

identification of possible solutions to some of the problems raised by the authors. These drawbacks have been dealt with somewhat by the Editors' strong Introduction and Conclusion, which both draw together the common themes and link the chapters to form a cohesive whole. By identifying and problematising issues of scale in the formation of environmental knowledge, the contributors have laid the ground for further consideration of the way in which global governance is formulated.

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C. Christine Fair, *The Madrassah Challenge: Militancy and Religious Education in Pakistan* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2008, 145 pp., US\$14.95 pbk).

Prior to the events of 9/11, the Western world was stubbornly insular to the study of *madrassahs*, or Islamic educational institutes, and their influence on terrorism. The landmark events of 9/11 galvanised the Western attitude against this insularity, and interest was stirred in the pursuit of greater understanding of the mindset of a terrorist as well as tracing their roots to the religious education provided in *madrassahs*. The common allegation was that *madrassahs* were 'incubators of militants in Pakistan and responsible for creating communities of support for militancy in the region' (p. 1). Since then the perception of a *madrassah* in the West (particularly in the United States) is tantamount to Tolkien's portrayal of Mordor, churning out *Uruk Hai* and *Orcs* by the thousands. It is at this juncture of misconstructions that Fair's book, *The Madrassah Challenge: Militancy and Religious Education in Pakistan*, functions as an indispensable *vade mecum* in understanding Pakistani *madrassahs* and their connection with militancy.

Fair's research draws on her fieldwork, as well as the works of countless others (i.e. Andarabi, PIHS, Alan Krueger and Claude Berrebi), to substantiate her argument that '*madrassahs* are not the cradles of militancy as generally perceived, nevertheless in comparison to public and private schools they do produce students who are significantly less tolerant and more inclined to violent means of resolving disputes' (p. 94). Fair uses extensive primary data, comprising her own interviews with teachers, students and other *madrassah* members in addition to numerous surveys and opinion polls, as the basis of her argument. The author aims to address multiple aspects of Pakistani *madrassahs* such as: their share in the educational sector, the socio-economic background of *madrassah* students and, most importantly, the connection between such institutions and militancy, and Islamabad's sincerity in reforming the *madrassah* system.

The first two chapters provide elaborate insights into both the mainstream and religious educational systems of Pakistan. Using the data provided by the Pakistan Integrated Household Survey (PIHS), Fair contrasts the enrolment figures of *madrassahs* to conventional public and private schools. These figures are astounding, as it shows that '0.9 percent of all full time students' are enrolled in *madrassahs* in contrast with '73 percent

of students in government school (public) and 26 percent in private schools' (p. 29). These figures are significant, as they exhibit an unfavourable public attitude towards *madrassah* enrolment. The third chapter presents the key argument of the book on the putative links between religious educational centres and militancy. Fair enumerates the works of Marc Sageman, Alan Krueger, Peter Bergen and Claude Berrebi, for example, to counter the claim that '*madrassahs* are involved in the production of militants in Pakistan and elsewhere' (p. 67). This argument is based on the evidence gathered by 'supply-side' studies that include an examination of the background of known militants. Fair concludes, using 'supply-side' findings, that 'in general militants are not under-educated or from *madrassahs*' (p. 69). With this said, it would be naïve to think that *madrassahs* play no role in promoting militancy or *jihadi* – Fair's research shows that *madrassah* students may not be among the prominent international terrorists; however, they do provide suicide attackers for the tribal areas bordering Afghanistan. The concluding chapters discuss the various reforms that have taken place since 9/11, such as the role of Pakistan's government in curbing militancy and the initiatives taken for restricting *madrassahs* in promoting *jihadi* rhetoric. Thus, *madrassahs* may have created an environment for furthering the causes of the *jihadis* on a regional and sectarian basis, but Fair's study does not find that they are the primary generators of international terrorist acts.

One of the strengths of this book is the detailed quantitative data collected and analysed by Fair. The foreword provided by Hussein Haqqani, Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, is informative in providing a historical background for a neophyte to the discourse of *madrassahs* and their roots in Pakistan. In conclusion, Fair's benchmark study on Pakistani *madrassahs* has laid the groundwork for academics and students interested in the study of Islamic religious institutes. This book is a valuable guide for policy- and decision-makers – especially for understanding the structure of these religious institutes.

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Miwa Hirono, *Civilizing Missions: International Religious Agencies in China* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, 262 pp., £58.00 hbk).

Miwa Hirono's book is the work of a highly accomplished scholar. Based on research for a doctorate in International Relations, her book successfully reaches well beyond the discipline. While theoretically grounded, it is also the result of significant archival research and extensive on-site fieldwork at various locations in China, as well as in Hong Kong and Japan. Hirono's primary aim in the book is to compare the work of Christian missionaries in China in the early 20th century with the more recent work done by international Christian non-governmental organisations in the same country. Ultimately, she seeks to 'critically assess the idea of the Christian "civilizing mission" over time' – in a