

expense of institutions and governance. Engaging the substantial literature on political ecology, and its efforts to understand causal mechanisms beyond scarcity and abundance, would have strengthened this argument.

This said, through its diverse disciplinary perspectives, its focus on societies rather than states, and its empirical examples, *Environment, Development and Human Security* is a worthy contribution to what Barnett (2003) calls the “third wave” of environment-security scholarship. The book’s empirical focus on one of the world’s most vulnerable regions reminds academics to stay grounded instead of drifting away from practitioners’ concerns.

## References

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## Security and Environment in the Mediterranean: Conceptualizing Security and Environmental Conflicts

*Hans Günter Brauch, P.H. Liotta, Antonio Marquina, Paul F. Rogers, & Mohammad El-Sayed Selim (Eds.)*  
Berlin: Springer, 2003. 1136 pages.

### Reviewed by **EVAN VLACHOS**

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cal challenges, and political and economic developments in this fascinating and ever-evolving region.

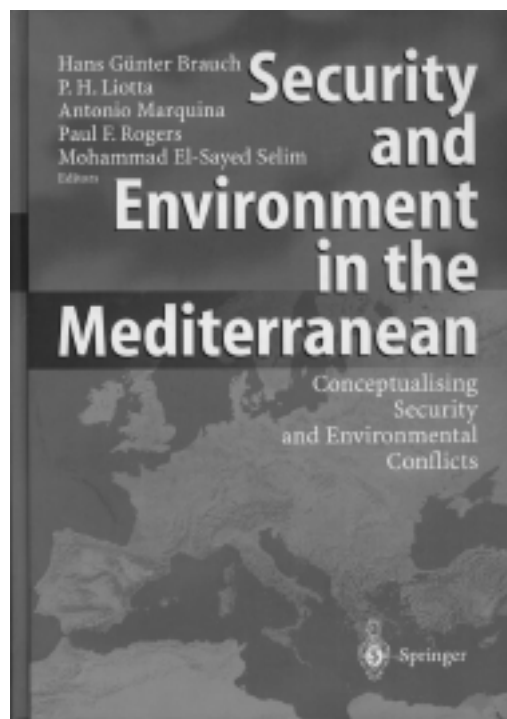
Due to the encyclopedic compilation of topics and its diverse authorial styles, the book is difficult to evaluate. Yet, thanks to the editors’ careful attention to structure and coherence, it is not just a collection of vaguely related papers. Instead, five key themes clearly emerge from the text. First, the book focuses on the dramatic transformation of our complex and interdependent world. The global environment is rapidly changing, due to degradation of natural resources and anthropogenic impacts, such as overpopulation, hyperurbanization, and agricultural innovations. At the same time, the search for peace and security has become a central preoccupation. Second, the book addresses the “fall of paradigms” after the turn of the 21st century and the pivotal

events of September 11, 2001. Throughout the volume, earlier theoretical approaches—namely, Hobbesian/Machiavellian (pessimistic), Kantian (normative), and Grotian (pragmatic or internationalist)—are juxtaposed with more interdependent conceptual models.

*Security and Environment in the Mediterranean* posits a new understanding of security in the context of social-economic-political-environmental conditions; this theme is closely related to the fourth key theme, which investigates the overlap between development and security. Security is broadly defined to encompass survival, social well-being, and eradication of poverty and exploitation. Finally, the fifth major theme is a normative (teleological) approach that emphasizes goals and visions. I was struck by the association of such terms as “dignity” and “degradation” with the search for security (see Chapter 14, for example). Such visionary thinking is consistent with the pronouncements emerging from recent scientific conferences and United Nations programs, such as the Millennium Development Goals.

A note of caution: when considering these shifting and emerging paradigms, we must carefully separate ideological orientations from visionary aspirations. This is particularly true when discussing confrontations between the Middle East and circum-Mediterranean countries. Long-standing historical grudges have often interfered with dispassionate efforts to encourage negotiation, mediation, or conflict resolution.

Any collection of this size contains a few uneven chapters. The first essay, however, deserves close reading; its detailed introduction to the evolution and interdependence of Mediterranean security makes the essential point that cooperative security concepts emerged to manage the end of the Cold War.<sup>1</sup> The next chapter on the Mediterranean ecoregion’s fragmentation is particularly impressive; its exhaustive and well-footnoted analysis of definitions, schools of thought, and world views includes a valuable introduction to vulnerability and its centrality to ongoing theoretical and methodological efforts. Michael Lund’s



“Prevention of Violent Conflicts” contains a useful policy toolbox for conflict prevention that addresses underlying socio-economic causes, intermediate political and institutional factors, and a range of triggers and events (pages 173-174).

The volume’s look at NATO is mostly pragmatic and descriptive, although Peter Liotta’s “Military and Environmental Security” in Part III includes an insightful analysis of the new emphasis on human and environmental security and the move away from the old *security* dilemma to a new *survival* dilemma. Liotta competently discusses socio-political forces that can lead to either global fragmentation or integration. Similarly, in “From Cooperative Security to Security Partnership in the Mediterranean,” Antonio Marquina describes how alliances like NATO reconceptualize traditional security as human survival. Bechir Chourou’s “Conceptualizations of Security” notes that national security is often confused with a particular regime’s security, using examples drawn from the Maghreb region.

By now, the metamorphosis from traditional security to all-encompassing human survival is quite familiar. Many of the book’s authors



In its desire to be all-inclusive, the volume has ballooned to an almost prohibitive size—I sympathize with the poor undergraduate who has to haul this hefty collection around campus!

introduce environmental concerns and emphasize the multilateral efforts of the European Union, World Bank, and others to avoid a strictly “securitized” view of the environment; see, for example, “Environmental Security: Conceptual Contestation and Empirical Relevance in the Mediterranean” by Stacy D. VanDeveer. This chapter marks the transition from the first half’s overview of security concepts to the second half’s look at environmental viability, including the role of population, climate, desertification, water scarcity, food security, urbanization, and natural disasters. Finally, the last section (“Empirical and Theoretical Results and Conceptual Conclusions”) underlines the need for conceptual clarity, cooperative activities, and case studies, and argues that scholars should continue to search for underlying causes rather than simply discussing symptoms.

In such a large collection of diverse papers—with many semantic and linguistic side trips—it is difficult to separate the interesting from the important. Some chapters are repetitious, and in its desire to be all-inclusive, the volume has ballooned to an almost prohibitive size—I sympathize with the poor undergraduate who has to haul this hefty collection around campus! By the end I was tired of reading text that had appeared in earlier chapters; editing out the overlapping material would have lengthened the reader’s attention span, which is already

taxed by continuous summaries and summaries of summaries.

Despite (or because) of its extensive footnotes, abundant diagrams, and summarizing tables, I would recommend this book as an important addition to any library on environmental security. I am perplexed, however, that such a large and conceptually demanding volume would target an undergraduate audience. This specialized volume is difficult reading; I cannot envision using it in any undergraduate curriculum. On the other hand, scholars and graduate students, if they can afford its significant price (\$159), will find this a great collection of conceptual clarifications, important data, methodological considerations, hard-to-find references, historical trends, and succinct summaries of convoluted international treaties and excruciating international negotiations.

In all, *Security and Environment in the Mediterranean* will reward the patient reader. Bechir Chourou closes his careful analysis in Chapter 47 with a definition of security in the context of different cultures and backgrounds:

No nation can insure its survival alone. The Europeans understood this back in 1957 and acted upon it. The Arabs understood the need for concerted action even earlier (1948) but did little about it....[The] Euro-Mediterranean dialogue should henceforth focus on creating a new mentality, which recognizes that the future hinges not on short-term security but on long-term survival, and that survival can no longer be considered as the exclusive or preordained right of the fittest. (page 841).

A great summary for this challenging volume.

## Notes

1. More recently, the security community has turned its attention to the rising North-South asymmetric interdependencies (page 317).