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"IMAGINATION, PERFORMANCE, EXPRESSION: UNRAVELING GLOBAL PAKISTANI IDENTITY"

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Program in Global Studies

Washington University in St. Louis

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Bachelor of Arts

By

Omaer Naeem

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This thesis represents the accumulative work of my undergraduate experience, shaped by people, places, and institutions. This work exists as an extension of my own personal curiosity, as guided by my family, friends, and mentors. Thank you for trusting me.

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Abstract:

Expressions of Pakistani identity are presently being flattened out by both the state and global West, dominantly being explored through religion. This project argues that gender is used domestically and internationally to present a multifaceted resistance to the state's idea of the national identity. This project interrogates the creation of global Pakistani identity through examining the historical antecedents in imagining Pakistan, resistance to the state's identity-construction process demonstrated in performing Pakistan, and transnational expressions of identity. This project argues that gender, while leveraged by the state in a top-down construction of national identity, has been used bottom-up to reconfigure national identity.

To demonstrate this, this project offers historical developments in the Pakistani state and nation, analyses of two performances of Pakistani identity: "Hum Dekhenge," performed against the backdrop of the Zia regime, and "Joyland," a film released in 2022, banned-and-unbanned by the state, and an exploration into how gender is expressed in Pakistani identity. To support this argument, this project utilizes publicly available secondary and primary sources and independently conducted oral histories from London and Lahore. Overall, this project shows how gender, from the bottom-up, complicates an otherwise simplistic national identity.

Motivation:

As a Pakistani American raised in rural Appalachia, I have continuously questioned the role *my* identity plays in creating community. Certainly a product of American immigration laws and culture, Pakistani American identity manifests in consumable ways –through food, dance, or music, for example. While studying in London during fall 2022, I immersed myself in the British Pakistani community, particularly curious to see how national identity manifested in this community. Through attending university society events, building relationships with my peers, and attending Jummah prayers in East London, I quickly understood that I was rendered an *other* by the Pakistani community, through differences in cultural, lingual, and behavioral practice. By the time I had left London, I began to interrogate how globalization has transformed Pakistani identity, particularly in the trans-Atlantic context. I felt that my identity was being flattened out. My research up to this point looked at the emotional construction of the Pakistani nation state, resistance movements during the Zia regime, and the role Sufism plays in Pakistani society at-large. It was in this context that I interrogated how Pakistani identity continues to be flattened out by the Pakistani state amidst a U.S.-centric globalizing world and how gender presents a multifaceted resistance to the state's idea of a national identity.

I was interested in answering these questions through ethnographic research, particularly back in London. I got in touch with a local middle-aged Pakistani women's group affiliated with a masjid in East London and planned to conduct storytelling sessions around half a year after I had initially left London, during summer 2023. Despite being a Pakistani American *male*, I was rendered to be close enough to engage in conversation with middle-aged British Pakistani women affiliated with a masjid. I was particularly excited by the prospect of centering Pakistani women, who are often marginalized by Pakistani studies, both within and outside of Pakistan.

Unfortunately, the responses to my messages grew few and far between, until eventually, I was completely ignored. As the months turned to weeks, and my return to London approached, I realized I would no longer be able to conduct these storytelling sessions. Perhaps it was the external perception of me being an Pakistani American, rather than British Pakistani, or that I am a male, or that I was just generally incompatible with their perception of a Pakistani Muslim. Or maybe it's all conjecture, and the group simply lacked a centralized administration that could facilitate my communication needs. I felt like I hit a wall, but I understood the gendered context I was operating within. Pakistani sociocultural norms, particularly as they manifest in the British community, tend to view anyone outside of the immediate community (ethnolinguistic, provincial, religious) as an outsider, and to further complicate things, gender and expressions of identity play crucial roles. To cover the distance between an outsider and insider would require an extensive period spent with the community to meaningfully build trust – a luxury I did not have.

While my initial plan to hold conversations failed, I was eager to explore new opportunities to engage with the British Pakistani community. I returned to my peers in London, and through them, connected with the administrative and public relations leaders of other Pakistani masjids in East London. These masjids were frequented by Sunni Punjabi Pakistani migrants and their families. These leaders were younger British-born Pakistanis, who offered to facilitate groups of middle-aged British Pakistani men for me to speak with. With this opportunity in hard, I returned to London half a year after my semester abroad. Once I came to these masjids and spoke with the leaders, I realized that the process of conversation-creating was not yet over. While I had been told through correspondence that the leaders would invite members of the community to voluntarily participate in a group-style conversation, these masjids did not have the institutional

capacity to support my endeavors. I revised my approach, and with their permission, circulated digital flyers sharing the following: I am a Pakistani American undergraduate interested in holding conversations with Pakistani people who lived in Pakistan for at least 1 year during the Zia regime. It was through this process that I finally procured willing participants to hold storytelling sessions with. These participants were all middle-aged Sunni North-Punjabi Pakistani men and had some experience either living in or familial experience with Pakistan during the Zia regime.

With my set of participants finalized, I set individual one-on-one conversations up. I would share the purpose of these interviews, my positionality and interest in the research, and plans upon completion virtually before either having a phone call or talking in person. It was in this process that I understood the complex self-censorship and nuances in expressions of Pakistani identity in British Pakistanis, particularly when reflecting upon Zia's legacy, and how gender was implicitly reinforced. These interviews demonstrated a strong relationship between British Pakistanis and Pakistan, in that these peoples truly believe they will return to Pakistan. These Punjabi uncles I spoke to were deeply invested in Pakistani politics, actively protesting in front of Avenfield House, home to the former Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, brother of now-two-time-Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and head of the Pakistan Muslim League – Nawaz (PML-N) and Sharif clan. Pakistani politics have long been under control of both the army and landed, dynastic families, and these British Pakistanis were large and wide politically connected to Pakistan through the Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI) led by former Prime Minister Imran Khan. These men were proud landowners in the Punjab, showing me pictures of their *havelis* [حویلی] (a large, independent house common across the Indo-Gangetic Plain) and *kothis*, [کوٹھی] (a traditional mansion or courtyard house common in Punjab) and pictures they took on their

annual vacation back *home*. I observed their desire to return to Pakistan as a performance, offered as a response to global Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism, as well as an opportunity to construct their place within a malleable nation. Fragile migrant groups cannot sustain themselves transnationally, even in large numbers.

The British Pakistanis I spoke to were all of ethnically and linguistically Punjabi descent – as am I. Despite being incredibly enflamed Pakistani nationalists, their immediate communities were restricted to people of *similar* backgrounds. This speaks to gender, class, caste, religious, linguistic, and ethnic identities, among many others. What was most interesting was that Pakistani was a label not cohesive enough to hold others. While studying in London, the masjid I attended was explicitly known as a Pakistani, Punjabi, Sunni, Barelvi masjid. Like other masjids, it was dominantly attended by men. In other words, there were explicitly shared identifiers between congregational members. Many of whom I spoke to were dually surprised and confused why anyone, let alone a Pakistani *man* from the U.S. would be interested in scholarly intervention into their identity. Especially given that I had no personal relation to any attending member, for if an outsider knows someone, then they must be a *rishtadar* [رشتہ دار] (relative) and thus are privy to being an insider. Nonetheless, I let my curiosity guide me.

I wanted to gain a better perspective into what the Zia regime looked like for Punjabis, especially through popular culture, and in rural settings. My father was raised in a northern Punjabi village, and while his own experience is colored by his age, he described Zia's Pakistan to certainly be better than Bhutto's, or even successive regimes, going so far as to say that had Zia not died, Pakistan would be in a better global (economic) standing, if not through robust rule of law. For my father, his Pakistan was his village, and his village was actively seeing some sort of economic benefit from the mass influx of American and Saudi wealth and influence under Zia.

I found similar anecdotal experiences to be true of the men that I spoke to in London. These men had no explicitly negative experiences, as self-described, to speak of. One of the men I spoke to shared that during the Zia regime, a family near his village married off one of their underage daughters. The daughter was forced into hard labor by her in-laws, and her father sought justice in the newly established Islamic courts. The court subsequently jailed the imam who authorized the *nikkah* [نکاح] (Islamic marriage contract) and the husband of his daughter. Subsequent interviews also touched on similar themes of underage girls getting married off and emancipated through the Islamic courts. However, none of the interviews I conducted touched upon the Hudood Ordinances, even when I probed for details. Perhaps this was simply a symptom of a culture that rewards self-censorship, public piety, and quietism. Or perhaps this was another opportunity for these Pakistanis to reimagine and remap what *their* land of the pure could be, as articulated through gender. And even more strikingly so, perhaps this was the response to an outsider: me. Someone who was not perceived as Pakistani, out of my diasporic identity, working experience in the U.S. Department of State, and the American academy. Thus, this stock image of an underage girl and a predatory man, could have been leveraged as an opportunity to resist *me.* Despite the complicated process it took to get to these conversations, gender was used as a mechanism to reach some sort-of common ground. These conversations furthered my curiosity into what it means to be Pakistani, centering on how gender is leveraged as resistance from the bottom up to the state's flawed concept of the nation.

Returning to the Zia regime, even amidst mass censorship and policing by a state supported by the U.S. and Saudi Arabia against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, the Pakistani people resisted through poetry, performance, and protest. One prominent example came in 1986, when well-known singer Iqbal Bano performed a collection of Faiz Ahmed Faiz's poetry to

commemorate his death on February 13, 1986, in Lahore. This thesis analyzes Bano's performed "Hum Dekhenge" [ہم دیکھیں گے] (We Shall See), a rendition of the poem "Wa Yabqa Wajh Rabbik" [ویبقی وجه ربك] (Only the Face of Your Lord Remains), written by Faiz, to explore a vignette resistance often forgotten in Pakistani history.[1] "Wa Yabqa Wajh Rabbik"[2] is a poem that implicitly binds Pakistani resistance to Islam, explicitly reinforces the fundamentals of Islam, and manifests revolutionary love for the nation, as opposed to the state, but it is in Bano's performance that transforms this poem into an anthem of resistance, altering the way people received, engaged, and appreciated this art, and articulating a desire to reimagine Pakistani identity.

We have no video recording of Bano's performance, only audio, and it is her rendition of "Wa Yabqa Wajh Rabbik," complete with the audience's participation. As such, I analyze the verbal engagement between Bano and her audience chiefly leveraging Ric Knowles and Marvin Carlson's approach to performance and theater theories. Those who arranged the performance were allegedly arrested, and copies of the performance were destroyed. It is in listening to the existing copy, resplendent in its revolutionary glory, that I probed deeper into this vignette of resistance, eager to uncover how Pakistani people resisted the state at the height of this military dictatorship's crackdown on protest. Bano herself was banned from appearing on national stages as a singer, televised or publicized, until after Zia's death. My analysis centers the *performance*, grounded by Bano as a performer, and will not cover the audience's interpretation of the

[1] Iqbal Bano, "Hum Dekhenge by Iqbal Bano," YouTube video, 11:29, 10/29/10, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dxtgsq5oVy4.
Faiz Ahmed Faiz, "Wa-Yabqa-Wajh-o-Rabbik (Hum Dekhenge)," Rekhta, https://www.rekhta.org/nazms/va-yabqaa-vajh-o-rabbik-hum-dekhenge-ham-dekhenge-faiz-ahmad-faiz-nazms.
[2] See the appendix for a transliterated and translated version of Hum Dekhenge [translation: my own].

performance itself, nor a literary analysis of "Wa Yabqa Wajh Rabbik" itself.[3] Sarah Waheed[4] describes "the great glamorous ghazal songstress vocalized the poem in melodic immortality, to an audience of hundreds of thousands in a stadium in Lahore. In that first version set to music, one can hear the audience cry out *inqilab zindabad!* [انقلاب زنده باد] (Long Live the Revolution!') as Iqbal Bano's voice reaches its crescendo with the refrain, 'And we shall see.'"[5] While the actual audience was around 50,000 people, Bano's performance has had longstanding consequences for Pakistanis and the Pakistani state.

Faiz's poetry has received global notoriety and scholarly attention, but I posit that it was Bano's performance of his poetry that truly transformed the poem into materialized resistance. To get there, this thesis lays out the circumstances leading to Zia's rise to power, analyzes the audible performance, and addresses the consequences of this performance. Analyzing "Hum Dekhenge" is important because Bano transformed the poem into a song, performance, and anthem, that perhaps more than a billion people are familiar with. "Hum Dekhenge" demonstrates popular resistance to the imposition of the nation-state on understanding identity, proven by its immortalization across South Asia, even to today. This analysis endeavors to critically approach a cultural moment of resistance, often obscured by Western historians in the footnotes of analyses of Pakistan's military regimes, as a moment of performing Pakistani identity.

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[3] For analysis of "Wa Yabqa Wajh Rabbik" see Bilal Irfan, "Reimagining Hum Dekhenge," In *University of Michigan Undergraduate Research Journal* Vol. 16. doi: https://doi.org/10.3998/umurj.3786.

[4] Sarah Waheed is a cultural historian and Assistant Professor of History at Davidson College who specializes in South Asian Islamic history in global and local contexts across the India-Pakistan divide, and teaches medieval, early modern, and modern South Asia. She critically approaches history through a transnational and comparative lens, and addresses religion, colonialism, nationalism, and gender.

[5] Sarah Fatima Waheed*, Hidden Histories of Pakistan: Censorship, Literature, and Secular Nationalism in Late Colonial India* (Cambridge University Press, 2022), pg. VIII.

In addition to “Hum Dekhenge,” I searched for performances of identity in more contemporary times, to see how expressions of identity had changed as a result of Zia’s policies. Pakistan hosts a robust drama serial industry, tackling many social issues like the patriarchy, religious extremism, and sexuality, all in pursuit of honing a more inclusive, representative Pakistani identity. While working in Washington D.C., I had the opportunity to attend a film screening for “Joyland,” a Pakistani film released in May 2022 – and only available in Pakistan months later in November 2022, after subject to censorship by the state. The film follows the lives of a patriarchal family in Lahore, with the head of the family – the grandfather – his two sons, their wives, and the elder son’s daughters. The patriarch awaits either of his sons’ wives to bear him a grandson, the younger son’s wife is forced to quit her job once the son (secretly) finds a job at a theater, and that son falls for the transgender lead dancer. Despite the state’s attempt to flatten out expressions of Pakistani identity by (temporarily) banning the film, this expression was reinforced on a global scale when the film premiered at the 2022 Cannes Film Festival. “Joyland,” a nuanced portrayal of Pakistani identity, was reduced to a deviant Western import by the state, and a light on a repressed, foreign, Muslim people by the West.

Presently, the world wants to flatten out what it means to be Pakistani, and the state has benefited from that, but the Pakistani people continue to resist that idea. I hit a wall when I broached gender, and I wanted to know why. Gender was the reinforcing tool here, but not in a misogynistic way – rather, in a way that dually bifurcates and reinforces Pakistani identity. This thesis serves as an intervention in showing how, like many postcolonial countries where the state preceded the nation, and creating the nation has been a top-down project, Pakistanis embrace the idea of representing the nation bottom up, and how gender is leveraged as a multifaceted

resistance to the state's idea of the nation. In resisting the state, Pakistanis continue to build the nation.

Chapter 1: Imagining Pakistan

This chapter lays out the ongoing project of imagining the Pakistani nation. Pakistani national identity, like all national identities, is fraught and forced, but takes a particular bent towards gender, as it exhausts other flexible aspects of identity. This chapter provides the historical antecedents to how the Pakistani state created and reproduces itself. The making of the Pakistani state and the way that it expresses itself may be seen as anxiety over Hindu-domination-turned-to-Indian-hegemony, to Western imperialism, Islamic inquisition, or even ethnic power, but what has continued to prevail, are the fundamentals represented, explicitly, through gender. Further, this chapter argues that the state has attempted to subsume gendered critique, as demonstrated through the first female Muslim head of state in the world, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's, tenure.

Imagining Pakistan

The Partition of British India saw two states born out of the brutal British Raj: India and Pakistan. Pakistan was officially established as a nation-state, on August 14, 1947. Pakistan stands out as the first modern state to have been founded on the basis of religion, serving as a homeland for South Asian Muslims. The British's incorporation of the diverse communities of South Asia into one administrative unit and subsequent failure for representatives to self-govern had triggered the basis of contemporary South Asian statecraft. During the British Raj, elite Muslim landowners were stripped of their property rights and struggled to adjust to their new rulers. As disenfranchised affluent Muslim communities left institutional places of power, a power & educational vacuum opened, that was subsequently filled by the Brahmin elite. This led Muslim scholars and theologians to develop theories ruminating over the decline of Muslim

status in British India during the late 19th-century era of colonization & globalization. Brahminical Hindus were better suited to adapt to the socio-economic changes introduced by colonization, exacerbating the deterioration of the Muslim political status in Northern British India, particularly in the United Provinces.[6] Muslims were a minority group in British India, and they faced discrimination and marginalization in many aspects of life. For example, the British government introduced property, educational, and employment policies that favored Hindus over Muslims.[7] This led Northern British Indian Muslims to express sensations of alienation, political exclusion, and fears of a threat to Muslim identity and tradition. Here, too, gender was interrogated as a mechanism of declining socioeconomic mobility.

Simultaneously, British colonial authorities were imposing their legal and administrative systems on the British Indian population, which included the introduction of secular laws that often were at odds with Islamic customs and traditions.[8] Muslims were forced to choose between following Islamic laws or complying with British legal norms, which created tension and conflict within Muslim communities. In defining South Asia through British Indian borders, Muslims were numbered and categorically defined as a minority, despite vast discrepancies in how individuals interpreted their identity both religiously and culturally. The tension between faith-based, ethno-linguistic, and caste communities were exacerbated by the British divide-and-rule policy. Thus, a strain of political Hinduism was born, alongside trans-regional political Islam in colonial South Asia. During the ongoing global colonial nation-state movement, elite Muslims

[6] L. Louër and E. Rundell, "PAKISTAN: FROM MUSLIM STATE TO ISLAMIC STATE," in *Sunnis and Shi'a: A Political History* (Princeton University Press, 2020), 135–49.
[7] David Gilmartin, "Introduction," in *Civilization and Modernity: Narrating the Creation of Pakistan* (Yoda Press, 2017).
[8] Sharif al Mujahid, "SIR SYED AHMAD KHAN AND MUSLIM NATIONALISM IN INDIA," in *Islamic Studies* Vol 38, No. 1 (1999): 87–101.

emphasized that the differences between Muslim and Hindu polities were the root cause of the problem.

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, an Islamic political modernist and British-Indian judge with family roots in the Mughal court, initially proposed the concept of a distinct Muslim state in British India in the late 19th century.[9] To Khan, British Indian Muslims possessed a unique identity and culture that necessitated distinct political representation to protect their interests. He recognized that Muslim communities in India lacked adequate levels of Western education and were at a competitive economic disadvantage compared to Brahmin-Hindu counterparts, who had embraced Western education. He also observed that Muslims were largely excluded from positions of power and influence in British India and faced discrimination and prejudice from the colonial administration. He argued that Muslims needed to adapt to the Eurocentric modernization process and reconcile their Islamic faith with modern scientific and intellectual knowledge. He also believed that Muslims needed to engage with the British colonial administration and work within the colonial system to advance their interests. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan remains in Pakistani consciousness as an ardent advocate for Islamic reform in a globalizing world, and a forefather of the Pakistan project.[10] In the colonial lens, this moment galvanized a movement for a state.

The push for a separate Muslim state gained significant momentum during the 20th century. The All India Muslim League, established in 1906, emerged as the primary political platform for the British North Indian Muslim community's demand for a distinct state. The League's demand for a nation, named *Pakistan* [پاکستان] (land of the pure), aimed to create

[9] Ayesha Jalal, "The Demand for Pakistan, 1940-1947," in *The State of Martial Rule : The Origins of Pakistan's Political Economy of Defence* (Cambridge University Press, 1990).
[10] See Mujahid, "SIR SYED AHMAD KHAN," for additional details on Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's life, reformist Islam, and the origins of the two-nation theory.

separate electorates for Muslims and Hindus in a new, postcolonial nation-state. Eventually, the argument shifted – Muslims and Hindus could not coexist in a single state and deserved two separate states. The demand for Pakistan fluctuated during the early 20th century, as colonial subjects saw themselves through their religious and ethno-linguistic groups, identities that were not necessarily in opposition.[11] It was during this crucial phase that the push for separate Muslim and Hindu electorates in a postcolonial South Asian state arose.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah, a British-Indian barrister and politician with Gujarati roots, assumed leadership of the All India Muslim League in 1913.[12] Initially, Jinnah supported Hindu-Muslim unity, but his experiences working with the Indian National Congress (Hindu majority party) disillusioned him. His perspective significantly differed from his caste and political contemporary, Mohandas Gandhi, who led the Indian National Congress. Jinnah envisioned Pakistan as a compatible nation, rather than a state, alongside Hindustan.[13] In other words, these two nations were intended to coexist within a single state.[14] Jinnah attempted to translate his visions for a state where Muslims had the potential to transcend communal environments and lead through constitutional and legislative means, as opposed to Gandhi's satyagraha (nonviolent resistance). As colonial rule fostered further resentment and violence, independence movements gained traction. However, Jinnah was forced to withdrew from politics between 1920 and 1933 because of health complications (both him and his wife, who died in 1929), professional commitments to his legal practice, disillusionment with the India National Congress'

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[11] Jalal, *The Demand for Pakistan.*
[12] For an extensive analysis of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, his leadership of the Muslim League, and his own politics, see Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge University Press, 1994).
[13] Hindustan was, broadly, what South Asia was known as prior to British rule, meaning 'land of the Indus.' During colonial rule, the term was taken by Hindu-nationalist movements to claim an ageless conception of the Indian subcontinent belonging to Hindus.
[14] Hamza Alavi, "Pakistan and Islam: Ethnicity and Ideology," in *State Ideology in the Middle East and Pakistan* (Macmillan Education, 1988).

increasingly Hindu-nationalist sentiment, and exploration of alternative options for securing Muslim political rights within or outside of British India.[15] Jinnah, recognized as a unifying leader in Muslim politics, eventually returned to the League amidst political stagnation. Jinnah continued to advocate for separate Muslim electorates upon his return to the League. However, he became further disenchanted during the provincial elections of 1937 when the League failed to secure a majority of Muslim seats in any of the Muslim-majority provinces.[16] One significant factor in the League's failure was its political strategy, which, while understandably reactive to the Hindu nationalism of the mainstream Indian freedom struggle, further amplified communal politics, gender norms, and religious identity. This approach failed to resonate with a majority of voters who prioritized issues such as economic development, education, and healthcare.[17] Here were constituents who coalesced around policy issues as opposed to pandering to identity politics. As a result, the League failed to form a government anywhere in British India. Furthermore, the party lacked effective leadership and organizational structure, divided over internal issues, no clear vision, and poor strategic coordination addressing electorate concerns. Meanwhile, the Indian National Congress, and its allies, formed governments, even in provinces with an overwhelmingly Muslim majority. The British government provided crucial political support to the Congress and other groups opposed to the League. Ultimately, the separate electorates failed to safeguard Muslim interests.

Mapping Power from the British Raj to the Pakistani Military

[15] Jalal, *The Demand for Pakistan.*
[16] Jalal, *The Demand for Pakistan*.
[17] Hamza Alavi, "Social Forces and Ideology in the Making of Pakistan," in *Economic and Political Weekly* 37, No. 51 (December 2002): 5119–24.

In the 1940s, Jinnah redirected the League's focus towards the demand for the separate state of Pakistan. Jinnah now envisioned a secular homeland for Muslims, or a Muslim state, as opposed to a religious homeland governed through codified Islamic law. Jinnah, an Ismaili Shi'a, certainly did not imagine present-day Pakistan, nor is it what Pakistanis today conceptualize as Pakistan. While Pakistan began as a nominally Muslim homeland, it has since been converted to an Islamic state. Negotiations between the British, Congress, and League intensified as the British sought an alleged peaceful transfer of power. The idea of creating two separate states was reluctantly accepted, and the British hastily divided the subcontinent based on a flawed calculus of Muslim-majority districts going to Pakistan and the rest to India, per the Lahore resolution of 1940.[18] This led to the Western Frontier and the Eastern Edge of the subcontinent joining Pakistan, separated by almost 1000 miles of India. Jinnah referred to the proposed Pakistan as a "a maimed, mutilated and moth-eaten [state]" but reluctantly accepted it in the interest of securing Muslim political legitimacy and self-rule.[19] Many British Indian Muslims resisted the violent displacement into now-Pakistan, and stayed on in their indigenous lands in now-India – particularly in the princely state of Hyderabad, located in South India, which was subjected to Indian annexation later on.[20] The princely state of Jammu and Kashmir was also claimed by both Pakistan and India, leading to ongoing armed conflict between the two countries. Pakistan, a homeland for Muslims, had been brutally born.

The British decision to partition British India into India and East & West Pakistan was made in self-interest. For the British, Pakistan's existence partly served as a strategic ally in the event of Soviet influence in the region. Presently, both Pakistan and India are leveraged as part of

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[18] Jalal, *The Demand for Pakistan.*
[19] Jinnah's address to the AIML council at Lahore, 30 July 1944, in Pirzada (1970), Foundations of Pakistan II.
[20] See Wilfred Smith, "Hyderabad: Muslim Tragedy," in *Middle East Journal* (1954) for a detailed analysis of the Princely State Hyderabad and the consequences of Indian state formation on Hyderabadi self-rule.

these neo- and colonial networks. The Partition resulted in one of the largest forced mass migrations in history, with an estimated 14 million people being displaced and around another million dying in the process.[21] Pakistan's territory was inhabited primarily by Panjabi-speaking people, and Jinnah, who preferred to speak English, was part of the Urdu-speaking *muhajir* [مہاجر] (migrant to Pakistan) community. The displacement of Hindus and Sikhs from Pakistan to India and Muslims from India to Pakistan led to large-scale riots, communal & sexual violence, and the loss of property & lives. This decision was made by property bearing elites on both sides of the newly formed border, and the Punjab, in particular, saw widespread violence as it was divided. Communal violence had been occurring during British rule, but the Partition exacerbated the already fraught relationship between Muslims and their Hindu & Sikh neighbors. The new nation state of Pakistan hosted an influx of refugees from various interpretations of Islam, languages, ethnic backgrounds, and distinct cultures; thus setting the blood-stained backdrop of an emotional historical nation state.

On August 14, 1947, Pakistan achieved independence from British colonial rule and became a homeland for South Asian Muslims, and Jinnah was appointed as its first Governor-General. Pakistan adopted a federal parliamentary system of government, modeled after the Government of India Act of 1935, which established a federal system of government for British India. Pakistan's federal system consisted of a central government in Karachi and four provinces: East Bengal, Punjab, Sindh, and the Northwest Frontier Province. Pakistan was formed as a multiethnic and multilingual state with no unifying language, culture, or interpretation of Islam, but what did persist, was the articulation of gender. The Governor-General represented the

[21] See Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, "Abducted women the state and questions of honour. Three perspectives on the recovery operation in post-Partition India." (1996), for further statistics on Partition with specific emphasis on gendered violence & abduction.

British Crown until Pakistan became a republic in 1956, and the Prime Minister was responsible to the Parliament. The initial global response to Partition and Pakistan was unfavorable, with many predicting its failure and eventual dissolution into India. Pakistan inherited a fraction of capital compared to India; factories, mills, and industrial hubs were largely concentrated in Indian territory, while Pakistan inherited the fertile land of the Punjab and Bengal (primary economic means of production), and a sizable portion of the military, the only institution in Pakistan that held power at its birth.[22] Political power was concentrated in West Pakistan, chiefly the military.

Pakistan saw Jinnah's untimely demise one year after its birth, which plunged the country into chaos, as it grappled with an impending election and no clear leader. Pakistan's early political history was marked by a series of political crises, military interventions, and frequent changes in leadership. After Jinnah's death, Liaquat Ali Khan became the first Prime Minister of Pakistan and served from 1947 until his assassination in 1951. After Khan's assassination, Khawaja Nazimuddin became the second Prime Minister and served from 1951 to 1953. Mohammad Ali Bogra succeeded Nazimuddin as Prime Minister in 1953 and served until 1955. Chaudhry Muhammad Ali was appointed as Prime Minister in 1955 and served until 1956. Huseyn Suhrawardy became Prime Minister in 1956 and served until 1957. Iskander Mirza was elected as the first President of Pakistan in 1956 and served until 1958. He dissolved the National Assembly and dismissed Prime Minister Feroz Khan Noon in 1958. Ayub Khan took power through a military coup in 1958 and served as the President of Pakistan until 1969, the second longest serving military dictator in Pakistan's history, assuming power a mere 11 years after Pakistan's birth. Fatimah Jinnah, Muhammad Ali Jinnah's younger sister, emerged as a key

[22] Jalal*, The Demand for Pakistan.*

challenge to Ayub Khan. While she initially supported his military take over as means to stabilize the country, the regime's opposition combined to pose a unified response, and selected Jinnah to run for President in the 1964 election. Despite allegations of Ayub Khan's vote rigging, Jinnah lost. However, she was the popular choice in East and West Pakistan's urban centers, Dhaka and Karachi, suggesting popular resistance to military rule in urban Pakistan.[23] Here, Pakistan began to interrogate the question of female leadership, which would later draw many (unfortunate) connections to Benazir Bhutto's resistance against General Muhammad Zia ul-Haq. Ayub Khan's "victory" demonstrated Pakistan's (continued) struggle to establish a stable democratic system, exacerbated by its poor economic and security situation. Following Ayub Khan's coup, the military's control over Pakistani state of affairs expanded, as one of the few institutions the country was born with, again, 11 years prior. Khan's regime set a dangerous precedent for proceeding leadership to follow.

Khan sought to leverage Islam build the nation and a sense of national identity in Pakistan. Implicitly, military leadership was predominantly composed of Punjabi and Pashto speaking West Pakistanis who operated on a colonial paradigm with respect to East Pakistan, which was predominantly Bengali. Thus, the visible strains of Islam in government were those of similar contexts to his. His military government emphasized Islam's importance in society through the promotion of Islamic values and principles, as expressed through redefining Pakistan as the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, in 1956, legally enshrining Islam as the state religion. The military government also established the Council of Islamic Ideology, tasked with ensuring that Pakistan's laws were in accordance with Islamic principles.[24] The Pakistani military promoted

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[23] Lawrence Ziring, "Political Connections: Fatima Jinnah and Benazir Bhutto," in *Asian Affairs* Vol. 21, No. 2 (1994): 67–79, pg. 71.
[24] Stephen Philip Cohen, *The South Asia Papers: A Critical Anthology of Writings by Stephen Philip Cohen* (Brookings Institution Press, 2016).

Islamic education through targeting and recruiting university-attending youth and establishing madrasas throughout the country. Simultaneously, gender was being reinforced alongside resistance being silenced. During Khan's rule, Pakistan went to war against India over the disputed Kashmir and lost. Ayub attempted to coopt Islam to destabilize the *ulama* [علماء] (a class of Islamic experts and scholars) and consolidate his power over the state. He attempted to make Islam Pakistani through defining Pakistani parties to follow Islamic ideology or be banned (which subsequently happened to leftist parties). But, Khan was popularly associated with the hedonistic West, especially the U.S, which was recognized as un-Islamic large-and-wide. The *ulama*, under leaders like Maulana Maudidi, used Khan's relationship to the West as grounds for promoting their respective religious perspectives, who proselytized oft-radical traditionalist interpretation of Islam. Khan, however, envisioned a modernized Islam for a modernized Pakistan.

South Asia became globalized during this broader period of history, and Pakistan engaged with the U.S., who inserted itself to contain the threat of Soviet encroachment. The U.S. aimed to modernize the world to answer the question of Soviet power, reinforce its global supremacy, and install itself as a global *protector.* Modernization, or international development, was a front for liberal capitalist economic, political, and sociocultural growth. America saw third world military leaders as most attentive to their desires, perhaps because they were falling into capitalist hell as opposed to listening to their people, irrespective of the democratic aspect. Rampant industrialization, controlled particularly so by the same feudal elite who created Pakistan, oversaw the accumulation of wealth, leading to massive wealth discrepancies and the establishment of an urban proletariat that organized against this consolidation of wealth.[25]

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[25] Interesting to note, Khan's family was one of 50 families to have benefited. See Saadia Toor, *The State of Islam: Culture and Cold War Politics in Pakistan* (Pluto Press, 2011), pg. 84, for more.

The Pakistani Project's Great Failure

Eventually, Khan was forced to resign and Yahya Khan, a military general, assumed power and became the President of Pakistan on March 25, 1969. Under Yahya Khan's rule, Pakistan faced a growing demand for greater autonomy by the people of East Pakistan. In 1970, Yahya Khan organized general elections in Pakistan, and the Awami League, a secular Bengali nationalist political party with a platform for greater autonomy and political representation for East Pakistanis, the plurality of the nation, drastically won. However, Yahya Khan refused to hand over power to the Awami League, which sparked widespread protests and civil unrest in East Pakistan. Thus, in 1971 the Bengali Liberation War[26], erupted as a result of the growing resentment and demand for autonomy. The Pakistani government supported a brutal crackdown on East Pakistan including mass killings, rape, and other atrocities.[27] This led to a nine-month armed conflict between the Bengali freedom fighters – the Mukti Bahini – and the Pakistani military. An estimated 3 million people died while 30 million more were displaced – more than twice those displaced during the Partition. With India's assistance, the Mukti Bahini defeated the Pakistani military, and on December 16, 1971, the civil war ended with East Pakistan declaring independence from Pakistan, forming the new country of Bangladesh. The original Pakistan project had failed. Yahya Khan's tenure as the President of Pakistan ended with his resignation on December 20, 1971 and Speaker of the National Assembly, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto became the Prime Minister of Pakistan, and the country entered a new phase of political and social change.

Bhutto was the founder of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), a center-left social-democratic political party, and served as Pakistan's prime minister from 1971 to 1977. The PPP

[26] Also known as the Bangladesh Liberation War.
[27] See Ayesha Jalal, "An Uncertain Trajectory: Islam's Contemporary Globalization, 1971-1979," *in The shock of the global : the 1970s in perspective* (Harvard University Press, 2010) for further details on the West Pakistani genocide of East Pakistan & Pakistan's attempts to rewrite its history.

used the motto “Islam is our faith, democracy is our policy, socialism is our economy. All power to the people,”[28] and he made sure to reflect party values is personal political rhetoric. He believed in a socialist and secular Pakistan, which emphasized national unity and democracy. Bhutto played a key role in the development of Pakistan's nuclear program and pursued a policy of non-alignment in international relations. His vision for Pakistan was based on a strong centralized government that could address the country's economic and social problems. Bhutto had attempted to play down his secular brand to appeal to the large conservative Muslim political base, expanded through the years through the military’s cooption of Islam, by formally & legally labeling Ahmadis as non-Muslims, which led to oppression, blasphemy allegations, and killings.[29] He had initially campaigned on behalf of the West Pakistani elite prior to becoming Prime Minister, but upon assuming leadership, quickly accepted Bangladesh’s sovereignty.[30] He sought to nationalize key industries, introduce land reforms to address economic inequality, and invest heavily in the education system. Bhutto also popularly used populist rhetoric like *roti, kaprey, aur makan* [روٹی کپڑے اور مکان] (bread, clothes, and housing) to solidify his political base, the long neglected Pakistani poor. His rule, however, saw economic stagnation, allegations of vote rigging, and a brutal military operation in Balochistan after dissolving provincial feudal governments.

Anti-imperialism has consistently been a defining characteristic of Pakistani politics, from its birth against the backdrop of the Raj, to today, amidst growing frustration with the U.S. This anti-imperialist sentiment intensified over the 1960s as Pakistan was implicated in the cold

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[28] Brooke Allen, *Benazir Bhutto: Favored Daughter*, Icons Series (Boston: New Harvest Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016).

[29] See Sadia Saeed, "Pakistani Nationalism and the State Marginalisation of the Ahmadiyya Community in Pakistan" in *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* Vol. 7, No. 3 (2007): 132-152, for a historical account of the status of Ahmadis in South Asia, from British India to Pakistan.

[30] Jalal, *Islam’s Contemporary Globalization*.

war as an American ally, amidst American interventions in Afro-Asia. Pakistanis, broadly, supported Iran's Mossadegh after the CIA coup, Egypt's Nasser during the Suez Canal Crisis, the Democratic Republic of the Congo's Lumumba following his murder, and later, the Vietnamese resistance. This period also saw a rich cultural production coming out Pakistan demonstrated through its globalized perspective and connection to the transnational *umma*.[31] Bhutto saw this moment in Pakistan's politics as an opportunity and took it. His politics catered to feudals, rural, poor, rich, separatists, leftists, liberals, and progressives. Bhutto was far from being an actual leftist, however. He held support of the military, which was frustrated with Ayub's handling of the Tashkent Agreement, and Sindhi landlords upset by Ayub's industrialization program (which benefitted *muhajir* traders). The PPP's popularity was a product of Ayub's politics, global anti-imperialist movements, and Bhutto's reception to the Pakistani people. Bhutto carefully and successfully stressed the priorities of the people he was addressing. In Punjab, he underlined confrontation with India. In Sindh, he promised to curb the *waderas's* [وديرا] (elite, landed political class) influence and improve the standard of living of the people. In line with Sindhi nationalist sentiments, he stressed the injustice of One Unit.[32] He spoke about Islamic Socialism to the industrial workers, particularly in Karachi. He held out something for almost everyone, except capitalists, and endeavored to envelop within his fold both peasants and landlords, workers and well-to-do. He profited from the disarray of the leftists after the break-up of the National Awami Party (NAP) and stole the leadership by calling for a socialist revolution. Subsequently, when he sought to appease religious sentiment, he talked about *Musawaat-i-*

[31] For example, the Pakistani film Zarqa, was produced during this time, which highlighted the story of a Palestinian dancer and PLO member rebelling against the Israeli nation-building project. Even here, gender was weaponized as a global act of resistance.

[32] A scheme launched by the federal government of Pakistan in 1954 to merge all West Pakistani provinces into one unit acting as a counterbalance against the ethnic Bengalis of East Pakistan.

Muhammadi [مساوات ا مهممدی] (social and economic equality preached and practiced by Prophet Muhammad) instead of Islamic Socialism."[33] Women also constituted a significant block of Bhutto and PPP supporters, who would later be disappointed with his regressive policies and continued gendered political game. Bhutto, despite being Pakistan's first truly democratic leader, engaged in anti-democratic endeavors that defined his tenure and ultimately saw his deposition and death. Following the war in East Pakistan, he kept military reports sealed, keeping discourse over state-led violence on its own citizens a secret, asserted dominance over the military as opposed to attempting to constructively work with them, and destabilized Balochistan and the NWFP, provinces he did not win.

Balochistan exercised mass resistance against Bhutto's state. Emboldened and imaginative after the success of Bangladesh, the dominant political party in Balochistan, the NAP, demanded greater autonomy from the state. As civil unrest grew, the insurgency became a massive armed struggle against the state, with over 20,000 deaths. Because of the history of state suppression of Baloch separatist sentiment, contemporary general political consensus overlooks Baloch demands. The consequences of Bhutto's oversight in Balochistan continue to be faced by Pakistanis, as demonstrated by the daughters, sisters, and wives, of the victims of the Pakistani state who organized mass protests in 2023 to demand their rights as Pakistani citizens and dignity as human beings. These Baloch protestors, largely women, were prompted by Islamabad police to bring forth their men in negotiations – men who were victims of state oppression decades prior. The irony in these women's resistance against the Pakistani state is not unrecognized.

[33] Rafi Raza, *Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Pakistan, 1967-1977* (Oxford University Press, 1997), pgs. 27-28.

Furthermore, Bhutto actively reversed much of the progressive developments of the 60's for broader political support, and sealing Zia's ascension to power, through institutionalizing tyranny itself. While radical PPP members tried to occupy factories and establish people's courts, Chairman Bhutto cracked down – censoring, arresting, and assassinating these peoples. Bhutto rid the PPP of the Marxist element, much to the landed Punjabi elite's chagrin, who inserted themselves to Bhutto's support. Thus, land reform, which was a crucial pillar of Bhutto's platform, was superficial at best. Nationalization of key industries was but a talking point. For most Pakistanis, Bhutto's rule saw lower economic standards of living, and political disenfranchisement. Bhutto further distanced himself from the people who he had pledged to represent through cutting off subsidies to control inflation. This led to mass protests, as people struggled to purchase food and gas. The state cracked down, and conceded through raising government employee's salaries, furthering the middle class's discontent.

Bhutto envisioned himself as anti-imperialist third-world leader, and worked to establish that image domestically and abroad. He "demand an independent foreign policy, withdrawal from US defense pacts such as the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), and a retraction of the Tashkent Agreement."[34] Bhutto realigned Pakistan towards the gulf and encouraged migrant labor to build economic and sociocultural ties. These return migrants returned to Pakistan conservatively aligned with Wahabi-adjacent perspectives and approaches to Islam. Saudi Arabia was a proponent of the Jamaat Islami, and Tariq Ali, a leading public intellectual, argues that there was a direct link between Saudi-Pakistani trade and Jamaat influence on the state.[35] Bhutto opened himself up for assault from the

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[34] Toor, *The State of Islam, pg. 98*.

[35] See Tariq Ali, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms: Crusades, Jihads and Modernity* (Verso Books, 2003) for further insight into the relationship between the Jamaat, the Pakistani state, and Saudi Arabia.

religious right, which he could have buffered had he upheld the support of the left. Bhutto was cornered by the religious right and famously made many concessions which ultimately define his tenure and gave Zia the space to orthodoxify Pakistan. Bhutto, a known drinker, quoted saying "yes, I do drink alcohol, but at least I don't drink the blood of the poor," declared Pakistan a dry state, banning alcohol consumption and liquor licenses for Muslims. He banned casinos, clubs, and gambling, made the weekly holiday Friday instead of Sunday, and most consequentially, declared Ahmadis as non-Muslims. In doing so, Bhutto set off on an irreversible course of action – using the state to issue religious edicts. Even so, Bhutto was popular enough with workers across Punjab and Sindh to anticipate victory in the 1978 elections. Despite an impending victory, Bhutto rigged the elections. This would lead to a campaign to oust him backed by the army, bourgeoisie, and Saudi Arabia, alongside the ideological support of the proletariat, urban petit bourgeoisie, and professionals. Bhutto's fate was sealed.

Conversion from a Muslim to an Islamic State

The army intervened, led by General Zia, who had been picked by Bhutto, and promised fresh elections. At the time, the army was socially unpopular, seen as illegitimate, and brutalistic, following Bangladeshi liberation. The Jamaat claimed the army had lost the war, in part, due to women and wine. Bhutto shuffled military leadership when he came into power, inadvertently marking a religious movement. More military men were recruited from impoverished Northern Punjab and East Punjab migrants, like Zia himself, who were socially more conservative than central Punjabis. These men were more attached to the Islamic nation instead of a territorialized national identity. Simultaneously, the Jamaat was reckoning with its weak internal political

support, demonstrated by its abysmal 5% victory in the 1970s election.[36] So, they ‘infiltrated’ the state through the military. At the time, few were aware the long era of brutal military rule that awaited Pakistan, which reversed socialist sentiment, redefined populist politics, and rewrote history, present, and the future. Bhutto was released, re-arrested, and hung. The Supreme Court’s three non-Punjabis dissented, and four Punjabis offered the majority opinion. Upon Bhutto’s hanging, Zia appointed himself as president. He passed the Political Parties Ordinance of 1979 that outlawed any political party that spoke against the military (which directly ties to its abuse today). Zia oversaw the passing of the eighth amendment which allowed the president to dismiss the Prime Minister, dissolve the National Assembly, and appoint Provincial Governors and the Chief of Army Staff, completely undermining Pakistani ‘democracy.’

Zia de-nationalized the industries Bhutto had, but kept higher education nationalized to help construct one unified state ideology. The working class could no longer strike or protest without fear of arrests, flogging, or death. Zia knew the role of students in Bangladesh, so, he banned student unions and politics from campuses, aside from student groups under the Jamaat. Zia then set off to Islamize Pakistan. School curriculum radically transformed through revisionist history, Islamizing Pakistan and the Indus. Textbooks transformed Pakistan’s military from being a state force, to the defender of Islam itself.[37] Zia wanted to transform Pakistan in Maududi’s vision, leveraging both Saudi Wahhabism and the Jamaat. He declared secularism, socialism, democracy, and their respective political parties as un-Islamic. He defined the role of elections as to identify people qualified to implement Allah’s law, not engage in law-making.[38] He launched media campaigns to promote public piety and encourage neighbors to engage in piety, too. Zia

[36] Toor, *The State of Islam,* pg. 127.
[37] See Khursheed Kumal Aziz’s *The Murder of History: A Critique of History Textbooks Used in Pakistan* (Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2010) for an in-depth review of how Pakistani history books have been transformed.
[38] Toor, *The State of Islam,* pg. 132.

sowed the seeds for fascism and institutionalized gender expectations. He enforced prayers in government offices and stopped the selling and eating food in public and government during Ramadan, even for non-Muslims and menstruating women.

During his regime, he implemented a conservative Islamization agenda, which included the Hudood Ordinances, a set of Islamic criminal laws that were enacted in Pakistan in 1979. They cover a wide range of offenses, including theft, adultery, fornication, and false accusation of *zina* [زنا] (adultery or fornication). The Hudood Ordinances are based on the Islamic legal tradition of fiqh, [فقہ] (the Islamic humanistic interpretation and practice of the Sharia) and they are often criticized for being harsh and unfair, particularly to women. For example, the *Qanun-i-Shahadat* [قانون-ا-شہادت] (the law of evidence), qualified a woman's testimony to be worth half as a man's. One of the most controversial aspects of the Hudood Ordinances is their treatment of rape. Under the Hudood Ordinances, rape is not defined as a crime against the victim, but rather as a crime against the victim's family. This means that the victim's family must be willing to press charges for the rapist to be prosecuted. If the family does not press charges, the rapist can go free. In a patriarchal society where fathers, husbands, and brothers are making decisions, it is common for a daughter, wife, and sister's pleas to remain unanswered to preserve the family's *izzat* [عزت] (respect), for a woman is supposed to be responsible for a man's gaze and his subsequent actions. Ironically, one of the greatest unifying aspects of culture across South Asia, *is* izzat: a concept of honor and respect centered on gender shared across ethnic, caste, linguistic, and religious lines.

The Hudood Ordinances have also been criticized for their vague definitions of adultery and fornication. This has led to a number of cases in which innocent people have been accused of these crimes and punished accordingly. In recent years, there has been a growing movement in

Pakistan to reform the Hudood Ordinances. In 2006, President Pervez Musharraf (another general-turned-dictator) signed the "Protection of Women Act," amending the Hudood Ordinance's conditions and penalty of adultery. In 2016, the Supreme Court of Pakistan struck down a provision of the Hudood Ordinances that allowed for the death penalty for false accusation of *zina*. This was a major victory for women's rights activists in Pakistan. However, the Hudood Ordinances are still implemented to varying degrees and continue to have a negative impact on women's lives in Pakistan. It is in the Hudood Ordinances that Zia's Pakistan was legally enshrined through gendered, sexist policies aimed at policing the female body and a woman's bodily autonomy. For example, a woman who brought forth a rape case could be arrested for *zina*, for she had admitted to having unlawful sex. Furthermore, judges exercised their own personal will in interpreting the law. Toor writes of several examples where judges used their judgement outside of the usual corruption, including a case in which a 13-year-old daughter testified that her mother had committed adultery. Apparently in this case, the voice of a 13-year-old girl, now matched the Islamic legal weight of four adult men. This case, among countless others, showed the extreme leniency in which judges operated in recognizing Zia's law. Zia opened the floodgates of an already flooding, and fragile, masculine space. While no woman nor man was ever stoned to death (out of fear of international backlash), the legal prescription to adultery, a culture where women are surveilled and policed became normal during this era. Low- and middle-class women were abused by brothers, fathers, husbands, men, and the state at large, through law. One of Zia's inexplicit consequences was the eroticization of women in public space. These policies redefined the role of a woman, reflecting the ongoing joint patriarchization and masculinization of public space, through a religious and moral obligation in surveilling women. The consequences of such were immeasurable.

Zia's policies were also influenced by his alliance with the United States during the Cold War. He supported the Afghan Mujahideen in their fight against the Soviet Union and allowed the establishment of rigidly traditionalist madrassas prone to radicalism.[39] While Bhutto believed in a socialist and secular vision for Pakistan, Zia held a conservative and traditionally Islamic vision for Pakistan that called for a true Islamically governed state. Zia remained in power until his death in a plane crash in 1988, after ruling Pakistan for more than a decade. His legacy is primarily defined through his strict Islamization agenda, which Pakistan today grapples with, alongside the country's struggle to balance its Islamic identity with its democratic and secular values.

It was precisely because Zia was not operating in a geopolitical vacuum, that he was able to exert the level of control he did. In the midst of his subversive repression of women and minorities, the world continued to turn, and the Cold War ran hot, particularly in Muslim-majority countries. In 1978, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, supporting the pro-Soviet government against mujahideen rebels. This would set the stage for covert (and eventually, overt) American funding for training the mujahideen in Pakistan. Zia benefited immensely through his newfound utility offered to the Americans in arms intervention. The Cold War, while not the sole cause, played a significant role in shaping negative perceptions and anxieties towards Muslims and Islam, paving the way for present-Islamophobia. During the Cold War, both the U.S. and the USSR sought allies in the Middle East and beyond. The U.S., fearing the spread of communism, became friendly with authoritarian regimes in Muslim countries, often overlooking human rights abuses, as in the case of Pakistan. This created resentment and fueled anti-American sentiment

[39] See Husain Haqqani, *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2011), for further details on General General Zia-ul Haq's relationship between the Mujahideen, U.S., and Saudi Arabia.

within some Muslim communities, who saw the U.S. as being responsible for their state's poor leadership. Conversely, the USSR also courted Muslim-majority countries, potentially contributing to anxieties about the spread of communism and atheism. Both sides strategically used Islam – and bred a specific type of political Islam - for their own ends. The U.S., for instance, highlighted the "moderate" Islam of its allies while portraying the Soviet Union as an enemy of religion. This contributed to a binary narrative, painting Islam as inherently good or bad depending on political alignment. The Cold War also saw the rise of Islamic activism as a counterpoint to both communism and Western secularism. While some groups engaged in peaceful movements, others adopted more radical ideologies, leading to concerns about extremism and terrorism. This fueled the association of Islam with violence and instability in the Western imagination. American Cold War media often portrayed Muslims and Islam through a limited lens, focusing on conflict and extremism. This contributed to negative stereotypes and fueled anxieties about "the Muslim threat." Of course, this is but one part of a longer legacy of fear of the Orient. As a response to Islamophobia, Pakistan conducted critical internal inquisition to the kind of Islam practiced and bred state-sanctioned sectarianism.

General Zia's Pakistan and Beyond

While all national projects exploit emotions, national projects have limited tools to construct emotional range. Here, the Jinnah project's failure prompted an antidote from both Bhutto and Zia to reconstruct an emotional landscape, where Pakistan is redefined. Their respective visions for Pakistan were driven by different ideologies and values, and had a significant impact on the country's political, social, and economic development. Both resistance and imposition of law in Pakistan happened along gendered lines, determining gender as fixed.

Through cultural repetition of gender norms and expectations to assume gender as natural and bodily fixed is gender dually constructed and normalized as a normative identity, integral to the Pakistani identity. Through legal enshrinement in policy, like the Hudood Ordinance, supported and sanctioned by the U.S., gender relations were institutionalized. However, it was explicitly gendered resistance, by women, who most critically resisted Zia at all levels of the regime. For it was expression of identity articulated in gender whose existence was being threatened by the imposition of state policy.

Pakistan's evolution as an Islamic state can be attributed to a need for self-preservation due to ethnic conflict caused by the overrepresentation and misrule of ethnic Punjabis and Urdu-speaking Muhajirs, despite the Bengali majority. Pakistan's focus on building a pan-Islamic coalition differed from the postcolonial Arab states, which were more concerned with establishing & legitimizing ethno-states created by the British after the fall of the Ottoman Empire. The British parliamentary system was not suitable for a multiethnic state constituting two wings, East and West Pakistan. While Pakistan was created to provide South Asian Muslims with a place to practice their religion without fear of domination by Brahmanical Hindu rule, it quickly devolved into a Deobandi orthodox state governed through strict interpretations of Sharia. While the Zia regime converted Pakistan from a Muslim to an Islamic state, this change was not reflected through top-down Pakistani national identity construction, rather, it is the experiences and perspectives of the Pakistani people that define the character and national identity of Pakistan.

The question of Pakistani identity is rooted in the question of South Asian Muslim nationalism. What failed to bring South Asian Muslims into Pakistan following the Partition, and what failed to keep both wings united? Furthermore – where do the non-Muslims fit into all of

this? Pakistan was not imagined as a nation-state, but a nation. The consequences have been immeasurable. Once Pakistan was to be a state, Jinnah was stalwart in defining it as a secular democratic homeland for South Asian Muslims. If the two-nation theory held that Muslims constituted one nation, and everyone else another, it failed the moment Pakistan and India's borders were enforced. Muslims did not far-and-wide coalesce around Pakistan. Pakistan inherited little of the cultural nationalist monuments leveraged in the battle for its nationhood – Fatehpur Sikri, Taj Mahal, Lucknow, etc. – so it moved to language, Urdu, to make the case. Jinnah was adamant that Urdu be the national language. Bengali was later begrudgingly granted national language status, but the power vested in West Pakistan saw that it existed nominally so. Toor argues that the conflict in Urdu against Bengali was a battle of the Punjabi, *muhajir* military elite, and Bengali *ashraf* [اشرف] (Bengalis racialized by the British to be a part of Indo-Persianate high culture, similar to Lucknowi aristocracy) against the Bengali middle class. Provisionalism was deemed Pakistan's number one enemy, perhaps even moreso than India as the existential threat. This was not just because of Bengal, for secession movements were commonplace in Sindh and Balochistan. The Pakistani state attempted to indigenize West Pakistan as a land of a unique, continuous civilizational and societal history, from Harappa to West Pakistan, under Punjabi rule. The state went so far as to claim that region's unity, partially guided through the enlightenment of Islam, inspired the unity of a Hindustan, and the creation of India. In articulating this unity of West Pakistan through historical normative conventions, the state actually made the case against East Pakistan in fitting in. Successive attempts to unite wings into the One Unit system, so no region could threaten Punjab's power, proved to fail. Punjab, too, is not a monolith. Its impoverished northern and southern districts are used as military and agricultural fodder while the central districts are home to power.

In Zia's Pakistan, to be a good Pakistani, you had to be a Muslim. No, not a Shia, and no, certainly not an Ahmadi. No, you had to be Sunni man, preferably Punjabi, for your full rights. Everyone else was relegated to second class citizenry. Non-Muslims could not testify in cases involving Muslims. Women had varying levels of court credibility, but generally were worth half the testimony as men. The blasphemy law, a draconian colonial era policy, was leveraged painfully so against Pakistani Ahmadis. There were many active movements aimed at bringing democracy back to Pakistan, but Zia "pacified" them, in both Balochistan and the NWFP. Sindh, however, the home of the PPP and the Bhutto clan, proved to be a thorn in Zia's side. The continued Punjabi elitism had found itself in Sindh, where newly farmable land was parceled off to the (Punjabi) military and government. Bhutto's hanging was seen as an attack on all Sindhis, irrespective of his own faulty politics. Massive protests were accompanied with mass arrests and occasionally death.

Militant Pakistan was on the precipice of destruction, already seen as a global pariah, until 1979 when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan. Everything transformed, and Pakistan was now a state on the frontline of the Cold War. Zia was now a key-player. Reagan gave billions to a military dictator, who had just a decade ago, participated in genocide with American dollars. This money, and western allegiance, paradoxically saved Zia and his regime. This era also saw the military sink its teeth into Pakistan's economy, laying the ground for its current domination of Pakistan's economy. The army's welfare orgs held stock and interest in fertilizer, oil, sugar, gas. The military acquired lands (now-turned into elite housing societies like Defense Housing Authority (DHA) and Cantonment (Cantt) across urban Pakistan). As a side effect of the war, millions of refugees flooded into an already racist state, now saturated and the center of an

international heroin and gun trade.[40] Furthermore, the Islamisization of the military and the militarization of Islam was definitively constructed. The ISI also comes up as a key player during this time.

The decades that followed Zia's death would see the poisonous fruits of his labor. Pakistan had been recreated and its people - its women - suffer. The blasphemy law was used (and thus abused) in any instance of one against another as a surefire way to get an opponent killed. The military owns the most land (urban and rural) in Pakistan, a country, a state that was made on the condition of private property ownership. Balochistan has emerged, or perhaps has found its voice, as the new Bengal. The state continues to operate on a colonial paradigm in respect to this resource rich, geo-strategic province. The Pakistani liberal elite is only in it for self-preservation and will make whatever concessions it needs to for the religious right's support and continues to leave the bleeding left is on its own.

Gender and the Nation

Gender has continuously been leveraged as a tool in nationalist movements in 'post'-colonial states. It is important to explore the development of a South Asian Muslim women's political consciousness, as it has been coopted by successive nationalist movements in Pakistan, to gain further clarity into process of constructing a national identity. Muslim women's' rights movements in Pakistani history can be categorized into the early, middle, and current eras. After the 1857 mutiny, the Ashraf in United Provinces were ousted from the public sphere, and forced to critically reflect on their status, and that of their women (who were of course, considered property). These men found their women to be lacking outside of tradition and culture, and so,

[40] Ayesha Siddiqa-Agha, *Military Inc: Inside Pakistan's Military Economy* (PlutoPress, 2017).

promoted education as an antidote. This led to upper-class Muslim women producing literature and scholarship on divorce, polygamy, *purdah* [پردہ] (directly translated as "the curtain," used to refer to the seclusion of women within a household away from men), and marriage, even if they were still under the conditions of *purdah* at home. This era saw the beginning of a 'men for women' movement.[41]

Later on, in the early stages of Muslim nationalism in South Asia in the early 20th century, Muslim women's rights became tied to the Pakistan movement. Women, even those outside the *ashraf*, were empowered and encouraged to participate in public protest, advocating loud and proud for what they had assumed to be their rights in a binational state. Instead, they were destined to write articles, hold meetings, and protest on the street for their new homeland. Then, in the 1940s, *ashraf* women were provided the opportunity to do the undoable. They left the safety of their private domain and entered the public sphere. They continued to write, mobilize support for the All-India Muslim League, and held public meetings, as the demand for Pakistan grew. Their demands now aligned with the political elite – they wanted to fight for the homeland. These women were baton charged, arrested, and jailed, yet they persevered in pursuit of an imagined homeland where they could exercise and express their identities. This mass mobilization of women was not only confined to the more emancipated regions like the Punjab, but also in the relatively traditionalist and restrictive NWFP, where burqa clad Pathans protested the Congress Ministry.[42] The British Governor of the NWFP, upon witnessing this mobilization of women not quite remembered in British India, especially in NWFP, remarked that "Pakistan is

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[41] Gail Minault, "Secluded Scholars: Women's Education and Muslim Social Reform in Colonial India," in *International Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol. 34, No. 1 (February 2002): 168–70.
[42] Aisha Anees Malik, "Gender and Nationalism: Political Awakening of Muslim Women of the Subcontinent in the 20th Century," in *Strategic Studies* Vol. 37, No. 2 (2017): 1–16.

made."[43] Jinnah himself was regarded as an immense proponent for Muslim women's rights, declaring in 1944 that "It is a sin against humanity that our women are shut up within the four walls of the houses as prisoners. There is no sanction anywhere for the deplorable conditions in which our women have to live. You should take your women along with you as comrades in every sphere of life."[44] His modernist views inspired women and certainly the progressive element of political Muslim thinkers in South Asia to join the cause for Pakistan, for the promise of a future in their homeland.

The middle era saw the creation of the Pakistani state, leftist movements for equal rights, and failed promises made towards women, particularly exemplified through the erosion of Muslim women's rights during the sexist and restrictive Zia regime. Despite their ardent support for Pakistan, the Jamaat actively repressed their rights, who had now found themselves institutionalized in the state apparatus. Women who had actively participated in the struggle for Pakistan now found themselves as the objects of reform by these traditionalists. The current era grapples under the shadow of the repressive regime politics and policies, alongside the consequences of globalization in making the War on Terror.

In the early movement for Pakistan, education was leveraged as a means for Muslim women to become politically engaged. Once Pakistan was formed, however, its educational resources were coopted by the traditionalist and patriarchal parties. Women symbolized the Pakistan movement and galvanized the need for a Muslim homeland in South Asia, but when Pakistan was formed, only two out of 96 seats were women elected to serve in the Constituent Assembly (the interim parliament). Women's resistance in the earlier period of the birth of nation

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[43] David Willmer, "Women as Participant in the Pakistan Movement: Modernisation and the Promise of a Moral State," in *Asian Survey* Vol. 30, No. 3 (1996): 573–90.
[44] Khawar Mumtaz and Farida Shaheed, *Women of Pakistan: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back?* (Zed Books, 1987).

was most visible in the upper echelons of society, demonstrated through political engagement. Sana Khan demonstrates that it was only upper-class women who were allowed to pressure political parties, as in the case of February 1949, when the PML Council considered electing a woman for Joint Secretary. The women in the party, led by the PM's wife, walked out and formed the All Pakistan Women's Association (APWA). The APWA's membership was limited to upper class women and was seen as one of few socially acceptable avenues for women's activism. In 1953, The APWA put forth a charter for a ten-women reservation in both provincial and national legislatures, which eventually expanded into covering issues like the equality of status and opportunity, equal pay for equal work, and a guarantee of Muslim women's rights under the Sharia. This charter was not looked at seriously, and it took an additional 3 years until "the principle of female suffrage for women's reserved seats on the basis of special women's territorial constituencies, thus giving women dual voting rights for general seats and reserved."[45]

Later on, the Family Laws Ordinance of 1961 were passed, which discouraged polygamy, regulated divorce, and standardized marriage contracts. While this ordinance did provide some relief to women, it did so at the cost of penalizing women "by requiring them to suffer two years of non-support before filing for divorce on the basis of lack of maintenance," among other performative promises.[46] On the other hand, the orthodoxy deemed the ordinance un-Islamic and strongly condemned the measure. This attempt by Ayub Khan's military regime to coopt women's rights as means to state legitimization marked a beginning of many dubious, successive attempts to institutionalize identity.

[45] Sana Khan, "Women and State Laws and Policies in Pakistan: The Early Phase, 1947-77," in *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* Vol. 74 (2013): 727–28.
[46] Khan, *Women and State Laws*.

When the PPP came into power under Bhutto, the women's rights movement was reaching its peak in terms of sheer numbers and organization. Bhutto, the idealist and crude politician he was, did not mediate between these organizers and the orthodox clergy. Instead, he continued to fraternize with the orthodox and compromised in crafting the 1973 constitution with their approval. This constitution is what legally defined the Ahmadis, a sect of Muslims created during the British Raj, as non-Muslims, legally limiting their expressions of faith and identity-at-large. Bhutto was unwilling to put his political support at risk, so he caved into the orthodoxy's demands. Inversely, his engagement with women's rights was largely symbolic. He refused to engage with women's organizations, despite these women having largely mobilized in support of Bhutto's democratic vision of Pakistan. The 1972 reforms did see women granted access to public careers like the police force, district administration, and foreign service, but women continued to be limited in the socially gendered (and governmentally reinforced) workforce, sticking to higher education and professional institutions. Furthermore, while Bhutto codified the limits of dowries, so that low- and middle-class families could lessen financial burdens in matching *rishtas* [رشتا] (directly translated as "the relationship," used to refer engagement] they were largely ineffective because of the loopholes built into policy. In essence, symbolic policy was passed that failed to produce social attitude changes.

In addition to the Hudood Ordinances and the Qanun Law, Zia introduced several other anti-women laws, like the *Qisas* and *Diyat* Ordinance [قِصَاص and دية] (an ordinance that redefines the offenses of murder and bodily hurt, as well as their punishments, in Islamic terms, replacing and amending relevant sections of the Pakistan Penal Code), and the Family Laws. Under the guise of Islamization, Zia institutionalized expressions of gender identity, to define Pakistani identity. The state systemically denied women the basic right to equality, freedom, and

dignity. Zia's fundamentalist interpretation of ascribed Sharia facilitated oppression and sexual violence in addition to eroding women's rights to equality and justice. Women were policed on their attire and presence in public spaces and ultimately relegated to male authority. As Khan aptly puts it, "if Bhutto ignored the issues of women, and failed to go beyond symbolic gestures, under the military regime of Zia-ul- Haq, the state actively pursued a policy of the subjugation of women, and systematically buttressed the feudal, patriarchal forces in Pakistan."[47] While Zia's Islamization agenda affected poor and working-class women most adversely, the public discourse on women's dress and mobility in public spaces propelled upper-class, urban women to mobilize and act upon. Their limitations on their social and cultural expressions of identity, which had previously been safeguarded by their class and social standing, was restricted in the wake of the new regressive policies.[48]

Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto

To further complicate the role of gender in Pakistani identity, *Mohtarma* [محترمہ] (madam) Benazir Bhutto, Pakistan's first and only female Prime Minister, emerged. She was born into an independent Pakistan and represented a new generation of Pakistanis, *indigenized* by the state. Despite inheriting the political status of her father, and being the daughter of a wealthy landlord, she emerged as a figure painted in hope for her lesser-off compatriots. After her father's execution in 1979, she became a leading figure in the opposition against Zia's regime, despite facing house arrest, prison time, and eventual exile. She led the PPP to a slim victory in the elections following Zia's death, in November 1988. She served two non-consecutive terms, from

[47] Khan, *Women and State Laws,* pg. 731.
[48] It is integral to note, that while these urban elite women resisted, so too did multitudes of rural women with limited access to scaled, organized resistance.

1988-1990 and 1993-1996, but was marred with allegations of corruption and forced out of office. In 1989, she saw the first attempted parliamentary no-confidence vote against her leadership. The vote failed by 12 votes, and she argued that National Assembly members had been bribed by Saudi Salafi cleric Osama Bin Laden to replace Bhutto's *secular* government with an Islamic theocracy, partly because it was considered un-Islamic for a woman to govern. This Saudi opposition came at a time where Benazir Bhutto was a fan favorite of the American government. [49] Following her second dismissal, Bhutto lived in exile for several years before returning to Pakistan in 2007 to participate in elections. While her corruption allegations were never explicitly proven, they remained engrained in Pakistani popular political consciousness. Unfortunately, she was assassinated in a suicide bomb attack while campaigning. Benazir remains a controversial figure, having promised transformation for the exhausted nation, but instead upheld the status quo as a member of the landed elite. Bhutto's rule subsumes gendered critique of the state and its boxing-in of identity.

The PPP leaned into its populist rhetoric in newly fashioned design to complement Benazir as its new chairwoman. Prior to the 1988 election, the PPP released its adapted manifesto, which promised to:

> "(1) sign the [United Nations] convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women;
> (2) actively support women's right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work, to protection against unemployment, to equal pay for work of equal value, and payment of maternity leave;
> (3) repeal all discriminatory laws against women;
> (4) reform Personal Law and bring it in line with the demands of contemporary socioeconomic realities;
> (5) ensure that the law-enforcing machinery would be made effective to protect [the] modesty of women;
> (6) take special measures to promote the literacy of women; and that

[49] Ziring, *The Fall of Benazir Bhutto*, pg. 114.

(7) Jahez [dowry] would be "eradicated by enlarging social consciousness of women and strictly enforcing the relevant laws and Dowry Act."[50]

With a manifesto speaking to a population exhausted of over-a-decade of erosion of civil liberties, the PPP quickly regained significant sociopolitical clout. Benazir was invited by President Ghulam Ishaq Khan to become prime minister and form a government, amidst disagreement over whether the Sharia permits a woman to lead a Muslim state. In any case, she became Pakistan's first female Prime Minister, and the first Muslim Prime Minister in the world. While Zia repressed gender through policy, Benazir was running on a ticket to express gender. Her platform coalesced around women and the protection of their rights, in addition to restoring the legitimacy of Pakistan. However, she inherited the problems Zia had attempted to deal with, and the fallout from his own rule, including: ethnic strife, a mass influx of smuggled arms and heroin brought in through the Afghan border, poor economy, and rampant corruption (in addition to her own). [51] Instead of pushing her reform programs, she worked to neutralize her opposition; at the time of her ascension to Prime Minister, the Parliament consisted of senators who had run during Zia's tenure, a time when the PPP had boycotted the national elections. She lacked a majority party in the government, thus had to look elsewhere for constructive ways to implement her agenda. Ultimately, she failed to enshrine and promote the rights of women as effectively as her constituents were hoping for. Her performativity is nothing novel for (Pakistani) politicians. She leveraged her identity, as the scion of the Bhutto clan, a Harvard & Oxford graduate, and a *woman* – the self-proclaimed "Daughter of the East"[52] – to build political support. Because Zia explicitly singled her out during his rule, she was able to stage a grand homecoming and bring

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[50] Anita M. Weiss, "Benazir Bhutto and the Future of Women in Pakistan," in *Asian Survey* Vol. 30, No. 5 (1990): 433–45.
51 Significant to note here that Benazir appointed General Tikka Khan, one of the few senior military officers who were loyal to her, and a key player in the Bengali genocide, as the Governor of Punjab.
[52] Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East* (Hamish Hamilton, 1989)

large swaths of the Pakistani public under her banner. She struggled to make meaningful movements in challenging Zia's policies, though. She was forced to defend her rule as opposed to enact change. Because of the limited support by the government, she was unable to overturn the Hudood Ordinances, made alliances against her party's stance (i.e. appointing *more* elites into positions of power),[53] and struggled to change the status and role of women in Pakistani society. Women's rights continued to be politicized as a mechanism in which the state could exercise its power to drive its agenda. In Ayub Khan's era, female literacy was promoted to build a larger workforce, and build a economically-sound Pakistan. During Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's tenure, female literacy was promoted as an ideological necessity, to build a just Pakistan. Under Zia's regime, focused on institutionalizing gender divides down to education, through separate schools and colleges for men and women. Benazir followed her predecessors in approaching gender as a nebulous identity that could be rendered for her and her party's political gain. In spite of her own positionality, she was dually set back by the state, as well as her own struggle to retain power. She certainly served as a role model for a people who had yet to see female leadership (particularly given what had happened to Fatima Jinnah during her election), but simultaneously her policy initiatives were limited. She is rightfully credited with plans for women's development banks and "inclusive" police stations, but simultaneously, these projects faced resistance and were not fully implemented.

Benazir's rule was colored by her lack of political experience, corruption, and opposition from Pakistan's conservative Islamist lobby for her modernization agenda. She allegedly used government funds for personal gain,[54] awarded contracts to favorable companies, and further

[53] See Weiss, *The Future of Women in Pakistan,* for more on the PPP and its advocacy for women's rights.
[54] Bhutto allegedly used money from the treasury to pay American public-relations experts to improve her image in Washington and secure support for her tenure.

enriched the Bhutto clan – which now included her husband, to-be-twice-President Asif Ali Zardari. Zardari is set to be Pakistan's *next* President, despite widespread cleavages in political support for him. Many of Benazir's critics suggest that it was Zardari, in fact, who was driving the couple's corrupt practices. He was nicknamed "Mr. 10%,"[55] for charging ten percent commission for obtaining permission to set up government-contracted projects or loans. Zardari was also arrested for kidnapping and extorting money from a Pakistani-born British citizen.[56] Decades later, the Pakistani establishment, headed by the Sharif clan, continues to be deeply invested in upholding Pakistan's dynastic and military hegemony, with Zardari set to return to serve as the next President in 2024. Benazir was never convicted of corruption, despite her leaving office twice, but her legacy follows both her husband, and son, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the current head of the PPP. Criticism of Benazir existed as an extension of the gendered context she operated in.

The people of Pakistan spoke up *twice* on behalf of their *Mohtarma,* imagining representative leadership. Benazir's class background positioned her for a place on a public stage, and despite vocally advocating against Zia's Islamization project, did not affect change on the Hudood Ordinances. This is not to discount her vital role as the first female Muslim head of state in the world, and in opposing Pakistan's martial law and the Zia regime, but to critique her as a *female* politician as a liberator for cosmopolitan Pakistanis, given the PPP's platform advocating for the common people, and the context of a post-dictator Pakistan. Benazir's successor, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif (one of Zia's proteges), was in staunch opposition to Benazir's policies. He worked to revive the Islamization program, introducing new legal and

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[55] Peter Wonacott, "Zardari Set to Assume Pakistan's Presidency," *Wall Street Journal*, September 5, 2008, sec. Business, https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB122058073564902483.
[56] Ziring, *The Fall of Benazir Bhutto*, pg. 115.

political changes in efforts to integrate Pakistan into the global market. Since then, Pakistan has continued to see an oscillating league of leaders, each more politicized than the last. What has not changed in this league of leaders, is policy intervention directed at uplifting the legal protections and equal status of women in civil society. Pakistani women continue to be confined to private spaces with limited opportunity for economic or social mobility. Benazir's attempt to rule demonstrated the struggles a woman would have to operate in a position which had been honed for a *man.* In a country that dehumanizes its minorities amongst intersectional lines tracing ethnicity, language, sectarian identity, religion, caste, color, subscription to orthodoxy, gender exists as one of the most visible markers of separation.

Conclusion

Tying the imposition of nation states in South Asia, the development of the Pakistani nation from the bottom up, and the attempts by the state to institutionalize the nation from the top down is how gender is leveraged. Gender was essentialized in the galvanization of the independence movement, articulated as a fixed aspect of national identity, and defined through state policy. What holds Pakistan together was not *just* Islam, as proven by Bangladesh. Whether Pakistan was defined through a dominant ethnic or linguistic narrative also became central to these internal inquisitions in identity. This chapter posits that it was gender, in part, that constituted a fixed component of this identity.

Chapter 2: Performing Pakistan

This chapter analyzes representations of Pakistani identity though performance: "Hum Dekhenge" written by Faiz, and performed by Bano, as an expression of Pakistani identity through poetic resistance in popular culture during the Zia regime, and "Joyland," produced by Sadiq, as an expression of a "normal" Pakistani experience. Existing scholarship "looks to the present and traces Pakistan's history teleologically, from the present to its founding in 1947, inattentive to historical context, obsessed with the Pakistani army in relation to how it could be best maneuvered for the United States' strategic purposes, and blind to the making of Pakistani history of ordinary people."[57] Pakistani people are rendered as extraneous to Pakistan's story, which is the opposite of how *any* people's story should be told. Pakistani people have continued to define and redefine Pakistan amidst political, economic, and environmental catastrophes, with or without the support of institutions, corporations, and governments. This analysis seeks to reorient Pakistani scholarship to look more critically at these cultural moments of resistance often obscured by Western historians in the footnotes of analyses of Pakistan's military regimes.

Grounding "Hum Dekhenge"

Faiz is widely acknowledged as one of the greatest modern Urdu poets to have lived and is particularly popular in Pakistan for his resistance poetry that synthesizes decolonial love for the Pakistani nation and faith in Allah. Despite holding both a great sense of sorrow over the Partition and religious values that conflicted with conservative religious leaders, his work synthesized both decolonial love for the Pakistani nation and faith in Allah. Faiz himself identified as a globalist-postcolonial poet and regularly engaged with other revolutionary poets

[57] Waheed, *Hidden Histories,* pg. 153.

from Palestine to the Soviet Union.[58] Faiz lived through the Partition of 1947, the war over Kashmir in 1965, the genocide in East Pakistan in 1971, and part of General Zia's rule. Faiz was deeply troubled over the division of Pakistan and creation of Bangladesh. As Ali Madeeh Hashmi, Faiz's grandson, writes in Faiz's biography, "the wounds of partition had just begun to heal and this new one was unbearable."[59] Faiz remained actively involved in poetic correspondence with Bangladesh as a nation and people, with the iconic "Hum Ke Thehre Ajnabi" [ہم کے تیرے اجنبی] (We Who Became Strangers) representing the sentiments of many Pakistanis acknowledging and feeling the loss of the Pakistan that they had grown to imagine. While Faiz was classically trained in Urdu poetry, Punjabi was his first language.

For some, resisting Urdu means resisting Pakistan, but there is no doubt that Urdu unified these diverse peoples because of its imposition. Leveraging a national language – an imposed language – in popular protest is part of an active discourse over the postcolonial national identity construction project that many former colonized peoples continue to grapple with. Language continued to complicate both the state and nationalist attachments to identity. Urdu was leveraged as the primary voice of organized resistance in the press, literature, and poetry, instead of Bangla because of direct state patronage and Western Pakistani power. Urdu could be used to leverage change within the state by speaking directly to the decision makers. The literary left in South Asia had actively resisted the state at all stages of nation state building in South Asia, from pre-, during, and post-Partition, but faced immense censorship and pushback for attempting to

[58] Faiz was particularly fond of the Soviet Union over the United States, especially during the Cold War. Despite Faiz's extensive international travel, he had only gone to the U.S. twice during his life: once to San Francisco in 1948 for the International Labour Organization conference and again to Hawaii later in life for a summit held by the East-West Center, where Faiz met then-Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) Chairman, Yasser Arafat. Faiz later spent extensive time in Beirut with Arafat, and his poetry reflects shared themes of global resistance.
[59] Ali Madeeh Hashmi, *Love and Revolution: Faiz Ahmed Faiz: The Authorized Biography* (Rupa Publications India, 2016), pg. 227.

resist the state as opposed to constructing a shared community and space to build an identity collectively and constructively. The state banned the Communist Party of Pakistan, arrested Faiz during Ayub Khan's regime, and progressive perspectives of the state in newspapers were censored. Anti-colonial nationalism was commonplace across formerly colonized territories, globally, during Ayub Khan's tenure – and so were Pakistani-state led attempts to police leftist expressions of nationalist identity. Leveraging Urdu as a voice of resistance thus became an transformed political act, given the context of East Pakistan.

Another famous Urdu poet was Habib Jalib, dissenting most famously against the Ayub Khan regime. His piece *Zulmat ko Zia Sarsar ko Saba Bande ko Khuda Kya Likhna* [ظلم کو ضیاء سر کو صبا بندے کو خدا کیا لکھنا] (What can God write to the slave of slaves) appealed to large swaths of the Pakistani public under the Ayub Khan regime, partly because his poetry leveraged accessible forms of Urdu to dismantle the elite culture around Urdu, and professed in public spaces, from the cornerstones of Punjabi towns to university campuses, and formal mushairas.[60] Faiz himself went so far as to call Jalib "the poet of the masses," but Jalib struggled to reach popular appeal like that of Faiz.[61] His use of poetry exemplifies the practice of poetic power. Resisting Urdu can mean resisting Pakistan, but there is no doubt that Urdu unified these diverse peoples as a result of its imposition. "Wa Yaqba Wajh Rabbik" was not the only piece of Urdu poetry written in resistance – in fact, Urdu poetry was a popular mechanism of resistance, charted through leftist movements reaching even before the Partition. Revolutionary poets like female Kishwar Naheed, famous for *Hum Gunahgar Aurten* [ہم گنہگار اورتین] ("We the Sinful Women") and Fahmida Riaz, famous for *Chadar aur Chaar-Diwari* [چادر اور چار دیواری] ("The Veil and Four-Walled Covering") wrote directly in opposition to sexist policies and politics of the Zia regime, in Urdu.

[60] Toor, *State of Islam,* pg. 93.
[61] "Habib Jalib," https://www.letsstartthinking.org/Pakistan/personalities/habib-jalib.php.

These women never reached levels of notoriety like Faiz, perhaps because of the institutionalization of Pakistani gender roles and identity where their families were their primary responsibility.

Faiz argued that Pakistan lacked an encompassing culture to meaningfully connect citizens.[62] It is in this gap that Faiz made the case for Urdu poetic tradition to serve as the antidote. Even if he was a revolutionary, he still pushed for the fixed nation. Faiz's understanding was the result of his extensive international travel, as described in *Mutala-e Faiz: Europe Mein* [مطالع ا فیض: یورپ میں] (Faiz's Studies: In Europe). Faiz interacted with a Cuban traveler while he was traveling in Europe in the 1960s. Much to Faiz's dismay, the Cuban does not know or recognize Pakistan, which Faiz claims is because "Pakistan has no trademark, nothing by which anyone can recognize it' before discussing at length the problem of introducing Pakistan's culture and civilizational history."[63] Faiz conflicted with traditional understandings of Pakistani identity rooted in a universal interpretation and approach to religion, instead positing an identify unified through a shared language. While serving in Bhutto's government as a cultural affairs representative, Faiz argued that Pakistani culture constituted the "religion of Islam which provides the ethical and ideological basis for the people's way of life," the "indigenous cultures of various linguistic regions," "elements of Western culture absorbed since the days of British occupation" and " distinct cultures of minority groups who form a part of the Pakistani nation."[64] In other words, Pakistani identity was certainly rooted in the ethics and ideology of Islam, but it was a rich synthesis of the former, indigenous linguistic traditions, and the postcolonial character, that truly defined and distinguished Pakistan. Bano's immortal rendition of "Hum

[62] Hashmi, *Love and Revolutio*n, pg. 192.
[63] Hashmi, *Love and Revolution*, pg. 191.
[64] Faiz Ahmed Faiz, "Report of the Comission on Sports, Culture and the Arts" (Islamabad: Government of Pakistan, 1968).

Dekhenge" further interrogated questions of identity in what brought Pakistani people together, which proved to be poetic resistance, demonstrated through its usage against oppressive regimes, leaders, and the state, in Pakistan and beyond, as a cultural synthesis of Sufi, Quranic, and revolutionary poetry.

Following Bhutto's death, Faiz fled Pakistan to Beirut, where he explored transnational resistance centered on decolonial love for a nation with Palestinians Edward Said and Yasser Arafat.[65] It was during this period of connection to global resistance that Faiz wrote "Wa Yabqa Wajh Rabbik" aimed to subvert Zia's fundamentalist interpretation of Islam, in 1979 (but published later, in 1981). Faiz described *qiyamat* [قیامت] (Day of Resurrection; the Islamic Day of Judgement where all people are judged on the morality of the deeds of their life) as the day of revolution where General Zia's government would be toppled. This poem's power is tied to its invocation of the certainty of the Qur'an, and the Pakistani people's commitment to this belief. Despite increasing right wing and Islamic fundamentalist leadership in Pakistan's press, Faiz's poetry continued to have wide-reaching audiences across Pakistan. At the time of Faiz's death in 1984, protests against the dictatorship were reaching their peak. Large congregations were prohibited and those who took part were at risk of arrest, imprisonment, or worse, but many continued to advocate for their civil rights.

Two years later, Bano performed "Hum Dekhenge" for an audience of over 50,000 in Lahore. Bano's transnational renown awarded her the popular title *Malika e Ghazal* [ملکہ ا غزل] (Queen of the Ghazal) and in Pakistan, Bano received the Pride of Performance award (the highest

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[65] Faiz was deeply invested in the Palestinian liberation movement, even prior to his move to the Levant. Faiz published poetry like "Sar-e Wadi-e Sina" (In the Skies over the Valley of Sinai) in solidarity with the Palestinians during the Arab-Israeli war of 1967. It is intriguing to note here that General Zia trained Jordanian soldiers and fought against the PLO during the Black September conflict in 1970. General Zia's experience in Jordan shaped his views on the PLO and the Palestinian conflict. He became a staunch critic of the PLO and supported the Israeli government in its efforts to suppress the Palestinian uprising.

national literary award in Pakistan) in 1974, three years prior to Zia's rule. She specialized in the Urdu *ghazal*, originally an Arabic verse form of poetry grappling with loss and romantic love, integrated into medieval Persian poetry, and subsequently, into Urdu. "Wa Yabqa Wajh Rabbik" was written as a *nazm* [نظم] (a significant genre of Urdu descriptive poetry), following conventional standards socialized into South Asian Muslim culture, like its rhyme scheme. The rhyme scheme itself is not standardized across *nazms* but is fixed within a *nazm* itself. So, the performance, in following its own rhyme scheme, lent itself to be repeated and replicated by performers across space and time. For South Asian Muslims, poetry has been a powerful (particularly oral) medium for the preservation of history, culture, tradition, and faith, often transcending class, caste, and gender. Islamically-inclined poetry became more formally collected, organized, and written during eras of Muslim rule in South Asia, like the Mughal era, where Urdu poetry became popularized. Poetry is not a private endeavor to be consumed on an individual basis, rather to be recited and shared for – and with – an audience. Here, "Hum Dekhenge" exists as a recitation transformed into a performance.

Analyzing "Hum Dekhenge"

To analyze this performance, I leverage Knowles' theoretical approach to theater, which situates the ways in which performance production creates meaning, entertaining, and moving. Communities produce meaning when they engage with culturally conditioned performance. Knowles argues that meaning is produced by "the mental counterpart of a pattern or sequence of sounds, assigned arbitrarily to those sounds by convention" while value "always involves the invocation of something dissimilar for which the sign can be exchanged."[66] Meaning is thus

[66] Ric Knowles, *How Theatre Means* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014), pg. 21.

created by essentializing the listener's cultural identity and placing that into conversation with otherwise arbitrary sounds and words. For Pakistani people in the audience of this performance, then, the thrum, beat, and rhythm of "Hum Dekhenge" invokes nostalgia to those familiar and socialized in a South Asian context, through devotional poetry, song, and dance. Knowles' description of value captures a key aspect of how we understand and assign value, which can be broken down into: value arises from comparison and relationship to something else, the "something dissimilar" is different from the object being valued (need, desire, another object, or concepts), and the object being valued acts as a sign representing something else that we are interested in obtaining or feeling fulfilled through. On its own, "Wa Yaqba Wajh Rabbik's" value may be limited. However, "Hum Dekhenge's" value, in the context of a military regime that does not seem like it is going away anytime soon, as opposed to its onset, increases. "Hum Dekhenge's" value, then, can be observed in relation to the written poem, but simultaneously as a piece warranting its own aesthetic appreciation, cultural significance, and revolutionary potential. The intrinsic properties of the performance – namely, the poem – are only a small part of the equation in determining "Hum Dekhenge's" value.

Faiz, an ardent critic of systems of social stratification like class and caste, self-identified as a Marxist, and his work, even as transformed by Bano, must be read as such. Knowles discusses the Marxist interpretation of theater as "the activation of audiences for the purposes of producing social change," an effect demonstrated through Hum Dekhenge.[67] Bano leveraged the latent political messaging in the poem to perform and produce social change. For a performance to produce social change on a national level, it must reach an audience conditioned through years of an identity construction process. Nationalism is created through memory, and identity itself is

[67] Knowles, *How Theatre Means*, pg. 72.

observed as a performance. Carlson explores the relationship between the stage and memory, relating theoretical positions like faith, national truths, and legends, to have been crafted through memory, as does modern nationalism, all through performance. [68] Scholars see performance as integral in crafting accumulative truths, like a historical narrative, through controlled and codified acts. Hum Dekhenge acted to be just that – an accumulative truth of Pakistan, Muslims, and all those who suffer through tyranny, that these moments too shall pass, and we (the oppressed) shall see them through. Within the performance, the continuous repetition of *hum dekhenge* positions the listener to have faith in the future and the fundamentals in Islamic faith. Carlson describes how present scholarly intervention into performance study "has involved a shift from the romantic or new critical view of each work of art as essentially self-contained to a new view of each work as existing in and best understood through a web of intertextual relationships."[69] Thus, the performance of "Hum Dekhenge" must be explored through its language, site of performance, performer herself, performativity, audience, and intertextuality, amongst others.

Knowles describes "the languages of the stage" to be performative.[70] Here, Urdu was the language of the stage. Urdu was the language of a former-elite that had dreamed and subsequently migrated to Pakistan, and it was in these educated peoples, that critiques of the state they continued to dream of were expressed through poetry, literature, and song. "Hum Dekhenge" was performed in Urdu, a language with an extensive political history in South Asia. Progressive Muslim intellectuals advanced the Pakistan movement using longstanding literary traditions rooted in both Islam and Urdu. Muslim society, across empires and languages, have

[68] Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage* (University of Michigan Press, 2003), pg. 3.
[69] Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*, pg. 126.
[70] Knowles, *How Theatre Means,* pgs. 112-113.

used poetry as a primary means of creative expression. Urdu has been mobilized as a political language particularly given its origin in the Muslim Mughal court, and state patronage in Pakistan. Waheed argues that Urduphone leftist intellectualists construed a significant community that pushed for a Muslim state in South Asia, and that "their refusal to be silenced for criticizing the state and society" could be observed particularly through a poetic dimension, which carried through into Pakistan, as demonstrated by "Hum Dekhenge."[71] Waheed sets up the framework to understand how extensive censorship in consumable media, as "Hum Dekhenge" was under the Zia regime, limited political sensibilities and expressions of identity. Waheed argues "the Islamization of Pakistan, under Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, and the Sunnification of Pakistan under General Zia ul-Haq were both top-down constructed processes which were at odds not only with the public, but with the Courts and the Constitution… but it was Zia al-Haq and his Hudood ordinances which set up a parallel legal apparatus to Islamize all of Pakistani laws." [72] While Bhutto set out to rebrand Pakistan as an Islamic nation in the wake of Bangladeshi independence, General Zia kept the Pakistani project defined through his fundamentalist interpretation of Sunnism. Bano took those fundamentals, as written out by Faiz, and applied them back to the Zia regime.

Given the linguistic context of Pakistan, which had just violently severed itself a little over a decade prior over the question of national language, querying why Urdu was used to protest is important. Faiz roots himself in Urdu poetry, of course, but there are limitations to the audience that can engage with the Urdu poetry tradition meticulously crafted over years as a language reserved for those ranging from the Mughal aristocrats to the Muslim *ashraf* to the

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[71] Waheed, *Hidden Histories,* pg. 35.
[72] Waheed, *Hidden Histories*, pg. 224.

muhajirs. Urdu was a language of the elite coopted by the Pakistani state to subdue ethnic nationalist sentiments in the newly formed nation. The imposition of Urdu was formalized under Bhutto's predecessor, Yahya Khan, when West Pakistan committed genocide in East Pakistan, and *Bangladesh* [বাংলাদেশ] (country of Bangla, signifying the power of the language movement) was born. A Muslim homeland that does not institutionally, politically, or societally accept diverse interpretations of the Islamic faith tradition had to look elsewhere for identity. Urdu formed the basis for an imagined community, in Benedict Anderson's terms, one that created an unequal equalizer for West Pakistan and excluded East Pakistan. As Waheed notes, the Pakistani state "worked to marginalize Pakistan's many languages, most notably Bengali, which was, upon the creation of Pakistan in 1947, spoken by a majority of the population."[73] The military elite, the *muhajir* progenitors of Pakistan, and political establishment are in strong alliance with Urdu-demonstrated power. East Pakistani discrimination by the Urdu-speaking Punjabi military elite and bureaucrats who claimed a monopoly on political rule, and the exclusion of Bengali, were integral grievances that led to the Bengali liberation war. While "Hum Dekhenge" was written and performed in Urdu a mere decade after the bloody genocide, it is routinely celebrated as a moment of resistance against General Zia's regime. Waheed states "In Pakistan… Urdu has harnessed statist and majoritarian impulses against ethnic and linguistic minorities," which does beg the question of the limits of Urdu poetry as an act of resistance against the Pakistani state.[74] Pakistan has limited means to construct an identity for its people to coalesce around, and it attempted to leverage Urdu to do so. The imposition of Urdu upon all Pakistanis continues to be the subject of resistance within the state, with Balochi, Pashto, and Sindhi communities in

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[73] Waheed, *Hidden Histories*, pg. XVI.
[74] Waheed, *Hidden Histories*, pg. XVI.

Pakistan fighting for their rights, which some revolutionaries imagine in a new, distinct ethnolinguistic state.[75]

It is integral to analyze the processes and choices that led to the performance being grounded in the time, space, and place that it did to understand its meaning. As Knowles notes, "everything on stage, and everything involved in 'the entire theatre experience,' is a sign."[76] Bano performed in Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan. Given that the majority of Pakistan's population is located in Punjab, whose ancestral center is Lahore, Lahore is commonly referred to as Pakistan's heart or cultural hub by scholars, politicians, and again, the majority-ethnically Punjabi population – with external (namely Western) scholars following suit. Lahore must be seen as having been intentionally chosen as the site of this performance. Of course, Punjabis would coalesce around Lahore and its supremacy of cultural marking, and of course these state-privileged Punjabis would commodify and export this idea of Lahore as the heart of Pakistan. Bano herself was ethnically Punjabi, but what of the Saraiki in South Punjab, Balochis, Sindhis, or other minority communities actively resisting the Pakistani state? Lahore certainly serves as a hub for Punjabi Pakistanis, but in this imagined community of a multiethnic, multilingual Muslim nation, it is a gross misrepresentation to exclusively label Lahore as Pakistan's cultural hub, especially when cities like Karachi exist that boast a multiethnic, multilingual, and relatively religiously heterogenous population. Lahore as a Pakistani cultural hub inherently limits the cultural value and output of the subaltern across Pakistan, which has grave consequences on expressions of individual and communal identities expressed within and outside of Pakistan. Of course, this is not to discount Lahore's cultural value. Lahore has historically served as a commercial and

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[75] See Charles H. Kennedy, "Managing ethnic conflict: The case of Pakistan," in *Regional Politics and Policy* Vol. 3, No. 1 (1993), 123-143, for a primer on ethnic secession movements in Pakistan.
[76] Knowles, *How Theatre Means*, pgs. 112-113.

agricultural hub, but its identity lies in its history in Punjabi tradition as opposed to the created Pakistani identity. Lahore is stereotyped as a city that never sleeps, where strong gender norms and conventions are upheld, and art is constantly being reproduced. Bano's performance, while acting in resistance against the Zia's Pakistan, furthers these cultural stereotypes and embodies a level of performativity. If this performance was truly to be revolutionary for all Pakistanis, why not hold it in Karachi? Why was the power of "Hum Dekhenge" expressed by *another* Punjabi? Why was "Hum Dekhenge" performed by a *woman?* The answer is unclear, but that is precisely why we must interrogate this act of resistance. Despite the contradictions, "Hum Dekhenge" *did* speak to large swaths of people.

Bano performed at Alhamra, present day Alhamra Arts Council, built next to Lahore's *Bagh e Jinnah* [باغِ جناح,] (Jinnah Garden, formerly a colonial park, Lawrence Gardens), the colonial-era Governor's House, and the Punjab Assembly. The creation of institutionalized and administered theaters as a colonial enterprise in South Asia contributed to the storage of cultural memory for mass audiences in a power-patroned site, where rich storytelling meant performance in poetry, dance, and song. Bano performed inside of the theater, but the vast majority of her 50,000 concert-attendees, listened on from the outside. Physical spaces, as Carlson describes, have their own "ghosted memories of harvest and festival," that contribute to performances.[77] Alhamra itself was a new construction, with few performances gracing the stage. Situating this performance in a new theater, susceptible to innovative interpretations and expressions of art, next to the theoretical progenitor and father of Pakistan's garden, a colonial memento, and a seat of institutionalized power, thus holds significant weight. Lahore is a massive, sprawling city, with venues that could have easily hosted the masses that attended this performance. Irrespective

[77] Carlson, *The Haunted Stage,* pg. 133.

of who made the choice to ground the performance at Alhamra, the choice had reverberating consequences. Alhamra Arts Council pays some digital homage to its revolutionary legacy but "Hum Dekhenge" is popularly remembered in the minds of Pakistanis and non-Pakistanis alike, globally.[78] David Wiles describes the inflection of power relations in different sites of performance, ranging from sacred and cosmic, to professional and empty, and sympotic and public.[79] Alhamra exists functionally as a public and sympotic space because performances are publicly accessible, but not the raison d'être. Bano's performance transformed Alhamra into a sacred and cosmic venue in which the audience could transcend the physicality of the performance in pursuit of the imagined Pakistan, defined in holy proportions. Not only was Alhamra a centralized location for laypeople to join in on revolutionary love for Islam and Pakistan, but it offered the state an easy opportunity to persecute the event organizers. Coincidentally, Alhamra was renovated a few years after she performed, and there are limited records of what the hall looked like at the time of Bano's performance, again, given the Zia regime's propensity to censor anything deemed a threat to the longevity of its state.

Performances cannot exist without a performer, who translate their intentions to their audience. There is, however, a difference between the physical and theatrical body. The physical body is quite literally, the physical body of the performer and what she adorns herself with. The theatrical body is a symbol that the performer constructs, a representation of what she wants the audience to see. Knowles describes that "while everything on stage is a sign, these signs are not 'consumed in their sense'."[80] Bano's physical body, wrapped in a black sari, has its own power discrete from her theatrical body, her capabilities as a performer. A black sari, in addition to

[78] See *Tribute to famous singers*, International The News (2022), https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/992587-tribute-to-famous-singers, for further details.
[79] Knowles, *How Theatre Means,* pg. 66.
[80] Knowles, *How Theatre Means*, pgs. 112-113.

existing as an article of clothing, symbolizes much to a culturally conditioned audience. Bano commonly (and publicly) wore saris, a common attire for women irrespective of religious background in the subcontinent, and a piece of clothing that was banned by the Zia regime for being un-Islamic and too Indian. That did not stop Bano, or many other Pakistani women, from asserting their rights to bodily autonomy in the most basic sense – dressing themselves. Zia's *Islamization* project relegated itself to gendering bodies, constructing physical narratives, and restricting expressions of identity – Bano, however, resisted. Already relegated to sexual and assumed-gender segregation, limited avenues of feminine expression and resistance existed. In addition to choosing wearing a sari, her choice in a *black* sari can also be read as an intentional act of resistance, against Zia, because of the cultural significance of wearing black clothing in both subcontinental and Islamic tradition. While the origin of wearing black as protest in the Indian subcontinent is uncertain, it became popular during the Raj as a means of resistance.[81] Banning saris was a further attempt to homogenize Pakistan's culture, given the context of West Pakistan's justification of the genocide in East Pakistan because it was too *culturally Hindu* – for example, through clothing. Bano's choice to wear a sari, given the gendered politics and policies of the Pakistani state, can be read in solidarity with her Bangladeshi sisters. In the Islamic context, black clothing and fabric signifies Shia identity. For the Shia, a sizeable minority in Pakistan (10-15% of the population),[82] Shiism is exemplified through sacrifice for right against wrong, for justice against injustice, and for truth against falsehood. While some key aspects of Shiism are heavily criticized by Sunnis, the martyrdom of Husayn (the Prophet Muhammad's

[81] Lala Lajpat Rai Birth Anniversary: All You Need to Know about the Man from Punjab Who Gave 'Simon Go Back' Slogan," (2017), https://www.india.com/news/india/lala-lajpat-rai-birth-anniversary-all-you-need-to-know-about-the-man-from-punjab-who-gave-simon-go-back-slogan-1790189/.
[82] "Islam in Pakistan," *Oxford Islamic Studies Online,* June 18, 2013, hhttp://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e1809.

grandson), is recognized by both Sunnis and Shias as a solemn moment in Islam's history. It is particularly common for Shias to signal their identity publicly, with black flags affixed to a Pakistani flag on their roof, and black clothes to commemorate the martyrdom. Thus, Bano did not simply wear a black sari; she wore resistance materialized, through its painful recent reality in East Pakistan, liberating legacy in the subcontinent, and ties to a religious struggle for right against wrong.

Knowles, on discussing representation in theater production and performance, brings up a point of curiosity crucial to my analysis. "Theatre stages representations, and all representations are misrepresentations, performing their cultural work in the gap between the 'real' and the representation, selecting and 'ostending' (foregrounding) certain things as signs and occluding other possible representations."[83] I assume the concert goers as primarily middle-class Punjabi men, the typical concertgoer in the Lahore of yesteryear, but perhaps just as crucial as those who could and did attend this performance are those who could not – people not represented by this performance, thus resistance – peoples marginalized on class, language background, and gender identity. People who could not afford attendance in the hall, forced to listen and participate outside, further distancing a woman from public perception. Or perhaps non-Urdu speakers, already marginalized by the Pakistani state, and distanced from organized acts of resistance, like this performance – their exclusion is significant. Was this truly the act of revolution that Pakistanis resonated with? Or was it a Pakistani state-legitimizing act (particularly through using Urdu), just not Zia-legitimizing? "Wa Yaqba Wajh Rabbik," let alone "Hum Dekhenge," certainly would not have been produced if not for the Zia regime's ascension to power. The absence of women in the audience, too, is notable but unsurprising. Given the gendered

[83] Knowles, *How Theatre Means,* pgs. 112-113.

sociopolitical Pakistani landscape, it is difficult to imagine Bano's performance for anyone relegated inside of the *zenana* [زنانہ] (literally 'of the women,' referring to the part of house reserved for the women). This performance's popularity came from its circulation by Pakistani men. Pakistani women certainly resisted in large swaths across the nation, but it would be difficult to organize a body of women to engage and participate in this performance, whereas Pakistani men would have the ease of entering and leaving social spaces in Pakistan without question or redress. The fact that women would have to coalesce in groups as opposed to act as individuals speaks in it of itself the sensitivity of which Pakistani women have had to operate in, in public and private, and the limitations of this performance. There is no actual record of who attended, for even if it were to exist, the Zia regime would certainly have cracked down.

Knowles describes that "when audiences assent, either individually or collectively, to a given representation – 'yes, that's true,' … or 'yes, that's an accurate representation of domestic life,' - they are 'hailed' into ideology, a set of 'givens' that they are required to accept as 'normal' if they wish to understand and enjoy the show."[84] In the available recording of "Hum Dekhenge," the thrum and beat of mens' voices reverberate the passion, urgency, and faith, in Bano's invocation of the fundamental truths. It is in these men that the performance is fully realized. The only existing recording of any poetic recitation from this performance exists because of these men and their deliberate asking for an encore of "Hum Dekhenge," another moment of devotional love for their Pakistan. Repetition builds memory. "Hum Dekhenge" directly converses with the audience – its entire premise is predicated on the idea of we. We shall see, not I, nor you, or him or her. We, the Pakistani people; we, the faithful; we, the victims of tyranny. This speaks particularly effectively for the Pakistani audience, already organized into an Islamic

[84] Knowles, *How Theatre Means*, pgs. 112-113.

brotherhood of sorts after years of rule institutionalizing faith, distinct from Zia's Sunnifcation project. Islam is predicated on the idea of a community that transcends borders, and this particular invocation of the Ummah reverberates across boundaries of individual identity. The buy in of the audience, demonstrated through the audible *wah ji wah* [وہ جی وہ] (a verbal sign of approval, appreciation, and respect in Urdu), collective applause and synchronized clapping matched by the rhythm, and hollering and cheering, particularly when *sab taaj uchaale jaenge* [سب تاج اچھالے جائیں گ] (all crowns will be overturned) is invoked, highlights the collective Pakistani plight for the nation, but against Zia's state. This represents a set of givens that the audience internalizes as normal. This performance shows the coalition around national identity, through resistance, highlighting the common peoples' voice.

"Hum Dekhenge" must be analyzed in relation to the intertextuality with the Holy Qur'an, for as Knowles describes, "performance analysis… consider[s] exactly what is invoked by those references, and for whom."[85] Of course, this does limit its application as an expression of an identity for non-Muslims in Pakistan. Given that the Qur'an is a Holy Islamic scripture, and this performance is situated in a revolutionary context in Pakistan, a previously nominally Muslim nation converted into an Islamic state, the intertextuality is invoked for the resisting Pakistani Muslims. In some traditional Islamic understandings popular in Pakistan, the Arabic Qur'an is the only authentic and true Qur'an. Translations of the Quran are considered as interpretations, which are acceptable, but not as the authentic Qur'an. "Hum Dekhenge" (literally) translates the fundamental *Qiyamat* in the Qur'an into the poetic Urdu tradition, rendering it nostalgic, culturally, and socio-politically relevant. In Islamic tradition, *Qiyamat* promises and threatens believers of the afterlife, when the dead will be resurrected, and all

[85] Knowles, *How Theatre Means*, pg. 194.

people will answer for their sins in this life, marked by a set of key events. This includes the coming of *Dajjal* [دجال] (the fake messiah), the spread of murder, corruption, and greed under the *Sufyani* [السفياني] (the tyrant ruler), and natural calamity, including massive earthquakes. This poem and performance challenge Zia's fundamentalist Sunni interpretation of *Qiyamat*, and instead, transforms it into the Day of Revolution, where the military regime is deposed, and the people return to power. Simultaneously, the Pakistani peoples' plight under General Zia is set to be comparable to the Prophet Muhammad's companions under the *Quraysh* [قُرَيْشٌ] (the Arab clans that controlled Mecca at the time of the Prophet's birth). This chapter does not endeavor to conduct a lyrical analysis, but listed are three invocations of *Qiyamat* in revolutionary fashion, as translated and performed in Urdu, to understand the role of intertextuality: *lazim hai ki hum bhi dekhenge vo din ki jis ka vaada hai* [لازم ہے کہ ہم بھی دیکھیں گے وہ دن کہ جس کا وعدہ ہے] (it is certain, we shall see, the promised day)*, sab taaj uchhale jaenge sab takht girae jaenge [* سب تاج اچھالے جائیں گے سب تخت گرائے جائیں گے] (all crowns will be overturned, all thrones will be thrashed to dirt), and *jab zulm-o-sitam ke koh-e-giran ruui ki tarah ud jaeenge* [جب ظلم و ستم کے کوہ گراں])when the waves of oppression will disperse into the air). These references are explicitly made both in reference to the promised *Qiyamat* and the imagined end of the Zia regime. Bano invokes and applies the fundamentals of Islam against the Zia regime by taking *Qiyamat* and complicating the idea of an *Islamic* state tasked with policing its peoples' relationship with faith itself. In "Hum Dekhenge," Islam becomes a means of resistance to an *Sunnifying* regime. Bano contradicts the Zia regime's interpretation of the Quran by signaling that we, too, shall see Qiyamat, a day similar to when Zia's *throne* is destroyed, when oppression is dispersed, and his rule ends. Bano's performance, thus, genders resistance, and transforms a poem into an revolutionary anthem.

Analyzing "Joyland"

"Joylands" performs Pakistani identity dually as a film and through its invocation of a theater as a vehicle that propels the story forward. Set in Lahore (yet again), "Joyland" features the story of Haider, his patriarchal family, and their desires, grief, and insecurities. Every character veils his or her expression of identity to uphold social conformity, hiding his or her own individual motive in pursuit of socialized norms and expectations, like gender. Haider struggles to find work, and when he does, it is as a backup dancer at an erotic dance theater. Haider then falls for Biba, a transgender director and main dancer for one of the theater's performances. Haider's wife, Mumtaz, is financially independent, intelligent, and supportive, but suffers from sexual deprivation. Haider's older brother's wife, Nucchi, fulfills her role as housewife, but fails to meet the expectation of giving birth to a *son*. Haider's father, the patriarch of the house, finds solace in a widowed woman's visits to his home, but ultimately reprises himself for failing to uphold his own social standard. Every character is certainly flawed, particularly in their lack of communication that is socialized, engrained, and normalized through public piety in the shadow of the Zia regime, but there is nothing *wrong* with the feelings that each character possesses. There is never any explicit confrontational dialogue navigating each character's respective challenges, furthering the fixed nature of self-censorship. At film's climax, Mumtaz commits suicide, unable to tend to the expectations thrust upon her. Here, gender cleverly resists, but not overtly revolutionizes, the state. This act of performing Pakistan resists the state, reinforces the nation, and reimagines gender.

The theater is what employs Haider; it forces him to *provide* for the family, forces Mumtaz out of work to *create* a family, and introduces him to Biba to be *used*. These invocations of gender are implicit, with the plot of the story exploring each respective character's journey

through the imposition of the theater. Every character is operating in the space they have to express their identity. Mumtaz explores expressions of identity through working, and subsequently, forced to *perform* identity when at home with Nucchi. Haider explores his identity *through* Biba. She, the transgender, exists for Haider's development and complication of what is an otherwise *normal* man. I dwell on the theater partly because of the prior discussion on the role of the theater as a site of performance and purpose, but simultaneously because the way the theater is portrayed in this Pakistani film, as it reinforces a strain of a *normal* Pakistani identity, even if exploring otherwise-taboo topics. "Joyland's" theater *literally* performs Pakistani identity. Filmed in Punjabi, this film proudly demonstrates what a bottom-up approach to Pakistani identity looks like, despite having been banned in Punjab, the province it was filmed in, and again, the ascribed heart of Pakistan. The theater in "Joyland" is an allegory for performing identity.

When asked about his inspiration for the film, Sadiq responded:

> I think somewhere my own experience [of] growing up in a patriarchal society was perhaps the most significant inspiration for this story. In particular, my never-ending struggle with the definitions of masculinity and femininity, and the cracks and companionship those subjective definitions can bring into relationships.[86]

Sadiq was raised by a father in the military and a stay-at-home mother; a privileged upbringing, reflected in his attending Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), one of Pakistan's most elite universities, and later, Columbia University in New York City, for his Masters. He took a semester off from school to attend shows at theaters in Lahore, building relationships with dancers, and honing "Joyland's" story. As noted in The Guardian, "the popularity of such venues in an otherwise very conservative country is a reminder that Pakistan is more complicated than

[86] *Give Me the Backstory: Get to Know Saim Sadiq, the Filmmaker Behind 'Joyland,'* Sundance (February 2023), https://www.sundance.org/blogs/give-me-the-back-story-get-to-know-saim-sadiq-the-filmmaker-behind-joyland/.

outsiders might assume."[87] Creating a film like this was *always* going to be a risk, but Sadiq was empowered by his background to pursue it. Despite his own class privilege, however, he notes how gender complicated expressions of identity both personally and extraneously. This film translates those complications into an argument for liberty in expressing identity, much to the state's dismay. Sadiq suggests that "Pakistan has become a bit schizophrenic, it's a bit bipolar," and that "people pray and then they do a lot of things that they're not supposed to do. There are these weird sorts of outlets that people have found to be able to express themselves."[88] Paradoxically, the *theater* exists as an avenue of expression, and it was in that experience that Sadiq chose to produce a film.

Film in Pakistan is *also* heavily scrutinized by the state, with Zia having censored "public nudity of females on TV screens, cinema screens, and in visual art."[89] Zia's codified morality extended the definition of nudity beyond complete nakedness to "women wearing wet clothes, visible cleavage, and displaying legs and arms," in addition to "love scenes… depict[ing]… kissing were also banned in the media."[90] The state put in active effort to box-in identity, from Faiz's poetry, to Bano's performance, to film, and media-at-large. Sadiq himself states that he "had a relationship with almost every country's cinema except [his] own because, when [he] was a teenager, there was no [Pakistani] cinema."[91] While successive regimes have attempted to remove censorship policies (most notably under Pervez Musharraf, 2001-08), the Pakistan

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[87] Sarfaz Manzoor, *Saim Sadiq on His Banned Trans Love Story, Joyland: 'We Spend Our Lives Trying to Hide Our Desires*,' The Guardian (February 2023), https://www.theguardian.com/film/2023/feb/24/saim-sadiq-joyland-interview-cannes-jury-prize-trans-drama.
[88] Manzoor, *Saim Sadiq on His Banned Trans Love Story, Joyland.*
[89] Mohib Rehman, "Discourse on Gender, Religion, and Culture in Pakistani Films: A Narrative Analysis of Contemporary Independent Films from Pakistan," in *Communication ETDs* (July 1, 2016), https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/cj_etds/94, pg. 5
[90] Rehman, *Analysis of Contemporary Films from Pakistan,* pg. 5.
[91] Suparna Sharma, *Joyland: Taboo-Tackling Pakistani Film Makes History at Cannes*, Al Jazeera (May 2022), https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/27/joyland-pakistan-cannes-film-festival-saim-sadiq.

Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) heavily monitors content, to *accurately* represent national values in media. Again, there's no legal definition of obscenity, allowing PEMRA to exercise its liberty in casting judgement. This film made Pakistani authorities *uncomfortable*. This invocation of identity was too *controversial,* too *relatable*, too *familiar.* That's where the power of the film comes in, it represents a traditional family, not the cosmopolitan Pakistani story of migration, wealth, and marriage, but the mundane struggles of a family operating in a *log kya kahenge* [لوگ کیا کہیں گے] (what will people say) society. "Joyland" was produced by Pakistanis, with a majority Pakistani cast and crew, and shares a *familiar* Pakistani story. Acting in the film – thus performing Pakistani – were well known, famous actresses and actors in Pakistan like Sarwat Gilani (known for her roles in popular Pakistani television series and films since 2008), Sania Saeed (experience across the industry beginning in 1991), Alina Khan (the first transgender to lead a role in a major Pakistani film in 2019) and Sohail Sameer (who began his acting career as a child on PTV). In selecting popular Pakistani individuals with active media careers, whose reputations are consistently at stake with their work (particularly in the wake of cancel culture), "Joyland" worked to appeal to *Pakistanis*. More than anything, Sadiq wanted the film to be seen *in* Pakistani theaters.[92] But, it was also ardently dissented upon by the state, which saw the film as a moral affront. Thus, the nation's attempt to construct, represent, and perform its identity, was most resisted by the state itself. Warm Western reception only further complicated this expression of what-was Pakistani identity to a piece of some Western agenda to liberalize Pakistani society.

Pakistan's film industry is largely focused on producing and reproducing Punjabi cultural norms, often guided through transnational and historical narratives. The industry shifted from

[92] *'Joyland,' a Pakistani Film Banned at Home, Is Celebrated Abroad*, The New York Times (April 2023), https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/07/movies/joyland-pakistan.html#.

cultural heritage towards violence and action during the Zia era, and the production of regional films particularly rose after the Bengali Liberation War.[93] The five-most domestically *successful* films in Pakistan are, in order: "The Legend of Maula Jatt," "Jawani Phir Nahi Ani 2," "Teefa in Trouble," "Punjab Nahi Jaungi," and "Parwaaz Hai Junoon." Numbers one, three, and four, are produced in Punjabi; two and five in Urdu. What is being represented on the big screen is a *specific* invocation of identity. "The Legend of Maula Jatt" is an action drama exploring an inter-caste tribal conflict and love story in pre-colonial Punjab; "Jawani Phir Nahi Ani 2," "Teefa in Trouble," and "Punjab Nahi Jaungi" are romantic comedies whose central plot revolves around marriage; and "Parwaaz Hai Junoon" is an action-romance film depicting encounters between the Pakistani air force and the Taliban, with the backdrop of yet another wedding. Gender works subliminally to ground identity and each respective film's representation of Pakistani identity.

"Joyland" was cleared for approval by all provincial and censor boards but was banned by the government one week before its domestic release in November 2022 because of its objectionable material. Sadiq had already filmed several cuts of the same scene that he was concerned would be censored. The context in which he was operating in was deeply familiar. The ban was quickly reversed upon intercession by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif after receiving international backlash but remains banned in Punjab. Sadiq suggests that it was not gender that led to its banning, but religion: "the minute the film was linked to religion – as in this film is going to destroy Islam – nobody is going to fact-check that. Religion is the one topic you don't discuss: you defend your religion, you don't discuss it."[94] Across online reviews of the film, Pakistanis suggest that "Joyland" should be banned because it simply *features* a trans woman and

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[93] Rehman, *Analysis of Contemporary Films from Pakistan,* pg. 27.
[94] Hannah Ellis-Petersen, *Joyland: Pakistan Bans Oscar Contender Film about Trans Love Affair,* The Guardian (November 2022), https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/14/joyland-pakistan-bans-oscar-contender-film-about-trans-love-affair.

the fissures in patriarchal Pakistani society. This is not a love story, but a story of real issues, and real ways that Pakistani people engage with these issues to try to resolve them, under a state bent on policing their expressions. In any case, the censor boards were forced to relent to external demands. Joyland" was a *massive* hit abroad, and received a modest appreciation domestically, with the film earning over a million dollars. "Joyland" received a *ten-minute* standing ovation when it debuted at the Cannes Film Festival in 2022. The film was Pakistan's official entry to the annual Academy Awards, has been nominated for 20 awards, and has won 18, including the Jury Prize at the Cannes' *Un Certain Regard* category. The movie exemplifies a state-led effort to flatten out Pakistani identity, aided and abetted by the global response it elicited, and its reception in its home country. "Joyland," for the Western audience in charge of charting popularity, demonstrates sexual liberation for an oppressed, archaic people adding nuance to a people relegated to discourse on Army, Allah, or America. The Pakistani state, meanwhile, subverted "Joyland" as deviant, provocative filth aimed to corrupt the inhabitants of the land of the pure.

Conclusion

Identities are performances. "Hum Dekhenge" and "Joyland" are just two examples where Pakistanis have used gender to complicate simplistic ideas of national identity to resist the state. The state's identification of gender has been the plane where identity has certainly been interrogated, but not radically transformed, for that would be corrosive to the state. In "Joyland," being Pakistani is not central to the plot. This is a *natural* story playing out, that represents an everyday life outside of the academy, yet it evokes the state, nation, gender, and identity. It *feels* normal. Why aren't Pakistanis allowed to have families, homes, lives, that are not contingent on

being explicitly Pakistani or *Islamic?* The film is authentic in its delivery of a middle-class Punjabi family's life. The Pakistani state is invested in flattening out these attempts because these performances complicate the idea of Pakistani identity. They make it harder for the state to have full say in what Pakistani identity is. "Joyland" does so, not just through the content of the film itself, but through the response to the film. The film complicates the idea of Pakistani identity because it centers themes of sexuality which are actively, publicly frowned upon, and policed in popular discourse. Simultaneously, the film demonstrates a popular, middle-class culture, as opposed to the cosmopolitan elite Urdu-speaking *muhajir* or Punjabi transnational identity. It highlights the small plights that are implicit in a Pakistani person's life, like struggling to find meaning in housework, dealing with a marriage that has not *produced* a son, and offering absolute deference to the patriarch.

These acts of performing Pakistan resist the state, reinforce the nation, and reimagine gender. It is through bottom-up acts of resistance – performances – that Pakistanis complicate the state's attempts to force its people to identify in a certain way. "Hum Dekhenge" was transformed into an anthem that is applicable transnationally, across time, as demonstrated by its notoriety today. Perhaps as a unexpected consequence of the form of the *nazm* itself, performing "Hum Dekhenge" is easily replicable. Popular renditions of Bano's performance have been shared by Coke Studios, the "Sound of the Nation"[95] and Pakistan's longest running annual television music show (although some of its lyrics critical to the state have been altered), in addition to being performed by international superstars like Ali Sethi, and more domestic-based singers like Rauhan Mailk, Faheem Abdullah, and Fatima Shamim. As Pakistanis continue to interrogate their identity against the backdrop of a state bent on censoring them, "Hum

[95] See https://www.cokestudio.com.pk for more.

Dekhenge" will continue to be invoked. Further, Bano's performance churns emotional yearning for the nation in a way that speaks beyond Pakistanis. Waheed uses "Hum Dekhenge" to illustrate the extent to which Urdu poetry was and continues to be used in protests across modern South Asia, particularly in early 2020 India over the Citizenship Amendment Bills in India under the Bhartiya Janata Party.[96] Kashmiris, a people whose land is wanted, but a people not needed, invoke "Hum Dekhenge" in protest against its *assigned* government. "Hum Dekhenge" has been exported to the heart of the colonial enterprise, London, to protest the Pakistani establishment government, headed by the Sharif clan, as resistance against tyranny. "Hum Dekhenge" capitalized on the Pakistani peoples love for their brethren, their steadfast faith in Allah, and desire for their imagined homeland. This performance's repetitiveness is one aspect of its strength and has cemented itself as a normative social phenomenon. Perhaps in the future we shall hear "Hum Dekhenge" evoked yet again, in newly resistant glory.

Partly because of the globalizing, commercializing, and institutionalizing processes common in postcolonial contexts, performers are often dehumanized. Performers tend to be reduced to existing solely for the performance. Bano's performance is immortal, but she was not. Her activism and resistance existed outside of "Hum Dekhenge," it is what propelled her to perform in honor of Faiz, her choice to be in community with the Pakistani people, her continued struggle against the state. Bano did more than sing a song, she spoke to the Pakistani peoples' relationship with fundamental Islamic truths, like *Qiyamat*. Today, Black Sari Day is recognized on April 21st in honor of Bano's resistance – perhaps, the Pakistani state's attempt to coopt Bano's choice as means of state legitimized gendered resistance. Bano performed at least in part to honor Faiz but has been recognized chiefly for the performance against the backdrop of the

[96] The Citizenship Amendment Act offers amnesty to non-Muslim illegal immigrants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. See https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-50670393 for more.

Zia regime and the imposition of the *Hudood* Ordinances. “Hum Dekhenge,” transformed a poem into an anthem and performance that rings familiar to perhaps a billion South Asians living in the subcontinent today, and even more in our ever-globalizing and digital world, has had limited scholarly work done in appreciation of its power.

As Pakistan continues to grapple with political, economic, and sociocultural challenges, alongside lesser acknowledged issues like sexism, religious discrimination, and casteism, its young population is sure to find new ways to express their ambition in charting a new story, a new imagination of what Pakistan can look like, growing in the shadow of the Zia regime’s strict policies and lasting cultural footprint.

Chapter 3: Expressing Pakistan

This chapter explores expressions of Pakistani identity, from London to Lahore. Pakistani identity is contingent on a forward-yearning, future-oriented perspective where Pakistan is truly defined as the land of the pure. Many different interpretations of what it means to be the land of the pure have led questions of national identity to be violent confrontation between factions of varying beliefs, ranging from the idealistic Islamic society based on foreign schools of Islam, to Punjabistan (in which power is continued to be lauded to landed Punjabi elite), or even a Westernized, *modern* Pakistan, as a global market consumer and producer. All, however, are predicated on imposed expectations dictated through gender identity. There is a resistance to the top-down idea of the nation, and that resistance itself has become a gendered response.

Gender, initially institutionalized by the British Raj, reinforced through Western-centered globalization, and reiterated by the Pakistani state, has been crucial in constructing Pakistani identity, and policing expressions of national identity. National identities are contingent on a variety of factors, such as language, ethnicity, politics, but lesser scholarly attention has been paid towards analyzing gender in national identity construction and subsequent expression. Women have certainly contributed to these processes, irrespective of who is writing and recording history. This chapter endeavors to highlight those perspectives, in conversation with scholarship, and my own transnational experience. Due to the limitations in my research, this chapter will not explore the role of the *khwaja sira*[97] [خواجہ سرا] (a term originating from the Mughal Empire, presently referring to transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming

[97] See Shahnaz Khan, "Khwaja Sara, Hijra, and the Struggle for Rights," in *Pakistan, Modern Asian Studies,* Vol. 51, No. 5 (2017): 1283–1310. and Amen Jaffer, "Embodying Sufism: The Spiritual Culture of Third Gender (Khwaja Sira) Communities in Pakistan," in *South Asia@LSE, April 8, 2022, https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/southasia/2022/04/08/sufi-spiritualism-as-a-vehicle-and-ally-for-third-gender-khwaja-siras-communities-in-pakistan/,* for more information on the history of the *khwaja sira* and present reception in Pakistan.

people) in constructing and expressing Pakistani identity, which also necessitates concentrated research. In highlighting the position of Pakistani women both in Pakistan and in the broader diaspora, this chapter argues that Pakistani identity is articulated through gender expression codified in policy, reinforced by sociocultural expectations, and rationalized by transnational economic marginalization. In doing so, this chapter aims to suggest a multitude of expressions of national identity, and the ill-directed Pakistani state's attempt to continue to construct a faulty illusory identity. Furthermore, this chapter offers a critical glimpse into the national identity crisis that may very well be a mere instance in a series of broader global identity crises.

Pakistan in Revolution

Benedict Anderson defines the nation as "an imagined political community… as both inherently limited and sovereign," which I extend towards gender in imagining Pakistani national identity.[98] National communities have boundaries. It is impossible to be in conversation with all individuals within the nation, and nations are sovereign because they are *supposed* to rule themselves. The structure of power is determined within the nation itself. Nations are communities because of a shared sense of fate – compatriots are linked through the rule of the land they inhabit. To understand what the imagined community is, it is imperative to acknowledge who is imagining it. In the case of Pakistan, it was the League, under Jinnah, that imagined Pakistan. The first European nations stemmed from the consciousness of international society and borders, existing through linguistic barriers. Today, nations have become the fundamental building block in which modern humans are physically, politically, and socially grounded.[99] Identity, thus, becomes the mechanism to reinforce the nation – and gender is an

[98] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (Verso, 2016), pg. 6.
[99] Anderson, *Imagined Communities,* pg. 6.

implicitly assumed identity integral to the nation. For a postcolonial nation-state like Pakistan, born out of a violent schism of a centrally unified colonial empire, and imagined by a non-representative political party, national identity becomes both a challenge and opportunity. Anderson argues that the administrative choice of language is an integral nation-building, nation-sustaining, and power-accumulating tool.[100] He describes the "lexicographic revolution" as having converted the ability to speak a language into personal property, thus entitling those of the same linguistic background to an imagined community.[101] European nations were born out of this sense of shared consciousness and solidarity, and while the same cannot be explicitly said for nations like Pakistan, where the state came before the nation, language-based consciousness is still an integral component of the state-building and national identity project. Anderson fails to discuss what happens in cases of state before nation, which is common in the postcolonial context. Pakistan's national language, Urdu, was chosen by its Urdu-speaking architects. This proved to be a challenge for most Pakistanis, demonstrated by 1971. Imagining Bangladesh, a country literally meaning land of Bengali, became the impetus for the Liberation War of 1971. Sharing a language means more than communicating with one another; it means operating within the same cultural capacity that can simultaneously fix categories like gender. Using Anderson's theoretical approach to the nation and national identity, I continue to contextualize, shape, and reimagine Pakistani national identity, through the lens of its global diaspora, with particular emphasis on gender.

From Bhutto to Zia, Pakistan saw one political revolution to the next. Despite Bhutto's socialist and anti-imperialist rhetoric, the left was systemically oppressed – thus blocking constructive critique to the state in ways outside of orthodoxy offered by the right. Bhutto

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[100] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pg. 42.
[101] Anderson, *Imagined Communities,* pg. 84.

cracked down on dissent and Zia bureaucratized the state to the point where the left could not exist in public. There is perhaps no other political force that has been so brutally silenced as the Pakistani left, aside from the Balochis and East Pakistanis. As in the case of East Pakistan, not only was the Left silenced, but its history was also systemically wiped. Archival evidence of the Left's organization and mobilization is scarce because of the state's violent repression, from taking over leftist journalism firms, to arresting prominent activists, to outright killing dissidents. Furthermore, the left itself had to destroy many of its own archival evidence of existence out of self-preservation "because the state was coming after them."[102] Any shred of evidence would be used in court cases against then.

The Pakistani state picked up sociocultural development where the British left off, institutionalizing social norms through policy. Ayub Khan worked to modernize culture, too, outside of Islamic orthodoxy. While area studies were being developed in conversation between the U.S. and the academy, the idea that the Islamic World could function as the wall against the Soviets became popularized. In Pakistan, academics were not allowed to publish anything critical of the state. Literature itself was highly censored. The regime took control of progressive journalist firms, kicked out *some* editors (with the hopes that some would remain), and arrested others. However, many editors quit in solidarity, thus in effect, the state killed two birds with one stone; it now killed leftist journalism and got a new propaganda machine.[103] Furthermore, the new generation of Urdu writers were fiercely critical of their leftist and progressive predecessors, marking a new dangerous shift in the literary landscape of Pakistan, which was then enveloped

[102] Mushtaq Bilal, *Writing Pakistan: Conversations on Identity, Nationhood and Fiction* (Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India: HarperCollins Publishers India, 2016), pg. 200.
[103] Toor, *State of Islam,* pg. 89.

with conservatism.[104] Partition, for example, was no longer subject to criticality and scholarly intervention, as the people who had lived through it provided. The new generation essentialized it as necessary and used increasingly Hindutva India as the prime example for Partition's necessity. Literature no longer reflected the social reality, but the desired cultural creation, guided by the patrons of the state, who were patrons of the U.S. – all falling under anti-progressivism/socialism. While the progressives always couched their arguments within a discourse of patriotism, a fact which is easily established by a glance at their published statements, there was a key difference between their patriotic discourse and that of the "nationalist" intelligentsia. Toor writes "the Progressives tended to speak in terms of awam ("the people") while the nationalists preferred the term qaum ("nation")."[105] This is a crucial difference because these thinkers chose to reflect ambitions for people as opposed to the nation. The state, always acting in self-defense, chose to patronize the nationalists. But was this truly a reflection of the aims and ambitions of Pakistanis? Was it an expression of Pakistani identity? The Jamaat, powerful as it was (and is), saw the attempts to construct Pakistani culture as an opportunity for the West to devise deviance in Muslim South Asia.

As a result of the progressive movement of the 60's, women were now valuable in contributing to the economy. Their economic power proved threatening to the Jamaat and urban petit bourgeoisie, however. The Jamaat aimed to reform the place of women in society through the *chaadar aur chaardivaari.* Since women even existing in public space was too scandalous, the Zia regime infamously launched an anti-obscenity campaign, where women were no longer to appeal on television, unless for a product for women, were allotted less than 25% of

[104] Rubina Saigol, *The Pakistan Project: A Feminist Perspective on Nation and Identity* (New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2013).
[105] Toor, *State of Islam,* pg. 69.

screentime when they did appear and had to wear modest national dress. The latter was not so much to enforce the wearing of the shalwar kameez so much as it was to rid Pakistan and Pakistani women of the sari. Women athletes were no longer permitted to perform abroad, and within Pakistan, had to travel with a mahram.

The Women's Action Forum, an umbrella organization for women activists, mobilized during the Zia regime, reforming the traditionalist All Pakistan's Women's Association, to a explicitly feminist organization. Women actively protested the *Qanun-i-Shahadat* and found themselves finally being taken seriously by the state, partly because the state had attacked them. For the WAF, this meant the state was afraid, contributing to liberating sensation almost lost to the 60's and early 70's. Women activists were still heavily publicly surveilled, so many oriented themselves to cultural expressions like performance and poetry, deemed less inflammatory. Women operating in public spaces was an inherently political act. Most cultural intervention centered on women, whose roles were being the most severely undermined and transformed. This was the era that saw the previously mentioned poetry: *Hum Gunahgaar Auraten* (Kishwar Naheed**)** and *Chaadar aur Chaardivari* (Fehmida Riaz), amongst others. Literature, by and large, was a boy's club, but this era saw the mobilization and popularization of female creatives, who broke down the walls between the audience and performance.

Under Zia, patriarchal and puritanical interpretations of Islam became national policy. The Jamaat's goon-squads were effectively state-sanctioned morality police and threatened expressions of cultural identity far and wide. For example, "art forms and cultural practices that were considered Hindu in origins and inspiration, such as kite-flying, classical dance and Hindustani classical music, were either banned or were constantly under threat of

proscription."[106] Through his Islamization project, Zia purged a people of historical tolerance, syncretism, and openness, particularly along gendered lies. His obsession with obscenity was really an obsession with regulating women and their respective expressions of identity. Along with the moral policing of expressions of identity came severe political censorship. Zia's crackdown on political art made feminist poetics all the more powerful. As Toor simply puts it, "it was hard to believe that this was the same country which, at the end of the 1960s, appeared to be on the brink of a socialist revolution led by a mass movement of left-wing forces."[107] His narrowing of Pakistani identity into a regressive interpretation of Sunni Islam aided, abetted, and empowered extremist elements in Pakistani society and culture, with severe implications for women, religious minorities, and non-Sunni sects.. Zia's laws directly and indirectly led to the increase of control of women within a family, too. Familial violence had long been gendered, both internally as a mechanism of control, but externally too, as a way to settle family feuds. Zia reinforced the idea that women were "property of their family, tribe, caste, or community,"[108] despite this idea directly conflicting with Islamic law, which recognized women's agency and right to property. But this was to be just the beginning.

After Zia's death, the 90's saw an explosion of sexual violence as political intimidation. The era was defined by the normalcy of honor killings, which are of course, not sanctioned by Islam, but paradoxically connected to Zia's Islamization legacy. This, coupled with the increasing power of feudal, landed elite, furthered the downward descent of women's status in Pakistan, even as Benazir Bhutto came to power. She too failed to negotiate between Islamic law, customary law, and feudal & tribal power, which proved lethal for many women. For many, the

[106] Arif Hasan, "The Roots of Elite Alienation," in *Economic and Political Weekly* Vol. 37, No. 44/45 (2002): 4550–53.
[107] Toor, *State of Islam,* pg 158.
[108] Toor, *State of Islam,* pg. 163.

imperative of tribal law, like the *Pukhtoonwali* [پختون والی] (directly translated to "of the Pukhtoon/Pashto," referred to Pukhtoon/Pashto historical tribal law) trumped both Islamic and Pakistani law. For women of these minority communities, they were seen to have deliberately chosen to disobey their cultural law, and thus were responsible for whatever repercussions followed (i.e., death). Marriage, in particular, has been leveraged as a mechanism for the continued evolution of patriarchal power. This contract between families solidifies loyalties and could never be left to a woman. Women (girls) were encouraged to get married as early as possible to preserve the purity of the home.

Secularism underpinned the very idea of a women's movement and influencing its demands thus women's movements created agentic women which led to the rise of immorality which destroyed the family and then society at large - what happened to the west and what is feared will happen to Muslim society. This sort of thinking reduces Pakistani identity to amalgamation of rigid traditionalist interpretations of Islam, sidelined with cultural law. Thus, in Pakistan, Islam's superiority in recognizing women as legal entities worthy of rights is uttered in the same breath as the reduction of women's place in society through cultural intervention. The end of the Cold War, the breakup of the Soviet Union, and the rise of Hindutva in India further beleaguered the Pakistani left, already struggling to exist as a cohesive force after successive waves of anti-left policing by the state. Now, the world was beginning to look more like what we are familiar with today – the West and the Islamic world. Without the progressive criticism offered by the left, religious factions were offered yet another consequential opportunity to popularize their rhetoric. Global moments in the Muslim world, like the second Palestinian intifada, and the continued military support for Kashmiri self-determination, were exploited by

Sunni groups, religious parties, and the state-at-large, to further an image of Pakistan as a victim of this ill-opportune war on Islam, by Israel and the West.

Existing ethnographic research and scholarship into Pakistan and women's rights movements have seen the coalition of minority, urban, educated women leading the charge, as opposed to rural, village-based women, who appeared to be indifferent to the political and policy-centered implications of their rights.[109, 110] But how could rural women effectively advocate for their rights without having space or agency to do so to begin with in the patriarchal, feudal village? For now, let us return to the diaspora.

Globalizing Pakistani Identity

Pakistani politicians' proliferation of the holy connotations has led Pakistanis to believe they are owed success on the nation state level and that it is in their religious interests for Pakistan to succeed. This creates a dependency on state success as a core identifier. External threats, like that of India's existence, the growing power of Israel, and the wishy-washy political relationship with the U.S. (particularly in the context of Afghanistan), combined with the religious fate of Pakistan as a broader part of the Muslim Ummah, and the cultural conflicts arising from a multiethnic state rued with ethnic strife, have uniquely positioned Pakistan and Pakistanis to continue to reimagine what it can be. Members of the Pakistani diaspora worldwide also contribute significantly to cultural production of the Pakistani national identity. Here, I will primarily explore the experiences of British Pakistanis, as they relate to the construction of Pakistan's identity at-large.

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[109] Richard Kurin, "Islamization in Pakistan: A View from the Countryside," in *Asian Survey* Vol 25, No. 8 (August 1, 1956): 852–62.
[110] Henry J. Korson and Michelle Maskeill, "Islamisation and Social Policy in Pakistan: The Constitutional Crises and the Status of Women Asian," in *Asian Survey* Vol. 25, No. 6 (1985): 589–612.

The British Pakistani community is large, constituting the largest Pakistani diaspora community outside of the Gulf. In Western terms, it is socio-politically conservative, with strong emphasis on traditional family values, orthodox religious tradition, and robust rule of law. Many areas in the UK host Pakistani-dense communities, like that of Birmingham, Bradford, and East London. This pattern of repeat migration, and continued community growth, lends community members the incentive to continuously replicate the Pakistani culture that they had left behind. With migration histories stemming as early as before the Partition, Pakistanis have been in England as long as Pakistan itself has been a modern nation-state. Early migration began on a blank slate, with many migrants retaining their cultural interpretations of Pakistani identity. This identity was raw, as was the nation, and many Pakistanis found themselves deeply dependent on their Islamic or ethnolinguistic identities to satisfy their community needs. Implicit and unquestioned here were gender identities. As time progressed, more and more Pakistani migrants found themselves in England, joining the preestablished blue-collar communities. Additionally, given urban English policy, which favors dense infrastructural space, these Pakistani communities were populated in proportions that were reminiscent of the homeland, where intergenerational families were housed in one unit. British multiculturism favors traditional expressions of cultural heritage and identity. Lalaie Ameeriar, an ethnographic researcher engaging in critical studies of race, globalization, diaspora, and feminist studies, in a transnational Muslim context, describes Canadian multiculturalism similar to British, but distinct from American integration.[111] Her analysis of Canadian multiculturalism, as an extension of Western state-directed multiculturalism, contributes deeply to my own analysis. Canadian society relies on multiculturism as its center, but the UK boasts multiculturalism as a societal feature.

[111] Lalaie Ameeriar, *Downwardly Global: Women, Work, and Citizenship in the Pakistani Diaspora* (Duke University Press, 2017).

Lalaie purports that multiculturalism can serve three purposes: meeting assimilationist goals, as a tool in coopting the real interests of minority groups, and/or meeting the needs of minority groups. Multiculturalism manages and directs what identities can be represented, much to the chagrin of dominant minority groups. With relative ease of access between Pakistan and England, cultural, economic, and sociopolitical ties are easier to maintain – whether through less of a time difference, more opportunities to travel between the two, or commonalities of a postcolonial British imperial state and modern England – and the Pakistani identity is thus offered a unique opportunity to express itself in England. Expressions of Pakistani identity remained in strong accordance with the tradition in the imagined Pakistan. By Zia's death, over 470,000 Pakistanis were in the UK, with the vast majority concentrated in England: a significantly large community with a direct link to Pakistan at that distinct political era, with many deeply invested in their homeland's politics.[112] This investment into political affairs into Pakistan has continued today, particularly demonstrated in the wake of former Prime Minister Imran Khan's arrest in 2021.

Tahseen Shams' *Here, There, and Elsewhere: The Making of Immigrant Identities in a Globalized World,* aims to understand modern South Asian national identity as it is expressed in the U.S. through anecdotal encounters between Shams herself and members of the South Asian diaspora in the U.S. Shams also further contextualized Muslim immigrants as "vectors of globalization," given Islam's transnational Ummah, and traces the role religion plays in creating community outside of a homeland.[113] Shams positionality is relevant to her research, given that she is a Bangladeshi American female Muslim immigrant. Her reception from her interviewees

[112] Tahir Abbas, ed., *Muslim Britain: Communities under Pressure* (Zed Books, 2005).
[113] Tahseen Shams, *Here, There, and Elsewhere: The Making of Immigrant Identities in a Globalized World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2020), pg. 2.

was in large part constructed as an extension of her perceived identities. As a Pakistani American male Muslim, I needed to understand the limitations of the conversations I could hold with British Pakistanis. My *perceived* gender inherently set limits on who I could talk to and what I could talk about, particularly in traditionalist Pakistani households. Pakistani identity is rooted in gendered norms, and it is improper for a young, single Pakistani male to privately converse with a Pakistani woman, irrespective of her relationship status or age. Thus, I can constructively converse with other Pakistani men, painting part of the picture. Shams constructs a narrative through imperial British and contemporary American policies and politics, but her argument develops through her anecdotal experience with members of the South Asian diaspora her argument develops. She assesses the implications of South Asian religious infrastructure, a lasting legacy of the British Raj, in creating and sustaining an "other" within Pakistan's borders, and she considers what it means to be a part of the "other" outside of Pakistan. For example, Shams argues that in a global society where Islamophobia is normalized, Pakistani American Sunnis mobilize and advocate for themselves, but Pakistani American Shi'as tend to respond less vocally, given that Shi'as are used to these injustices in the motherland. The victims of Islamist militancy in Pakistan often are Shi'a Muslims. As Shams describes, "second generation Shia Pakistani respondents… view their ancestral homeland and their 'Muslim' identity differently from their peers" given the relative normalcy of Shi'a tragedy in Pakistan.[114] Pakistani American Shi'as imagine the Pakistani community fundamentally differently than their Sunni compatriots; sectarian identity trumps national identity. *Here, There, and Elsewhere* concerns itself with internal diversity in migrant groups, their varying degrees of assimilation, and "dyadic ties between the sending and receiving societies."[115] Shams argues that "the nature of the relationship

[114] Shams, *Making of Immigrant Identities,* pg. 82.
[115] Shams, *Making of Immigrant Identities,* pg. 18.

between the immigrants' hostland (the U.S.) and 'elsewhere' (the Middle East) can shape their homeland identity."[116] Thus these immigrants are recognized as guests indefinitely, constructing themselves through a relational lens spanning *Dar al-Islam* and the *Dar al-Harb*.[117] In my case, assessing the relationship between British Pakistanis and England has revealed fundamental differences in how this community identifies, as opposed to Pakistanis in Pakistan. I use Shams' approach to South Asian diasporic identity to explore and analyze what the imagined Pakistani identity is and how it is expressed.

Pakistani women are obligated to perform the role of cultural preservation in migrant households, wear shalwar kameez, taking the kids to Jummah, cooking traditional foods, etc. Men can advance and change the trajectory of cultural reality. While men call people *kafirs* [کافر] (disbeliever) women can call people *churails* [چڑیل] (directly translated as "witch," used as an offensive term directed towards women). In line with the obligation of reproducing culture, many find difficulty in the subtleties in Western culture, like eye contact. Western social norms, like looking someone in the eye when talking to them, is a hard adjustment for women to make when they have been policed on their sight. These challenges in cultural confrontation build up, and reitify the need for their respective expressions of identity. Modernity is thus painted as the antidote to immigrant culture – translated into women wearing jeans. Funnily enough, using *modern* as an adjective, is leveraged as an insult in Pakistan, aimed to demean women. For Pakistani men and women, the home exists as the central space. Unlike men, however, women are specifically contained to remain in the home. Western scholars talk of a "third place" for

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[116] Shams, *Making of Immigrant Identities*, pg. 68.
[117] Dar al-Islam means 'house of peace' and refers to the dominion of Islam, commonly used to describe Islamically oriented or governed countries. Dar al-Islam is usually juxtaposed against Dar al-Harb, which means 'house of war' and refers to places where Islam cannot be practiced without persecution – most used to describe the contemporary West.

peoples of varying backgrounds and identities to connect with each other; for Pakistani women, that space is the market, bazar, or the *zenana*. For men, quite literally everywhere outside of the home exists. Pakistani policy promotes public piety, so the masjid is assumed as the central organization meeting point for Pakistani men.

Especially in existing ethnographic research, academics, scholars, and journalists continue to label the women they talk to *as a Pakistani woman writer/author/doctor* etc. as opposed to *as a* Pakistani. This line of questioning continues to ascribe and normalize male Pakistanis in public spaces as opposed to females. Lalaie brings up aspects of personal identity that may not necessarily be explored in depth – like scent – as being gendered, for it is frowned upon to smell like home, but why should a Pakistani woman even think of how her scent will make her perceived? Something as minute as smelling like the food one has grown up cooking and eating thus becomes an act of destabilization. Gender, again, cleverly inserts itself as a fixed component of Pakistani identity.

Hierarchies of Love and Power

Decolonial Love: Salvation in Colonial Modernity synthesizes theologies of liberation and decolonial thought to critically analyze structures of oppression and violence in Western modernity. Joseph Drexler-Dreis utilizes Frantz Fanon's description of decolonial love to reveal peoples' relationships with the postcolonial nations they live in. Drexler-Dreis maps decolonial love as a response to the question "can communities that have been epistemically disenfranchised within and by Western modernity think theologically outside a Euro-entered epistemological framework?"[118] In other words, can communities that have been oppressed and

[118] Joseph Drexler-Dreis, *Decolonial Love: Salvation in Colonial Modernity* (Fordham University Press, 2019), pg. 5.

used as capital in the process of Western modernity, construct their own theological approach to decolonization? Pakistan, as both a postcolonial state and former colony, has long grappled with negotiating power in a global society of nation-states, with concentrated faith in Islam's guidance. Despite the end of European political colonialism in the 1960s, coloniality still defines knowledge and ways of knowing. Eurocentrism is thus not just knowledge stemming from a European context, but the way of knowing, conceiving, and engaging with the world.[119] Colonized intellectuals thus are the preferred conduit of knowledge production within a nation constrained by a Eurocentric global society. And on the other end, colonized persons who think outside of ways that are relevant to Western traditions, are excluded as intellectually irrelevant.

For many Pakistanis, knowledge is defined through the words of Allah, not normative conventions produced by capitalist Western Europe or the U.S. Knowledge is a sacred and intimate affair that touches upon the core of a person's being, not something that necessarily must be commodified for means of production. Knowledge is also gendered, as it is constructed through the lens of the individual, their perceived self, and their experiences. Further, there are competing regimes *of* knowledge. In the case of Pakistan, then, where gender is constructed, defined, and codified, all categories of thought, including knowledge, can then become bifurcated. A woman's knowledge is defined through her ability to maintain and manage a household, treat her parents with deferential respect, and uphold her married-family's honor. A man's knowledge is demonstrated through his ability to think, work, and act, to bring prosperity and wellbeing into the house. In other words, access to knowledge is conditional. Those at the center of Western modernity and those who can operate from the centrality of Western modernity (including colonized peoples) enjoy relative privileges. These peoples can "assume the

[119] Drexler-Dreis, *Decolonial Love,* pg. 26.

communities outside colonial centers lack the ability to reason in a reciprocal way to ourselves, and thus we can avoid the work of this journey and ignore others who do this work, for reasons we perceive to be legitimate and rational."[120] Western modernist intellectuals thus, upon imagining places like Pakistan, perceive a place whose value is strictly derived from the economic, militant, or geopolitical benefit it can offer the West, because no internal productions of knowledge relating to faith as the crux of one's being is relevant. Even then, it is common for colonized people to adopt and appropriate the language of Christianity in navigating their relationship with the divine.[121] This lends Christian Western thought to assume dominance and sensations of righteousness and abject validity at the cost of denying a people their own syncretic sociocultural methodologies of integration, resilience, and creation. Participating in global society is not a question, but the degree to which is – from the nation-state perspective, this means through economic, political, sociocultural, or other means. Pakistan quickly acknowledged the privileges of participating in global society, particularly with China, the U.S., and other Muslim-majority nations, but has not moved significantly in reorienting its perception of level of engagement at the global scale.

Fanon, a transformative postcolonial Marxist philosopher centered in Francophone Afro-Caribbean, centers his scholarly intervention in the consequences of colonization through intellectual political radicalism, Pan-Africanism, and Marxist humanism. Fanon maps questions of identity to be tied to nationalist struggles in postcolonial North Africa, an idea that grappled much of postcolonial society, including Pakistan. Even in communities outside of their naturalized homeland, Fanon describes "a process in which alienation from the original culture through a project of assimilation turns into the clinging to the original culture, before

[120] Drexler-Dreis, *Decolonial Love,* pg. 32.
[121] Drexler-Dreis, *Decolonial Love,* pg. 48.

colonialism, as the truth."[122] This is paradoxically evident in British Pakistani communities, who define their Pakistani identity to be beyond what is presently conceived within Pakistan as Pakistani, but still tied to the idea of Pakistan. Identity is not stagnant, but migrant communities coalesce around that bond to home that defined them once prior. Again, particularly in the British context, where Pakistanis exist as a visible minority community and are robust in organizing, their interpretation of Pakistani culture is preserved and fossilized. Hence, Pakistani youth have the gendered choice of integrating into the Pakistani culture of yesteryear, of their parents and forefathers, or assimilating into the British multicultural society. Expressing identity thus becomes doubly difficult as the culture one is socialized into is distinct from that of which has informed one's broader historical legacy. The past is not just relevant to the present but defines the future. Fanon describes the relationship between a colonized intellectual and their perceived homeland and people as that of an outsider's; the intellectual welcomes and internalizes the indigenous culture as a memory.[123] While "intellectual" is not a representative label to affix to everyone, these individuals certainly play a significant role in negotiating and brokering culture. Pakistanis in the UK negotiate their memories with their identities as identity continues to be constructed against the grain by outsiders perceiving them. In academic and intellectual spaces, Pakistanis, like many other migrant or displaced communities, preserve what they perceive as authentic identity to clarify and construct a valid modality of power. Fanon claims that the colonized intellectual immerses themselves in the nationalist project after losing themselves amongst the people to rouse the people, galvanize their lethargy, and resist external factors to

[122] Drexler-Dreis, *Decolonial Love,* pg. 86.
[123] Drexler-Dreis, *Decolonial Love,* pg. 89.

"become a spokesman of a new reality in action."[124] This is where questions of national identity grapple with self-identity in postcolonial contexts, like the case of British Pakistanis.

Probing nationalism for gender identity is not a uniquely Pakistani question, by any means. In describing efforts towards Palestinian liberation following the Nakba, Nahla Abdo remarks, "In almost all liberation movements, where women were actively involved, a general reversal of their roles became the fact of life after national liberation and the establishment of the nation-state."[125] This reversal is seen in the case of Pakistan, too. However, there are limited explanations offered through literature and scholarship on nationalism. Nationalism is certainly gendered but the relationship between nationalism and gender is subject to query. Women exist as the vectors of reproduction in the boundaries of ethnic/national groups, ideologies, cultures, and actual peoples. The nation-state, explicitly contained, thus becomes the prerogative of women to reproduce.

The globalized form of feminism that we see on our American and British screens are certainly representations of Western feminism, but feminism exists in different ways in different cultures in different capacities. Globalization spreads ideas but does not and should not enforce the same ideas. The Women's Action Forum of 1980s during Zia's regime expressed that the regime does not get to interpret Islam for women. For some scholars, nationalism is completely antithetical from feminism. Cynthia Enloe describes nationalism to be born of a "masculinised memory, masculinised humiliation and masculinised hope,"[126] where women exist solely as property, vectors of reproduction, assets to be exploited by external factors, and the weak link in

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[124] Drexler-Dreis, *Decolonial Love,* pg. 90.
[125] Nahla Abdo, "Nationalism and Feminism: Palestinian Women and the Intifada – No Going Back?," in *Gender and National Identity: Women and Politics in Muslim Societies*, (Zed Books 1994).
[126] Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, 2nd ed. (University of California Press, 2014).

which society could crumble. Western feminists tend to assert and relate to their national identities from an oppositional perspective, whereas feminists like that of Pakistan, relate their subjugational experiences to their collective, and see little autonomous space for themselves.[127] In confronting western imperialism, Pakistani women joined the public nationalist struggle. Once their role was deemed fulfilled by state actors, they were quickly brought back into the zenana. The performance of nationalism is best understood in the theater of intimacy expressed in family life, under the purview of women, who bear tradition, culture, and language, for the next generation.[128] Globalization has mainstreamed gender, particularly in global frameworks of production. What we purchase is produced through the implications of gendered labor – as a minor example, women will sew and stich our clothes, and men will drive and ship it. To *fully* unravel the global economy, we must understand the centrality and invocation of gender. Through the economic marginalization of Pakistani women in a global capitalist market system, their respective sensations of agency and ability to act upon their ambitions are limited. As Ameeriar explains, "Domestically and abroad, participating in the labor market allows agency and an opportunity to express selfhood and identity. Women are understood to be perfect for work in under-paid and undervalued offices as part-time, temporary, or casual workers. Seen as wives and mothers, their work is not considered a priority in their lives, but instead is a way to supplement the income of their husbands or provide pocket money."[129] While Ameeriar looks at Pakistani women migrants in Canada, her analysis and conclusions are valuable in explaining and contextualizing many trends, shared beliefs, and expressions of identity, globally. For many skilled migrants migrating to Western countries, like the US and Canada, on the basis of their

[127] Nira Yuval-Davis, "Gender & Nation," in *Politics and Culture* (Sage Publications, 1997).
[128] Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*, Vol. 4 (Princeton University Press, 1993).
[129] Ameeriar, *Downwardly Global,* pg. 41.

professional or academic qualifications, are quickly forced to turn to menial labor as a consequence of nativism. Both men and women are downwardly mobile, but women are implicitly implicated as they reproduce the gender roles they had left at home. Women now return to the *zenana* and reproduce the culture and traditions that her and her husband had left behind.

'South Asian'

Cultural Western state ideologies around South Asian women intentionally exclude Pakistani women; instead, they *really* mean Indian. As such, for many Pakistanis abroad, they exist invisible as Pakistani and hyper-visible as South Asian. South Asians have been subject to a process which has been increasing labeled Bollywoodization, domestically and abroad. That, coupled with the American conceptions of model minoritization, had dually constructed my own schema of how my identity should be expressed. Without an orgy of dance, music, and family drama, without academic and financial excellence, I would be failing to express what South Asian identity is. Even that in of it of itself, South Asian has been a label that has become increasingly normalized as a means to classify and categorize a billion plus people. Using South Asian is a catch-all phrase, similar to *desi* [دیسی] (directly translated as "local," commonly used to refer to something or someone of South Asian origin), which essentializes the rich cultural identities of these peoples into a politically correct term that does Western peoples justice in simplifying what they struggle to understand. But what the reduction to South Asian truly does, is signals India and Indian, for the strength of the Indian diaspora exemplified through financial, cultural, and artistic production in the West certainly does do South Asians justice – state sanctioned inclusion.

Pakistanis popularly distance themselves from the South Asian label, even if geographically true, even in Pakistan. So, what does this mean? This means that Pakistanis intentionally distance themselves from South Asian/Indian/non-Muslim labels. Islam, thus, has replaced the nation. The fragility and sensitivity of the South Asian label is dependent on the level of connectivity to a South Asia. For many Pakistanis, the last time they felt connected to a South Asia, was the era immediately pre- and proceeding the Partition. This has been aided and abetted by the ongoing racialization of Muslims. For others, using South Asian as an identifier "attempts to resolve the precarity produced by historical events."[130] That being said, there's a level of comfort along linguistic lines. Demographically, most Pakistanis are Punjabi. Most Sikhs, largely in India, are Punjabi. There is a relative level of comfort and solidarity amongst the Punjabi Sikh and the Pakistani communities abroad, and to an extent, domestically too. Looking at social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and more, you can usually find that where one reference to Punjab lies a plethora of Pakistani and Indian Punjabis ruminating on their shared connection to land. In my own experience, I have found that my own cultural expressions have been largely shaped by my family's linguistic cultural traditions. For my parents, this has translated through caste lines, finding solidarity within caste groups, and an assumed shared heritage. While the "national divides between Pakistanis and Indians – were insurmountable… religious differences between [Pakistanis] and… Sikh[s] – were overcome by a common history in the Punjab."[131] In any event, by refusing the imposition of a variable South Asian label, Pakistanis resist, and signal their own identity. Pakistanis are familiar with state-designated minority labels and resist at home and carry this spirit abroad. For many, South Asian

[130] Ameeriar, *Downwardly Global,* pg. 111.
[131] Ameeriar, *Downwardly Global,* pg. 110.

erases the unique blend of nationalist pride coupled with the experiences of ferocity of an anti-Muslim racist society.

Postcards from Punjab

In my experience across central and northern Punjab, where my research originally looked at the relationship between Sufi syncretism and Pakistani national identity in dargahs, I found myself more invested in the day-to-day expressions of identity. In exploring different expressions of identity across middle-class Punjabi families in Lahore, I gained further perspective into the explicitly, and proudly, patriarchal family dynamics that underpins a certain Pakistani identity. For the father, he is responsible for the moral and financial wellbeing of the family, paying deep attention to his occupation, and public perceptions of his and his family's piety. For the mother, she is responsible for upholding her husband's and her husband's mother's expectations in maintaining the household, caring for and building a sense of familial pride attached to national identity, and policing her own behaviors, irrespective of whether or not they are fixed (for example, hiding her menstruation, even if debilitatingly painful). The boys and girls of the household share a bit more flexibility; their role is to serve as a vector of nationalism itself, promoting idealistic values that only children can so properly espouse. Pakistan, for many of these families, means *la ilaha illalahu, mohammadur rasul Allah* [لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله] (there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of the Allah). To be Pakistani is to be Muslim – or rather, Sunni, sometimes-Barelvi, sometimes-Deobandi Muslim. Even then, the space that exists for women to practice their faith is limited. Women are expected to uphold religious expectations in both public and private spaces, but simultaneously and ironically, are routinely excluded from this Islamic state's masjids. With no section delineated to women,

Pakistani masjids also embody the state's mission to define identity through gender. And in the same vein, many of the masjids I considered reaching out to in London were also explicitly for men. Why is gender so casually invoked here?

Women occupy a precarious position in having to uphold their husband and his family's interpretations of Islam, reproducing national pride, and subliming her own expressions of selfhood in pursuit of her role as a Pakistani woman. She, the Pakistani woman, is encouraged to be educated, but exercise her agency in the domestic sphere. She, the Pakistani woman, is expected to produce and reproduce pride, but only to her in-laws liking. She, the Pakistani woman, is to symbolize Pakistan, but as I have described prior, there is no uniform understanding there. Perhaps what can be best said there, is that a specific invocation of a patriarchal traditional interpretation of Islam that selectively chooses cultural law over the Sharia is what defines these women's Pakistani-hood.

Muslim women have historically been accorded with equitable rights, explicitly designated unequal, for a man and woman are defined entities with their respective roles to play. Pakistan has done something more with this Islamic understanding, which even then may be construed as an interpretation – it has layered Islamic jurisprudential law with indigenous cultural practices, colonial laws, and ethnolinguistic traditions. How this interplay maps out certainly varies family-to-family, but my experiences in Punjab highlighted the expectations that an identity was to hold, and the fixed nature of these identities as integral components of national identity.

Conclusion

This chapter pushes for continued scholarly intervention in recognizing the role that gender plays in expressing Pakistani identity, both at home and abroad. Through my own anecdotal experience in London and Lahore, expressions of identity have been codified and categorized through gender, assumed to be a fixed component of Pakistani identity. Pakistanis continue to explore the boundaries of identity through religion, gender, and cultural tradition. It is in this exploration that Pakistanis have rooted their identity in their criticality of the state, and simultaneously, love for the nation. This decolonial love aims to serve as an antidote to global anti-Muslim racism, a Western hegemonic 'world order,' and a mechanism of radical community building. Pakistan's continued emotional history, systemic marginalization of minorities, and consolidation of power has shown that it continues to be the voices of the subaltern who resist, that shape identity. As the state explores the limits of what it can and cannot do, it is in the people's responses that we can understand the nation.

Conclusion:

Vested constituencies of power are invested in flattening out Pakistani identity and the diversity of experiences and expressions of being Pakistani. Pakistanis have resisted that flattening out and that resistance has been done through the idiom of gender and sexuality. Gender and sexuality, too, in everyday Pakistani contexts, as demonstrated by "Joyland," cannot be reduced to the normative western understandings of a binary or orientation, for example. While gender has been a mechanism in which human bodies are trained to act and express themselves, partly defined through state expectations, it is simultaneously a plane of resistance. Gender operates so subtly that it can create community as it resists state power.

I began college in Fall 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Having left Appalachia at the onset of the pandemic, I was eager to create community at WashU on my own terms. A large part of my college experience has been navigating and negotiating what identity means, though. What connected me to my peers in my Urdu classes? What separated me from my peers in the South Asian Students' Club? I interrogated my relationship to Pakistan, self-identification as Pakistani, as the prime plane in which my identity has been expressed at an American institution. But, even as I attempted to situate myself as a Pakistani American on this campus, I recognized my connection to other Pakistanis was relatively weak. Why was that the case? Even in the case of my time abroad in London, and Lahore, I faced similar disconnects. Indirectly, I was resisting the gender norms and expectations "fixed" in Pakistani identity. After some time in considering what exactly this thesis would look like, and after having written a substantial portion of it, I made the connection: Pakistani identity has always been contingent upon a specific invocation of gender, which the state continues to exert power over, the global community attempts to subvert, and the people resist.

This thesis serves as recognition to the tumultuous, often emotional, labor put into processing what identity means in a globalized world bent on labeling, stereotyping, and institutionalizing identities through nefarious means, and under problematic frameworks. Amid this scholarly introspection, the world has continued to turn. As I look ahead to life outside WashU, I observe the awful societal realities unfolding: Palestinians, now not just displaced, but mass-murdered with American consent; climate change ravaging South Asia, and soon the world; and the rise of fascism at home and abroad (amongst so many more cruel injustices). It is my hope that this thesis speaks to people who far-too-easily fall into the dominant narratives perpetrated by the state, the international "community," and institutions. This project serves as a reminder to me, too, that the key to making sense of the world is to listen first.

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Appendix

ہم دیکھیں گے

لازم ہے کہ ہم بھی دیکھیں گے

وہ دن کہ جس کا وعدہ ہے

جو لوح ازل میں لکھا ہے

جب ظلم و ستم کے کوہ گراں

روئی کی طرح اڑ جائیں گے

ہم محکوموں کے پاؤں تلے

جب دھرتی دھڑ دھڑ دھڑکے گی

اور اہل حکم کے سر اوپر

جب بجلی کڑ کڑ کڑکے گی

جب ارض خدا کے کعبے سے

سب بت اٹھوائے جائیں گے

ہم اہل صفا مردود حرم

مسند پہ بٹھائے جائیں گے

سب تاج اچھالے جائیں گے

سب تخت گرائے جائیں گے

بس نام رہے گا اللہ کا

جو غائب بھی ہے حاضر بھی

جو منظر بھی ہے ناظر بھی

اٹھے گا انا الحق کا نعرہ

جو میں بھی ہوں اور تم بھی ہو

اور راج کرے گی خلق خدا

جو میں بھی ہوں اور تم بھی ہو

ham dekheñge

lāzim hai ki ham bhī dekheñge

vo din ki jis kā va.ada hai

jo lauh-e-azal meñ likhkhā hai

jab zulm-o-sitam ke koh-e-girāñ

ruuī kī tarah uḌ jā.eñge

ham mahkūmoñ ke pāñv-tale

jab dhartī dhaḌ-dhaḌ dhaḌkegī

aur ahl-e-hakam ke sar-ūpar

jab bijlī kaḌ-kaḌ kaḌkegī

jab arz-e-ḳhudā ke ka.abe se

sab but uThvā.e jā.eñge

ham ahl-e-safā mardūd-e-haram

masnad pe biThā.e jā.eñge

sab taaj uchhāle jā.eñge

sab taḳht girā.e jā.eñge

bas naam rahegā allāh kā

jo ġhā.eb bhī hai hāzir bhī

jo manzar bhī hai nāzir bhī

uTThegā anal-haq kā na.ara

jo maiñ bhī huuñ aur tum bhī ho

aur raaj karegī ḳhalq-e-ḳhudā

jo maiñ bhī huuñ aur tum bhī ho

We shall see!

It is certain that we will see the promised day

Carved on the stone of eternity

When the mountains of oppression

will disperse in the air like feathers

When the ground beneath our feet will thump with the beats of our hearts

When over the heads of the rulers

will crash a thunderous roar

When idols from the Ka'ba

We'll throw away for good

When we the denigrated ones,

we the purest souls

will take the highest seat

we'll fling all crowns to dirt

and thrash all thrones to ground.

What will remain is only Allah –

He who is present and also is not

He who observes

and is also observed

The sky will drown with the cries

of I am truth, I am God, I am one with God

And what will rule the world

is only His creation —

which is you, which is me

which is everyone.