2. Theoretical approaches to neighbourhood governance: searching for lost treasure and comparative frameworks

Benjamin L. Read

LOST TREASURE

Hannah Arendt gave the title 'The Revolutionary Tradition and Its Lost Treasure' to the last chapter of *On Revolution* (1963). In it, she laments what she sees as the missed opportunities presented by successive moments of political fluidity for 'an entirely new form of government, with a new public space for freedom' (ibid., 253). Arendt refers specifically to spontaneously formed citizen councils – communes, *soviets, Räte* – that emerged in the collapse of old regimes in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Before long, these small beacons were snuffed out by emergent post-revolutionary states, with their tendency toward administrative centralization and top–down control. What these citizen councils offered, she writes, was the possibility of a system of local self-rule that could bring on to the public stage a certain kind of counter-elite, selected only by their peers: 'those few from all walks of life who have a taste for public freedom and cannot be "happy" without it' (ibid., 283).

Although they are half a century old, seemingly rather romantic, and concerned with political upheaval on an epic scale as much as the quiet workings of everyday institutions, Arendt's words sound a fitting note on which to begin a set of reflections on grassroots-level organizations. After all, those who study the social and political workings of neighbourhoods all seem to search for lost treasure of one kind or another. Like Arendt, they look to the ultra-local level of urban society with some broad redemptive possibility in mind.

It is worthwhile to reflect on this, I suggest, because, innocuous and ordinary though they may seem, neighbourhoods are never studied merely for their own sake. The kind of treasure that is sought strongly colours

the assumptions that are brought to the analysis. Particularly, in order to bridge the gap between 'Western' theory and Asian empirical realities, or even to consider Asia's various forms of neighbourhood organizations side by side – to make them intelligible to one another – these varying purposes must be made clear.

Perhaps Manuel Castells's *The City and the Grassroots* is the most fitting work to consider in light of Arendt's conceit. In his ambitious comparison of cities on at least three continents and over centuries of history, this author too looks to the locality as a potential source of sweeping, lyrical change, such that might 'accomplish the transformation of urban meaning in the full extent of its political and cultural implications' (Castells, 1983, 322). The potential agent of such change takes the form, not of a novel kind of grassroots institution, but rather of 'urban social movements', a wide array of which are scrutinized in the book. In the end, most social mobilizations – from squatter movements in Peru to renewal efforts in San Francisco – come up short when held against the ambitious criteria that Castells applies to them. Only the very occasional case, such as that of the Citizen Movement of Madrid in the 1970s, seems to possess the magical combination of ingredients, including a panoply of goals (collective consumption, cultural identity, self-governance) together with the right mix of social connectedness while also staying 'organizationally and ideologically autonomous of any political party'. Freedom from the entangling alliances and external control that come with established political forces is, for Castells, crucial for an urban movement to accomplish anything worthwhile.

A related school of thought puts local organizations into the conceptual framework of 'civil society', a mode of discussion that is prevalent in anglophone states in considerations of citizen associations. The implicit assumption here is that government exists at higher levels, but that moving outward, away from city hall and into the residential quarters, one crosses a boundary into the non-state sphere. Neighbourhoods are thus qualified to join a special class of organization – voluntary groups standing independent of government – that is seen as distinct, possessing special properties. As readers of this chapter well know, civil society has, for at least two decades in its most recent scholarly life cycle, served as a touchstone in discussions of many disciplines; it has been seen as a particularly valuable form of social treasure.

As one prominent political scientist defines the term, civil society is 'the realm of organized social life that is open, voluntary, self-generating, at least partially self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules' (Diamond, 1999, 221). Scholars in this camp assert that civil society groups contribute to a host of salutary

outcomes, even though this happens partly in unintended ways, through action that is only incidental to the organizations' primary purposes. More specifically, such groups are said to have internal effects on members, making them better citizens by encouraging political participation and providing practice in democratic self-governance, as well as external effects on the state, making the state more accountable by articulating interests and exerting pressure on public officials.[1] In short, civil society enhances politics both by enriching the practice of democracy and by supplementing electoral mechanisms with direct forms of action.

But civil society organizations are found in a wide variety of contexts, many of them unrelated to urban neighbourhoods per se. A prominent article by Robert J. Sampson, Doug McAdam and others provides an outstanding example of the civil society perspective as applied specifically to neighbourhoods, in this case the neighbourhoods of Chicago, Sampson's longtime subject of research (Sampson et al., 2005). The authors gathered fine-grained data on what they call 'collective action events' in this city over the course of three decades – including 'civic events', 'protest events' and hybrid activities that combined the two. They found, among other things, that, at an ultra-local level, the number of such events is strongly predicted by the density of neighbourhood-based organizations, including such things as the 'community newspaper, neighbourhood watch, block group or tenant association, crime prevention program, alcohol/drug treatment program' and so forth (ibid., 693). As they put it, 'prospects for collective action are powerfully conditioned by the presence of established social settings within which emergent mobilization can occur' (ibid., 709). In other words, neighbourhoods serve as sites for local organizations that, in turn, act as incubators for collective action, which they see as manifesting valuable civic capacities in a particularly important way.[2]

Though writing from a thoroughly different perspective – neoliberal rather than neo-Marxist – Robert Nelson shares with Castells a deep scepticism towards the state in his *Private Neighbourhoods* (2005). He too writes of a movement of sorts: the 'constitutional revolution' brought about through the increasing prevalence of the private neighbourhood association in the USA. For Nelson, what is most valuable about the more than 250 000 such associations that had come into existence as of the book's publication is that they empower residents in ways that public government does not permit. Strong local decision-making authority and freedom from certain forms of constitutional oversight, he argues, open up a world of possibilities for property owners to create collective arrangements of their choosing. Neighbourhood associations serve as a check on the depredations of local government and the hubris of paternalistic elites who would impose a common vision upon all. They could even, he

suggests, pave the way towards a broader, deeply libertarian 'postmodern urban agenda' with much greater latitude for market rather than public forces in infrastructure, zoning, schools and other policy areas (Nelson, 2005, 447–9). Nelson praises homeowner organizations as a possible site for experiments in self-government, and he is not persuaded by those who critique such organizations on grounds that they disenfranchize renters and thus are poor models of democracy.

Thus one vision of what neighbourhoods offer is a counterweight to existing local government. Matthew A. Crenson's study of Baltimore also fits broadly into this pattern, albeit more with a communitarian than a libertarian slant. Crenson was particularly exercised by the question of whether neighbourhoods could be thought of as a form of government. 'One is not likely to find anything that deserves to be called a government along the streets of most residential areas', he pointed out (Crenson, 1983, 9). He observes that neighbourhoods lack a means to exercise legitimate physical coercion, which he identifies as the 'distinguishing feature of all authentic political systems' (ibid., 12). Crenson nonetheless resisted the notion that neighbourhood polities should be relegated 'to the twilight zone of "parapolitical systems", along with private groups like churches, trade associations, or universities' (ibid., 13). Their political nature is retrieved, in his analysis, by dint of two facts: neighbourhoods are territorially defined units, just like other forms of government; and all urbanites must live in one neighbourhood or another.

In Crenson's eyes, what is particularly valuable about neighbourhoods is the capacity that some possess for governing themselves informally, a capacity for exercising forms of power as an entity that is not quite an interest group and is more than a collection of community organizations. This might take the form of generating local solutions to urgent problems – such as responding to the looting of stores when a snowstorm paralyses the city's regular infrastructure. Neighbourhoods might also increase society's governability, taking on some of the 'discordant business that would normally fracture the energies of urban policy-makers' and resolving it themselves (ibid., 297). Ultimately, his book strains to interpret 'the neighbourhood as a polity', for instance conceiving of the neighbourhood's dealing with city government and external politicians as 'foreign entanglements'. In the end it acknowledges that, in many Baltimore localities at least, informal political activity is weak to nonexistent, and that the centralization of power in city government does not bode well for neighbourhoods as political units. 'As authority takes root downtown, the political prospects for neighbourhoods seem to wither away' (ibid., 292). The treasure may not be entirely lost, but prospects for the multiplication of this kind of wealth seem bleak in Crenson's book.

A final form of value that is found at the neighbourhood level can be summarized as democratic participation that brings (or forces) grassroots-level input into the workings of the machinery of city government. Research in this vein assumes that city government – although its highest officials may be popularly elected – is insufficiently responsive to the needs of ordinary people. It also views popular engagement in the formal political realm as a worthy goal in itself. Neighbourhoods, thus, are seen as possible sites for participatory democracy, and as avenues that can bring residents into greater involvement in the business of the city.

This perspective is exemplified by Berry, Portney and Thomson's *The Rebirth of Urban Democracy* (1993). In this book, the authors examine neighbourhoods in 15 US cities, with a focus on four of them (Birmingham, Alabama; Dayton, Ohio; Portland, Oregon; and San Antonio, Texas) in which the city government created or incorporated special institutions designed to enhance popular participation. The exact form of these structures varied in each place, but generally involved neighbourhood associations linked to large-scale boards or councils. The common idea was that, through these structures, 'cities can reach out to their neighbourhoods and successfully incorporate the participation of average citizens into public policymaking' (ibid., 1). In their careful empirical analysis, the researchers discovered that the participatory institutions do not meet every expectation that they might be held to; popular participation in the four cities was not systematically higher than that in ten control cities, for example (ibid., 78). Yet they did find some positive effects. Administrators and city council members, for example, 'tend to be more attuned to the general public's neighbourhood issues in the cities with higher levels of community participation' (ibid., 133).[3]

Summary

The previous pages have reviewed several notable strains of scholarship on neighbourhoods by political scientists and sociologists based in the USA. Some of the above works are new and influential, others seem a bit obscure as of the year 2014, but in all cases the ideas resonate. To say that each of these lines of research can be thought of as a search for a particular form of lost treasure is not to belittle any of these particular examples of research. It is merely to make explicit the normative motivations that underlie them, a necessary step before bringing Asian and Western cases into dialogue with one another.

As this review makes clear, the potential value that is seen in neighbourhoods varies somewhat but has some common tendencies. The neighbourhood is seen by some scholars as a potential source of social

movements or collective action, whether transformative or merely part of the drumbeat of a healthy city polity. In other cases, it is looked on as a self-contained sphere of political activity, whether explicitly as a privatized counterforce to local government or more as an informal alternative to it. Finally, some see in it a potential source of democratic participation that can revitalize sclerotic city-run institutions.

Generally speaking, the emphasis in these accounts is on the neighbourhood as an autonomous unit and a source of grassroots-level civic energy, which might be used to pressure the city government or merely to assert a preferred way of life. The neighbourhood is a source of potential bottom-up, popular pressure. Links and entanglements with powerful actors are to be viewed with scepticism, as they might muffle or deaden this latent force.

Perhaps surprisingly, these theorists do not necessarily see the core value of neighbourhood organizations as embodying democratic practice for its own sake. The focus tends to be on what they might accomplish politically, and not on how they accomplish it. For scholars such as Berry et al. or Fung, democratic participation is welcome but the main goal is to improve the way the city as a whole is run, or its schools, or its police department. After all, in US cities there is little institutional apparatus at the neighbourhood level.

CHINA, TAIWAN AND OTHER ASIAN CASES

Most countries in East and Southeast Asia have astonishingly robust and widespread neighbourhood organizations. Yet the relationship between these bodies and theories that emerge from the traditions discussed above is less than straightforward. That is not to say that the theories are of no relevance to the Asian case; the discussion below will point out ways in which they pertain. But the Western accounts were created against the backdrop of a pluralist model of societal organization: although grassroots-level organizations may occasionally receive a helping hand from the government, they are largely left to their own devices. They may flourish or fall into oblivion, depending on the motivation and self-organizational capacity of the residents themselves. For the most part, they are not called on to perform any duties on behalf of government; indeed, at least in the US context, such a notion would seem strange and, to many people, offensive.

The neighbourhood-level organizations of most countries of East and Southeast Asia emerge from a very different pattern. Here I primarily have in mind China's residents' committees and Taiwan's neighbourhood wardens, and most of the discussion will focus on these cases.

(Space limitations preclude a full bibliography of scholarly publications on these cases.)[4] The cases of China and Taiwan are not alone, however. In the background lie other institutions: Japan's *chōnaikai* and *jichikai*; South Korea's *ban* and *tong*; Singapore's residents' committees and other grassroots organizations under the aegis of the People's Association; and Indonesia's RT/RW (*rukun tetangga/rukun warga*).[5]

Within this category of grassroots bodies in Asian cities, the residents' committees (RCs) and the neighbourhood wardens (NWs) stand at opposite ends of a spectrum of state domination. The members of China's official neighbourhood committees are, in essence, appointed by the party-state under a thin veneer of faux electoral legitimation. Moreover, as a partial but important component of what they do, China's residents' committees form a part of a dense network of political surveillance through which the Communist Party identifies and monitors potential threats to its control, such as adherents of the banned Falun Gong sect or political dissidents. In Taiwan, however, candidates for neighbourhood leadership vie for the *lizhang* positions in a four-year election cycle that is, in most neighbourhoods, highly competitive and certainly involves genuine choice on the part of voters. In both China and Taiwan the neighbourhood bodies also keep an eye out for crime and other threats to public order, but in Taiwan the political surveillance function is absent, along with certain programmatic functions such as family planning education and enforcement. Rather, many, although by no means all, of Taiwan's NWs have allegiances to either the Kuomintang (KMT) or the Democratic People's Party, and if they engage in partisan political activity it revolves around the mobilization of voters in elections for the city council, the mayor, the Legislative Yuan, or the presidency.

Thus there are fundamental differences between the residents' committees and the *lizhang*. Still, they also have much in common. For example, they have common roots in the *bao-jia* system of imperial China, which Japan adopted in its colonization of Taiwan as the *hokō* system, and which the KMT deployed on the mainland during the Nanjing Decade (Chen, 1975, 1984; Ts'ai, 1990). Although they have evolved far from these historical roots, today's institutions still share the core element of recruiting neighbourhood members to put their local roots and connections in the service of various administrative and policing programmes. They follow a legal and administrative template that, with some degree of city-by-city variation, is applied in a relatively uniform way nationwide – in other words, their existence is not left to the vagaries of local motivation, but is carefully structured. In contrast to the emphasis in American theory on civic forces emerging spontaneously at the grassroots, then percolating upwards to exert themselves

upon state institutions, here we find organizational forms with a heavily top–down cast to them. They correspond to a notion of harmony and cooperation between state and society – a notion that is simplistic, idealized and perhaps even patronizing, but one that has considerable popular appeal nonetheless.[6]

In light of East Asian cases, it seems that accounts such as those of Crenson, Berry and his co-authors, and others underemphasize possibilities for collaboration between state and society, and how this cooperation itself might constitute a kind of civic force. They posit a liberal, hands-off form of relationship between neighbourhood and state. The focus is not on top–down administration, or how the neighbourhood can work hand in hand with government. Rather, they focus on possibilities for empowerment of the neighbourhood in extra-institutional ways to check the state, supplant it, or pressure it to do its job better.

Thus from a Western, or at least from an American, perspective, these types of neighbourhood institutions fit very uneasily, at best, with the general theories laid out above. Finding concepts that seem relevant requires stepping out of the 'neighbourhood' realm entirely, into broader theories meant to apply to a spectrum of organizational forms. For example, one might look to theories of 'mass organizations', including classic accounts of state-socialist systems or Gregory Kasza's relatively recent synthetic account of what he calls 'administered mass organizations' (Linz, 1975; Kasza, 1995). In many respects China's residents' committees, at least, indeed do fit the mass organization model, although this model rapidly loses applicability when applied to state-sponsored bodies in less authoritarian contexts. One might also look to the concept of state corporatism (Schmitter, 1979; Collier, 1995), although this lens is typically applied to the economic realm and patterns of labour and business organization, rather than to contexts such as neighbourhoods.

Other kinds of theories, such as the 'state-in-society' approach developed by Migdal and others, appear to have applicability, although they are pitched at a high level of generality (Migdal, 1988, 2001; Migdal et al., 1994). The concept of 'state–society synergy', as sketched out by Peter Evans and Nobel laureate Elinor Ostrom (Evans, 1997) and employed by development researchers (World Bank, 2004; Woolcock and Narayan, 2006), points more specifically to the potential utility of the kind of partnerships between government and neighbourhood that are found in cities of East and Southeast Asia. It remains somewhat underspecified as a theoretical construct. For instance, in it there exists no general account of what brings about or sustains such productive partnerships. It too fixates on the prospect of a particular kind of lost treasure: generally speaking, development and poverty reduction. Yet, unlike other approaches, this concept of

state–society synergy provides a starting point and invites us to consider such partnerships further.

One way of slicing into such issues is to ask: what is it that ordinary urbanites value in their neighbourhood organizations? Standard accounts do not generally take such an approach – they focus more on searching for theoretical lost treasure of various kinds, rather than ascertaining citizens' own views of their neighbourhood and what they themselves might like to see realized in associational form. In this respect, interviews in cities of China and Taiwan are eye-opening. To be sure, there are many citizens for whom the residents' committees or the *lizhang* have little salience, and quite a few take a negative view of these organizations. Still, in both Beijing and Taipei a majority of citizens are positively disposed towards their neighbourhood institutions. In Taipei, a solid two-thirds of residents surveyed in 2006 expressed a desire to maintain rather than abolish the position of *lizhang*.

In-depth interviews shed light on the reasons behind this preponderance of approval. Importantly, to the extent that citizens approve of their neighbourhood organizations, they often do so not despite its ties to the state but because of them. For example, many people like having a locus of functioning authority in the neighbourhood, a place where they can go to make problems known or ask for help on any number of issues. They often like a liaison with the government. Again, it would be wrong to paint too rosy a picture here; on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, citizens also express many of the same kinds of complaints and suspicions about their neighbourhood leaders, wondering, for instance, if they are corrupt, insufficiently attentive, or simply powerless to address major issues in residents' lives. Still, there is no getting around the fact that, in the perception of many people, the Asian system has a core strength: designating a person or group of people whose job it is to take broad-spectrum responsibility for the neighbourhood and its problems, rather than leaving this responsibility up to happenstance.

A final point concerns democracy at the neighbourhood level. As mentioned previously, Asian institutions at this level run the gamut from highly state-dominated to popularly elected. The Taiwan case shows that competitive democracy (involving both real contestation and real participation, in Dahl's terms) of a sort usually associated with higher-level office can in fact be manifested even at a very local level of urban society. In Taipei's elections of January 2003, for example, 1377 candidates competed against each other for 499 positions. In that year, only 43 of the *li* had just a single candidate running unopposed; all the other races were competitive (City of Taipei Election Commission, 2003, 217). In the Shuanglian neighbourhood of Datong district, as many as ten individuals sought the *lizhang*

position. Moreover, turnout is high considering the local nature of the elections and the fact that the balloting was not (until 2010) done simultaneously with elections for other offices. Taipei's precise figures on voting show that 38 per cent of eligible voters cast ballots in the 2003 contests.

Admittedly, the *lizhang* system is the best-case scenario with regard to ultra-local urban democracy in Asia, not some representative average of the region. Still, other cases, such as the Indonesian RT/RW, have also democratized in the aftermath of that country's transition from Suharto's authoritarian rule, just as the KMT's power monopoly at the grassroots level ended during the Lee Teng-hui years (Kurasawa, 2009). In other words, although the USA often sees itself as a beacon of democratic practice, more than one of the Asian cases show that neighbourhood democracy can take a more rigorous, institutionalized and competitive form than is recognized in existing accounts. Indeed, few places anywhere in the world have full-scale electoral campaigns at the neighbourhood level. With wardens earning stipends of 45000 new Taiwan dollars (NT) per month, to say nothing of the prestige and other opportunities associated with these positions, residents have strong incentives to seek and defend these posts. As a result, competitive elections make the wardens work harder than they otherwise would to win the approval of their constituents, and also provide a mechanism for getting them out of office if they become lackadaisical or inattentive to their duties. In every recent round of warden elections in Taipei, approximately one-third of incumbents have been replaced by newcomers, testifying to the fact that the elections genuinely result in leadership turnover and are not mere window-dressing.

POSITIVE RESONANCES

Despite all the aforementioned disconnections, it would be wrong to convey the impression that the theoretical accounts cited have no relevance to Asian cases. On the contrary, there are indeed some places where the two resonate with one another.

Although they are conceived as part of a seamless state–society nexus and often act accordingly, many of Taiwan's *lizhang* act in highly independent ways. After all, they win their positions through popular elections, and (unlike members of China's residents' committees) they do not serve merely at the pleasure of the city government; they can be dismissed only if they grossly neglect their duties or commit serious crimes. While more traditional-minded *lizhang* are content with their roles as government intermediaries, others see their role much more as advocates for their communities. Some of the NWs that I interviewed related, with consider-

able gusto, stories of their having taken various government officials to task: criticizing them, for example, for not cleaning up rundown property owned by the state, or for failing to discipline or reassign lazy liaison officers. City officials have reason to treat the *lizhang* with solicitude, given that the politicians in the city council and at the highest levels of the city hall rely on the help of the NWs at election time.

A scholar like Castells, at least as expressed in *The City and the Grassroots*, would assess neighbourhoods on the basis of their capacity for launching social movements. Probably just about any run-of-the-mill neighbourhood association anywhere would fail to live up to this standard, as what Castells has in mind is not merely resistance to some siting decision, but a transformative movement that fundamentally reshapes a city. Certainly the NWs of Taiwan (to say nothing of China's committees) would not make the grade. For most of the *lizhang* – and certainly the more traditional of them, rooted in clan ties and local property holdings – the idea of spearheading an effort to bring about social change would be quite foreign to their dispositions. In isolated cases, younger neighbourhood leaders, or candidates for the office, have taken on campaigns against things they perceive as public nuisances, such as certain development projects, or in one case a proposed memorial tower (*lingguta*). Generally they are reluctant to embrace such causes, however; after all, they risk alienating some of their voter base by taking controversial political stands. The city's NGOs often see the *lizhang* as part of the forces of conservatism against which they struggle in their efforts to promote environmentalism, architectural preservation or other causes.

Sampson, McAdam and co-authors also looked at protests, but they paid attention not merely to such claims-making actions, but also to what they call 'civic events', such as 'a rummage sale for a local church, a neighbourhood breakfast, a local cleanup day, or a charity ball', gatherings whose purposes are 'to celebrate the neighbourhood (for example, festivals), to procure resources (for example, fundraisers), or to accomplish collective goals (for example, cleanups, preservation)' (Sampson et al., 2005, 685). By this standard, generally speaking, Asia's state-fostered neighbourhood organizations fare much better. To cite just one figure from survey data, 22 per cent of Taipei residents reported participating in neighbourhood social activities in 2006. The corresponding figure in Beijing, in 2001, was 11 per cent – although there, as many as 62 per cent said that they contributed to residents' committee-led charity drives. In short, these neighbourhood bodies serve as the locus of a substantial amount of group activity. The question, of course, becomes whether such heavily government-assisted activities can still be seen as a measure of civic vitality in the same way that more neighbourhood-initiated activities can.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has surveyed the various forms of value found in accounts of neighbourhoods written by scholars based in the USA, and tried to bring them into dialogue with two of the empirical cases of a quite different type of neighbourhood institution in Asia: China's residents' committees and Taiwan's neighbourhood wardens. As is true of most research, studies of neighbourhoods always proceed against a normative backdrop; they are motivated by one or another desired sociopolitical state of affairs, which I have metaphorically dubbed 'lost treasure'. When thought about with this in mind, the residents' committees and neighbourhood wardens seem, if not wholly illegible, at least rather difficult to make sense of. Although authoritarian in the one case and democratic in the other, they share a statist nature, which cuts against the grain of many existing studies.

Nonetheless, there are also ways in which Asian institutions do speak to, and should inform, the concerns of scholars working from Western perspectives. In Crenson's book, for example, one finds almost a kind of wistful hope that the neighbourhoods he investigated could take on a more robust and politically active role. Although they are on the state's payroll and form part of its administrative apparatus in ways that would certainly seem odd from the viewpoint of an American city such as Baltimore, Taiwan's warden system puts meat on the bones of the vibrant neighbourhood 'polity' that a theorist like Crenson wishes to see. An even more broadly relevant theoretical framework can be found in the concept of state–society synergy. Institutions such as China's *shequ* and residents' committees, as well as their counterparts elsewhere in the region, are intended to embody a close partnership between the governing apparatus and the neighbourhood. Research to date has only begun to explore the many dimensions of such a partnership: the degree to which it is accepted or rejected by residents; the aspects of governance that it may promote; the costs it imposes by blocking or discouraging bottom–up initiatives; and so on.

The overall suggestion that this raises is for those studying neighbourhood institutions to think carefully about the normative frameworks in which they operate, consciously or unconsciously. Organizations at this level serve many different purposes; they have no single, obviously predominant source of value. It is to be hoped that more research on non-Western associational forms will help to bring more of a global perspective to work in this area.

NOTES

1. Scholars also advance many other claims about the possible benefits of associations (Cohen and Rogers, 1992; Heinrich, 2005; Anheier, 2004; Walzer, 1995). Indeed, Diamond lists no fewer than 13 pro-democratic functions of civil society (Diamond, 1999, 239–50). Mark E. Warren covers similar terrain, although he eschews the term 'civil society', preferring a more open-ended approach to the study of associational life (Warren, 2001, 60–93).
2. In this vein, see also the work of David Horton Smith (2000).
3. Archon Fung's study of participatory bodies in Chicago provides another example of this type of enquiry (2004), and Rebecca Abers's research on Porto Alegre in Brazil exemplifies this variety of work in a context outside the USA (2000). See also work by Schmid (2001) and a separate book by Thomson (2001).
4. My research on China and Taiwan is collected in a book-length study (Read, 2012), as well as several articles (Read, 2000, 2003, 2007, 2008a; Read and Chen, 2008; Read and Michelson, 2008; Read 2008b).
5. These cases are presented in chapters of *Local Organizations and Urban Governance in East and Southeast Asia* (Read and Pekkanen, 2009), and are discussed as a group in my introduction to that volume (Read, 2009).
6. Patrick Guinness has explored the 'harmony' concept with respect to Indonesia's state-structured grassroots organizations, the RT and RW (1986, 2009).

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