

culcated in society before jihad could be waged (again). LeT emphasised that it would never fight the Pakistani state and embarked on alternative forms of activism such as spearheading protests against “anti-Islamic” messages emerging from the West or devoting itself to extensive welfare programmes for the wider Pakistani society. In this challenging climate, LeT magazines for women shifted the responsibility for keeping the flame of jihad burning to the group’s female members.

While Yasmeen manages to tell a persuasive story, the book’s readability is impacted by some structural issues. For long stretches, the author seems merely to relay the arguments she finds in her sources without embedding these into the context of wider Islamic thought or additional scholarship. This issue is particularly evident in her extensive discussion of a new “theory of jihad” post-9/11, which she ascribes to Hafez Saeed, one of the main ideologues of LeT. Yasmeen perceives echoes of the thought of Carl von Clausewitz and Sun Tzu in Saeed’s writings, without, however, being able to substantiate these claims (pp. 129–135). More troubling perhaps is the lack of engagement with recent literature on the conceptualisation of Pakistan as an Islamic state, such as the monographs by Naveeda Khan, Faisal Devji or Venkat Dhulipala, contributions on JuD such as Humeira Iqtidar’s book *Secularizing Islamists?*, or Andreas Rieck’s study of Shi’i Islam in Pakistan. Nevertheless, Yasmeen has done a great service to the field. She has skilfully engaged with LeT publications that have remained relatively inaccessible to many scholars and has deftly proven that jihadi writings need to be explored on their own terms. Her attention paid to female activists, in particular, is both innovative and highly fascinating. *Jihad and Dawah* is thus a trailblazing work in demonstrating the gendered dimensions of jihad in South Asia and beyond.

*Simon Wolfgang Fuchs*

STEPHANIE STOCKER, *Caste and Equality. Friendship Patterns among Young Academics in Urban India*. Bielefeld: transcript, 2017. 300 pages, €39.99. ISBN 978-3-8376-3885-1

The primary theme of this book is described in the subtitle, whereas the tension between the caste hierarchy and equality is dealt with in a more implicit manner. The notoriously difficult term “caste” is introduced all too cursorily, yet strangely enough, the word *Harijan*, unusable today, is used for the Dalits, and the error – often found in the literature – is repeated here, that the Indian government has abolished the caste system (p. 63), whereas only the practices of untouchability have been made illegal. Nevertheless, in her dissertation (in

Cultural Anthropology at the University of Tübingen) the author pursues the laudable approach of investigating practices that are connected with everyday life in a highly structured society and have the potential to change it. The notion of “modernization” alluded to here is critically examined in the first chapter, which also explains the choice of a university in Chennai (Madras), Tamil Nadu, as the location of the study.

The educational system opens new spaces for actors, in which they can form friendships characterised by greater equality, even when the participants come from unequal backgrounds (see also the comparative study by Barbara Riedel, *Orient und Okzident in Calicut. Muslimische Studenten und Studentinnen in Kerala, Südindien, im Spannungsfeld zwischen lokaler Verwurzelung und globalen Verflechtungen*. Heidelberg: Draupadi Verlag, 2014).

The author rightly points out that in anthropology, it is most often “kinship” that is investigated, even though “friendship” can be equally important. The meaning of friendship is naturally time- and culture-dependent and depends on the concrete relationships or on the particular context, such as the educational system or work. This latter point was recently thematised by Christian Strümpell (“*Wir arbeiten zusammen, wir essen zusammen*”. *Konvivialität und soziale Peripherie in einer indischen Werksiedlung*. Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2006), whose research Stocker explicitly cites, as it introduced the term conviviality (as opposed to commensality). Louis Dumont had argued that in India the hierarchical order was primary, while relations of equal rank were secondary. Stocker therefore poses the question of how far the forms of egalitarian interaction, lived in the special context of educational institutions, extend in their effects. She describes friendship relations on campus and in the domestic environment (Chapters 3 and 4).

The next four chapters illuminate the effects of these relations on that most sensitive topic in India, marriage. Desires for a partner are aligned with new ideas but remain within the established framework of the status system. Friends can play a role here up to a certain point, and they are valued guests, but in the end, the barriers remain. They help to organise the preparations for a wedding, but can scarcely participate in ritual activities. Despite a certain elasticity in implementation, adapted to the respective situation, the system of social rank thus remains largely intact, even if education is now an important aspect within it. The behaviour of the actors is oriented towards the context, which in fact requires a particular competence (p. 270). This can explain why some norms can be circumvented while others continue to have an effect. It would be interesting to investigate when and why people recognise this as an inconsistency. When does a greater social change find more open support?

Similarly, in a few sentences at the end of the book the author names several themes for further research. To this list could be added the need for a more precise distinction between kinship or caste ties (normative), friendship (emo-

tional) and contacts (instrumental), as mentioned in the work of Kathinka Frøystad (*Blended Boundaries. Caste, Class, and Shifting Faces of "Hindu-ness" in a North Indian Village*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 129ff.). The work of Minna Saavala (*Middle-Class Moralities. Everyday Struggle over Belonging and Prestige in India*. Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 2010, pp. 74 ff.) could also contribute here. Stocker herself writes: "As part of a 'modern' sphere, 'university friends' assume an esteemed status. However, they exhibit a functional character, in contrast to emotional ties experienced between 'village friends'" (p. 121).

As we all know only all too well from our own societies, social inequality can persist despite legal equality. To the great credit of this book, it shows that – and how – status differences can persist and reproduce, even in the face of egalitarian relationships.

*Gernot Saalman*

B. D. CHATTOPADHYAYA, *The Concept of Bharatavarsha and Other Essays*. Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2017. 238 pages, Rs 795. ISBN 978-8-17824-516-4

Prof. B. D. Chattopadhyaya's new anthology is a significant and essential addition to his previous publications. In his first anthology – his magnum opus from 1994, *The Making of Medieval India* – and in his successive studies he validated the existence and identity of the Early Middle Ages as a distinctly post-classical period of Indian history. In order to verify its actuality it was not enough for him to contradict the Indian History Congress's tripartite periodisation of Indian history into Classical, Muslim and Modern Indian History (and its predecessor of colonial historiography – Hindu, Muslim and British History). He had primarily to detect political, social and cultural processes in the time of the post-Gupta and pre-Delhi Sultanate that verified "certain fundamental movements within the regional and local levels, and not in terms of the crisis of a pre-existent, pan-Indian social order" (1994: 17). In other words, he emphasised the "positive" elements that finally emerged in regional state formation and regional cultures, the landmarks of Early Medieval India, without, however, completely neglecting conflicts and antithetical ideas.

In view of more recent political developments Chattopadhyaya focuses in his new anthology, *The Concept of Bharatavarsha and Other Essays*, on contradictory aspects of socio-political and cultural developments and on controversial concepts of Hindu nationalist historiography. He has focused his critical discourse on two essential Hindu-nationalist topoi – the imagined age-old