fiers of wealth" under the New Order; and the Derridian trope of an impossible longing for an originary home, could have been developed further if there had been a tighter focus. The book deals exclusively with the subjectivity of the stranger guest. More engagement with the objectifying forces of the host would help to clarify how and why identity was truncated, but will perhaps also show how, glimpses of which we caught in Chapter seven, some form of accommodative identity was achieved under the New Order regime. All in all, its theoretically novel ethnographic approach, and pioneering research on the Chinese in West Kalimantan make this a key reference work for future scholarship in the fields of the Overseas Chinese and Indonesian regional studies.

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The Family in Flux in Southeast Asia: Institution, Ideology, Practice
Yoko Hayami, Junko Koizumi, Chalidaporn Songsamphan, and Ratana Tosakul, eds.
Kyoto: Kyoto University Press and Bangkok: Silkworm Books, 2012, ix+546p.

The Family in Flux in Southeast Asia: Institution, Ideology, Practice is a long-awaited addition to family studies in Southeast Asia. It is edited by a multidisciplinary team of leading scholars on Thailand and Myanmar, Yoko Hayami and Ratana Tosakul (anthropology), Junko Koizumi (history), and Chalidaporn Songsamphan (political science). Presently, both Hayami and Koizumi are professors at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS), Kyoto University, and Songsamphan and Tosakul are associate professor and senior lecturer, respectively, at Thammasat University. The volume consists of an introduction (by Hayami) and 23 chapters, and examines wide-ranging aspects of family change and continuity in modern Southeast Asia that loosely spans from the nineteenth century to the present. While the book primarily focuses on Thailand, it also features comparable cases from Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Taiwan. The present volume is a product of a three-year research program entitled "Changing 'Families'" in which Thammasat University and CSEAS at Kyoto University served as home institutes between 2006 and 2009. The contributors are the former participants in this research initiative and come

from diverse disciplines, including history, political science, economics, sociology, literary studies, and anthropology.

The book starts with an overview of family change or "macro demographic trends" in Southeast Asia over the past three decades with a specific reference to Thailand (pp. 1–2). These trends are marked by declining fertility rates, prolonged life expectancy, rising divorce rates, and an increase in female-headed households, and have been observed in a time of greater labor migration. While these phenomena find a plethora of global parallels, much of the theorizing in family history has focused on experiences in the West, particularly in Western Europe, and our understanding of family change in modern Southeast Asia remains inadequate. Thus, one chief objective of the present volume is to "fill in this gap" in family studies (p. 2).

Such an exploration into the course of family change in Southeast Asia inevitably involves comparison, especially with Western Europe, where industrialization was a decisive phase in family formation. During the industrializing period, families were institutionalized and came to constitute "the domestic sphere as separate from the public productive sphere" (p. 2). What ensued was a cluster of ideals about the modern family that emphasized the universal nuclear family and its reproductive function, romantic conjugal relationships, and blood ties among family members. In Southeast Asia, as Hayami aptly points out, "[T]he historical trajectory in which institutionalization of the family took place . . . has been different" (p. 2). Therefore, we cannot take for granted the notion of the "family" stemming from Western industrialized societies. The book argues that to understand "family" in Southeast Asia, we must take into consideration such historical processes as colonialism, nationalism, encounters with the West, state building, and the middle-class formation (p. 18). Through these processes, the very concept of the "family" was "debated, contested, and negotiated" in everyday practice and ideology (p. 2). Under these common concerns, 23 chapters fall into three areas of inquiry, "Family Law and Related Debates" (chapters 1–6), "State Policies, Ideology, and Practice" (chapters 7–13), and "Families and the Network of Relatedness in Flux and Flow" (chapters 14–23). Some of the featured issues include (but not limited to): the evolving notion of the family as a closed and monogamous unit in language and law; patriarchy buttressed through polygyny, transnational businesses (among overseas Chinese families), and national policies; various forms of kin and communal networks at work in family cycles such as child rearing of migrant female workers (many of whom were in transnational marriages). Together, these observations caution against making an easy association of the modern family with consanguinity and conjugality, the nuclear household, and the gendered divisions of roles championed by male wage earners and female homemakers. What the present volume illuminates is the fluid and plural notions and practices of the family across Southeast Asia then and now.

Family history is a relatively untapped area of research in Southeast Asian studies. One main reason for the paucity of historical studies on the family is that the topic has often been pursued (somewhat in disguise) through alternative and interrelated subject matters, such as women,

households, gender, sexuality, kinship, and state, to name a few.[1] Therefore, any contribution that is specifically about the "family," as *The Family in Flux* demonstrates, is a welcome addition. One vantage point of taking a family-specific approach is that it opens room for comparison among cases from Southeast Asia and beyond that so far have remained largely overlooked in the existing scholarship. The book is already forthcoming in drawing parallels as to how the practice of polygyny and the accompanying discussion on monogamy as a modern ideal served as a focal point of colonial and nationalist politics in Thailand, West Sumatra, and Malaysia (chapters 2, 3, 4, 7).[2] This line of comparative conversation can easily be extended to other similar studies on late-colonial Java and Egypt under the British protectorate, to name just two.[3]

Another common thread for comparison concerns language. A few studies in the present volume illuminate linguistic ambiguities towards the nuclear family household in Southeast Asian vernaculars. In pre-modern times, the Thai word for family *khropkhrua* commonly referred to "a network of diverse relationships" (p. 7). In the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the meaning of the word evolved into one that emphasized the conjugal pair and their children. What propelled this linguistic evolution towards a bounded notion of the family were legal reforms and the accompanying state campaign for a modern monogamous family (pp. 7–8). Such encoding of *khropkhrua* with marriage and blood relations stands side by side with yet another word for "family" or *ban* in contemporary Thai, which literally means house and denotes a group of people sharing a residence (p. 29). In Javanese, the closest to the Indonesian word for family *keluarga* is *somah* whose meaning besides the nuclear family household includes "other family members, usually parents, unmarried siblings, or married siblings with their children might live together" (p. 288). Another case in point is the Burmese equivalent for family *mithazu*, which to this day remains relatively foreign among the Karen. Local conceptions of "family" in the Karen language center on "people of the same brood, child-mother, child-father relationship" (p. 297). Tagalog is another language marked by the initial absence of "family" until colonial times. While the existing indigenous concept focuses on "bilateral relatedness" or *mag-anak*, a new lingo and definition of the family or *pamilya* as "a basic autonomous social institution" was introduced and localized through colonial influences (p. 10). Similarly, colonial encounters in West Sumatra were the vehicle for introducing the Dutch word *familie*. In the 1920s amidst Dutch colonial rule,

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1) The scholarship on these subject matters is extensive. A few of the recent contributions (monographs) include: Koning *et al.* (2000), Locher-Scholten (2000), Stoler (2002), Day (2002), Andaya (2006), Ikeya (2011).

2) The book also refers to the recurrent debate over polygyny in the years leading to the legal abolishment of polygamy in Thailand in 1935 as chronicled in Loos (2006, 7–8).

3) For a study on Java, see Locher-Scholten (2000, 187–218). Pollard has shown that the debate on polygamy in the vernacular print media was one of the geneses of nationalism among the Egyptian bourgeois elite (2005, 94–97).

familie along with the Indonesian alternative *rumah tangga* or household were staple vocabularies for "family" thus overshadowing *keluarga* (Hadler 2008, 80). These preliminary observations further reiterate the problematics of the evolutionary and linear trajectory of family change looming so large in family theory.[4] Moreover, further research into Southeast Asia's linguistic complexity and local notions of "family" centered on a web of (bilateral) networks, when read against the background of colonialism and nationalism, could collectively form a pillar of theoretical critique in family history.

While *The Family in Flux* constitutes a rich depository of empirical and methodological issues in family studies, a few editorial limitations maybe noted, including the inconsistencies in the depth and length of the featured case studies, the underrepresentation of cases from Thailand (especially in Part II), and the concentration of anthropological literature primarily drawn from Japanese scholarship.

There is no question that *The Family in Flux* is a path-finding volume that paves the way for meaningful dialogues among scholars of the family. Each case study combined with the well-informed introduction offers a point of reference for global and regional comparisons on family change and continuity in modern world. *The Family in Flux* is highly recommended for researchers and students from all disciplines interested in family studies in Southeast Asia and beyond.

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4) For a recent study on the historiography of family theory, see Thornton (2005).

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Saigon's Edge: On the Margins of Ho Chi Minh City

ERIK HARMS

Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011, xiv+294p.

In his introduction to the book, Erik Harms states that there are no Vietnamese poems about Hóc Môn, a district lying on the outskirts of Ho Chi Minh City, one of its five outer-city districts. Perhaps this statement was true when Harms was conducting his research there at the beginning of the 2000s and when he was writing this book. But the appearance of this book has changed the situation—in Harms, Hóc Môn found its own poet, as his book, even if written in prose, is nothing short of a poem of appreciation if not of this industrializing area then of its inhabitants.

To be sure, it is a sophisticated and complicated prose poem, not an easy afternoon read. The book is firmly grounded into anthropological and sociological theories: spatial-temporal considerations, analyses of edginess, conflations and confrontations of rural and urban, dichotomies of kinship. It thoroughly considers the relationship between idealized myth-making and practical reality.

The book consists of three parts with each part subdivided into two chapters. The first chapter delineates the historical-sociological framework of the primary binary distinctions between inner city and outer city, the city and the countryside. They are not only in opposition to each other but also complement each other—their mutual interdependence seems to be inevitable as without one the other cannot exist, cannot even be identified. Harms skillfully analyzes trajectories that influence the development of each space and the changes produced by their proximity, reaching the conclusion that the outer city, regardless of this proximity and these changes, persists in maintaining its own identity.

Chapter Two explores the reasons for this persistence: economy, culture, upbringing, opportunities or lack thereof, and—perhaps most importantly—power are the factors that perpetuate the distinctions between urban and rural, inner city and outer city, Ho Chi Minh City and Hóc Môn. Disparity between the center and the margins has a dual effect on the latter: some people get depressed by what they perceive as their inevitably inferior position, while in others the disparity generates creative forces as well as the desire and ability to overcome invisible but firmly established borders.

In Chapter Three Harms considers temporal changes in the material landscape of Hóc Môn