mission, but returning to it is the only way that the Blue Helmets will be able to continue to be an effective instrument of international diplomacy in the settlement of conflicts and a credible hope for thousands of people caught up in the turmoil of war" (195).

It has become apparent that "traditional" peacekeeping, premised on Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter is not up to the task of maintaining peace and security given the changing nature of conflicts around the globe — from inter to intrastate conflicts. If the world body is to live up to its duty of maintaining the world’s peace, then Coulson’s conclusion, genuine and objective as it is, needs to be reconsidered. The question that comes to mind after reading Coulson’s conclusion is: what then should be done in most of the civil/ethnic conflicts that keep rearing their ugly heads around the globe? Should the international community just sit and watch since these conflicts do not lend themselves to Chapter VI peacekeeping? Perhaps, one way out is for the world body to pay attention to one of the key concepts in Boutros-Ghali’s An Agenda for Peace—preventive diplomacy. Preventive diplomacy was on the verge of success in Rwanda but for “great power” politics. The genocide in Rwanda could have been prevented! Another strategy might be for the United Nations, and in fact the great powers, to give financial and logistic support to regional security organizations since most of these organizations are prepared to take the risk and intervene in combat situations.

Overall, however, Coulson’s work reviews the most crucial issues that need to be addressed if the world body is to play the role that is expected of it. The book is thought-provoking and can serve as a handsome companion for policy makers, scholars and students in security studies.

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Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality
Aihwa Ong

Aihwa Ong’s Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality is an excellent example of a book that speaks to many fields of social science. Ong writes an anthropological text with the fluidity of a storyteller, cleverly combining academic analysis with contemporary media examples and personal anecdotes—Ong has clearly used her insider’s view of Chinese cultural life to its fullest. Her readers learn that in the China of the 1990s, more business deals were concluded in karaoke bars than in teahouses. The Chinese, living both inside and outside of China, are no longer concerned with alleviating political repression. Ong argues that they are concerned with their financial prosperity and have developed notions of flexible citizenship to secure it. That is, Chinese citizenship per se no longer carries the sort of emotive ties one expects to be associated with the idea of citizenship. Instead, the Chinese all over the world have become flexible with respect to the formalities of their citizenship: Chinese have separated their citizenship from their culture, where the former is flexible and the latter is stable, the result of which is that the Chinese, as her title suggests, are truly transnational people.

In this vein, Ong pursues three distinct lines of thought in her book. First, she evaluates the “transnationality induced by global capital circulating in the Asia Pacific Region,” suggesting that increased capital circulation is linked to the increased mobility of the able Chinese population (4). Although the vast majority of Chinese in China cannot afford to leave the country, Ong shows that rural Chinese are moving to factories in major cities and border towns in
the hopes of finding a rich match who wants to support them outside of China. Second, she looks at “the transnationalism associated with the practices and imagination of the elite Chinese subjects” (4), suggesting that the Chinese rich all over the world engage in a sort of business-related cultural network. Ong levels accusations of racism among non-Chinese, especially by the Americans who, she argues, resent the rich Chinese for not entering the American business hierarchy at the bottom in the way expected of good immigrants. However, it is never clear whether the network of business affiliations that Ong holds critical to Chinese success is a reaction to this racism or whether Chinese behaviour is consistent with most immigrant groups—an attitude of helpfulness towards one’s own.

Finally, in the third section, she looks at “the varied responses of South-east Asian states to capital and mobility” (4). It is here that an otherwise lucid and interesting book displays its most critical shortcoming, namely, either a failure or an unwillingness to define the terms properly. The third section is the most theoretical of the three, and is thus the most likely of all three sections to have useful analyses for other disciplines of social science. The clearest example of this problem occurs as Ong confuses the terms democracy, liberalism and economic liberalism.

Ong berates the United States for its pride in its liberalism, and accuses Americans of not having realized that China is a liberal country as well. Moreover, and without explaining how she concludes this to be true, she argues that most South Asian countries are democracies (she does not mention which ones she has in mind) and that China is a “caring society” in ways in which Western countries are not. She suggests, instead, that “a logic of economic liberalism” (187) underlies Chinese economic and social policy, and that “the task is to explain why liberal economies should coexist with a form of state regulation that makes Asian democracies appear ‘liberal’ when compared to neoliberal democracies” (195). The only difference, she argues, is that social regulation in South Asia is accomplished through the state apparatus, while in the West it is accomplished more cunningly through a vast array of social programmes.

She makes references to the “various curbs on the freedom of speech” and refers to the South Asian countries as “so-called authoritarian” (207). As an example, she criticizes international media for pointing to actions made recently against trade unions and public assemblies in Hong Kong, without recognizing that these actions “are taken in the interests of economic liberalism... to make Hong Kong more competitive and politically stable” (206). It seems to me, however, that a country that establishes stability by disallowing free speech and banning public assembly is neither liberal, regardless of the status of economic freedom, nor is it democratic.

In conclusion, readers with a theoretical background may have concerns about the choice of terminology, but aside from this, the book has much to recommend it. It is interesting, well written and has many insights to offer both sinologists and students of citizenship theory.

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