Erik Martinez Kuhonta, *The Institutional Imperative: The Politics of Equitable Development in Southeast Asia*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011, 368 pp.

Accountsof the trajectory of economic growth in recent decades in Southeast Asia, particularly in the so-called "tiger cub economies" of Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines, have taken the foreground of discussion within various academic circles[1]. However, political scientist Erik Martinez Kuhonta finds that the literature lacks a systematic analysis focusing on the level of inclusiveness of Southeast Asian economic development – that is, to what extent has the national pursuit of economic progress benefited the poor? In his book *The Institutional Imperative*, Kuhonta seeks to address this gap by offering a theoretical perspective that explains the pivotal role of strong political institutions in driving the engines of economic growth *with* equity.

The central thesis in Kuhonta's book argues that the interplay of party institutionalisation, presence of a cohesive interventionist state, and adoption of pragmatic policy choices lays the foundations upon which a nation can pursue equitable development. First, he explains that institutionalized parties empower the economically disadvantaged sections of society through inclusive coalitional structures, designed to articulate the poor's interests in advocating genuine social reforms. Second, he lays strong emphasis on state-party dynamics. An effective state bureaucracy, as a partner in growth characterized not by "naked politics" (p. 44) but by competency, functions to operationalize a political party's redistributive goals, while an institutionalized party ensures that the state machinery works towards accomplishing its policy agenda. Finally, he posits that programmatic policies rooted in moderate ideology are more likely to be

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[1] See, for example, ANDREW MCGREGOR, *"Southeast Asian development"* (London, New York: Routledge, 2008); Antoinette Raquiza, *"State Structure, Policy Formation, and Economic Development in Southeast Asia: The Political Economy of Thailand and the Philippines"* (New York: Routledge, 2012); AriefRamayandiand MeganandaSuryana,"Southeast Asian Economies: Striving for Growth", *Southeast Asian Affairs* (2015): pp. 46–64; Hal Hall, "Is There a Southeast Asian Development Model?" *Malaysian Journal of Economic Studies* 51 (2014): pp. 89–111; and Jan NederveenPieterse, "What happened to the Miracle Eight? Looking East in the twenty-first century", *Canadian Journal of Development Studies* 36:3 (2015): pp. 263–282.

successfully implemented, especially when their stated outcomes are geared towards collective benefits and positive-sum gains.

Applying these theoretical assumptions in two main sections of the book, Kuhonta examines the direction of economic development in Malaysia and Thailand. In the final chapters, he extends his arguments to analyze case studies in relation to Vietnam and the Philippines.

On the one hand, Kuhonta asserts that political institutions in Malaysia and Vietnam have been successful in advancing pro-poor socio-economic reforms primarily through the United Malaysias National Organization (UMNO) and the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), respectively.The high degree of political institutionalization in these two countries, Kuhonta argues, has led to the sustainable implementation of an egalitarian and distributive economic model that prescribes strategies. Such strategies include the provision of agricultural support and land reform as a social insurance, improving access to universal health care and education, and targeted investments that could help facilitate the transition of rural labor to more productive and industrialized economic activities.

On the other hand, Kuhonta explains that Thailand and the Philippines have not succeeded in implementing pro-poor policy agenda due to inadequate political institutions, which are often characterized by vacuous party philosophy, factionalism, clientelism, personalism, and patronage politics. A recent example in the Philippines can reinforce how these negative factors indeed obstruct efforts that promote upward economic mobility. Much to the dismay of Filipino low and middle income-earners, President BenignoAquino, who leads the governing centrist Liberal Party (LP), publicly rejected in September 2015 legislative proposals to considerably lower the prevailing individual income tax rate, which, at 32%, is seen as one of the highest in Southeast Asia[2]. The fact that the proposed measure was sponsored by the House Committee Chair on Ways and Means and firmly supported by the Senate President and the House Speaker[3], who are all from LP, points to the inherent limitations of non-institutionalized political parties.

Two main criticisms, however, can be charted in terms of Kuhonta's methodological approach. First, non-inclusion of any substantial discussion on various theoretical approaches to inequality[4] is surprising, especially since

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[2] Philippine Business Groups, Joint Foreign Chambers, "Unity Statement on Income Tax Reform", 23 September 2015, http://www.philippinechamber.com/images/2015/pdf/Position_Paper_Tax_Statement-Unity_Statement_on_Income_Tax_Reform.pdf.

[3] Amita Legaspi, "Special Report: 15 senators, House leaders back measures to lower income taxes",*GMA News Online*, 9 October 2014, http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/382731/news/specialreports/special-report-15-senators-house-leaders-back-measures-to-lower-income-taxes#sthash.QJvrILfc.dpuf.

[4] See, for example, AMARTYA SEN, *On Economic Inequality (expanded edition)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, (1997 [1976]); John Rawls, "Justice and Equality", in *Equality: Selected Readings*, edited by Louis Pojman and Robert Westmoreland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 183–190; John Roemer, *Equality of Opportunity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); and Stuart White, *Equality* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007).

Kuhonta's key focus of study revolves around the concept of inequality. A conceptual analysis on the subject is critical because it enables a more nuanced inquiry into the problems of economic inequalities, as well as a more informed treatment of measuring the levels of inequality.

In addition, comparative indicators, such as GDP growth rates, poverty incidence levels and income distribution, particularly GDP per capita and the Gini index, are employed to examine whether development in Southeast Asia in recent times has been equitable or not. Despite recognizing the drawbacks of using the Gini index as an integral measure (p. 15) and arguing instead that his interest mainly lies "in the *politics* of social reform, especially in the ability of governments to *implement* pro-poor policies" (p. 16 – emphasis in original), Kuhonta fails to acknowledge other more suitable models for evaluating economic inequality.

Indeed, it could be argued that "an integral measure of inequality is not necessarily a good estimator of social justice"[5]. Using a different statistic tools, such as the ratio of extremes, can give us a better picture of the level of income distribution in the highest and lowest economic brackets of a population. For example, data from the UN Human Development Report 2014 indicate that for the period 2003–2012, the richest 20% in Malaysia earned 11.3 times more than the poorest 20%[6]. Based on this finding, we can ask whether the recent growth in Malaysia has truly been equitable. Using this particular approach, therefore,allows us to look more closely into the dispersal of wealth among the rich and poor. Still, other scholars argue that focusing on income distribution as a measure of development is "a restricted definition of welfare[7]. In this regard, dimensions of inequality may be better examined through alternative holistic indicators, such as life expectancy and the Human Development Index.

Overall, despite the aforementioned observations, the key strength of Kuhonta's theoretical and comparative-historical contribution rests with his departure from mainstream obsession with democratization, political class struggle and social structure as likely catalysts for development outcomes. His institutionalist framework could offer observers, especially undergraduate and advanced students of comparative politics and development studies, a more compelling perspective on why certain economic development projects in Southeast Asia have attained a positive degree of shared growth, and why others have not.

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[5] Bob Sutcliffe, "World Inequality and Globalization", *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* 20:1 (2004): pp. 15–37, cited inp. 26.

[6] United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2014: Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing Vulnerabilities and Building Resilience*, 2014, http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr14-report-en-1.pdf.

[7] François Bourguignon, Christian Morrisson, "Inequality among World Citizens: 1820–1992", *The American Economic Review* 92:4 (2002): pp. 727–744, cited in p. 741.

Sumit Ganguly, William R. Thompson (eds.), *Asian Rivalries: Conflict, Escalation, and Limitations on Two-Level Games*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011, 272 pp.

What makes interstate rivalries important in terms of war and peace issues in Asia? In their book *Asian Rivalries: Conflict, Escalation, and Limitations on Two-Level Games*, Sumit Ganguly and William R. Thompson identify rivalry as one of the main vehicles for interstate conflict (p. 1). They argue that the main problem of existing literature on interstate rivalries, and Asian rivalries in particular, is that they primarily focus on case-by-case explanation of antagonistic relations. On this account, the editors use the rivalry concept as a background in order to offer a more general vision of what interstate hostility is. They reject foreign policy goals as a key factor for determining rivalries, replacing it by conjectured applicability of a two-level (domestic and international) game theory. Such considerable attention to rivalry, rather than other forms of confrontation, is based on the assumption that owing to the psychological and historical background, rivalries are susceptible to recidivism and, as a result, bear a greater responsibility for regional proneness to conflict (p. 8).

The book is divided into nine chapters: the first and the last, written by the editors, are attempts to meet a gap in academic literature by providing a general conclusion on the significance of rivalry in Asia and its correlation with the two-level approach. The final chapter summarizes the case-studies examined by specialists in their areas. There are seven Asian rivalries, including the Taiwan dispute, US-China controversies, Indo-Pakistani conflict, Sino-India strategic rivalry, tensions between China and Russia, rivalry on the Korean Peninsula, and China-Vietnam rivalry.

All seven cases are designed to demonstrate the applicability (or non-applicability) of the two-level concept and to scrutinize the role of domestic factors in the conflicts examined. The editors conclude that the relevance of domestic factors in the implementation of foreign policy is not very significant. This is supported by the collection of case studies, which are the main strength of the book owing to their detailed and in-depth examination. Indeed, all of the rivalries in which China is involved are described as those where the domestic factor is "certainly not important" (the Taiwan case, p. 32), "not decisive" (the US case, p. 44), "played no role" (the India case, p. 89) and more distinct "neither domestic politics nor third parties played critical roles" (the Vietnam case, p. 184). This tendency is also valid for the Sino-Russian rivalry, but with regard to the limited contribution of domestic and international triggers in the two countries' rapprochement.

It is hard to ignore the linkage between this tendency and China's policy-making features; in particular, Chinese authoritarianism (excluding other factors) is the natural obstacle to the two-level game concept (p. 196). However, other cases do not lend support to this theory. The India *vs*. Pakistan rivalry is also characterized by the unimportance of intrastate factors but, in contrast with China, the important point is that "domestic political factors remained fairly constant" (p. 62). The rivalry on the Korean peninsula stands out from the other instances: Samuel Kim considers the interactions between the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as complicated by not only domestic and dyadic factors, but also by regional and international triggers (p. 174).

Hence it appears that Ganguly and Thompson find little evidence of the relevance of two-level games theory in Asian rivalries. Moreover, the volume's contributors and the editors agree with the assumption that the political regime does not really contribute to the applicability of this theory (p. 86). For instance, in such cases as South Korea, Taiwan, Japan and India, the editors point out that their electoral systems are appropriate for two-level games, but the elections' impact on the rivalry process is no more significant than in less democratic countries (p. 203).

The possible reason that Ganguly and Thompson's hypothesis finds little empirical support may be an excessive selectivity and insufficient explanation of the terms provided. The book tries to unify three concepts – rivalry, two-level game, and Asian countries – into one well-balanced theory. However, there is no clear idea what the peculiarities of Asian rivalry are in comparison with any others. The editors provide only a limited distinction between Asian, European, and Middle Eastern countries without demonstrating what particular features differentiate the Asian type of rivalry from others', and whether such a type exists or not. It is also unclear what are the distinctive features of rivalry when compared to conflict, confrontation, dispute, and the like, which calls into question the validity of rivalry as a concept. The borders between these closely related terms are blurred: for instance, the editors emphasize that the virtue of rivalry is in "historical and psychological dynamics" (p. 24) that contribute to the more explicit understanding of the problem. However, whether the historical approach is really innovative and unique in the explanation of other forms of antagonism remains unclear.

Moreover, these are not the only gaps to fill. Limited explanations of the terms' differences result in a number of discrepancies, such as Manjeet Pardesi's description of China-India tension fluctuations. He argues that the domestic factor had no impact on overall rivalry and on the escalation in 1959 in particular; however, intrastate triggers were crucial when war between them broke out in 1962 (p. 21).

Though the volume addresses a large number of regional factors, the research seems to be unaccomplished. The result of the hypothesis testing is that the two-level game and Asian rivalries are demonstrated to be unconnected. Although the authors do not formulate a full-scale theory, they provide a strong basis or, as

Thompson and Ganguly conclude, a "preliminary foray" (p. 209) for potential further research. The range of their study interests should not be limited only to the rivalry theme, but can also relate to more general areas, such as war and peace, the development of two-level game theory, and so forth. Nevertheless, the book may prove a useful source of more specific data – it is an excellent example of careful examination of the regional rivalry cases.This makes *Asian Rivalries* relevant not only for advanced researchers, but also for those who have only tenuous familiarity with conflicts in the region. The correlation of Asian rivalries and two-level game theories is shown to be inapplicable, but the paper serves as an attempt to explain the specificity of Asian conflicts–an issue that still remains open.

EVGENY BARANOV

Mary Alice Haddad, *Building Democracy in Japan*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Kindle edition.

Japan's democratic regime is the subject of a broad range of literature, being one of the most prominent economic powers for decades and a unique example of democratization. *Building Democracy in Japan* by Mary Alice Haddad contributes in a unique way to this debate. Qualified as "illiberal, undemocratic" (Chap. 1), and "pseudo, dysfunctional, or incomplete" (Chap. 7) by many scholars, the Japanese political system remains a cherished concern for academics.

Mary Alice Haddad is an American who has lived in Japan, has nearly forty years of relationship with this country, and conducted more than ten years of research in it. She asserts in this book that Japan has a functioning and complete democracy, which is nevertheless different from Western democracies. She states that her intent in this book is to tell a story of people who have managed to transform their undemocratic society and government into a democracy. To prove this, she uses historical and theoretical concepts, and provides a rich and impressive empirical-based work (Chap. 1).

Haddad includes many stories about different Japanese people, generational changes, and civil society organizations. These actors and factors, alongside a transformation of traditional Japanese values and practices, would have "made real" democracy in Japan. Haddad claims that Japanese democracy was not only imposed by the Western occupation, since democracy is an "indigenous" political regime. Thus, it could not have evolved in the same way as it did in Western countries, as Japanese values and traditions are different from Western ones. The democratic institutions imposed by the US occupation, she argues, were not sufficient to democratize Japan (Chap. 1).

The author argues that democratic education and values influenced new generations of Japanese in the post-occupation era, and thus have progressively

transformed political and societal institutions and practices over the past decades. She then uses a new approach to democratization theory: the "State-in-Society" approach, which suggests that democratization is a long process that creates a new political system intended to address pressing social and political concerns through a mutual transformation of state and society. Japan's political system would then be "an amalgamation of Japanese and liberal democratic political values, institutions, and practices" (Chap. 7)

Haddad's definition of the democratic concept raises concerns about her research methods. The author claims that Japan has become more democratic in the past decades thanks to a "generational change" that brought democratic-educated people as a majority of the voting population and later as a majority of the politics in power. She adds that the Japanese elite and government have become more transparent and accountable (Chap. 3). However, considering Japanese characteristics and features of the political, bureaucratic and decision making system, Haddad contradicts herself in her description of the Japanese political system. As she later admits it, the Japanese government suffers from endemic, persistent and structural corruption. Moreover, power is still centralized, with an important lack of transparency.

I would also highlight the fact that, as Akizuki argues, the bureaucracy remains the"key institution determining virtually all major policy issues, not the politicians or the people" (2010: 200). The influence of bureaucracy in Japan is huge. The first non-democratic aspect of the bureaucracy is that they rule without being elected –and even when they are elected, they are part of an elite, a dynasty (Stockwin, 2008), Bureaucrats spend most of their career in the same ministry; there is no turn-over; in the end, the same people continue governing. Furthermore, another mechanism for bureaucracy's undemocratic influence is *amakudari*– "descent from Heaven" – whereby civil servants on retirement take positions in the private sector, public sector, or in politics (Kim, 2014: 157).

Haddad claims that "[f]inally, Japan suffers from persistent sexism, racism, and xenophobia" (Chap. 7). Although the author – through several interviews, personal experience and a historical background – demonstrates that a democratic transformation happened in the Japanese civil society, she makes a hasty deduction saying that these social changes led to institutional democratic transformation through the "state-in-society" approach. Greater democratization on a micro-level of society – creating a generational change accompanied by a democratic culture – does not seem to me to have improved the quality of Japanese democracy.

Although I agree that democracy is a broad and large concept that should be recognized as having multiple forms, one of the main concerns and issues about this book is that it does not provide the reader with a clear definition of democracy. Sunil Kim has previously argued that Mary Alice Haddad actually tends to provide several blurry definitions of this concept (2014). Democracy seems to be about diversity and gender equality when she deals with the democratization of civil society organizations, whereas it is about transparency and decentralization when she refers to the government (Chap. 4).

The four interviews and portraits of her female politicians friends used as basis are about political opportunity and gender roles. Haddad almost suggests that "gender equality" is synonymous with "democracy." According to the author, gender equality appears to be the touchst one for democracy. Nonetheless, "gender equality" is not defined by the author and seems to be approached only from the angle of political opportunity. Besides, one can question the claim that greater gender equality necessarily promotes democracy. Rwandan and Cuban parliaments respectively have 64% and 49% of women Members of Parliament, when the United States of America have 19% (INTER PARLAMENTARY UNION, 2015). A clearer and more coherent definition of "democracy" and "gender equality" would have been a great help for the reader, as would have greater diversity than only four biased interviews. This makes it difficult to make a generalized claim.

Overall, I would say that this book is well worth reading because it shows the reader where and why democracy is embraced and contested within Japan institutions and its civil society organizations. Mary Alice Haddad's extensive empirical work and personal immersion enlightens the reader about relations between government institutions and civil society organizations, and how their practices – as well as the citizens' practices – have changed in a more liberal democratic way over the past generations.

GERMAIN LAIGLE

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Valentina Marinescu, Sivia Branea, Bianca Mitu (eds.), *Contemporary Television Series: Narrative Structures and Audience Perceptions*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014, 215 pp.

The book is a collection of studies that analyze the world of modern television, a world where the barrier between reality and the imaginary becomes hardly noticeable, and TV shows and series become increasingly important in shaping the perceptions viewers have on the way today's world works. In the

contemporary world of syndicated television series and reality shows, the contributors to this book, although from different countries or even different continents, have managed somehow to find a common language through their studies, basing their analysis on wide accepted theoretical and methodological approaches.

The book is divided in thirteen chapters, covering a large array of television products, from historical series to crime/procedural drama or medical ones, from children oriented TV programs to reality formats where audience interaction and participation is crucial to the success or failure of the show. Through their researches, by analyzing the narrative structures of such TV products (the content of the plot, the form used to narrate a story, and so on), as well as the perceptions of the audience and wider public, the authors bring a fresh perspective on the study of television series, thus allowing the reader to understand the impact this kind of media might have.

The strengths of the book lie in the way the editors chose to bring different kinds of research together in their analysis of narrative structures and television audiences. This combined approach works even better when the authors apply themselves to thorny problems such as the ideas of government mentality and national identity crisis and the "media controversy" raised regarding these subjects (as is the case of the Turkish TV series "Magnificent Century", analyzed in *Chapter four* (p. 41) written by Cherie Taraghi) or the emergence of a new wave in the Bulgarian TV series (*Chapter six*, author Valentina Gueorguieva), "staged in the social and political context of contemporary Bulgaria" (p. 94), with a fictional storyline implemented in a "pseudo-reality", constructed by references to actual events (ibidem), that presents "the trinity of power, money and criminality" (p. 102) as a sort of fatality, "something inescapable, inevitable and normal" (ibidem) thus depriving the audience of hope that an alternative that brings social change could be possible.

Other interesting approaches are presented in the various chapters that deal with the media representations of specific social institutions (such as different law enforcement agencies and health services), as well as analyzing the perceptions different categories have on the subject and the way viewers learn from TV products how the world works.

For instance, the study presented in the *first chapter* of the book explores the perceptions British police officers have with regard to the influence TV police procedurals series have on the expectations and the interactions of the public with the police. Thus, the author Marianne P. Colbran presents the results of three focus groups with officers from The Metropolitan police Service and from the Greater Manchester Police Service, each group being joined by two civilian indexers (p.2). Prior to the discussions, the participants watched an episode of the British crime drama "The Bill", the longest running police procedural TV series in UK, that focuses on the lives and work of one shift of police officers, uniformed and

detectives. This series is also considered to be particularly influential on audiences, due to the "emphasis on procedural accuracy" that gave the show an aura of authenticity (ibidem). The aim of the semi-structured group discussion was to find out "to what extent do officers perceive that the fictional representation of their work has an impact on public understanding and interaction with the police" and "what aspects of police work and police role they would like to be portrayed in a television drama for increasing understanding and decreasing expectations of police work" (p. 3). Although the author recognizes that with the information obtained a generally valid conclusion cannot be formulated, she considers is likely safe to assert that "police officers believe that media representations of policing can and do shape interaction with the public and also, on occasion, impact on police work" (p. 12). On the other hand, police officers believe that "portrays of the service-oriented aspects of both frontline and investigative police work" in crime drama "might increase public understanding" of this specific work, as well as "decrease unrealistic public and media expectations of the organization" (p. 13).

Another interesting topic is presented in *Chapter seven* of the book. The study conducted by Valentina Marinescu investigates "the patterns of watching TV medical drama in Romania among doctors and students of the Faculty of Medicine in Bucharest" (p. 104). Using the theoretical background offered by "social representations theory", "cultivation theory", as well as "uses and gratification theory" (pp. 105-107), the author's methodological approach aims to answer two questions: "Q1. What are the audience's motives for watching medical dramas?; Q2. Is medical drama viewing associated with health information orientation for medical students and staff?" (p. 107). To this end, in February-May 2013, were conducted in Bucharest seventy-two interviews with family doctors and students of the Faculty of Medicine in Bucharest (ibidem). The analysis of the empirical data thus obtained "demonstrated that the main elements motivating the Romanian doctors and students at the Faculty of Medicine's viewing of medical television series are medical knowledge, professional values, and team-work qualities" (p. 110). Furthermore, the fact that the Romanian audiences viewed the success of TV medical drama as being the result of the narrative content of the "stories" told, filled with universal values, is in itself a confirmation of "uses and gratifications theory" (ibidem). The interviews conducted with the medical staff and medical students have also revealed that "the respondents were able to assess both the fictional character of some parts of the script and the huge gaps between Romanian and other medical system" (ibidem). At the same time, in spite of the fact that they recognized that the story lines were "either fictitious or heavily dramatized accounts of real incidents", the "respondents were susceptible to adopting new definitions of reality, and to adjusting their value systems" (Ibidem).

Several chapters of the book (three, ten and thirteen) address the genre of Reality TV. A reality format usually attracts a large amount of viewers, many others download and share YouTube clips, and even more people chat about the show. Thus considered a phenomenon, reality TV has often bigger formats than

necessary to present the actual content on offer. Usually part fiction and part fact and often referred to as "reality drama" or "constructed reality", in these shows producers work with a cast of real people, structuring scenes and storylines to enhance specific traits. The characterization, emotional display and story lines often work within a flexible frame of reality.

An adequate illustration and analysis of this genre of television product is the study presented in *Chapter thirteen* (p. 186), in which the authors Sony Jalarajan and Rohini Sreekumar address the notions of stardom image and television charisma while employed for the emotional marketing of social messages. The case study presented is an analysis of a TV reality program, "Satyameva Jayate" ("Truth always wins"), that deals each episode with a grave social issue in India. The authors approached their research by an in depth analysis of the TV show's presenter (and producer), Bollywood actor Aamir Khan, a person already raised to stardom status through his roles in Indian movies, and the relationship he develops with the audiences by personal involvement and charisma. While the analysis of Aamir's stardom follows Dyer's theoretical approach and combines both filmic and non-filmic narratives (p. 189-190, 193), thus explaining the persuasive power and capacity to attract audiences, the further initiation of a public sphere is analyzed according to the definition given by Habermas to this concept, as a "social space where the information and ideas can circulate and form an opinion, and initiate a move" (p. 194). Aiming to reach a broader section of the public, the show producers decided to telecast it (on a significant time slot for family audiences) both on a private channel (for those with access to a cable network) and on the national channel of India (comprising also its regional telecast in five languages). Furthermore, Aamir Khan started a weekly column in a national newspaper in which he reflects on the issues dealt with each week. Another significant step was the opening of the shows website as a platform for public debate and opportunity to give personal opinions regarding both the show and the issues discussed, as well as to upload videos related to the subject. The conclusion of the study enhances the fact that Reality TV attracts attention from consumers, audiences and the wider public in a mediated environment, as part of a broader social and media matrix. Furthermore, by taking a multimedia approach and combining on a TV platform the stardom and charisma of the presenter with the image of an activist seems to have inspired people's support and interest and, although "the show couldn't make a tremendous change in society, people have become informed and a wave of activation can be felt" (p. 196).

All the above being said, this review cannot discuss all of the chapters so, naturally, readers will inevitably find that the book contains more than is covered here. Although at times the style of writing can be difficult to read for those without a thorough theoretical knowledge in the domain, overall the language used allows even the readers without a research background to understand the impact that television series have on audiences all over the world.