

from the narrative that ASEAN member states do not welcome China in all areas, and believe that the presence of other powers meaningfully engaged in the region stabilizes East Asia. It also traces the origin and motivation behind the East Asian regionalism process, and rightfully notes that an ASEAN-centred regionalism has progressed solely due to multilateral cooperation along parallel tracks, including “second track” regionalism comprising think-tanks, academics and eminent persons. Yet, it is conspicuously silent on territorial disputes in the South China Sea, save for some brief references in the latter part of the volume, particularly since these disputes are the cause of the deficit in Chinese soft power.

The second part of the volume is organized into seven chapters and looks at China’s relations with its neighbours, mostly from an economic lens. The first chapter of this section, covering Sino-Korean relations, persuasively argues that Chinese foreign policy is centred on guarding its economic development, and this is reflected in the normalization of its relations with Seoul. However, the authors’ contention that Chinese support for North Korea prevents regional instability is questionable, especially when we consider North Korea’s numerous security threats including nuclear threats to South Korea and the United States (p. 159).

Interestingly, while the title of the volume indicates that it studies developments following the GFC, the significance of this event becomes evident mostly in Chapter 9, which discusses trends in Chinese investments in the region since the crisis. It observes that the GFC served as an opportunity for China to increase its economic footprint in the region through investments and promoting connectivity projects linking ASEAN with China. The last four chapters (11 to 14) conclude the volume with a discussion on China’s bilateral relations with major countries in the region namely Singapore, Vietnam, Malaysia and the Philippines.

Overall, *China and East Asia* is very topical and pertains to an issue that may be analysed from different perspectives. This volume provides the reader with the Chinese perspectives on East Asian regionalism, and is therefore an interesting

read for understanding the country’s foreign and economic policy stances.

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The Trans-Pacific Partnership, China and India: Economic and Political Implications. By **Amitendu Palit**. New York: Routledge, 2014. Ppp. 172.

Amitendu Palit’s book is a very useful resource that benefits from its timeliness and focus on a specific comparative research topic, China’s and India’s interests in and present positions towards the U.S.-led Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade negotiations.

The author has done a good job of incorporating the most recent sources, with the latest published in late 2013 and a majority of sources used written in the last two years. Hence, the book is still relevant for a broad range of mostly non-academic readers with a primary interest in the present situation of the TPP, China’s and India’s potential membership in the TPP, or the interaction between the TPP and the smaller, less advanced ASEAN-led Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations that include China and India. Palit’s succinctness and clarity of writing enhances the book’s broad appeal and utility.

The book’s focus makes a relevant contribution to a wide range of research areas of current academic, governmental and media interest in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. From the specific to general, these include: Chinese foreign and trade policy in East Asia; Indian foreign and trade policy in East Asia; Chinese views of the United States’ position in East Asia; the political economy of trade in the Asia-Pacific; and the implications

of the shift to a more multipolar inter-state system where large “emerging market” states such as India and China are increasingly influential. The book’s comparative focus on China and India is particularly relevant for its contribution to the latter area, and to the very small but recently expanding literature on relations and comparisons between the two most populous states and re-emergent powers in the world.

More specifically, Palit’s book has two particular strengths and two limitations, all stemming from the book’s ambitious scope and admirable brevity. First, the book provides a compelling case about the different levels of current Chinese and Indian economic and strategic engagement with Asia-Pacific states and preparedness to join the TPP. China is much further ahead on both accounts and the book is more about China than India. Likewise, the final chapter focusses on Chinese and Indian strategies to join the TPP. This chapter outlines concrete specific steps for China while for India it is more an exhortation for New Delhi to develop a coherent trade diplomacy strategy and the political will to overcome protectionist interests.

Second, *The Trans-Pacific Partnership, China and India* does a good job of summarizing the different origins, goals and potential roadblocks and pitfalls of the ongoing TPP and RCEP processes and how these two complicate and invigorate the progress of each other. Palit looks at how the inclusion of the United States in and present exclusion of China and India from TPP negotiations, and the inclusion of China and India in and present exclusion of the United States from RCEP negotiations complicates the interaction between the two and undermines their ability to be merged later into the envisioned wider Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific. As developed in the book, these major power membership differences contribute to concerns that the TPP and RCEP already may be or will become arenas for the strategic competition between the United States and China.

Palit’s focus on Chinese assumptions about the geo-political implications of the American leadership of the TPP process, particularly prevalent as noted during the later Hu Jintao

years, contributes to two of the book’s limitations. Palit’s analysis of the TPP and its implications for China and India does not provide enough information about or give enough weight to the political economic dynamics shaping American trade diplomacy and approach to the TPP. On the domestic front, the difficulty for any administration to get a trade deal through Congress and the demands that this process puts on what is required in any trade deal the American executive signs is a key determining factor in the United States’ maximalist approach to the TPP. The step from signature to ratification is the most difficult and the one that shapes U.S. trade diplomacy priorities the most. On the global front, both the TPP and the much less advanced negotiations between the United States and the European Union are about establishing WTO-plus rules globally outside of the stalled WTO in fora where American influence is greater. The book mentions both of these factors but does not integrate them sufficiently into its analysis of the TPP.

Likewise, this focus means that the most parsimonious explanation for which states are in the TPP and which ones are out is not canvassed while more tenuous Chinese arguments about the TPP being part of an American attempt to isolate China in the region are presented uncritically. In Southeast Asia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia are in RCEP but not the TPP. These same five states also are the least keen to pursue trade agreements outside of the ASEAN+1 process at the core of RCEP. Whereas, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia and even Vietnam that are in both also have the most active and diverse bilateral trade diplomacy in Southeast Asia. As is the case with China and India, RCEP is a less challenging trade liberalization format than the TPP and for the less open economies of Southeast Asia more palatable. The fact that the two American alliance partners in Southeast Asia — the Philippines and Thailand — are not part of the TPP and Australia and Singapore joined the process before the United States should give short shrift to the Chinese containment/isolation argument.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership, China and India makes a new and useful contribution to a very important academic and policy question in the Asia-Pacific today. It will only become more important in the years to come as China and India's economic and political influence grow and as the TPP and RCEP negotiations advance (or not).

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Border Economies in the Greater Mekong Subregion. Edited by Masami Ishida. Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, IDE-JETRO Series, 2013. Pp. 362.

Over the past ten years, studies on the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) have become increasingly numerous. The extent of this literature reflects the dynamism of current regional integration processes in continental Southeast Asia where commercial exchanges were first interrupted by decades of war, then limited by competition between rival political systems. In many of these works, the GMS, which includes Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and the southern provinces of China (Yunnan and Guangxi), is studied using either: an approach on a national scale, evaluating in particular the different policies adopted by each state to integrate the GMS; or a transnational approach, studying, for example, the reorganization of movements of migrants, transport or investments on a subregional scale. This volume's contribution is that it fills a gap in the existing literature by analysing the impact of the development of the GMS on local spaces. It also directly evaluates the reasons behind the creation of economic corridors, which, according to the United Nations, should favour the development of peripheral areas rather than the main structural nodes.

This volume is divided into three parts and contains a great wealth of information on the local territories studied. The first part defines the directions of research and analysis structuring the case studies that are examined in the second part. The final part is a synthesis of the information contributed by the studies presented in Chapters 3 through 10.

The prologue concisely describes the main stages of the establishment of the GMS. Following this, it then identifies two main development possibilities for border economic zones: the cross-border movement of people and goods; and the development of border industries, border trade, tourism and casinos. This volume aims to measure and evaluate the reality of different economic activities conducted in these border areas. Chapter 2 cuts to the heart of cross-border movements as it deals with the Cross-Border Transport Agreement (CBTA), an agreement signed by the six countries of the GMS to simplify procedures when vehicles cross each border. Several studies emphasize that border crossings are the weakest links in the supply chains of economic corridors. After the 1997–98 Asian Financial Crisis (AFC), the Asian Development Bank (ADB) made the reconstruction of transport infrastructure (“hard infrastructure”) conditional on the ratification of free trade agreements (“soft infrastructure”) between the parties concerned. Despite this, Ishida emphasizes in this chapter that border-crossing difficulties continue to persist. Chapter 2 is valuable also because it provides a detailed description of the stages that must be completed before the CBTA can be said to have been implemented in its entirety — all of the chapters featured in the second half of the volume use Ishida's classification to evaluate the progress of the implementation of the CBTA in each of the border areas studied.

The second part of the volume contains eight chapters studying no less than fifteen border areas, twelve of which are located on a GMS economic corridor. The two main qualities of these chapters are that they all rely on extremely detailed, concrete knowledge of the border areas, and that they all use the same method of analysis — proof of real