ent. This comment also underlines why this book is so valuable. It gives Americans a special opportunity to put aside doing for a while, to listen to the new Americans from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, to hear and learn things one would not know otherwise.

After reading and learning from this book, I have one criticism I would not have had before: the title should have been "Voices of Americans from Southeast Asia."


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This book presents elements for a research agenda on how ethnic communities govern themselves. The author sets out to explain the organization and functioning of ethnic communities as polities. In particular, Breton conceives of the internal politics and external relations of ethnic polities as "unofficial governments." These ethnic polities do not have institutions capable of physical coercion, yet they take on a public character; they deal with political struggles and authoritative decision-making. The term governance refers to the efforts of ethnic polities to deal with the political environment. The environment matters both because it constitutes a set of constraints and opportunities and because of active external intervention into community affairs. In order to illustrate his arguments, the author uses secondary literature, largely on Canada, but also on the United States and the United Kingdom, and an Ethnic Panel Survey on ethnic groups in Toronto. The inclusion of Canada in the subtitle may even be somewhat misleading. Canada is used as an illustration, but nowhere are the propositions placed into the historical context of Canadian political development.

The conceptual frame rests on a typology of political configurations along the following dimensions: distributions of power in the polity (fairly equal or unequal) and polarization of the ethnic community (high or low). Low polarization entails a high degree of cooperation between groups within the polity, high polarization is characterized by competition and contention. Breton derives four possible ideal-typical cases. Accommodation and ascendency are characterized by a low polarization between competing political groups within a given ethnic polity. Accommodation mainly occurs when resources are spread out among several subgroups and thus a fairly equal distribution of power exists in the polity. Ascendency results when a group is able to eliminate or politically neutralize competitors or to absorb them into its own circle, and thus to dominate the political and policy processes. We find truncation and segmentation when competing subgroups are highly polarized. In a segmented political order, where power is distributed fairly equal, parallel centers exist in opposition to each other, while each group governs a particular segment of the community. In the case of truncation, where power is distributed on a highly unequal basis, one political segment has been effectively marginalized.

This typology is clearly the most innovative and concise statement of the book. The following chapters include discussions of the exercise of leadership and power and policy-making, as well as the construction and maintenance of an ethnic community, such as participation in community affairs and collective identity.

The book nicely supplements political economy and rational choice perspectives in that it avoids the reductionist tendency to see politics simply as an expression of underlying ideological or material forces. However, there is no explicit discussion of sociological network theory upon which Breton's elements of a framework are based. The chapters on leadership, policy-making, political participation and collective identity at times read like an inventory of hypotheses. We do not learn about the relative importance of factors governing ethnic polities. Thus, the book does not fully succeed in its goal—the integration of relevant concepts.

Intriguing questions are raised by Breton's use of Daniel J. Elazar's (Community and Polity, 1976) work on Jewish community organizations in the United States: Can the Jewish experience in the United States, where conceptions of polity were different from other immigrant groups, be extrapolated to other groups and countries? Another question arises from the differentiation between "territorial minorities" (e.g., Quebecois, not discussed) and "nonterritorial minorities"
(Breton’s focus). If it is not territory, then what is the basis of the governance of ethnic communities, ideology, interests or functions? Above all, how do they interact?

It is only by immersing ourselves in the case studies of particular ethnic communities in a comparative perspective, based upon theoretical statements which give weight to factors involved, that we will be able to generate new advances. Breton’s study constitutes a valuable first step toward this goal.


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In the late nineteenth century, the predominantly Greek (or Uniate) Catholic group community of self-described Rusyns began arriving in America from three distinct regions of the Austro-Hungarian Empire—Eastern Galicia, Northern Bukovina and then-Hungarian Transcarpathia—now five of the westernmost oblasts or the Ukrainian SSR. Soon they were followed by their churches and, largely on the basis of ecclesiastical rivalries among Galician-based Uniates, their Hungarian-based co-religionists and the Russian Orthodox Church (the latter two funded respectively by the Hungarian and Russian governments), they evolved into Ukrainians, Byzantine-rite Carpatho-Ruthenians, Russians, or were assimilated. As the Ukrainian identity gained dominance in all the areas from which the “Rusyns” originally came, only the Ukrainian community was strengthened by successive waves of emigration.

Dr. Kuropas has presented us with a vivid account of how the Ukrainian American community evolved, stressing two interconnected themes: 1) the organizations with which the community shaped itself and maintained its ethnic distinctiveness and 2) how rivalries in the ancestral homeland or about its desired rate divided the community into rival and often warring American organizations. Both are treated against the background of the problems Ukrainians encountered in the New World and how new waves of emigration, leaving a different Ukraine from its predecessors, challenged the Ukrainian American hosts and mentors who welcomed them. What resulted was one of the most, but not necessarily best, organized of all America’s ethnic groups.

Just as the original Rusyns confronted alternatives in the self-identifications they might choose, Ukrainian Americans in the antebellum period faced options in organizational and political self-identification based on religion (Catholic versus the newly created Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodoxy) and political options facing the homeland. Ukrainian Orthodoxy was particularly attractive to those who could not accept the Latinizing tendencies of the interwar Ukrainian Catholic hierarchy, creating the paradox that most of today’s Ukrainian American Orthodoxy are either converts from Catholicism or the descendants of interwar converts.

Political divisions surfaced even before World War I and were focused by responses to Ukraine’s failure to gain national independence in what Hugh Seton-Watson dubbed the Great East European Revolution. Especially during the period of Ukrainization in Soviet Ukraine (1923–1933), communism presented an attractive alternative for many nationally-mined but radicalized Ukrainian Americans. Others opted for traditionalist monarchism under Hetman Skoropadsky, who had led a German-sponsored regime in Kiev in 1918. The strongest group, the Organization for the Democratic Rebirth of Ukraine (ODWU), evolved a naively Americanized and democratized version of integral nationalism connected to interwar Poland’s underground Organization of Ukrainian Nationalism (OUN). While one would have hoped for a more systematic treatment of the socialist alternative embodied by the Ukrainian Workingmen’s (now Fraternal) Association, the paucity of sources (the personal papers of Miroslaw Sichynsky, UWA president 1933–1944 and the dominant figure of anti-Soviet Ukrainian American socialism in the interwar period, were thrown out by a janitor) make this shortcoming understandable.

Kuropas rounds out his account with the absorption of Ukrainian displaced persons after World War II, a tremendous challenge to their Ukrainian American sponsors and one of the most outstanding examples of community-based altruism in the annals of American ethnic history. In writing this excellent survey, the author has done a tremendous service to