

Book Reviews

EBERHARD SANDSCHNEIDER, *Der erfolgreiche Abstieg Europas. Heute Macht abgeben, um morgen zu gewinnen*. München: Hanser Verlag, 2011. 208 pages, €19.90. ISBN 978-3-446-42352-7

“The alleged victory of the West in 1989 was also the onset of its decline”, writes Eberhard Sandschneider (p. 10). This is a normal historical process, and the main task of today’s politics is to manage it responsibly. Dangers lurk in miscalculations and in smug, self-righteous attitudes. From 1989/91 onwards, the West as a strategic entity has ceased to exist, perspectives are diverging across the Atlantic, and national interest has returned with a vengeance. Unexpected shocks and creeping trends (i.e. demography, IT development, resource scarcity) have led to international shifts in power. One example is the financial crisis of 2008, which, with its continuing repercussions, has caused a dramatic decline in the reputation of the West. When the pursuit of growth becomes greed and achievement is revealed to be simply fraud, the attractiveness of Western values, which Western politicians and journalists like to brag about, inevitably crumbles (p. 32). Values should not be held up to others but should determine one’s own moral standards. What if the rest of the world were to treat us now as we have treated them for the past 200 years? And Sandschneider points to another problem with value-based politics: values are not negotiable. There are only winners and losers – or double standards, which are so evident in Western politics (pp. 32–33, 81).

Sandschneider reminds readers of Barbara Tuchman’s 1984 book *The March of Folly. From Troy to Vietnam*, where she emphasised the consequences of insisting on false choices, and of rigid mindsets. The absence of critical questioning of established political behaviour patterns, and the misguided use of information, remain two major sources of error. Modern means of communication place decision-making under huge time pressure, and few people have the courage to deliberately slow down that vicious cycle. Instead, many people rely on previous decisions, on master plans, and on ideas from the past. Thinking in black-and-white binary opposites is part of the folly, as is the search for enemies, in academic discussions as well as in practical politics. We should instead come to recognise and end our self-deceptions; we should reform our thinking and refrain from zero-sum games, dichotomies, bogeymen and double standards.

It appears questionable to both the United States and China, how much political weight Europe will retain in the future. One chapter of the book ad-

dresses “transatlantic self-deception”, leading to a call for more European realism. We in Europe are living with the negative consequences of the overambitious extension of the EU. In the EU as a construct *sui generis*, national interests will remain dominant. The EU does not need a constitution but rather a stronger effort towards consolidation as well as a readiness to solve problems pragmatically wherever they may emerge. Sandschneider cautions against debates about identity which are exclusive; the strength of the EU is in its diversity, not in enforced homogeneity. Europe has always been an elite project, whose complexity can hardly be explained to voters. Consequently, the main issue is not more participation but rather enhanced transparency of interests and decisions. Europe needs to increase its problem-solving capacity or it might sink into obscurity.

Aggravating the decline of Europe are think tanks that mostly benefit from crises: “Europe’s continuing crisis is mostly feeding those who constantly revive it in debates” (p. 154). Another problem is the media, in which disinformation now supersedes information. Pictures can be manipulated and used in global disinformation campaigns. The internet offers similar problems, and many people nowadays feel overwhelmed by a flood of information and withdraw into private life altogether; yet democracy needs critical public debate. And that presumes an educated public that is aware of hidden dangers, as well as of the disinformation campaigns (p. 65) that are being discussed in some social media and online debates – and are very slowly becoming a topic in some official media circles that recognise the need for self-criticism. The nuclear disaster at Fukushima vanished from the media within just one month. Sandschneider criticises the fact that politics is not in the habit of evaluating such events, in contrast to private industry, where this is common practice (the book appears to have been finished before the German government’s adoption of the *Energiewende*, a transition to low-carbon, environmentally-friendly energy). Sandschneider touches upon far-reaching questions, about energy policy and the ongoing financial crisis, that continue to confront us; he only briefly mentions the German sociologist Ulrich Beck, who has described the political process by which industrial (and other systemic) dangers are produced: they are economically externalised, legally attributed to individuals, legitimised by a subservient science and finally politically belittled (p. 123). The motto of Sandschneider’s book reads: “Questions not asked can be more dangerous than misguided answers.”

The world is changing rapidly, and visibly: economic growth, export developments, resource needs, demography and educational standards are changing our international environment, and many in Germany do not even perceive these international trends. Sandschneider stresses that politics needs to talk about uncomfortable truths, like the declining influence of Germany and Europe. Whether we recognise these major challenges, and whether we find peaceful

responses, depends on our ability to correct old patterns of thinking. A growing self-assurance among the emerging countries is evident. China criticises Western weaknesses, such as our failure in development policy towards Africa, and the problems in our political systems, which have come to the surface during the financial crisis. The bipolar world is gone, and the idea of a multilateralism of cooperation among equal partners is unrealistic, according to Sandschneider. Non-polarity is his term for the present. To deal with this situation peacefully presupposes new forms of long-term cooperation. This period of major international changes requires historical consciousness among the main actors; accordingly, it is not helpful that German parties tend to have ever younger people in leadership positions.

In its negative experiences with colonial powers, China realised that there was nobody to rely on. The “Western community of values” must sound rather hollow to many countries with similarly negative experiences as well. And this self-declared community of values has not integrated any new members as equal partners. Therefore it is all the more important to recognise the significance of the new G-20 state grouping. This is a more promising step towards international partnership than if emerging political powers have to fight for their rights at every step of the way (p. 108). As models for the future role of Europe, Sandschneider contrasts Great Britain, which has been struggling for about 100 years now to accept its declining international standing, with Switzerland, which has achieved an international political role without ever having been a major political power.

In times of widespread self-deception in Western political debates, and after years of political instrumentalisation of the “human rights debate”, Sandschneider’s appeal for realistic appraisal may well be called courageous. The book addresses important questions to broaden the thinking of those dealing closely with politics in process. The first advice can only be: more humility.

Sabine Grund

T. A. HEATHCOTE, *Balochistan, the British and the Great Game. The Struggle for the Bolan Pass, Gateway to India*. London: Hurst, 2016. 288 pages, £30.00. ISBN 978-18490-4479-0

Ever since Rudyard Kipling popularised the term the “Great Game” in his novel *Kim* (1901), the history of the British political, military and colonial engagement and competition with Russia in the borderlands to India and later the Raj has been of particular interest to historians and to a predominantly British audience. The fateful military campaigns in Afghanistan from 1839–42 and 1878–1880 still influence the perception of Afghanistan and the Afghan

tribes as unruly, resilient, traditionalist and cunning. Thus, the relevance of the region derives, as the author notes in his introduction, from its continuous challenge to regional security until today.

The Iranian province of Sistan and Bolchestan, Pakistan's province of Balochistan (by far the largest administrative unit of Pakistan) and the three southern Afghan provinces of Nimruz, Helmand and Kandahar are considered as an economically underdeveloped, politically marginalised and volatile region. T. A. Heathcote, a graduate of the School for African and Oriental Studies (SOAS) and former curator at the Military Academy Sandhurst, leads the reader back to these restive edges of the British Empire, to Balochistan in the late 18th and 19th century. The book, an expansion of the author's PhD thesis at SOAS, is exclusively based on British archival sources and Heathcote offers a meticulous description of British military and diplomatic operations in the region from the late 18th century until the enforcement of British rule in 1893.

The manuscript opens with a historical account on the establishment of the Khanate of Kalat in the 17th century, when Mir Ahmad Khan achieved autonomy from the Mughal Empire. Heathcote bases this introduction on the standard English secondary literature on the region. The local political dynamics, the conflicts between various groups are represented in terms of the traditionalist checks and balances of a tribal society which had experienced little transformation or change. The following chapter introduces the competition among Iran (then under Qajar rule), Russia and Britain in the region in the first decades of the 19th century. The subsequent chapters, the main part of the manuscript, depict the expansion of British rule in the region from 1839 on, initially led by the East India Company and then later under the rule of the Viceroy. The author organises his material in strict chronological order and pays detailed attention on the careers of individual British officers and adventurers who took Benjamin Disraeli's line in *Tancred* literally: "The East is a Career". The myriad of geographical and personal names, the at times circuitous descriptions of various battles and smaller skirmishes between the British (including their auxiliaries) and their Balochi adversaries will fascinate historians of the colonial and military expansion of Britain in South Asia; a more general audience might well consider the volume an exhausting read, however.

Besides the detailed microhistory of events, there is only a limited interest in the larger political (for instance, the "Great Game" as such) or social transformation in the 19th century. While Heathcote is predominately interested in the trials and tribulations of his British heroes, their Afghan-Balochi antagonists remain the stereotypical "Other" – the volume would have benefited from a stronger consideration of the entangled history as well as the indigenous perspective.

Tim Epkenhans

ALI RIAZ / MOHAMMAD SAJJADUR RAHMAN (eds), *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Bangladesh*. London: Routledge, 2016. Xix, 448 pages, £140.00. ISBN 978-0-415-73461-5

Bangladesh has a tradition of bringing out excellent reference works in the English language, and the new *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Bangladesh* is a welcome addition to this trend. This is all the more remarkable given that the country won its independence after a long fight for its own language and, decades ago, decided to publish official documents in Bangla rather than in English. In 2003, a twelve-volume national encyclopaedia was published both in English and Bangla and is also available on the internet. Its second edition came out in 2016. The handbook under review, however, is less a compendium like the *Banglapedia*, but rather a collection of 36 articles dedicated to pressing issues and problems, written almost exclusively by academics from Bangladesh, mostly with a background of study and service outside of the country, especially in the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia. As the editors write in their Introduction:

In a few years Bangladesh will celebrate its fiftieth year of independence. The country emerged as an independent nation in 1971, although it has existed for centuries – as a part of the Mughal Empire, as part of the British-colonized subcontinent, and then as the eastern province of Pakistan (1947–1971). [...] Since its independence Bangladesh has faced adverse situations – political, economic, and environmental. Yet, it has not only survived, but thrived. Once described as a “test case for development”, the country has achieved significant social and economic progress in the past decades (p. 1).

Accordingly, the book is a proud recounting of achievements, as well as an attempt to present the difficulties, with all their complexities, that the country has faced. This has been done with great attention to brevity and clarity. All of the contributions are highly informative and readable.

That the project took longer than expected speaks for the optimism of the editors. Their success in having articles updated as needed should be gratefully acknowledged. All texts are well referenced, and at the end of the book there is a detailed index. The book is organized into six parts:

Part One “History and the making of contemporary Bangladesh” is dedicated to topics including: Bangladeshi politics since independence, nationalism, secularism and the genocide of 1971. The last article on the Shabagh rising – in support of the government’s policy to not only finally bring the perpetrators of the massacres of the Liberation War to court, but also have them executed – explains how sentiments and frustration are passed on through generations and can erupt out of the blue.

“Politics and institutions”, the second part, deals with political parties, elections and the party system, public administration, non-governmental organizations and civil-military relations. The shifting nature of NGOs from

service delivery to advocacy in their first phase, to the development industry in their second, and to “marketization and hybridization” (p. 126) in the third, is a wider phenomenon, but can be studied par excellence in Bangladesh. On reflection however, the concept of non-government organizations needs greater differentiation, as not-for-profit organizations are major providers of social services not only in “developing” countries.

The third part is for good reason the longest section, encompassing “Economy and development”. It took Bangladesh more than twenty years to recover from civil war and reach a level of consumption equal to that in the last year within an undivided Pakistan, made possible by advances in three areas: first and foremost in agriculture, allowing an improving food supply for a growing population; in industry, where Bangladesh advanced to become a world leader in ready-made garments, produced by millions of young women with a predominantly rural background; and in the emigration of millions of workers, whose home remittances are amongst the highest in the world. Self-sufficiency in food production (more or less), textile exports and remittances allow Bangladesh large-scale imports and the building up of foreign exchange reserves, both of which were unimaginable in the difficult years after independence.

The next part, entitled “Energy and environment”, is the shortest section, with articles on power and energy potentials, climate change and water issues. The country has a deficit in primary energy, but a reliable (electric) energy supply is a precondition for export-oriented industry, where instant reaction to rapidly changing world market trends is required. With most of the country only a few metres above sea level and located in one of the largest river deltas of the world, natural calamities like floods, droughts and cyclones are regular events that easily become disasters. Global warming, a rising sea level and the prospect of the increasing frequency of extreme weather phenomena add to such problems, and will affect millions of citizens. This could trigger mass migration within the country and beyond.

Diverse questions are analysed in part five on “State, society and rights”. Human rights and the law, the state of gender, the CHT and the peace process, religious minorities, print and electronic media, the education system and public health are all examined. The fact that Bangladesh has managed to surpass countries with higher production and income levels such as Pakistan and India in the field of social services has attracted international attention. Beyond the satisfaction this has created in Bangladesh, this is important evidence that social development is not just a function of economic growth. As Sri Lanka had earlier shown, education and health can be improved significantly also in poorer countries.

The final section, on security and external relations, is characterized by Bangladesh’s unique geography and history: tucked in a corner of the subcontinent, Bangladesh shares a long and winding boundary with India, and a

much shorter stretch with Myanmar. The country blocks India's access to its own northeast, a region which could – in theory – be reached easily by rail and road across Bangladesh. Historically and culturally the country was part of Bengal, and the idea of Pakistan as a separate state for the Muslims of India was especially strong here. Bangladesh's history as East Pakistan (1947–1971) ended almost half a century ago, but the role of religion in the state is far from defined. As for the outlook going forward: “Besides domestic drivers, such as political instability, growing authoritarian tendencies of the ruling regime, proliferation of intolerance, polarization of society, and lack of space for religio-political parties within the mainstream, the future trajectory of terrorism in Bangladesh will depend on the global political situation, especially in the Middle East. If the role of the West, mainly the USA, in international politics reinforces the sense of Muslim victimhood, then the appeal of violent extremism to the common people in Bangladesh is likely to intensify” (p. 435).

This book will be a standard reference work on Bangladesh for years to come, and a necessary addition to any collection on the region in general and on Bangladesh in particular. Bangladesh as a “test case for development” offers useful insights for other “less developed” countries and their donors.

Wolfgang-Peter Zingel

ANDREW SMALL, *The China-Pakistan Axis. Asia's New Geopolitics*. London: Hurst, 2015. 319 pages, £30.00. ISBN 978-1-84904-341-0

In a book of over 300 pages dealing with an under-researched state-to-state relationship, the reader can expect a reasonable number of footnotes, as well as a bibliography and an index of perhaps 25 pages. In this regard, Andrew Small's book clearly surpasses expectations. It is telling that the main text of this meticulously researched and well-written book on the history and trajectory of the China-Pakistan axis consists of 188 pages, while the remaining 131 pages are solely devoted to an impressive quantity of documentation.

Small writes on page 5 that “in-depth studies on the China-Pakistan relationship are few and far between, with virtually no full-length treatments appearing since the early 1970s”. Clearly, the author has successfully taken up the challenge and chronicles what has happened, and, more importantly, what is currently happening between Pakistan, the Islamic state, and China, the Communist state. The book provides a detailed account of the origins and developments of this relationship, China's secret role in (and not so secret support of) Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme, trade issues, the current status of extremist movements in both countries, and possible future developments.

The China-Pakistan relationship, often described by both sides as an “all-weather” friendship, dates to the 1962 Sino-Indian war, a defining event in the history of India and a lasting trauma for Indian elites until today. The fact that Indian forces proved vastly inferior to their Chinese counterparts led the Pakistani leadership to focus on, even align with China. Especially when the USA rejected Pakistani military demands during the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war, the latter was in dire need of a strong international ally, and, to the surprise of many, found it in communist China. Pakistani leadership, beginning with Field Marshal Ayub Khan in 1962, followed by Yahya Khan, General Zia-ul-Haq and all their successors, all undertook to deepen and widen this relationship.

Andrew Small impressively demonstrates in the seven chapters (and dramatic introduction) of this book that geopolitical considerations, arms/weapons, trade and infrastructure are the four major pillars upon which this unique axis rests. The latter two, in particular, have received their fair share of criticism in recent years, with, for example, the Gwadar port development project on the Arabian Sea and the Karakoram Highway linking China to Pakistan both failing to bring about the desired economic improvements, despite the huge amounts of Chinese capital invested in the two projects. The author makes use of extensive interviews conducted in both China and Pakistan, as well as ample citations from the memoirs of relevant actors involved, especially from the military and politics. For Andrew Small, the nuclear question is also of utmost importance, and the author has been able to unearth many details regarding nuclear matters, probably unknown to most readers, in addition to highlighting how Pakistan has helped many “rogue” states to obtain nuclear material or plans for building centrifuges.

It goes without saying that the problems in this axis are many, particularly in the form of unbridgeable cultural differences and widespread terrorist activities. Small (p. 30) describes an incident during the brief war of 1965 when then Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai met a Pakistani delegation that, to his surprise, only requested ammunition for no more than 14 days. “How can a war be fought in that short time?” Zhou wondered. “I would be interested to know if you have prepared the people of Pakistan to operate in the rear of the enemy. [...] I am talking about a People’s Militia being based in every village and town.” Pakistani generals, many of whom had received training in the UK, were speechless: “What does Zhou Enlai know about soldiering and military affairs anyway?” Such differences in military tactics and approaches remain characteristic of this relationship today.

On page 67, Small cites a Pakistani sinologist who said: “China has a good understanding of almost everything in Pakistan, political, security or economic, that might affect the bilateral relationship, but there is one piece they just don’t get: Islam.” These words reveal the major dilemma underlying the axis. Critically, China is worried about violence in its Muslim Xinjiang province,

along with violence against the more than 10,000 Chinese nationals living and working in Pakistan. Pakistan is home to one of China's most feared terrorist movements, the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), which fights for Uighur freedom in Xinjiang and is partly based in tribal areas in Pakistan. Much to the chagrin of political elites in China, Pakistan is poised to play a decisive role in China's battle against Islamic terrorism in the future, even though the Chinese fear that their fight is not fully supported, even sabotaged by Pakistan and that unresolved terrorist problems in Xinjiang province might incite protests in other Chinese provinces as well. According to a Chinese expert (p. 90): "When we provide them [Pakistan] with intelligence on ETIM locations they give warnings before launching their attacks."

After having read the book, one cannot but conclude that despite stark differences in ideology and cultural understanding, a common enemy (India) and economic interests (predominantly Chinese) are enough to provide the basis for a lasting friendship between the two nation-states. How can one understand the underlying motives, the nature, the trajectory of the alliance that binds these two important states together? The answer: by reading this book. Small's insightful account is highly recommended for students, researchers, analysts and policy makers dealing with international relations and security in the Asia-Pacific. The wealth of information and data included, along with the hundreds of hours of (frank) interviews will make this a book of lasting relevance.

Arndt Michael

AMARNATH AMARASINGAM / DANIEL BASS (eds), *Sri Lanka. The Struggle for Peace in the Aftermath of War*. London: Hurst, 2016. 293 pages, £25.00. ISBN 978-18490-4573-5

The termination of Sri Lanka's civil war through the military defeat of the LTTE and the establishment of a victor's peace in 2009 offers a compelling case for those studying war-to-peace transitions and the transformation of violent intra-state conflicts; nonetheless, academic interest in Sri Lanka's protracted civil war and the underlying ethnic conflict has been waning since the war's end. The volume under review is thus a welcome exception to this tendency. Against the backdrop of the 10-year rule of former President Mahinda Rajapaksa (2005–2015), who not only engineered and implemented the ruthless military campaign that ended the war, but moreover left an indelible mark on the country's post-war politics, the authors of this volume have set out to explore the manifold problems Sri Lanka's minorities have been facing since the war's end.

The first part of the book, entitled “Social and Legal Complexities”, addresses questions relating to peacebuilding and reconciliation. Kumaravadivel Guruparan analyses the public discourse on reconciliation under the Rajapaksa regime. The concept of reconciliation is generally associated with transitional justice and accountability in post-war situations; however, the author contends that in the Sri Lankan context, the official agenda for reconciliation was directed rather towards the consolidation of the Sinhala-Buddhist nation-state, while Sri Lanka’s minorities were implicitly expected to recognise and acknowledge the unitary nature of the Sri Lankan state with the Sinhala-Buddhist majority at its apex (p. 22). Consequently the reconciliation discourse has served as a legitimising tool for the ongoing structural violence exerted towards the Tamil minority in the former war areas. This important argument is further supported by the remaining three articles of this section, which deal with the legal and normative underpinnings of the Sri Lankan unitary state (Asanga Welikala); the question of how human rights abuses in Sri Lanka can be addressed (Sujith Xavier); and the influence of Sri Lanka’s ethnically divided media on peacebuilding and reconciliation (Senthan Selvarajah).

The second part of the volume sheds light on “Ethnic and Religious Dynamics” in post-war Sri Lanka. Suren Raghavan examines the role of the Buddhist Sangha as a non-state actor from a historical perspective; Farzana Haniffa delineates the “newness” of the phenomenon of Islamophobia in post-war Sri Lanka, arguing that Sinhala triumphalism in the aftermath of the victor’s peace not only reinforced the discrimination against the Tamil minority, but also laid the groundwork for the periodic outbreaks of anti-Muslim violence that Sri Lanka has been witnessing since 2012. The remainder of part II expounds upon the problems of the Up-country Tamil community vis-à-vis the Sinhalisation of both society and polity during the Rajapaksa era (Daniel Bass) and issues pertaining to trauma and memory in Sri Lanka’s war-ridden North and East (Malathi de Alwis).

The third and final part of the volume is entirely dedicated to the analysis of Tamil nationalism both in Sri Lanka and among the Tamil diaspora abroad. Ravi Vaitheespara discusses the future prospects of the Tamil struggle in Sri Lanka by examining the few sustained writings that have appeared in the Tamil media. Mark Whitaker explores Tamil attitudes towards the war’s end among Tamils in Sri Lanka and abroad. He makes a compelling argument about how both the Rajapaksa government and the international community appeared to agree upon Tamil attitudes after the war, characterising the Tamil community as war-weary and thus having “abandoned militancy and nationalism in favour of pragmatism” (p. 184). Through the analysis of a number of interviews with Tamils in Sri Lanka and among the diasporic community in Canada, Whitaker dissects this simplistic assumption in order to show that the ethnic conflict and the war have created a complex epistemological legacy which ren-

ders comprehensive assertions about people's views extremely difficult (p. 187) – a point that cannot be stressed enough, considering that open expression was particularly constrained during the Rajapaksa years. In the volume's final chapter Amarnath Amarasingam calls for a more nuanced view of the influential Tamil diaspora, which is generally portrayed as “overly radical and fundamentally corrosive to the prospects of peace in Sri Lanka” (p. 203).

The volume offers a comprehensive overview of the social and political problems that were caused by the war and remain largely unresolved to this day. With its contributions from sociology, anthropology, history, religious studies, law and politics, the collection is well structured, as the chapters of each section are interrelated in their scope, thus rendering possible a comparative perspective on issues in post-war Sri Lanka. Beyond that, the “new” lines of religious conflict that have resulted directly from the war's end are also analysed in some depth.

The editors Amarnath Amarasingam and Daniel Bass stress that the articles should be read as a “cumulative critique [...] of the policy-oriented ‘lessons learnt’ literature” (p. 6). This is an important contention, as transitions from war to peace are of a procedural nature and, as becomes increasingly clear throughout the book, Sri Lanka has yet to move from a post-war to a post-conflict situation. Hence, the reviewed volume proves to be a valuable point of departure for all those investigating violent intra-state conflicts and war-to-peace transitions in South Asia and beyond.

Katharina Frauenfeld

ANDREAS MARGARA, *Der Amerikanische Krieg. Erinnerungskultur in Vietnam*. Berlin: regiospectra, 2012. 154 pages, €19.90. ISBN 978-3-9401-3248-2

The book begins with the famous meeting between Robert McNamara and Vo Nguyen Giap in Hanoi in November of 1955, a scene which is also notable in the documentary “The Fog of War” from the American director Errol Morris. While McNamara is hoping for reconciliation through the meeting, Giap still considers the American attack, in the context of that period, as foreign “aggression”. Therefore, he sees no reason for any critical discussion of Vietnam's wartime past.

Andreas Margara chooses this scene as the introduction to his monograph on the culture of remembrance in Vietnam. On the one hand, in the course of his analysis Margara considers the public representation of the so-called “American War”. On the other hand, he analyses the private processing of

wartime experiences from the end of the war until the introduction of the Doi Moi programme of economic reform in 1986. The theoretical framework for this work comes from the French historian Pierre Nora's concept of *lieux de mémoire*. Based on this concept, the author analyses, in the second chapter, the reassessment of the war through places of remembrance such as war memorials, military cemeteries, official memorials and state museums. In addition to spaces of remembrance, Andreas Margara also addresses practices of remembrance in the form of tributes and memorial days. In the third chapter, the author approaches remembrance in a private context. Because Andreas Margara was not able to conduct any personal interviews with war veterans, this work relies on secondary literature. However, through his clever inclusion of quotes from former soldiers, taken from secondary sources, the author successfully establishes a focus on individual perspectives and single destinies. He thoroughly describes the role of women during the war, as well as the difficulties they experienced in post-war society, particularly returning female fighters, who often faced problems starting a family due to the physical and health deprivations they had experienced during the war. The recurring theme of the waiting wife in Vietnamese literature and music also makes its way into this work. Naturally the author also takes the war trauma experienced by the Vietnamese population into account when discussing personal remembrance. While the term "Post Traumatic Stress Disorder" was included in the American handbook for treating mental disorders found in returning veterans from Vietnam, there was no medical or psychological treatment for those similarly affected in Vietnam.

The author provides the reader with a historical and cultural perspective on the topic of death in order to better approach the individual methods of remembrance in a Vietnamese context. At the end of the third chapter he identifies problems of reprocessing experiences of the war in Vietnam, including the "marginalization of South Vietnam" (p. 93). The narrative promoted by the state takes into account only the combatants who fought on the side of the former Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and ignores the fate of the members of the army of the Republic of Vietnam, as well as the officials of the South Vietnamese regime. Andreas Margara also identifies the relationship between the USA and Vietnam as an additional problem. Though there has been both an economic as well as political rapprochement between the two states over the last two decades, the USA has not officially recognised the war crimes committed by American soldiers in Vietnam and has not paid any reparations to date.

In the fourth chapter, the author surveys the way in which the country has coped with the war since 1986. In his brief explanation of the Doi Moi reforms, the author also touches on the generational conflict in Vietnam. Over 50 per cent of the population of the country was born after the end of the war

and is familiar with the war only as it has been portrayed in stories, movies, literature, music and in official state representations. Methodologically, the author draws on analyses of film, literature and art from the post-reform era in this chapter. He briefly addresses the works of authors including Bao Ninh, Duong Thu Huong and Pham Thi Hoai, as well as the directors Dang Nhat Minh and Bui Thac Chuyen, all of whom have dealt with the American war and the post-war period in a critical manner. With regard to art, the author observes that “a meaningful transition” (p. 112) has taken place. While the works of artists such as Bui Xuan Phai, Duong Bich Lien, Nguyen Tu Nghiem and Nguyen Sang were considered counter-revolutionary during the revolution, these artists were honoured, partially posthumously, at the fourth Congress of the Arts Association in 1994. Following these analyses of the art scene in modern Vietnam, the author examines war tourism, differentiating between the several groups of actors and memorials. Margara observes that memorials like the Cu Chi tunnels have been commercialised to cater to the interests of tourist groups, for example by providing a seemingly authentic war experience for US-American tourists. In addition, the author notes that nostalgia for the war has resulted in an increasing commodification of wartime artefacts, such as guerrilla helmets or Zippo lighters used by American GIs.

In order to give a perspective on the process of the evolution of war remembrance, Andreas Margara points out the reworking of the war with the example of the exhibition on daily life in Vietnam during the subsidy period (1975–1986), an exhibit which was featured in 2006 at the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology in Hanoi.

As a conclusion to his analysis, Margara selects the term “fragmentation of remembrance”, which Peter Steinbach used to shape the German discourse of the memory of World War II. By choosing this term, he seeks to describe the inconsistency between the narrative of the state and the public representation of the war, on the one hand, and the actual experience and daily practices of the population, on the other. In the case of Vietnam, Margara finds that the former completely neglects the experience of the population in the southern part of the country.

This work from Andreas Margara serves well as a general introduction to the topic of the culture of remembrance in Vietnam. With this book Margara provides an important contribution to German research on Vietnam.

Sandra Kurfürst

MONIKA SWASTI WINARNITA, *Dancing the Feminine. Gender and Identity Performances by Indonesian Migrant Women*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2016. 208 pages, £29.95. ISBN 978-1-84519-818-3 (pb)

For Indonesian migrant women who are married to Australian men, “dance provides a sense of well-being through socialisation, community engagement, the ability to express who they are and the opportunities it gives to them” (p. 131). With *Dancing the Feminine*, Monika Swasti Winarnita provides compelling insight into the endeavour of Indonesian migrant women to find their place within a heterogeneous migrant community in Perth, Australia. The author’s analysis of dance performances as rituals of belonging shows “that in the diaspora, the meanings of the ritual are always open to contestation” (p. 31). Fissures between the performers and their audience reveal the political notions of cultural performances.

Throughout 2007, the author conducted fieldwork among Indonesian migrant women dancers in Perth, actively taking part in dance rehearsals and performances. Most of the research participants are married to Australian men who work in transnational companies in rural Indonesia, where they met their wives. The “amateur hobby housewife dancers” (p. 3) have to cope with stereotypical ascriptions as bar girls and lower class migrants, even though they are in fact relatively wealthy. Their counterparts in identity negotiations are other Indonesian migrants, in particular members of the Indonesian consulate and the consulate’s branch of Dharma Wanita, an Indonesian women’s organisation for state officials’ wives, who frequently denounce the performances as inauthentic and *haram*.

In their struggle to represent “authentic”, “traditional” Indonesian dances, the marriage migrants negotiate dominant discourses on authenticity and moral values and their own preferences for a *mélange* of different dance styles, including Arab belly dance and Western aerobics. Winarnita describes “how certain gendered and moral values are imposed on the performers by not only the audience, but also other parties with a vested interest [...], who become arbiters of legitimacy and aesthetics” (p. 130). For the dancers, this means that they have to newly create “authentic” folk dances in order to gain acknowledgement. Winarnita argues that authenticity becomes a “strategic form of self-essentialising”, which is “negotiated by subaltern groups” (p. 33). However, this strategic act is not detached from the joy of dancing, creativity and subversive acts. Recognition from officials, such as the Western Australian Premier, grants the dancers a higher status and scope of agency. Through humour and self-mockery, as well as controversial performances, the women embody resistance in a playful manner. They subvert certain “dominant sexual values” (p. 92), such as images of ideal Indonesian femininity (p. 24), by exploring

their sexual self-determination and enactment of different gender roles. The migrant women dancers negotiate “three interrelated gender discourses of *ibu* (housewife/mother), mail order bride and bar girl while strategizing with gendered performances of masculinity and femininity” (p. 77). In the “duel of recognition”, the dancers’ experiences vary from “embarrassing to empowering performance” (Chapter 2).

Winarnita includes analyses of age (Chapter 3), the experiences of Chinese Indonesians (Chapter 4) and representations of exotic Bali as a tourist destination (Chapter 5) in her ethnography. The varied cases shed light on the interrelation of gender, sexuality, class, age and ethnicity. Moreover, they indicate the significance of the historical circumstances of migration, such as the anti-Chinese riots of 1998.

The author follows an interpretative and phenomenological approach in studying the multi-layered meanings of migrants’ dance performances in Perth. The uniqueness of this ethnography is its balanced representation of different emic and etic perspectives, embodied knowledge and sensitive reflection. Winarnita demonstrates that the reflection of the researcher’s position is not only an ethical issue but also reveals insightful research data. Her role in the group provoked reactions and questions that she includes in her interpretation. As an example, her research participants’ attempts to label her an insider or outsider to her research topic mirrored many migrants’ difficulties of defining where they belong, dealing with demarcations by other migrants. Winarnita describes her own role as a “partial insider” (p. 8), hinting at the relativity of insider and outsider perspectives in anthropological research. The switching of perspectives enables her to provide a nuanced and close-grained ethnography.

Winarnita carefully distinguishes the role of Indonesian marriage migrants in Australia from Indonesian female labour migrants who work in other countries. However, she touches only marginally upon the relevance of the host country’s social system. Here, her theoretical analysis of migrants’ agency could have been expanded further. It would have been interesting to consider how the host country’s attitude towards multiculturalism and Western discourses on sexuality influence the migrants’ actions. All in all, *Dancing the Feminine* is a valuable empirical study on marriage migration from Indonesia to Australia. Its major strength is its ethnographic depth and methodological reflection. On the theoretical level, contributions to the understanding of migrants’ agency are thought-provoking and can be juxtaposed with migrants’ experiences in other countries, illuminating those conditions under which “their marginal status does not equate Indonesian women as fixed within subordination” (p. 139).

Mirjam Lücking

THOMAS KOLNBERGER (ed.), *August Kohl. Ein Luxemburger Söldner im Indonesien des 19. Jahrhunderts. Kommentierte Edition der Reise- und Lebensbeschreibungen (1859–1865) des Soldaten August Kohl*. Mersch: Centre National de Littérature, 2015. 312 pages, €25.00. ISBN 978-2-919903-45-0

Thomas Kolnberger, a historian who has made a name for himself with his excellent historical and geographical dissertation on Phnom Penh, presents here as a publisher a work which is remarkable both in terms of its content as well as its decorative apparatus. His work deals with the transcription of a manuscript of 195 pages, one of two writings that differ slightly from one another. The manuscript, which was written in German cursive with the title *Reise, Abendtheueren, u. Soldatenleben eines Luxemburgers im Ost-indischen Archipel*, was for several generations in possession of the author's family and was deposited in the national literature archive in Mersch only in 2011.

August-Nikolaus-Joseph Kohl was a horn maker by profession. He was born in 1834 in Luxembourg City and died there in 1921 at the age of 87. Fifty years after his return from Indonesia (a long period of time which undoubtedly influenced his memories, though to what extent we cannot know; what did he highlight, omit or invent?) he describes his time as a mercenary in the Dutch colonial army in Indonesia. His various exciting experiences during his six-year stay, and on his journey via Paris and Liège to present-day Indonesia, are recounted in an easy-to read language and include stories of diseases, mutinies, punishments, combat and much more. Unsurprisingly, like many of his contemporaries, he questions neither colonialism itself nor the racism of the time. The moral of his story is, to put it simply, that "home is still best".

The transcription, together with 339 footnotes, is elaborated very meticulously. Is this a work of literature or is it a contribution to historiography? That is the question the publisher poses at the beginning of his introduction, leaving it to the reader to decide. The second part of the publication contains four articles, which place the notes of August Kohl in a broader context. In the first article ("Einmal Ostindien und zurück. Die Reise- und Lebensbeschreibungen oder die 'kleine Heldenreise' des August Kohl") Thomas Kolnberger analyses the text as a "brief hero's journey", based on the ideal model of Campbell and Vogler, a cycle with twelve stages, adapted to the present work. The second article ("Luxemburger Söldner in Niederländisch-Indien während des 'langen 19. Jahrhunderts'. Ein Quellenbericht und eine statistische Auswertung im kolonialen Kontext"), also by Kolnberger, deals with a detailed description of sources and a critique of sources as well as, as the title implies, tables and graphs, among others describing the Luxembourg mercenaries and their military employers during the 19th century.

Helmut Lukas provides in a third article (“Die Kolonie Niederländisch-Indien im 19. Jahrhundert. Ein Überblick zur historischen Entwicklung mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Zeit August Kohls”) a very helpful, concentrated overview of the colony in the 19th century with a view to earlier times. In a final article (“Luxemburg im 19. Jahrhundert. Von der Festungs- und Garnisonsstadt zur offenen Stadt”) Norbert Franz describes the political, economic and social development of Luxembourg in the 19th century and provides an introduction to the state- and nation-building as well as the development of the city of Luxembourg before and after the dismantling of the fortress from 1868 onwards. Although Luxembourg was not a colonial power, the presence of hundreds of Luxembourgers in foreign armies shows that the subject of colonialism should not be underestimated.

An article on the involvement of Luxembourgers in colonial endeavours would have been a useful addition to the book. Unfortunately, little research has been produced on this topic. Among the few pieces worth noting are that of Yvan Staus (Yvan Staus (2009): “The Luxembourgers in the Dutch-East-Indian Army from 1810 to 1913. A Case Study of Colonial Population Movements to South East Asia in the 19th century.” *Hémecht – Zeitschrift für Luxemburger Geschichte / Revue d’histoire luxembourgeoise* 61(4), pp. 467–493), the printed version of the master thesis of Régis Moes on the Luxembourgers in the Congo (Régis Moes (2012): *Cette colonie qui nous appartient un peu. La communauté luxembourgeoise au Congo belge 1883–1960*. Luxembourg: Editions d’Lëtzeburger Land) or the work of Claude Wey, among others in his function as curator of the exhibition “Von Orchideen, Kakao und Kolibris – Naturforscher und Pflanzenjäger in Lateinamerika”, which was presented in 2016 in the Luxembourg National Museum of Natural History. Another article covering this issue is forthcoming: Ulbe Bosma / Thomas Kolnberger: Military Migrants. In the Colonial Army of the Dutch East Indies. *Itinerario – International Journal of the European Expansion and Global Interaction* 2017(2) (in print).

In addition, the reception of Dutch colonial policy in Luxembourg remains unmentioned. The work in hand is an important contribution to global history from the point of view of a state without colonial power. It can also be seen as an illustration of a global curriculum vita from a bottom-up perspective, in the form of the life of a simple mercenary from the lower class, one of the more than 1,000 Luxembourgers who served during the period from the French Revolution until World War I in the colonial army of the Dutch East Indies (only 40 per cent of the colonial army was Dutch) and who were searching for an alternative livelihoods whereby the mercenary service was endorsed by the state. In this way August Kohl played a role in the conquest of today’s Indonesia by the Dutch Colonial Army, whose rule extended over 40 years. In the course of his experiences, Kohl, like his European contemporaries, failed

to perceive the multicultural environment in the country around him, for example ignoring the five gender categories of Bugis people.

In conclusion, it should be highlighted that the volume is excellently illustrated and appeals to the reader through its very successful layout. It is thus a joy to read and to look at.

Jean-Paul Lehnert