Guest editorial

This theme section of *AEDS* seeks to examine the challenging and promising Asian experiences centered on China and Vietnam, comparing such recombinations between the two (late- or post-) socialist countries with special focus on recasting community festivals and cultural governance in the past few decades of reforms. It brings together seven articles about the re-emergence and revitalization of community festivals in China and Vietnam, in different localities, at different scales, and often involving ethnic minority groups or transnational bonds. These seven articles, which we introduce in more detail below, deal with a wide variety of different localities in China, Vietnam and beyond; with a variety of ethnic groups, some of which have transnational connections; with a wide variety of religious and cultural practices at different scales; and with different historical trajectories and modes of institutionalization. All articles describe the increasingly important roles that states – at various levels – and markets play in the organization of these religious and cultural events as festivals. And all festivals covered in the articles appear to be increasingly subjected to a heritage regime (cf. Geismar, 2015) that finds its mode of validation and standardization in UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) regime (Smith and Akagawa, 2009). To the extent that culture is increasingly heritagized, and that heritage is a simultaneously global and local – or glocal – regime, this heritage regime constitutes a form of cultural governance that articulates with states, markets, knowledge regimes and – as Coombe (2012) and Coombe and Weiss (2015) argue – with neoliberal governmentalities.

Given this complex set of intersections, articulations and connections, we develop some comparative ideas about the connections between China and Vietnam, in the more distant history of Chinese suzerainty; in the recent history of Communism and economic reforms; and in the contemporary period of neoliberal governance. In making these connections, we hope to offer a compelling argument for comparing China and Vietnam. We will subsequently pay attention to the cultural governance practices in both countries, and the rise of the ICH paradigm which became very important in both countries. After that, the individual articles will be introduced by highlighting their contribution to the theme of this collection.

Center and periphery?

Why China and Vietnam, one could ask? For one, because these countries have strong historical and cultural bonds. For example, the country that calls itself the Middle Kingdom or Central State [*Zhōngguó* – 中國) is known in Vietnamese as *Trung Quốc*, having the exact same meaning. And Việt Nam calls itself the land of the Việt to the south, which is mirrored in the Chinese term for Vietnam, Yuènán – 越 南. In other words, in both countries and languages, China is known as the center, and Vietnam as its southern periphery, suggesting how both countries situate themselves and each other in a cultural hierarchy. Where Vietnamese historians usually stress that Vietnam managed to guard its independence through a millennia-old struggle with China, many Western scholars hypothesized that Vietnam was successful by politically and culturally following the "Chinese model" (Woodside, 1971). As a scholar of Vietnam, Salemink experienced several times that Chinese and Taiwanese Vietnam-experts considered Vietnam to be an imperfect copy of China. While these views are admittedly far from general, they suggest that a rather wide range of takes on this supposedly close connection between China and Vietnam.

But China was the Middle Kingdom not only for Vietnam, but for many of its neighbors – and especially those countries that developed a demotic script much like Mandarin: Japan

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and Korea – which vernacularized Mandarin in their own languages. There is a thriving Japanese and Korean scholarship on Vietnam, and more recently also an interest in historical cultural connections, exchanges and similarities between Vietnam and Korea, to some degree embodied in the work by Laurel Kendall and Heonik Kwon (Kendall, 2008; Kwon, 2008). But the recent historical trajectories of Korea and Japan diverge widely from China and Vietnam, which are both ruled by a Communist Party overseeing booming market economies since the economic reforms in both countries from the 1980s onward. This has led to a debate how to characterize both polities with reference to the purported political telos of Communist rule, namely socialism as a way to organize labour and consumption through a state-led distributed ownership of the means of production, with the aim of abolishing exploitation and inequality.

Late socialist regimes?

During the first decades of Communist rule, both countries experimented unsuccessfully with such state-led development, and in both countries chaos and poverty forced the Communist leadership to abandon their high-socialist experiments in the 1970s resp. 1980s. But while allowing for the liberalization of the economy, the Communist parties did not give up their hold on society through their Leninist shadow-apparatuses within the state, and their sectoral associations organizing the population. In addition, both Communist parties held on to a – perhaps largely fictive – idea of socialism: socialism with Chinese characteristics in China, and a socialist-oriented market economy in Vietnam. In international scholarship, these largely aspirational notions are usually covered by the term "late socialism", which – with the addition of the temporal prefix "late" – seems to suggest that the socialist political-economic arrangement in both countries have attained more maturity. It could be argued, however, that both Party-States have largely given up on their utopian, egalitarian socialist ambitions.

Another qualification with temporal connotations is postsocialism, which denotes an enduring legacy of socialist forms and institutions, sensibilities and subjectivities after the overthrow of socialism. Scholarship on Eastern European postsocialism has called for attention to the plurality of intersecting economic and governing logics/practices that gave rise to novel recombinations and rearrangements of power, subjectivity, social relations and forms of property. To the extent that China and Vietnam abandoned their respective socialist projects, their societies could be described as exhibiting many of the characteristics of the postsocialist countries in Eastern Europe. But since both Communist parties did not give up on their ideological apparatuses of socialism – at least in name – the label "postsocialist" might not be ideal. A perhaps more appropriate term is market-Leninism where, according to Jonathan London, "market economic institutions and market-based strategies of economic accumulation exist and develop in subordination to Leninist political institutions and ideology" (London, 2011, p. 1). This is not entirely a semantic matter, as the Chinese and Vietnamese political-economic systems intersect with globalizing and neoliberalizing tendencies, affording an important backdrop to the theme of this collection, as we shall show later.

Neoliberal societies?

Neoliberalism emerged in the 1980s with the rise of Thatcherism and Reaganomics, and globalized in the 1990s with the fall of the Iron Curtain and the quasi-universal adoption of the market paradigm as the dominant political-economic ordering principle, for example through the European Union's Maastricht Treaty and the World Bank and IMF's structural adjustment policies. Neoliberal policies entail privatization of public services, reduction of regulations, duties, taxes and redistributive welfare and other subsidies, as well as austerity and other individual "responsibilization" policies. This means that fields that until relatively

recently were seen as public services, like education, healthcare, and culture, are increasingly treated and organized as competitive markets, meaning that the services provided have to be valorized and financialized. In turn, the beneficiaries of such services are treated as customers, who choose and purchase such services based on rational evaluations and capitalist investment logics; for instance, health, education, and culture pursuits become investments promising pay-off in the future. In this way, political citizens are turned into customers of services and economic actors whose subjectivities and sensibilities increasingly align with the pervasive market paradigm governing society through what Foucault (1991) called subjectivation.

One could ask how relevant a discussion of neoliberalism is for Communist China and Vietnam? Through their market reforms, both China and Vietnam largely withdrew from direct management of the agricultural, industrial, and service sectors. In this way, both countries effectively created capitalist markets, shattering the security of Mao's famous "iron rice bowl" and Vietnam's equivalent, and introducing strong and rising inequality in society – even when both states kept a strong hand in strategic industries through state-owned enterprises. In the wake of their respective market reforms, both China and Vietnam have changed their state-provisioned welfare delivery systems, by introducing profit, competition and fees in fields like healthcare, education and arts. In China this development was known as privatization and marketization (Mok, 1997; Yip and Hsiao, 2014), but in Vietnam this very same notion was called socialization (*xã hội hóa*): "[I]n Viet Nam the term has a meaning diametrically opposite that in the rest of the world. Outside Viet Nam, socialization refers to the state assuming costs or ownership over a given social activity. In Viet Nam, socialization refers to "all segments of society contributing" to some sphere of social life." (London, 2010, p. 369). This idea of society contributing takes the form of users of services paying fees, primarily in healthcare (London, 2008; Thanh *et al.*, 2014) and education (London, 2011; Anh *et al.*, 2016), but it also extends to the cultural sector, where it is often interpreted as commoditization and commercialization[1]. This necessarily introduces a neoliberal element of competition and financialization to sectors where this was largely absent. As Jonathan London argues, "Neoliberal elements of market-Leninism involve the selective embrace of market-led governance in certain fields, including (at times) essential services, such as electricity, water, and health care. […] The distinctive combination of redistributive, neoliberal, and communist-corporatist principles is unique to Vietnam and China" (London, 2011, p. 78).

The enduring socialist legacy and entrenching neoliberal characteristics in China and Vietnam have produced culturally and historically varied recombinations of socialist and market initiatives. While the study about neoliberalism and its impacts on governance in socialist Vietnam and China (with rapidly growing publications on various aspects of governance attributed to neoliberalism)[2] have been fruitful, the advocacy for comparison between the two countries has been gathering its momentum in recent years. The special issue on "Neoliberalism in Vietnam" in the journal *Positions: Asia Critique* (2012 vol. 20, issue 2) attests to the importance of comparison with China in both the introduction chapter "How Is Neoliberalism Good to Think Vietnam? How Is Vietnam Good to Think Neoliberalism?" (Schwenkel and Leshkowich, 2012) and the Afterword chapter "Afterword: Flexible Postsocialist Assemblages from the Margin" (Li, 2012). Most recently, the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology collection "Socialism with Neoliberal Characteristics" offers a noteworthy comparison between Vietnam and China on the topics of "social support and kinship" and "traders, market and the state" (Endres and Hann, 2017).

Neoliberalism has been referred to as a "logic of governance". Michael J. Shapiro's concept of cultural governance, inspired by Michel Foucault's notion of governmentality (Foucault, 1991), provides the broad outlines of a method for studying the dynamic of culture and power in Pacific Asia. According to Shapiro, cultural governance means the

"management of the dispositions and meanings of citizen bodies, aimed at making territorial and national/cultural boundaries coextensive", in addition to "coercive and economic aspects of control" (Shapiro, 2004, p. 31). The concept of cultural governance was fruitfully applied by William Callahan (2006) in his monograph "Cultural Governance and Resistance in Pacific Asia". Casting a Foucaultian lens on cultural practices in China, Thailand and South Korea, he applied Mary Louise Pratt's (1992) notion of cultural "contact zones" to cultural events, thereby reconceiving those as zones of potential resistance. In an essay on "Neoliberalism, Heritage Regimes, and Cultural Rights", Rosemary Coombe and Lindsay Weiss link cultural governance through heritage with the commodification of difference and entrepreneurial valorization.

If neoliberal governmentality has shaped "cultural realms in the production and affirmation of diversity through the commodification of difference" (Perreault and Martin, 2005, p. 193), its effects are uneven (Kingfisher and Maskovsky, 2008) and its mandates are reworked by enterprising subjects, who may subvert the opportunities it affords for new purposes. (Coombe and Weiss, 2015, p. 52).

During the period of high socialism in both Communist states, the Communist parties considered culture an integral part of ideology and propaganda, and hence a direct part of the governance remit of the state. The economic reforms in China and Vietnam entailed the scaling back of subsidies in the cultural sector, and its marketization; in the words of Michael Keane, after a cultural policy change in China in 1992, "The role of cultural policy was now seen to be more than determining styles, establishing quotas, and policing recalcitrant activities. Culture had become a commodity and this necessitated a rethinking of how the cultural sector would be funded. At the same time, it was necessary to justify the existence of the cultural market from an ideological standpoint" (Keane, 2009, pp. 246-247). A few years later, in 1998, Vietnam similarly embarked on a path toward culturalization of its policies and politics with *Nghị Quyết V* [Resolution V of the Central Committee on "building a progressive culture imbued with national identity"], creating the umbrella for a flourishing of cultural activities within society (Salemink, 2020).

Mobility, community and festivals

In addition, one other glaring effect of the reforms implemented from the 1980s onwards by the Vietnamese and Chinese Party-States on people's lives is enhanced mobility. The general public started to go on their way traversing spatial and administrative boundaries erected by state authorities in the previous decades. This changed social life tremendously from the stifling confinement under the stringent household registration and the Socialist redistributive system (Yang, 1994), not to mention the bureaucratic hurdles set against movement. The loosening of mobility restriction changed the meaning and practices of community festivals, in the sense that they were opened to different kinds of outside influences.

Our understanding of community festivals has long been plagued by an underlying assumption that strongly links the festival to a bounded sense of place and community. What is missing from this focus on community-in-place is the importance of movement and mobility – of people, ideas, practices into and out of the festival and its location – and how these shape the meanings and experience attributed to the festival event (Duffy and Mair, 2017, pp. 47-60). Festival events ritually and performatively express a locality's identity constructions in a dynamic process, created out of numerous social relations that connect that place to a much larger social fabric. The new mobilities paradigm (Sheller and Urry, 2006) brings to our attention the ways we have tended to ignore the importance of mobility and trivialise the impact of movement in the study of village festivals in China and Vietnam. Belonging and identity emerge through numerous activities, processes, networks and social relations in community festivals, as well as such things as the

aesthetics (see the papers of Nguyen To Lan and Kao Ya-ning in this special issue on opera art and Shamans' chants) through which identity is created and performed. Such dynamics of community festivals impact upon individuals and their embeddedness in both local and wider social networks connected by mobility. The papers in this special issue address the mobile connections between the individual, the community, and the wider social networks in community festivals. They examine how community festivals enacted in different spatial scales and temporalities shape diverse senses of belonging and identity in contemporary Vietnam and China.

Before the imposition of land reforms and collectivization, the community was largely an open arena, and the associated religious and seasonal festivals could be regarded as ritualized, performative institutions not only for internal connections, social cohesion and exclusion, but also linking the community with the outside world through networks and mobility. Local elites cultivated their "cultural nexus of power" (Duara, 1988) by extending beyond the local community to accumulate economic, social and cultural capital through connectivity. The imperial states also worked through these connections with local elites to standardize religious cults and festival rituals for securing local loyalty (Watson, 1985, also see Ding Hong Hai's paper in this special issue). On the other hand, local communities engaged in networks of regional competition or integration with other communities by worshipping distinct tutelary deities or adopting the same cult (see the paper by Nguyen Ngoc Tho in this special issue).

To suppress local powerholders, Communist regimes destroyed traditional elites' cultural nexus of power through class struggle, on the one hand; and breaking their external networks by imposing household registration, centralized redistributive material supplies, and movement restrictions, on the other. The regimented rural communities in the countryside arose in cellularized existence in the progress of collectivization (Siu, 1989). Communist antitheism banned religious cult and community festivals for being superstitious, feudalistic and resource wasteful. After the implementation of reforms and open policies in the 1980s, Vietnamese and Chinese were gradually on the move again. Household-based and market-oriented farming policies required peasants to commercialize their production and set free their families' redundant labor to the labor market near or afar, especially in export-oriented manufacturing industries rapidly developing in the cities (see the case of the ethnic Miao migrant workers in Cheung Siu-woo's paper of this special issue). The relaxation of mobility restriction was accompanied by the liberalization policy of religious practices, giving rise to the flourishment of community festivals such as temple fairs worshipping tutelary deities (DuBois, 2005; Chau, 2006), as mentioned in most papers of this special issue. These occasions required mobile stakeholders and participants, including ritual specialists such as priests, monks and nuns, and shamans (see Kao Ya-ning's paper); opera and performance troupes (see the papers of Nguyen To Lan and Nguyen Thi Phuong Cham), migrants replicating community festivals in host societies (see Cheung Siu-woo's paper), state representatives (Papers by Nguyen Thi Phuong Cham and Cheung Siu-woo), processions conducted within and between communities (see the papers by Choi Chi-cheung, Nguyen Ngoc Tho), and pilgrimage groups going across national boundaries (see the papers by Nguyen Thi Phuong Cham and Choi Chi-cheung).

The re-emergence of mobility and community festivals constitutes by no means a return to the the old days, as they rely on various new conditions of market liberalism, evolving logics of Leninist governance, and globalizing flows of cultural invention, place-making and identity-formation (Appadurai, 1996). Common discursive practices have been shaped by cultural tourism, regional economic development, and homeland imagination among migrant based on connections within or across national borders, in association with the re-penetration of state administration into local communities in terms of regulation,

management, sanction, and provision of funding and services for cultural events and heritage. Most of the papers in this special issue examine the transformative configurations of power and meaning in community festivals re-enacted in late/post-Socialist Vietnam and China, including the divide between tourist market and religious market for opera performance (see Nguyen To Lan's paper), recontextualization of shamanic rituals and singing in religious practices (See Kao Ya-ning's paper), cultivation of network linkage and institutional embeddedness in and between the migrant community and the hometown (see Cheung Siu-woo's paper), as well as standardization of religious cults and integration of cross-border and transnational communities against the backdrop of globalization (the papers of Nguyen Thi Phuong Cham and Choi Chi-cheung; see also the papers by Ding Hong Hai and Nguyen Ngoc Tho for historical cases of standardization and integration promoted by the state or juggled among communities).

The processes of place-making, identity-formation and affects of belonging that are ritually performed in the limited spatio-temporal context of community festivals require the "mooring" of incessant movement of mobile things – bodies, materials, ideas through interconnecting elements of everyday life and integrating mobilities and relational spaces (Gorman-Murray and Nash, 2014, pp. 624-625). We need to rethink the festival event in terms of mobilities that emphasize the importance of various forms of movement not as an 'undifferentiated flow' but 'instead as a series of identifiable activities' (Hannam *et al.*, 2016, p. 2) that connect individuals and groups into a location or community. The authors of the contributions to this special issue make the effort to delineate the particular patterns of "mooring" with reference to the specific ways of interconnecting things and people and integrating mobilities and relational spaces.

Intangible cultural heritage

One of the consequences of the re-emergence and flourishing of community festivals in both China and Vietnam after decades when such festivals were either suppressed as wasteful and superstitious, or thoroughly politicized, was a flourishing of studies in China (Chau, 2006; DuBois, 2005) and Vietnam (DiGregorio and Salemink, 2007; Taylor, 2004), employing a variety of different theoretical perspectives. Most studies paid attention to ritual and (popular) religious aspects of festivals, to community participation, to markets and commercial aspects and to the role of the state – something that the articles in this collection do as well. A more recent focus of study in both countries, but especially in China, has been the connection of community festival studies with the UNESCO notion of ICH – something that all case studies in this collection directly or indirectly mention. ICH constitutes a particular form of cultural governance which aligns well with a neoliberal governmentality. In the words of Rosemary Coombe again:

> Heritage regimes are increasingly neoliberal in obvious and not so obvious ways. Certainly we are witnessing a new dominance of market ideologies in heritage management and in its means of "valuation" with an increasing emphasis on *investment* in cultural resources and human capital so as to yield economic returns, adding value to them so as to encourage tourism, foster foreign direct investment, encourage product differentiation, and promote new commodifications of "cultural resources" (Yudice, 2003), often through new uses of intellectual property vehicles (Coombe, 2012, p. 378).

Whereas neoliberal tendencies are global and hence not exclusive to China and Vietnam, the UNESCO-backed heritage regime aligns particularly well with China's and Vietnam's market-Leninist forms of cultural governance. China and Vietnam have been particularly adept at adopting UNESCO's (intangible) cultural heritage frame, resulting in novel assemblages of cultural, political and economic governance in both countries.

UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the ICH had been in the making for more than a decade, after receiving a boost with the Nara Document on Authenticity of the

International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), adopted during its 1994 meeting in Nara, Japan. Japan played a major role in the promotion of the ICH agenda, and from 1993 onwards funded an ICH program within UNESCO, headed by Noriko Aikawa (Aikawa-Fauré, 2009), and promoting and organizing ICH-related meetings and events around the world, especially in Asia (Akagawa, 2016a, b)[3]. Among the Asian countries, both China and Vietnam enthusiastically embraced and supported UNESCO's ICH agenda, and since the ICH Convention went into force in 2006, both countries have been extraordinarily proactive in drawing up national ICH lists and nominating ICH "elements" for the UNESCO list. In 2020, China had forty elements on the UNESCO list – by far the most of any country – while Vietnam had thirteen elements on that list.

For China, this heritage fever – or what Haiming Yan calls "World Heritage craze" (Yan, 2018) – has resulted in an equally feverish scholarly production which considers the heritagization of cultural sites, objects and practices as an arena of cultural politics that combines strong state intervention with equally potent commercial valorizations (see, e.g. Blumenfield and Silverman, 2013; Flath, 2016; Maags and Svensson 2016; Yan, 2018; Zhu, 2018; Zhu and Maags, 2020). As many of the inscribed elements have or at least had ritual and religious aspects, the heritage regime affords a way to formally recognize, govern and contain China's flourishing popular religions – a process felicitously called the "ICH-isation of popular religions" by Ming-chun Ku (2019). The harvest of studies on ICH and heritagization in Vietnam is less rich than in China, but still considerable. Barley Norton (2009) and Lauren Meeker (2013) published monographs on musical traditions – quan họ singing and Mother Goddess songs – that are both inscribed on the UNESCO ICH list, while Salemink in a series of articles focuses on the process and socio-political consequences of heritagization, in particular of the ritual gong music of Vietnam's indigenous Central Highlands groups (Salemink, 2013, 2016, 2020). Particular mention must be made of the book edited by Lê Hồng Lý and Nguyễn Thị Phương Châm (2014), which offers a detailed description and critical analysis of the on-the-ground effects for local communities of heritage inscription.

One of these effects of heritage recognition and management is what Lê Hồng Lý and Nguyễn Thị Phương Châm (2014) call the theatricalization (*sân khấu hóa*) of culture, which is akin to Salemink's proposition that "[h]eritage is arguably a Debordian spectacle, in the sense that something that was an object to use, a place to live, a place of worship or an object to worship, or a ritualised event, becomes an image of such cultural sites, objects or practices representing the past." (Salemink, 2016, p. 314). Or in the words of Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998) in her inimitable Destination Culture (p. 150):

> Heritage adds value to existing assets that have either ceased to be viable (subsistence lifestyles, obsolete technologies, abandoned mines, the evidence of past disasters) or that never were economically productive because an area is too hot, too cold, too wet, or too remote or that operate outside the realm of profit because they are "free, inherent and natural resources" or inalienable possessions. Heritage organizations ensure that places and practices in danger of disappearing because they are no longer occupied or functioning or valued will survive. It does this by adding the value of pastness, exhibition, difference, and, where possible, indigeneity.

The public for this is provided by tourism, as "heritage convert[s] locations into destinations and tourism mak[es] them economically viable as exhibits of themselves" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998, p. 151).

All contributions to this collection on Community Festivals, Cultural Governance, and Late Socialism in Vietnam and China focus on community festivals as a locus of intersecting interests of communities, state, market and outside, tourist publics. As the various temple and village festivals are now subjected to a heritage regime mandated by UNESCO but enacted by the state, they draw in more actors that claim a stake in the management of and the benefits from the festivals, with wide-ranging effects: as community festivals are

heritagized, the heritage becomes festivalized, as Valdimar Hafstein (2018, p. 139) puts it: "[A]s part of their safeguarding, those practices and expressions that are framed as intangible heritage are festivalized", thus becoming "a genre of display" and introducing an element of competition. Such festivalization is clearly visible when ritual practices are taken out of their religious context and performed on stage for an outsider audience as an art form – as Salemink has described for the music and dance accompanying Mother Goddess possession rituals and the ritual gong music of the Central Highlanders (Salemink, 2013, 2016, 2020). With heritagization, the performance is increasingly done by professional troupes, and a competition element is introduced through festivalization as the occasions for performing are often festivals at which various performers from multiple locations compete with one another before a non-local public.

The contributions

The papers in this special issue are arranged in an order that reflects the involved community festivals' characteristics of mobility and its integration with relational spaces in different distances. The emphasis is on the transformative configuration of power and meaning in the specific ways of interconnecting things, people, ideas, and spaces.

The first two papers by Dinh Hong Hai and Nguyen To Lan explore community festivals that are popular in the areas close to Hanoi, Vietnam's political center in the north, and the southern economic center of Ho Chi Minh City, respectively. Both involve mobility patterns affected by the dominant centers nearby. Dinh's paper, entitled "The Symbol of Saint Gióng and the Gióng Festival in the Historical Context of Vietnam," studies the Gióng Festival held in Phù Đổng and Sóc temples in the outlying districts of Hanoi, as one of Vietnam's most important festivals. In spring, before the rice harvest, people honour the mythical hero, Thánh Gióng, who is credited with defending the country from the invasion of China, and is worshipped as the patron god of the harvest, family prosperity, and national peace. Dinh Hong Hai traces the processes of historicization of myth and the mythologization of history that made an agricultural fertility god into a national military hero fighting against the northern invader. He discusses how the different dynastic regimes intervened to transform the worship of the fertility god into patriotic heroism. The Gióng festival is an efficient way to unite many local festivals and deities in the Red River Delta together in one system of Gióng festivals. Under the current post-reform conditions, the festival was inscribed in 2010 on UNESCO's Representative List of the ICH of Humanity. Annual celebrations in the first and the fourth lunar months involve ritual offering, dance, opera and processions, participated in widely by villagers in Bắc Ninh province and parts of Hà Nội.

Focusing on the Hát bội opera as a nationally protected art heritage, Nguyen To Lan explores in her paper, "Entertainment as Ritual: The Post-Reform Transformation of Hát bội in Southern Vietnam after the Reform," how the revival of folk religion and community festivals since the implementation of reforms has affected the art form in Ho Chi Minh City and the surrounding provinces of southern Vietnam. State-sponsored theatre troupes perform the opera as entertainment for tourists, emphasizing innovations by composing and staging new plays and adapting traditional techniques to contemporary plots. Meanwhile, a private performance company that emerged by breaking with state patronage has maintained its business by performing standardized *hát bội* opera in worshipping rituals of community festivals, particularly at the shrine of the Lady of the Realm in Châu Đốc, An Giang Province. The author argues that the need to survive in market economy has pushed private *hát bội* companies into greater dependence on religious events and produced a stasis in operatic performance.

The community festivals discussed in Kao Ya-ning's paper "De/Re-Construction of Zhuang Shaman Songs in Cultural Festivals" took place in Ande, a remote inland county in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous District, China. This paper examines the performance of ethnic Zhuang's shamanic narrative songs in three festivals to explore how and why a narrative

song genre that originated with Zhuang shamans has been decontextualized from shamanic ritual contexts and then re-contextualized in festivals under the PRC's culture policies in the post-socialist era. The local literati in southwest Guangxi composed songs by adapting a narrative song melody from shamanic ritual in the late 19th century. The songs were accepted by audiences because the local people were familiar with and fond of this melody. In the early 1980s, Chinese scholars selected the narrative songs as representative of Zhuang performance arts, yet the religious elements of the songs had already been obfuscated. With the development of the Intangible Culture Heritage Law, local Zhuang elites have restored the shamanic rituals and singing melody to narrative songs when they are performed in festivals. In this way, "doing religion" has been transformed into "doing culture."

In the post-reform period, the cultural influence of dominant political or economic centers upon village communities on the periphery may take a reverse direction with the flow of migrant workers, linking the migrants' rural homeplaces with the metropolis that serves as a manufacturing center. Cheung Siu-woo's paper, "Festivals and Re-ethnicization of China's Miao Migrant Community," examines the efforts of an ethnic Miao migrant worker association to transplant a traditional community festival from their homeplace in the mountainous inland Guizhou province into the host society of Guangzhou in China's rapidly flourishing southeast coastal region. The author analyses how and under what conditions the disadvantaged migrant workers collectively demonstrate and assert their cultural identity in festival activities, rekindling and strengthening their ethnic consciousness. The migrant leaders use community festivals and the notion of heritage as cultural capital to facilitate the cultivation of homeplace fellowship networks and institutional embeddedness in governmental structure for economic advancement and overcoming ethnic prejudices and institutional disadvantages. Cultural festivals have contributed to the building of an ethnic migrant community after displacement, while linking up the marginal homeplace with the resourceful metropolis to facilitate the flow of capital, labor, and culture.

Another pattern of mobility under the revival of community festivals in post-Socialist Vietnam and China is the transnational interaction of ethnic groups on the border region. Nguyen Thi Phuong Cham's paper, "Globalizing Community Festivals: The Case of the Community Festival in Wanwei, Dongxing, Guangxi," discusses the Kinh/Việt people's movement traversing the Sino-Vietnamese border for the native community festivals on the two sides of the national border.[4] The Kinh in Wanwei and the nearby communities became an ethnic minority in China after the Sino-Vietnamese national border was demarcated in the late nineteenth century between China and the French Indo-China colonial administration. The author documents the transformation of the community festival in Wanwei village before and after the normalization of diplomatic relations between Vietnam and China in the late 1980s, which had been disrupted for a decade by a bloody Sino-Vietnamese War (Ngô, 2020). Following the implementation of reforms in both countries, border trade has been officially promoted, and Wanwei villagers excelled in economic development due to their cross-border cultural and kinship linkage. Inscribed on the national list of ICH in 2011, a small-scale village festival worshipping the tutelary deities was quickly transformed into a spectacular regional fanfare. It attracted a huge number of visitors from other parts of China, Vietnam and other countries, including tourists, businessmen, officials, journalists and researchers, either Vietnamese, Chinese or foreigners. According to the author's analysis, the transformation was an invention of tradition from below supported by state sponsorship aiming at cross-border and regional economic development. Corresponding to such a transformation, characteristics of globalization emerged in its tangible forms including transnational flows of people and capital, as well as the less tangible ones such as invention of tradition and identity changes.

Mobility between Vietnam and China has happened for centuries. Many Chinese migrants or refugees moved to Vietnam during dynastic changes or development of distant

trade on land or by sea. Historical records reveal that some loyal court officials of the toppled Ming dynasty fled to Vietnam and participated in the Vietnamese imperial expansion to the southern frontiers during the seventeenth century, and waves of Chinese traders went along the monsoon sea route to go between the southern coast of China and Southern Vietnam. Early Chinese communities in southern Vietnam became known as *Minh Hương*, the Vietnamized Chinese settlers tracing back to the Ming dynasty and their descendants (Wheeler, 2015), and the later *bang* system comprising Qing expatriates of five different dialect groups from Fujian and Guangdong. The paper by Nguyen Ngoc Tho, "Hakka identity and religious transformation in South Vietnam" tells the story of a Hakka group who claimed to be the descendants of an anti-Qing military leader who had fled to Vietnam. This group developed a community in the town of Buu Long, Bien Hoa, Dong Nai province, specializing in stone craft industry. The authors described this Hakka group's distinct worship of the craft-master gods while the other Chinese dialect groups adopted the standardized cult of Thien Hau, a popular goddess for seafarers in southern China. Due to the weakened craft industry and the rise of trade in the 1930s, the Hakka group responded to the pressure of integration by renaming their temple as Thien Hau Ancient Temple and organized a vegetarian festival to honor the goddess, superimposing Thien Hau on the surface of their original craft-god tradition which was largely kept intact. This practice of "pseudo-standardization" also aimed at integration with the Vietnamese, who consider the goddess as a version of Guanyin, the Buddhist "Goddess of Mercy" (Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva).

Choi Chi-cheung's paper, entitled "Beyond Hegemony and Sisterhood: Transnational Tianhou-Mazu Cult in East Asia," discusses the reestablishment of transnational Chinese religious network and interaction centering around the Tianhou-Mazu Cult. Though the case of Chinese communities in Vietnam, like the one in Buu Long studied by Nguyen Ngoc Tho (this issue) was not included, the spatial scale of mobility involves a vast transnational web of Chinese community festivals held in Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, and Singapore. The author examines the redefinition of overseas Chinese religious affiliations in this global development of the cult from the early 1980s after the rebuilding of the goddess's ancestral temple in Fujian and her acquiring of a world ICH status in the early twenty-first century. It is argued that the cult has developed its global hegemony, replacing local culture with an emphasis on a politicized "high culture" in conjunction with the rise of China. The development of cultural connections among different Chinese communities also represents a religious strategy regarding local people's choices in their interpretation of correctness and authority. As these choices were premised on Chinese elites' common cultural language, their intention to reconnect with the goddess's ancestral temple while heeding local governments' cultural policies.

Taken together, these articles offer rich material for a systematic comparative analysis of cultural governance in China and Vietnam. Both countries share a long history of proximity and competition; and a more recent history of Communist governance followed by neoliberalization in conjunction with market-Leninism. Both countries share a state-centered cultural governance system that enthusiastically embraces the UNESCO ICH discourse by selecting, managing, cleansing and valorizing cultural elements for the national and global lists, leading to a simultaneous process of heritagization of community festivals and of festivalization of ICH elements. This collection puts together cases of community festivals located in remote villages, the vicinity of metropolises, borderlands, and overseas communities. Such a wide spatial spectrum show the interconnection between a range of issues concerning cultural governance that shapes the dynamic relationship between the local community, the local and central state, market actors and outside publics. Through community festivals, ethnic minority cultures, labor migrants' fluid lives, cross-border connections, and global networks are represented as intersecting with the powers that be.

This theme issue diversifies our view of cultural governance concerning its scope, meaning and operation in varied local contexts, while shedding light on some major themes of the intersection of late Socialism with neoliberal enactments.

Various scholars have advocated for comparative studies between Vietnam and China about neoliberalism and its impacts on governance in late socialism. This special issue works on a focused theme about changing community festivals in Vietnam and China, thereby addressing issues of cultural governance and re-alignment between market, religion, state and community in late Socialist contexts. In advancing the comparative study on late-Socialism between Vietnam and China, we hope that this collection promotes academic exchange, collaboration and comparison between Vietnamese and Chinese researchers. Another goal of this special issue is to provide useful references for undergraduate and postgraduate courses on related topics of community, cultural heritage, identity, nationalism, globalization, cultural governance and neo-liberalism.

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Notes

1. When working in Vietnam as program officer for the Ford Foundation (1996-2001), Salemink worked with the Ministry of Culture and a number of research and training institutions on the development of a not-for-profit arts management knowledge and teaching program against the backdrop of the "socialization" of the culture and arts sector in Vietnam.
2. See, for example, (e.g., the panel "The role of State-society Relations in Vietnam's Pathway to Neoliberalism in the 25th World Congress of Political Science, 2018).
3. Salemink was rapporteur for Noriko Aikawa's first country-specific UNESCO "expert meeting" on ICH in Hanoi (Vietnam) in 1994, and editor of UNESCO's first country-specific ICH volume – see Salemink (2001).
4. The term Việt is an ethnonym referring to the people in Vietnam, whose self-appellation is Kinh. In China, the Kinh on the Sino-Vietnamese border of Guangxi is a minority known as Jing in Mandarin pronunciation, whereas the local Cantonese pronunciation of the Chinese character is similar to Kinh.

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