

Die der westlichen Truppen, die für eine bestimmte Zeit im Land bleiben werden, und eine afghanische Perspektive, wonach der Zustand von Konflikt und Krieg eine lange Zeit dauern könnte.

Wagner analysiert die westliche Kriegsführung demgegenüber in einer langfristigen Perspektive und attestiert ihr gewissermaßen Modellcharakter: „Scheitert das Bündnis am Hindukusch, so dürfte sich jeder ähnlich gelagerte Versuch des militärischen Nation-Building auf längere Zeit erledigt haben.“ (S. 102) Interessant ist seine Darstellung der Lehren, die aus dem Afghanistankonflikt gezogen wurden und die auf eine bessere Bündelung militärischer und ziviler Kapazitäten beim *nation* und *state building* hinauslaufen (S. 107).

Im letzten Kapitel dieses Abschnittes weist Claudia Haydt zu Recht darauf hin, dass der rechtliche Status insbesondere der deutschen „Spezialkräfte“ überhaupt erst seit 2007 juristisch geregelt sei (S. 137).

Die sich anschließende Sektion „Ziviler Aufbau“ verlegt die Diskussion ins Praktische. Thomas Gebauer beschäftigt sich mit der Rolle von NGOs im Kontext der Militarisierung des Humanitären (S. 145–160), während Herbert Wulf sich einem zentralen Thema der ganzen Misere annimmt: nämlich dem (westlichen) *state building*, das in Afghanistan (bis jetzt) gescheitert zu sein scheint (S. 161–180). Auf den folgenden Seiten (181–194) schildert Nicole Birtsch ihre praktischen Erfahrungen auf dem Gebiet der Friedenserziehung. Ihr Bericht stellt einen Höhepunkt des Buches dar. Sie beschreibt, wie die „Erziehung zum Frieden“ in afghanischen Bildungseinrichtungen durchgeführt wird und welche Schwierigkeiten dabei auftreten. Ihr Aufruf zu Transparenz, Inklusivität, *traditional justice*, Vertrauen und Einheit sollte nicht ungehört verhallen.

Leider fällt trotz dieses gehaltvollen Beitrags das Fazit über das Gesamtwerk ernüchternd aus. Wer von vornherein den Krieg in Afghanistan als ein von westlicher Perfidie angezetteltes, von westlichen (und anderen) Macht- und Wirtschaftsinteressen am Leben gehaltenes und unter Umgehung demokratischer Kontrolle widerrechtliches Ereignis versteht, wird sich durch dieses Buch in vollem Maße bestätigt finden. Wem jedoch, bei aller Einsicht in die mitunter fatalen Fehler der internationalen Gemeinschaft in Afghanistan, an einer ausgewogenen, abwägenden und (um die Autoren zu zitieren) erleuchtenden Analyse gelegen ist, dem sind andere Werke zu empfehlen.

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GEORG NOACK, *Local Traditions, Global Modernities. Dress, Identity and the Creation of Public Self-Images in Contemporary Urban Myanmar*. Berlin: Regiospectra, 2011, 281 pages, illustrations, € 29.90. ISBN 978-3-940132-33-8

This book addresses Burmese identity and values in contemporary urban Myanmar (Burma) with emphasis on dress and adornments. Following years of em-

bargo, Myanmar is still relatively isolated, but dress and dress code, and even casual dress code (pp. 105, 202), seems to be a concern for traditional Burmese, in particular women, but also, and more universally, for modern youth. So, this analysis of the Burmese art of dress addresses a wide public. In the context of local traditions and global modernity, we could argue that identity, a complex concept, is more important today than at the turn of the twentieth century. Local traditions in a rapidly changing society conflict with global modernity; hence, Burmese dress, fashion and traditions constitute an excellent topic.

The relationship between dress and identity explains well what is *habitus* or “aspects of culture anchored in the body... habits, skills styles, tastes of a specific group” (p. 186). Noack’s study of dress and the body “as a vehicle of identity” constitutes a valid extrapolation of Mauss and Pierre Bourdieu’s works and is based on extensive field research, mainly in Yangon in 2007, which formed the core of his PhD thesis submitted at the Humboldt University in Berlin (2010).

Following participant anthropological research in a monastery, he notes the importance of Burmese dress and Theravada Buddhism in defining the Bamar (or Burman) identity, without overlooking their social relevance (p. 241). Moreover, for Noack, unlike some Burmese specialists, the topic of Muslims in Myanmar is not taboo.

The author mentions interaction with British, Chinese, French, Indian, Manipuri (or Meitei people in the northeast Indian state of Assam, on the border with Myanmar) and Siamese. In his historical introduction, the author has an interesting note on the significant differences between Western and Thai appearances and images, but the comparison with India is inadequate. Furthermore, the discussion of the exchange with India, China and Siam (Thailand) with respect to traditional dress could be more detailed. Nevertheless, Gandhi’s white Indian cotton cloth, symbol of colonial resistance is mentioned (p. 224). The author did not want to detract from the self-image of the people studied, which is an essential attribute for an anthropologist.

Expressions of political views through dress are a point. The present government of Myanmar and fundamentalist Buddhists “perceive ‘Western’ dress as a major threat to the continuity of national culture”. So, young people sometimes have a tendency to dress “in favour of something foreign” to show their disapproval of the government (pp. 225–226). In various parts of his book Noack illustrates that the body and dress are modes of identity.

One the main ideas of this book is “identity and the creation of public self-images” and the interface between traditional Burmese dress and modern Western clothes. Traditional dress is described and analysed with elegance and intelligence. For example, the ‘longyi’ is “a multifunctional garment better adapted to local climate conditions than any ‘Western’ garment would be” (pp. 40, 256). Longyi may have expressed a ‘patriotic attitude’ throughout the twentieth century, but also became a party uniform for Suu Kyi’s National League for

Democracy in the 1990s. There is also the question of ‘ethnic dress’ as a necessary expression of identity (pp. 224–225). However, global modernity has its limitations in Myanmar: “Nobody but a very few teenagers would attempt to visit a pagoda in clothing that does not cover his body from the base of the neck to the ankles. Most would avoid sleeveless tops, bright colours ... modest dress is thought to be acceptable” (p. 238).

The photographic research (Chapter Three) is partly based on the Burmese collection of the Ethnological Museum of Berlin. This research constitutes a creative strategy to present and analyse the museum’s entire photo collection. The pictures and photos are well chosen.

Noack analyses the larger debate of Burmese-ness and global consumerism, with a specific focus on dress, in particular female dress (roughly 50 pictures representing only women vs. 20 depicting men and their clothes), consumption, tradition and standardization via globalization. He highlights the pivotal role of women in Burmese society: they often manage the family’s resources.

The last chapter, Chapter Five, is the most important. It analyses most of the arguments about dress and communication, identity and globalization. In the sixteenth century, Matteo Ricci, one of the first Europeans to learn Asian customs (though Chinese, not Burmese) was also the first to mention globalization, a key concept in Noack’s study. The author in fact offers a reflection on dress in the local and global context.

Face and social prestige are also two essential concepts. A manager of a fashion design school remarks: “Myanmar people are much more concerned than Japanese about what other people might think when they see them wearing a new piece of dress. They are afraid of ... being indecent or overly eccentric ... dress and bodily appearance need to be monitored constantly at home as well” (p. 228–229). Choices of what to wear are determined by “personal tastes, taste of one’s parents, spouse, peer group and individual attitudes toward fashion and consumption in general” (p. 241). The Author makes the point that ideas and dress do not exist in a vacuum and there is always an interest behind creativity.

To conclude: this convincing book, centred on mainstream Burmese, is very readable. The arduous task of dissecting the relationship between identity and globalization is done with competence and will promote the book. In the event of a reprint, it would be useful to include an index. The Burmese-English glossary and references are well detailed. This book will be particularly useful for scholars doing research in the field of dress, fashion, identity, globalization and culture.

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