wherein workers attempt to go beyond the capitalist chain and link urban and rural struggles. Hopefully, in the future, Hauf will follow the trajectories of the workers’ collectives to examine how possible alternative structures may be viewed by different union members, from the beginning to their realisation.

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The ‘Asia–Pacific’ may no longer exist. Analysts now refer to the region stretching from the littorals of East Africa and West Asia to the littorals of Australia as the ‘Indo–Pacific’. While the terminology goes back to the 1950s, Indo–Pacific only took off as a geopolitical construct during the past decade. Different governments, however, have different geopolitical rationales for the term. Japan’s ‘free and open Indo–Pacific’ construct, for example, reflects a strategic anxiety about China’s military rise and assertiveness in disputed areas, as well as its ‘Belt and Road Initiative’. India, Australia, and the United States have adopted similar conceptions of the Indo–Pacific. Indonesia, meanwhile, prefers an ‘Indo–Pacific regional architecture’ based on the potential coupling of ASEAN-led mechanisms with the Indian Ocean Rim Association to ‘bridge and integrate’ the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

These contending Indo–Pacific visions are emblematic of the growing nexus between regional economic integration, on the one hand, and the increasing intensity and complexity of security challenges—from terrorism to illegal fishing and nuclear proliferation—on the other hand. Territorial disputes in particular have taken centre stage. The Indo–Pacific witnessed more territorial disputes and armed conflict over territory than any other region: it has 24 active disputes with major power involvement (including China, India, Japan, and Russia), and many of the disputes have been durable and resistant to settlement (Fravel 2014).

And yet, the existing literature on the matter is not as well developed as it should be. Numerous studies on Indo–Pacific territorial security have been published in the past few decades. However, many of these studies are single-country (e.g. China) case studies or single-dispute case studies (e.g. the South China Sea). They also tend to examine territorial disputes in East and South Asia rather than Southeast Asia. Systematic cross-national comparisons of border disputes over time across the Indo–Pacific are few and far between. Consequently, the insights provided by a single country or single dispute could not easily be used to understand other countries or disputes in the region. We are still unable to systematically explain why some maritime or land disputes could be settled peacefully and quickly while others
linger for decades or lead to militarised responses, from skirmishes to major wars. While the two books reviewed here do not directly address this question, they give us useful building blocks.

In *Unresolved Border, Land and Maritime Disputes in Southeast Asia* and *Maritime Security and Indonesia*, Febrica and Gerstl and Strašáková (as editors) contribute to the broader empirical literature on Indo–Pacific security and fill some of the gaps in the literature on policy debates over Indo-Pacific security. The former focuses more broadly on the historical and political contexts of maritime and land border disputes involving Southeast Asian states and China. The latter seeks to explain why Indonesia participated in some cooperative mechanisms pertaining to maritime terrorism and armed robbery at sea, but not others.

As an edited volume focusing on several cases and perspectives, *Unresolved Border, Land and Maritime Disputes in Southeast Asia* is explicitly comparative. While there is no overarching set of theoretical propositions or methodological framework to guide the comparisons throughout the chapters, the editors succinctly and coherently integrate the different contributions. They remind us that many of the current problems over territorial disputes in Southeast Asia can be traced to the enduring legacies of colonialism and the push-and-pull of domestic politics, as well as the lack of clarity in international law, particularly in the maritime domain.

Petra Andelova’s chapter describes territorial disputes in Southeast Asia between former British and French domains (e.g. Myanmar–Thailand; Thailand–Malaysia), between former Dutch and British domains (e.g. Indonesia–Singapore; Indonesia–Malaysia), and between China and Vietnam. Filip Kraus draws attention to the Cambodian domestic politics shaping the country’s border disputes with Thailand and Vietnam, and to its relationship with China. Meanwhile, Richard Turcsányi and Zdeněk Kříž’s chapter shows how Thai and Cambodian domestic political calculations shape the Preah Vihear Temple dispute, while Mária Strašáková’s chapter notes how different Cambodian political leaders used Phu Quoc (Koh Tral) Island to gain public support by leveraging anti-Vietnamese sentiments.

By drawing out the importance of historical legacies and domestic politics, the book provides a useful corrective to the prevailing policy narrative that geopolitical logic and great power politics drive territorial disputes. By further comparing the different land and maritime disputes, the book also provides a wider lens to the different policy challenges in managing and resolving them. The comparisons are useful in making sense of the different perspectives associated with the South China Sea and are addressed in six chapters, although mostly from the point of view of Vietnam, China, and ASEAN, rather than claimants such as Malaysia or the Philippines.

Meanwhile, Febrica focuses on maritime terrorism and armed robbery at sea, rather than disputed boundaries. While the book is another single-country case study, it adopts a comparative perspective to the variation in Indonesia’s participation in maritime security cooperation mechanisms. The author argues that Indonesia’s decision to participate or not is informed by ‘absolute gains’ calculations: whether its benefits outweigh the costs or not. In maritime security cooperation, Indonesia is interested in burden sharing, equipment, access to training and exercises, as well as ancillary benefits, including agreement from its partners to negotiate other treaties or assistance. The costs meanwhile are measured in terms of sovereignty (the degree of limitation that an agreement poses to autonomy) and implementation (incurred in implementing the cooperation requirements).
The book comprehensively makes the case of why Indonesia is a crucial state in the Indo-Pacific maritime domain. It also details different empirical and policy debates about Indonesia’s maritime security governance. Anyone seeking to understand the country’s maritime security challenges would find the book’s empirical descriptions helpful. The comparison of different cooperative mechanisms also provides useful insights into Indonesia’s foreign policy. Like *Unresolved Border, Land and Maritime Disputes in Southeast Asia*, Febrica reminds us that great power politics rarely drive non-great powers’ security behaviour. Each Indo-Pacific state has its own strategic interests, shaped by their respective historical and political contexts. But in the literature and in policy debates over maritime security challenges, the predominance of a great power lens (i.e. US–China rivalry) tends to subjugate the interests and agencies of non-great powers, most of which are in Southeast Asia.

Taken together, the two books provide useful empirical descriptions of the different and nuanced challenges associated with territorial disputes. They remind us that the South China Sea is not the only area of conflict; lesser known conflicts such as the Preah Vihear Temple dispute are more important to smaller states such as Cambodia. The assumption that Cambodia’s siding with China about the South China Sea is a simple matter of geopolitics only tells half of the story. The books also remind us that colonial legacies, domestic politics, and policymaking calculations all shape how regional states respond to their territorial disputes.

As far as policy solutions, however, both books leave something to be desired. Gerstl and Strašáková’s book explores the ‘structural’ problems of domestic politics and historical legacies but does not provide specific solutions to address them. If disputes are driven by domestic politics rather than geopolitical dynamics, how do we move forward? The book only mentions in passing some of the successful bilateral cooperation to manage disputes, without analysing the larger patterns. It spends more time arguing that ASEAN is an ineffective multilateral solution, but it makes the banal observation that different states within ASEAN (as well as China) simply defend their own national interests. The suggestion that regional integration based on a socialised ‘ASEAN way’ seems to follow a circular logic. Should we have a socialised ASEAN way before achieving integration, or do we need to have integration before socialisation?

Meanwhile, Febrica compares different cooperative mechanisms and Indonesia’s policy calculation without telling us what to do next. Are there specific suggestions we can infer from the cases to help craft a better maritime security initiative? Should countries seeking Jakarta’s participation in a maritime-security cooperation craft proposals in particular ways to increase the likelihood of success? What does the analysis of Indonesia’s maritime security calculations say about other regional states such as Singapore, Malaysia, or the Philippines? Are there broad policy lessons maritime security policymakers can learn from the Indonesian case? These are important policy questions that the book, unfortunately, does not address.

Both books are emblematic of a growing trend whereby scholars writing academic studies of Southeast Asian territorial disputes—or Indo-Pacific security, for that matter—spend less time debating specific policy solutions and more time focussing on the details of the historical and political contexts of the problem. Policymakers and analysts working on Southeast Asian or Indo-Pacific security, on the other hand, tend to debate policy suggestions without understanding the broader historical and political contexts of the problems. Given the prevalence and complexity of territorial
disputes in the Indo–Pacific, this gap between policy and academia is not productive. Future studies should have academic rigor with attention to historical and political contexts, as well as clear engagement with the policy implications of their analyses.

Finally, while both books succeed in reminding us of the importance of historical and political contexts, as well as in empirical comparisons, their attempts at theoretical development fall short. *Unresolved Border, Land and Maritime Disputes in Southeast Asia* does not explicitly seek to engage in theoretical development or debate. But several of its chapters employ and engage in theoretical concepts and debates—primarily drawn from international relations literature—to help guide their analysis. These include Alica Kizekova’s chapter on ASEAN’s ‘soft balancing’ strategy, Alfred Gerstl’s chapter on the ‘securitisation’ of ASEAN’s diplomatic discourse, Josef Loher’s chapter on China’s security discourse over the South China Sea, and Jörg Thiele’s chapter on Vietnam’s ‘neorealist’ South China Sea policies.

These chapters provide interesting findings, including that ASEAN’s official discourse does not view the South China Sea as an extraordinary security threat, that China’s spring 2014 public discourse over the South China Sea is centred on individual and economic security (rather than energy or national security), and that China initially embraced ASEAN’s multilateralism to improve its post-Tiananmen image but not over the resolution of the South China Sea. But as some chapters explicitly engage in theoretical concepts, while others do not, the overall theoretical contribution of the book is uneven. Those chapters that engage in international relations theories or concepts also proceed haphazardly; some were careful and fully engaged, while others only do so in a cursory manner.

Such half-hearted theoretical engagement is unfortunate. The advances in quantitative and qualitative research on issues such as militarised disputes, deterrence, bargaining, or conflict resolution could offer valuable theoretical insights to help separate the forest from the trees amid the bewildering idiosyncrasies surrounding Indo–Pacific territorial disputes. Some of the best research in contemporary international relations theory no longer focuses on developing the ‘big paradigms’ of (neo-)realism, (neo-)liberalism, or constructivism. Mid-range and micro-theories of international relations are shown to be more productive at addressing empirical puzzles. The Indo–Pacific security landscape, when paired with the appropriate research design and commensurable theories, could yield valuable empirical and analytical insights.

Febrica meanwhile also seeks to contribute to the theoretical debates on international cooperation by ‘testing’ different predictions drawn from different strands of international relations theory. It seeks to establish which of the following explains Indonesia’s maritime security cooperative behaviour best: a constructivist argument focusing on collective identity; a neorealist argument on the importance of relative gains (as it relates to the partner’s power and size); a neoliberal argument on the role of absolute gains (cost–benefit analysis); a neorealist–neoliberal argument of hegemonic leadership; or a bureaucratic politics argument on the material benefits of cooperation for specific agencies. These arguments are supposed to be tested in a sample of 26 cases of maritime-related cooperative mechanisms Indonesia has or could have participated in.

However, there is no clear research design to systematically test the theories. For one thing, the case selection criteria and coding rules are not clear. The cooperative mechanisms listed vary widely in scale, level, importance, and membership: some
are broad defence arrangements, others are wider counter-terrorism declarations, or specific and technical maritime safety regimes. If there is no unit homogeneity across the cases, how do we know if they are comparable? Also, testing five hypotheses over a ‘medium-N’ sample without clear methodological guidelines is problematic. For another, the hypotheses drawn from the different international relations paradigms are not fully developed, are unevenly treated, and are simplified into partial representations of their original core insights and concepts. For example, the treatment of bureaucratic politics in chapter 2 looks at material benefits for the foreign ministry, rather than the dynamics of inter-agency conflict or concordance in shaping policy. Chapter 4 whittles down the constructivist paradigm into a problem of shared identity, instead of addressing the causal and constitutive effects of norms and how ideational beliefs shape behaviour.

Consequently, the theoretical analyses scattered by Febrica seem ‘crunched’ into short expositions rather than rigorous examinations of what each case tells us about the different theories’ analytical purchase. The book’s key theoretical argument—that out of the five hypotheses, the neoliberal account of absolute gains best explains Indonesia’s behaviour—is also problematic. After all, neoliberal international relations theory is not just about absolute gains but about the power of institutions, whether at the international or domestic (state–society relations) levels, in shaping state preferences and behaviour. Further, if the key finding is that one maritime-security-cooperation mechanism is more beneficial than others, how do we know that the nature of the mechanism—how binding or specific or who the participants are—is not doing the analytical heavy lifting? This question is important because without a clear research design and coding mechanisms, there tends to be a conflation between terrorism, maritime terrorism, and defence cooperation in the analysis.

To conclude, the two books advance our understanding of the different historical and policy contexts surrounding territorial disputes and security cooperation in Southeast Asia. They bring a much-needed corrective to the prevailing policy narrative that geopolitical dynamics and great power politics drive regional states’ security behaviour. Both books show that Southeast Asian states formulate their own set of strategic interests and calculate which policies benefit their positions. However, the two books also remind us that historical legacies and domestic politics remain powerful drivers of territorial disputes in the region. Given the centrality of maritime security and territorial disputes in the evolution and dynamic of the Indo-Pacific, we need better research asking broader comparative questions backed by systematic empirical data analysed using the best theoretical developments across different disciplines, from political science, economics, to history, and geography. Overall, the two books allow a better understanding and appreciation of regional security dynamics in Southeast Asia.

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