

is more interesting, but does not provide a strong perspective on Brunei's ability to succeed in such an endeavour. There is also no discussion of what other ASEAN member countries are able to offer in terms of the same. It therefore would be nice to see some comparative statistics on e-commerce in ASEAN countries.

In Chapter 5, Kairul, Ho and Azmawani provide empirical evidence to support factors driving the adoption of green supply chain management in the Malaysian manufacturing sector. Their study is largely preliminary as they interviewed firms from a rather small sample size of four. Despite this methodological weakness, the results of the study are interesting, especially as they reveal the role of foreign markets in prompting domestic firms to adopt green supply chain management.

Irawati and Rutten (Chapter 6) provide a broad review of the Indonesian automotive industry with a focus on the impact of Japanese foreign direct investment (FDI) on the sector. Whilst acknowledging the benefits of FDI (such as knowledge transfer), the authors also emphasize the dependence and inability of domestic firms with regard to undertaking industrial upgrading. They offer some broad policy recommendations but there remains much uncertainty as to whether Indonesia can progress towards developing more indigenous technological capabilities.

In Chapter 7, Kroll and Schiller compare public support for R&D in China and Thailand. The institutional differences in R&D funding between the two countries are very interesting. Due to institutional weaknesses in Thailand that include a lack of linkages between public and private sector support for R&D and poor governance of innovation programmes, the authors conclude that public support for R&D is more effective in China.

The chapter on national innovation systems by Yokakul, Promwong and Zawdie (Chapter 8) complements, to some extent, the preceding chapter by Kroll and Schiller. The authors provide a detailed description of the various elements within Thailand's national innovation system. Yokakul, Promwong and Zawdie are less critical about Thailand's institutional infrastructure than

are Kroll and Schiller but they provide more policy recommendations. Chapter 8 is also one of the few chapters in this volume that discusses ASEAN economic integration, albeit in a general manner.

Finally, Rahmawati and Irawati (Chapter 9) provide a refreshing analysis of the creative industry in Indonesia focusing on its economic contributions as well as the role of local entrepreneurs. It provides a useful discussion of Indonesia's role in ASEAN via collaborations between creative cities in the region. This includes cultural exchanges and cooperation between the cities of Sawahlunto (Indonesia) and Malacca (Malaysia).

In short, *Emerging Knowledge Economies in Asia* is likely to be of interest to students and scholars looking for specific topics related to the ASEAN member countries covered in this book. In this age of academic specialization, it might be difficult to find readers that would be interested in each and every one of the topics covered, but this is would not be the fault of the editors and contributors.

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Vietnam's Economic Entities in Transition. Edited by Shozo Sakata. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Pp. 233.

This book examines the socioeconomic and institutional transformations that Vietnam's economic entities have undergone following the initiation of the *Doi Moi* (renovation) policy in

1986. *Vietnam's Economic Entities in Transition* presents eight essays written by a team of Japanese scholars and practitioners. With the exception of the introductory chapter, these essays are divided into two parts. The first part (Chapters 1 and 2) focuses on state-owned enterprises (SOEs), particularly their restructuring processes, such as the adoption of new corporate governance standards. The second part (Chapters 3 to 7) examines the different types of economic entities operating in various sectors of the Vietnamese economy.

The underlying message of the book is that Vietnam's economic entities — firms, individuals and institutions — have been relatively successful in their integration into the global economy following a series of economic reforms. However, the book scrutinizes the seemingly shaky foundations of this economic success: Vietnam's SOEs; and the foreign firms that invested in the country following the gradual relaxation of investment rules. It argues that despite some success in corporate restructuring, SOEs (as a group) are still plagued by a considerable number of non-performing ones. Foreign firms have been relatively autonomous in charting their business strategies in Vietnam, however, such autonomy is not desirable for the country's national industrial development as it exacerbates the technological and expertise gap between Vietnam and other, more developed economies.

The attention to empirical detail is evident throughout the book. For instance, Chapter 1 provides comprehensive information on SOEs and the restructuring processes they have undertaken in order to effectively compete in a more liberal economic environment. Chapter 1's thesis is supported by a masterful analysis of economic and financial data obtained from relevant government ministries, SOEs, and other business and trade journals. Specifically, the chapter argues that the SOEs have undergone a consolidation phase as smaller and less efficient SOEs have gradually been dissolved, while larger and more efficient ones have been scaled up. The chapter also discusses the corporate reorganization of the PetroVietnam Group (PVN) and the Vietnam Shipbuilding Industry Group (VINASHIN), especially their

efforts at diversifying and expanding into new economic activities. SOE restructuring is presently uneven and remains a work-in-progress as the state continues to play a vital, albeit diminishing, role in their decision-making processes. For instance, the appointment of top management personnel, and the setting of management and production targets still require the approval of the Prime Minister.

A similar level of empirical rigour is seen in Chapter 5's analysis of the Vietnamese motorcycle industry; it traces the industry's transition from a small and inefficient market to the world's fourth largest producer of motorcycles. The chapter's thorough survey of Vietnamese motorcycle assemblers and their key suppliers provides an in-depth perspective of the strategies deployed by Vietnamese assemblers to cope with the challenges posed by the technical superiority of Japanese industry leaders and the changing economic policy environment within Vietnam, which has transited from a nurturing state to one that actively promotes a more liberal marketplace.

This book is especially noteworthy because of its contribution to the literature on global value chains (Chapters 4 and 5). Focusing on the garment and motorcycle manufacturing industries, two of Vietnam's more successful undertakings, the authors aptly illustrate that their success thus far is largely due to an expansion in volume, without substantial technological advancement within the relevant firms. Thus, Vietnam's economic development might not be sustainable in the long run as many of the country's garment and motorcycle manufacturing firms are locked in a "race to the bottom" on the commercial and technological terms set out by lead firms from the developed world. In other words, they are trapped in low value-added activities wherein the possibilities of upgrading and conducting higher value-added activities along other nodes of the value chain are limited. This finding somewhat dampens the euphoria surrounding Vietnam's anticipated emergence as a "new economic dragon" of Southeast Asia.

Despite the book's various merits, there is a lack of analysis on how Vietnam's economic entities have withstood the fallout resulting from

the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) of 2008–09. For example, some of Vietnam’s larger and more successful SOEs (such as VINASHIN) ran into difficulties during the crisis and have shown little sign of recovery despite state support. The absence of a discussion on the GFC is understandable as most of the book’s research was conducted prior to this period. Yet, the crisis is one of the more severe events in recent years to challenge the Vietnamese economy, and it is a pity that the book offers little comment on how the crisis has affected the transition process.

In summary, *Vietnam’s Economic Entities in Transition* deserves credit as it offers a detailed and well-structured analysis of a topic that is relatively understudied. The book’s organization and attention to empirics will appeal to the research, policy, and business communities. Notwithstanding some of its shortcomings, the book is also recommended for both general and specialist readers interested in the Vietnamese economy.

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Asian and Pacific Cities: Development Patterns.
Edited by Ian Shirley and Carol Neill. New
York: Routledge, 2013. Pp. 298.

This publication comprises sixteen chapters, each representing one city in Asia, Oceania or along the Pacific Rim. Cities as diverse as Apia (Samoa), Santiago (Chile), Pune (India), Jakarta (Indonesia), Auckland (New Zealand) and Shanghai (China) are described in their historic formation as the authors search for forces shaping today’s social, political and economic development processes. By focusing on the dynamics of development, without necessarily classifying, rating or comparing the cities under study, this volume examines development patterns of Asian and Pacific cities

and their social dimensions. In doing so, the publication concludes the first phase of the Asian and Pacific Development Program (APDP), established by Ian Shirley in 2006 to generate distinctive interpretations of development from research teams working across the region.

In the introduction, the editors argue that development in the Asia-Pacific region over the last six decades and its attendant impact on the political economy of the world has been outstanding. For instance, the region generates a third of the world’s GDP. Macroeconomic indicators aside, Shirley and Neill utilize literacy and life expectancy rates to describe the region’s social transformation: average life expectancy at birth rose from fifty-six years in 1960 to seventy-one years in 1990, with rates of adult literacy jumping from 73 to 91 per cent over the same period (p. 4). The enormous diversity within this vast region, which covers a third of the world’s surface and houses 56 to 60 per cent of its total population, can be expressed in terms of its geography, population distribution, religious plurality, demographic transformation, political systems and/or economic models. This diversity, the editors argue, is often neglected in academic research.

The rapid growth of cities in the region is described as a new phenomenon that gained momentum during the second half of the last millennium. Thus the formation of Asian and Pacific metropolitan cities differs radically from what is known about cities in the West: the urban planning practised under colonial rule; the comparatively late but immense impact of industrialization; and the more recent effects of globalization exemplify the different circumstances and forces that shaped or still shape development patterns in Asian and Pacific cities. These transformation processes are documented by scholars and global development agencies in numerous books and articles. Nevertheless, according to the Shirley and Neill, this region remains one of the least understood regions in the world (p. xvii).

Reasons for this are the scale and diversity of the area as well as the dominance of Western academic theories in research. These theories, widely used