

research, it validates concerns that many of us have raised in our classrooms, conferences, and gatherings and shows that power imbalances in international aid to education are deep-seated and extensive. As Menashy explains, while the field of international education has made important strides in addressing resource imbalances, we continue to fall short. Partnerships are part of the recipe for improving international aid, but to be effective they must be based on authentic power sharing at every level of decision-making and implementation.

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YOUTH AND THE NATIONAL NARRATIVE: EDUCATION, TERRORISM AND THE SECURITY STATE IN PAKISTAN

by Marie Lall and Tania Saeed

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Since Donald Trump's election in 2016, there has been a resurgence of nationalism and nativism across every continent. From the increasing power of right-wing populist parties in Europe to the rise of authoritarian leaders around the globe, the world's turn toward nationalism begs the question of how countries construct national narratives of citizenship. In *Youth and the National Narrative: Education, Terrorism and the Security State in Pakistan*, Marie Lall and Tania Saeed contend that national narratives are often informed by a country's education institutions, social media platforms, political activism, and the "social contract" the state develops with its citizens. They explore this argument by drawing on youth voices in Pakistan, where over 64 percent of the population is under the age of 30, and offer insight into the ways the young people will contribute to and shape Pakistan's future society through their political participation, or the lack thereof.

In a captivating account, Lall and Saeed weave together more than 1,900 interviews from four large field studies they conducted between 2009 and 2018. The data were gathered through interviews and surveys with Pakistani youth (ages 16–28) to explore young Pakistanis' relationship to the state. The studies collected data from schools across Pakistan that varied in type and location—from public to private, rural to urban, high school to university. Lall and Saeed draw from these empirical data to "explore tensions between ethnicity, sect, and religion" as well as the "overarching youth perspectives" (p. 23). Through youth voice they craft a narrative to illuminate how Pakistani young people perceive and understand the notions of national identity and citizenship. They find that the youth in their study lacked a cohesive notion of citizenship and argue that this is the result of "neither a sense of rights and duties, nor an inclination for political participation" (p. 14). Instead, they posit that citizenship and Pakistani youths' understanding of rights are connected to individuals' ethnic or sectarian identities.

The strength of Lall and Saeed's argument rests in their analysis of the education system, which establishes Pakistani citizenship as defined by Islam. Through a brief recount of Pakistan's history, the third chapter details how government policy has recognized Islam as the best approach to teach the "right values" to Pakistani students. This endorsement, Lall and Saeed demonstrate, has seeped into all aspects of the education system. This is particularly evident in the examination of Pakistani curricula textbooks. Although Pakistan's curriculum claims to prioritize the promotion of peaceful values for unity and cohesion, Lall and Saeed show the implicit biases found in textbooks that sanction discriminatory content toward non-Muslims and highlight the oppression of Muslims at the hands of other faiths, "promoting hostility towards non-Muslims, especially Hindus and a Hindu India, Christians and the British missionaries, and even Jews as the tormentors of Muslims" (p. 102). The authors reinforce these findings by demonstrating Islam's subtle markers in textbooks that begin with traditional Islamic sayings like "In the Name of Allah, the most Gracious and Merciful."

These textbook findings and analyses raise the critical issue of how textbooks are often fraught with discriminatory language and hidden curricula that teach hatred of minority factions. Lall and Saeed add to research that demonstrates that the entanglement of citizenship to any singular identity "precludes other conceptions of group entity" (p. 106). In Pakistan, they suggest, embracing Islam as a central tenet to Pakistani identity excludes and alienates other religious minorities, leaving them vulnerable to threat and attack by violent extremists. By establishing the threat of violence in Pakistan, Lall and Saeed lay the foundation for better understanding the ways in which youth seek and place trust in the Pakistani army, which provides protection, rather than in the government, which fails to deliver basic services and abide by a "social contract" with its citizens.

In situating the research, Lall and Saeed examine the role of the social contract in developing youth citizenship identity in Pakistan. Their exploration of the social contract, combined with youths' view of the army, provides critical contextual framing for this text, which demonstrates the role education has played in creating a national narrative centered on Islam. Following the era of colonialism, many newly independent countries adopted a Western model of a state-citizenship relationship, also known as the social contract model. It is here Lall and Saeed position their work, stating that a traditional social contract model between the citizen and the state is one in which the government provides basic education, health, and other public infrastructure for its citizens. However, from Pakistan's inception, a "parallel system" emerged whereby in the private sector wealthier Pakistani citizens paid for their basic needs, like health care and schooling, while the poor remained the responsibility of the state. These differences in both the provision of social services and their reception grew out of regional and class differences within Pakistan. Thus, from the beginning, Pakistan's social contract with its citizens—the pro-

visions of basic services and infrastructure—has been divided along socioeconomic class lines as well as religious identities. Lall and Saeed demonstrate that the state's growing failure to uphold the social contract has been further tested by the recent rise in violence across the country; terrorism has reigned over civilians with little response or retaliation from the government.

In literature on education in conflict settings, this tale of a state's failure to deliver basic services to its citizens is not new. However, Lall and Saeed's case surprises the reader by revealing that Pakistani citizens have come to view the military as the institution that provides protection in place of the state. Through the rich interview data, they show that the army occupies "a position of reverence for the majority of young Pakistanis in the study" (p. 49) and, more importantly, that most young Pakistanis have very little notion of the social contract, as many express their lack of faith in the state institutions and democracy. In a striking interview with a university focus group, one student shared that the "army is everything here. The link between state and army is so vague. Foreign policy is run by the army . . . [The] army is the only stable institution we have. With bureaucrats there is a bond between them and the army. Come on—in every family one brother is in the army and the other is in the bureaucracy. That is how it works" (p. 49).

The students make clear the ever-present threat of violence and the ways they feel the army is "compelled to intervene politically . . . because the government is not standing" (p. 50). Lall and Saeed use student voice to demonstrate vividly how students are wary of the government because they find little protection and solace coming from the state.

As Lall and Saeed note, their exploration of the relationship between youth and the Pakistani state reveals the complex relationships of the citizen, the state, and the military. Although they build a compelling argument using youth narratives, the interview data raise questions about the authors' methodological decisions. One wonders about their positionality: Where are the researchers in this work, and why did they embark on this study? How did these field studies converge to answer their shared research question? Perhaps the biggest question readers are left with is how the authors account for differences between participants within their data. The interview data are often presented in large segments, drawing on a number of students to frame each point. Lall and Saeed posit that they include a "range of voices" from different school types in the study; however, this range and the lines marking these differences are blurred. The discussion of respondents' "potential differences" is hidden, confined to a page in chapter 3 where the authors discuss how school and class differences can impact youths' views on citizenship and the state. An earlier study by Lall (2012) demonstrates that the type of school in which young people are educated is associated with their views on citizenship and the state, and although the authors acknowledge that school differences affect students' perceptions of the state, this is not reflected in the text. Their presentation of the data did not allow for the exploration of how con-

textual factors (e.g., students' school experiences, class differences, or ethnic and religious identities) informed youths' views on citizenship and the role of the state. Thus, while Lall and Saeed's work can speak to the broader trends across citizenship and Pakistan, greater context is needed for the evaluation of these claims along more specific lines, such as socioeconomic class, ethnicity, or regional identity.

This book is a critical read for all students, scholars, and policy makers who are interested in understanding the relationship between politics, religion, and radicalism in South Asia, as its in-depth analysis synthesizes questions on citizenship and national and religious identity. Although Lall and Saeed provide historical and political background throughout the text, knowledge of the South Asian political context would be helpful. As a doctoral student who studies the role of education in conflict affected settings, I see this as a necessary read for those interested in the important and pressing questions around citizenship and national identity—which will become increasingly important as countries turn inward to face the challenges posed by COVID-19.

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## HOW THE OTHER HALF LEARNS: EQUALITY, EXCELLENCE, AND THE BATTLE OVER SCHOOL CHOICE

by Robert Pondiscio

*New York: Avery, 2019. 384 pp. \$27.00 (hardcover).*

In 1890, Jacob Riis published *How the Other Half Lives*, a collection of photographs that shined a light on the abject poverty of New York City's slums. Poor tenement dwellers living in squalor comprised Riis's "other half." Though it makes no explicit connections to Riis, the title of Robert Pondiscio's new book, *How the Other Half Learns: Equality, Excellence, and the Battle over School Choice*, is an unmistakable reference to it. The focus of Pondiscio's book, however, is not the neglected, low-performing city schools to which society's privileged classes too often turn a blind eye. Instead it is Bronx 1, a well-resourced, high-achieving school in the Success Academy K–12 charter network. Though "no excuses" charter schools attract much attention, Pondiscio's reference suggests that the actual goings-on of classrooms too often remain hidden in our debates about them. *How the Other Half Learns* shines a light on one charter school's inner workings and offers a broader assessment of its network and, in the process, continues the discussion about school choice.

New York City's Success Academy, headed by education iconoclast Eva Moskowitz, continues to be one of the country's most controversial charter net-