



Special Friday Lunch Session

# The Disposable Pakistani Scholars at AAS-in Asia (Delhi, India): *A RoundTable Discussion*

Friday, October 12 , 12:30 pm - 1:30 pm

Wisconsin Ballroom (second floor)

On June 7, 2018, The Wire was the first to report on the ban on Pakistani scholars (irrespective of their nationality) from attending the AAS-in-Asia conference at Delhi. The exclusion of scholars from attending a conference may seem insignificant in comparison to the life and death situations many immigrants/refugees are facing worldwide, but it is a testament to an emerging pattern of hyper-nationalism penetrating into academia. It marks out select groups of academics from certain places and/or political affiliations as 'disposable'. The restrictive and punitive practices stifle academic discussion and debate; constrain the exchange of ideas and knowledge production, while establishing the relationship between knowledge and power. In so doing, the excluded and marginalized scholars and their voices become reduced to what Giorgio Agamben and Judith Butler refer to as 'bare life', as disposable bodies.

The exclusion of the Pakistani scholars at AAS-in-Asia is the point of departure for generating an interactive round table conversation. Three interrelated questions will anchor the discussion.

First, what is the responsibility of professional association with respect to such statist practices and prohibitions? We hope to examine the inadequacy of the AAS' response and its attendant ethics.

Second, how does the Indian government's ban reproduce tropes regarding 'Muslim' bodies and feed into their dehumanization at this particular historical juncture?

Finally, why this particular ban and AAS's response is important to understand within the context of ascendant global nationalism(s) and neo-liberalization?

This round table is motivated by our concerns regarding the particular matrix under which nationalist politics and denial of voice to Pakistani scholars feed into the objectification of Muslims, the inadequacy of AAS's response allowing the Indian government to make the Pakistani scholars disposable, and a re-examination of academic professional ethics. The round table will include several speakers from Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh and be moderated by Yasmin Saikia.

