



various motivations that drive actors to commit said acts, and does not account for why, for example, some incidents revolve around some local elections, whereas others adopt religious symbols and pit religious communities against each other, and still others are protests against government policies on the environment, labour, among others.

Furthermore, like many good books, *When Violence Works* leaves more questions for future scholars to engage with. Barron's quantitative analysis provides a snapshot of the aggregate patterns of postconflict violence and the regional distribution of certain types of violence in Indonesia, but it stops short of fully utilising NVMS' rich data on state responses and interventions, the types of actors and weapons involved. Aside from a discussion of the temporal distribution of the count of security forces' interventions in riots over the years in the early post-New Order era (pp. 187–8), we know little about when, where, and why security forces tend to be ordered to intervene, and in what types of violence. The same could be said about the types of actors involved in the incidents: there is very little mention of how and why some forms of violence involve some groups of actors and certain weapons, and not others. Querying these issues would help us understand better the mechanics of violence continuation in postconflict settings.

Nevertheless, this book has charted a way forward for scholars of conflict and legacies of violence. In highlighting the importance of strategic considerations of both state and non-state actors at various levels in determining the prevalence of postconflict violence, Barron has crystallised a key mechanism that allows incidents of violence to escalate.

RISA J. TOHA

*Wake Forest University*

## The Philippines

### *The Filipino migration experience: Global agents of change*

By MINA ROCES

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*The Filipino Migration Experience* is the latest work by Mina Roces, who has published extensively on Filipino gender, kinship networks, and activism. In this book, Roces presents a historical view of the experiences of overseas Filipinos using a multisited approach with a source-base she refers to as the 'migrant archive' from the 1970s to around 2018. Roces' goal is to put the spotlight on the migrants both as 'agents of change' but also as the ones who collect, publish, and disseminate the 'migrant archives' (p. 8). Roces' use of a range of themes provides an engaging analysis of the migrant experience, and it is notable that she does her best to locate this analysis outside of the obvious sphere of labour. While it is difficult not to account for the effects of domestic work on Filipino women in Singapore, for example, Roces is

able to focus on how migrants navigate, negotiate, and exert themselves in these contexts.

As a historical study, Roces' use of the migrant archive—including data, histories, and critiques that have been written and disseminated by the migrants themselves—and interviews provide a migrant-centred analysis. In these narratives, she identifies a common theme that she terms the 'heroic narrative', which begins with stories of hardship and struggle and end with some sort of triumph (p. 98).

Part 1 has two chapters analysing how migrants have challenged traditional formations of gender, sexuality, and family. The narratives Roces uncovers in the 'migrant archive' critique the traditional Filipino family unit in light of a range of hardships they have suffered because of their families, such as unfaithful partners, ungrateful children, estranged relations, and financial exploitation. Furthermore, the loss of physical and emotional intimacy often led both male and female migrants to seek affections from others in the locations they worked, often non-Filipino, whether for short-term encounters or to begin new families. Roces' innovative use of the migrant archive allows her to reveal how important sexual identity is to overseas Filipinos, especially women. Roces highlights how actions such as infidelity, sexual promiscuity, and homosexual relationships break long-held taboos in the Philippines that label Filipino women as lacking desire and being passive in their sexuality.

Part 2 looks at how Filipino migrants use their income and greater financial literacy to enact change, both in their lives and in the Philippines. The first chapter explores how these spending behaviours are tied to Filipino social values, and the second looks at how Filipino companies such as broadcaster ABS-CBN and Philippine-based real estate firms have come to target overseas Filipinos. Roces intentionally looks beyond remittances, such as her engaging discussion of the *balikbayan* box (shipments of gifts to the Philippines in large boxes) and its representation of a shift in traditional Filipino values. These acts are driven by the belief that sending gifts, including *balikbayan* boxes, were obligatory and that such gift-giving was 'the barometer for the giver's love and affection for the receiver' (p. 60). As Roces notes, failing to fulfil these obligations might be interpreted as a lack of love from the overseas worker for their family, leading to hurt feelings, and might also suggest that their work abroad was a failed venture as they were unable to afford such gifts.

Part 3 is composed of three chapters looking at Filipino Americans as community historians, the role and impacts of overseas advocacy on the Philippines from the 1970s, and the efforts of overseas Filipinos to enact social change in the Philippines. The chapter on community histories is a fine chapter that reminds historians of the Filipino diaspora of the value of such sources, tying in well with Roces' overall theme of the heroic narrative. The next chapter looks at the role of American and Australian-based advocacy groups and how they have been successful in promoting access to education for Filipino Americans and protections for Filipinos living in Australia. Roces points out that a significant reason for their success is collaboration with other entities such as sectors of the government whether in the form of financial support or by raising awareness. The final chapter on medical missions from Australia demonstrates how collaboration with groups operating on the ground

in the Philippines adds to their success through assisting in preparing for medical missions and dealing with the aftermath of surgeries and diagnoses.

Roces maintains a strong focus on the narratives of Filipino migrants and interpretations of their own experiences. She moves away from the lens of labour to explore, in detail, the ways in which the migration experience presents opportunities for change, both for the migrants themselves and in their host and home countries. In focusing on agency in the migrant archive, Roces has made a valuable contribution to Filipino migration studies, both in her findings and method.

JON G. MALEK

*Providence University College*

## Thailand

### *Dynastic democracy: Political families in Thailand*

By YOSHINORI NISHIZAKI

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Yoshinori Nishizaki's *Dynastic Democracy* presents a novel interpretation of Thailand's political development over the past nine decades. He argues that the ups and downs of electoral democracy in Thai political history are inseparable from the endless power competition between two types of families: the conservative princely-bureaucratic families, who are connected and subservient to the Chakri dynasty, vis-à-vis the commoner-capitalist families, whose emergence, ironically, was inseparable from political reforms to make parliamentary elections more competitive. When electoral democracy is present, the commoner families emerge as the dominant power in the Parliament, giving Thai electoral democracy a strong dynastic character. Alternatively, when the conservative royalists viewed electoral democracy as too corrupt, they did not hesitate to intervene through unconstitutional and undemocratic means and temporarily bring down the democratic dynasty. Nonetheless, even during the temporary demise of the dynastic democracy, the conservative royalists must rely on some commoner families to support them. Therefore, regardless of who holds power at the pinnacle of Thai politics, political families always play essential roles in supporting the structure of the winning regime.

By placing family as the main focus of Thailand's political development, Nishizaki has successfully demonstrated the key role of family as a political organisation. Scholarly debates on the state-making process and democratisation often ignore the role of family in their analyses. Within the modernisation theory framework, family is seen as a relic of the ancient political past that has no position in contemporary state-making and democratisation. Using Thailand as a case study, *Dynastic Democracy* successfully challenges the domination of the modernisation narratives. The book demonstrates that family matters in determining political outcomes and can act as an alternative means to organise power. When party institutionalisation