

Iob, Elisabetta: *Refugees and the Politics of the Everyday State in Pakistan. Resettlement in Punjab, 1947–1962*. Abingdon: Routledge 2017. ISBN: 978-0-415-73866-8; XVII, 174 S.

Rezensiert von: Deepra Dandekar, Center for the History of Emotions, Max-Planck-Institut für Bildungsforschung

Elisabetta Iob's *Refugees and the Politics of the Everyday State in Pakistan* is a remarkable and poignant academic narrative that recounts the resettlement and rehabilitation of post-Partition refugees in Punjab, Pakistan after 1947. The book divided into five chapters, in addition to a separate introduction and conclusion is an intimate account of how Punjabi Partition refugees emotionally negotiated citizenship, belonging, home, political allegiance and new kinship networks in Pakistan, based on a combination of sources. While Iob notes limitations within available bureaucratic records in Pakistan, she builds a coherent narrative about post-Partition Punjabi refugees by arranging available official records, media reports and personal narratives (oral history) between 1947 and 1962, detailing how refugee emotions impacted their integration. At the same time, remaining self-reflexive about the limitations inherent in her research methodology, Iob presents her readers with the reality of everyday refugee emotions that achieved political mobilization in modern Pakistan. The book uncovers meaning-making processes associated with refugee resettlement in Pakistan and constitutes a linear trajectory of post-Partition Punjabi history that makes for lucid, interesting and comprehensive reading.

The Introduction already outlines the primary theme of the book that repudiates Pakistan's government-led narrative about Punjabi refugees integrating better because of their shared ethnic background with their host society. Iob challenges statist opinions that present Pakistan as a failed or failing state and instead claims that it was a negotiated state, as she explores the disruptive experiences of many middle and upper-middle class refugees in contrast to what was projected in government accounts as well-planned resettlement. The book describes how refugees

negotiated the state to develop their own political identity and emotional belonging to nation and governance through everyday interaction. This everyday interaction between refugees, government institutions and larger political ideas of statehood in Pakistan, carved out temporal room for individual creativity and resistance to revolutionary state-building processes. Iob describes Partition and the nascent nationalism of India and Pakistan as liminal processes heralded by British withdrawal that revealed multi-dimensional institutions complicated by the everyday and local perception of power, as citizens sought institutional participation, refashioning political authority and hierarchy. The book ends poignantly, exploring the stigma refugees underwent in the political life of Punjabi Pakistan, their resettled homes a tapestry of inhabited places that transformed the balance of power. This everyday nature of power in turn redefined kin-group networks or *biraderi* that was invested in political patronage as a form of governance, wherein influential persons turned into political institutions. Iob argues that these transformations embodied 'modernity' in Pakistan, as traditional hierarchies and authority underwent rupture and were reframed within the discourse of Punjab's urbanization.

In the first chapter (*Memories, swords, blood and freedom: when independence came to India and Pakistan*) Iob frames Partition migration within its historical context, chronicling debates surrounding the birth of Pakistan, communal violence and the initial flow of refugees. Through an exploration of individual experiences of communalism, Iob describes how the indeterminateness of political ideas in early 1947 re-negotiated religious and civic identities that subsequently dictated legal and political frameworks of resettlement. The second chapter (*Camps, homes, towns and villages*) explores how Punjabi refugees inscribed Pakistani belonging through resettlement and re-negotiated domesticity, family identity and social capital. Iob explores how resettlement affected refugee emotions and integration, even as government allotments disrupted existing kin-groups. While refugee families re-elaborated kinship and patronage in ways

that facilitated agency, the discontent with resettlement molded everyday political and institutional identity in Pakistan. Establishing socially networked homes was more important than houses for refugees and the search for home epitomized their deep-seated need to reestablish intimacy and authority, as they struggled to mitigate the alienation resulting from evacuee property allotments. Homes were therefore, also emotional and physical space for contesting government-led resettlement plans. These newly gained, albeit disrupted homes and relationships intertwined death and life, public and private as government allotments ripped family and community ties apart. Increasing individual isolation and the mass grief of refugees ultimately produced political solidarity among them initiating them to build their own homes that gradually drew attention from powerful patrons. A whole social imaginary of home and relationships was reshaped as mutual normative expectations were interwoven with spatial and narrative dimensions, even as the consistent feeling of an invaded domestic space contrasted with erstwhile relationships of authority, status, belonging, control and identity that imbued the memory of domestic space with notions of home.

Chapter three (*Patronage, bureaucratic unruliness and the resettling of Partition refugees in everyday Pakistani Punjab*) foregrounds the weakness in Pakistani Punjab's new bureaucracy as it asserted authority over local society. Iob explains how this new government assertion reframed politics as a form of patronage that became central to institution-building within Pakistan's trust-based and personalized society. This chapter details how citizens accepted patronage as a social and morally sustainable tool for institution-building in post-Partition Pakistan, which was further replicated at the grassroots to allow even marginal men to participate within patronage networks. Chapter four (*Punjab Assembly, party seats, electoral boxes*) describes how this new political environment of patronage renewed old expectations and transformed them into new demands that redefined kinship and the everyday struggle towards financial stability. An emergent understanding of mutual trust

as indissoluble led to the growth of everyday paternalism tinged with kinship relationships. Politicians interacted with their voters within an intricate framework of emotional situations that mirrored the father-son bond. The fifth chapter (*Constituent Assembly and neighbors*) explores how institutional politics in Pakistan became characterized by close emotional attachments with charismatic figures, censorship and press partisanship. As state authorities remained unable to rehabilitate millions of refugees, government provisions and the establishment of myriad committees and sub-committees constituted local politics in Western Punjab, infused by attachment to charismatic leaders heading these. As refugees themselves became politically mobilized participants of the resettlement process, politics in Punjabi-Pakistani politics became typified by the limitation of free speech and adherence to emergent local authority.

Refugees and the Politics of the Everyday State in Pakistan is an intimately written book. Iob presents researchers of Partition with a new historical framework that analyzes refugee integration as impacted upon by emotions. And this contribution makes Iob's research relevant for a larger readership on global migration. Iob explodes statist notions about institutional and bureaucratic refugee-resettlement as she describes how refugee integration took place through everyday negotiations within smaller social networks, local political institutions and newly fashioned kin groups that accepted patronage as a governance system based on personal relationships and trust. While source materials for research on the Partition have hitherto depended heavily on media reports and bureaucratic records, there are few research projects that combine all three sources meaningfully, initiating new academic perspectives. Iob's research is therefore unique, since her analysis binds various sources together, enriching pre-existing data about the Partition and highlighting a new hermeneutical approach to politics and institution-building in Pakistan as personally negotiated processes. While Punjabi refugees were disempowered after arriving in Pakistan, as refugees in almost every system are, Iob's research demonstrates their agency in reformulating local regions and its

urban development, as refugees redefined relationships and politics in Pakistan on their own terms. Reading the book is very enjoyable and Iob's academic analysis is astute. The book makes for an excellent textbook for graduate and postgraduate levels.

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