

David Martin Jones, Nicholas Khoo and MLR Smith, *Asian Security and the Rise of China: International Relations in an Age of Volatility* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2013)

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If there is one issue in contemporary international relations that continues to provoke interest in academic and policy making circles alike it is how states, regions and the world should react to a rising China. While the influence of the People's Republic is being felt from Africa and the Global South through to the developed economies of North America and Europe, it is in East Asia where a re-emerging China has most focused the minds of diplomats and strategists, leaders and scholars and, indeed, the military men and women who must navigate this increasingly precarious great power polity. Within this East Asian context this new volume by David Martin Jones, Nicholas Khoo and MLR Smith delivers thoughtful and attentive analysis to the problem of responding to China's rise. The book is neither a historical account of the rise of China, though it does offer sufficient historical contextualisation for the reader, or another collection of prescriptive policy suggestions, though there are clear conclusions made about which regional and state strategies have best dealt with the rise of the Sinic superpower. Instead, this book is a theoretically informed, consistently argued and well written account of how states in a broadly defined East Asia have and continue to react to the changing security environment that confronts them in the first decades of the twenty-first century.

The volume is divided into seven chapters bookended by an introduction and conclusion, though it can be better thought of as being presented in four main parts. The first consists of an opening chapter that defines the terrain of the US-China relationship, the great power dyadic interaction that has thus far dominated debate and discourse about the region as the latter gains power at the expense of the former. The second part of the book, in the words of the authors, assesses the "response of the region to China's rise among its neighbours in the Pacific arena" (p.6). This part consists of four chapters that consider the reactions of northeast Asia, including Taiwan, Japan and South Korea, and the ASEAN states, along with ASEAN the institution, to the emerging reality of East Asian security. A third section consists of a lone chapter titled 'Between Two Worlds', analyses the recent history of Australian foreign policy in East Asia, a contemporary account that is detailed in its analysis of the Howard, Rudd and Gillard administrations and demonstrates exactly why the Australian example is a single state worthy of analysis in the broader regional context. Finally, in Chapter 7, the authors consider the impacts of the 2008 financial crisis on the region before concluding, with allusions to Carr, that there is little special about this crisis or the post-crisis world it will engender.

The authors make clear from the outset that they are not seeking to present an analysis of Asian security that is balanced somewhere between the realist, liberal and constructivist poles of the discipline. Instead, they succinctly explain the assumptions about the international system and the behaviour of states upon which they ground their work. These assumptions (p.3) can be characterised as broadly realist: anarchy is a foundational organising principle of the international system, that states are the principal actors in this system, that survival of the state is a fundamental concern and that security is thus a primary concern of states and their leaders. Yet the authors tweak this classical stance somewhat so as to fall more properly into the neoclassical realist realm. For example, while acknowledging that, in the style of Waltz and Mearsheimer, the states in the international system can be considered unitary actors in a self-help world, they also allow for the impact of domestic politics and regime type on international actions and reactions of states. Where classical realists might imagine states as seeking to maximise their power or structural realists imagine states seeking blunt survival, the authors adopt a position where they expect states to be "security maximisers rather than power maximisers" (*ibid*), staking out a theoretical position that encourages criticism, such as in Chapter 2, of both theoretical liberals and the more aggressive offensive realist theorists alike. Clearly outlined from the outset, this theoretical grounding is a major strength of the book and allows the authors to offer a sustained argument on East Asian security that would be impossible to find in, for example, one of the competing edited collections which seek, rightly or wrongly, to balance different views in the cause of fairness but which do not deliver the same consistent, rigorous and satisfying inquiry that Martin Jones, Khoo and Smith manage herein.

The book draws on a wealth of sources, both academic and journalistic. The former include all of the names one might expect in a book on the region (Acharya, Beeson, Johnston, Shambaugh and White) and the theoretical approach selected (Cha and Christensen). The latter are a result of the authors' efforts to ground their analysis firmly in the real world of diplomacy and inter-state strategic relations; with internal government documents not yet available for secrecy and security reasons, the use of journalistic accounts of meetings, motivations and decision making is a fair proxy for what, for the moment, cannot be known in its entirety. All of these sources are meticulously footnoted throughout the volume making it easy for the curious reader or the reader challenged by the conclusions of the book to acquaint themselves with the source material relied upon by the authors. However, it is not the footnoting or the broad literature underwriting the book that is underlined as its great strength. Instead, there are two significant contributions that *Asian Security and the Rise of China* make to the discipline of international relations generally, and the sub-disciplines of security studies and East Asian regional relations specifically, that can and should be highlighted.

The first is the book's efforts to problematize the stunning disconnect between the theoretical and the empirical in analysing East Asian security. A striking example here is the demolishing, in Chapter 2, of the extent to which theoretical perspectives predict populations and leaders in northeast Asia to be fearful of a rising China. This chapter, based largely on Nicholas Khoo's previously published article 'Fear Factor: Northeast Asian Responses to China's Rise' (Khoo 2011), positions the offensive realists and their 'much fear' ilk, represented here by Mearsheimer, at one end of a continuum of fear, with Johnston and Shambaugh as prototypical 'little fear' alternatives at the other end. With reference to popular surveys and empirical data the authors are able to demonstrate that neither the very pessimistic nor the very optimistic theorists are describing the reality on the ground in East Asia. Instead, studies point to a fear that is real and rising (p.52) and reflect neither the regional 'fear inflation' of Mearsheimer nor the 'fear deflation' of Johnston and Shambaugh.

The second is the authors' position with regards to the financial crisis that has enveloped the world since 2008. The book makes the argument that this is less a 'Global Financial Crisis', as it is often termed in the West, but rather a Northern Financial Crisis born of the US housing market and today continuing thanks to the "financial contagion sparked by the public debt accumulated by states in Southern Europe, and...the unsustainable character of the European monetary project more generally" (p.213). This positioning of the global crisis as a distinctly north-formed event (as opposed to the Asian Financial Crisis ten years before) is novel in and of itself, yet to then continue and argue in what remains of Chapter 7 and also in the Conclusion that this crisis is not particularly special in contemporary or broader history, at least in security terms, is reassuring and sound, particularly in light of the disparate voices within and without of the region who imagine this crisis is some sort of Great Depression II (for example, DeLong 2013). For realists, even those who shirk the limitations of both Morgenthauian and Waltzian approaches, this certain scepticism emerges naturally yet, in an era of moral panics, it is all the same intellectually refreshing.

David Martin Jones, Nicholas Khoo and MLR Smith have delivered a wonderful neoclassical take on East Asian security and added energy to the debate surrounding China's rising influence in that region. *Asian Security and the Rise of China* will find an audience in universities as well as in the conference rooms where foreign and security policies are made in the Asia-Pacific.

Bibliography

DeLong, J. Bradford, "The Second Great Depression: Why The Economic Crisis is Worse Than You Think." *Foreign Affairs* (July/August), 2013, 159-165.

Khoo, Nicholas, "Fear Factor: Northeast Asian Responses to China's Rise." *Asian Security* 7(2), 2011, 95-118.