

certification. ROOs should uphold rather than undermine ASEAN's efforts to establish a single economic community and enhance rather than diminish the benefits of a more integrated ASEAN economy.

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***From Community to Compliance? The Evolution of Monitoring Obligations in ASEAN.* By Simon Chesterman.** Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. Pp. 198.

The book is a commendable, though initial, effort to study monitoring in ASEAN. During the first four decades of ASEAN's inception, monitoring had not been taken seriously by the governments of member countries. Its importance only gained traction recently, when the level of regional cooperation was raised to systematic community-building.

During the research process, the author and his research assistants found a dearth of information on the topic — which is to be expected. The information provided in the book is slightly outdated since this study was done in 2012. ASEAN has since moved on, going beyond the official "establishment" of the ASEAN Community in 2015 to crafting a new ASEAN Community Vision 2025 Roadmap. Nevertheless, the book provides an interesting conceptual framework to study monitoring in ASEAN (Chapter 2). Researchers interested in this topic can adopt the author's approach while conducting additional studies on monitoring, reporting, and compliance in the post-2015 ASEAN Community.

Although conceptually interesting, Chesterman's understanding of the "ASEAN Way" (pp. 8 and 94) is rather limited. The "ASEAN Way" is more than policy-making through consultation and consensus. It includes: the preference of a low level of institutionalization (no ASEAN Secretariat during the first ten years of ASEAN; no new entities outside of the ASEAN Secretariat except for the ASEAN Regional Forum; the ASEAN Plus Three or the East Asia Summit); quiet diplomacy; emphasis on the positive (including no naming or shaming of any member government in public); more flexibility for newcomers (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam); and equal contribution to the annual budget of the ASEAN Secretariat. All these finer details of the "ASEAN Way" have influenced how monitoring in ASEAN has developed, or, in some cases, failed to ensure compliance.

Since adopting the ASEAN Charter in 2007, two substantive components remains non-operational: the legal personality of ASEAN in Article 3; and the Dispute Settlement Mechanisms (DSMs) in Article 23 (good offices, conciliation, and mediation) and in Article 25 (arbitration). The long and continuing delays for certain countries to ratify their domestic laws have raised serious doubts among observers on the willingness of governments to make ASEAN more rule-based — let alone to accept more compliance. In this connection, the three questions presented on

assessing a monitoring mechanism (p. 62) are extremely relevant.

The book correctly takes note of the growing acceptance of monitoring in the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). This change is welcomed and arises from the need to give confidence to the international business community, as ASEAN still heavily depends on trade and foreign direct investment to drive growth. However, the book could have delve further into the issue by examining the reasons for the delay for the twenty AEC agreements awaiting full ratification.

Despite efforts to improve monitoring in ASEAN, there is no effective peer pressure for slow-moving member governments to comply with this crucial obligation under the Charter's provision. As a matter of fact, Article 5 Paragraph 2 of the ASEAN Charter states that "Member States shall take all necessary measures, including the enactment of appropriate domestic legislation, to effectively implement the provisions of this Charter and to comply with all obligations of membership". Another example of an enacted regulation experiencing a lack of usage is the 2004 ASEAN Protocol on an Enhanced Dispute Settlement Mechanism. Although it has been in force for nearly twelve years, no legal case has been raised thus far. This reflects another trait of the "ASEAN Way": avoidance of cumbersome litigation and preference for political consultations to settle an economic dispute quietly.

ASEAN Finance Ministers made a decision in 2011 to set up the ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic Research Office (AMRO) in Singapore (p. 31), on the ground that the ASEAN Secretariat lacked the human and financial capacities to undertake the highly technical job. That was and still is the case. Alternatively, the ASEAN Secretariat could have considered strengthening internal resources to increase its technical capability.

With the establishment of the ASEAN Community in 2015, member governments came to the realization that in order to build a more credible post-2015 Community, they must ratify all the signed agreements without unreasonable delays; and more importantly, implement them in good faith for the common interest of ASEAN.

ASEAN governments have called on the ASEAN Secretariat to spearhead a new and more "robust reporting" system in light of the more ambitious community-building goals in the 2025 Roadmap. The ASEAN Political-Security Committee (APSC) Department and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Department in the ASEAN Secretariat will each set up a new monitoring and analysis division. In the AEC Department, the ASEAN Integration Monitoring Office (p. 30) serves this function.

In spite of the strengthening of the ASEAN Secretariat, there remains among ASEAN member governments a shared common belief not to allow the ASEAN Secretariat or its Secretary-General to have supranational powers. The 2011 Rules of Procedure for the Conclusion of International Agreements by ASEAN makes clear that the Secretary-General of ASEAN needs authorisation before he or she can sign an external agreement that will bind all member governments in ASEAN.

In Chapter 3 of the book, it proposes other entities to conduct monitoring in ASEAN besides the Secretariat, which includes other international organizations (pp. 86–87). In fact, the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) has been monitoring the AEC and disseminating information on its informal AEC scorecard. Whether such monitoring by an external party is appropriate remains debatable.

On balance, it is still unclear how effective ASEAN can be in developing monitoring mechanisms for itself. A systematic study of monitoring in ASEAN will be a useful means to assess progress in the movement in ASEAN towards compliance.

Despite the paucity of public information, this book shows how it can be done. To gather more up-to-date information, researchers will have to figure out on their own how to penetrate the wall of opacity in ASEAN.

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