

chie zwischen Süd- und Südostasien dann eben doch - nämlich in den empirischen Befunden (etwa bei Ricci, van Putten, Sevea, Noor, Rozehnal). Auch transnationale zirkuläre Netzwerke kommen nicht ohne Zentren und Binnenhierarchie aus - und die lagen und liegen nun einmal eher in Süd- als in Südostasien. Selbst der Nahe Osten kommt durch die Hintertür wieder mit herein - etwa wenn Tschacher festhält, dass die meisten Tamil-Lehnworte in Malay arabischen Ursprungs sind, also auf eine doppelte - und klassisch west-östliche - Transmission hinweisen.

Abgesehen von den Grenzen der Zirkulationstheorie rächt sich in vielen Beiträgen auch eine bereits in der Einleitung auffindbare begriffliche Unschärfe: geht es tatsächlich um (uni- oder bidirektionale) *Verbindungen*, wie der Titel des Sammelbandes nahelegt, oder nicht doch eher um *Parallelen* oder *Gemeinsamkeiten*? Hier verzichtet der Sammelband leider auf die ansonsten vorhandene Präzision. Dies ist sicher nicht zuletzt auch den Schwierigkeiten und Grenzen eines solch ambitionierten Forschungsprogramms geschuldet, das „eigentlich“ plurilokale ethnographische oder historische Forschungen erfordert - und damit einen hohen Ressourceneinsatz und breite Sprachkenntnisse. Wenn beides, wie im Beitrag von Prange, vorhanden ist, wird der Band beeindruckend - das ist jedoch nicht bei allen Beiträgen der Fall. Neben dem Versprechen der Plurilokalität wird schließlich auch jenes der Interdisziplinarität nur teilweise erfüllt; abgesehen von Noor und Rozehnal handelt es sich bei fast allen Beiträgen um historische Ansätze. Aus sozialwissenschaftlicher Sicht ärgerliche Verkürzungen, wie etwa die unreflektierte Übernahme der Selbstbeschreibung der Tablighi Jamaat als „unpolitisch“ (in der Einleitung) ließen sich durch ein breiteres interdisziplinäres Gespräch verhindern.

Dennoch: der Sammelband ist gerade auch in Anbetracht der skizzierten Herausforderungen und bei aller Begrenztheit ein beein-

druckender Start in ein spannendes Forschungsprojekt. Fast alle Beiträge stützen sich auf wuchtiges empirisches Material (welches gut auch die eine oder andere Monographie hätte füllen können) und die Argumente der Autoren werden differenziert und überzeugend dargelegt. Positiv fällt auch die sorgfältige Redaktion (einschließlich 12 farbiger Grafiken und eines ausführlichen Index) auf. Man darf also auf den nächsten Sammelband des Projektes gespannt sein - und bis dahin angeregt in den „Muslim Connections“ schmökern!

Raphael Susewind

Sammelrezension: EU Perceptions in Asia

**Martin Holland, Peter Ryan, Alojzy Z. Nowak and Nathalia Chaban (Hgg.):
The EU through the Eyes of Asia.
Media, Public and Elite Perceptions in
China, Japan, Korea, Singapore and
Thailand**

Singapore, Warsaw: Warsaw University, 2007, 301 p.

**Nathalia Chaban, Martin Holland,
Peter Ryan (Hgg.): The EU through
the Eyes of Asia, Volume II, New
cases, new findings**

Singapore: World Scientific, 2009, 265 p.,
USD 86,00

A lot of effort and money goes into promoting the European contemporary image in Asia. More, the EU's "soft power" strategy is premised on the assumption that the EU's normative role model in governance, regional integration, progressive societal agenda, environmental protection and integrated development will spread on the strength of its intrinsic attractiveness. This logic however only has a chance to work if people learn about it in a positive evaluation

from credible sources. All the more it is important to provide reliable feedback on the EU's genuine perception in Asia: its portrayal in the printed and the electronic media and its image among the public at large and among the opinion making elites. These two volumes report the research findings on the first large scale comparative research in the subject in Asia and such represent interesting reading.

Though not everything is perfect – the Chinese mass survey sample has a share of 60% university graduates (Vol 1, p. 60), the Thai elite survey asks only six individuals, the definition of “elite” (occasionally termed waffly as “stakeholders” in Vol 2) varies in each country, and Japanese TV was not watched (contrary to what is asserted in Vol 1, p. 30 and p. 229) – and the major researcher in each country as a graduate student appears as not overly experienced for this “flagship project” (Bertrand Fort), yet the whole work represents a remarkable breakthrough beyond the past confines of anecdotal conjectures in producing fairly solid empirical ground on which other research and practical PR strategies can build upon. This is by no means a small achievement and it helps to forgive certain editorial weaknesses and repetitions in the volumes: ASEM membership, for instance, is enumerated no less than eight times in dull earnestness in Vol 1 and the – actually quite interesting – chapter by Martin Holland on evolving Asian perceptions is reproduced almost verbatim with only minor updates in Vol 2.

In each country the research was undertaken as contents analysis of EU related stories in one major popular paper, a leading national business paper, an English newspaper and a major TV channel. The year 2006 was chosen in China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Thailand and Singapore (Vol 1), and the year 2008 in the follow up study on Vietnam, the Philippines and Indonesia (Vol 2). As media recipients are not just passive consumers of messages it was wisely decided also to

commission mass opinion surveys and to do elite interviews to see which messages arrived, or rather were formed on the basis of semi-informed guesses and often garbled media messages.

Contents analysis typically does not produce surprises but confirms what we know already (W. Russell Neuman). In this case it confirms almost all of our worst expectations. If we abstract from our vastly over-educated (and hence biased) Chinese sample, then the Asian public at large cares very little about the EU and knows even less. In most countries TV and the popular press cover little EU related news, and if they rarely do, then only as an also-run in some external policy event. The only reliable source of news and information in most countries is the business press which understandably treats the EU as an economic animal in its trade, investment and currency roles. As a result the Euro has become Europe's most visible symbol in Asia. Also frequently the ECB and its president are more visible and known representatives than the Commission and its president or the Council and its foreign policy supremo. Reports in the local media are mostly neutral to positive, befitting the friendly indifference felt for a low key, marginal and distant international actor who does no harm.

In the English language press analyzed – which, apart from Singapore, Hong Kong and perhaps the Philippines, has an almost exclusive expatriate readership (with doubtful impact on the local public opinion) – like the mass media in the poorer SE Asian countries reliance is strong on Anglo-American wire services with their typical Euro-sceptical slant. These reports are understandably mostly unrelated to the host country and present the EU as distant and of little local relevance.

Since Asians are usually polite in their public pronouncements their views are generally those of benign indifference. Post-colonial grudges against Europeans are no longer held. The EU is seen as important as an

export market, as a source of investment and know how, and the Euro as a potential – but not quite yet – alternative to the US\$. It plays a certain constructive international role subordinate to the US. Yet the EU and its policies are distant and seem of little relevance to one's own livelihood or to the fate of one's nation. Its soft power and consensus operations are difficult to comprehend (Vol 2, p. 229). It can be safely ignored and is almost never discussed with friends, colleagues and family. Its environmental, social and developmental policies are very rarely reported – except in the expatriate English papers – and hence unknown. The EU's hopes to be seen as a trendsetter for human rights and a progressive societal and environmental agenda, ranging from gender and sexual minority rights to biodiversity and climate change, are thus thoroughly frustrated. In Natalia Chaban's view this represents a major failure of the EU's claim to normative power (Vol. 1, p. 280).

If the EU did badly enough, ASEM as the bicontinental forum fared worse in the media. It was presented and treated as an inconsequential talk shop, where bilateral side meetings, like Thai-Cambodian border talks, or discussions of the EU arms embargo against China were covered as newsworthy, as were unintended effects, like Thaksin's overthrow after attending the Helsinki ASEM 6 summit (Vol 2, p. 232).

Should this PR disaster surprise us (as Graham Watson put it on a road show presentation in Brussels on 9.4.2010)? Sure not, given the complexity of EU decision making, its relative ignorance amongst Europeans themselves and its ambivalent identity which offers little scope for identification (Vol 1, p. 24). Should we worry? And what should we do?

Let us first take a brief look at specific national results. Chinese media then (in 2006) were the most friendly. It was the only country where the EU was considered TV-newsworthy. The EU was presented as a respected interlocutor in the fields of trade,

industry and finance. The public judged the EU to be China's second most important international partner, after the US and ahead of Russia and the rest of Asia (Vol 1, p. 52). Clearly the EU and ASEM seemed to fit China's doctrine of a multipolar world structure, but remained of little political relevance.

In contrast the freer media of Hong Kong showed much less interest. The EU was no subject for TV dominated by local news. As a financial centre the ECB and its monetary policies were of interest, as were anti-dumping duties hitting the Hong Kong owners of Pearl River plants (Vol 1, p. 84).

The Japanese media relied more on their own correspondents in Europe, who were able to give their EU stories a stronger relevance to their readership. Most articles were in Nikkei, the business daily. In the Yomiuri, Japan's (and the world's) largest daily the EU was more of a political actor. Javier Solana, followed by Jean-Claude Trichet as Mr. Euro were portrayed as the EU's most named actors. The EU was seen as a sympathetic partner for Japan, whose importance however was ranked 6th, behind Korea, but still ahead of India and Russia (Vol 1, p. 117 and p. 131).

In Korea there was little EU coverage, given the media's inclination for national introspection and paucity of international news (Vol 1, p. 147). With the start of the FTA negotiations (during which the talks with the US were considered much more interesting), the EU's importance as a market and source of investment was reported, with some critical coverage of anti-dumping and agricultural subsidies. The EU was also portrayed as a minor actor over the North Korean problem. The Korean élites were well aware of the EU's economic role, but much less interested in its political role, which in the view of some could balance US influence in the future (Vol 1, p. 160). For the public at large the role of Korea's main partner would pass from the US to China however.

In Singapore, like in HK, the EU was not a TV story. The EU was mostly covered by the Straits Times which relied on the usual crowd of international wire services. Again the ECB appeared as Europe's most important institution. For the general public the EU remained distant, with little personal interest or contact.

In Thailand the EU remains as a minor international actor, virtually unknown by the general public. This is not their fault. Like in the rest of SE Asia (and the world) EU development programmes in Thailand are subcontracted to other IOs and NGOs who do the work and take the money and the credit. With the EU's preference for ASEAN and intra-bureaucratic interactions people understandably felt little relevance to their lives. After the September 2006 coup – which deposed PM Thaksin after attending the ASEM summit in Helsinki – the Thai media understandably followed the ensuing prolonged drama and indulged into domestic introspection with the EU, like many other international subjects, fading from the media screens (Vol 1, p. 201).

In the Philippines public interest in the EU equally is very limited. TV is the major source for foreign news, but Philippine TV carried no EU stories, which are perceived by the media elite to have little news value. With its traditional US orientation the EU remains unfamiliar and seen as of no consequence. If anything, it is interest for labour migration. Among the elite knowledge on EU affairs is low and among the general public 80% have “no idea” what the EU is or what it stands for (Vol 2, p 47). Hence it makes little sense to distribute caps and T-shirts with the 15-star banner which the EU does when doing development work in the country, when people are clueless what the logo and the flag stand for.

In Vietnam the EU's development work (inspite of a budget of € 700 mio. per year) is equally invisible to the public. The few stories carried in the Vietnamese press are

unrelated to the country and leave readers indifferent. (Vol 2, p. 71).

Similarly in Indonesia the EU is “somewhere out there”. As the national media for foreign news rely on international wire services, there were no EU stories related to the country including on any development projects undertaken. Only some 30% of the general public are aware of the EU's existence (Vol 2, p. 120). Though its role for peace and rehabilitation in Aceh is positively evaluated, the EU's importance for the elite is ranked behind the US, Japan, China, Singapore and Australia, just ahead of India and Russia.

Should we then worry? A Russian proverb teaches us not to blame the mirror if we don't like the face we see. Perhaps there is a lot of truth in the friendly-disinterested Asian perception of the EU and a lot of expensive self-deception in the Quartier Schuman in Brussels. What should be done? During the mentioned road show event on 9th April 2010 Glyn Ford, ex MEP, half-jokingly suggested “nothing”, since the EU's portrayal was best in the North Korean state media where it was lauded as a barrier to US hegemonic imperialism – without any EU PR activity permissible in the country. And only in China's state controlled media did the EU make it into prime time news as well (Vol 2, p. 125).

In view of the importance of the media of creating images on subjects on which most recipients have no personal experiences, Martin Holland develops a series of recommendations for action, like most importantly the EU foreign policy role for a single personality of the standing of Solana. Whether the new complexities of the Lisbon Treaty and the External Action Service will foot this bill, remains to be seen. Other sensible proposals are the production of TV features and documentaries of interest to Asian TV stations, journalist exchanges, a more active role of EU Delegations (which actually don't get good marks in the survey), with regular briefings, press conferences and links to EU

Studies centres, and the insertion of EU themes into secondary school curricula and university courses with good textbook materials and awards for good teachers (Vol 1, pp. 287). Also Erasmus exchanges should be beefed up, playing a similar visible role which Australian scholarships enjoy in many SE Asian countries.

Most important however remains surely the substance of the message. If the EU were to engage in real politics with genuine strategic objectives in Asia, supported by a cohesive mixture of hard and soft politics undertaken by charismatic public figures of the standing of a Jacques Delors, it would be taken seriously and newsworthy. People would immediately take interest and actively seek information. PR gimmicks and spin doctors are not longer needed. Further, if the EU was properly democratized, with presidential campaigns of the US sort, which fascinate crowds more outside the US than within, then also EU leaders could enjoy global appeal. As things stands with Council back-room deals, no such chance. Finally there is a major problem with the way the EU and its member states project their modern image abroad as post-national post-modern melting pots of diffuse and confused identities. In fact, the survey from Korea to Vietnam confirms strong elite and general public appreciation for traditional European culture and history. Not to cultivate this invaluable asset is worse than a stupidity, it is a cultural crime.

In sum, these two volumes are neither particularly well written nor edited, but they are extremely valuable as pioneering research work and useful for their policy implications and recommendations.

Albrecht Rothacher

Arundhati Roy: Aus der Werkstatt der Demokratie

Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 2010, 335 S., EUR 19,95

Arundhati Roy gehört zu den international bekanntesten politischen Stimmen Indiens. Ihre Bücher, Artikel und Reden werden sowohl begeistert aufgenommen als auch kontrovers diskutiert. Im Frühjahr 2010 sorgte sie mit einer Reportage über das Leben naxalitischer Aufständischer für Aufsehen. Nun ist ein Sammelband mit verschiedenen Einzelbeiträgen aus den vergangenen Jahren in deutscher Übersetzung erschienen.

„Aus der Werkstatt der Demokratie“ versammelt Essays aus den Jahren 2002 bis 2008. Die Aufsätze wurden hierbei nicht aktualisiert, sondern lediglich mit zum Teil zahlreichen Anmerkungen und Fußnoten versehen. Die Entscheidung, die Beiträge in ihrer Originalversion zu belassen und dabei auch die oft erst im Nachhinein sichtbaren Unschärfen der jeweiligen Interpretation beizubehalten, ist ein Glücksfall, da der Band so politische Analyse und Diskursgeschichte verbindet. In allen Essays geht es Arundhati Roy um den „Blick von unten“ (S. 11), mit welchem die für ihr soziales Engagement bekannte Autorin die indische Demokratie kritisch begleitet. Hierbei steht weniger die Betrachtung der konkret thematisierten Einzelfragen im Mittelpunkt. Diese bilden häufig nur den Rahmen für die Analyse übergeordneter Entwicklungen. Kleinteilige Untersuchungen spezifischer Gegebenheiten sind für Roy, so scheint es, ohne den Blick für das große Ganze nutzlos. Selbst die besten Gesetze und Verordnungen sind ohne Wert, wenn sie nicht umgesetzt werden können und an den sozialen Realitäten Indiens scheitern: „Es ist, als würden wir in einem Bus ohne Bremsen einen steilen Abhang hinunterrasen und darüber streiten, welches Lied wir singen sollen.“ (S. 32).

Die Themen der Einzelbeiträge sind vordergründig breit gestreut. Es geht unter anderem