and how successful they are in forming a democratic space are the main stories of the book.

The introduction and the chapters collected in this book are an important read. Mike Douglas, K.C. Ho and Giok Ling Ooi, as editors of the book have written theoretically challenging pieces which present an articulate framework for the subsequent empirically rich essays by scholars from various disciplines. Through examples and case studies ranging from the streets of urban China and the peri-urban villages to the Malaysian mosque and pavement in Hanoi and to the "demopolis" of Jakarta, the authors challenge state and society relations by rendering them unstable and creative. The engagement with civic space as the embodiment of the democratic process in Asia means centering attention on the politics of space. It also means addressing the issues of reception, an aspect that has often been overlooked by works on urban studies. The authors identify and qualify spaces that play the role of a civic space, assessing their historical constructions and their potentials for the future. They do not always agree with the general framework provided by the editors (who themselves do not occupy a single position on the issue). Some authors show the evidence of the working civic space in their case studies by showing the insurgency of people claiming rights to the city; others question the assumption of the civic space by showing how it is continuously subjected to (authoritative) regulation at both the national and the local level. The coherency of the theme and the diversity of the cases which include detailed studies of civic spaces of China, Indonesia, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand and Vietnam allow a dialogue that leaves us with a shared political direction or at least moments of political possibility and alternative ways of imagining the production of space in Asia. It is in this spirit that the book is a must read for those working on urbanism in Asia, even though we have to accept the irony that the condition of possibility for the emergence of civic space in Asia is to acknowledge the merit of globalization, in all senses of the word.


This is the third volume in the Association for Asian Studies’ Key Issues in Asian Studies series, aimed at providing teaching materials for teachers and students at undergraduate institutions and high schools. It packs a great deal of information and analysis into a small package, arguing for the importance of the topic on its own merits, as well as for understanding important issues in East Asia, and for developing countries more broadly.
After introducing the topic, Professor Zhu reviews the experiences of Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and the People’s Republic of China (PRC). He then compares and contrasts the cases and finally draws on their experiences for lessons for other countries.

He starts by introducing “the flying geese pattern” where the “four little dragons” followed the lead of Japan, emphasizing how low expectations were for East Asia’s development as compared with many other countries of the postwar world. It is within this context that the East Asian experience can be called “miraculous.” This leads to discussions of the activist role of the state in each case, and how it relates to the market at home and globally. There is a helpful discussion of the developmental state model and the risks of devolving into crony capitalism, as exposed in the 1997 financial crisis. A book of this length cannot delve deeply into the details of each case, and the author hits most of the important points. I would have done more on land reform as well as contrasting Japan’s keiretsu and Korea’s chaebol with Taiwan’s guanxi qiye (not mentioned) and plethora of small enterprises. There is a helpful list of suggestions for further reading at the end.

The similarities he notes among the cases include export-oriented policies, stable domestic conditions (although he downplays the role of authoritarian repression in achieving this, particularly in South Korea and Taiwan), activist state, visionary leaders and investment in human resources. He highlights the following differences, primarily between the PRC and the others: the external environment; unequal income distribution; China’s continuous modification of strategies; and the fact that there are really several Chinas, some of which have successfully implemented lessons from the earlier developers, while others lag far behind. There is no discussion of how the states gained the power and capacity to formulate and implement policies, and the statement that “visionary individual leaders…had a strong commitment to promoting the well-being of the public” (54) is more than a bit naïve, as it glosses over the desperate situation they all found themselves in, where regime survival was clearly the primary objective.

The last chapter briefly introduces debates over East Asia, mentioning the positions of economists Paul Krugman and Joseph Stiglitz, but for an area studies audience, there should have been a sustained discussion of the Confucianism and the development hypothesis as well.

As well as introducing the concept of “flying geese,” the author should have discussed other relevant concepts, such as product life cycle and global commodity chains, to highlight the ways in which the East Asian economies, with a great deal of hands-on research, guidance and financial allocation from the states, have successfully anticipated many economic trends and built comparative advantage virtually from scratch. Part of the challenge they all face is to keep doing this in order to stay at the top of the curve. Related to this, Zhu should have paid more attention to the ways in which Japan, Korea and Taiwan, and now the PRC, are investing heavily abroad, in the region...
and beyond, to take advantage of cheap labour, lax regulations on labour and the environment, tax incentives and market access. This replicates what America and Japan did for the little dragon economies decades earlier, minus the Cold War atmosphere. Another area receiving too little attention is the trade-off between development and the environment. Although he mentions China’s severe environmental degradation, this is a noticeable consequence of industrialization throughout the region which the other states, often pressed by civil society, are now addressing.

Given my own experience teaching The Sociology of Development and Globalization, I would also have advised more attention to the Cold War and its implications for East Asia, in particular the phenomena of divided nations and a garrison mentality in Korea and Taiwan. I find my students (as well as East Asian youth!) have little or no understanding of this period, or even what the Soviet Union was, and how the competition between the “free” and “communist” worlds drove so much of the global political economy for decades.

The language varies from rather complex sentences conveying sophisticated ideas and intellectual debates to high school level near-fragments. And an index would have helped.

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China has an estimated 200 million rural–urban migrants, who have been the engine that has propelled China’s extraordinary rate of economic growth. Despite their contributions to China’s economic development, rural–urban migrants form part of an emerging urban underclass. They endure sub-standard housing, earn low incomes relative to their local urban counterparts and confront widespread discrimination in many forms. For the most part, for instance, migrant workers in China’s cities face numerous obstacles in accessing education for their children, in participating in social insurance schemes, in accessing reproductive and sexual health services and in obtaining decent housing. It has also been well documented that China’s migrants are frowned upon by many urban locals who blame them for all manner of urban ills, from increasing urban crime to urban unemployment. It is against this backdrop that Yan Hairong’s book New Masters, New Servants explores class dynamics and the struggle for suzhi (quality) among migrant women from Anhui.