

Thais learn democracy only through repeated voting (p. 183). As in Korea and Indonesia, Jackson shows, Philippine voter turnout has usually been high, but the country's politics are still dysfunctional because of a 'shortage of the right kind of participation and a surfeit of the wrong', i.e. 'Tammany Hall' style deal-making over robust civil society activity (p. 218).

Levels of satisfaction with political leaders throughout Asia, writes James Kirby, depend largely on citizens' individual socio-economic conditions. When asked to grade several recent national leaders, many Asians choose a 'neutral' rating (p. 223). These tend to be urban residents without higher education degrees who are exposed to mass media, and who are somewhat pessimistic about the economy, except in Korea, where they are more optimistic. Kirby thinks that this common 'neutral' rating may also relate to lingering fears of criticizing national leaders.

A rewarding trove of polling data on democracy it may be, but the book is not an easy read. Lay readers will find it hard to get through many of the chapters in one sitting, and may resort to extensive skimming. Wherever launched, democratization is an exciting and engaging process, and we need to feel more of the drama of Asia's emerging democracies. Also, favourable views of authoritarianism are presented as noteworthy, but are they? As in new democratic countries in other parts of the world, it should not be surprising that ordinary people, still unused to norms of participation and reciprocity, would be impatient for immediate change and nostalgic for governments that seemed to make things run smoothly. The editors contribute most of the volume's articles, giving the collection a bit of an in-bred feel. Perhaps a little more sharing of the work could have strengthened its findings. Finally, tossing Korea, one of the original 'Four Tigers', in with three late-developing south-east Asian countries skews the project's findings. Even so, the book is an excellent addition to the ongoing discussion about the direction and meaning of Asia's governments of the people.

Joel Campbell, Troy University, Global Campus, Japan-Korea

Chinese hegemony: grand strategy and international institutions in east Asian history. By **Feng Zhang**. Stanford: Stanford University Press. 2015. 280pp. £45.00. ISBN 978 0 80479 389 6. Available as e-book.

Discussions of Imperial China's international relations during periods of its hegemony in east Asia typically draw three distinct conclusions: that China exercised benign hegemony and maintained Chinese world order through the tributary system; that Chinese cultural realism or strategic culture reflected a view of the world as insecure and threatening, and hence an inclination for offensive rather than defensive posture towards its neighbours; and that China maintained a façade of pre-eminence through a combination of defensive and accommodative policies.

Feng Zhang's new book on Chinese hegemony offers a refreshing look at the unique ways in which Imperial China developed and implemented grand strategies to maintain its dominance. Most importantly, the book seeks to discuss and redefine Chinese hegemony as a result of its interactions with three neighbouring countries—Japan, Korea and Mongolia—and likewise, the grand strategies of the latter in dealing with China, the regional hegemon at the time. For Zhang, the two major dimensions of the international relations of east Asia that require careful analysis are the grand strategies of China and its above-mentioned three neighbours and the fundamental institutional practices of the day. These strategic and institutional choices can only be explained through what Zhang terms 'a relational theory of grand strategy and institutional formation' (p. 3).

Zhang's relational theory of grand strategy puts greater emphasis on the dynamic processes of interactions among actors than on their substance and attributes (p. 5). Grand strategy is often described as the purposeful mobilization and utilization of available resources in order to achieve specific goals. Zhang argues, instead, that it is an outcome of a dynamic relational process of strategic interaction between actors. He makes and clarifies a number of distinctions that are critical to advancing his theoretical arguments. While hegemony 'requires material primacy', it is perhaps its social legitimacy and recognition by other states, not material preponderance alone, that is its most important defining characteristic (p. 6). Hierarchy is both a state of relational structure and a strategy pursued by a state. In Ming China, he differentiates between two distinct approaches: expressive hierarchy (ideational) and instrumental hierarchy (material). China's neighbours, on the other hand, adopted the grand strategies of either identification with Chinese values or deference to Chinese power (p. 9).

There are three case-studies (chapters three to five) that analyse the relationships between China and three of its neighbours—Korea, Japan and Mongolia—respectively to test Zhang's theory in answering this fundamental question: was Ming China able to create and maintain a hierarchic authority over its neighbours and what specific strategies were predominant in their relations? Needless to say, the degrees of Chinese hierarchy and acceptance by the other three vary, depending on the extent to which the country pursued material interests, was influenced by cultural affinity or engaged in extended conflicts with China. In fact, his findings show that other countries rarely adopted the strategy of identification; instead, strategies of exit, access and deference were deployed in order to resist Chinese dominance and gain material benefits, they only occasionally (and grudgingly) acquiesced to Chinese authority over them. Indeed, 'China possesses no authority over other actors when those actors adopted strategies of access and exit, some authority when they adopted a strategy of deference, and great authority when they adopted a strategy of identification' (p. 155).

Zhang also goes beyond traditional discussions of regional order. China sought to maintain its hegemony in the region through tributary diplomacy to establish hierarchical relationships with its neighbours; this was a symbol of Chinese primacy. But Chinese hegemony was never complete; other institutions, from communications to trade and war, were used to sustain at least the semblance of Chinese dominance in the region, achieved through a combination of rewards and punishment.

What does the description of a period of Chinese dominance in east Asia say about the contemporary Chinese grand strategy as the country re-establishes its Great Power status in the region? Are the concepts of 'a harmonious world' and the 'China Dream' reflections of the Confucian order of the past? Zhang's discussion of Chinese hegemony and his relational approach to understanding Ming China's international relations would suggest that Chinese foreign policy is more likely to be based on and influenced by processes of relational interactions than just material attributes, such as economic and military power, or domestic agendas. If history offers any useful lessons, China's grand strategy is as much a reflection of its responses to relational interactions with others as it is an expression of intentions to pursue what it perceives to be a just, ethical and appropriate international order.

Jingdong Yuan, The University of Sydney, Australia