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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.

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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

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by researchers and global agencies, tend to place the region in a global web of interdependencies, in turn, marginalizing areas of high regional value and indigenous forms of progress and development. Using theories of globalization, researchers tend to describe development through economic constructs and economics alone. The editors therefore question traditional, linear concepts of development because of their partial and deterministic interpretations of political, social and economic change. To create distinctive interpretations of development, the book asks local scholars to write “development stories” about their respective cities.

In other words, Shirley and Neill have aimed to collect “indigenous” knowledge about the cities’ development by tracking economic and social trends and describing specific moments in their development trajectory. In this context “indigenous” is understood as research carried out by local scholars of urban studies, human geography, economic and policy development or social science. The scholars built profiles of these cities by analysing domestic migration, spatial and social fragmentation, suburban development, squatter settlements and gated communities, poverty and inequality, urban housing, the informal economy and the scale of unemployment and underemployment, identifying the “drivers” of development within the metropolitan centres of the region.

This approach, described as *development from below*, culminates in sixteen “stories” about metropolitan “laboratories” written by “insiders”, who are not obliged to follow Western academic traditions but rather build their own narrative beyond their respective scientific traditions. The editors explain that this framework allows the scholars to trace the dynamics of development without the use of generalizing ranking systems. The competitive nature of academic research is set aside to establish a collaborative framework. This shift from a comparative to an interactive approach was initiated to facilitate exchange between the scholars and to stimulate new findings within their respective cities and scientific fields of inquiry (p. 15).

The book is divided into three parts comprising the three geographic areas: Asia (Ho Chi Minh City, Bangkok, Singapore, Manila, Kuala Lumpur, Tokyo, Jakarta, Mumbai, Pune, Shanghai); Pacific/Oceania (Apia, Auckland, Suva, Melbourne); and the Pacific Rim (Guadalajara, Santiago). Focusing primarily on big cities, the dynamics of development are analysed from an urban perspective. However, this perspective does not exclude issues such as rural land ownership, agrarian stagnation, urban-rural migration or traditional systems of village communities, but frames them within an urban context.

In the concluding chapter, Shirley and Neill state that the articles collated in this publication serve as platforms for understanding Asian and Pacific cities and the region’s respective countries. They continue by summarizing economic and social developmental achievements in these cities and attempt to reveal that an integrated interpretation of development is practised today. For them, these local interpretations mark a radical shift from Western understandings of Asian and Pacific development patterns. Social conditions, they continue, are not treated as artefacts of the economy any more, and the ultimate challenge of these experimental development strategies, would be to sustain themselves (p. 285).

In summary, this book provides useful introductory insights into the development processes of a wide range of cities. The well-structured essays provide readers with a basic understanding of each city’s development, but the average chapter length of about 6,500 words seems insufficient for both historic discourse and an in-depth analysis of contemporary development processes.

Although the editors have attempted to collect indigenous knowledge, as was mentioned above, the book focuses on cities only. This neglects the large expanse of non-urban areas in this region. Even if the editors encouraged the authors to write without a given academic framework, the use of cities as a lens into respective countries evokes an outsider perspective, similar to one evoked by a western academic perspective. Urbanity, or the city, might not be the region’s indigenous core.

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According to the Asian and Pacific Development Program, a second phase of research will be published in a complementary publication. And, together, these two books might reveal the missing link between developments in the city and the countryside in their attempt to redefine the region against dominant western perspectives.

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***Trade and Employment in Asia. Edited By Ninny Khor and Devashish Mitra.*** Abingdon; New York: Routledge and the Asian Development Bank, 2013. Pp. 312.

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This ten-chapter volume analyses trade and employment issues as they persist throughout East Asia generally and in four economies specifically: Indonesia; Malaysia; the Republic of Korea; the People's Republic of China (PRC); and its Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong. In the introductory chapter, Khor provides a roadmap that is essential for readers to keep in mind as they move through the book's mass of serious scholarship that includes empirical data, theoretical analyses, institutional evaluations, policy issues and development perspectives. Khor stresses that in the book, "[the authors] look at the trade-labor nexus in the context of Asia, which has been growing rapidly over the last two to three decades and which has, at the same time, been undergoing changes. This period in Asia has seen jobs being created at a rapid and robust pace ... (and) growth has led to substantial poverty reduction." (p. 1)

The four chapters that follow the introduction analyse and describe in detail the changing relationships among the patterns of trade in goods and services, the structure of employment markets,

employment conditions, the importance of foreign direct investment, globalization's impact, labour market regulations, firm behaviour as well as competitiveness. However, relatively little attention is paid to informal and formal education and their impact on generating the human skills and attributes necessary to produce exports. Despite education's absence, the range of topics covered throughout the volume makes it a useful addition to the academic literature and clearly it can be added to reading lists in selected university classes that deal with Asia's economies.

Readers will also note an important theme analysing "the links between openness to trade and historical trends in employment and its quality, where 'quality' captures various employment characteristics such as the wage rate, job-security, working conditions and other non-wage benefits." (p. 10). In this sense the contributors do not forget that they are examining the lives of human beings whose workplace circumstances and economic well-being are not simply abstractions but are the consequences of interactions of domestic and external market activities and government policies. Well-being is partly defined in terms of wages about which Khor concludes that despite "considerable variation within the region", "one of the most striking patterns that we observe is the rise in wages in Asia, especially and its developing countries." (p. 45)

The concluding five chapters narrow the book's focus to the four economies and their trade, development and employment performances. Numerous topics stand out including the following three. First, the chapter on Indonesia analyses the reasons behind the decline in labour-intensive manufacturing and the rise of services. It calls attention to the capital-intensive production function inherent in the nature of foreign direct investment and technology transfers into the Indonesian economy, particularly its export-oriented industries. The authors conclude that "the slowdown in manufacturing jobs associated with exports is a concern at this stage of the country's development, as highlighted by the rising share of employment in agriculture" (p. 201). In addition,