

ment capacity and incentives among domestic government entities. This chapter is the best and most comprehensive overview of the subject of which I am aware in the existing literature.

Chapter 7, “Lessons from Abroad,” compares Chinese experiences with those of other Asian and eastern European countries. Although the overview of these non-Chinese experiences is rather broad, the chapter raises an interesting question, i.e., to what extent may further development of environmental NGOs trigger larger social movements that could lead to fundamental political changes. Chapter 8, the concluding chapter, follows up on this theme by outlining three possible scenarios for the future.

Overall, the book is a welcome addition to the growing literature on environmental governance in China, reflecting many years of fieldwork and careful observation by a dedicated scholar. The book is especially valuable because it raises issues about how China’s response to its environmental challenge may affect its overall political development.

SHUI-YAN TANG

*University of Southern California*

**Bare Branches: The Security Implications of Asia’s Surplus Male Population** by Valerie M. Hudson and Andrea M. den Boer. Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 2004. 400 pp. \$35.00.

Population dynamics have a way of catching people unaware, and sometimes producing havoc. The worldwide baby boomers, born between 1945 and 1965, began coming of age in the late 1960s and produced an equally worldwide epidemic of violence. From the anti-Vietnam War movements to the Chinese Cultural Revolution, it was the great surge of young people taking to the streets who produced the violence. More recently, population aging has caught the attention of demographers and policy makers, who are struggling to understand the implications.

One issue has escaped attention, however, and may well pose a far more serious risk to worldwide stability, and for far longer. This is the rising number of men without women, especially in east and south Asia. It is to these that Valerie M. Hudson and Andrea M. den Boer turn their attention in this exhaustively researched and important volume.

Boys and men have always and everywhere been more valued than girls and women. This is especially the case under conditions of scarcity and insecurity. Sex ratios at birth under “normal” conditions are typically 105–106 boy babies for every 100 girl babies. But many societies distort this ratio through female infanticide or, more recently, abortion of female fetuses. The result is an “exaggerated sex ratio,” which can easily reach 120 boys to 100 girls. This produces a surplus of males, most of whom will not be able to marry and raise families. These are the “bare branches” to which the title refers.

The authors show with extensive documentation that their numbers are large and growing. In south and east Asia (China, South Korea, Taiwan, Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan), the total female deficit or male surplus may be as high as 90 million (p. 62). East and south Asia are particularly important, inasmuch as this is where the undervaluing of females is most extreme and this is also an area that accounts for nearly half of the world's population.

But there is more. Males are more violent than females, in part because of higher levels of testosterone. Men without women are far more violent than are men with women. Testosterone levels drop significantly and quickly when men marry.

The bare branches are most likely to be the less-educated, less-skilled, transient populations, in whom are seen reduced ability to marry and extreme marginalization. This social and physical isolation implies weak social control networks, which amplifies the violence in the bachelor groups.

The authors use historical cases to show high instability in countries with "exaggerated sex ratios." Typically, high-sex-ratio countries have authoritarian governments. The spread of democracy owes much to women and the balance of sex ratios.

China has recognized the problem it has and is now attempting to raise the value of girls and women. India has yet to recognize the problem. The authors note that solving the problem by correcting the sex ratio will take decades at best, and may be impossible in most societies. A most likely outcome will be increased instability and violence against other countries, against internal ethnic minorities (seen now especially in India), and possibly against the government itself.

Two conditions the authors do not emphasize make their prognosis of rising violence more fearsome. The current demographic transition is producing very large numbers of these young males; and more and more of these are concentrated in urban areas. They have already shown they can be rich cannon fodder for demagogues. The future does not look bright.

The authors are to be commended for the acute perception that brings this insight and for the exhaustive research that makes the case.

GAYL D. NESS  
*University of Michigan*