

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

developments as well (Chapter 5). Although power (Chapter 6) can address environmental challenges and social movements, like in the case of forestry in ASEAN (Chapter 9), governing policies must be complemented by environmental legal frameworks (Chapter 8).

The third section (Chapters 11–18) looks into various elements of the environment, such as: forests and biodiversity (Chapters 11, 12); waters, rivers and dams (Chapter 13); and fisheries and aquaculture (Chapter 14). The impact of movement of people on the environment is investigated, via urbanization (Chapter 15), peripheral urbanization in mega-urban ASEAN cities (Chapter 16), and regional migration (Chapter 18). A relational approach (which empowers individuals to build relations of change) to address climate change in ASEAN concludes this section (Chapter 17).

The final section (Chapters 19–30) presents ASEAN specific country studies and highlights the differences in the way the environment is handled in varying contexts. The environment in ASEAN is generally considered to be undermined due to the fixation with economic development. It therefore seems appropriate to position ASEAN's role in environmental protection at the onset (Chapter 19). To monitor environmental protection, governance and institutions: play complementary roles in terms of structure for Malaysia (Chapter 24); evolve under a transitional region for Myanmar (Chapter 25); and rely on historic ecological degradation for the Philippines (Chapter 26). Nonetheless, environmental debate remains staunch on territorial claims in Cambodia (Chapter 21), and history in Indonesia (Chapter 22), but has potential for advancement in Laos (Chapter 23). Due to the geographic endowment of ASEAN, transboundary disputes are prevalent, such as those in the Mekong delta in Vietnam. Chapter 20 uses Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as a policy instrument to address sustainable development; while Chapter 30 introduces government and society's response to environmental issues.

The thematic organization of the volume is logical as it first introduces theoretical approaches, and thereafter validates them with

applied and country specific cases. This is uniquely demonstrated by theories of population growth and immigration policies (Chapter 4), and environmentalism (Chapter 5) in the context of a political economy (Chapter 7), positioning the environment as an "actor". This is further underlined by the concepts of urbanization, peripheral urbanization, and regional migration set out in Chapters 15, 16, and 18.

A growing voice for the environment also comes from the public. The involvement of communities in the co-creation of environmental policies is discussed in selected chapters of the volume. The inclusion of local communities and marginalized sectors (Chapter 10) and greater public engagement in policy making (Chapter 11) towards environment — and natural resource-management further emphasize this. The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and SEA are also discussed (Chapter 13) as policy tools to facilitate greater public participation in this area.

This volume merits recognition for offering insights on a vast range of environmental issues in ASEAN. While it is very resourceful in its current form, it could have further benefited from the addition of a chapter on environmental valuation following Chapter 3 (where environmental history is employed to explain current observations of economic and population change) and Chapter 4 (which sheds lights on the relationship between population growth and environmental degradation i.e., deforestation). A chapter on this topic would offer an opportunity to operationalize the theoretical debates in this volume.

The authors of the volume argue that the environment serves two functions; it is a service-offering source for economic development, and a sink for less desirable by-products of economic development. The role assigned to the environment in ASEAN's ongoing development process is critical, as mismanagement can lead to irreparable damages. An analysis to illustrate the detrimental effects of economic development on the environment — using a national income framework — would serve to support Chapters 3 and 4 with arguments well-grounded in empirical

facts. The use of a revised national income framework internalizing environment degradation would help keep in check liberal growth policies and export-led paradigms. Also, a meta-analysis would be very useful here, as it enriches and shapes a holistic argument, guides policies, and resolves the lack of positivism in contextual environmental studies.

ASEAN was formed in 1967 to focus on peace and stability, and facilitate economic development in the region. However, in the course of time, environmental issues (and protection) have been neglected. Even though ASEAN is poised to become a global economic driver, the challenge of economic degradation is bound to threaten this economic progress. Cooperation efforts amongst

members are in place but more can be done to expedite the process, including implementation of policies that consider environment as capital for sustainable development. In general, the consequences of mistaken policies which neglect the environment are not realized until much later. This volume offers: renewed perspectives that the environment is central to economic development; and a detailed look on an often overlooked related component — the context which frames the environment.

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