

CARSTEN WIELAND, Nationalstaat wider Willen. Politisierung von Ethnien und Ethnisierung der Politik: Bosnien, Indien, Pakistan. (Campus Forschung 814) Frankfurt/Main, New York: Campus 2000, 372 pages text, bibliography, index, EUR 45, ISBN: 3-593-36506-5.

In our age, wars and civil wars are shaped by the media. The media tend to simplify conflicts by labeling participants with stickers of „ethnic“ or „religious“ groups, especially since ideological divisions seem to have diminished. Academics are sometimes involved in this discourse as „experts“ for „background“ analysis, but mostly their opinions are just ignored. There is, in any way, a wide gap between the two systems. Carsten Wieland is a rare exception to this: He is an academic with deep journalist experience, or a journalist with excellent academic training. In his dissertation, he analyses beginnings and developments of „ethnic“ national movements in Bosnia and India that pretended to represent „Muslim“ minorities and turned later into state-building parties. Wieland criticises that „among academics and particularly among journalists a confusion of ideas and a lack of distance towards concepts, that originate from the political field, prevails“ (p. 37) He summarises results of theoretical discussions in history, political science, cultural anthropology, and sociology in a very precise and clear language. He rejects both the primordial and constructivist definition of „ethnic group“ („ethnicity“), „nation“ and „nation state“. Wieland highlights the fact that „ethnic groups“ are constructed by use of *one* primary peculiarity that is alone not enough to create a group. Therefore the „ethnic group“ is constructed by *secondary peculiarities* which are added to the primary to make differentiation of the group more plausible. The secondary characteristics of an „ethnic group“ are „modified, overemphasised or constructed *ex post* for this purpose“. Wieland calls this primary peculiarity the „*Ethnizentrum*“, around which the secondary categories of the „ethnic“ group are organised to distinguish his own approach from the one of Donald L. Horowitz. The author is dealing with a huge amount of reference books, but sometimes his study of secondary sources leads him to mistakes. At p. 58 he quotes Stalin’s definition of „nation“ as: „a historically evolved stable community of language territory, economic life and *psychological make-up* manifested in a community of culture“, taken from an English version of „Marxism and the National Question“ (New York 1942). Who knows Stalin’s works better, would rather follow the German version „Marxismus und nationale Frage“ (Moskow 1945), in which instead of „psychological make-up“ it says „*psychische Eigenart*“ (character) (p. 8), exactly the opposite.

In Bosnia as well as in Pakistan and India *Religion* was used as „Ethnizentrum“ of nationalist groups. Historical myths like that of the Bogumil in Bosnia (p.128-132), of the Aryan-Hindu in India and the „prehistoric Pakistan“ myth (p. 133-137) functioned as amplifiers to strengthen the weak religious core of the „ethno“-national construction. Conversion to Islam happened in both areas during periods of Islamic domination providing Muslims with higher social and economic status. But in India Muslims remained a minority while in Bosnia they became the majority, which lead to different forms of state-building. (p. 147) The Osmanic principle of *millet*, group autonomy on a religious basis, enforced in the modern period separatist tendencies among Muslim populations. (p. 158)

Only in the 19th and 20th century efforts were taken to „define“ the different groups in Bosnia and India according to religious and then „ethnic“-religious concepts that were introduced by Serbian or Croat nationalists or by British colonialists. (p. 166) Herder’s ideas of „ethnic“ nationalism spread among intellectuals in both areas. Later racist concepts, ideological mainstream at the time, were adopted. During the first half of the 20th century, religious denomination was more and more turned into an „ethnic“ category and Muslim groups developed a kind of „defensive homogenisation“. (p. 179) Interaction and conflict of ideological leaders of different groups and a process of modernisation of the means of communication was a necessary condition for this. Religious and linguistic conflicts intensified and were interpreted within the frames of the new „ethnic“ discourse. (p. 195) By instrumentalising symbols for „secondary“ group characteristics the small elite which consciously worked on the construction of the „ethnic“ identity could appeal to larger groups of the potential „ethnicity“. In the cases of the Muslims in India and Bosnia, other „ethnic“ groups, the Hindu-nationalists, Croats and Serbs were much faster when constructing their „national“ parties during the turn-of-the-century. After WW II terror, massacres lead to the victimisation of the „own“ group and the demonisation of „the other“ (pp. 270-273). Violence by radicals „proved“ their own assertion, that it is „impossible“ to live together with „the other“.

Apart from the big differences between them, Izetbegovich and Jinnah were both treating Muslims not as citizens but as „ethnic“-national groups, as endangered minorities which had to be protected by as much political autonomy as possible. By doing so they ethnized politics and politized „ethnic“ groups. (p. 291) Exterior factors such as the actions of the dominating (British, Austro-Hungarian colonial administration) or intervening (European Union, NATO, UN) forces weakened political representatives of alternative trans-„ethnic“ or liberal (citizen-

oriented) programmes were catalysing the conflicts. „Ethno“-national groups. By this they could mobilise better the populations and appeal more successfully to political players on a higher, international level. (p. 311, 320) Since the foundation of Pakistan and Bosnia-Herzegowina, the Muslim „ethno“-national camps are moving in different directions: while in Bosnia, a certain homogenisation and tendencies towards a Muslim nation-State-building are going on, in Pakistan inner conflicts between different Muslim groups lead to growing conflicts, that caused f. e. the separation of Bangladesh that rejects the label of a „Muslim“ state or the Cashmere-conflict caused by the general problem of the fact that more Muslims live in India than in „Muslim“ Pakistan. Terror, particularly against women who symbolised „ethnic purity“ in the nationalist ideology was used to „prove“ that the different „ethnic“ groups could not live together anymore - a terrible „argumentation“ which was used by the foreign power to suppress alternative political solutions to those terrorists desired.

This is an important book. It shows that „ethnic“ conflicts *per se* do not exist (p. 366), and how political leaders with mixed or unclear identities themselves mobilise groups by appeal to „ethnic“ categories, whereas foreign powers enforce this process by statistics on ethnic bases (British, Austro-Hungarian colonial administration), by following the argumentation of „ethnic“ leaders who do not represent but small minorities. It should be stressed that the political cultures of India and Bosnia were organised by „ethnic“ categories not because they were the most important dividing lines, but because other divisions – social, economic, cultural – were translated into the language of „ethnic“ division at a critical period of time. In Western Europe, Britain f. e., political cultures developed *before* „ethnic“ and racial thinking became important political issues. Therefore in India or the Balkan „ethnic“ categories do *not* matter more than others, but they began to matter at a certain period of time thus becoming more important than other issues. Wieland’s contribution to the theory of „ethnic“ and „national“ politics is important: He explains how and why constructed identities become realities.

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