

well written and highly informative. The book has lots of data and in-depth discussions on the issues that will appeal to experts and policy makers. At the same time, the essays are very readable and provide enough background to make this book accessible to members of the general public.

XUEZHI GUO

gguo@guilford.edu

Resolving Land Disputes in East Asia: Exploring the Limits of Law

Edited by HUALING FU and JOHN GILLESPIE

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Property has been central to the historic growth of Hong Kong and Taiwan since the 1960s, and of China and Vietnam beginning some two decades later. While the role of property in the global shift to East Asia over the past half-century has been most commonly understood in economic terms (i.e. real estate markets, urbanization and consumer classes) there are other dimensions to property in East Asia's (re)emergence. Property also means justice, piety and home, among other expressions of value and identity. *Resolving Land Disputes in East Asia* helps us understand why it is that land and the fixtures upon it mean so much to their owners and occupants and how they seek to protect their property rights in the face of the modern metropolitan state.

One of the main puzzles that prompt the volume is that increasing clarification of property rights in East Asia has not necessarily led to a reduction in conflicts over land. In response, the volume stands for the proposition that the state does not have a monopoly in defining rights in property; rather, there are a number of non-state actors that shape ownership over land. The "limits" of the law are exposed when state institutions confront such informal authorities; the complex relationship between "state" and non-state norms assumes a variety of forms across East Asia – in courts, extralegal mechanisms such as mediation, discourse about law, and rights activism. The volume thus contributes to a growing "law and society" scholarship that corrects earlier assessments of Chinese law that focused too narrowly on the state. Instead, as argued by collaborators Hualing Fu and John Gillespie in their introduction, the local state and non-state norms "imaginatively interact" (p. 4), each trying to frame conceptions of property.

The volume consists of contributions by legal scholars, political scientists and practitioners of law from the US, PRC, Taiwan and Hong Kong. In terms of organization, the book is divided into five parts that provide its comparative backbone; these include a theoretical discussion of land disputes in socialist Asia (i.e. China and Vietnam) and case studies on China, Vietnam, Taiwan and Hong Kong. The country-focused case studies are loosely based around an initial chapter that lays out the history of property developments in the country which is followed by chapters that address specific concerns. Arriving at the problem of pluri-legal property norms from diverse disciplines, the contributors rely on a number of different methodologies and data sets from case analysis to county-wide surveys and interviews. The eclectic use of both quantitative and qualitative methods enriches the volume, and gives credence to a growing interest in law and society research in East Asia.

A strength of the volume is its comparative appeal. While slightly weighted toward China with seven (and a half) chapters on the PRC, the volume's inclusion of Vietnam provides a helpful comparison with China where in both cases, "land communities" (p. 293) interpret property in ways that diverge from those of the post-socialist state. These contests have reached a fever pitch in China where the law functions more often than not to diffuse disputes rather than provide a basis for social or economic justice. Hualing Fu observes in his study of the Wukan conflict that "law absorbs conflict and protest by taking oxygen out of the fire" (p. 174). In parallel, as a number of the contributors (e.g. Frank Upham, Susan H. Whiting and Hua Shao, and Changdong Zhang and Christopher Heurlin) observe, the state has turned to mediation to frustrate rights protection and collective action. As Eva Pils examines in her chapter, homeowners' conceptions of property differ from those of the state, and these ideas of property inform their strategies of rights protection, including international law, petitioning, and even video games that garner public sympathy for evictees (p. 170).

Compared to the China and Vietnam cases, there is greater reliance on formal state venues for property rights protection in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Political pluralization and economic development have created conditions whereby citizens can gain protection under the state. Yet even here, there are "epistemic communities" (p. 331) that derive their notions of property from sources unrecognized by the state, as in Duan Lin and Po-Fang Tsai's example of *jisigongye* ("ancestral worship property") in urban Taiwan. Similarly, as Say H. Goo and Alice Lee demonstrate in their contributions, due to its post-colonial property regimes, Hong Kong exhibits tensions between state and non-state social norms as in the instances of temples and ancestral places of worship (Tso and Tong) as well as illegal structures.

In sum, the common theme of the unsettled interaction between state law and non-state norms in property disputes unites the volume as the individual contributions shed light on the problem through both theoretical and empirical studies that allow for intra-regional comparison. This is not to say that the authors agree on solutions to legally plural property regimes. For instance, Lei Chen points to greater statutory clarity to regulate the procedure of expropriations in the PRC, whereas Jie Cheng and Pils suggest that legislation cannot address the systemic weakness of institutions such as courts. Offering a middle-way approach, Xin He argues that courts can be limited sites of resistance and can even be change agents. The multiple views offered underscore that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to property rights assertion in East Asia.

MATTHEW S. ERIE
matthew.erie@orinst.ox.ac.uk

Labor Activists and the New Working Class in China: Strike Leaders' Struggles

PARRY P. LEUNG

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In this important new book, Parry Leung delves into aspects of Chinese labour politics and mobilization that have been too little studied in the past – notably how activist workers and middle-managers proactively organize strikes as a tactic for getting