

AIPS Fellowship

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Muhammad Zubair Abro

Project Abstract: In her 2009 *Speaking Like a State: Language and Nationalism in Pakistan*, Alyssa Ayres argues that the idea that Pakistan is unified by a single language, namely, the Urdu language, is a thin political ideology based on a problematic and partial appeal to what Benedict Anderson calls, an imagined community (1983). I hereby propose to build upon her work by exploring the mediation of Sindhi nationalism in the Sufi voicings of the poetry of Shah Latif, and the implications of the practices of this underrepresented group for highlighting the internal diversity of Pakistani nationalism. Theoretically my study will explore the contributions of 'voicing' to the nation, understood as a collective political identity predicated on the sharing of a common culture. I will argue that due to the influence of Benedict Anderson attention has focused primarily on national languages as institutional complexes rather than the complexities of spoken communication. In the Sindh case, I will argue, the common culture centers not on a standard language per se but a complex of cultural practices of vocal enregisterment mobilized by contemporary performers drawing upon the work of Shah Latif.