Yew PAP faction takes control
1958	Crown Colony becomes a state, semi-independent
1959	Election to parliament, PAP wins
1960	D.J. Enright rebuked for public lecture[72]
1963	Contentious membership of Malaysia
1963	Operation Cold Store suppression of opposition party
1964	Inter-ethnic riots
1965	Separation declared

The particular circumstances of decolonization shaped the political project of the narrow coterie who came to power and formed the replacement elite.[73] The replacement elite mostly came from a narrow,

privileged English-speaking sector of colonial society, and in order to secure influence, they made common cause with the much more powerful communist-dominated Chinese popular forces whose activities were shaping anti-colonial politics. The local drive for decolonization involved a now familiar spread of actions—demonstrations, strikes, low-level colonial repression, notable trials and occasional harassment—whilst elections on a limited suffrage provided public platforms for negotiation where these in turn were coupled to on/off private conversations with the authorities. The popular political muscle informing the pro-independence groups was provided not by the PAP led by Lee but by the Chinese trades unions and student bodies, both dominated by the political left and were thus anathema to the authorities in the colony. The grass-roots left provided the pressure for change, and the PAP offered an acceptable face. It was successful, and so by the early 1950s, the colonial authorities were more than ready to think about withdrawal, a disposition underscored in 1956 by events in Suez. However, in Singapore the pro-independence groups looked for support in different sections of the community and offered different visions of the route forwards; in brief, they constituted only a marriage of convenience. It did not last.

Singapore: Creating the PAP Party-State 1965–1990

As the process of decolonization ran its course in a regional and international environment suffused with cold war competition, the PAP clashed with the local leftist groups and, with the help of the colonial authorities, successfully displaced them from the head of anti-colonial opinion and activity; thereafter leftist opposition groups were systematically demobilized and, where that did not suffice, suppressed. An episode of raw competition for power settled the matter.[74] In this, the PAP were no different from other post-colonial replacement elites: as state-empire structures dissolved away, the creation of new states was inevitably an untidy, often violent and unfair business; international and local elites combined with available local forces to create states and popular legitimacy amongst the population was a matter arising, desirable, certainly, but not immediately necessary. As state-empires disappeared, replacement elites sought to secure their positions, always and inevitably the first overriding concern, and thereafter a number of distinctive political–cultural projects were pursued.[75] In the case of Singapore, the elite focused on state-sponsored

outward-oriented national development within the general framework of post-war liberal-market-oriented East Asia.

Much has been written about the style of government of the PAP party-state, its heavy-handed nature and its success, and critics have called attention to the former, celebrants to the latter; however, one curiosity of the record is less frequently remarked, that is, the apparently unnecessary nature of much of the state-sponsored repression, the 'surplus repression'.[76] This aspect of the rule of the PAP party-state is often simply tagged 'authoritarian', which might be true, but does not help very much. Heng H.K. unpacks this a little, noting the following techniques[77]:

- Low tolerance of criticism and dissent
- Tight control of social organizations
- Pre-empting challenges to its power
- Use of internal security measures
- Legislating solutions to political challenges
- Latitude in use of power
- Expansion of party's role into important public sectors

In terms of the electoral record, the party-state has been successful.[78]

1948	Restricted elections to Legco		
1951	Restricted elections to Legco		
1955	Restricted elections to Legco		
1959	First election to local parliament	PAP 43 seats	Others 8
1963	Election within Malaysia	PAP 37 seats	Others 14
1968	First election as independent state	PAP 58 seats	Others 0
1972	Election	PAP 65 seats	Others 0
1976	Election	PAP 69 seats	Others 0
1980	Election	PAP 75 seats	Others 0
1984	Election	PAP 77 seats	Others 2
1988	Election	PAP 80 seats	Others 1
1991	Election	PAP 77 seats	Others 4
1997	Election	PAP 81 seats	Others 2
2001	Election	PAP 82 seats	Others 2
2006	Election	PAP 82 sears	Others 2
2011	Election	PAP 81 seats	Others 6
2015	Election	PAP 83 seats	Others 6

On all this, Yao has offered a novel reading.[79] Invoking the work of European cultural theorists, Yao tackles the self-presentation of the party-state elite directly. Yao notes their reiterated claims to responsibility, prag-

matism, honesty and so on, and these tropes are unpacked. In this fashion, Yao uncovers the vehement moralism of the party-state elite: for members of that elite, their self-proclaimed moral uprightness finds exemplification in the wider character of Singapore and so the elite and their project and Singapore are fused. Thereafter, any popular dissent is disallowed because (1) the elite are correct and (2) it would impugn their moral status and (3) it is un-pragmatic; that is, it does not help. Recalling Alasdair MacIntyre[80] on Stalinism, inside the bubble it all makes sense, but then the bubble has to be maintained, boundaries must be policed and sustained; otherwise, it will all collapse. The party-state actively maintains the bubble. Politics is pervasive: ideology (vulnerability, ruggedness, voluntarism, the five Ms, etc.); social discipline is pervasive (organizations, HDB rules, welfare system, etc.); and material advance is stressed (growth-at-all-costs syndrome). And all this bubble maintenance opens the way a species of violence; that is, judicially and administratively carried state violence, which, for example, in respect of political debate takes the form of 'OB markers'[81] and the elite's habit of suing critics careless enough to impugn or be though to impugn their moral propriety. It is low-level violence, but violence nonetheless.[82] In sum, once the PAP secured power, it has been assiduous in keeping it.

Civil conflicts in Singapore 1965–1990

1968	Employment Laws—demobilizing Unions
1981	Anson by-election—Workers Party win
1981	Jeyaretnam's libel trials[83]
1984	Graduate Mothers Policy
1986	Law Society criticized[84]
1987	Great Marxist Conspiracy—ISA arrests of social activists[85]

Second Generation 1990–2004

The second-generation leadership saw Lee Kuan Yew step back from the role of Prime Minister, and he was succeeded by Goh Chok Tong. An early commitment to a softer more collaborative way of working was quickly put to one side as the heavy-handed state resumed its familiar pattern: overt violence was not necessary; rather, it sufficed that control was exercised in judicial and institutional forms.

Civil conflicts in Singapore 1990–2004

1994 (March)	Fay scandal[86]
1994 (October)	Lingle/IHT attacked—press comment criticized[87]

1994 (November)   Catherine Lim attacked—press comment criticized[88]
1995 (April)   Oral sex trial of Tan, K.M.[89]

Third Generation 2004–Ongoing

In 2004, the third generation of PAP leadership took power. They inherited the work of the earlier generations: work that had been turned to the task of state making, nation building and the pursuit of development. The PAP's task in 1965 was daunting. The aggressive behaviour of the party in the peninsula had undermined the project of a united Malaysia, and now the party was left with the unanticipated task of turning a colonial seaport, albeit an important one, into some sort of independent country. The elite pursued national development: they did so energetically; they did so effectively; and they erected an elaborate ideology that cast success in nationalist terms: the PAP had organized the creation of a ruggedly individual society, and so their colonial-era inheritance was read in a highly selective terms; nonetheless, their record was good. At present, the third generation presides over a rich city-state—it ought to be a simple matter, but recent elections suggest that the PAP is losing the automatic support the population once provided.

Civil conflicts in Singapore, 2005–2015

2001   Singapore government discovers JI terrorist plot[90]
2012   SMRT strike—leader goaled, some participants expelled with remainder warned
2014   Facebook expat scandal illuminates issue of inward migration[91]

Lee Kuan Yew: Laying Claim to His Legacy[92]

Lee Kuan Yew[93] died in March 2015. Lee dominated Singapore's public life for some 30 years, and he was always a contentious figure within the country, but what is interesting for present purposes is the way in which this event has been read. The Singapore media reported events in terms of the 'death of our founding father', whilst the foreign press reported the death in similar terms; for the foreign press, Lee was 'Singapore's founding father'.

The domestic press reported the death of Lee in standard terms: a key political figure had died and his role in the standard version of the history of Singapore was recalled. The population marked his passing, and the press recorded that his death was formally acknowledged in the form of a state funeral during which half a million queued to offer their condolences at the main site of lying in state and at other local centres, and one hun-

dred thousand lined the streets in the rain for the funeral cortege.[94] The online community was reportedly somewhat more diverse in its postings, and some were sorrowful, others less so, and there was also a strand of directly critical commentary.[95] The PAP—exemplifying its claim to pragmatism—called an election shortly thereafter and were rewarded with an increase in their percentage share of the vote; however, that said, Lee had for some time been a marginal figure in active politics in Singapore.

The foreign press[96]—European, American and Chinese—offered a clear frame for their discussions; matters were cast in terms of the notion of 'modern Singapore', and thereafter they made a number of quite similar claims for Lee's period in office, mostly revolving around about the territory's lack of resources and the contribution of Lee himself. Standard treatments worked in line with the official national past and cut away all history and context, thereby eliding the obvious distinctions between Lee, the PAP and the history of the territory of Singapore.

Cast in general terms, cutting away the history of the place allows commentators to put Lee and the PAP[97] at the centre, so that Singapore becomes the voluntaristic achievement of its ably led ruggedly independent people, whereas putting Singapore back into its own history creates a quite different story.[98] Historically, Singapore was extracted from the Johore-Riau Sultanate by two British officials—W. Farquahar and T.S. Raffles—and they established a free port, which was successful as it was plugged into both the local archipelago networks of trade and crucially the British Empire's global trade network, and thereafter by the turn of the twentieth century, the city was exporting tin and rubber[99] to the USA and was thus plugged into the trade networks of the upcoming successor global economic power. The territory enjoyed this position during the inter-war years. More recently, re-introducing the context produces further alterations to the standard tale: thus after the Pacific War, Singapore, with its record of deep involvement in global trading networks, was one of four Asian Tigers, successful over the post-war period as they were part of US-centred trading sphere, a sphere given a significant boost by America's wars in Asia.[100] Nonetheless, the PAP, from 1965 onwards, had to make the city-state work. The PAP sought to diversify their port city economic inheritance, and they harnessed the population to this task; the PAP balanced these demands with the provision of welfare (housing, schooling, leisure facilities, etc.).

Turning to the specific response of China, whose historical record is discussed elsewhere,[101] the record of Singapore has been praised, and com-

mentators[102] suggest that the denizens of the party-state machinery view the 'Singapore model' as one that offers useful lessons for China. A number of aspects of the model are cited: thus Singapore is wealthy (following decolonization its economy has flourished); the Singaporean population is quiescent (content with material prosperity); Singaporeans eschew political involvement (content with elite leadership); the leadership is authoritative (knows how to run the country); and the leadership is enlightened (it is committed to the ideal of the community flourishing). A further claim is also made to the effect that Singaporeans are predominantly Chinese, and whilst it is superficially true (thus, physiology or language), claims to identity are not straightforward and mainland habits of reductive argument—China/Chinese as a 'race-nation' obscures the extent to which identity is a social construct—and so the 'Chinese' in Singapore have had many years in which to grow apart from whatever mainland roots they might once have had. All these borrowings offer the current Chinese leadership a model of how they might plot a route to the future; the leadership can grant that Singapore has engaged with the West but insist that it has found a distinctively Chinese way of accommodating the demands of shifting global circumstances[103]; thus for Beijing, the future does not require domestic reforms on the model of the West; rather, reforms can be made within the broad cultural frame of Chinese-ness, thus the future is open.[104]

Success Has Had Its Costs

The PAP has resolutely pursued national development. They inherited a rundown colonial port city, albeit one that had been plugged into the global system since the turn of the twentieth century,[105] and a commitment to economic growth was the centre of gravity around which other policies revolved. A key strategy was 'inviting in the multinationals' by providing an educated quiescent workforce, along with an amiable legal and regulative environment. The government also established welfare systems in education, health and housing, and they encouraged inward migration. These policies have run on into the present day. Singapore is no longer a 'decrepit colonial trading port'; rather, it is rich. However, it is increasingly an unequal society, and the native population resents incoming moneyed professionals. Political action in the past has been unsuccessful, but that pattern has changed; recent parliamentary elections saw significant opposition success, and whilst these successes surprised ruling

elites—who might be expected to respond, there is no reason to suppose that they might not be repeated.

Yet for the PAP, the record of the country, both since 1945 and as projected backwards into the colonial and pre-colonial past, revolves around their efforts, and this view feeds through into the national past of Singapore. This expresses an idea of the polity: its past, present and ideal future. It offers, in part, a characterization of the context within which the polity moves; it is a stylized history, with the machinations read out, the problems highlighted and the activities of the ruling elite celebrated. Read thus, the official story is one of collective achievement gained through the hard work of the population guided by a dispassionate, responsible, talented elite who have successfully tackled problems of vulnerability by insisting upon discipline whilst maintaining a steady pragmatic focus on development.

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The new Singaporean polity emerged in the context of the collapse of empire, and the subsequent opaque struggles of aspirant replacement elites. Lee alludes to these events when he remarks that 'we nearly didn't make it', and whilst there are elisions between Lee, the PAP and Singapore,[106] routinely flagged and rejected by contemporary local scholars,[107] the comment neatly underscores the contingency of the political–cultural project of Singapore; the territory had been a part of an externally oriented economic, social and political system—a state-empire—and as these collapsed abruptly in the 1940s, local elites had to adjust. And whilst the personal trajectory of Lee Kuan Yew was by no means unique, as other post-colonial national leaders had similar experiences; indeed, many others were more violent, seen this way, and it is rather surprising that Singapore did make it.

Recollections

Benedict Anderson, tracking the emergence of the notion of 'Southeast Asia' in military designations, late imperial scholarship and the post-war drive by America to assert its hegemony, notes that the region was novel in one unfortunate fashion, that is, the Japanese expulsion of European state-empires was so thoroughgoing as to make their post-war re-establishment impossible, but nonetheless these powers did try and a series of wars of colonial withdrawal followed. Anderson remarks[108]:

> It … meant that Southeast Asia was the one colonized region—after Spanish America 140 or so years earlier—where armed struggle for independence—and more—was commonplace. … Burma, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia, even in a certain way, Malaya, actually fought, mostly with bitter success, for their independence—and were increasingly aware of each other doing so.

In Malaya, the returning British turned against their erstwhile allies against the Japanese, the MCP, supported the Malay elite, reinstated the Sultanate in Brunei, relocated Sabah and Sarawak to Malaya and helped suppress the left in Singapore. The withdrawal from peripheral territories was managed and the dollar income streams from holdings in the peninsula were a key concern, and it was within this violent context that Lee Kuan Yew and the PAP came into power.[109]

In East Asia, as in Europe, people with direct experience of these events are fewer and fewer, so the events become available to the wider community only at second hand, as family, community or collective memory, or sometimes, perhaps, only in the form of official or ritual truths; but at the same time, they also become available for successor generations to examine and re-examine. In Singapore, Lee has complained that the younger generation lack appreciation of earlier difficulties and are thus in some way both unwarrantedly privileged and untested; such criticism is inappropriate, as new generations cannot live the lives of others,[110] and moreover, they have their own talents to put to work; but the report on the chaotic nature of the times within which he lived as a young man is accurate, and when measured against today's routines, in Singapore and Britain, the upheaval and violence were extraordinary.[111]

Notes

1. A strand of Lee's thinking that runs back to his earliest days in politics—see M.D. Barr 2000 *Lee Kuan Yew: The Beliefs Behind the Man*, London, Curzon, quoting colleagues about Lee's speech making being haphazard—p. 31.
2. A strand of Lee's thinking that is routinely asserted—both true (the territory must attend to its livelihood) and misleading (it has been a key global post since around 1900 when the primary products of the peninsula were shipped out to America).

3. Self images unpacked by S. Yao 2007 *Singapore: The State and Culture of Excess*, London, Routledge.

4. See, for example, Azhar Ghani, Peh Sing Huei, Laurel Teo and Lydia Lim 2006 *Stuck by Lightening: Singaporean Voices Post-65*, Singapore, SNP International.

5. Lee was born in 1923—in 1941, he was 18 years old, and by 1965, he was 42 years old—the period covers adolescence and young adulthood—it is a period of some 24 years of continuous abrupt upheaval—see Lee Kuan Yew 1998 *The Singapore Story: Memoirs of Lee Kuan Yew*, Singapore, Simon and Schuster, chapter three; see also J. Minchin 1990 *No Man is an Island: A Portrait of Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew*, Sydney, Allen and Unwin, chapter two—Barr 2000, chapter five—notes the personal reinventions.

6. There were several other empire systems—Czarist, Hapsburg, Ottoman and Qing—but these pre-dated the shift to the modern world and were less significant within the global system, and in the event, they did not long survive the conflicts that were to disfigure the century.

7. Immediate processes detailed in C. Clark 2013 *Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914*, London, Penguin.

8. It was also divided and occupied—in the western parts by the USA and in the eastern parts by the USSR, and so Europeans had to look to new centres of power—in Washington and in Moscow.

9. For an extended treatment, see: P.W. Preston 2010 *National Pasts in Europe and East Asia*, London, Routledge; P.W. Preston 2011 *England After the Great Recession*, London, Palgrave.

10. The rhetorical strategy of the list is taken from Norman Davies 1977 *Europe: A History*, London, Pimlico; and for the scale of the contribution of various participants to the Second World War, see Norman Davies 2006 *Europe at War 1939–1945: No Simple Victory*, London, Macmillan—the dates are these: 1911, Chinese Revolution; 1991, end of fighting in Indo-China—dates are arbitrary—point is that collapse of empires took time—and had different paths in cores and peripheries, and of course that the violence shaped lives of many nationalist leaders in region.

11. It is difficult to estimate numbers of war dead; Davies 1977 (p. 1328) offers an estimate for Europe. A breakdown of various estimates for Europe and East Asia is given on website 'Source List and Detailed Death Tolls for the Twentieth Century Hemoclysm'

on http://users.erols.com/mwhite28/warstat1.htm accessed June 2009. Further information is available on from 'Secondary Wars and Atrocities of the Twentieth Century' on http://users. erols.com/mwhite28/warstat1.htm accessed June 2009. There are further numbers for famines and political repression in the Soviet Union, British India and Maoist China, but these estimates are not included in this list. The numbers are best taken as indicative of the scale of the wars/deaths.

12. Raises the question of why one is tempted to turn away—tagging the elite as mad is a too easy evasion—but unpacking the scale and detail of the losses and the parallel detail of their culpability is exhausting—for a preliminary sketch, see Preston 2010.

13. See C. Bayly and T. Harper 2007 *Forgotten Wars: The End of the Britain's Asian Empire,* London, Allen Lane; M. Shipway 2008 *Decolonization and Its Impact: A Comparative Approach to the End of Colonial Empires*, Oxford, Blackwell; see also J. Darwin 2101 *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World System*, Cambridge University Press.

14. The rhetoric varied—UN located drives for development (taken as a given in the literature of development theory—the pursuit of effective nation state-hood)—socialist bloc offers of 'socialism'—western bloc offers of 'modernization'—Non-aligned movement calls for solidarity amongst the poor and the identification of alternatives to cold war choices—in the event, local elites read and reacted to enfolding circumstances and plotted their own routes to the future—some sought national development, others were content with rent-seeking and others collapsed into confusion—for a detailed discussion of the present situation read against an unselfconsciously affirmed Western model, see William Case 2002 *Politics in Southeast Asia*, London, Routledge Curzon.

15. The notion of 'the shift to the modern world' used in this text is an orienting frame—it does not imply any particular trajectory—theories like modernization/globalization are hopeless—the USA is not the model to which countries move—what we have is an untidy pattern built up by a myriad local-level political processes.

16. Where the defeat was a double one—first by the Imperial Japanese armies and then by the activities of local aspirant replacement elites—and the costs enormous, that is, the loss of long-established core elite political–cultural projects—in respect of the British, see

P.W. Preston 2014 *Britain After Empire: Constructing a Post-War Political-Cultural Project*, London, Palgrave.

17. For an overview, see P.W. Preston 2014 *After the Empires: The Creation of Novel Political-Cultural Projects in East Asia*, London, Palgrave.

18. On the Malaya experience, see P. Lim Pui Huen and Dianna Wong eds. 2001 *War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies—the war period sharpened ethnic divisions—Malay, Chinese and Indian—these problems fed into post-war inter-ethnic relations—they shaped the ways in which the war period could be and was remembered—in both Malaysia and Singapore, the war was played down—only considered gingerly from early 1980s.

19. The scale of the changes is grasped in Bayly and Harper 2004.

20. Easy to list—Taiwan under the KMT—Philippines under Marcos—Burma under Ne Win or North Korea under the Kim dynasty—the familiar assumption that replacement elites were automatically committed to nation building is false—survival first, then a variety of projects which in total run intermittently with the standard expectations.

21. Notably, for an English audience, J.G. Ballard 1988 *Empire of the Sun*, London, Grafton Books.

22. This is not to underestimate the costs incurred—on Singapore, see Turnbull 1977; on Hong Kong, see P. Snow 2004 *The Fall of Hong Kong: Britain, China and the Japanese Occupation*, Yale University Press—these reports could be extended for all the territories caught up in the warfare.

23. Thus, in Malaya, the experiences of Malays and Chinese ethnic groups are contrasted—in Burma, for a period, local figures joined movements aimed at the former colonial power—in Indonesia, elites worked in a similar way—in the Philippines, some historians speak directly of collaboration amongst elite.

24. In regard to France, see Rod Kedward 2005 *La Vie en Bleu: France and the French Since 1900*, London, Allen Lane, chapters 11 and 12; Tony Judt 2008 *Reappraisals: Reflections on the Forgotten Twentieth Century*, London, Heinemann, chapters 11 and 12; in respect of Chinese/Japanese collaboration, see T. Brook 2005 *Collaboration: Japanese Agents and Local Elites in Wartime China*, Harvard University Press; D.P. Barrett and L.N. Shyu eds. 2001

Chinese Collaboration with Japan, 1932–1945: The Limits of Accommodation, Stanford University Press.

25. P. Lim and D. Wong eds. 2000 *War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, Singapore, Institute for Southeast Asian Studies, discuss how events produced an enduring legacy.

26. Thus pre-war business groups and other owners of property— there had been long-established tensions between metropolitan core civil servants and agents in peripheral territories—with war-time dislocations and prospective independence, such divisions could become acute—such links could run to local people—thus the situation involved many—state, corporate and popular.

27. There is a sharp contrast to be drawn: in Europe, the catastrophe of war overwhelmed these polities and local elites thereafter pursued reconstruction oriented to the creation of welfare states and regional cooperation oriented to unification (cast in terms of the EEC and Comecon). Any dispositions to continued inter-European conflict were subsumed within the reality of bloc-division and the rituals of bloc-time—violence faded from the routine experience of Europeans, East and West. But it did not vanish entirely—not only were there wars of colonial withdrawal but there were also minority groups not indisposed to violence, and there were periodic upheavals in the Soviet bloc—however, measured against Europe's record, these were minor—not so the wars in the former Yugoslavia, hence the widespread revulsion in regard to the actions of Serbian ultra-nationalists and irregulars.

28. Military campaigns on a vast scale ejected the Imperial Japanese (Max Hastings 2008 *Retribution: The Battle for Japan, 1944-45*, New York, Alfred Knopf)—later the forces of the PLA defeated the armies of Nationalist China—amongst the civilians caught up in these events were groups of Japanese settlers (see Ruri Pilgrim1999 *Fish of the Seto Inland Sea*, London, Harper Collins).

29. An obscure episode, see Michael Yahuda 2004 2nd ed. *The International Politics of the Asia-Pacific*, London, Routledge Curzon, pp. 48–50.

30. The 1948–1960 Malayan Emergency—Bayly and Harper 2004 pp. 448–55; 461–2; offer a note on the background.

31. The idea of 'collective memory' comes from M. Halbwachs (ed. Lewis Coser) 1992 *On Collective Memory*, Chicago University Press; the idea of 'the national past' is taken from Patrick Wright

1985 *On Living in an Old Country*, London, Verso, who in turn takes it from Agnes Heller.

32. Direct, so to say, via using words of one sort or another, indirect, so to say, using symbols of one sort or another—official celebrations, statues, flags, tunes and so on.

33. Lots of materials in this vein—available in airport bookstores around East Asia—but 'captivity' is an interesting issue—it seems to be associated with both the expansion and ending of empire—on the former, see Linda Colley 2002 *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World 1600–1850*, London, Jonathan Cape.

34. Thus nationalism in China: see Zhao Suisheng 2004 *A Nation State by Construction: Dynamics of Modern Chinese Nationalism*, Stanford University Press; or the machineries of what has been tagged the 'holocaust industry'—see Norman Finkelstein 2001 *The Holocaust Industry*, London, Verso.

35. These can be quite different: see Judt 2008, in particular the introductory chapter; also Tony Judt 'What have we learned, if anything?' in *New York Review of Books* 55.7 01/05/2008.

36. A comparison is available—see J.G. Ballard 1988 *Empire of the Sun*, London, Grafton—on Singaporean memories more generally, see L. Hong and J. Huang 2008 *The Scripting of a National History: Singapore and Its Pasts,* National University of Singapore Press; P. Lim and D. Wong eds. 2000 *War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, Singapore, ISEAS.

37. Lee, K.Y. 1998 *The Singapore Story: The Memoirs of Lee Kuan Yew*, Singapore, Simon and Schuster, pp. 74–7.

38. Thus a sequence of elections with changing electorates and changing parties and changing elected winners—see Turnbull 1977.

39. Thus—speed of change—relations with peninsula—schedules of local policy.

40. Thus Egypt—the mandate territories—smaller links to tribal units in Arabia—source of oil—but these were not drawn into a formal colonial status.

41. The 'arc' metaphor is from Bayly and Harper 2004.

42. W.G. Huff 1994 *The Economic Growth of Singapore: Trade and Development in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge University Press, make this point—it made British Malaya an important source of dollar earnings for the British Empire.

43. A map is provided by P. Buckley Ebrey 1996 *The Cambridge Illustrated History of China*, Cambridge University Press, p. 241, which shows the French interests in the south, the British along the Yangtze river and the Japanese in the north.

44. On the base, see J. Niedpath 1981 *The Singapore Naval Base and the Defence of Britain's Eastern Empire 1918–1941*, Oxford, Clarendon Press; see also M.H. Murfett, J.N. Miksic, B.P. Farrell and Chiang Ming Shun 1999 *Between Two Oceans: A Military History of Singapore from First Settlement to Final British Withdrawal*, Oxford University Press, chapter four.

45. A recent review is given by Murfett et al 1999.

46. See P. Snow 2004 *The Fall of Hong Kong: Britain, China and the Japanese Occupation*, Yale University Press.

47. The sweeping Japanese advance and British collapse are noted by C.M. Turnbull 1977 *A History of Singapore 1819–1975*, Oxford University Press, chapter five.

48. There is something of a cottage industry of commentary on the fall of Singapore, and it takes place largely out of the sight of the general population of the UK (remembering/forgetting) where the fall of Singapore has been read out of the national past of the British polity, and it is not obviously present in the more diffuse collective memory (similarly, the violence in Kenya, recently recalled in scholarship). Singaporean remembering/forgetting is rather different as the defeat of the colonial power is noted but lies at a distance (the defeated were the *colonialists*), and instead the experience of the population of the city is remembered (and, for the local Chinese, it was very bad), whereas for the local Malays and Indians, the recollections work differently, encompassing, for example, nascent national sentiment directed towards Malaya and India.

49. For a measured discussion, see N. Tarling 2001 *A Sudden Rampage: The Japanese Occupation of Southeast Asia 1941–1945*, Singapore, Horizon Books; N. Tarling 1993 *The Fall of Imperial Britain in South-East Asia*, Oxford University Press.

50. Japanese dominance was unchallenged—their navy chased the Royal Navy out of the Indian Ocean where a small force was under the command of Admiral Somerville.

51. Bayly and Harper 2004 p. 143—for a description of the rolling inevitable collapse of armies and empire, see pp. 131–55.

52. See Turnbull 1977 chapter six.

53. See P. Lim and D. Wong eds 2000 *War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, Singapore, Institute for Southeast Asian Studies; a pictorial record is available in The National Heritage Board (National Archives of Singapore) 1996 *The Japanese Occupation 1942–1945: A Pictorial Record of Singapore During the War*, Singapore, Times Editions; see also M. Shinozaki 1992 *Syonan My Story: The Japanese Occupation of Singapore*, Singapore, Times Books International; N.I. Low 1995 *When Singapore Was Syonan-To*, Singapore, Times Books International; Foong C.H. 1997 *The Price of Peace: True Accounts of the Japanese Occupation*, Singapore, Asiapac Books.

54. As ever numbers are difficult—this figure is from a survey of *sook chings* in Southeast Asia—and their subsequent remembering and forgetting—see G.C. Gunn 2007 'Remembering the Southeast Asian Chinese Massacres of 1941–45' in *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 37.3.

55. Turnbull 1977.

56. Detailed by Brenda S.A. Yeoh and Kamalini Ramdas 'Remembering Darkness: Spectacle, Surveillance and the Spaces of Everyday Life in Syonon-to' in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong eds. 2000.

57. In brief, the UK was broke—see, for example, R. Skidelsky 2001 *John Maynard Keynes: Fighting for Britain 1937–1946*, London, Papermac.

58. Interlinked—see P.W. Preston 2014 *Britain After Empire*, London, Palgrave; P.W. Preston 2014 *After the Empires*, London, Palgrave.

59. Konfrontasi 1963–1966—Sukarno's response to creation of Malaysia—initiated when referenda were not held in Northern Borneo state-lets—a matter of delineating post-colonial borders—in 1965, Sukarno was moved aside in a bloody coup—American involvement is routinely assumed.

60. The material used to illustrate these themes is drawn very loosely from the text P.W. Preston 2007 *Singapore in the Global System: Relationship, Structure and Change*, London, Routledge.

61. Lee Kuan Yew is an example of a much larger set—leaders schooled by violence—thus Mao Zedong and Chiang Kai Shek have intertwined biographies filled with violence—such violence persisted in East Asia (Korea, Vietnam—plus assorted local-level rebellions, etc.)—it did not persist in Europe—hence those come to adult-

hood after 1945 in Europe unless they were unlucky enough to become involved in wars in overseas colonies have no direct experience of these matters.

62. Peter Winch 1990 2nd ed. *The Idea of a Social Science and Its Relation to Philosophy*, London, Routledge; see also Alasdair MacIntyre 1971 *Against the Self Images of the Age*, London, Duckworth.

63. Barr 2000 chapter five points to a number of personas—from Fabian Socialist-style nation builder to the later Confucian Chinese figure—the core is power and concern for material advance.

64. Noted, for example, in C.A. Trocki 2006 *Singapore: Wealth, Power and the Culture of Control*, London, Routledge, pp. 103–4, and unpacked in Chua Ai Lin 2008 'Imperial Subjects, Straits Citizens: Anglophone Asians and the Struggle for Political Rights in Inter-War Singapore' in M.D. Barr and C.A. Trocki eds. 2006 *Paths Not Taken: Political Pluralism in Post-War Singapore*, National University of Singapore Press.

65. A conventional term, otherwise Baba and Nonya, designating a distinctive social/cultural group—Chinese intermixed (and perhaps intermarried) with Malays—the identity is not stressed in post-independence Singapore—see J. Clammer 1980 *Straits Chinese Society: Studies in the Sociology of the Baba Communities of Malaysia and Singapore*, Singapore University Press; recently, in memoir/heritage mode, see Betty Lim 1994 *A Rose on My Pillow: Recollections of a Nyonya*, Singapore, Armour Publishing; Felix Chia1994 *The Babas Revisited*, Singapore, Heinemann Asia.

66. Lee Kuan Yew 1998 *The Singapore Story: The Memoirs of Lee Kuan Yew*, New York, Prentice Hall, see chapters two and three.

67. On the landscape of fear, that is, the violence imposed/evaded; see Brenda S.A. Yeoh and Kamalini Ramdas 'Remembering Darkness: Spectacle, Surveillance and the Spaces of Everyday Life in Syonon-to' in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong eds. 2000.

68. The term—and debate cast in that term—starts in Occupied France with the government of Marshal Petain—see T. Judt 2008 *Reappraisals: Reflections on the Forgotten Twentieth Century*, London, Heinemann, chapter 11—the term is popularly one of moral disapproval and abuse—however, scholars are now tracking the details of the ways in which those caught up in these events had perforce to make some sort of practical accommodation to circum-

stances utterly beyond their control—it is not a happy area of enquiry—in China, still resisted—see T. Brook 2005 *Collaboration: Japanese Agents and Local Elites in Wartime China*, Harvard University Press; see also D.P. Barrett and L.N. Shyu eds. 2001 *Chinese Collaboration with Japan, 1932–1945: The Limits of Accommodation*, Stanford University Press.

69. Lee Kuan Yew 1998 *The Singapore Story: Memoirs of Lee Kuan Yew*, Singapore, Prentice Hall.

70. Lee 1998 pp. 74–77—Lee describes the occupation as the most important years of his life—the key element being the utility of extreme violence—thereafter that everyone had to continue living—and that the nimble-minded and adaptable could prosper—on all this, James Minchin comments that there are gaps in the early record (Minchin 1990 p. 35)—Pang Yang Huei 2005 'A Tangled Web of Wartime and Collaboration and Survival in Singapore: A Chinese Farmer's Experience' in Fiona Hu ed. 2005 *Reflections and Interpretations: Oral History Centre 25th Anniversary Publication*, Singapore, National Archives of Singapore, comments rather more directly—noting that the discussion in his autobiography is 'perfunctory' goes no to note that collaboration was not something people subsequently wished to discuss.

71. See, for example, Paul Addison 1977 *The Road to 1945*, London, Jonathan Cape, also Peter Hennessy 1992 *Never Again: Britain 1945–1951*, London, Jonathan Cape.

72. S. Yao 2007 *Singapore: The State and the Culture of Excess*, London, Routledge, p. 59.

73. See Lam Peng Er and Kevin Tan eds. 1999 *Lee's Lieutenants: Singapore's Old Guard*, St. Leonards, Allen and Unwin.

74. The PAP, British and Malay authorities cooperated in the suppression of the political left—February 1963 Operation Cold Store seized around 150 left activists and opened the way to PAP parliamentary control—they never relinquished it—see C.A. Trocki 2006 *Singapore: Wealth, Power and the Culture of Control*, London, Routledge, pp. 108, 124, 186.

75. See, for example, William Case 2002 *Politics in Southeast Asia*, London, Routledge Curzon, who offers labels for the different regime types presently evident in the region.

76. See Minchin and Trocki and Barr—the point is pursued by Yao 2007—the expression comes from Herbert Marcuse—he meant something slightly different, but the phrase seems apposite for Lee's style of politics.

77. A. Loathamatas ed. 1997 *Democratization in Southeast and East Asia*, Singapore, Institute for Southeast Asian Studies.

78. Information from Wikipedia accessed May 2014.

79. Yao 2007 pp. 1–27.

80. A. MacIntyre 1971 *Against the Self Images of the Age*, London, Duckworth.

81. The PAP elite are reported to enjoy golf—a game for the rich in Singapore—in golf, OB means 'out of bounds'—and the player whose golf ball goes out of bounds suffers a penalty.

82. At which point an argument by analogy is available—European history records the fascism of the 1930s—ideologies of discipline, moralism, action, elite leadership, community coupled with an intolerance of dissent.

83. See Heng H.K. 1997 'Economic Development and Political Change: The Democratization Process in Singapore' in A. Loathamatas ed. 1997 *Democratization in Southeast and East Asia*, Singapore, Institute for Southeast Asian Studies, pp. 127–9.

84. Loathamatas 1997.

85. Teo Soh Lung 2010 *Beyond the Blue Gate: Recollections of a Political Prisoner*, Petaling Jaya, Strategic Information and Research Centre, offers a memoir of the episode.

86. Yao 2007 p. 80.

87. Yao 2007 p. 29.

88. Yao 2007 p. 12.

89. Yao 2007 p. 97.

90. Arrests under ISA announced—observers very sceptical—see Mark Baker 'Singapore facts stranger than fiction' in *The Melbourne Age* 21 September 2002.

91. Expat (with permanent residence) posted images/words on Facebook which were derogatory of locals—public complaints resulted—expat sacked and relocated to Perth—*Daily Mail* 16 May 2014—the episode gave ammunition to locals concerned with the flows of inward migration to the city.

92. This section on the death of Lee is derived from S. Luk and P.W. Preston 2016 *The Logic of Chinese Politics: Cores, Peripheries*

and Peaceful Rising, Edward Elgar; see the Afterword for a fuller treatment.

93. On Lee directly—see J. Minchin 1990 *No Man is an Island: A Portrait of Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew*, London, Allen and Unwin; M.D. Barr 2000 *Lee Kuan Yew: The Beliefs Behind the Man*, London, Curzon; see also S. Yau 2007 *Singapore: The State and the Culture of Excess*, London, Routledge.

94. *Chanel News Asia*—online—21 December 2015.

95. Interna*tional Business Times*—online—27 March 2015.

96. English-language material: from *South China Morning Post*, from UK broadsheet press and from *The People's Daily* and some from *Time Magazine*.

97. There was a wider network of players involved, and these included, *first*, the core group of the PAP (Lee plus Goh Chok Tong plus Devan Nair) and, *second*, the departing colonial power (Lee was their favoured candidate to succeed, and he was supported by colonial power [thus Operation Cold Store]), and *third*, the Malay rulers in the peninsula (who found him brash and dangerous, hence the expulsion from Malaysia and the necessity of working as a city-state). On all this, see P.E. Lam and K.Y.L. Tan eds. 1999 *Lee's Lieutenants: Singapore's Old Guard*, St. Leonards, Allen and Unwin; Barr 2000; more generally, see M. Turnbull 1977 *A History of Singapore 1818–1975*, Oxford University Press [M. Turnbull 2009 *A History of Modern Singapore 1818–2005*, National University of Singapore Press]; C.A. Trocki 2006 *Singapore, Wealth, Power and the Culture of Control*, London, Routledge.

98. P.W. Preston 2007 *Singapore in the Global System: Relationship, Structure and Change*, London, Routledge.

99. W.G. Huff 1994 *The Economic Growth of Singapore: Trade and Development in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge University Press.

100. R. Stubbs 2005 *Rethinking Asia's Economic Miracle: The Political Economy of War, Prosperity and Crisis*, London, Palgrave.

101. See chapter eight—'China: A State-Socialist Route to the Modern World'; for a fuller discussion, see S. Luk and P.W. Preston 2016 *The Logic of Chinese Politics: Cores, Peripheries and Peaceful Rising*, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar.

102. See 'Lee Kuan Yew Death: China's Leaders, Media Avoid Sensitive Topics in Mourning Singapore Leader'—a digest of mainland media treatments—www.ibtimes.com—23 March 2015.

103. *China Daily* 24 March 2015 'Lee Kuan Yew's Legacy meaningful for China'—'Singapore is not a democratic country in the Western sense. … But it functions well in the interests of its citizens … the country is an example of how Eastern culture, Chinese culture in particular, can be successfully integrated with Western culture for a prosperous nation. … Reviewing what this man has done for his own country, we should have more confidence in sticking to our own culture and philosophy. But we should also never forget that he had the vision to learn from the advanced cultures.'

104. See 'Lee Kuan Yew Death: China's Leaders, Media Avoid Sensitive Topics in Mourning Singapore Leader'—a digest of mainland media treatments—www.ibtimes.com—23 March 2015; see also 'Lee kuan Yew: Asia Media'—www.bbc.com/news—23 March 2015; see also Cary Huang 'Beijing's lessons from the Lee Kuan Yew school of governance' in *South China Morning Post* 4 April 2015.

105. Huff—staple port—a narrow reading, but it flags crucial links to global economy.

106. Evidenced in the title of the first volume of autobiography.

107. See, for example, Hong Lysa and Huang Jianli 2008 *The Scripting of a National History: Singapore and Its Pasts*, National University of Singapore Press.

108. B. Anderson 1998 *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia and the World*, London, Verso, p. 6.

109. Other figures can be noted: Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam, Mao Zedong in China, Sukarno in Indonesia, later, via a bloodbath, Suharto or Park Chung Hee in Korea—the common experience is of great violence.

110. Nicely captured in Yao Souchou 2007 *Singapore: The State and the Culture of Excess*, London, Routledge, who grasps the achievement, the relentlessness of the mobilization and records that the 'ordinary Singaporean in the hawker centre' has had enough—Yao's reportage suggests that the PAP is configured to fight battles that were won years ago.

111. In recent years, a considerable body of work has been produced which looks at the history of the polity—one strand has looked at

the ways in which the past has been read into the present—see in particular, Brenda Yeoh and Lily Kong eds. 1995 *Portraits of Places: History, Community and Identity in Singapore*, Singapore, Times Editions; Lily Kong and Brenda Yeoh 2003 *The Politics of Landscape in Singapore: Constructions of Nation*, New York, Syracuse University Press; Hong Lysa and Huang Jianli 2008 *The Scripting of A National History: Singapore and Its Pasts*, National University of Singapore Press.

Contemporary Thailand: Local Culture and/or the Manner of Failure

Siam entered the modern world via a foreign-inspired conservative revolution from above. In reaction to the arrival in the region of powerful foreign traders, the elite inaugurated a top-down process of reform designed to accommodate the demands of foreigners whilst preserving local patterns of power and, so far as possible, local forms of life. In 1933, the army staged a coup, abolished the absolute monarchy, invented the Thai nation and thus Thailand and began a programme of reform, unfortunately interrupted by war after which the country, now lodged in the American sphere and acting in line with their demands, in particular the spillover of cold war conflicts in neighbouring countries, experienced a series of military coups. Once again the line of development was conceived in top-down terms, as change should not threaten the status quo. Yet progress has taken place. And whilst it has been slow, it has been effective as new social forces have emerged amongst provincial elites and grass-roots citizens, and they are looking for a political space within the system. The impact of the 1997 financial crisis led to a new constitution and offered a chance for a new politics, but the old elites resist. The twenty-first century has seen two recent coups as the traditional elite cling to their privileged status. It

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This piece began life as a presentation at the 2007 ISA Chicago. Some material has been taken from earlier texts—*National Pasts in Europe and East Asia* and *After the Empires*; all the material has been reworked and updated.

seems that the unfolding shift to the modern world is blocked, or it may be that the current pattern is the form of the modern world in Thailand.

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As the British assembled their state-empire through the nineteenth century, they organized a series of trading centres that served to draw territories into the ambit of the system and to link them to the metropolitan core. The state-empire system grew as a ragged accumulation of bases, associated territories and trans-global linkages.[1] The system also grew as a result of successfully deployed violence: thus, in Asia, the British gained access to those princely territories that were in time to become India as a result of the military victory at the Battle of Plassey, and it was not only the local powers that lost out, but also the French, and South Asia thereafter moved into the ambit of the British. The sub-continent provided jumping-off points for further expansion to the east, and in time there were more bases (and further conflicts), which took the form of a series of port cities, new or remade: George Town, 1786; Malacca, 1786; Singapore, 1819; Labuan, 1846; Hong Kong, 1841; Shanghai, 1845; and Bangkok 1855.

In the area of mainland Southeast Asia, the British and French competed for influence with existing local country powers or mandala states,[2] and as these exchanges unfolded, the French were to lay claim to formal control of a large swathe of the area, creating their colony of Indo-China, whilst the British established a trading relationship with the Siamese kingdom centred on the Chao Phroya River. Siam served as a tacitly agreed buffer state between the state-empire spheres of the French and the British, and this was the particular context—in all its economic, social, cultural and political detail—within which the Siamese polity undertook its own shift to the modern world. It took the initial form of a conservative, defensive strategy of top-down reform, and variants of this strategy of response to the challenges thrown up by events that have been repeated down the years.

After these initial exchanges the subsequent trajectory of the Siamese and later the Thai, polity can be unpacked as a series of phases: (1) the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century elite-led top-down reform[3]; (2) the 1930s abolition of the absolute monarchy and the invention of Thailand; (3) the 1940s war-time fascist interregnum; (4) the long post-war era, with the cold war American supported local dominance of the military, the bureaucracy and (in time) the monarchy; (5) the late

twentieth-century shifts in patterns of domestic power (economic, geographical and [eventually] political); and (6) finally, around the turn of twenty-first century, a period of sharp elite reaction with sustained anti-democratic manoeuvring and two military coups re-asserting elite central control of the polity.

Contemporary Thailand is an elite-dominated polity centred firmly upon the primate city of Bangkok. Political power is concentrated in the hands of an elite which refers to its own character as a means to its legitimation; that is, army and bureaucracy understand themselves to be in the service of the monarchy, and this trio of institutions exemplify moral propriety and responsible concern for the country, in contrast to venal politicians, disreputable business and a foolishly grasping, ill-educated populace with their insistent demands for populist policy. Inside the bubble it all makes sense,[4] and the borders of the bubble are policed and critics disallowed via a draconian lese majesty law that protects the monarchy, the symbolic core of the system,[5] so that what there is, is 'modern Thailand'.

There are two ways to read this: first, as exemplifying a species of modernity, that is, 'Thai modernity' or, second, as an instance of a failure of modernity in the face of an entrenched conservative elite. So, *first*, the present situation reveals the nature of the shift to the modern world accomplished by the Siamese/Thai polity. Its fundamental political–cultural logic revolves around the concerns and agendas of the elite—army, bureaucracy and monarchy—what there is, is 'modern Thailand', and so it should not be read as a partial, incomplete or failed version of a model of the modern taken from European experience. Or, *second*, the notion of the shift to the modern world, which frames European social science and provides the basis for both dialogue with scholars from other cultures and the comparative analysis of these cultures (we can and do offer characterizations[6]), embraces ideals of reason, science and progress, and in the political arena, this unpacks (along various tangled lines of debate[7]) as a preference for democracy.[8] That being so, 'modern Thailand' is in political terms a system that did not or has not yet made it fully into the modern world, and so the question in respect of 'modern Thailand' is the manner of this failure, and here there are two tracks for such reflection: long run, how did the polity get to where it is now; and short run, what can be said about the repeated actions of the elite, in particular, their recourse to military coups in order to veto political advance.

Top-Down Reform: Siamese Elite Reaction to the Demands of the Modern World[9]

The modern world arrived in the South Asian sub-continent in the form of European traders: Portuguese, Dutch, French and British. The Portuguese arrived early,[10] later the Dutch and the French and British arrived in the early seventeenth century. European traders and their military forces became players in the local political scene—allying with local Sultanates—carving out their own territories. In time, the bulk of the area came to be controlled by the British—as elsewhere in their empire territories, trade and violence went hand in hand. Bases in South Asia provided jumping-off points for further trading ventures in Southeast Asia and thence to China.

The key organization facilitating British trade in the region was the EIC,[11] and as with other areas, the early contacts involved relatively few people; however, these small numbers grew, and in the eighteenth century, the sub-continent was the scene of more ambitious activities. The company signed treaties, manoeuvred, embroiled itself in local conflicts and launched wars on its own behalf,[12] and it slowly accumulated considerable power. One key moment came in 1757 at the Battle of Plassey as this opened up much of the sub-continent to the British. The key ports and centres of administration in the east were Calcutta and Madras, and these were the bases for further expansion to the east. The goal was to reach China and so further trade routes were developed. The trade was carried by sea and so depended on available ports. The network of bases included: first, in the Malacca Straits, George Town, Malacca and Singapore; then in the South China Sea, Labuan; in the Gulf of Siam, concessions at Bangkok; and finally these links reached the Qing Empire in Hong Kong, Shanghai and other coastal cities of China.

The chain of port cities that facilitated this trade each had a dual function[13]: they drew their local area into the system (ports had hinterlands available for trade, and these ports intersected with established local trade activities), and they joined the chains of ports and linked them finally to the metropolitan centre, in the case of the British, London. Other modern state-empires functioned in similar ways, European, American and Japanese. These trade ports were crucial to the overall system of state-empires as goods and money plus people and ideas flowed along the networks or logistic chains that they sustained. The British sphere created major trade flows. Opium from Bengal and Patna moved along the chain into Southern China,[14] whilst teas and silks moved the other way and

thence to the metropolitan core. Local areas contributed: at first, assorted tropical or local products, and later, primary product flows, and thus tin and rubber from Malaya to America to feed the canning and car industries. All these were variations on the theme of trade, and over time, the British drew in territory and peoples from South Asia, through Southeast Asia and into the coastal areas and river valleys of China. Other European state-empires followed, and later the Americans, Germans and Japanese.

As noted, the British opened up a series of trading and administrative centres, and some prospered, whilst others failed.[15] Those that prospered both opened up their local hinterland for the demands and opportunities of the modern world (in shorthand, 'development') and created a further link in a chain linking established bases in South Asia via Southeast Asia to the final goal of Qing China. The *first* important link in this chain, after the early success of George Town in Penang, which was established in 1786, was Singapore, which was established in 1818. It was extracted from the surrounding Johor–Riau Sultanate by the expedient of signing a treaty with a disenchanted junior member of the Sultan's royal family. The freshly invented Sultan of Singapore took himself to be co-equal with the British, but he was disabused and soon relocated to the Malay Peninsula. The newly established port was a success, and it facilitated British trade and drew in traders from around the archipelago.[16] The *second* important link in the chain was Hong Kong.[17] And where the establishment of Singapore rested upon political guile and no little trickery, the British seized Hong Kong only after a war against the Qing Empire, a war to facilitate opium sales. The territory was ceded to the British in 1843, and later further adjacent territories were added: Kowloon, after the Second Opium War and the New Territories, after the Qing defeat in the Sino-Japanese War 1894–1895.[18] The route the British took into China was not smooth, but the port of Hong Kong did in time become successful and prosperous. The *third* link in the chain of British trading bases was in Shanghai,[19] and this settlement along with American and French settlements was to become the premier foreign gateway to central China. It was located adjacent to the estuary of the River Yangtze which flowed through the centre of China, and the three foreign settlements functioned in effect as mini-colonies; they enjoyed extra-territorial rights; they organized their own municipal government; they organized the development of the urban area that they controlled. The settlements drew in trade, and the city grew, and by the 1930s, it was the premier modern city of China.

Then, finally, in the context of the creation of these bases and the local and international networks, which they both constituted and served, the last key trade base was Bangkok. The city had been the Royal capital of the Chakri dynasty, and it became the entry point for foreign traders and with them the assorted demands of the modern world. Bangkok became to all intents a colonial port city, albeit without a single colonial ruler and formally, it remained under the rule of the local Siamese kings.[20] And as before, the trajectory of the polity can be unpacked in terms of a number of phases: (1) elite top-down modernization, (2) the 1932 coup and the local impact of general crisis, (3) the long post-war pattern and (4) the contemporary pattern (the legatee of all the history).[21]

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The Siamese polity was never formally colonized by the incoming European state-empires, in particular, the British and the French, though each held territories adjacent to the country, the British to the south in the Malay Peninsula and to the west in Burma, and the French to the east in Indo-China. It suited both state-empires to leave Siam as a buffer state between their respective spheres; however, both pressed their demands upon the Siamese kingdom, as ever trade was the driving preoccupation. Having established a base in Singapore, the British sought contacts in the region. The British sent trade delegations to Siam, and in the late nineteenth century, these approaches produced the Bowring Treaty 1855, which created a variant on the extra-territorial settlement pattern used elsewhere in the region. The Siamese elite responded creatively, reading and reacting these demands in such a way as to placate powerful foreigners, grasp the logic of the modern world that they exemplified and to sustain their domestic position. The upshot was a conservative, defensive modernizing regime; the elite began the task of remaking Siam from the top downwards.

Prior to the arrival of the modern world, Southeast Asia had been organized in a distinctive fashion. The key was the mandala state[22]; it was a system that saw a key settlement that was home to a powerful family surrounded by a number of powerful allied centres; so there were shifting networks of settlements along with their powerful families. The mandala state did not have fixed geographical boundaries as the claims of the core royal family upon allies were not fixed: borders were unclear and loyalties were unclear. The system functioned around sets of specifiable loyalties, and these were buttressed in ceremony and ritual; centres thus waxed and

waned in terms of their power and the long history of the region reveals a number of these centres.[23]

In the case of Siam, the primate city was Bangkok,[24] which was founded in 1782.[25] The city was located on the Chao Phraya River near to the sea, and it was the base of the Chakri royal household, which commanded the support of lesser families. Its core area lay in the valley of the river,[26] but its territorial reach was unclear, and in the modern era of maps, the boundaries of the country have shifted several times.[27] The economy revolved around agriculture, but there was sub-regional trade and also sea-borne trade with China. It was a part of the Sino-centric regional economy, and the royal rulers encouraged inward migration from China and so the agricultural economy acquired a thriving trading economy. In the nineteenth century, the arrival of Europeans seeking trade relations was a further impetus to Bangkok's growth, but they also represented a threat to the established order, and the local elites were cautious, a stance underscored by the 1842 Opium War. Nonetheless, the decisive change in policy came with the 1855 Bowring Treaty, and Bangkok was plugged into the global trading networks of the British state-empire; the city grew; Siam was drawn into the state-empire system.

Under pressure from the British to reform their administration, the Siamese elite sought to reform their mandala state, and from the middle of the nineteenth century, they introduced the core elements of a modern bureaucratic rational state: a permanent military, a permanent bureaucracy and a centralized tax system; and they made claims to territory, and borders were asserted or established.[28] The years up to the end of the nineteenth century saw economic changes as an already existing market in agriculture, and regional trade was supplemented by the linkages via foreign traders to the wider modern economy. Baker and Phongpaichit report that by the time of the Great War, the city of Bangkok was dominated by foreigners, and it was a species of colonial port city, and as its economy grew, so did its role as a capital city.[29]

Siam entered the modern world in the late nineteenth century. The royal elite inaugurated a programme of conservative reform from above; the formal machinery of a state was assembled; infrastructure was built, port facilities and canals; rice production was facilitated and in the late nineteenth century the country became a primary product exporter of rice, tin and teak. The reform programme was a top-down strategy borrowed colonial models and the dynasty was active through a number of kings until the 1932 coup that abolished the absolute monarchy.[30]

SIAM BECOMES THAILAND: THE 1932 COUP
AND THE ABOLITION OF THE ABSOLUTE MONARCHY

The royal elite continued to oversee the development trajectory of the country through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and they enjoyed considerable success so that the polity prospered; however, economic and social change slowly overwhelmed the established administrative procedures. At which point reforms were made, borrowing from the model of the Europeans, and these were colonial models: hierarchical models of superiority and subordination (the mandala form) were replaced by ideas of state and nation; royal absolutism began to look anachronistic, but the elite enjoyed success. However, in the 1930s, opposition built as criticisms of absolutist government were made,[31] and Royal absolutism was rejected in favour of government grounded in constitutional law. Siamese political–cultural identity had been linked to the royal household and religion, but now it was refashioned in favour of the idea of a nation rooted in race, place and language. These ideas were shaped into a political programme by a small group of reformers, including Pridi Banomyong[32] and Luang Wichit Wathakan,[33] who formed the People's Party, and their ideas were turned to state-led national development. In June 1932, the army staged a coup, and it quickly gathered widespread support, although there was continuing elite-level opposition; there was also competition amongst the reformers as Pridi and Colonel Phibun manoeuvred for power.

In 1938, Phibun became Prime Minister. In 1939, the country was renamed Thailand. During the late 1930s and 1940s, the government was corporatist and nationalist. The army became key players. Thereafter, as the general crisis of the European system of state-empires gathered strength, events propelled the country into the orbit of Japan. The Thai government embraced a variant of fascism. In 1941, the country declared war on the Western allies and fought a short war against colonial France. But Phibun was removed from power in 1944. At the end of the Pacific War, the country was drawn into the American sphere. A brief interlude ensued with much domestic manoeuvring, until in 1947, Phibun staged a coup. This action inaugurated a long sequence of military-dominated elite governments, but the Americans were content with this and so a significant measure of domestic continuity with pre-war days was established; that is, power reserved to the elite, with the masses disregarded. The post-war period thus developed in terms which granted significant influence to an outside power with its own agendas and which chose to

support one key domestic group: that is, the Thai army. The result was in outline predictable: post-war Thailand became subject to army rule, the royalist faction slowly reasserted itself and governments were changed by military coup.

THAILAND: 1945–2001

After the Pacific War, the state-empires of the Europeans, Japanese and Americans dissolved away. The territories of the former pair attained varieties of independent statehood whilst the USA assumed something of the role of regional hegemon, with its key allies in Northeast Asia and its anti-communist activities spread through the wider region of East Asia. In this context, in particular, in the period of the disintegration of the French position in Indo-China, the USA became the key foreign power in Thailand.

The particular route to the modern world taken by the Thai polity, essentially conservative reform from above, inflected by the 1932 coup, plus the militarized nature of the American's cold war, opened a route for the Thai military, which, along with allies in the senior levels of the bureaucracy, consolidated their domestic political power. And over the following years, commentators have discussed the domestic politics, the demands of the cold war sphere and the role of the military throughout this long post-war period. Three broad lines of enquiry can be sketched[34]: (1) modernization theory (modelled on the West, such that economic growth plus social change will produce a disposition towards liberal-democratic politics); (2) political economy theory (looking to structural explanations and suggesting that economic growth will be met with difficult domestic politics as the country upgraded links to the wider global economy); and (3) democratic elitist theorists (who unpack the matter of elite disunity and partial democratic development). These debates have run on through the post-war era and into the present day.

1. *Modernization*

The political elite of the USA affirmed the notions of modernization and anti-communism, and one aspect of the scholarly and policy work of this period was an argument to the effect that in poor underdeveloped countries the army could function as a pillar of the state and thus assist the pursuit of modernization, which itself is the best cure for popular dissent in developing countries.[35] Modernization theory looked to comprehensive change in economic systems, social relations and cultural ideas and

expectations. The process of modernization would enable poor traditional societies to become rich modern societies.

The project required the state to encourage and facilitate the development of the marketplace, organize social reforms and—in due course—move towards the creation of a democratic polity.

In the case of Thailand, American aid served to reinforce the machinery of the state. The military treated as the key group,[36] both for domestic purposes (modernization ideas of the military as the most modern organization and thus key to process of becoming modern) and international purposes, thus Thailand as a base for anti-communist operations. The result was the more or less permanent rule of the military. First, Phibun (1947–1957) embraced American influence and began half-hearted economic reforms. Then Sarit (1957–1963) inaugurates new phase of elite rule, with the move to centrality of monarchy. In all, politics becomes internal to an elite embracing the military, the bureaucracy and a progressively more influential monarchy. A further change of rule takes place as Thanom takes power (1963–1973). The country continues as before. Mainstream foreign analysts offer characterizations of the polity: it is a 'bureaucratic polity'[37] or 'loosely structured polity'.

2. *Political economic theory*

In contrast, political economists,[38] looking to the structural underpinnings of economic activities, social relations and cultural ideas, write of a social world sharply divided into classes—not fixed, but changing—thus, presently, there is a powerful local elite that is linked to the wider global economy, subordinate but not without effective power, along with poor rural farmers, an ineffectual urban bourgeoisie and an impoverished urban poor.

In the post-war period, American anti-communism impacted the local context.[39] The USA supplied aid to the Thai government and Thailand was for many years a front-line state during America's wars in Indo-China; at their maximum, the USA had some 50,000 military based in the country.[40] Thai military rule was acceptable to the Americans, and popular movements were not welcomed, and local elite-level politics produced a steady stream of military coups. However, in the middle 1970s, there was an interlude with liberal-democratic-style politics, but in the event, this interlude ended with a violent coup.[41]

Benedict Anderson[42] sketches the background to the 1976 coup. *First*, *American involvement*: after 1945, the USA displaced the Europeans, and was much more actively involved in the life of the country, and relat-

edly the broad American policy stance was centred on anti-communism, and at the time, there was warfare in Indo-China and Thailand becomes a key strategic ally hosting the American military in numerous bases. *Second, economic development and cross-cutting changes in Thai society*: the old bureaucratic–royal–army elite remain in place, Chinese business is not involved and the peasantry remain quiescent. But impact of US war spending changes the economy and thus its constituent social groups, and two new groups take shape: middle-class professionals and lower-middle-class service sector workers. As the government encourages inward investment, it is an economic boom-time and pressures for political reform grow. In time, these feed into the 1973–1976 democracy period. However, the impact of US defeat in Vietnam unsettles the new patterns of social groups and politics in Thailand: the lower middle class are uneasy, the middle class are uneasy and the elite are distinctly unhappy. All this feeds into the 1976 coup, which is an elite attempt to block change in favour of restoring an older-style security. Anderson notes one novelty in the 1976 coup—in the past, politics was reserved for the elite, so violence and killing took place within that group, but now politics is part and parcel of the social life of the country, and violence became public in the guise of the organized violence of street campaigns and killings, with the mobs drawn from those newer social groups unsettled by the withdrawal of USA.

The uneven[43] dynamic of economic and social change, which has created new social groups, with novel social aspirations, confronting an established elite determined to protect its position, continues down to the present day; so too the public violence identified by Anderson. In all this, the trio of elite players—bureaucracy, army and palace—claim a particular moral status, superior to the venality of business or politics, and exemplified in the monarchy, an institution protected by lese majesty laws; however, the institution has come under scrutiny, and scholars have asked how it functions within the Thai social world.

Recently, Duncan McCargo has identified the Thai network monarchy, pointing both to the role of the monarchy and the networks of business that flow through and around the institution; so contrary to standard official state ideology, the monarchy is anything but politically neutral. However, the crucial agent in sustaining the system is the army. It has routinely involved itself in politics since the 1930s and it legitimates its own role by professing its loyalty to the monarch, celebrating its moral propriety and declaring an overriding commitment to the country.

3. *Democratic elite theory*

Democratic elite analysis offers a quite different approach to political analysis; derived from inter-war European corporatist theorizing, it points firmly to the role of elite agents. William Case[44] builds his argument via a debate with available approaches to political analysis—structuralist, looking to macro-forces of class to drive change; modernizationist, looking to the role of the middle classes in building liberal-democratic systems; culturalists (C. Geerz, B. Anderson, J.C. Scott), insisting that all culture is local and in Southeast Asia is concerned with hierarchy, deference and paternalism. Case turns to elite theory. Its origins lie in inter-war Europe with W. Pareto, Mosca and Michels; this trio of theorists insist that in any political system, an elite will form, and the creation of elites is inevitable, and other theoretical aspirations are futile. In the wake of the episode of European fascism, these ideas rather went out of fashion, but they were revived in the form of democratic elite theory by scholars—G. O'Donnel, P. Schmitter, J. Linz—concerned with what were called democratic transitions in Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s. The focus is on elite groups, their relationship to ideas of liberal-democracy and hence the overall political nature of the regime.

Cast in these terms, Thai politics assumes an unequivocally elite form; the key elements have been the monarchy, the bureaucracy and the army, and whilst there have been arguments for democratization, and there have been experiments with systems that resemble European or American competitive electoral liberal-democracies, these have been short-lived, as the elite has moved and closed them down. The system is not stable. Case argues that the key to grasping the particular logic of Thai politics is precisely elite disunity—the disunity erodes state capacity; the business community has become powerful as a consequence; business has funded parties to advance their interests, plus civil society has developed and become active. The upshot is a political system that fails to be 'democratic'. Case tags the country 'an unconsolidated democracy'.

4. *The logic of Thai politics*

Thai politics revolves around an elite that comprises the bureaucracy, the army and the palace; its power is buttressed by a particular nationalism, which runs together place, people and King (religion), and it is more directly protected by a lese majesty law which blocks criticism of the system.

From 1945 through to 1976, the country has been dominated by military governments and politics has been a matter for a factionalized elite.

The country has been host to foreign military and its neighbours have been embroiled in vicious civil wars compounded by external proxy competition.[45] A tentative movement towards democracy 1973–1976 was suppressed by the military in 1976, and Kraivchien takes power, later replaced by Kriangsak and finally succeeded in 1980 by Prem.

List of main post-war coups and elections[46]:

>1947 Coup installs Phibun Songkhram
>1957 Coup installs Sarit (dies in 1963)
>1963 Coup succession installs Thanom Kittikachorn
>1973 Revolt and King's intervention
>1975 and 1976 Elections install Seni Pramoj, later Kukrit Pramoj
>1976 Coup installs Thanin Kraivchien, later Kriangsak Chomanand
>1980 Coup succession installs Prem Tinsulandonda
>Failed coup 1981
>Failed coup 1985
>1986 Election installs Prem Tinsulandonda
>1988 Election installs Chatichai Choonhavan
>1991 Coup and May 1992 Demonstration
>1992 Election installs Chuan Leekpai
>1995 Election installs Banharn Silpa-archa
>1996 Election installs Chavalit Youngchaiyudh, later Chuan Leekpai
>2001 Election installs Thaksin Shinawatra
>2005 Election installs Thaksin Shinawatra
>2006 Coup installs Boonyaratglin, later Surayud
>2007 Election installs People's Power Party (PPP/TRT)
>2009 Judiciary installs Democratic Party (DP)
>2011 Election installs Puea Thai (PT/TRT)
>2014 Coup installs Prayuth

It was Prem who began a cautious movement towards civilian rule, and this resumed in 1988 when Chatichai became prime minister. Another coup took place in 1991 but was resisted by the population. A confused period follows with a series of elections and short-lived governments until in 2001 when Thaksin's election began a new sequence of political manoeuvring. Once again familiar elite groups—military, bureaucracy and palace—compete for position, but now there is a cross-cutting force, the organized people who join parties and help create a vibrant civil society,

and so the familiar Thai political cycle is made more complex as ordinary people seek to make their mark.[47]

Contemporary Thailand: Identity and Structure

A national past[48] provides the polity with a location within the unfolding processes of history, and it records where the polity has come from, and it offers a view of the fundamental nature of the polity and, on that basis, offers the outline of where the polity ought ideally to be going. It is a discourse; that is, ideas are both articulated and embedded in institutional practice. It is always contested, and the ideas affirmed reflect relations of power within the polity. In Thailand, these relations of power are unstable. The polity is dominated by its elite. The elite comprises various fractions, and the balance can change; the masses are available and can be mobilized, and they also assert themselves; and as the balance within the elite shifts and changes, so its interactions with the masses alter and so the national past is adjusted. The ensemble is fluid and debates unfold as to what it is to be Thai and how the nation should be ordered; thus, in recent post-2006 coup era, the role of the monarchy has been stressed.

At the outset of the country's shift to the modern world, there was no Thai nation; there was a king plus key families plus religion plus ordinary people, and over time, as the mandala state was upgraded, a variant bureaucratic rational state and a modern nation were constructed; both were top-down exercises. The upshot was that by the late 1930s Thai identity was taken to revolve around race, place and language.[49] The king was a key figure; however, the 1932 coup displaces the monarchy, and thereafter, in the years following the Pacific War, the monarchy slowly rebuilds its role. The role of the King becomes more and more important in the polity until by the latter years of the reign, Thai identity involves race, place, language and the central position of the king/religion. An official nationalism is in place. It is marked in routine practice in the form of the proliferation of wayside shrines to the king along the streets in Bangkok; shops and offices display images of the king, and public politics requires deference to the throne; and the ideological circle is kept firmly shut by the routine deployment of draconian lese majesty law.

As the second decade of the twenty-first century approaches, Thai political life is in a disturbed state. A popular bid for reforms following the 1997 financial crisis and involving a new constitution and novel parliament-focused politics from 2001 was undermined over the period

2006–2014 by a series of colour revolution-type street actions, judicial interventions and two military coups. These activities were sponsored by the elite who were anxious to protect their own position, and supported by an urban middle class complaining of business/political corruption. These activities have amounted to an attempt to return to the status quo ante; commentators have suggested that the military/bureaucratic elite seemed likely to construct a constitution and political system redolent of the 'bureaucratic state' of earlier years, that is, the 1950s and 1960s.

In comparative terms, recalling the inter-war period in Europe, it seems to be an attempt to construct a politics without politics.[50] It will fail (necessarily), but the manner of failure will be at issue. How will the polity be reconfigured? Who wins, who loses? Domestic politics are stuck, and the elite will be unable to make their bid for old-style power stick,[51] as recently empowered groups show no sign of abandoning their struggles. Speculating about the future is unhelpful, but one characterization of the situation invokes the long history of the shift to the modern world in Siam/Thailand, positing a repetitive cycle of constitution, election, corruption, coup and then another new constitution. The cycle has continued into the second decade of the twenty-first century as a reactionary elite has asserted itself against new social groups; however, this time around, there are crucial problems: *first*, the king is old and charismatic authority is non-transferable; *second*, there is a deeper issue in respect of the identity of the polity, that is, is there a distinctive and novel form of Thai modernity or should events be discussed in terms of a failed/blocked modernity. If it is the former, then European commentators will have to adjust their expectations (revised ideas of modernity will be needed), and more importantly, many sections of Thai society will have to adjust to what would seem to be a permanent second-class status. If, however, it is the former, then the issue of the country's shift to the modern world remains open notwithstanding that progress seems blocked.

Contemporary Thailand: From the 2001 Election

The 1997 Asian financial crisis is usually analysed in terms of a domestic crisis cascading through the country and regional contagion spreading around East Asia. In Thailand, the epicentre of the crisis, the domestic impact was severe as the banks, stock market and, finally, the real economy were disrupted with consequent social and political implications. The scale of the damage was great, and all these problems spilled over into the politi-

cal sphere. A new constitution was prepared, the 'people's constitution', and it was seen as the most progressive in the country's history.[52] It ushered in a period of new politics: popular, democratic and development oriented.

In the new political environment, with its parliament, parties and an energetic public sphere (media), the key player to emerge was Thaksin Shinawatra, leader of the new Thai Rak Thai party (TRT). The party was built by an alliance surrounding a business tycoon whose base lay in provincial Chiang Mai and the party's stance was pro-development, which implied drawing in the usually neglected rural farming communities. The party won the first post-crisis election held in 2001. The new prime minister styled himself on Lee Kuan Yew and Mahathir Mohamad, and the goal was the construction of a Thai variant of the now familiar regional pattern of a developmental state oriented towards national development. At the outset, the policies adopted proved both successful and popular as the country recovered from the financial crisis, debts to the IMF were dealt with ahead of schedule and rural development initiatives were begun with social welfare addressed in the area of health care. But there were also problems: in particular, in the South, there was violent disorder, and in Bangkok, a harsh violent campaign against recreational drug-users. Critics of the government were not slow to call attention to these problems, but notwithstanding the problems and criticisms, the TRT government was re-elected in the scheduled 2005 election.

The success of the TRT proved to be highly unpalatable to the traditional elite. It is not clear just what triggered their active hostility. One *Financial Times* commentator listed business disagreements, trespass on palace disputes and accusations of corruption. The upshot was shortly after the TRT was re-elected to office, in itself a first in Thai politics, and a long campaign began to extirpate the TRT grouping in order to return to the political status quo ante, that is, political life revolving around the Bangkok elite. There have been a number of phases in the struggle: (1) TRT, 2001–2006; (2) a military coup and rule, 2006–2007; (3) a PPP/TRT[53] government, 2007–2008; (4) a constitutional coup and DP government, 2009–2011; (5) a PT/TRT government, 2011–2014. In 2014, a coup removed the government, the army returned to power and the status quo ante was on the face of it re-established.

The overall sequence had—as noted—a number of stages.

1. *TRT 2001–2006: new politics*

The 1997 financial crisis caused considerable economic and social damage in Thailand. It also provoked popular political debate that led to the preparation of a new constitution. In the context of the new system, the

TRT was established by a rich businessman from the Northeast, Thaksin Shinawatra. The party was well funded and ran a Western-style campaign in which hitherto neglected groups were targeted, in particular people living in the Northeast of the country. These people had long regarded by the Bangkok elite as backward farmers, but they were in fact politically astute enough to rally to TRT side in order to advance their particular agenda. The TRT won the 2001 elections: it gained overwhelming support and it commanded the parliament.

The TRT won support from non-elite groups, many from the Northeast, but many poorer Bangkok city residents also supported the TRT. In power, the government modelled itself on other top-down developmental states, in particular Singapore and Malaysia, neighbours in ASEAN. In its early years, it successfully pursued a national development strategy, and the country recovered from 1997 debacle: debts to the IMF were paid off ahead of schedule, reforms to agricultural development funding were made, likewise reforms to health care. Nonetheless, there were problems: the 2003 drug crackdown and the 2004 trouble in South; however, notwithstanding these doubts, the TRT was re-elected in 2005.

But there was now increasing opposition from both the traditional Bangkok elite and the Bangkok middle classes, and public criticisms were made as Thaksin's business dealings were scrutinized. The TRT called 2006 snap election, and the elite linked somewhat misnamed DP ran a boycott and the courts declared the election void. New election dates were scheduled and media commentators anticipated a TRT win.

2. *Military coup and rule 2006–2007*

Opposition towards TRT and its new politics hardened into the outright enmity of the traditional elite comprising the palace, the bureaucracy, the military plus the economic elite of Bangkok. In September 2006, elite organized what the *Economist* newspaper[54] dubbed the Royal Coup.[55] In May 2007, TRT was dissolved by the courts.

Following the coup, a period of military rule followed. Commentators excoriated the military, characterizing them as mistaken in their actions and incompetent in their stewardship of the economy[56]; a new constitution was presented by the military and gained public support in an August 2007 referendum.

3. *PPP 2007–2008*

In December 2007, a new election was held and the successor party to the dissolved TRT, called the PPP, won the election. Samak Sundaravej

became Prime Minister. However, this does not settle matters, and the traditional elite continued their hostility towards the new politics, and here, as an overt role for the military is unavailable (given the foreign reception and their own recent incompetence in office), two new strategies came into focus: a struggle via the courts to undermine and expel from office the government, along with a parallel struggle in the streets involving a local variant of the tactics of colour revolutions. Here the 'Yellow Shirts' made their appearance. So, after the PPP election victory, the Yellow Shirts began street protests. In August, the courts convicted Thaksin of financial crimes, and he fled to London. In September, the courts removed the Prime Minister (as his appearance in a television cooking programme was deemed an illegal income), and Somchai Wongsawat was made Prime Minister. In October 2008, Thaksin was convicted in absentia, and Yellow Shirts occupied the international airport in the city. In December 2008, Somchai resigned after courts ruled that PPP had acted illegally, and the party was dissolved.

4. *Judicial coup*[57] *and DP rule 2009–2011*

A new government took power; the elite allied with DP, and they managed to assemble a coalition in the parliament. The ousted supporters of the now dissolved PPP then proceeded to organize street demonstrations. The demonstrators were tagged the Red Shirts, and these protests ran on until a series of demonstrations around an ASEAN summit in April 2009. These demonstrations provoked public criticism and produced an uneasy calm,[58] but later further street demonstrations took place. In March 2010, the Red Shirt demonstrators occupied central Bangkok, and they built a number of ramshackle camps. In May 2010, the army violently dispersed the protesters amidst serious rioting, and around 100-plus people were killed, and downtown Bangkok suffered significant damage as a result of fires being set during the rioting.

5. *PT 2011–2013*

In July 2011, a further election was held and the latest successor party to the TRT, now the PT, won. Yingluck Shinawatra became Prime Minister. The government faced problems: some beyond its control (floods); some of its own making (rice pledging scheme, attempt to amend constitution and attempt to pass amnesty/reconciliation law); but many of its problems were of its opponents making (Yellow Shirt street protests, DP manoeuvring and judicial involvement on the part of the elite).

Confronted by mounting problems, the PT held a snap election in early 2014, which they won. The DP opposition boycotted and the Yellow

Shirt street politics continued, and they blocked voting in a number of constituencies. The court ruled election void because not all Thais could vote on the same day, and in early 2014, optimistic anti-government commentators were expecting a second Judicial Coup and newspapers laid of schedules for such a move,[59] whilst pessimistic pro-government supporters said that the coup had already begun; thus, this time around, a slow-motion Judicial Coup.

6. *May 2014: second judicial coup*

The PT government ran on in face of muted criticism until the government proposed in the autumn of 2013 an amnesty bill that would have re-set the political system in pre-coup form, that is, amnesty for those caught up in legal tangles related to political manoeuvring. The PT government's attempt in November 2013 to introduce an amnesty bill, an attempt to recover from years of political tension, provided the elite with a pretext for action designed to undermine the government (i.e., remove it from power by non-constitutional means).

The action had two strands: street level and judicial.

The first area of action revolved around street protests, the colour revolution-style mobilization of masses. Such protests are carefully organized and expensive to run and have been organized and bankrolled wealthy elite families.[60] The mass demonstrations continued through the following months; they ran for around six months. And by early 2014, the PT government faced a rapidly deteriorating political situation—continued mass regime change-oriented colour revolution actions on the streets of downtown Bangkok were beginning to impact the tourist economy, and their strategy of occupying or blockading government offices along with seeking supporters in the bureaucracy and army and middle classes along with launching or encouraging legal and administrative challenges slowly rendered the government impotent.

The second area of action was political and administrative–judicial. Here the actions of the government were blocked by the opposition DP or voided by judicial or constitutional oversight bodies; thus the main conservative political party, the DP,[61] the parliamentary wing of the elite, boycotted February 2014 snap elections. The Constitutional Court decided that as the elections had not all been held on the same day—as a direct result of the boycott and blockade—the election was void. At which point, in early 2014, commentators looking to the likely unfolding of the crisis offered several speculations: (1) PT legal problems would fade along with anti-government demonstrations and there would be new elections with

DP participation but a PT win and the cycle will begin again after a short period; (2) Constitutional Court engineers a constitutional coup and PT banned, then an appointed prime minister acceptable to traditional elite would be installed, and thereafter issue is reaction of PT supporters, and here speculations ranged from acquiescence through to violence; or (3) there will be a military coup cast in standard clichéd terms of morally upright soldiers rescuing the country from venal incompetent politicians and their ranks of deluded supporters, bought by a few expensive and untenable populist policies.

This double-track process culminated in May 2014 with the court's dismissal of the Prime Minister (whose earlier transfer of a senior civil servant linked to the opposition was declared lawful but done so quickly as to be lacking in 'morality'). The dismissal of the Prime Minister was welcomed by the street demonstrators who redoubled their efforts with demonstrations aimed at removing the PT government in favour of a nominally non-party government to be appointed by a vaguely specified group of elder statesmen who would be asked to undertake equally vaguely specified reforms; in effect, the resumption of power of the old elite; thus the end-point of the long programme of street/political–judicial action, the judicial coup.

7. May 2014: military coup[62]

On 20 May, the army announced that it was imposing martial law, and it put troops onto the streets in Bangkok. It did not discuss this with the government ahead of the action, and it was at pains to stress that it was not staging a coup. Early actions included banning large demonstrations (both Yellow and Red Shirts) and taking propaganda television stations off the air. Early non-actions notably involved announcing that the government continued in office.[63] The immediate schedule of questions revolved around the intentions of the army. Taken at face value, the army had moved to quell rising tensions, but more sceptically, the army had moved to pre-empt popular demonstrations ahead of further moves in the slow-moving judicial coup: the dismissal of the PT government and installation of a replacement. On 21 May, the army leadership brought figures from the contending political factions together ostensibly to find a solution to the impasse (provoked by elite refusal to acquiesce in rule of elected government), but the talks lasted only a short while.

On 22 May, the army leadership announced it was taking power. The army leadership justified its actions in the usual way, laying claim to a particular moral status that obliged them to act on behalf of king, coun-

try and people. Commentators suggest that this self-understanding is sincerely held. The three-day coup was completed, street demonstration sites were cleared, press and TV restricted and around 150 key players were seized by the army; reports[64] stated that most were from government side. The constitution was suspended with only the Senate and Constitutional Court left in place. The army leadership announced a projected rapid return to democracy contingent upon unspecified reforms. Commentators noted tensions amongst factions in royal household and likely differences amongst the 250,000 strong army plus the well-advertised differences between political groups. General Prayuth thus became the latest military dictator to run the country. Commentators were gloomy about the immediate future. They pointed to deep structural changes in Thai society, in particular, economic change had turned poor peasants into less poor potential citizens, and Thaksin had spotted these structural changes and responded to them; former peasants, now citizens, were enfranchised both de jure and de facto. The situation was made more awkward for the recalcitrant elite by the age and infirmity and great wealth of the king, and so the issue of royal succession compounded the elite's problems.[65]

The coup leaders announced a road map; they announced a model for an interim parliament.[66] Commentators began wondering if the promised re-establishment of democracy would mean an authoritarian-managed democracy, a system with the established elite left safely in power with the wider country enjoying a narrowly restricted role; in all, a system oriented towards the ideal of a politics without politics. But after a few months as the military announced plans, quiet criticism began in the now cautious mass media.[67] Politics began again, and personnel in the new assembly were discussed, the role of prime minister considered, along with the failings of early plans for shape of new constitution—and so on. The coup leader, General Prayuth Chan-o-cha, repeatedly postponed the promulgation of a new constitution and promised elections.[68]

8. *Going forward*

It is unclear how the unrest will subside. The political struggle has taken on aspects of elite-level vendetta. The street-level politics of competing organized gangs seems tribal in style. The hostility of the traditional elite to the new politics introduced in 2001 by TRT remains fixed; indeed, its expression seems sharper. Palace, civil service, local elite and local media are all quite direct about their opposition to TRT and its successor parties/personnel. At the same time, the supporters of the TRT and its successors remain in place, notwithstanding what is now nearing a decade

of sustained elite hostility. And in all this, there is one imponderable: the officially charismatic king is the figurehead of the elite, and he is now very old, and the attitudes of the population towards the crown prince are unclear. More broadly, the status of the monarchy is in question amongst some of the population.[69] In respect of the membership of the elite, it is clear that a process of regime transition is underway. Thus far it has been handled catastrophically badly and the death of the King will further unsettle domestic politics. On a broader perspective, one knowledgeable commentator[70] remarked that the conflict 'is pitting an entrenched elite that is destined to lose power against new political forces whose rise seems inexorable', which may be true, but established elites are not noted for leaving the historical stage quietly; they resist.[71] The Thai elite's decade-long struggle continues.

Thailand: The Route to the Modern World or the Manner of Failure

Cast in terms of the historical dynamic of structures, agents and their projects, the traditional Thai political system is both distinctive. First, *the structure of the polity is distinctive*—it is radically divided (class and ethnicity), and the elite deploy ideas/rituals to legitimate and secure their position (ideology); there is an elite that is quite separate from the majority of the population; the elite comprises the monarchy,[72] the army, the higher ranks of the civil service and the higher ranks of the Buddhist church. *Second, the elite constitutes a highly active agent*—that is, it both affirms a distinctive ideology and seeks to keep the population safely within the frame of that ideology by making criticism of its core elements illegal via a draconian lese majesty law. As Alasdair MacIntyre remarked about Stalinism, it all makes sense from within the system.[73] And *third, the elite political–cultural project is pragmatic*. It is conservative; thus the status of the monarchy is stressed, and great play has been made down the years to the King's concern for 'sufficiency economics', which, viewed charitably, is a variant of the familiar idea of sustainable development or, viewed more sceptically, a Thai elite version of British Victorian ideas of 'everyone in their place'.[74] The project is also commercially minded; thus the elite are not poor, but they are typically very much richer than the average ordinary member of Thai society,[75] and whilst this is not unusual in East Asia, it is unusual to have any criticism of the system declared illegal (and the lese majesty law

is invoked). Most of the population are structurally situated below this elite. The urban middle classes, the urban lower middle classes, the urban poor, the rural masses, the rural poor and so on have all been effectively excluded from politics in the past; traditionally, the business of politics was a matter for the elite.

This traditional pattern has slowly lost plausibility. As economic growth has spread throughout the country, the hitherto poor are no longer marginalized: they have access to the modern economy, modern consumer goods and modern means of communication. The economic and social structural underpinnings of the elite/mass political system have shifted. The balance was fatally disturbed in 2001 when the post-financial crisis constitution ushered in a novel popular competitive electoral democratic system, and new elites gained access to the political system along with new groups of ordinary people, those recruited to support the newly organized political parties. An era of popular liberal-democratic-style politics began. It has been met by relentless elite-level hostility.

Contemporary Thai politics therefore involves the old elites—monarchy, army, bureaucracy and church—with their old legitimating ideology of King, nation and country and their established Bangkok-based corporate partners, along with new groups including provincial business groups and ordinary people drawn from the poorer sections of society, both in Bangkok and in more rural areas. The traditional elite-centred system has been disturbed, but there has been no transition to a liberal-democratic-style democracy, nor is there a stable alternative institutional structure in sight; rather, the elite, seemingly appalled at what has been unleashed post-financial crisis, are seeking to block further change and are indeed to find a route back to the status quo ante.

Notes

1. A.D. King 1990 *Urbanism, Colonialism and the World Economy*, London, Routledge.
2. See Amitav Acharya 2000 *The Quest for Identity: International Relations of Southeast Asia*, Oxford University Press.
3. On this, see Kullada Kesboonchoo Mead 2004 The Rise and Decline o*f Thai Absolutism*, London, Routledge Curzon—the author argues that the Thai state was created in the context of the pressures of an expansionist nineteenth-century capitalism and a local elite concerned to adapt and survive—the adaptation was

only partial as reformers and conservatives both inhabited the realm of the elite—in 1932, the absolutist state was removed or recast by reformers looking to advance beyond the absolutist state system.

4. After Alasdair MacIntyre 1971 *Against the Self Images of the Age*, London, Duckworth.

5. Symbolic—also significant material players—see Duncan McCargo on the 'network monarchy'.

6. For scholarly purposes—getting the story straight—others offer characterizations with other concerns in mind—city risk analysis, money—foreign policy analysts, state interests.

7. For example, in the case of the UK, from historians—records of the debates and manoeuvring attending slow democratization (Sidney Pollard 1971 *The Idea of Progress*, Harmondsworth, Penguin)—and from political theorists—various models of democracy—affirmed at one point or other in the debate and associated with one or other politician or thinker (David Held 1987 *Models of Democracy*, Cambridge, Polity).

8. For present purposes—this is not a fixed model (Held offers a survey, not a history or report on practice—thus there are no given definitive models); rather it is an unfolding project—so the idea of democracy can be unpacked as idea, institution and historical achievement—produces scope for a rich set of variously democratic polities.

9. This section is derived from P.W. Preston 2010 *National Pasts in Europe and East Asia,* London, Routledge.

10. The Portuguese established a base on the east coast at Goa in 1510, an inevitably small-scale trading base, essentially pre-modern.

11. Philip Lawson 1993 *The East India Company: A History*, London, Longman.

12. A list of these numerous wars is available at http://www.zum.de/whkmla/military/india/milxbrindia.html—accessed 11 July 2009.

13. A.D. King 1990 *Urbanism, Colonialism and the World Economy*, London, Routledge.

14. On the opium trade and its importance to the British state-empire, see Brian Inglis 1976 *The Opium War*, London, Coronet; Carl Trocki 1999 *Opium, Empire and the Global Political Economy: A*

Study of the Asian Opium Trade 1750–1950, London, Routledge; Julia Lovell 2011 *The Opium War: Drugs, Dreams and the Making of China*, London, Picador.

15. In the case of the British, Labuan, Weiheiwei and Bencoolen were not successful and company officials had doubts about the viability of Singapore and reacted negatively to the establishment of Hong Kong; in brief, success was never guaranteed, nor was the type of success attained.

16. P.W. Preston *2007 Singapore in the Global System: Relationship, Structure and Change*, London, Routledge.

17. S. Tsang 2004 *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, Hong Kong University Press.

18. Bruce A. Elleman 2001 *Modern Chinese Warfare, 1795–1989*, London, Routledge; see chapter seven.

19. On Shanghai: L. Cook Johnson 1995 *Shanghai: From Market Town to Treaty Port 1074–1858*, Stanford University Press; E. Dennison and Guang Yu Ren 2006 *Building Shanghai: The Story of China's Gateway*, London, Wiley.

20. C. Baker and P. Phongpaichit 2005 *A History of Thailand*, Cambridge University Press, p. 89.

21. Baker and Phongpaichit 2005.

22. Acharya 2000.

23. Acharya 2000 pp. 18–29.

24. M. Askew 2002 *Bangkok: Place, Practice and Representation*, London, Routledge, pp. 2329.

25. It was the successor city to Ayutthaya, destroyed by the Burmese in 1776—see C. Baker and P. Phongpaichit 2005 *A History of Thailand*, Cambridge University Press.

26. Baker and Phongpaichit 2005 p. 12.

27. Baker and Phongpaichit 2005 p. 61.

28. Baker and Phongpaichit 2005 have a series of maps showing the changing borders.

29. Baker and Phongpaichit 2005.

30. Series of influential kings: Mongkut r1851–1868, a reformer; Chulalongkorn r1868–1910, a reformer, creates elite bureaucracy and pursues modernization from above; Vajiravudh r1910–1925, creates official nationalism; Prajadhipok r1925–1933, removed; Mahidol r1933–1946, period of regional conflict; and Bhumibol r1946–, reformer.

31. Baker and Phongpaichit 2015 pp. 109–112.

32. Thai politician, reformer and participant in the 1932 coup.

33. S. Barme 1993 *Luang Wichit Wathakan and the Creation of Thai Identity*, Singapore, ISEAS, argues that Wichit was a political activist (and artist and administrator) who knew the reform leaders and helped create Thai nationalism—Barme states that it was a top-down construction (cf Benedict Anderson); it was not a popular grass-roots idea.

34. For an example of locating analysis, see K. Hewison 1985 'The State and Capitalist Development' in R. Higgot and R. Robison eds 1985 *Southeast Asia: Essays in the Political Economy of Structural Change*, London, Routledge.

35. Hence W.W. Rostow 1960 *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*, Cambridge University Press.

36. See K. J. Hewison 1985 'The State and Capitalist Development in Thailand' in R. Higgot and R. Robison eds. 1985 *Southeast Asia: Essays in the Political Economy of Structural Change*, London, Routledge; Baker and Phongpaichit 2005, chapter 6, point to American money producing a bloated and corrupt Thai military.

37. See Fred Riggs or J.L.S. Girling 1981 *The Bureaucratic Polity in Modernizing Societies*, Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

38. See, for example, Hewison 1985.

39. Hewison 1985 p. 269, 273; see also N. Hamilton-Hart 2012 *Hard Interests, Soft Illusions*, Cornell University Press, who argues that local elites accommodated themselves to US power as it suited their interests, and claims about democracy and so on were useful illusions in which interests could be wrapped.

40. Benedict Anderson 1998 *The Spectre of Comparisons*, London, Verso, p. 146.

41. Events tracked by Kevin Hewison 1993 'Of regimes, state and pluralities: Thai Politics enters the 1990s' in K. Hewison, R. Robison and G. Rodan eds. 1993 *Southeast Asia in the 1990s: Authoritarianism, Democracy and Capitalism*, St Leonards, Allen and Unwin.

42. Anderson 1998 pp. 139–73.

43. Thus, there were economic policy issues in the 1980s—K. Hewison 1987 'National Interests and Economic Downturn: Thailand' in R. Robison, K. Hewison and R. Higgot eds. 1987 *Southeast Asia*

in the 1980s: The Politics of Economic Crisis, Sydney, Allen and Unwin; and later, Thailand was the local epicentre of the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis; on this, see Pasuk Phongpaichit and C. Baker 2000 *Thailand's Crisis*, Singapore, ISEAS.

44. W. Case 2002 *Politics in Southeast Asia*, London, Curzon.

45. A macro-scale overview of American activity is provided by Michael Yahuda 2011 3rd ed. *The International Politics of the Asia-Pacific*, London, Routledge.

46. Information is culled from Benedict Anderson, William Case and Kevin Hewison, plus *Wikipedia* summaries—the list mentions main figures—detail is labyrinthine and is not pursued here.

47. Hewison make the point that the space for public politics ebbs and flows—there is no linear progression and nor is there a definitive exercise in demobilization; rather, the space for public politics is contested—see K. Hewison 1996 'Political Opposition and Regime Change in Thailand' in G. Rodan ed 1996 *Political Opposition in Industrializing Asia*, London, Routledge; K. Hewison 1996 'Emerging Social Forces in Thailand' in R. Robison and S.G. Goodman eds. 1996 *The New Rich in Asia*, London, Routledge.

48. On this—see Patrick Wright 1985 *On Living in an Old Country*, London, Verso—he takes the idea from Agnes Heller, the humanist Marxist scholar.

49. Baker and Phongpaichit 2005.

50. See Richardson on EU, see Ben Rosamund.

51. Duncan McCargo 'The elite cannot turn back the tide of Thai politics' in *Financial Times* 8 May 2014.

52. The constitution was prepared by a popular drafting committee—it was approved in a referendum—it was overturned by the military coup of 2006.

53. The elite used the courts to disqualify TRT staff and the party itself—it reinvented itself first as PPP and after that incarnation was dissolved as the PT, this last led successfully by Yingluck Shinawatra until the latest coup.

54. At this time, the newspaper, whose articles are not signed, clearly had a very knowledgeable commentator.

55. *The Economist* 'A Right Royal Mess' 4 December 2008.

56. Interestingly, the London-based newspaper, the *Economist*, excoriated the coup leaders as an error and thereafter incompetent.

57. *The Economist* 'Desperate Days' 27 November 2008; Gwynne Dyer 'Final Nail in Thailand's Democracy Coffin' in *South China Morning Post* 16 December 2008.
58. *The Economist* 'Dousing the Flames' 18 April 2009.
59. *Nation* and *Bangkok Post*—March 2014.
60. *Financial Times* 7 May 2014 'Thailand's rising political risk'.
61. For an excoriating critique of the shameful behaviour of the Democratic Party and its leaders, see R. Lloyd Parry 2014 'The Story of Thaksin Shinawatra' in *London Review of Books* 36.12 19 June 2014, in particular the last paragraph—later reports in *Economist* and *Financial Times* noted that elements of the Bangkok elite were advocating boycotting European luxury goods as a protest against hurtful criticism.
62. *Financial Times* 7 May—'Thailand's rising political risk'—this was one of many pieces in the *Financial Times*—similar pieces were printed in the *Economist*.
63. The military staged coup—the second aimed at the new politics— was staged without violence—the notion of a coup is available in Thai political culture (recall Peter Winch)—there is an available understanding within the public sphere of the nature and logic of military coups—they are intelligible—the players have a script— political life went quiet for a whilst—the coup leaders announced plans for reform and a return to democracy.
64. See *Daily Telegraph* of that date.
65. See May 2014 editions of the *Economist* and the *Financial Times*, see also *RSIS Commentary* 096/2014, see also Andrew MacGregor-Marshall blog at *zenjournalist*—see book of same to be published in autumn 2014 by Zed Press.
66. *Bangkok Post* July 2014.
67. Bangkok in late July and early August—see cautious commentaries in *The Nation* and *The Bangkok Post*.
68. At the time of writing (March 2016), elections have been re-promised for 2017.
69. See 'A Right Royal Mess' in *The Economist* 4 December 2008; more recently, see 'Treason in Cyberspace: Thailand's lese majesty law' in *The Economist* 4 July 2009.
70. Duncan McCargo writing in the *Financial Times* 8 May 2014.
71. In respect of Europe and the post-1945 establishment of liberal-democracy—late—see Arno Mayer 1981 *The Persistence of the Old*

Regime, New York, Croom Helm; see also T. Nairn 1988 *The Enchanted Glass: Britain and Its Monarchy*, London, Hutchinson Radius.

72. See Duncan McCargo 2005 'Network monarchy and legitimacy crises in Thailand' in *The Pacific Review* 2005 18.4.
73. MacIntyre 1971.
74. Hence the hymn 'All things bright and beautiful'.
75. For a development approach, see J. Rigg 1997 *Southeast Asia: The Human Landscape of Modernization and Development*, London, Routledge.

China: A State-Socialist Route
to the Modern World

China, it might be said, has made a number of attempts to join the modern world; where these include the late nineteenth-century elite top-down reforms that were organized by a decaying pre-modern empire, an early twentieth-century republican revolution engineered by groups looking to examples outside the country, the confusions and progress of the 1930s Nanjing Decade and then, via warfare and revolution, a period of peasant-centred state socialism, and now, in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, a species of developmental state turned towards the formal goal of peaceful rising has been constructed. The dazzling and ambiguous achievements of this last noted period were celebrated, as the legatee of earlier efforts, particularly those associated with the Communist Party, at the 2008 Beijing Olympics: tagged by observers as 'China's coming out party'. However, a cursory acquaintance with the long trajectory of the shift to the modern world in China reveals the difficulties—the violence, the setbacks and the abrupt changes of policy and direction—with the current configuration able to be read as simultaneously successful, disfigured

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Some of this material is taken from earlier texts, P.W. Preston 2010 *National Pasts in Europe and East Asia*, London, Routledge and P.W. Preston 2014 *After the Empires*, London, Palgrave; it has been reworked and updated; for more on this topic in this general vein, see S. Luk and P.W. Preston 2016 *The Logic of Chinese Politics: Cores, Peripheries and Peaceful Rising*, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar.

and less than entirely convincing in respect of the solidity of its future. The success is clear, the problems, such as corruption and pollution, routinely noted, and so too the tricky demands of the inevitable reform. Here, with enquiry operating at a macro-scale, the unfolding historical trajectory of the shift to the modern world will be considered.[1] The process is open-ended, and the general direction of travel likely inevitable, and it is also thoroughly contingent as neither the past nor current elite declarations are a clear guide to the future.

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There are numerous ways of grasping the historical trajectory of a country, that mix of past and present and implied future, from simple narrative histories through to elaborate comparative typologies—all are lodged within the cultural horizons of their authors. In respect of political life, the historical trajectory establishes the domestic political logic, and different trajectories produce different logics; these logics inform analysis—social theorists and also social citizens—and grasping these logics is not straightforward. The domestic sphere is occluded by reason of familiarity—the foreign sphere by reason of unfamiliarity and difference; in respect of foreign logics, it is easy for scholars to drift into error.[2]

In the case of 'China',[3] these difficulties are compounded as the territory is vast, its history long and its shift into the modern world relatively recent. There are a number of ways in which "China" might be conceived: firstly, *China as a culture*—the history is presented in terms of a sequence of dynasties running back 2000 years; secondly, *China as a geographical term*—home to a number of polities over that same period as internal patterns and external borders shifting and changing; third, *China as a nation*—a nationalist tale mixing claims about race, dynasties, foreign aggression and contemporary success; fourth, *China in the eyes of hostile foreigners*—critical tales specifying varieties of imminent economic and political failure; fifth, *China as an elite top-down project*—with the project variously expressed at local level; or, finally, sixth, *China as a dynamic modern polity*—with a domestic pattern of power and a definite place within the international system with the whole represented in public discourse in terms of a distinct national past. It this last noted China that will be discussed here, in particular its unfolding historical trajectory as it shifts into the modern world.

The earliest attempts were made during the latter years of the pre-modern Qing dynasty—the Self-Strengthening Movement, the New

Culture Movement, the One Hundred Days reform programme and the Late Qing Reforms—but they were all to no avail. Barrington Moore[4] argues that by the time the Qing authorities had realized the scale of the challenges posed by the form of life carried by the foreigners, they lacked the domestic social support base to effect change as reformers had moved their agendas forward; thus the reforms promoted by Sun Yat Sen and associated radicals. By the early twentieth century, those groups anxious for change sought models overseas, drawing lessons from Japan, Europe and America, and they also constructed utopian agendas (hence—democracy, nation and people's livelihood) and, in time, came to embrace insurrectionary violence. The final problems for the Qing authorities revolved around railway finance in central China where provincial opposition to attempts at centralized control spiralled into rebellion, which episode thereafter cascaded throughout the country.

The first post-Qing attempted shift to the modern world, following the lengthy debate amongst reformers and numerous failed insurrections, found expression in the 1911–1912 attempt to establish a republic. Sun Yat Sen and his allies had learned the lessons of modernity from contacts with the Europe, America and Japan, but as rebellions broke out in central China and spread thereafter throughout the country, they were unable to secure their initial successes. In the wake of the overthrow of the Qing and the declaration of a republic, there were conflicts amongst the progressive-minded revolutionaries,[5] and there were a number of regional or local power holders who were not inclined to fall in line with the requirements of the newly made republic, and an attempt was made to put in place a new Emperor. Thereafter, collapse was rapid as regional warlords took power. There were hundreds of warlord groups, including a few very large formations, and the manoeuvring was insistent, so too were their wars. China had descended into confusion, plus the foreigners were still in place, now more visible than before as they moved to protect their commercial interests.

The early death of Sun Yat Sen in 1925 saw power within the KMT Party shift to the military leader that he had installed at the Whampoa Military Academy, Chiang Kai Shek.[6] Chiang worked to unify the republican forces, and he made an early alliance with the recently formed Communist Party, yet the manoeuvring continued and so too the violence. Chiang opted to solve the problem of warlords via a mixture of methods: notably, military campaigns, co-option and bribery. In 1926, Chiang launched the Northern Expedition. Moving up from the south of China towards

Shanghai and Nanjing, Chiang's armies were successful as warlords were successively defeated or fell into line. The Communist Party in Shanghai, anticipating the arrival of their ally, organized an uprising amongst their supporters in the industries of the city, that is, urban workers, the closest the city had to a conventional Marxist proletariat; however, Chiang did not support the efforts of his erstwhile allies; indeed, he took the opposite course as his troops along with the forces of local industrialists and the city's gangsters attacked and largely destroyed the party. With the destruction of the party in the city, the first Chinese Civil War had begun.

Over the next decade, running up to 1937—conventionally 'the Nanjing Decade'—developments unfolded along two distinct trajectories: the one oriented towards consolidating his rule, and the second to the related task of extirpating the Communist Party. So, first, Chiang continued to move his forces northwards, and using the same techniques as before, he organized a kind of unity for the country with the capital based in Nanjing. The government is often characterized in retrospect as chaotic and deeply corrupt; however, that said, the country was unified and the regime began to put in place the apparatus of a modern state, plus it began to wind back the privileges of the foreigners. Then, second, Chiang began a series of military campaigns designed to destroy the remnants of the weakened Communist Party. A number of campaigns were launched against communist 'base areas', those small patches of territory to which remnants of the party had retreated. Internal conditions were typically appalling, and these areas were also subject to numerous attacks by the forces of Chiang. In time, the base area organized by Mao Zedong[7] was overrun, and the remnants of the communist forces fled, pursued by Chiang's armies, making a long retreat over difficult ground in remote areas of China and at great cost in losses, before eventually finding a form of sanctuary in the far north of the country. Chiang's plans for a final assault were thwarted by the actions of one of his allied warlords and so the episode unexpectedly inaugurated a second period of uneasy alliance between the two parties. Subsequently, for the communists, the retreat was re-imagined as the Long March, later, one foundation myth for contemporary China, and for Chiang, the failure to finish off his enemies was a matter of deep regret.

However, the confusions of the Nanjing Decade were not the end of matters, for in 1937, the Japanese invasion of China produced further chaos. Japanese involvement in China dated from the years of the Meiji Restoration, and in the late nineteenth century, there had been one clash between the Qing and the Japanese over influence in Korea,

territory that the Japanese annexed before deepening their involvement in Manchuria and Northern China. Now, in the 1930s, China itself was invaded. The Japanese were able to defeat Chinese armies they engaged, mostly Nationalist, but they could not secure the country.[8] So in 1944, the Japanese army was waging a major campaign in southern China at the same time that the Americans were island hopping across the Pacific Ocean and securing bases that brought the home islands within the range of bombing aircraft.[9] Both Nationalist forces and those of the Communist Party were clear that the Japanese would be defeated by the Americans, and in respect of their own hostilities, they bided their time. In 1945, the civil war resumed, and after a short period, the decisive military engagements took place in Manchuria. Chiang's armies were moved north and equipped with the help of the USA whilst Mao's armies received support from the USSR and were also able to access captured Japanese supplies. The military engagements were short. The Nationalists defeated in the north, and Mao declared the founding of the PRC, and the remnants of the Nationalists fled to Taiwan.

The establishment of the PRC represents the third sustained attempt to join the modern world made by the elites and masses in China; the earliest top-down efforts foundered along with the Qing dynasty, then the Republic foundered and so too the political project summed as the Nanjing Decade, and in all these cases, violence was endemic, domestic and foreign, but now the country was unified. The Nationalist had been expelled, so too the foreigners; Japanese armies were repatriated and Henry Pu Yi was in goal. Now the familiar trio of tasks bequeathed to post-crisis replacement elites could begin—state making, nation building and development. Building a New China proved difficult, and outside commentators speak of the peasant-centred utopianism of Mao and typically the regime's achievements are disregarded whilst its costs are noted, but the era saw the creation of the party-state and an effective pursuit of development. Finally, commentators, domestic and foreign, identify the market-oriented reforms associated with paramount leader Deng Xiao Ping as the clue to current success; that is, the mix of state-direction, local initiatives, inward investment and energetic global trading with the package of policy stances and overall line of advance being summed as 'peaceful rising'. However, the track to prosperity has had its downside with pervasive corruption and severe pollution being the more obvious, but the undoubted achievements of 30 or so years were celebrated in some style at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

China and the Unfolding Shift to the Modern World[10]

As noted above (and as described by many distinguished historians[11]), China enters the modern world of natural science-based industrial-capitalist society via the quite particular experience of quasi-colonization, a mix of settlement and trade. The numbers of foreign settlements grew throughout the nineteenth century, and they served to introduce foreign influence in China, direct, visible and powerful.[12] In time, various foreign powers carved out distinct spheres of trading influence within China with the French in the south, the British in the centre, and Japan, Germany and Russia in the north.[13] Such systems of quasi-colonialism entailed the creation of complex distinctions, both intellectual and practical: elite versus mass, metropole in contrast to periphery, the civilized as opposed to the uncivilized, resistor and not collaborator—and so on. All these exchanges can be characterized in systemic terms (thus, 'feudal agrarian society' is replaced by 'industrial capitalist mass society'), but such exchanges were carried by agents, and in the case of China, the earliest agents were merchant traders: European, later American and later still Japanese. It is true that European traders had reached East Asia in pre-modern days: thus the Portuguese established Malacca in the Malay Peninsula in 1511 and Macau in 1557; likewise, the Dutch were active in the wide Southeast Asian archipelago from early in the seventeenth century, and later they traded in Formosa and in Japan. But all these European groups were small in numbers, and their status was that of traders, just one more group working within an area dense in trading networks: rich, advanced and centred on China.[14] It was only in the early years of the nineteenth century that the Europeans stepped up their demands on the Qing authorities, and, as in other places within the expanding spheres of the European state-empires, the demand was for new or enhanced trading relationships. The key players were now the British and the French.

The British and French had manoeuvred against each other in respect of control of the South Asian sub-continent, where a series of local wars had been pursued, but in the event, it was the British who secured control against both their European competitor and the local powers.[15] On the British side, the key organization was the EIC.[16] The British government empowered this company to engage in trade, deploy armies[17] and make treaties. The bestowal of authority was unilateral, creating a kind of quasi-state. The company gradually accumulated bases and territory

in the sub-continent, and two bases in the sub-continent at Calcutta and Madras facilitated further expansion towards Southeast Asia and further East with new trade routes and new bases in the Malacca Straits (George Town, Malacca and Singapore), in the South China Sea (Labuan[18]), in the Gulf of Siam (Bangkok) and thence to China (Hong Kong and Shanghai).

European expansion into Southeast Asia and thence to China involved a further round of conflicts: both intra-European and directed against local country powers, and the eventual pattern of nominal territorial empires was wholly contingent. In this drawn-out process, in Southeast Asia, the British struggled against the Dutch who laid claim to the archipelago and against indigenous local powers. And, in regard to Indo-China, there were conflicts with the French, whose political authorities, after losing access to the sub-continent, re-ordered their activities and sought territory in mainland Southeast Asia, securing control of large swathes of territory in the mid- to late nineteenth century and thereafter opening routes to trade in Southern China. As with other European powers, the Dutch and British, the French advances were secured with violence. In this case, avoiding entanglements with the British, they invaded Vietnam and thereafter seized the rest of mainland Southeast Asia, save for Siam, left by both the French and British and serving as a buffer state between their respective state-empires.

China was the goal for the European powers. Over time, the British and French acquired large areas of influence in the centre and south of the country, and the Americans, Germans and Japanese came a little later.[19] However, in the early years of the nineteenth century, in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars, the key players were the British traders, characterized by one scholar as a rapacious, violent and disreputable group,[20] and for many years, a mystery to the authorities in China, who could not understand who they were or why they were violent or what they wanted.[21] The early British activities, which involved illegally trading vast quantities of opium through the Pearl River, finally provoked a response from the Chinese authorities who, after reviewing a series of options, decided to prohibit the trade. Local exchanges followed and the trade was suppressed; however, predictably, the traders protested and the British state then launched the campaign subsequently tagged the Opium War. Elite-level opinion in London was mixed—the war was denounced, but it also received support when cast in racist terms[22]; in the event, the war caused many casualties amongst the local population until it was ended by a treaty. The key gain for the trader's lobby was the island of Hong Kong as a base; it was estab-

lished in 1842. A second major base was established shortly afterwards, in Shanghai; here the foreign enclave took the form not of the ceding of an island but the creation of a semi-independent foreign settlement, a concession territory.

However, these gains were not enough to satisfy the trader lobby, and their demands increased: wider access, fewer restrictions, extra-territorial rights, extra-territorial control of customs operations and tariff rates and so on. A further war was contrived. The 1857–1860 Second Opium War or Arrow War and the Qing agreed further demands. Slowly the incursions of the foreigners produced the Treaty Port System, and over the following years, running up towards the end of the century, China was reduced to the status of quasi-colony.

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The Qing authorities made attempts to respond to the incursions of the foreigners, to escape the logic of the Treaty Port System and to participate in the international system as a sovereign state. In itself this was a radical change from the assumptions of the long-established Sino-centric system, but these efforts were ineffectual. In the early twentieth century, a rebellion created elements of a short-lived republic, but the project was not completed and warlords took power in many areas, with civil war compounding problems. A relatively successful Nationalist government was overwhelmed by invasion, and later civil war resumed. A revolutionary communist group took power and their project has endured; however, what is clear, recalling this history, is that the shift to the modern world in China, a process which in general found organizational expression in the form of the expansion and later collapse in general crisis of a system of state-empires,[23] was accompanied by sustained and often extreme violence, and in this vein, it can be argued that it was not until the 1978 reform programme began that the long-drawn-out crisis in China could be said to have come to an end; thereafter, the ruling elite pursued national development and their success was celebrated in the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

The Republican Revolution and Civil War

The scale of foreign depredations was clear by the latter years of the nineteenth century, and the disaster of the Boxer Rebellion underscored the costs of foreign presence. The rebellion was also the last throw for the Qing authorities, and later reforms were too little, too late. In this con-

text, local intellectuals and political actors sought new models for China: they looked to the modern world, and they engaged with its available lessons; that is, they sought to derive locally useful arguments from reflection on its experience, looking to Europe, America and Japan. In Japan, following the 1868 Meiji Restoration, the country's elite had sought to learn the lessons carried in the forms of life of traders, and study missions had been sent abroad and then the country radically reformed itself. Chinese reformers looked positively on Japan's record. Information and argument about Europe and America thus came to Chinese reformers through a variety of routes. Such material was inevitably complex, like the societies themselves, and it had to be read into local Chinese culture,[24] and so many ideas were debated and neologisms coined: state, nation, race, progress, fascism, communism, democracy and so on. Plus there were intellectuals who recoiled from the changes enveloping the country, and they sought to invoke older ideas, lodging claims in respect of the enduring value of the resources of traditional culture.

However, as might be expected, domestic politics were fragmented. The Qing authorities had numerous opponents—regional, social class, popular and intellectual[25]—and Moore[26] comments that by the time the Qing authorities had realized the extent and urgency of required reforms, it was already too late, as they no longer had the social base to support a drive for reform. Those wedded to the idea of reform wanted them gone, and indeed in the early years of the twentieth century, there were numerous attempts at armed insurrection.

The republican revolution began with a dispute about the funding of railway infrastructure. These disputes came to a head in Wuhan in Hubei Province, and a rebellion began in late 1911, and the Qing authorities were repudiated. The rebellions spread and the revolution found its home and base in the south, in Guangdong Province, and a provisional government was proclaimed in January 1912 with the last emperor abdicating in February 1912.[27] The difficult task of creating a new political settlement was begun; that is, the proclaimed republic had to gather support from other regional elites and the mass of the population. Sun Yat Sen proclaimed the three principles—nationalism, democracy and people's livelihood—but in the event, the republic suffered from elite-level faction fighting,[28] the scepticism of numerous local power holders,[29] opposition from those who had been close to the now deposed Beijing authorities,[30] along with the ongoing confusions inherent in a quasi-colony, now without any central authority.[31]

The drive to create a republic ran from 1912 to 1913, and a double process followed: first, the republic government in the south was unable to assert its authority over the rest of the country, and although the Qing residues in the north could not sustain their position, gradually fading from the scene, a species of political void opened, and it had to be filled somehow; thus, second, it was filled by local-level forces, and the beginnings of the warlord period are found here as local groups of sometime officials along with local groups of sometime soldiers took power in their local areas. As regards the first process: in the period 1913–1916, one key figure from the late Qing era, the elite military figure of Yuan Shikai, assumed power, and the leaders of the republic acquiesced. Yuan shortly thereafter proclaimed himself emperor, at which point a distinctive sequence had been traversed from revolutionary optimism, confusion and regression to a variant status quo ante; however, Yuan died in 1916. And, as regards the second, the country slowly dissolved into confusion. The leadership figure Sun Yat Sen died in 1925, and the KMT and CCP, two political parties oriented towards the future, coexisted in an uneasy alliance, but the bulk of the country was now controlled by warlords. The period 1916–1926 was dominated by the activities of these locally based groups, some 300 plus, with half a dozen major groups. These groups fought numerous wars, some involving armies measured in the hundreds of thousands,[32] and the result, predictably, was confusion.

The republic had failed, but it had produced two modern-style political parties, that is, mass parties offering distinct political programmes. The late Qing era had seen many local oppositional groups formed, and the revolution saw Sun Yat Sen transform one such group into a modern-style political party when in 1912 the KMT was formed; a little later in 1921, the Communist Party of China was formed. Both parties drew on the work of local critics, mixing elements of indigenous culture with ideas imported from Europe and America, and both advocating sweeping reforms, thus both supported the ideal of the republic. However, as Moore pointed out, they drew their support—their social bases—from rather different sections of Chinese society, and their agendas differed as a result. The KMT drew its support from the better off such as landlords, affluent farmers, business sectors and officials of the previous regime, where, in contrast, the CCP found its support in the peasantry and the numerically small urban working classes. The two parties cooperated in the First United Front 1924–1927 as they sought to resist the warlords who by this time were controlling large areas of the country and advanced the ideas of the republic.

After the death of Sun Yat Sen in 1925, leadership of the KMT passed to Chiang Kai Shek. Chiang's background was in the military, and an expedition was launched to bring the warlords under control. The 1926–1928 Northern Expedition involved the Republic's armies moving northwards, and they overcame or suborned or purchased the warlord groups along their path of advance. The campaign was thus part military and part political, and the first objective was to capture Shanghai. At that time, the city was unusual. It had developed alongside the foreign concessions and had developed both trading activities and industrial operations, and so it had developed some of the aspects of class-division that communist theorists read as significant; it had a working class, and it also had a local communist party, and members of the party staged a local rebellion in anticipation of the arrival of the armies of the KMT. However, in April 1927, the KMT in alliance with local businessmen and gangsters attacked the communist forces and effectively destroyed the local party, although a few key figures escaped. The KMT continued its purge of CCP in other areas under its control, and the party was marginalized. The decision by Chiang to attack the party in Shanghai ended the United Front and inaugurated a civil war that was to run on for the next 20 years. The episode was symptomatic of the violence of the period amongst elite and mass, with assassinations, protests, social breakdowns and, finally, warfare; however, for a period, following the Northern Expedition, the result was a more or less united China.

Chiang's party established a new capital at Nanjing, ruling for the next ten years, the Nanjing Decade 1927–1937. The circumstances in which the government operated were difficult with residual and ongoing problems with warlords, continued foreign concessions, intermittent fighting against CCP, plus the social breakdown associated with confusions of the whole period since the revolution. The upshot was a weak government. It was authoritarian, chaotic and corrupt, but it was also a period of state making and economic advance. The core state became more institutionally robust; economic development took place inside the country, links with the wider world also developed. The conflict with the CCP was a nuisance, but maybe little more; however, that said, the KMT made determined efforts to extirpate the remnants of the party.

For the Communist Party, the un-looked-for and unexpected defeats in Shanghai provoked reflection on the part of the leadership as anger at the KMT's betrayal was accompanied by the realization that adherence to Marxist nostrums occasioned by the situation in nineteenth-century

Europe, which stressed the role of the urban proletariat, were not applicable to the situation in China as the overwhelming bulk of the population—90 % or more—were rural peasantry. The leadership turned to the rural peasantry: in part as a result of this brutal lesson, in part because they had little choice. The remnants of the leadership plus supporters moved to rural areas, in particular, to remote areas, and here they formed soviets, that is, nominally independent socialist democracies. In practice, these were impoverished territories: poor peasants, poor soldiers and equally poor leadership cadres; however, they did attempt to put theory into practice, in particular, via land reform.[33] They were also quickly under military pressure from the KMT. One key base area was the Jiangxi Soviet (1931–1934). The KMT with the assistance of foreign advisors organized a series of encirclement campaigns, and the fifth campaign was successful and drove the CCP out of the base area. The retreat took the communist forces through remote western areas of China and finally to an equally remote base in the north at Yan'an. Their casualties were enormous, but later the retreat was recalled as the 'Long March', now a part of contemporary China's national past. Chiang, determined to finish off the communists for good, planned a further attack, but it was thwarted by the rebellion of one of his warlord allies, and a new Second United Front was formed oriented towards the threat posed by the Japanese state-empire. From this point, the CCP accumulated more base areas, and in time, these provided jumping-off points in the final exchange with the KMT, but in the meantime, elite attention turned to the activities of the Japanese.

Prior to the arrival of European and American powers, relations between local elites were ordered in terms of the 'Sino-centric system', a pre-modern system that placed Beijing at the centre, surrounded by tributary states. This system had been slowly undermined over the period of the nineteenth century by the depredations of foreign state-empires and their demands in respect of trade. The rapid development of Japan created further pressures. The Sino-Japanese War 1894–1895 over influence in Korea was a defeat for the Qing, and it marked the first involvement of Japan in the foreign occupation of China. The Japanese gained access to Korea and acquired Taiwan. A short whilst later, there was further conflict in the area; the Russo-Japanese War 1904–1905 saw control of Korea pass unequivocally to Japan, plus there were deeper incursions into Manchuria. The expansion of Japanese interests in China continued: the 1931 Incident saw Manchuria occupied and thereafter further incursions into northern China. The Second United Front 1936–1945

was directed against this common enemy. The second Sino-Japanese War began in 1937, and from 1937 to 1941, the forces of the KMT offered most resistance; however, with the outbreak of the Pacific War, both KMT and CCP preferred to avoid fighting as they both correctly assumed that the defeat of the Japanese at the hands of the USA was only a matter of time, and the two sides thus manoeuvred in the expectation of an eventual resumption of hostilities.

The resumption of hostilities occurred at the end of the Pacific War; however, this war had changed the wider context of the Chinese Civil War as both sides now had outside allies who were in the process of constructing the many layered exchange tagged 'the cold war': thus, the CCP received after some hesitation support from the USSR, whilst the KMT, well connected in Washington, received financial and logistical support from the USA. War material flowed into northern China. In the period 1946–1949, hostilities resumed, now in the guise of full-scale conventional armies, and the forces of the CCP routed the Nationalists in northern China. The CCP proclaimed the PRC in October 1949, and the remnants of the Nationalists were pursued in the south of the country, and leadership cadres and armies escaped to Taiwan, and the ROC continues down to the present.

The Nanjing Decade and the subsequent years during the Pacific War are sometimes written off as thoroughly confused with a corrupt, authoritarian political leadership governing a divided unequal society, and Chiang Kai Shek being tagged as a species of Asian fascist. The whole episode is put to one side as an historical trajectory that did not make it into the post-war period, a political project overtaken by the drama of the expansion of the Japanese state-empire and its dismemberment by the USA in the course of the Pacific War, a war which remade pre-war East Asia, dismantling also European state-empires, promoting the USA to prime position and dividing the region into cold war blocs. But this is history written backwards, for the republic did secure notable achievements: there was development in urban areas, indigenous Chinese business expanded, the state recovered control over concessions and trade tariffs and the state became better at taxing and investing. There was greater stability in rural areas as warlords and communists were in some measure controlled, although traditional patterns remained, with peasants, landlords and officials. And, it might be noted, it was the Nationalists in alliance with the USA that offered the most effective resistance to the invading Japanese.

The Peasant Revolution of the Communist Party of China

The Communist Party came to political power in China in the wake of a series of wars that had begun around 1911 and run on until 1949 and included civil war, inter-state war, regional war and finally world war. The consequences of these conflicts for China were severe in terms of casualties, material losses and social disorder, so it is unsurprising that when the party came to wield political power, its first concerns were not dissimilar to those of more straightforwardly post-colonial regimes, that is, security, order and development.

The CCP had to deal first with the remnants of the Nationalist forces, their sympathizers amongst the population, landlords and business classes. At the time, 90 % of the population were rural, and landlords were thus particular targets; estimates of the numbers killed often cite around a million. Second, the party had to construct its party-state apparatus and draw in the population, mobilizing and disciplining them to the party's political–cultural project. Thus, third, the party sought development and the project was cast in local terms, thus the leadership advanced an amalgam of ideas using Marxist–Leninism as a framework; hence, class, class conflict, progress, along with Chinese nationalism, are a celebration of country, culture and people, taken as evidenced during the war years plus a distinctive celebration of the vitality of the peasantry and the possibilities inherent in that energy. It all added up to a novel project: a peasant-centred activism ordered by the party-state, characterized by campaigns of mass mobilization, unpacked as projects for agricultural and industrial collectivization along the lines pioneered in the Soviet Union. These policies were not fixed, but they changed; but roughly, they ran on until the late 1970s. The whole period can be unpacked as a number of phases: early popular development, advances, experimentation and then a species of failure that led to the creation of a new line of advance, a new project.

The period 1950–1956 saw land reform and the creation of rural cooperatives as landlords were dispossessed with as noted great loss of life. The reforms were popular with peasants who gained access to land, but the party was aware of ongoing problems and so criticism was invited, and after a remark from Mao, it was known as the hundred flowers movement (1956). The party elite were surprised at the criticism, and debate was closed down with critics attacked as rightists and the Anti-Rightist Campaign reduced intellectuals, professionals and other critics to silence. The loss of expertise did not help the authorities as they organized devel-

opment projects, and the failures were exemplified in the 1958–1960 Great Leap Forward, a mass rural development scheme. The plan was to jump a stage of development, and the energy of the peasantry was invoked and there was mass mobilization, but after some initial success, problems began to accumulate. However, low-level officials failed to report problems upwards until the whole business ran out of control; estimates of the number of dead in the resultant famine are usually measured in their millions,[34] a catastrophe on any account and one more episode of social disruption and violence.

The failure caused changes amongst the elite of party, in particular, Mao was sidelined, and became a leadership figure as experts reassert their ideas in order to bring matters back under control, to resume a rational development strategy. However, Mao resisted this marginalization, and there were further elite-level faction fights. Mao mobilized support amongst students and used them to attack the apparatus of the party. The period 1966–1969 saw extensive grass-roots mobilization against local officials: groups of critics attacked other groups and a species of inter-group violence developed, but it was understood by participants as an attempt to remake culture, the ways in which people thought, hence the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976).[35] The conflict continued until it began to threaten the army, a part of the core of the state, at which point the revolution was halted. Nonetheless, the elite-level political conflicts continued, and the death of Mao was crucial as now elite-level power balances shifted with those closest to Mao arrested and subject to the show trial of the 'gang of four'. Mao's designated successor was marginalized, and Deng Xiaoping took control, and thus the first tentative steps towards a new development paradigm were taken.

The period 1949–1976 is associated with Mao, and it recorded significant achievements. These included the expulsion of foreign interests, the unification of the country and the achievement of domestic peace after many years of chaotic warfare. Thereafter, rural land reform saw the dispossession of landlords and the transfer of land to the peasants. There was rural political reform, which saw the destruction of the landlord class and a transfer of power to peasants. Agricultural reforms saw the construction of infrastructure and agricultural extension services. Urban industrial development saw the establishment of state-owned enterprises and large cooperatives along with urban political development in the form of the dispossession of capitalist classes and power to workers. The development record was good. But there was also extensive political turmoil. After the

death of Mao, the party reworked its policies. The success of East Asia was noted, so too the role of the developmental state. The party created its own version; reforms began slowly, and as they were successful, so further reforms were embraced and the reform process generated its own momentum.

The 1978 reform programme

After the removal of Mao's immediate elite-level allies along with the repudiation of the eccentric destructive idealism of the Cultural Revolution, the new leadership, headed by Deng Xiaoping, inaugurated a new programme; in effect, learning from the experience of East Asia, which was, by 1978, evidently successful. The approach was pragmatic, a matter of piecemeal reforms; the key was what worked, hence the one-liners about black and white cats and crossing rivers by feeling for the stones. The earliest phases of reform were focused on rural areas; later, there were small-scale experiments with export processing zones, and still later, these reforms were opened out, embracing the whole country in a sweep of economic, social and juridical arrangements (in brief, liberalization, i.e., progressively introducing reforms that are oriented towards an implied goal of a private contract, dominated marketplace supervised by a regulatory state).

In the period 1978–1984, reforms were carried out in agriculture and a number of SEZs were set up. In agriculture, the process was one of de-collectivization and the creation of the household responsibility system. The hitherto established system of administratively specified quotas for collective work units was amended; that is, quotas were reduced, individual households could operate and, having met the quote, surplus could be sold into an open market. The results were dramatic; agricultural output rose and levels of living improved. At the same time, the rural industry was encouraged; it took the form of township and village enterprises (TVEs), which engaged in low-level production oriented towards an open market. These soaked up surplus labour and generated a perhaps modest economic surplus; again, levels of economic activity improved; in all, a species of rural peasant-based capitalism.

In the period 1984–1987, urban industry and finance were reformed, but this proved to be more difficult to organize as the economic and social make-up of a city is more complex than that of a rural area. Individual enterprises were given more autonomy and moved towards open market operation: again, a process of liberalization; however, there were awkward issues around the notion of private ownership, and there were issues of

transferring ownership from state to reformed enterprises, issues of financing and managing quasi-private enterprises and related issues of building up appropriate social welfare operations. These experiments adopted one novel form, that is, SEZs, and five were created on coastal sites. One was adjacent to Hong Kong, and Hong Kong industry was relocated to Shenzhen and the area prospered, so too the rest of the Pearl River area, now, some 30 years later, a global production hub.[36] However, at the time, elite-level politics were divided about these reforms. Deng Xiaoping's 1992 Southern Tour was designed to reaffirm the policy of reform, and a new policy was established: the 1992 programme of creating a socialist market economy. Further sweeping reforms followed, and in 2001, the country joined the WTO, and this signalled the country's participation within the global economic system.

The party elite have pursued the goal of economic advance pragmatically and single-mindedly, and as noted, the policy is now more than 30 years old; it has produced dramatic economic and social changes. Economic advance has been headlong and material levels of living have improved markedly, but there have been costs as inequality and corruption have grown, plus there are severe environmental problems. Over the decades, the party-state system has reformed and adapted[37]; contrary to the expectations of foreign critics, it has not collapsed.[38]

Achievements and Contemporary Issues

The long-drawn-out—and continuing—shift to the modern world in China has sketched out a distinctive historical trajectory, and the lessons and legacies of that trajectory find expression in the domestic logic of politics; that is, the past has shaped the present.

1. *The party-state system*

Zheng[39] Yongnian deploys historical institutionalism and European Marxist criticism in order to argue that the institutional and ideational armature of the Chinese state—the party-state—constitutes an 'organizational emperor'. The party is an institutional apparatus that combines historical resources (ways of understanding the machineries of governance inherited from dynasty days) with locally read imported ideas (European Marxism–Leninism) and that has been shaped by the particular historical experience of revolution and civil war, and the upshot has been the creation of a vanguardist Chinese party. The political record runs thus: the elite shaped the party, the party engaged in state making, creating the

party-state system, which thereafter has governed the pursuit of development. In other words, the CCP is not a party in the European or American sense for the party-state is only governance institution and in that sense it is an organizational emperor. The party-state will change and adapt as it has in the past, but the goals built into the CCP apparatus do not point towards a European- or American-style competitive liberal party system; reforms yes, accumulative, drawing in more people and regularizing the procedures inherited from revolution/civil war days; but the core of emperor system is commitment to continuity.

The CCP in 2008 had 73 million members and a vast organization[40]:

By 2006 the CCP had 3.6 million organizations, including both Party committees and Party branches at the grass roots level. More than 420,000 firms had established Party organisations. Out of 2.4 million firms in the non-state sector, 178,000 (7.4 per cent) had established Party organisations. In other words, Party organisations have penetrated all forms of firms, institutions and social organisations.

Zheng argues that the historical legacy of emperor system offers resources for present day—two features of emperor system: (1) it is hierarchical, and this was sustained by a stress on ideological conformity (official truths must be respected); (2) emperor's power was limited—core could make rules, but all these had to be put into practice by subordinates in centre and provinces. Thereafter in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, new ideas were imported and reworked—state, nation, democracy, development and so on—all picked up as ways to reorganize China so as to resist foreigners and join in the modern world, but the 1911 parliamentary system failed and the KMT and CCP both moved to the organizational emperor system: a centralized elite-led party-state system oriented to mobilizing the population, either the KMT system[41] or CCP system.[42]

Zheng[43] argues that when the revolution of 1911, which aimed at a party-based parliamentary-style system, failed and collapsed into warlordism, the KMT and CCP opted for strong state, and thus the party-state system and the pattern endure today. The party dominates state and the party-state dominates society. Mao created a highly centralized system, and the basic structure was in place when Deng moved to the fore and began dramatic reforms. The post-1949 political history can be read in these terms. The reform era, that is, post 1978, can be read in terms of three phases: (1) Deng Xiaoping era (1978–1989), (2) Jiang Zemin era

(1989–2002) and (3) Hu Jintao era (2002–2012). In each, there was a process of power concentration, then new policy and ideological gloss and slogans. There has been a slow process of intra-party reform, and the key issue of succession is now much more institutionalized (this was not the case in Mao or Deng periods). Now the leader is Xi Jinping.

The CCP has evolved. Zheng notes that in the pre-reform revolutionary and civil war era, party elite struggles were ruthless (producing a 'winner takes all' style[44]), whereas in post-reform era, attempts have been made to institutionalize intra-party politics, and today power is distributed. The system is hierarchical and geographically dispersed comprising a nested hierarchy of centres of power, and whilst ritual obedience has to be shown to CCP emperor, thereafter individual- and institution-based factionalism is rife and factions manoeuvre for position in party and in state and in ideology.[45] Zheng later comments: elite factions manoeuvre for position and advantage around (1) institutional bases (organizations or offices within the party-state machinery), (2) policy/ideology (hence all the programmatic statements associated with particular leaders), and (3) issue of succession (positioning for change in direction of wind). So, with (3) achieved, then (2) and (1) are revised accordingly.[46]

The Party dominates the state, and the relation between the two is crucial.[47] Zheng goes on to argue that three key institutions allow party to control state: the Nomenklatura plus Central Leading Small Groups plus Party Groups. Under Mao, a central system was created[48]:

> A party-centred political hierarchy was formed: the Party made all decisions over state affairs and the power of the Party at different levels was centralized in the hand of Party secretaries there, and nationwide, all ultimate power was centralized in the hands of Mao Zedong.

After Mao, there was a discussion of political reform, but the 1989 Tiananmen events brought an abrupt halt to this aspect of change. Zheng states: 'Instead, how to strengthen the domination of the Party over the government is at the centre of reform discourse.'[49] The Nomenklatura system[50] allows the party to control personnel, and the system of research groups determines general policy directions so the party thus controls the state. In turn the party-state asserts control over society. In the pre-reform era, all this was very centralized, but in the post-reform era, there have been changes with decentralization within the party-state (centre and provinces) and decentralization between party-state and wider society by

allowing more social groups to form and act.[51] The party thus secures its power via hegemonizing its power; that is, its ideas are spread widely through party-state and through wider society. It is a mix of control plus co-option plus greater tolerance plus nationalism.

Zheng[52] notes that there have been reforms that have permitted some diversity in patterns of life, and this has been reflected in realm of ideas. A sequence of ideas have been debated: (1) liberalism in the 1980s—along with market reforms, economic growth and talk of political reform but comes to a halt in 1989 Tiananmen Square episode; (2) nationalism from the 1990s—elite stress nationalism is ongoing and often aimed at West in general; (3) New Left from the 1990s—respond to the negatives of headlong growth and stress role of state and support Bo Xilai's 'Chongqing model' whilst key elite figures resist and favour 'Guangdong model'; and (4) cultural renaissance from the 2000s—rediscovering and recovering the past of China, tradition and celebrating the 'China model', and whilst many join in this debate, there is no consensus. Xi Jinping in recent years has purged the party, advocated a greater international role for the country and hinted—indirectly—at approval of the past, and so he has been tagged a conservative figure.[53] Recent press reports suggest a tightening of the sphere of permitted debate.[54] But in sum, whilst it is true that the CCP has reformed internally and it has reformed its involvement with wider society, it has not moved towards a European or American competitive party system.[55] The CCP is an organizational emperor, and as the party-state is fundamental to the Chinese political system, it will adjust but not change its core identity.

2. *Reforming a party-state system*

The party-state system sought to embrace all aspects of the lives of its citizens in the pursuit of socialism, drawing them into productive work, social exchanges and the government of the country via local party and state representatives. It was an ambitious programme, and there was much scope for flexibility in the translation of theory into practice or, to put it another way, the historical trajectory of the country shaped the internal organization, and explicit directions from the state were but one aspect of the mix, and ideological convictions on the part of the elite were in turn one element of that particular mix. That said, a party-state system was created, and disentangling the elements in pursuit of a programme of reform or liberalization was never going to be easy: it required the creation of a marketplace (law, regulators, firms, consumers), and it required the creation of social welfare systems (health, schooling, housing—accessed

as citizens), and it required the re-ordering of society (the ideologically motivated reconstruction of inherited or traditional patterns of social action was relaxed, old forms were allowed to resurface, new marketplace-oriented interactions were allowed—so Chinese tradition plus new individualism). It also involved political reforms, and as noted, the party-state apparatus adjusts, public legitimation shifts from ideological exhortation towards practical achievement (i.e., material advance), plus reasserted nationalism. There has been much success.

David Shambaugh[56] analyses the nature of the party and argues that it has learned the lessons of the 1989/1991 period, that is, from 4 June 1989 through to the collapse of the Soviet Union. The party has analysed the Soviet collapse in systemic terms; that is, it identified a moribund party presiding over an old-fashioned isolated economy plus imperial overstretch and US hostility, and it has taken steps to upgrade the Chinese party's organization and performance in governance—successfully. The accession to power of Xi Jingping has continued the drive for reform.

Nonetheless, many problems remain. There is endemic corruption amongst elite, official and corporate sectors, all pursued vigorously by Xi Jingping. Problems have emerged with nationalism, which the elite have found useful, but which can also assume virulent anti-foreigner forms, in particular amongst internet users. Contemporary nationalism appears to be an aggressive nationalism defined against outsiders, rather than a celebration of place and people.[57]

3. *Adopting the model of the developmental state*

The reform programme has produced dramatic results, and hundreds of millions of people have seen their levels of living significantly improved. The keys to this record have been the cities adjacent or linked to the coast: the Pearl River area, the Yangzi River area and the Yellow River. These areas have created a powerful manufacturing export machine, and the country enjoys large trade surpluses with the EU and the USA. The country has vast reserves of foreign currency. The economic reform programme has also created a boom in domestic infrastructure development, including roads, bridges, high-speed railways and urban infrastructure in the guise of factories, offices and housing. The Beijing authorities have come under pressure to curb this surplus and to redirect economic development towards domestic consumption. More generally, they face four interlinked problems: first, replicating the coastal success story in the western or inland parts of China; second, upgrading the economy so that it operates in higher value-added manufacturing, an aspect of escaping the

middle-income trap; third, upgrading the financial system and internationalizing the currency; fourth, as noted, reorienting the economy from high-volume exports and vast infrastructure projects towards private consumption. These it might be noted are problems consequent upon success; thus the economic record is unprecedented and standard agency data record the success, and as noted above, hundreds of millions have seen their levels of living raised with rough estimates suggesting that around 300 million now count as middle-class citizens. However, all that said, there are also many problems. There is corruption amongst elite cadres, lower-level officials, the armed forces and the corporate sector; over-investment in infrastructure; wasteful duplication as provinces and cities compete with grandiose infrastructure projects; severe environmental degradation; a weak rule of law, which finds acknowledgement, in part, in mass incidents or rightful resistance[58]; and there is inequality between coastal and western or inland China, and this feeds inward migration to the cities, which in turn creates problems, both poor insecure 'villages in the cities' and rural areas denuded of working-age young people.[59]

Looking to the future, more positively, the country now trades extensively with the region: it has extensive economic links with Japan (notwithstanding diplomatic exchanges); it has deepening links with Taiwan (despite some local Taiwanese doubts); it has growing links with South Korea (notwithstanding long-standing relations with the North); and it has had generally good relations with ASEAN (notwithstanding issue of South China Sea). On a somewhat wider scale, relations with the EU are good, relations with the USA are somewhat less happy (thus, American anxieties and their governments 'pivot' towards Asia) and relations with the global south are good. Here, China has a growing profile in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa. China is now a major regional player. It is likely to become a major global player, and the actions of the government of Xi Jingping clearly point in this direction with the declarations of 'One belt, one road' and the formation of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)—and more awkwardly for its neighbours, the claims on the South China Sea, the refusal to negotiate collectively with ASEAN and, more recently, the creation and militarization of artificial islands in the area.[60]

4. *Nation, nationalism and the national past*

China's route to the modern world was chaotic and violent.[61] The long-established pre-modern empire of the Qing was undermined over the period of the nineteenth century by European, American and Japanese traders, traders who, with the support of their respective governments,

established a species of colonial rule over parts of the country. There were multiple conflicts from the early nineteenth century down to the years following the end of the Pacific War. The end of the Chinese civil war[62] with its attendant outside involvement was followed by further conflicts, domestic and international with the cold war. In brief, China has thus made a number of attempts to join the modern world: the late nineteenth-century reforms of the Qing, the early republic, the Nanjing Decade, the peasant socialism of Mao and the current era of market socialism along with peaceful rising.[63]

All this gets fed into ideas of the nation. Zhao[64] argues that an idea of nation is relatively new and can be dated from Sino-Japanese War of 1895, an early industrialized war involving novel weaponry, new logistics and high casualties.[65] In China, both elites and intellectuals endeavoured to grasp the implications of the military defeat, and one aspect was engagement with the idea of nation; thus the war was read as a national struggle. Zhao argues that the idea of nation has been successively shaped by changing contexts, in particular, exchanges with outsiders, but nation and nationalism only became mainstream ideas amongst the masses during the Sino-Japanese War 1937–1945. There are three identifiable strands: liberal nationalism (concerned with citizens), ethnic nationalism (stressing primordial identity and race), and state nationalism (stressing state plus territory plus people). The mix of elements has varied according to those making the arguments and the audiences they address, but Zhao records that the state is pragmatic, and ideas of nation and nationalism are deployed to serve the party-state requirement of stability and development.

One particular strand of nationalist thinking in China is identified by William Callahan[66]; it is a characterization of the history of China during the long shift to the modern world that focuses on the exchange with foreign powers. It is the idea of a century-long experience—1842–1949—of 'national humiliation', that is, of sustained failure. In part, the responsibility of foreigners, those making the incursions into the form of life of China, and in part the responsibility of the Chinese themselves, those who failed to resist outside demands. Callahan calls national humiliation a 'structure of feeling', a way of recalling the past in such a way that it informs a desire to recover.[67] Callahan[68] makes it clear in a related work that nationalism runs through not only elite and popular thinking but also those he tags 'citizen intellectuals'—those who join in discussions about the nature of China and its future—and here, whilst debate is varied

in diagnoses, the nationalism is re-affirmed with China's future variously read as matching or surpassing the USA.

All this gets fed into the contemporary collective memory, and it all finds expression in the national past as events are remembered and self-understandings accumulate material.[69] The material is selective as some events are read in, others read out.[70]

The following can be noted[71]:

- *in the modern era up to outbreak of general war*
- from 1842—National humiliation and Self-Strengthening—discussed
- from 1916—New Culture Movement/May Fourth Movement—discussed
- from 1937—Anti-Japanese War—much discussed

- *from the early period of CCP to KMT/CCP civil war*
- from 1921—foundation of CCP—discussed
- from 1927—the betrayal of KMT—discussed
- from 1927—base areas and encirclements and purges—later not discussed
- from 1934—the long march—stylized formal recollection

- *then from period of rule of CCP*
- from 1949—declaration of PRC—symbolic moment of state-hood
- from 1950—assertion against USA in Korean War—symbolic assertion of nation-hood
- from 1956—hundred flowers and anti-rightist—later not easily discussed
- from 1958—great leap forward—issue of role of Mao—not easily discussed
- from 1966—the great proletarian cultural revolution—not easily discussed
- from 1976—trial of gang of four—not easily discussed
- from 1989—4 June Tiananmen Square events—not discussed
- from 2008—Beijing Olympics—discussed

5. *International relations within the region*

Beijing is the core of the Chinese political system, but it would be foolish to treat the polity as a single homogenous entity.[72] There are multiple factions within the elite levels located in Beijing, and there are multiple peripheral agents located in provincial capitals. There is a nascent civil

society (much of it web based). And as the country is very large, there are many local communities with their own local concerns (sometimes expressed as mass incidents). Nonetheless, the country revolves around the party-state apparatus. There is also an officially sponsored nationalism that revolves around the construction of the Han race and a stylized national past cast in terms of the depredations of foreigners or national humiliation. The nationalism also revolves around claims to a long history of civilization, and these domestic factors feed into the international relations of the country: self-understandings and understandings of others. The party-state authorities speak of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and they speak of a socialist market economy, and they speak of peaceful rising or peaceful development.

These understandings have taken shape in the years since 1949. The CCP came to power at the same historical moment that hitherto crucial European-centred state-empires left the scene to be replaced in different guise by the USA. The hostility of the USA occasioned the division of the region along cold war lines, and the general international relations stance of the PRC resembled that of other newly created states, a concern for differentiation, a concern for sovereignty and a concern for non-interference. In the context of cold war, the PRC supported the ideas of non-alignment, and later Deng Xiaoping was to advocate keeping a low profile in global affairs. Over time, the PRC gathered around itself a small group of nominally friendly state-socialist countries: North Korea, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia; however, this state-socialist bloc, unlike the situation in Europe, was never monolithic, and given the vagaries of timing, it was neither assembled quickly nor did it dissolve away dramatically.

China faces a number of crucial problems in the international relations arena: first, the long-running issue of relations with Taiwan; second, the equally long-running issue of the relationship with Japan; third, relatedly, their relationship with the USA; and fourth, the issue of the South China Sea.

In respect of the first noted, the root of the problem is the unresolved civil war issue. In1949, the defeated Nationalists retreated to Taiwan, which they made their base, having first suppressed local opposition, and thereafter, protected by the USA and ordered domestically as a military dictatorship, the country prospered. However, Beijing has never discontinued its claim to sovereignty—pursued in diplomatic channels—and so the territory continues to inhabit an ambiguous position within the region and global system. In recent years, relationships across the straits have

improved somewhat, but deeper economic links are viewed with scepticism by sections of the Taiwanese population. Then, second, Beijing has similarly awkward relations with Japan where economic links are strong but public political relationships are poor. For the Chinese elite, Japan is a useful enemy, and the collective memory of the Sino-Japanese War is kept very much alive and feeds into an often-aggressive nationalism. For their part, the Japanese political right find little to apologize for, taking the view that Japan had a war, lost and that is that. So Chinese popular nationalism confronts an unapologetic right-wing Japanese nationalism, and in their different ways and for different reasons, both political elites foster these nationalist exchanges. And, finally one recent site of contestation has been the Senkoku/Daiyou Island group. Japan is sovereign, but the islands are claimed by Beijing as they have both economic and strategic value. In this, they are like other islands in the South China Sea, and here China confronts members of ASEAN, in particular, the Philippines and Vietnam. There have been low-level clashes, and these are likely to continue; recently, however, these clashes have drawn the attention of the USA, which is now resuming military links with the Philippines, thus another issue that is problematical from the perspective of the elite in Beijing.

China is now a major power, and it is quickly assuming a predominant role in East Asia, and a number of problems flow from this situation (relationships with Japan, South Korea and ASEAN, plus the issues of the South China Sea and North Korea's nuclear ambitions). It has strong and deepening trade and political relationships with the EU. It has deep trade relations with the USA, but the relationship is otherwise troubled. It has a range of relationships with the global south, most recently, sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. China has also been the centre of a bloc of state-socialist countries—a set of divisions put in place during the cold war era—a period which involved two open wars plus numerous covert struggles. China's nominal allies included Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and North Korea; however, each country is pursuing its own trajectory of development, and relations with China are as much pragmatic as ideological, and development is the common concern in Southeast Asia, and North Korea remains a hangover from the worst days of the cold war. Nonetheless, it is likely going forwards that China notwithstanding American anxieties will assume a greater role in East Asia and the wider global system.

The Party-State, the Pursuit of Socialism and Nature of Modernity

Reviewing the unfolding shift to the modern world, a process that embraces the bulk of the population of the planet, it is clear that it is not possible to identify and characterize either a simple process or a final model. The recently fashionable theorists of modernization–globalization are wrong in both these regards; the processes are infinitely variable, and there is no single simple goal. It is a gross error to confuse American nationalist celebrations of the model of late twentieth-century America with the theoretical end-point of the shift to the modern world, and in this sense, there is no 'end of history'.

The shift to the modern world began by accident in Europe. The core of the process is natural science-based industrial–capitalism, and from its European heartland, the form of life has been transplanted to numerous other polities where it has interacted with extant forms of life, occasioning the creation of multiple forms of modernity. It has drawn these forms of life into the global system, but the trajectories followed by both the initial core countries and the sometime peripheral but now established territories have been distinctive as each polity works within its own structural and cultural context. In respect of China, the country has entered the modern world via an extended exchange with nineteenth-century European state-empires, and partial colonization was the result, so too was domestically organized rebellion and revolution. The costs of shaking off the demands of the foreigners were high, so too the costs of domestic conflict, and the death toll rose to millions; however, the transition has been achieved. China is now a part of the modern world, but it is a modern world still in process of change, and it is likely going forwards that China will be a major player.

NOTES

1. To be clear—the notion of the 'shift to the modern world' is derived from the classical European tradition of social theorizing—it has nothing to do with either 'modernization theory' or 'globalization theory', both of which can be read as ideological confections, reflecting episodes of transient American pre-eminence—the 1950s and more recent 1990s.

2. Hence, all the last few decades worries amongst scholars about '-centrisms' of various kinds—on the problems caused by not worrying, see B. Anderson 2016 'Frameworks of Comparison' in *London Review of Books* 38.2 21 January 2016.

3. Thus Gail Hershatter—'For scholars, "China" is a convenient shorthand, a way or organising our teaching, our production of knowledge, and our narrative of the nation. In the long 1950s, "China" was governed by a single-party state in the midst of a powerful drive to make "China" uniform, to produce the effect of a state that was present in every village. Our persistent habit of talking about "China", however, obscures the extent to which all socialism is local. The working out of state policies is contingent upon geography, prior social arrangements, local personalities, and a host of other endlessly variable factors'; G. Hershatter 2007 'Forget Remembering: Rural Women's Narratives of China's Collective Past' (pp. 70–1) in C.K. Lee and G. Yang eds 2007 *Re-envisioning the Chinese Revolution: The Politics and Poetics of Collective Memories in Reform China*, Stanford University Press.

4. Barrington Moore Jr 1966 *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, Boston, Beacon.

5. Not merely manoeuvring but also assassinations—see J.D. Spence 2013 *The Search for Modern China*, New York, Norton, pp. 262–7.

6. For a discussion of his record, J. Fenby 2005 *Generalissimo: Chiang Kai Shek and the China He Lost*, New York, The Free Press.

7. For his career—P. Short 2004 *Mao: A History*, London, John Murray.

8. A military history of the Japanese armies is given by M. Peattie, E. Drea and H. Van De Ven eds 2011 *The Battle for China: Essays on the Military History of the Sino-Japanese War of 1937–1945*, Stanford University Press.

9. On the fire-bombing of Japanese cities, see B. Cummings 1999 *Parallax Visions: Making Sense of American-East Asian Relations at the End of the Century*, Durham, Duke University Press; on the military campaign more generally, see M. Hastings 2008 *Retribution: The Battle for Japan, 1944–45*, New York, Alfred Knopf.

10. The material in this section is derived from P.W. Preston 2014 *After the Empires*, London, Palgrave—it has been expanded and updated.

11. In particular , recently: Spence 2013; J.D. Spence and A. Chin 1996 *The Chinese Century: A Photographic History*, London, Harper Collins; R. Mitter 2013 *China's War With Japan 1937–1945*, London, Allen Lane; J. Lovell 2011 *The Opium War: Drugs, Dreams and the Making of Modern China*, London, Picador; R. Bickers 2011 *The Scramble for China: Foreign Devils in the Qing Empire 1832–1914*, London, Allen Lane; plus, in political analysis, Christiansen, F. and Rai, S. 1996 *Chinese Politics and Society: An Introduction*, Hemel Hempstead, Prentice Hall.

12. R. Nield 2015 *China's Foreign Places: The Foreign Presence in the Treaty Port Era, 1840–1943*, Hong Kong University Press—Nield distinguishes 'settlements' and 'concessions'—here the former term is used in a generic sense—these settlements survived from early nineteenth century through to their abolition during the Pacific War when the Americans and Europeans were in alliance with the Nationalist government of Chiang Kai Shek.

13. Nield 2015 p. 7.

14. A.G. Frank 1998 Re-Orient: Global Economy in the Asian Age, University of California Press; on Southeast Asia, A. Reid.

15. Key date—Battle of Plassey.

16. Philip Lawson 1993 *The East India Company: A History*, London, Longman.

17. A list of these numerous wars is available at http://www.zum.de/whkmla/military/india/milxbrindia.html—accessed 11 July 2009.

18. Labuan was established in 1846—but it proved to be unsuccessful—it was abandoned.

19. Offering variant justifications—the one cast in terms of 'Manifest Destiny' and the 'Open Door'—the other cast in terms of 'Pan-Asianism'—by the late nineteenth century, as Bickers 2011 makes clear, it was something of an 'open season' on China.

20. Bickers 2011.

21. Lovell 2011.

22. Lovell 2011; see also Brian Inglis 1979 *The Opium War*, London, Coronet; on the regional macro-economics of the trade, see C. Trocki 1999 *Opium, Empire and the Global Political Economy: A Study of the Asian Opium Trade 1750–1950*, London, Routledge; and turning to the more domestic dynamics—F. Dikkoter, Lars Laamann and Zhou Xun 2004 *Narcotic Culture: A History of*

Drugs in China, Hong Kong University Press; T. Brook and B. Tadashi Wakabayashi eds 2000 *Opium Regimes: China, Britain and Japan 1839–1952*, University of California Press.

23. The notion of state-empires—rise and collapse—is pursued in P.W. Preston 2010 *National Pasts in Europe and East Asia*, London, Routledge.

24. Stuart Hall discussed this in context of UK—ideas can be formulated, presented, read and thereafter translated into practice—a process akin to unfolding conversation (Peter Winch)—not to the regular automatic movements of a mechanical apparatus.

25. Regional (China was divided—north/south—rural/urban)—social class (language—clan—economic position)—popular (ethnic division—Manchu/Han)—intellectual (conservative/ reformer/insurrectionist/ revolutionary).

26. Moore 1966.

27. Spence p. 254.

28. Various factions—conflicts—assassinations.

29. In particular, nascent warlord groups.

30. As in the case of Yuan Shikai.

31. On response of foreigners to all this, see Bickers 2011.

32. On the wars of the warlords, see S.C.M. Paine 2012 The Wars for Asia, Cambridge University Press.

33. For some detail on life inside the Jiangxi Soviet, see Short 2004; Spence 2013 p. 356 et seq.

34. Short 2004 pp. 476–504 puts the number of deaths at 25 million.

35. R. Macfarquhar and M. Schoenhals 2006 *Mao's Last Revolution*, Harvard University Press.

36. Greater China—Hong Kong: Becoming a Chinese Global City State.

37. D. Shambaugh 2008 *China's Communist Party: Atrophy and Adaptation*, London, Wiley.

38. K. Pomeranz 2016 'Nightwork in Chengdu' in *London Review of Books* 38.4 18 February 2016, ends a downbeat review of texts on China by remarking—'We need to stop thinking that in China the only possibilities are spectacular success or catastrophic failure: China, too, can muddle through for long periods. And with so many Chinese still poor—and the advanced economies failing to produce either dynamism or increasing justice—now is an odd

moment to insist that Chinese convergence towards Western liberalism is necessary, sufficient or particularly likely.'

39. Zheng, Yongnian 2010 *The Chinese Communist Party As Organizational Emperor: Culture, Reproduction and Transformation*, London, Routledge.
40. Zheng 2010, p. 4.
41. Zheng 2010, p. 61.
42. Zheng 2010, p. 64.
43. Zheng 2014, chapter three/four.
44. Zheng 2010, p. 73.
45. Zheng 2010, p. 84.
46. Zheng, Yongnian 2014 *Contemporary China: A History Since 1978*, Chichester, Wiley-Blackwell, chapter two.
47. Zheng 2010, p. 99.
48. Zheng 2010, p. 101.
49. Zheng 2010, p. 103.
50. Zheng 2010, pp. 104–6.
51. Zheng 2010, p. 139.
52. Zheng 2014, chapter seven.
53. W. Lam 2015 *Chinese Politics in the Era of Xi Jinping*, London, Routledge.
54. See *Financial Times*—early 2016—on arrests of activist lawyers and controls on NGOs, reported as repression—plus the apparent state-sponsored kidnapping of publishers producing sensationalist criticism of the regime (on this, *South China Morning Post*).
55. Zheng 2010, p. 177.
56. David Shambaugh 2008 *China's Communist Party: Atrophy and Adaptation*, University of California Press.
57. S. Zhao 2004 *A Nation By Construction: Dynamics of Modern Chinese Nationalism*, Stanford University Press; C.R. Hughes 2006 *Chinese Nationalism in the Global Era*, London, Routledge.
58. K. O'Brien and L. Li, 2006 *Rightful Resistance in Rural China*, Cambridge University Press.
59. Luk and Preston 2016, see chapter five.
60. See reports in the Financial Times, 16 February 2016 regarding installation of missile batteries on disputed islands adjacent to the coast of Vietnam.
61. On the wars, see E.L. Dreyer 1995 *China at War 1901–49*, London, Longman.

62. On the protagonists, see J. Fenby 2005 *Generalissimo: Chiang Kai Shek and the China He Lost*, London, Free Press; P. Short 2004 *Mao: A Life*, London, John Murray.

63. Shambaugh 2008 argues that the party has taken steps to upgrade the party's organization and performance in governance—successfully—but oddly the text is grounded in cold war bloc-think and does not ask the question of how Soviet and China 'watchers' ever got themselves into the intellectual dead-end they came to occupy—later, the author has become more pessimistic.

64. Zhao 2004.

65. It came as a shock to both sides.

66. W.A. Callahan 2010 *China: The Pessoptimist Nation*, Oxford University Press.

67. Callahan 2010, chapter seven.

68. W.A. Callahan 2013 *China Dreams: 20 Visions of the Future*, Oxford University Press.

69. Zhao 2004, in chapter one, stresses the 'situational context' of Chinese nationalism—shaped by responses to events, especially wars—thus Opium War feeds into Self-Strengthening—thus Sino-Japanese War feeds into Boxer Rebellion and overthrow of Qing—thus Versailles Treaty feeds into May Fourth New Culture Movement—thus Sino-Japanese War feeds into national struggle—thus Korean War feeds into consolidation of PRC—thus post-1989 criticisms feed into CCP self-presentation as defender of China.

70. See W.A. Callahan 2006 'History, Identity and Society: Producing and Consuming Nationalism in China' in *Critical Asian Studies* 38.2—on national humiliation days.

71. This list of points is reproduced from Preston 2010 pp. 215–6.

72. F. Christiansen and S. Rai 1996 *Chinese Politics and Society: An Introduction*, Hemel Hempstead, Prentice Hall Europe, offer these standard labels: totalitarian—the system controlled by one ideologically motivated repressive party: factionalism and clientelism—the system is dominated by an elite, but elite control is fissured by continual manoeuvring for position and advantage; complex bureaucracy and state—the system is essentially bureaucratic—and decisions are taken inside the system and handed down; culturalist approach—appeals to the cultural resources of the Chinese—common practices of Chinese, hierarchy and obedience.

Hong Kong: Living with Distant Masters

Hong Kong entered the modern world in the guise of a colonial port city. Its key trade goods were opium and labourers, the former imported for the vast Chinese market, the latter flow of people moving into Southeast Asia and also across the Pacific to the West Coast of America. Initially, the colony was ruled by a narrow elite made up of British colonial officials, expatriate traders and a small number of local business people. Participation in government was by invitation. The elite's attention was turned to the business of commerce, with the masses of the people left to their own devices. Over time, the make-up of the elite changed. Chinese businessmen, professionals and others became more influential amongst elite-level players. This local elite, by now diverse, found ways of running Hong Kong whilst dealing with the concerns of London and the more immediate and varied pressures flowing from its Qing neighbours. The colony prospered. Later its development trajectory was interrupted by the chaos of the Pacific War, but thereafter, its progress continued, augmented now by flows of inward migration and its awkward cold war era role as gateway to China. The internal structure remained largely stable, relations with London benign, exchanges with China generally manage-

This is taken from a talk given at Beijing Normal University, June 2013; a fuller statement of the argument is presented in P.W. Preston 2016 *The Politics of China-Hong Kong Relations: Living with Distant Masters*, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar.

able. Commentators have remarked on the low key, subdued politics of the colony; occasional riots aside, it seemed one way or another to work. But these same observers now suggest that this situation has changed. Speaking of Hong Kong after the 1997 transfer of power, they identify multiple problems both of domestic governance and in external relations with Beijing: the one unsettled by popular discontent, the other clouded with uncertainty. All this is unfortunate, for as the experience of the old distant colonial power fades into memory, the political community of Hong Kong must both order its domestic affairs and deal with its new distant master if it is to continue its distinctive and prosperous pattern of life.

FRAMING THE DEBATE: STATE, NATION, COUNTRY AND EMPIRE

The political economy of Susan Strange[1] suggests that it is possible to identify structures (given systems of global power), and those agents that must deal with these structures (but whose actions in total comprise these self-same structures), usually significant and powerful agents such as states, multi-national corporations, international organizations and (maybe) NGOs. In all this, the key agent would be the state. This requires that one can be identified, and this in turn implies that it is possible to identify an elite (a group in positions of power within the machinery of the state), and it also implies that it is possible to identify a polity (a political community ordered around the elite-directed machinery of the state). These ideas can be usefully deployed in many circumstances, but in the case of Hong Kong, much of this is quite unclear: the nature of the state (clearly established or not?), the nature of the elite (able to act independently, or not?), the nature of the polity (coherent and sure of itself, or not?), and the nature of the elite project (discernible, or not?).

So, first, a few familiar ideas can be revisited: state, nation, country, polity and empire.

Distinctions can be drawn between a state and a nation: the former a sovereign politico-juridical unit within the international system of states, the latter an imagined community. Popularly, the one dwells within the confines of the other; however, social theorists would reverse the relationship arguing that states make nations so as to order populations and legitimate elite power.[2] The two are quite routinely linked, thus 'nation-state'. Another notion is also available, less used and less clear, the notion of a

country. It calls attention to people and geographical place. During the phase of the expansion of European state-empires in Southeast Asia, the incoming Europeans spoke of 'country powers', pointing to local polities, not states, not nations, but coherent political units occupying definite (if loosely defined[3]) places. And running up the scale, a further idea is available, empire: a large territory, comprising many subordinate communities oriented towards a metropolitan centre. And here, it should be noted, the organizational possibilities are many; thus direct rule, indirect rule, claims to trustee status, declarations in favour of assimilation and so on; and commentaries are similarly diverse, and recently familiar terms have been core and periphery. In this discussion, looking to the system centred on Britain, the preferred term is 'state-empire'; thus the apparatus of the state organizes a geographically extensive sphere comprising multiple participants into an organizationally untidy but nonetheless integrated whole. Given these terms, all serving to grasp the nature of political communities, we can ask: how does Hong Kong fit, what sort of entity is it?

Hong Kong is not an independent sovereign state; it has a non-standard politico-juridical status—in the past, it has been formally a part of a state-empire system centred on London, characterized as a colony; at the present time, it is formally a part of the PRC centred on Beijing,[4] and it is characterized as a 'special administrative region' (SAR). But in both cases, in practice, it has been remote, both geographically and practically, that is, its local form of life, from the metropolitan centres of these two distant powers. It has lain at 'the edge of empires'[5] and so it has made its own form of life (the sum of economic, social, political and cultural practices). It has also made some sort of coherent polity; that is, it has had a sense of its separateness from wider structures of power, and its ability in significant measure to order its own affairs—in brief, its own distinctiveness.

Hong Kong is not a nation. The inhabitants do have a sense of themselves, but their political community has never had access to those state machineries (or analogues) which can serve to foster an imagined national community; rather, it is the sense of the inhabitants of a great city, thus, for example, the people who live in Paris are Parisians, or those in Berlin, Berliners, and so on (the identification notes a city). Yet where for Parisians their nation is France, or for Berliners, Germany, the analogical invitation fails in respect of the people of Hong Kong. They are 'Hong Kongers',[6] but they are not, or at least not all or even a majority of them, Chinese in the sense of being Chinese nationals,[7] much less Chinese nationalists, where both terms would point to an identification with the People's Republic.

Indeed, the PRC is routinely labelled and thus differentiated as 'the mainland', with its inhabitants the 'mainland Chinese' or 'mainlanders'.

Hong Kong people remain 'Chinese' in terms of ideas of ethnicity (pointing to language and inherited cultural practices, which are signalled in routine by physiology—having 'black hair' or 'looking Chinese'[8]), but here too distinctions are drawn: ethnic Chinese-ness is not a simple given, but it is contested.[9] In the case of Hong Kong, 'ethnicity' does not override identification with a city, hence 'Hong Kongers'.

Hong Kong might be treated as if it were a country: a place (geography plus people) with a population aware of its distinctive form-of-life (identified by insiders and identifiable for outsiders) and happy to assert its cultural autonomy. Cast in these terms, Hong Kong has occupied a definite territory for some 150 or so years. It has its own boundaries; it has its own elites; it has its own government; it has a population aware of itself and its own interests; and it has a distinctive history (and can tell stories about it). But notwithstanding these attributes of a country, it does not have an independent state machinery and nor does its elite or population lay claim to nation-hood—so it would be an unusual country. Unlike, say Singapore, which is, insofar as any small country can be within the global system, independent and master of its own destiny, Hong Kong must negotiate its route to the future with a powerful distant master: in the past, London, now, Beijing.[10]

This offers an alternative way of reading the circumstances of the territory and people, and it can be noted that during the early modern period Hong Kong was a part of two large political units: the *first*, a state-empire centred on London; the *second*, a state-civilization[11] centred on Beijing. The local elites had to manage these relationships, read and react to the demands of distant masters and formulate plans and legitimate them amongst their population. The demands of the British were for trade. Their demands on the local population subordinate to the concern for trade. Thereafter, the ways in which the local elites managed these relationships shaped the resultant local polity. In the case of Hong Kong, this has been a tangled process (many awkward external linkages and domestically shifting subaltern groups), creating thereby a distinctive 'Hong Kong polity'. And now, Hong Kong confronts the demands of a powerful party-state system centred on Beijing.

The current situation is paradoxical. Thus *domestically*, there is a Hong Kong polity, and many elements of independent nation-statehood are present: it does have much of the machinery of a state; it has a population with

a strong sense of itself, a population that has received waves of migrants[12]; it has occupied a well-defined territory for some 150 years (i.e., to be precise, most of the period of the 'modern world'). But *externally* there are significant constraints that cut against its status as a coherent Hong Kong polity, and whilst it is true that all elites are constrained, that is, they must read and react to enfolding structural circumstances and order their population, here the constraints are unusually visible, in particular in the guise the machineries of rule by distant masters—claims to juridical oversight, claims to political oversight, claims to military oversight (a garrison of soldiers situated in the heart of the downtown area)—and on these grounds, a disposition towards involvement in what otherwise would be regarded as domestic or internal political matters.

It is not easy to answer the question of the nature of the Hong Kong polity, so a slightly different one can be pursued: how has the Hong Kong polity dealt with its distant masters? This question can be unpacked in various ways: how have local elites managed these crucial relationships? If it is assumed that the local elites have had a measure of coherence and have sought to create a maximum room for manoeuvre—for their own goals as well as collective goals—how have they done this, how have they dealt with the local population, what mix of law, regulation, persuasion and force has been used to secure their support, or where this was either not available or not needed, their acquiescence? In brief, how have local elites and local population together created a changing but distinct 'Hong Kong polity'?

Terminologies Considered Further: Transferred Colonialism

The relationship with empires is picked up in commentary. Some speak of 'decolonization', but this is misleading for Hong Kong did not become a sovereign entity, as other political communities did, in the wake of the dissolution of the state-empires that followed the Pacific War; in brief, it did not become 'independent'. Others speak of 'retrocession', but this is misleading as there was no place to cede so far as Qing were concerned, merely a patch of coastline, plus the Qing were superseded by ROC not the People's Republic, so an argument about successor states would be unclear. The best phrase in this sort of formulation, the least contentious, would seem to be 'transfer of power'—from one elite to another, both external to the place itself.[13] However, overall, it was a process obliging both Hong Kong elites and masses to adjust as best they could so viewed

in these terms a sharper characterization of the process would identify 'transferred colonialism'.

Commentators sometimes speak of Hong Kong's 'decolonization' or 'post-colonial' Hong Kong, but a little reflection shows how that these and analogous formulations are rather odd. In recent times, that is, post-1945, the term 'decolonization', along with its variants, refers quite directly to the end-time of the European state-empire system when large multi-ethnic territories ordered around a key central power dissolved away and produced a number of successor political units. These patterns of dissolution were contingent—aspirant local replacement elites vied for position, sought support where they could find it (maybe from the departing metropolitan power, perhaps from another external power) and mobilized the population they sought to control/rule in terms of a basic political deal—popular support in exchange for elite striving to provide better lives. The end result (or, given that politics continues, the provisional result) was the shift from being a territory within a state-empire system to being an independent state within the contemporary international system—'decolonization'—or in brief, popular terms, the winning of independence.

This did not happen to Hong Kong in 1997. What did happen was a transfer of macro-level power from one external authority to another external authority—from London to Beijing. If the notions of colonialism and decolonization are to be invoked, then the correct form should be 'transferred colonialism'. If it is viewed this way, it is easy to see why the transfer of power from one distant master to another should be the occasion of domestic Hong Kong unhappiness and the core reason for the many difficulties occurring in their relationship with Beijing (and the people from that polity, those tagged in Hong Kong as 'mainlanders').

Mainland commentators cast these matters rather differently. The official line—for they all seem to run down a similar track, and given its inherent social scientific implausibility, it can be assumed to have been authoritatively spelled out—is that Hong Kong has returned to the motherland; that the territory and people living in it have been reunited with their compatriots; that the people of Hong Kong are Chinese and that they have returned to China. It is an official nationalism. It may be that the argument carries weight amongst the nationalist minded in the mainland. It may be that the argument carries some weight amongst less well-informed members of the elite. There is good reason to believe that it does not carry that much conviction amongst the people of Hong Kong,

whether they are pro- or anti-Beijing (as the city has a sophisticated population).

The other term that is found in discussions leans towards the legal; the term is retrocession. The two territories of Hong Kong Island and the southern part of the Kowloon Peninsula were ceded by Qing government to the UK; later the New Territories were leased. In 1997, the lease expired and plus the two territories were retroceded; that is, the UK ceded its sovereignty to the Peoples' Republic. As Beijing insisted during the run-up to 1997, discussions were to be kept at state-to-state level; that is, the population of Hong Kong was explicitly excluded from these discussions. This narrowly legal line has the merit of coherence—setting aside issues in respect of relevant successor state to the Qing—but as with the claims about returns to the motherland, it fails in respect of popular legitimacy; Hong Kong people were not given an opportunity to assent to the retrocession or, contrariwise, to withhold consent.

So, neither 'decolonization' nor 'return to the motherland' nor 'retrocession' accurately grasp what has happened to Hong Kong. The easiest phrase would be that 1997 was a 'transfer of power', but the unfolding domestic and external problems are more critically captured in the term 'transferred colonialism'. A number of symptoms of this condition can be identified and all have been identified by local commentators, and they revolve one way or another on the lack of societal consensus about the future of the territory, and, one step back, so to say, they note the inadequacy of extant mechanisms in respect of the goal of a consensus, and, one step further back, they note deep unease about the intentions of the elites in Beijing, and these can be summarized in terms of economy, society and polity.

Economic links with the mainland are long established (indeed, the reason the British took control of the territory and turned it into the place 'Hong Kong') and are deepening. An argument can be made that local Chinese business family groups are disinclined to take a collective view on this situation, whilst in the meantime some are able to take quick business advantage: thus, the expansion of private hospitals providing obstetrics services on the open market to a client group comprising many mainland mothers (whose Hong Kong-born children automatically gain Hong Kong identity and can thus access the city and its welfare systems); and thus, the property sector, with development projects in the mainland and development projects in Hong Kong serving a new affluent clientele to the detriment of the general provision of housing in Hong Kong for local

citizens (private firm profit, externalities bequeathed to the wider society or government).

Social links with the mainland are historically firmly established (again, these links served the incoming power, which, in any case, could not have prevented them). They were controlled in the years following the end of the Chinese Civil War but are once again increasingly vigorous, now in the context of elaborate modern state machines, that is, monitored/controlled. There is a large cross-border flow of people every day for employment and for schooling, and, more visibly, the easing of border controls has seen the numbers of mainland tourists increase dramatically, and this has led to complaints from local people (picked up now by government in terms of 'capacity'). Again, visibly, the easing of border controls has also produced a new cross-border informal industry of smuggling, termed 'grey traders'. It is an informal sector business involving several thousand operatives organizing the individual transport of goods from Hong Kong into Shenzhen (some reports also of vehicular smuggling and also, occasionally, smuggling by power boat). The grey traders have aroused ire of locals as they are visible, regarded as a nuisance and have evidently been tolerated by relevant authorities. A small riot in September 2012 occasioned a change of policy, and the trade is now being more vigorously controlled.

Political links with the mainland are not new (in colonial era mainland politics were picked up locally), and today, post-handover, the mainland is ever more visible (this seems to be part design, as Beijing presses forwards, part local inaction, as the local political system seems unable to generate its own view of its future; illustratively, the most recent Chief Executive (CE) was elected and immediately had a meeting with local Beijing representative, and similarly, on the occasion of a ferry disaster, the local Beijing representative was read as seemingly taking charge). Local politics seems unable to fashion a prospective response and instead disparate issues are tackled ad hoc; thus local commentators argue that local politics is stuck, and some point to the relation with Beijing, whilst some point to lack of domestic capacity and then some call for political reform and some call for better economic planning. Debate seems to go around and around.

How these matters will resolve themselves is unclear. Social scientists cannot predict the future; that is a game for natural scientists. The best social scientists can do is sketch out scenarios; sets of statements about what might happen if certain agents act in certain ways in response to enfolding structural conditions; and so attention turns to key political

players, their social bases, institutional locations, interests/ideologies and thus anticipated projects.

THE PRC AND HONG KONG SAR: TWO INTERLINKED JURIDICAL–INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEMS

In 1997, Hong Kong reverted to the control of China, and there was some dispute about terminology as the British cast matters as a return of control, the Chinese as resumption; either way, power was passed over the heads of the local population from one distant master to another. The official constitutional status of Hong Kong became that of a 'special administrative region' of the People's Republic, the SAR had a 'Basic Law', which acted as a 'mini-constitution' and which was promulgated after extensive consultations with selected mainland and Hong Kong interests by the government in Beijing, the relevant sovereign authority.[14]

The Basic Law functions as the juridical mechanism whereby two distinct political systems are fitted together and the overarching slogan governing the new SAR status is that of 'one country, two systems'. The Basic Law is a constitutional law. Such law is liable to emendation in the light of unfolding events, and several 'interpretations' of the law have been issued by Beijing, and save for one technical issue, each has reinforced the power of Beijing over against those provided for the authorities in Hong Kong. What is at issue here is the nature of the juridical and institutional relationship of the two territories: the one a continent-wide territory comprising some 1.3 billion people, the other a sometime colonial port city of around 7 million. It is not a relationship of equals, nor do the local institutional machineries mesh smoothly, in fact, the reverse is the case as the unfolding historical trajectory of Hong Kong has created a kind of liberal-democracy, an eccentric and unsatisfactory version, but nonetheless, recognizable, whereas the trajectory of mainland China has produced a party-state system oriented towards a perhaps nominal socialist development.

The PRC Party-State System

The party-state system is a double-bureaucracy, where each element is hierarchical: recruits enter at the bottom of the chain and work their way up, and like any other bureaucracy, such organizations create their own

internal ethos as operatives buy into collective ideas in the course of their ordinary duties. The party provides political direction and the mobilization of the population, whilst the state functions to meet the administrative needs of an advanced industrial society. The relationship between the two elements has been described by Zheng Yongnian[15] who argues that the party-state is the space within which politics works; it combines elements of inherited culture, in particular, the idea of the emperor, providing a frame that has to be respected, together with a variant form of vanguard party. So the party dominates the state and the party-state dominates the wider society. The party is wedded to the idea of development. The party is not a European- or American-type party; it is, as Zheng puts it, an 'organizational emperor' with a mass membership.[16]

The key elite party bodies comprise the National Party Congress, the Central Committee, the General Secretary and the Politburo's Standing Committee; this hierarchical structure then reaches down through thousands of committees into the grass roots of Chinese polity. The parallel state bodies comprise the National People's Congress, the Standing Committee, the President, the State Council and thereafter an elaborate system of ministries: again, reaching down into society.

The Hong Kong SAR System

The system in Hong Kong derives from the colonial era—the British established an elite-dominated system; the core was the London-appointed governor, plus key regular officials (administrative and military), plus co-opted key figures from the local community, in particular, the business community. Together these made up the Executive Council or Exco. The wider community found a subordinate representation on the Legislative Council or Legco. Power rested at the apex of this system. This system was transferred more or less intact with the 1997 handover. Critics have been vocal, attacking both the process of handover and the characteristics of the resultant arrangement.[17]

China's Party-State in Hong Kong: Institutions and Official Positions

Beijing's power articulated in Hong Kong via a number of institutional and agential lines and the local population responds in various ways, including (as might be expected) collaboration, dissent and withdrawal.

National People's Congress
Hong Kong and Macau Office
Hong Kong Liaison Office
CCP (Local Hong Kong memberships—not publicly acknowledged)
United Front activities

Where the system on the mainland was understood and legitimated in terms taken from European traditions of communism, more recently, understandings/legitimations have been cast in material economic and nationalist terms. So there is a mainland 'national past'; it is a discourse of foreign invasion and national humiliation. Thus, more restrictedly, in respect of Hong Kong, the national past unpacks as a claim that after a 100-plus years of colonial oppression, the people of the territory are returning to the motherland; Hong Kong compatriots are emerging from colonialism. Thereafter, mainland officials advise that Hong Kong compatriots must deepen their appreciation of being Chinese: it is claimed that the motherland has offered Hong Kong compatriots extensive help (economic and material); it is confirmed that the motherland will continue to offer such help; and in this environment of comradely concern, Hong Kong compatriots must work to appreciate their place in the motherland.[18]

There is also suspicion of conspiracies surrounding Hong Kong; thus unspecified 'outside' forces are charged with trying to undermine the 'one country, two systems' arrangement by, for example, arguing for independence or liberal-democracy or human rights on the mainland.

Hong Kong Elite Activities

The Hong Kong elites are divided into factions, and there are also divisions amongst the mass of the population. Amongst the former, business groups are pragmatic in their responses to Beijing as links to central- or province-level institutions on the mainland can smooth the path of business deals, and Hong Kong has many economic links to the mainland. This is no new; to recall, this was why Hong Kong was founded in the first place, and such links have been sustained over all the subsequent years. Then there are those linked to long-time pro-Beijing groups such as trades unions or other leftist groups (including covert members of the communist party) that are supportive of Beijing. This is unsurprising as the colonial authorities did not reject cold war anti-communist rhetoric, nor did they clamp down on corruption, nor did they lend support to arguments

for reform, and they were content with an unequal society (now, paradoxically, worse). On the other hand, those groups linked to the law or education is suspicious of Beijing's intentions, for the law provides one key institutional base for arguments for liberal-democratic-type governance. As regards the mass of the population, there are parties sympathetic to Beijing that are active in social welfare (directed there by Beijing), and they gather widespread support, and there are parties sympathetic to the idea of a liberal-democratic-type of regime in Hong Kong, and they too gather widespread support. Commentators make two points: *first*, that there is no elite consensus on how to deal with Beijing or relatedly how to advance the interests of Hong Kong, and *second*, there is no functioning political system that can do this job—the result is a politics of muddle and drift.

Overall, commentators suggest that there is little real sign of local elite players being committed to the future of Hong Kong: the activities of various elite groups looks more like disparate commitments to sectional interests; indeed, the system of functional constituencies enshrines this approach. This pessimistic line is familiar, and it is generally turned towards the population of Hong Kong; that is, political problems are read as internal matters. The role of regional authorities, the role of Beijing and the strands of policy opinion in these circles are not pursued. One consequence of looking inwards is that necessarily it misses the role of mainlanders, or it simplifies them to a stylized opponent, but in sum, optimistic lines are noticeable by their absence.

1. *Governance considered*

An important line of analysis suggests that Hong Kong politics simply do not work very well; that is, the system cannot do the basic political job of managing power relations, aggregating opinions and formulating policy. Ma Ngok[19] argues: *first*, the Hong Kong elite is internally divided, controls a weak state and cannot enforce its will against the wishes of the population; *second*, Hong Kong political society is fissured, organizationally underdeveloped and institutionally demobilized and cannot articulate effectively the wishes of the population (political society is split between mutually hostile pro-Beijing groups and pro-democracy groups); *third*, the political parties that have formed are weakly developed, lack support and, in any case, must operate within an institutional structure that affords them only a very restricted access to power; and *fourth*, given all these factors, Hong Kong political society cannot generate an effective political consensus. In sum: Hong Kong political society is both effective at

defending the status quo and ineffective in securing any changes. Hong Kong politics are thus confused: the elite cannot provide leadership; the masses cannot effectively engage in political life; and the population as a whole can only defend the status quo. However, this does not add up to a depoliticized society; rather, it adds up to a polity that does not function very well.

A complement to this style of analysis is offered by Chiu and Liu,[20] who draw on the literature of 'world cities' in order to present a discussion of local politics rooted in political economy. They too note that the colonial era looks stable in comparison to contemporary Hong Kong, and they trace the changes to some of the consequences of recent changes in the political economy of the city. Thus *first*, they note that decline of British business-centred cartels (whereby large firms carved up the available economic space between themselves and could take a collective view on the interests of the territory as a whole) and the rise of Chinese family-centred conglomerates which compete across all spheres of the economy (there actions thereby cutting against elite-level agreements covering the territory as a whole). Then *second*, they note that Hong Kong is displaying some of the predicted characteristics of a neo-liberal world city, that is, increasing economic and social polarization where money and power concentrate in the elite, the bottom of the social hierarchy drifts further down and a dual economy/society develops, and they also note that this situation has been reported in the local press, noting that Hong Kong's Gini coefficient is now one of the most unequal in the world.[21] And *third*, they note the increasing presence of Beijing in local politics with demands flowing in from the external power, and in this situation, they argue, local politics cannot accomplish the task of securing elite-level consensus and nor consequently can there be any search for popular legitimacy; the upshot is drift and unease.

2. *Popular politics considered*

Hong Kong's popular politics have been widely debated, and setting aside the dynamics of elite and mass politics in the years before the Pacific War, the post-war years have been characterized both in terms of 'familial quietism', that is, Hong Kong people represented as not interested in politics, preferring the realms of family and work,[22] and in terms of serial aggressive protest movements.[23]

Lam notes that the standard view of Hong Kong politics regards the population as passive and concerned with private matters, an apolitical population. Lam disagrees and argues that there is 'lots of politics in Hong

Kong' and that qualitative analysis in the form of case studies shows that there have been many episodes of political protest. In terms of a list:

– 1952 Tramway Workers dispute—politics/industrial dispute
– 1956 KMT/PRC riots
– 1957 Tung Wah Hospital marriage rules dispute
– 1964 Telephone rates protest
– 1966 Star Ferry riots
– 1964/1971 Campaign for Chinese language
– 1970/1971 Campaign for nurses pay
– 1970/1972 Defend the Diaoyu Islands protests
– 1973/1974 Godber scandal
– 1975 Telephone rates protest 2
– 1977/1978 Precious Blood secondary school protests

All the tensions within the local scene will find some sort of expression in popular politics. Lam[24] has shown that popular outbursts of displeasure have been a familiar event in local politics down many years and this pattern has continued in the years following the 1997 handover. Recent events can illustrate the ongoing vigour of popular politics and the continuation of the underlying problems from which they emerge.

One crucial event took place in 2003. The C.Y. Tung regime was determined to pass a local anti-subversion law in line with Article 23 in the Basic Law. The proposed law was widely opposed; nonetheless, the government pressed on. Then on 3 July, a few days before the law was to be passed, a demonstration of some 500,000 came out to protest the proposed law and the wider unhappy condition of Hong Kong. The proposal was finally undermined when a usually pro-Beijing business party refused to support the CE and the proposal was withdrawn. The population, loosely organized, had thus won a significant political victory, and it re-energized local pro-democratic forces and such demonstrations, albeit on a much smaller scale, are a familiar event.[25]

In 2005, Tung was replaced. His successor was a local civil servant, Donald Tsang. At first he was popular, but later he was accused of neglecting Hong Kong in order to advance his own interests, and he became unpopular.

The election of a new CE, C.Y. Leung, in mid-2012 was read—briefly—as a chance to re-set local politics, to move beyond the conflicts of the latter years of the period of office of his predecessor. In the event, this hope proved forlorn as conflicts resumed quickly, and the first 100 days of the

period of office of Leung was marked by a series of public conflicts. These continued to rumble on into the autumn, which saw the November 2012 leadership changes in Beijing. Some commentators looked to this change, noting that many senior Beijing figures had experience of Hong Kong, and they speculated that this might bode well for the city.

In the meantime, low-level political tensions continued.

(a) Patriotic Education Curriculum Demonstrations

A proposal was brought forwards by the SAR government for amendments to the curricula of local schools[26] and in particular a new subject was to be introduced: National Education. A proposed syllabus was prepared by consultants and made available in the latter part of 2012. The proposed National Education classes now provoked widespread hostility from school students, their parents and some teachers and school officials. A number of well-attended demonstrations were organized, and these received extensive coverage in the media. The proposal was branded as pro-mainland propaganda, and the episode served to reinforce local anxieties about the intentions of Beijing and its local supporters. The SAR government gave ground to these protests, making the proposed programmes optional, a matter for the piecemeal decisions of teachers and schools. Critics voiced suspicions that this amounted to either a convenient delaying tactic or alternatively a declaration that a low-level school-by-school strategy would be adopted by the SAR government in order to get its way more slowly. Others suggested that it was a reasonable compromise and that, in any case, it was a little naïve to expect the government to fully acknowledge its errors.

(b) An Informal Sector: Grey Traders

Following the transfer of power to Beijing, the long-established economic linkages between Hong Kong and the mainland have been deepened with trade arrangements, travel formalities, rail lines and even bridges. One aspect of this deepening has been the rise in numbers of people crossing the Hong Kong and Shenzhen border[27]; this is a two-way flow, and the numbers are now in the tens of thousands every day, and amongst these flows of people, a new group has emerged, numerous and organized: smugglers, taking advantage of the mainland demand for Hong Kong goods.[28] The smugglers are organized and rent commercial and residential property in towns in the New Territories in order to gather and pack materials for individual 'grey traders' to carry back along the local metro train lines into Shenzhen.

One site for organizing the distribution was the small town of Sheung Shui. Here the traders were readily identifiable as their goods were usually carried in bulky packages loaded onto small trolleys and then loaded onto the metro trains. Here the numbers of grey traders became so large that the local people were severely inconvenienced at the local train stations and eventually staged a mini-riot. One aspect of the mini-riot, noted by the media and criticized by pro-Beijing commentators, was that members of the crowd shouted out 'go back to China'—another aspect, reported in the media, was the retort heard from amongst the traders— 'speak mandarin'.[29] The local protest actions finally prompted action from the metro train authorities and the SAR government and the numbers of grey traders fell.

(c) Mainland Mothers

During Donald Tsang's period in office, a decision was made to encourage private medicine as it was thought that this could be a new industry for Hong Kong, a way of broadening the range of service industries located in the territory. Also in this period, the senior court in Hong Kong determined that a child born to Chinese nationals in Hong Kong could be registered as a Hong Kong citizen. This decision opened up the opportunity for mainland mothers to come to Hong Kong in order to give birth to their children: an advantageous strategy as it evaded mainland restrictions on childbearing (the one-child policy) and meant that the children gained access to Hong Kong education and welfare systems. The private hospitals were happy to provide for this new market.[30] The private hospitals made good business, but mainland mothers also took advantage of the SAR's public hospital system, sometimes simply turning up in the emergency rooms just before their babies were due to be born and returning to the mainland shortly thereafter.

This provoked a reaction amongst local Hong Kong people. They were critical of these practices. There were several strands of criticism: ordinary people spoke of queue jumping and overcrowding whilst medical professionals spoke of being drawn into unsafe practices (simply turning up, giving birth and then leaving meant no pre-natal care and no ante-natal care either). The problem was addressed by C.Y. Leung who announced that the practice was to be suppressed; but quite how this is to be accomplished is another question, so too the issue of the law granting access.[31]

(d) Housing Speculations and Border Development Plans

In the autumn of 2012, the Hong Kong housing market was experiencing bubble conditions: prices were rising steeply, rentals were rising equally steeply, waiting lists for public housing were lengthening and young people were contemplating the great difficulties of buying places to live. Once again public disquiet was voiced, and a particular target was the inflow of mainland speculative buyers. Various motivations were mooted including short-term profits, using bricks and mortar as a store of value and washing money, but the upshot was clear, the local market was being impacted such that a housing shortage was being created (for those with property, there was no problem, merely the temptations associated with asset-price inflation). The SAR government was urged to act, but intervening in a housing market is not straightforward for the SAR government relies for taxation on land sales and property taxes, the construction industry is politically well connected (both in Hong Kong and increasingly in the mainland) and current property owners do not want the market to crash. All these people are influential in contrast to those who are tenants or living with family unable to move into places of their own. The SAR government responded by adjusting some property taxes and looking around for ways to increase the supply of flats, yet these cautious responses met with criticism: those with problems of accommodation found them too feeble, whilst influential groups were annoyed and spoke deprecatingly of 'interfering in the market', a standard status quo defensive move (all markets are embedded in societies and Hong Kong's is no exception, but the pro-business slant of successive governments had ensured that the claim to a 'free market' is widely and erroneously believed).

(e) Tourist Numbers

One of the so-called four pillars of the Hong Kong economy is tourism. In recent years, the flow of tourists from the mainland has increased markedly, that is, from around 6 million arrivals a few years ago to around 40 million in 2012.[32] Such an increase makes the tourists very visible: visible in local trains and buses, visible in local shopping malls, visible in queues at border crossings, and once again this influx of tourists has generated popular resentment and wide discussion.

Ordinary Hong Kong residents complain about the numbers and their impact upon local quality of life: too many tourists, too culturally different, their shopping habits destructive of local amenities (businesses

turn from local shops serving local people to a proliferation of cosmetic and chemists shops [the latter with baby-milk]). However, the corporate world takes a different view for more tourists mean more business and more profits. One survey of the problem generated a suggestion from a tourism industry representative that the SAR government should employ more immigration officers (to reduce queues) and build more shopping malls (to accommodate the shoppers)—an example of dependency theory in ironic mode.[33]

(f) Flags, Websites and Calls for Independence

One surprising response to these events, and the alleged behaviour of Beijing over the longer period since the transfer of power, has been overt political protest plus responses from pro-Beijing figures. The protest has had two surprising aspects: *first*, flag waving—the colonial flag has been visible in demonstrations (a variant flag, minus references to Britain is also available), but no one has suggested this indicates a desire to return to the status of British colony; it is rather read as nostalgia for an easier time in Hong Kong's history, say, pre-Tiananmen Square, when the territory ran itself and did so quietly, efficiently and according to general positions agreed over time; and *second*, calls for independence (or at a minimum, calls for SAR government to attend to the interests of Hong Kong rather than forever looking towards Beijing, which suggestion, it might be noted, does look rather like a practical definition of independence).

In respect of the issue of nostalgia, it can be recalled that Germany went through the process of reunification in the early 1990s, yet 20 years later, it is still problematic, and former West and East Germans can still distinguish each other and their respective societies. It might be said that this is unsurprising—individual, social and political identities root deeply in subjective experience; individuals cannot shift from one identity to another either quickly or by choice. What is at issue is changing forms of life—a long-drawn-out process; nostalgia is one symptom of the difficulties of such adjustment. In the case of Hong Kong, local people can easily look back to a pre-transfer period when life, in retrospect, seemed easier, and given current suspicions of the intentions of Beijing plus the above-noted issues, it is easy to see how a general nostalgia can be cashed as contemporary hostility towards the new holders of power, and given that political futures can be imagined by returning to political pasts (reaching back in order to go forwards), critics should be wary of dismissing it as being without import.

In regard to the issue of independence (or independent-mindedness on part of SAR government), this idea has been floated by some figures presenting the argument in the public sphere (website and publications). The idea of independence is advanced, so too the idea of city-state. These ideas have been spotted by pro-Beijing figures, who, predictably, have been highly critical, but it is not a mainstream idea.

However, there are two obvious comments to make. Thus, *first*, it might be noted that, running down a separate line of reflection, Hong Kong is often compared to Singapore in economic performance, living standards, air quality, and so on, and if it is noticed that Singapore is an independent state, then the arguments for Hong Kong independence might at the very least gain some more plausibility. Singapore's PAP is wedded precisely to the success of Singapore. And *second*, Singapore's political system is sometimes invoked as a potential model for mainland reform: an authoritarian polity oriented towards economic goals. But this misreads Singapore and neglects the wider, deeper and enduring project of the pursuit of national development; nonetheless, this does point to Singapore once again, and once again, it is an interesting model in the context of debates about the future of Hong Kong.

(g) Trust in Political Leaders

As C.Y. Leung assumed power, it might have been thought that a period of peace and quiet would follow, there would be a honeymoon, but the reverse was the case. Mr Leung was attacked from the outset, and one issue quickly came to serve as a point of attack for his critics, that is, his alleged dishonesty. All this stemmed from an aspect of the public debates staged in the run-up to the closed circle election of the new CEO when, in a televised exchange, Leung accused his opponent Henry Tang of building unauthorized structures at his Kowloon Tong home. These were alterations made to his house without permission or paying relevant taxes and later it turned out that Mr Leung's house on the Peak also had unauthorized structures. A long public campaign of criticism began in the Legco and in the press from politicians and from the political activists. Newspaper reports suggested that these protests were funded by factions within the elite who were not reconciled to the electoral loss suffered by Henry Tang (and his supporters/sponsors).

The substance of the accusations was trivial, they were acknowledged and apologies made, yet criticism continued. That such a line of criticism could be sustained over many months would be in other contexts

quite remarkable: surprising in Hong Kong, but symptomatic of political dysfunction. In January 2013, C.Y. Leung made his first formal policy statement giving him both the chance to set out the programme for his government and an opportunity to reply to his by now many critics, but criticism continued.

(h) Occupy Central 1

A further line of popular pressure took shape in 2012, and a group formed with the declared intention of 'occupying central' after the style of US 'Occupy Wall Street'. A camp was set up in the open space beneath the HSBC office tower, and the objectives of the protest were to call attention to inequality in Hong Kong—the Gini coefficient of the territory indicates that the territory is one of the most unequal on the planet.[34]

(i) Occupy Central 2: The Umbrella Movement

In August 2014, the Standing Committee of the NPC presented its report on political development in Hong Kong, and the crucial element was the selection committee that was to nominate candidates to run in the subsequent 2017 election for CE. What had been at issue in the run-up to this announcement was the extent to which (as it was widely taken as a given) Beijing would in effect manipulate the electoral process by screening out candidates the CCP elite deemed unacceptable and promoting the candidature of those deemed acceptable. In the event, the local response was varied with pro-Beijing groups and pro-local autonomy groups (i.e., those looking for a minimum of Beijing involvement in domestic Hong Kong affairs [i.e., the closest to independence on offer from given circumstances]).

A new occupy central movement took shape, celebrated as the Umbrella Movement. The context was the discussions about the promised direct elections for the CE to be held in 2017. Beijing and its loyalist have proposed a nominating committee, and Hong Kong proponents of liberal-democracy read this as a mechanism to weed out candidates unacceptable to Beijing. Occupy Central proposed mass occupations and deliberative meetings to oppose Beijing and advance the cause of open elections.[35]

The reactions to the August 2014 NPC decision ran through a number of phases.[36] At first, reactions were spontaneous as the NPC proposals were denounced. Then later the protest grew and school students from Scholarism[37] began a protest and a sit-in adjacent to Legco in downtown began on 26 September 2014, which then gathered support from a civil

society group called Occupy Central.[38] The protest gathered support from university students, some working class, some lower middle class and some professionals, until the police made the decision to use tear gas on demonstrators on 28 September 2014, and this act met with widespread popular disapproval, and so thereafter the protest gathered wider support and the numbers of protestors grew rapidly. Until finally, there was stalemate as the protest movement and the authorities reached an impasse. The protestors could not force further concessions and the authorities could not disperse the crowds; eventually, the protest wound down of its own accord after some 67 days.

3. *Action: politics as usual*

As noted, in the latter years of the colonial era, scholars who pursued quantitative comparative studies found relatively little formal democratic political action and reported that Hong Kong people were family-centred, politically indifferent and that the sphere of political life had been absorbed into the civil service administration.[39] It is true that much politics revolved around the colonial government apparatus and that much debate was cast in narrowly practical terms; however, doubt has been cast on the suggestion that somehow political life was absent.

A qualitative perspective suggests that Hong Kong people have been routinely politically active (strikes, letter writing campaigns, petitions, riots, demonstrations, pamphlets and debates in the press) and not simply materialistic but principled (holding pro-socialist, pro-capitalist and social reformist positions), and that the talk of depoliticization is an error (part getting the story wrong and part believing self-serving colonial regime characterizations of political indifference amongst Chinese—plus scholarly work suggesting family and work concerns[40]). Qualitative analysis suggests that there is an extensive political activity in Hong Kong—formal and informal; in recent years, a series of massive popular demonstrations for democracy have shown Hong Kongers are very politically active.

To the list made by Lam can be added:

– 1982/1984 Joint declaration debates—public counterpart
– 1984/1997 Internal reform debates/experiments
– 1989 Tiananmen Square sympathies voiced
– 1990 Basic Law
– 1992 Democratic Action for Betterment of Hong Kong Party founded

- – 1993 Liberal Party founded
- – 1994 Democratic Party founded
- – 1997 Reversion to China—HKSAR
- – 1997 Asian financial crisis—debates
- – 2003 Article 23 demonstration[41]
- – 2004 Demands for direct elections for CE
- – 2005 Tung sacked and replaced
- – 2005/2007 Further popular policy protests (ritualized, routinized and accepted[42])
- – 2008/2012 Complaints against Donald Tsang

At the present time, following the appointment of Leung C.Y., a further set of issues can be added to these lists:

- – 2012 Patriotic education curriculum demonstrations
- – 2012 Grey traders' mini-riot
- – 2012 Mainland mothers issue debated
- – 2012 Housing speculations and border development plans
- – 2012 Tourist numbers
- – 2012 Occupy central 1
- – 2014 Occupy central 2

In respect of these latest examples of popular level politics, which on the face of it cover a disparate set of issues, the common thread was a local fear of 'mainlandization', that is, the slow absorption of the city into the mainland. The future seemed to be that Hong Kong would become just another city in China, with mainlanders given increasingly free access. It might also be added that whilst the SAR government did take ameliorative action in respect of all these noted, popular discontent continued to be voiced, and over the autumn of 2012, popular discontent was reported in an almost daily fashion in the press.

On the basis of the collection of examples, Lam concluded that politics was alive and well in Hong Kong. Current debates about reform may produce better machinery and thus a more familiar style of politics, but what is striking is that the process of riots and so on identified by Lam seems to be continuing down into the third post-handover administration. This does not seem like progress towards either a domestic consensus or a public/popular modus vivendi with Beijing; it looks more like a chronic low-level dis-function, and it is redolent of the style and impact of mass protests on the mainland.[43] However, for Hong Kong, it is clear that a modus vivendi with the new distant master is yet to be organized.

HONG KONG: ROUTES TO THE FUTURE—SPECULATIVE SCENARIOS

Ordinarily, it is possible to characterize structural patterns, identify key agents and thereafter sketch out possible lines of development for the polity in question. It is a speculative business, but not without some interest; however, in the case of Hong Kong, it is an awkward task. The structural elements can be sketched (the long-established linkages with China around trade), and some idea of how they are changing can also be sketched (economic competition from the mainland in sectors hitherto dominated by Hong Kong-based firms—logistics, finance and other services), and some idea of how they are 'deepening' can also be sketched (infrastructure developments and cross-border flows of people and economic activity); however, it is more difficult to uncover the understandings and motives of key agents; this is true of elites in Hong Kong, and it is also true of the denizens of the party-state machine on the mainland.

Making Scenarios of the Future[44]

In the case of Hong Kong, this procedure runs into certain difficulties because the civil service, corporate and professional elites do not offer (at least in the public sphere) any coherent vision of the future of Hong Kong. Chui and Liu,[45] comparing the colonial era with the present, argue that the corporate elites today are unable to participate in formulating an elite-level consensus for the territory as groups fall back to their narrow sectional interests, in part encouraged by the pursuit of profit in the mainland. In the Legco, the government is routinely supported by the pro-Beijing parties (DAB, Unions, Liberals), and most of the functional constituencies and their stance are one of pragmatic acquiescence to circumstances. Together they dominate the mainstream, and other groups are marginal (Democrats, Civic Party, etc., although some have the appearance of another functional group, i.e., the law).

So, in the absence of an actively prospective domestic politics, making scenarios about the future is awkward and must turn *first* to speculations about the intentions of Beijing (as they act, so local groups respond), so the game of scenario building is thus even more hazardous than usual, but, that said, two lines may be identified—a 'conservative Beijing' and a 'reformist Beijing'; these point to rather different futures for Hong Kong. Thereafter, *second*, some speculations can be hazarded around changes in Hong Kong politics.

(a) Conservative Status Quo in Beijing

Integration option—Hong Kong retains some local control. Local elites elect to deepen links with the mainland. Key economic groups argue for this. Key political elites argue for this. The territory of Hong Kong becomes ever more closely embedded within sub-regional networks as Hong Kong-based elites establish ever more secure linkages with sub-regional players. Elites do well; the mass of the population adjusts; and the distinctive nature of the territory slowly dissipates.

Mainlandization option—the local economy and society integrate with the sub-region, but Hong Kong elites slowly lose any significant local control. Local autonomy is slowly emptied of meaning. Beijing becomes ever more visible in the local scene. At some point, key local elites relocate their loyalties towards those networks linking them with the mainland. The mass of population adjusts. The distinctive nature of the territory dissipates.

Absorption option—Hong Kong becomes just another mainland city. Economic integration proceeds rapidly. Exchanges of population gather pace and scale. Local elites relocate their loyalties and so too do significant sections of the local population. The distinctiveness of the city erodes rapidly. Hong Kong becomes just another mainland city.

(b) Reformist Tendencies in Beijing

Status quo ante 1—'one country, two systems' reaffirmed. Deng's idea is reaffirmed and put into practice; that is, Beijing withdraws from local scene. Beijing patriots are not pleased. Local elites in the civil service, business and the professions find a way of securing a consensus about the route to the future of the city. Local elites argue the case for the city in the corridors of power in Beijing. Authorities in Beijing are content. Hong Kong remains separate from the mainland. Hong Kong remains distinct as the deal offered by Deng holds.

Status quo ante 2—'one country, two systems' reaffirmed plus distancing mechanisms. These political and cultural mechanisms serve to distance the territory from the mainland and recover something of the inward looking and stable Hong Kong of late colonial days (compare with formerly West Germans and their nostalgia for that country, now gone, post-reunification). In outline, same as above. Beijing patriots are even less pleased. But now the distinctiveness of Hong Kong is buttressed by a local elite prepared to insist upon this point in discussions with Beijing.

Local government secures agreement of population. Hong Kong prospers within the frame of the PRC.

(c) Action in Hong Kong

The Singapore model—this has been invoked by Beijing in terms of a distinction between an economic city and a political city. Officials claim the former is exemplified by Singapore, which is thus an appropriate model for Hong Kong. This misreads the nature of the post-independence experience of the polity of Singapore. It is a politically mobilized society as its form of life is suffused with politics and the core is the pursuit of national development. A Hong Kong variant would require a much more engaged local leadership and the acquiescence of Beijing.

Local settlement with Beijing—the Hong Kong elite could settle their factional splits; engage with their local population (energetic and smart) and build a consensus for a future for Hong Kong. It would require the active agreement of Beijing.

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It is difficult to envisage more radical trajectories: there is some talk of independence, but it is difficult to imagine how this might be pursued, much less achieved, and there is some talk of democratic reforms in China, but these seem just as speculative, so the immediate future seems to be more of the same. Hong Kong's form of life is distinctive; the city is rich, albeit very unequal, and the local elite do not seem minded to challenge Beijing's officials.

Hong Kong in Longer View

Hong Kong entered the modern world in the quite specific context of foreign state-empire expansion. A scattered territory was first made into a 'place' and then, with the majority of the population Chinese, few local, many from wider areas in Southern China and communities of Overseas Chinese traders,[46] it was made into a success. The trading port served a large-scale state-empire system, which meant that the local territory was plugged into a powerful global network. Hong Kong may have been formally a British colony, but it was from very early on a thoroughly Chinese city. Local elites had to deal with distant masters in London (and their local representatives), and the relationship had to be made to work. It did.

Now the local elites have to deal with distant masters in Beijing (and their local representatives); this is the relationship that now has to be made to work. And it may be working at the level of elite contacts (drawing in civil service, corporate world and pro-Beijing political parties and other local allies), and it may be working at individual levels (thousands of people travel back and forth across the border every day), but the record at public levels is much less clear as suspicion and resentment mark popular opinions in respect of the mainland.[47]

Notes

1. S. Strange 1988 *States and Markets*, London, Pinter.
2. E. Gellner 1983 *Nations and Nationalism*, University of Cambridge Press; B. Anderson 1983 *Imagined Communities*, London, Verso; and J. Habermas 1989 *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Cambridge, Polity; and running the three together—states make nations which are imagined communities which amongst other things create a public sphere in which collective issues can be addressed.
3. A. Acharya 2000 *The Quest for Identity: International Relations of Southeast Asia*, Oxford University Press—citing ideas of 'galactic' and 'mandala' polities—based on a core family/place with a shifting group of associated families/places.
4. Quite how the PRC should be characterized is another issue—one suggestions is a 'civilization state'—the state embraces or serves as an organizational vehicle for a civilization—the idea of nations is relatively new (Anderson)—so laying claim to a national identity is something that could be done only recently—but its not clear just who would claim to be a member of a civilization? But the idea does usefully point to the scale and history of the territory—David Goodman has remarked that China is not the name of a country, it's the name of a continent—getting at the same issue, the PRC, which now occupies the territory of the Qing at its maximum extent, is large and diverse—opens the way for multiple popular identifications (locale, network and memory).
5. J. Carroll 2005 *Edge of Empires: Chinese Elites and British Colonials in Hong Kong*, Cambridge University Press.
6. Over the years—local academics have made simple surveys of self-identification, offering respondents a choice between 'Hong

Konger' or 'Chinese', and whilst the balance shifts, the former is usually to the fore (see *Hong Kong Transition Project*).

7. This involves technical issues of citizenship—a Hong Kong person can carry a British National Overseas passport or a Hong Kong SAR passport or a PRC passport—many Hong Kong persons may have one or other of the first pair, plus a passport from overseas—say Canada—this is also distinct from subjective identification—who you think you are.

8. Ideas of 'ethnicity' are widely used—they are problematical—grouping together members of a form of life in terms of how they look seems foolish—it seems to be a polite version of race identification—but, obviously, forms of life are not determined by physiology.

9. Thus multiple languages—differences in climate, foods, histories and so on; more locally, for example, scripts—Hong Kong people use traditional script in contrast to mainland's simplified script—or Hong Kong people have maintained unbroken folk festivals only recently reintroduced in the mainland.

10. Might be other comparators—in Europe—Scotland, Catalonia, the Basque country or the Dutch-speaking areas of northern Belgium.

11. The idea of a 'civilization state' flags a difference between European and American states and the situation in China—vast in size with diverse regions—it is picked up by Martin Jacques—here it notes merely size and long history—post-1949, the CCP elite has assiduously fostered a party-state.

12. In most of colonial era, the border was more or less open—it was closed by PRC in early 1950s—there have been subsequent waves of inward migration—interesting issue as to how these inward migrants both keep hold of their pasts whilst becoming Hong Kongers—partly, generational, that is, since borders closed resident population has cohered and used mainland as available 'other'—a status it retains.

13. Law, W.S. 2009 *Collaborative Colonial Power: The Making of the Hong Kong Chinese*, Hong Kong University Press—chapters seven and eight.

14. Yash Ghai 1999 *Hong Kong's Constitutional Order*, Hong Kong University Press; see also C.A.G. Jones 2015 *Lost in China: Law,*

Culture and Identity in Post-1997 Hong Kong, Cambridge University Press.

15. Zheng, Yongnian 2010 *The Chinese Communist Party As Organizational Emperor: Culture, Reproduction and Transformation*, London, Routledge.

16. Model we get is this: as revolution and civil war unfold (1) received culture informs elite thinking, (2) who construct a party and (3) engage in state making, (4) what they make is a party-state system, (5) thereafter wedded to pursuit of development. The CCP today is a large organization: in 2008 had 73 million members—'By 2006 the CCP had 3.6 million organizations, including both Party committees and Party branches at the grass roots level. More than 420,000 firms had established Party organisations. Out of 2.4 million firms in the non-state sector, 178,000 (7.4 per cent) had established Party organisations. In other words, Party organisations have penetrated all forms of firms, institutions and social organisations' (Zheng 2010, p. 4).

17. See, for example: (on law) Jones 2015; (on politics) K. Poon 2008 *The Political Future of Hong Kong*, London, Routledge; (on society) A. Ku and N. Pun eds. 2006 *Remaking Citizenship in Hong Kong: Community, Nation and the Global City*, London, Routledge.

18. Law 2009—points out that there is some unease in these characterizations as Hong Kong is simultaneously read somewhat contradictorily as recently subject to colonial oppression and more economically developed.

19. Ma Ngok 2007 *Political Development in Hong Kong: Political Society and Civil Society*, Hong.

20. Chiu, S. and Lui, T.L. 2009 *Hong Kong: Becoming a Chinese Global City*, London, Routledge.

21. Reports in SCMP put HK Gini at over 0.5—in China, estimated at over 0.6—both very unequal—Europe and America, around 0.35.

22. Lau S.K. and Kuan H.C. 1988 *The Ethos of the Hong Kong Chinese*, Hong Kong, The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press; Miners N. 1998 5th ed. *The Government and Politics of Hong Kong*, Oxford University Press.

23. Lam, W.M. 2004 *Understanding the Political Culture of Hong Kong: The Paradox of Activism and Depoliticization*, New York, M.E. Sharpe.

24. Lam 2004.

25. Lee and Chan 2011, pp. 38–42.
26. SCMP.
27. SCMP.
28. Various goods—for example—new electronics, lower taxes in Hong Kong plus an advantageous exchange rate between yuan and dollar—also certain more domestic goods, baby-milk powder and cosmetics, where Hong Kong products are regarded not merely as higher quality but safer.
29. Shifting out of the political context—it might be noted that such trading is familiar across borders—in the case of relatively poor people it is a way to earn a living—it might also be noted that such trading activities often annoy otherwise settled communities—the new traders are regarded as a nuisance—the flow of migrants to the city and into poor jobs is an issue for many cities in China (on social stresses and strains in China, see E. Perry and M. Selden).
30. An interesting specimen of what mainstream economists call 'externalities'—corporate world takes the profits and shifts the costs to the community.
31. One local pro-Beijing figure suggested that Beijing be asked to 'interpret the Basic Law'—this suggestions generated another round of hostile comments.
32. Figures quoted in SCMP.
33. SCMP.
34. SCMP—July 2014—Gini coefficient is over 0.5—HK is most unequal developed territory on the planet.
35. T. Branigan in the *Guardian* 6 March 2014.
36. A useful point made in NLR—S. Veg 'On the Umbrella Movement' in NLR92 March/April 2015—it helps organize reportage on essentially dis-organized fluid street politics.
37. Originally a school student-centred group—called into being by HK government proposals to run pro-Beijing propaganda classes in local schools.
38. Sponsored by local law professors at HKU—D. Sevastopulo 'Professor leads fight for Hong Kong democracy' in *Financial Times* 3 September 2014.
39. Lau S.K. and Kuan H.C. 1988 *The Ethos of the Hong Kong Chinese*, Hong Kong, The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press; Miners N. 1998 5th ed. *The Government and Politics of Hong Kong*, Oxford University Press.

40. Law 2009.
41. Francis L. Lee and Joseph M. Chan 2011 *Media, Social Mobilization and Mass Protests in Post-Colonial Hong Kong: The Power of the Critical Event*, London, Routledge.
42. Lee and Chan 2011.
43. K. O'Brien and Li Lianjiang.
44. These scenarios essentially revolve around two lines of development—optimistic, Beijing and its local allies decide to honour the one country, two systems idea/ideal and allow Hong Kong to continue its historically established trajectory (perhaps a variant of the Singapore model); or pessimistic, Beijing and its local allies determine to absorb more or less quickly Hong Kong and its distinctive form of life is extinguished as the city becomes just one more mainland urban area—see P.W. Preston 2016 *The Politics of China-Hong Kong Relations*, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar.
45. Chiu and Lui 2009.
46. Law 2009.
47. An opinion poll carried out in late 2012, recorded record amongst the local population highs percentages reporting a subjective identification with Hong Kong (report in SCMP).

Afterword

The intellectual machineries of comparative analysis, here rooted in an interpretive and critical notion of social science, and presented in substantive terms via an historical institutionalist approach, can be turned to the political logic of the author's home country; in this case, Britain.

But why make so much of this rather obvious matter?

In brief, two reasons, reflection and dialogue. So first, having considered other cultures, comparative analysis is an available mechanism for fracturing the taken-for-granted understanding of one's home political culture, challenging the assumptions, maybe learning something. Then, second, scholarship is always rooted in a particular culture and one cannot step out of received culture as there is nowhere to step to, there is no 'view from nowhere' just as there is no 'end of history'. That being so, then, cast in procedural terms, reflexive self-embedding is a necessary condition of scholarship, and then cast in dialogical terms, turning the machineries of comparative work onto the home culture demonstrates to others that at the very least the author's scholarly intentions are even-handed (thus there is a crucial difference between argument rooted in time and place on the one hand, that is, context, and argument that un-reflexively deploys local notions in dealing with other cultures, where this is a familiar procedure that gets us '-centrism' of various types: 'Euro-centrism', 'Western-centrism', 'America-centrism' and so on (all low-grade argument forms).

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Cast in these terms, the historical trajectory and contemporary political logic of Britain have been pursued in two related texts: the first, P.W. Preston 2014 *Britain After Empire: Constructing a Post-war Political-Cultural Project*, looked at the response of the core elite to the acute challenges presented by the collapse of the empire; the second, P.W. Preston 2014 *Empire After Empire: The Dissolution of Empires and the Construction of New States in East Asia*, which looked at the creation of novel states and nations following the collapse of the overarching system.

The argument in respect of the metropolitan core, that is, contemporary Britain, can be rehearsed in outline terms: (1) in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the empire was created; (2) it flourished through the nineteenth century; (3) it collapsed in the mid-twentieth century; and (4) in the post-war period after 1945—domestically—the metropolitan elite survived, albeit in much diminished form, and—internationally—did so lodged in subordinate position within the Washington-centred neo-liberal trading sphere.

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The historical trajectory of Britain has shaped its current political logic. The detail is rich, but, to simplify, three elements of this trajectory can be noted, and each contributes to contemporary political practice: the creation of the state-empire system; the abrupt and unanticipated collapse of that system; and finally, the nature of the post-war period during which the elite contrived a measure of continuity within the frame of Washington's Cold War-era policies.

The creation of Britain and British-ness in the context of the project[1] of a global sea-borne trading empire[2] ran through eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; the system created was a state-empire. It had a core in the British archipelago, and it had peripheral territories around the planet, hence the empire upon which the sun never set. A subaltern English nationalism was carried by the Chartists in the early nineteenth century, but it was snuffed out[3] and a top-down national identity of British and British-ness was created.[4] The state-empire prospered throughout the nineteenth century; however, it was a fragile construction. It had competitors within the wider global core territory of Europe; thus, in particular, the Dutch, French and German elites. And it had other state-empires outwith this group with which it variously competed, notably the Czarist and Ottoman Empires. And it had opponents within its various peripheral territories, those seeking change in colonial territories. The Great War[5] signalled system breakdown in the global core, as European state-nations

drifted into open warfare; and around this time, there were breakdowns in peripheral territories, with the Republican Revolution of 1911 in China[6] and the start of independence movements in India.[7] It was also the case that the European-centred system of state-empires was threatened by the competition of the emergent USA, now recovered from its Civil War, commanding a continental territory, drawing in migrants and becoming a powerful polity.

The final collapse of the European system of state-empires and with it the collapse of the British state-empire took place over a few decades in the mid-twentieth century. In the case of the British, in 1939 the metropolitan elite commanded a global empire, but in 1945 the metropolitan elite faced the loss of this empire. The state-empire dissolved away in stages[8]: *first*, territories in East Asia and South Asia (holdings in mainland China and the Indian sub-continent); *second*, territories in Southeast Asia (Malaya, Singapore, Brunei)[9]; *third*, territories in the Middle East, following the Suez 1956 debacle; and *fourth*, territories in sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean, plus a scatter of smaller island territories have been retained for defence or lack of any alternative.

At the outset, the wars of 1939–45 destroyed the British state-empire holdings in East Asia. In East Asia, the Japanese armed forces overran and occupied colonial-era trading concessions in China.[10] These were formally renounced during the war and sovereign authority handed to the Nationalist Chinese government, the KMT. The nature of the end of the Chinese Civil War with the victory of the Communist Party and the formation of the PRC meant that there was no possibility of a return to any of these concessions, save for the anomalous survival of the colony of Hong Kong. The destruction of British holdings in the Far East and Southeast Asia[11] destroyed the pretence of empire, and as events unfolded, it became clear that the state-empire system was finished, plus, at the same time, amongst local groupings, the war years enabled the rise of powerful independence movements.[12]

In the Indian sub-continent, the British were obliged to relinquish control; in 1947, power was handed to Congress, partition followed and Pakistan emerged. In the late 1950s, the territories in Malaya and Singapore followed, and this after low-level civil war pitting Malays plus British against a largely Chinese communist party, one that had fought with the British during the Pacific War. In the event the departing British handed power to successor leaderships with whom they could work in both Malaysia and Singapore.

The British elite sought to retain its peripheral holdings in the Middle East where they controlled the canal and oil fields throughout Arabia and in Persia; the 1956 Suez debacle ended this attempt. Prime Minister Macmillan's 'winds of change' speech anticipated the dissolution of holdings in sub-Saharan Africa, and the Caribbean and the remaining parts of the empire were quickly off-loaded. Now there are only the remnants of the peripheral territories in the shape of a few islands or bases scattered around: thus the Falklands Islands, Gibraltar, the Akrotiri sovereign base, Diego Garcia, plus a number of quasi-sovereign tax havens and so on.

This historical trajectory of acquisition and loss feeds through into the contemporary situation in Britain. The key point is that the British elite survived the collapse of their state-empire. In order to secure their position, they lodged a double claim: first, they claimed the peripheral territories had never been that important; and second, the core territories were in fact a long-established nation state, a model for others.

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The collapse of the state-empire system was not a single event; rather, it ran over a clear period of time, that is, the late 1940s into the early 1960s, overall, around 20 years. In the time-scale of the accumulation and holding of the peripheral empire territories, this time period was short and it left the British elite without an obvious overarching project, one built around a plausible national past, a narrative detailing the history, present and implied ideal future of the polity. In short, the collapse of the state-empire was a disaster for the elite, one that demanded a creative domestic response.

The elite adopted a dual strategy: *first*, in a process of active forgetting,[13] they denied that the peripheral territories of empire had ever been that important: thus they had been accumulated in a 'fit of absent-mindedness'; they had not been unreasonably seized or held; they had been responsibly governed and independence had been achieved largely without violence. The empire has even had a kind of institutional afterlife in the Commonwealth. S*econd*, in a thoroughly creative exercise of selective remembering, the elite claimed that the metropolitan core territories of the now dissolved state-empire were in fact a long-established British nation state[14] and moreover this nation state had been victorious in a virtuous war against National Socialism. Overall, the country was, in fact, something of a model for other nations. Thus the core reinvented itself: 'continuing Britain'.

However, behind this façade was the reality of an oligarchic elite accommodating itself to a subordinate role within an American dominated region; the key linkages were finance, defence and ideological nostalgia (reciprocated in part by the American elite[15]). In this settlement, the ordinary masses were demobilized, encouraged to rest content with welfare services and consumerism. So, against the claim to exemplary modernity, it is clear that the machinery of the British state was formed in the early modern period and is in significant measure un-reformed[16]; power is reserved for an oligarchic elite[17]; the state machine is configured to protect this power[18]; and the whole arrangement is buttressed by a carefully engineered national past;[19] and these three elements—elite plus state plus national past—block the development of a more sophisticated democratic-type polity.

* * * * * * *

Lately, there have been signs of popular disenchantment with the current condition of the polity—the project of the EU has never been emotionally embraced by elite or mass in Britain—and recent years, signalled by the post-Thatcher 2008–10 economic crisis, have slowly undermined the taken-for-granted-ness of 'continuing Britain'. The heartland territory of London and the Southeast is increasingly detached from the provinces, and commentators style London as a 'world city' signalling that its ideological orientation is outwards, to the global system with the domestic regions secondary; Scotland came close to voting for independence in 2014 and voted en masse for SNP in recent 2015 domestic elections; and there are signs of working-class resentment at their relative decline, evidenced in the support given to anti-European parties. In 2016 a referendum resulted in a vote to leave the European Union. The future for continuing Britain is not as clear today as it was a decade ago, but at the same time, there is no obvious alternative future for the polity; the elite are secure, the masses unable to articulate much less effect a change of direction; and so muddle and make-do seems to be all that is on offer.[20]

NOTES

1. J. Darwin 2009 *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World System*, Cambridge University Press.
2. L. Colley 1992 *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837*, Yale University Press.

3. K. Kumar 2003 *The Making of English National Identity*, Cambridge University Press.

4. E. Gellner 1983 *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford, Blackwell; B. Anderson 1983 *Imagined Communities*, London, Verso.

5. C. Clark 2013 *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914*, London, Penguin; the route to the Sarajevo assignation lay through Italian empire building at the expense of the Ottomans plus subsequent Balkan nationalist wars.

6. J. Spence 2013 *The Search for Modern China*, New York, Norton.

7. B.N. Pandy 1980 *South and Southeast Asia 1945–1979*, London, Macmillan.

8. Darwin 2009.

9. C. Bayly and T. Harper 2007 *Forgotten Wars: The End of Britain's Asian Empire*, London, Allen Lane.

10. J.G. Ballard 1988 *Empire of the Sun*, London, Grafton.

11. C. Bayly and T. Harper 2004 *Forgotten Armies: The Fall of British Asia 1941-45*, London, Allen Lane.

12. Pandy 1980; J. Pluvier 1977 *Southeast Asia from Colonialism to Independence*, Oxford University Press.

13. T. Judt 2008 *Reappraisals: Reflections on the Forgotten Twentieth Century*, London, Penguin.

14. Albeit with four component parts, the Home Nations, all folded into the one polity.

15. C. Hitchens 1990 *Blood, Class and Nostalgia: Anglo-American Ironies*, London, Vintage.

16. The 'Nairn/Anderson Thesis'—the trajectory of Britain is taken to be responsible for a quasi-modern polity—the argument was developed in pages of *New Left Review*—on UK, see T. Nairn 1977 *The Break Up of Britain*, New Left Books, see also T. Nairn 1988 The *Enchanted Glass: Britain and Its Monarchy*, Hutchison Radius.

17. Recently, F. Mount 2012 *Mind the Gap: The New Class Divide in Britain*, London, Short Books.

18. Thus the configuration of Whitehall/Westminster—on the former, see P. Hennesy—on the latter, see the results of the 2015 General Election—UKIP votes/seats—the system draws in the parties; the two main parties are largely interchangeable (a point made in respect of one recent election by the *Economist*) and have persistently blocked calls for electoral reform.

19. P. Wright 1985 *On Living in an Old Country*, London, Verso.

20. This manuscript went to the publisher just as the referendum on Britain's relationship with the EU was getting underway—at the time of writing, expectations were that the referendum result would endorse the position of Prime Minister David Cameron and that the UK would remain a member of the EU—however, if, against expectations, the result went the other way, then the domestic rumble of disenchantment would become a more significant issue—a post-rejection political environment would be that much more difficult for the elite to manage.

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