

The contribution of Lukas Heckendorn Urscheler opens the Third Discussion Round and Panel Discussion. It investigates Nepal as an example of the spread, diffusion and even adoption of Mao Zedong Thought outside of China, beginning in 1996 and originating – interestingly enough – not from China but from India. The long-festering Maoist insurgency in the heart of India, which has been challenging the Indian state itself for more than forty years, is the focus of Jens Rosenmeyer’s contribution. The last presentation of this round, the only contribution in English, starts with the question: “How does one come to understand China?” Roland Boer stresses in his answer the importance of a knowledge of Marxism – in addition to knowing the Chinese language and classics or Confucianism. According to Boer, it is a great mistake to dismiss Marxism in China and neglect what is arguably one of the most important factors in an understanding of China.

The second contribution by Harro von Senger – “‘Pragmatismus’ und ‘Maoismus’: Rückblick auf die Tagung ‘Maoismus oder Sinomarxismus?’” (“‘Pragmatism’ and ‘Maoism’: A Retrospective of the Conference ‘Maoism or Sinomarxism?’”) – summarises the discussion of Round Four, thereby providing a useful resume of the two concepts as analysed by several contributors during the symposium.

The CCP continues to espouse Mao Zedong Thought until today, with the exception of a few ideas propagated by Mao during the Cultural Revolution. The party thus takes Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, the Deng Xiaoping Theory, the important concept of Three Represents and the Scientific Outlook on Development as its guiding principles. For this reason, as the book clearly evidences, one should not always focus either on Maoism or Mao Zedong Thought alone, but rather maintain a broader overview of the multiple components guiding the CCP’s governing principles. This concept of political theory is best described with the term “Sinomarxism”, the contributors/editors suggest. The arguments seem plausible and the name appropriate. “Sinomarxism” can thus become a fundamental term for better understanding the Chinese political system.

*Stefan Messmann*

CHRISTL KESSLER / STEFAN ROTHER, *Democratization through Migration? Political Remittances and Participation of Philippine Return Migrants*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2016. 196 pages, \$80.00. ISBN 978-1-4985-1421-7

The Philippines is one of the top labor exporters worldwide. Besides the economic benefits this brings home, there is the widespread hope among Philippine pundits that outward migration will serve as a trigger for a more active citizenship in the political life of the country. This stems from their perception that

such a sense of citizenship is lacking or weak among those Filipinos who stayed behind, and that the inertia of the political system is hard to overcome. Hence, their hopes are pinned on influences from overseas to activate the Filipino citizenry. The millions of migrant workers are widely perceived as catalysts of democratisation due to their exposure to societies considered democratically more developed than the Philippines.

Randy David, one of the country's leading sociologists, like many of his colleagues, assumes that Overseas Filipinos "see how modern and accountable governments take pains to respond to the needs of their citizens. They watch in awe when the inhabitants of these [host] societies, conscious of their civic responsibility to work for the common good, take initiatives to improve their communities rather than wait for their governments to act. Naturally, they begin to ask what it would take for Filipinos to attain the same level of solidarity and political maturity. When they come home or read about happenings at home, they recoil at the incompetence and the privileges of the few who rule us" (Randy David, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 16 February 2013).

However, while the hopes pinned on "democratic remittances" are high, there is little research to prove or disprove this hope as justified. Some research has been done on the impact of migration on the political circumstances of sending societies in the Latin American context, but in the case of Southeast Asia, so far only one extensive research project has been presented. It was conducted in the Philippine context from 2005 to 2007 by a team from the University of Freiburg, Christl Kessler and Stefan Rother. Their book summarises the findings of the study.

The project aimed to understand how far migrants' experience living in a democratic or an authoritarian host society impacts on their political attitudes once they return to the Philippines. For this purpose, the research team interviewed 1,000 migrant returnees as well as 1,000 first-timers about to depart for work abroad within a quantitative survey, and 37 of them in a qualitative survey.

The study comes up with a rather sobering finding about expectations from migrant returnees with regards to democratisation in the Philippine context. The assessment of political performance by migrants clearly shows that there is a considerable discontent among migrant returnees with the Philippine political system and that such dissatisfaction is intensified by the migration experience (compared with the first-timers), since migration makes the country of destination of the migrants the "yardstick" (p. 91) against which the political system of the Philippines is now measured. However, migration seems to weaken rather than foster democratic attitudes, as a comparison between returnees and first-timers suggests. The study concludes that "migrants are not likely to change the rather bleak picture of the level of democratic support in the Philippines" (p. 154) and observed expressions of "hopelessness" as "prevalent in the interviews" (p. 143).

Despite the 37 qualitative interviews included, the research however mainly tests a hypothesis, and provides only a minimal description of the sense of citizenship among migrant returnees. I see this as one of the main weaknesses of the study: it places its focus on changes of attitudes with regard to democratic values, but little can be concluded on how migrants play out such values in their everyday practices – e.g. by becoming politically active “back home” in the Philippines (active citizenship) or expecting more service from state actors and holding them accountable for fulfilling such expectations (passive sense of citizenship).

The study can thus only partly answer the question of whether the hope that migrants will contribute to democratisation in the Philippines is futile or not. While the study concludes (though on a thin basis of data) that “the migration experience has no substantial effect on levels of political participation and civic engagement” (p. 152), i.e. that migration does not enhance active citizenship, the study does not answer the question of how far migration actually leads to a higher sense of passive citizenship, i.e. a more pronounced sense of entitlement towards state services. One of its main assumptions, which is that “the [migrational] experience of a society with a functioning economy and providing for the material needs of its citizens makes migrants more demanding towards their own political system” (p. 130), is not clearly tested.

Furthermore, the Freiburg Research Project was only able to include migrants to authoritarian or semi-democratic societies (with the exception of Japan). Migrants to Europe or North America (societies which are usually used as yardsticks when it comes to issues of a developed sense of citizenship) were not part of the study. It could thus not properly test the (rejected) assumption that “a prolonged stay in a democratic country enhances democratic values” (p. 155). Furthermore, the study did not include long-term migrants. In gauging how far overseas experience might influence migrant returnees to contribute towards change in the Philippines, both subgroups should have been considered essential. The overseas labour migrants interviewed in the study are rather in the middle of a chain of overseas employments, as is typical of service work migrants to the Middle East, Hong Kong or Japan, i.e. they will sooner or later leave the Philippines again. This makes it rather unlikely that they will get involved in citizenship action while on “home leave”, given that the connection between residence and citizenship has been clearly established.

The great merit of this study, however, lies in its pioneering role on this subject. Hopefully, it will trigger and inspire further research towards finding in-depth answers to the important questions it raised.

*Niklas Reese*