

Reviews

JAMAL MALIK / HELMUT REIFELD (eds.), *Religious Pluralism in South Asia and Europe*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005. 317 pages, Rs 955.00. ISBN 019-566975-4.

Plurality and pluralism of religions is and has always been a core issue in societal discourse. In view of the 'headscarf controversy' in Germany and France or communalist conflicts in India it is evident that religious pluralism is more than ever an important subject. The present volume brings together a range of prominent scholars from South Asia and Europe with different academic backgrounds, who contribute to the discussion from different perspectives, religious, sociological, theological, political or linguistic. Most of the authors take a historical perspective to investigate the various traditions as well as contemporary forms of religious plurality.

In the introduction Jamal Malik points out that 'religious pluralism is more than mere diversity; it implies active engagement with plurality.' The history of religion, in Europe and South Asia, is characterized largely by long-term processes of normatization and regularization, based on the idea of mutually exclusive traditions that tended to marginalize alternative options. By outlining the inter-relatedness of religion and the academic study of the same, a contextualization of the study of historical and contemporary religious culture is proposed.

The twelve articles of this volume are grouped into three parts that approach the issue from the more theoretical viewpoint to the examination of the local context. In the first part, 'Legitimization of Plurality', Mark Häberlein examines the historical roots of plurality in Western Europe between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. Contrasting the statement made by two German historians that Turkey is incompatible with the European Union, he points out that the formation of a secularized and plural modern Europe was often accompanied by religious wars, persecution and intolerance. In his essay T.N. Madan compares Indian religions with Islam and Christianity and evaluates forms of religious plurality and pluralism from an intra- as well as an inter-religious focus. Christian W. Troll, besides giving an insight into Christianity from his background as a Catholic theologian, also provides interesting perspectives by presenting five voices of Muslim thinkers from different countries, who developed ideas about the plural character of Islam and its potential in a globalized world. The papers by Claire de Galembert and Michael Dusche examine political concepts of pluralism. While Claire de Galembert writes about the historical evolution of the French concept of laicity and critically evaluates its rather contradictory application, Michael

Dusche's article is more theoretical. He discusses the political concept of multiculturalism as compared with that of liberal pluralism in order to explore the consistencies and inconsistencies of both regarding questions like individual rights and cultural recognition.

In the second part, 'Individual, Church, and Community', Margrit Pernau focuses on nineteenth century Delhi, taking the example of Ghalib, a famous poet, in order to discuss the complexity of individuality and multiple identities. Contrary to the modern perception of multiple identities being integrated in a coherent whole, she argues that identities differ depending on the respective religious or social context; they are not a fixed category but relational. On the basis of theories of Thomas Luckmann and other religious sociologists, Monika Wohlrab-Sahr discusses the transformation of religiousness in the process of secularization in Europe. Not a general decline but a process of religious individualization is suggested by empirical data, characterized for instance by 'pluralization of institutionalized belief', 'de-traditionalization', and 'privatization'. The controversy about Muslim headscarves has to be seen in the context of religion as a private matter - 'invisible' in the public sphere - that has become a norm and a cultural heritage. Sudhir Chandra's paper illustrates in detail Gandhi's constant struggle with the matter of conversion, places his partly contradictory statements in their context, and argues that the assumption of 'the denial of plurality in conversion' is too simplistic since the denial of conversion can go along with the denial of plurality as well. Unfortunately part of the last sentence on page 215 seems to be missing.

The third part, 'Living Plurality' starts with Saiyid Zaheer Husain Jafri's essay on the Chishti *khanqah* in Salon. He offers a rather simplified view of religious plurality in the Chishti tradition while considering at length donations of land grants to the *khanqah* by rulers and chieftains. Monica Juneja provides a refreshing essay on architecture in pre-colonial North India that calls into question classifications of architecture in exclusively religious terms, like 'Hindu' and 'Muslim' on the assumption that this would provide a key to the 'meaning' of the structure. Keeping in mind the symbolic importance of religious buildings she states in the case of the mosque: 'What tends to be overlooked is the remarkable fluidity of the frontiers separating the sacred and the profane...: the location of a large number of mosques in dense urban structures and their constant imbrication in living cultures brought an additional layer of plurality to their meaning.' Salil Misra transgresses the field of religion for the realm of language and uses the example of Hindi and Urdu to illustrate the shifting identification of language with (i) territory in premodern times, (ii) culture/religion and, finally, (iii) nation in modern times and the resulting pluralization of a formerly composite tradition. Ashis Nandi uses narratives of personal experiences of scholars and writers to discuss in an original way the complex issue of religious violence in South Asia.

Some critical comments have to be made concerning the editing work. Besides some typing errors, the transcription of South Asian names as well as of words cited in Urdu and Arabic is handled quite generously and therefore inconsistently. It would have been appropriate to adopt the common standard of transcription used in the South Asian context. Further, especially in the case of Saiyid Zaheer Husain Jafri's essay, some terms are not translated, which is rather inconvenient as the book clearly addresses a broader readership. Some of the articles provide a bibliography, while other do not, and an always helpful index is missing.

In conclusion, this collection of essays makes a significant contribution to knowledge of religious plurality and dynamic processes of religious conflicts and coexistence. The volume certainly does not consider every aspect of the ongoing discussion, as topics like religious pluralism in Christian theology are not included. Nonetheless, the diversity of approaches and the variety of geographical areas treated makes for an innovative comparative perspective that will stimulate further discussion and make the book interesting not only for academics, but also for a general readership.

Ute Falasch

ANN FROTSCHER, *Banden- und Bürgerkrieg in Karachi. Die Ethnisierung von Politik am Beispiel der Mohajir*. (Studien zu Ethnizität, Religion und Demokratie, Band 6). Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2005. 288 Seiten, € 59,00. ISBN 3-8329-1100-6

In den 90er Jahren des letzten Jahrhunderts wurde Pakistan von einer Reihe gewaltsamer Auseinandersetzungen erschüttert, die besonders in den Jahren 1992 bis 1997 zum Tode von rund 3000 Menschen führten. Regierungen wurden gestürzt, das öffentliche Leben war zuweilen lahm gelegt und schwerwiegende Menschenrechtsverletzungen waren zu beklagen. Pakistan befand sich in einer tiefen Staatskrise, die sich im Anwachsen der ethnischen Bewegung der Mohajir Qaumi Movement in den Städten Karachi und Hyderabad manifestierte. 1999 mündete diese Krise in die Machtübernahme des Militärs unter General Pervez Musharraf. Seitdem bestimmen weitere Koordinaten die Dimensionen dieser Staatskrise, an deren Lösung durch die Anschläge auf das World Trade Center im September 2001 und die Londoner U-Bahn im Juli 2005 auch die westliche Welt nun ein Interesse haben dürfte. Die Relevanz der von Ann Frotscher vorgelegten Studie liegt auf der Hand. Sie sollte von all jenen gelesen werden, denen die Entwicklung Pakistans und Südasiens wahrhaftig am Herzen gelegen ist.

Ann Frotscher basiert ihre Studie auf mehrmonatigen Aufenthalten vor Ort, während derer sie mit vielen Personen der vom Konflikt gezeichneten Städte der Provinz Sindh, Karachi und Hyderabad, Interviews führte. Bereits dieses empi-