

Folkloristic Understandings of Nation-Building in Pakistan



Ideas, Issues and Questions of Nation-Building in Pakistan
Research Cooperation between
the Hanns Seidel Foundation Pakistan and the Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad

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Edited by

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Introduction: Cultural Practices, Folklore and Nation-Building in Pakistan

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In post-colonial Pakistan a multitude of cultural practices and folklores – ranging from dress, theatre, music, poetry and *qissas*, architecture, the celebration of festivals and food to the telling of jokes – are expressions of particular identities and traditions and contribute to social, cultural, political and historical narratives. Folklores preserve identities and traditions but also function as representations of interests and aspirations and they can also challenge and critique the status quo. A systematic study of the dynamics that frame the performance and representation of cultural practices, as well as decisions about the preservation of cultural practices can provide valuable insights into micro- and macro-negotiations of national and individual identity. This means folklores can be used as an indicator for communal and national processes of change, reform, redefinition, reconstruction, rediscovery.

The papers in this volume are an outcome of the research collaboration "Ideas, Issues and Questions of Nation-Building in Pakistan." Since 2012 Hanns Seidel Foundation, Islamabad Office and the Departments of Anthropology, History and Sociology, the Centre for Excellence in Gender Studies and the National Institute of Pakistan Studies at Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad have worked together on different focal themes within this larger framework. An international workshop and a lecture series provide platforms for sustained discussions on issues pertaining to nation-building. The award of research grants to students seeks to support and promote empirical research in Pakistan.

Apart from stable economic, social and political structures, culture and folklore are integral reference points for identity construction and individual, communal and national narratives. In a world that is increasingly in flow, heritage, a sense of belonging and the search for roots has become a central point of contention in many academic and public debates. Which cultural practices are central to national and individual identities? How are decisions made about what kind of cultural practices, artifacts and stories should be preserved, rehabilitated, reformed, reconstructed or even abandoned? How are cultural practices legitimised? Which factors and actors shape cultural practices?

To explore the intricate links between folklore and national identity, social cohesion, norms and values, the HSF-QAU research collaboration selected the theme "Folkloristic Understandings of Nation-Building" in 2018. Throughout the year we focused on the performance, reception, transmission, preservation and representation of folklore that take place formally and informally and at various levels of state and society. 'The cultural realm' is often studied as a sphere that is separate from prevailing economic, social and political circumstances. A central point that emerged over the course of the year was that cultural practices and folklore should not be isolated from their contexts because they mirror historical and current worldviews and cultural practices and folklore also

function as structuring agents that influences prevailing notions of social cohesion and identity. Hence, a broader discussion, cutting across disciplines, contexts and time, needs to be initiated. Connected to this larger issue, three salient themes emerged from the research collaboration, which were outlined by the three keynote speakers of the international workshop that was organised in April 2018.

First, folklore and cultural practices are indicators of changing conceptions of social cohesion. In his keynote address entitled "Preservation and City Planning that fits the Climate and Indigenous Architectural Styles – Comparative Perspectives from Egypt" Carsten Velguth (DAAD Professor of Integrated Urban Planning and Design, Ain Shams University, Cairo, Egypt) showed that shifts in architectural styles and urban planning attest to shifts in perceptions of what society is or is supposed to be. For instance, the garden city movement, which informed the planning of Islamabad, envisioned cities to be separated into sections, each with a different function. Such kind of spatial segregation can then also impact how people perceive of society and social cohesion. Another point, Velguth highlighted was that pivotal historical events, such as wars or terrorist attacks but also inventions and scientific progress need to be included in debates about cultural heritage because they affect how individuals relate to each other and to society.

The second point that emerged was that folklore and cultural practices provide insights into conceptions of the past. Prof. Dr. Leo Schmidt (Brandenburgische Technische Universität (BTU) Cottbus, Germany) in his keynote address "Destruction, Construction, Reconstruction: The Role of Heritage for National Identity" explained different approaches to heritage preservation and showed how decisions to destroy, construct or reconstruct buildings, memorials and other architectural structures are shaped by notions of 'good taste,' conceptions of originality and authenticity and perceptions of what 'culture' or 'art' of a certain region or nation should look like. Schmidt pointed out that heritage sites create a picture of the history and culture of a nation or its people, they thereby present a picture of the past that people of the present feel comfortable with. Therefore, policy decisions about heritage sites provide insights into national and official narratives of the values, history and culture of a town, region or country. Decisions to destruct, reconstruct or destroy are thus connected to past and present politics, but also emotions and aspirations. It is therefore important to think about the contexts, factors and motives, as well as the selection criteria that inform decisions regarding the preservation or destruction of heritage and cultural practices.

This was also a point stressed by Dr. Feriyal Amal Aslam. In her keynote address "Choreographing Inclusivity in Pakistan: The Tree, the Dancer, and the City" she stressed the importance to recognise and analyse what and who is included in culture and folklore in Pakistan, and who or what is left behind. As an academic and trained in classical dance she contended that that corporal knowledge is an important, yet often neglected, dimension in Pakistani folklore because public dance performances, especially by female dancers, were mostly disallowed in the 1980s during the regime of Zia-ul-Haq. As a consequence dance, even though it has a long history in South Asia, is often considered a vulgar activity, a view that, she contended, needs to be reconsidered. Feriyal Amal Aslam demonstrated in her talk that classical forms of folklore respond to contemporary culture and are far from static. Moreover, they can tell occluded histories in artistic form which draws the attention of the audience to real life events.

A last point that emerged during the course of the year was the increasing commodification of cultural goods and folklore. On the one hand there are lamentations that cultural practices and folklore are 'lost' because people no longer have time to perform certain rituals or because local handicrafts have been replaced by cheaper mass-produced goods. On the other hand folklore has become a consumer product in the national and global market, for instance in the form of ethnic fashion, ethnic handicraft, ethnic food or fusion music. Culture is also a central factor in the tourism industry to market a location. What happens to cultural practices and folklore if it is re-enacted for tourists?

As Syed Faizaan Ahab pointed out during his presentation at the international workshop, while discussing Pakistan's history and culture it is important to recognize that Pakistan, as a post-colony, has borrowed, re-modelled and appropriated cultural expressions from various cultures and regions. He argued that it is the task of the fourth generation of Pakistanis to discuss and determine what their place in this diverse historical and cultural context is, which aspects to adopt or appropriate and which parts to discard. One way to do so, for Ahab, is through art and folklore.

The articles in this volume present diverse perspectives on the role of folklore in nation-building in Pakistan. The first part of the volume contains papers presented at an international workshop entitled "Folkloristic Understandings of Nation-Building in Pakistan" which took place on 19th and 20th April 2018 at the National Institute of Psychology, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan. The workshop was the sixth international workshop organised within the framework of the research collaboration "Ideas, Issues and Questions of Nation-Building in Pakistan" between Hanns Seidel Foundation, Islamabad Office and the Departments of Anthropology, History and Sociology, the Centre for Excellence in Gender Studies and the National Institute of Pakistan Studies at Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad. The articles in the second part of this volume were written by research students who received a grant to conduct their own empirical research projects.

**Folkloristic Construction of Gendered Identities:
A Corpus-based Exploration of ‘Othering’ in *Heer Ranjha***

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Introduction

Language has long been considered a phenomenon, the function of which is to communicate as well as to reflect what is happening in the society. Various researchers, such as by Edward Sapir (1929), Dell Hymes (1972), Edward Said (1978) and Norman Fairclough (2001), have highlighted the social aspects of language by emphasizing the significance of the tool of language in the construction of social reality which is reflected in the fiction/discourse of that particular social set up. Similarly, gender, rather than a biological reality, is a social construct that is constructed by various social institutions. It is enacted or performed in a society based on previously established patterns (Butler 1990). It is constructed by societies through the establishment of norms for both male and female sex, which they enact when performing duties and looking for expectations and opportunities (Goddard & Patterson 2000).

This research, therefore, intends to explicate the ways of language use in which the male’s hegemony is established and maintained in a patriarchal system, thereby setting different standards of living for men and women, by selecting folklore literature. Folk literature travels through generations and embodies traditional beliefs, customs and culture. The folk tale selected for this study is *Heer Ranjha*. The tale is a symbol of classic patriarchy in the Punjab province of Pakistan. Folklore, a term coined in 1846, by the English antiquarian William John Thomas, to take the place of the rather awkward expression *popular antiquities* (as cited in Masuku 2005). Due to its significance in preserving as well as transforming culture through ages, it has a growing interest of historians and folklorists. Folklorists hold a special interest in this tradition due to their ability to have a peek at the time honored beliefs and customs without any interference of historians and interpreters. Ben-Amos (1971) likens folklore with an artistic communication existing in small groups. This concept is further elaborated by Teolken (1996) who refers to it as an amalgam of the static, which is past, and the dynamic, the present, aspect of human beings resulting out of interactive and participatory processes of centuries. As mentioned previously, social values and practices are codified and manifested through folklores. Thus, they too reflect the social beliefs regarding gender. The gender perceptions of a particular culture can be better understood by studying the folk literature of that particular language or culture. Hence, it grabs the attention of feminist theorists and critical discourse analysts because both aim to address social inequality and injustice.

Since the late 1960s, the term feminism has influenced the study of language and gender (Aoumeur 2014). The term ‘feminism was originally coined by Alexander Dumas in 1872 and concerned with the study of issues related to the rights of women for an aim

of equality among sexes at various social, religious, liturgical and theoretical levels (Kumar 1995; Ahmed, Abbas & Khushi 2013). Early dictionaries (such as *The Oxford English Dictionary* as well as *The Dictionary of Philosophy* in 1901) defined feminism as a state of being feminine or womanly (Patel *et al.* 2013). There was a growing awareness and definiteness regarding the concept later, as the *Dictionnaire de Philosophie* in 1906 took the position that feminism is a stance protecting the women rights. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary terms 'feminism' as a doctrine that believes in the equality of women rights to those of men (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). According to Moi (1988), the term 'feminism' is not a neutral term and is more like a politically motivated notion acting as a support for the cause of late 1960's the new Women's Movement. The movement owes its present standing to the ideas by several theorists including Elaine Showalter, Alice Walker, Michele Wallace, Naomi Littlebear, Simone de Beauvoir, among others (*ibid.*).

The concerns of critical discourse analysis have greatly influenced feminism theorists. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) views discourse as socially oriented and aspires to address issues of social import for a purpose of bringing a social change (Tenorio 2011). Wodak (2002) postulates that since social problems have a discursive dimension, CDA provides an avenue to address the problems resulting out of social inequality. Fairclough attaches great value to the discursive dimension of these social problems in order to figure out a way of bringing a change (1992; 2001). The aims of CDA and the position of analyst is clearly sociopolitical, critical and unbiased (Wodak 2002) within a particular society (van Dijk 2001). Hence, the phenomenon of identity of a woman's particular cultural position and her status in relation to men is studied in this research from a critical perspective by selecting a representative tale (*Heer Ranjha*) in Punjabi folk literature.

Heer Ranjha is one of the timeless tales celebrating love and romance that reportedly took place in the city of Jhang situated near the River Chenab in Punjab, present day Pakistan. The era of the story is believed to be early the 16th century in the Indian subcontinent; however, it is also at times linked to Behlol Lodhi's era, during the second half of the 15th century. Nonetheless, the tale has retained a glorious position in the history of oral literature in the Punjab and this became a rationale for selecting *Heer Ranjha* for the current work. The tale was recounted by Sufi poet Waris Shah (1722-1798) and it is more commonly known as *Heer, Waris Shah*. The poetic recounting of the tale was translated into English by Charles Frederick Usborne (1874-1919) as *Waris Shah: The Adventures of Hir* and Ranjha* (*spelled as 'Heer' in this work). The folk tale has also been made into several memorable Pakistani and Indian films in the Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi languages, with different titles such as *Heer, Heer Ranjha* and *Heer Sial*. Several other translations of the tale also exist such as English translation by Sheeraz (2013) which is based on Urdu prose version of Shafi Aqeel, included in his book called *Pakistan ke Lok Dastanain* (Folk Tales of Pakistan) published in 2008 by National Language Authority Pakistan (Sheeraz 2013). However, the current research is based on the English poetic recounting by Charles Frederick Usborne. Usborne is considered an avid contributor to Punjabi folk literature through his translations of them into English, which made them available to a wider audience. His major contributions revolve around translations of Punjabi lyrical poetry. Since the text selected for the study is a translated version of the original tale as recounted by Waris Shah, there are chances that the interpretation might have altered the meaning keeping in view the non-native status of the translator. Nonetheless, it is the earliest known translation of the original *Heer, Waris*

Shah. The translation is the condensed version of the original, without compromising on the essence and important information of the tale as recounted by Waris Shah (Usborne n.d.). The English prose version of Sheeraz (2013) is less detailed and much shorter version of the original. Moreover, Sheeraz's (2013) translation is twice removed from the original interpretation since it is the English translation of an Urdu translated prose version by Shafi Aqeel.

The literature by Waris Shah provides a glimpse into the lifestyle, customs and beliefs of a village peasant. More than that, it represents the soul of society in those times (Soofi 2013) and mirrors the stereotypes and prejudices still prevailing for the women of less social import in the current Pakistani patriarchal setup. The narrative of *Heer Ranjha* by Waris Shah is firmly characterized by patriarchal closures, both in the structure of its episodes and in its rhetoric. The story depicts Jats, a cast in Punjab, mostly involved in simple, rural agrarian life. The tale is a love tragedy of daughter of the Siyals in the context of a feudal set up, who falls in love with a young man but their marriage is opposed by her family. The story typifies and is still relevant to patriarchal structures in Punjabi culture where love can be sacrificed for the sake of honor and family traditions. In the tale, daughter's love is sacrificed for the sake of kinship and her lover conditioned by the prescribed gender role, fails the beloved at crucial moments (Kaur 2017).

The recounting of the folktale by Waris Shah is celebrated for its dynamic and empowered representation of women since Heer is believed to be portrayed as a main character and subject of the story rather being an object and thus less significant (Soofi 2013). Despite this, the patriarchal discourse is consistently reflected in the folktale either in the form of a romantic glorification of woman or her arbitrary condemnation. Like most of the traditional literature by men, this legend also presents what may be termed as "fictional woman" who is a male product and suppresses the historical i.e., the real woman who remains oppressed under a biased value structure and obliterated by the cultural representations of gender (Kaur 2017). The representation of women and structures of repression and suppression are still valid in today's patriarchal setup where the real suffering of women is seldom given voice or addressed.

Both feminist theorists and critical discourse analysts have been concerned with stereotypical representations and discriminations of gender and used several tools to uncover the phenomenon in discourse. The gendered representations in discourse can provide an insight into power structures as enacted by both the genders as part of their identity construction and also reflects their perception by the society (Walsh 2016). Therefore, gender is an important way in which people perceive their surroundings and reflect that back in the discourse. The purpose of a text, as identified by Widdowson is to convey ideas and beliefs to others or to convince others of one's beliefs by changing their thinking patterns or modifying their actions (2007). Critical discourse theorists believe that a text can reflect a lot about the social reality and reveal the role of dominating group over the dominated group in serving their interests.

In the context of the sub-continent generally and Pakistan specifically, many studies (Asani 1988; Ahmed, Abbas & Khushi 2013; Kaur 2017) have been conducted on the various aspects of folk literature. Asani (1988) historically traced the tradition of Sufi-poetry in the Indian subcontinent. Rahman and Sami (2015) looked at the works of four folklore poets Sachal Sarmast, Baba Buleh Shah, Rahman Baba and Mast Tawakali for the purpose of integrating diverse cultures and traditions in the country. An examination

of folkloric literature from the CDA perspective is Dilpul (2016) who worked at unpacking hidden ideologies at work in the poetry of Baba Bulhe Shah and Mast Twakalli. With respect to gender representation in folklore literature, there is lack of significant research. The research by Ahmed, Abbas and Khushi (2013), covers a detailed debate on previous investigation by thinkers and scholars on gender issue and the fundamental nature of woman to sacrifice as claimed by gender theory. The study provides an insight into the issue from the perspective of feminism and shows how poets make a harmony or cooperation between male and female relationship.

Moreover, the study by Mehmood (2014) has examined the text of *Heer, Waris Shah* from a feminist perspective. Mehmood's analysis is limited to the character analysis of female figures and how Waris Shah has facilitated representation of female stereotypes through plot, roles and situations. However, the author refrains from carrying out analysis of discursive structures from critical perspectives. Kaur's (2017) analysis of *Heer, Waris Shah* upholds that literature written by men is a means of strengthening patriarchal ideology. Such literature glorifies a woman's beauty but undermines her intellectual capabilities, which are portrayed as non-existent. While the existing research on folk literature has confirmed the existence of women stereotypes bound in the chains of patriarchy as being submissive and meek, there is a need to carry out an in-depth analysis of folktale *Heer Ranjha* highlighting discursive choices made when representing 'woman' and 'man' through corpus-based methods.

Heer, Waris Shah enjoys the status of a classic in Punjabi literature. More than hundred versions of *Heer Rajha* are composed but *Waris Shah's* composition stands apart. He is regarded as the poet of people (Kaur 2017). His *Heer* is a "historic gem which shines with full of its glory over the crown of undivided Punjab" (Narang 1987, 165). The inner depth of *Waris's* poetry sways human feelings and sentiments. Narang remarks about the tale that "intensity of thought leads the human mind to the provocation where all the emotions melt" (1987,167).

Hence, this paper highlights the ways how in the text *Heer Ranjha* the dominant and hegemonic group of males has privilege over the subdued and weak group of women and how patriarchal voice controls the narrative of *Heer Ranjha* throughout. The feminist critical perspective towards a discourse looks at the relationship of language and gender and explores the extent to which a discourse is gendered in a particular context. Therefore, this investigation has to do with the production of gender stereotypes and the phenomenon of 'othering' in the selected folklore *Heer* by *Waris Shah*.

Theoretical Frameworks

A framework that operates on combining insights of critical discourse analysis and feminist studies is feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA). The purpose of the approach is to expose the ideologically driven and unquestionable assumptions about the genders, their roles and representations (Lazar 2005). This combination of CDA and feminism can aid in providing a rich critical perspective on politically motivated power structures in a society (Lazar 2005). The aim of an FCDA study is ultimately to support the victims of such oppression and provide an avenue for resistance and change in their existing conditions. This is mostly undertaken by investigating the ways in which a discourse acts against women and to what extent, and in turn, how women can utilise discourse to contest for their rights.

By utilizing the framework of feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA), the current study is concerned with the representation of males and females through corpus-based analysis in the magnum opus folklore: *Heer, Waris Shah*. Through this enquiry, the researchers intend to throw light on how language is used to construct the social reality of male dominance. This patriarchal ideology pervades those writings which have been traditionally considered great literature and which until recently have been written mainly by men (Kaur 2017). The core aim is to demystify the pivotal role of language in the process of representation particularly focusing on gender representation.

Methodology

A work of research must satisfy certain philosophical and intellectual principles (Rasul 2015). Following both quantitative and qualitative research designs, this study undertakes the genre of fiction with the interpretive approach focused on the notion that reality is socially constructed. Under the umbrella of FCDA, the researcher adopted two analytical methods, corpus analysis and discourse analysis in order to examine the gender representation in the selected data, i.e. *Heer* by Waris Shah. On quantitative level, the methodological tools in the present investigation follow corpus linguistics (CL) which is concerned with describing and explaining matters related to language such as its nature, structure, acquisition and variation (Meyer 2004). Rather than considering corpus linguistics as linguistic theory or a branch of it, it is better perceived as a way or method of doing analysis of language phenomenon (Meyer 2004). Biber (2010), Kennedy (2002), and McEnery and Wilson (2001), consider CL a method of doing linguistics (as cited in Aarts & McMahon 2006). There are reasons for considering corpus linguistics as a methodology (Meyer 2004; Conrad & Biber 2004; Pérez-Llantada 2009; Yusuf 2010; Yoon *et al.* 2015; Gungor & Uysal 2016; Obaid *et al.* 2017) such as:

- The approach is concerned with analysis of real data in natural occurrences
- There is an extensive use of computers primarily involving the use of various software for developing and analyzing data
- It concerns itself with a quantitative approach mostly for frequency and statistical measures (Meyer 2004) while the interpretation of the measurements are achieved in a qualitative paradigm (ibid)

Therefore, the current work is carried out at both quantitative and qualitative levels. At the quantitative level, the frequency of gender related words has been obtained with the help of corpus software. At a qualitative level, the textual analysis has been done by adhering to critical discourse analysis with particular focus on the three-dimensional model of Norman Fairclough (2015). The three-dimensional model describes the linguistic properties of texts at the description stage; the interpretation stage looks at the relationship between discursive practices and the processes of production and interpretation, while the last stage is the explanation phase and explores the relationship between discursive practice and social practice.

Corpus Compilation

In order to compile the corpus, English translation of folklore *Heer Ranjha* by Charles Frederick Usborne was selected through purposive sampling. This electronic file of the data required the procedure of standardization for the analysis through corpus tools. The

file was converted from PDF to text and then text to word form for cleaning. Following this, the titles, contents, page numbers, chapter headings and line breaks were erased manually in order to make the standard files which are readable for the computer software. The size of the corpus after cleaning was 46,210 words. Overall, concordance lines were excerpted randomly in order to make the sample as much deviant as possible. WordSmith Tools version 5.0 has been used to extract the frequency and concordance of the excerpted compounds for the quantitative perspective.

Data Analysis

Through the corpus-based analysis, the representation of man and woman is studied in the folklore *Heer Ranjha* and the striking features are brought out. The analysis of the data for gender representation was limited to studying the occurrence of 'man/men' and 'woman/women' in the context. The analysis is twofold: on the quantitative level the frequency and use of adjectives with man/woman and their plural forms have been explored through WordSmith Tools 5.0, and on the qualitative level, the representation of gender has been explicated through concordance lines and interpretation has been done by using Fairclough's three-dimensional framework.

'Man' Representation

The concordance hits of the word 'man' in its singular and plural forms gave 38 instances of 'man' and 46 instances of 'men'. The use of word man/men was then looked upon in its context. The list of the adjectives used with man/men is given below.

Table 1 Representation of man in corpus/Heer Ranjha (Usborne n.d.)

Occurrences	Frequency
Holy man/men	7
Wise man	4
Saintly man	1
Young man/men	5
Bigger man	1
Great man	1
Best man	1
Honest men	1
Good men	1
Sleeping man	1
Poor man	1

Occurrences	Frequency
Justly men	1
Ruffians men	1
Dying man	1
Wicked man	1
Blind men	1
Evil man	1

The list shows frequent use of positive adjectives with man. It represents the gender as a paragon of modesty and virtue. As the list shows, most of the adjectives used with male gender have positive connotations such as holy, wise, saintly, great, best, honest, good, powerful and justly. The adjectives with negative connotations found in the corpus include examples such as ruffians, wicked and evil. The frequency analysis through word search by corpus tools only provided insight into the kind of adjectives used. It cannot provide an insight into how, when and where such adjectives appear in the text, which can only be studied by looking at the occurrences in their context. Moreover, some of the frequencies are extremely low (only one instance), which is insufficient evidence to make any conclusive claim. Therefore, the analysis was further carried out at the qualitative level as well to study the context along with the text, which is the aim of any discourse analysis study.

The study is further supported through concordance lines which were interpreted by adhering to Fairclough's three-dimensional frameworks. The representation of *man* is illustrated in some of the following concordance lines.

Concordance lines reflecting males

- "Their young men are heedless and handsome and care naught at all for any man"
- "Ranjha should be spurned from the assemblies of honest men"
- "A young man belonging to a village would be referred to as the son' of that particular village"
- "Fakirs should not go near women"
- "Hir's* brother, came forward and said, Mother, she puts us to disgrace in the whole world. Do not keep such a bad daughter. Give her poison and get rid of her at once"

(*Spelled as 'Heer' in this research paper due to closer approximation with word's pronunciation instead of 'Hir' as spelled in the source text).

Based on the analysis of concordance lines and context, the following patterns emerged.

Free and Fearless

In order to describe the men of Ranjhas'clan, Waris Shah eloquently portrays the image of a stereotypical, bold and independent Punjabi male. Note their competitors are none but other males:

Their young men are heedless and handsome and care naught at all for any man (Usborne n.d., 1).

Physically strong

Ranjha is jeered by his brothers due to his long locks and his obsession with his looks. The masculinity is juxtaposed with the femininity: to be a man is to be strong and less obsessed with beauty and looks. It is only the trait of females to care about their looks and beauty:

*'How can a **man** plough who wears long hair and anoints his head with curds?' What **woman** will marry such a ne'er-do-well? wears a looking-glass on his thumb **like a woman**. He plays on the flute all day and sings all night. Let the boy quarrel about the land if he so wills. His strength will not avail against us who are many' (Usborne n.d., 2. Emphasis added).*

Explanation

The aforementioned examples of concordance lines represent men as powerful and dominating figures. The study of gender in the classic story of *Heer Ranjha* reflects the patriarchal setup of the society. The theme of male domination is prominent in Waris Shah's *Heer*. The selected lines carry implicature that a man enjoys matchless status in the patriarchal society. To be a man is everything in this classic patriarchal system and it gives a person the sense of confidence, courage, power, bravery, decision-making and respect, and on this basis, he often misuses this power and exploits other's rights. The story of *Heer* demystifies how men, exploit women and prove their superiority over women. In Punjabi society, family exists as a strong institution and an important pillar of society. The peasant life depicted here is typical of any Punjabi village representing the social conditions, more or less continuing to exist in their basic form. The tribal and caste systems continue to endure. The male being the head of family controls the rest of the family members and considers them as his commodities. Therefore, in the social arena, his competition is only with males. Being involved in physical labour, he must engage in conflicts of various sorts and is required to remain strong in order to fight his way through. The social world is therefore only male dominated world; there is no role of females in it. Hence, the Punjabi male is physically strong, and carefree, juxtaposed with 'woman' being fragile and an object of beauty, as reflected through the examples given above.

'Woman' Representation

The concordance hits of the word 'woman' in its singular and plural forms gave 36 instances of 'woman' and 76 instances of 'women'. The frequency of plural form, that is, 'women' is found to be higher than 'men'. The use of word woman/women was then looked upon in its context. The list of the adjectives used with woman/women is given below.

Table 2 Representation of woman in corpus/Heer Ranjha (Usborne n.d.)

Occurrences	Frequency
Barber woman	3
Proud woman	2
Quarrelsome woman	1
Clever woman	1
Barren woman	1
Sick woman	1
Runaway woman	1
Ugly women	1
Chattering women	1
Poor women	1
Loose women	1
Young women	1
Singing women	1
Lucky woman	1
Beautiful woman	1
Witty women	1
Village women	1
Jat women	1
Potter women	1
Sial women	1
Hilt woman	1
Peshawar woman	1

Occurrences	Frequency
Khatri woman	1
Shroff woman	1
Bengali woman	1

The list above shows frequent use of word woman/women with adjectives of negative connotations. The adjectives such as ‘quarrelsome’, ‘clever’ (as opposed to wise), ‘barren’, ‘sick’, ‘ugly’ and ‘chattering’ present woman as an inferior and detestable creature. At the other extreme, some adjectives represent women in positive hues such as proud, young, singing, beautiful, lucky and witty. The rest of the adjectives used provide identification of women through their work, caste, or place of birth such as ‘potter’, ‘Jat’, and ‘Peshawar’. The occurrences of each adjective are low (mostly one instance) and frequency count fail to show any significant difference in the positive and negative usage of adjectives. Through frequency analysis by corpus tools, we can get an insight into the kind of adjectives used with the word woman/women. The ways in which the search words are used in context can be reached only through a detailed contextual analysis.

After the quantitative analysis through corpus tools, the analysis of context was carried out by studying some of the concordance lines.

Concordance lines reflecting females

- “It is truly written in the Holy Qur’an: ‘Women are ever deceivers.’”
- “You women make men into rams so that they fight with one another”.
- “Satan is the Lord of evil spirits and women”.
- “Women falsify the truth and feel no shame”.
- “Hir is yours but use her not as a wife, as men use women”.
- “Even you, proud lady, will have to die”.
- “Hir replied, ‘Woe to that nation that destroys its daughters’”.
- “Women are as foolish as driven cattle”.
- “Your heart should be far from other men’s women”.
- “Please accede to our request and lay us poor women under a debt of gratitude”.
- “I can banish fairies, Jinns, women and Satan himself”.
- “Women verily are faithless”.
- “Men who have sisters-in-law like you should drown them in the deep stream”.
- “Do not upbraid women. None can be so persistent or steadfast as a woman”.
- “Women were created as the origin of discord from the very beginning of the world”.
- “It was woman who got Adam expelled from Paradise”.

The following patterns emerged from the analysis of context from the concordance lines.

Disloyal and Deceitful

Ranjha after being angered by an act of his sister-in-law, accuses all women in general of being deceitful and faithless; interestingly he does so after (mis)quoting the Holy Quran, where he generalizes a context specific verse as a distinguishing feature of womanhood:

Women are ever deceivers. *Did not women befool Raja Bhoj, put a bit in his mouth and drive him like a donkey round the palace? Did not women destroy the Kauros and Pan-dos? Did not a woman kill Ravana? It is you who have stirred up strife it is you who have separated me from my brethren (Usborne n.d., 2. Emphasis added).*

At another point, Ranjha seeks a commitment by Heer through these words:

Verily your deceit is great. Satan is the Lord of evil spirits and women. Women falsify the truth and feel no shame. The word of women, boys, hemp smokers and bhang smokers cannot be trusted (Usborne n.d., 11).

While feeling dejected after being unable to attain his love, Ranjha writes a letter to Heer complaining about the treacherous nature of women in general:

Verily women can pull down the stars from heaven. Such is their guile (Usborne n.d., 29).

In order to be a 'pure man', men have to stay away from women. When disguised as a Jogi (hermit), Ranjha convinces a shepherd about his adopted identity: it is a religious duty of Jogi to abstain from women; otherwise he is not a Holy man.

*I am without doubt **a holy man.** I fear the very name of women.* (Usborne n.d., 33. Emphasis added)

*I only know the ways of hermits, recluses, pilgrims, Gums, Jogis, and Bairagis.' Other people pound and sift bhang and sherbet. I sift men at a glance. **I can banish fairies, Jinns, women and Satan himself** (Usborne n.d., 35. Emphasis added).*

Ranjha even declares the treacherous nature of women as the cause of all ills in the world:

*Women were created as the origin of discord from the very beginning of the world. Those who wedded them were mined while those who held aloof from women became saints and acceptable to God. **It was woman who got Adam expelled from Paradise** (Usborne n.d., 44. Emphasis added).*

The text alludes to the biblical and quranic reference that man's burden of guilt of being expelled from paradise lies on the shoulder of women for their greed and disloyalty.

Unchaste

The faithlessness of women is pointed at when the sister-in-law of Ranjha blames his beauty as a reason for women falling for him as flies come after honey:

*For women fall in love with such beauty as is yours; even 'as flies are caught in honey. Day and night the **women run after you**. Your love has ruined many households (Usborne n.d., 2. Emphasis added).*

While convincing village girls of his 'holy' nature, Ranjha clearly talks about the faithlessness of women:

*Why do you seek to ensnare me in the entanglement of your beauty? **Women verily are faithless**. I will never take their advice (Usborne n.d., 36. Emphasis added).*

Ranjha, when disguised as a *jogi*, or 'holy' man, deliberates at length regarding the unchaste character of women and likens them to reptiles:

*In very truth **loose women** have become **grand ladies** and **ugly women** are flaunting themselves as if they were peacocks in the garden of beauty. Look at this loose-tongued seductive darling of the Balooches. Look at her showing off! her airs and graces like a prostitute of Lahore. A crawling **deceitful reptile** who devours men's hearts (Usborne n.d., 41. Emphasis added).*

The metaphor used for female is that of a reptile - an ugly deceitful creature that feeds on the feelings of men.

Intolerable

The teasing and annoying nature of women is mentioned by Ranjha when, after becoming frustrated by the questions of village girls regarding his identity, he attempts to convince them that he is a holy man:

*Why, did not you women put Harut and Marut in the well? You defeated even Plato and Aesop. You would **tease the very angels themselves** (Usborne n.d., 35. Emphasis added).*

Untrustworthy

Ranjha, when sharing his secret (that he is not a *jogi*) with a village girl, Heer laments his act by commenting on the untrustworthy nature of women.

*Ranjha has been **foolish to babble the secret of his heart to a woman**. Did not Mansur get crucified for telling his secret? Did not Joseph get put in the well for telling his dream? (Usborne n.d., 43. Emphasis added).*

Heer, though belonging to the same gender, by alluding to the historical and quranic references, expresses the stereotypical image of women as being untrustworthy. Interestingly though, in reference to Joseph, it was men with whom the secret was shared and not women.

Subordinate to men

When in love with Ranjhha, Heer considers herself as a slave to him. The bond of love among two genders as reflected in the folklore is not a relationship of equality, but thriving on the subjugation of one by the other:

*I am your slave. Tell me, friend, whence have you come? Has some proud woman driven you from your home? Whither and why are you wandering? What is your name? Of what caste are you? Who is the wedded wife you have left behind, for whom you are sorrowing? Your eyes are as soft as the eyes of a deer. Flowers drop from your mouth as you speak. **I am even as your slave** (Usborne n.d., 8. Emphasis added).*

The above quote shows the encounter between Heer and Ranjha for the first time, and Heer confesses her love for him by surrendering herself to him as his commodity.

When Ranjha meets a *pir*, he is advised by him and while doing so, *pir* hints at the preferred way in which men ought to treat their women: not as their wives but to use them, without taking their full responsibility – a bond definitely not made out of the relationship of love:

Hir is yours but use her not as a wife, as men use women (Usborne n.d., 17).

More than simply subordinating women to men, the patriarchal setup discourages women to go about alone without any male family member to protect them. When father of Heer discovers her along with Ranjha and some other village girls, which later on left them to stay behind, he utters these words in despair:

See the tyranny of God. Women are roaming about here alone in the forest (Usborne n.d., 20).

While teaching Ranjha the intricacies of adopting *jog* (eremitism), his guru (spiritual guide) advises him to refrain from the love of a woman. He at the same time hints at the secondary position of women to men as he mentions them as men's possessions:

*Your heart should be far from **other men's women**. That is the way of Jog. An old woman should be treated as your mother and a young woman as your sister (Usborne n.d., 31. Emphasis added).*

In the folklore, the head of the tribe is mentioned as the 'owner' of women in the tribe. Ranjha expresses this stereotypical image of village headman after being frustrated by the 'nonsensical' questions of the village girls about his identity:

*Do not ask vain questions. A snake, a lion and a fakir have no country. We are dervishes and have no kith and kin. What care we for bed or board, for the headman of a village or **his women folk**? (Usborne n.d., 35. Emphasis added).*

Born to care for family

Ranjha disguised as a *jogi* mentions the duties a Jat woman can perform:

A Jat woman is only good for four things, pressing wool, scaring sparrows, grazing lambs and nursing a baby. She loves quarrels and beats fakirs.

She looks after her on family and abuses others. (Usborne n.d., 41.
Emphasis added)

Her world is supposed to be confined to the four walls of her house where she is left to take care and feed others.

Steadfast and bold

The context reflects that negative connotations abound, however, a few instances reflect the strength of women character, though such examples are rare. Heer in order to prove her loyalty, defends the whole class of women and aspires for equality in relationship. It is to be noted that her own behavior and choice of words deny this equality. The social patriarchal setup stops her from following this dream of equality:

*Do not upbraid women. **None can be so persistent or steadfast as a woman.** For the love of Joseph Zulaikha renounced her kingdom. For the love of Mahiwal Sohni was drowned in the river, ... Sassi died a martyr in the burning sands and Shirin died too for the sake of her lover Farhad. Had not prophets and saints mothers that bore them? **Was not Eve Adam's equal? Men cannot be as bold as women*** (Usborne n.d., 11.
Emphasis added).

Explanation

The study of concordance lines from the data under investigation, carry the implicature that a woman is a weak, timid, accursed, poor, helpless and bad creature as shown through the words, such as, *deceivers, evil spirits, origin of discord, faithless, falsify and bad* from the text. It presupposes that a woman is treated and suppressed ruthlessly. She is a puppet in the hands of man and he uses her for personal satisfaction and ease. She must face many restrictions. She is a symbol of helplessness and dependence. She is not in a position to raise her voice against all these sufferings and she is being exploited fearlessly in a society that is male dominated.

The given concordance lines clearly underscore the manner in which women were treated in a patriarchal society at that time. They seem to have no right of enjoying their life with their own choice. They are at the beck and call of their men, serving them devotedly and sincerely. There are always restrictions on them regarding every matter. Especially, they must suffer a lot after marriage. Men regard it their fundamental right to rule over them as is illustrated in *Hir is yours but use her not as a wife, as men use women*. It symbolizes the imprisonment and oppression for women. Unfortunately, there are either no laws or lack of implementation that could guarantee women a secure place in society; such attitudes are more preserved by cultural norms and traditions along with the continued twisting of Islamic values particularly which suit the needs of misogynists. Furthermore, the women are labeled as faithless, evil, clever, bad and foolish in the text. Through these words, the text is putting barriers for women so that they cannot dare to disobey the masters and lords of the system.

Conclusion

This study has analyzed the corpus of the classic folk tale by making use of critical feminist perspective through corpus-based tools. Folklore is considered as a tradition

reflecting old age wisdom. Nations build their foundations on the beliefs and cults as established by these works of centuries. The research has uncovered significant discursive evidence of embedded social structures in traditional folklore that are entrenched until today in Pakistani patriarchal settings (Mahmood *et al.* 2013). It has exposed through linguistic analysis as to how folklore mirrors social stereotypes typical of a Pakistani culture regrading gendered identities.

As established before, these identities are social constructs and they set precedence for future goals of a nation society where one gender is discriminated over the other, it is 'normal' to subjugate the rights of the oppressed. Such discriminations ultimately permeate in nationalistic discourse and greatly impact national identity formation. The stereotypes become prevalent ways of approaching reality and the oppressed and victims themselves find no objection in such representations. The dominant image of women portrayed in the folklore *Heer Ranjha* as a faithless and untrustworthy being as compared to an overarching image of men as saints and holy, needs an insightful review by the stakeholders of the current Pakistani society. As with any CDA study, this research alludes to the need for raising awareness among the youth and the wider Pakistani public to remember the primary goal of reading these tales as reflections of traditional words of wisdom, while at the same time to approaching them with an eye informed by the requirements of the present. The projection of a particular gender by the 'other' gender must be conducted consciously, so as to pay due respect and representation without being unjust. For this, a thorough understanding and assessment is in vogue by producers of discourse at several social and institutional interfaces such as media, politics and education. This study is aimed at challenging these very taken-for-granted representations or 'common-sense assumptions' (Fairclough 2015) and stereotypes of a particular gender.

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Women in the folklore of Sindh: A critical appraisal in a historical perspective

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Introduction

Folklore is "a part of oral traditions which are the messages or testimonies transmitted orally from one generation to another" (Doctor 1985, 223). The testimonies are transmitted in the form of folk tales, sayings, ballads, songs or chants. In this way, it is possible for a society to transmit history, literature, law and the other knowledge orally across the generations without any writing system. It has been argued by scholars that the accounts transmitted through oral traditions has generally formed or provided the basis of literature in the world, albeit semi-historical in nature. The genesis of the global folkloric canon, such as *Odyssey* of Homer in Greece, the *Shahnama* of Firdausi, a great epic of Iran and the *Divine Comedy* by Dante of Italy has been rightly traced back to oral traditions.

There is, however, some conjecture regarding the meaning of the term folklore, as it lends itself to multiple definitions. For a lay man, all folk cultural production, be it songs, customs, and stories, constitutes folklore. But in its wider sense folklore implies a socio-cultural corpus specific to a particular ethnic group, and includes folk-behavior or the study of folk-traditions. This term may be treated in its narrowest sense as being coterminous with folk literature and folk sayings. It includes both poetry and prose, though the former is historically older than the latter. Folklore truly represents the socio-cultural milieu of the people over ages.

In the other words, "folklore is the study of antiquities or archaeology, embracing everything relating to ancient customs and usages, notions, beliefs and superstitions of the common people. It is the science which treats of the survival of archaic belief and customs in modern age" (Saleem 2004, 5). They play a dominant role in literature and need not to have an intellectual, philosophical, religious or a humorous motive, but none of these subjects is ever ruled out. Literature holds a mirror to life and is the criticism of life. In fact, it shows life in miniature and means of "the common man without any tempering by artificiality, or conscious efforts of any artist" (Allana 1977, 243).

Almost all global literature, since the dawn of civilization has been folklore until writing was developed in Egypt and in the Mesopotamian civilization in Sumer. Over centuries, a vast record of written literature produced in the form of hand-written manuscripts to paper print, though alongside this exists the lore of people, the observations, experiences and sentiments of the common people expressed through the folklore. A minor difference between folk and academic history is to be found in the medium of communication. In oral history, it is difficult to preserve the unmemorable; the jumble of dull detail and fine webs of qualification that make written arguments seem complex and convincing do not belong in good tales (Glassie 1987).

Folklore is different from folk-stories, which are recited by the professional minstrels at feasts and festivals, versified by the folk-poets, and alluded to by the classical and other recognized poets of Sindhi language in their poetry. The folk-tales or folk-stories have no clear historical background except in-so-far as faint childhood memories, superstitious lingering from early times, or social mores and morals are dimly reflected in them. On the other side, folklore includes the narrations which have some geo-historical basis. In them, names of some persons and places and references to some events and occurrences could be identified historically (Baloch 2014, 223). These may be pseudo-historical or historical. Adventure, romance and intrigue are among their more conspicuous elements. Folklore usually reclaims from the historical past that which is more exciting and romantic, and uses it after diluting it with its own unbelievable. Each story has its geographical habitat and a background in history.

As with other regions of the world, Pakistan also has a wide variety of folklore, mostly circulated regionally. However, certain tales have related variants in other regions of the country or in neighboring countries. The region forming modern Pakistan was home to the ancient Indus Valley civilization and then, successively, host to ancient Vedic, Persian, Indo-Greek and Islamic cultures. The area has witnessed invasions and/or settlement by the Aryans, Persians, Greeks, Arabs, Turks, Afghans, Mongols and the British (Doctor 1985, 224). For this reason, Pakistani folklore contains elements of all of these cultures. The themes, characters, heroes and villains of regional folklore are often a reflection of local religious traditions, and folklore serves as both entertainment and a vehicle for transmission of moral and religious concepts and values. Some folklore performances are integral to religious rites and festivals.

Folklore of Sindh

As with all regions of Pakistan, the southern province of Sindh is rich in folklore. The folklore of Sindh, like all other folklore is the result of an interaction of cultural, geographical and religious factors and offers valuable historical evidence of cultural influence (Ibid., 295). It is a very important historical source in a region where there was no tradition of recording important events in writing till the fifteenth century (Khan 1959, 48). The oral testimonies were introduced in Sindh during the last days of the Arab rule (in the eleventh century CE) and the successive Soomra period, particularly in the form of folklore. Yet the folklore of Sindh, like all other folklore is the result of an interaction of cultural, geographical and religious factors that offers valuable historical evidence of cultural influence (Doctor 1985, 295).

However, the folklore of Sindh is a source of history and culture of Sindh, particularly highlighting the status and character of woman in local society. One can explore status and character of woman within specific historical, cultural and literary contexts of medieval Sindh. It helps to understand the paradoxical situations and dichotomies that continue in the lives of women in medieval Sindhian society. The earliest historical accounts of Sindh such as the *Tarikh-i-Sindh*, *Beglar Nama*, *Tarikh-i-Tahiri* and *Tohfah al-Kiram* etc., which were, for the most part, compiled during the Mughal era (r. 1520-1737 CE) employed this folklore as their source particularly for the history of the Soomra rule (1024-1351 CE). A socio-cultural analysis of the folklore provides an illustration of the social set-up, politics and economy in past eras.

In this study, I have employed a combination of two methods: the research or investigation and the interpretative; and the natural scientific method. In the research, both primary and secondary sources have been used. The primary research sources depend on the literature review and personal observation. The research on this topic is descriptive and qualitative because of its main source for data collection is the primary sources. It is a social research method that involves the direct observation of social and cultural phenomenon in their natural settings. The paper deals with particular questions, such as: why the depictions of heroines in Sindhi folklore highlighted only for their positive attributes, particularly their honesty, integrity, piety and loyalty? Why also is so much placed on the chastity of women? And why she is necessarily elevated to the highest rank of purity and grace? Why these female characters were symbolically expressed as archetypes of the highest form of womanhood, courageous, battling, self-sacrificing, determined and persevering.

It is evident that during most of Sindh's history, only scholars and administrators were literate; poetry and literature were transmitted orally and folklore and folk tales offered education in religious precepts and moral values, preserved political understanding and history, and provided entertainment. Since, according to modern trends, history is more a history of people than politics, though it is difficult to segregate the two if meaningful description of activities of people is to be presented in a particular era as people have always been affected and subordinate by government policies, wars, intrigues of nobles and other players of history. The history of Sindh written so far is accessibly loaded with the role of the rulers, vis-a-vis, their nobles and adversaries, wars, expeditions, palace intrigues, tombs, folklore, and fiction etc. There is little or no information on the lives of the common people, most especially the role played by the women and their status in Sindhi society.

It has been established by historians of Sindh that there are no known authentic and reliable written records compiled during the Soomra (r. 1050-1350 CE) and the Samma (r. 1350-1520 CE) periods. It is strongly believed that the Persian and Sindhi literature would have been developed in more than 500 years of the Soomra and Samma rule but would have been totally destroyed due to the upheaval of the times with exception of the *Chachnama* and a few Sindhi poems of a dozen poets (Panhwar 1973). The historical references of this period are meager; rather people received historical records from the folkloric stories, romantic poems, epics and ballads of local Bhats and Charans (Majumdar 1961, 16). All these semi-historical sources add substance to the historical record of Sindh.

The earliest record of Sindhi literature and written folklore dates back to the Soomra period (1050-1350 CE), when Sindhi became the common language of lore and verbal narration. This era is regarded as the 'romantic period' of the history of Sindh, giving birth to the pantheon of symbols that have galvanized Sindhi patriotism and folk-literature (Baloch 2003). The local Soomra rule in Sindh's history holds extraordinary significance in terms of intellectual awakening among the masses. It gave birth to the eminent stages and rhapsodists (local Bhats and Charans), who memorized the historical, regional and traditional folktales. They laid the foundations for Sindhi folk literature by composing and popularizing the classical narrations of chivalry and legendary romances, which became prevalent within folkloric prose and poetry.

Thus, a number of folkloric epics became popular among the people such as Umar-Marui, Moomal-Rano, Sohni-Mahiwal, Saif al-Maluk-Badi al-Jamal, Leela-Chanesar, Sorath-Rai Diyach, Sassui-Pannun and Noori-Jam Tamachi etc. This folklore provided the foundations for history writing in Sindh. Beside such folkloric production, there are some famous epics and ballads such as the battles between the Soomras and the Gujjars; Ala al-Din Khilji and the Jams (Baloch 1999, 99-108). There are also some local ballads such as *Dodo-Chanesar*. These works are very important semi-historical sources in regions such as Sindh, where the available written history dates only from the fifteenth century (Khan 1959, 48).

The native annals of Sindh are written in three languages; Arabic, Persian and Sindhi. The author of the *Tuhfat al-Kiram*, Mir Ali Sher Qani Thattavi expressly states that no attention was paid to the subject till about 1216 CE, when Ali Kufi of Ouch translated an Arabic account of the conquest of Sindh entitled the *Fathama-i-Sindh*, commonly known as the *Chachnama*. After the *Chachnama* of Ali Kufi the other sources are the *Tarikh-i-Masumi*, *Beglar Nama*, *Tarikh-i-Tahiri*, *Tuhfat al-Kiram*, *Lubb-i-Tarikh-i Sindh* and some local ballads such as the *Dodo-Chanesar* etc (Qani 1971, 70). All of these sources relied upon folklore, particularly for the history of the Soomras.

All of the above-mentioned source material on history of Sindh, which though written in the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries based on oral testimonies does provide an image of the social setup of the era. Although folklore is considered to be only semi-historical material, in Sindh it is the only source to bring historical facts to light. Folklore was preserved orally for centuries by local *Bhats* and *Charans*. Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai (1689-1752 CE), a Sufi scholar and saint, is considered one of the greatest poets of the Sindhi language. His most famous work, the '*Shah Jo Risalo*', is a compilation of folktales and legends in verse. The original work was orally transmitted and became popular in the folk-culture of Sindh. The women of Shah Abdul Latif's poetry are known as the Seven Queens, heroines of Sindhi folklore, who have been given the status of royalty in the '*Shah Jo Risalo*.' They are featured in the tales of Umar-Marui (Marui), Moomal-Rano (Moomal), Sohni-Mahiwal (Sohni), Leela-Chanesar (Leela), Sorath Rai Diyach (Heer), Sassui-Pannun (Sassui) and Noori-Jam Tamachi (Noori). These women are celebrated throughout Sindh for their positive virtues: honesty, integrity, piety, and loyalty. They are also valued for their bravery and willingness to risk their lives in the name of love. The historical analysis of these characters is discussed below:

Marui

The story of Umar and Marui has been circulating among the people of Sindh for centuries. It took its origin during the Soomra rule (1050-1350 CE, then through the Soomra period onwards the street bards and poets have sung the story with full commitment and lyricism so much so that this lyric was called Raag Marui (Baloch 1976, 2-3). This story, written in Persian, was entitled the '*Naaz o NiaZ*' by Tahir Muhammad Nisyani, the author of the *Tarikh-i-Tahiri* which was written in 1621 CE (Ibid., 44).

The story narrates how during the period of Umar Soomro, there lived a girl named Marui in a village 'Malir' of Thar. The fame of her beauty spread far and wide. Umar, the king fell in love with her and took her to his palace in Umerkot. He offered her gold, jewels and all manner of luxuries, yet she did not accept his overtures. Instead, she cried day and night, lamenting the memory of the husband and home she had been separated from, refusing food and sleep. No offer of luxuries, riches and high status as a queen

could sway her from her path of chastity, determination and loyalty to her family and home (Khan 1959, 52). After an entire year, when *Umar* realized her chastity and loyalty to her husband, he summoned her husband, returning Marui to his care along with gold and other precious items.

The character of Marui is portrayed as a symbol of love, freedom and patriotism. In order to protect her chastity, she turns down the offers of all the luxuries of the palace. It proves the purity of her character and raises the standards Sindhi women's character. It demonstrates to Sindhi women the importance of upholding their prestige and honor at all costs. Her character expresses the idea of a free human who, rather than bowing to oppression and injustice, should transform her poverty and weakness into power and remain confident. Her ego and self-respect become her weapons.

The poets presented so many qualities in this one character; patriotism, love for freedom, freedom of conscience, self-respect, standing up to oppression, height of purity and character, pride in her poverty, self-determination, consistency and optimism. She was presented as a symbol to deliver a message, a historical fact, some social truth as an ideal character rather than being helpless and weak person as woman is considered in society.

Noori

The folklore of Noori and Jam Tamachi represents the tragic story of the love between King Jam Tamachi of Unar, and Noori daughter of a fisherman named Muhana, an innocent and humble girl. This folktale originated during the Samma rule in Sindh (1350-1520 CE). Jam Tamachi, the ruler of the country (1388-1392 CE), was a renowned king among the Samma rulers of Sindh (Baloch 1957, 23).

He loves this woman of a lower caste of the Gondar community who lived and worked on the Keenjhar Lake. In this love, Jam negates the differences of caste, creed and social inequality (Ibid., 73-75). Noori's character is high and her qualities being gentleness and humbleness and possession of such qualities makes her superior to the well made up royal women. Always keeping a low profile is a quality Noori possessed most.

The society during that era was one of contrasts and contradictions where there were privileged classes and also deprived classes. People did not like these differences, so the poets tried to raise their status and place in the society by giving a better character to them in their poetry and portrayed Noori as the symbol self-respect and freedom of conscience for women. In the Sindhi society such a woman is considered an ideal that is humble, gentle, and has patience to tolerate everything. In this context, Noori's character in that era was an ideal character and the most praiseworthy aspect was her self-respect and pride in origin.

Sassui

Details of the story of Sassui and Punnun, apart from a few contradictions in various languages, is much the same across the neighboring regions. She was the daughter of a washer man. Punnun arrives with a caravan of Baloch traders, falls in love with Sassui and in order to get married with her, poses as a washer man. Sassui falls asleep on the wedding night and Punnun is fetched away by his brothers. Sassui follows them (Ibid., 60-63). This story expresses her love, pains and agony, self-devotion and infinite

suffering, while going barefooted on mountains and across the jungles in her beloved's search.

From the characterization in this story the philosophy is evident that the character suffers due to her cursed sleep. A message is conveyed to the people of the time to abandon carelessness and sleep and to awaken and clear the sleep from their eyes. Through the character of Sassui, the poet intends to provide women the lesson to come out of their confines for a purpose and depend only on the truth of feelings and emotions.

Moomal

During the 15th century, Moomal was a princess of a Gujar tribe during the Hameer Soomra's period. She constructed a palace and used her beauty to acquire wealth from the rich and wealthy men. She also wished to choose the most intelligent and handsome groom for herself (Qani 1971, 70). The character of Moomal arises as an arrogant princess who chooses Rano amongst hundreds of princes due to his intellect and wisdom. Moomal is symbolized by the knowledge, wisdom and beauty of woman.

This story shows a contrary type of character where lover had a suspicious character and beloved is shown as a whore who was ready to meet the spectators on fulfillment of her demand in the Kak Palace. Moomal's cruelty and viciousness is proven by her lust for wealth. In order to acquire treasure, she had many people killed. This story also determines the wisdom, alertness and courage of Moomal. It is, however, proves that a woman could be accepted as a ruler as well and she possessed the rights to select her life- partner.

Leela

The folklore of Leela and Chanesar belongs to the region of Liore or Lihore in the Lower Sindh during the Samma period. Kaunro was the daughter of a wise and brave king 'Khanger.' As a lady of royal family, Kaunro expresses her arrogance and pride. She accepted the challenge to ensnare Chanesar, the most handsome and rich person, possessed of pomp, power and a vast kingdom. He loved his wife Leela in a true sense (Nisyani 1964, 136). Leela fell in love with him at first sight. The character of Leela is depicted as a wise, intelligent and understanding woman but she loses her husband as a result of her greed for the diamond necklace of Kaunro. Her love for jewelry is used as a symbol of greed for riches (Ibid., 138).

On the other hand, the consistency of Kaunro is proven by her desire to win Chanesar's heart. The characters of the two women are depicted as opposite to one other. One loses all of her wealth to secure her love while the other loses her love by falling for riches. Here repent and remorse is symbolic. In the end, the self-esteem of Leela increases the dignity of woman. Circumstantial evidence tend to show that Chanesra Dasarro was a Samma chief, some villages of the Dasarro clan of the Sammas still flourishing in the south of Hyderabad district. This story was versified in Persian in *mathnawi* form by the poet-historian Idraki Beglari under the title of Chanesar Nama in 1601 CE during the Mughal period (1691-1737 CE) in Sindh.

Sohni

There are many famous myths regarding the story of Sohni and Mehar. Some scholars believe that this story originated in Sindh and later reached Punjab, where it evolved somewhat according to the local conditions and assumed the local name of 'Sohni-

Mahiwal' (Baloch 1972, 2). According to the tale, Sohni, the daughter of a potter fell madly in love with Mehar (one who tends buffaloes) but her parents forcibly married her off to a member of their clan named Dum. One day, she woke and saw smoke coming from Mehar's farm on the other side of the river. Unable to resist, she decided to cross the river using a pot as her buoy. Meeting Mehar on the opposite shore, became a daily activity for Sohni. Realizing the situation, her mother-in-law exchanged the cooked earthen pot with an uncooked one. As per her routine to see Mehar, Sohni brought the pot to the river, which was rough and tempestuous due to the dark 29th night of the lunar month. Having set out, when Sohni reached the centre of the river, her earthenware pot began to sink. Sohni realized that the uncooked pot was dissolving. With the river conditions making it too difficult for her to return, she continued swimming but the high tides soon exhausted her. She cried for help but Mehar was unable to save her and Sohni drowned in the river (Ibid., 2).

In this folklore, Sohni's character depicts another unique quality, her physical strength. The circumstances, in which she sets out to meet Mehar by crossing the river, were enough to scare many strong men greatly. She was neither stopped by the darkness of the night nor the ferocious tides of the river, neither the sounds of whirl pools nor the crocodiles, neither rain nor cold and not even the knowledge of having uncooked dissolving pot. Nothing was able to shake her confidence. While the male subject of the tale was a passive character, all the difficulties in the way of love were borne actively by the female protagonist, Sohni. Even after marriage, she does not accept this forced bond. Though, generally in Sindh, the folklore seems to defy societal conventions that see women married without their consent and against their will.

Sorath

The folklore of Sorath and Rai Dyach is unique among all other Sindhi folklore as it is the only depiction in which the female protagonist appears to have been given less importance as compared to her male counterpart Rai Dyach. For his part, he sacrifices his head over her ecstatic music. But commendable is Sorath too as she witnesses this terrifying scene. Sorath's pain is in no way less than that of Sassui, Sohni or Moomal. In fact her suffering was even greater, since in their case, the pain of separation from the beloved is mixed with a hope of reunion. While Sorath's husband lost his life in front of her, she was powerless to do anything but look on helplessly.

The chief interest of this story lies in the magnanimity of King Rai Dyach in giving up his head at the instance of Beejal, the fiddler and in the sorrowful lamentation of his wife Sorath after his death (Lalwani 1985, 75). Beejal used to play his instrument in such a wonderful way that Raja Rai Dyach became spell bound and promised to award him his own head. Thus, Beejal rejected any other awards of money, jewels, gold and elephants rather he demanded the head of the Raja only. Rai Dyach was so fascinated with the love of music and admired Beejal's talent to an extent that he was ready to present him not one but hundred heads, if he would have. Sorath made pleading requests to Beejal to spare her husband's life. Here, she seems to have been a victim of harsh dealing between two men. Beejal rejected all her requests and got the head of Raja leaving Sorath screaming and crying. Finally, Sorath committed suicide by self-immolation, not simply as an act of 'Sati' but because she considered death better than the suffering that would come with life without her beloved. In this manner, she attained relief from her sorrows.

However, the place and role of women in Sindhi folklore had always been more active and deeply involved in their pursuits. The story of Marui as dramatized in the folklore gave to understand that she was above all an undying symbol of dedication, devotion and patriotism. Sassui's decision to leave Bhambore was an attempt to prove that there her life was nothing but absurd and death to her was regeneration of new hopes. These stories also highlight the plights of the down trodden class of the society that greatly attracted the masses. Women are presented as the symbols of pursuits, struggle, love and patriotism. On the other hand, some stories depict the unhappiness and pathos of the women. This folklore also guides the people who had lost hope and became unconcerned about their fate to make the sorrows as beacon light to achieve the true liberation and self-recognition.

In fact, the most significant aspect of women's life seems to keep her prestige and pride higher. Purity of woman is dignified through the stories of Omar-Marui, Moomal-Rano and Leela-Chanesar. The folklore also determines the chastity and patriotism of Marui, self-esteem of Leela, wisdom and courage of Moomal, consistency of Kaunro, steadfastness and bravery of Sassui. However, Marui, Sassui, Sohni, Moomal and Leela are characters which are from stories and epics of Sindh but in fact exemplary and are true and relevant from the society (Qadri 1984, 32).

In a tribal society of Sindh, the existence of woman has such an importance that the man desires for her and this is what the folklore describes. Indeed, woman of this society must have had to strive to get the attention and love of her husband. She accordingly had to struggle hard to excel herself in the art of monopolizing the polygamous husband. The king had many queens and concubines but for her, king was the only groom. In this regard the stories of Leela-Chanesar, Moomal-Rano and Noori-Jam Tamachi are evidences.

Through the folklore, it has also been tried to depict woman of the poor class in the guise of Marui, Sassui and Noori as virtuous ladies, while the woman of the upper class like Leela, Moomal and Kaunro are shown as arrogant, self-centered ladies who turned a blind eye to their duties and swerved from their real path. However, the woman of the lower class, despite of being suppressed plays a vital role in the society. By participating actively, she retains the equal share in the economy. She proves the importance of her existence through her hard work and struggle. Here the question arises why so much stress is laid on the chastity of woman? And why is she being elevated to the highest rank of purity and grace? The purpose of this myth was to raise the low status of women in a feudal based society and to train them for playing a satisfactory role in a tyrant married life to keep society going smoothly. These characters were symbolically expressed to give a message to the weaker classes by giving them the examples of the courage, struggle, sacrifice, determination and perseverance of the heroines of these stories. Furthermore, in order to make them realize that if these innocent, tender and weak girls of the stories could achieve their goals by crossing all the difficult obstacles of the way, then why couldn't women in real life not do so either?

Although, some fictitious parts of the stories which are about magical and unnatural things are not acceptable for modern human minds and seem to be used to add color to the story, such as Marui, at the end, in order to prove her chastity, holds a red hot iron rod in her hand and walks on fire (Qadri 1984, 73), Moomal burns herself on a pyre (ibid., 80) and in the story of Leela- Chanesar, Leela goes back to her parents and when

Chanesar reaches there; both die seeing each other (Nisyani 1964, 140), and at the end of the story of Sassui- Pannun, the earth bursts and Sassui buries alive into it (Qani 1971, 79). These events spread optimism and hopelessness. The entire structure of all these stories has been developed on the foundation of chastity of woman.

Historical evidence proves the social discrimination between the man and the woman in traditional Sindhi society. This permitted a man from the upper class to engage in polygamy, seeking wives of his own choice even from outside his clan (Panhwar 2007, 155). By contrast, women generally neither had the right to select their life-partner nor to marry outside the family. Marriage was usually for life, although divorce was theoretically possible albeit very rare (Bakkhari 1938, 60-61). All of these norms and customs prove that the woman had been treated as a valuable commodity and prey. Like money and land they were considered as private property. A man endowed with authority or opportunity therefore sought out many wives and concubines (Qani 1971, 41-42).

In any case, the status of women narrated in the folklore cannot be separated from the society. The phonetic world of ritual myth or drama expresses social truth. A socio-cultural analysis of these characters helps to arrive at an opinion about the status and character of woman in the society. The information generated from the folklore adds substance to the interpretation of the empirical realities based on concepts. It serves as a mechanism for social control. It provides support for social institutions and behavior patterns of a culture. It also serves to instruct and remind the members of society of the sagacious codes of conducts. Ancestral legends mock the idle and improvident. It exalts individuals who exemplify the admirable virtues attributed to cultural heroes in ballads and legends and reflects those dominant values of society whose observance is rewarded by success.

Actually in a feudal society, people's minds were so suppressed that they did not have any collective idea of nationality, they had hardly any social, political or other collective movements. They had no set economic and financial goals. Monarchy and autocratic governments through the centuries never allowed the development of such revolutionary thoughts. Oppressive forces never let a collective sense to develop among the people. Though, despite such suppressive forces, personalities like Shah Inayat of Jhok (c. 1655-1718 CE) posed great resistance in the way of tyrant and oppressive rule of the Mughal governors in Sindh. But his tragic end by the hands of the rulers, fear and despair along with the feeling of helplessness spread among the people. That was the reason, through this folklore; some people like Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai made efforts to ignite spirit of consciousness among the people through his folk-poetry. Due to this reason, the great body of folklore in particular has come, that interpreted the feeling of patriotism that is particularly portrayed in the character of Marui.

Conclusion

Viewed from within, from the perspective of the historian at work in a community, all histories are history. Viewed from without, are histories are folk history, in some measure fabricated and irrelevant. Simply, folklore is what we call other people's history. It is actually the history concocted within the confines of academic community (Glassie 1987, 190). A minor difference between folklore and academic history is to be found in the medium of communication. The major differences between them abide in the culture of historian. From deep within their cultures, historians extract an idea of the real, which

forms the basis of their description of action. Actually, history is culture. Different cultures shape different histories. Without resort to falsification, historians select different facts and arrange them differently because historians live in different societies governed by different needs. Accepting the challenge of folk history and the opportunity of the artifact, we have a chance to co-operate in the construction of history that will entail the truth in all histories that will embrace multitudes.

The folklore which is employed as a source for compilation of the earliest written record on history of Sindh enables us to understand different perspectives of the society. Particularly the character of woman, each of them is distinct, having different attributes and qualities. These qualities are loyalty, patriotism, endurance, fearlessness, steadfastness and intellect. Her natural flaws and weaknesses are also exposed from these stories and provide a complete picture of her individuality which provides help in understanding her role in the society.

All of these characters express some social, cultural and moral values of the place and time as well as the psychology of the people of that era. The message of freedom and patriotism is found in the story of Marui. The importance of this feeling is felt when the country faces problem. As this record was narrated during the Kalhora period (1737-1783 CE), there was a need to ignite such a feeling among the people in that deteriorated economic, political and social conditions of the oppressed people. However, the woman must have been forced to strive to excel in the art of monopolizing the attention and love of her polygamous husband. The stories of Leela-Chanesar, Moomal-Rano and Noori-Jam Tamachi are evidences in this regard. The folklore of Sindh, though considered being fundamentally fictitious but it is important and significant as the only historical source that provides an image of social set up of the past era. During this era, love, loyalty, and the qualities of chaste women are glorified but she was a victim of social inequality and injustice. Narrators depicted the picture of women as they sought to retain her status in society with a pure and chaste character.

The attitude of a society towards its women is an indicator of the extent of its decency. In the folklore, the attitude towards woman shows two distinct traits. One, the actual status of a woman in that feudal society and second, apart from the actual position it represents ideal of a perfect woman. So, in order to restore her lost status in the society, the woman of the time was given so much importance that her emotional state was also being considered because of the fact that she was a representative of suppressed and suffering class. There was a need to make her feel sympathy in order to give her deserved status in the society. These characters express the feelings and emotions of different types of women which provide an opportunity to analyze the causes of disruption of the society.

Folklore is uninterrupted continuity of oral tradition embellishing the epic and its narration which makes it not only a significant contribution within the domain of folklore but also a valuable source of information on the historical and cultural aspects of the Soomra period. In the absence of any contemporary record of this period, with the exception of a few passing references in some historical works, these epics, in their different dimensions, become a valuable source of information to the historians to piece together a more valid account of the political, social, cultural, economic and ethnological conditions of Sindh during the twelfth to fourteenth century.

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Folklore, Ethnicity, Democracy and Nation-Building: The Primacy of the Sindhi

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Introduction

Folklore tends to make some kind of national or ethnic identity salient. Folklore for the purposes of this project is defined as the traditional beliefs, stories and customs of a community, orally passed through generations. In this paper, I shall concentrate on Sindhi folklore trying put the Sindhi into prominence. This work tries to deal with the following broad theoretical questions: Does ethnic folklore help in establishing an ethnic identity? If ethnic identity is primed through folklore, does it inevitably rival the formation of a national identity? Hence, do folkloristic depictions of ethnic identity help or harm nation-building and democracy?

Pakistan being a multi-ethnic state provides a useful case to understand questions concerning the relationship between ethnicity fractionalisation and nation-building. Within Pakistan, the evidence for this paper comes for the province of Sindh, whereby Sindhi folklore and conception of identity are analysed.

Specifically relating to the previous literature on the topic the following debates in the literature are also of interest to the paper¹: How do we measure ethnic fractionalisation? Can certain institutional arrangements help in combining ethnic identities into a national identity? When is ethnic or civic nationalism counter-productive for democracies?

In dealing with these puzzles the paper first paints the connection between ethnicity and nation-building. Second, it critically reviews the current methods to measure ethnic heterogeneity. Third, it reviews the literature on the promotion of nationalism to aid nation-building and democracy with special focus on the proposals presented to assist nation-building in ethnically divided societies. Fourth, the paper provides three examples of Sindhi folklore that could be analysed in relation to nation-building. Lastly, the concluding section, discusses the what we have learnt from this paper and how the cases help us understand whether ethnic folklore helps or hinders nation-building.

Ethnicity and Nation-Building

Ethnicity is an especially sticky identity that often intersects with other cleavages in society, such as religion, region, occupation, or class. While it is clear that ethnic identity, and consequently national identity, is not primordial in nature and is subject to activation and manipulation (Posner 2004a, Posner 2007), ethnic identities and demands are often rooted in substantive significant differences in world view and lifestyle (Horowitz 1985) or in historical legacy (Laitin 1985). For many, the attachment to one's ethnic group is the most overarching identity and cannot be easily deconstructed. Nationalism can result through the politicisation of this ethnic identity.

¹ This literature is covered in detail in the sections below. Although the literature relating ethnicity and nation-building in the Pakistani context is quite limited.

In the debate on nationalism and ethnicity, the sources of ethnic identity are not fully understood or agreed upon. One view of ethnicity posits the sources of ethnic divisions as longstanding societal cleavages that are shaped from historical memory and are bonds that are not easily redefined or reshaped (Horowitz 1985). This primordialist view of ethnicity argues that such ethnic links are not easily erased or muted. This view holds the opinion that politics in ethnically segmented societies will inevitably be associated with ethnicity because of the psychological association between certain ethnic groups and political parties.

An alternative view of ethnicity argues that while ethnic cleavages may be salient, politics is not necessarily an ethnic census (Posner 2004a, Posner 2004b). Instead, ethnicity or nationalistic sentiments become salient in the body politic only when political elites manipulate ethnicity in order to maximise their political opportunities (Wilkinson 2004, Snyder 2000).

The reality of the situation is that while these two arguments seem to be in conflict with one another, they are not. A view of ethnicity as a fundamental division in society does not prevent strategic politicians from manipulating its salience for political gain whether through violent means or non-violent means. This constructivist view recognises that ethnicity is not socially dominating, nor are political elites able to manipulate ethnicity according to their own will. Instead, such a view argues that ethnicity and its salience is a result of a dense web of societal influences both historical and present day. The study of the rise in prominence of ethnicity in Bosnia, Serbia, and Croatia provides such an example. As the strong institutions of the former Yugoslavia disintegrated, individuals who had previously identified with a Yugoslav identity were forced instead to return to ethnic roots that did not previously exist (Lake and Rothschild 1998, Brubaker 1995, Kuran 1995). The shift in nationalism from a civic nationalism emphasizing the Yugoslav state to a more violent nationalism involving more particular ethnic groups came as a result of the disintegration of the state structure and institutions in the early 1990s.

Measuring ethnic heterogeneity is difficult for two reasons: the problems of defining ethnicity, and the widespread use of Ethnic Fractionalization Index (ELF) as its operationalisation. First, accurate measurement of any concept requires that it first be defined. Ethnicity has often been seen as a primordial characteristic based on blood-ties, language or race (Geertz 1963). Others argue that the choice of ethnicity is strategic. For instance, Ghanaians chose English as their official language following independence rather than their tribal languages in order to improve their career prospects (Laitin 1994). Eller and Coughlan (1993) use the example of Afrocentrism in the US to demonstrate that ethnicities can be made salient in response to opposition. Chandra (2006) merges both perspectives by arguing that the concept of ethnicity consists of two features: stickiness and visibility. Stickiness refers to the fact that the descent-based characteristics (hair, skin colour) are on average harder to change in the short term than non-descent-based characteristics (occupation, education). Because attributes are fixed within the short-run, the strategic choice of ethnicity is constrained on the basis of underlying attributes. Chandra also argues that on average, ethnicity is more visible than other categories, and hence might a cheaper source of information for strangers.

Anthropologists and Ethnic Studies scholars are rightly concerned with the origins of group affiliations, and this work is important (See, for example, Sussman et. al. 2005).

But for most of the outcomes of interest in political science, ethnicity itself is unimportant. What is important is the notion that societies or groups might be divided along a single dimension or cleavage, which may be ethnicity, but could also be race, religion, occupation or class. Chandra attempts to argue that on average, ethnicity will be different in terms of stickiness and visibility than these other identities, but this is an academic point. In reality, all sorts of identities are greatly salient in divided societies. From class in the UK to ideology in Austria, humans have been born out Jonathon Swift's expectation that societies can be divided over the most seemingly "minor" attributes or customs, such as which side a person cracks their egg (the big or the little end).

A divided society is one that is dominated by segmental cleavages. Segmental cleavages exist "where political divisions follow very closely, and especially concern lines of objective social differentiation, especially those particularly salient in society" (Harry Eckstein, quoted in Lijphart 1977, 3). In other words, politics in divided societies is dominated by one (or a few) ideological, religious, linguistic, regional, cultural, racial, or ethnic differences. Majoritarianism in such societies is inherently problematic because it effectively excludes all but the largest of these groups from political power. Loyal opposition is impossible because the weaker segment will be relegated to permanent opposition (Rabushka and Shepsle 1972). A good example of the failure of majoritarianism in divided societies is the Stormont regime in Northern Ireland (1921-1972), where it ensured protestant dominance. In its fifty-year history, only one piece of nationalist sponsored legislation was passed in Stormont. Eventually, the Stormont regime was suspended after Bloody Sunday in 1972. It is unclear what a separate concept of ethnicity would add to this analysis. For political scientists, what is important is that societies are divided, what they are divided over is less important.

Additionally, divided societies can be problematic because they might intensify the two main causes of conflict: problems of incomplete information and credible commitment (Fearon 1995, Lake and Rothchild 1996). The very definition of segmental cleavages offered by Lijphart (1977) implies that incomplete information about preferences exists between each segment, and each has incentives to misrepresent these preferences. This may cause one segment to mistake the other segments intentions, perhaps feeling threatened by or suspicious of the actions or offers of the other segment. Mutual suspicion might derail any attempt to establish a democratic constitution.

Secondly, accurate measurement of a concept requires that we operationalise it. The most common measure of ethnic heterogeneity is an index of ethno-linguistic fractionalisation (ELF). This was first used by the Soviet state and was later made widely available by Taylor and Hudson (1972). There is no one index of ELF, instead the coding criteria varies among authors according to how they define ethnicity (Alesina et. al. 2003, Fearon and Laitin 2003). In all of its forms, an ELF index measures the probability that two randomly selected individuals from the entire population of a state will be from different ethnic groups. ELF is widely used in quantitative political science. In the IR literature, ELF is most associated with the study of civil war. Some studies have found a curvilinear relationship between ethnic heterogeneity and civil war (Collier and Hoeffler 1998, Elbadawi and Sambanis 2000) others have found no relationship (Fearon and Laitin 2003).

The widespread use of ELF as a proxy for ethnic heterogeneity is bad for two reasons. First, it obscures subnational and temporal variation. Most studies use ELF scores for entire countries over time. There is some evidence to suggest that the regional distribution of ethnic groups is a better proxy for ethnic heterogeneity than the amount of linguistic fragmentation in an entire country (Sambanis 2001; Melander 2009). Laitin and Posner (2001) argue that applying a fixed score to each country masks the variation of ethnic identities over time. They also argue that a single index is ill-prepared to capture the multidimensionality of ethnic identity.

Second, the assumption behind the widespread use of ELF that a one-size-fits-all operationalisation of ethnic heterogeneity is useful is simply wrong. Cederman and Girardin (2005) argue that ELF is a poor proxy for testing the effects of ethnic heterogeneity on civil war because its assumptions imply that violence occurs randomly rather than strategically. As such, ELF may be a better measure for testing the effects of ethnic heterogeneity on riots (Tilly 2003). Cederman and Girardin (2005) then chose to craft a measure of ethnic heterogeneity on the basis of theories of nationalism and civil war rather than just importing an index developed for different purposes. This suggests that ultimately ethnicity might have different impacts across different issue areas, and that scholars should tailor their measures of ethnic heterogeneity to the projects that they study.

Nationalism, Democracy and Nation-Building

Understanding national sentiment to be inherent in society, yet not socially dominating, the successful use of nationalism and ethnic sentiments in the promotion of democracy may depend upon the structure and strength of the institutions that country develops. While other scholars have advocated an increase in civic engagement, such engagement is not a necessary indicator of success (Berman 1997). Neo-Tocquevillean scholars such as Putnam (1993) have advocated that an increase in social capital through civic interaction and engagement in voluntary organisations promotes democracy by increasing social trust and cooperation, others have been quick to point out that these effects are present only under the right conditions (Gutman and Thompson 1996). Berman's (1997) analysis of the Weimar Republic prior to the rise of Nazism shows a high degree of societal involvement between different groups and organisations. As she points out the German state had a vibrant organisationally oriented society "measured by both historical and comparative standards" (403). However, in spite of, or as Berman argues, because of high levels of social interaction, the absence of a strong and responsive national government caused society to fragment, and encouraged the rise of nationalistic sentiments that gave rise to Nazi violence. While the presence of high social capital in countries that are transitioning towards democracy may be a helpful addition in encouraging democracy, it is by no means necessary or sufficient.

While civic engagement and social capital may be a helpful addition, strong and responsive national institutions are necessary for a successful transition to democracy. Strong and vibrant political institutions provide a non-violent forum in which to express frustrations (Rosenblum 2007). Snyder (2000) argues that strong institutions combined with adaptable interests of the political elite promotes the emergence of what he terms "civic nationalism," a non-violent form of nationalism that focuses on the governmental structure and not on non-governmental identities. Under such circumstances, elites, such

as those in Great Britain in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, do not have the incentive nor the opportunity to pursue divisive strategies aimed at raising ethnic or nationalistic sentiments in the pursuit of political gain. Snyder also emphasises the benefit of the political heritage of democratic institutions in countries such as Argentina and Chile in their non-violent transition to democracy in the 1980s. Electoral institutions, such as the alternative vote, also have a way facilitating cooperation across ethnic groups in order to ensure the best outcome (Reilly 2001).

The example of electoral institutions in Papua New Guinea, however, also shows that while institutions shape the nature of conflict across ethnic groups, the appropriate institution for each society may be different (Reilly 2001). Some scholars have lauded the use of institutions in helping to facilitate democracy in the form of consociationalism in societies that are divided strictly along group lines, with minimal cross-cutting cleavages (Lijphart 1969, 2004). In areas where violent conflict has arisen and which have a dearth of other cross-cutting issues other than group characteristics, or where group characteristics are reinforced through other societal cleavages that run together with group divisions, in order to minimise violence and rancour, the division of authority and the slowing of policy development is important to preserve an emerging democracy. In the case of Northern Ireland, where violence between unionists and separatists has been ongoing for years, such a governmental arrangement is essential to limiting the violence.

However, others would argue that the failure of consociationalism in transitioning democracies such as Fiji add a necessary caveat that in order to create a power-sharing type agreement all parties must know that alternative efforts to control power will not be successful (Roeder and Rothchild 2005). If the balance of power is unknown to the parties in conflict, the status quo will be less appealing. In a consociationalist democracy, because of the many veto players and high transaction costs, the enactment of policy becomes much more difficult, thus advantaging the status quo to possible alternatives (Tsebelis 2002). In states where the parties in conflict have not fully explored the alternatives to the status quo, such privileging of the status quo is likely to lead to a breakdown of democracy. Thus, the importance of institutions in the facilitation of democracy in the face of ethnic and nationalistic cleavages is dependent upon the choice of institutions.

Consociationalism, however, is not the only plausible pathway to development of democracy in deeply divided societies, and in fact may inhibit the proper development of democracy in some nations. By dividing governmental power strictly along societal lines, other scholars have argued that consociationalism privileges societal conflict over other political cleavages, thus inhibiting the growth and development of other issues that may arise (Roeder and Rothchild 2005). In countries where there exist a multitude of immobilised or non-salient cleavages other than societal cleavages, consociationalism may limit the proper growth of democracy by privileging ethnic cleavages and providing incentive for politicians to emphasise those cleavages, instead of creating coalitions along other more programmatic lines.

Instead of consociational democracy, critiques of that form, have argued for institutional designs that eliminate the incentives for political elites to mobilise along ethnic or nationalistic lines. Instead of power-sharing Roeder and Rothchild (2005) argue for power-dividing. By limiting the power of the national government and creating majorities

at different levels of government, Roeder and Rothchild argue that political elites will de-emphasise ethnicity and focus instead forming broader coalitions that enable the formation of policy.

The exact form of the institutions that best facilitate democracy in the face of the presence of nationalistic or ethnic divisions in the polity depends upon the nature of the divisions within that society. The question, however, of how best to encourage the development of democracy in nations that have underlying nationalistic or ethnic cleavages, is through the strengthening of the proper institutions that surround them. While the appropriate institution in each polity may differ according to the number of alternative non-ethnic or nationalistic cleavages and the shape of society, it is through those institutions that nationalistic and ethnic sentiments are channelled best in order to promote democracy.

Nationalism can foster democratisation when it does not create major divides in a society or when institutional structures can effectively channel nationalist demands into compromise for autonomy. This is more likely under certain conditions, such as when a national group is geographically concentrated and when the country has relatively strong democratic institutions and civil society in place. When nationalism is extreme and demands cannot be met without territorial separation, conflict is likely to erupt, which can hinder democratisation and even lead toward authoritarianism.

A final important distinction to be made is whether a national group demands autonomy or secession. These demands may change over time and are responsive to the political context. However, some groups may be more amenable, or more easily bought off, to stay part of the state. They may accept regional independence or autonomy over important cultural rights such as language or education. Democracy is more probable when a group is willing to accept self-autonomy within a geographic region or policy dimension in the state, which may be a good institutional fix if the group is geographically concentrated. If a nationalist group is not willing to compromise under any circumstances, democratic institutional solutions will be hard-pressed to quell demands and violence and breakdown is more likely. The case for the 18th amendment to the Pakistani constitution provides a fitting example. Although, under the 2010 amendment, provinces were granted greater autonomy and control over their affairs, the amendment failed to placate the ethnic nationalist groups (Kakar 2016).

When Does Nationalism Fosters Democracy?

Nationalism can foster democracy when the population is relatively homogenous or has already acquired self-determination. As noted above, if there is the possibility of developing an overarching civic national identity that transcends other divides within the society, the prospects for democratisation may be enhanced. However, if there is no accepted view of national identity and culture and instead there are competing claims of ethnic nationalism, democratisation is challenging. Three aspects have the potential to foster democratisation: (1) nationalist demands that can be met with regional or policy autonomy, (2) consociational and federal arrangements that can effectively grant this autonomy, and (3) civil society which acts to enhance the importance and value of citizenship.

Kymlicka (2001) notes that national minorities often reject the idea of integrating into a common, national culture and wish to define themselves as distinct nations. This entails

rights to territorial self-government, official language status, and autonomy over education and culture, for example. In this case, if national groups are willing to concede demands for secession and settle for high levels of autonomy, democracy may be able to survive. If the nature of the nationalistic demands is such that the granting of partial autonomy and the protection of minority rights can reconcile a nationalistic group's demand for secession, two sets of institutions may contribute to enhanced levels of democracy

Although there have been many critiques against consociational ideas (Reilly and Reynolds 1999), there are situations in which consociational arrangements may work to incorporate nationalistic groups. If the ethnonational identity inherent in the claims is overarching above all other possible identities, giving all groups "a seat at the table" may be the most viable option for making people perceive that they are being represented, even if this has the effect of reinforcing the divide. If the divide is so deep that voters cannot be induced to look beyond that identity anyway, providing arrangements to be descriptively represented may be critical. Second, and related, consociationalism works better with geographically concentrated minorities and with smaller countries in general (Lijphart). In part, this is because it can be paired with federalised institutions, which allow groups much more autonomy. It is possible to grant other forms of power and autonomy over education and language, for example, that aren't contingent on geographic concentration. However, as I will discuss below, these institutional solutions are not guaranteed to work and depend on other critical factors in the nature of society.

Another condition which makes nationalism less threatening to democracy is the presence of a strong civil society. Varshney (1997) argues that the structure of civil society is critical for understanding how societies with deep divides can avoid violence. He argues that social interactions across ethnic lines may develop the social capital to disintegrate conflict. However, civil society and democracy are mutually reinforcing processes and each is enhanced in the well-functioning presence of the other. Civil society can actually undermine democracy, if democratic institutions cannot meet the needs of civil society. Berman's depiction of Weimar Germany demonstrates the consequences of a democratic government that ignores its obligation to protect, promote and incorporate civil society into government decision-making. High levels of associationalism, absent strong and responsive national government and political parties, served to fragment rather than unite German society (Berman 1997). Thus, while civil society has the potential to help remedy strong societal divides, it must be done in a strong institutional framework.

An example of the way in which a nationalist group is not destructive to democracy is the case of Sindhi nationalist groups in Pakistan today. Although nationalism plays a major part of politics in Sindh and there have been separatist political parties (such as the Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz), for the most part, the institutional arrangements have quelled violent outbreak and channelled demands into the political arena. The value of having Sindhis having major national political positions also acts to keep Sindhi political leadership satisfied.

Degree of Institutionalisation

The above discussion necessitates consideration of the stability and strength of a democracy and it is important to consider the stability and degree of institutionalisation of

a democracy. Countries in earlier stages of democratisation are likely to be less institutionalised. This can have profound consequences on the state's ability to manage ethnic or national conflict.

Levitsky and Murillo (2009) note that political institutions function differently in practice than they do on paper. The debates over the form of constitutional structures that best remedied divided societies and challenges from nationalist groups often assumed that rules being designed would be enforced and stable, and they would reflect or create shared expectations about behavior. However, this is not always the case, especially in a society challenged by deeply held ethnic nationalist identities. Rules are contested, violated and frequently changed and the institutional weakness has profound consequences for democracy (O'Donnell 1994). Thus, in a society with weak civil society and weak democratic institutions, the demands of a national group may be very destabilizing.

This portrayal is particularly fitting with regards to a country such as Pakistan, where institutions may exist on paper but their functioning is limited. Hence, it is not just institutions it is not mere the existence if institutions that can mitigate conflict but the degree of institutionalisation that may ensure their proper operation.

When Does Nationalism Fosters Autocracy?

At the other end of the extreme are cases where nationalist claims cannot be reconciled and may lead to violence or even democratic breakdown. This is likely when (1) a nationalistic group cannot be satisfied with regional or policy autonomy and is completely unwilling to compromise on the demand for their own, sovereign state; (2) when institutions and the state are weak and cannot enforce protection of rights or autonomy.

Some nationalistic conflicts are so intractable that it is possible that they cannot be completely remedied with institutional solutions. If the history of conflict in an area has been long and violent, and if the factors distinguishing different ethnic groups are so deep —permeating through worldviews, religion, values, and culture — an ethnonational group may feel that the only way its needs can be met is through having its own state. Of course, this feeling can be activated by elites and there is not anything inherent in ethnicity that makes it impermeable to compromise. Nationalism may involve both rational calculations (Rogowski 1985) and emotional ties that induce people to take enormous risks and even die for the sake of their nations (Connor 1993). Once that identity has been activated and politicised, no institutional solution may be satisfactory.

This may be the condition from the beginning, or it may be induced by the institutional solutions a state tries to implement and then fails to secure. It is certainly exacerbated by politicians who mobilise ethnic identity for political gain. Weak states are especially like to be unable to arbitrate between groups or guarantee the rights of minority groups (Lake and Rothschild 1996, Fearon and Laitin 1996). The institutional solutions that a state employs to help satisfy nationalist demands may end up backfiring. Federalism may actually make national claims worse. Nordlinger (1972) argues that territorial separation may lead to secessionist demands instead of ameliorating them. Lake and Rothschild are also critical of the power of federalism in convincing political minorities that their rights will be protected. Consociational solutions, while praised for being able to bring all voices to the table, have been criticised for exacerbating the salience of divides in a

society. If the coalition government is perceived as being unfair, consociational arrangements may make the appeals of extreme parties even stronger (Rose 2000).

An example of the extreme case would be the dissolution in Yugoslavia following Tito's death. Although Yugoslavia had once been successful in economic growth and managing ethnic conflict, external forces such as economic instability and structural changes in the region at large reduced the capacity of the state to maintain control in the federal structure. These conditions, paired with increasing demands by ethnic groups and calls for national autonomy, led to violence which eventually broke apart the country.

It is important to keep in mind that democratisation itself may actually exacerbate ethnic or national conflict, and that the level of institutionalisation and democratic stability will affect the ability of elites to effectively implement institutional solutions. Some nationalist demands simply cannot be met with institutional solutions, and those are more likely to lead to violence and authoritarianism, especially in consolidating democracies or democracies in the early stages of democratisation. Other nationalist demands are potentially more amenable to institutional solutions, which are most effective when paired with certain geographic distributions and a well-established civil society.

In conclusion to the theoretical section of the paper, in Pakistan we see both occasions where institutionalisation has not been able to persuade ethnic groups to forego secessionist demands as well as instances where the ethnic elite has been effectively coaxed by co-opting them on important positions in government. While the degree of institutionalisation is still low, institutional solutions have had mixed success in influencing nation-building.

Analysing Folklore: The Primacy of the Sindhi

Growing up as a Sindhi and during my academic fieldwork in the province, I came across many a folklore that tried to establish the "Sindhi" as the original, the most prominent and the most significant son of the sub-continent. In this paper, I shall analyze three little excerpts that depict the primacy of the Sindhi. The selection of cases in neither representative nor trying to establish causality. These are folklore that I encountered during my fieldwork and interviews in Sindh. Places where I spent time included Karachi, Hyderabad, Sanghar, Sukkur, Shikarpur, Larkana, Khairpur, Thatta, Gharo and other areas which came on road-trips to these places.²

The areas where I conducted fieldwork were quite representative of Sindh as they include both rural areas in the north and the south, and the major urban centers of the province.

Excerpt 1: Geography

In one of the stories I was told, Sindh was the land of the "Sindhu" known to us as the legendary River Indus. The Persians could not pronounce the "S", therefore called it the "Hindu". The land of "Hindustan", the religion of "Hinduism" and its adherents the "Hindus" all derived themselves from "Sindhu" or its land "Sindh". The implication of the short story is that anyone who derives benefits from the River Indus in Sindhi. Therefore, anyone denying its significance is not being honest to her Sindhi roots.

² Matiari, Tando Adam, Dadu and Sehwan Sharif would be examples of other places on the way.

The Sindhu or the River Indus is revered in Sindhi songs, poems and the overall cultural narrative. While one may view this particular excerpt establishing the superiority of the Sindhi over others in the sub-continent as it claims that the truly indigenous people in the sub-continent all have Sindhi roots. Another view may see the excerpt as particularly inclusive as the in-group includes all those who use the *Sindhu* to their benefit. While ethnicity may be defined by language, practices and rituals as depicted in the previous section, demarcating ethnicity by topographical features transcends beyond culture, crucially tying the land to the nation.

The land itself being essential to the nation is significant in post-WWII scenario of the nation-state Pakistan. While Woodrow Wilson's (1918) conception of self-determination, defined nation as a territory in which a homogenous group of people lived together; such ideas of nation have become obsolete as we come to realise that it is practically impossible to maintain homogeneity in a particular territory. Today, even historically the most homogenous of societies, such as Sweden, have significant levels of diverse populations. Therefore, it may be safe to say that "nation-state" has ceased to exist and has been replaced by what experts in comparative politics may call the national state (Tilly 2003). A nation-state being defined as a territory where only one type of ethnicity or people live while a national state being a territory where a variety of nations and ethnicities abide. To maintain stability in the post- World War II international order, territory and not culture has become the most significant feature of the nation. If a state is defined in Tilly's territorial terms, it would be easier to justify the conception of the nation in diverse societies. The geographical aspects of Sindhi folklore therefore fit well in this conception of nation-building, as all dwelling land of the Sindhu may be considered "Sindhi". This viewpoint broadens the idea of nation beyond what is traditionally understood as ethnicity.

Excerpt 2: Islam

In another story I was told that it was Sindh that brought Islam to the sub-continent. Sindh in the 9th century was first invaded by the Umayyads under the famous youth Muhammad bin Qasim. Since this opened the doors of Islam, Sindh it is called "Bab-ul-Islam".³ The storyteller claimed that the Quran was translated in the 9th century to Sindhi, which would give Sindhi the distinction of being the first foreign language to which the Quran was translated into.

Sindh and Islam are topics that have generated great debate among area studies experts (Ansari 1992). In post-1947 Sindh, in which a significant number of Sindhi Hindus migrated out of Sindh, Islam played a crucial role in establishing the "new" Sindhi identity. Historically, the typical Sindhi in the literature was seen as shrewd trader or *banya*, whose religion whether Hinduism or Islam was irrelevant (Markovits 2000). The "new" Sindhi religious identity was constructed to be one of a Sufi, tolerant and mystic Muslim for whom the shrine was as important if not more important than the mosque (Ramey 2008). When these narratives clash with orthodox understandings of Islam, the excerpts such as the one above are used to reclaim primacy of the Sindhi status. The "gate of Islam" is a fitting example of how ethnic understandings may try to overcome dominant interpretations of religion. While different understanding of religion among different ethnicities may lead to conflict, they may also help reform and diversify

³ It is unclear whether the Umayyads named it Bab-ul-Islam or whether thus name was adopted much later.

perspectives on religion. One of the advantages of a heterogeneous society like Pakistan, may be the diversity of interpretations that may help nations to evolve. In this instance also, we see ethnic identity as enriching nation-building rather than stifling it, although the chances of conflict may exist. In the national narrative the regarding Sindh and Islam, the Sindhi is regarded as tolerant, peace-loving and spiritual. Sindh is usually seen as a bastion for Sufi Islam where extremist and radical tendencies have found it difficult to find a foothold (Isani 2017). The Sufi south of Pakistan therefore provides diversity to the more orthodox north of the country.

Excerpt 3: Resistance/the Other

In the last myth I would like to discuss, I was told, nearing the end of times Sindh would be jolted by the Afghans, it would shake but not vanish off the map. The storyteller, an old sage in a village in Shikarpur, attributed the saying to Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai to give the story credibility.

In any discussion of Sindhi folklore, Bhittai is center stage, as his folk tales and poetry are integral part of Sindhi syllabi. This paper leaves out Bhittai intentionally as many have tried to analyze different angles of his work. The myth mentioned above is also most likely not from Bhittai -as I did not find it anywhere in my research – but rather Bhittai was instrumentalised by the storyteller to provide the narration with credibility.

The excerpt can again be analysed from various outlooks. One obvious takeaway from the story is that there is well-defined out-group, namely the Afghans. The Afghans are regarded as causes of problems for the Sindhis. Whether this myth was created by the village sage on his own to show his displeasure toward present-day Afghan refugees - which were non-existent in the village - or whether the sage actually heard the story from his ancestors, I cannot confirm. However, the story definitely establishes a separate Sindhi identity different from the 'other', the Afghans. From a more optimistic perspective, the myth may also depict the resolve of the Sindhis to withstand immigration waves whether they be from Afghanistan or elsewhere. In order to provide more context to the story, it was narrated in response to questions on Sindhi culture. The prophecy was communicated in a background in which the Sindhi is shown to be able to withstand cultural, ethnic and military invasion. Sindh or the Sindhi was to remain even it would be heavily affected by invading cultures and armies.

The particular providentialism of the story identifies that the Sindhi has a separate group that is to persist, alone or in conjunction with other groups. While it warns of an invading group it also assures us that, no matter what, Sindh is to remain. For nation-building in a heterogeneous society like Pakistan, it allows a Sindhi to be moderately but not extremely worried about outside influences. For nation-building while exclusive identities are usually a problem, divine prophecies like this excerpt may aid in diminishing extreme fears.

Discussion and Conclusion

This paper began with the broad research question of whether ethnic folklore by priming ethnic identity hampered nation-building. To answer this question, this paper reviewed the theory and literature on the connection between ethnicity and nation-building. The first finding that came out of the overview is that ethnicity and therefore ethnic

fractionalisation is quite a difficult concept measure although significant efforts, such as the ELF, have been made to measure the ethnic divide.

Second, in ethnically divided societies various policies have been implemented to promote nation-building and democracy. One of the most popular proposals has been this idea of consociational democracy, which divides power in a national state among various ethnic groups. The success of consociationalism in its application has been varied depending on the scope conditions of the context. In general, whether appeasing ethnic actors by a division of powers would eventually lead to more democracy or autocracy depend on the extent of the cleavages and the degree of institutionalisation.

In the Sindhi folklore presented, it is clear that Sindhi identity is being positioned in a particular way. In the first folklore although the primacy of the Sindhi is clear it is not necessarily opposing a national identity. However, if another ethnicity attempts to impose or rule the Sindhi, the folklore may help formulate an identity to fight against the domination.

In the second folklore, again the Sindhi is being seen as the first to receive Islam in the sub-continent. Although primarily religious rather than ethnic identity is being primed this folklore is also not working against a national narrative. The folklore may also assist in countering narratives attempting to claim Islamic orthodoxy originating from elsewhere.

In the third folklore Sindhi identity is primed against a foreign Afghan identity but not necessarily against a Pakistan identity. The foreigner is seen as outside the national context against whom resilience may be required. Again, ethnic identity in this folklore does not hinder the formation of a national identity.

In all three folklores that I came across during my fieldwork a stronger Sindhi identity is trying to be formulated but in all these examples the narrative do not oppose or contradict a Pakistani, national identity. Again, by no means, are these a representative sample of folklore present in Sindh, however they do point at the fact that the promotion of folklore does not necessarily entail an effort to counter a national identity. This work does not want to make the overarching claim that folklore does not work against nation-building but makes an effort to depict that even though folklore may fantasise the superiority of one ethnic identity over the other, this may not necessarily hinder nation-building.

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The classical Balti folksongs by women: A mirror of the past and present

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Introduction

Academic inquiry into the phenomenon of nation-building has found that such undertakings become more fruitful when emphasis is placed on the seeking 'unity in diversity', rather than on assimilation and amalgamation which create discord and disaffection, particularly among cultural minorities (Bass 2008; Nieto 1992). The 'unity in diversity' can be established through respecting and promoting the cultural expressions. In the face of top-down nation-building efforts that aim to assimilate and homogenize, folklores can act as cultural mirrors, having evolved in the specific socio-cultural contexts in which cultural minorities attempt to (re)establish a sense of self and identity. The subtleties of cultural expression are best reflected in folklore. A deeper understanding of the classic folklore of any culture means a more nuanced understanding of a given socio-cultural milieu. Preservation and promotion of intangible cultural heritage can contribute in enhancing trust with fellow citizens from outside of a minority group, who can grow to respect and appreciate these cultural assets (Zakir 2015).

'Baltistan' refers to the geographical region surrounded by the Karakoram and Himalayan mountains in the northern part of Pakistan bordering with India and China. People in this region across the Indo-Pak border speak the same language, Balti, with minor differences of the dialect. Using a single language, all Baltis share the same unique cultural traditions inherited and transmitted through Balti language, however in Baltistan the Balti language has been heavily impacted by several decades of Pakistani rule.

Balti folklore including folksongs particularly the brand of '*rgiang khulu*' is considered a treasure trove of cultural meanings by the elderly Balti singers who continue to be devoted to its preservation.

The several centuries-old history of Balti culture is rich with feminist literature in the form of classical folksongs by women. However, contemporary Balti poetry by women has been silenced to such an extent that it has become something of a taboo for women to compose poetry or sing (romantic) songs. The term '*khulu*' denotes all kinds of poetry in the Balti language and types of '*khulu*' are differentiated with prefixes. When varieties of religious poetry were ascribed Persian and Arabic names in Baltistan, the word '*khulu*' became specific to non-religious, non-political, secular brands of poetry in the Balti language. The production and preservation of *khulu* is now facing severe challenges from the growing orthodox religiosity in Baltistan.

This paper explores the potential challenges and opportunities for the revival of classic Balti folksongs composed by women, by examining the gender discourse in Pakistan at the national level with a specific lens focused on literary expressions. Presenting a comparative 'narrative analysis' of the classical Balti folk songs *rgiang khulu* composed by women and an example of a contemporary Urdu poetry by female poets of Baltistan,

allows for a grasp of the sense of liberty and its suffocation then and now in the history regarding feminist literature in Baltistan.

Baltistan a Brief Background

Baltistan, the second administrative division of Gilgit-Baltistan is situated in northern Pakistan bordering with China and India. Before partition of India and Pakistan, Baltistan had close cultural relations with Ladakh and Tibet. After partition and annexation to Pakistan, Baltistan lost its former land connections, becoming hermetically sealed except for its sole connection to Pakistan via Gilgit. Baltistan has had a rich tradition of cultural production, with particularly widespread talents in poetry and music. The history of Balti classic folk songs reveals that the poetic aptitude among women was very high and they were free to express their thoughts. Their poetry was well-received and appreciated by the wider local audience. Kazmi's (1985) collection of folklores (*Balti lok-geet*), in addition to the lists of folksongs provided by Hussainabadi (1984) and Hasrat (2007) demonstrates a noteworthy fact that about two-thirds of the folksongs (*rgiang khulu*) were composed by women. Although not known as 'poetesses', the authors provide windows onto the lives of women in Balti society in form of '*rgyang [rgya] khulu*¹', a particular genre of song rich with symbolic and literary.

Folklores as the cultural mirror

According to the cultural historians such as Hussainabadi (2009), Kazmi (1985), and local elders, these folklores and songs possess the treasure of Balti culture. The oral traditions of folklores and songs are seen as the mirrors of intangible cultural heritage. Although their dissemination has scarcely extended beyond the mountains of Baltistan, the literary worth and standard of these folk songs are no less than any international classic. These songs are true reflections of the strong feminist strains within traditional cultural production in the Balti language. This has led some clerics to argue that these songs date from the pre-Islamic Buddhist age, but such claims are refuted by the presence in several folk songs of clearly depicted Islamic motifs, themes and names. It is also noteworthy that many of the songs belong to the post-Islamic era and are composed by women such as '*stroghi kazim*' a song composed and sung by a woman for her husband 'Kazim' who was away in jail, is an example. The content of this song demonstrates that the poet was a Muslim woman. Similarly, many other classical songs are evidences of post-Islamic female poetry well acknowledged by the society and regarded as literary masterpieces.

Until 1948, there were no borders between Baltistan and Ladakh and the region had a unified culture with free movement. As Norberg-Hodge (2009, 68) found, "women in Ladakh actually have a stronger position than in any other culture" and there was a dynamic balance. Regarding status of women Norberg-Hodge further adds "they are given full recognition for everything they do." Much the same situation was to found in Baltistan in terms of recognition and freedom of expression of women in the public sphere.

Historical traces suggest that feminist literature in form of Balti poetry was very popular until the late 19th century. Women were able to sing, dance, and compose poetry and

¹ The type of classical Balti poetry consisting of narratives, stories and mostly emotional content that conserved a bigger part of the history in form of oral traditions.

share their poetry in public. There is an adjective feminine noun *malakhanmu* in Balti denoting female dancers and singers. This word is, to this day, used to represent any woman who is highly vocal, soft-spoken, and inspiring through her oratory skills. However, in 20th century the trend was reversed and after Indo-Pak partition. The situation completely altered partly due to isolation of Baltistan from its cultural neighbors of Ladakh and Tibet and partly due to influx of religious clergy with sharp sectarian orientations from outside Baltistan.

Poetry in present day Baltistan

Today, both Balti and Urdu poetry are very popular in Baltistan. It is said that, in Baltistan, one out of ten would be a poet or have poetic talents. However, this is the case of only the present male population, which is known to public. The poetic aptitude of females is unknown due to present-day barriers imposed by the growth of more strict religious culture. Women are discouraged from singing songs, dancing by women has become taboo, and secular and romantic poetry in Balti by females is almost forbidden. Balti song (*Khulu*) is silenced. There has been a case wherein a young girl composed a few verses defending her father and family in a social conflict. The author in question was subjected to defamation of her moral character, although the content of poetry was not romantic. For girls, only religious poetry or national songs would be allowed to sing in female-specific ceremonial settings. Zakir (2015) found in his doctoral research that in schools the recitation of Balti *khulu* was not allowed and that there was a sense of fear while talking about singing a Balti *khulu* at schools, particularly in girls' schools. The poetic voices of women are silenced to such an extent that they can't think of becoming a poetess or even if they have composed verses, will never become public.

The content analysis of these folkloric songs can unpack the then feminist literature and cultural trends. However, this paper presents only a comparative study of cultural space for literary expression by women in the pre-partition and post-partition Baltistan. Before partition, Baltistan had open borders with Ladakh and Kargil (now controlled by India), and Shaqsgam and Terum (now controlled by China). After partition, the formerly passable mountains that surround Baltistan became its prison walls, preventing of the kinds of cultural interactions and exchange that had previously occurred between these regions. With this isolation from its cultural lineage, the influence and penetration of certain religious thoughts from the nascent Pakistani state, to which Baltistan had become attached, affected cultural expressions especially of women and specifically through poetry.

As Zakir (2015) found in his doctoral study, the contemporary conservative religious influence has become so pervasive to such an extent that the very word '*khulum*' standing for secular/romantic poetry in Urdu, is looked down upon with a label of religiosity. No female student can sing any song or *ghazal* or *khulu* in schools. Singing any *khulu* items by women and girls in public ceremonies is almost entirely banned. Similarly, permission for reciting poetry by women is also rare. It is well-known that the aptitude of poetry among people of Baltistan in terms of literary understanding, appreciation, and composing poetry is high (Hasnu 2011; Zakir 2015). There are literary societies which have frequent *musha-ira* sessions, however women are excluded from all such events. If it is known that any girl has composed few verses in Balti, she is discouraged from continuing. Recently, the author had an opportunity to examine an

Urdu poetry collection composed by a Balti woman. The manuscript was submitted for review as the author had been successful in gaining permission from her family (father, brother and husband) to publish her collection in the form of a book. She composes poetry with the pen name Semaab (meaning mercury showing dynamism and sensitivity). The poetry of Semaab could be taken as a representative voice of the Balti women in modern age. Semaab expresses her feelings in Urdu poetry and she could not or did not prefer to compose poetry in Balti, perhaps with the fear that her poetry would be classified as *khulu* and *khulu* is not accepted by the society. This paper presents a comparison of the narratives from few pieces of classical Balti *Khulu* and Urdu poetry of present day composed by Semaab a Balti lady who is a university graduate. This comparison can reveal the level of freedom of expression for women then and now. One can easily trace the openness, freedom of expression and recognition of feminine voices in history of Baltistan. At the same time, the level of suffocation, fear and internment can be sensed from the verses of present day in Urdu.

Narratives in the folksongs by women

About two thirds of the preserved oral traditions of Balti *rgiang khulu* were composed by women. These songs reflect the degree of freedom of expression, the literary taste and poetic aptitude of women of Baltistan. The preservation of these songs in form of folklores and oral traditions shows the public acceptance, and appreciation for these songs.

On the basis of themes of 'freedom of expression', 'romantic/ emotional content', 'women voice' and 'literary taste and symbolism', I have selected three songs 'Hilbi Murad', 'Lang Dukpa' and 'Yato' from Kazmi (1988), Hussain's (2017) and Muhammadcho's (2017) collection of classical Balti songs. All the three songs are known to be composed a few hundred years ago. 'Hilbi Murad' and 'Lang Dukpa' are both men for whom the songs were composed by their wives. Similarly, 'Yato' is the loved name not real name of the person for whom his wife sang this song.

Hilbi Murad

This song, composed by Khaplu, the wife of a man named 'Hilbi Murad' who belong to the Facho caste and was imprisoned by the Raja for reasons unknown.² His beloved wife could not remain silent and sung this song.

The song describes the solitude of Murad in a faraway prison and gives voice to the sorrows of his wife in forbearance of his suffering. The literary analogies and subtle expression of intimate desires are beautifully articulated in this song.

Translation of the Song:

In the land of the narrow mountains (prison site), O my Hilbi Murad,

I think you might be thirsty,

If you become really thirsty,

Surely, unfortunate me, may serve you drink 'cold drinking water' (but);

Alas! Thy girl is away from the kind, dear Facho (whom I can't serve water).

² To this day, Hilbi is name of a village in Machulu.

*In the land of the narrow mountains (prison site), O my Hilbi Murad,
I think you might be burning from sun,
If you are really burning from sun,
Surely, unfortunate me, would become umbrella for you (but)
Alas! Thy girl is away from you, the kind, dear Facho (unable to become your umbrella).*

*In the land of the narrow mountains (prison site), O my Hilbi Murad,
I think you might be tiring,
If you are really becoming tired,
Surely, unfortunate me, would become your ride (but),
Alas! Thy girl is away from you, the kind, dear Facho (unable to become your ride).*

The song Hilbi-Murad, on the one hand, is illustrative of the degree of freedom of emotional expression. On the other hand, it reflects the poetic symbolism and analogy qualifying to be a classic folk song. If we examine the content, this song indirectly expresses the deep desire of the modes of intimate relations. Being a loving wife, having aesthetic sense and pain of separation, the poet was socially justified and had every right to express her views. We can also sense the resistance expressed here against the tyranny of the rulers in form of a strong voice for freedom. This was the story of the past, the Balti feminist literature that is only history now.

Lang-Dukpa

This song is from the perspective of the first wife of a man who later married a younger second woman. The man had become enamored of his new wife, and ignored his first wife and her baby. Here again, the husband was imprisoned in an inaccessible place beyond a river for reasons unknown. When Lang Dukpa was imprisoned, his second wife was untroubled, showing indifference towards her husband. She neither attended to her duties at home nor visited Lang Dukpa in prison to console him. In contrast his first wife forgot his past indifference towards her, she took care of their home and with their infant child on her shoulder, would trek to the prison daily, bearing food for her husband. During this time, the first wife attempted to demonstrate her fidelity and love to her husband by singing this song:

Translation of the Song:

*If I say, I am not looking (paying attention) towards you,
My red eyes, like blooded lever never stops from your sight,
If I say, I do not think about you,
Me erroneous, my mirror like crystal clear heart, can't survive (without thinking you),
If I say, the wife you loves a lot,
She is happily in her new suit wondering with make-up of her hairs,
If I say, the wife you did not like, if say about her,*

She is carrying meal for you with her baby on her back.

In the song Lang Dukpa, the female narrator of the song regains and wins the heart of her husband with an endearing comparison of her fidelity and love with that of the second wife's indifference toward Lang Dukpa. We can find the natural emotions of jealousy, love, grief, the will to win, and an effort to distance the second wife from her husband. In this song, freedom of expression, a women's voice, the literary symbolism and the desire of winning love or intimacy are also evident.

Yato

This classic song enriched with philosophy of life was composed by a young woman whose partner (husband or fiancé) ventured somewhere far and did not return for long time. The poetess presents reality of life in terms of the climax or youthfulness of life of different living beings and tries to convince her partner to come back as soon as possible. There is variation of the story by different authors.

The word 'Yato' means the fellow, the helper friend, the beloved, 'Stroghi-Yato' means the 'loved soulmate'. The woman presents the transitory realities of life in a highly literary and symbolic way and tries to call her husband back home. The thematic, aesthetics, emotional and philosophical content of this song shows the marvelous talent of the poetess and her understanding of life as clearly articulated in this song. There are minor variations of the wording and a half verse in different versions. The translation of few verses of this song as Sung by Apo Muhammad Cho of Kande is presented below.

Translation of the Song:

While blossoming the flower, it blossoms from roots, I swear you, Oh my Stroghi Yato,

My soulmate, my fellow, this girl salutes you, I adore you (to come back).

While withering the flower withers from the top, I swear you, Oh my Stroghi Yato,

My soulmate, my fellow, this girl salutes you, I adore you (to come back).

The climax of the youth is no more than three twelves (36 years), I swear you, Oh my Stroghi Yato,

My soulmate, my fellow, this girl salutes you, I adore you (to come back).

The climax of lad (young girl) is no more than three births (babies), I swear you, Oh my Stroghi Yato.

My soulmate, my fellow, this girl salutes you, I adore you (to come back).

The climax of the spring is no more than three fifteens (one and half months), I swear you, Oh my Stroghi Yato,

My soulmate, my fellow, this girl salutes you, I adore you (to come back).

The climax of a flower is no more than three mornings, I swear you, Oh my Stroghi Yato,

My soulmate, my fellow, this girl salutes you, I adore you (to come back).

The pain of homelessness is felt at time of evening (getting the day dark), I swear you, Oh my Stroghi Yato,

My soulmate, my fellow, this girl salutes you, I adore you (to come back).

The childlessness is realized at the time of aging old, I swear you, Oh my Stroggi Yato.

My soulmate, my fellow, this girl salutes you, I adore you (to come back).

In all of the poems, the authors expressed their sentiments of love in a highly literary manner. The themes of 'freedom of expression', 'romantic/emotional content', 'women voice' and 'literary taste and symbolism' are common. One can feel that there were no barriers or obstacles of expression of love. Freedom of expression was exercised in its due spirit and people would appreciate it. In such ways, poetry became media for expression of sensitive or emotive content and by fulfilling such social functions; these oral traditions have survived for centuries. To have freedom to say something is quite different from freedom to say something sensitive or emotional in nature. We can find the prevalent 'romantic/emotional content' in these songs in contrast to contemporary Urdu poetry. The female poets are able to use their medium to raise their voices clearly in either way. The literary symbolism and analogical presentation, in all the three songs are admirable particularly 'Yato' reaches the philosophical climax of thoughts by using analogy. These songs were being sung and memorized by generations. Such kinds of songs had great public impact and the authors were hailed for their ideas and articulation. Most of the time these songs worked the purposed for which it was composed and sung as in the case of 'Lang Dukpa'. Similarly, there is a song by a poor village girl who wished to observe the marriage ceremony of a prince, which was impossible for her, so she sang the song expressing her wish. The marriage ceremony was conducted and subsequent renditions of the song reached the royal palace. The prince and his father, the Raja, were so impressed by the song that they announced the re-enactment of the whole marriage ceremony and festivities with all protocols. The village girl who had composed and sung the song was invited as a royal guest to observe how a marriage in the royal family takes place. This marvelous song by a poor village girl is known as Khri Sultan Cho.

The famous classic folk song of Bo-ngo Maryam (daughter Maryam) is an icon of courage, modesty, resistance, and expressive capability. The song provides a narration of the story of a ruler from Kashmir who attacked and gained control of Baltistan. Later, rights of Baltis to self-rule were conditionally returned to the local Raja who agreed to pay tribute to Kashmir. In tribute, in addition to large amounts of dried fruits, amongst other edible items and other provisions, a number of girls were also demanded. After several years the turn came to Bo-ngo Maryam who was already married with a deaf person. The local coolies would carry luggage and few security persons of the conquering Raja would oversee them. According to the song, on the way to Ghbiarsa, present-day Deosai, after de-camping, a girl named Maryam sang from the core of her heart, lamenting the lack of courage in challenging their conquerors on the part of her own ruler, the elders, the neighbors, the in-laws, and the brothers of the community. This song ignited rage among the local people against the cruel practice of ransom of women, they became furious and rebellious, fought with the security personnel, denied to pay ransom any more and warned their own ruler. From that day onward the ransom was left. When our elders sing this folksong (*Rgiang Khulu*) they burst in tears.

The song 'Yato' could be considered as the 'world view of life' by a Balti women who sees the climax of life in 'threes'. In terms of presentation, articulation, symbolism, and

power of message, this piece could be considered the pinnacle of Balti cultural expression. There are many other such works, considered by many to be masterpieces, which have been composed and sung by Balti women. However, such cultural production is a thing of the past.

There is a dearth of Balti *Khulu* produced by women during the last century. Although Balti women may well have composed poetry, this has not been made publicly available and hence more difficult to preserve for posterity. In this sense, the last century has been one of cultural repression, marginalization of women in the public and cultural spheres, and promotion of sectarian religiosity in contrast to traditional Balti mores. In recent years, after a longer blackout of poetry by women, some female poets are heard composing poetry in Urdu. However, when analyzed, the degree of freedom of expression and emotional content seems to a great extent, to be stifled. However, womens voice and literary symbolism are visible. The voice expressing suffocation regarding 'freedom of expression', particularly expression of romantic/emotional contents is clear. Below are examples of the Urdu poetry of a female poet with the pen name Seemab.

Narratives in the Urdu poetry of present day

To date, Baltistan remains rich in terms of poetic talent, but women are generally excluded, particularly from Balti language poetry. In order to provide a sense of present-day feminist literature in the form of poetry, I am present the Urdu poetry of Semaab. This Urdu *ghazal* of Seemab (pen name meaning Mercury) depicts the suffocation in freedom of expression in these verses:

If you grow flowers in streets, you will repent,

If I am invited in your streets, you will repent.

I have to tell you, keep these dreams hidden,

If these are decorated in eyes, you will repent.

In form of lambs, there are wolves all around,

If you show every wounds, you will repent.

There is suffocation, fear and no courage of expression, if you come to this city, you will repent.

Like the autumn season, an older (faded) one is my relation, if you want to grow flowers, you will repent.

Keep the story of love locked and hidden, if it is narrated to the time, you will repent.

With the name 'mercury' (Semaab), friendship would be very difficult, if it is settled in eyes, you will repent.

(Seemab 2015)

پھول گلیوں میں بچھاؤ گے تو پچھتاؤ گے
اپنی گلیوں میں بلا و گے تو پچھتاؤ گے
تم سے کہنا تھا چھپا کر کہیں رکھ لو ان کو
خواب انکھوں میں سجاؤ گے تو پچھتاؤ گے
بھیڑ کے روپ میں ہیں، بھیڑنے چاروں جانب
اپنا ہر زخم دکھاؤ گے تو پچھتاؤ گے
حسب ہے، خوف ہے اور جرأت اظہار نہیں
تم جو اس شہر میں آؤ گے تو پچھتاؤ گے
ہیں خزان رُت سے، پرانے سے تعلق میرے
گل کھلانا اگر چاہو گے تو پچھتاؤ گے

قصہ زخم محبت کو چھپا کر رکھو
یوں زمانے کو سناؤ گے تو پچھتاؤ گے
نام سیماب کے سنگ دوستی مشکل ہے بہت
اس کو انکھوں میں بساؤ گے تو پچھتاؤ گے

The following verses are self-explaining the intensity of suffocation, hurdles, fear and sanction upon freedom of expression of women in today's Baltistan:

I have to tell you, keep these dreams hidden, if these are decorated in eyes, you will repent.

In form of lambs, there are wolves all around, if you show every wounds, you will repent.

There is suffocation, fear and no courage of expression, if you come to this city, you will repent.

It is to be noted that even this courageous poet did not have the courage to compose poetry in Balti. As Zakir (2015) found that in present day Baltistan, other than religious poetry and national songs in Balti, no *khulu* is allowed in schools to sing particularly by girls. Perhaps because of all these unsaid and unwritten sanctions, even Semaab a graduate of the 21st century could not dare to compose her sentimental thoughts in Balti, which could be termed as '*khulu*' and she might be socially penalized by defamation or through any other means by the society.

When we examine the messages of her poetry, the sense of constraints, suffocations, repression and countless barriers are revealed. The verse "*Keep the story of wounds of love hidden, if it is narrated in this time like this, you will repent*" is a beautiful articulation of the fact that 'in her time and society' expression of the stories of love is considered as if it is something illegal. The degree of repression is to the extent "*If you want to grow flowers, you will repent*".

This is not only the voice of Semaab, it is the voice of the women in Baltistan in terms of the degree of freedom of their cultural expressions. To be romantic or aesthetically inspired publically is assumed to be something wrong or a matter of insanity for women.

وہ لڑکی بے بہت پاگل، جو شب بھر جاگ کر سوچے

کہاں، کیسے کوئی لمحہ اچانک خام ہو جائے

بجھا کر سب چراغوں کو تمہاری یاد روشن کی

تمہاری دید سے پر نور دل کے بام ہو جائے

"That girl is very insane, who keeps waking whole night thinking that, anywhere, anytime, instantly something miraculous may happen-

By putting off all lamps, lamp of your memories was lit on, so that the stairs of my heart may be illuminated with your sight."

The expression of 'that girl is very mad' and 'putting off lamps' to lit the lights of memories, are the state of mind and the state of affairs in the life of a women, whose "will to express" always remains in darkness, and the one who dares to bring her thoughts into light is considered as mad. Hence, there is a widespread reluctance to be declared 'mad' and no one dares to light the lamp of their thoughts. All of the lamps are therefore prevented from glowing with their full potential.

Though unconsciously in a poetic flow, Semaab suggests change of environment:

گران سا دل کو لگتا ہے، چلو موسم بدل ڈالیں

خزان ہے، زرد پتہ ہے، چلو موسم بدل ڈالیں

بھری بستی میں کچھ ایسے ہمیں تنہا کیا اس نے

ہر اک موسم یہ کہتا ہے، چلو موسم بدل ڈالیں

“Heart feels burdened, let us change the season (environment). It is autumn, the leaves have become pale, let us change the season.

In the populated village, we have been made so lonely, every season says, let us change the season.”

This is the voice of escape, the will and suggestion to leave such an environment of suffocation. So instead of escape, let us change the season, let us change the environment of burden, suffocation and isolation. Let us make the environment open so that every individual can breathe and speak freely, let us learn to live together.

A comparison of the narratives within Balti folksongs and contemporary Urdu poetry finds that the folksongs are the vehicles for liberation, freedom of expression, empowered women having their say, who do raise their voices and these voices were listened. However, the as the verses of Urdu poetry reflects, these voices are silenced and are feeling intense suffocation.

The preservation of the folksongs can give voice to the women of today for freedom of expression, recognition of their literary talents and aesthetic aptitude. For the Baltis, these folksongs are the melodies of liberty, the tale of human sentiments and feelings, the footprints of their culture. They are the voices of a past that survived for centuries through oral traditions. These folk songs provide an arena for public acceptance and appreciation of female voices. Revival of these songs would also therefore aid enabling the voices of the oppressed within society to be heard and allow them to express their desires for basic rights and freedoms.

In words of Seemab: چلو موسم بدل ڈالیں، چلو موسم بدل ڈالیں

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The Shandur Festival: States of Play in Northern Pakistan

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Introduction

Theorising the role of sport in state-politics, Lin, Lee and Nai (2008, 23) state that “sport and politics are still inextricably intertwined and often work to demonstrate social, economic, or political supremacy” Sport not only works to demonstrate politics between nations, but reinforce ideas of national identity arguing that “sport could form one of the most significant arenas by which nations become more ‘real’.”

Dario Brentin has pushed the case for the role of Sporting Nationalism in identity and nation-building, arguing that “modern sport has become one of the major *rituals* of popular culture, substantiating concepts of the nation as an ‘imagined community’” (Brentin 2013, 994). Sport allows for the construction of a national identity, providing the semantic frame for integrating a group of people through notions of belonging and supremacy. As a competitive system, sport allows for the expressions of supremacy and prowess in a controlled and regulated manner. Such modes of expression mediate latent aggressive tendencies in an environment of controlled competition.

Shandur is advertised as the highest polo ground in the world (KPK Tourism Board). The polo grounds are situated in a natural plateau that forms between the valley systems of Upper Chitral in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Ghizer in Gilgit-Baltistan, forming a natural boundary between the two valleys.

Polo, as performed at a festival in Shandur, provides a model to study the phenomenon of communal identities participating in a larger regional frame. These communities, while competing with each other, are also compelled to cooperate between themselves and with the state-institutions. This interaction and the forms it takes has implications for the study of nation-building processes, especially in seeing how latent tensions are expressed in a ‘liminal’ environment.

The paper aims to study the Shandur Festival as a 'folk' event (Dundes 1965), which acts as a semantic system (Turner 1974) to embody certain ideas about community, belonging and nationhood. Through the festival, a 'deep play' is enacted, in which individuals coalesce into folk-groups, negotiating interpersonal, communal and institutional tensions and anxieties (Geertz 2005). The festival further serves as an event to regenerate folkloric themes (Bloch 1998) around the questions of authority, belonging and legitimacy. To study the Shandur Festival this article uses qualitative data collected in 2018 during three weeks of fieldwork in Phander, Shandur and Laspur, through participant observation, audio-visual recordings and unstructured group discussions.

Shandur as a 'site' for phenomena to be enacted requires a consideration of the definitions of space as 'a social product', as a 'situational order' provided by early theorists like Leibniz (1715) and developed further by Lefebvre (1974) (Low 2016).

While considering the effect of geography and its relationship with humans, the 'iconicity' of the environment as it functions at the 'cognitive horizons' of a culture (Kohn 2013) directs this paper's attempt to define a semiotic connection between a landscape and the nations that subsist in it.

An analysis of 'Shandur' as a semantic system provides an appropriate area to study the effect of such a phenomenon on the shaping of semiotic constructions for the 'participants', which introduces an element of 'liminality' to amplify and modify certain behaviours (Turner 1974). The liminality introduces an element of 'play' at the structural level, using 'disorder' to give rise to "new symbols, models, and paradigms... as the seedbeds of cultural creativity" (Turner 1974, 60).

This structural 'play', reflected through the sport of Polo and its corollary activities is especially appropriate to study groupings, at various levels, of 'players' in the system. This positionality of the actors in the festival is subject to negotiations, both internal and external, with identity, function, and place- providing the frame for an analysis in line with Eco's interpretation of social acts as open creative works (Eco 1962).

An analysis of the 'play' involved in the Shandur context reveals insights into the processes of tension, cohesion, conflict and cooperation between several groups, which include the state, distinct ethno-linguistic populations and several levels of actors (players, households, food vendors etc.) The forces of resistance and opposition found within the participant groups at Shandur are highlighted in Deleuze and Guattari's work on resistant structures (Deleuze 1992). A semiotic methodology allows us to reach at these 'embedded' structures through signs whose "necessity, the force, and the legitimacy [...] cannot make us forget that the concept of the sign cannot in itself surpass or bypass this opposition between the sensible and the intelligible" (Derrida 1978, 284).

Citing Gadamer's work on the ontology of play, Maria Thibault states that play provides a starting point to study a frame of action. Players, while aware that the frame in which they act is not serious, act extremely serious at the same time. However the players must not be considered the subject of play, but rather a channel by means of which the play itself takes form' (Thibault 2016, 297)

The interpretations and motivations acting around the Shandur festival help to shed light on the dynamics of identity, belonging and the rights to place. Within the framework of nation-building these dynamics are integral to the question of how multiple identities can coalesce into a cooperative whole while negotiating historical and interpersonal tensions.

The festival thus becomes a way to not only embody these tensions, but also to disperse them. In Turner's words, "From this standpoint the ritual symbol becomes a factor in social action, a positive force in an activity field." (Turner 1974)

The behaviours associated with Shandur suggest two predominant ideologies, built around varying attitudes towards the land. An 'indigenous' approach of the communities contrasts with an attitude of control and organisation adopted by the state-level institutions. This 'indigenous' voice (Kohn 2013), reveals 'attitudes towards the environment' which frame man, where the semantic horizons of his world are formed by the environment. The resultant ideology is one of 'dialogue' rather than 'ownership'.

Background

Shandur lies at an elevation of 12,200 feet above sea level, composed of an elevated plateau that serves as a summer pasture, with steep mountains to the North and South, opening to Barsith in the East and accessible from Phandar in the Upper Ghizer and Broghil in the North East. Behind the northern mountains lies the Karombar Lake in the Yasin Valley. The western watershed opens into Laspur and Upper Chitral in the North East, with a pass leading into Swat on the southern side.

Thus Shandur forms a junction between regions that have developed distinct identities over time, with communities that distinguish themselves ethnically and were historically separated into separate kingdoms. Although upper Chitral and Ghizer both share Khowar as the main language of speech, they are identifiable as separate dialects. Ghizer itself stands out as a site of great linguistic diversity within the province of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B), with Khowar, Barushaski, Shin'a and Wakhi speakers inhabiting the valley and its tributaries.

Each year, at the start of summer (when all the fruit in the lower valleys has ripened), a festival of Polo games is conducted at the high pass and watershed of Shandur, which connects the two regions of Chitral and Gilgit together through the valleys of Mastuj and Laspur in Chitral; and Ghizer and Yasin valleys in Gilgit.

The festival revolves around the polo matches that are played between Chitral and Gilgit. Each side puts up six teams: Gilgit and Chitral teams A, B, C and D, along with Laspur and Mastuj on the Chitral side, and Ghizer and Yasin on the Gilgit side. The 'final' match, between Chitral A and Gilgit A on 9th of July is the highlight of the festival.

Chitral and Gilgit have a long historical rivalry. Chitral is now a part of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and so Pashto has become a *lingua franca*, with Khowar, Kalasha, and Wakhi spoken commonly within the district's ethnic groups. Gilgit is now the capital city of a larger area known as the Northern Areas in the past and Gilgit-Baltistan province at present. Wakhi, Shin'a, Brushaski and Balti are the major ethno-linguistic groups of the province.

The Shandur Polo Festival as a phenomenon stretches back in memory "to the indefinable past" (Bloch 1998), having passed relatively intact "in terms of a semantic system" (Turner 1974) through a past that spans several transitions of the societies involved in it: from warring tribes to chiefly states, empires and finally incorporated (marginally) into statehood. Its modern form, however, is much more recent—having first been codified by the colonising British and then fixed on the dates of 7-9 July after the visit of Benazir Bhutto in 1994 (Interview, Ashraf Gul, G-B Team Coach, 28 June 2018).

The actors in the Shandur framework can be categorized into three main groups, allowing for several subdivisions within them. These can be termed the state actors, the players, and the spectators. The state actors include the bureaucratic apparatus, the military institutions and the military teams that take part in the festival. The players, while they might be employed by the state institutions, maintain distinct identities of their own, and are often the site of fierce competition both between themselves and with the state institutions. The spectators form perhaps the largest and most diverse body of actors, fulfilling a vast range of functions from tourists, to grooms and caretakers of the animals, to the food vendors that sustain the population that comes to Shandur.

Research Question

- How does 'play' mediate and internalize latent conflict between regional communities?
- How do communities develop semantic connections to their environment to integrate in regional networks?

Research Objectives

- To map the ethno-political processes between competing communities from Chitral and Gilgit valleys.
- To study social cohesion and identity dynamics for horizontal/vertical social cohesion, within the framework provided by the game of polo.
- To derive a framework for the analysis of inclusive identities negotiated between individual positioning and regional cooperation.

Literature Review

Studying the interconnection between sport and politics, "evidence suggests that it is no longer possible for any serious social commentator to posit a separation between the worlds of sport and politics." Sport not only provides a means of social control, but also acts as a motor for social integration. States use sport as a means of achieving social integration on "the belief that sport imbues the populace with the right type of values and norms – of obedience, self-discipline, team-work." (Lin, Lee and Nai 2008).

Henning Eichberg (2003, 4) describes one aspect of play and sport as an integrative movement, centred "around festivity and play, related to popular identity." In such events, a maximal participation of people is ensured, regardless of group, age, or ability. It is this aspect that produces "the feeling of "we", "the meeting in a temporary community of participation. In this situation, tradition and surprise are mixing, competition and laughter, skill and drunkenness" (Eichberg 2003, 4).

Shandur provides a site for the folk groups of the region to assert their 'indigenous identity' in opposition to the state, which is perceived as a foreign agent of control. The festival thus resists "colonial legacies and contemporary practices of disconnection, dependency and dispossession" which have "effectively confined Indigenous identities to state-sanctioned legal and political definitional approaches" (Alfred and Corntassel 2005, 600).

Developing a frame for indigenous nationhood within state apparatus, Stephen Cornell (2015, 4) states that these indigenous groups claim not only “to have distinctive cultures and historical heritages but also constitute—or wish to constitute—distinct political entities that should rightfully exercise control over their lands.” This control revolves around “how those lands are used and cared for, over their own internal affairs including how they govern those affairs, and over the definition of their interests and over how those interests are pursued” as they “continue to exist within encompassing states.” Derrida begins his exposition on the role of structure, signs and the interplay between them by acknowledging Levi-Strauss’ contribution to the field. He stated that the “necessity, the force, and the legitimacy of his act cannot make us forget that the concept of the sign cannot in itself surpass or bypass this opposition between the sensible and the intelligible” (Derrida 1978, 224). From this point he builds upon the dynamic between structure (sensible) and the sign (intelligible), and their interchangeability.

Derrida links his departures to earlier studies in anthropology, “Classical thought concerning structure could say that the center is, paradoxically, within the structure and outside it” (Derrida 1978, 223). Important in this regard is the work of Victor Turner (1974) on the liminality of certain events as sites of symbolic performance, which he terms as ‘play’, ‘flow’ and ‘ritual.’

According to Turner the analysis of such ‘ritual symbols’ is not possible “without studying them in a time series in relation to other ‘events’ [regarding the symbol, too, as an ‘event’ rather than a ‘thing’], for symbols are essentially involved in social process [and, I would now add, in psychological processes, too]” (Turner 1974, 13).

Placing the ‘ritual symbol’ as the focus of any significant event, Turner states that “From this standpoint the ritual symbol becomes a factor in social action, a positive force in an activity field” (Turner 1974, 8).

Commenting on the Straussian paradigm for the study of symbols, Turner states that ‘*les symbols sauvages*’ “have the character of dynamic semantic systems” i.e. their capacity to carry meaning is dynamic. For Turner, “meaning in a social context always has emotional and volitional dimensions-as they ‘travel through’ a single rite or work of art, let alone through centuries of performance, and they are aimed at producing effects on the psychological states and behavior of those exposed to them” (Turner 1974, 32).

These ‘ritual symbols’ are used by “[l]iving, conscious, emotional, and volitional creatures [who] employ them not only to give order to the universe they inhabit, but creatively to make use also of disorder”, these creatures, as “the ritual subjects in these rites undergo a ‘leveling’ process, in which signs of their preliminal status are destroyed and signs of their liminal non-status are applied” (Turner 1974, 38).

Turner also focuses on the contemporary studies of children’s behavior while ‘play-acting’ different situations that explore roles, sexuality, dominance and power. He uses them to explore how liminal and liminoid situations provide the “settings in which new symbols, models, and paradigms arise- as the seedbeds of cultural creativity in fact” (1974, 60). “Either because we have an overdose of order, and want to let off steam [the “conservative” view of ritual disorder, such as ritual reversals, Saturnalia, and the like], or because we have something to learn through being disorderly” (Smith 1972, 17).

Maurice Bloch discusses the cultural processes that shape memory, especially the effect time has on the creation of multiple narratives surrounding a single event', whose truth lies somewhere beyond factuality, "memory is stored in ways that are different in kind from the expressive possibility of any one, or even all, of the narratives about the past; and that what is said can never be equated with memory" (Bloch 1998, 118).

These interlinkages between memory and narrative create the body of knowledge we know as history, which provides a fundamental frame of reference to the people who subscribe to it: "If people act within their own History, constructed within their own narratives, any other history is irrelevant to their action" (Bloch 1998, 114).

While exploring a framework to study the interaction of space and culture, Setha Low describes "how a space or place comes into existence", through the "material aspects of space and place making" while uncovering "the latent and manifest ideologies that underlie this materiality." For Low, the "historical and political economic approach to space and the built environment offers an in-depth and broad spatial perspective" with which to study these phenomenon (Low 2016, 17).

Echoing Turnerian notions of 'liminality,' Foucault (1984; 1986) also describes spaces of possibility or "heterotopias" where "the technologies and discipline of social order are broken down, or at least temporarily suspended, and reordered to produce new spaces where microcosms of society are transformed and protected" (Low 2016, 32).

Analogous to the 'event' described through the game of Polo in Shandur, Geertz describes the Balinese cockfight as an operation termed 'Deep Play' of semantic layers of identity, instinct and culture (Geertz 2005).

"This crosswise doubleness of the event" Geertz says, describing the paradoxes between culture and what it opposes as instinct (both suppressed and released through the event), as a fact of nature, is an expression of "rage untrammelled" and representing culture, "form perfected." This event, "something not vertebrate enough to be called a group and not structureless enough to be called a crowd, Erving Goffman has called a 'focused gathering'—a set of persons engrossed in a common flow of activity and relating to one another in terms of that flow" (Geertz 2005, 65; Goffman 1961, 9-10).

Theoretical Framework

This paper adopts a theoretical position within the broad ideas presented by Clifford Geertz and Victor Turner known as symbolic interactionism. It further uses the post-structuralist thought of Derrida and Umberto Eco to establish a relationship between the 'symbols' and the *play* present within these semantic systems.

Levi Strauss' analysis of ritual, myth and folklore as a certain set of fixed tools to solve various problems, using the rules of both game theory and linguistics, is invaluable to this research (Strauss 1962, 62). In the same stream of thought, the earlier work of Marcel Mauss on the embodied aspects of power and authority as 'habitus' (Haugaard 2008) inform the approach this study takes towards the attitudes of the participants in Shandur.

The Shandur festival enacts processes of place-making that convert Shandur from a simple geographic landmark into a culturally significant event (Low 2016, 18). This event

in turn embodies a Foucauldian 'heterotopia' (Low 2016, 32), which enables the voicing of rebellion, regeneration and cultural transmission.

Through the semantic framework that Shandur represents, certain themes emerge as predominant patterns within the behaviours and discussions. These themes revolve around the questions of participation, ownership, politics of space represented through camps, legitimacy and legacy, and a sense of suspended authority.

Among the participants, these themes are played out in an atmosphere of 'fun'—which turns the competition into a festival, with the festival aspect dominating over the competition. This festive environment allows the playing out of competitive rivalries in a non-threatening manner, allowing for greater margins of expression (Thibault 2016, 266).

Thus Shandur becomes a 'focused gathering' of actors "engrossed in a common flow of activity" (Goffman 1961, 9-10). This flow of activity is theoretically akin to 'the open work' of creative expression that Umberto Eco describes (Eco 1962).

The festival itself becomes a site for 'deep play', where positionalities of the participants are encoded through a quasi-ritualistic understanding of behaviour which informs the entire community (Geertz 2005). This aspect of the festival supersedes the immense diversity of the participating communities. The operating principle of the festival is a sense of suspended authority, inscribing a 'liminal' event (Turner 1974), in which semiotic play addresses rather serious questions of legitimacy, control and ownership (Deleuze 1992, 24-32).

Operationalisation of Key-Concepts

'Play' is defined for the purpose of this paper as a latent negotiation of power and authority (Thibault 2016). Play is manifested through structural elements within society (Derrida 1978), and takes a ritualistic form (Turner 1974; Geertz 2005).

'Polo' becomes a site for the enactment of the deep play expounded upon by Clifford Geertz (Geertz 2005) as well as a mode of ritualistic sport (Turner 1974) that manifests latent tensions within the society, acting both as a focus and cause for community regeneration (Derrida 1978).

'Shandur' is a polysemic term used with various connotations throughout the paper. As a geographical entity, it acts as a marker or territorial boundaries (Kohn 2013). As the name of a festival, it acts as a semantic carrier of cultural ideologies, suggestive of freedom, competition, rivalry and community.

Research Methodology

I adopted an emic, participatory approach to immerse into the processes of preparation, execution and celebration of the Shandur Polo festival (before, during and after the 'event') in 2018 (mid-June to mid-July). Through a series of key informant interviews with veterans of the festival (including Shahzada Sikandar, Colonel Shareef and Ashraf Gul, who had been attending the festival since 1976) and informal gatherings of players, cooks, musicians and spectators treated as quasi-focused discussion groups, qualitative data was gathered. This data, when paired with observational techniques in the form of film, photographs, notes and audio recordings, enabled a triangulated model to be extracted from the data.

Since polo is limited to specific segments within societies from both Chitral and Gilgit, related to royal and warrior classes, the sample for this study did not need to follow randomized statistical protocols. To obtain a larger breadth of data, a stratified, purposive, non-statistical sample was selected to provide data on analysis parameters. The sample was theoretically weighted towards the center of the horizontal axis i.e. direct participants (polo players) maintained an equal representation of the horizontal axis.

Plate 1. Scoreboard (photograph taken by the author)



Data collection in the field was done in a participatory manner. I arrived in Shandur a week before that start of the festival, timing my arrival with the first horses from Gilgit. Having journeyed to Shandur on a motorcycle from Islamabad legitimized my presence there among the players and participants, who shared a common understanding of adventure and freedom. With the arrival of Shahzada Sikandar (the second son of the last *Mehtar* [prince] of Chitral) from Mastuj, I shifted my tent into their camp as it was a more relaxed 'civilian' environment, with the lower fields being occupied largely by the military institutions until the start of the festival proper. These institutions, such as the G-B scouts, NLI, Frontier Corps (F.C.), Chitral Police etc. participate in the Festival much like football clubs in the Premier League.

Use of cameras during the day helped in carefully scrutinising various elements of behaviour, while the nocturnal discussions among the camp members provided a great deal of information regarding the perceptions of these elements. These needed to be committed to memory, as recording or note-taking disturbed the relaxed flow of speech, which often trespassed into territories that could be considered 'sensitive.'

For the purpose of analysis, prevalent themes occurring during interviews, discussions and conversations were sorted into categories. These conversational themes were then corroborated through observations in the field, to compare the discussions around the events of the festival with the actual performance of the activities.

Analysis

Framing the Field- A peripheral playground

Until 1968, Shandur lay at the frontiers of the kingdoms that lay in the Hindu Raj mountain range, westward of the Hunza River as it joins the Indus, and eastward of the Kunhar River and its tributaries—Mastuj, Punyal, Yasin, Hunza, Nagar, and Ghizer. Historically these kingdoms took turns to host the festival, increasing their stakes and representation in the region.

Plate 2. A view of Shandur looking west (photograph taken by the author)

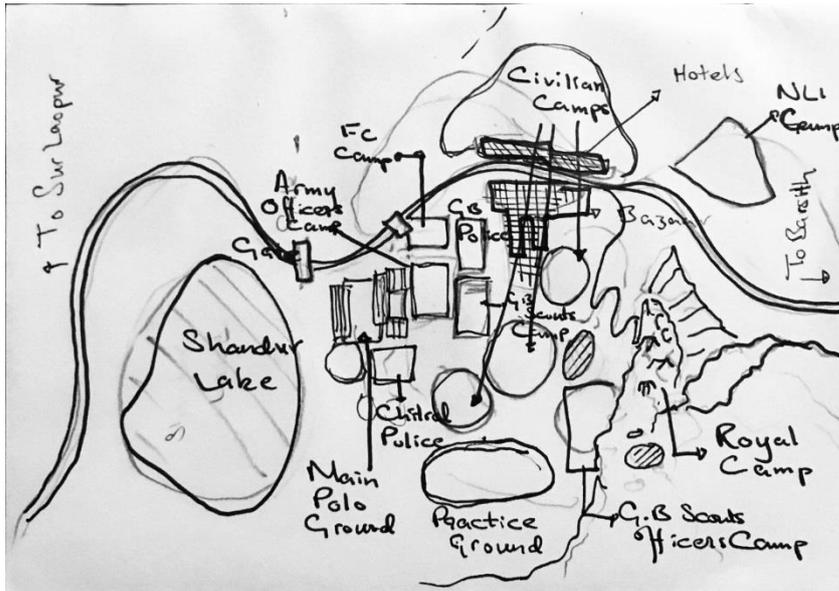


Shandur, in a sense, establishes both a periphery to the regions it interacts with as well as a focus. It forms a site in space for both contestation and congregation. As a site for one of the largest festivals of the Gilgit region, the spatial dynamic of its location lays the foundations of the 'spirit' that the festival embodies, which forms the content of this study.

Shandur is both a place of transit, and a transitory place. As a pass, it forms the bridge between the administrative regions of Gilgit and Chitral, open for the summer months from May to October. As of the Pakistan Geographical Survey, 2004 the border between Gilgit and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa falls at Shandur, identified as the headwaters of the Gilgit River, and the watershed of the Eastern Kunhar tributaries.

The Shandur that exists during the festival, held at the start of summer for three days, is not the same Shandur that exists for the rest of the year. Without the festival, Shandur is

Figure 2. Sketch map showing camp distribution in Shandur (by author)



The most distant camp, and the one in which I moved to a week before the festival began was the royal camp of Mastuj, headed by the Prince of Mastuj, Shahzada Sikandar-ul-Mulk, captain of the Chitral A-team. This camp was situated on a hill that flanked the eastern end of Shandur, a tiny brook flowing through it was the first headwaters of the Gilgit River. This was commonly known as the Royal Camp, claimed as the private property of the Mulk family and out of bounds to tourists or soldiers. Historically this campsite was reserved for the Chiefs of the States and their guests, and remains of a guest house could still be seen on the track that led to it. Until the start of the festival on 7th July, this camp housed all the civilian participants playing in Shandur, as well as their grooms and auxiliary personnel as the camps below grew with incoming teams.

Civilian and non-civilian tents could be easily differentiated through the colour schemes of their canvases. While the military tents were all khaki or camouflaged, the civilian tents stood out as little pockets of fluorescent colour. During the festival, a micro-city sprang up, exclusively for the visiting military personnel and their families. This camp-city was cordoned off with barbed wire and inaccessible to the outsider, and had electricity, lighting, warm water, even televisions inside the tents. It had its own mess, a canteen and a tuck-shop.

The modal camping pattern for the touring spectator was the motorcycle camp. A group of three to four motorcyclists would arrive, sharing a tent between two people, pitching their tent next to the motorcycle. They brought with them a basic stove fueled by kerosene or LPG which sufficed to make the morning and evening tea. These camps had no fixed preference for any place and could be set up anywhere; the traffic would then manoeuvre around them. A higher class of the tourist camp could be distinguished by larger tents, with a rudimentary wire-fence forming a basic boundary. These were reserved for either foreign tourists or civilians who were hosted by high-ranking officials in the Shandur administration.

Plate 3. The 'royal' camp (photograph taken by the author)



Structure of Participation

The festival revolves around the Polo matches that are played between Chitral and Gilgit. Each side puts up six teams, Gilgit and Chitral A, B, C, and D along with Laspur and Mastuj on the Chitral side and Ghizer and Yasin on the Gilgit side. Unlike a tournament, these teams are already decided on their rank (in terms of age, skill and reputation), and the matches are played to decide who wins from among the two. Thus, the best players are selected for the A team, and cascade down to the D teams.

The process of selection for the coming year begins as soon as the festival ends, and remains a focus of much debate and discussion till the selection committees for both sides release the results a month before the festival. The teams are comprised of players that are drafted from a total of 93 teams that start competing in local matches throughout the region, with festivals held in Chitral, Gilgit, Astore, Mastuj, Laspur, Rama, Chilas and other places. To be selected by a team to play in Shandur is a matter of great prestige, and a fiercely contested position.

The major institutions that participate in the Polo are the G-B scouts, the Chitral scouts, G-B Police, NLI (Northern Light Infantry) and the F-C (Frontier Constabulary). Although the teams that play in the Festival do not correspond exclusively to these institutions, they form separate camps. These institutions have come to replace the role played historically by the princely states, as patrons of Polo and the players, providing them the financial security to look after themselves and their horses. Out of the historical institutions, only the Mastuj 'Academy' remains functional, kept alive through the efforts of Shahzada Sikandar. These institutions draft players from the regional teams, and play a role in the selection committees.

Plate 4. A view of the Main Ground (left edge) and the surrounding campsites (photograph taken by the author)



However, participation in Shandur is not limited to participation in the matches. A whole spectrum of activities revolves around the matches as a focus and lasts for around ten days. On the other end of the spectrum from a player is the visiting spectator, of which 12,000 were present on the day of the finale, 9th of July.

In between the players and the spectators are all the actors that participate in Shandur, from fruit vendors and food hawkers in the bazaar, to travelling merchants that sell camping gear, children's toys, farming equipment, ropes, sunglasses and even jewellery. There are merchants who bring watermelons and mangoes from the plains, fruits that are not otherwise available in the northern markets. Pukhtun tribesmen bring metals, knives from Dir, sickles and hoes from Mansehra and Swat. There are cooks for the camp, grooms for the horses, specialist bakers who operate the *tandoor*, and musicians that play the music without which Shandur is not possible. For Shandur to exist in its true semantic space there are three things that form the necessary components, according to Ashraf Gul, one of the oldest continuous participants of Shandur: "music, wine, and horses" (Interview, 28 June 2018). These then become the non-human participants of Shandur.

There are three types of music played during the festival. *Ishtoq* is the music of merriment and festivity, requiring a string instrument mated with percussion, the most common combination being a *rubab* and a 'jerry can'- a fuel canister that is ubiquitous to Khovar music. *Ishtoq* is a private music, for drinking and dancing in the evening, in the warmth of the camp. The music one wakes up to is known as '*hareef*', acting almost as an alarm bell shortly after sunrise. This is the music that the horses are taken out to practice in. The third form of music is known as '*ghowar*' and is the music played during

Polo. It is the most intense form of music, with subtle nuances that reflect the changing dynamics of the game. “Each player, even each horse has a slightly different beat, and the musicians use it to make the *ghowar* for them, which is played when the horse has the ball during the match, especially when it does the ‘*thambuk*’ charge after scoring a goal” (Interview, Musician, 30 June 2018).

Plate 5. Spectators on a hillside (photograph taken by the author)



Plate 6. A scene from a practice match (photograph taken by the author)



There are also three types of horses that participate in Shandur, the *desi*, *half-breed* and the *badakhshi*. The *badakhshi*, named for the Badakhshan province in Afghanistan and where they originate, is a small, sturdy horse whose use is now dwindling. The *desi* is a taller and leaner horse appreciated for its speed and agility, preferred by the younger players in attacking positions. Half-breeds occupy a broad spectrum of features as they

have varying levels of the thoroughbred and *desi* genes in them, but are prized for their strength and endurance. Each player usually has a single horse, as substitution of horses is not allowed during a match, and the player is responsible for the costs of keeping the horse, which is a definite burden.

The wine in Shandur comes from all over the north, and is known as *arrak* (spirit), casually wine is also called '*pani*' (water). It is a distilled spirit with varying levels of alcohol, depending on the rate and temperature at which it is distilled and on the level of sugar present in the fermenting mixture. The fruit preferred for *arrak* changes from region to region- the grape wine comes from the Kalash valleys, Chilas is known for its plum and apricot wines, Hunza for the mulberry, and Ghizer also produces apricot varieties. Although outlawed, the winemakers of each region are revered for their skill with different blends, and guard their recipes fiercely.

Legitimizing the 'Indigenous'

The most fiercely contested concept revolving around Shandur is who has ownership of Shandur. Traditionally, the land was a pasture for the communities of Laspur, but since the last geographical Survey of Pakistan in 2004 which shifted the provincial borders, the boundary allows for a claim by Ghizer. This was such a point of contention that the festival almost came to a halt for four years, and increased the involvement of the military in the administration of the festival.

After the disbanding of the princely states in 1968, another party laid claim to militaristic supremacy in the region—the Pakistan Army. Along with its infrastructural capacity to nurture sport, the ability of the military institutions to establish camps and move resources to 'hard' areas makes the military think of itself as the most rational guardian of Shandur.

There is a counterpoint to this display of prowess; the old guard that has seen the times of the kingdoms feels that the rigidity of the military ethos runs against the nature of the festival. The army, despite its best wishes, is turning something that was by its nature free, playful, and unbounded into a disciplined, straitjacketed version of itself. They feel that this has discouraged the tourism that was generated by the festival, and is hindering the revenue that could be otherwise generated through corporate sponsorships.

This contested legitimacy is well illustrated by an incident that occurred in 2017 on the day of the final match, tales of which were still being told in 2018. The match, which was scheduled to start at 9:30 a.m. had not begun at 11:00 a.m. because the Chief of Staff, who was presiding over the match and was to fly in from Gilgit, had still not arrived. The players and the horses were chafing at their bits. Due to strict security measures, the musicians accompanying the teams had not been allowed into the stands, and the audience had not been allowed to bring any water, cigarettes or lighters.

The last straw came when the commandant overseeing the arrangements decided to play *milli naghmay* (national anthems) over the loudspeakers. Shahzada Sikandar, captain of the playing team and the champion of the festival, went up to the commandant and requested that the *milli naghmay* be stopped, upon which the commandant accused him of treason. Angered, the Shahzada signalled to the teams, upon which they picked up their paraphernalia and left the ground. According to the tales told, he told the commandant: "If I am treasonous, let us see how you have a final without the teams!" The commandant after discussion with his colleagues decided that the best course of

action was to let the musicians back in, upon which the teams were pacified (Interview, Ali-ul-Mulk, 25 May 2018).

The memory of this incident was still fresh in 2018, and the security apparatus was instructed to exercise leniency with the audience. In contrast Ashraf Gul told that there was a time in the nineties when official orders went out to the security check posts as far as Gilgit and Chitral to not obstruct anyone bringing in *hashish* or alcohol to Shandur. (Interview, 28th June 2018). In contrast, the profusion of barbed wire, police presence and metal detectors at entry points told of a significant shift in the 'official' attitude towards the festival at present.

Overall, even among the army officials who had witnessed this change in attitude towards the festival, there was a sentiment that Shandur "needed to be given back to the people, without which it was difficult to see a future in which it thrived" (Interview, Col. Shareef, 3 July 2018).

For the people who are attracted to the festival, both spectators and participants, Shandur is a free space, and the only legitimisation required of them to be in Shandur is to reach there. The journey itself is the only price of admission to the event. For no matter who comes to Shandur, it is a hard journey.

Plate 5. Tandoor operators (photograph taken by the author)



Plate 6. Musicians observing the game (photograph taken by the author)



Plate 7. A paraglider lands outside the polo ground (photograph taken by the author)



Suspended Authority – expressions of rebellion

Despite the heavy presence of security institutions and hierarchic orders at work, Shandur remains an ontologically democratic, even an anarchic space. As all parties contest legitimacy and supremacy, it stands that these concepts are held in suspension for the duration of the event.

The crowds in the matches jeer at the police lined below them, who seem rather foolish dressed in full anti-riot gear. They run to shelter when the storm breaks over Shandur, as the locals chat on the stands.

The Shahzada wrestles with the Police Senior Hawaldar Officer (SHO) at breakfast. A drunk player tells the Gilgit Scouts Commandant that his horses could be replaced by donkeys. The Shahzada's aide, angry for not being selected, sells his horse to the Gilgit side after the final.

Sikandar-ul-Mulk, the last champion of the old guard, instructs his players, "all in all, it is just a game, but to lose the final is unthinkable" (field notes, 8th July 2018, for that defeat is not only the defeat of Chitral by Gilgit, it would be the victory of the authority over the people, of the system which is alien).

Discussion

The relevance of this study to the idea of nationhood and folklore is located in the mechanisms of a place-based phenomenon that generates a focused community through its inherent semantic constructs.

During the course of this research, I found that the emergence of Shandur as a site of the congregation of diverse community or 'folk' groups is a highly semantically charged phenomenon. In fact, it is precisely this semantic charge that makes the Shandur Festival an 'event', lying at a site of geographical, ideological and behavioural juncture.

The festival that emerges at Shandur in the first week of July each year is a typical example of a folk event i.e. it does not depend on any institutional mechanisms for its occurrence. State intervention in the 'administration' of the festival is actually perceived to be detrimental to its authenticity, detracting from the 'indigenous' aspect of its performance.

Plate 8. A victory dance (photograph taken by the author)



The 'place-based existence' is in essence what defines Shandur as a folk phenomenon. Shandur not only becomes a place for marking indigenously, but also a folk phenomenon that defines a specific 'folk-group' – 'a group formed for whatever reason will have some traditions which it calls its own' (Dundes 1980, 4). This is perhaps most clearly highlighted in the theme of indigenous voices in opposition to an enforced and alien authority. Indigenously as an idea is defined by "an oppositional, place-based existence, along with the consciousness of being in struggle against the dispossessing and demeaning fact of colonization by foreign peoples" (Alfred and Corntassel 2005, 597).

The congregation of folk-groups of the North at Shandur is best understood as an organic process, where each group understands its position and role in the larger scheme of the event. Despite being centred on a highly competitive tournament of Polo games, where alliances are heavily subscribed and tensions between the opposing groups are markedly apparent—these folk groups exist in harmony. Distinct groups encamp at Shandur without conflict, sharing resources, participating in conversation, music and dance. Teams that were engaged in mock battle during the day celebrate together in the night.

This organic participation in a celebration of common identity and culture has profound implications for understanding nation building processes from a folkloric perspective. In the semantic framework provided by the festival, an integrated community emerges centred around a distinct ideology—incorporating the landscape, history and politics through behavioural expressions.

The form these expressions take are reflective of the political and cultural processes taking place in the participating communities. These processes, which are harboured within individuals as anxieties and tensions, find a release in Shandur. The festival provides a site for the cathartic expression of latent anxieties in a liminal, quasi-ritualistic environment.

Considering that there are no permanent settlements at Shandur, the establishment of the camps enacts the latent forces of tension and cohesion between the participants of the festival. Through their spatial positioning and relationship with each other, the camps in themselves become an act of posturing- signifying control, alliance, dominance, prowess and supremacy.

Amongst Shahzada Sikandar's camp and the army camp, a polar opposition in the philosophical approach to camping is evident. On the first day of arrival, having ridden for two days from Mastuj, the players in the Shahzada's camp set up their own troughs for feeding the horses, throwing down rocks from the slope and covering them with a mixture of clay and hay. The first thing the Shahzada did on arrival was hike upstream with a team of four men to 'adjust' the flow of water in the stream, creating channels between the rivulets by strategically placing large rocks. In the process, he siphoned off some water to a secret lake that had been 'made' by his grandfather, through the same process. The next morning he held a meeting with some army commanders, and let a small stream of water to the grounds below. This water would help the grass to grow and hold the earth more firmly, resisting the damage of the heavy traffic the grounds would experience in the coming days and turn the grass green by the start of the matches.

On the other hand, the military encampments were characterised by the movement of the *dhai tonne* (2 1/2 tonne trucks), that would bring in the amenities of life necessary for the 'officer' and the 'sipahi', the two classes of military men. For the officers' camp, around 3 *dhai tonnes* brought in ceramic commodes encased in wooden crates from Gilgit to set up the toilets. In contrast, the Shahzada would be brought a *lota* (fluted washing pot) of warm water every morning and he would go beyond the ridge to enjoy the call of nature in the open air and take in the sunrise, as would the rest of us.

For Allan Dundes, "the folklore of such groups provides a socially sanctioned framework for the expression of critical anxiety-producing problems as well as a cherished artistic vehicle for communicating ethos and worldview" (Dundes 1980, 12). Dundes "believed deeply that folklore is a pervasive, integral, and significant aspect of social existence and that its documentation and study can provide important insights into the essence and dynamics of culture and human behavior" (Georges 1975, 2).

As a subaltern entity, indigenous folklore functions to "allow counter-hegemonic thoughts and actions and unconscious anxieties to be expressed through symbolism" (Dundes 1965, 277), reflecting the view that control always results in expressions of resistance (Deleuze 1992).

The 'indigenous' efforts for legitimacy finds several representations at Shandur. Before the festival, the participating battalions go up the mountain slopes and paint their insignia with whitewashed rocks, along with the flag of Pakistan and a message saying "Welcome to Shandur," which is visible from miles away. At the start of matches, paragliders and hang gliders from the Army School of Physical Training launch from the high slopes and land in the ground. SSG commandos free fall from a helicopter flying at 20,000 feet, carrying the flags of the country and of their battalions.

The authenticity of polo in Shandur remains a pervasive question in all discussions around the topic. However, a singular, definitive answer to this question does not exist. It is exactly this ambiguity that enables the folkloric richness of Shandur as a semantic system. It is acknowledged as a colonial import while at the same time the 'indigenising' of polo demonstrates the existence of native historical populations that stand in opposition to it. Polo at Shandur serves to propagate the folkloric narratives of the state as well as of the princes.

The mechanism through which polo is 'indigenised' is reflective of the 'anxieties' present among the folk groups. Through a removal of rules, regulations and penalties, the sport is 'freed' from its colonial restrictions. This same sense of freedom pervades the participants of the festival, expressed through an abandonment of social restrictions, a flagrant disregard for authority, and a sense of regenerative joy.

As a creator and enforcer of regulations, penalties and boundaries, the state becomes the 'de-facto' subject of the essential opposition such a model entails. Despite being responsible for much of the Festival's logistics, it is thought to be better suited to all purposes if the state-institutions 'just stay out of it'. Thus, any steps to initiate a dialogue between the two parties is structurally doomed—"State-imposed conceptions of supposedly Indigenous identity read...as indicators of an on-going colonial assault on their existence, and signs of the fact that they remain, as in earlier colonial eras, occupied peoples who have been dispossessed and disempowered in their own homelands" (Alfred and Corntassel 2005, 598).

Conclusion

The Shandur Festival provides a fertile ground for the study of the semiotic processes that shape the politics of legitimacy, authority and supremacy. As a spatially situated phenomenon, it reveals the dynamics of regionality, community and nationhood as they are contested and negotiated between the participants. Through the framework provided by polo as a sport, embedded structures of state and nationhood are exposed and brought into a state of play. The participants express and enact a rebellion against authority through a systematic expression of opposition while operating in a fluid environment of negotiated cooperation.

The Shandur Festival comprises several semantic layers that operate at interdependent levels, which are correspondingly represented in the participant actors situated at Shandur. A transitory event, Shandur occupies a permanent semantic space in the psyche of the communities of the North, as a place of community regeneration through competition and conflict at a liminal boundary site.

Glossary of Khowar Terms

Arrak, Pani – A distilled alcohol made from the juices of various fruits

Astori- Horse (pl. *Astoran*)

Ghowar – A type of music played during a polo match

Gila – Sit

Hareef- A type of music played at the start of the morning practice

Hia – here

Ishtoq- Dance

Shafiq- Dinner, Food, Bread

Shtoq- Play

Thambuk- The opening charge of a player to the middle of the field after scoring in a match of polo

Yarak- A technique of binding the horse for preparation

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**The Death of Benazir Bhutto:
Anger, Defiance and Grief in Saraiki Poetry**

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Introduction

This paper is an attempt to understand the emotions of anger, grief and defiance as these appear in the collection of Saraiki poetry written as a tribute to Benazir Bhutto. The image of Benazir that emerges in the Saraiki poetry is one of a messianic figure whose very existence is a soul of redemption and salvation. It is a work that is very much constructed in the peculiar political subjectivities of the Saraiki poets. Saraiki regions provided a support base for her electoral campaigns, but her popularity went beyond the electoral dynamics. Her death moved poets of those regions. The paper employs the concept of dialect image (Benjamin 1999:462) by Walter Benjamin to make sense of the personalities whose image gets crystallized in the historical consciousness of a people or a community, the remembrance of which invokes feelings of defiance and resistance.

Setting the Context

Benazir Bhutto was the chairperson of Pakistan People's Party, the party she inherited from her father. Her ascent to power was the result of a long struggle against Zia-ul-Haq's martial law regime (1977-1988) in which her party workers were victimised and she herself was forced into exile. She came back to Pakistan in 1988 to lead the party and won the polls that followed and in 1988 was elected to be the youngest prime minister of the Muslim world. Building upon an image left by her father, she appealed to the masses and the downtrodden (Sekine 1992: 7). She went into a self-imposed exile when a military regime assumed power in early 1999 and was welcomed by huge crowds in Karachi on October 18 2007 when she ended her exile. Her caravan was met with a suicide attack in which one hundred and fifty of her workers lost their lives. She continued with her mass contact movement despite threats to her life. On December 27 of the same year a suicide bomber hit her vehicle in Rawalpindi. This was followed by gunfire. The attack claimed her life. Soon afterwards there were violent protests against her killing all across Pakistan. Her death was deeply felt by poets in Sindh and South Punjab.

This paper analyzes Saraiki poetry devoted to the death of Benazir Bhutto. This work does not claim to be an objective account of the life and politics of Benazir. It is merely an attempt to understand how poems devoted to persons having sway over a section of the population can give rise to feelings of grief, trauma and resistance.

The poeticisation of Benazir Bhutto, a Sindhi leader as a messianic figure has its roots in the peculiarities of geographical and ethno linguistic make-up of the region. It is not merely the electoral arithmetic that had made her the popular leader in South Punjab. In fact the poeticisation of her image owes itself to the cultural affinities between Sindh and the Saraiki speaking regions of South Punjab (Gaadi 2018). These cultural affinities

transcend administrative boundaries created by the modern post-colonial state. Nabi Bakhsh Baloch, a Sindhi linguist, opines that Saraiki had been the language of communication in the Indus Valley but it had different names in the areas that now fall either within the administrative jurisdiction of Punjab or Sindh (Hussain 2015: 288). The areas that now come within the province Sindh had historically been a part of Multan even before the Arab conquests of Sindh. The grammar, vocabulary, syntax and phonetics of Saraiki are very similar to that of Sindhi (Wahga 1997: 35).

The poetics of trauma on the death of Benazir Bhutto can also be understood if one considers her efforts for the promotion and standardization of Saraiki language. The initiative of the first Saraiki language conference was supported by Sindhi intellectuals, some of whom belonged to Pakistan People's Party. This conference emphasised the distinctness of Saraiki language. Prior to this, it was believed that Saraiki was merely a dialect of Punjabi. Rasul Bukhsh Palejo, a veteran Sindhi nationalist participated in this conference. (Dawn 2009) This conference was held under Benazir's premiership.

Similarly, it was under her government that the first Saraiki language studies department of was established at Islamia University Bahawalpur in 1989. The second Saraiki language and literature department was also founded under a PPP government at Baha-ud-Din Zakariya University, Multan (Gaadi 2018). In the light of these facts, it is not surprising that her death has inspired poetic tributes by Saraiki language poets and intellectuals.

It is not just the history that runs like a common thread between Sindhi and Saraiki areas. The cultural and linguistic affinities continue until present times also (Gillani 2013:1). Benazir is not the only one who acquired a cult status. Before her, her father Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was also celebrated as a symbol of emancipation in the 1960s and 70s. Saraiki poets had also been sensitive to his death. Fourth of April, the day Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was hanged in 1979 is remembered in the memory of the poets. Ashu Laal, a popular Saraiki poet had written a long poem as a tribute to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (Gaadi:2018). The poeticisation of trauma on the death of Benazir is therefore a historical continuum (Cvoro 2008: 90) of the image Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had left behind.

Collection of Poetry

The poetry selected for the thematic analysis is a collection of poems written by poets spread through Saraiki speaking regions. These poems have been collected and compiled into a book by Sunjaan, a Saraiki literary and political organization. The collection is a tribute to Benazir Bhutto. It contains some 26 poems and essays on her political as well as intellectual legacy. The compilation also offers a translation of the first chapter of Benazir Bhutto's book *Reconciliation; Islam, Democracy and the West*. This paper has selected a few of those poems keeping in view the range of themes.

Conceptual Preliminaries

This work attempts to conceptualise the image of Benazir Bhutto through a reading of the concept of '*dialectical image*' by Walter Benjamin. The '*dialectical image*' does not refer to an image in a conventional sense of the word. To Benjamin a *dialectical image* is an image of a messianic figure shaped out of 'historical consciousness of a culture' (Cvoro 2008:89-98). In his famous *Theses on the Philosophy of History* (1942), he presents an alternate view of time. He argues that what is referred to as the past is not always over. It continues to recur throughout history such that the 'new is permeated with

the old' (Benjamin in Cvorovic 2008 89-98). Therefore in some ways the present is a *continuum* of the past. From this thought Benjamin goes on to explain his idea of history which he sees as a 'flash of synthesis between *'what has been'* and a *'now'* (Benjamin in Pensky 2011:177). The image of Benazir Bhutto as it appears in the collection of poetry under review is precisely one of a messiah who exists in a continuum of prevalent images that have been suspended in the past as symbolic of some tragedy or trauma. It is no surprise then that the poet Riffat Abbas, while paying a poetic tribute to Benazir, invokes tragedies from the past such as Karbala or even as remote tragedy as the drying up of the mythical river Hakra.

The next important dimension of Saraiki poetry on the death of Benazir Bhutto is that of tragedy and trauma. In order to make sense of tragedy experienced and how it finds representation in poetry, the theory of 'trauma' by Jenny Edkins (2003) is employed. Trauma, as approached by Jenny Edkins, is a unique and often paradoxical experience of the human mind. It entails feeling of 'utter hopelessness and intense betrayal by those whom the traumatized previously regarded as reliable.' induced by extreme physical force and violence (Edkins 2005: 1). Traumatic experiences as constructed in the minds of participants trigger intense emotional processes that sweep away all public defenses. While trauma has this unique ability to instill hopelessness, it also has the "potential to trigger the political, the domain of innovation, revolution and abrupt change" (Edkins 2005: 1). It provides an opportunity to rethink power structures by "bolstering the re-inscription of trauma into everyday narrative which consequently becomes a site of struggle over meaning and its power implications" (Edkins 2013: 15). Trauma therefore is not simply the domain of the mind. It rather translates into society and is expressed through emotions of grief, anger and at times invokes the feelings of defiance and resistance as the collection of poetry selected for the textual analysis demonstrates.

An important theoretical observation on the present work concerns itself with the question of traumatic experiences finding space in literature and in this case poetry. The link between trauma and its representation in the literature has been explored at length by Cathy Caruth in *Unclaimed Experiences: Trauma, Narrative and History* (2003). The author analyses *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, a film by Alain Renais and Marguerite Duras to illustrate the experience of trauma on the victims of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. Caruth presents a theory of trauma in which the concept of 'latency' is central to an understanding of how traumatic experiences find representation in poetry. The idea of latency holds that trauma as it first appears is incomprehensible; it is only with the passage of time that it is able to find a place in popular narratives. The real effect of "trauma lies in its belatedness, in its refusal to be simply located" (Caruth 1996:25). It is for this reason that the Saraiki poetry selected for analysis has appeared some eleven years after Benazir Bhutto was assassinated. The time that has passed since her death offers the ability to understand, comprehend and makes sense of the trauma. Caruth would say that it is the 'latency' that gives its affectees the opportunity to calculate the loss and then poetry gives voice to those emotions of anger, grief and defiance by narrativising the loss.

Finally, the most important part of the paper is related to the technique used to judge and critique the collection of poetry. This research employs textual analysis to reach at the meanings and themes encoded within the poetry. The technique has gained currency with popularization of post structuralism as a method to interpret the text'. It is an

“educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations of the text” (Mckee 2002: 1). The text in textual analysis is not simply a written piece or a document; it can be anything under observation, a painting, a symphony or a film. It can be anything “a research tries to draw meanings from” (Mckee 2002: 1). The present work employs this rigorous technique to look into the ways in which trauma is internalised and narrativised in the poetry from the Saraiki speaking regions of Pakistan and how it invokes pathos and defiance as sets of emotions corollary to the trauma itself. It attempts to explore and find a balance between different positions or “range of positions the text offers” (Besley 2005:161).

This work first tries to make sense of trauma with all its complexities. It then attempts to draw some preliminary observations about how those traumatic experiences find resonance in poetry. Finally, it employs the technique of textual analysis in order to understand the myriad poetries in Saraiki that create a dialectic image of Benzair as a connection between the tragedies past and present

Literary Parallels

There is a scarcity of literature available on the subject at hand. There are however books and works available on the ways in which poetry written as a tribute to personalities revered by different groups of people can be a window to popular history *marsiya* is one such form of poetry that has a long tradition in both Persian, Arabic and Urdu poetry (Naumani 1934: 7). This particular genre of poetry is written to mourn the death of individuals who hold sway on many hearts. The *marsiya* tradition after the battle of Karbala in 680 CE came to be associated with the martyrdom of Hussain, the grandson of the Prophet of Islam and his followers. The genre has a purpose; it invokes the feelings of melancholy, remorse and grief and is also intended to glorify such human qualities as truthfulness, uprightness, speaking truth to the power and resisting the oppression. The person to whom the *marsiya* is devoted is obviously thought to be in possession of all these qualities. Meer Anis and Mirza Dabir are thought to be great proponents of *marsiya* in Urdu. Notably, *marsiya* was originally conceived as a form of epic poetry with no specific individual in view. It later got solely associated with the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (Ghani 2016: 3134).

The closest equivalents of *marsiya* in Punjabi are *waar* and *ghori*. These two genres have roots in the specificities of Punjabi folk traditions and are a source of tribute to individuals who stand against power and then their image, through poetic tributes gets crystallized in the popular imagination. There is however a difference between the two; while *ghori* is written and publicly sung on weddings to celebrate personal achievements of the groom, the *waar* is written and sung in order to mourn the death of a particular person. In Punjabi Folk poetry *waars* have been written in order to remember and commemorate the heroics of Dullah Bhatti, the famous Punjabi warrior who refused to budge down in front of the Mughal emperor Akbar in 1599. There are *waars* written to honor Bhagat Singh (Gaur 2008: 25), the famous 20th century Punjabi revolutionary who resisted against the British Raj and was hanged for agitating against the colonial power. There are possibly many more *waars* written to honour such local heroes who feature in neither national nor regional histories. Shafqat Tanvir Mirza writes in *Resistance Themes in Punjabi Poetry* that some 700 songs were composed about the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in 1919 and the bravado of Bhagat Singh (Mirza 1992: 16). It is sad however that not many of those are known even to the scholars on Punjab. There might exist

heroes who appealed only to a particular tribe, clan or sect and are therefore unknown. There are also other possibilities that relate to the oral character of the Punjabi folk poetry. This poetry was seldom put to paper. Instead, they were sung and passed down to the coming generations. There were particular occupational groups often known as *Marasis* whose job it was to memorize these poetries and sing on communal gatherings.

The scarcity of academic writings on Saraiki language and literature demands that some ways be sought to explore the literature in this language. This will eventually help to foster understandings of the various socio historic dynamics that separate southern Punjab from mainland Punjab. In addition, this might also lead to a better understanding of at least one important dimension of identity politics in present-day Pakistan.

Literature Review

This study examines three strands of literature to address the subject. Firstly, it looks into the literature that can help set some rudimentary methodology to construct through literature such embedded emotions as anger, grief, loss, defiance and resistance. Secondly, it takes note of the literature that deals with peculiar socio historic roots of the Saraiki language, literature and identity that emerges through these writings. And thirdly, it looks into the literature by those academics whose interests lie primarily in examining how poetry becomes a voice for collective emotions. Gaur (2008), Hussain (2015) and Mirza (1992) demonstrate through the corpus of written poetry, primarily in Punjabi, to lay bare the emotions of resistance and defiance. These songs construct heroes, building upon the emotions of resistance.

While Gaur (2008) presents Bhagat Singh as a hero of the people whose death was eulogized by poets all across Punjab irrespective of their communal affiliations, Hussain (2015) specifically examines *waars*, a form of poetic genre that glorifies and eulogises certain personalities. Gaur constructs the image of Bhagat Singh as a hero of the people and one that comes not from above but from below. To Gaur a hero is someone who “illustrates through his/her actions” the qualities of non-conformism and counter hegemony. Their image then resonates well with poets, singers and artists. The image of Benazir Bhutto if seen through the prism of Saraiki poetry is precisely one of resistance, defiance and counter hegemony. She is framed as a woman who challenges the established notions of politics, patriarchy and power.

Then there are poets and critics who have dwelled on the many ways in which traumatic experiences can be represented through poetry. Hietranta (2007) while commenting upon the poetry of Adrienne Rich demonstrates how traumatic experiences are different from ordinary experiences. When these experiences find space in poetry, they impact its ‘rhetorics and aesthetics (Hietranta 2007: 11). Similarly Alsadeen (2003) largely examines violence and its representation in poetry (Grondahl 1999: 19). The poetry or the act of writing poetry, argues Alsadeen, becomes ‘a protest’. The same holds true for the collection of Saraiki poetry under review.

The emotions to which Saraiki poets have given voice are those of grief, mourning and anger. While the anger experienced by a poet or a group of poets is subjective, there is still a gender dimension at play. Grief and mourning are largely thought of as the domain of women and anger as that of the men. In many cultures, public displays of emotions is not considered manly. Mills (2013) shows how male grief is a neglected subject of study (Mills 2013:2). The act of lamentation and mourning by the poets who are all men is not

in any way the symbols of effeminate behavior. In this way, these poets seem to have been breaking away from a cultural barrier. The gender dimension of grief is relevant for this study as poets whose works are examined are mostly men mourning the loss of a woman who could be a legitimate representative of their political aspirations.

As has been stated previously, not many works on Saraiki poetry are available. The majority of literature is written in the context of identity politics in the post colonial phase. These academics demonstrate how the demand for a separate province is rooted in the distinctness of the Saraiki language (Hussain 2015; Hashmi and Majeed 2014). The standard model in such academics work is to connect the linguistic to the political dimension. As a result Saraiki political aspirations are either seen as anti-center to the extent of breaking up the unity of Punjab and Pakistan at large or on the genuineness of the Saraiki nationalism. In either case, a certain notion of the past is projected onto the present. The literature of this kind becomes either an apology or advocacy for a separate province. In this way, a plethora of political aspirations that find voice through literature, mainly poetry, are often conveniently forgotten. Abbas (2008) for example delves into the phenomenon of marginalisation of the native languages in this case Saraiki as a continuation of what he calls internal colonialism, a term writers often employ to describe the subjugation of sub-cultures within Pakistan by the dominant groups (Abbas 2018: 1).

Saraiki language is one of the most widely spoken languages in Pakistan. According to one estimate, there are some 70 million Saraiki-speakers in a country of approximately 210 million (Hussain 2015: 288). It is spoken in almost all the four provinces of Pakistan. Thus a poetic emotion expressed in Saraiki can be taken to represent the federation of Pakistan. In the pages that follow, a cross-section of Saraiki poetry written as a tribute to Benazir is presented along with an English translation. Every poem or couplet is followed by a thematic and textual analysis. The explanation and criticism on the poetry is subjective and open to multiple interpretations.

Textual analysis of the Saraiki Poetry on the Death of Benazir Bhutto¹

Ashu Laal, has been upheld as the pioneer of Saraiki poetry. Throughout his poetry, his diction conveys his pathos and melancholy. He not only describes but also laments the modern day political realities in which the will of the people is suppressed through force. In these verses he paints 27th December as a day of mourning, on which the long shadow of democracy was trampled under proverbial boots. Boots have become a powerful metaphor among poets and political activists to describe martial law. In both of the poems Ashu Laal employs this metaphor to describe the forces that suppressed the rule of the people. He equates 27th December, the day that Benazir Bhutto was killed, to 4th April, the day that Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was hanged, as though both the days are part of a historical continuum. 'Wasson' and 'Waseb' are used interchangeably to describe the whole cultural ethos that binds the Saraiki speaking regions. In the second verse the poet mourns that the entire Wasson has been turned blue with the death of Benazir. Benazir has been seen as the daughter of Indus, the river. Historically, the land that now constitutes Pakistan has been the centre of Indus Valley Civilization. The poet has invoked the history by calling Benazir, the daughter of Indus.

¹ All translations from Saraiki into English by the author

سوگ پر بہ **Title: Sog Parabh, 27 December**

27 دسمبر **Poet: Ashu Laal, Karor Lal Esa**

اشو لال۔ کروڑ لال عیسیٰ

کوئی پتہ نہیں کیندے جائے ہیں۔

کیندی تھک ہیں۔

ساکوں ناں بس اتنا علم اے۔

From whom we have begotten and whose tiredness we are carrying, we don't know.

All we know is that our tiredness has become lonely in this world

ساڈی تھک ہن این دنیا اچ کلی پی اے

جیوں وی اپنی سیندھ سیندوری

آنڑ ونجائی اے

جیوں وی بوٹاں بیٹھ لتاڑن

گھا ملوکھڑے

اچ دے ڈینہہ کوں اسان نہیں بھلنا

چار اپریل دے وانگوں۔

We owe this tiredness to those who destroyed the Sindh under the marching boots.

We shall never forget this day

Like forth of April

نیل کنتھ سوگ وچ

اشو لال۔ کروڑ لال عیسیٰ

سوگ وچ سارا جہاں ، الامان۔

نیل کنتھ سوگ وچ

سندھو رات کالڑی

کالے بوٹاں والڑی

وسوں پوری نیل و نیل

چندر پورا لہولہان، الامان

نیل کنتھ سوگ وچ

Title: In the blue sorrow

Poet: Ashu Laal. Karor Laal Isa

The world is in mourning, mercy!

Sindhu! The night is dark and black, the color of boots.

Our entire society has been turned blue.

The moon is blood soaked.

Sindhu! Your innocent daughter was killed

Look at our helplessness.

Look at our trial. Mercy!

In this extreme sorrow.

سندھو تیری لالڑی

بے قصور ماری گئی

ڈیکھ ساڈی بے بسی

ڈیکھ ساڈا امتحان، الامان

نیل کنتھ سوگ وچ۔

Azhar Kalyani has treated Benazir in much the same manner. In Benazir, he perceives a woman who belonged to the soil. In the popular imagination, it is usually the men whose gallantry sees them glorified as 'sons of the soil'. It is seldom that one hears of a 'daughter of the soil'. This convention has transgressed by Ashu Laal as well as by Azhar Kalyani who poeticised this idea in the following way:

اظہر کلیانی۔ ڈیرہ غازی خان **Untitled**

Poet: Azhar Kalyani, Dera Ghazi Khan

ہک دھی ہائی سانجھی دھرتی دی۔

There lived a daughter who belonged to the soil.

جیہڑی بھویں اپنی توئیہٹی بی

اسان سبت سڑے ہوئے لوکانکوں۔

She had been waking us up; we who had been burnt.

جیہڑی ہکلاں مار تے ہٹی ہئی۔

جیہڑی سچ دی سولی چڑھدے ہویں۔

While she herself faced the gallows, she sacrificed her brother and father too.

پیو نال بھرا وی دے چھوڑین

She who, smilingly gave away her breaths for the sake of the motherland.

جس مادھرتی کونکھلدے ہویں۔

اج اپنڑے ساہ وی دے چھوڑین

What to recall of her in this dark evening of gloom.

کیہڑھ گالھ اوندی بہ یاد کروں۔

ایں دکھ دی گھائی شام اندر

Our generation will live to mourn.

ساڈی نسلان بھوگ بھگیسن

The patriarchy runs so deep that it is not appropriate to associate bravado and courage with a woman. The dialectical image of Benazir therefore is significant considering the fact that politics is considered the domain of the male. The imagination of the poet does not stem from intellectual understanding of feminism as a global discourse but from an organic understanding of the dialectical image. The association of glory with masculinity is a discursive tradition. Against such a backdrop a poetic depiction of Benazir as a tree that literally sprouted out of the soil is revolutionary to say the least. The poet speaks of Benazir is someone who had been speaking out for justice even while embracing death. To Kalyani the death of Benazir is a loss generations would live to mourn. "What to remember and what to forget" towards the end of the poem are the phrases that show that the memory of that fateful event will never fade.

مُکانڑ **Title: Mukaanr**

طاہر شیرازی۔ ڈیرہ اسماعیل خان

Poet: Tahir Sherazi, Dera Ismail Khan

جیڑا تھر پووے کیں تڑدیاں دو۔

Those who follow in the footsteps of the departed; Under the influence of desire for union.

کیں سیک پاروں کیں چھک پاروں

وس کیں دا اوں تے چلدا نہیں۔

No one can bring them back.

کیں جیندے جگ دی واسوں وچ

When one of your own departs from this world that is full of life, the courtyard of the house begins to look deserted.

جڈاں اپنا کوئی مرویندے

اوہ ویہڑا بٹا کر ویندے

The very title of the poem speaks of trauma and tragedy. The word mukaaanr refers to condolence after bereavement. The one who departs can never return. The poet speaks of a loss at a very personal level as if someone from his own family has died someone who lived in the close quarters. With the death of the person like this the entire courtyard of the house trickles with grief.

مجید اعوان- فتح پور تھل **Title: From Karbala**

Poet: Majeed Awan, Fatehpur Thal

کہیں کربل وچوں دی بھٹو دی *From Karbala, Bhutto's daughter's destiny*
 گہن اپنا آپ نصیب آئی *had been ordained. On the one hand were*
 کتھاں وعدے کوفیاں دے۔ *the false promises of the people of Kufa*
 کتھاں بن ٹھن فوج یزید آئی *and on the other was the powerful march*
 این راج دے رانڑے کیا جانڑن *of Yazeed's army.*
 پُھل پتیاں جہیں دھی بھٹو دی *The rulers of this land cannot understand*
 دھی بھٹو دی ہائیٹمدنی *that Bhutto's daughter, delicate and*
 پنڈ مکی ہائی دھی بھٹو دی *flowery; as if she had come from Makkah*
 پنڈی پنڈاں دے پنڈ کھا چھوڑے *or Madina. It is not only the Bhutto's*
 چھڑی کھادی نہیں دھی بھٹو دی *daughter that Pindi has devoured, it's the*
many villages that it has swallowed.)

In these verses the tragic death of Benazir Bhutto has been historicized as a continuum, to which this paper has referred in the conceptual preliminaries. The greatest tragedy in the popular imagination of Saraiki poets is that of *Karbala*. Drawing upon the parallel of the epic story Awan describes those who Benazir stood against as the army of the Umayyad Caliph Yazid against whom Hussain fought in the battle of Karbala. In these verses the image of Benazir appears as one of a daughter loyal to a mission started by her father. The link between past and present appears through a dialectic encounter between the image of the father and the daughter in a way that the tragedy now becomes a continuum of the tragedy then. That is, Benazir's death, and the death of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto are regarded as a continuation of the tragedy that started in Karbala in 680 Also Pindi (an acronym for Rawalpindi) was the place where two elected prime ministers of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto in 2007 and Liaquat Ali Khan in 1951, were assassinated and a city where Pakistan's military headquarters are. In the marsiya tradition of both Urdu and Saraiki, Kufa, the city is described as the city of betrayal and disloyalty. In the epic story of Karabala, the people of Kufa betrayed Hussain, the grandson of the Prophet of Islam and this betrayal left him alone to face death. In the verses above, Pindi has been seen as synonymous with Kufa and has been symbolised as a place of disloyalty and betrayal. Here, not only is the historical continuum at play in time but it is very much at work in space.

Similarly Wasmal Panhwar has dispensed Pindi with the same poetic justice.

وسمل پنوار۔ ملتان	Untitled
انویں سنڈدے ہیں کی سال آگیاں۔	Poet: Wasmal Panhwar, Multan
ایں راول راتھ دی پنڈی وچ	<i>So we hear some years ago in the Pindi of Raja Rawal, the sun was sent to the gallows.</i>
جیویں سورج سولی چڑھیا ہا	<i>The daughter of Bhutto, in the burnt city of Pindi received a bullet from the masters of this land.</i>
اونویں چندر مکھی دھی بھٹو دی	<i>O Wasmal, we the lost people had a single hope to live in this world.</i>
اوبیں سیت سڑے بوے پنڈی وچ	<i>That hope has been destroyed.</i>
ایں ما دھرتی دے دھاڑلاں توں	
کھا گولی جھول لڈا گی اے	
اسان وسمل ناں گے لوکاں دی	
ہئی جگ جیونڈدی اس پکا	
اوہ وی رُس گئی اے، مکلاگی اے	

Rawalpindi popularly known as Pindi has been portrayed as a metaphor for oppression and subversion. The poet speaks of the bullet that Benazir received in her body. The latency of the trauma is central to these verses. The opening line “we hear some years ago” has amplified the trauma and grief. Time is generally a healer in personal memory. But in the collective conscious time sometimes fosters a repetitive enactment as though the wound bleeds afresh (Caruth 1996: 2).

But the same is not true of the collective memory. In the collective memory, the passage of time can reignite the grief as happens in the poem above. The poet says that though years have passed Benazir was killed but the trauma is still alive and has fostered repetitive enactments of her death (Caruth 1996: 2) as though the wound bleeds afresh.

Building upon the allusion of Karbala further, Saeed Akhtar has employed another metaphor, Shaam-e-Ghareebaan which is associated with the epic story. It is a powerful metaphor that describes the night that befell on the family of Hussain after he was killed. It is synonymous with helplessness and extreme grief. The poet uses this metaphor to bring home the aftermath of Benazir’s martyrdom.

شام غریباں۔	Title: Shaam-e-Ghareebaan
سعید اختر۔ ڈیرہ اسماعیل خان	Saeed Akhtar, Dera Ismail Khan
بے پرپر بنجون کر دے ہن	<i>Tears are falling one after another as though it were the rain.</i>
منہ زور خمیس دھی جھڑی اے	<i>Thal, the desert will never saturate blossom with rain because this land is sun burnt from eternity.</i>
تھل، جل تھل مینہ نال تھونڈاں نہیں۔	
ایہہ بھویں اصلوں ڈھپ سڑی اے	<i>Soaking her hands in river’s chest, the witch of thirst has entered the house.</i>

دریا دے ہاں اچ ہتھ پا کے
 گھر ڈینڈ تریہہ دی وڑی اے
 نہیں بلنڈاں ڈیوا خیمیاں وچ
 اچ ککریں چُنیاں اڑی اے
 پنڈھ کرنا این وت ڈیگر تیں۔
 اگوں شام عربیاں کھڑی اے
 پنڈھ کرنا این وت ڈیگر تیں۔
 اگوں شام عربیاں کھڑی اے

*There shall be no light in the camps for
 our cloak is stuck in the thorns.*

*We have to travel till the day breaks and
 till we see the evening of helplessness
 approaching.*

Benazir's departure from the political landscape has left the rivers dry. This obviously does not refer to drying up of the rivers literally. It is instead a reference to the drying up of the mythical river Hakra that shaped and nurtured the Indus Valley Civilization in 5000 BC. There is a romanticism associated with the Hakra and is often referred to as 'the lost river' by the historians of the antiquity. The poet sees as the death of Benazir as tragic as the devastation brought upon the Indus culture with the drying up of the river.

Of significance here is the fact that the tragedy of the death of Benazir has been linked with historical tragedies that have gone before. On the one hand is the tragedy of the lost river and on the other is that of Karbala. The poet says that with the death of Benazir Bhutto, light has gone out of the house and the 'Shaam-e-Ghareebaan' is approaching.

شمیم عارف قریشی۔۔ ملتان
 کیویں تھی اے پھل تونخوشبوانج
 رنگوں پو پٹ رُسدی پئی اے
 کیویں بدل پچھوں لُکے چندر تلے
 وت چاننی کُسدی پئی اے
 کوئی کیچ دو ویندا راہ ہوسی
 کوئساہ وچ ولداساہ ہوسی
 اکھیاں اوتریاں تھی خالی گین
 پیلک کُسدی پئی اے
 پے ڈینہہ ڈرے سجھ اپنے توں
 ناں راتیں چندر دی گالھ کرن
 چند روز نماٹڑے لوکاں دی
 کیویں ول ول سُسدی پی اے

Untitled

Poet: Shamim Arif Qureshi, Multan

*How the fragrance got separated from
 the flower? How the colors were
 destroyed?*

*How the the moonlight is being crushed
 from the sudden hidden in the clouds?*

*Think of the road that leads to Kech and
 the breaths that become smooth on that
 road.*

*But now the cursed eyes have been
 emptied*

*The days are afraid of the light, neither
 the nights speak of moon.*

The separation of the fragrance from the flower often recurs as a powerful motif in both Persian and Urdu poetry. The grief on the death of Benazir Bhutto is such that the flowers have lost their fragrance. The eyes have emptied and the breath has been tightened up. These verses mark a break from the previous poetry. While the rest have poeticised the trauma quite literally, Qureshi has taken symbolic path. The sun hidden in the clouds, the emptiness of the eyes and the roads towards Kech are all symbols for the

loss and tragedy. Kech is the desert that starts in South Punjab and extends into Sindh. The poet says that the road that leads to Sindh will only soften his breadth,, Sindh being the home of Benazir Bhutto.

جیہڑے قتل تہئے انہانپہل چاتے **Title: Those who got killed, picked flowers**

رفعت عباس۔ ملتان **Poet: Riffat Abbas, Multan**

Those who were martyred picked flowers.

جیہڑے قتل تہنہانپہل چاتے۔ *Their stories did rounds.*

جیہڑھا قتل تہیا اوندی گالھ تری *Among those killed, were lovers, who coloured*
us.

این گالھ وچوں کوئعاشق اے *Those who were killed picked flowers*
جییں لاتا اے ساکوں رنگ آتے

جیہڑے قتل تہئے انہانپہل چاتے

The theme of martyrdom has a special place in the Saraiki literary tradition. Dying for truth and justice is a theme abundant in Saraiki poetry. There were poems written and sung on the tragic demise of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto in 1979. The same trauma was repeated once again when Benazir was killed in 2007. The poet ascribes a higher status to those who embraced martyrdom. These are individuals who carried flowers with them on their path towards heaven.

Conclusions

This chapter has focused on the image of Benazir Bhutto as it appears in selected Saraiki poems. She was the Prime Minister of Pakistan twice and was widely hailed as the voice of the oppressed and the downtrodden. She had a following in Saraiki speaking areas for various reasons. As a Sindhi, she enjoyed a support base in the Saraiki-speaking region largely due to the historical link between Sindh and Saraiki regions but also because her government gave support to the standardisation of Saraiki language. It was for these reasons that her death was deeply felt among the poets of Saraiki language. It becomes evident from the analysis above that these poets have expressed a deep sense of personal as well as collective trauma over her death. The trauma suffered by the poets is not a feeling of helplessness. It is one of grief, anger and defiance. The poetry also showcases a gender dimension of the grief in two ways; firstly, these are male poets who have expressed sorrow and remorse over a woman's death and secondly the qualities of courage, bravery and resistance have been associated with a woman, which is generally not the case. The poets make use of powerful similes and emotive metaphors and historical symbols to express their grief over Benazir Bhutto's assassination which this chapter has contextualised.

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Theatre and Nation-Building: An Ethnography of the Grass Root Theatre Group Sangat in Punjab, Pakistan¹

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Introduction

Theatre has the capacity to play a significant role in identity formation and nation-building, providing a space in which the past is remembered in order to bring unity and reconciliation among the audiences in present. By harnessing the media of dance, music and dramaturgy, cultural motifs central to the collective past are represented in the present, thereby contributing to the creation and recreation of social memory. The past events that have shaped the lives of ordinary people are remembered for negotiating the collective memory of a nation promoted officially. Social memory of the past and the related conceptions of nationhood are not always in accord with the collective memory which governments seek to promote. The imagination of the nation is fixed by the construction of the collective memory by the government. Social memory seeks to re-imagine the nation by remembering those past events that have been erased by the state in the process of imposing the imagination of the nation from above (Breed 2008, 33-34).

In order to study the role of theatre in nation-building in Pakistan, I have chosen to focus on the work of the Lahore-based theatrical troupe Sangat. The data collection methodology I employed was participant observation of Sangat's theatrical activities. I attended their poetry reading sessions and rehearsals organized by Sangat at venues at Jail Road and Bedian Road in Lahore for a week from the 8th to 15th of August 2018. Afterwards I attended their theatre performance held at the *urs* (celebration of the death anniversary of Sufi saints) of Bulleh Shah in Kasur on the 25th and 26th of August 2018.

The existing debate on culture and nation in Punjab had focused primarily on the Punjabi language movement. Tariq Rahman (1999) conceptualized the language movement of Punjab from a primordial perspective. However, the Punjabi language activists did not necessarily seek the revival of Punjabi language and culture for the sake of mobilizing the people for gaining power or resources. Alyssa Ayres (2008) conceptualized the Punjabi language movement through the lens of symbolic capital. The Punjabi language activists sought to reclaim a lost identity based on Punjabi language. Sara Kazmi (2017) conceptualized the Punjabi Language movement as class. The Punjabi language has been historically oppressed and marginalized. These debates do not take into account the concept of nostalgia that has been represented in the cultural production of Punjabi Language movement. In this research I will discuss the question how the theatre group Sangat performs the nostalgia of pre-colonial past to promote alternative historiography. The question then remains as to what role this performance of pre-colonial nostalgia plays in nation-building.

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Language is one of the central arenas within which the debates over nationalism plays out in the literature on the culture and nation in Pakistan's Punjab province. Conceptual debates over nationalism can be broadly divided into two categories, the materialist model proposed by Benedict Anderson and the functional model proposed by Ernest Gellner. Benedict Anderson conceptualized the rise of national consciousness in Europe for which he has employed the term "imagined communities." By analyzing 18th century European novels and newspapers, Anderson explored the relationship between print capitalism and the rise of the national consciousness (Anderson 1991, 24-25). These imagined communities emerged in Europe due to the intersection of capitalism, technological transformation, and diversity in the human languages. Print capitalism promoted a single, codified language, as a consequence of which the reading public of that particular language was expanded. The disparate groups of people who were reading publications in a common language began to imagine themselves as singular nations. Although these people were spatially located at a distance from each other, never having met or conversed with each other, they shared the language in which they were reading. This commonality in the reading language became the primary force behind the rise of the national consciousness among those people (Anderson 1991, 44-45).

A useful explanation is provided by Ernest Gellner who argues that Europe's transition into the age of nationalism occurred as a consequence of the transformation of society from an agrarian to an industrial structure. With rapid industrialization the division of labor became starker. The bureaucratization of society occurred in order to facilitate the process of industrialization. The rural peasantry migrated to the industrializing urban centers. Among these newly urbanized peasants some gained access to education in the industrial centers, going on to become journalists and academics. This newly acquired education attuned these peasants with the realization that while they spoke the same language as the poor and exploited. However, the powerful and affluent spoke a different language one promoted by the state via interactions with officialdom and bureaucracy. Consequently, a consciousness of oneness of culture on the basis of a shared language emerged. The peasants turned journalists and lawyers supported nationalist movements on the basis of shared language (Gellner 1983, 59-62).

Thus nationalism or national consciousness emerged in Europe on the basis of shared language. However, the same could not be applied to the emergence of Muslim nationalism in South Asia during the colonial period. The nationalist movements that emerged in the 1930s in British India and the subsequent creation of Pakistan could not be explained under the models proposed by Anderson and Gellner. The lack of literacy in South Asia meant that there was not a large enough reading public that developed a national consciousness. The 1911 literacy figures of India reveal a one percent literacy rate in English and a six percent literacy rate in the local vernaculars (Bhatia 2004, 5). Moreover, Muslim nationalism did not emerge in British India due to the labor migration prompted by industrialization of the society as argued by Gellner. The British rule promoted canal irrigation for the development of agriculture in Punjab at the cost of the industrialization (Ali 1989, 6). Similarly, canal irrigation in Sindh was expanded in order to bring arid lands under cultivation (Haines 2015, 647-649).

In the first half of the 20th century, the All India Muslim League espoused a nationalism based on religion in order to agitate for the creation of Pakistan. However, it did not mean that the nationalism corresponded to the pre-national imagined community, as Anderson argued, based on religious texts (Anderson 1991, 12). The Arabic language was not used as the marker of Muslim identity; rather the Urdu language became the signifier of the identity of the Muslim nation in British India. Tariq Rahman (1996) argues that the Urdu-Hindi Controversy began in 1867, sowing the seeds of the partition of India.

The use of Language for the creation of identity –specifically Hindu and Muslim identities in the nineteenth century –is intimately related to politics. This phenomenon, called the Urdu-Hindi controversy, occurred in British India in the nineteenth century and contributed to the partition of British India into Bharat and Pakistan (Rahman 1996, 59).

When Pakistan became an independent state in 1947, it elevated Urdu to the status of national language. In East Pakistan, the Bengali language was spoken, while Punjabi, Sindhi, Baluchi, and Pashto were spoken in West Pakistan (Choudhury 1955, 599). The new government expected that the uniformity in the language would bring unity among the people in the similar manner as Anderson proposed. Pakistani scholars and textbooks traced the historical roots of Muslim nationalism based on Urdu language back to 712 CE, when the Arab Muslims established their rule in Sindh (Ayres 2008, 918).

In Punjab, writers, civil servants, teachers and college students established Punjabi literary associations in Lahore for the sake of reviving and promoting the Punjabi language by the 1960s. These Punjabi literary associations included Punjabi Adabi Sangat which held its meeting at YMCA²; Punjabi Majlis of Government College; Punjabi Adabi League, an informal association; and Majlis-i-Shah Hussain. These associations read poems and stories in Punjabi and discouraged the use of Urdu words and phrases (Shackle 1970, 248-252). In 1962, the Punjabi Literary Associations started to organize musical functions and poetry reading circle on the *urs* (death anniversary of Sufi, saint, poets) of Shah Hussain³ (1538-1599) with the name Mela Charaghan (fair of the lamps) (Rahman 1996, 78)

Most prominent among those to emerge from the Punjabi literary associations is Najam Hossein Sayed (born 1936), a prodigious Punjabi language poet and playwright. Sayed was among the Punjabi language activists who established the Punjabi Adabi Sangat. He also held a chief position in the constitution of the Mela Chiraghan. He used the Punjabi folk tales as well as the works of the poets Bulleh Shah, Waris Shah, and Shah Hussain as alternative historical sources for the historiography of Punjab through the lens of historical materialism. For example, he penned a var, epic poem, '*Takht-e-*

² Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) was established at Lahore in 1876. The purpose was to provide a space for social events, meetings, and imparting education. After a few meetings at YMCA classrooms, the Punjabi Adabi Sangat shifted their meetings to the residence of Najam Hossein Sayed at Jail Road, Lahore in late 1960s.

³ Shah Hussain was a 16th century Sufi poet whose shrine is located in Lahore. He is remembered by the Punjabi literary association because he introduced the Kafi genre of writing mystical poetry. Later mystical poets followed the Kafi genre in writing their poetry in Punjabi. The Kafi style makes the poetry more rhythmic. He openly denied to follow the societal norms in his poetry. Therefore, the Kafi style on the one hand made the poetry more suitable to singing on the other hand made the poetry a tool of resisting the alienation of the people in a class based society. For details see Mushtaq Soofi, "Punjab Notes: Madho Lal Hussain: glow of an eternal flame", *Dawn*, March 31, 2017.

Lahore' ('The Throne of Lahore,' 1978), using the poetry of Shah Hussain, which depicted the resistance of Dullah Bhatti (1554-1605) against Mughal rule in Punjab. Similarly, folk songs recited in memory of Ahmed Yar Kharal's battle against the British on the bank of the Ravi River was employed by Sayed to write the play '*Ik Raat Ravi Di*' ('One Night by the River Ravi,' 1983) to depict the history of resistance against British rule in Punjab (Ayres 2008, 925-926).

Theatre performance was not a prominent part of the Punjabi language movement in the initial stages of its development in the 1960-1970s. Rather the locus of activism remained on the production of plays, poetry, and poetry. Although musical performance was part of the movement, and it was performed in poetry reading circles of Punjabi Adabi Sangat and Mela Chiraghan, the performance of the play failed to materialize. It was not until the rise of the Zia-ul-Haq regime in the late 1970s that the use of theatre as a tool for cultural politics gained popularity and became part of the Punjabi Language movement.

The street theatre movement was initiated in Lahore by the activists of the Women Action Forum (WAF), Madeeha Gauher. The regime of Zia-ul-Haq had banned the publication of the women photographs as well as introduced anti-women law such as Hudood ordinance. The activists from WAF launched a demonstration against the anti-women policies of Zia-ul-Haq in Lahore. The demonstration was suppressed by police, and many women activists were beaten and imprisoned. Censorship was enforced and political activities were banned by the dictatorship of Zia. In these circumstances, any political activity by activists belonging to any political faction was rendered impossible. Madeeha Gauher decided to express her dissent through cultural means, using street theatre as a political tool. In 1983, she established a theatre troupe named Ajoka in which the theme of women's rights featured in their dramaturgy (Khan 1997, 42).

The plays were performed in both the Urdu and Punjabi languages. However, the use of Urdu language was not acceptable to all the members of the Ajoka theatre troupe. Mohammad Wasim and Huma Safdar criticized Madeeha Gauher for the absence of the Punjabi cultural elements in Ajoka's theatrical work. As a result of this stewing dissent, both Mohammad Wasim and Huma Safdar broke away from Ajoka and established their own theatre company by the name of Lok Rehas (The People's Theatre) in 1985. The work of Lok Rehas is performed strictly in the Punjabi language. They perform plays written in the Punjabi language by prominent literary figure Najam Hossein Sayed. Moreover, attention was also paid to reviving the collective dances such as *jhoomer*, *giddi*, and *bhangra* as well as songs such as *vaar* (epic drama), *kafi* (a mystical tradition of poetry), and *lok geet* (folk songs) (Khan 1988, 54-57).

Huma Safdar worked with Lok Rehas for almost fifteen years. In the early 1990s, Lok Rehas registered itself as a Non-Government Organization. As a result, the nature of the theatre performances changed so that the theatre performances were first advertised and then tickets would be sold. Huma Safdar opposed this commercialization of Punjabi culture, and resigned from Lok Rehas. She argues that culture must not be appropriated for commercial purposes because the poor public were not able to purchase the tickets for viewing the theatre performances (Safdar, Interview by author 2018).

By the mid-1990s, she had established her own theatre troupe associated it with the weekly poetry reading circle Punjabi Adabi Sangat, and comprised of mostly student volunteers. They recited poetry by the prominent Punjabi poets Bulleh Shah, Waris

Shah, and Shah Hussain. In one poetry session they recited eight to ten Kafi. The poetry recital sessions informal in nature, open for anyone to attend and participate in when discussing the meanings of the poetry (Hasnain, interview by author 2018).

Huma Safdar graduated from the National College of Arts as a painter in the 1980s. Presently, she teaches drama at Lahore Grammar School. She trains her students to perform Punjabi Plays (Safdar, interview by author 2018). The performers in her theatre are not professionals, rather they comprise student volunteers. The performers memorize the poetry that is recited in Sangat. The performers of the theatre troupe attend the poetry reading session regularly on a weekly basis. However, they mostly perform on the *urs* (annual anniversary celebration of mystical poets) of poets at their shrine (Hasnain, interview by author 2018).

They first recite the work of the poet on whose *urs* they are to perform. Then they begin rehearsals and incorporate cultural elements from those regions where they are to perform in Punjab. For example when I was attending their rehearsals they were planning to perform on the *urs* of Bulleh Shah at Kasur. In Kasur the *jhoomer* (collective dance) is usually performed during the wheat harvest. They included the steps of *jhoomer* in their dances that they were to perform at the shrine of Bulleh Shah. They recited the poetry of Bulleh Shah before beginning their rehearsals. The rehearsals are performed at the residence of Huma Safdar at Bedian Road in Lahore. They also invite experts and professional dancers to guide them in including more Punjabi cultural elements in their performances. These experts and professionals also provide their services on a voluntary basis. When I was attending their rehearsals they invited Samia Mumtaz to guide them in their rehearsals. Samia Mumtaz is a prominent actor, she began acting with Huma Safdar in Ajoka productions. Later, she worked in the drama serials of Pakistan Television Network, and also appeared in the film *Dukhtar*.

Theoretical Framework

Sune Haugbolle (2010) has conceptualized the representation of memory by examining the case of how the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990) has been remembered. He argues that the national memory of the civil war in Lebanon should not be studied as a collective memory produced officially. The official memory produced by the state represents only the glorious part of the civil war. The experiences of the general populace, the memory shared by the people, are erased by the desire of the state to construct a collective memory. Haugbolle stresses the need to study the representation of national memory by taking not just its production but by also discussing its reception and negotiation by the people. Therefore, In order to attain a more nuanced view of the production of memory by people in a society, Haugbolle has coined the term memory culture. He argues that the term memory culture signifies more plurality in the negotiation of the historical memory by people as opposed to the more monolithic category of collective memory (Haugbolle 2010, 8).

Haugbolle used the term amnesia for discussing the official erasure of certain parts of the civil war memory by the state in Lebanon. When the civil war ended, the government granted amnesty to the prisoners of civil war in 1991. The problem of integrating those prisoners in society emerged as soon as they were released. The government imposed restrictions in discussing the civil war by passing the Broadcasting Law in 1994. The aim

of the Lebanese government, according to Haugbolle, was to avoid the public discussion of the war.

However, the public debate was initiated to remember the civil war by the intellectual and the cultural circles of Lebanon after 1996. They attempted to establish a continuity with the memory of the civil war in the present, which has been erased by the government initiated project of collective amnesia. In this remembering of civil war, the concept of nostalgia was also reflected. To understand cultural production by the people in the post-civil war period. Haugbolle analyzed texts, songs, films, and artworks as representative of Beirut's memory culture. In his analysis he focused on the nostalgia that was invoked in those cultural productions. Nostalgia is invoked as a memory of the past which is required being reproduced in the present. The past is regarded as being better than the present condition. He has divided the concept of nostalgia into two categories lived and imagined memory:

Whereas memory grounded in lived experience is a human condition, imagined memory is a distinctly modern phenomenon linked to the emergence of national publics and memory culture, which distils the cumulative experience of whole peoples [sic] in mass mediated archetypical symbols, narratives and idioms (Haugbolle 2010, 97-98).

Another author who has engaged with nostalgia and memory is Dominik Bartmanski (2011). He has discussed the concept of nostalgia in his comparative study of the cultural icons—lights in cafés and bars, cinema halls, street lights, and neon lights—in Warsaw (Poland), and Berlin (Germany). Bartmanski also supports, similarly to Haugbolle, a greater focus by the culture on studying the concept of nostalgia rather than limiting the debate to the institutional boundaries of the state:

The dominant focus on post-communist politics can neither gauge regional variability nor plumb the symbolic depth of non-traditional cultural phenomena such as utopianism or nostalgia. Thus, when it comes to the latter a need for an “anthropology of post-socialism” becomes pressing, as well as the necessity to ‘redirect our focus outside the institutional boundaries of the state (Bartmanski 2011, 215).

Both Haugbolle and Bartmanski have not included theatre in their analysis while conceptualizing nostalgia. This is why, from a methodological perspective, other studies on the anthropology of theatre can provide valuable insights. Willian O. Beeman (1993) has suggested four variables for discussing the theatre genre: the media used in presentation, the nature of the performers, the nature of the content of presentation, and the role of the audience. The media includes music, dance, and text. The variable nature of the performer includes: human theatre, masked theatre, and animated theatre The nature of the content of presentation includes: scripted, unscripted, and mixture of both; and the role of the audience includes: audience as participant, audience as evaluator, and audience as witness.

To analyze the theatre performances of Sangat, this study is conceptually based on Haugbolle (2010) and Bartmanski (2011) and methodologically, it employs three of the variables proposed by Beeman (1993), namely, the media, performers, and content. I have not included the role of the audience in the study as it would have been beyond the scope of this chapter.

Performing Nostalgia for the Pre-colonial Past

The official narrative of the nation in Pakistan promoted by the state draws connections from the past to the future without concern for the living conditions of the people in the present. The rewriting of history textbooks taught in Pakistan was initiated soon after the onset of the dictatorship of Zia-ul-Haq in 1977. Pervez Amirali Hoodbhoy and Abul Hameed Nayyar (1985) argue that the project of rewriting the history of Pakistan as it is taught at school and college level when Zia-ul-Haq made the teaching of Pakistan studies compulsory for all educational certificates. The authors, who were tasked with rewriting the history of Pakistan, were provided with the instructions to trace the historical roots for creation of Pakistan with reference to the religion of Islam. In short, identity based on race, language, and geography was being actively discouraged. The objective of the authors was to inculcate in the minds of the students that the aim of the creation of Pakistan was to establish a completely 'Islamized state' (Hoodbhoy and Nayyar 1985, 165).

Hence, this representation of collective memory has relied heavily on the glorification of the Muslim rule in South Asia due to which the plurality in remembering the past by the people is obliterated. Ayesha Jalal (1995) in her study of the official historiography as it is taught at schools and colleges argues that the roots of the creation of Pakistan has been traced back to the establishment of Arab rule by Muhammad Bin Qasim in Sindh and Multan. The spatial and temporal boundaries of Pakistan were thus expanded to Northern India and Bengal in 13th century under the Delhi Sultanate. The arrival of the Khiljis expanded the boundaries of Pakistan to southern India which brought Deccan and Central India under Muslim rule. The foundations of Pakistan weakened with the demise of the last Mughal ruler Aurangzeb in the late 17th century (Jalal 1995, 79).

In this way, the creation of Pakistan is imagined on the basis of the establishment of the Muslim rule in India. In this apotheosis of the Muslim past, identity based on gender is not taken into account, and consequently, women do not constitute a part of state-centric nationalism. The Sangat theatre group, in their play *Chog Kusumbay Di (Picking Saffron Flower)*, written by Najam Hossein Sayed based on the poetry of Bulleh Shah, portray the perpetuation of the marginal status of women from the pre-colonial past to the post-colonial present.

The Sangat theatre group performed this play on the *urs* of Bulleh Shah at his shrine in Kasur in order to ingratiate themselves with the women in the audience with respect to their local culture. The purpose of performing the pre-colonial imagined unity of female flower-pickers at the shrine of Bulleh Shah was to stir in the female audience members, a sense of self-identification as a community with a historical legacy of collective unity. By implication, the women need to establish a sense of unity among themselves in the present on the basis of their gender. In this play, the Sangat theatre group performs the imagined memory of unity among the women flower-pickers, harnessing the media of dance, poetry, and dramaturgy to provide an alternative interpretation of pre-colonial history, in which a discursive link is created between class and gender.

During the Mughal rule of Punjab, the women of the countryside in the vicinity of present-day Kasur would pick saffron flowers from a local forest. The saffron flower was used for extracting red color which was used for dyeing clothes. Traditionally, women would forage for saffron as a hobby, but this evolved into a cottage industry with the expansion of

Mughal rule, and its revenue collection system, into the countryside. The Mughals appointed a *muqaddam* (revenue collector) in the villages where these women lived. They were tasked with collecting taxes on the saffron flower which these women harvested from the forest. A *patwari* (village accountant) was also appointed from the village to keep the records of the share of *muqaddam* and the taxes imposed on the women flower pickers. The *patwari* levy heavy taxes on the women flower pickers. They have to pay the taxes in cash due to which they were compelled to sell the flowers in the market. The traders used to give them less money in order to earn more profit. As a result of which the women flower-pickers were unable to meet their expenses. The father and brothers of these flower-pickers used to subsist on the earnings of their women. They maintained constant surveillance on the activities of their women. In case the women flower-pickers attempted to resist the *muqaddams* and *patwari*, their brothers and fathers would assist the latter in controlling the former. Once, these women had a chance to meet the Mughal Emperor, Aurangzeb. They had heard about the benevolence of the Emperor and complained to him about the over extraction of taxes by *muqaddam* and *patwari*. After listening to their complaints, Emperor Aurangzeb granted all the women subjects a concession in tax collection. This brought change in the consciousness of the women flower-pickers. They decided to unite to bring change in their lives.

In the theatre performance, the alienation of the women in the present is linked to the memory of the alienation of the women flower-pickers during Mughal era. On the one hand, the performers point out that the women are underpaid in the labor market; on the other hand the exorbitant tax demand by the state takes away what small amount of money they have earned. As a result, they become socially alienated. The women who are working as daily wage laborers in agriculture, brick kilns, road construction, and masonry are underpaid in the present in the same way they were underpaid during the Mughal era. The contractors earn surplus income by paying lower wages to the laborers. This exploitation of female wage laborers in the present day is therefore linked to the imagined memory of women flower-pickers of the Mughal era. The contractors who hire laborers on daily wages are the present incarnations of those traders who underpaid the women laborers in the Mughal era to increase their surpluses.

The continuity of the practice of extraction of heavy taxes from the women laborers from the Mughal state to the Pakistani state has been portrayed by the theatre group. In the Mughal era, the *muqaddams* and *patwari* were responsible for collecting revenue and maintaining accounts respectively. The *patwari* imposed high taxes on the women flower-pickers, which they had to pay in cash to the *muqaddam*. Although the method and form of tax collection has changed, the nature of the heavy tax demand continues to the present day. The increase in the prices of the commodities due to increase in the sales tax by the government in the present day has made it impossible for the women to afford even the bare necessities required for their subsistence.

The exploitative structures work hand in hand with patriarchal structures that contribute to the marginalization of women in society, with no identity of their own. Although the women laborers are the breadwinners of the households, it does not mean that they are free to make their own decisions. Their men take decisions related to their life on their behalf. This is a continuity of what existed during the Mughal Era. The women flower-pickers used to collect the flower, while their brothers and father did not work. The men

kept their women, who went outside to collect saffron flowers, under constant surveillance. For instance who they are meeting, where they are going, and why they are laughing with someone. Similarly, the *muqaddam* and *patwari* controlled the women flower pickers by controlling their men. In this way the dialectical relationship in between the class and gender was performed by the theatre group Sangat.

The myth of the collective memory perpetrated by the state of Pakistan was countered in the performance of the play, *Chog Kusumbay Di*, by giving voice to the notion of an imagined unity of women flower-pickers of the Mughal era. This was portrayed by bringing the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb onto the scene. The *patwari* and the *muqaddam* began to praise the emperor as soon as he entered. When the women flower-pickers heard the praise of the Emperor, they decided to request that the Emperor grant them relief in the tax being demanded. The Emperor issued a royal decree in which he ordered the *muqaddam* and *patwari* to provide an exemption from tax to all his female subjects.

This brought a change in the consciousness of the women flower-pickers. They realized that they needed to unite against the *patwari* and *muqaddam* in order to assert their identity based on class and gender. They became conscious about the functioning of the structures that oppressed them. They called their fellow flower-pickers to make them conscious about the structure of their oppression, and bring unity among themselves. This performance of the imagined unity of the women flower-pickers of the Mughal era was intended to bring forth consciousness of unity among the women in the audience.

Chog Kusumba Di (Picking Saffron Flower)

Before the beginning of theatre performance *Chog Kusumba Di*, Huma Safdar, founder of theatre troupe, stood in front of the audience to briefly explain the background of the play. She explained to the audience that Kusumba is the flower of the saffron plant and that the play is based on the poetry of Bulleh Shah who became the voice of the women flower-pickers. The women would pick the saffron flower from the forest. It is a flower of red colour which is used to dye the clothes. Safdar tells the audience that the poetry in the play can be interpreted in two ways. The first interpretation of the poetry conveys the alienation of the women, while the second interpretation focuses on the unity of the women. In between the two interpretations of the poetry the women gain consciousness about the exploitative structure that work hand in hand with the patriarchal structure and oppress them.

The play is divided into four scenes. It included seven women who were given nicknames Mohanda, Phooji, Chabo, Pinyah, Rakhu, Noori, and Sabu—that are common in the rural regions of Punjab. These women approached the stage for the performance while carrying bundles in their heads. The black colored cloth was wrapped around the red colored cloth. The red color symbolized the saffron flower which the women collected. To one side of the stage musicians sat with instruments including a harmonium, *bansri* (flute), and *tabla* (small hand drum). The opening scene begins with a recitation of the *kafi*, *Chog Kusumbay Di*, which has a performer declaring:

I am tired of collecting Saffron

The performers raise the red *dupattas* and lower them slowly. They begin to spin on the spot, using their red *dupattas* in such a way to symbolically convey that they are picking the *kusumba*. Sad music is played on the *bansuri* and harmonium.

We have collected loads of Saffron

And the traders arrived

I am tired of collecting Saffron

To portray that they have collected saffron in heaped piles, four of the performers sit on the ground and cover themselves with the red *dupattas*. Two of the performers assume the roles of male traders who check the saffron heaps. While performing the role of the men, the women mimic the typical movements and behaviors of men in the society. They tie a green *dupatta* around their hips as is common amongst men in Punjab.

There are four muqaddam of this Saffron

Who demand heavy taxes from us

After the traders check the size, quality, and quantity of the heaps of *kusumba*, four of the performers assume the role of the *muqaddams* while one woman remains seated on the ground with a red *dupatta* over her to signify the heap of saffron. The *muqaddams* wag their fingers to indicate that the women must pay tax on the saffron collected.

The ruler of this saffron is tyrant

And the patwari is cruel

I am tired of collecting saffron

To portray the oppression of the ruler, one of the performers ties the green *dupatta* on her head to represent a crown, and two of the women sit behind her in such a way to symbolize a sovereign's throne. The king continuously twiddles his mustache between his fingers to assert his masculinity. The characters begin to praise the king. At the same time the *patwari* is shown taking the fingerprint of a saffron picker. After giving her finger print, the saffron picker begins to pick up the flowers; the other women also join her in doing so.

The Saffron has sharp spikes

Which have torn our dupatta

I am tired of collecting Saffron

The performers then portray that it was not easy for them to collect the saffron due to the plant's thorny nature. The performers use red *dupattas* to show that they were collecting the saffron, then one of the performers sucks on her finger to signify that she was injured by the thorns. Other performers use their green *dupattas* to signify that it is torn due to the thorns.

We do not carry our small baskets now

We have filled our larger baskets now

To make a living, the saffron collectors are compelled to collect large baskets, which they perform by raising their hands and hold them aloft widely, in a way that portrays them as holding large baskets on their heads.

*The mountainous path is difficult to cover
When there is heavy bundle on our heads
I am tired of collecting saffron*

The path via which they brought the saffron back to the village is difficult and their heads are laden with heavy baskets, so they walk slowly. The dance performance finishes with the recitation of the lines "I am tired of collecting saffron". All the women throw away their bundle and take a deep breath.

While the performer was reciting the *kafi*, the women flower pickers were portrayed as living in the past. When the recitation ends the performance moves to the present day and performers remember the story of the women flower-pickers of the Mughal era, and relate that story to their conditions in the present.

Phooji: The song that we were singing while we came here, I am going to tell you about its context. This is kafi of Bulleh Shah, why he wrote this kafi. It is based on our suffering saffron is a red flower. It blooms at night, people used to carry torch to find it, when it's the time of its harvest. We have collected it from the forest. People use it for dying their clothes.

The performers then remember how the exploitation of the women was perpetrated by the traders. The traders would pay less money to the women flower-pickers. Sattu and Mohanda become traders, who are men. They tie the green *dupatta* on their hips. They act like men by twiddling their moustaches.

Trader 1: What is in the large heap?

Phooji: Brother it is saffron.

Trader 1: Let me have a look

Phooji untie the bundle to show the collected flowers.

Trader 2: Look Sheikh ji ! It is full of thorns. What type of saffron is it?

They check all the other bundles and declare them wild as well. They offer them less money for it, while the women flower-pickers plead with them to increase the payment. The amount of money that was offered by the traders was not enough for the women to meet their expenses. The exchange value of the flower during the Mughal era was depicted in the negotiation in between the women flower-pickers and the traders. For measuring the weight of the flower the weightage system of Mughal era, *sair*, was used. One *sair* is equal to one and a half kilograms in the present weightage system.

Pinyah: Brother! Give us at least 10 paisa per sair. The prices of the goods are touching the sky, these girls have to meet their expenses by selling this flower.

Trader 2: (Talking to Pinyah) You are clever, bring forth solution of this bargaining

Phooji: Aunty has asked for 10 paisa. It is not a big amount.

Trader 1: we do not have time for bickering with you people. Settle the deal on 2 paisa per sair and give us the flowers, we could have earned more money during this time that we are wasting here.

Trader 2: We are not going to earn any profit after giving you 2 paisa per sair. How many bundles are there (15 after counting). Here take 30 paisa. Now divide it and calculate the share of each of you among yourselves.

The first scene ends when the women are paid less money by the traders. The scene is changed with the recitation of the *kafi* related to the *muqaddam*. In this performance on the recitation of the *kafi* again the women perform the past in the present.

There are four muqaddams of this saffron

Who demand heavy taxes from us

I am tired of picking saffron

The women walk while carrying the heavy bundles on their heads. Four out of the seven women begin to use their red *dupattas* to show that they are collecting flowers. By the end of the *kafi* recitation, the women return to the present. Phooji stands up and asks who is a *muqaddam*. Chabo, Rakho, Sabu, and Noori assume the role of *muqaddams*, while Mohanda becomes a *patwari*. Phooji and Pinyah perform the role of women flower-pickers. They stand to one side acting confused while the *muqaddams* discuss their share with the *patwari*. As soon as the *muqaddams* settle their share with the *patwari*, they move towards women flower-pickers and demand an exorbitant amount of money that exceeded what they had earned.

Pinyah: Here take 30 paisa. Could we keep the tip with you due permission? There will be only 1 paisa left with us now

Muqadam 2: Keep it, as you like. We have to deposit the money in the royal treasury.

Pinyah: Here take it, these girls have plucked the flower from that part of the forest which is located near to the well.

While Pinyah attempted to tell the *muqaddams* and *patwari* that the track that led to the forest was difficult to cross with heavy bundles, the *patwari* charge them with having trespassed on royal lands. The women were already being paid less and then were forced to endure a heavy tax burden, followed by the allegation of having committed a crime. All of these factors contributed to the development of the feeling of alienation among the women. The *patwari* and the *muqaddam* begin to list the severe consequences that the women will have to face. They begin to move around Pinyah, while telling her that it was a crime to collect flowers from the royal lands. They begin to move around her with increased speed around her to make her feel uncomfortable. Pinyah attempts to cover her ears to avoid listening to what they are saying. Then the *muqaddam* and *patwari* encircle Pinyah, while Pinyah loses her consciousness and falls down. During this whole scene, mournful music was played on the harmonium and *bansuri*. The *muqaddam* and *patwari* leave Pinyah on the floor and move away.

When Pinyah regains consciousness. She sees Phooji sitting hopelessly on the other side of the stage. While Pinyah and Phooji were shown standing on one side alienated, one *muqaddam* comes forward to inform the women that the money being collected is intended to be submitted in the royal treasury. Here the continuity is constructed between the state during the Mughal era and in the present. Although the form and method of the functioning of the state has changed, nature is the same. The collective

memory is constructed at that time also in which the plurality in remembering is ignored. The need for constructing a collective identity needed an enemy or in other words an 'other,'

Muqadam 2: (speaking to Pinyah) you are clever, try to understand. We don't need money for ourselves, we have to deposit it in the royal treasury. If the money is not deposited, how will the government function? How will the army be maintained? And if the army is not maintained then the outside forces will invade our country and they would destroy our cities and villages. They will make our men slaves and divide it among each other, they will take our women to sell them in their markets. Pay thanks to God that due to this King there is stability.

The *muqaddam* then holds the hand of Phooji while telling her that she will be sold in the market if Mughal rule ends. When the *muqaddam* says this, the arrival of Emperor Aurangzeb is depicted. Noori takes off her *dupatta* and ties it on her head like a crown in order to perform the role of the emperor. A chair is brought to depict the throne of the Emperor. Phooji and Pinyah stand alienated to one side while the *muqaddams* and *patwari* begin praising the emperor.

Muqaddam 1: Our king is a great saint, the history has neither seen one of such kings nor it will see. He never took a single penny from the treasury. He earns his own bread by doing calligraphy of the Quran. He eats simple. The oppressors start to shiver when they hear about him

Muqaddam 3: All of the laws of this land is based on Shariah because the emperor is himself the greatest Qazi and Mufti.

Muqaddam 2: He is the greatest of all the saints. His one hand is Shariat and the other hand is Tariqat, and he is himself reality. His one eye is Jamal, and the other is Jalal (God name). His one gaze changes the lives of the people.

After hearing the praises of the emperor, Phooji comes closer to him to seek his help in bringing relief to their miserable conditions. The *muqaddams* and *patwari* try to block her from speaking to the emperor. They warn her of the emperor's anger, and try to take her to the other side,

Phooji: We will also plead with this king to be just with us. We will tell him how much we earn and how much we must pay. He will be just with us.

The emperor heard what Phooji was saying and issued a royal decree in which detailed his order to provide tax relief to all the women subjects of the empire. Here the beginning of the period of transition is depicted. The female laborers became conscious of their reasons behind their alienation. The second scene ends when the emperor exits the stage.

*Which have torn our dupatta
I am tired of collecting saffron
The mountainous path is difficult to cover
When there is heavy bundle on our heads
I am tired of collecting saffron*

Mournful music is played on the harmonium, *bansuri*, and *tabla*. The women are portrayed as hopeless and sad due to the difficulty that they have faced while collecting the saffron.

In the third scene the women flower-pickers were shown discussing the patriarchal structures which have contributed to their alienation. Each woman shares her experiences with the others. This scene is performed in order to portray the women as having become conscious of the overall structure of their oppression. The women flower-pickers of the Mughal era are no longer remembered by the performers, rather they depict. All of the performers become flower-pickers. They were sitting with melancholic faces and their bundles were laying on the floor. Chabo begins to cry while complaining about how her brothers and father keep her under constant surveillance. After Chabo, Pinyah also shares her experience:

Chabo: All day my brother and father keep an eye on me - why did you look at him? Why were you laughing with her? Why did you stand there? Why did you sit there?

Pinyah: I have seen in the eyes of my father, brothers, and other siblings. With the passage of time, they have started to look at us like we are saffron. Like we are born to work, there is no shame in their eyes

The scene ends when Chabo finally decides that she will no longer collect the *kusumba*, she throws her red *dupatta* away to demonstrate that she is resolute about no longer taking part in the practice. The period of transition ends in the third scene, and now the women recite the same *kafi* which they recited at the beginning of the play. However, at this point they sing it in a more aggressive manner to convey the sense of their rebellion from the social structure that has alienated them. Rather than moving in a hopeless and sad manner, they dance with increased energy. The tableau is played at a higher scale to heighten the energy in the recitation of the *kafi*. They discard their *dupattas* to assert their resistance against the patriarchal structure. They clap while dancing to show that they are full of hope and energy. They form a circle while dancing to show their unity against the oppression that has been perpetrated against them on the basis of class and gender.

The fourth scene included the aspects of imagined unity of the women flower-pickers. They begin to organize with each other to resolve their problems. Hitherto, they have not asserted their identity based on their gender, but now after getting conscious that how they are being alienated they perform the imagined unity of women in the present based on their gender identity. The play concludes with the women becoming united with each other.

Phooji: It is from the stems of this saffron that revolution will come. Just think how much pain we give to our legs and hands for plucking this

flower. We have to bring together all the women. In villages whoever knows any new women, and in cities whoever knows the older women, tell all of them. When you get free in the evening come to the dera (tent) of Mohanda.

Mohanda: We all have outstanding taxes to pay. Some have half some and some have one fourth. The other women, whom we need to organize, also have outstanding cesses on them. We all want to get rid of these taxes. Whoever meets the Muqqadam must not confront him or quarrel with him. Come to the open spaces for meeting, and increase each other's strength to get rid of this tax. Come here every evening before the Naib Amil in me becomes active. Oh! It is evening already.

Conclusion

Existing studies on culture and nation in Punjab have largely focused on the development of the Punjabi language whether in terms of the conceptualization of language as under primordial terms, as a class, or as a symbolic capital. Focus continues to be placed on the creation and representation of the collective whole. The differences or the multiplicity of ways of remembering the past are often not taken into account. The focus on the development of a cohesive Punjabi culture ignores the multiplicity that exists among the cultural production of the Punjabi language movement. In this regard the negotiation, reception and the production of the variegated nature of memory through the example of street theatre provides an alternative framework for the understanding of the concept of nation and nationalism beyond the binary of 'us' and 'them'.

In this regard the concept of imagined memory provides us with an alternative. As this chapter has demonstrated, the theatre troupe Sangat performs this imagined memory in their theatrical productions. The play *Chog Kusumbay Di* connects the condition of women flower-pickers during the Mughal era with the present in order to convey the continuum of the conditions endured by women in both past and present. The groups perform the imagined unity of the women flower-pickers during the Mughal era to juxtapose their unity and solidarity to the lack thereof in the present. Through this act of remembering and reminding the audience of the past, the performers aim to reproduce the past conditions and dynamics in the present. The troupe thus provides inspiration by pointing out that women should unite to assert their identity based on their gender. The collective memory that is promoted by the state of Pakistan ignores the multiplicity of memory, which Haugbolle (2010) has termed memory cultures. In this way, women were alienated and lost their subject position when unity was promoted by the state in the post-colonial era. Hence, by examining the notion of identity based on gender, the theatre performance portrays a much more diverse identity than that is ascribed by the state.

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Gender and Power Relationships in the Language of Pashto folk proverbs among Pashtun society

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Introduction

Pashto folk proverbs, normally known as *mataloona*,¹ are greatly appreciated for expression of Pashtun identity and are considered “valued pearls of intelligence” to direct those using and hearing them all the way through their existence. Pashto folk proverbs play a vital function and comprise a significant part of the main structure of Pashtun folklore (Tair and Edwards 2006, ii).

The social and cultural traditions of Pashtuns enshrined in *Pashtunwali* which is called “the code of honor” that explains what it means to be a Pashtun (Duncan 1990; Hawkins 2009; Johnson and Mason 2008). According to Tair (1987) *Pashtunwali* still breathes as it is sealed in proverbs. Similarly, Enevoldsen (2004) states that Pashto folk proverbs dominate life matters and incidents as they are assumed to be a rich, true, authentic and an everlasting spring of intelligence, wisdom and belief of Pashtuns. On the basis of this belief, they are memorized and realised cautiously and are placed within appropriate context during conversations and circumstances to add to the validity, legitimacy, credibility and acceptability of the speaker's point of view. In Pashtun society, most proverbs are moralistic and instructional in tone and touch upon all aspects of life. The most significant topics of proverbs are gender relations, most of which are full of sexist association. They are found in published sources, radio and TV dramatisations, in conversation in bazaar and home, between and among men and women (Bartlotti 2006, iii), and a wiser man is viewed as the person who uses more proverbs (Khattak 2006, x). Although Pashto folk proverbs touch every aspect of *Pashtunwali*, a significant stock of Pashto proverbs is based on gendered meaning and perpetuates the orthodox patriarchal social order that has underpinned traditional Pashtun life.

This study explores the language used in Pashto folk proverbs to investigate the gender and power relationships in Pashtun society. To do so, more than 400 folk proverbs that refer to gender and power relationships were gathered from published sources and through ethnographic fieldwork in District Dir (Lower and Upper) in 2018. The textual data was supplemented by 20 interviews with Pashto-speakers of different backgrounds as well as personal observations. Although folk proverbs are commonly considered crucibles of collective truth and wisdom, for how long they can be considered so remains up for question. Most of the proverbs portray a negative image of women. Moreover, whether they help in promoting a unified and integrated nation is also questionable. If it is evident that men have made the leading contribution to their production, it is necessary

¹ The Pashto word for Proverb is called *matal*; the plural form is *Mataloona*.

to change those proverbs which portray women in a negative light? Given, the inevitable onward march of modernity, Pashto folk proverbs, and their persistence or disappearance, present a cultural space in which society is able to assess how it will seek to socially educate subsequent generations with regard to inequalities and sexism. By investigating such questions, this research will find that folk proverbs are not always sensible, wise and they are not equally shared, and they do not equally appeal to the prevailing wisdom of particular groups in society.

Proverbs play a vital role in various cultures across the world. These folk proverbs are used to stress a point during discussions. They are also used to ascribe distinctive roles among men and women, which implies that there is gender relationship within the meaning and interpretations of folk proverbs (Olasupo et. al 2012, 11).

Very few scholars have explored the negative representation of women in Pashto folk proverbs. According to the study of Granbom-Herranen (2010, 100) Proverbs are generally related to the social lives of men. Why then most studies of gender and folklore performance in Pashtun society have concentrated on women's songs and narrating stories, rather than on proverbs, is an interesting question. One explanation may be that in Pashtun culture, as in many cultures, folk proverbs are viewed as essentially a male domain; similarly as folk songs are related with women and riddles are related with children (Hasan-Rokem and Shulman, 1996).

In the resulting discussion, a theoretical overview of the connection between gender and proverbs is established which presents Pashto proverbs, their historical background and their relevance in Pashtun interaction. It likewise features and highlights the significance of their contextual analysis to perceive with respect to how the themes and content contained in proverbs are understood and perceived among Pashtuns. Pashto proverbs portray gendered power structures, gender segregation, gendered control and gender socialization in Pashtun society.

Folk proverbs have traditionally been the cultural domain of male elders in Pashtun society. In such a male dominant society, it was unthinkable for women and children to use proverbs in their discourse of *Pashtunwali* (respect, pride and courage), except if they had gotten quiet acceptance from men to do as such to maintain respect for elders. In the investigation of Okpewho (1992) who referenced the way that in numerous customary African societies, older people, particularly men, were viewed better qualified to use proverbs over different members of the society, for the most part since it was expected that their age and experience place them in a superior position to completely comprehend the implications of the knowledge and truth contained in the proverbs. They could therefore impart this wisdom to more youthful individuals of society and women.

Proverbs in the Pashtun Context

According to Obelkevich (1994: 220) proverbs play a vital role in different aspects of societies and have long attracted scholarly research. The "the brilliant period of proverbs" was the seventeenth century. As indicated in the book of American paremiologist Whiting's (1994) he states that gathered works of proverbs proceeded in the 18th and 19th centuries. Magwaza (2004, 33) referred in his writing to the significance of proverbs and stated that proverbs should be preserved in their existing form, without questioning their value and worth, because they form the basis of their society's morals, ethos, ideals, culture, direction, perceptions, norms and values.

As discussed by Milner (1969), proverbs are concise, brief and effectively recalled by the utilization of verse, beat replication, echo and reverberation. Proverbs are sensational, homely, sometimes rude and often deal with the primary interests of the masses. Proverbs single out something abstract and universal based on experience and observation which may be expressed truly or emblematically. It summarizes a situation by appealing to humor and it is regularly related to another saying which seems to give it the life and its impact is to raise a statement from the normal to emphatic level so as to encourage, educate, persuade, or on the other hand, to caution, blame, control or demoralize. Proverbs are upheld as valid by the masses, despite the fact that researchers know that in reality proverbs are contextual and relevant but not always true and complete. As indicated by Honeck et al. (1980: 133) a proverb as a non-literal proclamation is neither essentially evident nor fundamentally false. Being a broad explanation, a proverb in itself cannot be characterized as obvious or false. A man picks a proverb as indicated by the requests of the circumstance, not because of its far reaching, theoretical and abstract sense (Mieder, 1989).

In Pashtun society folk proverbs occupy a remarkable position in the verbal and oral writing and have traditionally been used widely in all folklore (Tair 1975; Akhtar 1997). As opposed to relics of the past, Pashto folk proverbs are still broadly spoken and play a vital role in the regular daily existences of Pashtuns. This is why the study is intended to comprehend the role of Pashto folk proverbs in gender relations and how these folk proverbs are being used by masses to amass gender relations on an ordinary premise. The investigation centers around one genre of Pashto folklore, the proverb, which is at some point called the smallest 'scholarly work' (Maria 2012; Akhtar 1997).

The social and cultural traditions of Pashtuns are made blessed and regarded in *Pashtunwali*, 'the code of honor' that illuminates what it means to be a Pashtun (Johnson and Mason 2008: 58). As demonstrated by Tair (1987) *Pashtunwali* still survives as it is preserved in folk proverbs. Pashto folk proverbs rule life matters and occurrences as they are believed to be a rich, authentic, genuine and everlasting spring of knowledge, intelligence and wisdom of Pashtuns (Enevoldsen 2004). In light of this certainty and conviction, they are held and recognized carefully and are used regularly in legitimate settings in the midst of discussions.

The proverbs have been generally viewed as a piece of patricentric discourse. Women have been viewed as the object of negative proverbial discourse. Women are for the most part associated with proverbs when the primary concern has been to look at the underestimation of women and womanhood. This understanding is the substratum for scholars of the 20th century and even 21st century (Granbom-Herranen 2010: 96). The status of women in Pakistan is not homogenous in view of the gender dimensions of social exclusion in the public sphere. The status of women varies greatly across classes, locales, and the rural-urban separation because of uneven economic development and the effect of innate, primitive, and industrialist social developments on women's lives. Notwithstanding, the circumstances of women opposite men is one of foundational subordination, controlled by the powers of male-centric society over classes, areas, and the rural-urban separation (Bari 2000: 1).

An important component that impacts the position and status of a woman in Pakistan is her ethnic environment. The Pashtuns, contrasted with other ethnic group in Pakistan, are considered by researchers (and Pashtuns themselves) as preservationist,

conservative and conventional in regard to gender relations, especially encompassing issues of women's *pardah* (segregation of women) (Khan 2007: 8). The Pashtuns are an ethnic group of almost 40 million individuals spread along the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Pashtuns are the second largest ethnic group of Pakistan (15%), for the most part settled in the regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Approximately 25% Pashtuns communicate in Pashto, a language that is part of the Indo-Iranian dialect family (Rahman 1995: 151).

In the study and investigation of Pashtun areas in Pakistan, Hallberg (1992: 30) reported that Pashto is exclusively spoken by Pashtun men in four out of the six spaces of day-to-day cooperation, i.e., home, village, mosque and addressing women, while in the other two areas (the market and school) Pashto is spoken (generally) alongside Urdu. In spite of the fact that Hallberg did not disclose why addressing women constitutes a different domain, he clarifies that men have a higher literacy rate than women and learn Urdu in school and keeping in mind that working in different urban communities. Most women, on the other hand, can understand only Pashto as most of them have received no schooling and have thus had no chance to learn Urdu. Essentially, the confinement of women to home/village life likewise limits their odds of taking in a language other than Pashto. Along these lines, Hallberg found that Pashtun men only use Pashto while conversing with women.

According to the study of Barth (1959) the three most essential aspects of Pashtun identity construction and maintenance are a typical patrilineal descent, Islamic religion and the Pashto dialect or more precisely *Pashtunwali*. The problem of matrilineal descent is a question of history; Islam and *Pashtunwali* play an important role in the current socio-political life of Pashtun communities, including gender relations. Most Pashtun recognize themselves as Muslim by birth.

In light of the foregoing debates, this research seeks to present a different aspect of proverbs, one that is rarely addressed by critics. This research thus takes the road less travelled, because it suggests that Pashto proverbs, especially those centered on women, reflect gender inequality. The study intends to comprehend the role of Pashto folk proverbs in gender relations and how these folk proverbs are being used by masses in such a patriarchal society to build up gender relations on a normal basis.

Method and Material

The study was conducted in rural areas of District Dir Lower and Upper Dir between July and October 2018. The primary area of the fieldwork was District Dir Lower in the province Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) of Pakistan. Given the focuses of the study, as elucidated in the introduction, interviews were used as the primary method for data collection given their capacity for providing rich information relevant to participants' experiences and points of view on an explicit subject (Burgess 1981; Creswell 2007). In the study of sociology, interviewing has been generally connected with qualitative research which centers around the examination of values, suggestions, perspectives, viewpoints, sentiments, opinions, practices, and mentalities normal for the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell 2007).

The researcher used semi-structured interviews which allowed preparing for a meeting to keep the discussion concentrated and focused regarding the subject, while permitting sufficient elasticity to allow for alteration and adjustment according to the condition (Creswell 2007; Turner 2010).

Purposive sampling was used for the selection of sample. Purposive sampling is the most commonly practiced and most recommended in research based on qualitative interviews (Bryman 2008). The sample selection criteria for the study were age and gender. These criteria were very valuable for the reason that the researcher could specifically ask a respondent whether they could recall a certain proverb, how they may practice it and how frequently they use it. The flexible interview schedule considered being informal and easygoing all through the discussion, encouraged the researcher to substitute or re-contextualise an inquiry according to the criteria of gender, class, age and education of the respondents, to know the proverbs which are negative about women as a general category and positive relational terms. Furthermore the semi-structured interview schedule was helpful because it allowed for the pursuit of topics of interest by asking supplementary and follow-up questions or adapt questions based on the respondent's answers.

The selection of participants and determining the number of participants to meet the objectives of the study are crucial and dependent on one's methodological and epistemological points of view, the sort of research questions, the nature of respondents and issues of access, time and assets accessible for information collection and other such practical factors such as the time and effort required for translation, transcription and handling the data (Baker and Edwards 2012). Qualitative research methods and techniques are mostly concerned with producing in-depth knowledge and understanding and comprehension of a particular phenomenon, or are centered on meaning and importance in a given issue, circumstance, process or situation (Dworkin 2012).

Some researchers avoid the topic of how many interviews are sufficient to meet the goal in qualitative research work. Researchers are more specific in signification and suggestion of numbers. For instance, Warren (2002) proposes that the number of interviews should be between 20 and 30.

The researcher followed the experiences and suggestions of the above mentioned experts, along with the type of data and amount of data necessary for this research work, the researcher interviewed a total number of 20 participants for this research. This was a reasonable number because the data were collected not only from field work but also from the previously published sources which supplemented the collection of data through interviews. In the context of gender and folklore research, twenty interviews are noticeably the same amount as previous studies.

A related decision that a researcher must make is whom to select for interviews. As one of the research objectives is to see if there are any variations in the use of proverbs across age, sex, and social class of the respondents, the researcher decided to split the sample into categories of respondents based on age and gender. The reason for this stratification is that both sociologists and sociolinguists maintain that the different social positions and identities of individuals significantly influence their points of view and social practices, including their language use (Murphy, 2010).

The researcher paid close attention to age differences because of the impact that age makes on interactions and perceptions of tradition and identity. For instance, younger people may have different life experiences than older people which might shape their view of proverbs and Pashtun identity. Similarly, men and women may use proverbs differently or have different attitudes toward sexist proverbs and gender roles and relations. Hence, respondents were categorized as either male or female, and the following age brackets were used: 15–30 years (young), 30-45 years (middle aged) and 45-60 years or above (seniors). Owing to issues of access and gender segregation in the public sphere, most of the female respondents were the relatives of the researcher.

The researcher introduced the research to the informant and clarified that the main aim of the research was to know about the relations between men and women in our culture, women's education, social status and women empowerment among the Pashtuns. Men's relations with women in home and outside and the Pashto proverbs about women and men. The fieldwork produced a large number of folk proverbs. From the general folk proverbs, the researcher selected those proverbs that related to gender as not all folk proverbs found in the interviews were relevant to the present research. It was relatively easy to identify gender based proverbs, due to the insider knowledge of the researcher about Pashto language and with the structural differences between general proverbs and gendered proverbs.

Results and Discussion

The proverbs which are selected for the purpose of the study are presented below. The greater part of these proverbs speaks to how women's social protection, prosperity, well-being and rights are of little importance to the male members of the sample. The proverbs analyzed are collected from the researcher observation and correspondence among the male and female members of Pashtun society. I endeavored a metaphorical translation of folk proverbs obtained from the field. The current research project explores how gender and power are represented in Pashto folk proverbs and how women are introduced. To facilitate the examination and analysis of data different categories of analysis were created which are demonstrated as below.

Women are talkative and non-serious:

The current study found that it is the general impression among the men of the society that women are more prone to talkativeness and lack seriousness, a large number of proverbs exists to that effect. This finding is confirmed by Rasul's study (2015) in which she presented both English and Urdu proverbs, in which she found fourteen English proverbs and three Urdu proverbs which presents women as talkative and inconsequential. According to Rasul, women are portrayed as unwise and recklessly talkative (2015: 6). Women are not only depicted as chatty and talkative but they are also presented as fools who speak without thinking. They are therefore constructed as brainless. For example there is the proverb: "*da khazi khula hasi chenga ye aw sary pa kaal ki yeo zal khandi*" which can be translated as: "Women always laugh and men laugh once in a year." It implies that women are not serious about their lives, since they exchange gossip, share stories about their husbands and laugh at every opportunity. Along similar lines, another proverb states: "*dwa khazi we aw ghali we*", ("When two women sit together, Silence is difficult"). It is an ironic statement about women implying that they can always be found gossiping and their conversations never end. There are

other proverbs with similar meanings: *“da tolu ghat darogh da di chi, dre khaze ghali nasty we”*, which translates to, “it is the biggest lie that there were three women, sitting quiet. To illustrate this point, another proverb states: *“da khazi shalgaza jaba ye”*, (“A woman has a twenty yard long tongue”) In the light of the previously mentioned proverbs, the researcher asked whether a respondent thought that men would take the time to talk with women to share their problems in such a male dominated society. In response, she quoted a proverb: *“che da khazu sa lagya shi nu izzat ba di gaya shi”* (“if you talk to women, you will lose your dignity”) This means that one cannot trust women, they are considered foolish. They will share a conversation with their friends and family and the chain will continue. Similarly, the researcher found a new proverb, which has not been previously published before, during the field work: *“che da khazu manay nu bad ba momay”* (“If you acknowledge the words of women, you will face bad outcomes”). Similarly, there is a famous Pashto proverb: *“da khazu khula surai wi”* which can be translated as, “women’s mouths have no locks.” An additional proverb states that: *“da khazu kheta daz kai ka haal ye wana wayo.”* Which is used to ironically express that “they cannot keep secrets; their bellies will blast if they maintain secrets for too long.” Similarly, there is one another proverb: *“che tror di khabar shi nu alam ba ti khabar shi”*, which means that, “If your aunt knows, the entire world will get to know.” The above mentioned proverbs and the report of the respondent underscore the lack of mutual trust between wives and their husbands which serves to legitimise the social norm that men should keep secrets from and never share important matters with their wives.

The researcher found many proverbs about the talkativeness of old people particularly old mothers and grandmothers: *“da budai khazi khabaru ta da jami shpe sa di”* (“the long winter nights are nothing for an old woman's talks”). When the nights of winter are very long and the days are very short in Lower and Dir Upper people sit around fires in their kitchens, drinking green tea while the elders of the household share old stories which often take a long time to finish. Other proverbs to that effect are: *“abai mrha da khu jaba ye jwandai da”*, which means, “the tongue of the mother never dies.” Similarly another proverb says that, *“Che budai pa kor wi nu da shetan zarurat neshta,”* “there is no need of the devil where there is an old lady in the home.” The above proverbs underscore the prevailing view that the women are unwise and talkative and the actual target is mostly old women. This criticism of old people is surprising because it is the long life experience of the elders that compels them to share their stories with their kin. This does not mean that they are simply talkative but rather, they are an important resource from whom younger people can learn about their communal history. On the other hand, the researcher found that there are some Pashto proverbs in which Pashtuns are portrayed that they respect their elderly and take care of them, which is also reflected in proverbs. Pashtuns consider their old mother and old grandmother *“da janat darwaza”* “the door to Paradise.” One of the senior aged women said that *“Ka janat gatay nu khidmat da budai mor waka”* which means “if you want to go to heaven take care of your old mother.” Similarly, there is another proverb *“Jannat da mor aw plar da khapo landide”*, which translates to, “paradise lies under the feet of parents.” The researcher found that there are more negative proverbs about the gossipy nature and lack of seriousness of women as compared to positive proverbs. The image of women reflected in some of the above quoted proverbs is generally negatively described. Although Pashtun women are suppressed in the wider society, they have thoughts, feelings, and aspirations and they use the power of their speech to share their feelings and have stories that deserve to be

listened to. Giving voice to this half of the population is very important for nation-building and moving forward with the development of an egalitarian and harmonious society.

Preference for a Male child:

Throughout the twentieth century the discussion on women's rights and women's role in society in the public eye has been closely interlinked with a country's destiny. Women do not only often symbolize the honor of the family, but are regularly viewed as exemplifying the national honor as well. If a woman gives birth to a male child, all of her family members prosper and provide that woman with honored status in her household and secures her offspring's access to inheritance. Male child preference may vary according to place and social and cultural context, convictions, beliefs, literacy and economic conditions (Saeed, 2015).

Male child preference is a global phenomenon but its most prevalent in East and South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa (Kapoor 2014). The Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey of 1990-1991 found that 33% of women without any children wanted to have a male child, while the preference to have a girl was insignificant. Among the individuals who had two girls and no male child, all (93%) preferred for their next child to be a boy (National Institute of Population Studies 1992).

In Dir it is very common for married women of the household and neighborhood to exhibit male child preference. They constantly inquire of the bride: "*sa tama laray ao kana*" which means that, "*are you with hope or not yet?*" another way to ask whether a woman is pregnant and advise her to create a place for herself in the house by producing a son as soon as possible. The birth of a boy in a Pashtun house is proudly announced in the village. A special custom in which the birth of a boy is announced is called "*zairy*" which literally means "good news". The men of the house fire guns in the air to publicly announce the news of a boy's birth, while no such celebrations are seen on the birth of a girl. In some Pashtun tribes, there is a birth ritual in which if a male child is born, the baby is wrapped in a long cloth, but if a female child is born, the baby is wrapped in a short cloth. In this ritual, the long cloth has a symbolic meaning that "*there is enough cloth for boys; more boys may be born*", while the short cloth means that "there is not enough cloth for girls, more girls may not be born" (Sanauddin 2015: 154). A common Pashto refrain is that: "*yeo zwe na zwe*" which means, "one son is not a son" which shows that parents want more than a single son, in case the only son dies before their time. High child mortality rates, life-long feuds among Pashtun tribes, and uncertain security in the region encourage parents to have more male children. Another similar proverb is that: "*zama zwe naye che tar so di miyana aw sharay tair kare naye*", which means: "you are not my son, until you have survived measles and chickenpox." These proverbs indicate that the physical health and the life of a male child are the primary concern for parents. Measles and chickenpox were considered the most dangerous diseases in the past, so it was the cause of great worry. They had a great concern with their male children and were worried about their health.

To express the necessity and desirability to have sons, a proverb that is usually used to this effect is: "*che mirhuna nawi halta koruna nawi*", which means that, "where there is no male child, there is no home." A similar proverb is: "*kam kor ki che naar awlaad naye nu kota ye wrana wakhla*" ("A home ought to be bulldozed, if it does not have a male child"). It is evident in these proverbs that the son is imperative to the family or home for the prolongation of the family and physical and financial support of the parents during old

age. The son can take care of the home and can continue the chain of the kinship. Another proverb says that: “*zwe da plarmla ye*” (“The son is the backbone of the father”), denoting that the son is the physical and financial support to the father, in ways that a daughter can never be. Another notable proverb is: “*Plar da zwe pa num yadegi aw zwe da plar pa num yadegi*” (“A father is remembered by the name of his son and a son is remembered by his father”) Similarly, there is another proverb which indicates the preference for a male child, “*dher bachi, dher izzat*” which means, “the more sons, the more social status.” It thus becomes evident that the connection between father and son is highlighted in these proverbs which show the patriarchy and male dominance among pashtun society. The father or other male member leads the family relations and public affairs which is difficult for female members in such a male dominant society.

Men and women both are encouraged to have male child. To this end, men are encouraged and advised to marry early or marry more women to have more children. A proverb is used to support this practice, “*wakhti fasal aw wakhti zaman behtara da*”, which means that, “early harvest and early sons are better.” Furthermore, there is another proverb: “*ka dhera ghala ghware nu fasal wakara aw ka dher bachi ghware nu wada waka*” which means, “grow more barley for more food and marry a woman, if you want more children.” In addition, there is another proverb which indicates son preference, “*zaman di salor we, kher de ka tor we*” which means, “it does not matter if sons are ugly but they should be at least four in numbers.”

Furthermore, among Pashtun society, the failure to produce a male child from the first wife is the most persuasive reason for the husband to divorce her, or to take a second wife (Hazarika 2000). A folk ritual, also observed in my own home, is that the moment a bride steps inside the home on her wedding day, a male child in the household is presented to her and removes the veil from her face. The bride offers money to child and she is required by tradition to take the child in her lap and play with him for some time. This is, in a way, a message to the bride that she must give birth to a son as early as possible. Infertile women are discouraged against contact with the new bride because a barren woman is thought to be inauspicious and a harbinger of bad luck and barrenness to other women (Srivastava 1991). Similarly, one folk proverb which points out the importance of sons for the mother is, “*nar bachay da kor hagma qemati khazana da kam che khaza zan sara sati*”, which means that, “a son is a precious treasure, which a woman should keep with herself.” This implies that a male child provides a strong foothold to the woman in the husband’s house. A male child is also considered a hidden treasure in the house, which is exemplified by the following famous proverb, “*zwan pa ero ki pat laal de*.” The proverbs mean that, “a male child is a hidden treasure” and he can attain success at any point will pay back his parents, and will overcome their family economic and financial expenses.

Moreover, Young (1984) in her study the ethnographic and theoretical focus are Kutchi women's perceptions of gender and caste identity. The ideology and practice of female seclusion being powerful on the Indian subcontinent, and perhaps especially in Pakistan, Kutchi women are isolated and encapsulated within their villages. She notes that the strongest woman in the household is usually the one having the most male children, and in old age, the sons become even more important as the mother lives with the sons. One proverb indicates that women are in a kind of competition with other women to produce a son: “*it is easy to compete in any other thing except in producing a male child.*” In some

cases where a man has two wives, wives enter into a competition to see who can produce the most sons. By having more children, one wife can dominate the household and perhaps eventually drive the other wife to her natal home in shame (Lindholm, 2008).

Girls, on the other hand, are generally despised, devalued and considered a burden. The family is highly conscious that a female belongs to another (her future husband), and is therefore a temporary visitor in the house (Hakim & Aziz 1998). An example of a Pashto proverb that reflects this kind of thinking is: *“lur loyawal da pradi kor dapara khwari da”* which means, “to raise a daughter is to toil for another household.” In a similar vein, the proverb, *“lur da pradi kor amanat de”*, means, “a daughter belongs to someone else’s household.” What is alluded to here is that investment in a female child is in vain since she will inevitably marry and leave the household for that of her future husband. This is why families generally do not invest much in the education and other activities of their female children, which is also one of the main reasons for the high female illiteracy rate. Additionally, one of the respondents quoted the following proverbs: *“hasi nasty na lur rawral kha di”*, which means, “it is better to give birth to a female child than sitting idle.” Here, society considers giving birth to a child, either male or female, is better because people will stigmatize them as infertile. Due to stigmatisation parents prefer a child over no children at all.

The above quoted examples clearly show the preference for male children. Only few proverbs speak positively of daughters, such as: *“da lur sa kor nematuna razi”* which means, “giving birth to a female child, brings blessings to the home.” Another example is: *“da lur sa qismat badlegi”* which means, “a daughter brings good fortune.” Although sons are celebrated for the various reasons discussed above, it is the daughter who is thought to be more reliably available in times of need. It is said that: *“zaman jayedad taqseemai aw luryani da mor ao plar ghamuna”* which means, “the sons divide the property of their parents while the daughters divide their sorrows.” Similarly, *“luryani hamesha da mor ao plar ghum khadi ki pakar razi”* which means, “daughters are always available to share the joys and sorrows of their parents.” These two proverbs have a similar theme. When their parents face hardships throughout their lives, their daughters take care of them, by feeding them meals and massaging their heads and feet.

In short, folk proverbs among Pashtun society and rituals depict sons as more valuable than girls for various social and economic reasons; male and female children are discriminated between from conception to old age; and a lack of sons has severe consequences for both parents, especially the mother.

Exercise of Control and Authority

The exercise of control and authority on women is considered an essential part of patriarchy and has been highlighted by various scholars. As indicated by Isran (2012) in South Asian countries and particularly Pakistan, there are various social controls applied to regulate women’s social and economic behavior at different levels of society. The main cause of women’s subordination is patriarchy, which is the most systematic and central form of control.

According to Barth’s study (1959: 22) of the patriarchal power structures in Pashtun families, father and husband occupy the super-ordinate role; they control all the social interactions of the household members to the extent of being able, at his discretion, deny

his wife any contact with her natal family. The husband controls the behavior of his wife and controls the property as well. He is considered the household head and has the formal right to break up the household unit at any time. He also has the right to force family members to move out of the home by divorce or by disinheriting his children.

The patriarchal structure in Pashtun society and violence against women has been emphasized by different scholars. As indicated by the investigation of Schular et al (2008) the most widely recognized type of brutality and violence against women occurs at the domestic level within their families, principally within marital relations. Also, gender-based violence against women in Pakistan takes a wide range of structures, yet the common form is physical spousal abuse which, as indicated by some studies, is higher among Pashtuns than among other ethnic groups in Pakistan (Fikree et al. 2005).

Most often violence against women occurs when male family members want to control household matters and may take numerous forms, for instance, spousal abuse, forced marriage, child marriage, and honor killings (Critelli, 2010). A case study by Qureshi et al. (2008, 419) of domestic violence Karachi found that the husband was the sole perpetrator in 88% of violence, most often with the connivance of other family members of the household. However in 58% of cases the husband alone was involved. Among the other perpetrators, the mother-in-law (15%) was the next most common abuser, in concert with her daughter(s) or other son(s). Mothers-in-law provoked or initiated violence against the victim by complaining to the husband. A few Pakistani women accept their circumstances as fate, and bear the burden of violence since they fear losing the help of their family, community and husband and at last, for family respect. As indicated in the study by the government of Punjab, Pakistan in 2001, 42% of women accepted violence and brutality as a part of their fate; 33% felt excessively vulnerable and helpless to ask for their rights, 19% challenged and 4% made a move against it (Government of Punjab, Pakistan in Amnesty International 2004). Additionally, spousal abuse in Pakistan is socially as well as religiously sanctioned. Violence against women is typically inserted inside male centric discourse and is commonplace among Pashtun households as well as in wider Pakistani society (Walby 1990).

Furthermore, in connection to violence and brutality against women, different kinds of proverbs have been used to exercise control and authority. For instance, a proverb is used which suggests that: "*da khazi kheta daka sata ao makh ye da saphery landi*" ("A woman's belly should be full of food and her face should be under a slap"). A husband's primary responsibility is to nourish his wife, but he should also remain vigilant that she does not transgress the limits on her conduct prescribed to her by society. This grants her husband the right to beat her if she disobeys him. Similarly, one proverb says that: "*che yeo sare da zan nawi nu da jehan ba sawi*" which means "If a man cannot handle his home, how can he handle the community." This proverb demonstrates that, the control of one's house is the prerequisite for a man to be accepted as a responsible man of a household and in the public sphere. As mentioned in the previous section, men often use violence against women to keep them subordinate, and do not allow them to interfere in domestic matters. This proverb sums up perfectly how the ideal construction of masculinity incorporates one's capacity to maintain control over the household. This normally implies teaching women and offspring of the family unit, which regularly includes the risk or genuine utilization of power.

Additionally, some other proverbs were identified which broach the issue of physical violence against women: "*masta khaza pa lata samegi*" which means, "a man's kick is the solution of a tough woman." Similarly, a famous proverb which is commonly used to control women is, "*ka sta adat badal nashi, nu zama pa laas lawar ba shi*", the meaning of this proverb is that "if you do not adhere to your (bad) habit, I will take my stick." These proverbs demonstrate that wife beating is considered the due right of men but they also show that the man's last recourse for a disobedient wife is to beat her and throw her out of the house. The second proverb provides a warning to women to behave themselves, and should they fail to, their husbands have the authority to beat them.

There are also some proverbs which are generally used on a daily basis which support violence and which most often are also used to exercise power and control over women like; the most general folk proverb recited to support physical violence is "*charta dab we halta adab we*" which signifies "Where there is a stick, there is discipline." It is man's responsibility to discipline and manage control. For which purpose he may exercise violent means. Similarly, one of the respondents quoted a proverb: "*kaga jama pa sook samegi*" ("a crooked jaw can be fixed with a punch"). This proverb is utilized regularly when someone speaks disrespectfully or abusively, which risks stoking a physical confrontation. Yet is applicable to all sorts of circumstances and situations in which discipline is required.

In spite of the fact that exercise of control by spouse beating and different types of violence against women are common among Pashtun society, yet a few folk proverbs advocate an increasingly conscious type of masculinity that expects men to practice moral instead of physical command over their wives. Connell (1995) has recommended that not all men use violence to keep up power or predominance over women, and that the meaning of masculinity changes from time to time. Beating one's wife is not a heroic act, as courageous violence in the Pashtun setting occurs among men and much more so between equivalents. This part of masculinity can be gauged from a couple of Pashto folk proverbs, for instance, "*Nor dha ghro sar wahi, namarda khpal tabar.*" which means that, "A real man climbs on mountains peaks and a coward beats his wife in his house." This proverb contains the possibility that beating one's wife is a demonstration of weakness and cowardice indicates a man's failure in public spheres. Similarly, one proverb expressly says that: "*da bahar begherata pa kor ki nar wi*" which means that, "a man who is dreadful outside his door is valorous inside the home." Thus, this proverb also demonstrates that, spouse beating is an indication of weakness and cowardice, a component of underestimated masculinity. If we understand that not all proverbs are wise and true and understand the context of proverbs, like the above mentioned proverbs which advocate a more respectful form of masculinity where men do not use physical violence against their wives and if we understand that the act of beating is cowardice then it will help in promoting peaceful domestic life,

Conclusion

This study found that Pashto folk proverbs reflect the gender segregated gender relations that prevail in Pashtun society, as embodied in *Pashtunwali*. Pashto folk proverbs are ideological tools for propagation of gender relations. The authorship of Pashto proverbs seems to be unequal, with the perspective betraying the likelihood that most were originated from men. This is accomplished principally by limiting and constricting

women to domestic circles mainly through the social norm of *pardah* (seclusion). The power structure is likewise gendered with negligible space allocated for women. Pashto folk proverbs assume an important role in the socialization of gender with regards to Pashtun society. They portray different roles and events and furthermore, divide and segregate men and women on plainly characterized gender lines. Men are associated to be brave, fearless, intelligent and bold, while women are taught to support and help men which shows that proverbs can be considered a display of power and social status. The proverbs suggest and confirm that decision-making power and the exercise of social control and authority must rest solely with men while women must extemporize to find ways and means to add comfort to their men at homes and are not allowed in public spheres.

In the light of this study the educated and younger participants reported less proverbs and peasants reported more proverbs. Young participants reported more vulgar proverbs about women's sexuality, which demonstrates the sexual objectification of women and women are considered sexually attractive, delicate and powerless. The investigation demonstrates that women are negatively represented in Pashto folk proverbs which stand in stark contrast to the portrayal of men. It is noteworthy to discuss that there are other genres in Pashtun folklore that convey altogether different representations of women. No single genre tells the whole story of a community social structure and values. Beside proverbs, there are others genres, such as folk songs, folk tales, folk *tappas*, riddles that represent other equally indigenous perspectives on social values and human character. Proverbs are a primary source of expression of *Pashtunwali* and contribute significantly to its constitution, if we comprehended it in a positive way and understand its context alongside other genres.

Folklore is a powerful means for building an aggregate identity. Using the genre of folk proverbs in a positive context can lead to nation building and integrated community. It is also important to that, that proverbs originate in indigenous culture and are transmitted by its individuals and they are more often wrongly contextualized by its individuals. Folk proverbs are considered true and wise but the question is for how long will they be considered true and wise? Most of the proverbs portray a negative image of women; do they help in promoting a unified and integrated nation? Is it necessary to change those proverbs which represent negative image of women? How will we educate our new generations that most proverbs promote inequalities and sexism? Besides proverbs we should also note that those who spread positive messages like the message of one of the most famous personalities in Pashtun society Bacha Khan, who wrote in his book *Zama Jwand ao Jadu Jehad (My life and Struggle)* about the rights of women, particularly about their education, marriage, child marriages and social status, should be introduced to the new generation. His famous quote, "*if you wish to know how civilized a culture is, look at how they treat their women*" can change the attitude and behavior of many people in a positive way, which is very necessary for nation building and a unified community.

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