



Mohajir Militancy in Pakistan: Violence and Transformation in the Karachi Conflict

Nichola Khan

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Synthesizing political, anthropological and psychological perspectives, this book addresses the everyday causes and appeal of long-term involvement in extreme political violence in urban Pakistan. Taking Pakistan's ethno nationalist Mohajir party, the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) as a case study, it explores how certain men from the ethnic community of Mohajirs are recruited to the roles and statuses of political killers, and sustain violence as a primary social identity and lifestyle over a period of some years. By drawing on detailed fieldwork in areas involved in the Karachi conflict, the author contributes to understandings of violence, tracing the development of violent aspects of Mohajir nationalism via an exploration of political and cultural contexts of Pakistan's history, and highlighting the repetitive homology of the conflict with the earlier violence of Partition. Through a local comparison of ethnic and religious militancy she also updates the current situation of social and cultural change in Karachi, which is dominantly framed in terms of Islamist radicalization and modernization. In her examination, governance and civil society issues are integrated with the political and psychological dimensions of mobilization processes and violence at micro-, meso- and macro- levels. This book injects a critical and innovative voice into the ongoing debates about the nature and meaning of radicalization and violence, as well as the specific implications it has for similar, contemporary conflicts in Pakistan and the developing world.

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