

systematic efforts to create spaces to discuss the relationships of affect in historical terms. The book under review is an attempt in this direction, placing the institution of the household under an academic lens. It is interesting to observe the perceptions of different authors on practices, religious traditions and characterisations in epics that are well established. Using diacritics in the linguistic terminologies may be a hindrance to communication with a wider, foreign audience, but in terms of substance, the book makes a valuable contribution to the literature on the household, an institution that is often naturalised and taken for granted. This book will be particularly useful to scholars of social history and political institutions.

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C. Christine Fair and Sarah J. Watson (Eds), *Pakistan's Enduring Challenges* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), vi + 310 pp.

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This edited volume attempts to provide an analysis of the interrelated security, domestic and foreign affairs challenges 'that will determine Pakistan's post 2014 trajectory' (p. 13) in the aftermath of the US withdrawal from Afghanistan. The volume's strength lies in the fact that the seemingly compartmentalised security, domestic and foreign affairs challenges identified in these articles are connected through a common thread which highlights the role of non-state actors. These are mostly nurtured by the state to further its geopolitical goals vis-à-vis India and Afghanistan, in fostering domestic instability, threatening nuclear security and complicating foreign policy decision-making in Pakistan. Apart from a single chapter on economic problems in Pakistan, most of the chapters in this volume are linked through this common theme.

The first chapter (pp. 27–54) sheds light on the various shapes that the militant juggernaut propped up by the Pakistani state may take after the US withdrawal from Afghanistan. It provides an incisive analysis of the possible 'atomisation' (p. 47) of the militant milieu, both sectarian and ideological, which may prevent it from becoming a combined threat to Pakistan's integrity. The second chapter (pp. 55–71) provides an insightful analysis of the sectarian and ideological nuances that distinguish the militant landscape in Pakistan. Through an overview of the differences in the interpretations of 'Sura-e-Toba', the Koranic chapter that is most frequently invoked by Jihadists to wage violent acts against non-Muslims, this chapter provides a much-needed 'political theological perspective' on militant Islam and highlights the 'normative and ideological constraints' (p. 97) under which Jihadists operate.

The third chapter (pp. 72–97) argues that instead of 'marking a criminal infringement of Pakistan's sovereignty' (p. 74), as proclaimed by the civilian government

of Pakistan, the US drone programme is implicitly supported by the country's security establishment. The chapter also provides a critical analysis of the disparity between different data sources on drone casualties along with a commentary on the legal aspects of drone wars (p. 79). The fourth chapter (pp. 98–130) provides detailed information on Pakistan's sophisticated nuclear security arrangements and the history of nuclear proliferation in the country. The chapter establishes that although 'the absolute possibility of an adverse nuclear event emanating from Pakistan is low' (p. 99), it is relatively high due to the country's hostile neighbourhood and the state's 'complicated relationship with violent extremism' (p. 99).

The fifth chapter (pp. 131–55) traces the civil–military relationship dynamics in Pakistan over the years and discusses the new players that can contribute to democratic strengthening in the country. This chapter also provides a nuanced analysis of the mechanisms that the security establishment has developed to retain its hold on security and foreign policies in a changing political scenario marked by an activist judiciary, independent media and greater provincial autonomy. The sixth chapter (pp. 156–77) provides a useful analysis of the role of social media in shaping Pakistan's politics. This can serve as an excellent starting point for social science researchers attempting to investigate this topic in Pakistan. The examination of how social media can be and has been appropriated by obscurantist discourses in Pakistan is especially relevant in the current political climate of the country.

The seventh chapter (pp. 178–204) is a well-summarised narrative of the myopic and corrupt energy and taxation policies in Pakistan which have brought it to the current economic impasse, forcing the country to look for constant support from international lending institutions. The eighth chapter (pp. 205–6) provides a refreshing alternative narrative to the dominant discourse which predicts further instability for Pakistan (and the region) in the aftermath of the US withdrawal. It highlights that the US withdrawal from Afghanistan will provide breathing space to several political players in Pakistan who can work towards developing a more constructive relationship between Pakistan and the United States.

The ninth chapter offers important insights on Pakistani public attitudes towards the United States. However, this article oversimplifies a complex phenomenon which is multilayered due to its reliance on survey data. The tenth chapter expertly unravels the complexities of Pakistan's relationship with Saudi Arabia and China, two states that are regarded as 'brotherly nations' in the popular political discourse espoused in the country. The chapter ends with the possible points of convergence between the regional strategies of Pakistan and its two 'brotherly nations', which will influence future cooperation between them. The final chapter offers an important historical analysis on the role of violent non-state actors in Afghanistan–Pakistan relations.

Most of the writers in this volume argue that the US withdrawal from Afghanistan will create immense security, political and economic challenges for Pakistan which will foster greater regional instability. In this regard, like all texts attempting political and economic analyses in rapidly changing political scenarios, some future assessments

made in the volume can be challenged. For instance, in December 2014, more than 130 school children were killed and hundreds injured when Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan attacked the Army Public School in Peshawar. This tragic event spurred the government into launching and intensifying military operations against non-state actors in the country. Furthermore, even though the state is yet to take action against some of its more loyal proxies, there has been a considerable shift in the previously obscure government, media and public narratives on terrorism in Pakistan. In short, there is a gradual change in Pakistan's policy towards non-state actors on its territory. This shift may spur stronger regional cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan in stamping out terrorism from the region, which may result in regional stability in future.

A compilation of challenges faced by Pakistan is a daunting task. Despite some changes in the domestic and geopolitical context in which this volume was compiled, the book offers a comprehensive overview of the various challenges confronting Pakistan. Overall, the volume offers an excellent starting point for academics and general readers who want to delve into the complexities of the Pakistani state, politics and society.

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