

AIPS Fellowship Final Report

Project Title: Diagnosing Biraderis: War, Mental illness and Kinship

Author's Name: Sanaullah Khan

Email Address: skhan103@jhu.edu

Dates for Project: 5/22—9/22

Location: Pakistan (Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad)

1. Significance to Pakistan Studies

- The research presents an ethnographic study on psychiatric care in Pakistan
- Uses an ethnographic lens to consider the impacts of militarization on the Pakistani society by drawing upon interviews with servicemembers and their families, how they grieve loss of life or motivate young men to join the army
- The research is also unique as it throws light on the lived experiences of soldiering in a militarized society
- In addition to interviews with servicemembers, the study also draws upon interviews with military psychiatrists and local healers to consider their unique ways of treating traumas of conflict
- The research is also unique as maps the emergence of mental illness by tracking major conflicts with India and the country's engagement in the war on terror
- the research expands the investigation into the intersections between Islam, healing and militarization by considering how assumptions of professional psychiatric treatment clash with treatment modalities used by Islamic healers

2. Key Outcomes and Deliverables

Key outcomes

- the research made it possible to explore the psycho-social experiences of displacement on civilian populations such as Afghan refugees who experience state-violence and new forms of illnesses
- the research made it possible to investigate networks of care among populations displaced by conflict, specifically how displaced populations drew upon Islamic healing to redress their traumas in the absence of psychiatric services
- the research considered the challenges civilian populations faced in accessing psychiatric care, specifically due to bureaucratic delays and state-violence as well as the criminalization of mental illness given the colonial legacies of treating mental illness as signs of malingering.

Deliverables

- the research made it possible develop an article for an online journal on medical humanities on state brutality, addiction and mental illness among Afghan refugees
- the research made it possible to gather data on psychiatric care in state-run hospitals in Pakistan specifically the problems faced patients in accessing adequate care, specifically among those who had been caught on charges of blasphemy showing the political uses of mental health diagnoses for the surveillance of society
- the research made it possible to develop a complete dissertation chapter on jinn-affliction as signs of political trauma
- the chapter specifically considers how healers engage with jinns to redress kinship disorders and the experience of political violence seen as causes of trauma which are effectively erased in professional psychiatric treatment