



Valeria Bello, Belachew Gebrewold. *A Global Security Triangle: European, African and Asian Interactio.* London: Routledge, 2010. 256 S. ISBN 978-0-415-49657-5; ISBN 978-0-203-86687-0.

Reviewed by Ross Anthony

Published on H-Soz-u-Kult (June, 2013)

V. Bello u.a. (Hrsg.): A Global Security Triangle

In the post-cold war era, issues of global security have become increasingly multipolar in nature. The current volume addresses this multi-polarity through a focus on the regional tri-angular relationship between Europe, Africa and Asia. Of course, narrowing the focus to a region which collectively constitutes over half of the world's population does not necessarily make the task analysis any easier. And yet, within a world where the axis of power is shifting increasingly east and where forces of globalization are creating new geo-political configurations, it is crucial that scholars make the attempt to grasp this shifting terrain. The first problem which confronts such a task, and one which is evident in this study, is the question of scale: how do you write a coherent volume, even if reduced to the single theme of security, which can adequately address the agency of these three regions, let alone the complexities which exist both within and between and within them? The answer, in short is that one cannot. And yet, within the current state of global affairs, such impossibility serves as a methodological challenge which needs to be negotiated. After all, the world is not going to become less connected any time soon.

The approach outlined in the introduction is that the European promotion of "normative power" (i.e. "good governance" and "democracy") is not so much a question of a former colonial powers imposing their values upon others as it is a strategy to prevent the European Union from falling apart. The authors claim the promotion of these values is an attempt "to defend them from

the dislocating effect of globalization on production and the subsequent loss of employment in societies and countries with a responsible approach to environmental and social rights" (page 4). One way in which this is played out in terms of European security is the question of (particularly African) migration to Europe. Another dimension outlined, which effects this policy more indirectly, is the increasing influence of Asia (and particularly China's growing influence) on the African continent and the implications this has for the exertion of European influence.

The editors have chosen to divide the volume into three parts: Europe, Africa and Asia. It is in this organization that we face the first problem: namely, to what degree should the chapters on Europe articulate Europe's relationship to both Asia and Africa (as is the case for the sections on Africa and Asia respectively in relation to Europe and each other). The Routledge series within which this book is published is called "Europe in the World". It is clear from the outset that the book's title, "European, African and Asian Interaction", refers primarily to European with Africa and Asia. For a subject so complex, bringing one region to the foreground as a focus is not a bad idea. However the over-familiarity of European issues in certain parts of the text gives one the feeling that the series should be called "The World in Europe" rather than the other way around.

This is not always the case though. There are several chapters which stand out in their attempt to condense

all three regions into a single analysis. Dirk Kohnert's chapter on EU-African economic relations demonstrates how EU foreign trade policies have harmed economic growth through elements such as market access not being accompanied by improved institutions and the failure of comparative advantage of agricultural and raw material exports to bring about financial gain. He then goes on to show how such failures (coupled with Africa's general wariness of being beholden to their former colonial masters) have helped foster Africa's closer economic relationship with China. This of course has implications for the future exertion of the EU's "normative" power upon the continent. Valeria Bello's chapter outlines EU policies in relation to regional African institutions (such as the African Union and the Third World Network) as well as the ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) group. She makes the interesting point that in the African instance, such institutions view the EU as hypocritical. For instance, they accuse the EU of aggressive trade strategies while at the level of discourse promoting more egalitarian forms of commerce. ASEAN, on the other hand, appears to be more at ease with the values of the EU insofar as there is an identification of "common interests" based on "mutual understanding and respect" (p. 66) which has led to, for instance, co-operation in the realm of terrorism.

Other portions of the book are less successful in the admittedly difficult task of bringing all three regions to bear in the analysis. Belachew Gebrewold's chapter

on European military intervention in the Congo meticulously outlines the administrative framework for EU military intervention and chronologically lists the EU's engagements there. This is followed by a final page which turns to the rise of China in Africa. However, no link is made between China's rise in Africa in general and European security measures in the Congo. It is almost as if the author tacked on the part about China as an in order to satisfy the criteria of the book's title. Other articles have chosen to focus on European interaction with only one of the other continents, making analysis and arguments clearer. This is done particularly successfully in Martin Malek's article on Europe's scramble for Central Asian oil and gas and the geopolitical competition it faces from China and Russia.

Other essays included seem like strange choices because their focus is on the Middle East rather than the three regions under discussion. To be fair, Paolo Foradori's interesting article on the EU's relationship with nuclear powers in the "Middle East" is in fact on Iran (classified as part of Asia) but the article on the Israeli-Palestine crises in relation to the EU is truly puzzling. When we think of the important regions omitted in this book - Japan, East Africa, North Korea - at the expense of the Israeli-Palestine conflict (not even a part of Africa or Asia) one can't help but feel a well-worn European pre-occupation crowding out other parts of the world which are becoming increasingly, and sometimes worrying, relevant.

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at:

<http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/>

Citation: Ross Anthony. Review of Bello, Valeria; Gebrewold, Belachew, *A Global Security Triangle: European, African and Asian Interactio*. H-Soz-u-Kult, H-Net Reviews. June, 2013.

URL: <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=39342>

Copyright © 2013 by H-Net, Clio-online, and the author, all rights reserved. This work may be copied and redistributed for non-commercial, educational purposes, if permission is granted by the author and usage right holders. For permission please contact H-SOZ-U-KULT@H-NET.MSU.EDU.