

**Workshop on ‘From “Developmental” to “Cultural” Nationalism in Asia
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The ‘Shariatization’ of Pakistani Nationalism

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The aim of the workshop:

- to cast doubt on the proposition that globalization has weakened all forms of nationalism and to focus attention on the emergence of a new kind of “cultural” nationalism in Asia that has effectively replaced classical 20th century “developmental” nationalisms.

What’s interesting about Pakistan in this regard?

- **first**, the trajectory of Pakistani nationalism does not appear to fit easily within the stated trajectory assumed by these workshops, i.e., the movement away from “developmental” to “cultural” nationalism. Why not? Because the kind of nationalism upon which Pakistan was predicated, i.e. Muslim nationalism, was from the outset a *cultural* phenomenon concerned pre-eminently with the issue of identity. Although it took shape, along with most other Asian nationalisms in the context of imperialism, the overriding concern with the question of Muslim identity meant that “developmental” discussions centring on the economy or the future orientation of the new state necessarily assumed secondary importance. In more senses than one, it might even be argued that Pakistan is “trapped” within the parameters of a cultural nationalism that remains preoccupied by the question of identity, in this case, the precise relationship between being ‘Pakistani’ and being ‘Muslim’.

- **second**, the case of Pakistan suggests that some forms of cultural nationalism far from acting as forces of opposition to, and in reaction against, globalization, can actually converge with the processes of globalization. Recent years have witnessed the drive by some Islamist groups in Pakistan to ‘Shariatize’ the debate on national identity. Unlike ‘Islamization’, which has always been firmly rooted within the parameters of the nation-state (largely because of its association with ‘official’ Islam, especially in the 1980s), ‘Shariatization’ has tended to be ‘transnational’ in orientation, showing little or no apparent regard for territorial boundaries. As such it appears to be particularly in tune with the rhetoric of globalization. And yet, it is not from this rhetoric but from the discourse of traditional Islam with its belief in the transience and superficiality of ‘national’ divisions that the votaries of ‘Shariatization’ claim to draw their inspiration.

Several lines of investigation follow from these observations though the aim will be to tailor the enquiry as closely as possible to the main themes of the workshop.

I. What are the main characteristics of ‘Shariatization’, and how does it differ, if at all, from the more familiar process of ‘Islamization’ associated with Pakistan? Is ‘Shariatization’ to be studied primarily as a social process involving the cultural transformation of society (which would explain its apparent disregard for the ‘national’ state), or does it also embody political objectives that depend to some extent upon capturing the very ‘national’ state which it claims to reject?

II. Can ‘Shariatization’ usefully be described as a form of ‘popular’ Islam distinct from ‘official’ Islam or state-sponsored ‘Islamization’? And if so, does it represent

fundamental changes in Pakistan's social structure involving the rise of an 'indigenized' middle class that is now in competition with hitherto dominant westernized elites?

III. Is 'Shariatization' a uniquely Pakistani phenomenon, arising from the ideological bankruptcy of the 'two-nation theory' – Pakistan's founding idea – or does it also express more fundamental ideological tensions between Islam and nationalism of the kind anticipated by Muhammad Iqbal, Maulana Maududi and others?

IV. Which parts of the cultural system in Pakistan are most actively engaged in promoting 'Shariatization'? What in particular has been the role of the 'new-style' religious seminaries (*madrassas*) in Pakistan, oriented more to political activism than to religious learning, and how have they, if at all, contributed to the transmission of 'Shariatization'?

V. Does 'Shariatization' reflect a convergence between the hitherto conflicting interests of the traditional ulama and lay activists in Pakistan? Could they together supersede the state as the main exponents of 'Pakistani ideology'? If so, how do they reconcile the idea of a 'national' culture with the 'transnationalism' presupposed by 'Shariatization'?

VI. To what extent has 'Shariatization' in Pakistan been shaped by the rhetoric of 'global Islam' (eg. the internationalization of *jihad*, appeals to a universal *umma*), and how have state agents (eg. the army, political parties) facilitated this process of interaction?

VI. What kinds of changes are being wrought by the process of 'Shariatization' on the praetorian state in Pakistan? Could 'Shariatization' finally erode Pakistan's already fragile sense of national identity and presage the end of the nation-state?

