

the United States to use its good offices to facilitate a peaceful resolution of the conflict. He expresses heartfelt sympathy for the Kashmiris—Hindus, Muslims and others—who have been victims of repression and terrorism perpetrated by the Indian security forces as well as Kashmiri and Pakistani militants striving to liberate Kashmir from India through violent means.

Unfortunately the book contains several factual errors. Some are listed here: On page 25 the author writes that Pakistani Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan was assassinated at Pakistan's army headquarters in Rawalpindi. He was assassinated when he was addressing a public meeting in a park in Rawalpindi. On page 30 he describes Iskander Mirza as a Parsi. Mirza was a Shia Muslim. On page 31 he gives the number of "basic democrats" as 60,000. It was 80,000. On page 40 he writes that Pakistan had only one Bengali prime minister, Suhrawardy. In fact there were two more: Khawaja Nazimudin and Mohammad Ali Bogra. On page 48 he refers to "93,000 Bihari prisoners"; they were overwhelmingly Punjabis. On page 85 he gives the name of the Taliban leader as Fakir Mohammad. His name is Sufi Mohammad.

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**MOHAJIR MILITANCY IN PAKISTAN: Violence and Transformation in the Karachi Conflict.** *Routledge Contemporary South Asia Series, 29.* By *Nichola Khan.* London; New York: Routledge, 2010. xi, 187 pp. (B&W photos.) US\$135.00, cloth. ISBN 978-0-415-55490-9.

Pakistan is familiar territory for those with an interest in the study of modern militant politics. Scholars have devoted considerable attention to religious militancy in Pakistan, but Nichola Khan departs from this trend. She focuses on a particular form of ethnic militancy—namely, militancy associated with those who migrated from India to Pakistan in 1947 (a.k.a., Pakistan's *mohajirs* or "migrants")—and, then, with this group in mind, she combines an account of the economic and political challenges these migrants face with a nuanced account of the *psychological* patterns that drive individual militants on the ground.

Whereas political scientists familiar with ethnic rivalries in urban settings like Bombay and Belfast might ask what led the mohajirs living in an urban Karachi to take up arms against ethnic "others" (e.g., Sindhis, Punjabis and Pashtuns), focusing on basic structural or elite-led political drivers, Khan launches her analysis as an anthropologist with a special interest in psychoanalysis. She does not discount the importance of conventional structural factors like urban poverty, ethnic ghettoization, the so-called "youth bulge," or the proximate importance of exclusionary

access to scarce state resources (including state-based employment). Instead, she begins by sketching out an environment in which these factors figure prominently, and then, after noting how these factors affect millions of mohajirs simultaneously, she focuses in on the experiences of just a few militants—those who killed not once, but often—in an effort to explore the factors that pushed these *few* mohajirs into a life of “extraordinary” ethnic violence. What makes these militants tick?

Drawing on extensive ethnographic evidence gathered in the neighbourhood where her sample lived (namely Liaquatabad), as well as a rich digest of detailed life history interviews, she pieces together the structural and, most importantly, the idiosyncratic *biographical* factors that led each militant to become an unusually prolific killer. In some cases she stresses the psychological imprint of an abusive father; in others, she stresses a bitter job search culminating in a humiliating loss to some under-qualified Punjabi with superior informal connections; and so on and so forth.

Focusing on the construction of what might be called the “motivational meanings” that frame mohajir militancy in Karachi, Khan asks: What led *this particular individual* to kill so prolifically in the name of mohajirs in general and, more specifically, on behalf of the Mohajir Qaumi (National) Movement founded by Altaf Hussain in 1978?

Richly historicized, Khan’s book unfolds across four main chapters: one concerning the life histories of particular militants; one concerning the role of “migrants” in pressing for the initial formation of Pakistan (only to claim that, after partition, they were shunted aside by an exclusionary Punjabi state and, within Karachi, by some combination of “native” Sindhi and “immigrant” Pashtun demands); one concerning the role of mohajir women in supporting militant framings of male honour; and, finally, one comparing ethnic mohajir militancy with the religious activism of Pakistan’s notorious Jama’at-e-Islami (Party of Islam).

Throughout, key historical events are woven together with a careful reading of the ways in which these events were experienced and interpreted by individual militants on the ground. What was their understanding of these events? Which terms did they use to describe them? How should we understand their specific emotional response? Indeed, what role did violence play in activating new forms of emotional autonomy on the part of individual militants (notwithstanding enduring forms of social and economic constraint)?

Just as Thomas Blom Hansen drew upon the work of Jacques Lacan to elucidate the meaning of violence perpetrated by Shiv Sena in postcolonial Bombay (*Violence in Urban India: Identity Politics, ‘Mumbai’, and the Postcolonial City*, Princeton, 2001), so too Khan mines the psychoanalytical tradition for inspiration with references to the likes of Sigmund Freud and Melanie Klein. In fact she clearly seeks to expand

upon the work of those with an interest in cross-cultural psychology more generally (for example, Ashis Nandy and Katherine Ewing).

Even as she calls for a greater appreciation of psychoanalysis, however, Khan concedes that her psychoanalytical conclusions are rather “speculative” (146). This is particularly true in light of her failure to construct a careful psychological comparison of militants and non-militants *within* the MQM. How did the configuration of social, political and psychological factors surrounding militants *differ* from those affecting non-militants? To what extent might experiences of ethnic exclusion, childhood trauma and masculine insecurity be combined with feelings of victimization or resentment without, in turn, generating unusually high levels of violence?

This is, alas, not a question that Khan seeks to answer—although, in many ways, this is precisely the sort of mixed-methods question that lies at the heart of her analysis. Indeed, as Roger Petersen explains in his book *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), the most pressing question is not merely: How are social structures interpreted and converted into the emotional underpinnings of political action? The most important question is: What is the specific mechanism that makes psychology or emotion decisive in the production of particular acts—including acts of prolific political violence?

Khan succeeds in bringing the terms of psychoanalysis back into the ethnographic study of political violence in Pakistan. In doing so, she does not argue against any particular feature (or prevailing theory) within the existing literature; she simply notes that the existing literature suffers from a persistent psychoanalytical gap.

Her efforts to highlight the study of individual militants over and above the presumed importance of enduring demographic or ideological groups will be greatly appreciated by those with an interest in fine-grained analyses of modern militancy. Her failure to show, more systematically, how the individualized psychology of militants differs from that of non-militants will frustrate those with an interest in defining, more carefully, as Khan herself seeks to define, “what makes militants tick.”

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**ORDERING POWER: Contentious Politics and Authoritarian Leviathans in Southeast Asia.** By Dan Slater. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. xviii, 319 pp. US\$28.99, paper. ISBN 978-0-521-16545-7.

This is an ambitious book that proposes a framework for understanding the “pathways” of state power in a number of Southeast Asian countries: