

Stephen Hoadley and Jürgen Rüländ (eds), *Asian security reassessed* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2006), xvii + 381 pp.

Mely Caballero-Anthony, Ralf Emmers, and Amitav Acharya (eds), *Non-traditional security in Asia: Dilemmas in securitisation* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2006), xii + 257 pp.

The two books under review here share something in common. First, their regional focus is Asia. Secondly, they are edited volumes bringing together specialists in their own fields to analyse security issues, especially human securities. Thirdly, they examine non-traditional security issues such as environmental protection, public health, irregular migration, and so on, which go beyond the traditional understanding of security between states in terms of national security, defence, and sovereignty. The distinction between traditional security and non-traditional (or new) security is sometimes difficult to make. Fourthly, and interestingly, they both stress the importance of states as an important set of actors in dealing with security issues, whether traditional or non-traditional.

Despite these similarities, the two books differ in some notable respects. First, whereas the Hoadley and Rüländ volume does not attempt to forge a strong theoretical approach, the other volume attempts to use the theoretical framework advanced by the Copenhagen School of thinking on securities in the 1990s as a point of departure for its analysis. Why pick the Copenhagen School, however, has not been made entirely clear. Secondly, they differ in the way the respective books are organised and the choice of issues covered. The Hoadley and Rüländ volume is divided into four parts. In Part 1 Hoadley sketches the different approaches to Asian security. Part 2 consists of five chapters with a regional/country focus: Asia, Japan, China, the United States, and major security institutions in the region. Part 3 consists of six chapters covering weapons proliferation, natural resources and the environment, ethnic conflicts, migration, finance, and human rights. The last part, Part 4, explores new concepts in Asian security in three chapters covering global public good, communities, and tradition and change. On the other hand, the Caballero-Anthony, Emmers, and Acharya volume consists of eleven chapters in all. Chapter 1 provides an introduction and Chapter 11 a conclusion. The rest of nine chapters discuss respectively Bangladeshi migrants, Malaysia's approach to Indonesian migrant

labour, piracy in Southeast Asia, small arms and drug trafficking in Indonesia, disease, AIDS, health, poverty, and resource developing in the Mekong region. Thirdly, a quick comparison of the two books reveals that while the first volume is more comprehensively covered and analytically organised, the second volume is more theoretically focused and more concentrated on issues in Southeast Asia.

According to Caballero-Anthony and Emmers in Chapter 1, the Copenhagen School of security was developed by scholars such as Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, Jaap de Wilde and others in the 1990s. (Buzan of course has since moved back to London.) The School puts forward a theoretical framework to understand security, which is underpinned by several proposed concepts (or academic jargons from another perspective!): *referent objects*, which ‘can be individuals and groups ... as well as issue areas (national sovereignty, environment, economy, etc.) that possess a claim to survival and whose existence is ostensibly threatened’; *securitizing actors*, which ‘can be governments, political elites, military, and civil society – those actors who securitize an issue by articulating the existence of threat(s) to the survival of specific referent objects’; *desecuritizing actors*, referring to ‘those who reconstitute an issue as no longer an existential threat, thereby moving it from the securitized realm into the ordinary public arena; and *process of securitization*, which ‘focuses on how securitizing actors use the language of security (*speech act*) to convince a specific audience of the existential nature of the threat. (pp. 4-5) Caballero-Anthony and Emmers point out that this Copenhagen School suffers from several limitations: First, it does not address the question of why securitization occurs. Secondly, it has paid too much attention on developing a broad-theoretical approach and too little on empirical evidence. Thirdly, it tends to be Euro-centric in its approach. Finally, it ‘is not particularly concerned with assessing the policy effectiveness of securitization and desecuritization policies. Nor does it pay much attention to the unintended consequences.’ (pp. 5-6) Their edited volume therefore aims to address these shortcomings by looking at specific cases mainly in Southeast Asia.

How successful the book has been in addressing these shortcomings can perhaps be gleaned from the Conclusion arrived at by Acharya in the final chapter, in which he draws five major findings. First, the state is still the critical actor in any securitization process. Secondly, while ‘national security’ such as sovereignty remains of greatest

significance, Asian actors, both states and non-state agents, have become more aware of 'comprehensive security' and 'human security'. Thirdly, security concerns in the past and established frames of reference of actors matter a great deal in securitization. These three findings are not as astounding as they sound, as they can most probably be found elsewhere apart from Asia. The rest of the two findings go beyond the central concerns of the Copenhagen School in that the fourth finding indicates that the enhancement of the efficiency and efficacy of securitization may have unforeseen consequences. Finally, the fifth finding is that the spheres of securitization and politicization are closely linked and, furthermore, the process of securitization depends a lot on the context in which it takes place. These two findings represent some refinements of the School's framework through the empirical contributions derived from some Asian experience, a result which is not totally unexpected.

Both books aim to serve students studying security issues, apart from other categories of readers. In comparison, the Hoadley and Rūland edited volume seem to be more suitable for beginning students, because it is written in a simple, flowing language and because of its wider and more even coverage of issues. Hoadley's own introductory chapter, which gives an overview of the field, is particularly useful. The Caballero-Anthony, Emmers, and Acharya volume, however, is likely to pose greater challenge and stimulation to advanced students who would like to wrestle with the linkage between theory and practice, and with ideas between the East and the West. In some ways these two books serve to complement each other and both can be read with great benefits, whether as a whole or in some select chapters that interest the reader.

Gerald Chan
University of Durham