

AIPS Fellowship Final Report

Project Title: Present of Past: Negotiating Pre-partition heritage of Rawalpindi in Post-Partition Pakistan

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1. Significance to Pakistan Studies

This project contributes a study at the intersection of archaeology and anthropology by focusing on non-Muslim, minority, architectural heritage in Pakistan. Cultural anthropological scholarship has remained confined to the oral and political histories in the field of Partition studies, whereas archeological studies on Pakistan have been limited to the ancient world heritage sites. My project proposes an archeological ethnography of contemporary past and historical evidence which is part of everyday life of urban social fabric. Anthropological ethnographies on Pakistan do not often bring together archeological past of architectural present in relation to the people and their life histories who inhabit these built structures, while archaeologists who have worked on Pakistan have often embraced ethnography only to give meaning to the materials from past and not as a lived experience in the present. The critical exploration of how people claim, interact, selectively own, and disown, and otherwise relate to their pasts requires a careful collaboration of both archeology and anthropology in the larger historical context that mobilizes memories, nostalgia, and everyday lived experiences. My research builds on these discussions to analyze how state-driven heritage, cultural, national, and political discourse selectively deals with material evidence of the contested past and award specific meaning and use to them in the present.

In so doing, the proposed project contributes to theories of heritage politics and heritage management, and global heritage framework. The history of Indo-Pak Partition, displacement, and resettlement of refugees, heritagescape transformation before and after UNESCO's intervention, and change in religious tourism policies impacting the state and condition of non-Muslim heritage in Pakistan, require a theoretical framework carefully attuned to social, political, and material interactions as well as historical entanglements. Partition studies on Pakistan have never focused on its material remnants in the form of ruins and material repository of the tangible heritage in the form of pre-partition architecture. UNESCO's intervention in Rawalpindi had brought pre-partition architecture in a new limelight of global heritage while this architectural heritage is being highly contested in Pakistan. Therefore, my project will address these critical lacunas in heritage studies on Pakistan and develop a first thorough investigation of archeological politics of Partition in Pakistan while also putting it in conversation with the larger politics of heritage in South Asia.

2. Key Outcomes and Deliverables

- I. Exploration and selection of specific neighborhoods, sites, and buildings in and around Rawalpindi for my dissertation research.
- II. Establishing contact with city management bodies such as Rawalpindi cantonment board, Evacuee Trust property board, office of Assistant commissioner Rawalpindi, and special police branch Rawalpindi Cantt- institutions that manage and control my field site.

- III. Introduction to the social, economic, political, and spatial issues in recognition, preservation, and management of architectural heritage
- IV. Exploration of relevant documents, journals, and newspapers in Punjab Public Archives, Punjab Public Library, Dyal Singh Library, and Taxila Institute of Ancient Civilization at Quaid-e-Azam University.
- V. Collaboration with Pindi Heritage tours to document Rawalpindi's architectural heritage
- VI. I presented at a panel in Lahore Literary Festival.
- VII. My paper was accepted for presentation in 15th Annual Workshop on South Asian Archaeology.
- VIII. Benefited by my AIPS funded research, I am submitting a paper for a panel presentation in Annual South Asia Conference at Wisconsin Madison.