

In this Issue

This issue contains four articles (Rogaski, Walder, Moon, and Kasza) which are on a diverse array of topics, though they do center on politics in East Asia at mid-century, and four articles (Huang; Pomeranz; Lee, Campbell, and Wang; and Brenner and Isett) which provide a close look at Kenneth Pomeranz's *The Great Divergence: China, Europe and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

Let's turn first to the four articles on East Asia at the middle of the twentieth century.

RUTH ROGASKI looks at the ways in which campaigns against pests in China in the 1950s intersected with claims about germ warfare in the Korean War and suggests ways in which these public health campaigns were related to emerging notions of modernity in twentieth-century China. Her article shows how Chinese conceptions of modernity in the post-1949 period were influenced not only by Maoist policies but also by earlier transnational notions of hygiene and the conquest of nature. She further suggests that seemingly innocuous public hygiene campaigns served as precursors to later disastrous mobilization campaigns such as the Great Leap Forward.

GREGORY KASZA's article looks at the ways in which institutional innovations in Japan during World War II proved to be durable and served as the foundations of the Japanese welfare state. He suggests that, among other factors, the necessity for a healthy army and the need to provide for the families of soldiers can serve as an impetus for the design of welfare institutions. Kasza hopes that the framework he has sketched for Japan will prompt scholars of other societies to investigate the relationship between war and welfare policies, placing war alongside other factors (such as industrialization and class conflict) in the conceptualization of theories of welfare.

ANDREW WALDER's article suggests that factional divisions among Red Guards were not based on prior social or family networks (as previous scholarship has suggested) but rather emerged from political interactions in the uncertain first weeks of the Cultural Revolution. He demonstrates that during the early summer of 1966 the work teams themselves, rather than the political and social status quo, were the issue.

SEUNGSOOK MOON's article looks the question of the public sphere in Korean society in the past several decades, delineating the complex ways in which women's organizations were able to claim public space for Korean women. Moon shows ways in which the meanings of gender in postcolonial Korea were informed by both Confucian roles and industrial notions of the gendered division of labor. She suggests that what is required for women to participate fully in civil society in Korea is nothing short of a new imagining of human relations, which need not follow a liberal model.

I sent the authors of the first four articles copies of one another's articles and, as has become journal practice, asked them to comment on commonalities and differences that they found in one another's work.

Greg Kasza notes ways in which the articles deal with issues related to the durable impact of war:

In various ways, all of these articles relate to war and its effects on social institutions and public policy. Rogaski's research and mine demonstrate how wartime practices (health policy, official organizations) often outlive war, acquire new rationales, and persist indefinitely. Walder's revisionist work on the Cultural Revolution shows how mechanisms of mass mobilization, originally born of the Chinese civil war, continued to play a central role in Chinese politics for years to come. . . . Moon's article offers evidence that democratization can undercut the negative legacies of war and authoritarianism (in this case the manipulation of women through state-directed organizations). . . .

(Kasza, e-mail, 9 February 2002)

Rogaski observes that one of the primary concerns of several of the articles is in delineating the "contours of mobilization" in mass movements and further notes commonalities in concern with issues such as the motivations of the participants and obstacles to participating in movements. She points out that she, Greg Kasza and Andrew Walder write about the urgency created by the conjunction of war and mobilization—the wars which Rogaski and Kasza write about are global wars, and the one Walder is concerned with (the Cultural Revolution) is a local one (Rogaski, e-mail, 14 February 2002).

Both China articles deal with mid-century political campaigns, and Walder notes the particular resonances between his article (on the Red Guards) and Rogaski's (on public health campaigns):

This [the two campaigns] is clearly the same set of political institutions and practices, separated by barely more than a decade in time. The deadly difference is that in 1952 the pests targeted for annihilation were non-human, whereas the targets in 1966 were dehumanized. Perhaps a broader theme that encompasses both cases is an urge to use mass mobilization to cleanse the body politic and strengthen the nation. Yet 1966 was different in two important ways: the attacks were unleashed on the party apparatus itself, and the designation of the targets was ambiguous and for a period contested.

(Walder, e-mail, 19 February 2002)

Although the parallels with Rogaski's work are the most obvious, Walder also sees parallels between his work and the work of other authors. He writes:

Besides this, I am struck by broader parallels in the papers by Kasza, Moon, and myself. While all three papers look carefully at the peculiarities of a specific case, they share an implicit conviction that exploring the peculiarities of context and culture will reveal generic processes common to any society. For Kasza the role of war-making in the creation of the welfare programs in Japan has parallels in British and American history; for Moon the emergence of the women's movement in Korea is an instance of a generic process defined by Gramsci; for me the emergence of Red Guard factions in Beijing causes me to question theories that assume close connections between social structure, identity, and political interest in any setting. There was once a time when Asianists defensively asserted that theories rooted in "western" experience are inapplicable to their cultures. (I've always countered that most theories fail pretty badly on their home territory too.) It is striking how unself-consciously the authors in this issue simply get on with the task of identifying the general in the specific.

Moon notes a similar phenomena, but articulates it differently:

At the level of core argument, all articles intend to present new ways of thinking about the subject matters discussed. My article examines normative feminist critiques of civil society in light of the contemporary women's movement in South Korea and illuminates the interplay between the women's movement and gender as a social structure in the process of expansion and transformation of civil society in South Korea. Kasza highlights the crucial role that the Pacific War (1937–1945) played in shaping social welfare policy in Japan to rethink established explanations of the development of welfare policy (i.e., the level of industrialization, the influence of labor, and the values of policy makers). Walder examines the detailed processes of Beijing Red Guard activities for the first few month of the Cultural Revolution to challenge the conventional account for Red Guard factionalism attributed to sociopolitical differences among the Red Guard factions. Rogaski focuses on the Patriotic Hygiene Campaign in Tianjin organized in response to the alleged use of germ warfare by the United States during the Korean War and offers a new way of thinking about the campaign.

(Moon, e-mail, 18 February 2002)

The final four articles are an extended examination of Kenneth Pomeranz's important book, *The Great Divergence*. Pomeranz argues that the state of the Chinese and European economies in the late eighteenth century (roughly the period 1750–1800) were not as different from one another as conventional wisdom has led us to believe. He argues that what caused the nineteenth-century "great divergence" between China and Europe was English access to coal and colonies. Philip Huang in one article, and Robert Brenner and Christopher Isett in another, take issue with this formulation. Pomeranz has written a response to Huang's article (he has not yet had the opportunity to read Brenner and Isett, and they have not yet read his response to Huang). Because a key element of Pomeranz's argument has to do with comparing living standards, and because he based much of his argument about Chinese life spans on the work of James Lee, Cameron Campbell, and Wang Feng, they have responded to those portions of Huang's essay which most directly critique their work.

The issues raised by Pomeranz's book and these critiques of it are critical to how we think about China (and Asia more broadly) in the world. How do we do comparison? What are appropriate units of comparison? How can we most usefully construct economic explanations in a world where the data are imperfect? The disputes are real—and have to do with the authors' varying positions on the nature of economic development, demographic analysis, and historical change. The differences among these authors are not merely in the area of theory. For example, readers will note that while all of the authors agree that the contributions of women as workers in proto-industrial sectors of the economy is critical, there is no real consensus as to how to evaluate that labor. Indeed, the question of how much a woman working in textiles in eighteenth-century China could earn is hotly contested in the pages that follow. And more work is needed on topics like consumption patterns in China before we can answer some of the important questions of comparison raised in this work. The disagreement in these articles, both theoretical and empirical, should help to make clear what it is we do and do not understand about the economy and society in eighteenth-century China and to provide suggestions for future research.