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BOOK REVIEW

Nakayama, M.; Pachova, N.I. and Jansky, L. (Eds). 2008. *International water security: Domestic threats and opportunities*. Tokyo, Japan: United Nations University Press. ISBN 978-92-808-1150-6, 308 pages.

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Two conceptual challenges to the study and practice of international water management emerged, or solidified, after the Cold War. The first was the challenge to traditional ideas of security. From this emerged the notion of the environment as a security issue (Tuchman Mathews, 1989) and, in particular, the idea that human security is, among other things, a function of environmental resources and the manner in which we cooperate, or not, over their use. The second was a challenge to mainstream international relations theory, which considered the state as the primary actor in international relations and regarded domestic and international affairs as largely disparate issues. The critiques of this "territorial trap" (Agnew, 1994) were based on the growing role of non-state actors – ranging from domestic civil society organisations to the amorphous forces of globalisation – in issues which crossed national boundaries. While water has been a dominant theme in the environmental security literature, until recently (e.g. Furlong, 2006) international waters have continued to be couched largely in traditional, state-centred language.

Neither of these challenges is explicitly articulated to frame the content or conclusions of *International Water Security: Domestic Threats and Opportunities*. However, it is a book fundamentally envisioned to provide insights into both by exploring "the multi-faceted and dynamic nature of interplay between domestic and international water security". The approach of the book is contributed case studies grouped according to their foci: the function of existing institutions (Indus, Orange, Danube, Mekong and Lake Chad), emerging threats to international water cooperation (Nile, Salween, Aral and Mekong), or new ways to consider future improvements in international water relations (Mekong, Tigris-Euphrates, and Okavango).

While suffering from the usual quality variation one expects in volumes based on multiple invited authors, each case study does provide interesting details on a specific international water issue and the domestic factors which influence its outcome. To give some flavour of the diverse content, Pachova and Jansky highlight how changing forces within Hungary and (Czecho) Slovakia are impacting the famous Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros project in the Danube. Mahmood El Zain shows how internal politics are changing the geography of the population in Sudan, with implications for supplies of Nile river water to downstream Egypt. And Warner and Meissner use the example of changing socio-political conditions within the countries of southern Africa and their impact on the Okavango as a means to examine a new framework for assessing international water security and cooperation.

While the book's title and focus are on the influence of domestic factors on international river outcomes, many of the authors have almost struggled not to move their attention onto the often critical role of supra-riparian forces. Colonialism and its demise, the role of superpower politics and

foreign aid, and the impact of global (read Northern) water management paradigms were all frequent themes. And indeed it is the consistency in such themes which only further highlights the need to look for causes, and potential solutions, to international water management problems outside traditional boundaries.

The main weakness of the book is not a flaw in and of itself but rather a lost opportunity. There is always a tension between the choice of case study approaches with their detail and nuance, and comparative approaches that allow insights into larger trends and patterns. The book has brought together enough case studies that it might have been possible for the editors to have developed an analytical framework, a set of hypotheses and initial hypothesis testing – or at least suggestions for which hypotheses were worthy of further work. In fact, the editors themselves noted the potential value of such an exercise in their conclusion. When read as a whole, the reader is left with no question about the importance of domestic drivers in international water outcomes. But without such an overarching framework for consideration, the book may be of greater importance to those interested in the specific basin stories rather than the larger policy and research issues of environmental security, the territorial trap, and the cooperative development and management of trans-boundary waters.

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