

**Jones, Lee (2012).**

***ASEAN, Sovereignty and Intervention in Southeast Asia.***

Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN: 9780230319264. i-xvi + 262 pages.

**Citation** Amer, R. (2013). Book Review: Jones, L. (2012). ASEAN, sovereignty and intervention in Southeast Asia. *ASEAS - Austrian Journal of South-East Asian Studies*, 6(1), 232-234.

The book by Lee Jones dealing with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a welcomed contribution to the growing literature on ASEAN and on various dimensions of regional collaboration in the Southeast Asian region. The focus of the book on issues such as sovereignty and intervention is very relevant in the context of ASEAN and the region of Southeast Asia. Given the emphasis ASEAN puts on non-interference and on respect for sovereignty within the framework for regional collaboration that the Association promotes in Southeast and also increasingly in the broader Pacific Asia, the book addresses a highly relevant area of research from both scholarly and policy perspectives.

The structure of the book is as follows: The Introduction outlines the purpose and structure of the book (pp. 1-9); Chapter 1 is primarily devoted to theorizing the concepts of sovereignty and intervention (pp. 10-35). Part I is devoted to the Cold War era and is divided into three chapters: Chapter 2 deals with the social foundations of ASEAN and non-interference (pp. 39-57); Chapter 3 is devoted to ASEAN and East Timor (pp. 58-74); Chapter 4 is focused on ASEAN and the Cambodian conflict (pp. 75-91). Part II of the book is devoted to the Post-Cold War Period and is divided into four chapters: Chapter 5 deals with ASEAN after the Cold War with a focus on the crisis of the late 1990s (pp. 95-127); Chapter 6 looks at ASEAN and Cambodia in the Post-Cold War setting (pp. 128-149); Chapter 7 is devoted to ASEAN's response to the East Timor situation of the late 1990s (pp. 150-179); Chapter 8 deals with ASEAN policies towards Burma (pp. 180-210). In the Conclusion the main findings are summarized followed by a final analysis (pp. 211-228). This is followed by the notes (pp. 229-233) and references (pp. 234-252).

Jones outlines ASEAN's position on sovereignty and intervention including the primacy of the principle of non-interference and the importance of this principle

within the ASEAN framework for regional collaboration in Southeast Asia. Through empirical case studies taken from the region he then examines how these principles are applied in practice. Jones' empirical case studies display that the principle of non-interference is applied in a more flexible way than one would anticipate given the strong emphasis placed on the respect for sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of the member states within the ASEAN framework. Since the situation during the Cold War period and the two cases of East Timor and Cambodia are addressed first, it can be observed that the first case was viewed as an internal Indonesian issue by ASEAN, while in the second case, besides the fact that Cambodia was not a member of ASEAN, the Association would argue that its policies were in response to Vietnam's military intervention in Cambodia. Thus, these two Cold War cases do not offer any strong evidence to inquire into the practical implementation of ASEAN's principles. The cases of East Timor and Cambodia, respectively, from the Post-Cold War Era are more convincing, and in particular the case of Cambodia. ASEAN even delayed admitting Cambodia as a member in 1997 on the grounds of the domestic developments in that country. This was a clear display of interference in the internal affairs of Cambodia. The case of Burma also offers a convincing example of the flexible implementation of ASEAN's principle of non-interference given that the internal developments in Burma have been scrutinized by ASEAN and by some of its member states.

Jones' findings highlight that ASEAN seems to experience a discrepancy between the stated principles of the Association as agreed upon by its member states and the policies conducted by its member states in practice both through their foreign policies and through ASEAN. This is not a unique situation as this phenomenon can be observed even more evidently in the context of the United Nations and its Charter and the policies conducted by its member states.

If a weakness can be found in the book, it relates to the fact that Jones disregards the legal foundations of the principle of non-interference. The focus of the book is on the international relations dimension. The linkage between the ASEAN principles and the Charter of the United Nations should also have been made more explicit in the book. This would have revealed to the reader how the fundamental principles of the ASEAN framework adhere to international law and to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

To summarize, the book is an interesting contribution to the study of ASEAN and of regional collaboration in Southeast Asia, in particular on core issues such as sovereignty, intervention, and non-interference. Through its approach and originality, it complements existing literature in the field by offering new insights. The book can be recommended to both the scholarly community and policy makers. It is of considerable relevance to those interested in the Southeast Asian region as well as to those interested in regionalism and regional collaboration more broadly, given that issues such as sovereignty and intervention are of relevance in other regions as well. In fact, they are of global relevance.

RAMSES AMER

*Institute for Security & Development Policy, Sweden*