

***Grey and White Hulls: An International Analysis of the Navy-Coastguard Nexus.* Edited by Ian Bowers and Swee Lean Collin Koh. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019. Hardcover: 292pp.**

There are three major practical questions that the contemporary maritime security debate struggles to answer: who are the appropriate actors that should respond to maritime insecurity? Should responsibility for the security of the sea be in the hands of navies or civilian maritime law enforcement agencies? How can countries with limited capabilities find the appropriate balance and make the right investments? To the credit of Ian Bowers and Collin Koh, *Grey and White Hulls* addresses these issues head on. Through the use of case studies from different geographical regions, the book offers the first major analysis of how countries divide the organization of their maritime security forces between their coast guards and navies. By studying what the editors term the “navy-coastguard nexus”, this volume provides major insights into one of the core elements of contemporary maritime security governance.

Bowers and Koh propose a framework of analysis that enables comparison across the cases. They identify seven determinants of the navy-coastguard nexus. They argue that national maritime interests formed on the basis of threat perceptions, evaluations of the environment such as the character of required operations and the emulation of existing models, are the main drivers of this nexus. In addition, they identify four shaping factors: resource availability; maritime geography; a country’s strategic culture; and domestic politics. Using this outline, the editors establish a flexible framework that is well suited to an empirical study such as this. However, perhaps more attention could have been given to the historical evolution of such structures, for instance, through processes of colonialization and decolonialization, the varying economic importance of the maritime domain for different countries, and the impact of regional integration processes. It would also be worthwhile to consider how far the nexus is driven by external pressures or assistance through capacity building or maritime security sector reform projects. Admittedly, however, Bower’s and Koh’s proposed concepts, such as “maritime interests” or “strategic culture”, are broad enough to accommodate these additional drivers and factors.

The core of this book is the twelve in-depth national case study chapters. The cases selected examine an impressive range of key countries in Northeast Asia (China, Japan and South Korea), Southeast

Asia (Vietnam, Singapore and Indonesia), Europe (Denmark, Norway Iceland, Italy and Russia) and the Americas (the United States, Canada and Argentina). This selection means that, with the exception of Vietnam, the focus of the book is on resource-rich and larger states. This is, to some degree, a missed opportunity, as largely absent from the discussion are the innovative models that smaller states such as Portugal are developing, or the challenging conditions facing small island-states such as the Seychelles or Palau. While most major regions are covered, the omission of countries from Africa and the Western Indian Ocean is noticeable. The book thus awaits to be complemented by a second volume examining the countries from those regions.

The chapters are empirically rich and vividly demonstrate a variety of organizational forms. Countries may opt for a model of either single, dual or multiple maritime security agencies. As all the chapters highlight, however, in practice a multiplicity of actors and agencies are involved, even in those countries that formally employ a single agency model. This is due to the broad range of challenges and tasks associated with the inter-agency responses that maritime security requires. This generic complexity casts doubt on whether this messy situation can be ordered in a coherent way. In terms of the analytical depth of the problems that arise in dealing with this complexity, the chapters on Indonesia, South Korea, Vietnam and Singapore stand out. All four demonstrate the problems that transpire due to diverging organizational cultures and interests, and the rivalry, contestations and coordination challenges that arise. Collin Koh's chapter adds an optimistic note in arguing that Singapore has found valuable strategies of coordination under navy leadership, although this success can perhaps be attributed to the limited scope of Singapore's waters.

Together the cases forcefully document the substantial re-evaluation over the last decade of the maritime domain as a space of both economic opportunity and insecurity. Challenges such as illegal fishing, piracy and contested maritime boundaries (particularly linked to the rise of China) have turned maritime security provision and law enforcement at sea into a political priority. The interests in the blue economy, as particularly obvious in the cases of Vietnam and Indonesia, have equally spurred many of the investments in maritime security capacities.

In a broader context, the cases add important new evidence to the debate on the relationships between the military and the police, and internal and external security policies. The blurring distinction

between the military and the police in the light of hybrid security issues and gray zone warfare has so far been observed in domains such as migration, counter-terrorism or peacekeeping operations. *Grey and White Hulls* shows how these dynamics play out at sea. In future research, it will be important to link the study of maritime security closer to other areas of security, and to raise not only questions of efficiency and operations, but also broach upon broader themes, such as legality, legitimacy and democratic control, which this volume only touches on briefly.

Nevertheless, this volume represents a milestone in the maritime security governance literature that goes beyond the usual focus on regions or singular threats. Providing important new evidence and a compelling framework, it is an important book for maritime security scholars, strategists and planners, as well as practitioners involved in maritime security. It is also a noteworthy contribution in the way that it invites and facilitates cross-regional learning.

CHRISTIAN BUEGER is Professor of International Relations in the Department of Political Science of the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. Postal address: Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen, Øster Farimagsgade 5, DK-1353 Copenhagen, Denmark; email: Christian.bueger@ifs.ku.dk.