

BERND KUZMITS, *Borders and Orders in Central Asia. Transactions and Attitudes between Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan*. (Weltregionen im Wandel, 15). Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2013. 388 pages, 1 map, €64.00. ISBN 978-3-8487-0153-7

Bernd Kuzmits' book is based on a dissertation that grew out of the research project "Local governance and statehood in the Amu Darya borderlands" at Bonn University's Center for Development Research between 2005 and 2010. The analysis seeks to identify drivers and constraints of cross-border interactions across the Amu Darya, i.e. between Afghanistan and Tajikistan as well as between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, on the one hand, and to compare these with interactions across the political border between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan on the other hand. Methodologically, the study combines a political analysis of state-formation and order, as delimited by political boundaries, with stock-taking of cross-border interactions, for example in the spheres of trade, border management and infrastructure (railway, roads and energy-related projects). The latter are not limited to national projects and everyday practices of borderland residents at the micro-level, which the borders both enable and constrain. In addition, the author refers to the cognitive dimension, exploring attitudes towards trans-border interactions from the frontier.

Bernd Kuzmits starts by discussing existing approaches to border studies in the discipline of international relations (IR). Examining both positivist and constructivist approaches, the study covers a wide spectrum of viewpoints on how to conceptualize borders, how to distinguish borders from frontiers and boundaries, and on the role of territorial boundaries between regional cooperation and state control. The author views realist and neo-institutional IR theories as a potential tool to analyse the production of borders and provide insights into how to overcome them, while constructivist theories with their focus on actions, attitudes and ideas pertaining to the role of specific borders contain assumptions useful for analysing the reproduction dimension. Based on the review of concepts in border studies, the author formulates ten hypotheses about drivers for cross-border interactions around five key motives and a number of soft factors. Accordingly, cross-border cooperation is assumed to be sought in particular by landlocked countries when they come to realize that they are to some degree interdependent (both in economic and security terms), and that interactions have the potential to reduce their individual, vulnerable statuses. The identified soft factors, i.e. triggers that could help translate the motives into concrete action, include opportunity, willingness, trust, and reciprocity. The rest of the analysis tests the validity of the author's hypotheses by focusing on the empirical specificities of state- and nation-building processes in the three countries and how these relate to local regionalization as well as the state of regionalism and transnational relations in greater Central Asia. The bottom line is that the study confirms the widespread lack of integration in the region and traces it to mistrust among the national political elites and their lack of awareness of the

potential mutual advantages of regional cooperation. Kuzmits finds that the structural deficits shared by the national economies in question, which compete with rather than complement one another, and the resulting fear of loss, e.g. of shares in transboundary water allocation, are the main motives for non-implementation of the cooperation initiatives regularly agreed between the states.

Kuzmits' aim is not to establish a general border theory; rather he takes the Amu Darya borderlands as an exemplary region to generate detailed, context-bound empirical insights that allow the reader to understand, among other things, the general failure of integration between Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Afghanistan. The author suggests that territorial "hypertrophy", i.e. the new states' overemphasis on the politics of national territory and nationalization processes following the state- and nation-building efforts in the successor states of the former Soviet Union after 1991, has sharpened mutual perceptions of otherness between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan in particular. This perception has long dominated Central Asians' perspectives of Afghanistan, which have not changed since 2001. The enforced borderland status, including aspects of border management, between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan is contrasted with the finding of privatized borderlands characterizing the borderline along the Amu Darya. Not only does the intensity of cross-border interactions differ from state border to state border, but interactions even vary depending on the location along the border, as the empirical observations along the Tajik-Afghan border illustrate. Despite multiple interdependencies and varying degrees of cross-border interactions, the structural conflict between nation- and region-building, which is rooted in the contradictory interests and priorities of national political elites, inhibits greater trans-border cooperation or regional entities. Against this background, the paper tiger phenomenon, i.e. the regular launching of new regional cooperation initiatives despite a lack of intention to cooperate, appears rational from the point of view of the actors involved. Going even further, the analysis provides an understanding of why multipolar orientations dominate foreign policy in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and, thus, why the time is still not ripe for schemes to foster regional integration in Central Asia. Instead, to date the results of top-down efforts in this direction have generally been counterproductive, e.g. by facilitating transnational crime in the region. Interestingly, it is in this sphere, the security domain, that a provisional need for cooperation is acknowledged by the elites and said to be increasingly manifested above all in cooperation between national intelligence agencies.

Unfortunately, but understandably given the difficulties of obtaining data, the reader does not learn more about the criminal dimension in the production and reproduction of the border between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. It is solely attributed to the role Afghanistan and its "privatized" social order beyond the Amu Darya plays in borderland dynamics. In this sense, the analysis may be overly determined by its theoretical framework and subsequent othering of informal integration dynamics "from below". That said, given the author's own

background as a political scientist and public law scholar specialized in the former Soviet Union, his interdisciplinary perspective on the topic of borders and orders in Central Asia and the incorporation of Afghanistan into the analysis makes this work an innovative and interesting read.

*Katja Mielke*

ARNDT MICHAEL, *India's Foreign Policy and Regional Multilateralism*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. 225 pages, £60.00. ISBN 978-1-13-726311-7

Regional multilateralism has played an increasingly important role in India's foreign policy since the 1990s, as reflected in the Look East Policy since 1994 and the Gujral Doctrine, with its emphasis on non-reciprocity vis-à-vis India's neighbors in South Asia, which was developed in the mid-1990s.

Arndt Michael's study on India's foreign policy and regional multilateralism compares several regional multilateral initiatives in which India has participated since the 1990s. Michael approaches the phenomenon from the theoretical perspective of norm diffusion. In five chapters he deals with the concept of norm localization and diffusion as well as the evolution of India's foreign policy. His empirical sections focus on the different regional organizations of which India is a member, for instance the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IORARC), the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) and the BCIM Regional Cooperation Forum.

Michael's work provides a valuable empirical study of India's engagement in the different regional multilateral settings. His main focus is on the development and evolution of regional multilateralism in South Asia, on which he elaborates extensively in Chapter 3 (pp. 48–112). Moreover, Michael also deserves credit for dealing with a variety of other multilateral initiatives in which India has actively engaged.

Less convincing is the theoretical framework of norm localization. Starting from Acharaya's work on ASEAN, Michael develops the concept of "norm sublimation", which "denotes the immediate phase transition that takes place if external norms are subject to an instant transformation and alteration in the process of (pre-)localization, without undergoing an intermediate phase of comprehensive norm negotiations, due to the impact of a political hegemon" (p. 16).

The relevance of the concept of norm sublimation in this context, however, is unclear. Assuming "norm sublimation", who in the context of India and China should be regarded as the hegemon (p. 16)? It is also questionable whether the impact of European experience was already strong enough in the early 1950s for regional multilateralism to be regarded as the global norm at that