

national security laws; this focus on the well-known constitutional mechanism, whilst entirely understandable, has frequently obscured the point that Beijing might intervene in ways not described by the Basic Law, as it indeed did with the national security law and earlier with the controversial express rail development. The second is simply the subsequent unfolding of events, although in some cases knowledge of those events is rewarded. For example, Simon N. M. Young suggests that Macau's home-grown national security law, which contains 15 articles, might serve as a model; this reveals the comprehensiveness of Hong Kong's 66-article national security law. Similarly, Petersen's argument that the international community has a legitimate interest in the situation is confirmed by the fact that at least nine countries have now suspended their extradition agreements with Hong Kong.

In the co-authored introduction, Cora Chan suggests that the beauty of "one country, two systems" is not in its harmony but in its inherent tension. That now reads like an epitaph. The imposition of the national security law and subsequent developments, like the reconfiguration of Hong Kong's political system to eliminate opposition, have confirmed that such pluralistic thinking is unwelcome. Unity under central leadership is the only way, whether in law, politics, education, the media or civil society. What, then, is the value in discussing a diminished concept like the rule of law? As well as clarifying (via Wai-Man Lam's chapter) that the rule of law retains substantial meaning for the Hong Kong people, this book suggests much about Beijing's governance philosophy and its interaction with rules-based systems, ironically unencumbered by the details of the national security law which was to come. Naturally, the scholarly unpicking of those details has since begun, and contributors to this book may return in a forthcoming volume edited by Hualing Fu and Michael Hor, *The National Security Law of Hong Kong: Restoration and Transformation* (Hong Kong University Press, 2022).

This collection continues the tradition of strong scholarship emanating from HKU's law faculty. The survival of that tradition, like others, is not assured. As Benny Y. T. Tai said (*New York Times*, 18 November 2018), Hong Kong isn't what it was, nor what it's supposed to be. Tai took part in the conference that led to this book, but he is absent from its list of contributors. As the book was being compiled, he was belatedly facing trial for his role in the 2014 peaceful civil disobedience movement. Around the time of its publication, he was sentenced to 16 months in prison. Within a month of the national security law's promulgation, he was extraordinarily dismissed from his associate professorship by the HKU Council. This book, and others we may be fortunate to receive in the future, must be read with these new realities in mind.

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Rethinking Authority in China's Border Regime: Regulating the Irregular

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Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022

317 pp. €117.00

ISBN 978-94-6372-635-1 doi:10.1017/S030574102200090X

In 2018, China established the National Immigration Agency, a new bureaucratic body charged with standardizing practice across the PRC. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, China was becoming a growing destination of migration for foreign labourers and experts, but also for refugees and displaced persons. Regulatory

frameworks accordingly grew with respect to cross-border marriages, citizenship rights, questions of permanent settlement, and social benefits for spouses of Chinese – areas previously explored by scholars like Elena Barabantaseva. Drawing upon fieldwork, Franziska Plümmer takes on these evolving issues within a broader matrix of borderland studies and demonstrates an impressive range within the social sciences.

The book is structured around two broad case studies. The first embraces the complexities of China's southwestern frontier; the second looks at the northeast border with North Korea. The text therefore advances our knowledge of Yunnan and Jilin's borderlands. Provincial governments are here seen wearing multiple roles: they are border-region propagandists (p. 105), engaged in managing the “zoo-like” atmosphere of cross-border tourism (pp. 109–111), and they promote or wrestle with unwieldy initiatives like the Greater Mekong subregion plans (pp. 185–186) or the less successful Greater Tumen Initiative (pp. 197–204). It can be difficult at times to parse out provincial autonomy amid the broad standardization of the nation-state, but in Jilin province, the border city of Hunchun emerges as exceptional, as does Ruili in Yunnan. Even if economic performances of some borderland SEZs lag behind national baselines, argues Plümmer, the Chinese government has enhanced the role of its periphery by establishing and sustaining such trade hubs.

Border politics and categories for movers and adjacent people are a significant takeaway from this study (pp. 98, 105, 108). China is demonstrated to possess a battery of refugee and resettlement laws, but these are not always put to intuitive use. As Plümmer shows, the UNHCR office in Beijing is reduced to coordinating with third countries, citing a UNHCR estimate of 317,255 refugees in China in 2016, only 668 of whom were engaged with pending asylum processes (p. 99). Prior to encountering this book, the reviewer had naively assumed that the term *bianmin* was simply a literal translation of “border people,” an indicator of their importance or value for the nation. However, Plümmer demonstrates how the state imposes the label upon new refugees as a way of “legitimizing the denial of their asylum requests and justifying repatriation (*qiansong chujing*)” (p. 98).

Regular and engaging citations from borderlands scholarship produced in mainland China are another advantageous aspect of this book. We therefore encounter scholars like Zhou Ping (b. 1959), a kingmaker in borderland studies based at Yunnan University who has found new professional success via writing discursive theoretical pieces supporting Xi Jinping's drive toward “inter-ethnic political integration.” Zhou's writings from the late 2000s and early/mid 2010s urge greater standardization and updating of China's border regime, but also have some theoretical valence, differentiating “border studies” from “borderland studies.” Hu Zhiding (b. 1986) of East China Normal University is another bright light in the field engaged with in this book. Plümmer thereby has a good grasp of how the concepts around the PRC's southwestern and northeastern borders continue to evolve, including how global discourse around the 9/11 terror attacks, and a later wave of phobia around refugees or “uncontrolled migration” (to borrow a phrase from British Prime Minister Theresa May in 2017) has impacted Chinese writing. Beyond migration discourse, readers with interests in PRC crisis management or crisis preparation along its border will find chapter four of special interest (pp. 237, 239, 241, 255). This is a valuable book overall, recommended to scholars of China's borderlands, border and migration studies generally, and the burgeoning discourse on rights for migrants.

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