

counterparts, concurs with the former. All these developments are captured lucidly by Li and Sadoi, and this is, perhaps, what motivates one to read their work.

Sadoi examines the process of technology transfer from foreign to local firms in China and compares the experience of China in the automotive parts sub-sector with Proton's experience in Malaysia. In the engine and transmission parts production, technology transfer from MNC played an important role. Additionally, the strong historical background of the metal industry has contributed to the localisation of engine parts production in China. In comparison to Malaysia's experience, despite starting automobile production at the same time – in the 1980s – Chinese firms were found to have achieved a greater localisation rate owing to the differences in government policy on localisation, presence of local support industry (e.g. metal) and second-tier suppliers in the engine and transmission parts and process of technology transfer.

The strength of this book is the editors' insistence upon exploring the role of MNCs, technology and performance in Asia, in particular among the currently emerging countries. As a whole, this book provides a collection of interesting articles, focusing on lessons important for developing countries, especially in driving policy design that can help leveraging from FDI. Roles of multinationals in Asia – in China, Japan, India, Thailand and Malaysia – especially as sources of technological knowledge is well compiled and presented in this book. Some excellent case studies provide in-depth detailed insights into individual development paths of local firms and their contexts. Without a doubt, this improves our understanding on the long-debated issues of MNCs' influence on developing countries. It is a "must-read" book for those interested in the subject of multinationals, technology and localisation.

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The Transformation of Yiguan Dao in Taiwan: Adapting to a Changing Religious Economy

Yunfeng Lu (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008)

This is a well-crafted monograph about a Chinese religion. It provides the most comprehensive overview of Yiguan Dao, a religious sect that is perhaps obscure to most people but specialists would trace its spiritual roots back about 2000 years ago.

Besides the three major traditions of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism and numerous, often nameless, folk religions, there has been a tradition of sectarian movements in China throughout its long history. From the Taiping Dao in the Han Dynasty to the White Lotus Sect in the Yuan Dynasty to the hundreds of spiritual groups in late Qing and the early Republic era, the sectarian movements are often associated with political rebellions and government's violent suppressions.

The name Yiguan Dao (an alternate transliteration is I-Kuan Tao), attributed to a Confucius' saying in the *Analects*, was formally adopted in 1905 by the founder of the sect who designated himself as the 16th patriarch. According to the author, it may

be translated as “the Dao of Unity,” or “the Way of Unity.” Various other sources translate it as “the Penetrating Dao” or “the Pervasive Truth.” Like other Chinese sects, Yiguan Dao is a syncretic religion that integrates elements of Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism and shamanistic practices. Unlike most other sects, however, Yiguan Dao’s innovative organisational structure and proselytising tactics under the 18th patriarch Zhang Tianran enabled its rapid spread in the 1930s and 1940s, claiming over 10 million followers throughout China. As a well-organised sect that demands exclusive commitment and emphasises proselytism, it became a political threat to the totalitarian government. Consequently, in the early 1950s, both the Chinese Communist government in mainland China and the Kuomintang government in Taiwan banned Yiguan Dao.

In mainland China, Yiguan Dao appeared to be wiped out by the mid-1950s. In Taiwan, however, the suppression led to unexpected consequences. Yiguan Dao successfully adapted to the suppressive environment with innovative doctrines, organisational structures and proselytising tactics. In doctrine, government persecutions were explained as one kind of “tests” the believers must pass in order to achieve a higher spiritual status or receive spiritual rewards. In organisation, the sect leader divided the followers into numerous autonomous divisions and small groups. Small group leaders reported to their superiors but did not interact with, or know much about, other groups. If a group was captured by the police, other cell groups would not be affected by confession or defection. Meanwhile, committed followers were encouraged to become initiators and develop their own cell groups by converting kinsmen and friends. The successful initiators were promoted to higher-level leadership positions. As a result, thousands of small initiator-disciple cliques were formed despite police crackdowns. When they could not congregate for collective worship publicly, Yiguan Dao groups often gathered for birthday parties or tourist excursions. Many Yiguan Dao leaders who were entrepreneurs built Buddha Halls on the property of their company and integrated religious instructions into their business training courses to their employees. Meanwhile, Yunfeng Lu argues, suppression actually helped to reduce free-riders who only wanted to take benefits of the religion, and the economic and political sacrifices of the leaders and committed members helped to boost the confidence of followers in spiritual rewards.

The growth of Yiguan Dao in Taiwan under suppression was very impressive. It was banned in 1952. By 1963, the police reported that the sect had about 50,000 followers. In 1984, the number of likely followers surpassed 324,000. In 1987, Yiguan Dao was legalised amidst the grand process of democratisation in the whole society. In an island-wide survey two years later, 2.2% of respondents reported to be Yiguan Dao believers, which means more than 443,000 people in the population of Taiwan. Today, Yiguan Dao has 19 divisions and tens of thousands of Buddha Halls in Taiwan and has spread to many countries in Asia and the Americas.

However, in the deregulated market of religion after 1987, the doctrinal and organisational innovations under suppression may have become liabilities for the sect. The persecution “test” is eliminated, thus taking away a mechanism for spiritual rewards. The autonomous divisions and initiator-disciple groups become fragmented. Internal factionalism paralyses the sect, preventing it from organisational co-ordination for socialisation of the second-generation believers and outreaching to non-believers. Free-market competition, along with the increase in

the educational level of the sectarians, has also prompted the sect to adjust in doctrine and ritual, the consequences of which are unclear yet.

This sociological study of Yiguan Dao is based on fieldwork in Taiwan. It is a remarkable accomplishment that the author Yunfeng Lu, who is originally from mainland China, where the sect remains banned, was able to overcome political, cultural, ideological and other obstacles to complete this study. The author skilfully integrates the literature about Yiguan Dao in both English and Chinese. More importantly, Yunfeng Lu superbly demonstrates the applicability of the economic approach to the sociological study of religion. This approach, sometimes labelled, or mislabelled, as rational choice theory, has been advanced by American sociologist Rodney Stark and his associates primarily based on empirical studies of religion in America.

Some Western scholars have expressed doubts about its applicability to non-Christian societies. In regard to religion in China, some Chinese scholars as well as Western Sinologists pronounce a kind of Chinese exceptionalism, claiming that religion in China is so unique that no general theory is applicable. The problem is that such scholars do not propose a theoretically-sound social science alternative. Yunfeng Lu consciously employs this social scientific theory and shows the concepts and propositions of the economic approach are very useful conceptual tools that help to explain well the rise of Yiguan Dao in favourable and unfavourable social contexts.

This case study contributes to the development of the economic approach by shedding light on the dynamics of sectarian movements under suppression or in the black market of religion. Many people believe that the unique Chinese culture is fertile for the non-exclusive religions, including the seemingly Chinese inclination for popular religion or folk religion. However, Lu argues that this is due to the government suppression of well-organised religions and sects. Adapting to the repressive policy, Yiguan Dao adopted flexible but secretive organisational structures and innovative proselytising tactics. When trying to convert people, Yiguan Dao appears to demand no exclusive commitment of the believers. Its introductory courses include the scriptures of Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity. However, the more devout a believer becomes, the more exclusive a commitment is required of this believer. Once a person is initiated into the sect, apostate is condemned. Therefore, the non-exclusive tendency of Chinese religiosity is probably a consequence of religious repression rather than of the Chinese culture. In a free market for religion, such as in post-1987 Taiwan, competition has tended to favour the well-organised and exclusive religions. Moreover, the ubiquitous popular/folk religion is the fertile soil for innovative sects to grow sweepingly, as happened with Yiguan Dao in the 1930s and 1940s, when the government lost its control.

The theoretical discussions of this book are well made most of the time. However, some broad generalisations need more careful reworking. For example, "History has shown that the policy of suppression always failed to eliminate religions" (p. 47). This sweeping statement may not hold. The well-known Taiping Tianguo in late Qing Dynasty, among others, seems to be a case at odds with it. Also important, not all of the sectarian groups grew in Taiwan before 1987. Meanwhile, Yiguan Dao appeared to have failed to grow in mainland China in the second half of the twentieth century. It is important for the social scientists to examine such variations

of various sectarian groups in different societies. Given the revivals of various religions in mainland China since the late 1970s, it is indeed very interesting to find out what has happened to Yiguan Dao and other sects in mainland China. I am hopeful to see more theory-driven empirical studies from Yunfeng Lu and other scholars.

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