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AIPS Travel Grant Final Report

Significance of the Presentation:

This paper presentation was part of the session ‘China’s “One Belt, One Road” Policy’ in the annual conference American Association of Geographers (AAG) held in Boston, MA. While most of the presentations offered insights into the economic and material rewards promised by China’s “One Belt, One Road” policy, my presentation questioned the economic logic of the analyses by offering a more nuanced understanding of the material consequences of the ‘symbolic’ logic of political struggles around resources, identities, and territories.

Pakistan and China have embarked on a massive collaborative project in different fields of infrastructural development, energy production, economic development, and regional integration. Collectively known as Pak-China Economic Corridor (CPEC), the project promises \$54 billion in terms of investments in different sectors of Pakistan’s economy. While the project is hailed as the ‘comprehensive development strategy’ by the current government which is trying to stabilize a fledgling economy, a divided society and, a fragile political set-up, the opposition parties have been quite vocal to raise their concerns about the alleged injustices done to them by the political and bureaucratic elite of the Punjab. This political scenario poses serious questions for the state and society in Pakistan. My paper questions the ‘development narrative’ of the current government and tries to bring to fore the political consequences of this ‘uneven development’ for the federal structure of polity in Pakistan. By doing this, the paper contributes to the larger body of scholarship on infrastructural development, regional (dis)integration, and identity politics in Pakistan.