

Hastings Donnan and Pnina Werbner (eds). *Economy and Culture in Pakistan: Migrants and Cities in a Muslim Society*. London : Macmillan. 1991. 268 pp.

Modern economic factors and forces are rapidly transforming the world into a single society and economy in which the migration of people at the national and international levels plays an important role. Pakistan, as a modern nation, has characteristically been deeply influenced by such migrations, both national and international. The first great exodus occurred in 1947 when over eight million Indian Muslims migrated from different parts of India to Pakistan.

Thus, from the very beginning mass population movements and migrations have been woven into Pakistan's social fabric through its history, culture and religion. These migrations have greatly influenced the form and substance of the national economy, the contours of the political system, patterns of urbanisation and the physiognomy of the overall culture and history of the country. The recent political divide of Sindh on rural/Sindhi, and urban/non-Sindhi, ethnic and linguistic lines is the direct result of these earlier settlements of these migrants in the urban areas of Sindh.

The book under review is a selection of eleven papers contributed by some Pakistani and foreign scholars on the problems of urbanisation in Karachi, the impact of migration on the Pakistani economy, status of women and modes of marriage, ethnicity, religion, nationhood, formation of new social classes and role of *ulama* (religious scholars) and *pirs* (chiefs of mystic of *sufi* orders) in politics and several other related issues. As the book reveals, the focus of anthropological research in Pakistan has now shifted from rural to urban centres; however, the book is not just a study of cities and migrants, it also analyses in detail some broader social forces moulding present Pakistani society.

Pakistani society is undergoing a massive change, socially, economically and religiously, from the traditional-rural-tribal formation to an urban structure. In this transitional phase, institutions, classes, groups and individuals are under stress, as they are changing, acquiring new values and structures and discarding the old ones. The major question which all the eleven papers pose is: how has Pakistan changed?

The first chapter, 'Introduction' by the editors describes the progress of anthropological research in Pakistan, in particular, in the tribal areas and in the Punjab. The chapter also introduces the remaining ten chapters of the book and relates their themes to the broader anthropological issues in Pakistan.

The second chapter, "Family and Low-income Housing in Karachi", by First Selier, examines the housing problems in the Orangi Township located in the north-west of Karachi. Orangi's residents are almost all refugees, (*muhajirs*). The chapter concludes that "social needs affect economic strategies and in the long run, they

also affect the value of properties and whole neighbourhoods, as consolidation tendencies encourage the establishment of permanent settlements” (p. 58). Economic factors, like prices, incomes and employment, says the author, do not necessarily affect the consolidation process. In Karachi, vast refugee ‘family’ migrations have determined the general trend towards consolidation in the city. According to the author, Karachi’s spatial development and urban planning have been determined mainly by its status as a city of refugees.

The third chapter is by Jan Van der Linden on “Security and Value: Squatter Dwellings in Karachi”. More than two million of Karachi’s eight million people live in *katchi abadis* or squatter settlements. The author discusses the nature and degree of security of tenure and their value in these *katchi abadis* and *goths* (villages). The author conducted a small sample survey of 25 migrant squatters and 25 dwellers of *goths* of different ethnic groups. Although the research was limited in scope and the sample was too small, yet the author derived the important conclusion that, for migrant squatters their house is much more than a mere shelter. In spite of its being illegal with an insecure tenure, the house is a source of socio-economic security to the squatter and his family.

In the fourth chapter: “The impact of Migration on Pakistan’s Economy and Society”, Omar Noman cogently explains the effects of migration (to the Middle East) on the distribution of income, class formation, political opposition, impact of remittances on patterns of consumption and production, on labour markets and on the balance of payments. He also discusses the local religious influence on the Pakistani migrants in the Middle Eastern societies and the problems the returning migrants face in Pakistan.

Michael D. Fischer in the fifth chapter: “Marriage and Power: Tradition and Transition in an Urban Punjabi Community”, discusses the development of social hierarchy in Green Town, an urban community in Lahore. This article throws light on the nature of social organisation in urban Punjab. *Zat* (caste) and *Biradari* (tribe) are important categories in towns where socially, and geographically mobile strangers create new viable relations with one another based on a new social order for honour, status and prestige and preferring marriages within *Zat* and *biradari*.

Hamza Alavi in “Pakistani Women in a Changing Society”, (Chapter 6), analyses the status of women in Pakistan and their struggle against various types of discriminatory laws against them, particularly after the Islamisation process initiated by the late General Zia-ul Haq which reduced a woman’s worth by half that of a man. Hamza Alavi rightly observes that eleven years of the so-called policy of ‘Islamisation’ (1977–88) has produced a culture of intolerance against women.

Wenonah Lyon, in the seventh chapter “Competing Doctors, Unequal Patients: Stratified Medicines in Lahore”, discusses ‘pluralistic medical models’ in Lahore’s Green Town. In this stratified system of medicines, the author tells us, a

small number of wealthy patients visit a small number of foreign-trained physicians; the larger middle class use the large number of qualified MBBS doctors. The great mass of patients utilise the services of the largest numbers of allopathic practitioners, both qualified and quacks. The highly specialised elite doctors give treatments to the rich elites, and the large poor masses use the services of common doctors. The author concludes that "the full range of technology and the social organisation of medicine have not been introduced in Lahore", "Allopathic medicine has adapted to South Asia, rather than being adopted by it" (p. 161).

The eighth chapter: "Nationhood and the Nationalities in Pakistan", another article by Hamza Alavi, traces the origin and development of the question of nationalities within the larger concept of Pakistani nationhood. His exposition of the nationalist and ethnic problems in Sindh is somewhat biased against those who take the Muhajir Qawmi Movement (MQM) to be a fascist ethnic organisation which was created by the late General Zia-ul Haq in order to divide and rule, and to weaken the Pakistan Peoples Party in Sindh. Alavi's criticism of Rasool Bakhsh Palejo, a highly respected Sindhi scholar and politician, is uncalled for. Alavi calls him an 'ultra-chauvinist' (p. 186). Palejo is a progressive intellectual who has been fighting for the Sindhi *haris* and urban workers. He has spent many years in jail for his independent views and policies. He commands respect for his honesty and integrity.

Pnina Werbner in the ninth chapter ("Factionalism and Violence in British Pakistani Communal Politics") recounts how factions emerge among the Pakistani emigrants in Manchester (U.K.) and how they become violent on issues of religion, politics and group interests. The author describes three areas of communal politics: religious rivalries, politics of the Pakistani Community Centre, and the Race Subcommittee formed by the local City Council. The author says that factions among the Pakistanis are, in general, pragmatic and non-ideological since factional alliances cut across class interests. The author concludes that "the real historical process would seem to be one of increasing *religious* domination". And that "the ideological divisions within South Asia have been reproduced in Britain, and the true leaders of this ideological movement are the religious officials" (p. 212). Local politics in Manchester thus becomes inseparable from religious politics.

The tenth chapter "Ulema and Pir in the Politics of Pakistan" by Sairur Rahman Sherani, examines the role of '*ulama*' and *pirs* in the politics of Pakistan since 1947. The author thinks that the *pirs*, particularly the *sajjada nashins* (owners of shrines, tombs) have exercised more power and prestige in Pakistan because almost every government in Pakistan sought their support since these *sajjada nashin pirs* are also great landlords who wield immense economic and political power in the villages where 70 percent of the population of Pakistan lives. The author concludes that, paradoxically more education, modernisation and a higher literacy rate have increased the influence of *pirs* because governments and ruling

parties tend to manipulate superstitious beliefs in *piri-muridi* and power of *pirs* to their own advantage. Every Pakistani political party has a large number of *pirs* and *ulama* in its fold.

The last chapter: "Migration, Death and Martyrdom in Rural Pakistan" by Akbar S. Ahmed, is a sociological analysis of the changing social and economic conditions in Pakistan from rural to industrial structures, which are creating new emotional and psychological changes in the people. This chapter is a case study of a *Shia* family which underwent such a religio-psychological transformation. The author discusses important issues about concepts of death, sacrifice and martyrdom. The study explains how migration and exposure to new social and economic stresses change a family's religious ideas and perceptions of life.

In 1983, thirty-eight persons of *Shia* faith, from Chakwal Tehsil in Punjab, men, women and children, plunged into the Arabian Sea near Karachi on their way to Basra in Iraq; the leader of the group, Sayyed Wilayat Hussain Shah, believed that a path would miraculously open in the sea which could take them to Basra, from where they would go to Karbala. Half the people were drowned and those who survived were hospitalised for exhaustion and trauma.

According to Akbar S. Ahmed, such religious-psychological changes in people can be explained due to the sudden social changes and migrations occurring in Pakistan with which these people cannot cope. He says that under social upheavals and abrupt economic changes, some migrants seek to recreate "a pure and absolute world view". In such behaviour there is appeal to kinsmen and to kinship loyalties, just as there are appeals to a "revitalised and purified religion" (p. 265). "Migrants are inevitably caught up in the course of their migratory careers in broader cultural movements" (p. 265), so concludes the author.

All the eleven chapters thus discuss the present Pakistani society from various angles, perspectives, issues and problems which constitutes an important contribution to our knowledge. The book will be useful to anthropologists, sociologists, demographers, development economists, historians and town planners.

The book is elegantly printed, but a few typographical mistakes mar the neat get-up. The word *tablighi* is misspelt as *tabliqui* on p. 195, and this error is again repeated on p. 218.

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