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Editorial

Politics of Belonging and Exclusion: Nation-Building in Contemporary Asia

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Introduction

The present special issue is the outcome of a call for papers by members of the *ASIEN* editorial board. Across six contributions — four research articles and two research notes — various perspectives on and aspects of nation-building in Bangladesh, China, Myanmar, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam are discussed. The diversity of these countries highlights how challenging a systematic comparison would be. Additionally, each contribution focuses on a particular aspect of nation-building, nationalism, and/or national belonging. Hence, the six pieces illustrate that there are many different and at times highly contested factors crucial to the success or failure of nation-building.

The return of nationalism

Although globalization processes in the final decades of the twentieth century led to academic discourses that deemed the nation-state to be obsolete as a political model, nationalism and its accompaniments are again on the rise globally (see, for example, Mansbach and Ferguson 2021). Through nation-building, citizens — individuals without any particular personal ties — can be united, while on the other hand trusted neighbors might become excluded in being perceived as outsiders. Accompanied by a multitude of — at times violent — conflicts within and between states, the concept of the "nation" still seems to be the most appealing and mobilizing force for the masses.

This can be seen in burgeoning nationalist movements around the globe. In Asian countries, one prominent example is India, where so-called Hindu nationalists have been in power since 2014. And whereas the departure of the United Kingdom (UK) from the European Union (EU) in 2020, the so-called Brexit, would be feared by many to represent the beginning of the disintegration of the EU, especially in East and Southeast Europe, a number of countries remain eager to join this union — in some cases for the same reason the UK left: growing nationalism. This is the case, for example, in Kosovo, the youngest of the seven successor states to the former

Yugoslavia, which declared its independence from Serbia in 2008 (Koneska, Huskić, and Krasniqi 2022). The desired EU membership not only offers potential economic advantages but above all would help secure recognition and sovereignty as a geopolitical entity. This also seems to be one of the main reasons for Ukraine's close proximity to the EU. The Russian invasion of February 2022 is the temporary climax of a growing nationalism in the present and illustrates both its steadfastness in Europe, too, as well as its interconnectedness with resulting geopolitical claims.

Moreover, the current Russian war on Ukraine highlights other important aspects of the nexus between nation, nation-state, and nation-building. On the one hand, both countries are home to the dominant ethnic groups, Russians and Ukrainians respectively, and a large number of ethnolinguistic minorities that are more or less excluded from current processes of nation-building in these two states. On the other, the language, religion, customs, traditions, and history of Ukrainians and Russians differ so very little, especially compared to the ones of ethnolinguistic minorities in the respective countries, that the current war exemplifies Freud's remark about the narcissism of minor differences — "der Narzißmus der kleinen Differenzen" (1930a, 85). While many Russians and Ukrainians perceive themselves to be brother nations or even one nation, especially in the case of Russians (see, for example, Kuzio 2022), Ukrainian nationalists in particular strive for the recognition of their cultural differences and of the uniqueness of their identity as a nation as a way to emphasize their distinctiveness from the Russian nation and to ensure their territorial sovereignty (Kuzio 2016). According to Freud: "[P]eoples whose territories are adjacent, and are otherwise closely related, are always at feud with and ridiculing each other, as, for instance, the Spaniards and the Portuguese, the North and South Germans, the English and the Scotch, and so on" (1930b, 90). The current Russian war on Ukraine is a prominent example of how this is still true for nations and bilateral conflicts today.[1]

But this leads us to the key questions still hanging over these kinds of conflicts: What, after all, constitutes a nation? And, which processes can be considered part of nation-building? Even though the latter is a crucial element of today's politics, practiced by most states and various individual or organized actors within or beyond those states (that is, in the so-called diaspora), such practices are as diverse as definitions of the "nation" themselves.

The term "nation"

The use of the Latin term *natio*, originally meaning "birth" or "being born," was subsequently extended "to refer to a breed, stock, kind, species or race. It could also be used in a derogatory sense to refer to a tribe or race of people" (Bouchard and

1 Another conflict to which Freud's theory of the narcissism of minor (or small) differences was extensively applied would be the disintegration of Yugoslavia (Blok 1998, 42–44; Ignatieff 1998 [1997], 34–71; Kamusella 2010).

Bogdan 2015, 7). In this sense, it was for example "used by Cicero when referring to distant and barbarous people" (Bouchard and Bogdan 2015, 7). Michel Bouchard and Gheorghe Bogdan show convincingly that the term "nation" was used in the Roman Empire to distinguish between the Roman civilized "us" (*populus*) and the other barbarian "them" (*natio*), even though the term *gentes* was preferred when referring to the latter groups stemming from outside the Roman Empire (Bouchard and Bogdan 2015, 7–8). Most importantly, the term was used for foreign groups of people who were considered to form one community because of their supposedly shared geographical origins, descent, language, customs, and similar. Hence, it was an external designation ascribed to an assumed community whose members were excluded from the citizenship regime of the Roman state and its civic rights. Being a member of a *natio* in the Roman Empire had, first and foremost, negative — that is, exclusionary — consequences. Later, during the Middle Ages, *natio* was still used for groups of people sharing, for instance, a common language, origin, customs, and the like. However, these groups were not necessarily perceived as being "barbarian" or "uncivilized" by now. Moreover, at medieval universities, a new semantic meaning was added to the term, one serving particular administrative and organizational purposes.

By the thirteenth century, *natio* was used as a both internal and external designation at cosmopolitan universities in different parts of Europe where Latin was the medium of instruction and *lingua franca* among their members (Kibre 1948; Knoll 2012). University members were categorized into *nationes* in most cases, according to their geographic origins — even if they did not share the same mother tongue, customs, ancestry, and similar. At the University of Paris, for instance, the number of identified *nationes* was limited to only four: the French, Picard, Norman, and English (Bauer 2012, 122). Arts masters stemming, for example, from regions that are today part of southern France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain were lumped together as the French nation, whereas "[t]he English nation, later renamed the German nation during the Hundred Years' War (1337–1453), was, either way, somewhat of a misnomer because in addition to the English and Germans, it contained scholars from Hungary and the Slavic lands" (Bauer 2012, 122). While this kind of categorization was meant to serve university members originating from across Europe by better representing their diverse interests, the meaning of the term *natio* expanded further with its adoption in modern European languages.

The emergence of modern nations and nation-building

From the sixteenth century onward, and especially during the French Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century, today's dominant understanding of the "nation" as something applying to the entire or majority population of a geopolitical entity — namely a political state — emerged. But in contrast to what was the case with its original Latin meaning, in France those concerned were far away from speaking the same language and sharing common customs, traditions, and similar. Members of

the emerging French nation developed, first and foremost, a sense of belonging based on shared interests — for instance, in standing against feudalism and absolute monarchy. In France, the growing commitment to the nation, its ideals (*liberté*, *égalité*, *fraternité*), and symbols (such as a unique flag and a distinctive national anthem) formed the beginning of what is today often referred to as "nation-building". In this case, the population of a sovereign state is assimilated into a nation by various state-initiated measures. Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821), for instance, already realized the importance of education to nation-building when stating in 1805 that

> [t]here cannot be a firmly established political state unless there is a teaching body with definitely recognized principles. If the child is not taught from infancy that he ought to be a republican or a monarchist, a Catholic or a free-thinker, the state will not constitute a nation; it will rest on uncertain and shifting foundations; and it will be constantly exposed to disorder and change. (Ramirez and Boli 1987, 8)

As with France, nation-building can constitute a deliberate strategy by which elite-led state institutions enforce their ideas of the "nation" on the concerned population in its entirety. Ideally, all territorial inhabitants come to perceive themselves sooner or later as members of the nation *and* of the state — that is, as citizens of a nation-state. But it was not until the introduction of mass education from 1833 onward — during the reign of Louis Philippe I (1773–1850), also known as the "Citizen King" — that this process of nation-building would gain particular momentum (Ramirez and Boli 1987, 8).

In the case of nineteenth-century Europe's emerging nation-states, linguistic homogenization played an important role in nation-building processes. However, in contrast to France — where the overwhelming majority of the population did not speak French at all during the time of the French Revolution and a single standardized language spread to all regions of France only with the introduction of mass education — a standardized German language had diffused much earlier to many regions of present-day Germany and beyond, even before German nationalism was born. A comparison of the role of language in the emergence of the French and German nation-states shows that in some cases the language of a state had to be homogenized to enable or strengthen the national consciousness of its citizens; in the case of Germany, a common language was one of the most important prerequisites for the emergence of the nation. There was already a shared German consciousness, at least among an elite existing far beyond the regions now consolidated as Germany. In the case of German national consciousness, however, this common language was not a given or primordial. Rather, according to Benedict Anderson (2016, 37–65), the "print capitalism" coming into existence in the wake of the invention of the movable-type printing press by Johannes Gutenberg would see, in interaction with the Protestant Reformation initiated by Martin Luther and its vast associated literary production, a specific variant of the German language arise.

Nation and ethno-symbolism

And while Anderson belongs, like Eric Hobsbawm (see for example, 1996 and 2003) and Ernest Gellner (see for example, 2006), to the so-called modernist school of scholars who do not believe in the "nation" as a premodern community but in its construction, invention, or imagination during processes of modernization, Anthony D. Smith, for instance, dedicated his work on nationalism to the *longue durée* of communities and their ethnic symbols:

> Where modernists tend to downplay ethnic ties, ethno-symbolism regards ethnic identities and communities as crucial for the formation and the persistence of nations. Although nations may be partly forged by political institutions, over the long term they require ethno-cultural resources to create a solidary community, mainly because of the critical importance for a sense of national identity of subjective dimensions. That is also the reason why nations cannot simply be seen as elite projects. We need to understand the often complex interplay between elites and various sections of the wider population whom they may seek to mobilise in terms of symbols, myths and memories that resonate with them. (Smith 2009, 21)

Whereas Smith is often criticized for overvaluing ethnic identity for the formation and persistence of nations and their *longue durée*, he accuses modernists of taking an approach to nation-building relying predominantly on cases from Europe and furthermore downplaying the factor of "ethnicity" in general. The truth lies, as usual, somewhere in between, but needs to be explored on an individual basis. Smith's approach is particularly interesting for analyzing nation-building and nationalism in Asia, where ethnicity doubtlessly plays an important role in current nationalist — that is, ethnonationalist — movements.

Cultural and political nationalism

Furthermore, the two concepts advanced by Smith's first PhD student John Hutchinson are also helpful here. He does not fully endorse Smith's idea of "ethnic nationalism," preferring instead to differentiate between "political nationalism" and "cultural nationalism." According to Hutchinson (1987, 12f.), political nationalism is a form thereof today advocated by cosmopolitan rationalists who focus on the commonalities and equality of all humans, giving these two factors far more weight than cultural or ethnic identities. This kind of nationalism refers overwhelmingly to Western European countries and is to some extent in line with the concepts of *Staatsnation* ("civic nation"), of which France is the prime example, and *Willensnation* ("voluntary nation"), of which Switzerland is a good representation. In summary, political nationalism centers around the equality of all citizens, their voluntary commitment to the nation, as well as their joint democratic participation in shaping the nation's future — regardless of their ethnic and/or religious identity.

In contrast, cultural nationalism often relies on the factors described above by Smith *vis-à-vis* ethnic nationalism. But in the case of the former, they are not taken as the result of a *longue durée* — relying instead on visions of a shared past and future by

an intellectual elite. These visions can lead to reform and revitalization efforts by shaping supposed elements of the past to serve the demands of the present and future. A prime example for cultural nationalism, according to Hutchinson (1987, 42f.), is the emerging Indian nationalism in nineteenth-century British India. Most importantly, both forms of nationalism — ethnic and cultural — do not depend on an already-existing state for these real or envisioned nations, whereas in the case of civic or political nationalism a sovereign state is what makes the nation possible in the first place.

Whether civic, cultural, ethnic, political, or voluntary nationalism, it is clear that there is no nation that ideally represents only one of these forms, and no state that relies exclusively for nation-building on only one of those variants. Moreover, the above exemplary elaborations by no means constitute a complete overview on this topic; rather, they merely serve to illustrate the complexities encountered when entering into discussion of the nation, nationalism, nation-state, nation-building, and similar. The many theories in this field, of which only a few were mentioned, might be helpful in some cases but in others completely redundant. After all, these are "only" theories intended to help us understand our complex and ever-changing realities — not the other way around. For instance, whether the "nation" is indeed a nation not only depends on the chosen definitions of scholars and the different aspirations of its architects but, first and foremost, on the people who are supposed to form it. And, how far they actually support the nation they are supposed to constitute often remains a mystery — until the next relevant conflict arises, at least. Especially in Asia — which is much larger than Europe both geographically and in terms of population size, as well as far more heterogeneous regarding ethnic, linguistic, religious, and socioeconomic differences — it seems even more difficult to decipher the politics of nations, nationalism, and nation-building — and, above all, the will of the people with the help of theories shaped predominantly by cases from Europe.

Nation, nationalism, and nation-building in Asia

By drawing on examples from Asian countries, some aspects that were not yet taken into account will illustrate that, apart from the size of the continent and its heterogeneity, there are also other factors that stretch the aforementioned theories to their limits. One important difference, especially in comparison to Western European states, is the fact that many Asian countries have a colonial past, and *ipso facto* a different development trajectory in terms of industrialization, nation-building, and state formation. One result of these diverging developments and the resulting often negative attitude toward the former, in most cases European, colonial powers is in a number of instances also a different understanding or negative attitude among sections of the postcolonial populations toward elements and processes ascribed to (Western) modernity such as equality, individualism, liberalization, secularization, and the like (Utz 2005, 626). And since those elements and processes

are, according to the abovementioned theories, prerequisites for a civic or political nation, several Asian countries have been seemingly torn between this form of nationalism and ethnic or cultural variants thereof.

Another important factor here are the huge socioeconomic disparities that exist in some Asian countries, which seem to form a significant obstacle to the felt equality of all citizens. Especially in times of crisis, people tend to fall back on the group identities with which they are more familiar and that are of greater relevance for their daily lives: namely ethnic and religious ones. In countries with an ethnically and/or religiously heterogeneous population, conflicts seem, then, to be inevitable. This refers, for example, to India, which is often regarded as the world's largest democracy, and to its neighbor and constant rival Pakistan.

Nation-building in India and Pakistan

Like Russia and Ukraine, India and Pakistan are also considered by many of their respective citizens to be brother nations since they share numerous cultural and linguistic elements as well as a common past, even though their populations are ethnolinguistically and religiously highly diverse. After most of the territory of these current states came under British colonial rule, this region would witness the emergence of Indian nationalism among the new Hindu elites in the nineteenth century alongside, contrariwise, also a growing fear among its Muslim elites of their future marginalization in an independent Hindu-majority India. The two-nation theory advocated by the All-India Muslim League and especially by its leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah in the 1940s led to the partition of British India — into secular India with a Hindu majority and Muslim-majority Pakistan respectively (Jalal 1994). The two-nation theory centered around the idea that Hindus and Muslims form two distinct nations, not only separated by different religions but also culture, customs, history, and traditions. For that reason, Jinnah vehemently demanded a country of their own for India's Muslims once the British started contemplating their withdrawal from South Asia. When India and Pakistan were established in 1947, both countries were predominantly led by politicians who had received their higher education in Great Britain and were highly influenced by (Western) modernity. The result was in both cases a state-building process based on the administrative, educational, and judicial infrastructure introduced by the British in parallel to two divergent forms of nation-building (Bose 2004).

While in the case of India the unofficial motto was "unity in diversity" and a commitment to maintaining this ethnic and religious diversity, Pakistan became — only nine years later, with its first constitution — an Islamic republic, cementing a nation-building process centered on Sunni Islam and marginalizing its religious minorities such as Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, and certain Muslim minorities, such as Shia and Ahmadi Muslims (Jaffrelot 2004). Another important element herein for both countries is their antagonistic relationship, which has continued to play — especially in the case of Pakistan — a key role since the 1940s. Despite the wars and

armed conflicts between the two countries since, only from the 1980s onward would Indian politics witness the slow rise of Hindu nationalism and its specific form of nation-building. The latter has instrumentalized this antagonism, in constructing an omnipresent and omnipotent enemy (Lall 2008).

After the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) formed part of India's central government between 1998 and 2004 — and since 2014, in power once more — it has over the course of the last 25 years advanced a form of nationalism that has led, according to Christophe Jaffrelot (2019), to an "ethnic democracy." Herewith the dominant ethnic group is equated with the nation, in this case Hindus — whereas Christians and Muslims are perceived, and to some extent also treated, as second-class citizens. Even though India cannot (yet) be termed a Hindu nation and it must be asked whether Hindus can indeed be perceived as an ethnic group in their own right given their immense ethnolinguistic heterogeneity, the endeavors of Hindu nationalists to construct a Hindu nation and their continued electoral success have been particularly alarming for the country's religious minorities. Similar to Pakistan, nation-building by Hindu nationalists centers around the imagined majoritarian community and excludes from the process everyone who is deemed not to fit the nation. This is in stark contrast to the nation-building advocated by India's founders, as a mixture of civic, political, and inclusive cultural nationalism instead.

Even though Hindu nationalists themselves fail to give any clear definition of who a "Hindu" is exactly and construct their ideology — Hindutva (Savarkar 1969) — around imaginations of a common geographic, cultural, and only to some extent also religious past, in which they include Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism too, they have ultimately the same aim as the Pakistani state. That is, to unite the majority of the ethnolinguistically and religiously heterogeneous population as a nation to the detriment of a minority of citizens. However, after Bangladesh's independence in 1971 (between 1947 and then: East Pakistan), it became evident in the case of Pakistan that nation-building centering around Islam had failed to even integrate all Sunni Muslims and that the ethnolinguistic identity of its citizens plays an important role too (Dil and Dil 2011).

Also today, there are several (sub)nationalist movements in India and Pakistan that illustrate how neither country is (yet) a nation-state. Rather, they are both multinational states that respectively struggle to unite all of their citizens under a common vision and identity. Separatist movements illustrate the omnipresence of ethnic (sub)nationalism in both: for instance, Baluchis in western Pakistan (and in parts of Afghanistan and Iran) (Wani 2016); Baltis in northeast Pakistan (Brandt 2021); Meiteis in Northeast India (Brandt 2018); or, Punjabi Sikhs and their ethnoreligious Khalistan movement (van Dyke 2015).

In all four cases the respective activists have continued to assert that they form their own distinct nation, despite the fact that they do not have a state on their own. Hence, they can be considered to each form instead a "nation without a state" or a "stateless nation" (Chouinard 2016; Guibernau 2004). The aforementioned term

"subnationalism" (Chima 2015) seems to be a problematic one, especially in the case of these different separatists. In contrast to members of other ethnic groups — for instance Punjabis in Pakistan or Bengalis in India, for whom their ethnic (that is, subnational) identity is not a contradiction to their citizenship and so-called national identity — Khalistani militants, for instance, have repeatedly demanded a complete separation from India.

Concluding remarks on nation-building in Asia

The short excursus to South Asia illustrates that nation-building not only centers around cultural or ethnic belonging, or ideals of equal citizenship associated with (Western) modernity that have, further, led to various forms of political nationalism. Nation-building can be based on a common religion too, as would be the case with the emergence of Pakistan. Moreover, the fact that India as well as Pakistan are still home to a number of separatist movements shows that both countries are far from being nation-states in which all citizens embrace the constructed nation of which they are supposed to be members. Interestingly, in both it is, in recent times, religious rather than ethnic minorities who have become more and more estranged from their home regions and considered second-class citizens. This phenomenon can be observed in several other Asian states too.

For example, whereas in the Maldives only Muslims can be citizens, in Myanmar it is Muslims (Rohingyas) who have lost their citizenship due to their ethnic but also religious belonging. In Sri Lanka, a form of cultural nationalism centering around the ethnoreligious identity of its majority population, Sinhalese Buddhists, would lead to a decades-long civil war. In the post-Soviet states, too, religion has been gaining new momentum in identity politics and nation-building, for instance, in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan. In China, meanwhile, religions — especially Christianity and Islam — are still seen critically and at times mercilessly oppressed. Elsewhere in Asia, in contrast, being an atheist can pose a threat to one's life. Particularly, autocratic Islamist regimes such as in Afghanistan, Iran, and Saudi Arabia base their nation-building dominantly on the "proper" religion and its practices. In the case of Saudi Arabia, the monarch additionally holds absolute power.

In general, less attention is paid to monarchy and its role in nation-building, even though it is of relevance not only in some Asian countries but also in certain European ones too. However, there are major differences as to whether the form of government is a constitutional monarchy, one in which the monarch has absolute power, or one where they merely play a representative role. And what about other national leaders who traditionally have combined, for instance, worldly and religious power, and their own role for nation-building, as is the case with the Tibetans and the Dalai Lama? Living in exile in India and being the leader of a nation without a state, the history of authoritarian leadership under the Dalai Lamas is scarcely questioned. There is no doubt that Buddhism and the Dalai Lama together play a

central role for the present-day Tibetan independence movement (Kolås 1996), even though there are also Tibetans, of course, who adhere to other religions such as Hinduism and Islam.

The main difference between nation-building processes in countries in the so-called West and those in Asia seems to be that in the former every citizen of a state is allowed to identify with the constructed, invented, or imagined nation, whereas in the latter countries nation-building draws somewhat heavily on cultural, ethnic, and/or religious belonging in striving to create an organic nation that excludes those who belong to ethnic and/or religious minorities. However, state-initiated nation-building that seeks to include all citizens does not automatically mean the prevention of everyday discrimination and racism, but at least officially all people are by law treated equally. In summary, in some Asian countries it seems the concept of the "nation" is understood rather in its original sense from Roman times: A term then used for the "other" (barbarian) groups posing a threat to the Roman Empire is today similarly used for one's own group when its cohesion is seemingly threatened by minorities who are excluded from nation-building, even if they are citizens of the state in question. The "nation" is often constructed as something organic, a unit that has primordial roots needing only to be rediscovered and strengthened. Citizens who do not identify with or who are not identified as part of this organic unit tend to become second-class citizens — or are already. And, these measures are not infrequently enforced in an authoritarian manner. Hence, we must be cautious about equating a state with the nation by speaking carelessly of nation-states, especially when the nation is something imposed on all citizens to the detriment of ethnic and/or religious minorities.

This issue

The respective contributions to this special issue all focus on distinct features of nation-building. In "A Long-Term View of Thai Nationalisms: From Royal to Civic Nationalism?" David Malitz examines the Thai political system and the struggle within the country's constitutional monarchy over the course of the last century. While more recently young Thais in particular have come to oppose the sovereignty of the Thai king through protests and large turnouts in national elections, Malitz's piece looks at the *longue durée* of this particular monarchy. It leads the reader through the establishment of royalist nationalism as a counter to colonialism in the nineteenth century, through the phases of political stabilization and economic boom that supported the establishment of a constitutional monarchy and royal democracy, and concludes in the twenty-first century with the ongoing struggles. By ending with the contemporary civic discourse on a future republican Thailand, the article touches on a recurring aspect that presents itself in many submissions to this special issue: namely how to create a society that is egalitarian and less discriminatory toward minority cultures and ideologies.

Similar aspirations to inclusive nation-building are discussed in "Identity, Conflict, and Social Movement Activism in Nation-Building Politics in Bangladesh" by Hosna Shewly and Eva Gerharz. Even though Bangladesh, with its majority Bengali population, is ethnolinguistically the most homogenous territorial state in South Asia, it is also home to a large number of non-Bengali groups who are excluded from the typical state-initiated nation-building processes. Hence, the cultural and linguistic diversity of Bangladesh stands in contrast to a rigid local legal-constitutional framework. As cultural differences become increasingly important to identity, established national concepts like "secularity" are now being reassessed in all their facets. The impact of identity politics can also be seen in social movements wherein individuals strive for new positionalities outside of the existing national community. Their struggles aim to counter the rigorously established homogeneity and majoritarianism, seeking to empower marginalized groups and minorities in the process. The authors' empirical work expands on the existing literature on social movements and political nation-building practices, highlighting how those processes are intertwined. By researching different social-movement groups and their participants' diverse positions on national identity, Shewly and Gerharz reveal the intersectionality of inequalities and exclusion and how these play into discourses of national belonging.

In "South Korea's Domestic Contestation on 'National Role' and its Recent Foreign Policy toward Japan," Bohyun Kim contributes to the field of nation-building by applying an International Relations perspective. Examined here are how vertical national role contestation and collective memories affect foreign policy. The author looks at the example of Korea-Japan relations and the continuing dispute surrounding the 2015 comfort women deal.

As in some other contributions to this special issue, Kim's analysis expands on conflicting definitions of citizenship between civil society and the national government. But her paper goes beyond national discourses in instead looking at how such contestation affects national role conceptions, nation-building processes, and foreign policy. Following major protests by the South Korean public as well as elections, the comfort women agreement was subsequently annulled in 2019. Through the comparison of national role conceptions before and after these large-scale protests, it becomes apparent how these divergences of understanding influence both domestic and foreign politics. This helps to close a gap in research on Korea-Japan bilateral relations, as the effect of domestic politics on international relations remains understudied.

"From Arabian Nights to China's Bordeaux: Wine, Local Identity, and Ningxia's Place within the Chinese Nation" by Michael Malzer turns, meanwhile, inward, in examining how identity-formation processes affect and are affected by the local economy and developmental politics. His case study of the formation of a previously uncommon wine trade in the central Chinese and predominantly Muslim region Ningxia tackles multiple aspects of nationalism. On the one hand, there is the

political nationalism of the Communist Party of China — which has commandeered the reframing of the region as a national vineyard and stands behind the regional tourism programs. On the other, the element of ethnic nationalism is particularly visible in the shifts occurring within the branding of Ningxia. While it was previously promoted on the grounds of its exoticism and Muslim culture, there has now been a move toward a more secular framing of the region. This development shows that China is drawing on economic factors for internal identity formation and external trade. Additionally, wine has been embraced as an inherently Chinese product symbolizing a modern and urban lifestyle, one thus compatible with the image the Party wants to promote of a modern and in particular civilized country. With Malzer's case study, we gain a better understanding of the processual nature of nation-building, especially considering rapid modernization, economic development, and majoritarian top-down planning.

Franziska S. Nicolaisen, Mirjam Le, and Mandy Fox at how citizenship negotiations are affected by memories and perceptions of belonging in "Between Memories and Taboos: The Formation of Alternative Vietnamese and Myanmarese Spaces of Citizenship and Belonging Citizenship." The authors outline the recent related struggles occurring in Myanmar and Vietnam, including among the diaspora populations of these countries, showing how both states as well as their social actors are using collective memories as a tool for mobilization. On the one hand, national-identity construction by the two states is similarly dominated by ethnic and religious majorities, as in Bangladesh. On the other, the authors propose that this exclusivity also leaves some peripheral spaces for alternative memory formation and remembrance practices that in turn pose a challenge to the state. In both countries, ethnic groups have experienced a long history of conflict and marginalization. In consequence, they have sizeable diasporas — which again play into national discourses on citizenship and belonging. To examine how society's different levels intersect with nation-building processes, Nicolaisen, Le, and Fox examine three specific cases. Although these explore communities at the local, national, and international levels, they all focus on groups that have been excluded from the dominant discourses on citizenship and thus from nation-building. While the prevailing conceptualization of citizenship results in the exclusion of alternative and marginalized collective memories and identities, the authors expand on the concept of "citizenship" as a more nuanced framework via which to examine belonging at large.

The final research note in this special issue, "Authoritarian Developmentalism in Contemporary Sri Lanka," examines another country with a history of civil war (1983–2009) and conflict between different ethnic groups. But while the previous papers by Malitz, Shewly and Gerharz, and Nicolaisen, Le, and Fox focus on the role of citizens and the government in the struggle for authority, Sören Köpke's also examines the role of militarization within a post-conflict nation-building process. He thus provides a comprehensive overview of the ideological and economic attempts at nation-building by Sri Lanka's post-conflict governments. The author illustrates

how both nationalist and liberal ideologies were applied by different leading figures to promote the development of a reconciled state and to stabilize economic development. Most importantly, these attempts have been shaped by ethnoreligious majoritarian discourses on belonging articulated by the Sinhalese Buddhist majority population. After the civil war, ethnoreligious conflict between militants from the Buddhist majority and the Muslim minority broke out, further influencing citizenship discourses. Köpke outlines how some aspects of recent political developments (such as religious conflict) have their roots in both pre-war and war times.

Following a period of rapid economic growth and government-led infrastructure development, Sri Lanka has been hit by multiple crises that pose a challenge to its leadership — with respective governments increasingly responding with authoritarian developmentalist measures. This has not only increased the visibility of the already-influential security forces but also led to an erosion of governance institutions and undermined nonsectarian civil society. At the same time, the grievances of the public and marginalized groups remain unaddressed. While the security forces play an important role in post-war Sri Lanka and have been repeatedly deployed to deal with crises, Köpke highlights how the previous government was losing ground amid an existential economic crisis and growing discontent. The article thus provides the background on these recent developments, putting them into the larger context of attempted nation-building following a long period of civil war.

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