

Security and Environment in the Mediterranean. Conceptualising Security and Environmental Conflicts edited by Hans Günter Brauch, P. H. Liotta, Antonio Marquina, Paul F. Rogers and Mohammad El-Sayed Selim. Berlin: Springer, 2003. Pp.xxvi + 1134; index. £100.00 (hardback). ISBN 3 540 840107 5

In: *Environmental Politics*

One may wonder whether the comparatively new academic field of environmental security will manage to establish itself as an independent sub-area of political-cum-sociological study, but as western countries show no inclination of changing their growth and consumption-oriented economies whilst China, India and other developing countries are increasingly determined and successful in emulating western life styles, there can be no doubt at all that we are only seeing the very beginning of environmental issues becoming a source of intra-national as well as international conflicts and thus also security. This volume with its well over 1000 pages, 177 figures and 144 tables is probably the most comprehensive and best publication on the issue so far. Contrary to much of the existing literature it does not locate problems of environmental security far away in overpopulated and underdeveloped Third World countries but focuses on a geographical area, the Mediterranean, that is relatively close by and well known to many Europeans. The book is an absolute must for anyone not just in environmental studies, but also in the wider field of security studies. And at least by UK standards, this volume is actually incredibly well priced!

Divided into thirteen parts, the book comprises a total of fifty-two substantial chapters. Although the focus is, overall, on the Mediterranean, the significance of this collection reaches well beyond this geographical area. Indeed, most of the conceptual work undertaken by the contributors is fundamental for the study of environmental security issues world wide. Given the unusually wide range of topics and approaches, at least an indicative outline is imperative: The first four chapters provide an introduction to the linkages between environment and security in the Mediterranean in the period since WW2, give an overview of environmental issues as a source of conflict, and address issues of conflict prevention. The second set of chapters explore the framing and negotiation of security issues at the level of NATO and the EU. Parts III and IV investigate the conceptualisation of security issues in the post-Cold War period, taking first a distinctly northern and then a southern perspective. Missile defence and soft security issues such as terrorism, organised crime and migration are dealt with in Part V, and the following three chapters focus in on more specifically *environmental* security in the Mediterranean.

One of the key problems of environmental security studies has always been that it covers very different dimensions, ranging from land degradation, desertification and population growth to the environmental impact of peace-time and war-time military activity. Accordingly, Parts VII to XII explore some of these dimensions in more detail: environmental consequences of Wars in the Mediterranean (VII); issues of population growth and climate change (VIII); desertification and water scarcity in the Mediterranean and MENA region (IX and X); food security and urbanisation (XI); and the impact of natural environmental disasters and disaster prevention (XII). In the concluding chapters (Part XIII) the main editor, Hans Günter Brauch, tries to pull the threads together and offers theoretical as well as empirical conclusions. Admittedly, there are issues (e.g. energy security and migration) which are not covered in the book

at the level of detail one might have expected, but each of these have their separate literature and for the field of environmental security studies it may not even be helpful to place too much emphasis on these much more mainstream issues. Very few people will want to read the book as a whole, but this is a real treasure trove which should be available in any serious university library. Its comprehensive bibliography provides an excellent overview of what has been published in this rapidly developing field of study up to the beginning of the new century.

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