

area to develop into a "world-class economy" with a "cultural renaissance" and "its own authentic models of democracy". Inspired by the example of Western Europe, he is confident that East Asia will be "a region of peace, harmony and prosperity".

The keynote address by Dipesh Chakrabaty, a professor at the University of Chicago, specialising in post-colonial history, does not opt for a clear definition of what "WeAsians" means either. He hints at the sameness that lurks behind the differences without actually defining what this sameness might entail. Caroline Hau, a professor at Kyoto University, points to the centrality of Asia in world history. Asia has long been regarded as "a disembodied fantasy of post-Enlightenment Europe ... an empty signifier ... a vanishing object" (p. 79). It is not enough to discuss "WeAsians" in terms of identity and values, but to fill the empty signifier in real terms, by say deconstructing Chineseness in terms of modernity, upper-class lifestyles and transnational entrepreneurship. Her arguments are sophisticated and interesting, but the question how Chineseness can be transformed into Asianness remains unanswered.

Chua Beng Huat, Professor of Sociology at the National University of Singapore, contributes one of the most interesting papers. He points out that since the integration of Asia "into the global logic of capitalism", Asians have never been without reservation towards capitalism and "its Western cultural forms" (p. 140). Hence the title of his paper "Living with Capitalism in Asia, Uncomfortably". The Asian values discourse of the 1980s was as much an attempt to de-link capitalist development from its Western cultural moorings as a cover-up of cronyism and corruption. Chua Beng Huat leads the debate in a new direction by asking whether there could emerge "a communitarian basis for capitalism in Asia" as a counterpoint to excessive individualism (p. 148). Communitarianism should, however, not be interpreted as essentially Japanese or Singaporean, but as a useful ideology to contain certain excesses of market individualism. Chua appears to argue that the Asian cultural resonance to communitarianism paves the way to the management practices of Asian states and economies.

There are a multitude of other arguments brought forward by the authors and commentators. Needless to say, no common definition of "WeAsians" emerges. The floor is still open for discussion.

*Hans-Dieter Evers*

HANS-DIETER EVERS, RÜDIGER KORFF, *Southeast Asian Urbanism. The Meaning and Power of Social Space*. Münster, Hamburg: LIT-Verlag, 2000. 268 pages, DM 49,80. ISBN 3-8258-4021-2

*Southeast Asian Urbanism* is based on the findings of over two decades of field research on cities and towns in Thailand, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore. The goal of the book was to analyse the connections between micro and macro processes, between grassroots interactions and urban structures, between social theory and empirical data – Evers and Korff, two German sociologists well familiar with Southeast Asian development in the last decades have succeeded in providing a vivid picture of the great variety of urban forms, the social creativity in the slums of Bangkok, Manila or Jakarta, and the variety of cultural

symbolism and the political and religious structuring of urban space: "We have worked through our earlier published and unpublished papers, field notes and secondary data to provide an analysis of the dynamism of Southeast Asian towns and cities." The book, which is written in the tradition of German or European sociological research from Marx and Weber to Habermas and Bourdieu, includes major findings of various research programmes conducted by the Sociology of Development Research Centre/University of Bielefeld (Germany), and also aspects of teaching and research assignments at Chulalongkorn University (Bangkok), the National University of Malaysia, Andalas University (Padang), the Population Studies Centre/Gadjah Mada University (Yogyakarta), the University of Indonesia (Jakarta) the University of the Philippines (Quezon City) and the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (Singapore). Featuring a broad variety of urban aspects – ranging from theoretical frameworks of global cities to colonial developments, from images and clichés of various towns in historical contexts to present survival strategies and questions of access to urban space – the book provides a number of detailed glimpses of urban life in selected urban centres within the subcontinent. However, it is obviously not meant to offer a comprehensive and all-inclusive overview of Southeast Asian urbanism in general – there are hardly any statistical data on city developments, making any comparison of growth aspects (such as demography or economy) impossible. Nevertheless, as a summary of sociological studies in the region, the book is definitely worth reading for urban anthropologists, political scientists and sociologists, students of Southeast Asian history, culture and society and for urban planners. Evers and Korff have succeeded in offering the reader an insight into the various research projects undertaken by them in Southeast Asia.

Günter Spreitzhofer

GÜNTER SPREITZHOFFER, MARTIN HEINTEL, *Metro-Jakarta. Zwischen Nasi und Nike. Suhartos „Neue Ordnung“ als Motor der Regionalentwicklung in Westjava?* Frankfurt am Main u.a.: Peter Lang, 2000. 257 Seiten, DM 79,-. ISBN 3-631-35992-6

Die indonesische Hauptstadt Jakarta zählt mit mehr als neun Millionen Einwohner zu einer der größten städtischen Agglomerationen Südostasiens. Mit ihrem Buch *Metro-Jakarta* wollen die Autoren nach eigener Aussage eine Bestandsaufnahme jener Stadtentwicklungsprozesse liefern, die die Metropole sowohl auf politischen, ökonomischen und kulturellen Zentrum Indonesiens als auch zu einem wichtigen regionalen Knotenpunkt innerhalb der Weltwirtschaft machten; letzteres zumindest bis Ausbruch der Asienkrise im Sommer 1997. Der Schwerpunkt des Buches liegt dabei auf der Rolle, die der Internationalisierungskurs des ehemaligen Präsidenten Suharto für die räumliche und sozio-kulturelle Entwicklung Jakartas spielte.

Anknüpfend an eine knappe Darstellung der historischen und gesellschaftlichen Rahmenbedingungen der Herausbildung des Großraums Jabotabek (*Jakarta, Bogor, Tangerang und Bekasi*) zeichnen die Autoren mit Hilfe umfangreichen Materials und vieler interessanter Details die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung der Agglomeration nach. Die strukturellen Bedingungen der Megastadt und ihrer Entwicklungsdynamik werden daran anschließend anhand der wichtigsten Problembereiche analysiert: der