

des Reiches der Mitte – immerhin war die 1300 km lange Bahn von zehntausenden chinesischen Billigarbeitern unter zum Teil unsäglichen Bedingungen errichtet worden und erstreckte sich durch chinesisches Staatsgebiet – war Teil der berüchtigten Politik der ungleichen Verträge. Die Annexion der Mandchurei durch Japan toppte gewissermaßen diese Entwicklung. Somit liefert Urbansky einen Beitrag zur Erklärung der bis heute oft überempfindlichen chinesischen Abwehrreaktionen gegen angebliche Einmischung in „interne Angelegenheiten“.

Urbanskys Sujet ist ein überaus interessanter Ausschnitt des Machtpokers einer Ära, in der Ostasien zu einem Kristallisationspunkt der Weltpolitik wurde. Mit dem Thema „Eisenbahnstrategien“ hat der Autor einen relativ wenig beachteten Aspekt des strategischen Ringens in den Mittelpunkt gerückt. Er zeichnet ein Bild der Ostchinesischen Eisenbahn, ihrer ökonomischen Bedeutung und der sie umgebenden Interessenkonflikte. Doch sein schwer lesbarer theoretischer Ansatz und der Anspruch, ostasiatischen Imperialismus, Eisenbahnstrategien als dessen Vehikel, Bahntechnik bis hin zu Fahrplandetails und die Kultur des Reisens im „Fernostexpress“ unter einen Hut zu bringen, führen zu einer zum Teil zähen Lektüre, der es an Systematik mangelt.

Das ist bedauerlich, denn Urbanskys immer wieder eingestreute Analysen zur Machtpolitik zeigen klar die großen Linien auf. Seine Recherchen über die Rolle des weißrussischen Exils bei der Leitung der Bahn und das vielfältige kulturelle Milieu der russischen Gemeinschaft Harbins tragen zur Belebung der oft trockenen Darstellung bei. Dazu gehören auch die Berichte von europäischen und amerikanischen Reisenden über ihre Erfahrungen auf der exotischen Trasse und die zum Teil haarsträubenden Lebens- und Arbeitsverhältnisse der chinesischen Bevölkerung entlang der faktisch exterritorialen Zone. Wer sich vom Durchschlagen wissenschaftstheoretischer Zwänge auf die Lesbarkeit des Werkes nicht abschrecken lässt, findet eine Menge interessanter Informationen aus einem Be-

reich, der nur selten systematisch erforscht wird.

(Hans Jürgen Mayer)

Martina Timmermann, Jitsuo Tsuchiyama (eds.): Institutionalizing Northeast Asia. Regional Steps towards Global Governance

Baltimore: The Brookings Institution, 2008, 410 S., USD 39,00

This comprehensive volume is a collection of 19 essays examining various attempts to create regional institutions in Northeast Asia (defined as comprising PRC, Taiwan, the two Koreas and Japan) in areas pertaining to political, economic and security issues of this complex region. In Part 1 the general theoretical starting ground is mapped out (normative issues, comparison with EU experience), in Part 2 different topic areas are addressed which focus on history, ideas and identity, security, economy, finance, environment, human rights, civil society and human security. Not surprisingly the authors dealing with history, identity and security are much more pessimistic about the degree and future potential of institutionalizing this diverse region despite the great need for it than those authors who investigate areas which allow functional integration which is less susceptible to political obstacles.

The contribution by Higgott and Timmermann explains the difference between European and Asian regionalism and concludes that in Asia one may better speak of 'regulatory regionalism', particularly in relation to trade and even more so to monetary issues, rather than of the politically more controversial term of 'regional institution building'. While conceding the underdevelopment of regional institutions they nevertheless emphasize that traditional power-politics approaches to addressing the region's problems are becoming less relevant in favour of more 'diffuse networked understandings of power' (p. 380). Baogang He explains further the differ-

ence to Europe by pointing at the normative foundations of Asian regionalism of a 'nationalist doctrine with a clear and unvanishing focus on sovereignty, statist power and Asian culture or values' (p. 77). Oshimura Takashi makes several proposals how the lack of an Northeast Asian may be overcome to facilitate institutionalization. Gilbert Rozman does not detect the fundamentals of any institutionalized regionalism in Northeast Asia (apart from accelerating economic ties centered on China) and rather focuses on the obstacles which have first to be overcome. Tom Berger gives a detailed account of one of the greatest obstacles, i.e. Japan's history problem with China and Korea. In several contributions the important role of the US in any attempt of integrating Northeast Asia is referred to, either as positively supporting it (which is not the case according to the authors, particularly during the Bush administration) or by provoking a positive Northeast Asian reaction towards integration in a reaction to US opposition. Jitsuo Tsuchiyama even asks whether the US-led alliances in the region (which he defines as an institutional approach) stabilize or destabilize the security relations in general and concludes that a careless operation of these alliances over a crisis on the Korean peninsula or Taiwan could escalate a crisis and that at a minimum the alliance system prevents security institutionalization in Northeast Asia.

The closest regional integration (although geographically going beyond Northeast Asia) has been achieved by a series of currency swap arrangements (known as the Chiang Mai Initiative) since 2000 and the establishment of Asian bond markets since 2003. Both initiatives were prompted by the Asian Economic Crisis of 1997 and serve as a regional firewall against another speculative attack by financial companies. However, as T.J. Pempel notes, in the case of the swap arrangements, the necessary monitoring and surveillance mechanisms have still not been put into place. Regional (although again mostly going beyond Northeast Asia) cooperation on environmental issues is also relatively advanced even if it

revolves only around joint research, networking and information exchanges. The role of civil society is also looked at: Although there is an increase of the involvement of think tanks, educational establishments and media organisations, it is still under-institutionalized. Stuart Harris examines energy issues but has to come to the conclusion that as much as cooperation would be useful there is so far no regional attempt.

The overall conclusion from the volume is not only that institutionalizing cooperation in Northeast Asia is still very much in its infancy but that where it exists it is actually geographically extending wider than the subregion (e.g. the US-led Proliferation Security Initiative) or even occurs as a result of global international institutions of which the states in Northeast Asia are members, and what Yoshinobu Yamamoto therefore calls in his contribution 'outside-in regionalization'. Most authors therefore examine the difficulties of institutionalizing regional cooperation and emphasize the need to make greater progress.

The contributions were written before the devastating dimensions of the world economic crisis became clearer. However, one needs to know the current situation of institutionalization in the region in order to consider to what extent existing institutions may contribute to overcome this new challenge. The readers of this volume will therefore be better prepared to understand that functional integration (as e.g. demonstrated by the increase of the Asian currency swap agreement in February this year) will continue to be easier and therefore more likely than advancing the Six-Party Talks. The volume can be recommended for anyone interested who desires a deeper understanding of Asian or comparative regional integration and cooperation and what can be expected from Northeast Asia as a regional contribution to overcome the current crisis.

(Reinhard Drifte)