regulatory institutions to adopt universal best practices such as transparency and independence (from the present framework in which politicians exert disproportionate influence over decisions) are commendable.

Despite the book's various merits, there is a lack of analysis on the palm oil industry. It would be excellent if a similar level of attention is also accorded to examine the dynamics of this industry, considering Chapter 9's detailed research on the electronics industry. This research gap is rather disappointing as Malaysia is the world's largest exporter of palm oil and the industry accounts for a considerable portion (about 8 per cent) of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). It is also a highly successful industry, with strong backward (research in agricultural inputs such as fertilizer and crop technology) and forward linkages (refining process and branding/marketing of products) along its value chain. Furthermore, some of the country's largest (in terms of market capitalization) firms are the role models of the global palm oil industry, with their business models replicated by aspiring firms from other countries. More crucially, it would be wise to unpack how this industry operates and its firm dynamics in order to replicate and adapt their best practices to other industries that are not upgrading as fast as they ideally should.

Overall, this book is well-organized as it balances the intellectual rigours of a multi-pronged approach, scrutinizing the microeconomic, macroeconomic, and distributional factors of the Malaysian economy without losing the overall picture of how they are related to Malaysia's "middle-income trap". Befitting its ambitious title, the book is also a valuable vault of information for both general and specialist readers interested in the Malaysian economy. Notwithstanding some of its flaws, the book provides solid empirical findings and useful advice to policy-makers, especially those interested in formulating development strategies for countries to progress from a middle-income to high-income status.

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***No Miracle: What Asia Can Teach All Countries About Growth*. By Mitchell Wigdor.** Farnham: Ashgate, 2013. Pp. 262.

There are many books about the Asian miracle economies and what other countries can learn from them. Scholars in the neo-liberal tradition have suggested that these countries demonstrate the virtues of markets and openness. Those following the world system and "dependencia" tradition have emphasized the exceptional global/regional circumstances that produced a dependency reversal. Culturalist scholars have highlighted particular deep-rooted values and belief systems. Other scholars have stressed the role of entrepreneurship and socio-cultural networks. Finally, statist scholars have explained the region's impressive economic growth by reference to the way in which the political-bureaucratic elites have guided the market, and the nature of state-business interaction. *No Miracle: What Asia Can Teach All Countries About Growth* belongs to the latter strand but is mostly concerned with relating itself to and criticizing the influential New Institutional Economics (NIE) approach.

The book explores how institutions matter for economic transformation and in bridging the digital divide. More precisely, the "purpose is to allow a greater understanding of the role of institutions as a mediating factor in the relationship between ICT usage and growth and to provide actionable advice to the governments of less economically developed countries and others concerned with economic development who must decide which institutions are important and determine how to build them" (p. 22). Mitchell Wigdor is a Toronto-based lawyer and a business advisor who has twenty-five years of practical experience. The book is based on the author's dissertation from the University of Toronto, Faculty of Law (2010). Wigdor is a strong believer in interdisciplinary approaches and the book cuts across the disciplines of economics, organization studies, law, business studies, innovation studies, and development studies. Apart from the introduction and conclusion, the book is organized into two parts.

The first part looks upon ICT and institutions. Chapters 1 and 2 examine the increasingly strategic role of information and communication technology (ICT) for sustained growth. The author argues that ICT is a general purpose technology — the usage of which plays the same growth-enabling role as electrification did at an earlier stage. However, the link between ICT and economic growth is mediated by four critical factors: telecommunication infrastructure, investments in ICT use, human capital needed for effective use, and institutions. Chapter 3 studies FDI and growth because FDI represents the most likely channel for obtaining the ICT needed to expand economies. While the ICT chapters draw upon the endogenous growth theory, the FDI chapter mostly builds upon John Dunning's "eclectic paradigm". The author forcefully demonstrates that there is no "free lunch", so that it is important for governments "to determine what they want from FDI, how to get it and, once they get it, how to make most out of it" (p. 58). Furthermore, the spreading of potential benefits from FDIs is argued to be dependent upon three key factors: technology, human capital, and institutions. The first three chapters are well-organized and make a contribution to the literature in the way it combines existing approaches and empirical studies within the chosen themes.

Wigdor argues that the importance of institutions for ICT use and as a locational determinant of FDIs are under-researched, which leads him to focus on institutions in the two following chapters. Chapter 4 is used to demonstrate that economists in general, and NIE (Douglas North) in particular, have mostly been concerned with *whether* institutions matter for growth and have presented institutions as slow-moving and outside what governments can influence. Moreover, the author finds that the definitions of institutions are unclear and/or unworkable. To reconnect theory and practice, the author suggests that focus should shift to *which* institutions are important for growth, just as scholars should come with suggestions about *how* to build them. The first step is a practice-oriented redefinition of "institutions" to "refer to governments and quasi-governmental bodies and agencies charged with the formulation, interpretation, implementation or enforcement of public policy or laws' (p. 100). The *which* institutions issue is taken up in Chapter 5 and provides specific suggestions of which institutions help to mediate the relationship between ICT usage and economic growth and how to build these. According to Wigdor the most relevant institutions are those that are most salient to building infrastructure (and regulation), encouraging investment in ICT, and developing human capital.

The second but smaller part of the book is devoted to the study of ICT and institution building in two Southeast Asian countries — Malaysia and Singapore. Both countries have developed ICT strategies and because they have relied on MNCs, they are considered to be more relevant than the Northeast Asian success economies when seeking lessons for present day less developed countries. Chapter 6 gives a good account of the Singaporean case. It builds upon and brings together the existing literature on Singapore but also focuses on the role played by the thoughts of Peter Bauer and Hla Myint as well as by the 1963 UN Winsemius Report. Similarly, the 1963 World Bank Rueff Report from the same year is taken up in the following chapter on Malaysia, and the most relevant literature on that country's economic transformation forms the basis of the analysis. Both empirical chapters are well-written and are organized according to the structure suggested in Chapter 5. The analyses (which is brought together in Chapter 7) confirm other studies in showing that both countries have achieved much in relation to economic transformation but that Singapore has achieved more (and stands out as a model for less developed countries) because of the way it has carried out its economic (including ICT) policies and its ability to build good institutions associated with these policies.

The strength of the book is not ground-breaking empirical research but the use of existing studies to forward a clear and sensible argument. Theoretically, it contributes by revealing the pitfalls of NIE's abstract thinking about institutions, and by demonstrating the usefulness of a clearer and workable definition. Furthermore, the study contributes empirically to the developmental state literature by concentrating on ICT (use). However, there are also some weaknesses in the book. While ICT is at the forefront in relation to Malaysia's and Singapore's transformation to a knowledge economy, it appears to be less obvious that sustained development in all less developed countries depends on bridging the digital divide. The author mentions historical institutionalism (pp. 76–77) but does not expand whether and how this paradigm could have informed the analysis. There is more reference to the developmental state literature (pp. 16–22) but the author could have been more specific as to whether and how his analysis contributes to the already huge developmental state literature. This could have expanded the very short conclusion (pp. 215–18). Moreover, while retelling the success story of Penang based on the work of Rasiah, the author seems to overlook the limits or "negative lessons" that other scholars (e.g. Philips and Henderson) have pointed at. Nevertheless, the book should certainly be read by scholars and practitioners that are interested in the weaknesses of the prevailing NIE approach to institutional change, have an interest in comparative work on Southeast Asia's economic transformation, or have a special interest in ICT, institutions, and economic growth.

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Aid Dependence in Cambodia: How Foreign Assistance Undermines Democracy. **By Sophal Ear.** New York: Columbia University Press, 2012. Pp. 208.

This book brings a subtle analysis to the scholarship on international aid, development, and governance in general and in Cambodia. Sophal Ear examines the effect of aid on governance using case studies on economic growth, the government and donors' response to Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), and human rights activism in this Southeast Asian kingdom.

Ear's arguments are persuasive. He begins by bringing some nuance to established research on the impact of aid on governance. Using data from 209 countries collected in 2005, he reports that, of six dimensions of governance — voice and accountability, political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption — only the rule of law shows a clear negative impact from aid — particularly aid and technical cooperation. Aid helps marginally to improve voice and accountability but aid dependence cannot be used conclusively to explain variation in the other dimensions of governance. In other words, his conclusions are more tempered — international aid does affect governance negatively, but not as badly as previous research has reported.

To delve more deeply into the actual relationship between aid and governance at the country level, he presents findings from a survey of forty-three people who were asked for their opinions on the six dimensions of governance in Cambodia and how these have fared over time. The subjective assertions of the respondents were that the donor community effected positive change in political stability, voice and accountability, but failed to positively influence government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, or control of corruption. This substantiates Ear's broader quantitative analysis.

The phenomenon of growth without development is the substance of the second chapter. Ear examines the factors that have brought about uneven growth across three industries — garment, rice, and livestock. He finds little evidence that donors were actually the driving force behind this growth. Instead, he points to the convergence of distinct circumstances as providing the necessary conditions for growth (or lack thereof). In the garment industry, private sector organization (mostly foreign) and the exceptional relationship between this organized group and the Ministry of Commerce were highlighted as the driving forces behind the success of this sector. The other two sectors, due to historical precedent and the local