

Book Review

Buzan, B. and Wæver (2003) ***Regions and Powers; the Structure of International Security***, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Reviewed by Fady Abu Sidu

Buzan and Wæver demonstrate in this book how Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) applies to and explains regional security dynamics and relations by focusing on case studies that were missing in their previous work. In this sense, *Regions and Powers* comes as the last set of publications developing this international relations regional approach to security.

In summary, RSCT was first sketched by Buzan in the first edition of '*People, States and Fear*' in 1983. The theory was applied to South Asia and the Middle East (Buzan 1983), then elaborated and applied in depth to the case of south Asia, and later applied to Southeast Asia. Väyrynen, Wriggins and Ayoob have applied versions of the theory to several regional cases. Buzan and Wæver used it to study the post Cold-War transformation in Europe. (Buzan, 1998). Later on Buzan and Wæver expanded the applicability of the theory and applied the latest version of the theory to other regions in their book *Regions and Powers* in 2003.

Regions and Powers demands attention from general international relations theorists and regional specialists due to the complexity of analytical tools and levels RSCT uses. The authors' earlier work in security studies is brought together and developed into an innovative and coherent regional security complex theory. The empirical sweep of the study is vast. The authors have undertaken a major re-thinking of the problem of security in the post-Cold War world and successfully challenge conventional and competing approaches. *Regions and Powers* has radically reconfigured the relationship between international system, international society and world society. Asserting that regional patterns of security are increasingly important in international politics, this study presents a detailed account of relations between global powers. It emphasizes their relationship with the regional security complexes which make up the contemporary international system. The book analyses Africa, the Balkans, Eastern and Western Europe, East Asia, the Middle East, North America and South Asia, tracing the history of each region through to the present. Through that, *Regions and Powers* develops

a conceptual apparatus for an interpretation of all of the world's different regional security complexes. In other words, this book argues that the world is divided into 'regions' and 'powers' with a sole superpower, the U.S., and a series of great powers (the EU, Japan, China etc.) and a number of regional powers (India etc.). This book explains that rather than simply seeing the world as a clash of civilizations, instead each region can be carved up and explained and conflicts understood within the regional framework.

Although the book did not tackle broader global phenomena such as terrorism, the authors categorised 9/11 attacks as a result of an interplay between regional-global dynamics instead of putting Bush and Bin-Laden directly in a global arena. Although "This book could be seen as an overview, one of whose purposes is to identify a range of subjects around which more detailed studies could be organised." (Buzan and Wæver) there is no doubt that RSCT will influence the future research of securitisation and regional research.