

**David B. Dewitt and Carolina G. Hernandez, eds. *The people. Vol. 2 of Development and security in Southeast Asia.* England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003. 248 pp.**

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With the Cold War over, contemporary Southeast Asia is now beset with new anxieties generated by its shifting development and security concerns. After the 1997 economic crisis, the governments and populations of the region became united in “rethinking” what should constitute economic progress in a “redefined” stable environment. The main challenge that Southeast Asia confronts and needs to overcome is the trade-off between development and security and the (mis)handling of progress vis-à-vis sustainability.

The same concern is advanced by the book, *Development and Security in Southeast Asia*. Unified by its fundamental shift in development thinking and security approach, this three-volume book examines how state-society relations is affected by and entwined in the complex security-development nexus. The research rests on the assumption that there is a gap between how the governments and societies in the region perceive, understand and obtain security. Given this gap, it is a comprehensive attempt to reconcile such disparity by fostering awareness on the experiences of Southeast Asian communities. The book engages governments and nongovernmental agencies to consider issues such as social equity, people empowerment and environmental conservation and regeneration as essential parts of any development project. The book’s six case studies in four Southeast Asian countries—Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand—intend to capture the complex linkage between development and security in terms of a wide gamut of issues such as migration, ethnicity, gender and employment. Brief, critical summaries of these studies conclude each chapter.

The strands of uncertainty and insecurity attached to the development in Southeast Asia have positioned the issue of migration at the forefront. The people’s search for an enhanced well-being and their dissatisfaction with their worsening quality of life has caused transnational and extraregional movements. Foremost of these is the increasing recurrence of labor inflow and outflow toward and beyond national borders that are oftentimes illicit in nature. This widespread phenomenon, along with its relation to the development-security

linkage, is comprehensively analyzed by Jorge Tigno in his research on "Migration, Security and Development: The Politics of Undocumented Labor Migration in Southeast Asia." The study is limited to the transborder mobility of migrants in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines. It focuses on the issues surrounding the clandestine migratory movements of low-skilled labor in the said areas of the region such as its "constructed" contribution to economic decay, social instability and insecurity of host countries. In discussing at length illegal recruitment as a factor to both undocumented labor migration and the problem of identity, state resistance and policy restrictions against foreign workforce, and the existence, significance and expansion of social networks ensuing from migration, the study then is an extensive attempt to identify the causes of extra-legal immigration of workers. It also explains the discrepancy between state-society discernment of this phenomenon.

On the other hand, while it entails a viable framework for understanding the plight of overseas employees in the countries mentioned, the analysis is concentrated on their "perceived" impact on the development and security only of receiving countries. The research should have included an extensive discussion on the effects of labor flight on the sending countries themselves. With Southeast Asia as one of the main exporters of clandestine workers, it is therefore also significant to trace and indicate what the source governments do and should do to secure the well-being of their overseas nationals and how this human resource flight threatens their own socioeconomic progress and security. Nevertheless, this paper provides well-built arguments in characterizing the state's role in the persisting social stereotypes of foreign migrants and their activities, as well as in proposing what initiatives it should take with the help of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in changing these perceptions and redefining its own policies. Above all, this sets off the initial stage from which to study further the links between transborder flow of low-skilled labor, security and development in both national and regional levels and in political, economic, social and even cultural terms.

Ruth Lusterio's research, "Perceptions of Women Migrant Workers from the Philippines and Indonesia," highlights the role of women as an active party to the dynamics of security and development. It rests upon the assumption that the feminization of overseas employment bears serious implications on both the individual and national levels of security. Tracing the factors that push women to seek job

opportunities abroad, the study emphasizes how this increasing phenomenon is, itself, a security issue brought about by the search for other venues that could cater to a more developed and enhanced well-being. In contrast to the previous case study, migration here is analyzed as an “internal” security concern, largely affecting the source or sending countries themselves. Its findings suggest that while women employment abroad is both a source of foreign exchange and a remedy to domestic unemployment, it also causes a great deal of personal, socioeconomic and even psychological insecurities that cannot be ignored in any pursuit of sustainable development. This reflects the two-sided response of both the Filipino and Indonesian female workers themselves, arguing that their occupations overseas have both negative and positive effects. In addition, the research suggests policy options in seeking long-term solutions to this ironic trend, reaching out to various sectors, especially the government. With all the empirical data presented, the study is a meticulous attempt to understand the concerns of female migrant workers and to identify how their problems can be resolved through collaboration between and among official agencies, NGOs and the private sector. This case study has particular relevance to the fate of many women overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), especially the domestic helpers and entertainers whose myriad of problems remain unattended or unresolved.

The impact of economic crisis, along with political instability and social turmoil, on the workers’ security in Indonesia is analyzed in the chapter “Security Implications of the Economic Crisis for Indonesian Workers” by Tubagus Feridhanusetyawan. The study focuses on how the labor sector had been largely affected by the drastic and painful changes in the Indonesian economy and polity, with the adjustments in employment trend and income levels as the main parameters for measuring security. In attempting to identify the security implications of the economic drought in 1997, its effects on workers are examined from both micro- and macroperspectives at the aggregate and individual levels. The strength of this paper lies in this dual approach, where its clearly constructed conceptual framework effectively explains the direct outcomes of the economic crisis in the national economy and individual households as well as its implications on the macro- and microlevels of security in the country. The author likewise discusses other issues such as the decline in employment rate, the absence or ineffectiveness of social programs as safety nets for laborers, the intensifying migration and labor flight, the worsening poverty, the

reverse transformation of the labor market, and the food crisis, which are altogether understood as end-products of the economic downturn and as additional sources of national insecurity. At the individual level, on the other hand, workers' insecurity is said to be derived from the instability of employment status and the drastic reduction in wages and income thus weakening their purchasing power. Through the survey data, the findings of the study suggest that the actual effect of the crisis is in the decline of the workers' real income, which thus necessitates a rethinking in policy orientation. The primary recommendation is for governments to embark on employment creation programs by encouraging the booming sectors to expand their hiring and to provide income support packages as safety nets through the help of NGOs.

That industrialization is part and parcel of development and the modernization process is indubitable. However, it is not without side effects that governments should push for it devoid of caution. The negative externalities of industrialization, as manifested in the labor sector of Indonesia are discussed in Muhammad Hikam's "Industrialization and Workers' Security: A Political Perspective." The paper examines the local workers' labor and living conditions under the New Order regime in Indonesia, which spearheaded the rapid growth of the country's industrial sectors. Presenting the gap between the actual situation of workers and the aggregate economic development, it questions the nature of labor policies implemented by the said regime in nurturing and further enhancing the security of the workers. It posits that the insecurity of the work force is, in fact, derived from the labor laws and government provisions themselves that perpetuate the abysmal living conditions of the workers. Examples cited are the wage policy and labor union laws that have negative implications not only on the workers' socioeconomic status but also on their basic human rights. The research findings suggest that the apparent success in the modernization of Indonesia sacrificed the security of the labor sector, not only because of the adoption of an inappropriate model for development as enshrined in the New Order's labor laws and regulations but also due to the wrong perceptions of labor relations and priorities. This chapter actually intends to target both the present and future administrations of Indonesia to consider a new approach to industrialization and empower its rather inactive civil society. Furthermore, it urges the workers to establish strong links with other sectors in the society not only to advance their cause but also to help transform the country's politics into a more citizen-based undertaking.

The chapter “Stockbrokers-turned-Sandwich Vendors: The Economic Crisis and Small-Scale Food Retailing in Thailand and the Philippines” by Gisèle Yasmeen presents another example of the oftentimes contradictory relationship between development and security. It highlights the increasing emergence of microenterprises in the region as one response to financial insecurity in a period of considerable economic development. It illustrates the growing employment trend in Thailand and the Philippines, where people engage in various income-generating activities. Focusing on small-scale food retailing, the study reveals that despite the rapid growth in the region from the late 1970s to the early 1990s, many firms had laid off workers, who in turn put up their own eateries and vending operations to earn small amount of profit on a daily basis. The growth of self-employment in Southeast Asia’s food sector is thus attributed to the mounting need for income security. In addition, the author gives attention to the high levels of women participation in microeconomic activities and the impact of industrialization on female self-employment. The last section of the case study points to policy alternatives that should be considered in recognizing and safeguarding the rights of those in the informal sector, especially women vendors and displaced workers, with the premise that such segment of the economy is not only an important source of livelihood but also fosters network building in the form of food cooperatives and microentrepreneur organizations, giving voice to the larger vulnerable work groups.

Conflict alleviation, being another core component of the development-security nexus, constitutes the main theme of Jacques Bertrand’s “‘Good’ Governance and the Security of Ethnic Communities in Indonesia and the Philippines.” He starts off by establishing the significance of conflict resolution and peace-building in any long-term development and security objective of a given society. Looking at conflict in the level of ethnicity, the author examines the relationship between political systems and the level of security they can guarantee to ethnic communities. With a focus on the religious dimension, the paper covers only Indonesian and Philippine experiences in Muslim-Christian enmity. The author is to be commended for his intelligent selection of these two cases because aside from the fact that both countries’ populations are divided into Muslim and Christian blocks and that both suffer from the discordant interaction of the two groups, Indonesia and the Philippines differ in their government types, which therefore gives a clear illustration of his main thesis about the

sufficiency of “good governance” in responding to community threats brought about by ethnic strife and religious rivalries. In addition, arguing that improvement in governance and democratization per se do not necessarily address hostilities originating from cultural, racial or religious diversity and hence the insecurity of communities, the paper offers an alternative approach in resolving ethnic tensions.

With the six case studies, this book stands out as a comprehensive survey on the nontraditional security challenges encountered by both Southeast Asian governments and societies. The research emphasizes the need for a strong and effective partnership between the people and the government in fostering a stable, secured and economically fit environment. However, the study seems to discount the youth as a major actor in the present security-development drama. The youth comprise a significant portion of the region’s population and are part of the most vulnerable sectors in society. They are major contributors to development since young people nowadays, especially in Southeast Asia, are already engaged in small-scale enterprises, usually as vendors or dealers if not as undocumented migrants or victims of illegal recruitment. Also, the youth are the most affected by the mismanaged and inadequate development and security measures of governments since it is their generation that will have to endure and suffer from these unhealthy policies. Nevertheless, serving as a bridge to further similar academic undertakings, there is no doubt that this book extends a sense of optimism and confidence that the region can surpass these new exigent realities with the right combination of development strategies and security goals. ❁

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