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The Governing of (In)Security – Politics and Securitisation in the Asian Context

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The Governing of (In)Security. Politics and Securitisation in the Asian Context

Editorial

Werner Distler

The consequences of threat constructions and security-dominated politics in many Asian states and regions have been all too apparent recently. Whether the escalating language between China and the US over the outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the violence against opposition movements in Hong Kong, the fate of minorities in Myanmar or the ongoing violence in Afghanistan – the invocation of "security" and the often violent practices of security agents constitute a powerful "key mode of governing" (Bonacker 2018: 190, Hönke / Müller 2012). Security drives international and domestic politics and, at the same time, shapes livelihoods of citizens and the fate of individuals in often worrisome ways. In offering various empirical studies guided by the pragmatic frameworks of securitisation and Critical Security Studies, this Special Issue aims at deconstructing security as a governing mode in the Asian context, with articles ranging from the local and national levels to international relations.

Debates on securitisation: Towards a pragmatic understanding of securitisation

Critical Security Studies has expanded immensely over the last three decades. Securitisation studies alone, one of the main subfields of Critical Security Studies, has developed several heterogeneous understandings of the construction, manifestations and normative and emancipatory dimensions of security. Together with the original and still influential Copenhagen School, with its main focus on security speech acts (Buzan et al. 1998) and second-generation

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securitisation frameworks (Balzacq 2005, Stritzel 2007), other contributions, for example on practice- and routine-oriented (Bigo 2014), feminist (Hansen 2000), emancipatory (McDonald 2008) and post-colonial (Amin-Khan 2012, Ketzmerick 2019) securitisation, constitute a most vivid field. The one shared point of departure is that security is not self-explanatory or given, but socially constructed – its meanings emerge in social and political processes, which are shaped by (asymmetric) power and agency.

Currently, securitisation studies is involved in a fierce debate on the Western-centrism and structural discrimination embedded in its early foundational texts (Bertrand 2018, Hansen 2020, Howell / Richter-Montpetit 2020, Wæver / Buzan 2020). Despite this challenging and uncomfortable, but hopefully productive debate (Aradau 2018), securitisation studies has long proven its value as an analytical tool to critically de- and reconstruct security in many thematic areas. Topics range from more state- and institution-focused issues (crime/policing, state-sponsored violence, border regimes and migration, international interventions) to environment and global health (Biswas 2011, Hanrieder / Kreuder-Sonnen 2014), also beyond Western societies (Bilgin 2011, Kapur / Mabon 2018).

Overcoming exclusionary logics of speech or the practice of security as the main analytical focus, pragmatic approaches to securitisation integrate the epistemological and methodological focus on speech *with* the practice and process of security, as merely different forms of enacting social meaning, with the goal of understanding the "politics of security" (McDonald 2017: 246) and its consequences (Balzacq / Guzzini 2015, Stritzel 2011). Such "middle-ground" frameworks have inspired this Special Issue. Constructing other groups or communities, ideas, or the behaviour of actors as threatening for a referent object (e.g. stability, the state, or society) not only calls for extraordinary measures (Buzan et al. 1998), but leads to security constructions becoming part of a broader political strategy and strategic moves, by which political actors try to defend or change government actions, claim legitimacy and authority in a political struggle, and even counter or resist previous securitisations (Vuori 2011, Stritzel / Chang 2015). So-called de-securitisation, "the move of an issue out of the sphere of security" (Hansen 2012: 525), can fulfil similar strategic goals. Furthermore, the analysis of context, even history (Balzacq 2005, Stritzel 2011), is of paramount importance to understanding why and how actors (de)securitise. As shown in studies on changing strategies towards criminal gangs in El Salvador (Van der Borgh / Savenije 2015), on the "security pluralism" at the border between South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Schomerus / De Vries 2014) or the stabilisation of "illiberal state-building" in the context of development (Fisher / Anderson 2015), (de)securitisation has to be understood as a creative, non-linear process in which political actors act and react, very much dependent on their position and interests, their opponents and supporters, and on the security practices available. With such a perspec-

tive, the political process of governing appears as non-linear and always relational – statehood itself, the monopoly of violence, or the nation are not set and given, but instead defined by spatial scales, emerging and disappearing agency, and permanent (re)negotiations and (re)constructions.

It is important to mention the limitations of conceptual perspectives: pragmatic securitisation frameworks with a focus on the politics of security are not necessarily helpful for analysing everyday security and the social emergence of security issues. Of course, these dimensions of security are crucial for a complete picture of what security is and how security determines the life of individuals and communities. The *International Quarterly for Asian Studies* broadened the debate in this regard with a highly innovative Special Issue in 2018, focusing on everyday security practices, social processes of security and the voices of the marginalised in an Asian context (Von Boemcken 2018). This Special Issue picks up the debate and carries it further into the realm of political and governing processes. While the observation that "everybody thus 'does' security in his or her everyday life" (Von Boemcken 2018: 10) is very true, I am convinced that the analysis of politics still greatly benefits from critical, non-essentialist and non-rationalist studies of securitisation. Nonetheless, communities and resisting actors are not overlooked in this issue. As I will highlight in the last section of this editorial, one of the articles deals with security on a communal level and two articles analyse securitisation as a strategy of conflict communication and resistance among political actors who face powerful opponents.

Securitisation in the Asian context

Without othering "Asia" as a most different context, one can note that this global region offers complex and heterogeneous forms of governance, ranging from single-party and authoritarian states to liberal democracies and regional, international and globalised entanglements, which challenge and enrich Critical Security Studies in many particular ways. I want to discuss some of these challenges and ways of engaging with these in this section. However, it is important to realise that, as McDonald notes in his introduction to the Special Issue "Critical Security in the Asia-Pacific" (2017) in the journal *Critical Studies of Security*, security literature in Asia or on Asian case studies is still clearly dominated by the traditional security agenda, not by "critical security". In fact,

> the term has not found a significant foothold in scholarship in or about Asian security, especially when understood in terms of emancipatory politics. And the re-emergence of great power politics and geopolitical challenges in the region, with accompanied concerns about interstate conflict, has arguably made it difficult for broader security issues or non-state referent objects to find their way onto security agenda or into debates about security. (McDonald 2017: 248)

Nevertheless, critical security scholarship and securitisation studies in particular have produced important studies over the last two decades, and Asian case studies have helped to reformulate conceptual frameworks originating in the OSCE world. As Stritzel reminds us (this issue), it was, amongst others, Wilkinson's work on Kyrgyzstan (2007) that asked whether securitisation is of any use outside of the West and challenged the universal and Western-centric foundations of early securitisation frameworks.

One empirical centre of gravity is, unsurprisingly, China, with its domestic policies and regional / global relations. In his excellent modification of securitisation frameworks to the context of authoritarian governance in China, Vuori (2008) has shown how language-sensitive analysis can lead to a new understanding of the construction of security in a non-democratic order. His study of "a grammar of securitisation in the People's Republic of China" deconstructs in detail the strategies of securitisation and desecuritisation of the "party state" towards political opponents or groups such as the Falungong (Vuori 2011). Such securitised groups in China, e.g., the Tibetan resistance movements, can use counter-securitising strategies themselves, as Topgyal (2016) argues regarding the practice of self-immolation among Tibetan protestors since 2008 – without doubt, a terribly high price for such a strategy. In the field of foreign policy or regional relations, several studies focus on the securitisation *of* China, for example the regional securitisation of China by India and Japan (Chand / Garcia 2017, Schulze 2018), securitisation in the context of disputes in the South China Sea (Zhang / Bateman 2017) or the "securitisation/desecuritisation dynamic in Sino-Russian economic relations" (Wishnick 2017: 114). However, Chinese foreign policy offers examples of de-securitisation as well. In his more recent work, Vuori tackles the issue of desecuritisation as a foreign policy strategy of China (2018) e.g., in trying to prevent its own securitisation as rising power. Biba (2014, 2018) focuses on the de-securitisation strategies of China in the context of transboundary rivers and hydro politics in the Mekong region.

While securitisation studies on China dominate the field, there are many studies on diverse cases and issues in Asia, well represented by two volumes: *Non-traditional Security in Asia: Dilemmas in Securitisation* edited by Caballero-Anthony, Emmers and Acharya (2016, first published in 2006) and *Critical Security in the Asia-Pacific*, edited by Burke and McDonald (2007). Both offer an immense range and depth of studies beyond foreign policy or domestic governance, for example on the securitisation of migrant workers in Asian societies (Liow 2016, Upadhyaya 2016), the securitisation of HIV/Aids in Asia (Ramiah 2016) or gendered legacies of security from a feminist-emancipatory perspective (Lee-Koo 2007). Recent studies have focused on environmental security governance in Southeast Asia (Hameiri / Jones 2013) and the role of non-state security actors from a securitisation perspective (Barthwal-Datta 2012). Other contemporary work has studied the effects and logics of securitisation for par-

ticular groups and communities, for example the securitisation of youth in Timor-Leste (Distler 2019), the "impact of securitisation on marginalised groups" in the Philippines, Indonesia and China (Kim et al. 2017) or the societal securitisation of the Rohingya in Myanmar (Howe 2018).

As we can see, the Asian context has inspired many studies of security governance, ranging from social and non-traditional security phenomena to more traditional themes such as the social construction of great power politics. The few examples mentioned here show how promising Critical Security Studies and securitisation studies in the Asian context are, from a critically deconstructing or a normative-reconstructive perspective, and have helped to modify securitisation frameworks in a pragmatic way (Caballero-Anthony / Emmers 2016: 2), reminding us that discourses and practices of security have to be analysed carefully to avoid reductionist generalisations (Acharya 2006). At the same time, scholars have used Critical Security Studies to foster emancipatory research and highlight the fate of vulnerable groups – or as a means to deconstruct and criticise policies and politics of governments and international agents (McDonald 2017). The five articles in this Special Issue are representative for such a multidimensional approach of Critical Security Studies and securitisation studies on the Asian context, and can hopefully push the debate further, while presenting meaningful empirical insights on Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, Indonesia and Timor-Leste, North Korea and the Indo-Pacific region.

The articles of this Special Issue

The aim of this Special Issue is to gain new comparative understandings of security constructions as the driving forces of politics and of attempts to govern by and through the construction of (in)security on various, interconnected levels. Taking up the focus on the domestic, even community, level of security as a governing mode, Lottholz and Sheranova ask what consequences the internationally and nationally introduced "community security programmes" in Kyrgyzstan have, in merely administrating or "producing" security for citizens, ten years after inter-communal clashes and violence in the southern Kyrgyz cities of Osh and Jalal-Abad. With the article, the authors add to research on everyday security in an internationalised "post-conflict" setting and challenge simplistic notions of the localisation and ownership of externally induced security reform programmes.

The domestic dimension of security is also in the focus of the article by Staar. He reconstructs the strategies of (de)securitisation for raising and maintaining legitimate authority in the domestic public communications of the North Korean government in its depiction of the United States. The analysis focuses on texts

from the North Korean newspaper *Rodong Sinmun* and on declarations made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of North Korea between 2017 and 2020 and shows how diverse the communicative strategies are, even in an authoritarian context, and how much the positionality of speakers matters with regard to the range of (de)securitising and resecuritising depictions of the "sworn enemy", thereby adding to the existing debate on speakers and audiences in Critical Security Studies (Vuori 2008, Côté 2016). Furthermore, this opens up the alleged "black box" of the governing logic of North Korea – showing that scholars in fact have the chance to deconstruct the modes of governance, even in such a closed political setting.

Proceeding from the domestic context to regional and international relations, Chand and Garcia reconstruct how four key states – Australia, India, Japan and the United States – have shifted their foreign policy focus from the Asia-Pacific to the Indo-Pacific. In doing so, in their attempt to react to China's rise, they facilitate and stabilise the securitisation of China. However – and this is the broader significance of the article for debates on security and region-making (Buzan 2003) – all actors in fact differ in the concrete discourse of securitisation, due to their specific domestic ideas and views of China and of themselves.

Connecting a conflict of self-determination with international politics in a historically informed study, Bonacker and Distler analyse the strategic use of securitisation at the United Nations in the context of the de-colonisation struggle of East Timor from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s. The article shows how the self-determination conflict was successfully constructed as a conflict system beyond the actual conflict region and as a matter of world politics by both securitising and desecuritising speech acts of the conflict actors, mostly Indonesia, the Timorese resistance movement and the latter's allies at the United Nations. The article, in combining securitisation with world politics, pushes our knowledge of how Asian political actors co-shaped international politics and how securitisation can be used to silence or resist political strategies. Similarly, in his research note Stritzel revisits the conflict in Afghanistan through the lens of securitisation theory, particularly the very relational dynamics of securitisation and counter-securitisation strategies of external interveners, the Afghan government and the Taliban, as the latter sought to raise legitimacy for their role in the future governance of Afghanistan.

While the contributions are different in both focus of analysis and concrete use of securitisation frameworks, they all underline the need to learn more about how "security" is used concretely to govern the domestic, regional and international spheres, as well as to justify violence or offer pathways for resistance in individual cases. The articles suggest several future research avenues – for Asian Studies, Critical Security Studies and beyond. How do everyday experiences in societies interact with internationalised programmes on community

security? How can we explain the different, even counteracting "shades" of security discourse in the attempt to generate legitimacy for authoritarian governance? How do Asian agents, in formulating policies and using securitising speech acts strategically in regional and international spaces, shape international norms and relations? And finally, how do (Asian) actors resist international, hegemonic security discourse and practices? Further studies along these paths will help us to de-construct security as an influential mode of governance – and, hopefully, to appreciate the potential emancipatory dimension of this work.

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Constituting the Indo-Pacific: Securitisation and the Processes of Region-Making

Bibek Chand / Zenel Garcia

Abstract

In recent years, securitisation discourses related to regional constructs in Asia have galvanised a shift from the Asia-Pacific to the Indo-Pacific. China's rise, particularly the perceived assertiveness and counter-normative nature of its foreign policy, have promoted a growing discourse of enmity, unease and fear, thus facilitating its securitisation by key global and regional actors. Through their promotion of securitisation discourses, political and military leaders in the United States, Japan, India and Australia are demonstrating two interrelated dynamics that reveal the political process of region-making: (1) how securitisation discourse not only exposes the threat perception of individual states, but also the role they see for themselves and others in the management of these threats; and (2) how these securitisation discourses galvanise regional formation and transformation based on shared threat perceptions and modes of threat management. Consequently, the meta-geographical transformation of the Asia-Pacific into the Indo-Pacific is predicated on a political process underpinned by securitisation discourses centred on China. This process has significant implications for regional order as well as security dynamics, particularly because the construction of the Indo-Pacific region by these pivotal actors results in the remaking of the region that situates China and the South China Sea at its centre, thus framing it as the target of containment. Furthermore, the concept of the Indo-Pacific merges the separate strategic spaces of the Pacific and Indian Oceans as a cohesive strategic space, wherein India and smaller Southeast Asian states are also included in securitisation discourses related to China.

Keywords: Securitisation, Indo-Pacific, Asia-Pacific, China, India, Japan, Australia, USA, threat management, speech acts

1. Introduction

For over a decade, there has been a gradual transition from the Asia-Pacific to the Indo-Pacific regional construct. This transition has been driven by securitisation discourses emanating from key players such as the United States, Japan, India and Australia. These discourses are aimed at the perceived counter-normative nature of China's foreign policy. While the Indo-Pacific construct has not been universally accepted, most clearly by China but also Russia, it is evident that

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its proponents have remained committed to this transition and have sought additional support from regional actors, especially members of the Association for Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). As a result, there is an ongoing competition of region-making discourses, underpinned by securitisation, that are reframing the region. The importance of this process should not be understated since regional frames affect key policy decisions such as resource allocation and high-level attention, the prioritisation of security partners, as well as the membership and agenda of regional institutions (Medcalf 2018: 10).

Although the Indo-Pacific construct does not appear to possess clearly delineated boundaries, through their speech acts, its proponents have revealed important features. The most obvious is the framing of the Indian and Pacific Ocean regions as a connected economic, political and strategic space. In this framing, Southeast Asia and the South China Sea (SCS) become the regional pivot since they serve as a conduit between the two oceans. Consequently, securitising discourses focused on promoting a "free and open Indo-Pacific" not only reveal international norms that are perceived to be at risk, such as freedom of navigation, but also how the undermining of such a norms endangers key sea lanes of communications (SLOCs), particularly along chokepoints in the SCS. Additionally, they reveal that it is China's actions along this space that are perceived to pose a risk to these norms. In other words, securitisation is doing more than illustrating the dominant security dynamics of the region; it is also revealing the region-makers and their vision for the region.

This study aims to trace the transformation from the Asia-Pacific to the Indo-Pacific as a result of securitisation discourses. It focuses on four key actors: the United States, Japan, India and Australia. These cases are selected since each of them has identified the others as key members of the new regional construct. As a result, their cases help illustrate how the process of region-making involves recognition of membership, and thus the spatiality of a regional construct. Additionally, these cases reveal how securitisation patterns not only expose the threat perception of individual states, but also the role they see for themselves and others in the management of these threats. Lastly, they reveal how securitisation shapes regional formation and transformation based on shared threat perceptions and modes of threat management.

2. Securitisation and region-making

Securitisation theory contends that security issues are not objectively "out there" but rather, that they are socially constructed through speech acts. As originally formulated by Ole Waever and Barry Buzan, the Copenhagen School intrinsically ties survival to the concept of security (Buzan et al. 1998: 21). Con-

sequently, the construction of security issues begins with a speech act designating a referent object as being existentially threatened. In other words, what makes "a specifically 'security' act – a 'securitization' – is its casting of an issue as an 'existential threat' which calls for extraordinary measures beyond the routines and norms of everyday politics" (Williams 2003: 514). This process is initiated by a securitising actor and may be shaped by functional actors (Buzan et al. 1998: 36). In essence, securitisation shifts issues out of the realm of normal politics by elevating them to security issues.

While this conceptualisation of securitisation paved the way for a significant body of work in the subfield of security studies, the theory has received several refinements. For example, scholars who have sought to apply the theory to non-democratic regimes do not see the distinction between "normal" and "extraordinary" politics as necessary (Vuori 2008, Balzacq 2011). Additionally, there has been a move towards recognising the importance of images and popular culture as contributors to the process of securitisation, thus moving beyond speech acts as the sole mechanism (Williams 2003, Hansen 2011, Heck / Schlag 2012). Perhaps the most comprehensive refinement of securitisation theory has been provided by Thierry Balzacq, who defined securitisation as

> an articulated assemblage of practices whereby heuristic artefacts (metaphors, policy tools, image repertoires, analogies, stereotypes, emotions, etc.) are contextually mobilised by a securitizing actor, who works to prompt an audience to build a coherent network of implications (feelings, sensations, thoughts, and intuitions) about the critical vulnerability of a referent object, that concurs with the securitizing actor's reasons for choices and actions, by investing the referent subject with such an aura of unprecedented threatening complexion that a customised policy must be immediately undertaken to block it. (Balzacq 2011: 3)

This definition not only expands on the performative aspects of speech acts by recognising images as a component, it also recognises the crucial role that context and audience play in successful securitisation. Additionally, it also distinguishes between the referent object, the entity that is threatened, and the referent subject, the entity that is threatening. Finally, it highlights the importance of distinctive policy proposals as being a component of securitisation. In other words, it "combines the politics of threat design with that of threat management" (Balzacq et al. 2015: 2). It is in this form that this study aims to utilise securitisation.

As indicated above, securitisation not only reveals what is to be secured, by whom, from whom and how, the process also has implications for region-making. Specifically, in the same way that securitisation represents the social construction of security threats, it also has a role in the social construction of regions. While this aspect of securitisation is recognised in Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT), the theory places great importance on geographical proximity (Buzan / Waever 2003: 44–46). More importantly, the manner in

which securitisation is utilised in RSCT is narrowly focused on how the processes of securitisation and desecuritisation are so interlinked that a state's security problems cannot be reasonably analysed or resolved apart from others in the region (ibid.: 44). In other words, it omits the process in which states, through their securitisation efforts, aim to situate themselves, and others, within a given geographic space or the role they aim to play; it lacks intentionality.

Accounting for this dynamic allows for a better understanding of what Iver B. Neumann (1994) calls the Region-Building Approach. This approach contends that regions are socially constructed. As a result, they are expected to be in a constant state of being defined and redefined by their constituent members as they attempt to situate themselves at the core of the region (Neumann 1994: 53). The Region-Building Approach not only assesses how regions are constructed, but also how region-builders bring them into existence. Thus, the existence of regions is preceded by region-builders that, as part of a political project, imagine a certain spatial and chronological identity for a region, and then proceed to disseminate this imagined identity to others (ibid.: 58)

Securitisation, while not explicitly noted as a component of the Region-Building Approach, is inherently embedded in this process. Through securitisation, key actors not only participate in the construction of security threats but also in region-making. The process of identifying the referent object, subject, audience and policy solutions reveals the regional frames of these actors. Consequently, whether implicitly or explicitly, as is the case in this study, the securitising actors also acquire the role of region-builders.

3. Constituting the Indo-Pacific

3.1. Japan and the confluence of the two seas

The idea of connecting the Pacific and Indian Oceans as a macroregional geopolitical space has historical precedents (Medcalf 2018: 14). However, contemporary efforts to promote the transition from the Asia-Pacific to the Indo-Pacific construct have been spearheaded by Japanese officials, particularly Former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. On 22 August 2007, during his first and short-lived tenure as PM, Abe gave a speech at the Indian parliament titled "Confluence of the Two Seas". The speech highlighted a number of key themes that frame the discursive and empirical transformation of the region. The first theme was the expanded spatiality of the region. According to Abe, "the Pacific and the Indian Oceans are now bringing about a dynamic coupling as seas of freedom and of prosperity" (Abe 2007). This "broader Asia", as he called it, would "evolve into an immense network spanning the entirety of the Pacific Ocean, incorpo

rating the United States of America and Australia" (ibid.). By linking the two oceans and identifying core constituents, Abe was establishing the spatiality of the Indo-Pacific construct.

The second theme from this speech touched on the normative foundations of this "broader Asia". According to Abe, Japan was rediscovering India, a partner that he believed shared the same values and interests. Specifically, India was to be a partner for enriching the "seas of freedom and prosperity" in a manner that would be open and transparent to all (Abe 2007). To this end, the shared values of freedom, democracy and respect for human rights are meant to be the normative foundation for regional cooperation. Abe indicated that as "broader Asia" took shape at the confluence of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, it was crucial for democratic nations located at the cardinal directions of these seas to deepen their cooperation. By setting out the normative foundations of the construct, Abe is also making the appeal that these must be protected.

The third and final theme revealed the securitisation process that underpinned the previous two. It is evident that maritime security was at the core of the "Confluence of the Two Seas" speech. Abe indicated that as maritime states, India and Japan had vital interests in the security of the SLOCs of the region, adding that these sea lanes were "the shipping routes that are the most critical for the world economy" (Abe 2007). While he is not explicit about the referent subject, by identifying the referent object in the context of the normative foundations, it is clear his main concern was China. In other words, freedom of navigation, as well as Abe's perception that China's military modernisation and foreign policy posed a threat to the SLOCs, was the imperative for his efforts to reshape the Asia-Pacific into the Indo-Pacific by bringing India into the fold.

Shortly after his re-election as PM in 2012, Abe authored an op-ed titled "Asia's Democratic Security Diamond". While his address to the Indian parliament could be considered a subtle securitisation effort, this op-ed was more explicit. The three themes indicated above were present once again. Abe stated that "peace, stability, and freedom of navigation in the Pacific Ocean are inseparable from peace, stability, and freedom of navigation in the Indian Ocean", thus linking the Indian and Pacific Ocean through a securitisation speech act (Abe 2012). Here again, Australia, India, Japan and the United States were identified as key partners, although India's role was particularly elevated. Specifically, he indicated that India, as a "resident power in East Asia, with the Andaman and Nicobar Islands sitting at the western end of the Strait of Malacca (through which some 40 per cent of world trade passes) – deserves greater emphasis" (ibid.)

The normative foundations also remained the same, namely, the importance of democracy. According to Abe, Japan is a mature maritime democracy; as a result, its choice of close partners should reflect that fact. Although he indicates that stable relations with China are vital to the well-being of many in

Japan, "diplomacy must always be rooted in democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights" (Abe 2012). In other words, values that he does not believe China represents.

It is clear from this op-ed that maritime security is at the centre of Abe's "Democratic Security Diamond" and that he sees China's actions as the primary threat. He contends that "the South China Sea seems set to become a 'Lake Beijing'", thus posing a threat to freedom of navigation. In fact, Abe explicitly linked China's actions in the ongoing Sino-Japanese dispute over the Senkaku / Diaoyu Islands to developments in the SCS, indicating that China's "daily exercises in coercion" in the East China Sea (ECS) are part of an effort by Beijing to make its presence appear ordinary, and to unilaterally establish its jurisdiction in the waters surrounding the islands as a fait accompli (Abe 2012). He argued that Japan must resist these moves, adding that if it yielded, the SCS would become more fortified and that freedom of navigation would be "seriously hindered" (ibid.). Here again, it is Japan's securitisation of China's policy that serves as the catalyst for regional transformation.

The speech and op-ed discussed above, while not an exhaustive representation of Japan's securitisation of China, reveal the dynamics behind the politics of threat design and threat management. In this case, Abe serves as the securitising actor who identifies the referent objects that are threatened, such as freedom of navigation. In doing so, he also identifies China and its policies as the referent subject. The audiences in this case are domestic and international, to which Japanese officials are appealing based on shared similar values. Collectively, these represent the process of threat design. This process also reveals the preferred forms of threat management. It is evident from Abe's efforts to bring together democracies, particularly those strategically located on the margins of the Indo-Pacific, that the management, or containment, of China's policy is the goal. Additionally, it serves as the basis for Japan's promotion of the "Proactive Contribution to Peace" as the basic principle for its national security strategy. This concept recognises Japan's archipelagic status and thus its need for an open and stable maritime order. It also indicates that Japan "intends to contribute to the development of the world economy while securing its own economic growth and prosperity through expansion of the open, rule-based international economic system" (Government of Japan 2014). In other words, Japan aims to play a greater security role.

As the twin dynamics of securitisation, both threat design and threat management can also produce regional transformations. In this case, Japanese officials serve as the region-builders who not only situate Japan as a core member of the region, but also identify other core constituents. In doing so, the region-builders redefine the spatiality of the region. Consequently, Japan's recognition of India as a strategic partner and constituent of the region expands the Asia-Pacific by adding the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), thus generating the Indo-Pacific. This

regional construct, where Australia, India, Japan and the United States are each located at strategic cardinal locations of the Indo-Pacific, situates the referent object and subject at the centre. In other words, freedom of navigation through the region's SLOCs must be secured against China's policies, which have been securitised.

3.2. India's Act East Policy

The Indian Ocean Region is a key component of the Indo-Pacific construct. As a resident power in the IOR, India sees itself as a security provider for the region, and consequently, a key player in the Indo-Pacific (Ensuring Secure Seas 2015: 8). However, in the context of existing Sino-Indian territorial disputes and growing geopolitical competition, New Delhi sees China's ability to project power into the IOR as detrimental to its position as well as the stability of the region (Chand / Garcia 2017). These concerns are encapsulated in securitisation discourses surrounding a potential Chinese "string of pearls" in the IOR and the threat this would pose to freedom of navigation along crucial SLOCs and choke points.

Traditionally, India has sought to maintain and limit its presence within South Asia. Given China's increasing presence in the Indian Ocean, India is increasingly redefining the spatiality of its strategic space, leading to the rapid disappearance of differentiation between the Indian and Pacific Oceans (Scott 2012: 93). Official documents such as the Indian Navy's report "Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy" demonstrate the growing acceptance of the Indo-Pacific construct, by acknowledging the shift from a Euro-Atlantic to an Indo-Pacific focus (Indian Navy 2015: ii). More importantly, the report links the Indo-Pacific to India's Act East Policy, signalling acceptance of the Indo-Pacific spatial concept and highlighting Indian interests within that region. In 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi began promoting the Act East Policy, which was meant to be a replacement of the previous Look East Policy. First used by the then Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, the Act East Policy was initially conceptualised to accelerate India's economic engagement with Southeast Asia (Jaishankar 2019: 13). India's growing interests in Southeast Asia (and beyond) prompted discursive shifts from Indian leaders.

The discourses used by Indian political elites are no longer tied to South Asia alone. At the Indian Ocean Conference in the Maldives in 2019, Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar stated that the Indo-Pacific was a priority for India and "the logical next step after the Act East and a break out from the confines of South Asia" (Ministry of External Affairs India 2019a). That same year, Jaishankar articulated India's geographic conceptualisation of the Indo-Pacific stating that, "economic and civilizational impulses link the eastern

and southern shoes of Africa through the Gulf, the Arabian Sea island nations, the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia, Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands" (Ministry of External Affairs India 2019b). Translating this conception on the ground, India began the groundwork in 2014 by expanding naval arrangements with Sri Lanka and the Maldives by inviting the Seychelles and Mauritius into an Indian Ocean security grouping that is unofficially called the IO-5 (Brewster 2014). More importantly, India has joined the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (the Quad), reaffirming its position in the Indo-Pacific construct.

New Delhi has also been proactive in rhetorically defining its normative basis for the Indo-Pacific. In 2018, PM Modi delivered the keynote speech at the Shangri-La Dialogue held in Singapore. During this speech, Modi emphasised the importance of the Act East Policy in connecting with its neighbours to the East. In the realm of security, he emphasised the role played by the Indian Navy in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. More importantly, he stated that the Indo-Pacific region's common prosperity and security necessitated the development of a "common rules-based order for the region", adding that "it must equally apply to all individually as well as to the global commons" (Ministry of External Affairs India 2018). This order, he argued, must "believe in sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as equality of all nations, irrespective of size and strength" where "equal access to the use of common spaces on sea and in the air are rights under international law" (ibid.). Finally, Modi stated that India was committed to upholding international norms, including a free, open, and inclusive region in accordance with international law relating to the use of common spaces on sea and air. In stating this, he positioned India as a central player in the region that backs international norms and law as well as their inviolability (Ministry of External Affairs India 2018). Consequently, Modi is not only setting the foundational norms of the Indo-Pacific that need to be protected; he is positioning India as a steward and protector of those norms, thus validating its regional role.

The securitisation discourse that underpins India's framing of the Indo-Pacific rests heavily on maritime security and directly links to China's increased activity in the IOR. The "National Security Strategy" document, commissioned by the Indian National Congress party, indicates that China's rise and growing assertiveness poses the most significant long-term challenge for India (Indian National Congress 2019: 10). This concern is reflected in its securitisation discourse. The referent objects are clear: India's interests in South Asia, freedom of navigation, open airspace and territorial integrity. These are directly linked to three Chinese activities in the region: (1) the strategic encirclement of India by China through the latter's endeavours in South Asia; (2) India's concerns for freedom of navigation in the SCS, which includes its crucial trade links with eastern Asia; and (3) increased Chinese forays into the Indian Ocean on the basis of

anti-piracy patrols (Rajagopalan 2020: 79). In other words, China is the referent subject in India's securitisation discourse.

The framing of China as a referent subject in these securitisation discourses also informs the modes of threat management. To ensure the protection of India's strategic referent objects, it has also made commitments to manage any threats that might emerge to undermine them. The Act East Policy is touted as a means of promoting Indian engagements with Southeast Asia but also of strengthening ties with states in the region that have significantly strained ties with China, namely Vietnam and to some extent, Singapore, Indonesia and the Philippines. India has also sought closer ties in the Indo-Pacific with states that share normative approaches such as Japan, Australia and the United States, which has culminated in India's engagement with the Quad (Basu 2020, The White House 2017, Ministry of External Affairs India 2014).

Another means through which India pursues its threat management vis-à-vis China is the Malabar exercises in the Bay of Bengal. In November 2020, India hosted the navies of the United States, Japan and Australia. The Indian Navy stated it as a "commitment of the participating countries to support a free, open, inclusive Indo-Pacific as well as a rules-based international order" (The Hindu 2020). Commander Ryan T. Easterday of the USS John S. McCain destroyer said that "Malabar provides an opportunity for like-minded navies, sharing a common vision of a more stable, open, and prosperous Indo-Pacific, to operate and train alongside one another" (Johnson 2020). The norms of a stable and open Indo-Pacific are reiterated, highlighting their importance and securitising the threats to them, which are to be managed by forging ties with other powers that share common views on the Indo-Pacific. Overall, India's threat management approach has focused on forging closer ties with states that share common norms of open oceans and seas, along with a commitment to the open rules-based multilateral order.

3.3. Australia's balancing act

Australia has perceived itself to be a key actor in Pacific affairs, especially in Oceania. Moreover, like other members of the Quad, Canberra has actively promoted the emergence of the Indo-Pacific construct through securitisation discourse from key officials and documents. In the Foreign Policy White Paper of 2017, the Australian Government articulates the country's framing of the Indo-Pacific. In this paper, former Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull stated that Australia is determined to realise a "secure, open, and prosperous Indo-Pacific" (Australian Government 2017: iii). This White Paper also highlighted the spatial demarcation of the Indo-Pacific as the region ranging from the eastern Indian

Ocean to the Pacific Ocean, including Southeast Asia, India, North Asia and the United States (ibid.: 1). It is also evident that through its framing of the Indo-Pacific, Australia sees itself as a central actor in the region. Prime Minister Scott Morrison illustrated this in a 2019 address in which he contended that Australia was not only a constituent member of the Indo-Pacific. The region was also where it exercised its "greatest influence" and could "make the most meaningful impact and contribution" (Asialink 2019).

Official statements and documents indicate that the normative foundations of Australia's Indo-Pacific construct are predicated on norms similar to those espoused by the United States, Japan and India. In essence, Canberra asserts strong democratic credentials with emphases on the rule of law and freedom. For example, the Foreign Policy White Paper highlights Australia's commitment to promoting an open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region where international order is maintained through adherence to international rules. It particularly highlights the importance of maintaining free access to the oceans and seas for all states (Australian Government 2017: 6–7). This is echoed in the Defence White Paper, which indicates that "Australia has a strong interest in the maintenance of peace and stability, respect for international law, unimpeded trade and freedom of navigation and overflight" (Department of Defence Australia 2016: 57). During a visit to Kuala Lumpur in 2019, Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Frances Adamson, laid out Australia's vision for the Indo-Pacific, which is encapsulated in the two aforementioned White Papers. This vision focuses on four normative components: (1) the resolution of disputes through mechanisms afforded by international law and without the threat or use of force and coercion; (2) open markets; (3) inclusive economic integration; and (4) freedom of navigation and overflight, in which the rights of small states are protected (Adamson 2019).

By articulating the normative foundations of its vision for the Indo-Pacifc, Australian official discourse also reveals the need for their protection. In fact, these norms are perceived as being intrinsically linked to Australia's security. This was illustrated by Adamson during a speech at Australian National University, in which she stated that Australia would be "more secure in a region characterised by respect for international law and other norms and where disputes are resolved peacefully" (Adamson 2018). It is also evident that Australia sees key democracies in the region as playing an important role in supporting its vision for the Indo-Pacific. The Foreign Policy White Paper explicitly indicates that democracies such as Japan, Indonesia, India and the Republic of Korea are "partners of first order importance" (Australian Government 2017: 40). Overall, the normative foundations for Australia's approach towards the Indo-Pacific rest on shared democratic ideas, freedom of navigation and a commitment to international norms and rules. These are largely in congruence with the

outlooks of normative foundations espoused by Japan, India and the United States.

Australia's securitisation discourse focuses on concerns over the undermining of the aforementioned norms. In August 2019, Australian PM Scott Morrison and Vietnamese PM Nguyen Xuan Phuc released a joint statement expressing "concern about disruptive activities in relation to long-standing oil and gas projects in the South China Sea" (Elmer 2019). The joint statement did not mention China, but its backdrop includes Chinese activities in the Vietnamese-controlled Vanguard Bank of the Spratly Islands, where China had deployed several maritime vessels, including a survey ship. China's activities in the South China Sea (SCS) are viewed as particularly concerning. The Defence White Paper voices Australia's concern and opposition to land reclamation efforts in the SCS as well as the construction of artificial structures (Department of Defence Australia 2016: 58). Importantly, it adds that Canberra "opposes the assertion of associated territorial claims and maritime rights which are not in accordance with international law" (ibid.).

These securitisation discourses illustrate a perceived threat to the stability of a rules-based order, particularly to the key norms that underpin it, such as sovereignty, territorial integrity and freedom of navigation. Morrison made this point in 2019 when he argued that stability of the post-war order has been predicated on the "respect for the individual sovereign state, no matter how large or small, and the ambition that each may be able to engage and participate with the security afforded by a common set of rules that means they can get a fair go, free of coercion" (Asialink 2019). While China is not explicitly identified as the referent subject in these securitisation discourses, it is clear, given the activities referenced and the context in which they were uttered, that it is Beijing's policies that are considered as threatening to the established norms and order.

Given its implicit recognition of China as the referent subject in its securitisation discourses, Australia premises its threat management through its existing alliance network and strategic partnerships with countries such as the United States, Japan, India, New Zealand, Vietnam, Singapore and Indonesia (Asialink 2019). Australia has also emphasised democracy as an effective threat management technique, as showcased by its extensive engagement in the Quad, and more recently, its participation in the Malabar exercise. Its worsening relations with China in light of the SCS disputes and Beijing's threats of economic retaliation in line with Australia's critique of its handling of the COVID-19 pandemic have prompted Canberra to strengthen its response vis-à-vis China (Grossman 2020). For example, as a response to growing fears of cyberattacks from China, Australia has committed to spending $500,000 to set up a tech network for the Quad (Hurst 2020).

Australia recognises the threats emanating from China, particularly with regard to competing claims in the SCS. This is particularly evident in the growing tensions between the two countries. While recognising the important economic relationship between the two countries, Canberra's official discourse clearly refers to other players such as Vietnam, Japan, India and the United States, who share concerns about China's activities, as strategic "partners" or "allies" (Asialink 2019). Thus, Australia's pragmatic foreign policy highlights the importance of engaging China economically while also concurrently working on constructing threat management mechanisms through fostering close security ties for threat management with the United States and norms-based alliance partnerships with other regional democracies such as Japan, South Korea and India.

3.4. The U.S. and the free and open Indo-Pacific

The American shift towards the Indo-Pacific regional construct began through the Obama administration's "Pivot to Asia" strategy, in which former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton played a key role. Clinton first used the term "Indo-Pacific" in 2010 during a speech in Hawai'i where she discussed the growing U.S.-India naval partnership, which she felt highlighted the importance of the Indo-Pacific basin (Clinton 2010). The following year she penned an op-ed in the journal *Foreign Policy* where she indicated that translating the "growing connection between the Indian and Pacific oceans into an operational concept" was crucial for adapting to "new challenges in the region" (Clinton 2011). In this op-ed, Clinton stated that America's alliance system in the region would serve as the fulcrum of the pivot to Asia, and that the U.S.-Japan alliance was the "cornerstone of peace and stability in the region" (ibid.). Importantly, she revealed the need to reframe the "alliance with Australia from a Pacific partnership to an Indo-Pacific one" (ibid.), thus illustrating the transformation of the regional context of the U.S.-Australian relationship. Lastly, Clinton identified India as a key democratic partner in the safeguarding of freedom of navigation along pivotal SLOCs (Clinton 2011). In essence, she identified three core constituent members of the American Indo-Pacific construct, all of which are democratic states that are perceived to share similar values.

Other officials in the Obama administration also echoed Clinton's framing. Former U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, during a speech in New Delhi, stated that "as India 'looks east' and the United States 'rebalances', our interests across the full span of the Indo-Pacific region are aligning more closely than ever", thus highlighting the important place that India occupies in the U.S. framing of the Indo-Pacific, in addition to key allies like Japan and Australia (Hagel 2014). Hagel also indicated that due to "shared interest in maritime security in the region, including the global crossroads of the South China Sea",

closer cooperation was needed to "protect freedom of navigation in the air and sea" (ibid.). Clinton's successor, former Secretary of State John Kerry was also proactive in the promotion of the Indo-Pacific construct. During his visit to Sri Lanka in 2015, he stated that the United States was "providing leadership on maritime security in the Indian Ocean in association with close friends and allies across the region, including India, Australia, Indonesia, and Japan", adding that Washington opposed "the use of intimidation or force to assert a territorial or maritime claim by anyone" in the Indo-Pacific (Kerry 2015).

While the "Pivot to Asia" served as the platform for America's construction of the Indo-Pacific during the Obama administration, the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" (FOIP) took on this mantle during the Trump administration. During his visit to New Delhi in 2017, former Secretary of Defense James Mattis followed a similar discourse set out by Obama-era counterparts, stating that a "peaceful and prosperous future in the Indo-Pacific region is based on a strong rules-based international order and a shared commitment to international law, to peaceful resolution of disputes and respect for territorial integrity" (Mattis 2017). Mattis indicated that U.S.-Indian defence cooperation was predicated on a convergence of mutual interests, adding that India's designation as a defence partner reflected Washington's recognition of New Delhi's role as a "pillar of regional stability and security" (ibid.).

Former Secretary of State Rex Tillerson echoed these points during a speech at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in 2017, when he argued that the United States and India shared mutual interests in peace, security and freedom of navigation in the Indo-Pacific (Tillerson 2017). Tillerson stated that the two countries should serve as "the Eastern and Western beacons" that maintain a free and open architecture in the region, adding that the Indo-Pacific "will be the most consequential part of the globe in the 21st century" (ibid.). During this speech, Tillerson also highlighted the important role that democracies such as India, as well as allies like Australia and Japan, play in strengthening the rule of law and furthering prosperity and security in the region (Tillerson 2017).

The clearest articulation of the Trump administration's "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" (FOIP) strategy was given by the Deputy Secretary of the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Alex Wong. During a briefing in 2018, Wong deconstructed the strategy to its constitutive parts. He indicated that the word "free" meant that the nations of the Indo-Pacific should be "free from coercion" and that their societies should be free in terms of "good governance", "human rights" and "transparency and anti-corruption" (Wong 2018). These points implicitly speak to China's coercive policies in the region as well as the illiberal nature of its regime. In regard to the word "open", Wong stated that it referred to "open sea lanes of communication and open airways", "open logistics", "open investment" and "open trade" (ibid.). Here again, China appears

to be the target, particularly its investment and lending practices, vis-à-vis the Belt and Road Initiative. Lastly, he highlights that the reason for the adoption of the "Indo-Pacific" concept is twofold: (1) "it acknowledges the historical reality and the current-day reality that South Asia, and in particular India, plays a key role in the Pacific and in East Asia and in Southeast Asia" and (2) it is in the U.S.'s and the region's interest that "India play an increasingly weighty role in the region" (ibid.). Wong adds that as a democracy, India is invested in a Free and Open Indo-Pacific that can serve to anchor a free and open order in the region. These points illustrate two important aspects of the Trump administration's FOIP strategy. The first is the key role that India plays in Washington's policies in the region. The second is that it reflects a balancing logic that frames India, a democratic country, as a bookend in the regional construct, opposite the United States, with China, an authoritarian country, situated in the middle.

While the securitisation of China is implicitly present in statements by key government officials, it is much more explicit in official government documents. For example, Trump's National Security Strategy (2017: 45–46) contends that "a geopolitical competition between free and repressive visions of world order is taking place in the Indo-Pacific". China's threat to freedom of navigation and regional stability is specifically outlined. The State Department's Free and Open Indo-Pacific document argues that "authoritarian revisionist powers seek to advance their parochial interest at others' expense" (U.S. Department of State 2019: 5). The document singles out China's policies as threatening freedom of navigation in the region, and adds that Beijing's claims in the SCS, based on the "preposterous 'nine-dash line,' are unfounded, unlawful, and unreasonable" (ibid.: 23). Lastly, the U.S. Department of Defense's Indo-Pacific Strategy Report states that China's policies undermine "the international system from within by exploiting its benefits while simultaneously eroding the values and principles of the rules-based order" (U.S. Department of Defense 2019: 7). The report calls attention to China's abuse of human rights at the domestic level as well as its coercion of neighbouring states in the ECS and the SCS (ibid.: 8).

Collectively, these official discourses frame the spatiality of the Indo-Pacific construct by identifying key constituent members and their roles, the normative underpinnings of the region, as well as the referent objects that are perceived as threatened. While China is not always explicitly identified as the referent subject, it is implicit that repeated mentions of freedom of navigation, open markets and fair competition allude to areas in which Beijing's policies are perceived as threatening. Additionally, by focusing on the role of alliances, strategic partnerships and regional institutions, these officials are revealing preferred modes of threat management.

4. Convergence and divergence

The brief cases presented above indicate several points of convergence among the region-builders: (1) each actor acknowledges the other as a core constituent of the Indo-Pacific construct; (2) they share core values that establish the normative foundations of the construct, particularly a rules-based order underpinned by international law; and (3) they intentionally mobilise securitisation discourses to support the previous two points and to promote the construction of the Indo-Pacific. Despite these important areas of convergence, however, none of the region-builders' conceptions of the Indo-Pacific are identical. The two main points of divergence are based on the spatiality of their respective Indo-Pacific constructs, as well as the degree to which China should be contained.

While the four region-builders explicitly identify each other as key partners in their efforts to promote the Indo-Pacific construct, their conception of the region's spatiality varies. This variation is predicated on the key roles they seek to play and the areas they prioritise. Japan's conception of the Indo-Pacific is the most expansive. The U.S.-Japan alliance, particularly the role that Japan plays in the forward projection of U.S. forces, as well as the regular military exercises the two conduct across the Pacific, indicate that Tokyo incorporates the entire Pacific region in its understanding of the Indo-Pacific. Additionally, Japan possesses several small islands in the central Pacific, which by necessity require attention. What makes Japan's conception of the Indo-Pacific the most expansive, however, is its inclusion of the African continent. Its FOIP vision illustrates how the "two oceans" link the "two continents" of Asia and Africa (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Japan 2020). This is being promoted through its "Asia Africa Growth Corridor" (ERIA 2017).

The United States appears to have the second most expansive spatiality of the Indo-Pacific as well as the most clearly defined. It is defined by the area of responsibility of the Indo-Pacific Command, one of the six commands designated by the U.S. Department of Defense. This command replaced the former Pacific Command in 2018 in recognition of the "increasing connectivity of the Indian and Pacific Oceans" (Mattis 2018). It is evident that the State Department's FOIP document follows the framing that the Department of Defense has set out, which brings spatial cohesion to the regional construct. This spatiality covers the entire Pacific Ocean but only involves a little over half of the Indian Ocean since it ends at 68 degrees east, leaving out East Africa and the Middle East, which are under the area of responsibility of other commands.

Australia's conception of the Indo-Pacific is more limited than the U.S. and Japan's. Its Pacific Ocean reach is focused on Pacific Island nations in Oceania, where it sees itself as a pivotal player. This is part of Australia's self-image as a middle power. However, there has been greater emphasis on the ECS and espe-

cially the SCS due to the strategic choke points on which its foreign trade is reliant. This extends to key choke points in the Indian Ocean, which are also vital. However, much like the United States, Australia's focus in the Indian Ocean is limited to its eastern half (Australian Government 2017: 1). This focus is natural given Australia's paradoxical geographical realities, which place it relatively near key chokepoints, yet distant from its largest trade partners.

Among the four actors discussed in this study, India has the most limited framing of the Indo-Pacific. Notwithstanding its growing partnership with the United States and Japan, it is clear that India centres its conception of the Indo--Pacific around the Indian Ocean Rim Association and its members (Ministry of External Affairs India 2019b). This includes the entirety of the Indian Ocean Rim (IOR) as well as sections of the Western Pacific, namely, Southeast Asia and part of Oceania. This framing is understandable given India's geographic centrality in the IOR as well as its self-image as a regional power. Its expanding relationship with Western Pacific states maps neatly onto its Indo-Pacific construct since it demonstrates the reality of interconnectivity as well as India's budding power projection capabilities.

The various spatialities of the Indo-Pacific are important. As indicated previously, regional frames shape policy. The nascent stage of the Indo-Pacific construct means that, at this point, it is difficult to evaluate how these different spatialities will affect the stability of the region as well as the degree of cooperation among key constituents, particularly over mutual security interests evident in the securitisation discourses. However, it is clear that the choke points in the IOR, ECS and especially the SCS are central to the regional spatiality of these four actors. This indicates that threat management cooperation is likelier in these areas.

The implicit or explicit securitisation of China by these four actors indicates that there is consensus regarding the threat that its policies pose to the norms they value. There is also consensus regarding cooperation to address these threats. While modes of threat management are likely to vary based on the degree of economic interdependence, territorial disputes and geopolitical rivalries, there does appear to be a convergence in a preferred approach for dealing with Beijing's policies – namely, economic and security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific in order to provide smaller states in the region with options for economic and political diversification (Chand / Garcia 2017). In other words, these actors aim to present themselves as alternatives, or even complements, capable of providing public goods that will mitigate overreliance on China. The goal is to deprive Beijing of the opportunity to establish dominance in the region without significant costs. Although coordination of these efforts remains nascent, it is clear in official statements and documents that these countries view this approach as the most effective avenue for managing or containing China's policies.

5. Conclusion

The complex securitisation patterns linking the United States, Japan, India and Australia have been the primary drivers of the shift from the Asia-Pacific to the Indo-Pacific regional construct. This reveals that securitisation not only serves as a means to understand threat construction and management, but also plays a role in region-making. Through the securitisation process, actors reveal the process through which they situate themselves and others in a geographic space. Furthermore, they reveal the roles they aim to play as well as those they see other actors play. As a result, securitising actors are not only deeply involved in the political process of setting the geographical boundaries but also in identifying the key players, and therefore members, of a regional construct. Lastly, securitisation shapes the region-making process through its identification of shared threat perceptions and modes of threat management.

These securitisation processes, which have galvanised the formation of the Indo-Pacific, reveal important dynamics. The first is that norms of freedom of navigation and democracy serve as the ideational foundation of the Indo-Pacific construct. They also serve as the referent object that is perceived as being threatened and thus needs to be secured. The second is that China's actions in the IOR, the SCS and the ECS are perceived as threatening to these norms, thus becoming the referent subject. The third is that the mechanism of threat management focuses on increased political, economic and military cooperation among the United States, Japan, India and Australia. The purpose is to manage or contain Chinese policies in the region that are perceived as counter-normative. It remains to be seen whether this regional transformation can achieve this; however, it is evident that its proponents see the validity in cooperating and coordinating their efforts to this end.

The growing salience of the Indo-Pacific region construct has important implications for the region. More than a mere change in name, the emergence of the Indo-Pacific has created a new geopolitical space that expands the number of participants and increases the complexity of security relations. Illustrative of the increased complexity that comes with the Indo-Pacific is the transformation of regional hierarchy. While the Asia-Pacific regional construct was spearheaded by the United States and was managed through its power projection capabilities and its hub-and-spoke alliance system, the Indo-Pacific is being proactively spearheaded by a variety of actors including India, which is not a formal alliance partner of the United States. In other words, rather than the hierarchical structure that dominated the Asia-Pacific, the Indo-Pacific appears to possess an ad-hoc structure in which key actors cooperate and coordinate on key issues surrounding the maintenance of freedom of navigation, as well as the protection of SLOCs and choke points, with China squarely in its focus.

This means that while the United States will continue to play a key role in regional security, Japan, India and Australia are taking prominent roles in the new regional construct. This is evident in Japan's "Proactive Contribution to Peace" strategy, India's Act East Policy and Australia's White Papers.

Theoretically, the nexus of securitisation and region-building opens avenues to explore the impact of securitisation processes on the conceptions of regions. For example, through the securitisation of China, which is underpinned by the importance of norms such as open seas and multilateralism, the entire strategic conceptualisation of the Indian and Pacific Oceans has begun to transform. The Indo-Pacific construct now invokes ideas of a new region and a new space wherein new challenges and opportunities exist. As such, the securitisation and region-building approach may offer insights into the discursive process in which we understand geopolitical concepts, as well as revealing how new conceptions shape the behaviour of states as they interpret their environment.

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Securitisation in World Politics: The Conflict on the Self-Determination of East Timor at the United Nations

Thorsten Bonacker / Werner Distler

Abstract

With the Indonesian invasion in late 1975, the self-determination conflict in East Timor gained international attention. Against all attempts on the part of Indonesia to silence international debate on its incorporation of East Timor, the Timorese resistance, with the support of selected states, continued to draw attention to its thwarted efforts at self-determination until the 1990s. Conflicts on self-determination are often analysed either as part of the larger picture of international conflicts or as local territorial conflicts. Instead, we suggest a systems theoretical perspective and understand conflict as a social system, which is based on repeated communication at various levels at the same time. Our analysis shows how the self-determination conflict in East Timor was successfully constructed as a matter of world politics by both the securitising and desecuritising speech acts of the conflict actors. These strategic speech acts from this early phase of the conflict in world politics, on the lack of self-determination of the Timorese people and the unlawful occupation, would prove to be important for the conflict system and renewed critical reaction to the Indonesian occupation in the early 1990s at the UN, ultimately leading to its resolution.

Keywords: East Timor, Indonesia, self-determination, securitization, world politics

Introduction

In the early 1990s, the issue of self-determination for East Timor and Indonesia's occupation of the small country gained renewed attention, as a reaction to the massacre of unarmed protesters in Indonesian East Timor at the Santa Cruz Cemetery, Dili, in November 1991. Before Santa Cruz, the conflict and its history were considered as almost "hidden" from the global public (Taylor

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1991). While NGOs had lobbied for more visibility of the issue of Indonesian violence in East Timor since the 1980s (Torelli 2020), the conflict had, for example, disappeared from the general debates of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in the 1980s. However, a closer look into the revived debates at the United Nations in the early 1990s reveals that the involved conflict actors (the Indonesian government, the Timorese resistance and its supporting states, and Portugal, as the former colonial power in Portuguese Timor until 1975) re-activated conflict vocabulary and references that had already been established in the mid- to late 1970s. The fact that the unlawful Indonesian occupation and the Timorese aspiration for decolonisation and self-determination had not vanished fully from all debates in the UN was the achievement of the Timorese resistance, its supporting states and even Portugal. As we will argue in this article, these actors successfully maintained the internationalisation of the conflict (which began in the mid-1970s) against the active attempts by Indonesia to silence the issue (Ramos-Horta 1987) with the help of security constructions, more precisely a process of securitisations (Stritzel 2011). In this paper, we want to reconstruct these attempts until the early 1990s, when the conflict entered a decade of international securitisations of human rights violations, new widespread attention for the situation in East Timor (Gunn 1997, Pateman 1998) and, finally, the willingness of the international community to intervene in 1999, leading to independence in 2002.

In the literature, conflicts over self-determination are often analysed either as part of the larger picture of international conflicts or as regional or local territorial conflicts. The conflict on self-determination in East Timor, known as Portuguese Timor at the time of its emergence in the mid-1970s, is no exception. After a failed decolonisation process under Portuguese rule and violence among various Timorese parties, Indonesia invaded the territory in December 1975. The resulting conflict has often been portrayed as influenced by logics of the Cold War (Hoffman 1977) or by the domestic dynamics of Indonesia (Tan 2015). The resulting gap in the literature between an international and a regional, domestic perspective on conflicts over self-determination causes two problems. First, it tends to ignore the agency of Timorese actors in the conflict, particularly on the international level. Although studies have shown that the Timorese resistance in exile was indeed quite active, these analyses are often disconnected from structures of international politics (Pinto / Jardine 1997, Fukuda 2000). Second, this split creates a “level problem” in conflict analysis, as studies tend to focus on either the international, the regional or the domestic level without considering the ties between them. In the Timorese case, it is striking for instance that the same conflict party, the Timorese resistance, operated in the occupied territory, influencing regional organisations like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and transnationally, mobilising a worldwide solidarity movement over nearly 25 years.

Moreover, conflict parties in self-determination conflicts are often actively engaged in internationalising the conflict and increasing international support. Thus, whether a self-determination conflict is an international conflict depends largely on the observation of "the international community".[1] Although a few studies examine how conflict parties actively involve international politics for their purpose, they normally do so by focusing exclusively on the parties' attempts to obtain international support, e.g., in lobbying for international intervention (Perritt 2010). In doing so, they largely neglect that such involvement also has an impact on the dynamics of the conflict itself, even if international actors decide not to directly intervene but to function merely as representatives of the global audience to which conflict communication is addressed.

This article addresses some of these shortcomings by providing a theoretical framework to account for the global dynamics of the Timorese-Indonesian conflict. Overall, the article aims to show how the conflict was constructed as significant for world politics by gaining the attention of a global audience and how this then affected the evolution of the conflict. For this purpose, we apply a systems theoretical perspective on conflict and understand it as a social system, which is based on repeated communication that stabilises mutual expectations of continual disagreement, e.g., about territorial claims (Luhmann 1995). Hence, conflicts over self-determination are both international and regional/local as the conflict occurs in only one social system, which can attract and involve conflict parties at all levels at the same time. Our aim is to show how different conflict actors positioned themselves during the conflict and how they were forced to react to the (re)positioning of others in the conflict system. We assume that from the moment the conflict was considered relevant for world politics, conflict parties exploited this "status" and tried to position themselves in front of a global audience and "the international community". This obviously shaped the conduct of the conflict and, to certain extent, made the conflict vulnerable to macro developments, such as the devaluation of certain narratives of the conflict parties.

After a brief review of the literature on the conflict, we will introduce our conceptual framework, which focuses on insights from systems theory – both on conflicts in general and on the construction of conflict in world politics in particular – and on pragmatic and historical securitisation studies (Stritzel 2011). Thereby, we examine how conflict communication in the Timorese struggle for self-determination attracted the attention of world politics and led to shifts in the internal dynamics of the conflict. We then present various speech acts of involved conflict actors on the "question of East Timor" in documents that circulated at the United Nations in the 1970s and 1980s. Our analysis shows

1 The vague use of the term "international community" by political actors and literature has been rightfully criticised (Bliesemann de Guevara / Kühn 2011). Here, we introduce the use of the term by the conflict actors and consider this "community" mostly as a global (state) audience.

how the self-determination conflict in East Timor was successfully constructed as a matter of world politics by both securitising and desecuritising speech acts made by the conflict actors. From 1975 onwards, these speech acts constituted a conflict system beyond the actual conflict region. When violence in East Timor regained attention in world politics in the early 1990s, the speech acts from various actors at the UN repeated the established arguments from the early phase of the conflict, such as the lack of self-determination of the Timorese people and the unlawful occupation and invasion by Indonesia. This recourse shows how important the strategic communication in this early period proved to be for the conflict system and international reaction at a later point in time.

We demonstrate that a comprehensive understanding of self-determination conflicts cannot separate the international from the regional, domestic or local level, but that a conflict takes place at all these "levels" at the same time and in the same conflict system by actively involving actors and audiences of these "levels".

The conflict on East Timor: literature review

East Timor has received much scholarly attention since the referendum on independence in 1999, the subsequent violence and then international peacebuilding and state building (Chopra 2002, Fox / Babo-Soares 2003, Lemay-Hébert 2011). While some recent studies are re-discovering the conflict history (Kammen 2015, Leach 2017), even with a focus on the Timorese or Indonesian political discourse in the 1970s (McRae 2002, Hicks 2014), only a few studies revisit the failed decolonisation in the 1970s and 1980s as a fruitful case for empirical and theoretical reflections on international politics (Carey / Walsh 2010). The conflict in the 1970s and later was largely portrayed as heavily influenced by the logics of the Cold War, particularly regarding the strong relationship between Indonesia and the US and Australia (Hoffman 1977, Chomsky 1979, Sidell 1981). Furthermore, literature with an international focus seems to consider self-determination struggles as international per se, since they negotiate the conflict between contradictory norms in international law, i.e., the right to freely choose sovereignty and international political status with no interference (as laid out in Chapter I of the UN Charter) and the right to territorial integrity (Clark 1980). Up until the 1990s, we find several international law studies regarding the status and self-determination of East Timor (Elliott 1978, Simpson 1994) or the genocidal intensity of violence inflicted by Indonesia (Clark 1981, Taylor 1991).

Studies with a regional and domestic focus have analysed the political behaviour of Indonesia (Hoadley 1977), the internal dynamics in Indonesia that led to the invasion and later stabilised the occupation (Anderson 1993, Tan

2015), and the consequences of the "Indonesianisation of East Timor" (Lawless 1976, Weatherbee 1981), with a focus on violence (Franke 1981). This retrospective shows that literature in general understood the conflict of East Timor either as part of the larger picture of international conflicts or as regional or local territorial conflict and was more concerned with the interests of actors than the dynamics of the conflict over time – a gap we hope to fill with this article.

On a broader level, our article also speaks to literature concerned with discourse at the United Nations. For one, the UN is used by states as an arena for strategic behaviour. States engage with the UN to position themselves and change international policies in the longer run: in an analysis of Libya's strategy against the UN sanctions regime, Hurd concludes that "Libya sought to undermine the legitimacy of the sanctions regime by reinterpreting the norms of the Council and the international community" (Hurd 2008: 137). In his views, governments engage with the UN because the "legitimacy of the Council emerges as a power resource that is at one and the same time valuable to states but also vulnerable to disruption, reinterpretation, and delegitimization" (ibid.). As we will show, the actors in the Indonesian-Timorese conflict were heavily engaged in such strategic behaviour. However, these strategies of states are always formed by the structure and dominance of specific discourses at the UN. Dominant, shared understandings of political issues at the UN can shape state behaviour, whether on climate change and security (Detraz / Betsill 2009), stabilisation after conflict (Curran / Holtom 2015) or humanitarian intervention and state building (Walling 2013, Bonacker et. al. 2017).

We suggest an alternative perspective on the conflict of East Timor and its dynamics at the UN, integrating individual strategic behaviour and international dynamics in a framework based on systems theory, world politics and securitisation.

Conceptual framework

From a systems theoretical perspective, conflicts are complex and dynamic social processes characterised by repeated articulations of the incompatibility of subject positions (Diez et al. 2006: 565, Stetter et. al 2011: 445). Conflict parties constitute themselves by rejecting the communication of others, e.g., by refusing to agree on certain claims. Once established, a conflict system generates more or less stable expectations about future rejections, and conflict parties assume that opponents deny their claims (Luhmann 1995, Messmer 2007). Disagreement becomes the dominant mode of communication. An important implication of a systems theoretical understanding of conflict is that there is only one single conflict system in which conflict communication occurs.

A key assumption of the article is that conflicts may emerge as territorially bounded, but normally are embedded in a variety of different functional systems that operate globally. Although primary conflict parties directly fight each other in a given territory, a conflict system can depart from that by being debordered with the involvement of, for instance, international organisations. As Sienknecht (2018) has argued, the conflict parties, as well as secondary parties and international organisations, can contribute to a globalisation and debordering of the conflict system by stabilising communication structures on the global level. By successfully addressing international organisations the conflict system manages its connectivity to world politics. As we will see in the case of East Timor, debordering provides non-state actors with the opportunity to be included in world politics although they are excluded in domestic politics. At the same time, states can also make use of debordered conflict communication, e.g., by blaming conflict parties for adopting terrorist strategies. Furthermore, diaspora groups can involve other countries in a conflict system. In that regard, the Timorese-Indonesian conflict, although it occurred mainly in the occupied territory of East Timor, also involved neighbouring countries, regional organisations and states with huge Timorese diaspora communities, such as the Netherlands and Ireland.

Even in countries without a significant Timorese diaspora, such as Germany, the conflict was processed when human rights activists successfully politicised the Timor question, managing to get the German city of Weimar to declare Suharto, the president of Indonesia, as a persona non grata in 1995 (Buchsteiner 1995). This already indicates that the dynamics of the Timorese self-determination conflict became transformed in its globalisation through the involvement of world politics. Theoretically, this does not come as a surprise, as historically the legal principle of self-determination of nations was a key driver for the evolution of world politics as well as the emergence of international law (Albert 2016: 207). Thus, if a conflict system is observed by world politics as a self-determination conflict, it seems very likely that it will be considered as a matter for global political affairs.

Against that background, it can be shown how a conflict actually becomes debordered and constructed as a conflict in world politics. A potential way of gaining political attention is to raise security concerns and either ask for protection for a threatened referent object or for the justification of security policies. Merging the notion of conflict in systems theory with the securitisation framework, Diez et al. (2006) argued that securitisation can be understood as intensification of a conflict, in that incompatible subject positions perceive each other as threats to their own identity. As Stetter et al. (2011) have shown, securitisation theory shares some basic assumptions with systems theory, for instance that conflict is processed and constructed by communication. The securitising move, defined by the Copenhagen School (Buzan et al. 1998) as an attempt to

discursively portray a referent object as worthy of protection and at the same time as existentially threatened, can thus be seen as both embedded in a conflict system and continuing the conflict.

For our analysis of how the conflict system has evolved over a longer period and has been globalised by gaining the attention of world politics, we use second-generation, pragmatic securitisation frameworks, which build on the original Copenhagen School, but have transformed and developed it substantially (compare e.g., Balzacq 2005, 2011) and suggest a "radically processual understanding of producing security" (Stritzel 2011: 343). Instead of a universalist, static understanding of what securitisation as a speech act is in one specific situation (Buzan et al. 1998 / Vuori 2008), these perspectives underline both 1) the historical embeddedness of securitisation, and 2) the relational, strategic character of speech acts. For our understanding of the "deep historicity" of securitisation (Stritzel 2011: 250), studies should reconstruct "empirically how actors in the social field of security think, talk and practise security at a particular point in time. An indication of current meanings is thereby usually suggested by their relationship to past meanings/practices" (Stritzel 2011: 346). The meaning and practice of security are open for transformation, and "(c)hanges in the practices of security over time translate into changes in the meaning attached to security, which can in turn become temporarily stable and hegemonic before it becomes transformed again" (ibid.).

Regarding the strategic character, literature has shown how actors use securitising moves with very different intent and towards very different audiences, for example to raise an issue on the political agenda, legitimate future or past action, to claim control or to deter (Vuori 2008: 76). Securitisation is thereby always an operation of the political system (Albert / Buzan 2011) and a strategic practice in conflict communication, seeking to intensify the contention, but also to constantly involve political actors (Balzacq 2011). By securitising the conflict, conflict parties aim to mobilise immediate political support either by their followers or by secondary parties. However – and that constitutes the key relational aspect of securitisation – actors cannot control the effects of such strategic uses. Securitising (as well as desecuritising) moves can fail altogether, because they are ignored, or even lead to resistance and "counter-securitisation" (Stritzel / Chang 2015). In conflict communication, any "securitizing move becomes necessarily unstable and risky because the intended perlocutionary effect of, for example, persuading an audience to provide legitimacy for a speaker to deal with a perceived threat may actually result in delegitimation and loss of power for a speaker" (Stritzel 2011: 350). To summarise, securitisation is embedded in "complex transnational flows that involve multiple actors, multiple audiences and multiple transnational encounters in different discursive locales" (ibid.) – the particular role of securitisation for each conflict case has to be empirically reconstructed.

From these theoretical insights, we can draw a couple of conclusions for our empirical analysis. First, self-determination conflicts are not affairs of world politics per se but must involve world political communication and thus be constructed in a way that resonates with world politics. For our empirical analysis we assume that the United Nations, beyond other roles, functions as a symbolic representation of a global public, which means that if a conflict on self-determination attracts the attention of the UN and its different bodies, it is likely to be considered as a matter of world politics. Second, one way of linking a conflict system to world politics is to raise security concerns and direct them to a global audience. Whether this succeeds depends largely on whether communication is continued with reference to world politics. And third, if a conflict system is established, actors are forced to react to conflict communication, mostly in an antagonistic manner. They are aware of the constant observation by others, particularly by a global audience. This likely initiates shifts in the conflict dynamics. Furthermore, it keeps the conflict open to world political affairs.

For our empirical analysis, we analysed speech acts of selected actors in public UN documents, including resolution texts, letters distributed for members of UN bodies such as the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the General Assembly, answers to reporting requests of UN bodies and press releases from state missions to the UN. In addition, a few internal documents of the UN Secretariat, obtained in archival research at the UN archives in New York City, have been included to trace the conflict dynamics and the position of the Secretary-General. We have selected the colonial administrator Portugal, the invading state Indonesia, pro-Indonesian political parties, the Timorese resistance (FRETILIN), states that supported the resistance and the UN secretariat as speaking actors in the conflict system – all actors that were directly involved in the conflict communication in the mid-1970s. Of course, numerous actors have spoken on the conflict in the UN, and our choices are only a section of such voices.

However, much has been written on, for example, Australia's difficult role in the conflict (Hoffmann 1977, Burchill 2000), and our goal is not to give a complete, exhaustive analysis of speech acts and positions, but rather to explore with this example the specific function of security-related communication by directly involved actors in establishing a conflict system. The content analysis of nearly 40 selected documents was guided by the suggestion of the Copenhagen School and pragmatic frameworks, which we can use to study security by identifying and contextualising speech acts with a security-, threat- and danger-related vocabulary (Buzan et al. 1998, Stritzel 2011). It is important to note that all sources, because they were "fed" into the UN system, are original English texts or have been translated by the speaking actors into English. While we are con-

vinced that all actors involved communicated and translated very strategically and consciously in the United Nations, which is the primary international authority on questions of official self-determination, we do not want to imply that (de)securitisation strategies and discursive practices are the same in all communication of the conflict actors. We will briefly mention some of those differences for the case of Indonesia below. When considering texts of the UN itself (the Secretariat and the General Secretary), one must remember that as a potential "neutral" party, the speech acts are very different from those of the involved conflict parties.

Finally, our analysis represents one particular dimension of global communication – of course, there are more, such as the global Civil Society solidarity movements on Timor-Leste (Simpson 2004), which we have not focused upon here. In the following chapter, the initial internationalisation of the conflict, the conflict actors and early securitisations will be introduced, followed by an in-depth analysis of the securitisation of conflict communication.

The self-determination conflict of East Timor in world politics

Internationalisation of the conflict in Portuguese Timor in 1975

Despite the decision of the 4th Committee of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) to declare East Timor a "non-self-governing territory" in 1960 and thereby putting it on the agenda of decolonisation, the Salazar/Caetano government of Portugal defined East Timor as an "overseas province", not a colony, and refused any cooperation with the UN (Clark 1980: 3–5). Only the revolution in Portugal in April 1974 led to the acceptance of the need to start decolonisation. Therefore, even before 1975, the East Timor question had been internationalised to a certain, but still confined degree.

Shortly after the revolution in Portugal, several Timorese political parties "emerged in the Territory, each advocating at the time different alternatives for the future of Timor: the União Democrática Timorense (UDT) which supported the continuation of the Portuguese presence, [...] the Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente (FRETILIN), [...] which advocated complete independence of East Timor after a relatively brief transitional period and the Associação Popular Democrática de Timor (APODETI) which favoured integration with Indonesia" (UN DPA 1976: 8). External observers generally agreed that the emerging parties, including FRETILIN, did not embrace radical political programmes or ideology (ibid.: 10). Centrist UDT and leftist FRETELIN even managed to form an alliance in January 1975, coordinating the efforts towards independence and entering in negotiations with the Portuguese administration.

However, the UDT/FRETELIN coalition broke down in May, amid disputes over relations with Indonesia. In August 1975, fighting between UDT and FRETILIN broke out (after UDT attempted a coup), eventually resulting in a victory for FRETILIN in most parts of the territory in September.

As mentioned above, Portugal accepted its responsibility as the administrating authority of a non-self-governing territory and the need to initiate decolonisation in 1974. However, the new Portuguese government and the new administration in Dili both failed to maintain enough authority in their respective arenas to guide the process. Several initiatives had been started in 1975, e.g., decolonisation talks for the formation of a transitional government and diplomatic meetings with Indonesia in Rome. But the political parties could not be persuaded to comply, the Portuguese army in East Timor disintegrated, and the Governor eventually fled to the small island of Atáuro on 28 August 1975. Even after FRETILIN established control in autumn 1975 and "repeatedly declared that they wanted the Portuguese authorities to return to East Timor and resume the process of decolonization" (UN DPA 1976: 23), no agreement could be reached. On 28 November 1975, FRETILIN declared independence from Portugal as the "Democratic Republic of East Timor" (ibid.: 17–27). When the invasion of Indonesia followed, in December 1975, any de facto control by Portugal ended. However, Portugal remained the official Administering Power under Chapter XI of the UN Charter, a crucial factor in the decades to come (Simpson 1994: 324), because it allowed Portugal to repeatedly raise the issue of self-determination of East Timor towards international audiences.

Turning to Indonesia, at first sight the invasion of East Timor appears consistent with the project of Indonesian expansion. Just a couple of years before, West Irian, the former Netherlands New Guinea, had been incorporated into Indonesia with little concern for local resistance (Saltford 2003). But in fact, Indonesia had shown very little interest in East Timor before 1974 (UN DPA 1976: 41). In late 1974, the position of the Indonesian government changed and the Indonesian Foreign Minister Malik was quoted as "saying that there were only two choices opened to the Timorese: 'remain under the Portuguese or combine under Indonesia'" (ibid.: 48). The Indonesian government developed a strategy that allowed "President Suharto [...] to successfully brand the new Fretilin Government as 'communist' when it came into power" (Hicks 2014: 197). FRETILIN was securitised as an existential threat for pro-Indonesian Timorese and even the whole region from early 1975 onwards: "an independent Timor would be open to influence by the great Communist powers and undermine regional security" (UN DPA 1976: 15–16). This threat perception and securitisation of "communism" is key to the understanding of the invasion. In the political ideology of the Indonesian "New Order", established amidst massive anti-communist violence in 1965/66, the fight against the communist threat was constitutive and "communists were not only villains in this tale, but also, more

importantly, the threat extraordinaire to the unity, security, and survival of the fragile and vulnerable collectivity that was Indonesia" (Tan 2015: 96).

With the invasion in December, we can identify a clear initial internationalisation of the conflict and conflict communication. The debates at the United Nations intensified and both the UNGA and the UNSC condemned the invasion and called upon Indonesia to withdraw from East Timor. While UNSC Resolution 384 (1975) from December was adopted unanimously, the second UNSC Resolution from April 1976 foreshadowed rifts in the UN on the question of East Timor – Japan and the United States abstained. From the very beginning, the UNGA resolutions offered a more divided picture. UNGA resolution 3485 from 12 December 1975, which "strongly deplores the military intervention of the armed forces of Indonesia in Portuguese Timor", was adopted by 72 votes to 10, with 43 abstentions. Important Asian states had voted with Indonesia against the resolution, inter alia India, Japan, Malaysia and the Philippines. Major powers such as France, the United Kingdom and the United States abstained.

The communication on the process of decolonisation in 1975 and the invasion of Indonesia in East Timor in December 1975 had firmly established the conflict system in world politics, with competing references to self-determination. The speech acts from the period up to the early 1990s show the overall strategic attempt of the main conflict actors at the United Nations to uphold or silence the conflict communication on East Timor at the UN, whether specific aspects or in general, plus the concrete use of (de)securitising and counter-securitising moves in these strategies.

Upholding or silencing the conflict communication on East Timor at the UN

The discursive strategy of Indonesian conflict communication focused on dismissing the conflict in East Timor as quickly as possible from international considerations. Being aware of the importance of "self-government" at the United Nations, Indonesia actively attempted to frame the issue as under control and resolved (Austin / Beaulieu-Brossard 2018). The government insisted that the integration of East Timor into Indonesia in late 1975 and early 1976 was an act of voluntary decolonisation and self-determination of the Timorese people and that the matter should thus no longer be discussed. In this move, which remained stable over the next decades, Indonesia referred to a specific series of events. First, the creation of a "Provisional Government" on 17 December 1975 by four pro-Indonesian parties in Dili, followed by a first meeting of a "Regional Popular Assembly" in Dili on 31 May 1976, which adopted a resolution requesting integration with Indonesia. Furthermore, the visit of a Timorese delegation and formal presentation of a petition requesting integra-

tion to President Suharto of Indonesia on 7 June 1976 and the visit of an Indonesian fact-finding mission to East Timor to ascertain the wishes of the people on 24 June. Finally, based on a favourable report of this fact-finding mission, the approval of a bill for the integration of East Timor into Indonesia by the Indonesian parliament in July 1976 (A/32/90 (1977); Clark 1980: 10).

In UN documents, Indonesia continued to repeat, until the 1990s, that the decolonisation had been accomplished, trying to counter the claim that East Timor was de facto still a non-self-governing territory under unlawful occupation.[2] As mentioned above, several Timorese parties eventually supported the integration into Indonesia: APODETI and UDT as well as KOTA (Klibur Oan Timor Aswain / Association of Timorese Hereos) and the Partido Trabalhista (Labour Party). For the purposes of this paper, we consider their speech acts only for the period of 1975 until mid-1976. Afterwards, Indonesia took over the primary role of speaker in the UN. After the invasion in December 1975, the pro-Indonesian Timorese parties communicated that the integration with Indonesia was de facto and irreversible and that a new, pro-Indonesian "provisional government" had taken territorial control of the country.[3]

As the official administrating authority of East Timor in the United Nations system, Portugal was deeply entangled in the conflict system, while no longer having any territorial control after 1975. Portuguese governments used their position and communicated on behalf of the Territory to the global public. As administrating authority, Portugal was asked to provide regular information on East Timor by the UNGA. While Portugal took a moderate stance towards Indonesia over time, the country never "left" the conflict system or agreed to dismiss the issue overall – also because the Timorese resistance repeatedly addressed Portugal. With Portugal taking a moderate stance towards Indonesia in the 1980s, other states carried the burden of keeping the communication on the conflict and Timorese resistance alive in the global public – namely Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and São Tomé and Príncipe, all former Portuguese colonies.

This support can be traced back to 1975, when they acknowledged the declaration of independence by FRETILIN, shortly before the Indonesian invasion (A/C.4/807 (1975)). Their key mechanism of support was the dissemination of the speech acts of FRETILIN and reports on the situation on the ground as part of official documents in the UNSC and UNGA. They gave important visibility to the issue in the 1980s, especially against the background of the above-mentioned successful silencing campaign of Indonesia regarding resolutions. The documents provided contained details on large-scale Indonesian military

2 A/32/90 (1977); UN Archive, S-1043-0001-06, 1982-10-15_Letter by Indonesian Representative to Fourth Committee; S/16132 (1983); UN Archive, S-1043-0056-0006, 1990-08-07 Letter by Indonesian Representative to UN Special Committee on Colonial Independence.

3 UN Archive, S-0904-0039-01, 1975-12-07 Telegram by Timorese President to SG.

operations and killings (S/16083 (1983); S/16759 (1984)), FRETILIN counter-attacks (A/39/345 (1984)), the desperate situation of citizens due to hunger and Indonesian human rights violations (S/16819 (1984)), referring to Indonesian civil society sources as well.[4] These states supported the argument that self-determination of the Timorese people was still an open issue.

Throughout 1975, FRETILIN tried to globalise the issue of decolonisation at the United Nations with direct communication via letters to UN actors such as the Secretary-General or the President of the UNSC.[5] Tragically, only the invasion by Indonesia firmly established East Timor as a problem of world politics, but in consequence, FRETILIN had to react to the rapid integration into the larger country. FRETILIN tried to delegitimise this process by comparing it to other global issues, such as Israeli actions towards its Arab citizens or the South African Apartheid regime.[6] In their speech acts for international audiences, FRETILIN always tried to underline the international dimension of the occupation: "Indonesian's expansionist war against East Timor [...] should be a warning to the tens of small and medium size States around the world, particularly in Africa and Latin America, that their existence is always threatened."[7] Not being a state, FRETILIN had a structural disadvantage in comparison with Indonesia in state-centred world politics. As mentioned above, the distribution of letters and statements in the UNSC and UNGA was carried out by supporting states trying to keep alive the argument that the question of Timorese self-determination remained unresolved.

Indonesia tried to silence speech acts from the Timorese resistance, which were transmitted by other states in the UN, by insisting that these speech acts were illegitimate. One example from a statement of the Indonesian representative from November 1983:

> I have the honour to refer to the letter of 7 October 1983 from the representatives of Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Sao Tome and Principe containing a request to circulate a letter from a so-called representative of 'FRETILIN' [...]. My Government regrets the circulation of that document and wishes to note that this is not the first instance of manipulation of United Nations procedures (S/16132 (1983)).

The votes in favour of resolutions to condemn Indonesia indeed dwindled over the years. Indonesia (defining itself as an anti-colonial state) invested massive diplomatic resources to counter its securitisation as occupying power of East Timor. While the UNGA adopted several additional resolutions after the inva-

4 For example, Mozambique asked for the circulation of a report on East Timor by the Indonesian NGO "TAPOL" in the UNSC: S/17744 (1986).

5 UN Archive, S-0904-0039-01, 1975-12-04 Letter from Jose Ramos-Horta to Security Council President; UN Archive, S-0904-0039-02, 1975-09-05_Cable by FRETILIN to SC; UN Archive, S-0904-0039-02, 1975-10-09_Summary of Cables by Jose Ramos Horta to SG.

6 UN Archive, S-0904-0039-03, 1976-06-24_Cable by Mari Alkatiri.

7 UN Archive, S-0904-0039-05, 1977-10-29_Communication by FRETILIN.

sion,[8] they "became less damning because of intense Indonesian lobbying, the eventual result of which was East Timor's complete removal from the agenda after 1982" (Simpson 1994: 325). Following the UNGA resolution 37/30 (1982), the debate was remitted to "the somewhat lonely deliberations of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples" (Maley 2000: 25). It took until the 1990s for East Timor to "re-appear" in the debates of the prominent UN bodies as a problem of word politics.

The UN Secretariat and the UN Secretary-General (UNSG) were involved as the relevant public audience on the "Question of East Timor" from the beginning of the conflict in 1975. After the invasion, the UN tried to obtain more information on East Timor through a Special Representative of the UNSG. However, due to fighting on the ground and political blockades, Mr Winspeare Guicciardi concluded in June 1976 that the "actual situation in East Timor […] still cannot be assessed accurately" (S/12106 (1976)) and that "[h]is mission was a complete failure" (Carey / Walsh 2010: 352). The UN Archives reveal the many internal notes, letters and minutes at the UNSG in the 1980s, documenting the attempts to find diplomatic solutions to the conflict or more concretely, to support East Timorese citizens through humanitarian relief, for instance (A/39/361 (1984)) – which could be interpreted as a general process of desecuritising, even depoliticising.[9] In consequence, the UN-supported dialogue between Indonesia and Portugal touched upon the issues of status and the violent occupation, but in general avoided these topics (A/40/622 (1985)). Accordingly, FRETILIN criticised these attempts, which de facto acknowledged the occupation.[10]

Securitising, desecuritising and counter-securitising

Key securitising moves for the Indonesian domestic audiences, such as the term "communist threat", were not mentioned in the international arena – because in the UN system, with many communist governments present, political ideology was not necessarily a useful reference in conflicts. Instead, Indonesia referred to the protection of well-accepted referent objects in the international arena. One strategy was to securitise Portugal's inability to ensure a peaceful and orderly decolonisation. Indonesia's own activities had been necessary to fill the gap of an "impotent" (S/11937 (1976)) administrating authority that could not fulfil its obligation to the Timorese people, the UN charter and security in the region (A/31/42 (1975); A/32/90 (1977)). The "vacuum of authority" (S/11937

8 Resolutions UNGA3485 (XXX) of 12 December 1975; UNGA 31/53 of 1 December 1976; UNGA32/34 of 28 November 1977; UNGA 33/39 of 13 December 1978; UNGA 34/40 of 21 November 1979; UNGA 35/27 of 11 November 1980; UNGA 36/50 of 24 November 1981; and UNGA37/30 of 23 November 1982.

9 UN Archive, S-1043-0001-06, 1982-12-09 Resolution on Report "Question of East Timor".

10 UN Archive, S-1043-0006-06, 1984-08-28 Summary on "The Question of East Timor" in the Special Committee.

(1976)) led to terror, refugees and incursions of FRETILIN into Indonesian territory, threatening the security of Indonesia as a whole (A/31/42 (1975)).

Throughout 1975, while accepting the de jure role of Portugal as administrating authority,[11] the pro-Indonesian parties – in a manner similar to that of Indonesia – securitised Portugal's inability to lead the decolonisation process, even supporting the thesis that "communists" from Portugal had helped FRETILIN.[12] In the months that followed, the pro-Indonesian government insisted that the situation in East Timor had returned to normal (desecuritising move) and downplayed the role and capabilities of FRETILIN.[13] However, at the same time, the parties were forced to react to FRETILIN's speech acts in the international arena and portrayed FRETILIN as an extremely dangerous threat to the citizens of East Timor, referring to violence and high numbers of victims (S/12041 (1976)).

Portuguese references varied. After a rather clear judgement initially and references to the Indonesian occupation of East Timor and the ongoing "unlawful" situation in the 1970s (UNGA, A/32/73 (1977)), we can observe attempts to desecuritise the situation in the 1980s. In internal meetings at the United Nations, Portugal declared that an Indonesian withdrawal was off the table and unrealistic, but that Portugal had the "moral obligation" to assist East Timor and its aim towards self-government.[14] In 1982, Portugal sponsored UNGA resolution 37/30 (UNGA, A/RES/37/30 (1982)), which had a non-aggressive tone and was dialogue oriented. Despite early reluctance of the UN Secretary-General,[15] a diplomatic process between Indonesia and Portugal was initiated in the mid-1980s, but had no substantial outcome.

FRETILIN, having faced the invasion in late 1975 and defeat in the late 1970s, unsurprisingly stuck with a securitising strategy in the UN. Faced with massive violence in East Timor, FRETILIN strongly securitised Indonesia as "fascist" and "expansionist" and called out Indonesian actions as "extremely violent", "bloody" and "horrifying" in mid-1976.[16] In the mid-1980s, with the East Timor Question disappearing from the UNGA debates, the resistance tried to further securitise Indonesian military operations, countering Indonesian remarks of a normalisation in East Timor or only "sporadic fighting", by emphasising that their own offensive capabilities and some territorial control still existed and that fighting would continue (S/16083 (1983); S/16819 (1984)). While the

11 UN Archive, S-0904-0039-02, 1975-09-19_Telegram by President of KOTA to Portuguese President. UN Archive, S-0904-0039-02, 1975-09-20_Telegram by UDT to President of Portugal.

12 UN Archive, S-0904-0039-01, 1975-12-05 Joint Statement & Proclamation pro-Indonesian parties of Timor.

13 UN Archive, S-0303-0002-09, 1976-04-22_Press Conference East Timor Provisional Government.

14 UN Archive, S-0904-0091-05, 1981-06-04_Letter UNSG to Portuguese Foreign Minister & Notes on previous meetings.

15 UN Archive, S-0904-0091-05, 1981-06-04_Letter SG to Portuguese Foreign Minister & Notes on previous meetings.

16 UN Archive, S-0904-0039-03, 1976-07-06_Letter by Ramos-Horta to SG with Communiqué & Press Reports attached.

supporting states shared the securitising strategy overall, they also tried to desecuritise the conflict in the 1980s, insisting on political and diplomatic solutions:

> [...] the Foreign Minister of Angola and the Prime Minister of Vanuatu expressed their conviction that representatives of the East Timorese people should be included in the process. The President of Mozambique referred specifically to FRETILIN in this regard. Sao Tomé and Principé, on the other hand, clearly indicated that Indonesia and Portugal were the parties concerned but mentioned also FRETILIN's "armed resistance".[17]

Resecuritisation in the 1990s

In the mid-1980s, attempts to desecuritise the conflict in the UN were rather successful. However, the remnants of securitising conflict communication gained new prominence and influence with the violence in East Timor in the 1990s. We see, for example, how Portugal was easily able to resecuritise the conflict: with reports on Indonesian violence towards Timorese citizens re-emerging, the Portuguese Parliament in 1990 again strongly securitised Indonesia and the illegal annexation of 1975, "saluted" the Timorese resistance and asked for international action against Indonesia, comparable to international interventions against the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.[18] Such a comparison documents the new contextualisation of the East Timor question in world politics during the 1990s, a decade characterised by interventionism and the securitisation of human rights abuses, in striking contrast to the 1970s and 1980s. The states supporting the resistance against Indonesia also resecuritised the conflict in this new macro constellation. In a joint letter from the Heads of State of Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Sao Tomé and Principé from 10 March 1992, transmitted by Cape Verde to the UNGA and addressed to the Secretary-General, we find representative examples of these conflict references:

> [...] the Heads of States condemned the Dili massacre and manifested their preoccupation for that abhorrent act, which violated the fundamental rights and liberty of the people of East Timor, whose territory is still being illegally occupied by Indonesia. The Heads of State deplored the relative passivity of the international community [...] despite the fact that Indonesia is in violation of the fundamental principles of the Charter [...]. The Heads of State expressed admiration for the determination shown by the heroic people of East Timor in intensifying their resistance by all means against the illegal occupation of their territory, in spite of the silence that surrounds their legitimate struggle.[19]

17 UN Archive, S-1043-0020-02, 1985-10-25_Note by Under-SG to SG on question of East Timor.

18 UN Archive, S-1043-0056-0006, 1990-12-07_Letter to UNSG with resolution by Portuguese National Assembly.

19 UN Archive, A/47/151, 8. April 1992. Letter dated 6 April 1992 from the Permanent Representative of Cape Verde to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General.

Conclusion

As for other self-determination conflicts, such as the conflict between the Turkish state and the Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê (PKK; Sienknecht 2018), the conflict system between East Timor and Indonesia was debordered and gained world political significance. The failure of Portugal to successfully and peacefully decolonise Portuguese Timor, and the invasion of Indonesia in December 1975, internationalised the self-determination conflict as a conflict system in front of global audiences, especially at the United Nations, as the primary organisation concerned with decolonisation in a global context. While initially in 1975 and 1976 the invasion was indeed considered as a security problem and illegitimate in key UN documents, Indonesia managed to successfully desecuritise the "question of East Timor" in the main bodies of the UN in the period until the 1980s, inter alia by strategies of delegitimation and silencing. However, by applying securitising and counter-securitising moves, the Timorese resistance and supporting states at the UN countered the hegemonic desecuritisation in conflict communication at the UN and, overall, upheld these references and vocabulary throughout the 1980s.

When violence in East Timor gained renewed global attention in the early 1990s, various actors could refer to the established arguments and securitising moves from the early phase, including the need for self-determination of the Timorese people, and the unlawful occupation and invasion of Indonesia.[20] While the communication at the UN had not led to an end of the occupation, this recourse shows how important the strategic communication in this early period proved to be for the conflict system and international reaction to it at a later point in time. However, it also shows that in its establishment as a conflict of significance for world politics instead of being territorial bounded, the conflict system remained vulnerable to shifts in world political communication. This had a decisive impact on the conflict. The difference in world politics of the 1990s, as compared to the 1970s and 1980s, was the shared perception that the human rights violations in connection with "illegitimate" territorial control and self-determination were a problem for the global public. In addition to its shifts in domestic politics, Indonesia came under pressure, as the resonance of its (de)securitising speech acts had dramatically decreased (Lloyd 2003).

Although several factors contributed to the dynamics of the conflict, world politics obviously played a crucial role in the conflict's fortunes. The conceptual and the empirical analysis demonstrate that a comprehensive understanding of self-determination conflicts such as that between East Timor and Indonesia cannot separate the international from the regional, domestic or local level,

20 For example in the debate of the 4th Committee of the UNGA [A/AC.109/PV.1404 (1992)], in reports of the Secretary-General in reaction to the Santa Cruz massacre [E/CN.4/1993/49 (1993)], or in letters by Portugal [A/C.3/49/19 (1994)].

but that a conflict takes place at these "levels" at the same time and in the same conflict system by actively involving actors and audiences of these "levels". Thus, levels should not be understood in conflict analysis as independent units, but as part of communication structures, which emerge and often shift during a conflict. We have captured this dynamic with a relational, processual and historical securitisation framework (Stritzel 2011). Security, in that regard, is a communication feature that allows relevance to be created for politics in general and for world politics in particular if they are concerned with "primary institutions" (Buzan 2004: 161) of world politics such as sovereignty or self-determination. Hence, beyond (and in East Timor also long before) direct intervention, the United Nations plays a crucial role as it functions not only as a stable political address for conflict communication, but as a representation of a global public that the conflict actors would like to persuade (Werron 2015, Ketzmerick 2019: 155–194). The presence of such a public, as we have shown for the case of the Timorese-Indonesian conflict, and the imagination of its expectations change the way conflict actors communicate.

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Governing, but not Producing Security? Internationalised Community Security Practices in Kyrgyzstan

Philipp Lottholz / Arzuu Sheranova

Abstract

This article tackles the fraught relationship between security discourse, on the theoretical level, and security experience and practice on the ground. It argues that the efforts of the Kyrgyzstani authorities to reform and thus create sustainable and needs-based community security and law enforcement structures have so far largely been performative or even "virtual", meaning that they have focused on governing, but not producing security. The argument is first developed out of literature on state building, the security sector and police reform from a global perspective and in the context of Central Asia and Kyrgyzstan, more specifically. In a second step, we draw on insights from fieldwork, professional experience and grey literature to examine Local Crime Prevention Centres (LCPCs), which are communal-level public bodies where local administrations and residents potentially co-produce needs-based forms of security. However, we also show that the work of these bodies is still dependent on international support while lacking the conditions and facilitation that only executive actors can provide.

Keywords: Security practices, community security, international cooperation, Local Crime Prevention Centres (LCPCs), Kyrgyzstan

The large-scale inter-communal clashes that struck the southern Kyrgyzstani cities of Osh and Jalal-Abad and their environs in June 2010 have become a turning point in international policy towards the country and the region more generally. In their aftermath, several intergovernmental organisations, including various United Nations Agencies, the OSCE and European Union, have run various post-conflict reconstruction, peacebuilding and community security programmes (e.g. Megoran et al. 2014). Over time, these programmes have become less focused on immediate issues of conflict prevention and peacebuilding and have begun to tackle questions of how more sustainable forms of tolerance and

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peaceful coexistence can be fostered between and within the communities affected by the 2010 clashes and resultant tensions. Now that ten years have passed since the “Osh events”, it is increasingly important to reflect on the extent to which these events and the lessons drawn from them have led to changes in the way community security and conflict prevention are practiced across Kyrgyzstan and to look at the policy approaches and institutional basis foregrounding such practices. In this paper, we seek to undertake this task and to critically enquire to what extent more holistic and sustainable forms of security have been fostered across Kyrgyzstan by the security and law enforcement programmes and policies of the past years.

Within this special issue, we seek to tackle the difficult and often fraught relationship between security discourse on the one hand – that is, the debates occurring and statements being made in the public sphere – and the forms of security that people experience and practice on the ground, on the other. Drawing on Heathershaw’s (2014) conceptualisation of the “global performance state” in Central Asia, we argue that Kyrgyzstan’s efforts to reform and thus create sustainable community security and law enforcement structures have so far largely been of a performative or even “virtual” nature. That is, while governmental, ministerial and other key actors have passed legislation, action concepts and decrees, they have not been substantially, or at least not sufficiently, involved in changing law enforcement practices on the ground. With this focus, we seek to widen the scope of much security studies scholarship on discursive processes of securitisation and legal and formal dynamics of policy-making and to bring it into conversation with an analysis of actual practices on the ground.

Various scholars have shown how practices constitute an important dimension of security and how they can escape the ambitions of policy and legislative frameworks, and, on the contrary, even contribute to the re-shaping or failure of such frameworks (Hönke 2013, Distler 2016). In the case of Kyrgyzstan, we would argue that the government and other leading policy-making actors focus their actions on “governing security”, i.e. taking key decisions on what provision and maintenance of security should look like in such a way that central power and control is maintained. Meanwhile, when it comes to actually “producing security”, i.e. ensuring that the law enforcement, conflict, and crime prevention mechanisms produce the desired outcomes, we observe a less active role of national executive actors. Rather, what appears to happen is that “producing” or “doing security” on the ground is outsourced to a number of intergovernmental organisations, including international as well as domestic NGOs. While this approach of “governing, but not producing security” may be the result of limited budgetary, cadre and knowledge capacities, we show that it foreshadows inherent limitations for the possibility of establishing and maintaining secure communities across the country. This is because superficial and performative reform steps do not create sustainable new mechanisms and pro-

cedures that would facilitate the work of community-level actors, who instead remain dependent on funding and approval from above.

Our paper adds to a growing literature on internationalised and transnational forms of security sector reform and governance. In the case of former Soviet states, the most frequently observed processes are police reforms introduced following the pattern of so-called "democratic policing" implemented in the former communist Central and East-European states, aimed at "transforming the former militia, characterized with a longer history of protecting the regime and abusing citizens' human rights" (Mesko et al. 2013: v–vi). The idea of policing thus had to be transformed – in line with the understanding that police should address the needs of the public, not those of the regime (ibid.).

For instance, Erica Marat's recent book on *The Politics of Police Reform in Post-Soviet States* (2018) has demonstrated how reform efforts in Kyrgyzstan, Georgia and Ukraine draw extensively on international financial support and conceptual templates. However, and especially in the case of Kyrgyzstan, Marat also shows how law enforcement reform has not led to significant changes in the top-down and often punitive approaches used by the Kyrgyzstani law enforcement apparatus, which to a large extent still maintains its Soviet legacy. These observations are in line with Heathershaw's work on sector reform and its role in processes of peacebuilding in post-civil war Tajikistan, where the Tajik government has made use of international funding and capacity-building support and has discursively propagated the achievements of reform while the forms of peace and security experienced by average citizens have not significantly improved (2009: ch. 6). The resulting performative and superficial character of security in post-conflict states, or "global performance states" as Heathershaw terms them in the Central Asian context (2014), appears to be a more widely observable feature alongside sustained forms of instability and insecurity experienced by populations subject to internationalised statebuilding (Bliesemann de Guevara 2012: 13–14) and transnational security governance (Hönke 2013).

In adding to these perspectives, we are not suggesting that there is an ideal approach to "producing security", by which safety issues in communities can be resolved sustainably. However, by shedding light on the institutional architecture and practices of security in communities across Kyrgyzstan, we show that the governing of security and its practice on the ground need to be brought into conversation and cooperation if effective and sustainable institutions, policies and practices are to be created and maintained. We illustrate this with the example of Local Crime Prevention Centres (LCPCs), bodies subordinated to local government structures and comprising a number of what could be called municipal civil society structures, such as Courts of Elders (*aksakals*), women's committees and neighbourhood committees. This paper is based on our research findings and work experience with some of the communities discussed in this

paper. During his PhD and post-doctoral research, Lottholz conducted participatory observation during fifteen community visits, alongside 17 interviews and cooperative research with various partner organisations (see Lottholz 2018: ch. 5, Saferworld 2016). Sheranova's perspective is based on longstanding practical experience at Saferworld's programme and her PhD research conducted since 2017. Thus, in addition to explicitly quoted material, our analysis draws on a large amount of practical experience and reflections from our personal work in the community security process and from participant observations in the field.

The capacity dilemma: Internationalised security governance and practice

Before venturing into the empirical context of security governance and practice in Kyrgyzstan, we briefly elaborate our conceptual approach and its relevance for literature on internationalised and transnational security sector reform. Put briefly, our observation from both the literature and our analysis of dynamics in Kyrgyzstan is that security governance in states emerging from conflicts, crises and regime transitions often faces a capacity dilemma (see Mesko et al. 2013, Friesendorf 2019). That is, governments and state institutions are often so short of capacity to provide and maintain security – both in financial terms and in terms of know-how and practical capacities – that they are notoriously dependent on the help offered by international actors.

The international response usually involves security sector reform (SSR) with some recent ideas of "shifting the governance focus from the state alone to what might be thought of as a 'whole of society' approach to security governance" (Froestad / Shearing 2012: 2). These include either intergovernmental organisations – including, in particular cases, intervention forces – or domestic civil society and internationally operating NGOs, who bring their international funding and capacity to take over the functions and working packages that state actors are unable or unwilling to take on. Such cooperation is often sought not out of opportunism but as a result of insufficient state budgets, as highlighted by, among other scholars, Berit Bliesemann de Guevara, who has pointed to "structural inequalities in [the] international system" that foreground "non-western states' inability to generate financial potential to fulfil their tasks" and "establish a legitimate monopoly of violence on their territory" (2012: 7–9). While utilising the help of non-state actors might indeed be handy for temporarily addressing security challenges – especially for governments interested only in governing security, but not doing the actual security provision work – it is problematic in the long run as such a division of labour rarely leads to the establishment of security institutions and practices acknowledged by society. Our

analysis of the problem of "governing security" without actually producing it seeks to highlight this problem and to indicate steps forward where governmental actors' agendas on the one hand and "security on the ground", on the other, are too much out of touch.

Scholarship on post-conflict peacebuilding and security sector reform has already outlined the pattern of governing without producing security that we wish to highlight in this article. The concept we find most instructive in this regard is Heathershaw's notion of the "global performance state" in Tajikistan (2014). Here, Heathershaw has noted how "the activities of international organisations, which must be authorised by state officials" serve to "reaffirm[ ] the authority of the state to act as a gatekeeper to external actors and supreme political authority in the territory" (2014: 36). Analysing the example of local government reform in the early 2010s, Heathershaw finds that "while the roles of the presidential administration and donor organisations were primary, parliament was, at best, a secondary actor, and civil society groups were absent" (2014: 46). "This primacy of performance (an ostensibly national legislative process) over content of local government (actual decentralisation)", he further argues, "indicates the globality of the Tajikistani state" (2014: 47). The "empowerment of the state's executive apparatus" (ibid.: 48), which Heathershaw diagnoses as an outcome of this globalised performance, corresponds to what we term the governing of a process – in that case, local governance reform – without actual involvement in the practical implementation of changes on the ground.

In a similar analysis of security sector reforms in the more immediate aftermath of the Tajik civil war, Heathershaw has shown how the interpretation and framing in terms of national sovereignty appears to have been of greater importance than the actual measures carried out (2009: ch. 6). That is, demonstrating unity and allegiance with warlords newly incorporated into the state served to assuage the temporary and often frail nature of these agreements, which have proven unsustainable and insufficient throughout the years (2009: 143). Similarly, the case of the handover of control of the southern border with Afghanistan from Russian to Tajik command was orchestrated as a reclaiming of sovereignty, while the involvement of Russian and Tajik personnel hardly changed, as the same Tajik soldiers continued to serve in the border units with Russians continuing to work in advising roles (2009: 149).

In analogy to Heathershaw's perspective, our analysis seeks to show how executive activities in law enforcement reform have been limited to symbolically meaningful acts such as passing legislation, concepts and decrees with the accompanying declarations. Yet, as we further show, the lack of concrete action to implement reform – or at least provide the necessary conditions for doing so – points to the performative nature of reforms, which are essentially governed but not put into practice. The argument extends and conceptually situates existing research on law enforcement reform and community security in Kyrgyzstan.

Although analyses in this area remain few and far between, recent research has shed light on the dynamics between discursive and publicly visible policy formation processes on the one hand and on-the-ground practical changes on the other.

Most importantly, a chapter in Erica Marat's *The Politics of Police Reform* examined how the police reform process in Kyrgyzstan has been increasingly influenced by civil society and particularly human rights organisations, who have called for more concrete changes in law enforcement and security practice. The politicisation of this particular state institution was, as Marat shows, related to the perception of police forces and their still militarised approach, structure and working methods as a potential "source of injustice and a threat to public security" (2018: 90, 92). To address these issues, the then-Minister of Interior Affairs launched, among other things, a pilot programme titled "Safe City" (Russian: *Bezopasnyi Gorod*) which, based on the role model run in Tbilisi, Georgia:

> [...] encouraged law enforcement officers to engage in neighborhood policing: instead of serving a shift at one precinct in the capital, law enforcement officers were given ten liters of gas and sent out to drive around the city, ticket traffic violators, and respond to emergencies. Cops were expected to interact as "social partners" with citizens just as much as they were expected to fulfill the traditional duties of law enforcement officers on patrol. (Marat 2018: 97)

Although suspended after a one-month trial period, the programme, Marat finds, had a positive effect in making police respond more rapidly and deal more competently with violations. Marat further maps out positive changes brought about by civil society and various individuals who have held the police to account (2018: 100ff.). She also points out how then-PM Otorbaev famously encouraged people "to videotape and take photos of traffic police officers [breaking the law]" and thus hold them accountable (cited in Marat 2018: 98). Nonetheless, reform initiatives have arguably subsided in recent years and Marat's insights have not covered realities beyond the placatory actions of authorities and reform dynamics in urban centres.

Peacebuilding and security programming since 2010: From projects to structural change?

In this section, we provide an outline of the landscape of international peacebuilding and community security projects as well as police reform efforts in Kyrgyzstan since 2010. Because the state's immediate post-conflict responses were related mainly to physical reconstruction but not security, these will not be discussed here. Given the fallout of the conflict and continuing tensions,

the involvement of international organisations appeared very much needed in Kyrgyzstan. As demonstrated in Appendix 1, more than ten international organisations funded and implemented peacebuilding, conflict prevention, mediation and reconciliation programmes in the south of the country and nation-wide. Furthermore, efforts to create more systemic and sustainable change in community security and law enforcement were again limited to internationally supported projects and initiatives, which, however, did not prompt authorities to "own" or substantively implement new approaches to security.

The peacebuilding projects run in Kyrgyzstan can be divided into two types: short-term peacebuilding and long-term peacebuilding projects. Short-term peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of the conflict mainly encouraged communication and cooperation between local communities and local governments to reconcile communities and help them recover after the conflict, as well as to prevent conflicts from breaking out anew (see ACTED, OSCE, Saferworld, the UN and USAID prevention networks in Appendix 1). With the direct involvement of local community representatives in the process of conflict prevention and improvement of local security, these activities demonstrated the idea that local communities can and should be part of the process of community security provision.

Long-term peacebuilding projects that have run from 2014 onwards shifted their focus to making peace sustainable and maintaining security, by both working with local communities and involving the national government to bring about policy and legislative changes. Primarily international actors and domestic NGOs, rather than the government, were the ones who piloted community policing practices in various communities. For example, the OSCE's Community Security Initiative (CSI) project (2010–2015), apart from working with 63 rural locations, provided expertise on police reform to improve legislation and policing approaches on the national level. While this programme was focused on capacity-building and practical change in the police, several international organisations, including USAID and Saferworld, concluded that so-called Local Crime Prevention Centres were more sustainable platforms to train and practice long-term community policing than other established networks or groups. LCPCs are formal bodies made up of local community representatives (*aksakals* or "elders", women and youth) and neighbourhood police inspectors to jointly prevent and resolve local security-related issues (see 2005 Law on Crime Prevention in Table 1 below). Thanks to international efforts, in some project locations, communities and local governments understood the importance of collaboration in security maintenance, while in other locations, the role of local governments or communities remained weak because of a lack of state support. Most LCPCs lack financial support from municipal budgets and have received relatively little attention in national-level policy-making. To address this, some international organisations

that were more oriented towards long-lasting peace and security turned to working with LCPCs and reforming police and law enforcement agencies.

In the understanding of international organisations, law enforcement reform was directly related to the maintenance of communal peace and security, because reforming the police was a longer-term response and strategy to ensure multi-ethnic policing approaches, to increase trust towards the police and to reduce conflict potential. On the other hand, the reform of law enforcement agencies had been demanded by civil society for years, going back to the early 2000s. Following violent mass protests against the government, the subsequent ouster of then-president Bakiev and inter-ethnic violence in 2010 in the southern part of the country, domestic NGOs and activists successfully put the issue of police reform back on the agenda (Marat 2018; see Table 1 below for dynamics in national legislation).

After a state commission, ministries and civil society organisations had proposed and discussed their concepts for law enforcement reform, a consensus was achieved in 2013 when the government adopted the decree "On Measures of Reforming the Internal Affairs Bodies" (see Table 1). In July 2016 a presidential decree on Law Enforcement Agencies Reform (2016) was signed based on the decision of the Defence Council of the Kyrgyz Republic (2016). The main tasks of the approved reform plan were the restructuring of the police force and the reduction of duplicated functions by creating six new police departments that replaced the previous 12 departments: Community Security Department; Crimes Department; Department on Countering Extremism and Illegal Migration; Department on Fighting Drug Trafficking; Crimes Investigation Department; and Internal Investigation Department (Presidential decree on LEA reform 2016: Art.3.2). The Ministry of Internal Affairs was supposed to become involved with serving community security and safety (ibid.). In particular, under PM Isakov (2017–2018) police reform received substantial state support (see Lottholz 2020). The government also adopted a pilot project on establishing police patrols in 2019–2020, which drew on positive experience with the abovementioned "Safe City" project in Bishkek (Marat 2018: 97). As part of this initiative, patrol officers were assigned additional responsibility for community security within designated areas.

The role of civil society and international organisations in police reform in Kyrgyzstan was crucial, as the country largely relied on international support and funding to implement most of the announced measures. The government's role was largely limited to legislation, while international efforts served to implement the newly introduced measures. As Table 1 demonstrates, after the launch of the police reform, the government primarily amended and adopted new legislation, while it did not participate in the actual implementation of reform measures on the local level. On the ground, most of the empirical work

was done by international projects. International organisations practiced and promoted police–community partnerships in security provision. International organisations such as the OSCE and UNDP arranged police–community meetings, trained national and regional police staff and management on community policing, provided the needed equipment and cars, built or rehabilitated LCPCs and police stations, and improved access to police in remote areas (see the CSI and other projects in Appendix 1).

As further analysed elsewhere (Lottholz 2020, Sheranova 2020) such projects did yield positive effects on the security situation in participating communities. However, for the new legislative and policy changes to be put into action across the country, implementation efforts would need to be replicated in all communities, whether on a project basis or otherwise. As pointed out by Zubenko (2019), despite the structural changes, such as restructuring the police departments, systemic changes, such as approaches to policing, were not implemented by the government. A report to the *Jogorku Kenesh* (parliament) by the NGO network Civic Union "For Reforms and Result" (2018b) noted that there was not a single assessment or report conducted by the government on the launched police reform activities. It also stated that the parliament did not act in its full capacity as a body regulating and monitoring the police reform, and thus cannot be named as an "owner" of the police reform (ibid.). Thus most implemented activities, such as annual public surveys on the Kyrgyz police or police–public partnership events stayed donor-dependent and did not take on a systematic character.

In this light, it can be argued that because existing implementation activities were not maintained or "owned", let alone scaled up by the government, they necessarily remained weak and partial. This limited scope of government action on legislation and policy programming – while leaving implementation to rank and file staff, other involved actors like local administrations and the initiative of civil society and international organisations – is what we would call governing, but not producing security, as top-down actions are not augmented by more meso- and micro-level actions to ensure that legislation is put into action. With their focus on amending or passing new legislation and decrees on reform measures, the government, ministerial and other executive actors were little involved in the implementation of reform measures on the local level and also failed to ensure the tracking and assessment of reform progress. This "primacy of performance [...] over content" (Heathershaw 2014: 47) in practice demonstrates that the authorities were primarily interested in governing but not actively producing security, thereby leaving security mechanisms on the community level provisional and continuously dependent on funding and approval from above.

Table 1: Dynamics within national legislation related to community policing (2002–2016)

	Laws	Concepts	Decrees
2002	**Law on Aksakal Courts (Courts of Elders)** legal enshrining of *aksakals* as an alternative dispute resolution mechanism subordinate to local administration and law enforcement		
2005	**Law on Crime Prevention** creation of LCPCs for coordination of public bodies, primacy of executive authority and law enforcement	**Concept on Reforming the Internal Affairs Bodies until 2010** strengthen community-oriented policing approaches; first attempt to organise on the national level police reform idea	
2007/8		**Regulation No 276 "On Coordination Activity of LEAs"** sets out mechanisms for coordination between various LEA services to ensure rule of law, public security & crime prevention	**Decree No 162 of the MIA "On Implementation of the Law on Crime Prevention"** implementation of the law and establishment of LCPCs to carry out crime-prevention activities within local territorial districts
2013			**Governmental Decree No 220 "On Measures of Reforming the Internal Affairs Bodies"** strengthening cooperation between the police and communities in the provision of public security and crime prevention
2015/16	**Amendments to the Law on Crime Prevention (2005)** indicates sources of financing of LCPCs at the local level. LCPCs can be established as legal entities (like NGOs) and receive money from domestic and international funds or grants	**Decision of the Defense Council of the Kyrgyz Republic "On Measures of Reforming the Internal Affairs Bodies"** defines police reform areas within the Ministry of Internal Affairs as well as steps for reform	**Governmental Decree 547 "On Adoption of Regulation on Interaction Mechanisms between Internal Affairs Bodies and Civil Society Institutions"** sets out mechanisms of interaction between civil society institutions (including LCPCs) and police **Governmental Decree 747 "On Adoption of the Template Statute of LCPCs"** recommends that local government bodies adopt the statute of LCPCs to organise their activities **Presidential Decree "On Measures of LEAs Reform"** approves police reform steps and measures within the Ministry of Internal Affairs

Source: Compiled by Philipp Lottholz and Arzuu Sheranova

Producing vs. just governing security: Local Crime Prevention Centers and their policy and legal frameworks

Having set out the landscape of security programming in Kyrgyzstan and corresponding practices, as opposed to mere governing processes, we now turn to a more close-up analysis of security practices at the municipal level. Starting with a vignette of a capacity-building project in one Local Crime Prevention Centre (LCPC) implemented by the international NGO Saferworld and the Foundation for Tolerance International (FTI), we discuss the impact of this work in the broader context of these and other international and civil society organisations' efforts to produce security. In a final step, we show how effecting sustainability in such security practices is only possible if legal and wider governance frameworks are linked and correspond to each other.

Case Study: the LCPC in Mady, Southern Kyrgyzstan

The LCPC of the municipality of Mady is one of several examples of the positive impact of community engagement in security maintenance in collaboration with the police. This analysis draws on our own experience in profiling LCPCs and local security working groups[1] and outputs of the work of LCPCs (Saferworld 2016, Eginalieva / Shabdanova 2016).

Located in the Kara-Suu region in Osh province, close to the border with Uzbekistan, Mady is a multi-ethnic municipality made up of several Kyrgyz and Uzbek majority villages, relations between which also worsened after the Osh clashes. In 2008, the LCPC Mady was established following the decree of the Ministry of Interior Affairs adopted the same year. In most *ayil okmotus* (village administrations) like Mady these institutions were established in a rushed top-down manner, which often left local municipalities scarcely understanding the role and importance of LCPCs. Like many LCPCs, the one in Mady was made up of local government representatives, such as the deputy head and secretary of the Mady *ayil okmotu*, the head of the Social Affairs Department and other staff members. With membership mostly consisting of local municipality members, the LCPC did not have a separate premises but conducted its activities in the *ayil okmotu* office. The most important function of the LCPC was the mediation of disputes between community residents on various everyday issues, such as family or property disputes, conflicts over access to water or land, petty crimes, hooliganism and school bullying. These were dealt with by the *aksakal* courts or courts of elders, an alternative dispute resolution mechanism operating according to customary law while also obliged to statutory law,

1 Sheranova as staff of Saferworld Kyrgyzstan from 2013–2017, and Lottholz in a short-term LCPC profiling study in July 2015; see Lottholz 2018: ch. 5.

which forwards irresolvable cases to law enforcement organs (see Beyer 2015). Between 2008 and 2010 the LCPC's *aksakal* court had registered 85 cases (on average 28 per year), 71 of which were successfully mediated so that they did not reach the state court.

After the regime change in 2010, the fate of the LCPC in Mady, like that of other LCPCs throughout the country, was not clear. As the head of the LCPC acknowledged on 1 August 2014 during an interview with Sheranova, from 2011 to 2013 Mady LCPC existed only formally and the number of cases directed to the LCPC significantly decreased to 29 (on average 9 cases per year).[2] The LCPC lacked state support, needed its own premises to operate effectively and its popularity among the communities decreased. As a result, most people preferred not to contact the LCPC in the event of disputes. Only in 2014, when the Mady municipality became involved in Saferworld's Community Security Programme, was the activity of the LCPC revived. In January 2014, a Community Security Working Group (CSWG) was established, which decided to revive the activity of the then inactive LCPC. The Community Security Working Group members wrote several letters to the Mady municipality and Mady local police station requesting support for the group's initiative on the re-establishment of the LCPC. As a result of the efforts of both the working group and its supporters from Saferworld, in February 2014, the Community Security Working Group in Mady officially evolved into the LCPC with a new charter and membership.

Mady municipality allocated a separate office for the LCPC in a room in a school and covered a basic refurbishment, while the local police department helped with the renovation of the flooring. Finally, the new membership body of the LCPC completely replaced the members who had worked there until 2013, which foregrounded a fresh start, strong ties and high motivation among the new team (see Figure 1). "CSWG members in the framework of projects with Saferworld demonstrated themselves very positively and because this group is trained to work on security issues, the municipality suggested that the group members become official members of the LCPC," explained the deputy head of the Mady *ayil okmotu*.[3] As he described, before the project, the municipal administration had not recognised the LCPC as an important institution. However, after the project, they understood the importance of the LCPC's preventive work: "The LCPC successfully resolved a number of disputed issues before they escalated to the municipal level," said the head of the Mady municipality during an interview. "Within only eight months since the re-establishment of the LCPC in February 2014, it had resolved 19 disputes, which is still a high number in comparison with previous years."[4]

2 Interview by Sheranova with the head of Mady LCPC, Mady, 1 August 2014.

3 Interview by Sheranova with the deputy-head of Mady municipality, Mady, 1 August 2014.

4 Interview by Sheranova with the head of Mady municipality, Mady, 1 August 2014.

If before, the old LCPC's membership had consistesd of *ayil okmotu* representatives, after the project, the Mady LCPC became a public institution because it was made up of community representatives. Moreover, the programme contributed to establishing a partnership and cooperation with the police. Before, cooperation had only taken place between the police and the municipality. This was, of course, important as well, but had led to insufficient appreciation of the opinions of the local population on security-related issues. For instance, the issue of conflicts between Kyrgyz and Uzbek schools had been previously addressed through post-conflict explanatory investigations by the local police and school administrations without actual analysis of the conflict's root causes for the prevention of future altercations. To prevent future clashes between youths, members of the LCPC spoke to teachers, pupils and some parents and thus learned that the children lacked interaction with each other and that activities for building constructive relations and trust between Kyrgyz and Uzbek youth were needed.

A small initiative on the prevention of conflicts between schoolchildren and the reduction of interethnic tensions was funded by Saferworld as part of wider efforts for the re-activation of the LCPC. The municipality and police office jointly supported the initiative by hosting a so-called "Tolerance Festival" (*Festival tolerantnosti*) in the town's House of Culture with the participation of schoolchildren. This illustrates how the new LCPC became more capable of representing community voices on security to law enforcement organs and local administrations and of implementing joint initiatives to address the causes of conflict and insecurity.

Figure 1: Members of the LCPC Mady after a working meeting, 2014

Source: Foundation for Tolerance International, 2014

Under Saferworld's Community Security Programme, Mady LCPC held regular meetings with communities (villages) to discuss and define security-related issues, which were then communicated to law enforcement organs and local administration. Furthermore, it jointly designed and implemented small action plans to address these concerns, for instance by conducting activities calling for interethnic tolerance and friendship among schoolchildren (such as festivals and "corners of tolerance" at schools), creating public spaces for leisure and interaction (e.g. the installation of a gazebo in the central park) and others. In brief, under the Community Security Programme, the LCPC was able to take the initiative, to communicate community concerns or security issues, to make decisions on their own and also to exchange their experiences and views with LCPCs from other towns.

Such capacity-building and the establishment of the institutional status of the LCPC are very important developments because they changed both municipal and local public perceptions about the role and place of the LCPC in local security maintenance. According to the head of the LCPC,

> in the past, the LCPC's work priority was determined by the municipality, which highlighted issues on which the LCPC should focus. But now these are identified by the LCPC itself when working with communities. The LCPC determines what to focus on in its preventive work based on frequent discussions with the local population, including issues raised individually.[5]

Initially, the attitude of neighbourhood police inspectors to the LCPC had more of an "invitational character" (*priglasitelnyi kharakter*), limited to requests for assistance with the resolution of disputes and crimes, as the head of the LCPC recalled.[6] Police officers would call LCPC members, mostly *aksakals*, and invite them to resolve disputes, as they were respected elders in the communities. However, after the project the neighbourhood police inspectors would treat the LCPC members more as their colleagues and listen to their opinions. The LCPC in Mady succeeded in serving as a dialogue platform between the community and the police, able to bridge and to facilitate a conversation between both sides.

Successes and limitations of community security programming

In putting the above case study into context and assessing its representative character for the way people on the municipal level engage in this practice, it is worth considering in further detail the work done jointly by Saferworld and the Foundation for Tolerance International (FTI). As already indicated, these two organisations have conducted their Community Security Programme since the year 2013 and have supported 32 LCPCs during that time, including the refurbishment of office premises and other in-kind support. Among other docu-

5 Interview by Sheranova with the head of Mady municipality, Mady, 1 August 2014.

6 Interview by Sheranova with the head of Mady LCPC, Mady, 1 August 2014.

ments (e.g. Saferworld 2015, Saferworld 2019), a key example of their output that presents the impact of the programme is a brochure titled "Success Stories. Local Crime Prevention Centres in Osh, Jalal-Abad and Batken Provinces" (Saferworld 2016), which was prepared for the Ministry of Internal Affairs and other key partners of Saferworld based on a tour of profiling visits by a consultant, who was assisted by Lottholz.[7]

It is, course, reasonable to view our accounts of these success stories, including the above account from Mady, with a certain degree of scepticism – and to question how representative and unbiased they may be. Yet, as argued in discussions on the trade-offs of cooperative approaches to research,[8] the point of the brochure and our analysis here is not and cannot be to deliver objective evidence of the effects of the intervention of Saferworld and its partner FTI, e.g. in terms of reduced rates of crime or violent incidents or changed security perceptions of residents that can be attributed to the Community Security Programme. While this is the task of analyses by the implementing NGOs and/or further in-depth research, the purpose of this initial analysis is to point out the mechanisms of engagement, mobilisation and activation not only for dealing with insecurity as such, but especially for encouraging cooperation on these issues between local administrations and law enforcement on the one hand, and civil society and wider community populations on the other. Overall, even though Mady and the other "success stories" are but a small number of communities throughout the vast territory of southern Kyrgyzstan, the issues they dealt with and ways of overcoming them are very similar not only to the OSCE's Community Security Initiative (OSCE and El-Pikir 2013) but also to a project run by the NGO network Civic Union "For Reforms and Result" under the title "Developing Mechanisms of Social Partnership on Questions of the Provision of Public Security and Crime Prevention" from 2015 to 2016 (CURR 2016). Similar patterns and trajectories were also found in a more recent project run by the United Nations Populations Fund (UNFPA) under the title "Addressing Social Disparity and Gender Inequality to Prevent Conflicts in New Settlements" (UNFPA 2017), in which the focus of local security working groups and LCPCs was more on relations between municipal administrations and the not infrequently neglected population, as well as issues of the delivery of social and health services.

Taking into account all the LCPCs or local security working groups and other entities trying to bring about more effective approaches of producing security, we count about 119 communities (Saferworld / Foundation for Tolerance International: 32, CU: 12, UNODC: 2, OSCE CSI: 63, UNFPA: 10) where capacity-building measures for better production of security have been taken. This demon-

7 See Lottholz 2018: 176–198 for an in-depth discussion of results from the profiling visits and follow-up research on LCPCs.

8 Lottholz 2018: 176–198 and Lottholz 2020: 72ff.

strates the large-scale effort that international organisations, as well as national NGOs, have made in terms of helping to create and maintain safer communities in Kyrgyzstan. It also illustrates how these organisations help the government and different stakeholders within the state deal with the capacity dilemma discussed above. As we have shown, while there might be limits in terms of whether and how LCPCs can help solve security issues on the municipal level, we argue that, provided that all stakeholders are involved in the work of these bodies, it is a more inclusive and potentially more effective mechanism of addressing issues than approaches where law enforcement organs are the primary or only actors dealing with issues.

At the same time, this overview of the coverage of international organisations (IOs) and national NGOs leads to the question of what is happening in the municipalities where no projects or programmes for activating and capacity-building of LCPCs are run. While more systematic research is needed to confirm the present challenges and limitations of LCPCs' work, there are a number of studies that have pointed out the key problems in recent years. One good indication can be gleaned from a "situational analysis" report by UNODC and the Women Support Centre (2018) prepared as part of the above-mentioned UN project (UNFPA 2017), which found that out of 10 LCPCs in communities in the "new settlements" or *novostroiki* located outside Kyrgyzstan's capital Bishkek, only three were working more or less formally, while another three only existed on paper and another four had seized to exist. While *novostroiki* could be considered as special cases with a set of specific problems related to their disputed legal or administrative status, they can be considered as rural areas within Bishkek's urban periphery, and issues of community security are of reasonably similar character as in other communities. This was indicated in earlier analyses by the Civic Union "For Reforms and Result" in 2014, according to which nearly all surveyed non-governmental organisations working on security-related issues in Kyrgyzstan noted LCPCs as ineffective or "dying" bodies and found residents unaware of LCPCs and their activities. For instance, a survey conducted in Osh and Bishkek in 2013 suggests that 74 per cent of residents were not aware of LCPCs (CURR 2014: 10). Sheranova further cites findings from Saferworld research conducted in 2010 that "the LCPCs existed only on paper" and that many of them lacked an understanding of core functions, lacked training in conflict resolution and appropriate working conditions, and that most LCPCs are inefficient because of poor state funding that leaves staff unmotivated and forces them to work on multiple positions at the *ayil okmotu* level (Sheranova 2020: 126).

From our own experience and interviews with people working in this sector, it is realistic to assume that a third if not less of all 557 municipalities have actively working LCPCs, with most of these bodies existing only on paper but

not actively operating.[9] With activities often being close to zero, it is no surprise that people are usually completely unaware of LCPCs, let alone their functions and purposes, or mistakenly believe *aksakal* courts to be the sole institution doing security-related work in their community (UNODC / WSC 2018: 9). Another report from a national forum on "Co-Security and Crime Prevention Policy" corroborates these findings (CURR 2018a: 17).

Although the Law on Crime Prevention (adopted in 2005 and modified in 2015) states that LCPCs are local mechanisms of conflict prevention and mediation, they are not part of the National System of Early Warning and Conflict Prevention led by the State Agency for Local Governance and Inter-Ethnic Relations (Russian abbreviation: GAMSUMO).[10] While it could be argued that the main responsible early warning bodies – so-called "consultative interethnic councils" and "public reception centres" throughout multi-ethnic communities (ibid.) – are sufficient to ensure the system's effectiveness, the fact that LCPCs are not integrated in the state agency is another missed opportunity to make them more relevant. Furthermore, LCPCs do not participate in the regional discussion on security and conflict-related issues arranged by Regional Coordination Councils – a local dialogue platform to coordinate on issues related to peacebuilding and conflict resolution – despite their general eligibility to do so (CURR 2014).

All of these observations point to the fact that the efforts of IOs and national NGOs to create, activate and sustain the production of security on the municipal level need to be scaled up to nationwide efforts to deal with insecurity and prevent crime and violence in communities across the country. Here, it becomes clear that the "production" and "practice" of security cannot be transformative on their own but need to be scaled up through processes of replication, standardisation and regulation of the production of security. In other words, the "governing" of security needs to be made responsive to what is needed to produce security "on the ground".

Thus far, however, attempts to improve the conditions, standards and policies to shape a more conducive environment for LCPCs' production of security have been of limited success. Since the events and projects from which these accounts were taken, new changes and progress have been brought about that give reason to hope. For example, the minimum term for neighbourhood police inspectors has been set to three years, enabling them to develop closer ties with the communities they serve. At the beginning of 2020, a new salary package with a 40 per cent wage increase for internal affairs and law enforcement was passed and could help to address the often precarious economic situation (and corresponding pressures towards succumbing to illicit and illegal activities) of

9 Interviews by Lottholz with ex-MIA staff (Bishkek, 24 May 2019) and a representative of the Civic Union "For Reforms and Result" (Bishkek, 10 September 2019).

10 See http://gamsumo.gov.kg/ru/?page_id=1276 (accessed 27 October 2020).

these professional groups (Sputnik 2019). Besides these improvements of the preconditions of security work at the community level, governing elites and civil society have prepared a new draft law “On Crime Prevention” and a corresponding “National Strategy for Crime Prevention”, which will address the issues raised above and have the potential to outlast the current backsliding into populist rule. In this sense, it seems that further steps are being taken to enable the governing of security – i.e. legislative and policy programming that set the wider frameworks and standards of security provision – to accommodate the issues and needs raised by organisations and people involved in practices of security provision on the ground.

Summary

We have mapped and traced the linkages of community-level practices of security on the one hand, and their institutional, policy and legal ramifications, on the other. Bridging the divide between discourse-focused and practice-based approaches to security studies, we have argued that a problem in Kyrgyzstan in the aftermath of inter-communal clashes in 2010 – a situation similar to that of many other countries transitioning from violent conflict or political rule to democracy– is that power holders limit their scope to “governing, but not producing security”. That is, authorities often limit their actions to securing the effectiveness of key state institutions and capacities to quell re-emerging conflict and protests, but only rarely and to a lesser degree get involved in processes geared towards creating and maintaining safe communities at large.

To situate our argument theoretically, we have drawn on literature of security sector reform and peacebuilding in Central Asia and beyond to show how community security reform in Kyrgyzstan can be understood through Heathershaw’s concept of a “global performance state” that carries out superficial, if not “virtual” reform to curry international support while maintaining internal stability and control (Heathershaw 2014; see also 2009). That is, as in neighbouring Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstani authorities allow security and law enforcement programmes financed and run by international organisations and domestic NGOs while steering these in ways beneficial and unchallenging to their own interests. Our analysis of data and existing research on community security in Kyrgyzstan demonstrates that reform towards community-based policing was largely performative and artificial. In particular, Kyrgyzstan lacked a substantial reform that produced security on the ground, even if authorities succeeded in enacting a superficial performative reform. Heathershaw’s “global performance state” concept is best suited to explain this discrepancy. As the analysed practices on the ground demonstrated, the state responses were limited to the adoption of

new policies, concepts or amending laws, while actual work at meso- and micro-levels was handled by various international and civil society organisations. Bearing in mind that the presence of these international projects is of a short-term nature, a serious step is needed for the government to move from "declarative" reform steps to "real", tangible ones that deal with the way security can be maintained in communities across the country.

Given the capacity issues described above one could argue that a limited scope of government action and delegation of tasks to civil society and international actors is only logical. However, we would further clarify what we think authorities need to do in order to produce, rather than just govern security. Taking the concrete example of LCPCs as a prime body for the production and maintenance of security on the communal level, for these bodies to function across the country authorities would need to, first, ensure financial support and salaries for staff, then to further facilitate the clarification of the legislative framework and jurisdiction of LCPCs and, lastly, to ensure that joint policing in communities and other activities aimed at building trust between communities and the police are actually implemented, tracked and assessed in terms of their impact. Most community-level activities are currently run and supported by international projects, and their longevity without such external support seems limited.

Finally, let us summarize a number of implications raised during our analysis that we find worth elaborating. First, by comparing the actual practices of security and law enforcement with the authorities' stance toward legislation and policy-making, we have demonstrated the importance of such a multi-level perspective when it comes to grasping security affairs in a given context. The insights from the paper require further research to be consolidated, but also provide entry points for future studies that could analyse the importance of LCPCs from the perspective of nodal security governance or from anthropological and ethnographic perspectives. Second, Kyrgyzstan's Local Crime Prevention Centres are a unique institution combining the traditional adjudication and mediation of *aksakal* courts with contemporary and widely-circulating concepts of crime prevention. With the necessary support and scaling up by the state, LCPCs could play a crucial role in bringing the country's decades-long police reform efforts to success. Third, beyond this particular context, the cooperation of various stakeholders within LCPCs could also serve as an example for the implementation of community policing in other states currently working to transform their police (such as Ukraine, Georgia, Mongolia, and others). Even if some of these have been referred to as successful cases, the longevity and depth of these success stories remain to be proven and require further in-depth research and evaluation.

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Appendix 1: Peacebuilding and security programmes in Kyrgyzstan, 2010–2019

Project Name	Implementing Organisation	Aims	Outreach	allocated amount in EUR	Donor	Year
Police Advisory Group Program upon the request from interim president Otunbaeva in 2010, soon replaced by CSI	OSCE Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe	assist Kyrgyz police in post-conflict rehabilitation, improving policing capacities, maintaining public order	South-wide: 52 unarmed police officers		OSCE	July 2010
Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) various projects as part of the Immediate Response Facility	UNHCR, UNDP, UNODC, OHCHR, UNICEF, UNFPA UN Women	conflict reconciliation and conflict prevention, youth and women's empowerment, women's networks, equal access to infrastructure	South-wide: youth and women's networks, Water Users' Associations, Youth Centres	8.86 million	United Nations	2010–2011
The Kyrgyz Republic Transition Initiative / Office of Transition Initiatives and 300 implementing partners from both civil society and local administrations	The International Resources Group representation (IRG) in the Kyrgyz Republic	conflict mitigation, improving governance, support of political transition (securing democracy, support of long-term development)	Nation-wide: 450 projects involving 300 implementing partners: local self-governance, national institutions, INGOs, NGOs, LCPCs, youth (Youth Banks), women (Women's Banks)	17.72 million	USAID	2010–2013
Youth Theater for Peace (YTP)	IREX International Research & Exchanges Board	peace promotion through youth theatres	Nation-wide: 33 school theatres, 284 youth trained in innovative theatre methodology (Drama for Conflict Transformation)	971,872	USAID	2010–2014
Community Security Initiative (CSI)	OSCE Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe	improving public trust in the police and enhancing safety and security in the communities	Nation-wide: provided with 28 international police advisors, 18 "mobile police stations" in 63 rural administrations, 2,500 police officers trained		EU and 21 individual governments	2010–2015
REACH a joint initiative for informing more effective humanitarian action	TASK coalition led by Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED)	conflict mitigation, socio-economic mapping	Nation-wide: local communities, INGOs, NGOs	5 million	EU	2011–2013
Yntymak Jarchylary "Peace Messengers"	IRET, Aimira, Alga local NGOs	conflict mitigation	Nation-wide: 550 peace messengers made up of women, youth and community leaders		OSCE	2011–2013

Improving Livelihoods and Peacebuilding in the Fergana Valley	GIZ	peacebuilding, improving livelihoods, food security	South-wide: 137 villages, farming households	1.5 million	German govern-ment (BMZ)	2011–2014
Territorial Youth Councils	IRET local NGO	building capacity of youth, strengthening inter-ethnic tolerance and mutual trust, maintaining peace, later mostly capacity building in youth work	starting in 12 territorial councils of the city of Osh, then extended to Jalal-Abad, Batken, and Tokmok		OSCE	2011–2016
COMTACA Conflict Mitigation through Targeted Analysis and Commu-nity Action in Kyrgyzstan	ACTED	early warning analysis and response	South-wide: early warning networks and local self-governance	1.77 million	USAID	2012–2014
Women's Peace Banks	EFCA Eurasia Foundation of Central Asia	improving the role of women in peacebuilding, conflict mitigation	South-wide: 16 Women Initiative Groups, 160 Peace Bank members, 413 mini-grants	1.04 million	USAID	2012–2014
Preventing Conflict through Participatory Approaches to Community Safety in the Ferghana Valley	Saferworld (UK)	community security through local partnership with security providers	South-wide (and Tajikistan): Local Crime Prevention Centers, security providers	478,941	Foreign Common-wealth Office UK	2012–2015
Projects under Peacebuilding Priority Plan (PPP) upon the request from the Presi-dent of the Kyrgyz Republic in 2012 to support long-term peacebuilding	UNHCR, UNDP, UNODC, OHCHR, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women	rule of law, justice, improving public-state trust, improving human security, promotion of national cohesion, support of new policies and reforms	Nation-wide: 96 municipalities: youth, women, local self-governance, national governance	13.38 million	United Nations	2013–2016
The Good Governance and Public Administration Strengthening (GGPAS) Programme	IRG	improving state service delivery, democratic growth, support of long-term stability and develop-ment	Nation-wide: local self-governance, national institutions	11.45 million	USAID	2013–2016
Community Security Effectiveness / Community Policing	Saferworld UK	support of activities of LCPCs and local police, improving community-police partnerships	Nation-wide: Local Crime Prevention Centres, security providers, NGOs, nation-al government	4.51 million	US State Depart-ment	2013–2019

Source: Compiled by Philipp Lottholz and Arzuu Sheranova

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How to Treat Your Sworn Enemy: North Korea's Securitisation of the United States

Benedikt Christoph Staar

Abstract

Despite the growing literature on the securitisation of North Korea, securitisation *in* the authoritarian state has been understudied thus far. Through analysing North Korean primary sources, this article presents the complexity of North Korean securitisation by examining how the United States is securitised in the North Korean newspaper *Rodong Sinmun* and by North Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, looking at data from between 2017 and 2020. By expanding a framework that is centred in the illocutionary logic of securitising speech acts and by incorporating socio-political authority into its analysis, this article shows that securitisation in North Korea goes beyond the sole purpose of leader-legitimation. Instead, North Korea strategically (de)securitises by having certain governmental speakers utilise only specific strands of securitisation in such a way that potential contradictory changes in securitisation content do not substantially harm the credibility of the North Korean leadership. As a result, if there is a political, economic or other gain to be had, the North Korean government can change its depiction of the US with a negligible legitimacy loss and can comparatively easily resecuritise the US again when external conditions change.

Keywords: Securitisation, resecuritisation, non-democratic securitisation, North Korea, North Korean media, autocratic legitimacy

Even though the scholarly attention paid to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK; in the following "North Korea") has risen steadily in the past decades, research into security within North Korea is still heavily skewed towards an external perspective. Arguing that domestic factors are either irrelevant or not analytically graspable, most scholars adopt a realist / essentialist perspective and conclude that North Korea's security objectives are dictated by the international system and that the North Korean government's most important goal is regime survival (e.g. Lim 2014, Düben 2017, Chang / Lee 2018). Though

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not necessarily explicitly, this kind of research contributes to an understanding of North Korea as something inherently incomprehensible, "a state unlike any other in the twenty-first century" (Düben 2017: 6). The problem with this approach to North Korea is that it obstructs any sort of enquiry into the nature of the North Korean regime or its motivations. This becomes apparent when the failed dialogue between North Korea and the United States between 2017 and 2020 is explained by some as simply reflecting North Korea's unwillingness to denuclearise in the first place (Narang / Panda 2018) or Kim Jong-un's[1] inherently incompatible true intentions (Kim / Snyder 2019). If these explanations are true, why did North Korea agree to a politically and diplomatically risky dialogue with the United States if it had never wanted to reach common ground in the first place? Asking this question highlights a major shortcoming of most security-related research on North Korea: the lack of attention to domestic factors and primary sources.

More recent studies have produced valuable insights by adopting constructivist or post-structuralist approaches to North Korean politics. It has been shown, for example, that North Korea's diplomacy is tied to the internal construction of an external threat (the United States), a nuclear identity, and how the North Korean government uses this threat to garner vital support among the populace (Ballbach 2015, 2016). With the prospect for dialogue between the US and North Korea having come and gone, the question then is to ask whether a security threat, whose existence North Korea's government considers vital for its own survival, can be "negotiate[d] away" (Ballbach 2015: 44). Why would North Korea negotiate with the US when it could simply securitise its archenemy to gain domestic legitimacy?

This article sets out to answer this question by analysing North Korea's securitisation of the United States of America between 2017 and 2020, as this time period shows both rapprochement and conflict in the relations between the US and North Korea and is therefore exemplary for identifying shifts and continuities in securitising behaviour. By analysing the *Rodong Sinmun*'s coverage of various summits, Kim Jong-un's New Year's speeches, the Report of the Korean Workers' Party (KWP) Central Committee Plenary Session 2020, as well as statements from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) during said period, we gain insights into securitisation in a highly non-democratic state.

Securitisation refers in its most basic form to the social construction of threats by actors to gain advantageous political effects, such as legitimacy or support. The present article treats securitisation primarily in the form of illocutionary speech acts "where an existential threat is produced in relation to a referent object" (Vuori 2011: 107) and the act of securitisation effects a status transformation of the related issue (Vuori 2011). However, the context of securitisation

1 Except for common names and places, this article employs the McCune-Reischauer transcription for Korean terms.

is considered as well by examining the socio-political authority of securitising actors within North Korean society and the differentiation between specific target audiences. In short, this article employs and explores an understanding of securitisation as both manifested in the power of speech itself and related to the context and structures within which it is produced.

Theory-guided approaches, such as securitisation, are mostly underexplored in North Korea studies. Non-democratic states securitise not only to justify the breaking of rules, but for a variety of reasons (Vuori 2008). Situated in this illocutionary logic-oriented, speech act-centred, approach to securitisation, this article contributes to the current discourse on securitisation and North Korean politics by showing how the North Korean government securitises the United States along different strands in conjunction with different issues to garner domestic support as well as influence (inter)national politics. Identifying the different strands in North Korea's securitisation strengthens our understanding of North Korea's security objectives, its domestic conception of security and the role of security in maintaining domestic support. Furthermore, the evidence shows that even a very highly non-democratic and opaque state such as North Korea securitises in an analytically graspable way and with prior consideration of domestic or international audiences.

Theoretical and methodological considerations

The main question this article explores is why North Korea engaged in talks with the United States between 2017 and 2020, when it seemed more sensible for the country to simply continue securitising the United States. The aim of securitisation studies is, as Vuori formulates:

> to gain an increasingly precise understanding of who (securitising actors) can securitize (political moves via speech acts) which issues (threats), for whom (referent objects), why (perlocutionary intentions), with what kinds of effects (interunit relations), and under what conditions (facilitation/impediment factors). (Vuori 2014: 35)

The Copenhagen School defines securitisation as the "intersubjective establishment of an existential threat with a saliency sufficient to have substantial political effects" (Buzan et al. 1998: 25). Starting from this basic definition, the field of securitisation studies has evolved into many different directions of research, each contributing to securitisation theory and its framework (McDonald 2008, Stritzel 2014). While some have argued for a focus on security practices instead of speech acts (Huysmans 2006, Balzacq 2011, Bigo 2014), others argue for a historical exploration of the securitisation concept (Bonacker et al. 2017). Some, however, have argued for a renewed focus on speech act theory (Vuori 2008, 2011; Oren / Solomon 2015).

In applying securitisation theory to North Korea, this article adds to existent studies of less- or non-democratic states. Vuori shows how securitisation can be used by non-democratic governments to gain legitimacy, stressing that even non-democratic governments need to justify their actions to their citizens (Vuori 2008). Lentz-Raymann further explores this by connecting securitisation with other forms of legitimacy in non-democratic contexts that differ from the common democracy-centred conception (Lentz-Raymann 2014). The present article connects to this idea by applying it to one of the most autocratic regimes in the 21st century. The broader implication is: if even North Korea shows signs of nuanced legitimacy-seeking behaviour, we can reasonably expect non-democratic regimes in general to show this sort of behaviour. Furthermore, by analysing mass media this paper demonstrates how speech act-centred securitisation analysis helps explain the importance of security logic for the continued sustainment of authoritarian regimes in the daily lives of people – an often neglected aspect of this approach (Szalai 2017, Pratt / Rezk 2019).

By using securitisation theory in the North Korean context, the present article explores a yet unused theoretical avenue in North Korea studies. Securitisation theory is a way of grasping a state's security thinking, as securitisation processes "reveal the state's threat perception and consequently inform its alignment preferences" (Chand / Garcia 2017: 312). Therefore, its relevancy for the case at hand lies in making it possible to grasp North Korea's security thinking vis-à-vis the United States before, during and after diplomatic talks, as well as revealing the details of the role of the United States regarding security in North Korea in general and the construction of legitimacy through security in particular.

Where can we see securitisation in speech acts? Vuori argues that securitisation is a complex speech act that consists of at least three elementary speech acts (also called illocutionary points). Securitisation can differ in perlocutionary intentions and illocutionary points (Vuori 2008). Possible combinations of these perlocutionary intentions and illocutionary points produce the following five strands (or types) of securitization: raising an issue onto the agenda, legitimating future acts, deterrence, legitimating past acts / reproducing securitisation, and control (Vuori 2008). This article adopts this overarching illocutionary logic-oriented framework and subsequent approach by conducting a manual content analysis of a text-based corpus that identifies the specific strand, reference objects of security and depiction of the United States. Speech acts that did not fit any specific strand were disregarded.

However, three caveats need to be stated. First, this article argues for the recognition of an additional sixth strand of securitisation, called the "primer" (Figure 1). This is necessary because the analysed material shows many securitisation-relevant depictions of the United States that employ a sequence of two elementary speech acts but lack the distinct third elementary speech act described in

Vuori's theory. This primer is critical in describing the domestic-centred securitisation process North Korea employs when depicting the United States and the construction of facilitating conditions for future securitisation. A primer speech act consists of the elementary speech acts claim and warning. Its illocutionary point is declarative, while its perlocutionary intention is to bring attention to its referent object and main point. A primer speech act differs from the speech act of raising an issue onto the agenda because its illocutionary point is not to bring somebody to perform a certain action (Vuori 2008). Rather, its illocutionary point means it is aimed at changing the social state of affairs merely by a successful utterance.

Figure 1: Primer speech act

Elementary speech acts	Illocutionary point	Perlocutionary intention
1. claim 2. warning	declarative "in utterances with a declarative point the speaker brings about the state of affairs [...] solely in virtue of his/her successful performance of the speech act (Searle / Vanderveken, 1985: 37–8)" (Vuori 2008: 81–82)	bring attention to referent object / main point

Source: Compiled by author

Second, acknowledging the critique by scholars such as Ciută, this article agrees that it is not sensible to define a priori that securitisation speech acts must refer only to an existential threat and at the same time claim that the formulation of the meaning of security can be observed this way (Ciută 2009). Therefore, the categorisation of speech acts includes not only those that explicitly declare an existential threat, but also those that implicitly claim a state of threat below the threshold of existential threat.[2]

Third, in this article the socio-political standing of the speakers is classified on a numerical scale to visualise the securitising actor's place within the North Korean social hierarchy (Figure 2). This is done to explicitly show which strands of securitisation are used by which (more or less) privileged actor.[3] (1) is the highest authority (i.e. Kim Jong-un, Kim Jong-il or Kim Il-sung), (2) represents any sort of North Korean governmental authority, (3) makes no mention of any par-

2 While this still implies an a priori construction of security, it is more inclusive and flexible than a fixation on existential threats; for a more in-depth discussion see Vuori (2011). More recent securitisation studies generally seem to make no explicit distinction between normal and existential threats (Sjösted 2020).

3 While Buzan et al. (1998) have already pointed out the importance of being privileged to speak security, no definite method of determining this privilege has emerged yet.

ticular authority and (4) represents foreign authorities. Foreign authorities are put below no mention at all because no mention implies a degree of objectivity, whereas speech acts from foreign authorities are made explicit in the source material.

Figure 2: Socio-political ranking of securitising actors

Socio-political rank	Corresponding actor / authority	Sample in-speech act description
1	North Korean leader: Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il, Kim Jong-un	"The dear and respected Supreme Leader and President Trump […] expressed their conviction in being able to develop DPRK-US relations." (Rodong Sinmun 2019a)
2	North Korean governmental authority	"A spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea released the following statement on 18 September." (MFA 2017)
3	no particular actor / authority	"The US is threatening Korea's peace and safety with its indiscriminate erratic behaviour." (Rodong Sinmun 2018b)
4	foreign authority	"Director of Russia's foreign intelligence service Sergey Naryshkin criticised US-American sanctions as a common trick." (Rodong Sinmun 2019c)

Source: Compiled by author

It should be noted that these values are assigned to emphasise the differences among speakers and are not a ranked indicator of the amount of privilege an actor has. Nevertheless, it is important to comprehensively consider the social authority of a speaker, as this affects the assessment of the role of the audience in accepting, rejecting or acquiescing in securitisation moves – even more so in an authoritarian setting such as North Korea. By branching out from the usual approaches to illocutionary securitisation, this article addresses known criticisms toward speech act-focused approaches, such as a narrow focus on the form of speech acts, a neglect of the relation between speaker and audience and a failure to take the context of securitisation into account (McDonald 2008).

Analysing desecuritisation in a non-democratic context is challenging. Holbraad and Pedersen (2012) have already shown that the distinction between normal and extraordinary measures in non-democratic contexts is much less clear, which

makes it difficult to treat desecuritisation as "the shifting of issues out of emergency mode and into the normal bargaining processes of the political sphere" (Buzan et al. 1998: 4). However, classifying desecuritisation speech acts as moves in specific categories (Hansen 2012, Bourbeau / Vuori 2015) can help us make sense of what desecuritising actors are trying to achieve. As the North Korean case is understudied in this regard, the present study resembles a simplified exploratory approach. This mode of identifying speech acts related to desecuritisation is similar to that used for securitisation-related speech acts, meaning that the focus was on complex speech acts that included at least two elementary speech acts (claim and warning) and a possible third elementary speech act, not defined beforehand. Desecuritisation moves identified this way are put into context by drawing on Bourbeau and Vuori (2015), who develop ideas by Hansen (2012).

As this article is novel in its application of the theory to North Korea, it examines two of the most prominent channels the North Korean government uses to communicate with a domestic and an international audience: the *Rodong Sinmun* and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The investigated period extends from 1 January 2017 to 1 January 2020. Since this alone would generate thousands of articles, the analysis was narrowed down to several meaningful events, assuming securitisation acts to be featured most prominently before, during, and after these events.[4] The *Rodong Sinmun* is North Korea's largest newspaper and serves as a mouthpiece for the government. Since securitisation acts manifest themselves as public speech acts, we can assume that securitisation moves in the *Rodong Sinmun* will have the largest possible domestic audience. In order to capture securitisation acts that are presumably targeted towards a more international audience, statements by the MFA regarding the United States, as well as general statements to the United Nations, were collected. Overall, this amounts to an analysed corpus of 60 *Rodong Sinmun* issues (40~50 articles per issue) and 21 MFA statements.

Since North Korea is an autocratic state that is highly suspicious of foreign interference, the use of domestic sources is not without difficulties. While still being opaque, however, North Korea is not the nation-state equivalent of a black box. The *Rodong Sinmun* publishes its full print editions online,[5] making it possible to work directly with the North Korean source material as it is published in Korean. This is preferable to analysing English translations, since a part of the original message may be inadvertently lost in translation. Additionally, any

4 The events in question are: Donald Trump's speech at the United Nations on 19 September 2017, the Hwasŏng-15 rocket test on 28 November 2017, the P'anmunjŏm Declaration of 27 April 2018, Kim Jong-un meeting Moon Jae-in on 26 May 2018, the first US-NK summit in Singapore on 12 June 2018, Moon Jae-in visiting Pyongyang from 18 September to 20 September 2018, the second US-NK summit in Hanoi from 27 February to 28 February 2019, diplomatic exchanges during June 2019, the US-NK meeting in P'anmunjŏm on 30 June 2019, the US-NK dialogue in Stockholm from 4 October to 5 October 2019, and the Korean Worker's Party Central Committee Plenary Session on 1 January 2020.

5 Available at http://www.dprkmedia.com/.

translation also runs the risk of being changed intentionally in meaning or wording, as the North Korean government can expect English articles to garner a higher amount of interest among foreign policy makers, scholars or journalists. The same applies to statements from the MFA. Naturally, the risk of censorship and post-publication altering of information is a given in North Korea. Still, this article revolves around very recent events and directly involves a minimal number of North Korean officials who could, theoretically, have been purged. Therefore, the risk of missing out on a substantial quantity of securitising speech acts is negligible.

North Korean securitisation of the US and depiction of the US

The following chapter discusses the depiction of the United States and the different uses of strands of securitisation in North Korea, specifically their orientation towards domestic and international audiences. In general, the depiction of the US changed over the course of the observation period from an aggressive and/or sanctioning and/or nuclear threat in the beginning, to an enemy of old, who nonetheless displays a general potential for betterment and could be a dialogue partner during a period of improved relations (Figure 3). Afterwards, the depiction returned towards a more hostile image of US aggression. Shifts in depiction were not abrupt, as the periods around April to June 2018, around September 2018, and June to October 2019 show a less directly hostile US image.

Figure 3: US depiction and respective behaviour over observed time periods

Time period	Main US depiction	US depiction behaviour
September 2017 to April 2018	aggressive / hostile	stable
April 2018 to June 2018	imperial	transitioning
June 2018 to June 2019	dialogue partner	stable
June 2019 to October 2019	imperial	transitioning
November 2019 to January 2020	aggressive / hostile	stable

Source: Compiled by author

Instead, in these transitional periods the United States is portrayed as an imperial country that is seeking to expand its powers (Figure 4). Changes in depiction were introduced from the top, specifically through securitising actors ranking 1 or 2. These shifts are gradual in timing as well as internal logic. Furthermore, the shifts do not follow abruptly after the talks showed positive results but are employed prior to talks. This points toward a deliberate effort of the North Korean government to actively change the tone in anticipation of the talks, with the intention of influencing both domestic and international audiences.

Figure 4: Examples of differences in depicton of US

US depiction	Example
aggressive / sanctioning / nuclear threat	"The US-American anti-Korean sanctions and pressure, designed to destroy our sovereignty and our right to life and to harm our most dignified socialist system, incite through their atrocious and provocative character the rage and fury of our army and our people." (Rodong Sinmun 2017a)
imperial / power-seeking country	"Critical voices of the US, which is becoming desperate to station Missile Defence Systems, have started to appear. Above all, it is criticised as a fulfilment of a [US-American] strategy of domination." (Rodong Sinmun 2018a)
dialogue partner	"[…] in order to ease the tensions on the Korean peninsula, advance peace and complete denuclearisation, both parties planned to make efforts to build mutual trust." (Rodong Sinmun 2019a)

Source: Compiled by author

Two points are of interest for international audience-oriented securitisation. First is the deterrence speech act, which is explicitly geared towards an international audience (Vuori 2008). It is used in North Korea only by securitising actors with a socio-political rank of 1 or 2. Depictions of the United States contained in deterrence speech acts conform to the general shifts outlined above. Deterrence is used by North Korea both in times of confrontation regarding its nuclear arsenal and in times of relative cooperation, coercing the US to reach an agreeable stance. Second, not only deterrence speech acts are performed with an international audience in mind, as speech acts to legitimate future acts display similar characteristics. They, too, are employed by high-ranking securitising

actors only and feature the same shift in US depiction. Further still, their main points also conform to this shift, seeing as without the prospect of talks, North Korea argues for a future course of self-reliance without the United States because of its threat potential. With the possibility of talks, North Korea argues that a dialogue with the US is needed to preserve peace in the region and secure North Korea's safety. Judging from North Korea's formulation of speech acts of deterrence and legitimating future acts, its intended international audiences represent foreign governments and decision makers, for whom North Korea tries to justify specific, internationally relevant policy decisions. The fact that these two complex speech acts are similar in securitising actor, timing and content shows that North Korea effectively employs speech acts of both deterrence and legitimating future acts to directly[6] convey messages to international audiences.

How do speech acts with an expected domestic audience change their depiction of the United States? Speech acts for legitimating past/future acts, securitisation reproduction, raising issues onto the agenda[7] and control are said to be geared towards domestic audiences (Vuori 2008). However, the particularities of North Korea addressing international audiences with speech acts that legitimate future acts become clearer when discussed in connection with the control speech act. Speech acts to legitimate future acts allow some room for rejection on the part of the audience, since the third elementary part of the speech act is requesting (e.g. "accept that X is done to prevent Y") (Vuori 2008: 80–81). Control speech acts do not leave any room for rejection, since they feature the elementary speech act of requiring (e.g. "you must do X to prevent Y" (Vuori 2008: 88–89). Since the political system in North Korea greatly devalues the importance of giving room for refusal, the North Korean government presumably suffers no additional costs of employing control speech acts at home. On the international stage, however, the government cannot continuously refuse to give room for rejection in securitising moves, as its reputation would suffer even more, hindering the success of its efforts. Therefore, the North Korean government employs legitimating future acts speech acts in front of an international audience, while using control speech acts in front of a domestic audience.

Comparing the control speech act with other strands of securitisation further supports this argument. The speech acts legitimising past acts, securitisation reproduction and control are used almost exclusively until early to mid-2018, show almost zero use for the majority of 2019 and only show signs of increased use at the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020. Their similar depiction of the United States is that of an aggressive, nuclear / sanctioning threat. The sociopolitical ranking of the relevant securitising actors is also similar – mostly 3 and 2,

6 As opposed to indirectly, though possibly not inadvertently, through speech acts more directed at domestic audiences.

7 The speech act raising an issue onto the agenda has not been observed and is presumably not necessary, since its perlocutionary intention – convincing decision-makers – is not needed in a context where decision makers themselves decide what is important.

with occasional instances of 1. The established securitising acts geared towards domestic audiences show a partial break in US depiction. This is because the narratives being used are abruptly abandoned during times when they are not applicable and resurface just as abruptly when the talks stall and they become applicable again. Even to the most loyal North Korean follower this sudden shift in argumentation and depiction must come as a surprise. Securitisation theory thus far cannot explain a positive description of the United States. Judged only in terms of legitimacy gains, there seems no logical reason for North Korea to positively depict the United States. Still, not only does North Korea depict the US positively, it also shows breaks in narratives that apparently result in a loss of legitimacy and credibility.

These seeming problems can be reconciled by introducing the primer speech act. Through this speech act, North Korea establishes a less hostile, but still threatening, image of the United States as an ambiguous security threat for a domestic audience, mitigating the loss of legitimacy and discrepancies generated by the narratives. Like other strands, primer speech acts show no real shift in the depiction of the United States, as negative depictions are simply abandoned when they are not applicable and reused when they make sense again. When comparing the strands regarding timing, an extensive use of the primer strand from mid to late-2017 to mid to late-2018 is observed, then virtually no use until mid-2019 and then again frequent use after mid-2019. Essentially, when the primer speech act is used more frequently, the control, reproducing securitisation and legitimising past acts securitisation speech acts precede or follow shortly. The social rank of primer speech act speakers is virtually only 3 or 4, with very few instances of 2 in 2017. This points towards an intended domestic audience, since speakers with a social authority this low are not perceived as important abroad. The difference in speaker rank makes it possible for the North Korean government to conduct a credible shift in US securitisation overall without sacrificing the credibility of higher-ranking speakers. This way, conditions for other strands of securitisation can be facilitated through primer speech acts. In turn, through the combined use of different strands of securitisation, a shift in US depiction can be conducted convincingly.

In North Korea, securitisation of the United States is possible since it is supported by well-known narratives of an established threat. However, if the context of securitisation changes and there is no established threat to draw on, this type of securitisation behaviour is not convincing. This becomes clear when we look at the period of mid-2019. From January to July 2019, North Korea emphasised the need for talks and non-confrontation with the United States, describing the US as a worthy and (potentially) constructive dialogue partner. Against this background, a government official suddenly declaring the US to be an aggressive threat would constitute a break in narrative that would raise

Figure 5: Strands of US-securitisation in North Korea

Strand of securitisation	Intended audience	Speaker rank	US depiction
legitimating future acts	international	high	aggressive or imperial
deterrence	international	high	aggressive or imperial
legitimating past acts / reproducing securitisation	domestic	high	exclusively aggressive
control	domestic	high	exclusively aggressive
primer	domestic	low	mainly imperial

Source: Compiled by author

doubts among the domestic audience – after all, how could the same officials that just a few days ago emphasised the need for cooperation with the US now talk about how the US is aggressive and not to be trusted? Essentially, sudden changes in US depiction undermine the effectiveness of securitisation behaviour from high-level North Korean speakers.

The North Korean government avoids this pitfall by introducing a shift in depictions of the United States using primer speech acts first on a low speaker level (4) with a low intensity (the US being described as an imperial state) and with North Korea not necessarily being the referent object of security. No direct mention of a threat towards North Korea is made and no North Korean government official is speaking out. Yet, by emphasising the potential threat the US poses, an argumentative foundation is laid, on which other speakers can build. By using primer speech acts, domestic audiences are influenced to think of the US as an inherently threatening power. Additionally, supplementary argumentative force in primer speech acts does not stem from the speaker's socio-political authority, but rather from the repetition of the argument itself – which the observed data clearly shows.[8] In North Korea, the primer speech act serves as a stepping-stone for topical and policy-oriented securitisation, which is done mainly by high-ranking speakers with the strands of control, legitimating past acts and securitisation reproduction.

8 Out of 135 observed speech acts in total, 68 are primer speech acts.

To summarise (Figure 5): the primer speech act is used to convincingly induce changes in the depiction and securitisation of a certain object for a domestic audience in contexts where high-level speakers are, because of prior securitisation or outside factors, not able to do so without a loss in credibility. It does so by creating facilitating conditions for high-level securitisation using low-level speakers and low-intensity depictions. Through this process, facilitating conditions for further (re-) or (de-)securitisation are constructed. It is therefore essential for North Korea's domestic securitisation.

Desecuritisation and the role of referent objects

For communicating desirable political effects as well as security beliefs, North Korea's desecuritisation behaviour is just as important as its securitisation behaviour. The speakers who employ desecuritisation are predominantly ranked 1, with instances of 2 and very few instances of 3 or 4. Desecuritisation speech acts appear after 30 April 2018 and are found until 1 July 2019. The United States is depicted throughout as a dialogue partner, an enemy of old with a potential for betterment. Seeing as North Korea engaged this theme early on a high level, we can assume the following: by quickly legitimising a potential dialogue with the US, North Korea induced a shift in US depiction before the talks could show positive results. This supports the argument that North Korea changed its securitisation of the US deliberately to effect a positive diplomatic result, and not because the talks were going well. Put more broadly, North Korea's desecuritisation behaviour shows that the state judges a positive depiction of the United States to be extremely politically relevant for others. Consequently, (de)securitisation is used for communicating meanings of security towards domestic as well as international audiences.

North Korea's desecuritising behaviour also shows that the North Korean government was not willing to risk everything for a positive outcome. Though predominantly high-ranking speakers engaged in desecuritisation, they did so by employing speech acts more similar to those legitimating past and future acts, with room for rejection on part of the audience. By employing these less aggressive speech acts, the North Korean government made the official stance for the domestic audience clear, while also managing to mitigate the disruption of established narratives and depictions of the US. This points toward a desecuritisation behaviour as described by Bourbeau and Vuori, where a state employs desecuritising moves to avoid conflict with other states (Bourbeau / Vuori 2015: 259). However, it remains doubtful that this behaviour is oriented towards a full desecuritisation. It seems more likely to be a temporary lessening of the constant securitisation of the US to strengthen diplomatic efforts. Still,

the observed de- and subsequent resecuritisation also do not fulfil the criteria of a renewed securitisation climax (Lupovici 2016), since the resecuritisation does not include more intensive measures or additional drama.

We can conclude that North Korea is fully aware of how its treatment of the United States influences not only domestic perceptions, but also international perceptions of what North Korea thinks about the United States. While investigating North Korea's securitising behaviour has shown how the state thinks its depiction of the US influences its own legitimacy, it has told us little about North Korea's perception of the meaning of security itself. To investigate this aspect, a look at what referent objects of security North Korea mentions in its depictions of the US is warranted.

Referent objects of security are presented here along three different indicators: confrontational / cooperative time-period, speaker ranking and absence of certain argumentative patterns. During the confrontational period between September 2017 and mid-2018, referent objects of security for North Korea are almost exclusively North Korea itself as a state, its right to life (*saengjonkwŏn*) and its right to development (*paljŏnkwŏn*). These are recurring phrases when describing the threat potential of the United States.[9] When referring to the state, right to life and right to development being threatened, the US is described as an aggressive, nuclear, sanctioning threat.

Between mid-2018 and mid-2019 (Figure 6), shortly before and during the talks between the United States and North Korea, the focus of North Korean referent objects changes. When desecuritising, North Korean speakers describe (world) peace, peace on the Korean peninsula, and the relations between North Korea and the United States to be the primary referents of security. This is an interesting shift in argumentation because North Korea implicitly argues that, while diplomacy may be useful in reaching peace and amicable relations, one's sovereignty is better protected through offensive and defensive capabilities. Thus, a central North Korean belief about security, although already known through North Korean publications about ideology (T'ak 2012), is shown directly.

The period beginning mid-2019 is dominated by primer speech acts that describe the United States as an egoistic and imperial country. Referent objects of security are predominantly other states. Particularly Russia, Syria and other states that share more amicable relations with North Korea are singled out as being threatened by the United States. In 2020 we see the first signs of North Korea returning to a depiction of the US as it was in 2017, with aggressive and nuclear threat-aspects being emphasised as substantial threats to North Korea. All in all, the calculated way referent objects of security are used by North Korean speakers leads to the assumption that the security nature of an

9 North Korea invokes these phrases primarily when arguing for the expansion of its nuclear arsenal or justifying its large conventional military capabilities.

Figure 6: Referent objects of security in North Korean (de)securitisation

Time period	Main (de)securitising behaviour and US depiction	Referent objects of security
September 2017 to mid-2018	securitising – aggressive depiction	sovereignty, right to life, right to development
mid-2018 to mid-2019	desecuritising – positive depiction	(world) peace, peace on the Korean peninsula, relations between North Korea and the United States
mid-2019 to 2020	securitising – imperial depiction	other states, North Korean allies

Source: Compiled by author

object is carefully manufactured by the North Korean state. This argument is further supported by the fact that some issues, most notably the North Korean economy, are omitted when it comes to describing the US threat under which North Korea sees itself.

Limitations of securitisation

A limitation that this study has not been able to overcome is the state-centric focus of its research direction. By confining itself to North Korean depictions of the United States as unitary nation state, singular instances of more detailed US depictions are lost. In one instance the *Rodong Sinmun* specifically criticises US citizens' lack of safety from gun violence (Rodong Sinmun 2019e, 2019f). In another instance, Kim Jong-un praises US-president Trump's "boldness" (Rodong Sinmun 2019b). Because of the extremely low number of such depictions, no solid conclusion can be drawn. Still, they show that North Korean security-relevant depictions of the United States have the potential to go beyond state-ism and merit further research. Furthermore, securitisation related to economic matters is almost completely absent from the analysed material. While this does not necessarily mean that North Korea thinks its economy to be security-irrelevant, it does show that an analysis of state-oriented securitisation potentially overlooks certain areas. To ascertain why North Korea does not substantially securitise its economy in relation to the United States could potentially be investigated by an analysis of overall securitisation processes in North Korea.

This article also points towards a need to examine the connection between targeted audience and speaker-authority invocation in securitising moves (Vuori 2008: 72). Concerning securitisation for deterrence (Vuori 2008: 82), it should be noted that the findings of this article suggest that a general a priori definition of which strand is aimed at whom is difficult to uphold. Rather, in North Korea the social ranking of the speaker is an indicator of the audience that a speech act is aimed at. A high rank, however, does not automatically guarantee a successful securitisation, which we can investigate here only vaguely in any case, since there are no opinion polls or elections. Still, if a single high-ranking actor were to make every securitisation move in a state, that actor would suffer a loss of credibility and legitimacy after any break with a previous narrative. To accommodate changes in narratives, low-ranking actors are needed to establish facilitating conditions.

The nature of the creation of facilitating conditions was briefly explored by introducing the primer strand of securitisation. However, it must be stressed that this article cannot fully resolve the concerns raised by other scholars (Vuori 2011, Stritzel 2014) regarding precisely what facilitating conditions are and how they can be measured. Still, the primer complex speech act is helpful in addressing the shortcoming of illocutionary logic-oriented, speech act-centred frameworks that cannot fully capture the North Korean securitisation of the United States without completely abandoning their core concepts. While it provides a satisfying explanation for the particularities of domestic securitisation in North Korea, its explanatory power should be tested in other contexts as well. It is likely that the primer speech act is related to resecuritisation processes, an "even less investigated phase of securitisation" (Sjösted 2020: 32). As these exhibit differences from standard processes of securitisation – even though North Korea has a highly different discursive context than other cases where this phenomenon has been studied (McDonald 2011) – further research in comparing resecuritisation in democratic and non-democratic contexts is needed.

Regarding the debate as to whether securitisation theory focuses too much on speech acts, the present study shows why we should not be too hasty in discarding them, as they are one of very few primary sources able for identifying securitising behaviour in non-democratic states. The fact that we cannot reliably investigate North Korean audiences or fully investigate a North Korean security-dispositif hinders the adoption of approaches suggested by scholars such as Balzacq (2011). Speech act-centred securitisation frameworks prove useful because they consist of an abstract, theory-based approach, clearly defined source material and a comprehensible way of analysing said material, thereby addressing key criticisms of North Korea studies. Additionally, studies of securitisation in North Korea may prove valuable to research into North Korean military provocations and strategic thinking, alleviating the lack of insight into domestic sources and security practices that these studies suffer from.

Further political and cultural North Korea studies may be valuable in generating insights about the characteristics of the audience concept in North Korea specifically and non-democratic states in general. The concept of North Korea as a theatre state (Kwon / Chung 2012) can be drawn upon to conceptualise ways that the North Korean state engages with its citizens. How North Korean citizens are enticed to join in state-organised performances and what role they have in these rituals correlates to the conceptualisation of an audience that is not inert, but also does not necessarily need persuasion (Oren / Solomon 2015). Rather, according to Oren and Solomon, the audience must join into a "collective incantation of ambiguous phrases" (Oren / Solomon 2015: 316) of security. The bulk of North Korean US-securitisation is oriented along ambiguous phrases like "foreign powers" (Rodong Sinmun 2019d) or "imperialism" (Rodong Sinmun 2017b) – the first phrase was explicitly identified by Ballbach (2015) in an international context. Further investigation of how the role of the audience in North Korea is constituted within performances of securitisation vis-à-vis the state may grant further insights into the role of the audience in non-democratic states, showing that not only democratic contexts feature an active audience.

Concluding remarks

This article has explored why North Korea engages with the United States of America politically and diplomatically, when the regime could simply securitise the US to strengthen its own legitimacy. In the period under study, North Korea engaged in talks if they potentially yielded political gains and were justifiable to its domestic audience. The country desired a positive outcome and saw such an outcome as a gain in security. Clear shifts towards a more positive depiction of the US before the talks began thus support the argument that North Korea deliberately changed its securitisation to effect a more favourable diplomatic outcome. Through ranking the securitising actors along their socio-political standing, the article shows that high-ranking speakers such as the North Korean leader or specific government organs dominate certain strands of securitisation, especially directly before diplomatic events up to mid-2019. Before and after the actual events, low-ranking securitising actors appear more frequently. In early and mid-2018 and after mid-2019 they partake in an essential domestic-oriented securitisation process in North Korea. By substituting certain strands of securitisation (e.g. legitimising past acts) with others (primer) up to and during diplomatic talks, the North Korean government manages to shift its US depiction without a strong loss of credibility among its citizens.

Going beyond North Korea, the findings suggest that a broadened speech act-centred securitisation approach is useful for identifying less obvious shifts

of security logic in non-democratic contexts. States must communicate with their people in some way – even if it is through propaganda. By considering less explicit speech acts, we can grasp how the logic of security touches the daily lives of people living in non-democratic states. While the approach in this article is not a substitution for opinion polls or interviews, it is an alternative tool for researchers who still want to investigate the role of the audience in contexts where the aforementioned methods are not feasible. Furthermore, analysing the logic of security in the mass media reveals how non-democratic states grapple with legitimacy problems when dealing with (former) enemies or threats. At some point, states may find themselves in a position where a threat, whose deterrence was once the main legitimising force for a government, has either changed or faded away. Rather than facing a legitimacy crisis by losing their main enemy, this article suggests that non-democratic states can make use of de- and resecuritisation to balance out losses of credibility and legitimacy. By refocusing on how non-democratic states legitimise their rule at home through security we can gain insights into why supposedly unstable nations or governments carry on without significantly visible change.

Overall, this article alludes not to the American threat being vital to North Korea's identity, but rather to a threat being vital for the way Pyongyang garners support for its policies and legitimacy among the populace. The way in which North Korea changed its depiction of the United States implies that the North Korean government presumably has the means – after a period of progressively changing its securitisation behaviour – to choose to securitise, for example, Japan or even China as its main enemy. In this way, the North Korean leadership could still claim domestically to be threatened from the outside while externally improving its ties with the United States. Seeing how securitisation is used in North Korea, this article supports the argument that the North Korean government has the option and the authority to decide of its own accord who or what it recognises as a threat and it does not rely on justifying its rule solely with the American threat, but rather with threat in general.

This means that North Korea is not exclusively bound by its prior securitisation and construction of the United States as a threat. If there is a preferable political, economic or other gain to be had, the North Korean government can, through its domination of the public discourse and the employment of certain strands of securitisation, change its depiction of the United States with a negligible loss of legitimacy. The risks for North Korea are low since the government can comparatively easily resecuritise the United States again in the case of a breakdown or failure of diplomatic talks.

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(Re)reading Afghanistan through the Lens of Securitisation Theory

Research Note

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Abstract

This article explores practices of (de)securitisation in a setting where securitisation, violence and legitimacy interact in complex ways. It is argued that in such settings (de)securitisations need to be analysed in relation to the complexities of violence and security on the ground and to the way that these are tied to local modalities of legitimisation and delegitimisation. In the highly fragmented Afghan setting, processes of (de)securitisation appear in a context where existing patterns of authority are constantly (re)negotiated and political order is in a continuous process of violent transformation. Conceptually, this suggests the need for a distinctly non-linear and relational reading of securitisation dynamics that challenges the way securitisation theory has traditionally been understood.

Keywords: Securitisation, Afghanistan, non-West, legitimisation, delegitimisation

Claire Wilkinson was one of the first who discussed the concept of securitisation in a non-Western context. In her seminal article "The Copenhagen School on Tour in Kyrgyzstan: Is Securitisation Theory Usable outside Europe?" (2007), Wilkinson argued that securitisation as exclusively conceptualised by the Copenhagen School at that time was unable to sufficiently account for developments beyond the West. According to Wilkinson, a major reason was that the Copenhagen School took for granted that European understandings of society and the state are universal. She concluded that the concept of securitisation may therefore be unsuited to non-Western settings where securitisations often play out in very different ways. In this context she specifically criticised the linear construction of a speech act leading to an exceptional measure: where speech is constrained, she argued, an extraordinary action may precede the speech act.

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Several scholars have advanced similar arguments since the publication of Wilkinson's article in 2007. For example, Holbraad and Pedersen (2012) and Greenwood and Wæver (2013) demonstrate how the liberal assumptions underpinning securitisation theory do not apply to revolutionary regimes or situations. As the Copenhagen School assumes normal politics to be clearly distinct from exceptional politics, such contexts may appear as if in a continuous state of exceptional politics, where extra-political means are not the exception but the norm. In such contexts, the distinction between a normal state of politics and exceptional measures thus collapses. Indeed, in such environments there may not be such a thing as normal politics as understood by the Copenhagen School at all, and processes of legitimisation and delegitimisation thus play out very differently to the way assumed by the theory. This is also true for the war in Afghanistan, which is not only "non-Western" in the ways described above, but is a setting that is profoundly different from a conventional Western model of stable democratic procedures and normal regulatory politics during peacetime.

This article argues that in Afghanistan practices of (de)securitisation thus need to be analysed in relation to the complexities of violence and security on the ground, and in the way these are tied to local modalities of legitimisation and delegitimisation. In the highly fragmented Afghan setting, securitisation, violence, perceived (in)security and legitimacy interact in complex ways. Processes of (de)securitisation appear in a context where existing patterns of authority are constantly (re)negotiated and political order is in a continuous process of violent transformation. Conceptually, this suggests a distinctly non-linear and relational reading of securitisation dynamics that challenges the way securitisation theory has traditionally been understood. Re-reading Afghanistan through the lens of securitisation theory is an attempt to acknowledge this greater complexity and context-specificity both with regards to the empirical setting of Afghanistan and the Western-centric assumptions underpinning the original design of the theory.

While the war in Afghanistan is exceptionally well researched, there is currently only one article that applies securitisation theory in some detail to the Afghan setting (see Stritzel / Chang 2015). As the authors predominantly aim to reflect upon and conceptualise counter-securitisation as an interactive dynamic of moves and countermoves, which they briefly illustrate with regards to the war in Afghanistan, however, their empirical reading as such can appear as overly dichotomous, reflecting only one central dynamic in the conflict among a multitude of others. In *re*-reading Afghanistan through the lens of securitisation theory, this article thus seeks to move beyond, and partly deconstruct, this reading. The existing literature on Afghanistan, on the other hand, has stressed significant complexities with regards to the Taliban setting,[1] yet fails to explore

1 See in particular Giustozzi 2007, 2019; Ucko 2013; Jackson 2018; Weigand 2017a, 2017b.

these in the context and as part of wider processes of securitisation. This article starts with a discussion of the initial design of securitisation theory as applied to a distinctly non-Western setting. After reconceptualising securitisations as complex struggles, the article continues with an illustration of this dynamic in the Afghan setting. Afghanistan here arguably illustrates *in extremis* the aspect of struggles that draw their efficacy from various processes of authorisation on the ground. Specifically, the case of Afghanistan will show how securitisations are closely tied to complex dynamics of legitimisation and delegitimisation at both state and diverse local levels.

Securitisations as complex struggles

From early on the initial design of securitisation has been criticised as overly parsimonious, lacking both nuance and greater context-specificity. In its original design, the process of securitisation is conceptualised as a stylised act which dramatises an issue as an existential threat to a valued referent object that allows a state representative to raise the issue above the bounds of regular political procedure and open debate in order to treat it by extraordinary means, which involves breaking the rules of regular political process. Under the conditions of the exception, normal democratic modes of regulatory politics are thus temporarily shut down for the benefits of the sovereign, who deals with declared problems as he or she sees fit (Buzan et al. 1998, Wæver 1995). From this perspective, securitisation thus seems to suggest the moment of the sovereign who is empowered by a successful process of securitisation to deal with issues in the mode of sovereign decisionism. As Williams (2003) prominently argued, "it is in the realm of emergency that the essence of sovereignty as decision is most clearly articulated" (Williams 2003: 517).

Such a decisionist reading of securitisation dynamics is clearly not applicable to Afghanistan and one might even say that in the realm of the emergencies in Afghanistan, the essence of sovereignty as decision is least clearly evident. Specifically, the distinct empirical setting of Afghanistan illustrates three broader challenges to the way the concept of securitisation has traditionally been understood.

First, practices of securitisation, be they securitisations, desecuritisations, re-securitisations or counter-securitisations (Stritzel / Chang 2015), are more closely tied to non-trivial questions of legitimacy and authority than typically analysed, involving processes of legitimisation and delegitimisation in relation to relevant audiences. Security practices often draw their efficacy from legitimacy, which gives these practices a positive normative status. Any erosion of the perceived legitimacy of security practices thus weakens their power to persuade people to align with or conform to their prescriptions. If subjects lose

confidence in the legitimacy or true authority with regards to security practices, it is more likely that they will resist, or search for alternative authorities. Legitimacy and authority are therefore natural targets of agents who may use securitisation, among other means, as tools to legitimise their own actions, delegitimise others and establish or strengthen their own authority with regards to relevant audiences.

Second, processes of authorisation can therefore play out in much more complex and ambivalent ways than assumed in the original design of securitisation theory. First, securitising moves may have multiple perlocutionary effects with regards to different audiences that are difficult to predict. A securitising move can have the intended perlocutionary effect of persuading an audience to provide someone with legitimacy for action against a declared threat, but the actual perlocutionary effect may be resistance against this move. Second, while in highly institutionalised settings with a clear monopoly of violence securitising actors are typically political leaders, state representatives and elites, in less institutionalised or politically fragmented settings this is much less clear. In these settings, authority is not already perfectly consolidated or is non-existent, so that authorised speakers need to be established in the first place. As Distler (this issue) argues, even statehood itself, the monopoly of violence or the nation are not set and given, but instead defined by spatial scales, fluid agency and permanent (re)negotiations.

Third, in less institutionalised or politically fragmented settings it is therefore necessary to consider more complex processes of authorisation and examine how actors mobilise valued types of capital in a political field that allows them to be temporarily accepted as legitimate voices and exert influence in that field (Bourdieu / Wacquant 1992: 98). This includes the study of the specific conversational strategies applied in such a setting, in which actors draw upon the resources available to create resonance with an audience's values and expectations but also other modes of interaction and coalition building among diverse groups of actors including brokers and gatekeepers. These different modes of interaction typically appear as part of contextually and situationally highly specific practices that are targeted at specific audiences. The specific modes of action and interaction thus adapt to the specific environment in which an issue is handled and authority is negotiated. Different articulations and conceptualisations of security may compete in these contexts as they derive from actors' attempts to translate them into a new context (Stritzel 2011, 2014) or may be successful due to their being more amendable to a variety of actors (Boas / Rothe 2016), but they may also derive from a more direct engagement between actors with explicit negotiations, compromises and exchanges of resources affecting the development of shared storylines. Actors join because they are attracted to a storyline that is typically influenced by its perceived legitimacy and the various material practices of authorisation upon which such storylines are based.

Legitimisation and delegitimisation in the Afghan setting

In Afghanistan, political fragmentation and material struggles over legitimacy have a long history.[2] After the Soviet withdrawal the country quickly disintegrated into various smaller areas controlled by abusive warlords and strongmen who mistreated the local population and extracted money for their own benefit. This formed the background for the rise of the Taliban, who managed to gain local legitimacy by successfully creating the image of taking a stand against corruption, fighting ruthless strongmen and providing effective local governance. While they introduced a new political order that implemented Islam in areas under their control, their way of de facto governing included strong elements of *Pashtunwali*, the Pashtun's informal social and cultural code, and decentralised modalities that reflected local distinctiveness and diversity as well as the often-complex social relations of power in different provinces, districts and at Afghan village levels.

The Taliban could capitalise on previous images of their stance against corruption and their own embeddedness at the local level. It worked in their favour that the US and its allies struggled to establish a viable governing system that was widely accepted as legitimate or provided efficient governance, particularly with regards to the justice system and in rural and remote areas. Instead, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan was widely viewed as corrupt, ineffective, complex and inefficient. Indeed, although the international community supported the Afghan government with more than $100 billion over the years, very large amounts were diverted away from reconstruction projects and government funds (Jackson / Weigand 2019: 148), while the initial 2002 Tokyo Conference only raised $5 billion (Bird / Marshall 2011: 113), a fact that contributed to poor economic performance and disillusionment during the important early recovery period.

When the United States launched Operation Enduring Freedom in October 2001, they collaborated with a number of strongmen and their militias, loosely bound together as the "Northern Alliance", that had previously tried to defend the north of the country against the Taliban. These groups then dominated participation in the negotiations on the future of Afghanistan in Bonn that led to the 2001 Bonn Agreement after quick initial military successes based on effective Western air support. Meanwhile, the Taliban, who were not represented in Bonn, went underground and several of their key commanders managed to

2 The history of Afghanistan and the rise of the Taliban after the Soviet occupation of the country is well documented in several detailed studies (see in particular Barfield 2010; Jones 2009; Giustozzi 2007, 2019; Rashid 2000, 2008). Apart from these and other excellent secondary sources (see in particular Johnson 2007, 2017; Johnson / Waheed 2011; Ucko 2013; Jackson 2018; Jackson / Weigand 2019; Weigand 2017a, 2017b), the empirical part of this article relies on Western primary sources and translated Afghan primary sources including data from the Combat Studies Institute's Operational Leadership Experience Interview Archive at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

escape to Pakistan. Yet the northern strongmen were never the undisputed spokesmen for the Afghan people, nor did the US-supported post-Taliban government, centred on Hamid Karzai, subsequently gain legitimacy across a broader spectrum of groups or larger parts of the country.

In their Pakistani refuge the Taliban quickly reorganised and began fighting again as an insurgency. After initially sending small infiltration teams across the Pakistani border, they steadily expanded and consolidated their reach, particularly in rural and remote areas of the country. In so doing, they were not only portraying themselves again as "jihadists" fighting against the "occupying" US forces and the "infidel" Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Against the background of a largely dysfunctional and corrupt government and illegitimately enriched local commanders and warlords, the Taliban could also promote themselves as a popular movement that promoted efficient governance and social justice, gradually establishing themselves as alternative authorised spokesmen for an increasing number of people, particularly in southern and eastern Afghanistan. This move of combining an insurgency with a deliberate political strategy of utilising governance became particularly prevalent under the leadership of Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour (see Jackson 2018: 8–9, Johnson / DuPee 2012, Terpstra 2020: 6–13). As his reign and revised strategy coincided with the significant withdrawal of international troops, while remaining troops typically continued to serve only in non-combatant roles as part of Operation Resolute Support, the Taliban gradually expanded their control and influence even in territory that they had not captured. Whereas much of this successful process of extending control was strongly demand-driven and decentralised, often influenced on the ground by various local "deals", local compromise and extensive bargaining, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan largely failed to establish or sustain legitimacy beyond larger cities.

Specific failures of legitimisation can already be found in relation to the *Loya Jirga* (grand council) in 2002, in which Afghan tribal elders and other key leaders were to agree on the election process and constitution. Although the council eventually achieved the goal of setting up a presidential election in 2004, it was marred with severe infighting among warlords and in relation to Karzai as the US-supported candidate for President of Interim Authority (Rashid 2009: 140–142), undermining attempts to establish the Afghan government's legitimacy throughout wider parts of the country. Scott Smith, the UN official responsible for the 2004 election process, argues that "institutional considerations were increasingly forsaken for short-term political concerns" (Smith 2011: 3). Furthermore, unfair practices with regards to the Security Sector Reform (SSR) and specifically the process of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) undermined processes of legitimisation as they strongly favoured groups

that had won the war (Bird / Marshall 2011: 130).[3] For example, many Taliban fighters avoided the process by joining US-funded anti-Taliban militias, while a selected number of militia groups evaded demobilisation by being incorporated into the police force (Giustozzi 2009: 78–79). Meanwhile, people from the villages were selectively targeted as Taliban sympathisers and harassed to pay bribes or face false imprisonment (Reuter / Younus 2009: 102). These practices enraged the Pashtuns in particular, mainly in the southern and eastern parts of the country, who had already felt disenfranchised in the post-Taliban government and thus increasingly decided to rethink their relationship with the central government in Kabul as a result.

Yet, at least equally important were severe governmental failures to establish legitimacy at the local village level in particular, especially with regards to the justice system,[4] which the Taliban deliberately targeted early on with skilful delegitimisation strategies. The ability to impose an effective centralised legal regime upon local communities has always been a great challenge as, historically, local Afghan communities had their own non-state institutions for regulating behaviour and resolving problems, typically grounded in both Islamic and diverse local traditions (Johnson 2017: 30). Legitimacy and governance are therefore often viewed pragmatically based on concrete day-to-day experiences and practical concerns,[5] while the legal system and code introduced after 2001 were mostly Western-inspired and more abstract, making them difficult for Afghans from rural areas to understand or utilise.

How securitisations worked

Securitising moves by the Taliban were closely tied to broader Taliban strategies of delegitimisation in relation to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and to establishing authority and gaining legitimacy themselves. To the extent that Afghan audiences lost confidence in the efficacy of the Afghan government, they thus searched for alternative authorities. Capitalising on their much superior local knowledge and entanglements at Afghan village levels, the Taliban were very effective in their campaigns and strategies, which were skilfully localised and deeply rooted in Afghan culture and tradition. While “bad” Taliban are often seen as under the influence of Pakistan or the

3 See also Giustozzi 2009 and Barfield 2011.

4 This has been stressed by various studies. See in particular Giustozzi et al. 2012; Giustozzi / Baczko 2014; Weigand 2017a, 2017b; Jackson 2018; Jackson / Weigand 2019, 2020.

5 For example, for some, the Taliban courts were simply closer than the state ones, as government courts are often available only in district or provincial centres, resulting in high transportation costs for people from rural areas. Furthermore, bribes often decide who wins and loses at court; and even if state courts resolve a dispute, they may be unable to enforce the judgement (see Jackson 2018; Jackson / Weigand 2019, 2020).

Pakistani intelligence service, many Taliban are in fact very much part of the local social fabric (Jackson 2018). By gradually regaining legitimacy as a viable entity and effectively positioning themselves against the background of a deteriorating security situation, they were able to regain their status as relevant authorities and "authorised speakers" for Afghan audiences.[6]

Specific Taliban political strategies can be broadly clustered into three main groups. First, a central element of both their rhetoric and actions was to construct the narrative of an "alternative government" that would provide effective governance, thereby nourishing the view that the Taliban would treat ordinary people better than a highly inept, inefficient and corrupt central government. By providing conflict resolution and other services in a way that was perceived to be accessible, fast and fair, the Taliban consistently delegitimised the authority of the central government. The highly diverse, decentralised and fragmented nature of Afghanistan here strongly worked in their favour.

Second, the Taliban used "armed propaganda", which effectively utilised intimidation as a control mechanism and as part of a broader control strategy. This typically involved threats followed by violent actions, which included kidnapping, assassination or murder.[7] This not only sowed fear, sending a message that the Taliban could reach anybody at any time, but it also helped portray the central government as ineffective and powerless. Indeed, the Taliban strategy gradually evolved into one of influence and control rather than territorial gains.

Third, the Taliban successfully applied strongly localised, culturally-specific language in their messages as well as their dissemination techniques, using night letters (*shabnamah*), chants (*taranas*) and poems.[8] As Johnson (2017) has shown, the Taliban's messages typically contained easy-to-understand stories in local dialects that appealed to the moral reasoning of Afghan villagers and promoted anti-Western sentiments, delegitimised the Afghan government and also deliberately included more specific local grievances and needs. A powerful aspect of this strategy was efficient intelligence collection at the local level that allowed the Taliban to pinpoint accusations pertinent to a specific local community, which could then be incorporated into their broader themes and narratives to help increase local resonance. References to errant air strikes, night raids, searches of compounds and images depicting the inappropriate touching of women by

6 As Jackson (2018) argues, ordinary Afghans often display a combination of weak preferences, opportunism and survival considerations. This can lead to pragmatic arrangements between insurgents and civilians and hybrid forms of authority structures on the ground involving the Taliban, elders, government actors, other armed opposition groups, criminal actors and/or pro-government militias. In this way very complex relationships can evolve that are often asymmetric but also mutually dependent.

7 The Taliban have targeted a wide range of people including leaders and key members of parties and groups hostile to the Taliban, government officials and employees of Western and other hostile governments, particularly members of the Afghan security forces, but also several thousand interpreters, contractors, individuals believed to be spying or informing the authorities on the Taliban or simply individuals who refused to collaborate (see Giustozzi 2017: 10–15).

8 For an analysis of Taliban communication strategies and propaganda, see Foxley 2007, ICG 2008 as well as Johnson 2007 and 2017, Johnson / Waheed 2011.

Coalition forces were thus combined with a strong focus on the diverse specificities at the rural Afghan village level. Their securitising speech acts were thus strongly embedded (Stritzel 2007), both culturally and locally.

Securitising moves by the Taliban thereby consist of multiple specific targets and referent objects. They typically target a conspiracy of enemies – an incompetent and corrupt Afghan puppet government that is instructed by "foreigners" who are ruling the country badly and by proxy. This "assemblance of enemies" conspires to exploit and "purchase" Afghanistan. Typical specific referent objects of securitising moves are Islam, the Afghan way of life as well as individual life, stability and security, but also local ownership and independent decision-making as essential elements of Afghan and community traditions (see Johnson / Waheed 2011). Importantly, this broader securitising narrative is not only conveyed explicitly by rhetoric but also implicitly and through action. In this sense, even gradual Taliban success on military as well as civil-political fronts is a securitising move that suggests that ordinary Afghans had better jump on the bandwagon with the winning side. This in turn resonates more specifically with the narrative of having historically defeated foreign invaders, both colonial and "superpower". Thus, from the perspective of a more complex, relational framework of (de)securitisation, a much broader perspective on the issue of securitising moves needs to be applied and can be illustrated with regards to the Afghan setting.

As the Taliban expanded their control and influence, Western forces reacted with different strategies that also included elements of local engagement. Major Jim Grant's tribal engagement strategy of "One Tribe at a Time" (Grant 2014) in a valley bordering Pakistan in the eastern parts of Afghanistan is such an example. The strategy deliberately targeted a much narrower audience in the hope of gradually expanding from single villages or tribes to the wider population. Other examples, apart from counterinsurgency (COIN) and the US strategy change of 2009 (The White House 2009, ISAF 2009), include attempts to hire locals to host music programmes and talk shows over public airwaves as well as "Radio in a Box" to deliver messages specifically targeted at and framed for the local population, as well as to draw attention to the policy that any entry into an Afghan house would be undertaken only by Afghan National Security Forces with the support of local authorities. Greater local engagement is also reflected in a plethora of specific strategic initiatives since 2009 including Village Stability Operations, the increase in local spending through the Commander's Emergency Response Program, the Afghanistan Social Outreach Program as well as, on the military side, US Human Terrain Teams and the UK Defence Cultural Specialist Unit (see Ucko 2013). However, in comparison, these initiatives never truly succeeded in generating sustainable practices that resonated well with the local population. Furthermore, while Afghans were exposed to many different and often competing sources of news and influence, there has

often been a tendency to follow the views of the provider of patronage or other Afghans that they desire to emulate (see Johnson / Waheed 2011: 6). In this sense, success has been a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Conclusion

Confronting securitisation theory with Afghanistan illustrates securitising moves that are part of broader political strategies and struggles. These moves do not call for extraordinary measures that break the rules of normal political procedure but become tools by which actors create political order in the first place. Actors position themselves, establish or disrupt authority, and engage in legitimisation and delegitimisation in a highly dynamic and volatile strategic setting. Authority and political order are thus not static but in a constant process of (violent) transformation.

In Afghanistan, legitimacy is often established or weakened in relation to the ability to engage with people on the ground. To the extent that Afghan audiences lost confidence in the efficacy and legitimacy of the Afghan government, they began to search for alternative authorities. The authority of the Afghan government was therefore a natural target early on. The Taliban crafted their securitising moves in relation to diverse local audiences, skilfully drawing upon the resources available to create resonance with the audience's values and expectations. Rather than trying to win "hearts and minds", however, the focus of the Taliban has mainly been on control and submission.

Ordinary Afghans joined in due to their attraction towards a particular narrative. Effective speech was thereby as much part of the storyline as economic performance, efficient governance, justice, diverse practices of intimidation and specific military campaigns. In the absence of security, the local population also often simply turned to the strongest side. At the same time, providing governance has proven difficult where the government is viewed as corrupt and predatory and insurgents can punish those participating, or where state representatives only operate through intermediaries.

When Claire Wilkinson was one of the first to discuss securitisation in a non-Western context, her conclusion was that the concept of securitisation may be unsuited to non-Western settings. Almost 15 years later this is no longer the case. The Afghan setting arguably only illustrates the need to reconceptualise securitisation dynamics in a more complex, relational way and specifically to consider more complex processes of legitimisation and delegitimisation in relation to relevant audiences. In less institutionalised or politically fragmented settings, authorised speakers need to be established in the first place and patterns of authority are constantly (re)negotiated. Even beyond the specific case of Afgha-

nistan, a narrowly decisionist reading of securitisation is thus arguably only applicable to a rather limited range of situations and contexts, and reconceptualising securitisation as a complex struggle promises to be relevant for both "Western" and "non-Western" settings alike.

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Democracy Taught: The State Islamic University of Jakarta and its Civic Education Course during *Reformasi* (1998–2004)

Amanda tho Seeth

Abstract

This article presents a qualitative content analysis of the instruction material used by the State Islamic University Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta for its mandatory civic education course, which was introduced in the year 2000/2001 in collaboration with US-based The Asia Foundation. Kicked off during the Indonesian democratisation process, the so-called *Reformasi* (1998–2004), the course aimed at socialising Muslim students into the values and norms of democracy, human and civil rights, and critical thinking. By focusing on the content of the chapter on "Democracy" in the course's original and revised textbook, it is shown that the Islamic academics involved in the creation of the course acted as cosmopolitan brokers between Islamic, Indonesian and Western culture, but in the course of time shifted to promote democracy from an increasingly Islamic and Indonesian perspective, thereby engaging in a practice of localisation. However, the textbooks also featured several biases, inconsistencies and contradictions that mitigated their pedagogic quality and that are critically assessed in this article. Despite these shortcomings, it is argued that due to the course's overall strong pro-democratic commitment and its strategic institutionalisation on campus, the State Islamic University Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, with its academic milieu, must be understood as a pro-democratic actor whose political agency during as well as after *Reformasi* deserves more scholarly attention.

Keywords: Indonesia, democratisation, Islamic universities, civic education, localisation

Introduction

Against the backdrop of the "religious turn" that started to gain ground in the humanities and social sciences from the 1980s onwards, scholars of political science are increasingly paying attention to the role played by religious actors

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in democratisation processes. Illustrating the premise that religion is Janus-faced, religious actors – defined as "any individual or collectivity, local or transnational, who acts coherently and consistently to influence politics in the name of religion" (Philpott 2007: 506) – take up multifaceted roles in democratisation processes (Künkler / Leininger 2009). They can support or hamper the introduction of democracy,[1] and because of impeding structural factors may also opt to abstain from clearly positioning themselves politically (tho Seeth 2020). In societies where religion plays an important role in shaping personal and group identities, attitudes and behaviour, religious actors can take crucial leading positions during a democratic transition[2] and publicly mobilise faithful followers for or against democracy, mostly legitimising their political position from within theological interpretation and argumentation. While existing research has looked at religious actors such as individual religious politicians, religious political parties, individual religious leaders, religious intellectuals, religious civil society leaders and religious organisations, which include churches, mosques, temples, foundations and a wide range of religious civil society organisations,[3] the following sets out to introduce Islamic universities as an actor category in democratisation processes.

A closer look at the political agency of Islamic universities during times of political liberalisation is important for several reasons. From a historical perspective, Islamic scholars based at so-called mosque-universities for centuries constituted *the* authoritative source for questions concerning religious life, but also for advising on politics, the economy and a wide range of other public affairs. In the contemporary era, state Islamic universities such as Egypt's al-Azhar, Tunis's al-Zaytuna, Fès's al-Qarawiyyin or Riyadh's Imam Muhammad bin Saud form part of their respective countries' official religious authority and elite, some of them even with outreach beyond national borders, impacting on the wider global Muslim community (Bano / Sakurai 2015). These Islamic universities represent what is perceived as the authoritative national interpretation of Islam, or orthodoxy; they set the standards, frames and limits for Islamic epistemologies, norms, values and knowledge production, many of them also producing officially acknowledged Islamic legal advice. By producing and disseminating specific theological and political thought patterns, they engage in religious and political legitimisation and mobilisation, reinforcing ongoing projects of nation-building.

1 See Cheng / Brown 2006, Philpott 2007, Künkler / Leininger 2009, Toft et al. 2011.

2 Democratisation processes are made up of three distinct sequences: the opening phase, the transition and the consolidation (O'Donnell et al. 1986, O'Donnell / Schmitter 1986). The transition is to be understood as a bridge that spans from the collapse of the authoritarian system to the realisation of the first free and fair legislative and/or presidential election, whose outcome then starts off the consolidated democratic era. The transition is a crucial sequence, as during its course the political and legal system is rebuilt, political parties, civil society groups and the media reorganise and format themselves, and new actors emerge in the public political arena. However, de-democratisation and backsliding into authoritarianism can occur at any time (Linz / Stepan 1996, Tilly 2007).

3 See Fuchs / Garling 2011: 129, Fox 2013: 69, Künkler / Leininger 2013: 26–28.

Although in the modern era of nation-states the former religious and political monopolistic authority of Islamic universities and their academic milieux have become undermined by the creation of new state entities tasked with shaping the religion-state nexus – ministries of religious affairs, national clerical bodies and official Islamic legal courts – they continue to exert significant influence on the religious, political and wider social sphere. It is not only that the future personnel of said official religious state entities are largely trained at Islamic universities and are thus shaped by them, but generally, through their educational and elite-producing function, these universities interact with great masses of the nation's future leading figures. In particular, they constitute an Islamic physical and social space for the educated middle class, which democratisation theory considers to be a decisive driving factor in democratisation processes. Islamic universities form a crucial social environment of opinion-making and empowerment, and they hold a rich potential for religious and political socialisation of the pious middle class, with possible spillover effects beyond the campus walls.

While Islamic universities and their Islamic academic milieux are first and foremost social microcosms with concrete rules, procedures, a distinct atmosphere and considerable impact on students' behaviour and ethical outlook, they are simultaneously highly interrelated with and interdependent on the greater national and international setting. Against the backdrop of their authoritative role, their situatedness in several social spheres and their potential for legitimisation and mobilisation, their agency in democratisation processes can be of key relevance for the greater social acceptance of democracy in Muslim contexts. In particular, they can be a crucial counterbalance to Islamist actors who, based on their scriptural understanding of Islam, reject a democratic system and its values. For the Indonesian context, Mirjam Künkler has convincingly shown that Islamic intellectuals played a crucial role as a pro-democratic force during the country's democratisation process (Künkler 2011, 2013). However, her insightful analyses do not specifically focus on university-based Islamic intellectuals but discuss broader manifestations of Indonesian Islamic intellectualism that also include, for instance, the political thoughts of the leaders of Islamic civil mass organisations.

In contrast, the following focuses on the Islamic academic sphere and explores the agency of Indonesia's largest Islamic academic facility during the Indonesian democratic transition, known as the *Reformasi* (May 1998 to October 2004)[4] : the Institut Agama Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta (State Islamic Institute Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, IAIN Jakarta), which in the year 2002 was transformed into a full-fledged university, the Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta (State Islamic University Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, UIN

4 The Indonesian democratic transition spanned from 21 May 1998 (the resignation of dictator Suharto) to 20 October 2004 (the inauguration of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono as the country's first directly elected president).

Jakarta). The article seeks to understand whether after the collapse of the New Order regime in 1998, this Islamic academic entity supported or rejected the introduction of democracy or remained indifferent by limiting itself to non-political academic affairs in its ivory tower – and thus whether it can be understood as a pro-democratic actor. As I have suggested elsewhere (tho Seeth 2020), the pro-democracy engagement of Islamic universities in democratisation processes can be operationalised through three indicators, namely a discursive indicator,[5] an institutional indicator[6] and a mobilising indicator.[7] I have argued that due to the high presence of all three indicators during the transition at IAIN/UIN Jakarta, this campus manifested itself as a strong pro-democratic actor. In the current article I focus on the second indicator and therefore discuss the teaching content of the obligatory civic education course, which was introduced for each IAIN Jakarta first-semester student in the year 2001 and which has remained on the curriculum until today. While the significance of the course's establishment has been pointed out in another work (Jackson / Bahrissalim 2007), so far no in-depth analysis of the teaching material has been undertaken.

This constitutes a research gap, as the textbook that was developed and revised during *Reformasi* has remained – after some additional revisions were undertaken during the period of consolidated democracy – the course's core source of instruction and thus continues to impact on the teaching of democracy to the Muslim studentship. I fill this gap by presenting a qualitative content analysis of the two textbook editions (the original from 2000 and the revised edition of 2003) that were in use on campus during the transition, with a particular focus on some aspects of the chapter "Democracy", as well as by discussing additional instruction material. The analysis is based on a close reading and structuring of the teaching material and its content. My elaborations are accompanied by citations that I have translated myself from the Indonesian original. In 2017, I also conducted interviews in Jakarta with three key informants, two of which had been directly involved in the implementation of the course.[8]

5 University's input to public discourse as measured by university rector's media writings: Did the university rector publicly address topics of relevance to the transition process? Did he promote democracy?

6 University's input to student socialisation as measured by teaching material used on campus: Did the university curriculum include democracy education? Did it promote democracy?

7 University's input to political decision-makers as measured by research reports published by university: Did the university research projects address topics of relevance to the transition process? Did the research results aim to advise the government on transition-relevant problem-solving, especially for conflict resolution, and on how to support democratisation? Did the university researchers thus materialise as an epistemic community?

8 Interviews were conducted in Jakarta with Dr. Bahrissalim (2 May 2017), Dr. Ismatu Ropi (2 May 2017), and Dr. Achmad Ubaidillah (5 May 2017). Dr. Bahrissalim, head of Madrasah Pembangunan (Developmental Islamic School) at UIN Jakarta, was involved in the implementation of the civic education course with The Asia Foundation at IAIN/UIN Jakarta from the year 2000 onwards. Dr. Ismatu Ropi, research director at Pusat Pengetahuan Islam dan Masyarakat (Center for the Study of Islam and Society, PPIM) at UIN Jakarta, is an expert on research policies. Dr. Achmad Ubaidillah, lecturer in social sciences at UIN Jakarta, was involved in the writing of the textbooks for the civic education course at IAIN/UIN Jakarta from the year 2000 onwards.

The overall aim is to understand how democracy was portrayed and legitimised in the course and whether a specific Islamic or Indonesian cultural perspective on democracy was conveyed to the pious Muslim studentship. This is of particular importance because the course was introduced as a collaborative project by the US-based The Asia Foundation and must therefore to some extent be understood as a product of Western democracy promotion. By comparing the two textbook editions, however, I come to the conclusion that while basic historical key developments and principles of Western democracy initially featured strongly, over the time of its implementation and refinement the course adopted an increasingly Islamic and Indonesian perspective on democracy in order to be better accessible to its Indonesian Muslim target group. These findings support the characteristic of Indonesian Islamic higher education institutes and their academic staff, much discussed in the literature, as competent cosmopolitan brokers between different cultures.[9] However, as I argue, the course's turn towards a more Islamic and Indonesian perspective indicates a practice of a localisation of the teaching on democracy, i.e. its adaptation to specific local requirements.

During *Reformasi*, most leading Islamic academics in Indonesia were able to quickly adapt to and participate in the democratising political environment, facilitated by the knowledge of and lived experience in democratic systems they had gained through extensive academic exchanges with democratic countries (e.g. Canada, USA, Netherlands) under the Suharto regime. The decades of sending Islamic academics to democratic countries had long-term effects, as it equipped them with theoretical knowledge of democratic principles and resulted in a gradual inner emancipation from the repressive New Order system and its doctrines. It has been observed that in the 1980s and 1990s the Muslim intelligentsia began "to dominate socio-political discourse in the Indonesian public sphere" (Latif 2008: 421), and seven years before the collapse of authoritarianism it was found that "Muslim intellectuals speak continually about the value of democracy to Islam and Indonesia" (Federspiel 1991: 245). While developing pro-democratic sympathies, Islamic academics did not lose sight of their Islamic heritage and continued to emphasise the centrality of the archipelago's local cultures and a distinctive *Keindonesiaan* ("Indonesian-ness") for national identity politics. Against this backdrop, the civic education course presents further ample evidence of the particular skill of the Islamic higher education sector and its academic milieu in being able to draw on culturally different epistemic sources and perspectives and to blend them into a coherent, yet culturally hybrid, religious-political narrative. For the purpose of democratising Indonesia, the IAIN/UIN Jakarta campus activated this well-

9 See Kersten 2011, Lukens-Bull 2013, Allès / tho Seeth forthcoming, tho Seeth forthcoming a and tho Seeth forthcoming b.

institutionalised competence, which successfully underscored its agency as a pro-democratic actor throughout the democratisation process.

A critical reading of the textbooks

On another analytical level, this article critically engages with the two textbooks' contents and their underlying message on democracy as well as the narrative they presented on Indonesian political history. This is a crucial endeavour, firstly due to the obvious impact of the neoliberal American The Asia Foundation on the civic education course, and secondly due to the highly symbolically structured and consensual characteristic of Indonesian political culture, which leaves little room for discursive dissent and political alternatives (Duile / Bens 2017). The dominant mainstream political discourse in Indonesia is characterised by the avoidance of conflict and the imposition of a broad consensus on political issues, which, amongst others, circulates around the untouchable, overarching centrality of the *Pancasila*[10] and the exclusion of leftist ideas (Duile / Bens 2017; see also tho Seeth forthcoming a). While the textbooks showcased a clear commitment to democracy, claimed ideological neutrality and to a great extent succeeded in objectively introducing the students to quite a wide range of Islamic and political perspectives, on the other hand, in some text passages inconsistencies and contradictions prevailed. The two textbooks at times stressed and exaggerated certain issues, while ignoring others. Hence, it is equally important to notice what is not taught in the textbooks, and I will discuss this matter throughout the article.

In order to guide the reader of this article into a critical reading of the textbooks, it is necessary to anticipate some key findings here. While the textbooks mostly assessed the authoritarian past and the dominance of the military very critically, they were silent about the involvement of the military and the Islamic civil mass organisation Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in the anti-communist mass killings of 1965. This indeed indicates a discursive reproduction of a deeply institutionalised taboo in Indonesian public political debate. On the other hand, against the backdrop that leftist politics is a delicate issue in Indonesia, the revised edition was quite progressive in that it indexed keywords such as "Karl Marx", "Marxism" and "Communist Party of Indonesia" (Partai Komunis Indonesia, PKI).[11] However, in the respective text passages, elaborations on these former politically taboo issues remained vague, particularly when they were mentioned in the concrete Indonesian national context. As will be shown, the

10 *Pancasila* ("the five principles") is the official Indonesian state ideology. It comprises 1) the belief in the One and Only God, 2) a just and civilised society, 3) a unified Indonesia, 4) democracy, and 5) social justice.

11 "Karl Marx" (pp. 60, 244, 245); "*Marxisme*" (pp. 26, 27, 28); "*Komunisme*" (p. 60); "*Komunis*" (pp. 104, 207, 208); "Partai Komunis Indonesia" (pp. 27, 207, 208); PKI (p. 132).

original edition already neutrally mentioned Karl Marx and his critical stance towards religion as a social construction, thereby broaching a taboo in a state that is inherently based on the idea of the existence of a monotheistic God.

Thus, the textbooks tended to treat politics paradoxically. Despite the course's enthusiastic aspiration to teach free thinking, it at times conveyed to the students a representation of Indonesian political history and an idea of democracy that was limited and selective, and at times even contradictory in its own argumentation. One example of this is that the Suharto regime was repeatedly called a "Pancasila democracy" – a questionable self-designation of the regime. The textbooks' use of the term "democracy" in such a flexible way is problematic as it then renders it an "empty signifier" (Laclau 2005) – a term that has no real content, that is consciously left open and inconcrete, and that is imagined and constructed according to situation and need.

On the civic education course

As in other Muslim-majority nations,[12] the Indonesian democratisation process was marked by a public renegotiation of the relationship between Islam and the state. The country witnessed a mushrooming of anti-democracy Islamist organisations, a deep polarisation of society by an Islamist-secular cleavage and numerous violent clashes between followers of different faiths and political ideas. Groups such as Front Pembela Islam (Defenders of Islam Front, FPI), Laskar Jihad (Jihad Army, LJ), Jemaah Islamiyah (Islamic Congregation, JI) and Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (Indonesian Party of Liberation, HTI) emerged, seeking to mobilise society for Islamist ideologies by peaceful or even violent means. The diversity within this Islamist camp was high, as can be seen by the different political goals they aimed at: while, for instance, the FPI sought to establish a "Unitary State of Indonesia under sharia law" (Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia bersyariah, NKRI bersyariah), HTI aimed at restoring an Islamic caliphate. In sum, during the Indonesian transition, the establishment of democracy and the public discourse about the compatibility of Islam and democracy were highly contested, and the threat of a backsliding to authoritarian structures or to nation-wide destabilisation and anarchy dominated the political climate.

The fact that democracy was successfully consolidated was to a great extent due to the ambitious engagement of several Islamic actor groups that upheld a pro-democracy discourse in the public sphere. This countermovement against Islamist voices was to a significant part rooted in Islamic civil society organisations such as NU, Muhammadiyah and Paramadina and their charismatic

12 Egypt (2011–2013, failed transition) and Tunisia (2011–2014, successful transition) are two recent examples.

leaders who publicly argued from within Islamic theological interpretation in favour of democracy. Most notably, NU leader (1984–1999) Abdurrahman Wahid served as President from 1999 to 2001 and the Islamic political parties affiliated with NU (Partai Kebangkitan Nasional, National Awakening Party, PKB) and Muhammadiyah (Partai Amanat Nasional, National Mandate Party, PAN) emerged as key pro-democratic forces.

From early on in the democratisation process, transition-relevant and pro-democratic debate also entered IAIN Jakarta. By actively shaping and contributing to a pro-democratic discourse, the campus manifested itself as an ardent pro-democratic actor. Individual Islamic academics from diverse Islamic as well as non-religious disciplines publicly commented on the positive compatibility of Islam and democracy. A prime example of this phenomenon of the politically engaged scholar and public Islamic intellectual was IAIN/UIN Jakarta rector Azyumardi Azra, who through his many media writings and public television appearances discursively supported and called for a pro-democratic Islam, thus supporting Indonesia's route towards democracy (tho Seeth forthcoming a). Moreover, the campus research projects were geared towards inquiries on transition-relevant topics, and research findings served to advise the government on how to resolve urgent (Islamist) challenges to the smooth implementation of democracy (tho Seeth 2020).

IAIN Jakarta's obvious competence in democracy promotion prompted international development agencies such as The Asia Foundation to offer support and collaboration. The foundation suggested an obligatory civic education course for every first-semester student as an effective tool for democratic socialisation. Hence, a course called *Pendidikan Kewargaan* (civic education) was kicked off as a pilot project in 2000 and replaced the *Kewiraan* and *Pancasila* courses that had tried to align generations of students to the New Order regime ideology.[13] The Asia Foundation provided funding and counselling for the implementation of the course as part of its wider development programme "Islam and Civil Society", which it had been carrying out in Indonesia since 1997. The course's aim was defined as teaching "values of democracy, human rights, tolerance and civil society. The teaching methodology changed from doctrinaire to one that is more participatory" (Indonesian Center for Civic Education 2006: 4–5). According to interview partners who were involved in the establishment of the course, the introduction of pro-democratic teaching content and a participatory teaching methodology were key objectives from the start.[14] The course intended to break with the limited political education and the *Pancasila* indoctrination that had prevailed in classrooms throughout the New Order era. It

13 These courses were dropped in 1999. The *Kewiraan* ("heroism"/"manliness") course taught various aspects of patriotism and military doctrines, in particular the concept of *dwi-fungsi*, i.e. the dual function the military held within the Suharto regime in security issues as well as in socio-political affairs. The *Pancasila* course taught the five principles of the state ideology in an indoctrinating manner.

14 Interview with Bahrissalim, 2 May 2017 in Jakarta and with Achmad Ubaidillah, 5 May 2017 in Jakarta.

sought to offer students the possibility to intellectually compare different political ideologies, which also included previous political taboos such as Marxism.[15] While the course itself was of egalitarian character, its implementation was, due to the supervision of The Asia Foundation, assessed as "top-down".[16]

The agency and interests of The Asia Foundation deserve critical reflection, as the organisation was founded in the context of the Cold War in 1954 by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) (Gould Ashizawa 2006: 116–117; Klein 2017). With its headquarters in San Francisco, it claims to be devoted to the promotion of democracy, the rule of law and market-based development in post-war Asia, and it "advances US interests in the Asia-Pacific region" (US Department of State, n.d.: 819). Seen in this light, The Asia Foundation was put in place as a counterforce against communism in Asia, and until today it follows a neoliberal political and economic agenda in the region. This ideological orientation seems to have had consequences for the way democracy and politics were portrayed in the civic education textbooks. This particularly concerns the marginalised treatment of the issue of social and economic justice in political and economic theory and in the concrete Indonesian context precisely.[17]

In mid-2000, The Asia Foundation established the Indonesian Center for Civic Education (ICCE) on the IAIN Jakarta campus and tasked it with managing the civic education course. In the same year, the textbook *Pendidikan Kewargaan: Demokrasi, HAM & Masyarakat Madani (Civic Education: Democracy, Human Rights & Civil Society)*[18] was published by IAIN Jakarta Press with funding and content advising by The Asia Foundation. In a preface, the book's aim was defined by IAIN Jakarta professor of pedagogy Dede Rosyada (p. i):

> This book can transmit ideas on the rights and duties students have as an integral part of the nation and within the realisation of the transition process towards democracy. [...] This study program is an educational program based on the wish to increase the students' critical ability as an agent of social change and as an agent of social control towards the realisation of democracy and the strengthening of human rights on the local as well as on the international level.

Another preface was written by IAIN Jakarta rector Azyumardi Azra, in which he stated that through the civic education course IAIN Jakarta "tries to partici-

15 Interview with Ismatu Ropi, 2 May 2017 in Jakarta.

16 Interview with Bahrissalim, 2 May 2017 in Jakarta.

17 While in the original textbook edition the democracy chapter superficially discussed on one page the idea of the welfare state (Salim et al. 2000: 174–175), the revised edition replaced the term "welfare state" with "social democracy" (*demokrasi sosial*) and reduced its treatment to one sentence, explaining that this form of democracy aims at achieving social justice (*keadilan sosial*) (Rosyada et al. 2003: 121).

18 The book was edited by Salim / Ubaidillah / Rozak / Sayuti (2000). If not otherwise stated, page numbers in parentheses throughout the text refer to this textbook. When followed by a * the reference refers to the revised version of the textbook, which was published in 2003 by Rosyada / Ubaidillah / Rozak / Sayuti / Salim.

pate in building up a democratic political culture and to socialise for democratic norms in the midst of society by an academic and scientific approach" (p: vi).

After an intensive training of IAIN Jakarta lecturers, who were given incentives for their participation,[19] the course was launched as a pilot project from September to December 2000 at the faculties of Islamic Law, Islamic Theology, Islamic Civilisation and Islamic Education. The heads of the project understood the ten participating student groups as "a laboratory for democracy".[20] The overall success of the pilot project resulted in the course's obligatory inclusion into each first-semester curriculum in early 2001 and its adoption by all IAINs and Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri (State Islamic Higher School, STAIN) in the country from September 2001 onwards. In the academic year 2002–2003, the course was even taken up by several private Islamic universities and colleges, for instance by the Muhammadiyah University in Yogyakarta (Jackson / Bahrissalim 2007: 47).

After IAIN Jakarta's conversion into a full-fledged university in 2002, The Asia Foundation collaborated with the ICCE to revise the course's teaching material and the applied teaching methodology, which resulted in the publication of a revised textbook in 2003. The revision of the textbook indicates that the civic education course was from the beginning seen not as a fixed study programme but as a flexible, adaptive learning experiment in the making. This flexible approach to the course implied that the Indonesian textbook authors and course instructors involved had to engage in critically rethinking the teaching content and methodology after having tested them in class. The flexible approach also shows that – due to the financial support of The Asia Foundation – enough resources were available to invest into the course over a longer period of time, allowing for mistakes, experimenting and costly redirections, in order to keeping the campus active as an effective pro-democratic actor.

While the title of the textbook remained nearly the same – *Pendidikan Kewargaan: Demokrasi, Hak Asasi Manusia & Masyarakat Madani (Civic Education: Democracy, Human Rights & Civil Society*) – the content underwent significant changes.[21] Compared to the original edition, the layout, structure and writing style of the revised textbook became clearer in order to make it more easily accessible to the Indonesian Muslim student readers. While the original edition tended to be intellectually overloaded, the content of the revised edition was reduced and tailored towards the Indonesian Islamic context. For

19 Interview with Bahrissalim, 2 May 2017 in Jakarta.

20 Interview with Bahrissalim, 2 May 2017 in Jakarta.

21 After the transitory period, this revised edition was again slightly revised several times and is still in use at UIN Jakarta today. In December 2004, additional teaching material for the civic education course was published in a "Supplementary Book" (Rozak et al. 2004) that was handed out to each student. This book offered for each chapter of the textbook copies of thematically relevant newspaper articles written by UIN staff or prominent national figures on up-to-date Indonesian political topics. It featured political cartoons that aimed to stimulate discussion in class.

instance, whereas the original edition predominantly made use of the foreign English term "civil society", the revised edition mostly replaced it with the Indonesian term *masyarakat madani*, which has an Islamic connotation. Also, in the revised edition, an entire chapter was dedicated to *masyarakat madani* (*pp. 235–259), in which the concept was, however, portrayed as a simple translation of "civil society" and as deriving from Western Europe. It was stated that the term was introduced to Indonesia in 1995 by the Malaysian then-Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim (*p. 240), and there was only a superficial discussion of the term and concept, basically providing a historical overview of the idea of "civil society" in the West. This is a shortcoming, as the origin, definition, meaning and use of the term *masyarakat madani* are actually highly contested in the Muslim world.

Alatas (2010), for instance, posits that *masyarakat madani* – when used as an Islamised equivalent to "civil society" – is a utopian vision and even constitutes a misconception and a misunderstanding of the term. This is because *masyarakat madani* originally refers to a concept of society as a whole that is inclusive of the state. By drawing on works of Nurcholish Madjid, Dawam Rahardjo and Masykuri Abdillah, Alatas shows that in Indonesia the term is used with a plurality of conceptual twists and turns that are not always in line with one another. Seen from this point, the revised textbook's unreflecting use of the term *masyarakat madani* as a simple translation of "civil society" presents yet another inconcrete "signifier" (Laclau 2005) that leaves much space for individual imagination and construction. The simplified and flattened use of the term *masyarakat madani* is symptomatic of the way the textbooks at times treated social and political concepts, ignoring the plurality of opinions and interpretations and the existence of conflicting debates on certain issues. In many other instances, however, quite a variety of opposing opinions on and multifaceted interpretations of theoretical concepts were discussed by the textbooks.

In some text passages, the original edition featured a more outspoken tone that was tamed in the revised edition. The revised edition was also updated with themes whose importance for the country's democratisation became clear only over the course of the transition. An example of this is the inclusion of the chapter "Regional Autonomy", which provided a theoretical background for discussion on the independence movements in Aceh and West Papua. The chapter "Good Governance" was included to guide debate in class on the heavy extent of corruption and money politics that accompanied the democratic transition. Another novelty in the revised edition was the extended appendix, which allowed the students to autonomously consult an array of key legal documents.

Despite the many changes introduced, certain continuities remained. In many instances, both textbooks cautiously tried to avoid presenting any singular truths. The textbooks mostly sought to objectively cover a wide range of opinions and

approaches – they often did so in a superficial manner – and to always refer to their sources. This was mostly done by balanced phrase constructions such as "according to author xy". Furthermore, both textbooks aimed to present the standpoints of Western and Indonesian authors and Islamic scholars with relatively equal frequency. However, there were tendencies: while the original edition tended to more often refer to Western authors, the revised edition more often mentioned Islamic scholars. Generally, the revised edition was much more tailored to explicitly address the Indonesian Muslim students; it tended to argue more from an Islamic viewpoint and it transmitted its democratic message through an Islamic, Indonesian and *Pancasila*-ist perspective.

The promotion of a democratic Indonesian civil society was key in the revised edition. Azyumardi Azra's preface specified one of the main goals of the course: "The growth and development of a civic culture can be named as one of the important goals of the civic education course" (*p. xi). On the role of UIN Jakarta within the democratisation process he stated (*p. xiv):

> The State Islamic University (UIN) Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta as part of the national education system has already begun to accelerate the application of a new educational paradigm. Above all, it supports the development of democracy education through the teaching of the civic education course. […] Against this backdrop, it is self-evident that I give my highest appreciation for the serious efforts undertaken by the Indonesian Center for Civic Education (ICCE) at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta for trying to peacefully contribute to the Indonesian transition on its way to a civilised democracy.

The revised textbook was from September 2004 onwards, accompanied by a "Manual for Lecturers". This manual featured detailed explanations on innovative teaching and learning techniques, such as group discussions, role playing, quizzes, brainstorming, snowballing, mapping or poster sessions. The advantages and disadvantages of different seating arrangements, such as horseshoe, circle, small-group tables and large conference tables, were elaborated upon. The manual aimed to break with the confrontational teaching style and harsh teacher-student hierarchy that had shaped learning processes throughout authoritarianism, and instead it aimed to introduce an egalitarian, participatory pedagogy. The learning atmosphere in the civic education course was defined as "interactive, empirical, contextual, humanist, and democratic […] it must be gender-sensitive and must put forward the principle of justice".[22] The overall concept of the course was "Everyone is a Teacher Here".[23] This concept was explained as:

> The lecturer is not everything. The lecturer is not the smartest one in class. The lecturer is not the one who knows most, but maybe the one who just knows more in the beginning. Thus, the source of knowledge does not come from the lecturer, but from all who are involved in the activity of learning. Each person is a teacher, each one is allowed to

22 […] situasi pembelajaran yang interaktif, empiris, kontekstual, humanis, dan demokratis. […] harus sensitive gender dan mengedepankan prinsip keadilan (Rosyada et al. 2004: 5).

23 Rosyada et al. 2004: 118, English expression in original.

> have an own opinion and to share knowledge. Students will learn from the lecturer, and the lecturer will also learn from students, and students are also allowed to learn from all other students.[24]

The manual also clarified the teaching goals of the course. It was expected that after having taken the course, students should be "democratic agents within society so that society will be able to internalise a democratic, tolerant and open attitude and will not violate human rights".[25] Furthermore, by the end of the course, students should be able to understand the Indonesian constitution and the function and elements of a state. They should be able to compare different political ideologies, explain the system of a democratic government, the rights and duties of citizens, the importance of civil society, a diversity of theories on the relationship between state and religion and on the concept of the human rights in religious and cultural contexts. It was hoped for that after completion of the course the students would value pluralism within the nation.[26]

Unfortunately, the course could not fully meet its goals. In 2006, the Indonesian Center for Civic Education conducted an evaluation study on the course and found that while in the short term the course had a strong impact on the positive perception among the Muslim students of democracy, in the medium and long term, the impact was only moderate. According to the evaluation study, the course's teachings competed for students' attention with other sources of political and religious information such as the media or religious teachings outside the campus, so that in the long run, the civic education course lost impact (Indonesian Center for Civic Education 2006). Another point raised in the evaluation study was the course's lack of engagement with several central taboos within Indonesian society and politics:

> [...] the Asia Foundation may need to think hardly about how the civic education curriculum should deal with delicate matters such as the human right for ex PKI members and detaines and for the Ahmadiah followers and the separation of state with religion. [...] On those issues, the curriculum should take an advance role. Otherwise, the curriculum is nothing much different with what and how the media have been educating the public about democracy, human right and pluralism.[27]

24 Dosen bukan segalanya. Dosen bukan yang terpintar diantara mahasiswa. Dosen bukan orang yang paling tahu, tetapi mungkin hanya lebih tahu dulu. Dengan demikian, sumber ilmu pengetahuan bukan dari dosen tetapi dari semua yang terlibat dalam aktivitas pembelajaran. Setiap orang adalah guru yang boleh berpendapat dan membagi apa yang diketahui. Mahasiswa akan belajar dari dosen, dosen juga akan belajar dari mahasiswa dan mahasiswa juga boleh belajar dari semua mahasiswa (Rosyada et al. 2004: 118).

25 [...] agen demokrasi di tengah masyarakat sehingga masyarakat mampu bersikap demokratis, toleran, terbuka, dan antipelanggaran HAM (Rosyada et al. 2004: 116).

26 Rosyada et al. 2004: 116.

27 Indonesian Center for Civic Education 2006: 35, English expression in original.

The content of the "democracy" chapter

Original edition (2000)

Throughout the chapter[28] a narrative is delivered that aims to convey a familiarity between democracy, Islam and the Indonesian nation. The concept of democracy is presented as an intellectual idea that has always existed in Indonesia, but whose correct political implementation was hampered until the collapse of the Suharto regime in 1998. The chapter critically reflects on the authoritarian past by pointing out democratic deficits of the Sukarno and Suharto regimes. The textbook's definition of a democratic system follows the discourse of classical Western democracy theory and particularly stresses the importance of the division of powers, the rule of law and an active civil society. One text passage explicitly refers to the crucial role intellectuals and academia as a whole may play as a pressure group for the support of democracy (pp. 187–188), another passage focuses on university students as a strategic component of civil society that may build up a democracy (p. 202). These statements are clear references of the Islamic academic milieu to its own crucial political function.

The chapter first elaborates on the nature of democracy and refers to an array of Indonesian authors (Masykuri Abdillah, Inu Kencana, Moh. Mahfud, Deliar Noer) and Western authors (Robert A. Dahl, Sidney Hook, Franz Magnis-Suseno, Joseph A. Schmeter, Philippe C. Schmitter) and their thoughts on democracy. The concept of "the power of the people" is repeatedly mentioned as a decisive constitutive element of a working democracy. For instance, Abraham Lincoln's statement that a government has to be "of the people, by the people and for the people" (the Gettysburg Address from 1863) is treated at length (pp. 163–165). The section highlights that in a democratic system a government receives its legitimacy through the outcome of the people's vote and not through divine inspiration or a supernatural power. A government must be run by the people themselves in order to secure the management of their own affairs and interests, and needs to operate for the people by fulfilling the wish and will of the majority, while at the same time protecting minority rights.

The motto "government of the people, by the people, for the people" is used as an analytical template to show that the Sukarno and Suharto regimes did not meet the definition of a democratic system. One section states that the concept of "the government of the people" underwent "an extraordinary distortion" (p. 164) in Indonesia, because during both regimes power was monopolised

28 The chapter is divided into the following sections: "What is the Nature of Democracy?"; "What is the History and Development of Democracy in the Western World?"; "What is the History and Development of Democracy in Indonesia?"; "Which Components Strengthen a Democracy?"; "How to Measure Democracy?"; "Which Democratic Models Exist?"; "What is the Relationship between Religion and Democracy?"; "What is the Prospect of Democratisation in Indonesia?".

by the president and shared only with cronies. Suharto's New Order is particularly criticised. It is described as "repressive" (p. 164) and "authoritarian" (p. 164). In this context, a definition of authoritarianism is presented (p. 164):

> An authoritarian government is one in which the execution of power and the control of power are in one hand. [...] it is a leadership that merges the three state institutions which constitute the ruling structure (legislative, executive and judiciary) into one powerful hand.[29]

The chapter then focuses on the history and development of democracy in the West. The concept of democracy is acknowledged as being of Western origin; however, its development in the Western world is not presented as a success story. Instead, emphasis is given to identifying democracy's many shortcomings and failures throughout Western history, in particular as caused by the repressive role of the church. Also, a rather rough and factually incomplete chronological treatise on the intellectual history of democracy is presented. It starts with the genesis of democratic thought in ancient Greece and continues with the decline of democracy in the Middle Ages, the birth of the Magna Carta, the Renaissance, the impact of Martin Luther, John Locke and Montesquieu, and it ends with a conceptualisation of the rule of law and a highly curtailed account on the welfare state.[30] Surprisingly, other key events in the development of Western democracy – such as the American War of Independence and the French Revolution – are left out. Some text passages claim a positive impact of Islam on the progress of democracy in the West. It is argued that this impact is due to the fact that Muslim scholars preserved ancient Greek knowledge, such as Greek philosophy on democracy, which was only much later revived in the West. On the Renaissance, for instance, the textbook notes:

> This movement was born in the West because of the contact with the Islamic world, which during this time had already reached the peak of a glorious scientific culture. [...] So it is that the nature of Western democracy in the Middle Ages has its roots in the Islamic scientific tradition" (p. 171).[31]

The next section of the chapter is dedicated to the history and development of democracy in Indonesia. The chapter argues that historically there is a continuity of democratic thought on Indonesian soil, yet democracy was always prevented from fully developing. Nevertheless, Indonesia is preconditioned for a democratic system and has a high potential for democratic development (p. 176):

29 Pemerintah yang otoriter adalah pemerintah yang menggabungkan pelaksanaan kekuasaan dan pengawasannya di satu tangan. [...] yang menyatuhkan ketiga institusi Negara (legislative, eksekutif dan yudikatif) pada struktur pemerintahan dalam satu tangan kekuasaan.

30 See footnote 17.

31 Gerakan ini lahir di Barat karena adanya kontak dengan dunia Islam yang ketika itu sedang berada pada puncak kejayaan peradaban ilmu pengetahuan [...] alam demokrasi di Barat pada abad pertengahan bersumber dari tradisi keilmuan Islam.

> Therefore, for the Indonesian nation, the tradition to have a democracy was actually already started in the time of the archipelagic kingdoms. This is the reason for the great potential of democracy's growth [in Indonesia].[32]

While this text passage obviously functions to convince the student readers of the quasi natural, deeply embedded existence of democracy in Indonesia, it factually contradicts scholarly debate on the history of democracy in Indonesia. Scholarly consensus traces the origin of Indonesian democratic thought back to the late colonial era when young members of the Indonesian *priyayi* (the aristocratic bureaucratic elite) were sent to study at universities in the Netherlands, where they developed anti-colonial and pro-democratic sentiments that resulted in the formation of an Indonesian national consciousness and the independence movement. The Indonesian independence movement was also nurtured by criticism of capitalism and the domestic feudal structures in the archipelago as well as by demands for economic independence from Europe and therefore bore strong leftist elements[33] – a fact that the textbook does not mention. Referring to the many persisting reservations against democracy in the Indonesian elite discourse in the late colonial era, it has been critically remarked that "from the very beginning, then, the idea of Indonesia had weak, shallow and confused democratic roots" (Elson 2008: 53). Therefore, the relationship between Indonesian society and democracy is neither as historically deep nor as clear-cut as the textbook claims.

The authors then categorise Indonesia's alleged democratic history into four time periods. The first period covers the years from 1945 to 1959, i.e. from Indonesian independence until the declaration of Sukarno's Presidential Decree No. 5 (July 1959), which ended parliamentary democracy and introduced the so-called *Demokrasi Terpimpin* (Guided Democracy). It is explained that democratic deficits had already risen in early post-colonial parliamentary Indonesia, because of the fragmentation of party politics, immature coalitions and an unconstructive opposition (p. 177). The outcome of the general election from 1955 did not lead to political stability, thus prompting Sukarno to abolish democracy altogether in 1959 (p. 177). The Guided Democracy period that followed from 1959 to 1965 is assessed as "not a real democratic system, but it was of authoritarian shape" (p. 180).[34] The section elaborates on how Sukarno centralised his political power by restricting party politics, strengthening the role of the military, and finally by appointing himself as president for life.

32 Dengan demikian bagi bangsa Indonesia tradisi berdemokrasi sebenarnya telah dimulai sejak zaman kerajaan Nusantara. Karena itu potensi tumbuhnya alam demokrasi sangat besar. – The term *kerajaan Nusantara* (archipelagic kingdom) refers to several regional kingdoms, including the Buddhist kingdom Srivijaya (7th–13th century), the Hindu-Buddhist kingdom Majapahit (13th–15th century) and an array of Muslim kingdoms (13th–18th century).

33 See Elson 2008: 44–58. On the history of the independence movement see also Legge 1988, Kerstiens 1966 and van Niel 1960.

34 bukan sistem demokrasi yang sebenarnya, melainkan sebagai suatu bentuk otoriterian

All this was a "distortion of democratic practice" (p. 179)[35] and violated the democratic principle of the separation of the legislative, the executive and the judiciary (p. 179). The end of the Sukarno regime is vaguely explained by the (alleged) insurrection of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) and the *Gerakan 30* (Movement of 30 September 1965), which, however, failed (pp. 180–181). The involvement of the military or the NU in the mass killings that accompanied the transformation from the Sukarno to the Suharto regime is not mentioned, which constitutes a shortcoming: the book's failure to come to terms with the violent past of these organisations. Interestingly, even in the corresponding section in the revised edition on the Suharto era, there is no reference to the PKI and the dubious events that accompanied the regime change from Sukarno to Suharto. Only in the preceding section on the Sukarno era is there a brief mention that "it was ended by the Movement of September 30 and the PKI" (*pp. 132).[36]

Another noticeable point in the original edition is that the Suharto period from 1965 to 1998 is referred to using the regime's falsely claimed self-designation as a "Pancasila democracy" (p. 182),[37] and not as a "Pancasila state" or "Pancasila dictatorship" – terms that come much closer to describing the political reality under Suharto. It is also extraordinary that the term "Pancasila democracy" was retained in the revised textbook edition from 2003. However, in one instance in the revised book, the term's use is followed by the critique that the term "Pancasila democracy" was only a rhetorical expression and was an idea that never existed in practice, as the regime did not allow space for democratic life – as illustrated, for instance, by the dominance of the military (*p. 134). In the further course of the original textbook, the period of the "Pancasila democracy" is also critically assessed. It is described as a time in which the approach of the state to society was "confrontational and subordinating" (p. 183),[38] and in which "the state or government was very dominant" (p. 183).[39] This was caused by the dominant role of the military, the dominant state ideology, the centralisation and bureaucratisation of politics, the suppression of party politics and the incorporation and control of non-state organisations (p. 183). Suharto's New Order focused on economic progress that only benefitted an elite group and furthered the socio-economic marginalisation of the common people (pp. 182–183). This period was characterised by autocracy and a strong cult of personality around Suharto (p. 182). The section concludes that the Suharto regime did "not at all give room for a democratic life" (p. 183),[40] so that accordingly

35 distorsi terhadap praktik demokrasi

36 G. 30 S/PKI telah mengakhiri periode ini

37 demokrasi Pancasila

38 berhadap-hadapan dan subordinat

39 negara atau pemerintah sangat mendominasi

40 rezim ini sangat tidak memberikan ruang bagi kehidupan berdemokrasi

"the people were far from a democratic life" (p. 182).[41] Against the backdrop of the strong criticism that the textbook voiced against the democratic deficits under Suharto, it remains unclear why the authors opted to refer to this political era as a "Pancasila *democracy*".

The text goes on to focus on four elements that democracy theory understands as the backbone of a democratic system: the rule of law, civil society, political infrastructure and a free and responsible media. On the rule of law the section states (p. 183):

> The concept of the rule of law comprises the understanding that the state grants the citizen legal security through legal institutions that are free and neutral, and it secures human rights.[42]

Furthermore, it is said that (p. 185):

> [...] the rule of law has become a precondition for the stability of democracy. In other words, democracy cannot stand upright without the rule of law.[43]

On civil society the section says (p. 186):

> [...] it is assumed that the political process of pressuring for democratisation is rooted in the struggle of an ethically conscious and self-responsible civil society for the improvement of its own fate.[44]

And (p. 185):

> Civil society with its trait of openness, its independence from any influencing control and state pressure, its critical perspective, active participation and egalitarianism forms an integral component for the enforcement of democracy.[45]

The subsequent pages explain the role and makeup of the political infrastructure. According to the authors, the political infrastructure must be composed of political parties, movements and pressure groups, whose members share a political orientation, values and ideals, which they want to see articulated in political policies (p. 187). The existence and activities of political parties, movements and pressure groups are pointed out as important components of a democracy, because they put into practice the democratic principles of the freedom of organisation, opinion and speech, and the right to oppose the government (p. 187). In this context, intellectuals and academia are explicitly mentioned as a potential pressure group (pp. 187–188):

41 rakyat jauh dari hidup alam demokratis

42 Konsepsi negara hukum mengandung pengertian bahwa negara memberikan perlindungan hukum bagi warga negara melalui pelembagaan peradilan yang bebas dan tidak memihak serta penjaminan hak asasi manusia.

43 [...] negara hukum menjadi prasyarat bagi tegaknya demokrasi. Dengan kata lain demokrasi tidak dapat tegak tanpa negara hukum.

44 [...] diasumsikan bahwa proses demokratisasi sebagai proses politik dorongannya berasal dari perjuangan masyarakat yang sadar secara etis dan bertanggung jawab atas perbaikan nasibnya sendiri.

45 Masyarakat madani dengan cirinya sebagai masyarakat terbuka, masyarakat yang bebas dari pengaruh kekuasaan dan tekanan negara, masyarakat yang kritis dan masyarakat yang berpartisipasi aktif serta masyarakat egaliter merupakan bagian yang integral dalam menegakkan demokrasi.

> Intellectuals, academia (higher education) and the media form a pressure group that often applies pressure and controls the executive in order to ensure that the performance of the state and government complies with the democratic system.[46]

We can notice here once more a positive self-reference on the part of the Islamic academic textbook authors, who emphasise their own, and the Muslim students', responsibility to further democracy. As the fourth component that strengthens a democracy, the media is briefly mentioned. Because of its supervising role towards the government's work, it has a "very strategic role" (p. 188)[47] and is obliged to abide by the law and journalistic ethics (p. 188).

Next, the chapter elaborates on how to measure democracy. An array of Indonesian and Western authors, such as Amien Rais, Miriam Budiardjo, G. Bingham Powell Jr. and Robert A. Dahl, are referenced. Several indicators for the operationalisation of democracy that these authors agree upon, such as free and fair elections, equality before the law, free speech and freedom to form organisations, minority protection and political participation, are pointed out (pp. 189–191). The section also engages with the question of how to assess the actual democratic quality of a country, as the existence of democratic indicators alone does not necessarily prove the actual quality of the democratic system. This problematic issue is illustrated with reference to the New Order regime, which officially featured political parties, elections and non-governmental organisations; however, these were all strongly controlled and manipulated (p. 191). The section clearly aims to encourage the students' critical thinking on democratic reality, but in itself does not offer a clear-cut answer to the complex problematic of how to measure the quality of democracy, which leaves the reader alone with loose statements and without a concrete toolbox on how to tackle the important issue of the quality of a state's democratic performance.

Especially interesting is the textbook's presentation of different models of democracy. This section's intention seems to be to show that democracy is not a rigid concept, but that it is flexible and can be adapted to different socio-cultural environments, clearly conforming to the concept that Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt referred to as "multiple modernities" (Eisenstadt 2000). However, it is also noted that the implementation of democracy in the non-Western world is not always free from conflict. With reference to political scientist Giovanni Sartori the textbook rather rigidly remarks that democracy (p. 192):

> [...] is one hundred per cent a Western product. That is the reason why Western values, viewpoints and lifestyles like individualism, capitalism and liberalism cannot be separated from the concept of democracy. This is why problems oftentimes appear when

46 Kaum cendekiawan, kalangan civitas akademia kampus (perguruan tinggi), kalangan pers merupakan kelompok penekan yang banyak melakukan tekanan dan kontrol kepada eksekutif untuk mewujudkan sistem demokratis dalam penyelenggaran negara dan pemerintahan.

47 peran yang sangat strategis

> non-Western states, which culturally and ideologically differ from the Western world, apply democracy as a political system and as a value order.[48]

It is interesting to note that this quite fateful statement on democracy being "one hundred per cent a Western product" and inherently coupled to capitalism was not reproduced in the revised edition, which, in a more accurate manner, simply traces the origin of democratic ideas back to Greek antiquity.

In the original edition, the section then mentions different democratic models such as liberal-capitalist democracy, socialist democracy, Islamic democracy, *Pancasila* democracy, representative democracy, participatory democracy, direct and indirect democracy and constitutional democracy (pp. 192–193). It is vaguely argued that "in an Islamic democracy the democratic values are derived from universal Islamic doctrines such as justice and deliberative consultation" (p. 192)[49] and that "Pancasila democracy is derived from the noble values of Pancasila" (p. 192).[50] No further elaboration on these different democratic models is given. The fact that the values that define an Islamic and a *Pancasila* democracy were not again mentioned in the revised textbook edition may indicate that the authors recognised their inherent vagueness and the general problematic of defining these democratic models. While the term "Pancasila democracy" was retained in the revised edition, the term "Islamic democracy" was altogether eliminated. These choices point towards the persisting centrality of the *Pancasila* as a key reference and "consensus" in Indonesian political discourse as well as towards prevailing scepticism in the Islamic academic milieu on the workings and the realisation of an Islamic democracy. In this thematic section, both textbooks ignore the long history of debates on how to integrate Islam and democracy in Indonesia. In his study, Luthfi Assyaukanie has shown how, since independence, different models on the relationship between Islam and the state have been discussed in Indonesian intellectual and political circles, culminating in ideas of an "Islamic democratic state", a "religious democratic state", and a "liberal democratic state" (Assyaukanie 2009). This plurality of Indonesian opinions on the issue of the nexus between Islam, the state and democracy in the concrete Indonesian historical contextualisation is, for some unknown reason, not mentioned in the textbooks.

The relationship between religion and democracy is dealt with in a more general way. It is argued that religion and democracy constitute value systems and that humans are religious and social creatures. Religion and democracy strive for similar goals, because both offer ways for the realisation of a good

48 [...] seratus persen merupakan produk Barat. Karena itu nilai-nilai, pandangan dan cara hidup Barat tidak dapat dipisahkan dari konsep demokrasi seperti individualisme, kapitalisme dan liberalisme. Karena itu ketika demokrasi diadopsi oleh negara-negara non Barat yang secara kultural dan ideologis berbeda dengan Barat untuk diterapkan sebagai sistem dan tatanan nilai politik, seringkali menimbulkan problem.

49 [...] dalam demokrasi Islam nilai-nilai demokrasinya bersumber dari doktrin Islam yang universal seperti keadilan, musyawarah dan sebagainya.

50 [...] demokrasi Pancasila bersumber dari nilai-nilai luhur Pancasila.

life. For instance, both religion and democracy ask humankind to live a peaceful, prosperous life in which people respect one another (p. 194). Yet, religion and democracy have different origins – divine and worldly – which causes difficulties and problems for the integration of both into one coherent value system. On this point the section stresses the importance of human agency. It declares that the individual must be the one who manages the realisation and integration of religious and democratic values: "The practicing actor of the aforementioned two value systems is the individual" (p. 194).[51]

The rather complex and complicated relationship between religion, democracy and politics is then discussed by showing how some prominent scholars have positioned themselves towards the issue. First, the section refers to the so-called paradoxical or negative model represented by Karl Marx, Max Weber, Nietzsche and Sartre. According to the textbook, these thinkers held that the values of religion contradict democracy. Marx's standpoint that religion is a compensation for social suffering is mentioned, as well as his famous expression that religion is "opium of the people" (p. 195).[52] It is further explained how these scholars justified their rejection of religion, namely by pointing to socio-historical evidence where religion (de facto Christianity) was used as an instrument to secure power and where religion limited the autonomy and freedom of citizens (pp. 195–196). I would argue that the textbook's uncommented mention of the existence of a systemic critique of religion as a social construct constitutes a progressive step in the Indonesian context, where atheism is societally not accepted and where the state obliges each citizen to register as an adherent of one of a limited number of religions.

Second, the so-called secular or neutral model is elaborated. This model separates religion from democracy and politics and reduces religion to the private sphere, where it is also protected from political interference. The section summarises on secularity (p. 196):

> Modern society that supports the secularisation of politics should not be understood as rejecting religion, because modern people are still religious. Yet, the formal, institutional presence of religion in politics is not accepted, because it easily politicises religion for the interests of politics.[53]

Finally, and thirdly, the so-called theo-democratic or positive model is treated. Out of the three models presented, this third one is given the most attention. This model advocates that (p. 196):

> […] religion does theologically and sociologically strongly support the democratisation of politics, the economy, as well as culture. […] Many aspects of normative religious

51 Aktor pelaksana kedua sistem nilai tersebut adalah manusia.

52 candu masyarakat

53 Masyarakat modern yang mendukung sekularisasi politik tidak mesti dihakimi sebagai menolak dan anti agama, karena orang modern tetap beragama. Namun kehadiran agama secara formal institusional dalam politik tidak diterima karena hal ini sering kali membuat agama mudah dipolitisasi untuk kepentingan politik.

> doctrine touch upon the normative values of democracy so that an interaction between the two can support both religion and democracy.[54]

The section then illustrates the democratic values found within Indonesia's by then five officially accepted religions – Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism and Buddhism. On Islam, it is said (p. 197):

> According to Ernest Gellner, Islam has similar basic elements as democracy. Such is also the viewpoint of Robert N. Bellah, who concludes that the state management created by the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in Medina was of an egalitarian and participatory character and that it had the design of a modern state. The basic elements that Ernest Gellner and Robert N. Bellah refer to are the Islamic doctrines of justice (*al-'adl*), egalitarianism (*al-musawah*) and deliberative consultation (*al-syura'*), which were realised within the political practice of managing state affairs in the early Islamic period.[55]

The chapter closes with a section on the prospects of democracy in Indonesia. It states that in Indonesia democracy has not yet been realised and consolidated (p. 199), and that the transition of a non-democratic regime into a democratic one will be a long-term process (p. 200). The text cites at length Azyumardi Azra and his opinion that in order to arrive at a successful democratisation, Indonesia needs to focus on the socialisation of democratic citizens through civic education courses (pp. 200–201). University students form a strategic part of civil society that may contribute to building up democracy. They have the potential to strengthen democracy if they appreciate differences, respect the law, participate in demonstrations or express their views through formal democratic institutions (p. 202). The chapter ends with a statement that hypothesises about the potential consequences of a failure of the democratisation process (p. 202): "Should the democratisation of this new Indonesia fail, then Indonesia will fall back into an authoritarian or dictatorial regime."[56]

54 [...] agama baik secara teologis dan sosiologis sangat mendukung proses demokratisasi politik, ekonomi maupun kebudayaan. [...] agama sebagai ajaran normatif dalam banyak hal mempunyai singgunan terhadap nilai normatif demokrasi, sehingga interaksi antara keduanya bisa saling mendukung.

55 Dalam agama Islam seperti dikatakan oleh Ernest Gellner bahwa agama Islam ada kesamaan unsur-unsur dasar dengan demokrasi. Begitu pula pandangan Robert N. Bellah yang sampai pada suatu kesimpulan bahwa penyelenggaraan pemerintahan yang dikembangkan oleh Nabi Muhammad saw. di Madinah bersifat egaliter dan partisipatif dan sebagai bentuk negara modern. Unsur-unsur dasar yang dimaksud Ernest Gellner dan Robert N. Bellah adalah doktrin Islam tentang keadilan (al-'adl), egalitarian (al-musawah), musyawarah (asy-syura') yang terealisir dalam praktik politik kenegaraan awal Islam.

56 Sedangkan bila demokratisasi gagal diwujudkan dalam Indonesia Baru ini, maka Indonesia kembali berada dalam rezim otoritarisme atau rezim diktator.

Revised edition (2003)

The revised edition that came out in 2003 adopted large parts of the chapter on democracy from the original textbook. However, some crucial changes were introduced. The narrative on democracy in the revised edition tends to be shaped more from an Islamic and Indonesian than from a Western perspective. This is evident in the greater inclusion of classical Islamic thought and increased reference to Muslim authors and personalities. As discussed above, the term "civil society" was translated and consequently replaced by the Malay-Indonesian Islamic *masyarakat madani*, but a discussion of its multiple meanings and controversial interpretations within Indonesia and the Muslim world was lacking. Furthermore, a section on "Islam and Democracy" was added to the chapter. The *Pancasila* is more often referred to than in the original edition, and it is explicitly portrayed as an ideological basis that Indonesian democracy could build upon. Focus is given to the official state interpretation of Islam, which theoretically subordinates Islam to the *Pancasila*. The tone and writing style in the revised edition more directly address the Indonesian Muslim readers' personal responsibility and call for personal engagement to make democratisation succeed in Indonesia.

The citizens' personal responsibility for a working democratisation process is, for instance, addressed in the newly included section "Democracy as a View of Life". Here it is argued that democracy cannot be taken for granted, but that it needs to be nurtured through a supportive democratic culture, a so-called democratic view of life. This democratic view of life needs to exist deeply within civil society and within the governmental realm to make democracy work (*p. 112). "A good government," it is stated, "can prosper and be stable if society has a fundamental positive and pro-active attitude towards basic democratic norms. This is why there must exist in society a widely diffused conviction that a democratic governmental system is the best one compared to other systems" (*p. 113).[57] By drawing on the work of the progressive Indonesian Islamic intellectual Nurcholish Madjid – who was not mentioned even once in the chapter on democracy in the original edition – seven norms that make up a democratic view of life are elaborated upon: pluralism, deliberative consultation, moral assessment in decision making, honest and sound consensus, economic stability/fulfilment of economic needs, a cooperative attitude and mutual trust among citizens and an education system in which citizens are democratically socialised (*pp. 113–116).

The implementation of democracy is depicted as a never-ending, open process that is always entangled with the local context of a society:

57 Sebuah pemerintahan yang baik dapat tumbuh dan stabil bila masyarakat pada umumnya punya sikap positif dan proaktif terhadap norma-norma dasar demokrasi. Karena itu harus ada keyakinan yang luas di masyarakat bahwa demokrasi adalah sistem pemerintahan yang terbaik dibanding dengan sistem lainnya.

> [...] democracy does not fall from heaven as a perfect object, but it merges with the history, experience and day-to-day social experimentation of how a society, a state and a government are formed. This is why the rise and development of democracy in a state need an open ideology it can build upon (*p. 116).[58]

The Indonesian state ideology *Pancasila* is then portrayed as such an open ideology that is conducive to democracy, because it allows for "trial and error [...] correction and refinement" (*p. 117).[59] The aspect of correction is added at the end of the section, which states: "Democracy – with all its shortcomings – is the ability to correct oneself through openness" (*p. 117).[60]

The original edition's section "History and Development of Democracy in Indonesia" was updated in the revised edition with a new subsection on "Democracy Since 1998". This subsection assesses the ongoing democratisation process as negative. It explains that the collapse of the New Order raised new hope that democracy would prosper in Indonesia, and it stresses that the current transition is a crucial phase for the direction democracy will take in the future (*p. 135). The realisation of democracy and its values are still waiting to be proven during the *Reformasi* era (*p. 139). It is acknowledged that since 1998 some positive democratic developments have been witnessed in Indonesia, such as the redefinition of the military's role, the introduction of several amendments to the constitution, regional decentralisation and increased freedom of the press (*p. 140). However, the subsection questions whether this package of legal reforms alone can change a political system and guide democratisation (*p. 141). Other factors are considered as equally important for the victory of democracy, namely the democratic behaviour of the political elite, a participatory political culture and a strong civil society that stands for moderation, compromise and the respect of a plurality of opinions (*pp. 135–137). The current status of the Indonesian transition is evaluated negatively, because (*pp. 140–141):

> [...] to this very day, there are indications for a return of the former status quo powers which aim to redirect Indonesian democracy back to the pre-*Reformasi* era. This is the reason why the current shape of Indonesia's transition is still at a crossroads and the location of its harbour is still unclear.[61]

In the revised edition the newly introduced section on "Islam and Democracy" replaces the section "What is the Relationship between Religion and State?" of the original edition. It seems that this increased focus on Islam is presented

58 [...] demokrasi bukanlah sesuatu yang akan terwujud bagaikan benda yang jatuh dari langit secara sempurna, melainkan menyatu dengan proses sejarah, pengalaman nyata dan eksperimentasi sosial sehari-hari dalam tata kehidupan bermasyarakat dan bernegara termasuk dalam tata pemerintahan. Karena itu tumbuh dan berkembangnya demokrasi dalam suatu Negara memerlukan ideology yang terbuka. (English term in original)

59 trial and error [...] koreksi dan perbaikan (English terms in original)

60 Karena demokrasi, dengan segala kekurangannya, ialah kemampuannya untuk mengoreksi dirinya sendiri melalui keterbukaanya itu.

61 [...] sampai saat ini pun masih dijumpai indikasi-indikasi kembalinya kekuasaan status quo yang ingin memutarbalikkan arah demokrasi Indonesia kembali ke periode sebelum orde reformasi. Oleh sebab itu, kondisi transisi demokrasi Indonesia untuk saat ini masih berada di persimpangan jalan yang belum jelas ke mana arah pelabuhannya.

in order to reduce the intellectual overload and complexity of the original edition and to better tailor the content to the Muslim readers. The section starts with the claim that many Western scholars – including Samuel P. Huntington, Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz and Seymour Martin Lipset – are pessimistic about the successful working of democracy in the Muslim world. Also, the Sudanese Islamic scholar Abdelwahab Efendi is cited: "The wind of democratisation blows to all corners of the world, however, it blows not a single leaf to the Muslim world" (*p. 141).[62] The section then turns to the US scholars John L. Esposito and James P. Piscatory, who defend the potential compatibility of Islam and democracy. Based on their writings on the Muslim world, the section sets out to present three paradigms on the relationship between Islam and democracy.

First, in the Muslim world, Islam and democracy are two mutually exclusive systems when democracy is regarded as a Western product and Islam is understood as *kaffah* (i.e. an all-encompassing religion, which regulates all aspects of life and human interaction). Famous representatives of this paradigm are the political regimes of Saudi Arabia and Iran, and the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb of the Muslim Brotherhood. Second, some Muslims do not see Islam as fitting with the explicitly Western definition of democracy. This implies that Islam can be compatible with democracy if Muslims themselves arrive at their own definition and interpretation of democracy. This paradigm is represented by Islamic thinkers such as the Pakistani al-Maududi, the Tunisian Rasyid al-Ghannoushi and the Indonesians Mohammad Natsir and Jalaluddin Rakhmat (a Shi'ite). Third, for some Muslims, Islam is a value system that justifies and supports the Western definition and interpretation of democracy. This third paradigm is said to be the dominant one in Indonesia and to be represented by Indonesian Islamic thinkers such as Nurcholish Madjid, Amien Rais, Munawir Sjadzali, Syafi'i Maarif and Abdurrahman Wahid (*pp. 141–142), thereby underpinning the central role of Indonesian cosmopolitan intellectuals in the national political debate.

Yet, the section explains that according to Esposito and Piscatory, the supporters of this third paradigm do not hold that democracy automatically and rapidly grows in the Muslim world, because they find that the mindset of the Muslim world impedes democratisation. This democracy-hindering mindset is composed of three aspects. First, the popular Muslim suspicion that democracy opposes Islam poses a serious problem for the implementation of democracy. A "liberalisation of the understanding of religion" (*p. 143)[63] is necessary in order to arrive at a synthesis of Islamic doctrine, democracy and freedom. Second, there exists a "cultural heritage within the Muslim society (community)

62 Angin demokratisasi memang berhembus ke seluruh penjuru dunia, namun tak ada satupun daun yang dihembusnya sampai ke dunia muslim.

63 liberalisasi pemahaman keagamaan

of habituation to autocracy and passive obedience" (*p. 143).[64] This is why a change in political culture is the key to making democracy thrive in the Muslim world. Third, the Muslim world has to internalise the idea that democratisation is a long-term process that needs be backed up with sincerity and endurance (*p. 143).

The end of the section on "Islam and Democracy" – which also constitutes the end of the chapter "Democracy" – legitimises democracy by reference to the foundational era of Islam (*p. 144):

> If very simple parameters are used, then an empirical democratic experience can be found during the rule of Allah's Prophet, which was continued by his four successors […]. [But] on the basis of historical sources, it is extremely hard for us to find any empirical evidence for democracy in the Muslim world that would have possibly existed after the rule of the above-mentioned fourth successor until today.[65]

Conclusion: A localised teaching of democracy

This article has shed light on the structural challenges faced when teaching democracy in a transitioning country. In Indonesia, these challenges consisted of a deeply institutionalised political culture and discursive practices that seek harmony and the avoidance of conflict in the public political realm and that aim for a consensus on the unquestioned centrality of the *Pancasila* and that treat as taboo the leftist political ideas and the past violent eradication of communism in the country (see also Duile / Bens 2017). These aspects are mirrored in the two textbook editions, which at times represented Indonesian political history and democracy with several inconsistencies and biases. Furthermore, the textbooks tended to introduce the students to a plurality of rather inconcrete democratic concepts, which indicates that the term democracy came close to being used as an "empty signifier" (Laclau 2005). It seems likely that the circumstances under which the course was established – in a rapid manner shortly after the collapse of authoritarianism and under the supervision of the foreign neoliberal The Asia Foundation – had a share in contributing to this outcome. In this context it is worth recalling that the Indonesian side was aware of the course's shortcomings. The Indonesian-led evaluation study from 2006 articulated criticism of the weaknesses of the course and an Indonesian interview partner assessed the course's implementation as "top-down".[66]

64 […] warisan kultural masyarakat (komunitas) muslim sudah terbiasa dengan otokrasi dan ketaatan pasif.

65 Dengan mempergunakan parameter yan sangat sederhana, pengalaman empirik demokrasi hanya bisa ditemukan selama pemerintahan Rasulullah sendiri yang kemudian dilanjutkan oleh empat sahabatnya […]. Setelah pemerintahan keempat sahabat tersebut menurut catatan sejarah sangat sulit kita menemukan demokrasi di dunia Islam secara empiric sampai sekarang ini. (English term in original)

66 Interview with Bahrissalim, 2 May 2017 in Jakarta.

On the other hand, with regards to their core message and how they treated issues of individual liberties, citizenship rights and civil participation in politics, the textbooks constituted a clear and authentic commitment to democracy and at times featured progressive statements on politics and religion. Also, the books did not shy away from criticising the authoritarian past and shortcomings of the then ongoing democratisation process in Indonesia as well as addressing prevailing democratic deficits within the global Muslim community. Therefore, in overall perspective, the pro-democratic aim and nature of the textbooks and hence the course clearly qualified IAIN/UIN Jakarta as a pro-democracy actor during the *Reformasi* period.

For the purpose of legitimising democracy, the course and its textbooks reproduced the mainstream Indonesian Islamic academic practice of mediating between classical Islamic theology, Indonesian culture and Western dynamics, thereby once more underpinning the key role Islamic academics have always occupied as cosmopolitan brokers in Indonesian political processes and national agendas. However, the fact that the revised textbook edition shifted to adopting an increasingly Islamic, Indonesian and *Pancasila*-ist perspective on democracy showcases that the cosmopolitan approach also had its limits. In order to more accessibly speak to the pious Muslim studentship, democracy promotion was more tightly tailored to the official understanding of national, cultural and religious identity. The civic education course did not entirely lose its cosmopolitan outlook, but it did more intensely adapt to the cultural and religious realities found in Indonesia, and therefore started to localise the teaching of democracy, also by taming the language and removing the foreign overload.

In sum, the course is an important indicator that the IAIN/UIN Jakarta campus and the Islamic academic milieu in Indonesia manifested as an actor in the engagement for the dissemination of pro-democracy sentiments during *Reformasi*. The outstanding concrete pro-democratic agency of IAIN/UIN Jakarta becomes clearer when taking a comparative perspective on the role of Islamic universities during recent democratisation processes: with its organised, structured and institutionalised form of pro-democracy socialisation through the civic education course, IAIN/UIN Jakarta differed dramatically from the agency of, for instance, al-Azhar University, which supported democratic reforms in Egypt from 2011 to 2013 only in an occasional discursive fashion (see al-Azhar University 2011, Maged 2012), or of al-Zaytuna University in Tunisia, which did not at all promote democracy, but took an apolitical, passive role during the country's transition from 2011 to 2014 (tho Seeth 2020).

Due to the fact that after some revisions the core of the 2003 textbook is still in use at UIN Jakarta, it would be interesting to gain a more updated picture on the civic education course and its localised pedagogical practices in the consolidated democracy. As a democracy is always under contestation and under construction, research is needed for a better understanding of what role UIN

Jakarta is playing in today's citizenship formation and identity politics. Generally, this article has argued that the political agency of Islamic universities and their academic milieu in democracy and democratisation processes deserves more scholarly attention. This is because Islamic universities have access to a wide range of the educated Muslim middle class where they are largely accepted as a religious authority, as custodians as well as innovative creators of religious knowledge, especially in Indonesia.

Against the backdrop of some recent surveys that indicate that in Indonesia university campuses are hotbeds of intolerance and Islamism, a focus on Islamic universities seems more pressing than ever. In 2017, a survey found that 58.8% of Indonesian school and university students have radical Islamic views, while only 20.1% were classified as representing moderate Islamic views. In the same sample, 85% of the respondents said that democracy is the best political system, while simultaneously 91.2% also aspired for the establishment of a caliphate (PPIM 2018). Another – controversial – survey, which was conducted amongst students at ten Indonesian religious and non-religious universities in 2019, ranked UIN Jakarta as the second most fundamentalist campus, behind UIN Bandung (SETARA 2019a, 2019b). Outcomes like these underscore the centrality of campus ideology for the future of Indonesian society and politics, and follow-up research must be channelled towards verifying these findings to unravel what is going on at the universities and within the Islamic academic milieu.

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Book Reviews

Jürgen Schaflechner / Christina Oesterheld / Ayesha Asif (eds), *Pakistan: Alternative Imag(in)ings of the Nation State*. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2020. 404 pages, PRs 1095.00. ISBN 978-0190-70131-4

Much of what is written in books on Pakistan, particularly on its contemporary politics and the like, is usually redundant and irrelevant by the time the books are published. Pakistani books are a graveyard for dealing with, and caricaturing, Pakistan as a "crisis state", sometimes beyond the crisis state, having as many as "nine lives", being a "hard country", "resilient", "apocalyptic", "on the brink" (almost always), and a "paradox" for those who visited a few times and expected something not found during their visits.[1] The list is endless. Thankfully, the volume under review does not fit into this category, dealing instead with sociological, cultural and literary trends.

The ten chapters of this edited volume constitute anthropological, sociological and literary imaginations of Urdu novels and digests (three articles), three articles on Hindu-Muslim relations and on religious minorities in Pakistan, one each on student politics in Sindh, representations of images across the India-Pakistan border, and an unexpected essay on farmers' markets in Pakistan. The outlier is the last chapter in the book on the incumbent PTI government's *naya* ("new") Pakistan, written in 2019 and sadly already out-of-date by the time of publication.

What binds these articles together, in some way, is that four of the authors have had some affiliation with Heidelberg University, Germany, and three have a connection to France, for the most part based or having studied in these two European countries. Additionally, another article on the Urdu novel "Ghulam Bagh" ("The Garden of Slaves") by Mirza Athar Baig – perhaps somewhat exaggeratedly praised as "one of the most important works in the history of the Urdu novel" (p. 46) – has, as one of its main four characters and interlocutors, a German archaeologist called Hoffmann.

It is thus evident throughout the book that there is a strong Western theoretical influence on the majority of the essays but surprisingly very little theory

1 These terms appear in most titles on books about Pakistan. Some examples will suffice: Maleeha Lodhi (ed.), *Pakistan: Beyond the "Crisis State"*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2011. Declan Walsh, *The Nine Lives of Pakistan: Dispatches from a Divided Nation*, London: Bloomsbury, 2020. Christophe Jaffrelot (ed.), *Pakistan at the Crossroads: Domestic Dynamics and External Pressures*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2016. Anatol Lieven, *Pakistan: A Hard Country,* New York: Public Affairs, 2011. Ahmed Rashid, *Pakistan on the Brink: The Future of America, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.* New York: Penguin Group, 2012. Christophe Jaffrelot, *The Pakistan Paradox: Instability and Resilience*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. Francesca Marino / Beniamino Natale, *Apocalypse Pakistan: An Anatomy of the World's Most Dangerous Nation*, New Delhi: Niyogi Books, 2013.

from South Asia on how South Asian scholars of literature analyse their own writings. This becomes especially obvious for the articles on Urdu literature. For example, the articles by Christina Oesterheld and Aqsa Ijaz, while looking at literature written in Urdu, examine such writing almost exclusively from European and Western sources, but do not make use of the huge Indian theoretical contributions that look at South Asian literature from a very different angle and perspective. With critical postcolonial studies and anti-orientalism having gained increasing importance in Area Studies during the last years, it is surprising to see the works of Eisenstadt, Deleuze and Guattari still being cited without comment. Moreover, Oesterheld's essay "Urdu Debates on Modernity and Modernism in Literature: Alternate Imaginings?" simply rehashes previous commentary, completely oblivious to the more recent literature in Urdu in Pakistan. Debates about what constitutes "modernism" in Urdu literature have now surpassed many of the works that Oesterheld cites, as has more recent literature, such as the work of Ali Akbar Natiq, who is recognised as one of the most articulate and creative writers in modern Urdu. Moreover, while Oesterheld is looking at a previous era, notions of Urdu and modernity and Modernism today have redefined notions of "literature", with television serials, for example, constituting new forms of literature. The ability to adapt and create new forms of literature, by writers such as Umera Ahmad, is one of the newer ways Urdu literature is being written and debated. The question itself – whether such writing is "literature" or a type of pulp fiction – is indicative of the times we live in.

This is perhaps one reason why Laurent Gayer's article "Pulp Fusion: The Art and Politics of Karachi's Urdu Digests, 1950s-70s" is excellent, and he provides a flavour of the local context in which such fiction emerged. Gayer gives a thoroughly located and rooted history of the people behind the concept and publication of the Digests and how they began to transform social and literary relations as the project developed. Since Gayer is familiar with Karachi, his understanding of Karachi's Digests is well developed within specific historical and social contexts.

Equally good are the two articles by Jürgen Schaflechner and by Syeda Quratulain Masood, on interfaith conversions and marriages between Muslims and Hindus, the latter constituting merely 1.5 per cent of the population of Pakistan. Schaflechner makes the important point that not all forced marriages due to conversion are based on threats and intimidation or kidnappings, but he also makes a point made by only a few people: that Hindu women also assert their "agency" in the matter and that a blanket condemnation of all acts of forced conversion often fails to take into account the rights of women who make clear choices. Social change and mobility even in rural areas have resulted in greater awareness and choice, as well as in the agency of actors, which gives rise to patriarchal practices where the rights of women are constantly being

denied. Quratulain Masood makes similar arguments in her examination of interfaith relationships in cosmopolitan Karachi, where many such practices are considered "dishonourable" because they disrupt existing arrangements of property and social mores that have remained unchallenged. However, both authors err in mapping India's recent "love-jihad" onto a hugely marginalised and discriminated Hindu community in Pakistan. In contrast to its widespread use in India, from where the term emanates and where many Muslims are prominent, not least in cinema, the notion does not translate or travel unchanged to Pakistan. "Love-jihad" is a concept much used in India, particularly around Bollywood, where with the rise of Hindu right-wing political and ideological forces, interfaith marriages have been particularly targeted. The Muslims in India constitute the largest non-Hindu minority, at around 11 per cent of the population, and according to right-wing political praxis are declared a threat to India's Hindu status and ideology. In Pakistan, with Hindus making up such a minor and extremely marginalised and ostracised share of its population, the notion of love-jihad does not translate from India as both authors imply.

The Frenchman Michel Bovin, an old Pakistani hand working on Sufi shrines and their representation, looks in his chapter at the visual representation of Jhulelal, a Hindu deity, and at how the iconography of the deity crosses the India-Pakistan border. The article makes a rather odd statement, saying that "Pakistan is a country usually depicted as a hub of terrorism and Islamicist radicalism, but except in the circle of the specialists it is less widely known that there are a number of shrines that are shared by Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs" (p. 219). While discussing this iconography, Bovin uses the term "Sindhiness", based on the origin, as he sees it, of this deity in Sindh and how it crosses over into India's "mainstream Hinduism". Although he talks about the deity being revered by Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, Bovin overlooks the important point that Sindh and Sindhiness are also constituted by a notion of Hinduness, if not "mainstream Hinduism", and it becomes difficult to disentangle the two. The province of Sindh, particularly in the regions and histories that Bovin speaks about, has always been eclectic and inclusive, with "religious boundaries" often being blurred.

"From Student Organizations to Ethnic Parties: Sindhi Nationalism during One Unit" by Julien Levesque gives a good historical account of student organisations in Sindh in the 1950s and 1960s by providing a description of how, after Partition in 1947, students began to organise along ethnic lines based on the politics of Sindh. He makes the case that leaders such as GM Syed, the great Sindhi nationalist, who helped mould such student organisations, responded to what the students were demanding – which, according to Levesque, resulted in Syed taking his separatist cause further. The only shortcoming of this otherwise interesting article is that it downplays the Sindhi-Urdu speaking contradictions that emerged in the province after Partition, when the colonisa-

tion of Sindh by Urdu-speaking migrants from India changed Sindh considerably. The change in demography and in the control of power in Sindh, which shifted away from those who had been settled there prior to Partition in 1947, changed the province irrevocably.

Julia Porting's essay on farmers' markets ("Farmers' Markets in Pakistan: Moral Consumption for Elites?") is an outlier for its freshness, exploring a phenomenon rarely encountered in Pakistani academia. Porting examines three farmers' markets in Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi and contrasts how they operate, their clientele, the goods offered, and so forth. A key theme underlying her analysis is that it is Pakistan's "English-speaking" elite who patronise these markets and that they are enclaves of elite preferences. She is not wrong in her analysis, but it would have been more interesting to see how these globalised farmers' markets compare with the more public and middle- and lowermiddle class *juma* ("Friday") and *itvar* ("Sunday") bazars in most urban cities in Pakistan.

The two articles that I think fall short of the standards of this volume are Peter Jacob's "Religious Minorities: The Heart of An Alternative Narrative" and Ayesha Asif's "Challenging the Status Quo: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf's Populist Politics for a *Naya* Pakistan". Jacob's essay is highly descriptive about the situation of religious minorities in Pakistan and presents a somewhat simplistic historical overview, but a certain fear and self-censorship is evident in this essay. Peter Jacob fails to make any critical new contribution to the ongoing debate or to provide fresh scholarly insight on Islam in Pakistan and its consequences on religious minorities. Finally, Ayesha Asif bases her research on speeches made by Imran Khan before he became Prime Minister in 2018 and follows the evolution of his thought and politics based on promises made in pre-electoral speeches. However, Asif completely fails to highlight the politics of the state arrangements that allowed Imran Khan to become Prime Minister. For example, there is no mention in the chapter that there was much accusation of electoral fraud, nor that the popular Nawaz Sharif, Imran Khan's main opponent, had been banned from running for public office for life, or that dubious political alliances were forged in the dark of night at the insistence of Pakistan's military just a few days before the elections. In order to gain a broader understanding of the background of the analysed speeches and the election of Imran Khan himself, it would have been very helpful for the reader to be provided with some information about how the military establishment brought Khan to power. Also the question of whether Imran Khan's longevity as Prime Minister might be grounded not mainly on his policies but on the fact that Pakistan's military has no other option available (to replace him), for now, might have been a question worth asking in this context.

Overall, *Pakistan: Alternative Imag(in)ings of the Nation State* presents a variety of issues in articles of high quality. Clearly, this edited volume will have

more longevity than many others caught up in day-to-day politics and descriptions of Pakistan, with the majority of the contributions offering alternative images of a country too often portrayed in a stereotypical way. Many of the articles will allow other scholars to build on the academic insight provided here. Interestingly, what is missing in most of the papers is the "nation state" mentioned in the book's title. By side-stepping the debate about the "nation state", the authors are able to focus on their specific themes and areas of interest, and to imagine the "nation state" in their own and different ways without explaining the term further. While this is perfectly acceptable, one might well ask why, then, the term appears in the title.

S. Akbar Zaidi

Richard Thwaites / Robert Fisher / Mohan Poudel (eds), *Community Forestry in Nepal. Adapting to a Changing World.* London / New York: Earthscan from Routledge, 2019. 204 pages, 10 figures, 36 tables, £38.99. ISBN 978-0367-4037-20

The shift from centralised management of natural resources by government agencies to decentralised management by communities or with the participation of communities has been one of the most dramatic policy changes of the recent past. It is a global phenomenon that is, however, more pronounced in countries of the Global South. Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM), of which Community Forestry (CF) is one of several manifestations, has attracted particular attention.

The shift commenced in the 1970s in a context of increasing awareness that forest is an important asset for people in rural areas of developing countries, of global concern about deforestation, especially in the tropics, and of a reassessment of the role and capacity of farmers and communities to manage forests. Community Forestry, which can be broadly defined as community participation in forest management with at least some commitment to generating benefits for rural dwellers, started earlier and has been implemented more vigorously in Nepal than in other countries. With currently 30 per cent of its forests under CF management, Nepal is considered a success story and some elements of CF that were developed in Nepal, such as Community Forestry User Groups (CFUGs), have been adopted in other countries as well. A book on CF in Nepal is therefore of interest not only for readers with an affinity to Nepal, but also for those with a broader interest in policy changes concerning the management of natural resources, especially of forests.

The editors and authors of this book are notable for the length and intensity of their involvement with CF in Nepal. This is especially true for Robert Fisher, who is a "man of the first hour" of CF in Nepal due to his early involvement with the Nepal-Australia Community Forestry project – which itself was a pioneer in the launching of CF in Nepal – and who has maintained a lifelong commitment to this cause. Except for Robert Fisher and Richard Thwaites of Sturt University, Australia, all other authors in this book are Nepali nationals with a strong record on CF, among them four PhD graduates of Sturt University. The book is partly based on the primary research of these graduates, partly on a review of the literature.

The first two chapters provide background on the origins and history of CF in Nepal. One of the major drivers of this policy change was the international alarm sounded in the 1970s about the imminent deforestation of the Nepal Himalayas. Deforestation was initially blamed on farmers, and later, in the wake of a re-evaluation of the role of farmers as resource managers, on the ineptitude of the state in managing its forests. In the face of what was perceived as an impending environmental disaster, CF was introduced and implemented with an initial focus on forest conservation and reforestation. Later, the focus shifted to livelihoods and poverty reduction. This shift of focus was paralleled by a shift of emphasis towards empowering forest user groups, which was codified by the Forest Act of 1993. *Community Forestry in Nepal* tells the story of how CF was established and how it has evolved up to the present. The book also assesses the outcomes of this policy change with respect to the environment, rural livelihoods, poverty reduction, community development and land tenure issues, and explores how CF must adapt to a changing context of global challenges such as climate change and biodiversity loss, as well as national challenges such as permanent political instability, outmigration and the emergence of a remittance economy.

According to the findings presented in this book, the record for CF in Nepal is mixed. CF was successful with respect to its original purpose – to address deforestation and forest degradation. A masterful analysis of a range of sources and data sets provides evidence in chapter 3 that forest cover has increased in the lower-altitude Mid Hills, which is the primary domain of CF activities, and that CF has also had a positive influence on forest conditions in terms of biodiversity and provision of forest products. The record with respect to livelihoods and poverty reduction is not so positive. The findings on these issues, which are based on case study research in three locations along an altitudinal gradient in Central Nepal from the Inner Terai through the Mid Hills to the High Mountains, show that CFUGs are dominated by local elites and that benefits from CF are unequally distributed within the communities. In some cases, the poor were found to be even worse off than before the introduction of CF. Environmental outcomes therefore do not reflect social and economic outcomes.

In general, CF in Nepal has been a success story, especially with respect to community development. Soon after their establishment, local CF institutions developed into central institutions with an agenda for broader local development, including micro-enterprise development, infrastructure development, capacity building, etc. The strength of these institutions became apparent during the Maoist insurrection from 1996 to 2006 when, following the breakdown of local government institutions, CFUGs were forced to assume these institutions' functions and continued to play this role after the end of the insurgency.

The context of CF in Nepal has changed with the emergence of climate change and biodiversity loss as global challenges, and with the implementation of policies to deal with these challenges. The case of the UN Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (REDD +) presented in chapter 8 is particularly instructive. While the objectives of REDD + to maintain or increase carbon stocks in forests are in line with the original conservation objectives of CF, there is a potential for conflict with other objectives, e.g. the objective of strengthening local governance. The authors of this chapter fear that the need to align local policies with national and global REDD+ policies and to spend REDD+ funding through government channels and in accordance with donor guidelines may undermine or even reverse the decentralisation process.

Chapter 9 moves from the changing global context to the volatile national context and discusses the effects on CF of labour migration and the concomitant emergence of a remittance economy on the one hand, and of political instability caused by the Maoist insurgency, frequent changes of government, an ongoing constitutional crisis and the rise of identity politics, on the other. The authors of this chapter see CF endangered especially by the effects of labour migration and a remittance-based economy, as when reduced dependence on forests leads to loss of interest not only in forests but also in local governance organised around forests. The book concludes with recommendations for a revitalisation of CF through, among other things, an emphasis on inclusive and strategic planning.

The book covers aspects of CF that have been covered before. The self-effacing statement on p. 196 that the findings reported in this book "are not new findings" is a welcome break from the hyperbolic invocation of novelty that runs through so many other publications. I agree with the authors that the value of the book lies not in the novelty of reported findings but in the quality of the supporting case studies. *Community Forestry in Nepal* does break new ground in chapter 9, however, by discussing the negative effects of the remittance economy, a perspective that has thus far been neglected in the literature on CF in Nepal. In doing so, it points towards a fundamental conflict between some aspects of global change and decentralisation, for which CF in Nepal is an instructive example. I find, on the other hand, that the astounding fact that CF was able to persist through the Civil War of 1996 to 2006 and that it continues

to function in a context of ongoing political anarchy has been dealt with too briefly and that this resilience should have deserved more space in the book.

Community Forestry in Nepal is a highly competent and professional effort to take stock of the development and performance of CF in Nepal up to the present, and to sketch out possible future pathways. It is a profound source of information and insights due to the professional experience of its contributors and to the combination of a thorough literature review with the results of primary research presented in the text, as well as in numerous tables. The provision of maps, on the other hand, is rudimentary. Readers with some familiarity with Nepal would have welcomed a map or maps showing the location not just of districts but also of the many places mentioned in this book. This lack notwithstanding, the publication is remarkably cohesive for an edited volume, mainly due to the close professional ties among its contributors and to the excellent synthesis in chapter 9 –"Community Forestry Reinventing itself in Nepal" – which ties the various narratives together with references to each relevant chapter.

Dietrich Schmidt-Vogt

Ashley Jackson, *Ceylon at War, 1939–1945*. Warwick: Helion and Company, 2018. 240 pages, £35.00. ISBN 978-1-9123-9065-6

This book is another addition to the growing body of studies that look at WWII through the lens of a nation-state, even if one in the making, as in this case. The works on India by Yasmine Khan and Srinath Raghavan represent two excellent examples of such studies with comprehensive treatment of the military, political, economic and cultural impact the war could have upon a country. It would of course be daring to compare the small island of Ceylon (as it was known in colonial times) to the subcontinent that is India, whose contribution to the Allied war efforts was indeed massive by almost any measure. But once this difference in scale is adjusted, Ceylon's contribution can be reassessed and re-appreciated. The island's importance rested largely on becoming the home of a major base of the Royal Navy at Trincomalee (or Trinco, in short), which was a crucial factor in Mountbatten's decision to move the headquarters of the Southeast Asia Command from Delhi to Peradeniya and Kandy.

Jackson's study begins with this story of an island becoming a site of decision-making. Chapter 1 explains the rise in importance of the naval base at Trinco as a result of the fall of Singapore, which made Ceylon a "surrogate Singapore". The next chapter discusses a lesser-known aspect of this defeat: the influx

of refugees from Southeast Asia to the island. Unfortunately, this flow of refugees is not quantified, though the number of refugees appears to have been small. Chapter 3 returns to the military strand of the history, depicting the measures taken for the defence of the island. Jackson here emphasises the significance of appointing Admiral Layton as the sole Commander-in-Chief, which avoided the repetition of the mistake made at Singapore, where overlapping and partially conflicting responsibilities of civilian and military officeholders contributed to the city's fall.

When the Japanese attack finally came (chapters 4 and 5), the British were not only well prepared but also forewarned, having intercepted Japanese communications regarding its date. The course and results of the attack are presented as a mosaic of various and often extensive quotes from eyewitness reports and personal experiences, without much comment. Jackson also highlights some of the secondary consequences of the raid, notably the flight of the Tamil labourers ("coolies") from Trinco, which hampered reconstruction work, as well as (and somewhat curiously included in this chapter) the decline of the island's banking system and money circulation. Chapter 6 describes the circumstances that led to the establishment of the Southeast Asia Command at the city of Kandy. Mountbatten, himself a commander in the Royal Navy, advocated a naval strategy for the war against the Japanese and the re-conquest of the lost British colonies in Asia, for which the naval base at Trinco was indispensable. Together with the opening of a military intelligence office dedicated to code-breaking, and a broadcasting station serving British and Allied troops stationed in the Southeast Asian theatre, Ceylon indeed became an "island of headquarters" (p. 133), despite much of the central decision-making remaining concentrated at Delhi.

In the two chapters that follow, the focus shifts from the military to the social and cultural sphere, beginning with the question of how the soldiers deployed to the island – including African regiments as well – settled in and spent their time. The most notable troop entertainer to visit the island was Noel Coward, who arrived at Mountbatten's special invitation, though his style of humour did not go down as well with the servicemen. Aspects of the island's social history are again addressed in chapter 8, which discusses issues of race and gender. Chapters 9 and 10 finally move away from the military stationed on the island and put the local population into the foreground. Descriptions of the way the people lived are blended with piecemeal economic data, e.g. on inflation (p. 206), hospital beds (p. 219) or rubber production (p. 207), the latter representing around 60 per cent of the production in areas controlled by the Allied countries. There is some repetition regarding the transformation of Kandy (p. 228), whilst on the other hand the island's domestic politics are treated with extreme brevity: only a few sentences on the question of independence and the Soulbury Commission (established to make

suggestions for Ceylon's post-war constitution) and a slightly longer passage on the activities of the Trotskyist Lanka Sama Samaj Party.

The selection and composition of the topics covered by Jackson represent the author's expertise in military and more narrowly in naval history. In this respect, the book provides a comprehensive account of major wartime events concerning Ceylon, often presented with longish quotes from the sources, as in chapters 4 and 5 mentioned above. Other aspects of the war in Ceylon – or life in wartime Ceylon more generally – receive less attention and are treated randomly and unsystematically. Most notably, the political developments on the island would have deserved more space and substance, possibly even by way of a separate chapter. Take the attitude of Ceylon's main party, the Ceylon National Congress (CNC): the loyalist and conflict-avoiding stance it adopted from its inception and throughout the interwar years contributed to making the island a "model colony" of the Empire, a position not least shown in the introduction of universal adult franchise in 1930. This relatively calm political climate, which persisted even after war had broken out, was one of the reasons that Mountbatten chose to move his headquarters to Kandy. Of course, the CNC for its part expected that in return for its loyalty, Ceylon would be granted independence after the war, and at the same time, the CNC used its relative political freedom to turn against the South Indian (Tamil) workers employed on the island's tea plantations, demanding their "repatriation" to India. This anti-Tamil agitation continued throughout the war and escalated immediately after independence, when the active expulsion of the Tamils began – a move that contributed substantially to the alienation between Sinhalese and Tamils and the eventual outbreak of civil war in the 1980s. Whilst there are no signs that the British or Allied authorities on the island actively supported the CNC in these actions, they did not actively intervene to stop them either.

Besides politics, a second field inadequately treated by the book is the island's economy. There are a few references to inflation, rationing or agricultural production, which mainly concern rubber, as Ceylon supplied almost two thirds of the Allied rubber production. But these references are quite patchy, unconnected and provided without explanation or interpretation. Rice imports and rationing, for instance, are randomly mentioned on pages 159–160, 206 and 231; the question of labour and labour shortages on pages 98 and 205. This dispersal of information across chapters in turn results in an occasionally odd composition of chapters. Chapter 8, for example, starts off with a discussion of race, sex and gender relations between Allied troops and the locals, but then continues to discuss the transformation of the city of Kandy/Peradeniya, its entertainment industry (which was also briefly described before, on p. 123), before eventually outlining the activities undertaken in the areas of broadcasting and print publications. The subsequent two chapters continue in similar

fashion, providing bits and pieces from "The Home Front" without much focus or coherence.

Curiously, it should have been quite straightforward to write a coherent and informed economic and political history of Ceylon during the war as a background (or possibly even foundation) for the military events that besieged the island, given that a good number of relevant sources are easily available in printed or online editions. These include the four volumes of the *Documents of the Ceylon National Congress, 1929 to 1950* (edited by Michael Roberts, Colombo 1977), but more importantly the comprehensive, data-rich yearbook *Ferguson's Ceylon Directory*, the publication of which began in the 1870s and continued for more than a century until the 1980s. Most of its volumes have been digitised and are now easily available online. And not to forget the Trotskyist Lanka Sama Samaj Party, which enjoyed glorious moments of anti-colonial resistance in 1940 and again in 1942 and duly commemorated those activities in a post-war publication (*Britain, World War 2 and the Samajists*, ed. by Wesley S. Muthiah and Sydney Wanasinghe, Colombo 1996). Those broader considerations apart, the book is welcomed as a useful, geographically focused contribution to our understanding of WWII in the East, its course and its consequences.

Tilman Frasch

Helene Maria Kyed (ed.), *Everyday Justice in Myanmar: Informal Resolutions and State Evasion in a Time of Contested Transition.* Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 2020. 388 pages, 1 map, 34 illustrations, £70.00. ISBN 978-87769-4281-6

This recently published edited volume addresses the important topic of legal pluralism and contested versions of authority and justice in the daily lives of minority ethnic communities in Myanmar. The work brings together a number of chapters that address how ethno-communal sources of justice typically supplant the state and its institutions in the country. The reason for this development is the conscious willingness of those involved in disputes or crimes that require arbitration and settlement to choose such ethno-communal sources of justice in order to avert and circumvent state power and its intrusion into minority communities. The state and its related agencies are generally regarded by ethnic minorities in the country as complex, expensive and ineffective purveyors of justice; official mechanisms are described as being costly, confusing and corrupt, and thus intimidating. Additionally, minority communities are anxious to avoid the negative image that might befall any individuals who refer their

problems to state agencies, as well as any redounding effect in turn on their communities. Consequently, the internal resolution of problems is the preferred option, with the occasional use of related ethnic armed groups to broker disputes that are referred upwards for resolution.

The book is divided into an introduction and a total of ten chapters that deal with case studies involving different ethno-linguistic groups. The introduction, which is written by the editor of the book, places the discussion within the theoretical perspective of legal pluralism and "acknowledges the possible coexistence of different forms of social ordering, meanings of justice, and interpretations of the causes of disputes, victimhood and suffering" (p. 2). The approach that is adopted by the authors of the case studies takes into account persons and agencies that are well beyond the confines of what would be regarded as the formal state and its legal and enforcement agencies. The recognition of such diverse sources of authority, despite their being embedded within local socio-political structures, naturally challenges the exclusive claims of the state to legally recognised authority within its territorial confines and hence poses a legitimacy problem (p. 6). Nonetheless, the authors are well aware of the on-the-ground realities that obtain in the challenge of such state centricity in the daily lives of ethnic minorities in Myanmar. The ethnographic case studies, based on observations by the writers, are triangulated with other case studies, interviews with justice providers and their protocols in order to ensure sound methodology (p. 13).

The first case study examines the concept of forum shopping within an ethnic Mon community in the southern Mon state that affords the community a choice of different fora for resolving communal disputes and offences. The term "forum shopping" is actually commonly used in international relations theory as well to describe how states rationalise and negotiate which fora to adopt in order to maximise gains and minimise losses within an econometric-styled pattern of behaviour. This case emphasises the importance of the village tract administrator, who tries very hard to resolve cases even when they appear to be beyond his level of jurisdiction (p. 57). Part of the reason for this practice is described as the preference for resolving problems within the community and also the aim of preventing the projection of a bad image for the village. Interestingly, this case highlights the importance of the ethnic armed group that represents the community, the New Mon State Party (NMSP), as one of the fora available for conflict resolution. Such an option appears to be a recurring theme in the other case studies as well.

The second case study is from a Pa-O Self-Administered Zone (SAZ), a legacy of ceasefire arrangements with ethnic armed groups in recognition of their territorial control and authority over contiguous spatial areas. The importance of the Pa-O National Organisation (PNO), another ethnic group with its own army, features prominently. The recourse to justice provision in

this instance is described as deriving from oral traditions, although codification of these traditions is now underway (p. 85). However, this case study also points to the difficulties associated with bringing powerful and well-connected outside perpetrators of crimes to justice (p. 88). In other words, while the provision of remedies for problems works well if these involve residents of an organic community, this may not apply for perpetrators of crimes from outside that community.

There is an interesting turn to the third case study, which involves the Naga tribal community. Here it is the *pha thar su*, the unit of patrilineal kinship across an extended network of families, that deals with problems. The elders from this lineage negotiate compensations that often include livestock as well as monetary payments. The rules pertaining to the provision of justice are prescribed by the Naga Literature and Culture Committee (NLCC), which was formed in 1993 by influential Naga tribal leaders (p. 109). The *pha thar su* is described as the collective that binds all males and females on the patrilineal side and not only provides group identity but also protects and preserves the group, including through the pooling of resources to ensure harmony and survival (p. 111). The provision of justice is said to focus on compensation, reconciliation and shaming as primary remedies (p. 113). The Naga are also described as having suffered tremendous repression by previous military governments and therefore as having little interest and faith in the state and its system of justice (p. 125).

The Karen state is in the focus of the fourth case study, which emphasises the importance of religious and animist recourses to justice within a plural setting. Both these options are described as offering an explanation to individuals who have suffered misfortune or harm and such explanations are viewed as providing consolation. This consolation is regarded as offering greater legitimacy than state mechanisms of justice among the inhabitants of the village studied (p. 153). Buddhism also helps to render an unfortunate situation more acceptable by framing it within the notion of karma, in which a person's poor behaviour in a previous life can lead to misfortune in this one. The chapter that follows involves the practices of an urban Karen community in Yangon that is under government control and administered by a Bamar ward administrator. In this instance the major communal construct for the administration of justice is the Baptist church. Religion provides a strong and shared sense of identity, and religious leaders are involved in the provision of justice for secular offences (p. 165). This situation is actually quite similar to that of the Kachin ethnic group in the north, where the Kachin Baptist Convention (KBC) is a major focus of identity and mechanism for dispute resolution within the state.

Than Pale's sixth chapter examines collaboration and conflict avoidance between Buddhist and Muslim Karen who live in the same village. The three factors that allow for such harmonious coexistence are described as a strong

attachment to the village and community in terms of identity, an aversion to state mediation of conflicts and the absence of external intervention in matters related to the village (pp. 190–191). This chapter again highlights the utility of Karen ethnic armed groups, who offer assistance and avenues for conflict resolution should the matter escalate beyond the village level. Chapter seven addresses the exclusion of Hindus and Muslims in Karen state and how this discrimination evolved over time owing to the reification of ethnicity and the British policy of recognising and cataloguing indigenous peoples as a way to exclude those perceived as outsiders (pp. 221–222). This exclusion is also attributed to bureaucratic practices through the military-dominated Ministry of Home Affairs that controls the General Administration Department (GAD). Incidentally, the GAD, which had been brought under the control of the Office of the President under President Win Min, has recently reverted back to the control of the Ministry of Home Affairs following the February 2021 coup staged by General Min Aung Hlaing. Exclusion is also often advocated by right-wing monastic groups such as Ma Ba Tha, as well as being enforced by complicated procedures for applying for citizenship.

Chapter eight looks at a forcibly relocated community in an urban setting in Mawlamyine in Mon state and examines how state disregard for a marginal community has a deleterious impact in turn on state-society relations as well as interpersonal relations, a negative influence that then percolates downward into the community (p. 264). The ninth chapter is not concerned with any particular ethnic group per se, but examines the role of brokers in Myanmar's property market and how they perform a useful role in overcoming poorly codified laws and record-keeping of property transactions and ownership.

Finally, the role of ethno-cultural factors in the acceptance of justice provision is again examined in the last chapter. Dealing with justice in Karen refugee camps in Thailand, the author traces the tension between the demands for justice on the part of international agencies and donors versus the traditional Karen methods of seeking justice (p. 316). Camp inhabitants are described as generally preferring harmony over conflict and as seeking to resolve issues peacefully while avoiding the involvement of the Thai state, under whose legal jurisdiction the camp operates.

The book has more cases from the Karen than from other ethnic groups and would have benefitted from a conclusion that brings the discussion full circle at the end. Nonetheless, the book is an enjoyable read and can be recommended to anyone who seeks an understanding of communal life in ethnic minority areas. There are a number of common themes in the book that connect the several case studies and allow a broader impression of the informal conflict resolution strategies applied by the studied Myanmar minority communities: a general preference for community-based justice, a preference for compensation over punishment, the importance of the ward and village tract

administrators, and the avoidance of resorting to state agencies. The procedural emphasis is on negotiation and mediation to obtain compensation on the basis of preferred negotiation mechanisms chosen by the affected parties. There is an equally strong emphasis on understanding (*nalehmu*) and on the maintenance of social harmony through de-escalation of conflict (p. 17). There is also a general tendency to work within religious norms as well as spiritual beliefs that reinforce social norms and harmony rather than enforcing punitive prescriptions for offenders (p. 27). Consequently, identity politics is an important aspect of justice provision for ethnic minorities in the country (p. 29). Finally, the common goals of cooperation and development bind the communities and ethnic armed groups, whose mediation is clearly preferred over that of Myanmar state agencies if a conflict escalates upwards for resolution.

Ganesan Narayanan

Odd Arne Westad, *Empire and Righteous Nation. 600 Years of China-Korea Relations.* Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2021. 205 pages, 4 maps, €27.00. ISBN 978-0-6742-3821-3

A scholar of Korean history is bound to become knowledgeable in the history of China and the numerous dynasties, states and ethnicities subsumed under this label. Cultural, political, economic, and religious connections and entanglements between the people of the Korean peninsula and those of the Chinese landmass are, irrespective of historical period, simply too significant to be ignored. Consequentially, Sino-Korean relations have proven to be a fascinating but also complex field of study. Past connections between China and Korea have produced historical contradictions that are often difficult to reconcile with historiography that focuses on the modern nation-state and that today produce issues of contention between the Korean states and the People's Republic of China. The contemporary political situation on the Korean peninsula cannot solely be explained as the result of conceptions about this shared history on both sides. Nonetheless an understanding of the historical relationship between China and Korea and modern attitudes towards it are certainly a prerequisite to comprehending and engaging with Chinese and Korean stakeholders today.

In his new book *Empire and Righteous Nation. 600 Years of China-Korea Relations*, Odd Arne Westad sets out to offer precisely this: a concise history of Sino-Korean relations that provides context for scholars of international relations with an interest in the situation on the Korean peninsula. In the brief introduction to his book Westad states his belief that a resolution of the Korea

crisis is predicated on the peaceful reunification of Korea, one that necessarily has to involve China (pp. 2–3). This hypothesis then drives the main question of the book: What can be learned from Chinese-Korean history to solve the current divide on the Korean peninsula?

Writing a history of Sino-Korean relations is, for a host of reasons, an enormous and daunting undertaking. Westad lightens this task by setting the starting point for his historical account in the late fourteenth century, which saw the decline of Mongol rule in both the Chinese heartland and the Korean peninsula and the rise of the Ming and Chosŏn dynasties respectively. Previous Sino-Korean relations are briefly discussed at the beginning of the chapter from a theoretical perspective that points out close cultural connections and then introduces three key concepts: Empire, Nation and Righteousness.

The concept of Empire refers to the rhetorical and practical conjuring of ancient Chinese empires by later dynasties as a legitimation of their claim to power. In relation to these conceptions of imperial ambition Westad discusses how Korea, positioned either at the margins or outside the designs of the Chinese empire, was perceived in China. He concludes that as a constant fixture in Chinese historiography, Korea came to play the important role of confirming the inclusive nature of the empire by accepting its cultural values and therefore, as *the* model vassal, avoided being swallowed up by the neighbouring Chinese empires.

The second key concept, Nation, then discusses Korean notions of self and others. Mostly based on the writings of JaHyun Kim Haboush, Westad's book follows Haboush's analysis that a particular Korean national identity manifested itself when the Chosŏn kingdom was under attack by Japanese forces at the end of the sixteenth century and had to rely on Chinese support. Notions about the loss of territory, the plight of the people, and the destruction of culture were expressed in a national discourse that – although not necessarily comparable to the later Western conceptions – centred around an exclusive Korean identity.

The last concept, Righteousness, is based on a central virtue of Confucianism and hence reflects on the role played by Confucian thought in the relationship between China and Korea. Adherence in both Korea and China to the interpretation and rearrangement of the Confucian canon by Zhu Xi is seen as a cultural link that simultaneously rendered the vassal relationship to China as well as the national self-assertion of Korea as righteous. Westad's discussion of the role played by Confucianism in the relationship between China and Korea reproduces the conventional picture of a quite static ideology that served as a sort of cultural glue keeping the two bound to each other. However, it is becoming increasingly clear in current research that Korean scholars used Confucian concepts and rhetoric to express ideas of cultural superiority that informed later Korean attitudes towards the Manchu-led Qing dynasty already

during the fourteenth and fifteenth century. While Confucianism certainly shaped the vassal relations between Chosŏn and the Ming and Qing dynasties, it concurrently also contributed to Korean self-assertion.

The introduction of these three concepts at the beginning of the book seems sensible, as they capture the historical circumstances of the late fourteenth century in Northeast Asia. However, the concepts somewhat lose their value for explaining the nature of the relationship between China and Korea as the book progresses. Nevertheless, they serve an important purpose in emphasising Korean agency in the relationship with China. Outside as well as Korean descriptions of Korean history often project the developments of the twentieth century onto the past and tend to portray Korea as a passive victim of imperial ambitions in the region, the proverbial shrimp between two whales. Westad shows Koreans throughout history actively taking steps to ensure the survival of their nation, for example against the always looming Jurchen threat at the northern border (p. 38) and vis-à-vis the Chinese and later also the Japanese empire. Even though the book is concerned with Sino-Korean relations, naturally it cannot exclude Japan from such a discussion, but the focus of the book largely relegates the Japanese to the role of pirates, marauders, invaders and colonisers.

After the introduction of the three key concepts in the beginning of the first chapter, Westad continues with a description and analysis of the major developments in the relationship between China and Korea, from the establishment of the Ming and Chosŏn dynasties until the landing of French troops at Kanghwa Island in 1866. This confrontation with the West provides the main theme for the second chapter, which deals with Sino-Korean relations from the age of imperialism until the end of the Cold War. The normalisation of relations between South Korea and the People's Republic of China in 1992 marks the opening of the third chapter, which discusses current relations up to the 2019 Hanoi summit between the US and North Korea.

In his conclusion Westad states that handling the empire next door was and in a sense still is the main task of any Korean state, and, from a historical perspective, their main achievement. The special relationship that formed out of the engagement between Korea and China still affects their views towards one another today. However, Westad is reasonably careful not to give this historical connection too much influence over contemporary matters of *realpolitik* (pp. 171–173). Nevertheless, he also rightfully points out how perceptions of the past can shape the conception of possible futures among Chinese and Korean policymakers and are therefore important to understand. Here the argument of the book could have profited from a broader discussion of its fundamental premise: why is it only Korean unification that could achieve stability for economic development of the region? And under what circumstances would the People's Republic of China, which also considers itself to be a divided country, agree to such a unification of the Korean peninsula?

In its overall structure the book is dominated by the first two chapters, as they cover the majority of the events in the 600 years discussed by the author. It is a remarkable feat that Westad manages to hit most of the significant historical beats in his streamlined discussion of Sino-Korean relations, while still presenting an engaging and never tedious read. However, his strong reliance on secondary sources has some pitfalls. Although Westad employs a large number of Western and some Korean sources, his trim narration of Sino-Korean relations frequently bases its discussion and interpretation of specific events on one or two reference works. More often than not, this presents no problem, as the cited publications accurately reflect the current state of research, but in a few cases it leads to inaccuracies. For example, the discussion of the Korean *sirhak* movement (p. 65) misses the twentieth century nationalist background of the term; and the mention of the destruction of the General Sherman (p. 78) maintains the impression that the ship was an official US vessel when it was actually a private merchant ship. A somewhat larger oversight is that the Northeast Project, which ran from 2002 to 2007 under the guidance of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, is not discussed in the third chapter of the book. Not only did this academic project draw the ire of the Korean public and lead to a worsening of the public perception of China in South Korea, but its actual research is emblematic of Chinese discourse on its historical empires and its relation to Korea. To this day, accusations of cultural appropriation between the two nations are a common occurrence. However, these minor oversights do not detract from the broader argument of the book.

In conclusion, Odd Arne Westad undoubtedly accomplishes his aim of providing an overview of Sino-Korean relations since the late fourteenth century that can help interested readers gain a better understanding of the contemporary political situation on the Korean peninsula. The concise nature of the book as well as the author's engaging writing style make for a pleasant read. Even though the lengthy historical time span of the book entails some broad strokes, Westad still manages to offer clues about grey areas that demand further enquiry by the reader. Therefore, Empire and Righteous Nation can also be considered a valuable introductory reading for students, as it provides a rich foundation for additional conversation.

Martin Gehlmann

James Scambary, *Conflict, Identity, and State Formation in East Timor 2000–2017*. Leiden: Brill, 2019. Xii, 252 pages, €105.00. ISBN 978-9004-39418-6

In April-May 2006, a major political crisis precipitated by a rift in the armed forces shook the newly independent nation of Timor-Leste. The Southeast Asian country had only regained independence four years earlier, after centuries of Portuguese colonial rule and 24 years of brutal Indonesian occupation. The fissures in the armed forces morphed into fighting between the police and the military, and soon simmering communal tensions broke out, in which various martial arts groups and other informal security groups (ISGs) played a key role. The crisis led to the displacement of over ten per cent of the country's population almost overnight, with 37 people killed and new international peacekeeping forces dispatched. Within a few short weeks, the country went from being a poster child of UN-led liberal peacebuilding to being an alleged basket case. Although much has been written about the 2006 crisis and its causes, comparatively few studies have examined the underlying local, rather than national, macro-level drivers or the nature and role of the various ISGs.

Conflict, Identity and State Formation in East Timor, by the late Australian anthropologist James Scambary, does just that, focusing on the "longstanding divisions and micro-conflicts obscured by the noise surrounding the UN statebuilding operation, but also the multiple networks of relationships and alliances that drive current configurations of political power and behaviour" (p. 209), as he puts it. Importantly, his analysis does not end with the "official" end of the crisis in 2006 but explores how violence continued in rural areas from 2006 to 2008 with over 150 deaths and long-term reverberations. The resultant book is a highly readable, multi-faceted and multi-level analysis of some of the drivers of the 2006 violence, but also a sobering account of how little has since been done to address these issues.

James Scambary, who passed away last year, was deeply invested emotionally and intellectually in Timor-Leste, having spent years working there in various capacities in civil society projects, as both a researcher and analyst. His embedded, grounded knowledge and willingness to go beyond dominant, simplistic and ahistorical explanations for the violence shines through in the book – as does his frustration with said master narratives. Unlike the common, somewhat reductive analyses of Timor-Leste's post-independence crises that focus on the UN and state level, Scambary dives deep into the local level. He examines the inter-linkages between urban and rural communities, as well as the overlapping influences of family and kinship ties, personal friendships and animosities, historical conflicts, political cleavages and the long shadows of Portuguese rule, the Indonesian occupation and their aftermath, all without getting caught up in endless complexity. He shows how these multiple local-

level tensions and cleavages can "jump scale" to the national level; how a drunken altercation at a wedding can escalate and become inter-woven with national politics.

The book is structured in nine chapters, most starting with an anecdotal vignette that draws the reader in. The first chapter lays out the basic argument of the book and how it positions itself against dominant narratives of the crisis. The second and third chapters give the reader an in-depth overview of the historical and socio-cultural context of the 2006 Crisis and of the various ISGs. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 examine the various groups in more detail and provide, in the sixth chapter, an account of how the conflicts and post-independence tensions played out in a particular squatter settlement in the capital, Dili. The seventh chapter then takes a critical look at peacebuilding efforts in Timor-Leste, while the penultimate chapter dissects the political system that has emerged in the country since independence, followed by a concluding chapter.

Much of the book thus portrays the various ISGs, which have also hitherto been under-researched academically. Scambary's analysis goes against common but superficial explanations of the groups as consisting merely of manipulated, misguided and/or bored, delinquent, impoverished urban men. Instead, he paints a nuanced picture of the variety of ISGs, ranging from groups of local kids hanging around in the neighbourhood to millenarian veterans' organisations challenging the state; from martial arts groups to criminal gangs. He explores their systems of meaning-making, their historical and social roots, their embeddedness in society (as well as politics) and their diverse membership. It is in these chapters – in which he traces the historical roots of the various groups, showcases their diversity and examines the localised dynamics of their activities – where his book is arguably at its best. Here is where his granular knowledge of the dynamics in the Bairro Pite neighbourhood of Dili, his grasp of the links between the urban squatters and their districts of origin, and his understanding of the personal backgrounds of key ISG leaders comes to its fullest. He also contrasts and compares the groups and their dynamics to others elsewhere, be it regionally to Indonesian or Filipino groups or the *raskols* in Papua New Guinea, or further abroad to Latin American groups. Rather than simply dismissing the ISGs as the spoilers, thugs and menaces that the media and public discourse have often portrayed them to be, Scambary's portrayal of them is far more nuanced, though in no way uncritical or naïve about the violent and criminal potential of some of the people involved.

The full force of Scambary's scathing criticism, however, comes to bear towards the end of the book, when he dissects national-level and internationally-funded efforts to understand and respond to the fall-out from the 2006 Crisis and the rise of ISG violence. He is withering in his assessment of the international community's "macro-level and monocausal" analyses, the lack of an understanding of historical and social processes, and the short-termism of

peacebuilding and development efforts. The reader can viscerally feel his exasperation at the reluctance of external actors to engage with local knowledge and their preference for simpler, one-dimensional narratives of urban poverty, state failure, "youth bulges" and the like. "The local" thus either gets sidelined in favour of international models from elsewhere, or conversely becomes reified and romanticised as a cure-all, even when it does not fit. James Scambary is equally blistering in his critique of what he terms the neo-patrimonial, clientelist state that he believes the Timor-Leste political elites have built for themselves since independence. There is a distinct under-current of despondency in his narrative as he sketches the channels through which the resources of the country are misappropriated under the eyes of the regulators.

The main contributions of James Scambary's book do not lie in anthropological or political science theory, nor in research methodologies. Rather, this is a book that I would hope (against hope) that external actors involved in peacebuilding and development would read, even if they do not engage with Timor-Leste. It compellingly makes the case for why a contextualised, nuanced, grounded analysis of conflicts is needed. As difficult as it is to explain this to donors, practitioners, journalists, analysts, researchers and others who prefer – or even demand – more straight-forward, simple narratives and dichotomies, trying to understand conflict requires engaging with inevitable and shifting complexities, contradictions and paradoxes. I also hope, with greater hope, that it will encourage more researchers to embrace their work and their subject matter with the same kind of warmth, empathy, dedication but also critical reflection that James Scambary did.

Henri Myrttinen

Gunnar Stange, *Postsezessionismus: Politische Transformation und Identitätspolitik in Aceh, Indonesien, nach dem Friedensabkommen von Helsinki (2005–2012) [Post-Secessionism: Political Transformation and Identity Politics in Aceh, Indonesia, after the Helsinki Peace Agreement (2005–2012)].* Berlin: regiospectra Verlag, 2020. 352 pages, €33.90. ISBN 978-3-947729-32-6

Gunnar Stange's monograph is a highly detailed account of a complex scene: post-conflict, post-disaster and post-secessionist Aceh. The book is divided into nine chapters that walk the reader through the twists and turns of political transformation of Aceh from 2005 to 2012, with rich ethnographic detail that strongly relies on interviews with high-ranking actors, for instance from the Free Aceh Movement or Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM), which would become the most important local political party.

The tragic Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004 claimed over 230,000 lives across the coasts of East Africa, South and South East Asia. With the triggering earthquake's epicentre off its Sumatran coast, Aceh was one of the worst affected regions, counting 168,000 deaths, close to half a million internally displaced people and material losses estimated at 6.1 billion USD. The world turned its eyes to Aceh in 2004 after this disaster, an event that Gunnar Stange cites as a key impulse for peace talks to begin and pick up speed (p. 3). His study counts as one of the few long-term fieldwork pieces addressing the transformation process from an identity politics perspective. Following reflections on gender, accessibility, the secrecy required when working with separatist movements, and ethics in the face of violence (p. 27), chapter three points to the overflow of (international) humanitarians, development workers and researchers, whose practices of collecting data and then leaving in face of the dire post-disaster and post-conflict realities Antje Missbach has framed as "knowledge extractivism" (Antje Missbach, "Ransacking the Field?", *Critical Asian Studies* 43(3) / 2011, pp. 373–398). While the book is strongly grounded in theories of conflict and collective identity, the author accurately adds that the scope of international financing of post-disaster reconstruction, development and reintegration processes is quintessential to understanding the transformations in Aceh (p. 82). With a historical review that goes beyond republican times and highlights the Kingdom of Aceh Darussalam's relations to cities across the Indian Ocean region, Gunnar Stange lays a solid foundation for an analysis of differential power that strongly opposes methodological nationalism.

The long way from an armed conflict to peace negotiations was paved with over 30,000 lives lost, 7,000 human rights violations recorded and changing political projects. Gunnar Stange carefully connects the latter with wider political constellations, for instance, with post-colonial and anti-imperial struggles in Africa and Asia in the mid 20th century (p. 114), or with a human rights turn well aligned with UN discourse in the 1990s. The author posits that, more than a paradigm change, these projects represent a series of strategic choices taken by political leaders for the internationalisation of the Acehnese cause, amplified by the post-disaster international presence and attention. Peace talks did not emerge out of a vacuum left by the tsunami. Instead, Gunnar Stange succeeds in explaining how social structures, historical depth and dynamic processes played out in peace negotiations, the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding of Helsinki (MoU) in 2005 by the government of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement, and the bumpy process of creating legislation for autonomy within a very centralised state apparatus. Violence deescalated and weapons were turned in, but much of the initial "spirit" of the MoU was not translated into the Law of Governing Aceh (p. 149). Here, Gunnar Stange points to how both instruments' intentions are a move away from violent conflict and towards a process of conflict resolution and management, yet neither estab-

lishes clear rules of how that process is to take place, rendering them both a blessing and a curse (p. 156).

The first elections where the GAM participated as an independent party in 2006 were indeed a milestone for a lasting peace. In chapter seven on contestations, the author painstakingly follows the making and unmaking of political movements during the next elections. The GAM's authoritarian leadership style resulted in political divides and new party formations. This process of negotiation and of conflicts being enacted at another level – with a lower degree of violence – is also shaped by corruption and clientelism, as the author illustrates with the example of parliamentarians using funding to reward or punish collective electoral behaviour.

Chapter eight tackles identity politics and takes as a key example the figure of the Wali Nanggroe, Aceh's highest ceremonial position, which had been held by Hasan di Tiro, the most iconic and certainly loudest voice for independence. The Wali Nanggroe is an important symbol of local leadership and autonomy, to the degree that the figure was enshrined in the MoU and Law of Governing Aceh. Yet the highest authority in Aceh, as a province of the republic, is the governor. How to reconcile the two figures? By the end of 2007 a committee of the regional parliament, advised by academics, was tasked with finding the origins of the figure of the Wali Naggroe in order to draft the functions for this position in post-conflict Aceh. The commission meandered from Leiden to Sweden and back to Aceh, empty-handed. Failure. Yet precisely moments like these are what make good ethnographies, and Gunnar Stange does not miss the opportunity to shed light on the social construction and dynamic character of culture. Likewise, the new law foresaw a flag for the province of Aceh, and a 2007 bill strictly forbade separatist symbols. For the elected GAM leadership, who already had a flag that some claimed was thousands of years old, it was natural to officialise this symbol. For the central government, officialising a symbol that separatist armed forces had been waving as a flag was controversial to say the least. Analysing the scope and effect of symbols of a united Aceh, such as the flag, the author also finds dissident voices within Aceh that speak of the ethnic frictions to be negotiated among ex-combatants and civil society actors.

This book is a careful story of transformation of the political landscape in Aceh, which invites the reader to follow multiple actors during a critical period of Aceh identity politics in detail. Especially the genesis and limitations of legal instruments are meticulously described and analysed. However, the juxtaposition of yet another actor and yet another policy document to an already complex mosaic comes at the cost of clarity of the bigger picture, which is the transition from an armed conflict to a process for party politics paired with an ideological transformation that gradually moved away from independence and towards what Gunnar Stange accurately calls "post-secessionism". A list

defining the many acronyms (such a list being several pages long would not be unusual for the Indonesian context), an extra page for a timeline or a chart mapping the actors could have provided a useful overview.

These caveats notwithstanding, overall this book can be recommended to readers interested not only in Aceh, but more generally in detailed accounts of peace processes and the (changing) roles of political actors, particularly the transition of armed groups to political parties. By focusing on how a conflict can operate in different modes, as Gunnar Stange recaps throughout the book, this book contributes to our understanding of conflict and the rearticulation of power. The author reminds us that conflict is not merely the opposite of peace but, if anything, is an inherent aspect of the processes of peace making.

Daniela Paredes Grijalva

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