

balls” that are closed to each other and consequently communicate merely by knocking against the next (Wolfgang Welsch, p. 151). We also find awareness of the great diversity that exists in “Buddhism” or in “African philosophy” (Nausikaa Schirilla, p. 81). However, many contributions do not engage such insights and construe “intercultural” processes as though we could conceive of “cultures” as distinct, even reified, entities that can then be identified by well-defined values and norms, common language, symbolism, heroes and conventionalised rituals (cf. Wolfgang Gieler, p. 227). Comments on these diverse positions, or better still some interaction between them, are regrettably lacking. As they stand, they themselves resemble the “ball model” of culture that Welsch so aptly critiques.

This is not to say that there are no “nuggets” among the contributions, for instance Jan Nederveen Pieterse’s lucid exposition of his concept of hybridity, Christoph Antweiler’s instructive pieces on the mutually complementing concepts of universalism and relativism, Pheng Cheah’s sceptical account of cosmopolitanism and Marlies Glasius’s insightful sketch of current debates on civil society. The contributions by Mark Gibney on migration control, Michael Newman on humanitarian intervention and Georg Meggle on terrorism provide useful critical perspectives on their respective subjects. Again, most of these highlights are at best only loosely related to issues of intercultural communication.

*Reinhart Kößler*

CHARLES EBINGER, *Energy and Security in South Asia – Cooperation or Conflict?* Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2011. XXII, 224 pages, US\$ 26.95. ISBN 978-08157-0411-9

In the past years, studies dealing with India and particularly South Asia in general stood in the shadow of the uncountable number of works on China, and specialized monographs were especially scarce. This is finally beginning to change with the academic and analytical focus shifting more and more towards India and South Asia. Clearly, with South Asia’s population continuing on its projected growth trajectory, the region will host almost 2 billion people and be of crucial geostrategic relevance for all major powers. The book by Charles Ebinger therefore provides a welcome and much needed new addition to the field of specialized monographs.

The study deals with South Asia’s (i.e. India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan) energy problems and their intricate relationship with various aspects of security in the region. In a way, the book can be read like a history of post-1947 South Asia from the perspective of “energy”. In eight chapters, the author firstly provides a wealth of information on the history of energy in the individual countries of South Asia and their handling of energy resources, pro-

curement, administrative structures of the region – with some fascinating insights and personal interviews –, and ends with three separate chapters dedicated to energy challenges, regional cooperation and South Asia's path forward. It uses helpful basic figures, explanatory boxes and maps.

The energy problems in all of the countries reviewed are very similar, and the author manages to highlight recurring patterns in all five countries: a slow moving and often corrupt bureaucracy, political bottlenecks, competing administrative institutions, insufficient technical capacity and geographical and logistical obstacles. For Ebinger, energy policy has been designed too often to attract short-term political support. For readers unfamiliar with the South Asian energy dilemma, the book will certainly be an eye-opener: the region already needs to import 80 percent of its crude oil requirements, a number which will even rise in the not too distant future. Working solutions to this stark disequilibrium of supply and demand are at large. Also, the book argues that regional cooperation which is so crucial for energy has never really worked, especially in the form of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), whose different programmes and institutional setup has disappointed since its inception in 1985. Even though the successful example of the Indus Water Treaty between India and Pakistan offers a glimpse of hope (see page 158), there are too few other examples in the region that allow for a positive assessment of future projects. An especially intriguing section of the book looks at four multilateral pipeline projects, none of which have come to fruition at this point, despite, in some instances, decades of planning. For Ebinger, taking a US perspective, the outlook is bleak: "A looming energy crisis in South Asia will have deleterious consequences for the United States." (p. 170). The policy prescriptions Ebinger provides do not come as a surprise for analysts and policy makers in and of South Asia: only bilateral, rather than multilateral strategies and schemes of cooperation will eventually succeed.

There are only two minor points of critique in order: the study could have benefitted from a more detailed description of the reasons for the failure of the SAARC energy programmes. The mentioning of SAARC seems somewhat rushed and really does not elucidate the complex reasons why South Asia has failed in its regional cooperation efforts. Besides, even though the book is clearly written for a policy-oriented audience with no theoretical trajectory, its second minor shortcoming is its somewhat little convincing attempt to provide a working definition of energy security in the opening chapter of the book. In Ebinger's words: "It is vital that any work addressing energy security in a region as diverse as South Asia provide a working definition that can be critiqued by other scholars" (p. 2). Energy security is then defined from a governmental, private citizen, urban area and "the poor" perspective, but it remains unclear which of these is the working definition Ebinger prefers. The book does not even try to actually connect these definitions with the following chapters, and it remains somehow unclear why a policy-oriented book that begins, a bit surprisingly, with policy prescriptions

even before Chapter 1 actually needs to contribute to the ongoing academic discourse on a working definition of energy security.

However, these points do not diminish the overall quality of a well-researched and well-written book that is a valuable policy-oriented contribution and fills a gap in the literature on South Asia (the only comparable book on the topic currently is “India’s Energy Security”, edited by Ligia Noronha and Anant Sudarshan, Routledge 2009. The book, however, is, much more limited in scope and substance). In all of its chapters, the book offers a detailed and in-depth description of the state of “energy” affairs that showcases the knowledge and long-time experiences in the region of the author. It is without doubt the new work of reference for all questions related to the history of energy production, procurement, distribution and consumption in South Asia and for everybody interested in the current state of the South Asian energy (and security) dilemma.

*Arndt Michael*

CHRISTIAN WAGNER, *Brennpunkt Pakistan. Islamische Atommacht im 21. Jahrhundert*. Bonn: Dietz, 2012. 191 pages, 1 map, 1 figure, 5 tables, € 16.90. ISBN 978-3-8012-0424-2

Since the 9/11-attacks in 2001 and the proclamation by the USA of global war on terrorism, Pakistan has gained renewed attention in international politics and Western media. Just three years before being suddenly thrust centre stage in international affairs as a frontline state in US geopolitics, Pakistan had become the first and only Islamic state to acquire nuclear weapons. In view of Pakistan’s ongoing struggles with Islamist militant groups and terror attacks, Western media readily developed a narrative of the imminent threat of the “Talibanization” of the country. They sketched a scenario of the “Islamic bomb” falling into the hands of Islamist terrorists in a collapsing state, thus earning Pakistan the unflattering title of “the most dangerous country of the world”.

In his book *Brennpunkt Pakistan* Christian Wagner’s dual objective is to correct and counterbalance the often negative, one-sided and distorted picture of Pakistan drawn in the media by presenting a more detailed depiction of a country with democratic traditions, moderate attitudes, liberal media and an active civil society. In his view, these factors make the “Talibanization” and disintegration of the state highly unlikely. His account is based on the presentation of historical facts and developments as well as political analysis, drawing on his profound knowledge and experience as head of the Asia research division at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP).

He fully achieves the second of his objectives – to present a more detailed picture – by covering a broad range of political, social, cultural, ethnographical and ideological aspects in a highly condensed, but well-readable and coherent