

Simonis, Udo E.

Book Review — Digitized Version

[Rezension] Peter Baron: Probleme der japanischen Regionalpolitik - unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Entwicklung Hokkaidos. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1973

Internationales Asienforum

Provided in Cooperation with:

WZB Berlin Social Science Center

Suggested Citation: Simonis, Udo E. (1974) : [Rezension] Peter Baron: Probleme der japanischen Regionalpolitik - unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Entwicklung Hokkaidos. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1973, Internationales Asienforum, ISSN 0020-9449, ABI, Arnold Bergstraesser Institut, Freiburg, Vol. 5, Iss. 2, pp. 295-296

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/112400>

Standard-Nutzungsbedingungen:

Die Dokumente auf EconStor dürfen zu eigenen wissenschaftlichen Zwecken und zum Privatgebrauch gespeichert und kopiert werden.

Sie dürfen die Dokumente nicht für öffentliche oder kommerzielle Zwecke vervielfältigen, öffentlich ausstellen, öffentlich zugänglich machen, vertreiben oder anderweitig nutzen.

Sofern die Verfasser die Dokumente unter Open-Content-Lizenzen (insbesondere CC-Lizenzen) zur Verfügung gestellt haben sollten, gelten abweichend von diesen Nutzungsbedingungen die in der dort genannten Lizenz gewährten Nutzungsrechte.

Terms of use:

Documents in EconStor may be saved and copied for your personal and scholarly purposes.

You are not to copy documents for public or commercial purposes, to exhibit the documents publicly, to make them publicly available on the internet, or to distribute or otherwise use the documents in public.

If the documents have been made available under an Open Content Licence (especially Creative Commons Licences), you may exercise further usage rights as specified in the indicated licence.



WZB-Open Access Digitalisate

WZB-Open Access digital copies

Das nachfolgende Dokument wurde zum Zweck der kostenfreien Onlinebereitstellung digitalisiert am Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung gGmbH (WZB). Das WZB verfügt über die entsprechenden Nutzungsrechte. Sollten Sie sich durch die Onlineveröffentlichung des Dokuments wider Erwarten dennoch in Ihren Rechten verletzt sehen, kontaktieren Sie bitte das WZB postalisch oder per E-Mail:

Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung gGmbH
Bibliothek und wissenschaftliche Information
Reichpietschufer 50
D-10785 Berlin
E-Mail: bibliothek@wzb.eu

The following document was digitized at the Berlin Social Science Center (WZB) in order to make it publicly available online.

The WZB has the corresponding rights of use. If, against all possibility, you consider your rights to be violated by the online publication of this document, please contact the WZB by sending a letter or an e-mail to:

Berlin Social Science Center (WZB)
Library and Scientific Information
Reichpietschufer 50
D-10785 Berlin
e-mail: bibliothek@wzb.eu

Digitalisierung und Bereitstellung dieser Publikation erfolgten im Rahmen des Retrodigitalisierungsprojektes **OA 1000+**. Weitere Informationen zum Projekt und eine Liste der ca. 1 500 digitalisierten Texte sind unter <http://www.wzb.eu/de/bibliothek/serviceangebote/open-access/oa-1000> verfügbar.

This text was digitizing and published online as part of the digitizing-project **OA 1000+**. More about the project as well as a list of all the digitized documents (ca. 1 500) can be found at <http://www.wzb.eu/en/library/services/open-access/oa-1000>.

Reviews

The reviews in Internationales Asienforum try to give a brief evaluation of recent German publications

Peter Baron, Probleme der japanischen Regionalpolitik — unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Entwicklung Hokkaidos. (Schriften des Institutes für Asienkunde, Bd. 36). Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1973, 139 pages, DM 44,—.

For several years the Volkswagen Foundation has sponsored research on East Asia; this book is one of the few examples of the successful accomplishment of the aim of that programme.

As a central issue is his study the author puts forward the hypothesis that a regional policy with the maximization of GNP as its goal cannot solve the various problems of a regionally unbalanced distribution of economic activities within a national economy.

Reviewing economic growth in Japan since the Meiji restoration, the initial part of the book shows the emergence of a highly unbalanced regional structure with an excessive congestion of economic activities in Middle Japan and more especially the Pacific coast. On the other hand, other regions among them Hokkaido, remained in a comparative state of underdevelopment. Among the early factors responsible for this structure the author sees the heavy concentration of public investment in Middle Japan, the income and capacity effects of which induced and aggravated depletion of the hinterland.

In the third and fourth part of the book, the aims and means of Japanese official regional policy are examined, starting from the early regional programmes prior to World War II and developing through several stages up to 1970/71. In spite of the formulation of different regional development strategies during these distinct stages, the basic objective has never been questioned. As the result of the author's investigation the concept of maximizing GNP at the expense of social goals emerges as the crucial problem of regional policy in Japan.

One chapter of the book is a case study on regional policy for Hokkaido, and especially the industrial complex of Tomakomai, which serves to illustrate the inadequacies of Japanese regional policy in so far as the priority given to national growth has undermined the development of the economically backward regions.

Having thus criticized growth policy, the author comes to the general conclusion that the unbalanced structure of modern economies should be considered, in principle, as irreversible and that in consequence governmental policy goals for regional policy should be redefined (p. 128). I ask myself what purpose such "redefinitions" of government policy goals serve, when, in fact, the structures are irreversible.

A solution to this seemingly contradictory statement would perhaps have been found, had the author given more thought to the relationships between government and private policy goals, especially on the matter of general and particular limits to balanced regional development in a capitalist market economy. This weakness, i.e. the lack of political economy in regional development, is, however, much more pronounced in most regional studies previously undertaken and should therefore not prevent critical scholars from reading this book dealing with the manifold problems of the most rapid growth process in history. The more so since this book, to my knowledge, is the first Western one on regional policy in Japan.

Unfortunately, and due to the long gestation period in book production, the Prime Minister's 1972 plan for remodeling the Japanese archipelago¹ is not discussed in this volume. Could

¹ Cf. the English version: Kakuei Tanaka, Building a New Japan. A Plan for Remodeling the Japanese Archipelago, The Simul Press, Tokyo 1973.

it be held that the fact that this plan has been in the meantime more or less put in jeopardy adduces proof of the author's proposition that in a modern economy unbalanced structures are, in principle, irreversible?

Udo Ernst Simonis