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Collaboration as a Frame for Understanding Politics

This paper uses Law Wing-Sang's *Collaborative Colonial Power: The Making Of The Hong Kong Chinese* to ask what the notion of collaboration does to our understanding of politics, colonial and post-colonial. Law Wing-Sang's book draws attention to the 'how' question: the manner in which collaboration occurs, its institutional sites and the details of their working. This paper proposes to extend the discussion beyond both Hong Kong and colonialism. All modern forms of government that Asia encountered, from colonialism to communism and electoral democracies, were predicated on the production of a new kind of a political subject: the governed as a member of a collective that was in fact an undifferentiated mass: nationality, race, caste, religious group, tribe, etc. What do modes and sites of collaboration tell us about the political community that is put in place when the ruler and the ruled become complicit? What is the relationship between the nation/nationality and other axes of massification? The paper will examine the evidence from popular cinema in India and Hong Kong to explore these questions.