

The essays collectively address large themes: the clash between past and present in traditional culture; the ascription of miraculous powers to objects and the question of agency; commodification, commercialism, collecting and globalism; the object as a lightning rod for nostalgia or authority; the search for the “authentic”; and the relationship of gender and power. Addressed to specialists, the tome is heavy in critical theory, Alfred Gell’s *Art and Agency: A New Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) being the favourite, which often creates a drag in the pace of the prose. Judicious editing would have ameliorated this problem to some degree. The reader frequently wishes for a bibliography so as not to have to hunt for references buried in the endnotes. The book, nonetheless, provides considerable food for thought as traditional cultures rush pell-mell into the twenty-first century.

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GLOBAL MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE: European and Asian Leadership. By *Cesar de Prado*. Tokyo, New York, and Paris: United Nations University Press, 2007. xvi, 275 pp. (Maps, figures, tables.) US\$34.00, paper. ISBN 978-92-808-1139-1.

In the book *Global Multi-Level Governance*, Cesar de Prado offers a theoretical approach to understanding emerging structures of international governance. De Prado argues that the mainstream theories of international relations—realism, liberalism and constructivism—fail to adequately account for the influence of the multiple non-state actors and forces which, functioning and interacting at the international and domestic levels, are altering international relations. He offers his theory as a more sophisticated way to understand the influence of these forces in the international system.

De Prado asserts that the system of nation-states is challenged by the emergence of micro and macro regions. How does the system hold together? His argument is that “new types of less territorially bound private and mixed actors have risen thanks to the accelerating information and communications revolutions and have gradually woven strong meshes of functional interests that irreversibly link various levels of governance” (20). These new actors include new governmental agencies, policy think-tanks and track-two processes, business, and regionally-linked institutions of higher education. These actors constitute “knowledge-based regional and global governance” (34).

There are many strong points to Prado’s argument and theoretical approach. Mainstream IR theories have difficulty explaining much that goes on in today’s world. This is particularly apparent in East Asia, where realism predicts conflict and rivalry, but cannot account for peaceful interaction;

where economic liberalism would expect far greater levels of cooperation, but cannot account for the real and ongoing security tensions between states; and where constructivism explains the region's politics through changes in identity, but cannot account for the fact that regional shifts in identity have not been that profound. There is a real theoretical gap to be filled.

However, it is not as clear that the forces de Prado identifies are having the same effect in all areas of the globe. In the European context, the many non-state actors he studies are a natural and complementary extension of a process started and abetted by government policies. If they have taken on a life of their own, this is neither unexpected nor outside the goals of what the European Union (EU) hopes to become. Within the European context, therefore, his theory seems to work quite well. At the least, it explains a real set of phenomena. In Asia, however, the many regional organizations and processes that he identifies have an ambivalent relationship to regional states. In Asia, states have explicitly rejected creating a supranational organization like the EU.

In most cases, Asian states are attempting to maintain and protect their sovereignty. This is not surprising, given that most Asian states are relatively weak and still see themselves as involved in the fairly preliminary stages of state-building. Most of their actions and initiatives are reactive. They are willing to work with other networks and non-state actors to achieve various purposes. But they are also likely to see themselves in competition with some of the networks that de Prado identifies as aspects of multi-level governance. At the least, state actors in Asia support a hierarchical approach to governance which guarantees them final authority in any decision or process affecting regional events. As a result, it is not clear that all of the many Asian actors de Prado identifies are actually as effective as their counterparts in Europe. But even in the European context, we must be careful. Extensive contacts across many levels of governance have not prevented the European project from running aground on nationalism and suspicion in some of its member states.

Actually applying de Prado's theoretical construct to the study of real-world events is difficult. This is not necessarily a weakness of the theory, since it reflects a complex reality. But multi-level governance is not a parsimonious theory and this means that it runs the risk of being more descriptive than analytical.

A considerable strength of de Prado's book is the remarkable detail of his work. He has provided a comprehensive list of the many transnational organizations and networks that operate in Asia and Europe. Simply as a research tool, the detail of the book provides an excellent starting point for anyone interested in a survey of these more obscure (but important) regional actors.

Overall, this book is an excellent resource and presents a compelling case that the influence of communications technology has nurtured networks that

have transformed the way in which the international system operates. But, in Asia at least, states remain the primary actors in regional relations and the book does not capture the real tension between states and networks that may reinforce state functions even as they undermine state authority.

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WORLD CLASS WORLDWIDE: Transforming Research Universities in Asia and Latin America. *Edited by Philip G. Altbach and Jorge Balan.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007. viii, 323 pp. (Tables.) US\$85.00, cloth, ISBN 0-8018-86619; US\$42.00, paper, ISBN 0-8018-8662-7.

This collection of essays addresses the importance and challenges of building research universities in low- and middle-income nations. These institutes have been economically and socially valuable to developed nations. Nowhere has this been truer than in the United States, where they have been essential to that country's scientific, technological and economic preeminence. In poorer nations, however, higher education has been focused on professional development, not research. Since the cost of establishing and maintaining advanced research facilities is high, priorities have been focused on basic education and technology transfer. In recent years this has begun to change as governments, business leaders and academics in developing nations have sought to establish their own research institutes that are peers to those in wealthier nations, and as they have begun to reform or at least reconsider the role of higher education in their societies. Philip Altbach and Jorge Balan have examined this trend in 13 essays by 15 authors. The book begins with Altbach's clearly presented argument for the importance of developing at least one research university that rises to the standard of, if not Harvard or Oxford, at least that of the major American state universities in quality as conventionally measured by publications. In a globally connected, knowledge-based world, research universities, the author explains, are needed by all countries to link them to the "global academic system of science and scholarship" in order to "understand advanced scientific developments and participate in them" (2). This introduction is followed by five essays that deal with Asia: two on China, two on India and one on South Korea; and six concerning Latin America: two each on Brazil and Mexico and one each on Chile and Argentina. This arrangement provides short introductions to the efforts at developing world-class institutions of higher education in these countries while highlighting the diversity of approaches and problems in the pursuit of this goal. It also helps the reader to get a general sense of how educational development patterns in Asia compare with those in Latin America. The co-editor, Jorge Balan, draws some of these comparisons in his concluding essay.

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