

Junior Scholars Conference on Pakistan



American Institute of Pakistan Studies
October 20, 2016

Junior Scholars Conference on Pakistan

October 20, 2016

Conference Room 5

The Madison Concourse Hotel

1 West Dayton Street

Madison, WI 53703

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AIPS Reception (October 22, 2016)

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Overview:

This conference showcases the new research being done by junior scholars (both recent PhDs and graduate students with ABD status) in the field of Pakistan Studies in the United States. The conference concludes with a pre-conference reception hosted by AIPS.

Welcome and Introduction

10:00 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.

Conference Room 5, The Madison Concourse Hotel

Session I

10:15 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

Conference Room 5, The Madison Concourse Hotel

Chair: Prof. Dr. Farhat Haq

Topic 1: Sovereignty between God and the State: Insulting Muhammad in Contemporary Pakistan

Mashal Saif, Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Clemson University

The act of insulting the Prophet Muhammad has often garnered international headlines in recent years. In Pakistan, in the past decade, dozens of alleged Prophet-insulters, including Salman Taseer the then-governor of Punjab, have been murdered for their critique of Muhammad. Despite the riveting and sensationalized media coverage of ‘radical Pakistani Muslims’ supporting these extra-judicial murders, there is a gaping dearth of informed discourse on the religious reasons meticulously cited by Pakistani traditional Muslim scholars (‘ulama’) to legitimate such acts. Similarly, the systematically reasoned religious opposition to such views remains virtually undocumented. It is precisely this lacuna that this paper addresses.

This paper highlights the tensions and intellectual disagreements between these two groups and makes a number of distinct contributions. 1) It brings to light the richness of the ‘ulama’ tradition in Pakistan and provides a vital counter to the narrative that Pakistani ‘ulama’ are united in their views on the legitimacy of extra-judicial punishment for insulting Muhammad. 2) This paper emphasizes that the disparity between the views of these anti-vigilante-justice ‘ulama’ and the ‘ulama’ celebrating extra-judicial murders of Prophet-insulters results from their drastically different opinions about state sovereignty. 3) Finally, in emphasizing Pakistani ‘ulama’s divergent commitments to state sovereignty, this work poses an important challenge to the views of scholars who assert the incompatibility of the shari’a and the modern state. Departing from such scholars, this paper emphasize both arguments and agreements over sovereignty between the state and the shari’a, i.e. God’s sovereign will as articulated by the ‘ulama’.

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Topic 2: Ontological Security: Explaining Continued State-sponsorship of Militancy in Pakistan

Sahar Khan, PhD Candidate, Department of Political Science, University of California – Irvine

Why do states sponsor violent religious militant groups? Geostrategic interests, domestic politics, and deniability have all been used to explain why states would resort to using and sponsoring violent religious militant groups as proxies. But what happens when the group turns onto the sponsoring state? Can a state stop sponsoring a group? More importantly, why would a state continue sponsoring violent religious militant groups when they become a threat to the state itself? Using Pakistan as a case study, this paper argues that states continue to sponsor violent religious militant groups to achieve ontological security, and civil institutions play a prominent role in facilitating the state's understanding of and need for its ontological security and national identity. Confronting the "survival" and "deterrence" assumptions of IR theory, this paper presents a theory for continued state-sponsorship of militancy, arguing that sponsorship is linked to how a state perceives itself and wants to be perceived by other states. Furthermore, it makes a case for why IR theorists should go beyond the traditional security institutions and analyze the role of civil institutions when studying state-sponsorship of militancy.

Session II

11:45 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Conference Room 5, The Madison Concourse Hotel

Chair: Prof. Dr. Shahnaz Rouse

Topic 1: Obstructing Geography: Resisting British Interventionism in Early Nineteenth Century Sindh

Shayan Rajani, PhD Candidate, Department of History, Tufts University

This paper considers three diplomatic encounters between the Talpur sovereigns of Sindh and the East India Company

from 1800 to 1829. These encounters hinge on British demands for access to Sindh and Talpur concern for denying British mobility in their domain. At stake in this contest is the British effort to expand their geographic knowledge of Sindh, which is a necessary precondition for escalating interventionism. The Talpurs drew on political and cultural resources available within Sindh and transregionally in their attempts to thwart the British. Yet, even as they sought to close off social and political exchange with the British, successive encounters found them appropriating British terms of engagement to shore up their resistance. The paper examines the range of possibilities open to sovereigns in the early nineteenth century who found themselves under the shadow of an ascendant British Empire. The dialectic between resistance and appropriation characterized the diplomatic exchanges of two states that were becoming rapidly familiar and increasingly suspicious of each other.

Lunch Break

WI Ballroom

(all participants are invited)

12:30–1:45 p.m.



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Session III

1:45 – 3:30 p.m.

Conference Room 5, The Madison Concourse Hotel

Chair: Prof. Dr. Cabeiri deBergh Robinson

Topic 1: Negotiating Nonconformity: The Politics of Encroachment in the Planned Modern City of Islamabad

Faiza Moatasim, Post Doctoral Fellow & Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Asian Studies and History, Hamilton College

This paper will explore the interplay between formally and informally planned spaces in the planned modern city of Islamabad - the purpose-built administrative capital of Pakistan developed in the 1960s. By focusing on the high- and low- end commercial encroachments in Islamabad, this talk asks: Why are certain nonconforming spaces tolerated in the planned city while others resisted by the city officials? How do concerns for preserving the 'master plan' of Islamabad affect the status of permitted encroachments in the planned city? Research on encroachments and nonconforming spaces in Islamabad shows that they are routinely created by both the rich and the poor residents, and business people of the city, and that they are not always instantly resisted and removed by the city officials. Instead, certain nonconforming spaces are tolerated for long periods of time when they are framed as temporary in official discourse in order to accommodate various unfulfilled spatial, political and economic needs. Recent court decisions on encroachments in Islamabad, however, reveal growing frustration of 'concerned' citizens and the judiciary with the city officials in their failure to preserve the 'planned character' of Islamabad. This discussion will thus reveal nonconforming spaces as being integral to the development and functioning of Islamabad as a comprehensively planned city, as spaces of contention and collaboration between various state and nonstate actors, and as spaces where non-planning actors like the judiciary directly intervene in the planning and management of the city. This paper will ultimately argue that these aspects of encroachments and nonconforming spaces in Islamabad are integral to its history as a comprehensively planned modern city, and to our understanding of the relationship between formally and informally planned urban spaces.

Topic 2: Big Companies, Small Bureaucrats: Water and Governance in Pakistan

Maira Hayat, PhD Candidate, Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago

This paper analyzes (i) ongoing litigation between a handful of local companies and the Punjab Irrigation department with respect to a sudden hike in the irrigation water tax rate; (ii) a Sindh High Court case involving a multinational bottled drinking water company and its extraction of groundwater, and (iii) the proceedings of a committee constituted by the Punjab Irrigation Department (PID) – with which I promptly tagged along on their inspections of industrial units dumping effluent into the Hudiara drain – in August 2015. Based on this field research, spanning most of 2015 and early 2016, the paper examines corporate–state relations, the disparities in their relative financial capital, and how these structural power inequalities play out everyday. The paper argues that how – if at all – these power differentials unravel or become deeper, depends on intensely private encounters and behavior (such as I took part in during the PID committee's proceedings, inspections and tours). It also looks at the politics involved in measurements of pollution, waste and effluent discharge – the seemingly 'unscientific' motivations underlying the 'scientific' findings of the committee. The paper aims to contribute to scholarship on anthropology of states, bureaucracies and corporations (including commentary on methodology and the challenges of 'studying up' (Nader 1972)).

Coffee & Tea Break

2nd Floor Reception Area

3:30–3:45 p.m.

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Session IV

3:45 p.m.–5:15 p.m.

Conference Room 5, The Madison Concourse Hotel

Chair: Prof. Dr. Frank Korom

*Topic 1: Women's Representation in Local Democracy:
Formal and Informal Institutions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa*

**Abida Bano, PhD Candidate, Department of Political
Science, Western Michigan University**

Pakistan's democracy is still rather new. In 2000, General Pervez Musharraf introduced the Local Government Ordinance 2000, which allocated gender quotas of 33% for women in the local government. In 2011, under the 18th amendment in the Constitution of Pakistan, provincial governments are empowered to introduce local government reforms independently and according to provincial needs and contexts. As a result, the provincial assembly of the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) passed its own Local Government Act 2013 on October 31 2013. Local elections were subsequently held in May- June 2015. Many women are now participating in local government as councilors. At the same time, KP's Pashtun society follows a set of informal institutions called Pakhtunwali that may affect women councilors' participation in local democratic processes.

The aim of the study is to assess women councilors' participation (political and civic) in local democracy in Pakistan's KP province. This study test hypotheses about the interaction between formal and informal institutions in connection with women's participation. Furthermore, the variables of political parties, civil society, and the media are also hypothesized to test their effects on women councilors' political and civic participation.

A case study approach is utilized. The main research methods are qualitative individual in-depth interviews, observation, and content analysis. A total of 53 individual interviews, 60 minutes per session (a total of one session per participant) are conducted with women councilors from nine local councils, civil society activists, and journalists and academics (as experts). Two newspapers are selected to collect news items from to do content analysis.

*Topic 2: Why Do Citizens Become Politicians?
Experimental Evidence on Candidacy*

**Saad Gulzar, PhD Candidate, Department of Political
Science, New York University**

Does being seen to run for the 'right' reasons affect citizens' decision to become politicians? This paper provides evidence that social image concerns affect the decision to run for political office. In a field experiment, we increase the salience of two reasons for entering politics. Either personal benefits from political office - such as gaining respect and status - or social benefits - such as the ability to help others - are highlighted in public meetings. In the control condition people meet in public but no benefits are mentioned. We find that while candidacy increases when social benefits are emphasized, highlighting personal benefits reduces candidacy. Further, in a placebo exercise - where benefits are highlighted in a private meeting - no treatment effects are observed, lending credence to the interpretation that there exists social encouragement for candidacy to help others, but social stigma around running for status.

Wrap Up

5:15 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Conference Room 5, The Madison Concourse Hotel

AIPS Pre-conference Reception

Private Dining Room

Thursday, October 20, 2016

5:30–6:30 p.m.

(All participants are invited)

Junior Scholars Conference

Thursday, October 20, 2016

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AIPS Reception

Senate AB

Saturday, October 22, 2016

9:00–11:00 p.m.

All participants and the general public are
invited to attend.