

people in Afghanistan? Do forms of advocacy and political campaigning qualify as an alternative form of scientific knowledge? Lastly, the analysis is impaired by the non-systematic character of its analysis, which is most tangible in its evidence-jumping between different years (e.g. from 2009 to 2012/2013), while scarcely regarding the new political situation since 2014.

Despite these flaws, this work and the decolonial interventions it suggests should be taken seriously: engagement through anti-hegemonic, “modest” dialogue with Afghans at the grassroots. One might share the decoloniality approach or not, but on a practical level the analysis shows very clearly that justice is a precondition for reconciliation and peace in Afghanistan. The reader immediately understands why peace negotiations as currently practiced, engaging with war criminals and Islamist groups without any legal retribution, will not generate peace.

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NICHOLA KHAN (ed.), *Cityscapes of Violence in Karachi. Publics and Counterpublics*. London: Hurst, 2017. 224 pages, £25.00. ISBN 978-1-84904-726-5

Karachi, the largest city of a country called “the most dangerous place on earth” (p. 164) is a violent place, indeed. Whether it really is one of the least safe cities of the world, as ranked in the Safe City Index, is a matter of criteria and quality of data. The editor of *Cityscapes of Violence in Karachi*, Nichola Khan, a social anthropologist and principal lecturer in the School of Applied Social Science at the University of Brighton, describes her aim as a “wish to formalise conversations that occur between academics, journalists, writers and activists in Karachi, but which rarely populate the same pages” (p. ix).

The focus of the book is on politically motivated organised violence. Karachi was a Balochi fishing village when the East India Company invaded Sindh on the way to Kandahar during the First Afghan War. It became a Sindhi town and India’s second harbour on the Arabian Sea. At partition, Hindus and Sikhs, more than half of the population, migrated to India and were replaced by a much larger number of Mohajirs, i.e. Muslims from Northern, Central and Western India. The capital of the new country grew rapidly and became the centre of commerce, industry and trade. When the army took over in 1958, they moved the capital to Islamabad, in the far North of the “Western wing”, i.e. West Pakistan. The “One Unit” of West Pakistan was dissolved in 1970 and the West Pakistan provinces were re-established. Unlike Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashtuns and Balochis, the Urdu-speaking Mohajirs had no province of their

own. When Sindhi was made the official language there, violent riots followed. The Mohajirs had left their homes in order to build up the “Land of the Pure”. When their major asset, the national language, was devalued, they felt set back.

When Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was thrown out of office (and killed) by the army, opposition parties rallied behind the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD). Bhutto’s Pakistan Peoples Party, however, never joined the MRD whole-heartedly. The Mohajir Qaumi Movement – later renamed the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) – emerged as the most active opposition party. In 1987 two bombs exploded at the Bohri Bazaar, killing 200 people in the worst terrorist attack the country had ever known – an event not mentioned in this book. This was the beginning of the urban violence which has since produced more than a thousand casualties, according to South Asian Terrorist Portal.

“People around You” is the opening contribution, by Asif Farrouki, which locates Karachi in the poetry of Azra Abbas. Poems are reprinted and speak for themselves, such as “Eye Witness” (pp. 29-30, translated by Asif Farrouki): “A man / shot dead // In front of / your eyes, // Then what? // [...] And later // When your wifesistermother // Is serving you dinner, // You tell her / you have something // Eye-witnessed / hot and fresh // For tonight’s dinner.”

Five contributions provide a social sciences perspective, often including ethnographic fieldwork. In her contribution “1994: Political Madness, Ethics and Story-making in Liaquat District in Karachi” the editor lays out the genesis of political violence in Karachi, reflecting on her fieldwork. The “divine migration” from India was followed by the pursuit of Mohajir rights. What is “really feared is the dissolution of a unity of identity, which is bound to occur with the disappearance of an enemy [...] the real madness in political violence is the sense of safety it ensures” (p. 57).

Zia Ur Rehman asks, “Karachi. A Pashtun City?” People from the Pashtu-speaking areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (formerly North-West Frontier Province) and Balochistan have been joined by refugees from Afghanistan. They already outnumber the Mohajir population in Karachi. Already now Karachi is the largest Pashtun town in the world. A turf war over territory, people, trades and neighbourhoods has been violent for decades; it literally exploded when a Mohajir girl was run over by a bus driven by a member of the Pashtun community. Needless to say, such rivalries were exploited by the military government of the day. Today the Pashtuns are blamed for their Taliban links.

Laurent Gayur, well known for his book *Karachi. Ordered Disorder and the Struggle for the City* (2014) introduces in “The Sunday Fighter. Doubts, Fears, and Little Secrets of an Intermittent Community” a part-time “self-restrained” fighter (p. 88), whose “attempt at upward social mobility through party politics remains frustrated” (ibid.).

Nida Kirmani explores life in a “no-go area”: The area along the river Lyari is one of the oldest and most densely populated parts of Karachi and home to more than a million people, characterised by a “history of marginalisation and resistance” (p. 106), a “criminalisation of politics” (p. 109), a siege mentality and gangs which count members by the thousands.

Oskar Verkaaik deals with the MQM, the Dawat-I-Islam and Mohajir religiosity. With the usurpation of power by the military under General Zia ul Haq, the Islamic Republic became “Islamised” as never before. Islamic institutions gained state patronage, especially the *madrassas*. Members of the Dawat-i-Islami were instructed to encourage their fellow Muslims towards greater piety, even as their version of Islam included “several mystical and magical practices and beliefs” (pp. 122–123). Over the years this developed into an “ethnicisation of popular religion” (p. 128) among the average Mohajirs, an aspect also noticed by the MQM.

The next four contributions are the most touching: Nadeem F. Paracha reflects on the prohibition of alcohol and on political protest. It is an irony of history that Z.A. Bhutto started as a liberal (kind of), openly defending his drinking, but was ousted by the military shortly after he had banned alcohol in a last attempt to save his government. Only a few years later, heroin addicts could be counted by the millions. “The Cost of Free Speech. The Media in the Battlefield of Karachi” by Razeshta Sehra opens with the disturbing news that, of the more than 55,000 Pakistanis killed in terror attacks over last ten years, 70 were journalists. In Karachi the MQM burned down the city’s newspaper offices (p. 157); meanwhile, the press reported on the existence of “MQM torture cells” (p. 158). The ruling military reciprocated in a similar way. She ends quoting Faiz Ahmed Faiz: “Speak, your lips are yet free / Speak, for your tongue is still your own” (p. 171, translated by Yasmin Hosain).

Arif Hasan describes in his chapter the long journey of Karachi from a cosmopolitan colonial port, to the enrichment of the city by “the Mohajir intelligentsia, which had strong left-wing roots, and [...] by the civil service [...] in the style of an old and well-established decadent colonial tradition”, on to the “Islamisation” under Zia. Since then, conflict has taken a new turn, fuelled by the transformation of Karachi society as the lower middle class seeks to raise its standard of living and social status. “Four ‘Ordinary’ Deaths” by Kausar S. Khan is a “tribute to four Karachiites, two women and two men, who died brutal deaths”. Especially frightening is the tendency of militants to target healthcare providers.

Two afterwords by Farzana Shaikh and Kamran Asadar Ali, a selected bibliography and an index conclude the book. In addition to a foreword that introduces the project and the contributions, there is a preface that seems to have been written at the last minute without checking any details (e.g. Ayub Khan ruled until 1969, not 1965; Zia ul Haq took over in 1977, not 1979;

Benazir Bhutto was famously killed in Rawalpindi and not in Karachi). Otherwise this publication is an excellent account and analysis of violence in the megacity Karachi, thought-provoking and recommended reading for all trying to understand violence in a large Asian city.

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MARKUS KECK, *Navigating Real Markets. The Economic Resilience of Food Wholesale Traders in Dhaka, Bangladesh*. (Megacities and Global Change, 19). Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2016. 240 pages, €49.00. ISBN 978-3-515-11379-3

The book and PhD thesis *Navigating Real Markets* by Markus Keck is a highly insightful study of Dhaka's food system with a special focus on wholesale traders. The work is based on a modern understanding of markets and institutions and on a sophisticated conceptual framework for studying the resilience of food systems from a spatial perspective. Keck aims at moving beyond the view of megacities as places of human misery and hardship. By focusing on the actors within Dhaka's food system, he wants to understand nothing less than what is at the heart of the robustness and resilience of this megaurban food system against the backdrop of the adverse impact of the institutional environment in which it is embedded.

The book offers three major contributions to the existing literature. First, it adds valuable evidence to a modern geography of food systems from the perspective of a megacity in the Global South. The analysis puts people and the dialectics of structure and agency at the foreground. Second, it advances the sociology of markets by recalling institutional embeddedness in the original sense of Polanyi and by expanding the concept through the dimensions of place and informality. Third, the resilience framework is applied to the economic sphere of markets and the resilience of market actors. The limited resilience of wholesalers in Dhaka is well connected to institutional failures.

The book is organised into seven chapters. The introduction is followed by a conceptual chapter that discusses and integrates the theoretical foundation for the empirical analysis. The debates are combined in a conceptual framework for a sociological approach to studying the geography of markets. The third chapter introduces the methodology of the remaining chapters. The analysis is based on careful between-method triangulation that combines quantitative and qualitative methods. The complementary use of a wide variety of methods is highly appropriate for the topic. The methods applied com-