

Faulting for omission such a creative, wide-ranging interdisciplinary exploration of such an understudied region is truly unfair. The Chilcotin Plateau is an area no scholar masters. Likely the most knowledgeable writer is *Vancouver Sun* columnist, Coast-Chilcotin MP Paul St. Pierre, whose superb semifictionalized social commentary makes no pretense of exhaustive coverage. Despite its geographical gravitas, the region's literature, archival and scientific records, are dispersed and fragmented according to culture and religion, institutional loci, and academic specializations. With his interdisciplinary approach, and his wide-ranging archival research, William Turkel not only sustains creative historiographic inquiry, he assembles the major themes of this hinterland of "suspect terranes" better than any other scholar to date.

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Dubai: The Vulnerability of Success, by Christopher M. Davidson. 2008. New York: Columbia University Press. 376 + viii. ISBN 978-0-231-70034-4, \$32.50.

It is generally believed that the Middle East is the least globalized region of the world. Yet, Dubai, an emirate of the United Arab Emirates, the federal state in the Gulf, seems to be the exception that has fully embraced globalization. Not only has its development model been emulated by its neighbors, but also its investments stimulate substantial foreign direct investment flows from oil-producing countries to non-oil-producing countries in the Middle East. Dubai's success is a fascinating case for scholars. Some doubt its sustainability, while others attempt to theorize its development model by drawing a parallel with the Asian Tigers. While the heated debates continue, there has been a financial crisis and economic recession at the global level. Being exposed in the globalized world, Dubai seems to have been hit the most. The Emirate has been bashed by newspaper articles and blogs for downsizing development projects, expatriating employees, for the size of its debt, etc. Has the long-suspected "Dubai Bubble" burst? Christopher Davidson's timely book sheds some light on the vulnerability of Dubai's success. His aim is to "highlight several key problems that lie beneath the emirate's glittering façade" (p. 2).

The book consists of eight chapters. Davidson gives historical background and contextualizes Dubai's earlier development from the social-political (chapters 1 and 2) and economic perspective (chapter 3). Chapter 2 is a true contribution to the existing literature, which is sparse on Dubai's development in the 1950s and 1960s. Unsurprisingly, Dubai, ruled by the Al Maktoum family since its establishment in 1833, was not immune from the wide spread of Arab nationalism in the 1950s. The organized oppositions led by local merchants posed a serious challenge to the British dominance and to Al Maktoum's ruling at one point.

In chapter 4 Davidson turns to Dubai's strategies to diversify the economy. Instead of echoing the claimed success, he believes that it is a "superficial success" (p. 135). He expands this argument in chapter 6, where he notes, "With most of Dubai's GDP now accounted for by free zones, tourist resorts, real estate projects, and all of their associated construction, retail, and service industries, there is little doubt that if foreign investment or foreign interest in Dubai were to decline, then the new and superficially successful post-oil economy would stumble" (p. 182). Thus, Dubai's first vulnerability is embedded in its diversification strategies of establishing itself as an international tourist destination and international financial center.

The second vulnerability is manifested in some inescapable issues emerging from the country's development, as presented in chapter 6. For instance, official statistics reveal that the native population accounts for only approximately 22 percent of the total population in 2007. Importing laborers offers a short-term solution to cut cost and supply the required skills for development when the indigenous labor is in short supply. Yet, combined with the rising unemployment rate of nationals in recent years the feeling among Dubai nationals of being marginalized spreads. As Davidson notes, one Dubai politician felt he had to move his family to a neighboring emirate in order to preserve its identity and culture. While this might be an isolated incident, the history, especially the case of the "National Front" mentioned in chapter 2, might be a hint that similar organized opposition is likely to emerge at some point if the discrepancy is not managed carefully. Another challenge facing Dubai is that it receives growing international criticism by relevant international nongovernmental organizations for its treatment of foreign workers. Davidson believes these reports may tarnish Dubai's image and make it less attractive to foreign investors.

The third vulnerability could be the instability of federation (chapter 7). Davidson argues, "Moreover, instabilities and uncertainties in the other emirates persist, and given their geographic proximity to Dubai and the ramifications of these problems for federal security and prosperity, future problems in these close neighbours may have serious consequences for Dubai's reputation and therefore its efforts to attract foreign investment and international tourism" (p. 219).

Finally, the geographic location on which the Dubai government is proud to capitalize seems to put Dubai's economic development in a vulnerable position. In chapter 8, Davidson presents several examples of security, crime, and terrorist activities that have occurred in Dubai. He says, "Dubai has also attracted the attention of both international criminal and terrorist organisations, many of which have exploited the emirate's geographic location, *laissez-faire* attitudes, and impressive infrastructure to set up various smuggling gunrunning, human trafficking, and money laundering operations" (p. 263).

Yet, these vulnerabilities should not be overplayed, because none of the above factors imposed significant consequences to Dubai's development in the long term. The ruling family has always been able to avert the threat at the crucial point. Davidson confirms this in chapter 5, where he discusses at length how the ruling family skillfully manages available resources to strengthen its legitimacy. Additionally, the ruling family's own business interest is very much intertwined with Dubai's economic activities today. The business community is Dubai's backbone, especially the vibrant and diverse business community noted in both chapter 2 and chapter 5. Thus, it is in the interest of the Al Maktoum rulers to continuously broaden its legitimacy from the traditional tribal base to create a favorable business environment. As a result, there is the genuine desire for development in Dubai, motivating it to be ahead of the others and to be different.

Davidson presents vivid accounts of individuals, their missions, and social and regional environments of Dubai, based on rigorous research in official documents, unpublished Ph.D. theses, and personal interviews. His book will definitely be a noteworthy reference for future studies on the country and related topics.

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Non-Representational Theory: Space|Politics|Affect, by Nigel Thrift. 2007. Series: International Library of Sociology. New York: Routledge. 325 + x. ISBN 978-0-415-39320-1, cloth, \$150; ISBN 978-0-415-39321-8, paper, \$49.95.

For all its sobriety, scholarly comprehensiveness, and explanatory lucidity, Nigel Thrift's *Non-Representational Theory* is a startling book. I shall begin by describing at some length the context for the book and the reasons for my claim.

One of the common and less than rigorous responses to postmodern "theory" is that all the features celebrated by postmodernists—antifoundationalism, decentered cognition, embodied intensities, continual creation without determined ends, nonidentity, and pure difference—actually