

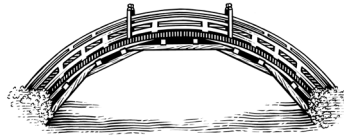
BOOK REVIEW ROUNDTABLE

T.J. Pempel's

*A Region of Regimes:
Prosperity and Plunder in the Asia-Pacific*

Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021

ISBN: 9781501758805



Saori N. Katada

John Ravenhill

Thomas Pepinsky

David Leheny

Mary Alice Haddad

T.J. Pempel

Regime Maturity and the Future of Asia's Regional Economic Order

Saori N. Katada

In 2020 the Asian economies became larger than those of the rest of the world combined, and the region is now home to half the world's middle class. These economies' growth over the last several decades has been impressive but not uniform. As such, T.J. Pempel's new book, *A Region of Regimes: Prosperity and Plunder in the Asia-Pacific*, provides a comprehensive and insightful analysis of the distinctive developmental pathways in the region. These pathways are heavily influenced by "regimes" that are constructed by interactions among political, socioeconomic, and international properties.¹ Covering the growth paths of ten countries in East Asia, Pempel maps out three distinct types of regimes, with two styles (developmental and ersatz) that have achieved prosperity and one (rapacious) that has led to plunder.

A Region of Regimes is a *tour de force*—the culmination of the depth, breadth, and expanse of Pempel's research career as a prominent scholar of the international and comparative political economy of East Asia. This study provides an ambitious and comprehensive yet nuanced treatment of the region's political-economic trajectory. The complex interaction among domestic regimes, policy paradigms, and the regional order, Pempel argues, has evolved in an Asia-Pacific that has not only pursued and mostly achieved rapid economic growth but also introduced diplomatic and security tension threatening the regional order.

With this generative book, Pempel provides a multitude of insights that will attract many other studies on the topic to follow. Of particular interest to me are the regional implications of the "aged" or "mature" developmental regimes of Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. In chapter four, Pempel examines their slow transformation. Once having had very cohesive unity pursuing embedded mercantilism, these developmental regimes have undergone fragmentation due to globalization and private-sector maturity, including the regional expansion of production networks. Nonetheless, these regimes have been very resistant to fundamental changes. In other words,

SAORI N. KATADA is a Professor of International Relations at the University of Southern California (United States). She is the author of *Japan's New Regional Reality: Geoeconomic Strategy in the Asia-Pacific* (2020). She can be reached at <skatada@usc.edu>.

¹ Pempel uses the term "regime" to refer to clusters of countries that share key political, economic, and international properties and the interactions between those shared variables (p. 2).

“regime shift” has not been a smooth process. With such regime stickiness on the one hand, I see that these economies are faced with a challenge of disembedded private businesses on the other. Despite the continued influence that large corporations or peak associations, such as Keidanren in Japan, wield over governments’ economic policies, these businesses no longer need government protection, nor are they willing to be controlled by state guidance. As discussed elsewhere by Henry Wai-chung Yeung, new strategic couplings through Asian firms’ pursuit of competitive positions in the global marketplace are leading these firms to free themselves from national constraints.²

By extending Pempel’s argument regarding these three developmental economies, an interesting angle to investigate would be to consider multiple implications that these matured developmental regimes with disembedded businesses could have on the regional order.

First, to support the national firms that have offshored and globalized, developmental governments such as those in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan are faced with the task of supporting businesses that stretch outside of their national jurisdiction. Particularly given their demographic challenges with aging populations and low birth rates, these mature developmental states continue to rely on regional production and global markets continue as the lifeline for their future prosperity. Economic regionalization and regional institutions built over the course of the last twenty years have created a heavily connected region, as Pempel discusses in chapter six. These conditions would inevitably draw these governments to act in support of a rules-based economic order and continued globalization to undergird their firms’ regional and global activities.

Furthermore, intraregional contagion through emulation and diffusion of policy ideas are an important factor in predicting the region’s future course. In the 20th century, Japan was the developmental model to emulate. Since the 1980s, China has learned from Japan’s successes and failures (p. 157), and Malaysia has also implemented a “Look East” policy during this time. In the 21st century, China has its own version of a “going out” and connectivity strategy that is particularly prominent in the Belt and Road Initiative introduced in 2013. At the same time, the mature developmental states from Japan to South Korea must eventually shed their developmental shells and begin to promote liberal economic rules. A vital

² Henry Wai-chung Yeung, *Strategic Coupling: East Asian Industrial Transformation in the New Global Economy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016).

question here is how developmentalism could continue to thrive and allow latecomers such as China to continue to promote economic growth in the new environment.

Second, and notwithstanding, the degree to which the boundaries of national economies have blurred through various kinds of regionalization are still uncertain. Despite ever increasing FDI and an uptick in “strategic coupling” under mergers and business alliances among firms from multiple nationalities, national borders and nationally based officials can still impose meaningful jurisdictional authority over countries’ economic activities. This was clearly seen in the various national responses to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020–21. Intensified efforts to respond to supply-chain disruptions have led not only governments but also businesses to think twice about economic globalization and ponder its limits.

In addition, China’s dramatic rise utilizing its composite regime (chapter five) has started to pose growing challenges to the regional order that the matured developmental regimes have tried to maintain. As China becomes “factory Asia” within a region of dramatically increased economic interdependence, the country assumes the central position that would allow it to occasionally weaponize such interdependence.³ Regional economic integration and connectivity has recently made national economic security a vital priority for states.

The regional order has fluctuated from bilateralism during the Cold War to the rise of both regionalization and regionalism. Contemporary East Asia faces a new geopolitics from the rise of U.S.-China rivalry (chapter six). The two conflicting demands—a rules-based order in support of an interdependent regional economic order on the one hand, and stronger economic security and protection of national economies on the other—usher in a difficult balancing act for these governments, especially when they no longer have strong power to control business behavior. How China fits into these dynamics will significantly determine the future of regional order in the Asia-Pacific. We owe to Pempel’s enlightening book many exciting avenues to continue research as well as scholarly and policy dialogues on this topic. ◆

³ Henry Farrell and Abraham L. Newman, “Weaponized Interdependence: How Global Economic Networks Shape State Coercion,” *International Security* 44, no. 1 (2019): 42–79.

A Region at Risk of Unraveling?

John Ravenhill

One of the hallmarks of T.J. Pempel's research over the last three decades has been its sensitivity to the inextricable intertwining of domestic and international political economy. *A Region of Regimes: Prosperity and Plunder in the Asia-Pacific* is exemplary in this regard. In addition to its unusually comprehensive comparative analysis of East Asia's domestic political economies, the book demonstrates very clearly how international forces conditioned the opportunities available to governments in the region. The emphasis on the international leads to another significant contribution that Pempel has made over the years: his engagement with debates on the appropriateness of U.S. foreign policy toward Asia.

The book makes clear that what might be termed the "long peace" in East Asia, broadly defined, was an era in which economic interdependence and security arrangements were for the most part mutually supportive. Countries did not have to choose between economics and security. And for many years the United States remained the ultimate market for much of the region's manufactured exports, even though the direction of intraregional trade changed dramatically over time—first in the wake of the 1985 Plaza Accord currency realignment and then with China's emergence at the turn of the century as the world's assembly plant. Besides serving as the market of not just last resort but frequently first resort, the United States underwrote the security of the region through its system of bilateral alliances established after World War II.

As Pempel points out, the economic and security structures that were facilitators for some were constraining factors for others that forcefully shaped domestic political economies, reinforcing, for example, the predatory character of regimes in North Korea and Myanmar. It was not, however, a simple unidirectional pattern of influence; the profound changes in the relative economic fortunes of states in the region fed back into the international economic and security structures. Pempel makes the persuasive argument that the unprecedented economic growth enjoyed by the region between the ebbing of the Cold War and the global financial

JOHN RAVENHILL is Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science at the University of Waterloo (Canada). He can be reached at <john.ravenhill@uwaterloo.ca>.

crisis of 2007–8 fostered a new era of regional stability based on economic interdependence and the emergence of numerous regional institutions.

As many commentators have remarked, however, the regionalization of production outpaced formal intergovernmental collaboration. Although the Asia-Pacific is no longer an institutional desert, regional institutions for the most part remain weak. Governments in particular have been unwilling to limit their options by signing on to binding regional agreements. Pempel is critical of the U.S. role, noting how it has been tangential to many of the efforts within the region to forge formal intergovernmental collaboration. This assertion is perhaps a little unfair. Washington was indeed hostile toward attempts to promote regionalism that had an exclusively Asian rather than Asia-Pacific basis. Yet if one examines the occasions on which major breakthroughs in regional collaboration occurred, U.S. leadership played a significant role—whether it be the decision of the Clinton administration to initiate leaders’ meetings at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) grouping, or the Obama administration’s early championing of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). The United States also led the way in negotiating comprehensive bilateral trade agreements with countries in the region, notably Singapore and South Korea.

Pempel is correct, however, in highlighting the variability in U.S. engagement with efforts to promote regionalism. Initiatives have been championed but then dropped precipitously. Sometimes this resulted from U.S. frustration at the unwillingness of Asian partners to sign on to the type of legally binding commitments that Washington preferred—notably, for instance, the loss of interest in APEC after Japan’s insistence on the “voluntary” character of its commitments. At other times, it has been a matter of administrations placing domestic considerations above international leadership—most obviously with the Trump administration’s withdrawal from the TPP.

The concluding section of the book looks at how developments since the global financial crisis have threatened the long peace in the region. It is still early days and there are inconsistent trends (such as the continued growth in institutionalized cooperation through the ASEAN- and China-led Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and the now-Japan-led Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). Nonetheless, the mutually supportive relationship between economics and security in the region appears to be facing greater challenges than it has for a half a century. China’s growing economic dominance may fundamentally transform the choices open to other countries in the region.

Beijing has increasingly resorted to imposing economic sanctions, either formally or informally, on countries whose actions have caused it offense. China has deployed a variety of policies ranging from outright bans, such as on trade and tourism, to informal measures, such as selective implementation of domestic regulations (including stepped-up customs inspections and sanitary checks) and encouragement of popular boycotts. Multiple examples can be cited, with notable ones including the 2010 ban on rare earth exports to Japan, the 2010 ban on imported salmon from Norway in protest of the Nobel Peace Prize being awarded to a Chinese dissident (it was perhaps no accident that at one point China suggested that the Covid-19 outbreak might have originated with imported Norwegian salmon), and the imposition of additional sanitary controls on Philippine bananas in 2012 and 2016 over the South China Sea dispute. South Korean exports to China slumped after Beijing's criticism of South Korea's installation of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) anti-ballistic missile system in 2017. Hyundai's current sales in China are less than half the volume of the year prior to the THAAD installation, down more than half a million vehicles.¹ Most recently, bans were imposed on the import of Australian agricultural commodities, coal, and wine after the Morrison government in Canberra demanded an independent investigation into the origins of the Covid-19 outbreak. Beijing's sanctions have been imposed both against countries in the region with which it has bilateral free trade agreements and those which are its partners in regional arrangements such as RCEP.

The question is whether, as China's relative economic strength grows further, it will be able to further exploit economic asymmetries in the manner described by Albert Hirschman to squeeze other countries into compliance.² Will Cambodia's vassal status, for example, be replicated elsewhere in the region? To date, China's formal and informal sanctions have mostly been short-lived. Some of these measures generated diplomatic concessions by the targeted states but rarely a complete capitulation. The actual exercise of power may be less significant, however, than the chilling effect that the potential for its exercise may have on the behavior of other states. The opposition leader in New Zealand, for instance, commented that

¹ Bart Demandt, "Hyundai China Sales Figures," Car Sales Base  <https://carsalesbase.com/china-hyundai>.

² Albert O. Hirschman, *National Power and the Structure of Foreign Trade* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1945).

the country was reluctant to criticize China because of fear of retaliation against New Zealand's exports.³

Pempel notes how U.S. policies in the last two decades have “generated regionally destabilizing uncertainty” (p. 180). Most notably, the United States has lacked a coherent economic strategy toward the region. Matters have not improved since the book was completed. Domestic political constraints appear to be preventing Washington from fashioning a coherent regional economic strategy, in particular on trade issues, and Biden's new pivot to Asia appears to lack an economic dimension. A military-first or military-only policy toward the region risks forcing countries into making the very choice between economics and security that Pempel notes they so assiduously have sought to avoid over the last half century.

A Region of Regimes is appropriately tentative in its conclusions on the future evolution of a region that Pempel characterizes as facing a resurgence of geopolitics, nationalism, and heightened state-to-state tensions. It does, however, pose the right questions that analysts will have to answer going forward. ♦

³ “NZ Opposition Leader Says U.S. and UK ‘Left Door Open’ for China in Indo-Pacific,” *Guardian*, October 2, 2021 ≈ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/oct/02/nz-opposition-leader-says-us-and-uk-left-door-open-for-china-in-indo-pacific>.

Developmental, Ersatz, Rapacious, or Mixed? Conceptualizing Regime Types in Asia

Thomas Pepinsky

In *A Region of Regimes: Prosperity and Plunder in the Asia-Pacific*, T.J. Pempel, one of the world's foremost experts on the political economy of East Asia, sets out to explain the divergent trajectories of the major countries of East and Southeast Asia since the end of World War II. The general story is well-known. Japan recovered from the war's devastation in short order and became a global economic powerhouse by the 1980s. Although Japan's growth has slowed since the roaring 1980s, as an economic dynamo it has been joined by South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore, which together are some of the most prosperous economies in the world today. Over this same postwar time span, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand have enjoyed decades of steady growth—albeit with some interruptions—and are today solidly middle-income countries. These development “miracles” (to use the terminology of the World Bank in the 1990s) have been overshadowed in the past twenty years by China, which has grown at a remarkable pace after decades of stagnation under Mao Zedong.¹ And amid all of this prosperity, there are also cases of more modest economic growth, such as in the Philippines, as well as sheer economic catastrophe, such as in Myanmar and North Korea.

Less well-understood are the politics behind these developmental miracles and debacles. Through the 1990s, much was written about the political foundations of economic performance, and several important works adopted a comparative perspective on the region's performance. Pempel himself played an important role in this research. But “big” arguments about economic performance and its political foundations across Asia have been somewhat displaced in the political economy literature by within-country research that probes mechanisms instead of macrostructures. This is the emerging hole in the literature on Asian political economy that *A Region of Regimes* fills.

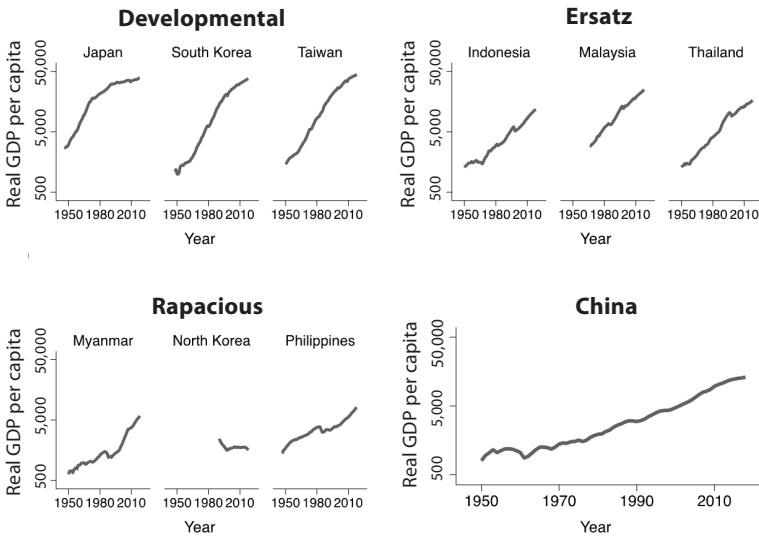
THOMAS PEPINSKY is the Walter F. LaFeber Professor of Government and Public Policy and Director of the Southeast Asia Program at Cornell University (United States). He can be reached at <pepinsky@cornell.edu>.

¹ World Bank, *The East Asian Miracle: Economic Growth and Public Policy* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1993).

Pempel's approach is synthetic and typological, exploring the interrelationships among political institutions, economic policy, and each country's international position. There is a wealth of empirical detail to cover, and the book's major contribution is to organize this material to identify three distinct development models that characterize the region's economies. Developmental regimes (such as Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan) are those with strong, meritocratic, and semi-autonomous bureaucracies that have tight links to the business community and which benefit from a supportive international environment. Ersatz regimes (such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand) are those in which the bureaucracy is less autonomous from sociopolitical forces and that possess a fragmented business community but a fundamentally open (if dependent) economy. And rapacious regimes (such as North Korea, Myanmar, and the Philippines) have weak bureaucracies and weak business environments. China is its own regime type, mixing various elements of the other three.

It can be helpful to look at the empirical record of economic development across these regimes. **Figure 1** plots real GDP per capita for

FIGURE 1

GDP per Capita, 1945–2020

Source: Jutta Bolt and Jan Luiten van Zanden, Maddison Project Database, 2020 ~ <https://www.rug.nl/ggdc/historicaldevelopment/maddison/research>.

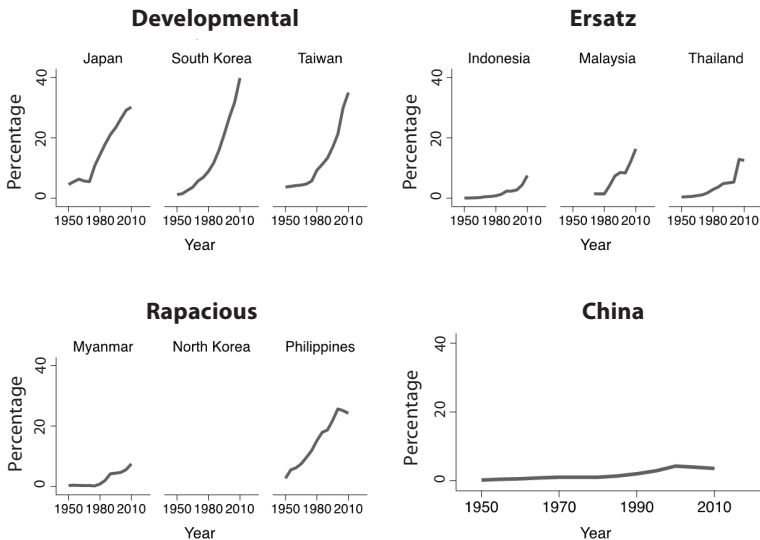
the economies that Pempel covers from 1945 (or the year first available) until now.

Just looking at material economic performance, we can see clear differences between the developmental and ersatz regimes. The rapacious regimes are more of a mixed bag though—the Philippines does not look very different from Indonesia, and Myanmar and North Korea stand out for their stagnant growth in the early independence period (Myanmar) and today (North Korea). The heterogeneity among the rapacious regimes is evident if we look at tertiary education completion rates (**Figure 2**) or total trade as percentage of GDP (**Figure 3**).

These simple quantitative summaries of these regimes’ economic trajectories do not do justice to the rich detail that Pempel amasses in the book. But they do help to identify what will surely attract the most commentary from specialists in the region. The rapacious regimes especially are a very diverse bunch (a point that Pempel himself stresses),

FIGURE 2

Tertiary Education Completion Rates, 1945–2020

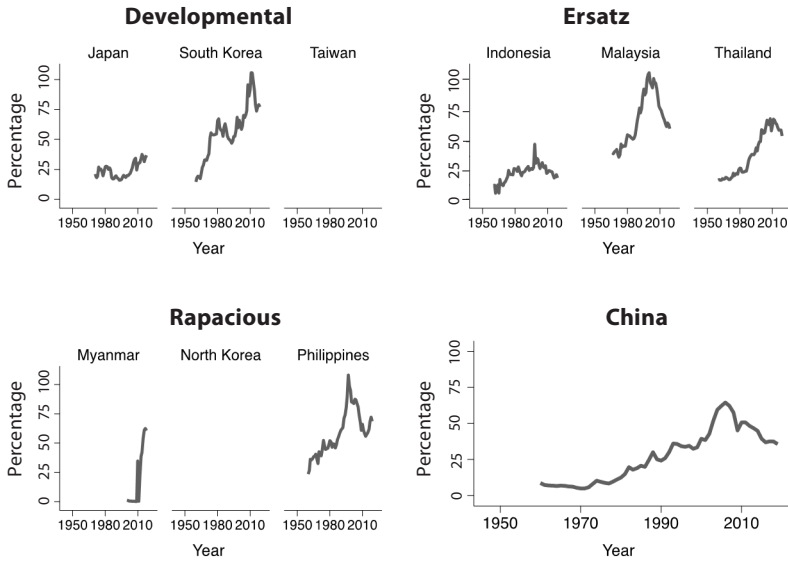


Source: Robert J. Barro and Jong Wha Lee, “A New Data Set of Educational Attainment in the World, 1950–2010,” *Journal of Development Economics* 104 (2013): 184–98.

Note: Data for North Korea was not available.

FIGURE 3

Trade as a Percentage of GDP, 1945–2020




Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2020.

Note: Data for Taiwan and North Korea was not available.

and the choice to mix the Philippines with Myanmar and North Korea is particularly provocative. My own view is that what sets apart Myanmar and North Korea from the Philippines is the extent to which the former two countries closed themselves off from the global economy for much of their history. Experts in Chinese political economy will have more to say about Pempel's treatment of the Chinese case than I do, but for a "typological purist" such as myself, mixed cases always invite further scrutiny, and I suspect that the logic of Chinese economic growth will be debated for years to come.

Where *A Region of Regimes* makes its biggest empirical contribution, however, is in conceptualizing the changing political economy of the region. At long last, we have a refresh of the developmental regime literature

that flourished in the 1990s.² But reading this latter section of the book emphasizes for me just how much has been lost in the shift from macro-level theories to micro-level empirical testing. Especially on Southeast Asia, we lack the type of careful, qualitative, case-based comparative political economy research of the form that produced classic texts such as Kunio Yoshihara's *The Rise of Ersatz Capitalism in South-East Asia*.³ Perhaps it is only a leading expert such as Pempel, who has a long-term view of the development of both the region and of the field of comparative political economy, who can reveal such problems for us. My hope—and my bet—is that *A Region of Regimes* will lead comparative Asia researchers to discover the importance of macro-level structures, institutions, and their interactions with politics and policy once again. 

² For seminal works from the 1990s, see Stephan Haggard, *Pathways from the Periphery: The Politics of Growth in the Newly Industrializing Countries* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990); Chalmers Johnson, *Japan: Who Governs? The Rise of the Developmental State* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1995); and Meredith Woo-Cumings, ed., *The Developmental State* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999).

³ Kunio Yoshihara, *The Rise of Ersatz Capitalism in South-East Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

A Region of Legitimacies

David Leheny

In his bestselling 2012 novel *Kaizoku to yobareta otoko* (A Man Called Pirate), the right-wing pundit and writer Naoki Hyakuta envisioned mid-twentieth century Japan as a better place in large part because his hero, a fictionalized version of the oil magnate Sazo Idemitsu, was deeply committed to his employees, whom he viewed as family.¹ This portrayal of Japan's vaunted lifetime employment system—itsself partial and uneven, and driven as much by employers aiming to secure wage restraint without labor strikes as by benevolence—is nostalgic, focused on a quasi-mythical past to make sense of a complex and often-anxious present. And although Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's description of his envisioned “new capitalism” for Japan was vague during his 2021 leadership campaign, it represented a step away from the ostensibly neoliberal turn taken in the country, with a smaller safety net and fewer corporate guarantees to workers, and toward a version of the putative “fairness” represented in this earlier era of Japanese capitalism.²

This nostalgia for a time when things seemed to work is hardly limited to Japan. It was central to Donald Trump's effort to win the White House, which was premised in ways both subtle and obvious on not just an earlier moment in the United States' economic leadership but also (and perhaps even more) on its racial hierarchies. If the long-term meaning of U.S. economic development in contemporary politics cannot simply be reduced to the liberal market economy represented in the “varieties of capitalism” literature, neither can the complex mix of public, private, political, and social forces of postwar Japan. Park Geun-hye's road back to South Korea's Blue House and Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos's political resurgence in recent years—both premised in wildly different ways on nostalgia for the leadership of their famous, authoritarian fathers—remind us that contemporary Asia also has a postwar past. This is not simply a set of events

DAVID LEHENY is a Professor at the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies at Waseda University (Japan). He can be reached at <dleheny@waseda.jp>.

¹ Hyakuta Naoki, *Kaizoku to yobareta otoko* [A Man Called Pirate] (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2012).

² See, for example, “Atarashii shihonshugi jitsugen kaigi: Kishida shusho—kinkyu teiganan torimatome shiji” [Conference for Realizing a New Capitalism: PM Kishida Issues Instructions to Gather Urgent Proposals], NHK, October 26, 2021 ≈ <https://www3.nhk.or.jp/news/html/20211026/k10013321841000.html>.

and decisions that create policy legacies but also the logics of development and power that allow for new possibilities in constructing political myths and affective social ties.

T.J. Pempel's *A Region of Regimes: Prosperity and Plunder in the Asia-Pacific* will likely immediately become required reading for students of Asia's political economy, and it does not disappoint on that front. It demonstrates all the hallmarks of Pempel's superb scholarship over the past half-century. By categorizing many countries in the region as developmental regimes, ersatz developmental regimes, or rapacious regimes, Pempel shrewdly provides an expansive overview while inserting the conceptual language needed to tease out patterns of economic development, political coalition-building, and social policy negotiation.

Japan hands will recall that Pempel's *Regime Shift* powerfully argued that post-bubble Japan underwent profound shifts in political pressures and policy choices in large part because the agreements and institutions that had remained relatively stable during Japan's long period of high-speed growth were far less effective in a fully advanced economy that was now exposed to similar fiscal and trade pressures as other nations.³ Here, his notion of regimes—as expansive networks of self-reinforcing practices and institutions—went beyond a simple focus on the state and instead viewed private and social actors themselves bound up in this set of seismic transformations. Japan's "developmental regime" harkened to Chalmers Johnson's much-debated concept of the "developmental state," which viewed administrative guidance of private investment and action as central to Japan's long-term growth, a model superior to the classical liberalism of the United States in particular.⁴ But in the rush to dismiss judgments about the wisdom of industrial policy, many observers, including Johnson himself, seemed to miss how expertly his book—with its close attention to the policy documents and logics of mid- and late-mid-century Japan—detailed what the sociologist Bai Gao has identified as a prevailing economic ideology.⁵ The "developmental state," with its analytical focus not just on the role of the state but also on expectations about its effectiveness, drew attention

³ T.J. Pempel, *Regime Shift: Comparative Dynamics of the Japanese Political Economy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).

⁴ Chalmers Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925–1975* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982).

⁵ Bai Gao, *Economic Ideology and Japanese Industrial Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

away from how the ideas around it were disseminated, taught, reproduced, and woven into the fabric of Japanese life.

Pempel's attention to regimes—which in his words are “fused interactions of three components pivotal to a country's political economy...state institutions, its socioeconomic forces, and such external forces as are integral to domestic functioning” (p. 4)—allows him to sidestep both the restrictiveness of the state focus and the implicit prescriptiveness of much of the literature. It also permits a dynamic reading of political change that overcomes some of the limitations in the varieties of capitalism literature to the normative and ethical dimensions of political economy. Institutions are, after all, about more than complementarities or mismatches and lead to different sets of expectations and judgments about their appropriateness, as well as about the rights and responsibilities of citizens.

Which is to say, a country's economy is political not only in the formal sense that actors compete over control of the rules and procedures that govern it but also in the broader sense that participants might agree to those rules and procedures because they have learned to view them as legitimate rather than just because they suit their calculations of interests. For example, that wealth, which evades me, mostly goes to those who have earned it. Or that those social welfare benefits, which I do not need, are just and proper because our society must take care of the poor or unlucky. As a concept, nationalism allows for certain variants of these judgments. For example, that I should change my practices to meet new national regulations rather than move my company overseas because it is my responsibility to hire my compatriots and keep our nation's economy strong. Or that I should buy an apple from my own country's orchards because I both feel some kinship with the farmer and trust the health and safety regulations governing the harvest. Nationalism, however, is of little help in thinking about the specific practices and approaches that citizens are accustomed to considering as just, proper, and appropriate for themselves and their compatriots.

Pempel does not write directly about legitimacy in *A Region of Regimes*, nor is there any reason for him to do so. The book, remarkably concise despite its extraordinary ambition and wide-ranging coverage, speaks to the concerns that animate myriad debates about political economy, and in particular about the Asia-Pacific. But my hope is that scholars in a variety of scholarly communities will read it because it offers analytical guidance and crucial lessons for many fields, including culture, identity, history, and comparative political thought. After all, Max Weber's own definition of the state implies just how central the concept of legitimacy is to our

understanding of politics, even as the researchers most likely to work on issues of ideology and culture are suspicious of the reified boundaries of the nation—for example, “Japanese history” or “Chinese culture.”⁶ We are, of course, aware of the importance of transnational flows that shape ideas, identities, and practices.

These transnational flows are, unfortunately, sometimes reduced to the (typically villainous) forces that render lives vulnerable to the vicissitudes of the market or the whims of far-away powers, such as global capitalism, neoliberalism, and imperialism. Pempel’s simultaneously elegant and commodious categorization of regimes, as well as his recognition of their own susceptibility to change, offers the opportunity to think in comparative and systematic ways about what kinds of arrangements—industrial guidance, long-term employment, and contingent redistributive policies—might be common across several countries in the region, hinting at the distinct blend of forces that shape how people come to think of certain rights and responsibilities as just and proper.

A Region of Regimes has certainly earned the wide readership it will enjoy among scholars of the region’s political economy, and they will not be disappointed. What would be disappointing would be if its reach were to extend only that far. T.J. Pempel’s admirably expansive but tightly written analysis offers myriad insights to those less focused on the concrete, distributional outcomes of political-economic arrangements than on the space they occupy in the imaginations of their proponents and participants. Here, too, he makes a remarkable contribution. ♦

⁶ To wit, “the human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory.” See Max Weber, “Politics as a Vocation,” in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, trans. and ed. H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 77–128.

City Networks in East Asia: A New Dimension to Regional Politics

Mary Alice Haddad

T.J. Pempel's new book, *A Region of Regimes: Prosperity and Plunder in the Asia-Pacific*, offers an expansive overview of regional politics in East Asia that credits the region's extraordinary economic growth and (relative) political stability over the past 70 years to the variations of developmental regimes. In his telling, the political parties in charge matter less than the country's type of political "regime" when determining the overall success of its political economy.¹ Of particular interest are the ways that the different domestic regimes interact with one another, creating a kind of regional system that, while not nearly as formal or institutionalized as the European Union, nonetheless has contributed to the region's overall economic prosperity even in the context of considerable security tension and uncertainty.

The main players in the story Pempel tells about the region are national ministries and big business, when discussing domestic politics, and national governments and regional institutions, when discussing regional politics. Civil society actors, whether they are grassroots neighborhood groups, nonprofit organizations, or global NGOs, are bit players. Labor unions receive occasional mention, generally in the context of compromises made with businesses and political parties. Subnational governments are not included.

In this brief review essay, I would like to highlight the increasingly large role that these excluded actors are playing in East Asia's regional politics. In doing so, I am not suggesting that subnational governments and NGOs play a more important role than national ministries and big business, nor am I arguing that they constitute an alternative version of regional regimes. Rather, city networks and civil society collaborators crosscut the regional dynamics identified by Pempel. Especially important from my perspective, these networks connect cities located in countries with different regime types, thereby allowing patterns of good governance and successful

MARY ALICE HADDAD is the John E. Andrus Professor of Government at Wesleyan University (United States). She can be reached at <mahaddad@wesleyan.edu>.

¹ Pempel defines regime as "the conceptual umbrella to capture the specific configurations of political, socioeconomic, and external forces" (p. 3). In examining ten East Asian countries since World War II, he divides them generally into "developmental," "ersatz developmental," and "rapacious" regimes, with China being a standout mixture of all three (pp. 11–12).

policymaking to spread to cities located in ersatz regimes and China. Furthermore, individual East Asian cities and the networks to which they belong are increasingly exerting global influence. Thus, transnational city networks both complicate and expand the view of regional politics provided by *A Region of Regimes*.

I will offer three brief examples from the areas of environment, health, and international peace to illustrate the diverse types of city networks shaping East Asia and the world. The first example is the KitaQ Composting Network. In 2001 the city of Surabaya, Indonesia (with a population of 3 million people), faced a solid waste crisis when local resistance forced the closure of one of the city's largest landfill sites.² To address this problem, Surabaya worked with its Japanese sister city, Kitakyushu, to investigate its municipal solid waste challenges and develop a solution. The Japan-based Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) coordinated with Japanese scientists, Surabaya city officials, and Pusdakota (a local women's organization in Surabaya) to develop a household composting system that was fast, clean, and efficient. They also designed a collection-and-distribution scheme using a system of neighborhood advocates that would engage individual households while both reducing the demand for municipally collected solid waste and contributing to neighborhood beautification.³

In 2007, they rolled out their first pilot demonstration project, working with 10 and then 90 households in Surabaya to distribute special composting baskets and train community members in how to use them. In the first five years of the program, Surabaya reduced its municipal solid waste by 30%, created 75 new jobs for low-income residents, and increased green space in the city by 10%.⁴ IGES then worked to disseminate Surabaya's success to other municipalities abroad, hosting a series of workshops that brought municipal leaders from Southeast Asia together to explain how the system worked.⁵ By 2011, 15 cities in Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia had formed the KitaQ Composting Network.⁶ By 2018, more than 30 cities,

² Simon Gilby et al., "Planning and Implementation of Integrated Solid Waste Management Strategies at Local Level: The Case of Surabaya City," Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), 2017.

³ IGES, "Waste Reduction Model of Surabaya City," 2009 \approx https://kitakyushu.iges.or.jp/publication/Takakura/Surabaya_Experience_Full.pdf.

⁴ D.G.J. Premakumara, "Kitakyushu City's International Cooperation for Organic Waste Management in Surabaya City, Indonesia and Its Replication in Asian Cities," IGES, 2012, 5.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁶ Toshizo Maeda, "Networking Cities for Better Environmental Management: How Networking Functions Can Enhance Local Initiatives," in *Greening Governance in Asia-Pacific*, ed. IGES (Hayama: Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, 2012), chap. 7.

including 11 in Latin America and 6 in Africa, had established community composting systems based on Surabaya's.⁷

My second example highlights Seoul's leadership around Covid-19, which shows how East Asia's cities are not just operating at the grassroots level to solve community issues like municipal waste but are also working through global networks to exert influence internationally. The first case of Covid-19 was identified on January 20, 2020, in Wuhan, China, and two weeks later the virus was identified in Seoul. By March 2, Seoul had nearly one hundred cases, and the city initiated a "pause" campaign that promoted masking and social distancing. On March 22, "intensive social distancing" began: public events were canceled, bars and restaurants were closed, nonessential employees were told to work from home, and those feeling sick were encouraged to self-quarantine.⁸

On April 1, Seoul hosted the five-day "Cities Against Covid-19 Global Summit," where mayors from 42 cities met to share experiences and learn best practices from experts. At the summit's completion, the mayors signed the Seoul Declaration, establishing the Cities Alliance Against Pandemic.⁹ Concurrently, Seoul and other Asian cities worked through the Partnership for Healthy Cities and Alliance for Healthy Cities networks to share information and gain new ideas.¹⁰ Similarly, United Cities and Local Governments created guides for local governments, with case studies that feature primarily Asian cities, such as Daegu, South Korea; Jakarta, Indonesia; Hubei, China; and Taipei, Taiwan, to help cities around the world effectively cope with the pandemic.¹¹

My last example is the international organization Mayors for Peace, which was formed in 1982 by the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to

⁷ Fritz Akhmad Nuzir, "Development Model of Takakura Composting Method (TCM) as an Appropriate Environmental Technology (AET) for Urban Waste Management," IGES, 2018, 8. Note that by 2018 support of the intercity networks and composting system had been taken over by the Ministry of the Environment and the Asia Low Carbon Center. Author's email correspondence with IGES, November 7, 2021.

⁸ Changwoo Shon, "The Role of Cities as the First Responder to Pandemics: Focusing on the Case of the Seoul Metropolitan Government's Response to the Covid-19," *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament* 4, sup. 1 (2021): 62–63.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Keiko Nakamura, "A Network of Healthy Cities in Asia and the Pacific: The Alliance for Healthy Cities," in *Asian Perspectives and Evidence on Health Promotion and Education*, ed. Takashi Muto, Toshitaka Nakahara, and Eun Woo Nam (Tokyo: Springer, 2011), 155–61; and Keiko Nakamura and Ai Chaobang John Ashton, "The Diversity of Healthy Cities in Asia and the Pacific," in *Healthy Cities: The Theory, Policy, and Practice of Value-Based Urban Planning*, ed. Evelyne de Leeuw and Jean Simos (New York: Springer, 2017), 293–313.

¹¹ See United Cities and Local Governments, "What Local Governments Need to Know in Tackling Covid-19 Challenge" ≈ <https://uclg-aspac.org/en/what-local-governments-need-to-know-in-tackling-covid-19-challenge>.

promote nuclear disarmament and now includes more than 8,000 cities located in 165 countries and regions. Working at the grassroots level, Nagasaki's mayor, Hitoshi Motoshima, fostered a vision of international peace that was rooted primarily in collaboration between municipal governments and civil society rather than between national foreign ministries and their international organizations.¹² The group hosts annual conferences for member cities and for youth, and it collaborates internationally with other city-level networks, such as the U.S. Conference of Mayors, which has been making supportive resolutions every year since 2006.¹³ For East Asian regional politics in particular, Mayors for Peace offers an important avenue for collaboration and mutual exchange around the fraught issues of nuclear disarmament and peace-promotion in a region where national security tensions run high. Although their precise mode of engagement has shifted over time, Mayors for Peace has demonstrated that city networks have an important and legitimate role to play internationally, even in the fields of defense, security, and international peace.¹⁴

In sum, while Pempel's *A Region of Regimes* offers an important overview of the roles that national regimes have played in promoting regional prosperity and stability, the book leaves out important actors in the story. To be fair, nearly all scholars of international political economy tend to ignore the role that cities, NGOs, and transnational networks have on regional and global politics. However, since cities now contain most of the world's population, generate most of its wealth, and are increasingly working together across national boundaries, scholars in the fields of international relations and international political economy would do well to begin to include these actors in their explanations. ◆

¹² Hirokazu Miyazaki, "Hiroshima and Nagasaki as Models of City Diplomacy," *Sustainability Science* 16 (2021): 1215–28.

¹³ Mayors for Peace, "Resolutions of Support," 2021 ~ <http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/vision/resolutions.html>.

¹⁴ Miyazaki, "Hiroshima and Nagasaki as Models of City Diplomacy."

**Author's Response:
The Asia-Pacific Kaleidoscope Continues to Shift**

T.J. Pempel

I want to express my sincere thanks to *Asia Policy* for providing the venue for this collective assessment of *A Region of Regimes: Prosperity and Plunder in the Asia-Pacific*. I am especially indebted to the five reviewers for their thoughtful reflections on the book.

Nothing is more rewarding to an author who has finished a major book project than to have respected colleagues engage in a thoughtful and appreciative critique of its core arguments. Beyond the usual highlighting of the book's merits and flaws, each reviewer draws attention to different facets of its key contentions. Most go on to suggest valuable extensions of its logic, plus ways in which it points to new research targets and future real-world problems. Although it is tempting to underscore the reviewers' favorable comments, I would prefer to use this limited space to respond to several of the challenges they raise, the extensions they suggest, and the implications for evolving regional uncertainties.

Let me begin by addressing two key criticisms. First, though gentle in his wording and appreciative of the "big" picture the book attempts, Thomas Pepinsky questions my provocative grouping of the Philippines with Myanmar and North Korea as rapacious regimes. His data on GDP per capita, tertiary education, and trade certainly suggest more economic differences than similarities among the three regimes. I would raise two counterpoints. First, I focused almost exclusively on the Marcos era (1965–86), when a host of similarities such as official corruption, widespread repression, and anti-industrialization radiated closer resonance. Second, external forces in all three regimes provided powerful underpinnings for rapacious repression while mitigating against industrial development. In North Korea and Myanmar, foreign sanctions, self-chosen isolation, and extensive reliance on foreign profiteering from raw materials and agricultural riches were key elements keeping narrow and repressive elites in power while simultaneously obstructing industrialization. Likewise, the United States was a fulsome supporter of the Marcos dictatorship; moreover, in an ironic twist, U.S. support for land reform and industrial upgrades that had been so critical to industrial development within Japan,

T.J. PEMPEL is the Jack M. Forcey Professor of Political Science at the University of California–Berkeley (United States). He can be reached at <pempel@berkeley.edu>.

South Korea, and Taiwan gained no traction in the Philippines. Rather, the U.S. government defended entrenched U.S.-run sugar magnates and landed elites in the country, both powerful veto players against land reform and serious industrial improvement.

Pepinsky's data also points to something not discussed in his review but that the book treated as pivotal in its distinction between the developmental and the ersatz developmental regimes—tertiary education. It is high and rises continually in the developmental regimes, while it lags demonstrably in the ersatz developmental regimes, creating a long-term obstacle against those regimes capturing a substantial portion of GDP gains.

Mary Alice Haddad raises a second criticism worthy of discussion. Although she acknowledges that different mixes of regimes play a powerful role in the dynamics and shaping of the regional order, she rightly notes that my treatment of the Asian region devotes little attention to subnational linkages. As a corrective, she foregrounds the ways in which micro-level multilateral projects often span different regime types and serve as powerful spurs to cross-border cooperation and mutual learning. As such, they add vibrant threads to the regional tapestry. While I accept her point, the argument in the book's concluding chapter analyzes how shifting balances and interactions among the national regimes examined in earlier chapters were critical drivers of the most visible alterations in the regional order. Though one can, of course, debate the significance of state-level vs. local-level webs of cooperation, as Gilbert Rozman found to his disappointment in his 2004 study *Northeast Asia's Stunted Regionalism*, nationalism, competition for power, and bilateral national government distrust in many instances upended even the most diligent efforts at cross-border cooperation by city mayors or NGOs.¹

Several reviews suggest tantalizing ways to extend the logic of the book. Pepinsky sees it as calling for more macro-structural studies of political economy. I share his predisposition. Such macro-structural analyses hold the greatest potential not only to expand our theoretical understanding of East Asia but also to exert the greatest magnetic attraction on analysts of developed democracies and developing economies to expand their universe of comparison by addressing puzzling and challenging aspects of East Asia. That said, I must also acknowledge that the structural synthesis in *A Region of Regimes* would have been unthinkable without extensive

¹ Gilbert Rozman, *Northeast Asia's Stunted Regionalism: Bilateral Distrust in the Shadow of Globalization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

reliance on the rich cornucopia of micro-level country and intra-national works already in existence.

David Leheny suggests another extension, addressing what is only an implicit message in the book—namely, the ways in which long-enduring regimes and their sustained policy paradigms sow, fertilize, and feed on particular ideas about what constitutes logical, normal, and appropriate behaviors and expectations. Such ideas, he rightly notes, are systematically “disseminated, taught, reproduced, and woven into the fabric” of both elite and public convictions while constructing legitimating political myths and affective social ties. If the book stimulates future research on the links between sustained power and embedded convictions, particularly outside the realm of political economy, I would of course be pleased.

Finally, Saori Katada and John Ravenhill both explore the book’s implications for evolving regional relations. Katada builds on a point made in the book—that as firms headquartered in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan relocate many of their operations to overseas locations, they become less subject to strict rules and officialdom at home. Yet she goes on to suggest that because such firms remain powerful contributors to national wealth, these home governments retain powerful incentives to continue their alignment with these now more globalized firms. As such, national officials in the three former developmental regimes have formidable motivations to abandon the embedded mercantilism once critical to their successes and to collaborate in advancing a regional order that is rules-based and biased toward freer trade and fluid investment. This was, of course, an underlying motivation for Japan’s embrace of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, South Korea’s driving of the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement, and bilateral free trade agreements by each with the European Union. It is congruent too with efforts by Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan to expand their networks of free trade agreements and to deploy portions of their foreign reserves in the service of regional infrastructure projects in Asia’s less-developed economies.

Such efforts run headlong into actions by the Chinese Communist Party leadership to weaponize China’s growing wealth as a diplomatic cudgel while employing military assertiveness to support the country’s irredentist territorial claims. As a result, political leaders in numerous East Asian countries now perceive their national security interests and national economic interests to be at odds. Pulled toward China by its economic vigor, they are at the same time wary of the military challenges China presents. Ominously, as Ravenhill points out, “The actual exercise of power may be less significant...than the chilling effect that the potential

for its exercise may have on the behavior of other states.” The only viable counterweight to the unchallenged success of those chilling effects is a regionally well-anchored and economically muscular United States.

The United States played this critical role in the past, as Ravenhill and I agree. Yet, Ravenhill is more optimistic about the potential for full-bodied U.S. economic engagement than I am. The Trump administration, as we both agree, shredded decades of well-established U.S. foreign economic policies, including those toward the Asia-Pacific. Many observers around the world had high expectations that the Biden administration could reverse the Trump-era damage and return to some version of the previous status quo; however, it is increasingly clear that the Trump years were far more than a deviant parenthesis easily corrected. They were the logical culmination of two decades of Republican Party shifts away from expertise, science, and agreed-upon realities and instead toward “alternative facts,” cultural wedge issues, populism, protectionism, and xenophobia.² A formidable majority of top national and local officials in the Republican Party now fully embrace Trump’s “Make America Great Again” message and his baseless claims that the 2020 election was fraudulent, thus rejecting democratic procedures and the GOP’s once-proud internationalist orientation that were so central to earlier U.S. economic multilateral muscularity in the Asia-Pacific. The deep chasm between Washington’s two political parties has made bipartisanship virtually inconceivable. Any policy achieved by a particular administration is now treated as an existential “loss” by the other party, and current political engagements are all about winning and control, rather than governing and policy.

One of the few areas where Democrats and Republicans are clasping hands is in their joint scramble to outdo one another by being “tough on China.” In that context, it should not be surprising that the Biden administration, instead of scrapping the multiple tariffs imposed during the Trump administration, opted to retain them. As well, the Biden administration is devoting the bulk of its Asia-Pacific efforts to single-mindedly expanding the military component of U.S. foreign policy rather than developing a more balanced economic and security diplomatic toolbox.

² Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson, *Off Center: The Republican Revolution and the Erosion of American Democracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

The United States and East Asia would both benefit greatly from a robust U.S. economy anchored around a cleaner, more sophisticated economic profile that is focused on cutting-edge technologies such as robotics, artificial intelligence, satellites, 5G, and biotechnology. China's leaders are in full pursuit of dominance in such sectors. Sustained U.S. efforts in that direction would permit Washington to advance a strong foreign economic policy that offers countries in East Asia a powerful option by which to resolve the current schizophrenic pulls of national economic and national security interests. Such efforts would dovetail U.S. policies with the rules-based, freer trade, and fluid investment order advanced by many Asian middle powers. Yet partisan U.S. politics makes such an outcome highly unlikely.

A Region of Regimes sought to provide insights into multiple facets of the political economy of the Asia-Pacific. Over time, readers will determine the extent to which it succeeded. In the interim, I am gratified that these five reviewers have mobilized their deep knowledge of diverse aspects of the region to share their reactions to its analysis. Going forward, I am hopeful that others will find it equally worthy of engaging and that East Asia's broadly successful past will prove to be prelude to an even more peaceful and prosperous future. ◆