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**Farhan Hanif Siddiqi, The Politics of Ethnicity in Pakistan: The Balouch, Sindhi and Mohajir ethnic movements. Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2012.**

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**Farhan Hanif Siddiqi, *The Politics of Ethnicity in Pakistan: The Balouch, Sindhi and Mohajir ethnic movements*. Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2012.**

An *ethnic group* is a social group of people who identify with each other based on a common ancestral, cultural, social, or national experience. Membership within an ethnic group tends to be associated with a shared cultural heritage, ancestry, history, homeland, language, dialect or ideology, and with symbolic systems such as religion, mythology and ritual, cuisine, and style of dress. The term *ethnic group* was first recorded in 1935 and entered into the Oxford English Dictionary in 1972.<sup>1</sup>

Strictly speaking, the inclusion of “physical appearance” here could possibly be considered less appropriate than the other markers, as the implication that peoples of a single ethnicity “look alike” borders on the implied existence of a “racial” component to ethnicity.

The major ethnic groups of Pakistan include: Punjabis,<sup>2</sup> Pashtuns, Sindhis, Saraikis, Muhajirs, Balochis, Hindkowans, and Chitralis. There are also smaller ethnic groups such as the Kashmiris, Hindkowans, Kalash, Burusho, Brahui, Khowar, Shina, Balti, and Turwalis, which are mainly found in the northern parts of the country.<sup>3</sup> The majority of Pakistanis belong to various Indo-Aryan-speaking ethnic groups, while the larger minorities belong to various Persian and Dardic language groups. In addition, small groups of language isolates such as Burusho and Dravidian (speakers of which include the Brahui people) can also be found. Punjabi (Shahmukhi), Saraiki, Sindhi, Pashto, Urdu, Balochi, Kashmiri (Koshur) are the general languages spoken within Pakistan. About 98% of languages spoken in Pakistan are Indo-Iranian, a branch of Indo-European family of languages (of which approximately 75% are Indo-Aryan and 20% are pure Iranian). Most languages of Pakistan are written in the Perso-Arabic script, with significant portions of their vocabularies having derived from Persian, Turkish<sup>4</sup> and Arabic.<sup>5</sup>

The book under review is comprised of seven chapters in which the author presents his understanding of the Pakistani state and government’s treatment of non-dominant ethnic groups after the failure of the 1971 military operation in East-Pakistan, intended to squash the uprising that ultimately resulted in the gaining of independence by Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan). The author looks at the ethnic movements that were subject to a military operation after 1971: the Balochs in the 1970s, the Sindhis in the 1980s, and the Mohajirs in the 1990s (pp. 2-5, 8-16, 28-32, 52-62, 75-83). On the basis of available literature on ethnicity and nationalism, the author claims that it is nationalist ideology and political divisions that define ethnic groups and facilitate ethnic movements. He challenges the modernist argument that nationalism is only relevant to modern socio-economic settings and claims that the available

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1 Fearon, J.D & Laitin, D. (2003). ‘Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War’, *American Political Science Review*, 97(1): 75-90.

2 The people of the Pothohar Plateau in Northern Punjab and Western Azad Kashmir (called Pothoharis) were historically distinct from Punjabis because of a difference in language. However, over time, both Punjabi and Pothohari have been largely replaced by the national Urdu language and, consequently, Pothoharis are now seen as Punjabi by the Punjabi community.

3 Pakistan's census does not include the 1.7 million registered Afghan refugees from neighboring Afghanistan, who are mainly found in Khyber Pakhtun Khwa (KPK) and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) areas, with small numbers in the cities of Karachi and Quetta, many of whom were born inside Pakistan in the last 30 years but are counted as citizens of Afghanistan. Most such refugees are ethnic Pakhtuns from southeastern Afghanistan. In addition, in 1995, there were more than 1.6 million Bengalis, 650,000 Afghans, 200,000 Burmese, 2,320 Iranians and Filipinos, and hundreds of Nepalis, Sri Lankans, and Indians reported to be living in Karachi (Saleem, 2011).

4 The language of Urdu was derived by Turkish kings and as such, a greater proportion of its vocabulary is derived from Turkish (over Arabic and Persian).

5 The pronunciation of Arabic words in the languages native to Pakistan follow the Persian pronunciation, not the pronunciation of the varieties of Arabic spoken in Arabia.

evidence from Pakistan makes clear that ethnic movements emanate from not only the politics of the Third World but also, specifically, from three distinct socio-economic realms: tribal (as in the case of the Baloch), rural (as in the case of the Sindh) and urban (as in the case of the Mohajir) (pp. 8-16, 28-32, 52-62, 75-83). This claim is valid, but the author fails to identify the reason behind the emergence of such an ideologically-based ethnicity, namely socio-economic deprivation of particular groups of peoples and unjust distribution of the national resources of Pakistan to these entities.

Nonetheless, the author skillfully uses the writings of prominent academicians and researchers to present the ways in which the Baloch, Sindhi, and Mohair ethnic conflicts in Pakistan took shape in their respective historical contexts and outlines probable future scenarios regarding the relationships between the Pakistan state and government and ethnic groups and movements (pp. 8-16, 28-32, 52-62, 75-83), though he does not clearly mention the objectives or manifestoes of these ethnic groups, some of which desire the further breakup of Pakistan, arguing for provincial autonomy. Chapter 1 of the text gives a brief political history of Pakistan since its independence in 1947, with a division of pre-1971 and post-1971 scenarios. Chapter 2 elucidates the theoretical framework of important works within the literature of nationalism, state, and politics of ethnicity. Chapter 3 lays out an empirical analysis of the Pakistani state, government, and ethnic movements in post-1971 Pakistan. Chapter 4 deals with the province of Baluchistan as a case study of the historical development of Baloch nationalism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Chapter 5 deals with the province of Sindh and Sindhi nationalism, which emerged as a political organization only post-1971. Chapter 6 examines the rise of Mohajir nationalism in the 1970s and discusses its emergence as a major political force in Pakistan in the 1980s. Chapter 7 gives the conclusion of the work.

On academic grounds, Siddiqi's work encompasses three major theoretical concepts as they relate to the context of Pakistan: state, nationalism, and ethnicity. The author's thesis is focused on the pre-1971 and post-1971 scenarios, i.e. the breakup of East-Pakistan and West-Pakistan, now known to world as Bangladesh and Pakistan. The author furthermore assumes that the contemporary trends evident as a result of the Balochi, Sindhi, and Mohajir ethnic movements (especially since 1999) are also reflected in the Pakistan-Punjab relationship, given the power of the Pakistani state (p. 112). This is a valid point. The author also argues that the reasons for the emergence of the Balouch, Sindhi, and Mohajir ethnic movements include: (1) the state of Pakistan precipitating the ire of ethnic groups based on its different treatment of various ethnicities; (2) intra-ethnic conflicts—often facilitated by the state's efforts to divide and weaken the resistance of particular ethnic groups; and (3) nationalism and ethno-nationalist movements, which may arise in myriad socio-economic settings (i.e. and are not particularly tied to conditions of modernization or industrialization). The author additionally claims that it is useful to view the phenomena of ethnic movements and resistance as a particular form of ideology and politics (pp. 112-113). Finally, the author also should have discussed the negative role of inept politicians and bureaucrats who gave way to the armed forces of Pakistan to intervene in the unstable situation of the country's sovereignty or the otherwise.

In conclusion, I believe this work by Farhan H. Siddiqi is a beneficial addition to the political literature of Pakistan and the sub-continent. It discusses an important element of the Pakistani political history by studying the role of ethnicity and its use by the politicians and governments. I recommend this book for the researchers and academicians having keen interest in the sub-continent and especially Pakistan's politics. Since the book generates the need of more in-depth research and analysis of the deep-rooted ethnic affiliations and its strong connection with the economical aspects, I highly recommend this piece of work for the students of political science and history of Pakistan.

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