

Special Issue in *Asian Perspective*

Call for Papers

The Domestic Consequences of China's Rise within and across Asia: Global Sources, Local Conflicts

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Chinese capital exports are at the front and center of China's globalization (Hung, 2015), actualizing in \$3.8 trillion of foreign direct investment (FDI) in 2018 (UNCTAD, 2019) and around \$843 billion in Chinese concessionary and non-concessionary financing between 2000 and 2019 (Bluhm et al., 2018). On one hand, numerous scholars have argued that China is using its economic gravity to pursue geopolitical ambitions, demonstrated, amongst other things, by contentious debt-for-equity swaps (Power et al., 2012) and land grabs (Carmody, 2013). On the other, some say that China is providing critical infrastructure financing (Bräutigam, 2009), foreign direct investments to countries with low-investment grade (Gallagher & Porzecanski, 2010), and technology transfers for skills-upgrading (Elu & Price, 2010). Most prominently within the discipline of international relations, researchers argue that host country governments hedge against, and/or pursue varying strategies towards, China (e.g. Lim et al., 2020). Yet, what is relatively less scrutinized is the kind of host country politics that has emerged in response to – or alongside with – Chinese capital exports and the degree to which these changing dynamics address socio-economic cleavages (Camba, 2021a; Liu & Lim, 2022).

This special issue will interrogate the evolving dynamics of political competition, social cleavages, and ethnic tensions in South, Southeast, and Central Asia, and theorize these in ways that enrich the debate on China's impact in the Global South. The three Asian regions make a rich site for empirical investigation and theory building because their processes of democratization and development have differed not only from the Global North or Western countries, but also among themselves. Adopting a macroscale perspective, Southeast Asian countries have generally pursued labor-intensive industrialization and illustrated distinct development patterns (Higgott & Robinson, 2013), South Asian countries are fraught with nationalist movements and inter-state rivalries (Bhattacharyya, 2020), and Central Asian countries are transitioning from their communist past into newly emerging democracies (Cummings, 2013).

However, these regions have – in varying ways – managed disillusionment with the West, increasing income inequalities, and intensified geopolitical tensions. Against this backdrop, China has emerged as an alternative capital exporter as Western firms have increasingly shifted their development finance from hard to social infrastructure, in addition to concentrating their FDI in key sectors not easily participated by developing countries (Camba, 2021b). For many countries, China has also become a provider of military aid, an ally in the international arena, and a model to emulate. These changes are expected to exert enormous consequences on executive power competition among political elites, socio-ethnic fissures within countries,

and geopolitical strategies of individual countries and/or regions. These changes will inform the on-going debates on China's rise by incorporating the changes in host country politics, both within and across the Global South.

This call invites papers from sociologists, political scientists, economists, anthropologists, geographers, and others with regional expertise on Southeast, South, or Central Asian countries to take a nuanced and comparative look at political and societal contestation as a result of Chinese capital exports (and more generally, China's rise). Our interest includes the ten members of ASEAN (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam), the eight South Asian countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and the Maldives), and the five Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan). We are especially interested in papers that conduct intra- and inter-regional comparisons, unpack the domestic ramifications of China's rise or capital exports at the on-the-ground level, and combine qualitative and quantitative methods.

We are keen to explore the following questions:

1. How has Chinese capital exports affected the national or local politics of particular Asian countries? How have these politics reconfigured ethnic relations, societal cleavages, and/or political competition?
2. How (and to what extent) does the (domestic) politics of China rising and its capital exports vary within Asian countries and across regions?
3. How important are concepts such as "state capacity," "regime type," or "patron-client relations" in explaining host country views and approaches towards China?
4. To what extent are the different regions converging or diverging? Is this convergence or divergence dependent on economic models, governing regimes, or ethnic marginalization?
5. Is there anything distinctive about Asia or each of the three region's experience toward China? To what extent do these insights apply to the Global South?

The overall aim is to advance the question of Chinese capital exports or China's rise through the study of Asian domestic politics. As a collection, it would appeal to *Asian Perspective* readers interested in how Chinese capital exports or China's rise shapes domestic politics across national/regional economies. The proposal complements work published in *Asian Perspective*: for examples, "Southeast Asian Responses to China's Belt and Road Initiative" (2021) by Cheng-Chwee Kuik that investigates the responses of Southeast Asian states toward the Belt and Road Initiative, and "Talking Green, Building Brown: China-ASEAN Environmental and Energy Cooperation in the BRI Era" (2022) by Jessica Liao that analyzes energy cooperation between China and ASEAN. This call for papers will deepen such scholarship by (a) extending the analytical lens above and beyond states and looking at *actors* within countries; (b) analyzing motivations and processes apart from hedging, authority, and asymmetry; and (c) scrutinizing China's impact on political competition, social cleavages, and ethnic fissures.

Guest Editors

Alvin Camba is an Assistant Professor at the Josef Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver. He is also a faculty affiliate at the Climate Policy Lab at Tufts University, and a non-resident fellow at the Stratbase ADRI Institute in the Philippines and the Paramadina Public Policy Institute in Indonesia. Dr. Camba has conducted in-depth research on Chinese foreign investments and infrastructure in Southeast Asia, published numerous peer-reviewed articles, and been awarded multiple best research paper awards by several academic associations (American Sociological Association, International Studies Association, Graduate Network Research and Development Network on Asian Security). Dr. Camba's articles have appeared in *The Review of International Political Economy*, *Development and Change*, *Environmental Policy and Governance*, *Journal of Agrarian Change*, and others. His work has contributed to widely-circulated policy reports, and been presented at the World Bank, AidData, and the National Endowment for Democracy.

Guanie Lim is Assistant Professor at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS), Japan. His main research interests are comparative political economy, value chain analysis, and the Belt and Road Initiative in Southeast Asia. Dr. Lim is also interested in broader development issues within Asia, especially those of China, Vietnam, and Malaysia. His latest monograph — *The Political Economy of Growth in Vietnam: Between States and Markets* (published by Routledge) — details the catching-up experience of Vietnam since its 1986 *doi moi* (renovation) reforms.

Victoria Chonn Ching is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Political Science and International Relations at the University of Southern California and member of the Pacific Council on International Policy. Her main research focuses on the development of cross-Pacific exchanges, particularly between China and Latin America with special attention to the dynamics between foreign and domestic policies in the latter. Dr. Chonn Ching is also interested in the broader analysis of the relationship between economic growth, political legitimacy, and power in the context of a changing international environment in the 20th and 21st centuries. Her work has been published in *The Pacific Review*, as book chapters, and related policy media.

Timeline

- June 2022: Call for papers
- July 15, 2022: Expression of Interest – abstracts of 500 words to be submitted to the guest editors, Dr. Alvin Camba (alvin.camba@du.edu), Dr. Guanie Lim (g-lim@grips.ac.jp), and Dr. Chonn Ching (chonnchi@usc.edu)
- July 20, 2022: Notification of invitation to submit
- September 2022: Submission of draft papers to editors; and a two-day virtual workshop for paper presentations and discussion (exact dates TBD)
- October 1, 2022: Submission to the guest editors. The entire collection will be sent to Asian Perspective

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