

Introduction

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This issue is our twelfth, and the second to be fully online. We are still actively seeking to join another publisher's list in order to produce some print copies as well as being online, while continuing as before with publishing the journal twice a year. So, please, continue to submit your articles, we remain a going, fully-refereed, high-quality journal. This year we shall also be seeking citation listings to boost our existing status. In the present volume we have one featured article and five general articles covering a wide range of topics.

The featured article this issue is *The Political Economy of the Dynamics of Global Production Networks and Economic Development*, by Frederick Nixson, Emeritus Professor of Development Economics at the University of Manchester, UK. The main objective of this paper is to discuss one of the most important developments – the emergence of what are variously referred to as global value chains (GVCs), global production networks (GPNs) and global commodity chains (GCCs) – within the wider context of global change, and to examine how host economies can or should respond positively to the opportunities presented by these developments, but that equally, they must also be aware of, and able to respond to, the challenges to the concept and practice of economic development that they pose. The article comes up with four important points about the impact of these networks on the globalizing process. The first is that the identification of global production networks gives a clearer picture of the dynamics of sectoral development; the second is that host economies will gain short- and medium-term economic benefits from participation in GPNs; the third is that a dynamic industrial policy remains crucial to the achievement of development and industrial objectives; and the last is to question whether participation in GPNs will accelerate or retard the process of national capitalist development in the majority of low income economies.

General Articles

Our first general article in this issue, by Steven Rothman of Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, Beppu, Japan, is *Focusing Events and Frames: Comparing Japanese and Western Presentations of the Fukushima Incident*. This article examines the nuclear incident at Fukushima as an important media focusing event that drew attention from the Japanese public, government officials around the world, and private organizations. Since focusing events and frames influence policy decisions, this research examines the rhetoric associated with the incident, and compares the rhetoric presented across media sources from Japan, the US, and Europe for the two-week period following the initial tsunami. The analysis demonstrates that a single focusing event can maintain several frames for different actors, and illustrates the differences in the immediate media frames resulting from the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami in regard to the Fukushima nuclear power plant. In particular, the research shows the differences in frame presentations between the European news outlets, the US, and Japan. These differences parallel subsequent policy choices made within these regions toward nuclear power.

David Nguyen, a doctoral student at the Tsunami Engineering Laboratory, Tohoku University, and Fumihiko Imamura a professor of tsunami engineering at the International Research Institute of Disaster Science, Tohoku University write on *Rail Reconstruction in Miyako City, Japan: How Financial Policies and Government Frameworks Rooted in Rational Planning Influence Rail Reconstruction and Disaster Resiliency*, in our next article. This article critically examines how Japanese laws rooted in rational planning and derived from Meiji Era policies, frame and limit the ability of cities in rehabilitating key transportation infrastructures after a disaster event. Although much of the infrastructure in the region has since been rehabilitated, reconstruction of the city's rail lines has stagnated due to differences over perceived economic viability, financing, and importance to the community. Using the case of Miyako City, interviews were conducted with city officials, community organizations, and rail representatives in January 2013, December 2013, and March 2015 to better understand the perspectives of major stakeholders regarding rail reconstruction. Finally, the author offers several modifications to reconstruction scenarios based on the situation described by these stakeholders.

The third general article, *Toward the Economic Predominance of Japan and China: Their Competitive Trade Strategies Compared* by Munim Kumar Barai of Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, deals with the rise to economic power of Japan and then China in the 20th century. Both have followed an export-led approach to their economic growth, and this article evaluates the competitive trade strategies they followed in their export-led model. Their strategies on the competition, composition, and direction of trade have been both similar and dissimilar. For Japan, the competitiveness of trade strategy was created by government-directed indicative planning, promotion of selective industries, the use of the exchange rate and ODA for trade, protection of domestic businesses, and so on. China has, on its part, followed a set of policies that encouraged foreign investment through various incentives in the labor-intensive, processing and trading industries to combine its edges in land and labor. Like Japan, China also manipulated the exchange rate and distributed ODA to favor exports. At the same time, like Japan, it refrained from any serious Free Trade Agreement engagement in order to expand trade.

Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited the Ivory Coast, Mozambique, and Ethiopia from 9th to 14th January 2014, and China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi visited Ethiopia, Djibouti, Ghana, and Senegal from 7th to 11th January 2014. The next article in this volume looks at *Sino-Japanese Rivalry in Africa*, and is by Seifudein Adem of the Institute of Global Cultural Studies at Binghamton University, USA. The two visits overlapped chronologically as well as geographically, and perhaps more importantly, also took place on the heels of a steadily deteriorating relationship between the two Asian powers. And, at times, the visits themselves in fact descended into a verbal combat over who has Africa's best interest at heart. From 4th to 11th May 2014, roughly about four months after Prime Minister Abe visited Africa, Mr. Li Keqiang, China's Prime Minister, also visited Ethiopia, Nigeria, Angola and Kenya. In this essay, Professor Adem explores some of the major issues that ought to be considered in assessing what seems to be an unfolding Sino-Japanese rivalry in Africa, and the options available to the Continent under the circumstances.

Our final article moves into the field of tourism, and looks at how ethnic tourism elsewhere might benefit from the example of how the Hmong (an ethnic minority), and the Kinh (the ethnic majority) established mutually dependent business relationships in which there are no domination/subjugation elements in a small commune in North Vietnam. This study, *A Description of Tourism Businesses Emerging Through Ethnic Tourism Development: The Case of Lao Chai Commune in Northern Vietnam*, by Yotsumoto et al., describes how tourism businesses emerged through ethnic

tourism development in Lao Chai Commune in Sa Pa District, Vietnam. In addition to peddling, three types of shops have been established; craft shops, grocery stores, and restaurants. While the dominant economic development perspective postulates that ethnic minorities fall into a subjugated position when ethnic tourism business develops, this study identified that Hmong keep their dominant status in the community because they maintain political, material, and cultural resources based on subsistent agriculture. This bonding social capital works to limit outsiders' access to and use of these resources for tourism businesses. The Kinh establish tourism businesses by utilizing both this bonding, and their own contribution of bridging social capitals. Bonding social capital is important for example, for constructing restaurants and getting local customers. Bridging social capital is critical for obtaining finance and business skills from the wider society.

The Book Reviews

We have two book reviews for this issue; David Slater assesses Paul Christensen's *Japan, Alcoholism, and Masculinity: Suffering Sobriety in Tokyo*. He notes that this is the sort of close and detailed ethnography that will be read for some years to come. Alcohol and drinking is a hugely important part of social life in Japan, intersecting with gender norms and sociality, salaried labor (the focus of most of the study) and often in the case of chronic drunkenness, relations to one's family in ways that are rarely understood and/or represented in the scholarly literature. This study does not aim to break new theoretical ground, but it quotes theory to help to explain this aspect of Japanese society that would be otherwise obscure. One of its great advantages is that the book focuses on the practices of the treatment and the narratives of the participants, often in vivid detail. The final assessment is that the author has provided a very positive contribution to Japan studies that could profitably be included on many undergraduate syllabi.

Justin Rayment looks at Michael Field's *The Catch: How Fishing Companies Reinvented Slavery and Plunder the Oceans*, and notes that this work reveals to readers the shocking reality of the operations of foreign charter vessels in the South Pacific. He strongly supports the author in using a variety of data and examples from the knowledge accumulated in his own reports on the fishing industry and the activities of foreign flagged vessels in the region during this time. This background and the author's immense experience as an investigative journalist greatly enhance the overall authenticity of the book. A highly recommended read that is well researched and full of shocking realities about where and how many of the fish we eat are caught from foreign charter vessels in the South Pacific that exploit workers and threaten the future of the world's oceans.

Please enjoy the articles you are about to read, and look for our next issue of *Asia Pacific World*, online.

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