

literature. While much speculation abounds when an FTA is signed, there are not enough efforts to observe the business response to these FTAs, once signed, and their actual impacts on trade. These two chapters, while focussing only on the Japanese perspective due to lack of data and information, provide some interesting insights on this issue. While it is noteworthy to observe that firms so far have used FTAs in a very limited capacity, it brings out the need to reduce the costs of their use, particularly for small-size firms. It also indicates that firms are likely to be more interested in using FTAs with large-sized markets and major trading partners, such as is the case for the Japan-Mexico agreement, compared to Japan's bilateral FTA with Singapore.

Overall, this book is a very valuable resource for academics, businesses, policy makers and students who want to know more about the degree of trade and investment liberalization actually achieved by these FTAs in the Asia-Pacific, and the extent to which they differ across countries in their quality and impact. The editors and other members of the FTA study group at RIETI deserve to be congratulated on their efforts at bringing out this highly interesting and well-researched volume. Such research needs to be more forthcoming on other Asia-Pacific countries to enrich the literature on whether FTAs are a building or a stumbling block to global free trade.

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PATHS TO DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA: South Korea, Vietnam, China, and Indonesia. By *Tuong Vu*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010. xvii, 294 pp. (Tables, figures.) US\$85.00, cloth. ISBN 978-0-521-76180-2.

The East Asian developmental experience continues to attract attention. Rightly so: the economic history of twentieth-century East Asia remains one of the most surprising and optimism-inducing periods of the recent past. There are still potentially important lessons to be learned about how it happened and what it might mean for other parts of the world. In the context of existing debates, Tuong Vu's analysis of the East Asian "miracle" pays particular attention to the role of the state and the conditions that allowed it to play a role in overseeing economic development. While this is hardly a novel undertaking, of course, Vu's book adds to our understanding of this process by focusing on the historical circumstances which gave a number of East Asian states their distinctive "developmental" character. What distinguishes this book in the author's view, is that it provides an explanation that emphasizes the "political and contingent factors," rather than what Vu takes to be the dominant sociological interpretation of regional development.

Paths to Development in Asia consequently does what the title suggests. By looking at the comparative historical experiences of South Korea, China, Indonesia and Vietnam, Vu provides an elite-centred analysis of state

development which explains state coherence and hence its potential to oversee the developmental project. Some readers will be surprised at the choice of case studies, no doubt, as apart from South Korea, their status as developmental states might be considered contestable. Whatever the merits of considering states like Indonesia as developmental, though, this approach does have the merit of isolating some of the factors that caused states to develop in particular ways; factors which help to account for their subsequent effectiveness. As Vu notes, the inclusion of Vietnam and China is also illuminating because they are notionally non-capitalist states, and because this analysis pays specific attention to the role of ideology. Given China's growing importance as a potential developmental role model, a discussion of the early period of the modern state in China is especially welcome.

The key argument that emerges from Vu's comparative analysis is somewhat counter-intuitive: elites that attempt to accommodate oppositional social forces are associated with reduced structural cohesion. Historical contexts and contingent factors mattered, but weren't decisive: establishing growth-oriented political coalitions was the decisive move, whatever differences in background and even ideology there may have been. The historical evidence provided to support these claims is detailed and generally persuasive and the country studies will be of interest to country specialists and comparativists alike. Indeed, there are extended comparative analyses of Indonesia and Vietnam in particular, and the latter's inclusion is especially welcome as it doesn't generally receive the sort of attention its unique circumstances and potential merit.

It is always irritating for authors when reviewers tell them about the book they should have written rather than reviewing what they actually did say. With apologies in advance, it would have been helpful—and significantly added to the book's overall appeal—if the analysis could have included some greater discussion of the case studies' current circumstances and an assessment of the developmental period's long-term importance. As it is, the book focuses mainly on the formative periods of the countries concerned, principally up until the 1960s. Informative, useful and well done as all this is, it would have been helpful to draw out its contemporary relevance in more detail. Nevertheless, the book is a significant contribution to the literature in this area and provides an original interpretation of an important and relatively neglected phase in the development of what has rapidly become the world's most important economic region.

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