The reviewed monograph entitled “Introduction to the Foreign Policy of the ASEAN Member States”, edited by Agnieszka Szpak and Michał Dahl, was published in 2021 by Nicolaus Copernicus University Press. Prof. A. Szpak is the Head of the Department of International Security at the Faculty of Political Science and Security Studies at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, while M. Dahl is a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Political Science and Security Studies at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń.

The book is of interest not only to scholars, but also to foreign policy practitioners connected with the region of Southeast Asia, as the recommendations on the back cover show. On the one hand, the region which is the subject of analysis in the reviewed volume is extremely distant from Poland, both geographically and socio-culturally, but at the same time it is a very interesting area, regularly appearing in specific contexts in the Polish discourse. Whether it is Myanmar, constantly oscillating between democracy and military dictatorship, Singapore, whose meritocratic model is looked upon with sentiment by many Polish scholars or publicists, Indonesia, gravitating from a secular state towards Islamism, or Vietnam and Cambodia, with its extremely difficult history of the 20th century, which was observed by the whole world. For those involved in foreign policy in Poland in relation to the Asian continent it should be a must read. Even a cursory knowledge of the geography of the region points to one circumstance that strongly determines the policy pursued by countries – their...
proximity to China. And this factor is also visible in the volume.

The advantage of the book is a very precise and accurate selection of topics and authors. The disadvantage of many collective monographs is the perceived in places randomness of the topics present in the individual chapters, which is attempted to be hidden by the very broad scope in the title of the work. Alternatively, the authors of individual chapters are confronted with a research area that is new to them, which, despite the work put in, is noticeable in the content of the work. The editors of the book managed to avoid these pitfalls.

The work impresses with its wealth of sources and constitutes an impressive compendium of knowledge on the foreign policy of the state of the region/sub-region under discussion. The individual chapters are very extensive, some of them even approaching the volume of 60 pages. On the other hand, the authors indicate that the research area itself is so wide that it cannot be comprehensively covered within the framework of a single volume, which they emphasize if only through the title of the book, that includes the phrase “Introduction to...”.

Among other advantages not obvious in the case of scientific publications is its topicality. The authors have even managed to include to some extent events of the current year.

Attention is drawn to the insightful analysis in Michał Dahl’s text on Philippine foreign policy. The author presents an interesting case study – a country with limited power, which in its functioning in the international arena uses a significant geostrategic position. He rightly points to the need for an in-depth analysis beyond the controversial behavior of President Rodrigo Duterte. The context of Philippine foreign policy conduct, which is subject to influence from both the United States and China, is outlined in detail. The author interprets the Philippine activity in deepening relations within ASEAN or with Japan and Australia as complementary to the alliance with the United States, rather than an alternative to it (Dahl, 2021).

Maria Ochwat’s text on Malaysia’s foreign policy is of significant exploratory value. This is the result of an impressive knowledge of the subject, but also a well-thought-out structure of the text, which is based on three levels – the directions of foreign policy. These are security, economic development and identity issues. The author is also right to distinguish in her analysis between the level of state structures and the level of the party system and individual political parties with their various manifestos (Ochwat, 2021).

The following remarks may be pointed out, which are not so much of a critical nature, but are a certain indication for further development of the undertaken research threads and for further publications of this type by the authors.
First, it is worth outlining the broader theoretical context. Foreign policy analysis has the status of a sub-discipline in political science with a long history and a rich and varied body of work that could help to better explain the different dimensions of decision-making processes, the impact of economic factors, or the issue of security. Although the editors stated in their introduction that the intention was to include “scholars using a variety of methodological approaches and presenting diverse research perspectives” (Szpak, Dahl, 2021, p. 15), if this was the case, it was not adequately emphasized.

Secondly, and this is to some extent related to the previous remark, the scientific value of the paper could be more clearly seen if the structure of the chapters was more unified. This would have made it more possible to grasp the similarities and differences between the policies pursued, or even to formulate a model proposal.

Third, many of the extremely interesting and important observations in the text could use some kind of conclusion, which, by the way, goes along with the previous remarks – such a conclusion would have been more firmly rooted in the research material if the theoretical framework had been more outlined and the structure of the paper more unified.

The diligence of the editors and the publisher itself deserves praise. This extended volume is distinguished by linguistic care, it is difficult to find even a single mistake, and no reservations are raised by the graphic design and composition.

To sum up, the reviewed monograph is an important contribution to social sciences, filling the existing gap. The insightful case studies included in the book can be useful for foreign policy experts and researchers, as well as for enthusiasts interested in the Southeast Asian region.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


