the textual integrity of Śaiva texts such as the *Linga Purāṇa*, which Śrīvaiṣṇava theologians argued contained too many interpolations to be considered authoritative. The key point, for Fisher, is that in the increasingly sectarianized public sphere of early modern South India, "the enunciatory context is not the traditional disciplines of text criticism but the sectarian polemical tracts themselves" (p. 112). In short, what was at stake in such debates was not simply the minutiae of how Sanskrit texts should be read, but the relative authority of the sects who upheld these variant scriptures and modes of reading. Such public textual engagement also manifested in material ways. Nīlakaṇṭha argued, for example, that Smārta Śaivas should decorate their foreheads with the *tripuṇḍra*—a pattern of three lines made with ash. Engaging in such public theology and indicating one's sectarian belonging through visible signs, Fisher argues, served to create a Smārta Śaiva public, and the sectarian age in South India saw the formation of many such sectarian publics.

Fisher concludes by examining the *Tiruviḷaiyāṭal Purāṇam,* a title applied to several Tamil poems describing the legends associated with Śiva's activities in and around the city; the most famous rendering of this story cycle achieved a great deal of popularity by the seventeenth century. Reversing the normal trend of translating Sanskrit works into the vernacular, Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita composed a Sanskrit reinvention of the most popular Tamil version of this story cycle. Therein, Nīlakaṇṭha simultaneously decried "the passion of hicks for vernacular texts" (p. 165) while also breaking from more conservative strands of the Smārta Śaiva community by claiming that initiation into a Śaiva lineage nullified one's caste status (p. 174). Fisher points out that this simultaneous accommodation of and resistance to modes of religious discourse outside the traditional ambit of Smārta Śaivism reflects the emergence of "a multicentric discursive sphere that reconstituted the shape of social and religious communities" (p. 175). These stories were also given a public visual manifestation—in the form of paintings and sculptures housed with Madurai's grand temple to the goddess Mīnākṣī and her consort Śiva.

As Fisher elegantly demonstrates, in all of these ways—through the articulation of public and private religious identities, through debates with sectarian rivals, and through the production of texts that simultaneously spoke to the worlds of Tamil and Sanskrit literature—the Smārta Śaivas created a distinct "sectarian public." This public existed alongside other sectarian publics, each of which was "defined dialectically against one another rather than as subaltern shadows of a single bourgeois Hinduism" (p. 23). In attending to the discursive strategies of sectarianization and to the contexts in which they were deployed, *Hindu Pluralism* thus offers a model of how we can understand the nature of religious identity in South Asia and beyond.

doi:10.1017/S0021911822000882

Modi's India: Hindu Nationalism and the Rise of Ethnic Democracy

By Christophe Jaffrelot. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2021. 656 pp. ISBN: 9780691206806 (cloth).

C. Christine Fair

Georgetown University
christine.fair@georgetown.edu

Christophe Jaffrelot has written a comprehensive account of India's democratic evolution. As he observes, India's democracy has always come with adjectives that have changed over time. In this hefty tome, Jaffrelot argues that an "ethnic democracy" is emerging in India.

Jaffrelot contends that India's democratization only began in the late 1980s when Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was defeated by a coalition of parties, which were united largely by their desire to eviscerate the "hegemony exercised by the upper castes, those who stood to gain the most from the

conservative democracy" (p. 3). Caste-motivated politics, however, created a political opportunity structure that enabled Hindu chauvinism to emerge. The Janata party (1977–80) and the Janata Dal (1989–91) were more representative of lower castes, especially the other backward castes (OBCs), often referred to as *shudras*. The Mandal Commission, formed in 1979 to evaluate whether reservations could or should be used to redress caste discrimination using a variety of standards, mobilized OBCs who favored such an approach to redistributive justice. The commission also mobilized high-caste Hindus, whose public service opportunities were threatened by its policies.

This mobilization led OBCs to stop voting for high-caste candidates, compelling the Congress Party to contest elections with OBC candidates. Unable to rely upon previous vote bank politics, Congress had to engage in the electoral interests of OBCs as well as those parties which claim to represent them. When the Congress Party returned to power in 2004, it set a 27 percent quota for OBCs at public universities. This policy discomfited high-caste Hindus, who began to look for political alternatives. Jaffrelot calls this phenomenon the silent revolution of Indian politics that heralded the retrenchment of upper-caste, middle-class voters, as was evident in poor electoral showings from the late 1990s through the early 2000s.

This caste-based politics precipitated a counterrevolution led by the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP). This revolution was animated by an ideology with origins in the 1920s: Hindutva. The first chapter of this volume recounts this early history. Jaffrelot argues that Hindutva's efficacy was limited until 2014, when the BJP, led by Narendra Modi, won sufficient seats to govern without the need for a coalition. The second chapter recounts the personal and political rise of Modi, whose leadership was crucial to the BJP's success.

In the third chapter, Jaffrelot closely examines the 2014 election, which was markedly different from other phases of Indian democracy. As Jaffrelot argues in chapter 4, this election heralded the rise of a Hindutva-inspired populist politics that relied upon campaign promises that were honored in the breach. Jaffrelot contends that with this turn of events, Indian democracy now requires two additional adjectives: "ethnic democracy" and "electoral democracy."

In the second part of the book, Jaffrelot lays out this concept of "ethnic democracy," which he compares to the Jewish state. In chapter 5, he explores how proponents of this style of democracy are motivated to promote a kind of Hinduism that is orthogonal to the secularism enshrined in the 1950 constitution, which guaranteed equidistance between the state and any religion. In chapter 6, he investigates the ways in which vigilantes have enforced these notions of Hindiusm by strategically employing violence against champions of secularism, Christians, and especially Muslims. He devotes the entirety of chapter 7 to examining the rise of these vigilantes as the sword arm that birthed and now defends what has become a de facto majoritarian state based upon Hindu chauvinism.

In the third section of the book, Jaffrelot describes the new authoritarianism that has flourished under Modi. In chapter 8, he describes how the BJP has "de-institutionalized" the Indian state by bending state institutions to service the interests of the regime and its ideology. The consequences of these machinations comprise a form of "electoral authoritarianism," which has rendered Muslims second-class citizens, a development he details in chapter 9. In chapter 10, Jaffrelot expounds upon this idea, adding a further adjective to India's emerging regime: "authoritarian vigilante state." He posits that India is transforming from a de facto Hindu state to an authoritarian Hindu state.

In chapter 11, he details a litany of challenges confronting India's Muslims ranging from continued institutional exclusion to judicial obligation. He concludes with a predictably dour view of India's future and the prospects of those who oppose the project of the Hindu ethnic state.

While there is much to appreciate in this capacious and heroic volume, there are a number of flaws that detract from the otherwise positive contributions it makes to the literature. First and foremost, Jaffrelot mixes well-defined political science terms (e.g., "electoral democracy") with ideological terms such as "Hindu Rashtra," undermining the coherence of the arguments he offers. This likely restricts the audience who can engage the volume to those with an understanding of these idioms, which are deeply rooted in South Asia. A second challenge is the volume's disjointed and unwieldy organization. The overreliance upon subject headers fails to compensate for the paucity of logical, organic textual organization. At times, at seems as if large tranches of prose were deposited per the demands of a tasking rather than the result of a measured exercise in exposition. (Some of the disjointed language could be attributable to

the fact that this volume is a translation from Jaffrelot's native French.) Ironically, the volume may have been more effective with more concision and tighter organization with a more organic analytical narrative.

Despite these significant organizational and logical shortcomings, the book's detailed exploration of how Hindu nationalism writes the epitaph for India's experiment with multiethnic, secular democracy will reward the reader with the stamina to grapple with it and its arguments.

doi:10.1017/S0021911822000894

The Battle for Pakistan: The Bitter US Friendship and a Tough Neighbourhood

By Shuja Nawaz. London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020. 428 pp. ISBN: 9781538142042 (paper).

Šumit Ganguly

Indiana University Bloomington
sganguly@indiana.edu

In the past decade, a number of books have been published about the fraught US-Pakistan relationship. Two of the most prominent of those include Daniel Markey's *No Exit from Pakistan* and Hussain Haqqani's *Magnificent Delusions*.[1] The first, the work of a former US official, made a case for why the United States could not afford to terminate its security relationship with Pakistan despite the many problems plaguing the relationship. The second, written by a noted Pakistani journalist and former ambassador to the United States, traced the evolution of the fraught relationship from its very outset under the Dwight D. Eisenhower administration. The latter was an especially informed account given Haqqani's considerable personal knowledge of the ebbs and flows of the alliance.

Markey's book was a straightforward policy-oriented work that emphasized the importance of the US-Pakistan security nexus to American foreign and security policy concerns. Haqqani's historical account sought to illuminate the reasons underlying the vicissitudes in the bilateral relationship. Shuja Nawaz's book, *The Battle for Pakistan*, on the other hand, is a rather curious contribution to this corpus of literature. It is odd because unlike the other two books, it has a distinctly "in medias res" quality to it. For no apparent reason, it begins at a particular (albeit important) historical juncture—in 2007—around the time of the assassination of the Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. Yet Nawaz provides no clear rationale for starting his analysis of the recent tribulations of the US-Pakistan relationship at that particular moment.

Indeed, the book is composed of a series of vignettes about the troubled bonds between the two countries. However, at no point does Nawaz provide an overarching statement that would justify the selection of these particular episodes and turning points. As a consequence, the book has a rather jarring quality and lacks narrative flow.

This structural shortcoming aside, there is no question that Nawaz possesses the knowledge of an insider. The book is laden with information gleaned from interviews with former diplomats, bureaucrats, politicians, and military personnel, both American and Pakistani. Consequently, he is quite deft in deploying any number of telling anecdotes to illustrate specific incidents that he highlights in the book. For example, he recounts in considerable detail the efforts of Benazir Bhutto's husband, Asif Ali Zardari, who assumed Pakistan's presidency after her assassination, to rein in Pakistan's all-powerful Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate.

[1]Daniel S. Markey, *No Exit from Pakistan: America's Tortured Relationship with Pakistan* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Hussain Haqqani, *Magnificent Delusions*: *Pakistan, the United States, and an Epic History of Misunderstanding* (New York: Public Affairs, 2013).