



that dominates Harban. Sher Ghazi's carpenter, Qalandar Shah, tells a harrowing tale of growing up as an Ismaili, a group regularly grouped with Shia, who converted to Sunni Islam and fled his home village to find himself as a skilled tradesman. Frembgen narrates his own conversion to Islam carefully because it took place in the company of followers of a Sufi order in Karachi. To his Harban hosts, Sufi worship is tantamount to idol worship and risked undermining his legitimacy as a Muslim (78). Most anthropologists who conduct fieldwork in Pakistan know the delicacy with which one must discuss Islam. Casual comments about the nature of God or religion that would be entirely acceptable in a European context take on potential for offence there. This book provides a number of rich illustrative examples of how careful one must be.

The violence described is casual and normalised. Beating people to the point where they have difficulty walking, accidentally shooting relatives, killing a rival's animals are all ordinary events which colour the background experiences of everyone in this remote valley. The tenacity of blood feuds is stark and poses real challenges to ordinary functions. Hanifullah, a local man, had lived for 10 years in a fortified tower as a consequence of a blood feud when Frembgen met him (94 f.). Although he might have sought an easier life had he fled the valley, he garnered respect and prestige for his willingness to stay put. Sadly, he was chopped to death by rivals two years after Frembgen met and interviewed him. He had negotiated a truce to the blood feud, but this was apparently not accepted by all.

Frembgen ends his account with a harrowing adventure of a gun battle and having to flee with bullets flying past his head. A local woman had been killed in the cross fire of an earlier gun battle. Her son had been shot and rushed off to the nearest doctor. His friends explained their concerns about being drawn into a blood feud as a consequence. They accepted the fate of those who can no longer exit the safety of their houses and fortified towers without fear of violent death (96–102). Frembgen's host, Sher Ghazi, laments the fact that Tablighi, the Deoband Islamic organisation that preaches adherence to more orthodox, Islamic doctrine, has had next to no impact on what he sees as the damaging un-Islamic relations of blood feud.

The book raises a host of questions, but refrains from providing comprehensive answers. Its goal is to share the individual experiences of fieldwork and leave readers the space to interpret and assign meaning appropriately. Frembgen intentionally set out to construct a richer, more nuanced representation of Kohistan and the misunderstood "Tribal Other" that has appeared in countless adventure stories from the 19th century onwards. He tries to challenge the trope of the ferocious martial Pakhtuns through a relatively balanced account of men who laugh, joke, and tell stories. These men are not simply killing machines who enter into blood feuds with the mindless zeal of Bollywood (or even Hollywood) baddies. The men who are drawn into the blood feud as a result of the unintended killing of the local woman, Frembgen tells us, are visibly frightened. This is not the world they would choose if they had the power to change things. It is the

world in which they live and they respond as any of us would in such circumstances.

For those of us who have worked with groups who espouse the virtue of blood feuds and honour and protecting one's lineage and dependents, the diversity and contradictions of such a representation are easy to see. I am persuaded that the Kohistani tribals befriended by Frembgen are complex characters who cannot be reduced to violent social relations. Sadly, I worry that this may not be the case with those who have no experience of rhetorically violent societies or have had no anthropological training. This is a book I will happily include on my reading lists in the future, but it will come with an advisory warning. I will draw my students' attention to the mundane descriptions of daily life and urge them not to allow the sexy blood feuds and gun battles to dominate their understanding of who these men are. It is *part* of who they are, but it is far from *all* of who they are. I believe this is the message that Jürgen Wasim Frembgen wants us to get from his brave, personal account, and I for one, am very pleased that he has taken the time to try and deliver it.

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**Geissler, P. Wenzel** (ed.): *Para-States and Medical Science. Making African Global Health*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2015. 369 pp. ISBN 978-0-8223-5749-0. Price: £ 19.99

P. Wenzel Geissler has brought together a theoretically engaging and empirically rich collection of essays in the volume "Para-States and Medical Science. Making African Global Health." The eleven chapters explore various aspects of medicine and health care in Africa while engaging with the novel concept of the "para-state," or "the ways in which the state albeit changed or in unexpected ways, continues to work as structure, people, imaginary, laws, standards, and so on" (1). The concept of the "para-state" is welcomed in the humanities and social sciences because it "helps us to avoid alternative descriptors such as *post-* or *anti-* ... which draw attention to important features but miss the peculiar sense of things changing without losing their form" (1). As Geissler points out in the introductory chapter, "para" enables us to think about the state in a different and unique way and allows us to account for the changing nature of the state, without losing sight of its role in society and people's everyday lives. "Para" encourages us to consider the state as being dynamic rather than static and fixed and in relationship with different publics, private entities, and other states. This collection brings a refreshing perspective not just to studying medicine and health in Africa, but also to studying the state as it counteracts much of the scholarship from across disciplines that treat the state as natural and predefined.

Geissler states, "[m]edical and medical-related bioscientific knowledge has been generated from and applied to tropical Africa for over a century, transforming global medical knowledge and health in Africa ... what marks biomedical science is its particular moral valence. Preoccupied with saving lives and reducing suffering, medi-