

EAST ASIAN REGIONALISM. By *Christopher M. Dent*. *New York and London: Routledge, 2008. xx, 320 pp. (Figures, tables, maps.) US\$41.95, paper. ISBN 978-0-415-43484-3.*

East Asian regionalism has been one of the most widely discussed and debated topics in the field of International Political Economy (IPE) since the end of the cold war. The main foci of such debates and discussion can be grouped in a few categories and usually in a dichotomy-based fashion: (1) the “progress” versus “process” it has made over the years; (2) the “impediments” versus “positive factors” in the realization of East Asian regionalization; (3) “structure” versus “institutions” as a means of facilitating regionalism in East Asia; (4) “bilateralism” versus “multilateralism” as a premise for East Asian regionalism; and (5) “pessimism” versus “optimism” on the prospects of East Asian regionalism. To date, much of the literature still fails to go beyond these questions. They have yet to address the subject in any all-encompassing manner. In his book, Christopher Dent makes a pioneering attempt to blend all these parallel and contrasting perspectives and theories in IPE to define what East Asian regionalism is all about.

After years of observation and analysis of the evolution of developmental discourse of East Asian regionalism, Dent succeeds in enlightening the students of IPE on the definition of East Asian regionalism by combining the concept of regionalism and coherence in the context of globalization. Dent states that “East Asian regionalism is embedded within wider economic, political and socio-cultural integrational forces and arrangements we typically associate with globalization. ... The coherence of East Asia’s regionalism can be maintained in relation to the[se] processes [of associative coherence, integrational coherence, and organizational coherence] because in most cases they tend to be involved in a mutually reinforcing relationship” (283). He basically constructs the definition by relating the progress made by the expanding international production networks (IPN), the ongoing process of “spaghetti bowl”-like free trade agreements (FTAs) based on bilateralism, and rising numbers of frameworks and institutions for regional cooperation to regionalism as coherence. It is a significant intellectual contribution to the understanding of East Asian regionalism, and the students of IPE who desire greater comprehension of East Asian regionalism will benefit much from this book.

As a textbook on East Asian regionalism, Dent’s book has the following merits. As emphasized in the preface, one of the strengths of this book lies in the consistent application of his studies, whether they are issue-specific or case studies, of East Asian regionalism to the theoretical frameworks he uses, namely neo-realism, neo-liberalism (institutionalism), social constructivism, and Marxism–structuralism. Each and every chapter concludes with an overview of the main findings from these four different IPE theoretical perspectives. At the end of each chapter, Dent also provides a set of study

questions that “may be used as a basis for class discussions.” The questions he raises are fundamental and essential, yet critical. They require a complete understanding of the context to answer. At the same time, they ask readers to think, and to have a sufficient background knowledge in East Asian affairs.

Not all the textbooks perfectly satisfy one’s intellectual curiosity. Admittedly, however, there are not too many flaws in Dent’s analyses and studies of East Asian regionalism, as he makes clear that his premises are derived strictly from IPE perspectives. Despite this, Dent somehow manages to overlook and/or undermine the importance of the American factor in the shaping of East Asian regionalism or East Asian regional frameworks, for that matter. While some of the frameworks are exclusively East Asian (e.g., ASEAN Plus Three (APT), Chiang Mai Initiative (CMI), East Asia Summit (EAS), others have America’s participation and, therefore, American implications. In those that the US is involved in, it plays a critical role in advancing East Asian regionalism, such as institutionalization. Conversely, in some cases, it is a hindrance and creates some adverse effects. The US, for instance, still adamantly adheres to the strategy of “hub and spoke,” relying on bilateral security alliances to secure its regional interests. Such a system of alliances reduces the room for maneuverability for the allies, making them more aware of the possibility that they might lose something should they decide to become more integrated in the East Asian regionalization process while deviating from the shared interests with the US. Dent briefly touches upon this matter but does not elaborate enough. The US factor will become increasingly more important and critical to the development of East Asian regionalism than China–Japan relations because the US will be “forced to observe China’s growing centrality,” as Dent rightly puts it.

Kyung Hee University, Yongin, South Korea

JAEWOO CHOO

GENDER AND GLOBALIZATION IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC: Method, Practice, Theory. *Edited by Kathy E. Ferguson and Monique Mironesco.* Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2008. xii, 420 pp. (Illus.) US\$35.00, paper. ISBN 978-0-8248-3241-4.

Globalization is a unifying as well as diversifying process. While it reaches every place and people, it affects them in different ways. A volume edited by Kathy E. Ferguson and Monique Mironesco, *Gender and Globalization in Asia and the Pacific: Method, Practice, Theory*, addresses this contradictory process of globalization and its divergent effects on gender in the Asia and Pacific (AP) region. Each of 16 case studies comprises a chapter that examines different topics related to gender and globalization, including history, media, labour and militarization, in various parts of the AP region.

In the Pacific islands, centuries-old Western colonization, coupled with