

endowments across the region to strengthen their international competitiveness. In this setting, production processes of a given product is fragmented and assigned to individual countries within the region according to the countries' comparative advantage. This resulted in increasing intra-regional trade and investment within East Asia. While there is a number of empirical studies examining intra-regional trade and investment, only a few were mentioned in the book. A better understanding is critical for policymakers in the region to promote further economic integration through law in the AEC.

All in all, this book is highly recommended for policymakers and audiences who are newcomers to the economic integration through law in Southeast Asia. It provides several facts that are usually omitted in previous studies but important in formulating our thoughts on how integration is attributed to ongoing market-driven initiatives in the region. I have no doubt that this book will be a key reference on economic integration in ASEAN and would be a great complement to other books that have been written in this area.

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***The ASEAN Economic Community: A Conceptual Approach.* By Jacques Pelkmans.** Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016. Pp 231.

On 31 December 2015, the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) was officially launched with

the intent to mark a new milestone in the path to deeper integration in Southeast Asia. The AEC, together with the Political-Security Community and the Socio-Cultural Community form the three pillars of the ASEAN Community. Many questions have arisen regarding the significance and importance of this long-awaited achievement for economic development and the emergence of the region as a political actor on the international scene. With multiple Chinese initiatives in Asia such as the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific, the Asian Investment Infrastructure Bank and the One Belt One Road initiative, the competing U.S.-led Trans-Pacific Partnership initiative, as well as the conflict over the South China Sea, the discussion on the concept of ASEAN is timely.

The book focuses on the AEC and is part of a wider research project entitled “Integration Through Law: The Role of Law and the Rule of Law in ASEAN Integration” undertaken by the Centre for International Law at the National University of Singapore, which aims at achieving a theory and conceptual framework of Asian legal integration. This explains why the book applies a conceptual approach to make the AEC intelligible. Two key concepts of the AEC are analysed in detail: the “single market” and “single production base for segments of global value chains” and their interrelations. The book also gives ample room to an extensive scrutiny of the instruments of implementation.

Following the short introductory chapter which justifies the conceptual approach, Chapter 2 is the longest chapter by far (69 pages) and is the core of the book. It delineates the foundations of economic integration in the general case and a modern stage approach specifying the logics of deepening the commitments and widening of the scope of the AEC. There are two aspects of deepening commitments: “negative” (the removal of discrimination and barriers) and “positive” integration (the joint action by member states to create new instruments, rules and institutions). One of the strengths of the chapter resides in the application of this framework to clearly locate where the European Union (EU), the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) and the

AEC stand. It is widely known that the integration in EU is much deeper than other agreements, so the comparison between NAFTA and AEC has more relevance. What makes NAFTA work is the combination of a very detailed treaty at the outset and a powerful private litigation culture which can also count on a solid judicial system. This confers credibility and transparency in the implementation and compliance of the treaty in the eyes of businesses. ASEAN typically starts with a “vision” expressed by political leaders, while the details are set through lengthy procedures under the strict control of national governments. This creates uncertainty and a “waiting attitude” by businesses. The absence of any compliance mechanism and possibility of private litigation against governments undermines ASEAN’s credibility and transparency. Only items that fit with national interests are effectively implemented by each government. The chapter proceeds with elaborating on four strategic choices that ASEAN faces to increase its coherence and credibility. This leads to the presentation of two different economic rationales of the AEC: “a cooperative ASEAN-led development strategy” and “a pro-competitive quasi-single market strategy for development”.

Chapter 3 defines the concept of the AEC by looking at its core documents such as the 2003 Bali Concord II Declaration and the recommendations given by the High Level Task Force (HTLF), which is responsible for giving operational substance to key concepts included in the declaration. The chapter not only shows a weak link between the “Bali Vision” and the recommendations, but also shows that the HTLF falls short of providing a clear interpretation of the five key concepts: free flow; single market; single production base; equitable development; and ASEAN’s economic competitiveness. One additional difficulty is that while ASEAN leaders give repeated assurance to not imitate the structure of the EU, they intentionally use a form of language that reminds people of the EU’s core treaties. To provide some clarity, the author employs the EU concepts as a benchmark to elucidate their meaning in the context of ASEAN. Readers learn that: free flow

does not mean free movement; there will not be a genuine single market; the single production base is intended to promote ASEAN-based segments of global value chains with more trade facilitation measures; equitable development is a wish that does not rest on any serious decision while competitiveness is just mentioned once in the Bali Declaration. The chapter ends with a presentation of a new detailed document, the Roadmap adopted in 2010, which fills the void of the Bali Declaration by incorporating agreements and ASEAN directives which again look very similar to EU directives.

Chapter 4 is dedicated to the inspection of the implementation instruments defined by the Roadmap. The author again painstakingly reviews the five key concepts and observes some progress in specific areas. But the overall assessment remains the same. There is a huge gap between the ambitious objectives of the AEC and the avowed instruments of implementation. Nonetheless, the author returns in Chapter 5 to a new comparison of the AEC and NAFTA based on the analysis of fifteen substantive provisions. The two entities share several characteristics when it comes to substance although NAFTA does not pretend to be a single market. One interesting result is that “ASEAN could come close to what NAFTA has accomplished if it would implement and comply with all the WTO codes that the ASEAN-6 have long committed to ... and amend or go beyond them where it suits Southeast Asia...” (p. 176). Chapter 6 presents three options for the AEC: a single-market-minus; ASEAN as a regional production base; and AEC as a living regional market and development compact. It comes up with a set of recommendations to achieve them.

The strength of the book is undoubtedly its capacity to synthesize voluminous official documents to provide the reader with the essence of what the AEC proclaims to be. This is probably the best exegesis of ASEAN official statements. But the book ascribes too much significance to them. Experience has shown that declarations, agreements, even detailed commitments may be signed by ASEAN member states, but it does not mean that they will actually be implemented. The

book itself is riddled with numerous examples of possibilities to avoid commitments and directives. One simple reason for that is there is no serious monitoring scheme, not to mention litigation or sanction possibilities. If a member state does not implement what it has officially committed to do, it is common knowledge that no measures are taken against the member. Although very instructive, the very detailed comparisons between NAFTA and the EU tells readers what the AEC is not, but it does not expound on what it really is. Perhaps, as the author himself acknowledges at the end of the book on page 182, the real question is this: Can ASEAN combine an extreme form of inter-governmentalism due to its sensitivity to national sovereignty with effective implementation to properly serve the common interest of the AEC?

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The Asian Century, Sustainable Growth and Climate Change: Responsible Futures Matter. Edited by Moazzem Hossain, Tapan Sarker and Malcolm McIntosh. Cheltenham and Northampton: Edward Elgar, 2013.

This book is an edited volume based on an international workshop at Griffith University's Asia-Pacific Centre for Sustainable Enterprise (APCSE). The workshop aimed to look at Asia's developmental challenges. The subject matter is a pressing one as Asia could produce over half the global output by mid-century and see massive improvements in its standards of living (ADB 2011). This volume will appeal to both policymakers and academics as it adds a specific Asian context to the voluminous body

of knowledge on sustainable development (see Parnwell and Bryant 1996).

The volume covers a broad range of topics in its twelve chapters, including social issues arising from property rights (especially with regards to agricultural land ownership); population growth and poverty reduction; the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); policy directions for energy security; long-term fiscal policy; agricultural adaptation programmes to deal with environmental change; public health policy; sanitation; decentralization and poverty reduction; migration; sustainable mining; and sustainable business practices.

The book is divided into three sections: the first identifies the future socio-economic issues that will affect the development of the Asian century; the second zeroes in on specific policy matters; and the third sums up the challenges that need to be surmounted for the Asian century to come to fruition. However, like many edited volumes, this volume reads better as a collection of individual cases rather than a cohesive thematically arranged picture of the issues around achieving the Asian century. This is not necessarily a weakness since sustainable development is such a contentious topic that there is no consensus on how it should be carried out, let alone be organized coherently. Instead, each chapter of the volume provides an in-depth study on its own that relates to a different issue in a particular socio-economic context. The depth of analysis gives the policymakers insights into the factors that need to be taken into consideration when planning long-term developmental policy.

While organizing an edited volume is inevitably challenging, one potential suggestion would have been to structure the book along the framework of the MDGs, which lists the end-goals to be achieved to sustainably develop the global south. For example, chapters could be grouped under the overarching theme of poverty reduction. This is would make it easier to relate M. Hossain's chapter, which tussles with poverty reduction in relation to burgeoning population growth, and Tjoe's chapter, which deals with it in relation to
