

One of the strengths of this book is the multidisciplinary approach adopted to study the EPE in Southeast Asia. This is because this volume is a product of the combined efforts of fourteen leading scholars across different disciplines. Furthermore, their original and extensive studies of Southeast Asia provide the background to analyse the EPE in various contexts. What I found rather illuminating in the conclusion was the distinction drawn between “everyday politics” and “everyday life”. This, in a way, gives scholars a clear idea of the objectives and benefits of each approach. Thus, it is apparent that the strength of the book lies not only in the data collected, but also in the theoretical framework.

While there are attempts to draw links in the book, including many edited volumes, most of these chapters do not completely engage the ideas discussed in the chapter(s) referred to. For instance, in Fischer’s discussion of the halal market in Singapore, although he refers to Rethel’s study, he draws a quick comparison on the marketization of religion without fully exploring the links between both cases. Moreover, clearer connections between the sections could have been made to show how they are related. Nonetheless, the overarching importance of the EPE is addressed in most chapters, with each highlighting different aspects.

This volume focuses on how the everyday political economy works, and the way ordinary people influenced state policies, and indirectly, regional and global operations of the state in the economy. If we used to refer to James C. Scott and B.J.T. Kerkveliet to understand agency and resistance, this volume provides another approach to understand the “power of the powerless” and how the “ordinary becomes extraordinary”. This is not just a regular book on agency, but also elaborates on why a study of agency is needed to better appreciate Southeast Asian economies.

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***Asian Port Cities: Uniting Lands and Water Worlds.* By Sharon Siddique.** Singapore: Lee Kuan Yew Centre for Innovative Cities, Singapore University of Technology and Design, 2016. Pp. 156.

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With Asia steadfastly remaining a crucible of urban transformation, and contemporary developments turning the gaze of observers of the region increasingly seaward in the twenty-first century, Siddique’s book comes at a timely moment. Her commendable endeavour to characterize the Asian port city and capture its ongoing reconfiguration sees her surveying and comparing Singapore, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Tianjin, Tokyo, Jakarta, and Johor Bahru comprehensively in terms of their form and process, including their footprint and governance. Two threads running through the book stand out. The first is how the Asian port city is in transition, as the focus of its maritime connection shifts from the port to the waterfront, with the former’s relocation from the city’s core to the city’s periphery and the latter’s rising up to take pride of place at the centre stage of the city. The second is how bringing people back to the port, thus reintroducing its human element, is crucial for the city to remain viable and conceivably flourish as an Asian port city. While Siddique seeks to revive the term “port city”, the Asian port city seems to have re-emerged as the “waterfront city”. Nonetheless, the city remains connected to its port through, for example, the urban governance and advanced producer services that it provides.

In Chapter 1, the author notes the dearth of research on relationships between the port and city and the gap in port studies with its focus on cargo and neglect of people. She demands and pursues a more holistic and nuanced understanding of Asian port cities by identifying their salient characteristics amidst rapid growth. Therein lies her attempt to, first, “model” the re-emerging structure and evolution of the Asian port city in the post-industrial age, with an emphasis on the interface and symbiotic relationship between port and city, and second, pinpoint the significant

factors that have led to the success of Asia's "hub port cities". Chapter 2 sees Siddique relating the fragmentation of urban port spaces to the dominance of transshipment, and suggesting that the establishment of ferry and cruise terminals may challenge the associated loss of a "human" port culture. She documents the consolidation of port and city even as they separate physically, which allows Asian port cities to remain efficient and even expand. She comments on the shifting demarcations of "hinterland" and "foreland", reviews studies that analyse port competitiveness, then introduces key players among shipping companies and port operators. Her observation that ports face countervailing influences to remain anchored to their cities yet perform in the global economy is fitting, given the growing ambivalence towards globalization.

In Chapter 3, Siddique analyses how structures for metropolitan and port governance incorporating public and/or private ownership and/or operation to different degrees are put in place to balance the politics of development with the economic rationale for growth. She lays out the "hardware" (institutions, technology) and "software" (rules, regulations, political mandates) that these involve. For her, greater cooperation is required for better coordination as public policy and administrative competence affect a port city's character by defining port-city relations across their common waterfront. In Chapter 4, the author turns to the "footprints" that the port has left by the waterfront, which remains the centrepiece of urban revitalization and redevelopment efforts and land reclamation, and both their economic and non-economic connections with the city centre's central business district or financial centre. She maintains that analysing port cities' character and competitiveness goes beyond political and economic imperatives, by considering social and cultural factors like "cultural buzz" and acknowledging the importance of "soft ports". To that end, she explores how cultivating a strong, attractive, and positive port, city, or even national identity, such as a cosmopolitan one, is an advantage in carving out a competitive niche for port cities.

In the final chapter, Siddique builds on these analyses by developing a port city metric to weigh the accomplishments of the region's hub port cities and serve as a framework to meaningfully theorize port-city interaction, noting that port cities have physical, virtual, and mental attributes. She selects eight parameters — cargo throughput, throughput per capita, transshipment levels, connectivity to hinterland, new port development, city port interaction, passenger facilities, and waterfront redevelopment — and ranks the seven port cities using them, scores the ranks, and weighs the scores to identify the key characteristics that define each port city. Examining the relative importance of the parameters, she concludes that the key drivers are twofold — the technical, economic aspects of the port and the artistic, human dimensions of the city, with the—waterfront drawing them together — and that connectivity, consolidation, and coordination are vital to the future of port cities. With that, Siddique caps off a useful resource for academics, policymakers, and also laypeople who are interested in the topic. It builds upon and draws links between port studies and urban studies, filling a lacuna in the existing literature on ports and waterfront cities. It ends with an annotated bibliography that will be a valuable starting point for others who are keen on doing research on port cities.

We may situate Siddique's book in the context of the nascent "maritime turn" in urban studies and the growing penchant for comparative approaches. However, it does have limitations, and she could have been more experimental in her choice of case studies and methodology. Her emphasis on hub port cities in Southeast and East Asia is understandable, given the attention that these have gained in recent years, but it neglects South Asian and smaller port cities, which are as essential to theorizing for the entire region's port cities. Just as urbanists are addressing their field's "metrocentricity" productively, so too can port studies benefit from broadening its scope. Siddique has undoubtedly contributed an extensive and multi-scalar investigation of Asian port cities, yet she remains straitjacketed by the dominant global and economic frames of the day, with more

attention being paid to how the cities position themselves for success on the world stage. *Asian Port Cities* merits a sequel, one that will truly fulfil the potential of Siddique's call for a more people-centred approach to understanding port cities. If this is to be published in a similar format, then the author(s) would do well by taking advantage of the space to provide illustrations of the ports and cities in question, particularly maps and photographs, for readers to get a sense of these beyond text.

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***Routledge Handbook of the Environment in Southeast Asia.* Edited by Philip Hirsch.** London and New York: Routledge, 2017. Pp. 521.

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This volume focuses on a critical and yet often overlooked component of economic development — the environment — and asserts that the background surrounding the environment is significant to sustainable development. Written by a group of thirty-eight scholars based in ASEAN, Australia, Canada, China, Europe, the United Kingdom and the United States, the thirty chapters in this edited volume offer engaging theoretical and applied perspectives of the context in which the environment is framed, complemented by localized ASEAN case studies.

The book is divided into four sections. The first provides an outline of ASEAN's environmental history and the environmental impact of development policies; the second offers diverse approaches to comprehend the role of the environment across multiple disciplines; the third applies these approaches to various facets of the environment; and the fourth focuses on ASEAN specific country studies.

This volume proves to be different from other studies in two broad aspects — first, the discussion here is centred on ASEAN; and second, the focus

remains on the discipline of environmental studies. With regard to ASEAN, this compilation fills a vacuum by providing a much-needed study on the region. Since its inception fifty years ago, ASEAN has made swift economic progress, and is poised to become the fourth largest single economy — behind China, European Union, and the United States — by 2030. The authors recognize that although ASEAN is rich in culture, ethnicity and history, its member nations remain highly disparate and maintain their individual livelihood and economic activities. The country-specific cases offer an extraordinary view through localized lenses; and actualize the theories and concepts put forth. In relation to the discipline of environmental studies, the authors acknowledge that sustaining the pace of economic development requires the environment to be elevated to a higher level. This makes understanding the context of framing the environment an integral feature of effective policy-making.

In the introduction (Chapter 1), the authors identify the environment as a node of many conflicts and debates in the rapidly developing ASEAN region. The main findings are summarized in three broad categories: thematic approaches; sectoral issues; and regional and country studies.

The second section (Chapters 2–10) discusses theoretical and conceptual approaches to understanding the environment in the context of ASEAN. The environment's physical characteristics (Chapter 2) are attributed to its sound management, but this can simultaneously create opportunities, as well as impose constraints on institutional mechanisms (Chapter 10) due to transboundary environmental issues in the region. The economic and population growth witnessed in ASEAN are then explained by the region's environmental history (Chapter 3); correspondingly, environmental degradation in the form of deforestation is explained by population growth (Chapter 4). The remaining chapters in this section highlight the interplay between environmental theories, politics and power. To be specific, it is argued that political economy (Chapter 7) shapes the environment and associated politics, while environmental theories shape political and social