

study, living and working in solitary are surviving. Thus, literal survival means at least not being physically killed by the masked malignancy of solitary. But what constitutes figurative survival?

Again, Rudes offers a starting point for beginning to clarify figurative survival, this time in her conclusion's final paragraph. Here, she writes: "Both RHU residents and staff feel alone, at risk, and discarded. But it if offers any hope at all, they still feel. They are, in fact, surviving. But so much more is needed and so very much more is possible" (p. 184). So, figurative survival, Rudes suggests, means possessing the capacity to feel, even if those feelings are reflective of the "cavernous wounds and festering sores" (p. 184) inflicted by solitary.

This conclusion offers an invitation to interrogate and identify the other facets of the human experience that must inform the operationalization of survival. Is hope, which informs Rudes' construction of tenacious resilience, a component of what it means to survive, figuratively? Are relationships (the subject of Chapter 3)? More broadly, should survival as an analytical construct for interrogating punishment be bifurcated into its literal and figurative components? And, if components like hope, relationships, and the other ideas that comprise the meaning of individual rights—are part of an integrated definition of survival, can we still empirically conclude that people in solitary are surviving?

Parsing the difference between literal and figurative may seem an exercise in semantics. Already, though, the field is increasingly taking the task of selecting a word to describe the people who live in carceral spaces seriously, so perhaps other seemingly self-evident concepts are also ready for more careful consideration. If, for example, we choose "resident" to describe the people living in solitary because it denotes, as Rudes argues on the book's first page, "individual rights," unlike a word like inmates, offenders, or prisoners, then it is also worth reflecting on the set of individual rights that constitute survival and on whether we, the people who live, work, and study solitary, are surviving.

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The politics of rights and southeast Asia. By Lynette Chua. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. 2022. 66 pp. \$22.00 paperback

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When I first read Lynette Chua's book on the politics of rights and Southeast Asia, I was inspired. Not only did she successfully encapsulate the Southeast Asian position on "rights" in the post-colonial neo-liberal age, she managed to strategically reflect on the sheer diversity and heterogeneity of Southeast Asia—in terms of its' cultures, laws, politics, development policies, and governance structures. The book is certainly not just an account of the "black-letter" law or legal rights, partisan or elite politics—it goes further by accurately depicting the mobilization of rights and politics from below. It is a story about the utility of rights by social movements and civil society organizations that represent the disenfranchised and marginalized in Southeast Asian countries in the Global South region.

The book is divided into four main sections: Section 1 is titled Concepts and features of politics of rights; followed by Sections 2, 3, and 4, respectively, titled Power and control, Power and resistance, and Power of rights. The structure and design of the various sections make it easy for the reader to understand the complexities of power that exist in Southeast Asian states and societies. In the introduction section, Chua reveals the challenges faced in mapping the politics of rights in such a diverse and disparate region (which comprises mainland Indochina and the Malay Archipelago). As Emerson (1984) described it, Southeast Asia is "heterogeneous, disunited, and hard to delimit."

Section 1 on the concepts and features of politics of rights begins on the premise that the study of politics of rights originates from the American scholarship on law and society (or sociolegal studies). The study of rights mobilization is particularly relevant here—as it has an empirical advantage and takes a bottom-up approach. This ensures the inclusivity of subaltern voices in Southeast Asia. Chua developed three key features of rights mobilization: decentring law on the books; interplay between structural and subjective conditions; and plural practices of rights. These features widen the scope of the study to include the official/legal and the unofficial normative orders, actors and practices; as well as the overarching structural conditions and subjective ways in which individuals exercise agency. The plurality of rights practice in Southeast Asia certainly mirrors the obvious and not so obvious diversities including ethnicity, gender, social class and privilege.

Section 2 on power and control, maps out the various studies that accurately show the use of rights mobilization in the face of structural conditions. Chua locates the plural sites of authoritarianism—in both state and non-state. While the sites of authoritarian power in states are mostly visible, the sites of such power in non-state entities are less apparent. Interestingly, this includes, “religious communities, tribes, political parties, corporations, gangs, social clubs, clans and families” (Chua, 2022). These sites not only exhibit power through legitimacy but also moral superiority. The section goes on to elaborate on the ways or modes in which social control is exercised. Overt modes include violent and sometimes extra-legal ways in which the powerless are intimidated. Elusive modes on the other end of the spectrum are about the subtle and less noticeable controls. Between the two extremes, is the somewhat overt and elusive mode—which includes the discreet and discernible. An example of this is the agenda-setting done by members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations or ASEAN—which overtly displays commitment to human rights principles but conveniently removes all contentious issues from discussion.

Section 3 on power and resistance addresses the question of *how* people mobilize rights and *what* forms rights mobilization take. The discussion traces the exercise of agency in various sites of authoritarian power. Chua maps the studies which try to make sense of the diverse circumstances (particularly in terms of type of grievances and collective identities) through which people *decide* to mobilize. Her analysis shows two types of needs that require fulfillment—quodidian and material needs—where the disenfranchised and dispossessed of Southeast Asia seek moral and human dignity. She goes on to organize the repertoire of rights practices into four categories: (a) the uncoordinated, hidden and (mostly) informal, for example, Malay peasant “everyday resistance” (Scott, 1984); (b) the coordinated, hidden and (mostly) non-formal e.g. the Pink Dot gay rights movement in Singapore; (c) the uncoordinated, open and formal-to-non-formal, for example, the labor rights movement in Vietnam; (d) the coordinated, open and formal-to-non-formal, for example, the Hindu Rights Action Force or HINDRAF movement in Malaysia.

Section 4 on power of rights brings the discussion to a central question—*what* are the consequences of rights mobilization and *how* do we assess them. In measuring the power of rights, Chua takes stock of both the instrumental and cultural powers of rights. The instrumental powers have quantifiable results that include legal recognition of rights claims, law reforms and penalties on rights violations. The cultural powers which are less visible have qualitative results such as increase in motivation, empowerment of the powerless, and cultural transformation. Chua addresses critiques of rights mobilization which opens the questions of hegemony of rights, that is displayed in both progressive and regressive type of social movements.

Essentially, rights mobilization in Southeast Asia can be contradictory and problematic. However, that should not dissuade or discourage the use of rights which have been proven to be effective. The final and crucial take away from Chua’s book is that: “we give rights a chance.”

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