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Review of "Strangers at Home: History and Subjectivity among the Chinese Communities of West Kalimantan, Indonesia" by Yew-Foong Hui

Sharon A. Carstens

Portland State University, carstesa@pdx.edu

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political polarization in Taiwan and are dismayed by recent political gridlock. They attribute the increasing corruption to Taiwan's democratization and political dysfunction to the legacy of an authoritarian tradition along with a single nontransferable vote system imported from Japan. Alternative views (e.g., some of the perceived increase in corruption might stem from an increasingly active free press) seem less well accounted for.

Finally, while the authors seem correct in observing that Taiwan does not seem to have really established "the give-and-take of normal democratic policymaking" (p. 109), their explanation seems relatively esoteric. Ultimately, an electorate split into two relatively equal and dissimilar pieces seems more than enough to account for the polarization. A long-term ruling party, ousted from the executive, but still in control of the legislature, aware of the ever greater resources flowing to its supporters from activities abroad and looking to reassert control of the executive, seems more than enough to account for the gridlock.

Overall, it seems like more could have been done, but that should not distract us from the good that has been achieved. In this respect, the story of the book is not so unlike the recent story of Taiwan.

JONATHAN BROOKFIELD
Tufts University
 Jon.Brookfield@tufts.edu

Strangers at Home: History and Subjectivity among the Chinese Communities of West Kalimantan, Indonesia. By YEW-FOONG HUI. Leiden: Brill, 2011. xvi, 342 pp. \$176.00 (cloth).
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This study weaves together historical and contemporary accounts of Chinese experiences in west Kalimantan, an area of Indonesia known for classic historical studies of Hakka gold-mining *kongsi* and only recently open to first-hand ethnographic and historical research. The key terms in the book's title—strangers, history, and subjectivity—signal the major themes of this project, which examines the shifting positions and subjectivities of overseas Chinese individuals and communities responding to the complex politics of postcolonial Indonesia and China over the past sixty years.

The book is divided into four main sections: the first two focus on historical events beginning with the Japanese occupation through the early years of the New Order period; the second two analyze contemporary religious practices and community rebuilding. Although much of this study centers on the Chinese community in Singkawang, Hui Yew-Foong argues that the diversity of Chinese communities in west Kalimantan and the movement of individuals between multiple places require a broader view of historical events in this region. Drawing much of his data from primary sources, including memoirs, oral history, and ethnographic inquiry, he subjects these materials to detailed and meticulous analysis.

Chinese residents of west Kalimantan in the periods documented faced harsh and repeated challenges, from the mass arrests and massacres of the Japanese occupation to the economic, political, and cultural attacks of the New Order period. However, rather than viewing the Chinese as victims of history, the goal here is to recuperate them as the subjects of history (p. 16). For example, Hui draws on oral history interviews

and the careful reading of selected documents to argue that Japanese attacks on west Kalimantan leaders, previously not well explained, were probably precipitated by activities of a Chinese opposition group, the *Ximenghui*. Similarly, he observes that the Chinese response to Japanese terror following the war promoted a new sense of unity, which encouraged the expansion of modern-style Chinese education and identification with the new Chinese nation.

The Indonesian state's policies towards the Chinese in the years following the 1965 coup were especially harsh. The anti-communist campaign initially targeted members of the Partai Komunis Indonesia (Communist Party of Indonesia) and individuals involved with pro-PRC Chinese schools, but eventually all Chinese came to be seen as suspect and liable to arrest and detention. Viewed as signifiers of wealth, Chinese were subject to extortion and treated as strangers. Dyaks were incited to violently evict Chinese from rural areas to ostensibly prevent them from providing support for the communist guerrilla movement. Descriptions of these years of terror and suppression and the resistance movements that they encouraged are drawn from published accounts in a newly revived Chinese press in 2003, allowing the recovery of a previously suppressed historical narrative of Chinese experiences. Hui's analysis uncovers the different articulations of home for Kalimantan Chinese in diverse situations, including those who elected to return to home in China (*zuguo*), long-term Chinese residents evicted from their rural Kalimantan homes, and communist supporters who aspired to build a new home for Chinese in an Indonesian nation where all were treated equally (p. 148).

Turning his attention to contemporary practices and events in the last half of his book, Hui takes up an extended discussion of Chinese religion, citing the more than 200 Chinese religious institutions in Singkawang and analyzing the key deities of Dabogong and Datak Gong, as well as territorially marked religious processions led by Chinese spirit mediums.

The last section, titled "West Kalimantan as Home" describes the rejuvenation of the Kalimantan Chinese community in the post-Suharto era. With the revival of Chinese education, private classes and new schools have multiplied, supported in part by contributions from former Kalimantan Chinese who fled to Jakarta during the New Order Period but retain nostalgic memories of their old homes. The new politics of multiculturalism in west Kalimantan recognizes the Chinese, the Dyaks, and the Malays as the three core groups, promoted through publically organized cultural performances. Hui's description of the elaborate procession celebrating the Chinese holiday Cap Go Mah, with more than 400 spirit mediums, both Chinese and Dyak, suggests a new vision of Chinese cultural inclusion in the Indonesian nation. Moreover, new types of Chinese organizations with leaders and members from an educated professional class, rather than wealthy merchants, signal "the receding of the image of Chinese as mere signifiers of wealth" (p. 296).

This book covers a lot of territory, both historically and geographically, making it difficult, at times, to keep track of the multiple events and personalities that factor into the analysis of the lived experiences of west Kalimantan Chinese. Yet the complexity is also the volume's strength, as Hui has uncovered many new sources with multiple ways of reading between the lines that should inspire others to continue in his path.

SHARON A. CARSTENS
 Portland State University
 b5sc@pdx.edu