
First, despite its comprehensive review of literature, the book lacks a theoretical framework. This lack of an overarching structure weakens the analytical and predictive force that this work would otherwise have.

Second, while the author states that the book is for policy-makers, journalists and generalists, the unmistakable tone and underlying bias is on analysing the implications of Asian regionalism for the United States. This accounts for the somewhat stilted treatment of the implications of regionalism, which only becomes clear once one understands Frost's background.

In addition, in some areas the analysis could have been pushed a little further. For example, the book argues that there are "push" and "pull" factors that are shaping integration. The push factor comes from the active integration initiatives coming from various governments in the region in their quest for security, national autonomy and economic interdependence. The pull factor comes from what the author calls "simultaneous integration fueled by market forces, economic opportunity, social and ethnic ties and the ease of communication and travel". While Frost is correct in identifying these two factors, the interaction between these two forces and the resulting effects also merit examination. For instance, there are lobby groups from the private sector of developed countries (most notably from the United States, EU, and Japan) that have supported integration and formulation of policies to foster regional markets. The establishment of the ASEAN Investment Area is a case in point. Or, given her focus on the United States, she could have looked at the success of the U.S.-ASEAN Business Council in including logistics in the list of twelve priority sectors for ASEAN integration. By limiting herself to the initial categorization of pull and push factors, Frost misses out on many of the more complex interactions that shape regional interaction.

Last, while Frost has clearly done her homework on regional integration, the book is a little less authoritative in other areas. For example, her concept of "Maritime Asia" is not really new. Historians such as Anthony Reid and Barbara

Watson Andaya have been writing about this concept for more than three decades, and the book might have benefited from an analysis, or acknowledgement, of this work. Furthermore, how the concept links to ASEAN or Asian leaders' perceptions of an Asian community are not dealt with.

This spills over into other parts of the book. For instance, on p. 5, the author states that Asia is brimming with demands for democracy after four countries previously dominated by military strongmen are now democracies. The evidence lists Taiwan, South Korea, the Philippines, and Indonesia as examples. While the Philippines was under martial law under Marcos from 1972 to 1986, Marcos was a civilian and not a military strongman in the tradition of the generals that ruled the three other countries. On p. 32, the map of maritime Asia places Bangkok correctly once, and the second time in Northern China.

Despite these limitations, *Asia's New Regionalism* is a useful primer. Its accessible language and review of literature make it a good tool for people wanting to learn more about the subject.

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***Labour Market Regulation and Deregulation in Asia.* Edited by Caroline Brassard and Sarthi Acharya.** New Delhi: Academic Foundation in association with Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, NUS, 2006. Pp. 229.

The edited volume of three parts comprising nine chapters on the nature of labour market regulation and deregulation process is an augmented outcome of a 2004 National University of Singapore conference. The Asian coverage includes Japan, India, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia in general with some comparisons of Taiwan and Australia to

Singapore and Vietnam in specific gender areas. It aims to link economic growth and distribution for productivity and social welfare gains with regulated labour regimes with the government as arbiter to manage conflicts with profitability and flexibility for capital owners. Dividing Part II's economics in three chapters and Part III's social aspect in four chapters is thus not easy.

Two chapters in Part I, respectively, set the theme and comparative perspective to endorse multi-stakeholder regulation and self-regulation. A better balance of theory and practice than broad platitudes of "better implementation" (p. 51), development of sophisticated enforcement strategies, trade union engagement and non-government organizations (NGOs) or compliance by self-regulation seem as remiss as some concluding chapter of editorial remarks. Most of Asia examined as former colonies borrow legislations and regulations, but adapting them for enforcement is complex. Underscoring some Asian success with institutional capability- and capacity-building by the editors would be illuminating.

In Part II, both India and Vietnam in Chapters 3 and 4, respectively, vouch for the role of the state as beneficial for social security, welfare, poverty and gender issues in both the public and private sectors. Similarly, Indonesia in Chapter 5 generally supports export-led industrialization in Java-Bali with deregulation versus land-abundant provinces burdened with deregulated labour influxes. Curiously, throughout the volume, human rights seem conspicuously unmentioned, or unmentionable in Asian settings. Chapter 5 offers more palatable synonyms such as what constitute labour rights or basic rights without any editorial adventurism into a sensitive matter.

Both India's regulated period (1950–80) and gradual deregulation since 1980 only realized low employment potential and "labour-unfriendliness" (p. 77). The stigma seemed fatalistically accepted rather than rigorously explained. All three populous country cases in Part II seem to show that they managed to muddle through regulatory gaps which labour-deficit countries would not have tolerated. Managing huge population size

seems an implicit excuse to tolerate resource wastages and abuses aided and abetted by implementation difficulties more than economic development charged primarily to harness all resources including labour for prosperity.

The state's social role in labour regulation is found favourable and imperative in Part III. Chapter 6 argues for inward-looking India and Sri Lanka to adopt outward- and growth-oriented labour laws which in turn foster both efficiency and global integration. However, an interesting but sad observation is that neither the government nor organized labour applies economic reasoning and statistics, with more politics at work (p. 161). The role of women compared in Chapter 7 for Australia, Singapore, Taiwan and Vietnam calls for both gender-neutral legislation as in Singapore and simultaneously improving the legal standing of women to mitigate specific hazards, especially for mothers. Whereas Australia and Singapore learnt comparatively well from British laws and norms, any colonial legacy has been less gratifying for Vietnam, also for Taiwan with adopted European laws (p. 176). Again, it may be that enforcement is the real culprit, due to under-resourced inspectorates or subconscious relegating of serious regulation where population size and low-wage development seem to go conveniently hand-in-hand.

These social issues are more intense for Southeast Asia's informal sector. Chapter 8 is more explicit on the role of the state for credit, technology and market accessibility. A stronger emphasis of women's economic contribution at the expense of their social contribution in family-raising and social culturization bears some emphasis. While labour regulation is more domestic than crossing jurisdictions, neither the authors nor editors stressed cross-border collaboration for an important aspect of Asian labour abroad, inside and outside Asia. Chapter 8 notes home-based work in the Philippines when millions more single and married Filipinos also work abroad. Whether in lowly jobs in domestic service, seafaring or construction or other professional occupations, a much larger social dimension resonates across Asian developing

economies with serious prospects for demographic family-formation and sustaining family values. The editors missed another opportunity to project from information, data and trends, or at least provide some agendas for future research or conferences.

Chapter 9 for Japan as more demographically challenged in a three-tier pension system finds reregulation for greater worker protection unwelcome by employers. Japan is more homogeneous in demography by choice, hence more uniform socially to implement labour laws and pension regulations in contrast to other more globalized and multi-ethnic Asian labour contexts. As the fastest ageing population in Asia, Japan may seem more idiosyncratic and unique with reform induced by less lifetime employment and more competition. Chapter 9 has lessons for ageing China or Singapore now or later for others which might be noted in an edited volume.

The editors do note the paucity of empirical evidence for the 1980s and 1990s so they draw no unequivocal relationship between growth and labour regulation. With international comparisons not flawless both in data and binding regulations in practice, the editors only conclude that labour is only one, and not even the most important, growth factor. As they valiantly seek country findings for lessons, some common socio-economic denominators might be threaded through Parts II and III. Country cases offer diverse regulatory regimes in open or autarkic economic models with sectoral emphasis like Indian heavy industry and Vietnamese labour-intensive or Indonesian rural sector.

The editors might have drilled more intensely for comparators as overview, and not left chapters as stand-alone country cases. Instead, they seem unable to answer their own questions: more or less regulation, appropriate forms, coverage and instruments, notwithstanding no generic template is possible or even desirable. Authors and editors could be more enlightening for any inter-temporal hindsight to be learnt for these countries over time, on an international scale for others or attempt some prognosis or research gaps to be plugged.

For readers in need of a one-stop Asian volume, they may have a somewhat “updated” package since the 1997/8 Asian crisis. Between one financial crisis and the next, the same questions posed may meet with varying answers according to country context and reforms undertaken. These might have been afforded when boom and prosperity do reward labour. A cursory mention of Korean labour experiences (p. 195) may remind readers that less passive response to commoditization of labour is possible as China fears labour-induced social unrest. With globalization noted in many chapters and recurring Asian financial crises implicating innovative financial weapons of mass destruction, more demanding readers would expect serious editorial efforts to frame chapter contribution in a coherent structure of themes, rather than an almanac of labour regimes described or compared.

While it is easier to describe than analyse for prescriptive policy-making, more is perhaps expected from the volume as a product of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy. Greater value-added by professional multidisciplinary to give the volume a more definitive impact in a subject as important as it is pervasive across Asia is expected. But all is not lost if this volume is seen as a work-in-progress, highlighting what needs to be plugged eventually.

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Indonesia and ASEAN Free Trade Agreement: Nationalist and Regional Integration Strategy.
By Alexander C. Chandra. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008. Pp. 275.

“One of the dangers during a crisis such as this is that people would start implementing protectionist policies ... I am pleased that the leaders reaffirmed the principles behind open markets and