

manner to be labeled, “first class.” Amit’s introduction situates the subjects tracked by the authors—diplomats, corporate executives (and their wives and families), international consultants, middle-class retirees, middle-class professionals, those comfortable enough to simply “opt out” of their daily lives and routines to retreat to yoga and spiritual centres, and a group of much-sought-after professional cinematographers—in the binary tension that informs a partiality towards the “local,” counterbalanced with ideas that privilege the “global”—the latter presuming that one can belong anywhere and everywhere simultaneously. The fine-grained ethnographic detail of the lives of these mobile “elites” offered by many of these authors affirms that such “global” movement prompts layered strategies to manipulate, and at times endure, the “local” imposed upon such subjects. This volume contributes admirably to Laura Nader’s long ago request that anthropologists “study up” highlighting in many of the essays the lives and realities of those who often “are taken along for the ride” on such journeys, willingly or otherwise. As such, several of these essays take the reader into the realms of those so transplanted. These essays specifically highlight the complexities of settlement and integration in the “new” and frequently temporary domestic spaces, continually re-created by such “privileged” movement. And even for those who seemed to have little linkage to these mundane spheres, such as the cinematographers that Greenhalgh tracked down, despite the assumedly glamorous landscape of the professional lives of these “stars” they eventually become dogged by the pull of the domestic realities of their lives. Such tensions eventually forced many to re-examine what it meant to be so tenaciously mobile.

Essays by Kurotani, Fletcher and Rodman take readers into the private, if not inner personal spaces of their subjects, finding contrasting realities there. Kurotani argues, ironically, that Japanese corporate executive wives in America relish their domestic space there as more “global,” a less constrained domain than they would know in Japan. In contrast, Fletcher found the lives of a parallel cohort of European and North American partners of international corporate executives in Jakarta confined by “boundedness” of the “bubble” they were constrained to live in, resolutely isolated from the “global flows” that their lives might be imagined to inhabit. The intensely private journeys Rodman documented, taken in a yoga/spiritual retreat in Hawai’i, were both ones of personal transformation, grounded in a physical place and yet transcendent of any connection to it at the same time.

The lives of all travellers in this volume were never disconnected from the places from which they came. Essays by Amit and Oliver highlight the characteristics of the ties that produce understandings of both belonging at home and away. Amit argues the claims made by transnational discourse that ties to family and natal home are the resilient ones that continue to shape those who live mobile lives did not resonate with the realities of the lives of the international consultants she interviewed who had lived abroad for much of their professional lives. Rather the latter are often “weak” in relation to ties forged over the years with others who move and work in the

same circles. In contrast, for many of the retirees in the south of Spain who are the subject of Oliver’s work, one’s “real” home always remains elsewhere, even if one does not want to regularly return there. Such desired distance is fostered by an understanding that the latter is a realm of tedium and personal limitation, inhabited as one retiree said by “fuddy-duddies” (p. 134). Regardless, the liminal space of southern Spain, resonating with the retreats described by Rodman, highlights the complexities of forging meaningfully constituted communities among such fluid populations. Their transient populations and a focus on “the self” perpetually work against such potential, even if the idea of community remains durable. Torresan’s compelling analysis of the intricacies of acceptance of Brazilian middle-class professionals into the workforce and social spaces of Portugal demonstrates the fragility of any presumption of privilege, as such notions intersect with the entangled interplay of colonial legacies, the realities of class positioning, and obviousness of visible difference in their new home, flagging these immigrants to many Portuguese as distant but somewhat uncomfortable relatives, whose home in reality is elsewhere. In a parallel manner, Olwig’s analysis of middle-class Caribbean migrants deftly teases out how cultural values and social relations informed by class positioning understood at home were challenged as they confronted vestigial colonial assumptions of who has the capacity to claim the privileges afforded by such positionings and understandings.

This small volume is a salient contribution to the scholarly examination of travel, tourism, migration, mobility, elites, globalization and transnational identities. Its arguments are sophisticated and probing, backed by rich ethnographic detail, made accessible by engaging and readable prose. It is a stimulating and pleasurable read. At a mere 172 pages, *Going First Class* could work well in a myriad of classroom situations, in courses that engage in many debates and discussions. I would highly recommend it for both personal and institutional libraries.

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**Choy, Tim**, *Ecologies of Comparison: An Ethnography of Endangerment in Hong Kong*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011, 224 pages.

*Reviewer: Alan Smart*  
*University of Calgary*

It might stretch an overused metaphor, but my reaction to *Ecologies of Comparison* is that it is a tale of two books. The first involves a set of exhilarating excursions through issues inspired by science and technology studies (STS); the second, an ethnographic study of Hong Kong based on the doctoral research of an anthropologist. My initial enthusiasm for this first book, influenced by my own current research that has brought me into productive engagement with STS, is severely tempered by dissatisfaction with a variety of elements of the second book. In doing so, it has also forced me to consider the

temptations for readers such as myself of high-velocity theoretical explorations, and the risks that “cheap theoretical thrills” might pose for anthropology. The two analytical projects may be brought together, Choy suggests, as “an ethnography of comparison” which “offers a close view into some of the comparisons, differentiations, and articulations that characterized environmental, political, and social scientific knowledge production” in 1990s Hong Kong (p. 6).

Our first book is more a set of essays than a monograph in the classic sense: the absence of a conclusion indicates this, although some themes do return in the final pages of the ultimate that have emerged in other essays earlier, particularly the relationships between particularity and universality, and the nature of contemporary localities interacting with encompassing scales of measurement and constitution. He begins from the question of the “specificity” of Hong Kong as it emerged in a variety of different kinds of discourse during his fieldwork. The first substantive chapter focuses on “endangerment”; both of pink dolphins threatened by land reclamation for the new airport on Lantau Island and other development processes, and of Tai O, a fishing village on Lantau. In talk about endangerment, he sees parallels with anxieties about Hong Kong’s future in the wake of its return to Chinese sovereignty in 1997. Here my concerns about the second book, the ethnography of Hong Kong, began to emerge. There is only one written source about Tai O used, yet a number of studies have been conducted about the village, including by anthropologists Liu Tik-sang and Cheung Siu-woo of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. Some, but not all, of these studies were published in Chinese, which led me to realize that there is not a single Chinese publication in the list of references. This, in turn, led me to wonder about the issue of language fluency. Choy leavens the book with Cantonese terms, but it is not clear how much of the research was done in Cantonese and how much in English with the cosmopolitan environmentalists that appear so frequently in the discussion (an analysis of their accounts of adopting their environmental vocations is the subject of Chapter 5). In any case, there are relatively few anthropologists in Hong Kong’s universities, so it is surprising that he did not discover that others had done work on Tai O. I also became aware in this chapter that despite considerable attention throughout the book to arguments between environmentalists and government officials, no government reports are discussed or listed in the references. For a study of the social construction of the environment, this seems a strange omission, and begins to raise questions about the solidity of the STS side of this study.

In the next chapter, Choy turns to analyses of “specificity” in Hong Kong, starting from an account of the scientific discovery of orchids unique there, and then turning to the anthropological preoccupation with the uniqueness of Hong Kong people. He criticizes these analyses, attempting to “denaturalize” the idea of “endangered Hong Kong way of life” and pointing out that the “pro-democracy mobilizations that emerged in anticipation and in the wake of the transition

to Chinese sovereignty were primarily conservative” and were not attempting to “transcend conditions of finitude. Instead, it is to continue living as you were” (p. 70). This seems unfair to me: couldn’t the goal of Hong Kong autonomy also be about preserving the possibility of becoming something else that China might not want it to be, about preserving the conditions for self-transformation? And if deconstructing the prominent idea that a Hong Kong identity only came into being since the 1960s was the goal, perhaps some close attention to dissenting historical accounts might have been useful. John Carroll’s *Edge of empires: Chinese elites and British colonials in Hong Kong* (2005) for example argues that at least certain Chinese residents had developed a Hong Kong identity in the 19th century. History is at best thin in this volume, and even the review of the anthropology of Hong Kong leaves massive gaps. The seminal work of James “Woody” Watson, for example, is only represented by his edited volume on McDonald’s in East Asia, neglecting detailed accounts of village life and politics that would have been relevant to the village-based environmental conflicts addressed in several chapters, particularly Chapter 4. Whether or not the book is an important contribution to STS, these failures to build on the existing state of the art limit its significance for anthropological knowledge of Hong Kong.

Even in the STS dimension, though, weaknesses appear, suggesting a thin body of knowledge in the relevant areas, or perhaps simply sloppy writing caught up in the theoretical pyrotechnics. Discussing the pink dolphins, Choy states that “everything hinges on endemism in the politics of endangerment. If the dolphins could swim somewhere else and survive, there would be no need to stop the dredging and dumping in Hong Kong” (p. 30). Hardly: much conservation science and politics concerns “local extirpation” rather than extinction, such as a current campaign by the Alberta Wilderness Association to protect the locally, but not globally, endangered greater sage grouse. Elsewhere, in the final chapter on “air” and its neglect in social theory, he states that “in colonial times, people cared mostly about heat and humidity” (p. 160). What about the widespread belief in the miasmatic theory of disease transmission through tainted air, that led to dual cities and segregated European areas like the Peak and is reflected in our word for malaria (mal’aria, bad air)? The massive bodies of work on colonial medical epistemologies and their impact on urban planning is completely absent here. More generally, the reader of this book would not be aware that Hong Kong is a city whose ecology and environment has been among the best studied in the world, including Stephen Vickers Boyden’s pioneering *The Ecology of a city and its people: the case of Hong Kong* (1981), numerous studies since the 1960s to investigate whether the intense density of the city resulted in social pathologies, and vast volumes of work on urban sustainability.

If I knew nothing of Hong Kong, I could have probably left my reading with renewed enthusiasm for the insights of STS application of cutting-edge social theory to the production of scientific and environmental knowledge. Instead, I am left wondering what I have missed in similar books produced

about places that I have no knowledge. In the desire of anthropologists to play in the exciting arenas of interdisciplinary social theory, are we at risk of losing the strengths of intense research engagement with the social and cultural processes involved in the organization and transformation of particular places? Do we still need doctoral research in anthropology to first encompass the relevant work done in the fieldwork site in the past before following the exciting traces of global scales and theoretical debates? If not, what will be anthropology's distinctive contributions to the swirl of what we might call recombinant social science?

## References

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**Colloredo-Mansfeld, Rudi**, *Fighting Like a Community: Andean Civil Society in an Era of Indian Uprisings*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009, 233 pages.

*Reviewer: Kim Clark*  
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This book explores complex questions of indigenous identities, livelihoods and mobilization, in a country known for having perhaps the strongest indigenous movement in the hemisphere. The product of more than a decade and a half of research in several highland regions in Ecuador, *Fighting Like a Community* works up from local contexts to examine what it means to be an indigenous person, and an indigenous community, in Ecuador in the early 21st century. Colloredo-Mansfeld concludes that it does not mean uniformity, shared experiences and consensus. Instead, the very differences of perspective and experience that must be continually negotiated at the heart of such communities have informed a broadly based indigenous movement that is also able to navigate successfully considerable internal differences. This study shows all the signs of being a second book, the result of mature reflection on Ecuadorian society undertaken over time and in more than one region: the countryside of Imbabura around Otavalo, rural Tigua in Cotopaxi, and the migrant and working-class neighbourhoods in the south end of Ecuador's capital city Quito. If Colloredo-Mansfeld's first book—*The Native Leisure Class: Consumption and Cultural Creativity in the Andes* (1999)—is very good indeed, his new book is even better.

An economic anthropologist whose work illuminates political processes, Colloredo-Mansfeld squarely confronts the multiple ways of being indigenous by beginning his book with accounts of three indigenous men's very different careers in the artisan economy. The first third of the book introduces us

to: the founder of Tigua painting, who uses his art to enable a life for himself and his family in the rural highlands of Cotopaxi; an Otavalo textile entrepreneur whose view of progress echoes some passages of Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (although the religion that sustains his vision is Mormonism); and a Tigua artist and community activist in Quito who has dedicated energy to organizing Tigua artists and resellers in the capital city, as well as channeling resources back to their communities of origin in Cotopaxi. The notions of the good life that each of these men pursues differ considerably, but it is significant that they all build their careers as people from particular places, particular indigenous communities, even when they work elsewhere.

Having presented a wide range of livelihoods and visions characterizing community members, Colloredo-Mansfeld turns to how indigenous communities nonetheless manage this diversity and the meaning of membership via processes of vernacular statecraft. In this area of the world where a number of elements of community structure were a product of the demands and pressures of colonizers and responses of the colonized in the 16th century (and before then, of shifting populations and identities under the expanding Inca empire), additional forms of legibility were promoted in the 1930s when the Ecuadorian government created the category of *comuna* in indigenous regions, with specific community offices and procedures. In the three situations of conflict and negotiation explored in the second third of the book, the author delves into such issues as the use of lists to record participation in community projects, how participants bring to life—make real and consequential—local jurisdictions, and how the structure of community offices and the symmetry between communities allows the negotiation of conflict that threaten to turn neighbours against each other. Throughout, Colloredo-Mansfeld reminds us time and again of how these processes take place where there are not only different careers and dreams, but also winners and losers in the new (and old) trajectories of indigeneity.

In the final third of the book, Colloredo-Mansfeld turns his gaze from internal community processes to negotiations with other groups that put additional pressures on the processes of vernacular statecraft and negotiation explored already. When Tigua artists in Quito are threatened with expulsion from their selling posts in a centrally-located park, they must negotiate with each other as they negotiate with municipal authorities and mestizo artisan associations. When community members have encounters with the legal system they must navigate not only court offices and legal procedures, but contradictory indigenous values. And when they block roads as part of a national uprising against a free trade agreement, they must negotiate internally (as community members may also suffer from a civic strike), as well as with regional and national actors, both inside and outside the state. In all cases, Colloredo-Mansfeld depicts the truces and temporary alignments that facilitate what are usually only partial successes. However, he emphasizes the larger significance of the processes followed