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19

APRIL  
2024



Keynote:  
**DR. GORDON MATHEWS**  
17th April 6:15- 7:45 PM

**REGISTRATION**  
[hssconf@lums.edu.pk](mailto:hssconf@lums.edu.pk)

HSS ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2024

# Between CONTAINERS & CANISTERS

INFORMALITY, GEOPOLITICS, AND  
TRANSNATIONAL IMAGINARIES  
SHAPING PAKISTAN'S FUTURES



## Day 1 17 April 2024

**Conference Inauguration:** 6:00 p.m.

(Venue: A-13)

**Keynote Address:** 6:15 p.m. to 7:45 p.m.

**Dynamics and the Future of Low-end Globalization**

**Speaker:** Gordon Mathews

**Moderator:** Aameem Lutfi

(Venue: A-13)

**Conference Welcome Dinner:** 8:00 p.m.

(Venue: EDH Lawn)

## Day 2 18 April 2024

**Session 1:** 9:45 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.

**Between Formality and Informality: From Frontiers to International Legalism**

**Speakers:** Matthew J. Nelson, Sana Haroon, Rashid Munir, Summaiya Zaidi

**Moderator:** Farhat Haq

(Venue: VC Lounge)

**Tea Break:** 11:15 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

**Session 2:** 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

**1. Margins to Mainstream: Many Routes of Migrations and the State Responses**

**Speakers:** Hamraz Ahmad (Online), Shahid Kamal, Ajmal Hussain

**Moderator:** Ilyas Chattha

(Venue: VC Lounge)

**2. Crossfire and Crossroads: Navigating Change and Conflict in Pakistan's Western Borderlands**

**Speakers:** Rasul B. Raees, Irfan Ashraf, Syed Raza, and Johan Chacko (Online)

**Moderator:** Asma Faiz

(Venue: A-8)

**Lunch Break:** 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

**Session 3:** 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

## **1. Mediums of Faith: Education, Festivals, and Digital Expression in Pakistan**

**Speakers:** Fakhar Bilal, Farhan Abbasi, Arsalan Ahmed

**Moderator:** Sara Humayun

(Venue: VC Lounge)

## **2. Music, Literature, and Dance: The Literary (Re)Production of the Social From Below**

**Speakers:** Virinder S. Kalra, Ghulam Ali Shair, Kiran K. Sunar

**Moderator:** Amen Jaffer

(Venue: A-8)

**Tea Break:** 3:30 p.m. to 3:45 p.m.

**Session 4:** 3:45 p.m. to 5:15 p.m

### **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in the Indo-Pacific**

**Speakers:** Yunas Samad, Hassan Karar, Saba Shahid, Tayyab Safdar (Online), Timo Kivimaki (Online)

**Moderator:** Majed Akhtar

(Venue: VC Lounge)

**Session 5:** 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m

### **Documentary Screening**

#### **'Songs of the Sufi: The Untold Story of Classical Qawwali'**

**Speaker:** Kamran Anwar

**Moderator:** Virinder S. Kalra

(Venue: A-13)

**Day 3** 19 April  
2024

**Session 1:** 9:45 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.

### **1. Crossing Lines: Commerce, Conflict, and Community on the Frontiers**

**Speakers:** Sohail Khan, Ahmed Khan, Akbar Notezai (Online)

**Moderator:** Nida Kirmani

(Venue: VC Lounge)

### **2. Ports, Planes, and Mobility: Constructing Infrastructural Futures, and Contending with Shadows of the Past**

**Speakers:** Majed Akhtar, Waqar Zaidi, Aameem Lutfi

**Moderator:** Hassan Karrar

(Venue: A-8)

**Tea Break:** 11:15 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

**Session 2:** 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

**1. Highlands and Heartlands: Traversing the Economic and Cultural Landscapes of Central Asia**

**Speakers:** Henryk Alff, Elsa Khwaja (Online), and Sarwat Shabbir

**Moderator:** Tania Saeed

(Venue: VC Lounge)

**2. Memory and Nationalism: Remembering the Past, (Re)Constructing the Future**

**Speakers:** Asma Faiz, Murtaza Taj, Zeynep Tuba

**Moderator:** Dominic Esler

(Venue: A-8)

**Lunch Break:** 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

**Session 3:** 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

**1. Educational Frontiers: From Grassroots to Governance**

**Speakers:** Farhat Haq, Rafiullah Kakar, Amir Shah

**Moderator:** Angbeen Mirza (Law School)

(Venue: VC Lounge)

**2. Creating an Oral History Archive of Government Work: The Women in Public Service in Pakistan Project**

**Speakers:** Sana Haroon, Sameen Ali, Manahil Raza, Sadaf Ahmad, Zeyna Malik

**Moderator:** Umair Javed

(Venue: A-8)

**Tea Break:** 3:30 p.m. to 3:45 p.m.

**Session 4:** 3:45 p.m. to 5:15 p.m.

**1. Pakistan and its Diaspora(s): Identity, Politics, and the Transnational Experience**

**Speakers:** Tania Saeed, Rabia Kamal, Serena Hussain

**Moderator:** Umber Bin Ibad

(Venue: VC Lounge)

**2. Reimagining Political Theologies: Reflections on the Centenary of the Abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate**

**Speakers:** Ali Raza, Tahir Kamran, Waqas Sajjad

**Moderator:** Nadhra Shahbaz

Venue: A-8

**Farewell Dinner and Visit to Old Lahore:** 6:30 p.m.

# Ahmed Khan:

## Bio:

Ahmed Khan is a lecturer in the Department of Humanities at Balochistan University of IT, Engineering and Management sciences. His objectives are to work on Urban Sectarian Violence, Climate Change, floods, and Critical Discourse Analysis in South Asian region. In addition to the above, he is interested in Migration, Refugees, borders, racial profiling, marginalization, and violence in Post-Colonial Balochistan, Pakistan. He has done his BA(Hons) in Political Science from Forman Christian College Lahore and MPhil from QAU. Currently he has enrolled as Ph. D candidate in the National Institute of Pakistan Studies (NIPS, QAU). Currently, he is working on Urban Sectarian violence and the restructuring of Urban spaces of Quetta, Pakistan as his PhD dissertation. His aspiration for conducting this study is the haunting of thoughts of being the one from a majority population group where minorities are being marginalized and persecuted. He, being an academic and part of the city and effected by violence feel the urge to write about sectarian violence and bring it to light. His biggest effort being in academia is that Balochistan has always been in the periphery of Pakistani and international academic world and he want to be the voice for peripheral academic understanding in Global South.

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## Abstract:

### **Borders in Transition, State, Mobility and Everyday Economy of Chaman/Wesh Border of Balochistan, Pakistan**

According to the census 2023, Chaman has a population of more than 0.466 million people who are dependent on informal/formal border trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Durand Line is the 2,640-kilometer (1,640-mile) border between Afghanistan and Pakistan came because of two treaties (Gandamak 1879 and Durand line treaty of 1893) between the British colonial power in India and the State of Afghanistan. Durand line has two major trade borders the Torkham in the current Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and the Chaman/Wesh border in the Western province of Balochistan. This paper addresses the transition of border, everyday economy, mobility, and interaction with state at Chaman/Wesh border Of Pakistan and Afghanistan. The paper focuses on the contemporary everyday entanglements of border regime and the intersectionality(s) of disastrous formalization and legalization of international border impacts on everyday life and how it left more than 25,000 families breadless. There are more than 25,000 informal laborers called as Laghari involved in everyday border trade who are left out due to fencing and formalization of the border. Chaman/Wesh border has functioned freely when it comes to trade and mobility for centuries, but with the current deal of formalizing/legalizing Chaman/Wesh border with the International Monetary Fund and World Bank and fencing of the border due to security issues for the state and curbing smuggling has altered the course of border sociology. In addition, there is a huge chunk of the population that are having business and family relations on the Afghanistan side of the border and crossed the border without documentation for ages but due to new regulations of visa policy people are stranded for hours and days. This study relies on the mix methodology by conducting interviews with Laghari

Etihad, the Chamber of Commerce, Customs, and law enforcement authorities of Chaman district and Wesh and Questionnaire with people on Border.

Keywords: Border in Transition, Pakistan-Afghanistan Border, Durand Line, Chaman/Wash, Border Economy

# **A**jmal Hussain:

## **Bio:**

Ajmal Hussain has research interests in urban and cultural sociology. He works on issues of new modalities of political expression among marginalised constituencies in postcolonial societies of Europe and in the Muslim world, the production of urban space through collaborations across different constituencies of power, and the role of affect in shaping political subjectivity. He is currently Assistant Professor in the faculty of social sciences at Warwick university.

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## **Abstract:**

### **The Politics of Presence: anticipation and affect in Zaman Park, Lahore**

Among Pakistan's diaspora communities there has existed a certain attachment with iconic individuals who have helped shape transnational sentiments and imaginaries. The case of cricketer turned politician; Imran Khan is a recent example, where a popular individual's foray into politics found resonance with significant portions of the diaspora; enlisting them into the project of creating a neya Pakistan.

With its invocation of the Medina constitution, neya Pakistan was a temporal framing that looped back to pre-modern time. It was also a spatial re-drawing of the site of the political – toward the level of society - away from state institutions that were a postcolonial formation. In doing so, this aspiration heralded a new moment in Pakistani politics, where through decolonial praxis operating at different scales and sites, Imran Khan and his supporters sought to undo the significance of the postcolonial state.

This paper offers an ethnographic account of presence at Zaman Park in the city of Lahore, Pakistan in early March 2023, when a first attempt was made to arrest the popular former prime minister Imran Khan. In response, thousands of Khan's supporters and party workers encircled his residence erecting tents and mobilising networks of support; in the process forming an infrastructure of resistance against enfoldment into what has become a postcolonial convention of military-backed dictatorships and western-backed governments that continue the violence of coloniality. Through the use of photographs, video shorts and accounts of goings-on in Zaman Park – and in a heady atmosphere saturated with tear gas and water spray from cannons - I pay attention to the affective labour involved in this presence, whereby individuals articulate a new relation to the state; through aspirations, expectations and proclamations that gesture toward a parallel moral economy of the political. This account is also an attempt to read Pakistan from afar; through the lens of a diasporic subject and the work of postcolonial cultural critics such as Stuart Hall, whose ruminations as a diasporic subject were formed at the juncture of the postcolonial. The politics of presence, I suggest involves making a number of moves with the ultimate ambition of re-arranging the deck of democracy and crafting a different realm of the political – one that might evade capture within (neo)liberal orientations of governance that permeate the global south.

## **A**kbar Notezai:

### **Bio:**

Akbar Notezai is a journalist with Dawn newspaper. He has been covering Balochistan for Dawn for over the last seven years. He writes detailed pieces on the topics related to his home province. Besides Dawn, he has also written for international publications such as Foreign Policy, Al Jazeera, and The Diplomat. He also reviews books in Dawn Sunday Magazine.

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### **Abstract:**

#### **Pakistan's trade with Iran, especially the oil trade that has been taking place between the two countries**

After the U.S. imposed sanctions on Iran in 2013 to cut oil exports, the smuggling of Iranian petroleum products has become an entrenched part of its ailing economy.

The smuggling of fuel and goods has been going for decades through the 900-kilometer porous border that separates the southwestern Pakistani province of Balochistan from Iran, becoming the primary source of income for the hundreds and thousands of ethnic Baloch families living across the desolated area.

On the Iranian side of the border, the same ethnic Baloch are involved in the same racket. Like the Baloch living in Pakistan, Iranian Baloch are poor and live below the poverty line. They have no other source of income but to smuggle oil out of Iran and into Pakistan.

Until or unless there is an alternative source of income for these people who are poor and have no other source of livelihood, oil smuggling will continue to fester.

Besides oil, other edible items' trade take place between Pakistan and Iran through irregular border points because Balochistan is dependent, as a whole, on the trade with Iran.



**A**li Raza:

**Bio:**

Ali Raza, Associate Professor, is a historian of South Asia. He received his DPhil from the University of Oxford and was a postdoctoral fellow at the Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient in Berlin. His research and teaching interests include the social and intellectual history of South Asia, comparative colonialisms, anti-colonialism/decolonization, and post-colonial theory.

Raza is the author of *Revolutionary Pasts: Communist Internationalism in Colonial India* (Cambridge University Press, 2020). His book narrates the lives, geographies, dreams, and anti-colonial struggles of Indian revolutionaries and how they sought to remake the world. South Asian editions of *Revolutionary Pasts* appeared in Pakistan and India with Folio Books (2021) and Tulika Books (2022) respectively. The book was also shortlisted for the Royal Historical Society's Gladstone Book Prize and the Karwaan Book Award.

Raza is also the co-editor of *The Internationalist Moment: South Asia, Worlds, and World Views, 1917-39* (Sage, 2015). *The Internationalist Moment* offers a collection of essays that look at South Asia's political, social, and intellectual engagements with the wider world between the Bolshevik Revolution and the onset of the Second World War. In addition, his work has appeared in *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*; *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*; *Itinerario*; *South Asian History and Culture*; and *Contemporary South Asia* as well as numerous edited volumes and other publications.

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**Abstract:**

**Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and Ideas of Partitions in Interwar India**

The end of the Ottoman and Austro Hungarian imperiums and the emergence of majoritarian ethnonational states across Europe had far-reaching political effects that were felt the world over. In British India, the end of the Caliphate did not simply spell the end of Muslim spiritual authority. It also spelled the beginning of the end of pan-Islamism as a viable political project. In its place, competing notions of Muslim sovereignty in British India were advanced by various actors across the political spectrum. This paper will offer an overview of those responses across the interwar period, with an emphasis on the ideas of the Khaksar Tehreek and its chief ideologues.

**A**meem Lutfi: (TBD)

**Bio:**

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**Abstract:**

**A**rslan Ahmed:

**Bio:**

Mr. Arslan completed PhD in Asian Studies and the running title was "Covid-19 and Intra-Muslim polemics: Cyber Islamic Environments and YouTube contestations for religious Piety in Pakistan". His area of interest lies in Cyber Islam, Sunni Revivalist Movements and Religious Politics in South Asia. Presently he is serving as an Assistant Professor at the School of Politics and International Relations, Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad.

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**Abstract:**

**Barelwi Proselytism on Ilm-ul-ghiyab, Religious YouTubing and Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan's (TLP) Electoral Politics.**

Being formed in 2015, Tehreekh-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) has immensely grabbed the attention of South Asian scholars in a very short span of time due to its politics over emotive issues i.e. Hurmat-e-Rasool, Blasphemy Law 295-C, passing bigoted rhetoric for minorities and billeting the independent Pakistani women as fahisha auraten (immoral women) etc. Until now most of the researchers are investigating emergence of TLP as a socio-political movement however, there is rarely any research that tries to deal with TLP's base of support which is deeply embedded in Imam Ahmed Raza's distinctive elucidation of the canonical texts. Unlike Salafi/Ahl-e-Hadith and Deoband, Raza portrays Muhammad (PBUH) as a person which possesses a wide range of supernatural qualities and to be a 'real' Ashiq-e-Rasool (lover of the Prophet) it's mandatory to have faith in Raza's prescribed supernatural qualities. This paper will try to examine intra-Sunni theological interpretations and differences over Muhammad's (PBUH) superhuman characteristic of Ilm-ul-ghiyab (unseen knowledge) and how TLP emanated its mass strength out of Barelwi theology. Moreover, it will illustrate how TLP managed to use YouTube as a new religious media/medium to present Raza's interpretation in election campaigns and instigated its followers to conceptualize elections as an opportunity to demonstrate religiosity by casting vote for TLP.

**A**asma Faiz:

**Bio:**

Dr. Asma Faiz is Associate Professor in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS). Her research interests include nationalist movements, ethnic politics, federalism and populism. Her latest book *In Search of Lost Glory: Sindhi Nationalism in Pakistan* was published by Hurst Publishers, London and Oxford University Press, New York in 2021.

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**Abstract:**

**Mapping the Sindhi Memoryscape**

Memory and nationalism are intrinsically connected with each other. Construction of nationalist imagination takes place through shared memories of the events from distant and not-so-distant past. Shared ideas, and values as well as interpretations of real or imagined events create a reservoir of a collective history which is re-imagined, re-created and re-enacted through daily actions of members of society turning them into a cohesive force. My presentation brings these ideas to the study of Sindhi nationalism as one of the longest-running nationalist movements in Pakistan. It has been a low intensity movement without ever reaching the level of violence witnessed in the Mohajir and Baloch cases.

In this presentation, I explore the Sindhi nationalist memoryscape as driven by remembrance of the Sindhi past. Through this memory-building, the nationalists attempt to define what was meant to be a Sindhi and the meaning of Sindhi identity? Sindhi memoryscape helps to emphasize the cohesiveness of the Sindhi nation that cuts across religious, tribal, class and gender faultlines.

Sindhis perceive themselves as an outlier from the national mainstream. There are several reasons behind this sense of marginalization. Sindh experienced partial deterritorialization after partition in a cultural and not necessarily geographical sense with the loss of its Hindu urban middle class which was forced to flee from the country after partition. However, Sindh is the only province where a sizeable Hindu-minority resides. Sindhis pride themselves on their pluralist inclusive culture. It is considered to be the land of the Sufis, home to Sachal Sarmast and Shah Abdu Latif Bhittai. Every year Sindhi cultural space is filled with annual Sufi celebrations. Another aspect of nationalist memory is Sindhi language day. Language is an important marker of Sindhi identity. It has been a rallying call for Sindhi nationalists since its de-recognition by the migrant-dominated state of Pakistan during the first decades after partition. The imposition of Urdu and removal of Sindhi from official usage was a major source of Sindhi alienation. It was only in 1972 that the Peoples Party government re-introduced Sindhi as an official language in Sindh which turned out to be a non-starter and in the end counter-productive. Similarly, the Sindhi Language and Culture Day keeps the memory of Sindhi

cultural marginalization alive. Through displays of Sindhi ajrak and cap, Sindhi landscape reinvokes its 'glorious' civilizational heritage. Another spectacle to observe is the Raja Dahir Day, celebrated in memory of the Hindu ruler Raja Dahir who stood up to the Arab conquerors in the 8th century. Thus, through an examination of celebratory and commemorative events that invoke certain collective memories of Sindhi political, material and cultural glory, nation is regularly re-imagined and re-constructed.

## **E**lsa Khwaja:

### **Bio:**

Dr. Elsa Talat Khwaja is an independent research scholar, international development consultant, and writer. She received her PhD in Public Policy from the George Mason University Schar School of Policy and Government, specializing in international development policy and foreign aid-effectiveness in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Dr. Khwaja has previously worked at American Councils for International Education, Chemonics International, the Aspen Institute, Embassy of Pakistan in Washington D.C., and the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. Dr. Khwaja was a Brent Scowcroft Award Fellow at the Aspen Strategy Group. She has also worked with the All Pakistan Women's Association and the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan in Karachi, researching Violence Against Women in Pakistan. Dr. Khwaja received her Masters in Public and International Affairs at the University of Pittsburgh and Bachelors in Political Science and Global Studies at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. She has published in the SAGE Handbook of Research Methods in Political Science and International Relations, Policy Futures in Education, and the Journal of Asian Public Policy.

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### **Abstract:**

#### **Networks of Resilience during Conflict: 'Localization,' Social Capital, and Humanitarian Assistance in Afghanistan**

Afghanistan remains entrenched in multiple cascading humanitarian crises, ranking among the most severe humanitarian crises worldwide. The withdrawal of the United States from Afghanistan in 2021, coupled with the Taliban resurgence, precipitated a massive refugee crisis in Pakistan, worsened the economic instability within Afghanistan, and perpetuated ongoing human rights and women's rights violations. Alongside the socioeconomic and political upheaval within the region, the shifting power dynamics in development assistance have sustained Afghanistan and Pakistan's place in the global development-security radar.

In mid-February 2024, the United Nations convened a meeting in Doha to discuss the ongoing humanitarian and human rights crises in Afghanistan and chart the next steps, prompting sustained international support. This analysis delves into the complex challenges with development assistance in Afghanistan amid political and economic turmoil in the region. The paper begins with an overview on the multilateral development efforts, spanning the past two decades (2001-2023), the role of various stakeholders in delivering assistance amid Afghanistan's volatility, and the global humanitarian response to challenges that emerged upon the Taliban takeover.

Moreover, the concepts of "Afghanization" and "Localization" are central to illuminating the shifting power dynamics, resource allocation, leadership structures, and the intended objective of local ownership and sustainability in humanitarian and development initiatives. The analysis scrutinizes the resilience and interconnectedness of development networks in Afghanistan, elucidating the power and influence embedded in aid delivery mechanisms and outcomes. Integrating a conceptual

framework rooted in social capital and network theory, the paper presents a primary case study of the World Bank National Solidarity Program (NSP), among the most successful community-driven development initiatives in the world, which served as a critical example of Afghanization and Localization. Drawing from the lessons of the NSP, the analysis evaluates the sustainability of these vital network structures post-Taliban rule, probing into challenges and opportunities surrounding coordination mechanisms and power dynamics within network structures. The paper highlights the pivotal role of development interventions in

generating social capital to shape collaboration, trust, and reciprocity among diverse stakeholders.

Presenting the unique aid narrative of war-torn Afghanistan, the research promulgates for a multilateral coalition bolstering humanitarian networks and social capital to optimize aid effectiveness and sustainability, embracing a critical understanding of the contextual nuances and the interplay between political, economic, cultural, and social factors. The analysis concludes with the anticipated challenges for localization of development assistance and the reverberating implications of Afghanistan's evolving aid dynamics on the stability, prosperity, and cross-border collaboration with Pakistan and the broader South Asia region.

## **F** akhar Bilal:

### **Bio:**

Dr. Fakhar Bilal, serving as an Assistant Professor of History at the department of History, Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad Pakistan. He has completed his M.Sc. and M.Phil. in History from Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad, Pakistan. He completed his Ph.D. in Modern South Asian History at Royal Holloway University of London, United Kingdom. His PhD research was on Colonial and Postcolonial Multan (Punjab) and its development with reference to religious education, religious seminaries and its impact on society. He has visited China few times and facilitated faculty and student exchange program with Nanjing University of China. He has been visiting fellow at Fudan Development Institute at Fudan University and guest lecturer at China-West Normal University and Nanjing University of China. He attended numerous international research and training workshops and courses relevant to his research and he has also presented at international conferences, workshops and symposia in the U.K, China, Italy, US, Pakistan and Belgium. He is also appointed as adjunct professor of the Belt and Road Research Institute, Beijing Language and Culture University of China.

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### **Abstract:**

Acquiring knowledge in a madrasa is like having a contract with knowledge itself or with the sources of knowledge. Islamic education is usually based on traditional educational system. The significance of this Islamic knowledge is judged and measured by the knowledge which is transmitted to students in religious seminaries and colleges called madrasas. The core focus of this Islamic education is to train the student's practical understanding of religion which they can later on practice in their lives and transfer that learning of madrasa life to further generations of students. Deobandi madaris in Pakistan, since the partition in 1947, are imparting religious education and preparing students for serving Islam and Islamic education. The madrasas taught Dars-i-Nizami after arriving in the new state of Pakistan. The influence of Deoband and emphasis of Deobandi tradition in Dars-i-Nizami was on manqulat "transmitted" knowledge and in favour of Hadith to be the popular teaching which was adopted in major migrated madrasas in different cities and localities of Pakistan. In addition to the above explained exploration, I will look into the process how curriculum has been prepared, developed and processed under the umbrella of Wifq (education board) since 1947. This paper/research will explain how successive regimes in Pakistan posed threats to the existence of madrasa and Islamic education system while attempting to reform madrasa curriculum while I explain how religious life within a madrasa operates and how an individual teacher and student spends their time in learning religion in their routine life at madrasa to make more logic and sense of implementation of curriculum and how these practitioners of religion are trained in their day-to-day life.



## **F**arhan Abbasi:

### **Bio:**

Farhan Munir Abbasi is a PhD scholar at history department Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad. His research interest is political Islam in South Asia. He is working on sectarian politics in post-colonial state of Pakistan. His research focuses on sectarianism in Pakistan's 4th largest city Rawalpindi. It fascinates him how the culturally rich city which had been ruled by ancient empires and birthplace of different ancient religions and rituals has now turned into a hub of radical Islam.

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### **Abstract:**

The present study explores the origin of Eid-Milad-un-Nabi (EMN) processions in Punjab. By doing this, it would discuss how an occasion which was previously associated with religious piety converted into a show of power. This event is traced to a historical city of Punjab named Rawalpindi which used to house a mixture of many communities i.e., Sikhs, Muslims, Hindus, and Christians. Before the partition of India, Rawalpindi witnessed bloodshed in the form of communal riots, these riots were the first incident of violence within the Pothwar region. In 1896 the construction of the famous Jamia Masjid became a bone of contention between Sikhs and Muslims. After just a couple of decades, the chosen locality and surrounding areas witnessed a massacre which took the lives of hundreds of innocent people.

In the memory of that catastrophic massacre, Muslims started the procession of Eid Milad-un-Nabi in 1926 for the very first time, thousands of Muslims participated in this procession.

The event that occurred in 1926 had profound and lasting effects, not only on the collective memory of Rawalpindi's inhabitants but also on their socio-political landscape. This communal catastrophe resulted in a dramatic transformation of the region's demography, marked by violent upheaval during the partition of India. The once culturally diverse city center, enriched by the presence of historic Gurdwaras and Mandirs, underwent a significant metamorphosis, with Mosques and Madrasas. It is also observed as a deviation from mere religious piety to a show of power. This research would also explore how the EMN procession presently serves socio political purposes and its conversion into a method to satisfy intrinsic political interests. This project aims to delve into how the Brelvi/Sufis institutionalized Milad in its political activism, striving to reinstate piety within their political agendas and secure a prominent social space in the society.

## **F**arhat Haq:

### **Bio:**

Farhat Haq is currently a visiting professor of Political Science at LUMS. She received Ph.D. in Political Science from Cornell University. She is a professor emeritus—and for 20 years was the chair-- of Political Science department at Monmouth College in Illinois.

She has published several articles on political Islam, ethnic politics, gender and politics and political violence in South Asia. In 2018 she published a book on: Sharia and the State in Pakistan: Blasphemy Politics, (Routledge). She is currently working on two research projects: Politics of Youth Activism in South Asia and electoral behavior of constituencies in working class neighborhoods in Lahore.

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### **Abstract:**

#### **The Local, the National and the Global in the Politics of Left and Right in Lahore**

This paper aims to analyze the politics of left and right in Pakistan by focusing on two relatively new political parties: the TLP (2016) and Huqooq-e-Khalq party (HKP). Both of these parties are based in the working-class neighborhoods of Lahore, both have young charismatic leaders and both appeal to the working class and youth. Their core constituencies have significant overlap, but they present two radically different approaches to engaging with key national and global political themes to mobilize grassroots support. Both parties focus on national and global issues, but their organizational and mobilization strategies differ in consequential ways. HKP is experimenting with hyperfocus on local issues of clean water, availability of sewage facilitates and provision of natural gas but at the same time mobilize the citizens to demand more from the state through sit-ins, protests, and other contentious styles of politics. HKP brings expertise in research and education through its connection to the Lahore academic, legal and journalist community to highlight persistent problems of the community. The leader of HKP, Ammar Ali Jan, will be contesting election for a provincial assembly seat from Chungi Amar Sadhu, the locality of their political base. TLP does not engage in grassroots organizing, instead it relies on fiery speeches and sermons, and presumed incidents of blasphemy in France, Sweden, and other places to whip up support for its brand of politics. TLP also operates as a societal actor that attempts to share in state sovereignty by making deals with local law enforcement in Punjab to jointly investigate presumed incidents of blasphemy. It also frequently deploys its moral sovereignty based on its claim to be the most effective custodian for Namoos-e-Risalat to control neighborhoods in towns and cities of Punjab.

**F**urrukh Khan:

**Bio:**

Dr Furrukh Khan is an Asst. Professor at the Gurmani School of Humanities and Social Sciences at LUMS and works on the Partition of India, Postcolonial Literature and Oral History.

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**Abstract:**

**Articulating the 'denkey route': European dreams, Pakistani migration narratives**

Migration from Pakistani Punjab to Europe, along the 'denkey route', has received increasing attention, and research with Pakistani migrants who have made it to Europe shows their experiences of journey and irregularised life in Greece, Italy, or Germany. We take a complementary approach, and juxtapose these European dreams with local Pakistani migration narratives, as these emerge in a village with a salient migration culture. We draw on data from fieldwork in district Mandi Bahauddin (interviews, focus groups, and fieldnotes). First, we consider changing dreams and aspirations, as these have evolved over time, from initial migration history, with pioneers and their migrant houses, to young men going to Europe seemingly at any cost, to an apparent reduction in migration aspirations over time. Second, we interrogate local migration narratives, foregrounding denkey route etymology, masculinities and gender, socio-economic hierarchies and change, but also reflecting on who goes and who stays, and the perceptions of this. In conclusion, we stress the need to analyse European dreams, in the context of local migration narratives, foregrounding the stories told and the lives of these stories, in specific places around the world. The research was part of the MIGNEX project, on links between migration, development and policy.

## **G**hulam Ali Shair:

### **Bio:**

Dr G. Ali Shair joined the Department of Sociology in March 2024 as a Research Fellow on the project EXIT: Exploring Sustainable Strategies To Counteract Territorial Inequalities From An Intersectional Approach , a cross-national project funded by Horizon Europe. Prior to this, Dr Shair was an Early Career Fellow in the Institute of Advanced Studies (IAS) at the University of Warwick where he had been building on his PhD research via several outputs. Dr Shair's research interests lie in the areas of cultural studies, diaspora and racialised soundscapes with a particular focus on conceptualising Muslim modernity and musical sound at the intersections of ethnicity and religion. Deploying a Gramscian framework, his doctoral research explored the relationship between religious nationalism and 'Hindustani' classical music in the South Asian context of Pakistan.

Recently, Dr Shair has been expanding his research interests by testing the significance of cultural studies approaches/frameworks for a nuanced understanding of spatial and territorial inequalities. In particular, he is interested in exploring the sonic aspects of urban experience to conceptualise marginalities and exclusions at the intersections of race, religion, gender and class.

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### **Abstract:**

#### **Baithaks and the Surviving Scene of Classical Music in Pakistan**

This paper brings together the ecology model as developed in ethnomusicology (**Neuman** 1990) with insights from Urban Studies for studying the survival of Hindustani classical music in Pakistan. For this purpose, I will present an ethnography of contemporary baithak culture and space in the city of Lahore, often described as the 'cultural capital of Pakistan'. I have drawn on insights from Urban Studies to spatialise the interplay of practices, meanings and materiality for studying performance cultures in a postcolonial urban environment (Simone 2004, 2022). Taking on a cross-disciplinary approach, this paper brings to the fore the multiple socio-cultural meanings the space of baithak carries in relation to classical music's marginalisation from dominant national cultural formations in postcolonial Pakistan. The space of baithak engenders a polemical imagining of modernity and tradition that despite being ambivalent remains contextually fluid and is exercised by the practitioners of classical music in an improvised manner.

## **G**ordon Mathews:

### **Bio:**

Gordon Mathews is an Emeritus Research Professor in the Dept. of Anthropology at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and is now Chair of the World Council of Anthropological Associations. He has written or edited ten books, several on the topic of low-end globalization: *Ghetto at the Center of the World: Chungking Mansions, Hong Kong* (2011), *Globalization from Below: The World's Other Economy* (2012, edited with Gustavo Lins Ribeiro and Carlos Alba Vega) and *The World in Guangzhou: Africans and Other Foreigners in South China's Global Marketplace* (2017, written with Linessa Dan Lin and Yang Yang). He has been convening a weekly class of African entrepreneurs in Chungking Mansions, Hong Kong for the past eighteen years, who have helped shape many of his ideas. He can be reached at [cmgordon@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:cmgordon@cuhk.edu.hk)

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### **Abstract:**

#### **The Chinese University of Hong Kong**

This talk will discuss low-end globalization: the transnational flow of people and goods involving relatively small amounts of capital and informal, often semi-legal or illegal transactions, often associated with the developing world, but apparent throughout the world. It first discusses the key features of low-end globalization. It then turns to morality: low-end globalization may involve copy goods sent across borders through bribery, but this may also create cheaper prices for consumers: this is how most of Africa became connected to the internet. It then explores the future: Will the internet, with its greater surveillance technologies, lead to the end of low-end globalization? If so, is that to be desired or lamented?

# **H**amraz:

## **Bio:**

Hamraz Ahmad is a doctoral candidate at Alfred Deakin Institute of Citizenship and Globalization, Melbourne, Australia

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## **Abstract:**

### **Chai, Change, Chatter: Migration and State at Quetta Tea Cafes**

The study explores the production of state spaces in the wake of developmental politics by tracing the experience of state in the stories of internal migration resulting in Quetta Tea Cafes (QCs) - generic name of an informal tea-selling franchise in Islamabad. The purpose of this study is to problematize the structural (e.g., Marxist) and functional (e.g., Weberian) understanding of state in Pakistan, i.e., a state is a set of institutions with designated functions, mainly to further the interests of a particular class/group. The structural and functional theories of state in Pakistan have historically culminated in security state and developmental state perspectives. However, recent studies show that state is not a static/top-down entity and is produced and reproduced as a processual space in the anthropological domain through a repetitive and collective performance of social and bureaucratic acts which cannot be restricted to macroeconomy, revenue collection, security, or territoriality. An ethnography of the public sphere that has taken shape at the select QCs from eight zones of Islamabad can reveal insights into the Pashtoon migrants' experience of state who fled from Balochistan, apparently because of violence, poverty, and climate change and established QCs as a nuanced model of migrant commerce in urban Pakistan. The conditions in the migrants' home districts and the opportunities in Islamabad are constitutive of the developmental politics, which is a mix of securitized periphery, ethnopolitical migration trail, and urban business landscape. This politics takes place through an active engagement between state and its subjects operationalizing the logic of economic growth, blurring the security-development distinction, since state is performed in both these realms at the same time with varying spaces across the country's geography.

**H**asan Karrar:

**Bio:**

Hasan H. Karrar is an associate professor in the department of humanities and social sciences at LUMS specializing in China and Central Asian studies.

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**Abstract:**

**China in East Africa: A Starting Framework for Parsing China's Regional Role**

Drawing from exploratory fieldwork in Kenya in 2023, in this talk I will make three observations about China's role in East Africa. First, I posit that by virtue of China being a "newcomer" to the continent, Africa-China relations are not weighed down by history; unlike the West, China is not seen as having exploited the people and the resources of the continent. Second—and related—the West is widely seen to have abandoned Africa in its quest for infrastructure-led modernization, the absence of which, it is believed, has prevented Africa from realizing its development potential. Third, China is both a model and a financier in East Africa's pursuit of large infrastructure which has resulted in multiple large infrastructure projects in the region over the last decade.

## **H**enryk Alff.:

### **Bio:**

Trained in human geography and area studies (Slavic and Central Asian studies), Henryk draws on 20 years of experience in development and transformation research in different regional contexts. He holds a PhD from Potsdam University and currently works as a senior research associate in the TRANSECT research group at Eberswalde University for Sustainable Development (HNEE) in Germany studying agricultural change and bioeconomy scenarios in Kazakhstan. His work is widely published in journals such as the Central Asian Survey and Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space.

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### **Abstract:**

#### **Between border, market and making a living from agriculture: Exploring local transborder transformation processes between Central Asia and China**

In my paper, I am going to scrutinize the complex socio-economic interactions shaping communities across the Kazakhstan-China borderlands. Similar to Pakistan, Central Asia's largest country in the face of Russia's aggression in Ukraine is looking increasingly eastwards towards China as its dominant economic partner, which has dramatic consequences for the development of transborder trade and transport infrastructures as well as local (largely rural) borderland economies as a whole. Drawing on 12 months of ethnographic field research in Southeastern Kazakhstan between 2019 and 2023, I will particularly focus on the transformations in the interconnected spheres of trade and agriculture over the past years. Hence it is asked, how local communities are adapting to ongoing socio-political and economic changes and particularly to the transformation of state power in the Kazakhstan-China borderlands. A surge in crossborder infrastructural development (SEZs, train and road transshipment terminals around Khorgos, highway, railroad and pipeline construction) and a recently relaxed visa regime with China, on the one hand, provide renewed opportunities for borderlanders to access the Chinese market for - among others - agricultural supplies like fertilizer, pesticides and seeds. The borderland population, on the other hand, also seeks (il-) licit trajectories to make a living from the border, despite of both the Chinese and Kazakhstani state authorities taking increasing control of customs, phytosanitary and other border-crossing procedures. While not immediately related to the interaction processes along the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the paper sheds light on the materialization of one of the Belt and Road Initiative's (BRI) neighbouring (and to some degree intertwined) critical junctions. Hence it brings forward evidence of transformed borderland economies in the wake of Chinese developmentalism in Central/South Asia. It too allows for inferences and comparability with regard to local rural communities in Pakistan becoming increasingly immersed in socio-political and -economic implications of ,Global China'.



## **I**rfan Ashraf:

### **Bio:**

Syed Irfan Ashraf is an assistant professor at the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Peshawar and has a PhD in mass communication from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, U.S. His journalism career started in 1997 when he worked for a number of magazines, including Dawn News. He worked as a fixer for many international news outlets, including the New York Times. He is a fellow of SUSI exchange program, 2011 and the next year moved to the U.S to pursue a Ph.D. He is an Op-Ed writer for Dawn, Pakistan, and was awarded by Syracuse University, New York, the Mirror Award in 2014 for his critical commentary on the media. He has published his work in numerous domestic and international academic research journals. In 2022, Anthem Press published his book, "The Dark Side of Journalism."

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### **Abstract:**

#### **Cultural Transitioning from "Fear" to "Fantasy":**

##### **The Domestication of Militarized Violence in Pakistan's Pashtun Periphery**

This study shows how, in Pakistan's troubled Pashtun periphery, the deadly technologies of the global "war on terror" and its cultural iconography coexist to reinforce one another, domesticating violence and its aftermath. In 2012, for instance, a Pashto language song was released in the urban center of Peshawar, the last Pakistani city situated 40 kilometers from Afghanistan's border. A female artist danced on stage to the playback song, a fast-paced dance performance, saying "I am an illusion, a suicide bomb" (Khud kasha dhamaka yum, dhoka yuma, dhoka) (Ali, 2011). The phrase "Khud kasha dhamaka" conjures up a vivid picture of the Taliban's suicide bombs sweeping from Afghanistan to Pakistan in post 9/11 context. Pashto literature also followed the popular trend. One *tapa*, a small poem, says: *Zmka Asman rabandy tang show/Kata khudkash dy bara drone hamly kawena* ("The earth and sky have shrunk upon me, the suicide bomber is raging on the ground, the drones humming above"). Based on the examination of the conflict imagery, i.e., roadside displays and slogans, this study shows how an emerging symbiotic relationship between violence and its representation inside the conflict zone contributes to what Achille Mbembe called "necropolitics," that is "the subjugation of life to the power of death" (p. 40). We spatially referred to this violence market and its spatial politics elsewhere as the "necro-space," a zone of destruction where militarized behavior and technologies blend seamlessly with cultural iconography (Ashraf & Shamas, 2020). (Ashraf & Shamas, 2020). I argue that this cultural form of violence continues to proliferate in the speech acts and reproduce the imagery of violence, death and destruction, filling the troubled space with seeds of self-fulfilling pathological outcomes extending violence beyond the conflict zone. The State's policy on geostrategic priority for bordering regions needs to be reviewed in order to replace it with geoeconomic openings that carries the possibilities of challenging this "necrospace".

**J**ohann Chacko:

**Bio:**

Johann Chacko is a doctoral researcher at the Department of Politics and International Studies at SOAS, University of London, and is the author of a number of academic publications. He received his M.A. and B.A. in Near Eastern Studies from the University of Arizona. Johann is the South Asia columnist at The National, the UAE's newspaper of record, and a research fellow with Knology in New York City. <https://soas.academia.edu/JohannChacko>

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**Abstract:**

**The Cold War Origins of Pakistan's Silk Road Dreams**

Preceding the announcement of CPEC by over a decade, the 2002 decision to develop Gwadar as a deep-water port was driven by the concept of Pakistan as an enabler for the flow of goods and energy between Central Asia and the Indian Ocean Region. The same ambition of creating a 'new Silk Road' was energetically pursued by General Naseerullah Babar 1994-96, shaping Pakistani policy towards Afghanistan and ex-Soviet Central Asia in several ways, including energetic support for the nascent Taliban movement. Although the fall of Soviet Communism and the dissolution of the USSR is generally described as a geopolitical surprise, Pakistan anticipated both events, and was well placed to exploit the ensuing opportunities. However, despite this advantage it repeatedly failed to achieve the kind of positive effects it sought. I argue that Pakistan's preparedness and ineptness alike have common origins that date back to 1977. The incoming Carter (and subsequently Reagan) National Security Council elevated a previously marginalised school of Soviet area studies which predicted - and sought to accelerate- the break-up of the Soviet Empire into its constituent republics. Like the Baltic republics and Ukraine, Soviet Central Asia was seen as an area of special promise, with Afghanistan and Pakistan as key conduits. However, while insightful knowledge work on the USSR's western periphery was generated by scholars of indigenous origin (e.g. Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Russians, etc), guidance on Soviet Central Asia was filtered through the highly othering orientalism of figures like Alexandre Bennigsen. These flawed assessments generated a highly misleading emphasis on Islam and Islamic identity, which aligned well with the pan-Islamist ideology of the Zia and post-Zia era Pakistan Army. While Western work generated useful insights into Moscow's decision-making and the future of the Soviet system, it also reinforced official Pakistan's cognitive biases about its immediate neighbourhood, weakening its ability to generate rational policy. Although US and Pakistani policy processes have decoupled and the Pakistan Army's ideological framing has shifted, Pakistan's Silk Road dreams will continue to elude realisation until the knowledge systems that inform policy are both rigorous and bottom-up in nature.

## **K**amran Anwar:

### **Bio:**

Kamran Anwar took a year-long sabbatical from his finance career to create *Songs of the Sufi*, an award-winning documentary film on classical qawwali co-produced with Dr Katherine Schofield. Driven by his passion for Qawwali and his desire to conserve classical Qawwali roots and inform others about the unknown nuances of this spiritual music genre, the film covers the history, culture and the core message of classical qawwali. Prior to this endeavour, he directed *Rung*, a widely acclaimed collection of traditional Qawwali CDs featuring extensive insights on the genre, performers, and Qawwali translations, each amassing 5 million+ YouTube views. He also researched and narrated *Hidden Gems of Lahore*, a Destinations Media series uncovering Lahore's unique historic sites. He is a frequent speaker on art and culture and is an avid collector of miniature paintings, Indian silver, and contemporary Pakistani art.

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**K**iran K. Sunar:

**Bio:**

Kiran K. Sunar is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Asian Studies at the University of British Columbia, Canada. Kiran's research and teaching coagulate around literature, religion, and culture in Punjab across its borders and into its diasporas, exploring questions of gender, sexuality, religion, and ecology.

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**Abstract:**

**Circuiting the Beloved: Travels and Trades of Pots and Pyaar in Qissa Sohni Mahinwal**

An emerging discussion across South Asian studies presupposes new possibilities for conceptualizing desire, sexuality, and love in cosmopolitan worlds. However, histories of desire in South Asia are most often theorized from the standpoint of cosmopolitan and elite orientations as opposed to vernacular and ordinary sites of possibility. In the Punjabi Sohni Mahinwal narrative tradition of Qissā Sohni Mahinwāl, two lovers of different castes and regions travel to drown in the legendary river Chenab due to their efforts to meet surreptitiously in the night. In different instantiations of the narrative, the river, the earthenware clay pot, and the thigh are all ordinary arbiters of longing and desire. What can ordinary objects and their travels in narrative love stories offer in theorizing a history of desire? How do ordinary objects and sites become lines of flight for invocations, evocations, and receptions of desire? How is the figure of the outsider or the traveller functioning in these vernacular worlds? This paper engages these possible sites of inquiry to re-conceptualize the framing of love and desire in Punjabi literary and social worlds and those beyond it.

**M**ajeed Akhtar:

**Bio:**

Majeed Akhtar is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Geography at King's College London. His work is at the intersection of geopolitics, infrastructures, and natural resources.

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**Abstract:**

**Geographies of the Colombo Plan: Empire, expertise, and catch-up capitalism in Asia**

The Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic Development in South and Southeast Asia, or the Colombo Plan, was founded in the mid-20th century as program of technical assistance, training, and mutual aid primarily between Commonwealth countries. The figures of the foreign expert and the foreign student were the beating heart of the Colombo Plan. These experts and students travelled not only between the white metropole and the Asian periphery, but also between Asian peripheries in an attempt to forge a trans-regional dimension to the emerging mosaic of national capitalisms emerging from the dissolution of the British Empire. Experts' movements were enabled by a host of negotiations, conditions, and assumptions at multiple scales - from the international sanctity of Sterling to the domestic requirements of foreign experts in their new places of residence. Drawing on archival material from the US, UK, Singapore, and Malaysia, this paper is part of new research that highlights the connections between decolonization, expertise, and uneven capitalist development in Asia.

**M**anahil:

**Bio:**

Manahil Raza was lead Research Assistant for the Women in Public Service in Pakistan Oral History Archive Project.

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# **M**arta Bivand Erdal:

## **Bio:**

Marta Bivand Erdal is a Research Professor at Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) and Co-director PRIO Migration Centre and works on migration.

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## **Abstract:**

### **Articulating the ‘denkey route’: European dreams, Pakistani migration narratives**

Migration from Pakistani Punjab to Europe, along the ‘denkey route’, has received increasing attention, and research with Pakistani migrants who have made it to Europe shows their experiences of journey and irregularised life in Greece, Italy, or Germany. We take a complementary approach, and juxtapose these European dreams with local Pakistani migration narratives, as these emerge in a village with a salient migration culture. We draw on data from fieldwork in district Mandi Bahauddin (interviews, focus groups, and fieldnotes). First, we consider changing dreams and aspirations, as these have evolved over time, from initial migration history, with pioneers and their migrant houses, to young men going to Europe seemingly at any cost, to an apparent reduction in migration aspirations over time. Second, we interrogate local migration narratives, foregrounding denkey route etymology, masculinities and gender, socio-economic hierarchies and change, but also reflecting on who goes and who stays, and the perceptions of this. In conclusion, we stress the need to analyse European dreams, in the context of local migration narratives, foregrounding the stories told and the lives of these stories, in specific places around the world. The research was part of the MIGNEX project, on links between migration, development and policy.

**M**atthew J. Nelson:

**Bio:**

Matthew J. Nelson is a Professor of Politics, currently serving as Head of Department (Department of Politics and International Studies) at SOAS University of London. His research focuses on the comparative and international politics of South Asia with an emphasis on religion and politics, law and politics, comparative political thought, non-elite politics, and democracy.

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**Abstract:**

**Informality: Frustrations and Future Research**

Touching on various strands of research regarding Pakistan, this presentation outlines some of the ways in which formal and informal processes (and their interaction) have been understood. The presentation begins with a set of frustrations regarding (a) approaches that misread the procedural distinction between formal and informal systems as a normative distinction (e.g. informal = 'good') and (b) approaches that overstate the relative power of formal systems (e.g. informal = 'weak'). Drawing on the work of Hans-Joachim Lauth (2000), as well as Gretchen Helmke and Steven Levitsky (2004), I conclude with a non-normative typology in which formal-informal interactions are described as (a) "complementary" (mutually reinforcing), (b) "substitutive" (in which one replaces the other to pursue common ends), (c) "competing" (substantively incompatible), or (d) "accommodating" (in which formal systems allow for informal processes that subvert them). With reference to Pakistan, I focus on the value of future research regarding the final type: accommodating interactions.



# **M**urtaza Taj:

## **Bio:**

Dr. Murtaza Taj earned both his Ph.D. and M.Sc. degrees in Electronic Engineering and Computer Science at Queen Mary University of London (QMUL), UK, in 2009 and 2005, respectively. Currently, he holds the position of Associate Professor at the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), within the Syed Babar Ali School of Science and Engineering in Pakistan. His expertise and research focus primarily span the domains of Computer Vision, Graphics, and Machine Learning, with a particular emphasis on understanding 2D and 3D scenes and the automatic generation of 3D models from raw point cloud data.

At LUMS, Dr. Taj spearheads the Computer Vision and Graphics Lab, a pivotal research group within the Department of Computer Science. His work in Graphics and Visualization, especially within the realm of digital heritage, has pioneered the adoption of modern digital technologies such as Laser Scanning and Photogrammetry in Pakistan's archaeology and cultural heritage sectors. His work has received the "CyArk Summit Award" in Education as the most innovative educational institute in the field of digital preservation and the Times Higher Education Awards for "Excellence and Innovation in the Arts".

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## **Abstract:**

The discourse on "Memory and Nationalism" in Pakistan is highly influenced by the foundational memories of the Partition of India in 1947 which resulted in the creation of Pakistan as a separate state for Muslims. This pivotal event has historically skewed the focus towards the Mughal Empire and the British Raj, inadvertently sidelining the rich tapestry of histories that predate these eras, notably the Indus Valley Civilisation and its significant non-Islamic heritage. This can be witnessed through the declining number of visitors to museums across the country, signaling a disconnect with the broader spectrum of Pakistan's historical and cultural legacy. Furthermore, while many of the monuments from the last few hundred years are still intact, those that are related to earlier eras only exist either as archeological remains and/or as scattered collections in museums. In the current era marked by technological advancements, digital heritage emerges as a potent tool to bridge this gap and to bring different layers of history to the forefront while reducing the bias due to the current social, religious, and ethnic diversity of the country. It helps us to re-live those eras through mediums such as virtual reality and virtual tours, democratizing access to the past while making it more tangible and engaging for people everywhere. Such immersive experiences not only enrich our understanding of Pakistan's multifaceted history but also play a crucial role in recalibrating the narrative of nationalism to be more inclusive. Presenting a holistic view of our heritage, such as via digital heritage, is essential to strengthening the internal cohesion of the nation and also to project a more nuanced and enriched identity of Pakistan on the international stage.

**R**abia Kamal:

**Bio:**

Assistant Professor of Anthropology, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS)

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**Abstract:**

**Transnational Digital Counterpublics: the challenges of Pakistani feminist activism and allyship online**

In this paper, I explore the ways in which technology and social media are shaping and being shaped by how urban Pakistani gender minorities engage with “the political.” I use the phrase “the political” to broadly reference such practices as civic and political engagement, transnational activism, and political/social commentary around popular culture. Through digital ethnography and offline participant observation and interviews, I argue that while Pakistani feminists and transactivists have often found spaces of support and empowerment online that are not afforded to them in the public sphere, digital spaces also present their own sets of challenges. Some questions explored in the paper are: How are minority activists responding to transnational gendered/racialized interpellations through content creation and online engagement? And how do factors such as class and location shape and limit transnational feminist alliances in both Pakistan and its diasporic communities? In particular, I share preliminary findings that demonstrate the ways in which the nexus of neoliberalism, surveillance capitalism, and political polarization serve to dismantle feminist counterpublics online, and pose serious barriers to structural change offline.

## **R**afiullah Kakar:

### **Bio:**

Rafiullah Kakar is an accomplished public policy and development expert with specialization in public sector governance and institutional reforms, social development, and the political economy of development. His research interests encompass ethnic conflicts, federalism, CPEC, education delivery, and political economy analysis. With over 12 years of distinguished professional experience in public and international development organizations in Pakistan and the United Kingdom, Mr. Kakar has demonstrated expertise in contributing to academic literature through numerous published academic articles, book chapters, reports, and policy papers. Mr. Kakar holds two master's degrees from the University of Oxford, where he earned the prestigious Rhodes scholarship.

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### **Abstract:**

#### **School Education in Post-18th Amendment Balochistan: A Political Economy Perspective**

In the wake of devolution of education to provinces through the 18th Constitutional Amendment, there has been a noticeable increase in public spending on school education in Balochistan. Moreover, certain reforms have been introduced in education planning, management and monitoring. These measures have enhanced availability of physical infrastructure and reading and writing material for schools and improved education monitoring. There is also evidence of marginal improvements in overall literacy rate and reading and arithmetic skills.

Notwithstanding the limited gains, the reforms and increased public spending have not translated into commensurate improvements in schooling and learning outcomes. Analysis of proximate causes indicates that learning outcomes aren't improving because the various elements of education system are not aligned around the goal of learning. In contrast, expansion of schooling appears to have remained a strategic objective of education delivery but it hasn't experienced significant improvement either because of the existence of serious policy incoherence among various elements of education system. Prevalence of centralized, politically-influenced, discretionary and outdated planning and management practices combined with ineffectiveness of accountability mechanisms across the education delivery chain have undermined the effectiveness of well-intended reforms.

A deeper exploration of these issues through the "political settlement" lens reveals that education outcomes aren't recording major improvements because elite interest is aligned neither with the goal of learning nor access. Instead, elite interest is aligned more around patronage politics. Short-term, clientelist, political objectives govern education provision, owing to the highly fragile, exclusive, fragmented and personalized nature of political settlement. The predatory nature of political settlement has adversely affected both the design and implementation of reform initiatives.

## **R**ashid Memon:

### **Bio:**

Dr Rashid Memon, Asst. Professor Social and Economic Survey Research Institute, Qatar University is labour economist with interest in discrimination in hiring and pay.

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### **Abstract:**

#### **Exploring Women's Agency under Male Breadwinner Norms in Keti Bandar**

Gendered norms of work are considered important determinants of women's labor force participation and there are now concerted policy efforts to make norms equitable. In the context of a small fishing village in the Sindh province of Pakistan, we explore notions of self-perceived agency and empowerment when, in the face of adversity, norms are broken in practice but sustained in principle. We find that women articulate their empowerment not from the perspective of being able to realize their potential for their own selves but from the perspective of sharing their husband's burdens and contributing to the family above and beyond themselves. Counterintuitively, it seems that it is precisely sustaining the male breadwinner norm in principle that allows the practice of norm-breaking to be empowering.

## **R**ashid Munir:

### **Bio:**

Rashid Munir is an Assistant Professor of Politics in the Humanities and Social Sciences department at LUMS. His research interests are in domestic sources of foreign policy, asymmetric security relations, and the impact of interest groups on external relations of minor states. His work has been published in *Political Studies Review*, *Politics and Religion*, and *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics*, among other journals and edited volumes. He teaches courses in International Relations and Research Methods.

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### **Abstract:**

#### **Shades of Grey: Ideological Differences and FATF 'Grey-listing'**

This paper argues that decision making by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is not free from political pressure by its influential members. The FATF oversees international efforts to combat money laundering and terrorism financing, and can 'grey-list' states with lax policies. Grey-listing threatens weaker states with losing access to international credit and financial markets, and influential FATF members use this threat to punish divergent states. FATF grey-listing is therefore a powerful mechanism to coerce states into complying, but it remains theoretically underexplored. This paper seeks to fill this gap and demonstrates that the likelihood of being greylisted is higher when a state is ideologically distant from influential FATF members, such as the United States and the other G-7 countries. Empirical evidence is presented by employing original data on FATF compliance for 103 countries from 2008-2019.

## **R**asul Bakhsh Rais:

### **Bio:**

Dr Rasul Bakhsh Rais has been a Professor of Political Science in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, LUMS, Lahore, since 2002. He took time off from LUMS and served as Director General of the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad (August 2013-December 2015). Before joining LUMS, he served as a professor of International Relations for 22 years at the Quaid-i-Azam University and as Director of the Area Study Centre for over a decade.

Dr Rais holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of California, Santa Barbara. He is author of *Imagining Pakistan: Modernism, State and the Politics of Islamic Revival* (Lexington Books, 2017), which was declared Best Non-Fiction Book of the Year at the Karachi Literature Festival 2018, and recipient of German Peace, at the KLF, 2018; *Islam, Ethnicity and Power Politics: Constructing Pakistan's National Identity* (Oxford University Press 2017), *Recovering the Frontier State: War, Ethnicity and State in Afghanistan* (Lexington Books, 2008), *War Without Winners: Afghanistan's Uncertain Transition after the Cold War* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1996), *Indian Ocean and the Superpowers: Economic, Political and Strategic Perspectives* (Croom Helm, 1986), editor of *State, Society and Democratic Change in Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997) and with Charles H. Kennedy, *Pakistan 1995* (Westview Press, 1996).

He was awarded a Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship in International at the University of California Berkeley (1984-85), a Hoover Institution Fellowship at Stanford University (Fall 1985), and a Social Sciences Research Fellowship at Harvard University (1988-89). He served as a Distinguished Quid-i-Azam Professor at Columbia University (1991-94). During this period, he was also conferred a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship. He received a Fulbright Fellowship at Wake Forest University (1998-99).

He is the recipient of Sitar-e-Imtiaz for contribution to education, a civil award given by the Government of Pakistan, 2009; the President's Pride of Performance Award in Education given by the Government of Pakistan, 2003; HEC Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in Research, 2013; HEC Distinguished National Professor of Political Science, 2015-2017.

His current research focuses on "Geopolitics of Pakistan's Western Borderlands". He writes opinion-page columns for *Dunya News* and *Arab News* on political, security, and social issues and comments on the same issues in the Pakistani and international media.

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### **Abstract:**

#### **In the Shadow of Wars: The Tribe and State in Pakistan's Western Borderlands**

Historically, there has been an uneasy relationship between the central authority of the state and the tribes in the frontier regions, mainly due to the geopolitical factors but also because of the conflictive needs of the two entities. Structurally, both of them represent an authority structure, institutions, leadership, and rules to govern populations. While the modern notion of national sovereignty and

territorial control would require assimilation of the tribe into the larger national community, the tribe and its chieftain would strive to maintain their autonomy, traditions, and political arrangements. While the British India and Pakistan pursued a colonial framework of “separation” and indirect control, the geopolitics of conflict in Afghanistan and Pakistan’s policy of using the borderlands as the frontline of intervention have greatly transformed the social landscape of the region by bringing in the new militant actors, shifting Pakistan’s policy from low state presence to political integration—the merger of erstwhile FATA into KPK. My proposition is that wars in Afghanistan, and as an effect of those wars, the persistence of insurgency and counter-insurgency campaigns have caused traumatic and transformative effects on the traditional social structure of the tribe and its relationship with the Pakistani state. The new social movements around the Pashtun identity, rights and justice are signs of a change from tribal leadership to more grassroots level activism to engage the state on citizenship rights. Using empirical research through visits to the region and expert interviews, I will explore how the geopolitics of multiple conflicts with the involvement of local, regional, state, and non-state actors have come to redefine relationship of the tribes of the borderlands with the Pakistani state. Will use insights from geopolitical theory, state-building strategies and post-conflict reconstruction literature to explain change in tribe-state relationship.

**S**aba Shahid:

**Bio:**

Saba Shahid is a sustainable development consultant and researcher. Currently she leads the Partnerships & Projects Team at the LUMS Center for Entrepreneurship. She conducted this particular study with the Centre for Public Policy and Governance at FCCU.

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**Abstract:**

**People-to-People Contact under CPEC: Fact or Fiction?**

People-to-people contact—a sub-measure of cultural diplomacy—is pervasively used within the context of the BRI and CPEC in particular as a priority objective. The potential of economic collaboration between the two communities can significantly be enhanced where there is better cultural understanding on both sides. Yet, efforts to promote cultural understanding have been limited to state fostered programmatic exchanges including academic scholarships and events organized by the countries' respective governments. Local experiences of Chinese workers in Pakistan as an indicator of how the objective of people-to-people contact under the CPEC is realized remains unexplored. There is a need to develop a nuanced evaluation of what exactly engagement looks like beyond the official, diplomatic sphere. Focusing on Chinese people arriving in Pakistan in the last ten years, coinciding with the launch of the CPEC, my research explores the localized experiences of Chinese migrants in terms of their social interactions and engagements outside of their professional commitments. Field work and conversations with Chinese expats in Lahore reveal that experiences in duration of stay and perceptions of differing business cultures, security concerns, socio-ethical value systems, and gender dynamics form the experience of Chinese professionals living in Pakistan. Insights from this primary research indicate that experiences of social life are deeply tied to professional/business experiences and that for effective agglomeration forces to set in, it is essential that positive feedback pipelines are established.



**S**adaf Ahmad:

**Bio:**

Sadaf Ahmad is an Associate Professor of Anthropology in the Mushtaq Ahmad Gurmani School of Humanities and Social Sciences at LUMS. Sadaf completed her Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology from Syracuse University in 2006. She is the author of *Transforming Faith: A Story of Al-Huda and Islamic Revivalism Among Urban Pakistani Women* (2009) and the editor of *Pakistani Women: Multiple Locations and Competing Narratives* (2010). Her current ethnographic research project is on Pakistani female police officers.

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**Abstract:**

**Pakistani Female Police Officers—The Axes of a Small, Diverse Minority**

Pakistani female police officers form less than two per cent of the police force in Pakistan, making them a very small minority in a profession that continues to be associated with men and “masculine” characteristics in Pakistan (and most other parts of the world). In this paper, I draw upon the ethnographic research I have conducted on female officers in all ranks across cities in Pakistan to shed light on their low numbers. However, in doing so, I also demonstrate that the reasons that help explain their low percentage do not apply equally to all ranks or cadres. Female officers' numbers, mandates, challenges and opportunities for growth vary across rank and cadre, and can be further informed by region. This paper aims to introduce some of this intersectional variance to demonstrate that this patriarchal or gendered organization does not impact all female officers in identical ways.

## **S**ameen Andleeb Mohsin Ali:

### **Bio:**

Sameen A. Mohsin Ali is Assistant Professor of International Development at the University of Birmingham and co-director of the Women in Public Service in Pakistan Oral History Archive. She works on governance and reform through the lens of bureaucratic and party politics, institutional design, and the politics of aid, primarily in Pakistan. She was previously Assistant Professor of Political Science at the Lahore University of Management Sciences.

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### **Abstract:**

#### **Creating an Oral History Archive of Government Work: The Women in Public Service in Pakistan Project**

The Women in Public Service in Pakistan (WPSP) oral history project records the professional life histories of women employed in public sector institutions. This rich archive of women's experiences serves public, scholarly, and institutional interests and is comparable to oral history projects on government in other parts of the world and intervenes in ongoing debates about digital oral history. At the same time the Women in Public Service in Pakistan oral history project is unique, not only in its use of oral history method to study contextual exploration of the nature of government employment in Pakistan, but also in the adaptations to best practices that we found necessary to undertake an oral history project in this setting. Our methods and approaches and conclusions are instructive, both for scholars of near contemporary history in Pakistan and for oral historians seeking to establish their own projects on women in public life. Most of all, the archive demonstrates that oral history methods enable a substantial intervention in the study of government employment in Pakistan.

This panel brings together members of the team that worked on the archive, as well as those whose work has informed its development, to discuss the role of women in public service in Pakistan and the value of oral history methods in telling their stories.

**S**ana Haroon:

**Bio:**

Sana Haroon is Professor of History and Asian Studies at UMass Boston and co-director of the Women in Public Service in Pakistan Oral History Archive and was Visiting Professor at LUMS in 2019-2020. She works on social organization and authority under the administrative and legal regimes of colonial South Asia and postcolonial Pakistan and historical methodologies for the study of Muslim South Asia.

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**Abstract:**

**A Social History of Tribalism in Pakistan's Borderlands**

Since 1947, people have narrated tribal genealogies and myths of origin to elicit collective agreement about their claims to land in Pakistan's borderlands. The state, fearful of its enemies within and beyond these borderlands, documented and valorized this ordering of society. Had the colonial state carried out a land settlement, comprehensive cadastral land survey records, land registry and courts here before 1947, as it had done in territories to the east, then these calculations, testimonies and agreements of belonging and rights relative to land would not have been required. In the absence of a land record, people have narrated origin, descent, settlement in the locale and family sizes in tribal courts, accompanied by their witnesses to make claims to land. Activities in these tribal courts reproduced the tribe while erasing histories of migration, land sales and purchases and extra-tribal affinities. James Scott asks whether the tribe preceded the state, or the state preceded the tribe. The idea that the land of Pakistan's northwest was inhabited by tribes, subdivided into clans, who between them laid claim to every square inch of this territory, was a construction of and documented by the state. Individuals in Pakistan's northwest attached their own claims onto tribal genealogies, making the tribe in successive instances since 1947.

**S**arwat Shabbir:

**Bio:**

Name: Dr Sarwat Halima Haider

Area of Specialisation: Textiles and Clothing

PhD from University of the Punjab

Working as Assistant Professor in Govt Degree College for Girls Skardu

Hailing from Siksa Chorbat (Gilgit Baltistan)

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**Abstract:**

**Exploring Trade Practices in Little Tibet: Unraveling the Complex Interplay of Informal Economies and State Dynamics**

This anthropological study delves into the intricate interplay between informal economies and state dynamics in the unique context of Little Tibet, offering a nuanced understanding of trade practices within this culturally rich and economically dynamic enclave. Situated at the crossroads of geopolitical tensions, Little Tibet now known as Baltistan provides a compelling setting to explore the ways in which informal economies shape and are shaped by state structures. The research employs a multi-faceted approach, combining ethnographic methods, participant observation, and in-depth interviews to unravel the complex tapestry of trade networks operating in this region. Little Tibet's economy is characterized by a vibrant informal sector that exists alongside formal state-sanctioned channels. This study seeks to elucidate the motivations behind individuals' participation in informal economies, shedding light on the socio-cultural factors that influence trade practices. Furthermore, the research investigates the intricate relationship between the informal economy and state dynamics. The state, often characterized as a regulatory force, is analyzed not only in terms of its impact on informal trade but also as a dynamic actor influenced by the very informal practices it seeks to control. This reciprocal relationship is crucial in understanding the resilience and adaptability of informal economies in the face of state interventions. The findings highlight the resilience of Little Tibet's (Baltistan) informal economies in navigating the complex terrain of state regulations, political pressures, and cultural influences. The study contributes to broader anthropological discussions on the adaptability of informal economic systems and their role in shaping, and being shaped by, state structures. By focusing on Little Tibet (Baltistan), this research provides a rich case study that offers valuable insights into the intricate dynamics of informal economies within a contested geopolitical space.

**S**erena Hussain:

**Bio:**

Associate Professor, Centre for Trust Peace and Social Relations, Coventry, UK

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**Abstract:**

**Campaigning for Disaggregation: Azad Kashmiri Diaspora Identity Politics in Britain**

Migration from Azad Kashmir (AJK) to Britain commenced during the colonial period, however it was not until the 1950s that larger waves of migration from the disputed territory began to take place. Today it is estimated the diaspora form half of all British Muslims, forming one of the largest non-European origin communities in the UK. Yet very little is known about the socioeconomic, political, and ethno-linguistic nuances outside of the community itself; and although a growing number of scholars, activists, and writers continue to emerge from the British Kashmiri community, their work remains at the periphery when discussing minorities in the UK. Grassroots identity movements continue to demonstrate a significant number of those from the community believe this masks both internal nuances, but also has a detrimental impact on the lived experiences of the community for representation and policy provision. Although many pioneers from South Asia who participated in political activism and trade unions, were from Azad Kashmir, there is evidence of discrimination by other South Asian heritage groups within a British context (see e.g. Hussain, 2015; Kalra et al, 2019). This often involves negative stereotyping and degradation of language and culture, as well as access to political platforms as 'Kashmiris'. Against this backdrop, this paper discusses the 'British Kashmiri Identity Campaign' that took place during the lead up to Census 2021, as a way of discussing continued attempts for Azad Kashmiris to gain an official 'Kashmiri' category within British data collection exercises, separate to the existing 'Pakistani' one.

**S**hahid Kamal:

**Bio:**

Shahid Kamal is an MPhil scholar at the Department of Political Science at FC College Lahore and works as a research assistant at the Institute of Development and Economic Alternatives (IDEAS), Lahore. Shahid's research interests include border studies, conflict zones, and Pak-Afghan relations with a focus on examining the socio-cultural impacts of fencing on communities along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. His recent research on Air pollution and smog governance in Lahore has been supported by UNICEF and UNFPA offices in Pakistan.

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**Abstract:**

**"Between Borders: Examining the Human and Cultural Consequences of Afghan Deportation in the Pukhtun Heartland"**

The Pukhtun region, stretching across Afghanistan and Pakistan, is home to about 49 million Pashtuns and has experienced intricate socio-cultural and geopolitical dynamics over the years. The porous Durand Line between Afghanistan and Pakistan has historically facilitated significant movement of people and goods between the two nations. The issue of Afghan refugees in Pakistan is a longstanding one, rooted in the millions who sought refuge during the Afghan-Soviet War in the 1980s and subsequent conflicts. While many have returned to Afghanistan, a considerable number remain in Pakistan due to ongoing instability, with some even being born in the country and establishing businesses.

In October 2023, the Pakistani government announced a deportation policy to repatriate Afghan refugees, a move that carries socio-cultural implications in the Pukhtun region where Pashtuns share common cultural, ethnic, and linguistic ties. The historical norm of people moving across the border is now disrupted, with forced deportations causing community upheaval, family separation, and socio-economic challenges. An illustrative example is the closure of nearly three hundred tandoor shops in Peshawar due to the deportation of Afghan migrants, leaving the once lively Board Bazaar in Peshawar now deserted.

This paper seeks to investigate the socio-political and cultural impacts of Afghan deportation on the Pakistani Pashtuns, emphasizing its political implications for Pak-Afghan relations. Peshawar, a historical hub for Afghan migrants, is selected as a case study. The research paper will rely on field visits and 10 interviews with locals, government officials, and academicians. The interdisciplinary methodology will specifically focus on the socio-political and economic influences on the Pakistani Pashtun region.

**S**ohail Khan:

**Bio:**

Sohail Khan is pursuing PhD at the National Institute of Pakistan Studies, Quaid-I-Azam University Islamabad. His research interests are migration and border studies. Investigating transformation and informality in Pakistan's border areas with Afghanistan, his dissertation is an ethnographic interrogation of patronage, migration, and changing social structures in Waziristan.

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**Abstract:**

**Border and Control: War and Resistance at Pak-Afghan Borderland**

This paper extends the debate about the post-colonial state exploitation of 'tribal' areas and/or community living on Pakistan-Afghanistan border region. It details the existing structures of power that have been evolved on war footing over the period of four decades, since 1979 and rise of PTM, as an anti-war movement. The paper introduces new archival material to ground the debate on the changing social order in Pakistan 'tribal' areas. Furthermore, the manuscript contributes, by conducting two years fieldwork in PTM's protests and Waziristan, to the existing discussion on PTM. The Paper is divided into three sections. First part investigates the power structure established in tribal areas, since the post-colonial state exploited the economic resource, in the form of border trade that had rooted in colonial experiences of the border. In next section details would be given to know about the evolution of war economy in the region and its contradictions. Here focus would be how social relations were patterned on war footing due to state security strategies after 1979. The last part's emphasis is on PTM. How the movement has evolved and demands end of war over the human bodies and exploitation of economic and political resources in 'Tribal' area of Pakistan.

**S**ummaiya Zaidi:

**Bio:**

Assistant Professor of Law, Department of Law & Policy, Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS)

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**Abstract:**

**The Rann of Kutch: Territorial Conflict between India and Pakistan**

The year 1965 drew international focus on a small tract of land called the Rann of Kutch. A “rann” in Gujarati means “desert,” but the Rann of Kutch is a desert only for part of the year when the water recedes only to return and inundate the area during the monsoon season. The two decades following Partition this boundary, or lack thereof, on the west for Sindh, and east for Indian Gujarat which separated the two new countries became bones of contention that led to flexing by both sides. This conflict led to Pakistan’s first international arbitration in Geneva following a cease-fire agreed to between both parties on 30th June 1965. The Arbitral Tribunal began its oral proceedings September 1966 and over the next eighteen months deliberations at the Palais de Nations led to the Award which resolved a border dispute where Pakistan received 10% of the Greater Rann while India received the rest.

This paper explores this territorial conflict through a study of the case as presented before the Tribunal including interviews with the counsel for Pakistan Aziz Munshi that brought an old case alive. Other sources like declassified secret documents from the United States, Parliamentary proceedings before the House of Lords in the United Kingdom, newspaper reports from the Times of India and the Daily Dawn all contribute to the painting of a colourful account of an otherwise seemingly dry boundary dispute.



**S**yed Amir Shah:

**Bio:**

Syed Amir Shah teaches Political Science at the University of Balochistan. He holds a doctorate in International and Comparative Education with focus on Education in Conflict affected contexts.

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**Abstract:**

**Higher Education, Neo-Liberalism, and Conflict: A case Study of the University of Balochistan in Pakistan**

This paper focuses on the role of peacebuilding in the higher education sector of Pakistan's conflict-affected region of Balochistan. The research is an extended case study of the University of Balochistan. It addresses how the institution's peacebuilding agency has evolved in the face of ongoing ethnic conflict and the neoliberal reforms pursued by the state during the past two decades. The research is based on the study of policy documents, legal instruments, and individual and focus group interviews with various educational actors. The peacebuilding agency of the institution is theorized according to the 4Rs (Novelli et al., 2019; Novelli et al., 2017), which attempts to address the structural causes of conflict and theorize education in relation to its role in contributing to those causes. The analytical lens incorporates conflict's cultural, political, economic, and social dimensions and proposes a holistic strategy for building sustainable peace. Thus, the university's peacebuilding agency is measured through its ability to promote representation, redistribution, recognition, and reconciliation within its institutional setup and the larger society. The research reveals three distinct phases of the evolution of the university's peacebuilding agency i.e., the era of bureaucratic-authoritarianism (1970-1988), the era of reactionary-politicization (1988-2000), and the era of securitized-neoliberalism (2000-present).

**S**yed Raza:

**Bio:**

Syed Sami Raza received his PhD from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, US. He has also been a Fellow at UCLA's Center for India and South Asia (2021-2022). He is an Associate Professor in the Department of International Relations at the University of Peshawar, Pakistan. His research focuses on the intersections of Critical IR and Critical Legal Studies. His latest publications include *The Security State in Pakistan: Legal Foundations* (Routledge, 2019) and *Geopolitics of Pakistan-Afghanistan Borderland* (Routledge 2020). Email: [syedraza@hawaii.edu](mailto:syedraza@hawaii.edu)

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**Abstract:**

**War, Migration and Refugees: The Necropower of Forced Return of the Afghan Refugees from Pakistan**

In October 2023 Pakistani government decided to send the undocumented Afghan (refugees) back to Afghanistan. Millions of Afghan refugees have been living in Pakistan for the past several decades since the Afghan War of 1980s. Later migrations also took place during the 1990s civil war and the first and second take-overs of the Taliban. Although the return of the refugees had been taking place slowly under the UNHCR's assistance, the recent desperate decision to crackdown on the undocumented Afghans became controversial. It has been untimely and precarious for those who had resisted the Taliban governments. In this presentation, I discuss the nature of power used to force the refugees to return by engaging the concept of necropower. I also argue that it might not work and is prone to result in violence, apart from being in contravention of international standards of dealing with refugees.

**T**ahir Kamran:

**Bio:**

Professor Tahir Kamran has been associated with BNU since January 2019. He has a PhD in History from the University of Punjab and has taught and served at key academic positions nationally and internationally at renowned Universities. He has been honored with multiple prestigious fellowships including Fellowship at the Wolfson College and the Allama Iqbal Professorial Fellowship at the University of Cambridge, UK.

Professor Kamran areas of research interest are governance, democracy and religious politics particularly in the regions of Pakistan and South Asia. He has authored several books with a number of research publications, encyclopedic contributions and edited volumes to his credit. Out of the recent notable works, he recently co-authored a book on Lahore titled Lahore: A Portrait of a Colonial City (Hurst & Co.) and co-edited Deobandi Militancy and Faith Based Violence in Pakistan (Palgrave). He has also been serving as an editor for several academic journals and is a founding member and editor for the Pakistan Journal of Historical Studies by Indiana University Press, USA.

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**Abstract:**

**Khilafat Movement: An Instrument of Political Ambivalence**

The Khilafat Movement possessed intriguing antecedents, embodying a dual nature that was both pan-Islamic and representative of Indian Muslim nationalism. Following the decline of Muslim political dominance after 1857, the community sought to establish connections transcending India's borders. These trans-Indian connections aimed to seek leadership and redefine their identity beyond national boundaries. Notably, this was reflected in the constitution of Jamiat-i-Ulama-i-Hind, which maintained a political presence in India while seeking religious and political support beyond its borders. Despite its transnational focus, the Khilafat Movement provided a significant impetus to the Muslim community within India, resulting in a localized and national impact. Consequently, it positioned Indian Muslim politics at the intersection of pan-Islamism and localism, serving as a catalyst for both broader Islamic unity and indigenous political aspirations.

**T**ania Saeed:

**Bio:**

Associate Professor of Sociology, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Lahore  
University of Management Sciences (LUMS)

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**Abstract:**

**Nostalgia and the Politics of Hope: An exploration of Pakistani politics in the diaspora(s)**

Pakistani diaspora(s) have historically played an important role for political parties in Pakistan, particularly during times of crisis, when political leaders have been imprisoned, or forced into exile, with diaspora support becoming central in mobilizing and campaigning abroad. Mainstream political parties have overseas chapters in countries with large Pakistani diaspora(s), where member support ranges from mobilizing voters, lobbying, and/or raising funds. The one political party that has established a formal structure for diaspora support is the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). Its Organization of International Chapters PTI (OIC-PTI) has played an important role in fund raising and gathering international support for the political party and its leader. In this paper, I examine the structure of OIC-PTI focusing on the UK and its local chapters. I draw on interviews I conducted between 2022-23 with office bearers and members of OIC-PTI, as well as PTI supporters in the diaspora who were not part of this organization, to examine internal and community dynamics that inform political activism. I locate these dynamics within a politics of hope and nostalgic imaginings of the (m)otherland, that are further strengthened because of ease of communication through messaging apps like WhatsApp and social media

**T**ayyab Safdar:

**Bio:**

Tayyab Safdar is an Assistant Professor in Global Studies at the University of Virginia. His research explores the strategic response of elite groups in developing countries to China's BRI.

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**Abstract:**

**The BRI in national peripheries: Gwadar and the limits of outsourced development**

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is an important part of the Belt & Road Initiative (BRI). Within CPEC, Gwadar in Pakistan's Baluchistan province enjoys a privileged position in the development imaginaries of Chinese and Pakistani policymakers. Even though Gwadar is central to policymakers' discourse on CPEC and development, it remains part of Pakistan's internal periphery. Since CPEC's launch, the Pakistani state has focused on administrative deepening and securitisation in this strategically vital internal periphery with limited focus on development and the provision of public services. What happens when China's ambitious BRI meets local realities in strategically important internal peripheries like Gwadar? The paper argues that given the perceived weakness of the local state, the Chinese have institutionalised what the paper calls an 'outsourced development' model in Gwadar. In this model, Chinese actors, especially State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), have taken on the responsibility of providing access to public goods and infrastructure. The paper argues that although Chinese SOEs, as non-state transnational actors, fill the void left by a weak domestic state in spaces like Gwadar, they have limited opportunities for independent action given their lack of sovereignty and control. Their ability to pursue their interests is circumscribed, which means they must work through local power structures.

**T**imo Kivimäki:

**Bio:**

Timo Kivimäki, Professor of International Relations, at the Department of Politics, Languages & International Studies, University of Bath and Senior Non-Resident Fellow, Sejong Institute, Seoul, Republic of Korea.

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**Abstract:**

**BRI and the (South) East Asian formula of peace**

The presentation is based on research on the very successful peace formulas of Southeast and East Asia and on a comparison of the elements of such a formula and the elements of the BRI.

ASEAN countries ended their interstate wars with the establishment of the association (Kivimäki 2001), while the transformation of China in the 1970s expanded the zone of no-interstate war with a decades-long delay (Kivimäki 2014b). Since the end of the 1980s, there has not been an interstate war in the region. In addition to the disappearance of interstate warfare, there has been a drastic decline in conflict escalation in East Asia since 1980. While the number of intrastate conflicts has not declined drastically, the number of conflict fatalities has declined by 95% when comparing the post-WWII era before and after the year 1980. East Asian peace can be shown with statistics of conflict to be based on two changes in the East Asian approach to diplomacy and conflict. The most important change, which explains the disappearance of conflict escalation to wars, is the principle of military non-interference in other countries' intrastate disputes and conflicts. This has meant that intrastate conflicts do not escalate into internationalized intrastate wars. Furthermore, the East Asian framing of the role of states as instruments of economic wellbeing has meant restraint to focus on divisive issues, something that had previously compromised states' ability to focus on the promotion of economic development (Kivimäki 2023).

BRI is based on principles of non-interference and facilitation of mutually beneficial economic interaction. This way, the initiative is in principle compatible with the norms of non-interference and the priority of economic development. At the same time, investments in the Maritime Silk Road in the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean Sea, and the Maritime Silk Road in the Pacific Ocean, may increase China's capacity to secure its trade routes and sea lines of communication in a way that reduces control from regional countries, while at the same time compromising the US monopoly of control over international waters. The focus of BRI in areas where economic motives may be less harmonious than in trade, and where the respect of sovereignty of other states is restricted due to sovereignty claims in the South China Sea region. Thus, while the East Asian obsession to develop normally leads to restraint, in the South China Sea, it may lead to the competition of the energy resources of the area (Kivimäki 2014a). Furthermore, while elsewhere the norm of sovereignty safeguards regional disputes from escalation and internationalization, in the South China Sea, where sovereignty over

territorial waters and islands is disputed, respect for the sovereignty of other states does not offer a solution to disputes: it is not possible to respect another country's sovereignty in an area that one claims sovereignty to. Thus, while in general, BRI is built on principles that have helped reduce East Asia's share of global fatalities of conflicts from over 80% to 3%, the focus on the South China Sea focuses attention on disputes that East Asian formula for peace is powerless to deal with.

**T**uba Zeynep:

**Bio:**

Dr. Zeynep Tuba Sungur is Assistant Professor at Social Sciences University of Ankara (ASBÜ) at the Department of Asian Studies. Holding a PhD degree in Area Studies from Middle East Technical University (METU) (2020), Dr. Sungur recently carried out post-doctoral research at SOAS University of London for a year (2022-2023) as a TÜBİTAK Fellow (Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye). Having specialised on Afghanistan with a focus on nation-building and education, Dr. Sungur continues to work on the discourses of nationalism, legacies of tribalism, social structures, modernisation processes and socio-political identities in South Asia.

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**Abstract:**

**Education Constructing National Memory in Islamic Republic of Afghanistan**

The two decades (2001-2021) under US-led NATO occupation in Afghanistan was a time remembered for its ambitious goals of “nation-building” on the Western model. Being a term that was generally misunderstood and often misused, nation-building actually addressed the Western ambitions and policies on Afghanistan; rather than the local realities on the ground. While claiming to be “nation-building,” nobody really cared about what was understood from the concept of nation or *millat* in Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The author’s PhD research, including field research in Kabul in 2018, constitutes an attempt to reveal the local conceptualisation of nation as presented in the discourse of education in Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Employing three major primary resources including official documents, school textbooks and expert interviews conducted at the Ministry of Education, the author’s PhD work uncovers four major elements that make up the idea of the “nation of Afghanistan” or the *millat-e Afghanistan*: (1) Islam, (2) *watan* (homeland), (3) *qawm* and (4) *Afghaniyat* (Afghanness). This conceptualisation, inevitably, works to construct the “national memory” in Afghanistan in a specific way. It is the particular goal of this paper to examine how each of these four elements contribute to memory construction, with Islam presented as a religion introduced long ago into this land; *watan* presented as an Islamic homeland historically defended with *jihad* against foreigners; *qawms* presented as coming together in the *Loya Jirga* since ancient times; and *Afghaniyat* presented as an inseparable part of Muslimness in



Afghanistan. Based on the theoretical readings on memory construction in nationalism studies, this paper seeks to present the case of Afghanistan through concrete examples from textbooks and interview material.

**Keywords:** Afghanistan, Afghan, nation, memory, nation-building

## **V**irender Kalra:

### **Bio:**

Professor Kalra is based in the Department of Sociology at the University of Warwick. He is currently researching British South Asian Vernacular literature in Punjabi, Urdu Gujarati and Bangla. His research interests are broadly on culture and social resistance and he is working on book looking at the Indian Farmers Protests, 2020-21.

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### **Abstract:**

#### **British-Urdu Literature: Gender and Vernacular Voice in Migrant Women's Writing**

Considering the breadth of migrant studies, one aspect that has not received due attention by scholars and commentators alike, is the literature produced by traveller-settlers in their own languages. In the context of migration to Britain, this literature began in the mid-1960s as migrants began to settle and reflect on their new found circumstances. Punjabi and Urdu were the main languages of this writing, but also Gujarati and Bengali (especially poetry). The authors themselves were mainly male migrants from educated backgrounds, who had often been declassed through the migration process. In contrast middle-class status was generally the norm for women writers of Urdu, who mostly migrated through marriage or family reunion. Their writing output offers a glimpse into women's experiences of migration and chimes well with literary norms that focus on interiority, character and affective state. This paper will consider two writers, Razia Ismail (Birmingham) and Safia Siddiqui (London), consider their biographies and literary output.

## **W**aqar Zaidi:

### **Bio:**

Waqar Zaidi is Associate Professor of History at LUMS. He was recently a Member at the School of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, and Verville Fellow at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, Washington, DC. His research focuses on twentieth-century technology and international relations, especially aviation and atomic energy. His first book, *Technological Internationalism and World Order: Aviation, Atomic Energy, and the Search for International Peace 1920-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021) was awarded the 2022 Turriano ICOHTEC Prize for best book in the history of technology. He is currently working on a history of US assistance for civil aviation in West Asia during the Cold War.

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### **Abstract:**

#### **Karachi Airport: From Colonial to Post-Colonial Aviation**

Karachi emerged as a crucial stop in London's air connections with its Indian empire in the 1930s. By the end of the decade, it also served as an important node in broader air routes to the rest of Asia and Australia. By the Second World War Karachi airport was by some measures the busiest and largest civilian airport in British India. Karachi airport remained one of the busiest airports in Asia after independence, and continued as a critical stop on global air routes across Asia until the 1970s. This paper compares and contrasts the colonial nature of Karachi airport in the 1930s to its post-colonial rebirth after partition, and explores in particular continuities and discontinuities in infrastructure, power, status, and flying experience. It argues that Karachi remained a significant stop for foreign airlines because political instability in the Middle East precluded the rise of rival airports. Although the airport retained many aspects of its imperial heritage into the 1950s, US-led modernization gradually molded the airport in new directions from the mid-1950s onwards.

## **W**aqas Sajjad:

### **Bio:**

Dr. Waqas Sajjad has a PhD in Cultural and Historical Studies of Religions from the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley. His research interests are broadly related to Islam in South Asia. He has worked on developments in religious discourses in South Asia, Sufism, the role of religion in social media, and the contemporary roles of religious scholars.

Before joining BNU, Dr. Sajjad has been involved in multiple research-related fields, including in the development sector and in a think tank. He is currently working on his first book-length project, which is an exploration of the polemical engagements between Deobandi and Barelvi traditions in Pakistan.

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### **Abstract:**

#### **Ahmed Raza Khan and Barelvi Memory: The Khilafat and Non-Cooperation Movements**

Ahmed Raza Khan (d. 1921), the founder of the Barelvi tradition, gave significant attention to the nascent Khilafat movement in the last years of his life. His perspective differed from that of many of his peers from among the ulama. In this paper, I explore the writings and fatwas of Khan from this period, highlighting his attitude to the Khilafat and Non-Cooperation Movements. For Khan, the very foundation of the Khilafat movement was flawed since he saw it as an illegitimate caliphate. And in the context of colonial India, he also highlighted how the politics of the movement went against religious teachings. The reasons and historical tradition he was following, and his descriptions of Muslims who did participate and lead these political movements, reveal how the idea of Muslim-ness through the Khilafat, was being debated in India. Beyond an examination of Khan's views, in the second half of the paper I discuss how later Barelvi writings have justified or explained Khan's position, considering the place of the Khilafat movement in nationalistic discourses in Pakistan. The Barelvi presentation of this history becomes more important given the polemics of other competing and opposing traditions who use Khan's views to denigrate his followers today.

**Y**unas Samad:

**Bio:**

Prof. Yunas Samad is Professor of South Asian Studies in the Gurmani School of Humanities and Social Sciences at LUMS and works on South Asia and the Diaspora

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**Abstract:**

**People on the Move: Policy, Migration and Development in Pakistan**

Pakistan's migration policy landscape is primarily focused on external dimensions and overlooks internal dimensions that are equally important. Emigration, immigration, internal migration, and transmigration are all relevant, and collectively, substantial populations are on the move. Policies related to emigration are primarily concerned with remittances and employment pressure, and rarely tie directly with development policies. The aspiration to migrate is lower than the aspiration rates found in Turkey, Tunisia, and Ethiopia. The aspiration to move is associated with connectivity, whether relatives or friends have migrated, or faith networks that allow for mobility, and more developed areas have high rates of irregular migration. In contrast, constraints act as barriers, which may be bureaucratic in nature or simply resources to finance or debt obligations that prevent movement. In terms of immigration, Pakistan has the 4th largest refugee population in the world, with under 2 million Afghans, which it is deporting in large numbers, as well as migrants from Bangladesh, Myanmar, Xinjiang, and Central Asia. Most are undocumented, and there is no simple pathway to citizenship. Many migrants to Pakistan move on, and around 300,000 people use transit networks of people smugglers to move to Europe. Internal migration is substantial, and Pakistan has the fastest urbanizing population in South Asia, but no policy is the policy. This is probably the biggest challenge, and development policy needs to be focused on. While the desire to migrate is still relatively low, this can change with push factors such as environmental change, political instability, and conflict.

## **Z**enya Malik

**Bio:**

Zeyna Malik was a Research Assistant for the Women in Public Service in Pakistan Oral History Archive Project.

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