



State Capacity, Civil Society, and Nation-building A Cross-national Exploration, 1945-2005

Invitation

Andreas Wimmer

Friday, July 1, 2011
2 p.m., Room A 300/310

Moderation: Ruud Koopmans

Why have some states been captured by specific ethnic elites and their clienteles, excluding all others from access to government power? Conversely, what explains political inclusion across ethnic divides or, in other words, successful nation building? I argue that high state capacity to deliver public goods and well developed civil society organizations reduce ethno-political exclusion because they produce more encompassing networks of political alliances less aligned along ethnic cleavages. Both contemporary state capacity and civil society development are in turn related to levels of state building achieved during the 19th century. Such long-term factors of endogenous political development are more important for explaining ethno-political power structures than political institutions (including democracy) or the legacies of colonial rule. This is shown on the basis of a cross-national dataset covering all countries since 1945.

Andreas Wimmer is professor of sociology at the University of California Los Angeles. His research aims to understand the dynamics of nation-state formation, ethnic boundary-making and political conflict from a comparative perspective. He has pursued this theme across several disciplinary fields, focusing on examples from both the developing and the developed world, and using various methodological and analytical strategies: anthropological field research (in Mexico and Iraq), network studies (in Swiss immigrant neighborhoods and among American college students), quantitative cross-national research (on wars and ethnic conflicts), a comparative historical analysis of Swiss, Iraqi, and Mexican nation-state formation, as well as policy oriented research on immigration and the prevention of ethnic conflict.

Andreas Wimmer is guest researcher at the WZB research unit Migration, Integration, Transnationalization.

The WZB provides child care during the lecture. If you are interested, please respond by June 23, 2011 to Jutta Höhne: hoehne@wzb.eu.

To register, please reply by June 27, 2011, to Jutta Höhne: hoehne@wzb.eu, fax: 030/25491-512.