



INTERNATIONAL STUDIES CONFERENCE & SUMMER SCHOOL

BARAGALI, 2026

CONFERENCE THEME

**Pakistan and the Region Beyond: Navigating
Conflict, Geopolitical Flux, and Economic
Opportunities**

SUMMER SCHOOL

**Southwest Asian Horizons:
A Summer School on Regional Politics and
Diplomacy**



CONFERENCE & SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAM,
2026



8th – 19th July 2026



DOSTI



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INTERNATIONAL STUDIES CONFERENCE & SUMMER SCHOOL



BARAGALI, 2026

DETAILED PROGRAMME

Day One: July 8, 2026

- ❖ **8:00 AM** Departure from Peshawar
- ❖ **3:00 PM** Lunch
- ❖ **5:00 PM** Inaugural Session at Baragali Campus and Keynote Speech
- ❖ **6:00 PM** VCs Round Table on Higher Education
- ❖ **7:00 PM** Dinner

Day Two: July 9, 2026

- ❖ **7:00–8:15 AM** Breakfast
- ❖ **8:30–10:00 AM** Panel 1: Regional Geopolitics, Corridors, and Economic Opportunities
- ❖ **10:00–10:10 AM** DOSTI Welfare Foundation, Introductory Session
- ❖ **10:10–11:10 AM** Kyber-Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority, Introductory Session
- ❖ **11:10–11:30 AM** Refreshments
- ❖ **11:30–1:30 PM** Panel 2: The ICRC and the Importance of IHL in the Current Era
- ❖ **1:30–2:30 PM** Lunch
- ❖ **2:30–3:45 PM** Panel 3: Extremism, Propaganda, and Transnational Peacebuilding
- ❖ **7:00 PM** Dinner and Cultural Music

Day Three: July 10, 2026

- ❖ **7:00–8:15 AM** Breakfast
- ❖ **8:30–10:00 AM** Panel 4: Post-Coloniality, Cultural Sub-National Identity, and Local Resistance
- ❖ **10:00–11:30 AM** Panel 5: Gender, Pluralism, and Marginalized Rights
- ❖ **11:30 AM–12:00 PM** Refreshments
- ❖ **12:30–1:30 PM** Panel 6: Non-Traditional Security Threats: From Digital Sovereignty to Eco-Tourism and Climate Conflict
 - Book Launch Ceremony
 - Closing Ceremony
- ❖ **1:30–2:30 PM** Lunch
- ❖ **3:00 PM** Hiking Campus Track (Pipeline Track Hiking)
- ❖ **7:00 PM** Dinner and Cultural Music

Day Four: July 11, 2026

- ❖ **7:00 AM** Breakfast
- ❖ **8:00 AM** Hiking to Mushkpuri Top
- ❖ **3:00 PM** Departure for Peshawar, Islamabad, and Abbottabad

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***International Studies Conference & Summer School,
Baragali, 2026***

***Conference & Summer School Program, 2026
8 to 11 to 19 July, 2026***

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(<https://isc.uop.edu.pk>)

Concept Note

The 3rd International Studies Conference and Summer School 2026 represents an advanced milestone in high-level intellectual convening within the region. Scheduled from July 8 to July 19, 2026, at the historic Baragali Campus of the University of Peshawar, this dual-component event merges peer-reviewed scholarly exploration with specialized youth development. This initiative brings together leading global and regional scholars, practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and outstanding university students to address pressing shifts in Southwest and Central Asian international relations.

To maximize international development integration and support humanitarian accountability frameworks, the conference structures its focus directly around core donor-friendly mandates. By emphasizing social protections, structural non-discrimination, human dignity, and grassroots resilience, the event actively bridges abstract geopolitical analysis with measurable sustainable development goals.

Frontier regions and transitional spaces exist as highly complex global sub-systems. Historically serving as vital vectors for trade, cultural diffusion, and cross-border migration, they simultaneously absorb the heaviest impacts of geopolitical friction, irregular border movements, and non-state threats. The Pakistan-Afghanistan frontier stands as an critical global case study of these overlapping dynamics.

In the contemporary landscape, these vulnerabilities require targeted responses from both civil society organizations and academic networks. Addressing basic rights-based deficiencies, unequal institutional access among marginalized communities, and transboundary environmental stress is essential for long-term stabilization. Moving beyond narrow security definitions, this proposal advances a holistic human security model where community resilience, legal protection of fundamental human freedoms, and gender equality are cross-cutting prerequisites for regional peace.

Conference and Summer School Objectives

- **Multi-Disciplinary Deep Dive:** Deconstruct structural vulnerabilities, ethnic-social links, and local institutional patterns that govern transitional border environments.
- **Geopolitical Architecture Mapping:** Analyze shifting roles of major regional powers alongside localized security architectures in Southwest and Central Asia.
- **Migration & Human Security Optimization:** Build practical crisis-management and rights-based resource-sharing formulas to balance demographic movements with border safety.
- **Scientific Capacity Construction:** Train emerging scholars in empirical field practices, advanced policy brief design, and international humanitarian standard compliance.
- **Actionable Policy Delivery:** Produce concrete, donor-friendly, actionable policy metrics on cross-border development and community stabilization to guide planning agencies.
- **Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Frameworks:** Examine structural and socio-economic variables underlying radicalization patterns to build effective localized prevention mechanisms.

Detailed Programme
3rd International Studies Conference and Summer School

Dates: July 8 – July 11, 2026 (4 Days)

Atmosphere: Dynamic, scholarly, and network-heavy.

Day 1: July 8, 2026

Arrival & Opening Plenary

- **8:00 AM** | Departure from Peshawar
- **3:00 PM** | Lunch
- **5:00 PM** | Inaugural Session at Baragali Campus and Keynote Speech
- **6:00 PM** | Special Session, VCs Round Table on Higher Education
- **7:00 PM** | Dinner

Day 2: July 9, 2026

- **7:00- 8:15 AM** | Breakfast
- **8:30-10:00 AM** | Panel 1: **Regional Geopolitics, Corridors, and Economic Opportunities**
- **10:00-10:10 AM** | DOSTI Welfare Foundation, Introductory Session
- **10:10- 11:10 AM** | **Kyber-Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority, Introductory Session**
- **11:10- 11:30 AM** | Refreshments
- **11:30-1:30 PM** | Panel 2: **The ICRC and the Importance of IHL in the Current Era.**
- **1:30- 2:30 PM** | Lunch
- **2:30-3:45 PM** | Panel 3: **Extremism, Propaganda, and Transnational Peacebuilding**
- **7:00** | Dinner and Cultural Music

Day 3: July 10, 2026

- **7:00- 8:15 AM** | Breakfast
- **8:30-10:00 AM** | Panel 4: **Post-Coloniality, Cultural Sub-National Identity, and Local Resistance**
- **10:00- 11:30 AM** | Panel 5: **Gender, Pluralism, and Marginalized Rights**
- **11:30- 12:00 AM** | Refreshments
- **12:30-1:30 PM** | Panel 6: **Non-Traditional Security Threats: From Digital Sovereignty to Eco-Tourism and Climate Conflict**
 - Book Launch Ceremony, Urdu Science Board Lahore
 - Closing Ceremony
- **1:30- 2:30 PM** | Lunch
- **3:00 PM** | Hiking Campus track (Pipeline Track Hiking)
- **7:00 PM** | Dinner and Cultural Music

Phase 2: Exposure Day & Mental Reset

Day 4: July 11, 2026

- **07:00 AM** | Breakfast
- **8:00 AM** | Hiking to Mashpurai Top
- **3:00 PM** | Departure for Peshawar, Islamabad and Abbotabad

Detailed Programme
1st Academic Summer School, Baragali, 2026

Dates: July 12 – July 19, 2026 (7 Days)

Atmosphere: Highly interactive, balanced, clear, and focused (Strictly Max 3 Lectures/Day).

Mobile Phone Access Windows (Strict Digital Detox):

- **Morning Window:** 06:00 AM – 08:30 AM
- **Evening Window:** 05:30 PM – 07:00 PM
(Phones are checked into secure lockers outside these hours to ensure deep, undistracted intellectual engagement).

Module 1: Geopolitics, Regional Rivalries & Applied Bilateral Diplomacy

Module 2: Security, P/CVE, Radicalization and Polarization

Module 3: Human Security, Gender, Migration

Module 4: Climate Change & Environmental Security, and Tourism

Module 5: Identity and Culture

Module 6: Research and Skills Development

Module 7: Interfaith Harmony, Pluralism, and Dialogue

Specialized Youth Development & Technical Competency Matrix

Unlike standard academic conferences, every lecture and field track in this Summer School is paired with an explicit measurable leadership outcome to build a modern employable skill set for international affairs professionals.

1. Advanced Policy & Analytical Capabilities

- **Technical Policy Architecture:** Training youth leaders to synthesise extensive research data into concise, structured two-page actionable state memos tailored for government bodies international organisations and strategic think tanks.
- **Multidimensional Risk Profiling:** Equipping fellows with the quantitative and qualitative tools to combine climate hazard indexes with local political indicators to map regional threat vectors.

2. Behavioral, Mediation & Diplomatic Skills

- **Identity Mediation & Conflict De-escalation:** Developing practical active listening, multi-stakeholder dispute management and identity-sensitive framing to safely navigate polarised communities.
- **Cultural Intelligence (CQ) & Diplomatic Protocol:** Building high-level cross-cultural soft skills, standard institutional decorum and decolonial narrative fluency required for high-level international representation.

3. Digital & Community Leadership Tools

- **Digital Counter-Narrative Design:** Demystifying extremist digital pipelines to teach young professionals how to launch data-backed strategic communication campaigns that build community resilience.
- **Regenerative Field Auditing:** Training youth in ethnographic interview techniques local resource strain assessment and field verification methods in fragile mountain ecologies.

**Detailed Programme
Summer School, Baragali, 2026**

Day 5: July 12, 2026 –

- **Lecture Resource Person:** Dr. Muhammad Feyyaz, Minhaj University.
- **Lecture Resource Person:** Sana Hafeez, Deputy Secretary, KP Govt.
- **Lecture Resource Person:** Dr. Alamgir Khan, City Dublin University
- **(Fireside Chat)**
 - Informal open-air discussion under the stars with senior faculty.

Day 6: July 13, 2026:

- **Lecture Resource Person:** Prof. Hussain Shaheed Soherwordy, UOP.
- **Lecture Resource Person:** Hassan Farooq Mashwani, Minhaj University
- **Lecture Resource Person:** Dosti Welfare Organization
- **Dinner & Trivia Night:** Regional history, culture, and geopolitics pub quiz.

Day 7: July 14, 2026,

- **Lecture Resource Person:** Dr. Amir Ullah, Islamia College
- **Lecture Resource Person:** Dr. Irfan Mehsud, National Defense University, Islamabad
- **Dinner & Student Showcase:** Informal music, poetry, and storytelling shared by delegates.

Day 8: July 15, 2026:

- **Academic and Exposure Visits**

Day 9: July 16, 2026

- **Lecture Resource Person:** Dr. Shahida Aman, Dr. Ayub Jan & Dr. Shagufta Aman, Department of Political Science, University of Peshawar
- **Lecture Resource Person:** Dr. Sayed Asim Shah, Comsat University
- **Lecture Resource Person:** Dr. Rizwan Naseer, Institute of Regional Studies Islamabad
- **Campus to Kalabagh Hiking**
- **Dinner & Movie**

Day 10: July 17, 2026

- **Lecture Resource Person:** Dr. Ghazala Rafi, Islamia College.
- **Lecture Resource Person:** Umer Sheraz, COMSATS.
- **Synthesis Workshop: Collaborative Policy Hackathon**
- *Activity:* Final assembly of group policy briefs under senior faculty advisors.
- **Social Activities in the campus**

Day 11: July 18, 2026

- **Lecture Resource Person:** Dr. Abdus Samad, Kohsar University Murree
- **Capstone Presentations: Executive White Paper Showcase**
- *Activity:* Student groups present their briefs before a mock evaluation panel of planners.
- **Summer School Closing Ceremony & Certificate Presentation**
- *Details:* Distribution of completion certificates
- **Course Evaluations, Feedback Loops, and Alumni Sign-ups**
- **The Grand Baragali Barbecue Night & Live Traditional Music Gala.**

Day 12: July 19, 2026 – Official Checkout & Departure

- **09:30 AM**
 - **Coaster Fleet Departure:** Baragali Summer Campus back to designated regional hubs.

Panel 1: Regional Geopolitics, Corridors, and Economic Opportunities		
(Focuses on macro-level foreign policy, economic diplomacy, cross-border infrastructure, and bilateral crises)		
Presenter	Co- Authors	Paper Title
Muhammad Saeed	Adnan Saeed Sami Ullah	Migration, Foreign Remittances and Socio-Economic Development in District Upper Dir, Pakistan: A Qualitative Analysis of Household Transformations and Structural Constraints
Amina Munir		Navigating Geo-economic Fragmentation: Pakistan's Compliance, Hedging, and Economic Diplomacy in a Coercive Global Order
Inam Ullah	Sajjad Ahmad Jan & Kashif Saeed	Title: Understanding Vulnerability Beyond Disasters: Evidence from a Multidimensional District-Level Vulnerability Index in KP (2004-05 to 2019-20)
Hafiz Muhammad Khurram Ayub		From Partition to CPEC: Geopolitical Flux and Economic Corridors in South Asia's Post-Colonial History
Abdul Ghafar		New Great Game, Baluchistan and Politics of Corridors
Shagufta Aman	Muhammad Ayub Jan, Shahida Aman, Irfan Khan and Israr Ahmed	Analyzing Trends and Patterns in Regular Labour Migration from Pakistan to Germany, Finland, Greece, Ireland, and Italy (2015–2024)
Panel 2: The ICRC and the Importance of IHL in the Current Era		
Presenter		
Bruno Radicchi		Head of ICRC Sub Delegation
Zeeshan Anwar	Moderator	Communication Team Lead
Muhammad Imran	Speakers	ICRC Legal Advisor
Muhammad Usman	Speakers	Head of ICRC IHL Department Pakistan
Asmat Afridi	Speakers	ICRC Peshawar Management Representative
Prof. Hussain Shaheed Sohrawardi	Speakers	Director Regional Studies
Panel 3: Extremism, Propaganda, and Transnational Peacebuilding		
(Focuses on militant networks, information ecosystems, recruitment strategies (specifically regarding the TTP), and the cross-border dynamics of Afghanistan)		
Presenter	Co- Authors	Paper Title

Kashmala Dilawar	Shahid Ahmed Afridi	Militant Hubs Redefined: Analysis of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan through the Lens of Alliance Formation Theory.
Wajid Mehmood	Sajjad Hussain	The Aesthetic of Suffering and Martyrdom: Reframing Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan's Recruitment Strategies
Rizwan Naseer		Digital Ecosystem, Narrative Construction and Promotion: A. Case Study of TTP
Muhammad Ilyas		Understanding the Relationship Between Formality and Informality in the Policing Practices of Khyber as a State Periphery.
Imtiaz Ali		Indo-Pak Conflict Over Kashmir: Global Governance Gaps and the Promise of Conflict Resolution Theory

Panel 4: Post-Coloniality, Cultural Sub-National Identity, and Local Resistance

(Focuses on Pashtun and Baloch nationalist imaginations, historical memory, state-periphery power dynamics, and decolonial critiques)

Presenter	Co- Authors	Paper Title
Alamgir Khan	Christian Kaunert	Militancy, Militarisation and Marginalisation: The Predicament of Pakhtuns Living in the Former Tribal Areas of Pakistan
Asif Iqbal Dawar		Winning the battle, losing the peace: A critical analysis of tribal land conflicts and the resurgence of terrorism in former FATA
Raza Naeem	Gulshan Iqbal	The Voice of (a) Qalandar (Momand): Gramsci of the Khyber
Fazal Wahab		Selective Epistemic In/Justice: A Call for Decolonisation
Dr. Muhammad Feyyaz		Effects and Strategy of Counter Terrorism

Panel 5: Gender, Pluralism, and Marginalized Rights

(Focuses on civil protections, minority representation, the role of women in peacebuilding, and socio-economic displacement or migration)

Presenter	Co- Authors	Paper Title
Muhammad Ozair	Muhammad Riaz	The Feminization of Resistance in Balochistan: Baloch Nationalism in the Changing Geopolitical Landscape of Pakistan
Sapna Rahman	Muhammad Makki Najimdeen Bakare	Genderisation and Localisation of Peacebuilding: A Constructivist Paradigm and Discourse Analysis of the Opinion of Women in Swat
Tahira Saba		Religion, Difference, and Violence: Governing Pluralism in the Age of Moral Politics

Farae Naeem		State Response and the Politics of Identity: A Comparative Study of Balochistan And Northern Ireland
JAVED KHAN		Children Without a Country: Legal Identity and the Protection Gaps for Refugee Children in Pakistan
Panel 6: Non-Traditional Security Threats: From Digital Sovereignty to Eco-Tourism and Climate Conflict (Focuses on systemic, non-traditional security challenges—ranging from climate vulnerability and tribal land disputes to digital economies and regulatory gaps)		
Presenter	Co- Authors	Paper Title
Tahzeeb Mahreen		Climate Security and Regional Stability in South Asia: Policy Challenges and Opportunities for Pakistan
Muhammad Irfan Mahsud		Climate Change and Conflict in Pakistan: An Analysis of National Security Discourse
Musarat Amin	Fareena Habib	Digital currency, Regulatory Gaps and Security Threats in Pakistan
Kinza Tasleem Chaudhry		From Dependency to Digital Sovereignty: Pakistan in the Global South
Basit Ali		Strategic Stability and Crisis Management Mechanism: Emerging technologies and lessons from the Indo-Pakistan May conflict 2025
Izhar Ullah		Challenges to Ecotourism in Kohistan: A Political Ecology Analysis of the State–Capital Nexus

Migration, Foreign Remittances and Socio-Economic Development in District Upper Dir, Pakistan: A Qualitative Analysis of Household Transformations and Structural Constraints

Muhammad Saeed
Adnan Saeed
Sami Ullah
Abstract

International remittances have become a critical lifeline for households in marginalized regions of Pakistan, yet their developmental impacts remain contested. This qualitative study examines how foreign remittances shape socio-economic development in District Upper Dir, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa—a remittance-dependent region where over 60% of households receive international transfers. Drawing on 30 semi-structured household interviews and 10 key informant interviews, and employing thematic analysis informed by the New Economics of Labor Migration (NELM) framework, livelihood strategies theory, and social remittances perspectives, this study reveals a paradoxical pattern: while remittances significantly improve household-level welfare outcomes, including educational access, healthcare utilization, and housing quality, they simultaneously reinforce pre-existing gender inequalities, create dependency dynamics, and fail to catalyze broader community-level development. Findings reveal that remittances operate as consumption-smoothing mechanisms rather than productive investments, with minimal entrepreneurial activity and persistent governance distrust limiting collective infrastructure

development. Gender analysis reveals that patriarchal norms mediate remittance allocation, with girls receiving substantially less educational investment and women exercising limited financial autonomy. This study contributes to migration-development debates by demonstrating how remittances' developmental potential is constrained by intersecting structural barriers, including weak governance, entrenched gender norms, and limited financial literacy, and argues for complementary policy interventions that address these institutional deficits to transform remittances from survival mechanisms into sustainable development catalysts.

Keywords: international remittances, migration and development, gender inequality, Pakistan, qualitative research, livelihood strategies, Upper Dir

Navigating Geo-economic Fragmentation: Pakistan's Compliance, Hedging, and Economic Diplomacy in a Coercive Global Order

Amina Munir

Abstract

Sanctions, financial governance, regulatory standards, and forms of economic coercion, mediated through networks, mediate geo-economic competition. Prior literature on the exploitation of financial hubs by powerful states is abundant, but little is said about how vulnerable states can remain autonomous and access resources in these hubs. The paper critically constructs a theoretical model of how vulnerable states deal with external economic risk amid geopolitical fragmentation and uncertainty about sanctions, called Compliance-Buffered Adaptive Geo-economic Hedging (CB-AGEH). The thesis is that exposure to network coercion rewards a two-pronged policy, states invest in a compliance buffer, that is, institutional, legal, and reputational mechanisms that make them continue to be part of the dominant financial networks, but have a diversified economic relationship that makes them less reliant on any one patron or channel. Compliance buffering facilitates hedging by reducing the threat of ostracism from global financial systems; the credibility of regulation is converted into a strategic asset. The framework not only expands the hedging theory outside of the alliance politics, but also links the scholarship on sanctions to economic governance, and redefines complex interdependence in the times of politicised interdependence. Qualitative study design will trace the process of economic diplomacy in Pakistan empirically, in relation to moments of engagement in the multilateral programs, financial governance reform, connectivity negotiations, and sanctions-proximate energy policy. The study will contribute to redefining geo-economic statecraft in terms of constrained states, establish compliance capacity as a procedure connecting international financial governance with foreign policy conduct, and define circumstances in which hedging is practicable. Policy implications include regulatory credibility, sanctions-risk regulation, and flexibility in connectivity as the instrument to find its way in an increasingly coercive international political economy.

Keywords: Geo-Economics, sanctions, weaponised interdependence, hedging, AML/CFT, Pakistan, financial fragmentation.

Understanding Vulnerability Beyond Disasters: Evidence from a Multidimensional District-Level Vulnerability Index in KP (2004-05 to 2019-20)

Inam Ullah

Sajjad Ahmad Jan

Kashif Saeed

Abstract

This study constructs a District Vulnerability Index (DVI) to inspect the spatial and temporal dynamics of vulnerability across districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, for a long and extended period i.e 2004–05 to 2019–20. Beyond conventional income-based assessments we adopt a multidimensional framework encompassing three core components exposure, sensitivity and adaptive capacity. A wide-range set of indicators is selected within each dimension to determine disaster risks, socio-economic fragility and coping or resilience capacity at the district level.

To ensure comparability through indicators with different units of measurement and scales, variables are transformed through min–max normalization method, normalizing values between 0 and 1. Dimension wise indices are then calculated by averaging the normalized indicators of each dimension. The adaptive capacity index is inversely (1-adaptive) incorporated to reflect its role in vulnerability. The DVI is constructed as a combined measure by integrating all three dimensions.

The results show important spatial heterogeneity and temporal evolution in vulnerability throughout districts. Districts characterized by high exposure to natural hazards, weak infrastructure, and limited institutional capacity exhibit persistently high vulnerability, whereas comparatively developed districts exhibit lower vulnerability levels. The findings further show that progresses in adaptive capacity play a critical role in reducing overall vulnerability as deficiency in Adaptive capacity at district level accounts for 60–68% of total vulnerability, although progress remains uneven across regions.

The study contributes to the literature by providing a district-level, longitudinal vulnerability assessment using a consistent methodological framework. The findings offer important policy insights for targeted, place based interventions, highlighting the need for strengthening institutional coordination, enhancing adaptive capacity, and addressing structural disparities to build climate-resilient and inclusive development pathways in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Keywords: district vulnerability index; Adaptive, exposure and sensitivity

From Partition to CPEC: Geopolitical Flux and Economic Corridors in South Asia's Post-Colonial History

Hafiz Muhammad Khurram Ayub

Abstract

Post-colonial South Asia has undergone significant changes due to the partition, which divided infrastructure, population, and resources, while creating long-term mistrust and barriers to regional integration. However, these upheavals did not diminish the importance of trade or the region's trade routes. For this reason, there have been few attempts to resume ties among regional powers, such as the 1960 Indus Water Treaty, the establishment of Eco/SAARC, and the 1990s–2000s Gwadar port development (an early maritime corridor idea), but most of these efforts have failed. The resulting geopolitical flux is filled with colonial legacies (arbitrary borders, divided rivers, the Kashmir issue, and nuclearization) and, significantly, Cold War and post-Cold War events (Afghan war and 9/11). At the same time, there are occasional openings for regional cooperation with the support of great powers (e.g., US mediation in the Indus Treaty, the Soviet Union's Tashkent Agreement, and Chinese investment in Gwadar/CPEC). The latest development, the CPEC project, a result of Pak-China cooperation, offers potential to overcome historical barriers and serves as a new platform for regional cooperation. This paper compares past failures with CPEC and assesses whether CPEC can succeed or fail like previous ones. It examines whether it will serve as a new platform for regional cooperation, open a Pandora's box of fresh tensions for South Asian countries, or remain largely insignificant.

New Great Game, Baluchistan and Politics of Corridors

Abdul Ghafar

Abstract

In light of the regional and global realignments, economic and security architectures in Baluchistan have gained a renewed geopolitical significance for peace, security and economic development in the region. The strategic re-emergence of Baluchistan as a pivotal theater in the twenty-first century new Great Game is characterized by competing economic and transit corridors. Sino-centric connectivity under China Pakistan Economic Corridor; Indo-Russian collaboration under International North South Transit Corridor; American centric Trump Road for International Peace (TRIP), Iran's Chabahar Port and Eurasian consolidation plan under the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) signifies the "competitive connectivity" strategies that pursue rival infrastructure projects embodying deeper strategic rivalries. Competing corridors reflect divergent visions of regional order. Therefore, this paper examines how Baluchistan's strategic location has transformed it into the epicenter of overlapping connectivity initiatives, arguing that the region's significance derives not only from its intrinsic resources but its function as the geographic hinge connecting South Asia, Central Asia, Middle East, Africa and the Indian Ocean littoral states. The paper conceptualizes the "Politics of Corridors" as a framework for understanding how infrastructure initiatives serve as instruments of geopolitical influence, economic statecraft, and territorial reordering. Whether connectivity translates into shared prosperity or deepens existing patterns of marginalization, the region's future hangs in the balance between integration and fragmentation. In Baluchistan and the broader Corridoristan, geopolitics of economic integration and connectivity intertwine with local grievances, resource nationalism, and security dynamics exemplifies that infrastructure is not merely developmental but deeply political.

Keyword: Baluchistan, Corridors, New Great Game, Politics of Corridors, Competing Infrastructure.

Analyzing Trends and Patterns in Regular Labour Migration from Pakistan to Germany, Finland, Greece, Ireland, and Italy (2015–2024)

Muhammad Ayub Jan, Shagufta Aman, Shahida Aman, Irfan Khan and Israr Ahmed

Abstract

Regular labour migration plays a crucial role in Pakistan's socio-economic development by delivering essential remittances and enabling upward mobility for hundreds of thousands of Pakistani families. Consequently, the Pakistani government is actively encouraging legal labour migration, aligning with destination countries' needs, especially during periods of significant labour shortages. While most Pakistani migrants typically head to GCC countries, an increasing number are now exploring European nations for better, more stable employment opportunities. This trend is supported by government efforts to diversify destinations and reduce reliance on a few GCC nations, as well as by the EU-Pakistan Talent Partnership initiative, which aims to promote legal, safe, and mutually beneficial labour mobility. This initiative addresses Europe's demographic challenges and labour market needs while fostering Pakistan's human capital development. It is essential to examine these emerging migration trends to EU countries participating in the EU-Pakistan Talent Partnership—namely, Germany, Greece, Italy, and Finland—with Ireland as an observer. These countries account for a significant share of Pakistani labour migration to the EU. In 2024, Germany, Greece, Italy, and Finland issued 73.23% of all EU Blue Card permits for highly skilled workers and 61.68% of EU seasonal work permits. Despite representing only 15.4% of EU employment permits in 2024, these countries granted about 40.81% of all first-time employment permits to Pakistanis across the EU. This paper analyzes labour migration flows from Pakistan to Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, and Italy over ten years (2015–2024), based on data from work permits issued by the selected EU member states to Pakistanis. It explores how these nations

address labour shortages by employing Pakistani workers through various permits. Using Eurostat big data, it analyses trends in the issuance of work permits to Pakistanis from 2015 to 2024 to draw conclusions. To our knowledge, there are no studies on Pakistani-EU labour migration utilizing such extensive data. These datasets are invaluable for understanding migration trends and provide essential insights into how EU destination countries manage labour migration. This makes our work unique and insightful. Analysis shows that from 2015 to 2024, the migration landscape from Pakistan to the EU experienced a major shift in approach. Previously focused on unspecified forms of residence, including humanitarian reasons, the trend has moved towards more targeted and regulated labour migration. In 2024, Greece issued five times more employment permits to Pakistanis. Germany doubled the number of Blue Cards given to Pakistanis since 2015, and Italy increased seasonal work permits for low-skilled Pakistani migrants by 87.8 times from 2017 to 2024. Our analysis aims to inform improvements to legal labour migration policies for EU member states through comprehensive big data analysis.

Militant Hubs Redefined: Analysis of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan through the Lens of Alliance Formation Theory.

Kashmala Dilawar
Shahid Ahmed Afridi

Abstract

The establishment of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) in 2021, following the Afghan Taliban's capture of governmental authority, has introduced profound challenges to contemporary counter-terrorism paradigms. By transitioning from insurgency to de facto governance, the IEA has evolved into a state-based militant hub, distinct from traditional non-state alliance hubs such as Al-Qaeda or the Islamic State. With territorial control, access to state resources, and institutional authority, it provides structural stability and operational depth previously unavailable to militant networks. This study analyzes the IEA's role as a central node for regional groups including Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), and Al-Qaeda. Drawing on Tricia Bacon's theory of alliance hubs and alliance formation, it argues that the IEA exhibits the defining characteristics of a state-based militant alliance hub. The analysis operationalizes three interdependent causal mechanisms—organizational needs, identity affinity, and trust—to explain why and how these groups align with the IEA. Using qualitative evidence from UN Security Council and SIGAR reports, World Bank data, media sources, and practitioner interviews, the study evaluates the IEA's hub function. Findings indicate that the IEA fulfills allies' organizational needs through territorial sanctuary, financial resilience, and varying degrees of military integration, thereby reinforcing trust. Identity affinity operates as an ideological filter delineating alliance boundaries. Furthermore, the study bridges theoretical gaps by drawing on the theories of Daniel Byman and David Galula, arguing that IEA's informal support is as vital to militant survival as active support. Finally, it concludes that the IEA employs these alliances as a strategic pre-emptive measure to prevent regional groups from defecting to rivals like IS-K. Ultimately, the IEA's state-based hub model rejuvenates regional militant capacity, presenting a novel challenge to counter-terrorism frameworks designed primarily for non-state threats.

Keywords: Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, alliances, state-based militant hub, counter-terrorism, terrorist alliance, militant cooperation.

THE AESTHETIC OF SUFFERING AND MARTYRDOM: AN ANALYSIS OF TEHREEK-E-TALIBAN PAKISTAN'S RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

Wajid Mehmood

Sajjad Hussain

Abstract

Why do martyrdom and narratives of suffering occupy a central position in the militant recruitment? This paper aims to explore the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) recruitment strategies in the erstwhile FATA region. It argues that the recruitment process/strategies of the militant organization cannot simply be understood with the Lense of religion, ideology or material gains rather as an emotional project and aesthetic. This aestheticization in turns transform political violence into moral obligation. TTP projects martyrdom as lofty ideals tightly linked with emotions, which is a central aspect of their narrative construction. The paper engages the theory of narrative construction and draws its conclusion from Ricoeur's (1984) "emplotment" concept. It describes how displacement, military operations, violence, political and social marginalization are being framed into "moral capital". They transform grievance into sanctified obligation and death into transcendence; thereby becoming highest aesthetic and ethical expression. Along with the narrative construction theory it also engages the concept of moral economy by E.P. Thompson (1971) and postcolonial borderland theories. Methodology of the paper is based on qualitative discourse analysis. Data is collected from TTP statements, sermons and propaganda materials and global jihadist imaginaries.

Digital Ecosystem, Narrative Construction and Promotion: A Case Study of TTP

Rizwan Naseer

Abstract

Terrorist organizations have switched to the digital domain to put forth their narrative to justify their acts of violence and continue recruitment. This struggle helps them to gain public attention and shape public perception. This paper is an attempt to highlight the sophisticated propaganda ecosystem of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) which combines their traditional method of narrative construction with modern digital tools. There are three main pillars of extremist narratives: (i) Legitimization of their acts of violence, (ii) Construction of their identity, and (iii) Mobilization of their assets. In this study, TTP's media outlets including officially declared and semi-official outlets will be discussed through the lens of narrative construction, promotion, and countering the Pakistani government's narrative. TTP's media outlets like Umar Media have made effective use of Twitter/X, Telegram, YouTube, Facebook, and multiple encrypted messaging applications and social media platforms. In traditional narrative struggle, magazines in both Urdu and Pashto have been used and shared on numerous users' personal phones through file-sharing links. This paper is an attempt to answer the question: "How does TTP construct and promote its narrative through digital platforms despite the numerous checks placed on it?". Similarly, videos of acts of violence, messages of their fighters glorifying violence, and documentary-style videos have been shared on a large number of people's phones to reach ever-wider audiences. TTP's websites have been taken down multiple times, yet they continue to re-emerge, projecting a so-called digital resilience. TTP's modus operandi of narrative construction and promotion includes religious symbolism, anti-state sentiment, the advocacy for establishing a so-called Khilafat and the overthrow of Pakistan's government, the targeting of marginalized youth, and the justification of violence. This paper employs qualitative content analysis and discourse analysis; secondary data sourced from TTP propaganda materials as documented in academic literature, policy reports, and conflict monitoring databases underpins the analysis. The findings illuminate the methods TTP employs in using the digital domain to promote its narrative. The paper concludes with recommendations for counter-narrative strategies for the Government of Pakistan.

Keywords: Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, Strategic Communication, Narrative Warfare, Counter-Narrative Strategy, Pakistan's Security

Hybrid Policing in a State Periphery: Formal–Informal Institutional Interaction in Post-Merger Khyber

Muhammad Ilyas

Abstract

Why do informal policing practices persist, and indeed function, even after the formal integration of state institutions in peripheral regions? This paper examines this question through the case of District Khyber, Pakistan, following its incorporation into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under the 25th Constitutional Amendment of 2018. Applying neo-institutionalism as an analytical lens and drawing specifically on Helmke and Levitsky's typology of formal-informal institutional interaction, the study investigates how formal and informal policing systems interact in a newly merged tribal district with deep roots in customary governance. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with police personnel, experts, and local leadership across all four Tehsils of Khyber, and analysed thematically using NVivo. The findings reveal that informal institutions, particularly *jirga*-based dispute resolution and customary law, are not displaced by formal policing but interact with it through complementarity, accommodation, and selective substitution. Institutionalized arrangements such as Dispute Resolution Councils, elder-led bodies operating within police stations, exemplify how hybrid formal-informal interfaces have been pragmatically constructed by both state and community actors. The paper concludes that policing in Khyber constitutes a functional hybrid model rather than a defective formal system and argues that official recognition and deliberate institutionalization of this model is essential for effective and legitimate governance in Pakistan's newly merged districts.

Keywords: Policing; Khyber; State peripheries; Hybrid governance; Neo-institutionalism

Indo-Pak Conflict Over Kashmir: Global Governance Gaps and the Promise of Conflict Resolution Theory

Imtiaz Ali

Abstract

The recent four-day war (7-10 May 2025) between India and Pakistan is a critical reflection that the Kashmir conflict continues to endanger regional stability and the human security of millions. The Kashmir dispute is one of the longest unresolved conflicts on the United Nations Security Council agenda and stands as a critical test case for the effectiveness of global governance in managing violent interstate disputes. Although global governance frameworks comprising international institutions, regimes, and legal norms were designed to enhance cooperation and mitigate conflict, their record in Kashmir has been largely confined to crisis management rather than conflict resolution. This paper argues that the persistence of the Kashmir conflict reflects not merely diplomatic failure, but deeper structural and conceptual limitations of global governance, particularly its reliance on legal-institutional mechanisms that treat the conflict as a technical territorial dispute while neglecting its socio-psychological and identity-based dimensions. While ceasefires, resolutions, and mediation efforts have prevented sustained large-scale war, they have not altered the underlying dynamics that reproduce hostility, mistrust, and violence.

Militancy, Militarisation and Marginalisation: The Predicament of Pakhtuns Living in the Former Tribal Areas of Pakistan

Alamgir Khan

Christian Kaunert

Abstract

This study investigates the predicament of the people of the former tribal areas of Pakistan, who have been caught between militancy and militarisation. After the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan in 2021, the area has experienced an alarming increase in terrorist violence, leading the government to announce a new military operation, Azm-e-Istehkam. However, the people of the area have voiced strong protests against the new military operation because the destruction of previous operations still haunts them. Conducting a new military offensive without the support of the people may further contribute to the grievances of the people and increase support for militants. It is also likely that the insurgents will further increase their control over the area without an effective counter-strategy. Based on the analysis of the existing counterinsurgency literature and Pakistan's military campaigns after 9/11, we argue that the government needs to revisit its strategy regarding militancy while addressing the grievances of the people. Without restoring the trust of the people and obtaining their support, any new military campaign will only worsen the existing security situation.

Winning the battle, losing the peace: A critical analysis of tribal land conflicts and the resurgence of terrorism in former FATA

Dr. Asif Iqbal Dawar

Abstract

This paper argues that unresolved land disputes among tribes became a critical but understudied factor in the resurgence of terrorism in the region. This study asks: In what ways did post-displacement return processes **reshape land ownership patterns and trigger renewed land disputes in the region?** And how did tribal land conflicts reshape the relationship between tribes and militant groups, generate social legitimacy in the eyes of local communities, and ultimately facilitate the resurgence of terrorism in the region? The displacement and repatriation of populations after military operations disrupted traditional patterns of land ownership and tribal authority. In the absence of a functional judicial system and effective civil governance, longstanding and newly emerging land conflicts intensified. This governance deficit created an opportunity for militant to strategically reposition themselves in the region. By arbitrating land conflicts militants gained renewed social legitimacy, embedded themselves within local grievance structures, and reconstructed their influence in the region. By reframing militancy as a by-product of unresolved local conflict rather than solely ideological extremism, this paper challenges dominant security-centric narratives. It contends that unless land reforms are institutionalized effectively, tribal conflict will continue to provide fertile ground for militant re-entrenchment in Pakistan's former tribal districts.

The Voice of (a) Qalandar (Momand): Gramsci of the Khyber

Raza Naeem

Dr Gulshan Iqbal

Abstract

The journey of my life is incomplete

My spirit is a blazing flame, passion

My faith is affection, friendship and love

My politics is hatred for every oppressor

Qalandar Momand

Qalandar Momand (1930-2003) is one of the greatest Pashto writers of the 20th century. *Sabaun* (Daybreak) is one of his landmark poetic collections, published in 1976, 50 years ago this year. In this

collection, Momand embarks on multiple journeys from the sorrows of the beloved to sorrows of the world. Whether he is negotiating the challenging stages of meeting and separating with the beloved, or lamenting the plight of his Pakhtun homeland; or camping in Ho Chi Minh's Vietnam, mourning the loss of departed comrades like Sahibzada Aslam Khan and Kakaji Sanober or worried about the miseries of the workers of the world, *Sabaun's* poetry is for the people and soil of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, so that Momand has declared openly, "My sight does not go beyond Khyber Pakhtunkhwa." Based on original translations from *Sabaun* in English on the occasion of the golden jubilee of the book's publication this year, the paper relates Momand's classic poetic collection to themes of resistance (against state hegemony), peace and violence with the borderlands. However the volume also contains pure poetry and romantic poetry. Thus the paper argues for the continued relevance of *Sabaun* as a versified people's history of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Selective Epistemic Injustice: A Call for Decolonisation

Fazal Wahab

Abstract

Building on Miranda Fricker's framework of testimonial and hermeneutical injustice, this paper proposes the concept of *selective epistemic injustice*. I argue that the post/colonial states, as an epistemic actor, does not merely include or marginalise epistemes. Instead, selectively render and legitimise those that align with state narratives and discourses, while simultaneously silence and suppress challenging perspectives through post/colonial systems. In theorising *selective epistemic injustice*, this paper makes three tentatively contributions; firstly, it expands Miranda Fricker's framework by arguing that epistemic injustice is not simply about epistemic exclusion, instead states, as an epistemic actor, practice and regulate epistemic hierarchies. To support my argument, I draw my empirics from colonial India and postcolonial Pakistan, where colonisers granted epistemic authority to reformist figures such as Sir Syed Ahmad Khan while anti-colonial voices, like Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, were systematically silenced and criminalised by terming them 'traitors'. Secondly, it further shifts the focus from of epistemic injustice as theoretical and social critique of knowledge production to a more applied understanding how knowledge is managed by states and how knowledge interact with power. Finally, it calls for decolonisation of both epistemic and state practices by urging decolonisation project scholarship that they must shift the focus from solely including non-Western epistemologies to addressing practical mechanisms through which epistemic hierarchies are maintained.

The Feminization of Resistance in Balochistan: Baloch Nationalism in the Changing Geopolitical Landscape of Pakistan

Muhammad Ozair

Muhammad Riaz

Abstract

This article explores the evolving role of Baloch women in the ongoing political conflict in Balochistan province of Pakistan. Its geostrategic location and ethnic diversity, combined with the region's traditional societal structure, have made Balochistan a site of intense contestation between Baloch nationalist movements and the Pakistani state since 1947. The conflict is rooted in issues such as sovereignty, relative deprivations, control of natural resources, and a host of other provincial grievances. While traditional narratives of the Baloch national movement have revolved around male-dominated tribal leadership, this study explores a shift—the emergence of women as the primary architects of mass political mobilization. This research situates the "gender question" at the heart of the current conflict with wider scope and scale, arguing that the transformation of Baloch women from domestic actors into prominent political leaders is not merely a tactical response to the state's harsh

policy measures but a fundamental redefinition of ethno-nationalist struggle. With a focus on the issues of enforced disappearances and human rights violations, women-led organizations—most notably the Baloch *Yakjehti* Committee (BYC)—have subverted traditional patriarchal norms and moved the resistance from the periphery to the center. This qualitative study is based on feminist political theory and social movement frameworks, and it examines how women leverage their traditional roles to navigate and challenge security-centric governance. It analyses the institutional role of platforms such as the Baloch Students Organization and the Baloch *Khawateen* Panel in fostering a new generation of women leadership that transcends symbolic participation. The study argues that the "feminization" of the Baloch resistance constitutes a watershed moment in the province's politics, as gendered identity has become a potent tool for both public protest and societal transformation. Grounding resistance in a secular tradition—in opposition to the state's religious political discourse—and the reimagining of folk heroes in songs and poetry as symbols of defiance have been key factors in this transformation

Keywords: Mass Mobilization, Gender, Nationalism, Women's Leadership, Political Resistance, Baluchistan, Feminist Political Theory.

Genderisation and Localisation of Peacebuilding: A Constructivist Analysis of Women in Swat

Sapna Rahman
Muhammad Makki
Najimdeen Bakare

Abstract

Women are widely regarded as among the principal victims of conflict, and this is particularly true for women in Swat, Pakistan. With regard to conflict, women have been the subject of extensive scholarly debate, not only as victims but also as moral and financial contributors to the dynamics of the crisis, and, in some cases, as direct actors affected by it. Existing scholarly efforts to understand peacebuilding in Swat have largely focused on stakeholders, institutionalised mechanisms, and formal approaches. This underscores the need for an informal, localised, and non-institutional scholarly inquiry that contextualises and genderises the discourse of peacebuilding, especially as it relates to women in Swat. Guided by the Constructivist paradigm and analytical lens, the study adopts a mixed-method approach, combining content analysis of open-source materials and purposive interviews to examine women's perspectives on peacebuilding. The semi-structured interviews exclusively targeted women, particularly those identified as housewives, who have lived and still live in areas directly affected by the Taliban regime in Swat; hence, the temporal scope spans from the Taliban era to the present. The findings suggest education, exposure, and cultural context shape women's perceptions and understandings of peacebuilding.

Keywords: Local peacebuilding, constructivism, gender-based violence, conflict, Women, Swat

Religion, Difference, and Violence: Governing Pluralism in the Age of Moral Politics

Tahira Saba

Abstract

This study examines how contemporary societies manage and maintain religious diversity and how these approaches contribute to the normalization of violence as a political strategy, making it more acceptable to society. Moving beyond the traditional explanation that views religious violence as extremism or social disintegration, this study argues that violence should not be understood merely as a breakdown of governance; rather, it often emerges as a structural outcome of moral political systems through which states regulate religious difference, even when such outcomes are not explicitly intended.

The study uses a qualitative methodology that integrates comparative theoretical analysis, in-depth interviews, and discourse analysis. The research draws on both primary and secondary sources of data. Focusing on Pakistan as a case study, it explores the constitutional exclusion of the Ahmadi community, the application of blasphemy laws, trends in Sunni-Shia sectarian conflict, and the rise of religious populist movements such as Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan. In a global context, with reference to France, India, and Myanmar, these dynamics reveal that the governance of religion is a shared feature across democratic systems. The findings highlight key insights into how religious difference is governed and how violence emerges as a structural outcome of governance operated by moral politics, where laws and public narratives together create situations that normalize exclusion and, at the same time, justify offensive practices. It calls for inclusive legislative reforms and democratic practices aimed at strengthening minority rights and enabling ethical coexistence.

State Response and the Politics of Identity: A Comparative Study of Balochistan And Northern Ireland

Farae Naeem

Abstract

This paper examines the politics of identity formation in peripheral regions through a comparative analysis of Balochistan in Pakistan and Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks of political recognition, centre-periphery relations, and emotional legitimacy, it explores how state responses shape collective identity and political belonging. The paper argues that identity-based conflict is not simply rooted in ethnic or cultural difference, but is significantly shaped by modes of governance, recognition, and engagement. While Balochistan reflects a trajectory of alienation reinforced by security-centric approaches, Northern Ireland demonstrates how negotiated inclusion and institutional redesign can transform antagonistic identities into participatory political structures. The study contributes to broader debates on state legitimacy, insurgency, and conflict resolution in peripheral regions

Children Without a Country: Legal Identity and the Protection Gaps for Refugee Children in Pakistan

Javed Khan

Abstract

Legal identity is a necessary condition for effective implementation of measures to protect and fulfil children's rights but for refugee children in Pakistan it remains a pipe dream. This paper focuses on access to birth registration, Proof of Registration (PoR) cards, Afghan Citizen Cards (ACC), and legal status for refugee children and how administrative hurdles, legal exemption, and exclusionary policies create structures that perpetuate the marginalization and statelessness of children. The study indicates that refugee children in Pakistan, with reference to laws including Pakistan's ratification to the CRC, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare Act 2010 and Juvenile Justice System Ordinance 2000, are barred from education, health facilities and legal resources. The findings confirm that non-registration creates cycles of deprivation, wears a risk factor for child labor, trafficking and early marriage and erodes children's rights to protection by juvenile justice systems. The study reveals that 40-70 % Children, refugees are at a risk of statelessness, thus calling for strengthening of administrative formalities, birth registration of children regardless of their parentage, and large scale community outreach in order to educate refugee families. Absence of clear child protection policies conforming with international laws on refugees and statelessness erases the existence of refugee children in Pakistan, denying them elementary rights to respect, protection, and their basic rights.

Keywords: Refugee children, legal identity, birth registration, statelessness, child protection, Pakistan, Proof of Registration (PoR), Afghan Citizen Card (ACC)

Climate Security and Regional Stability in South Asia: Policy Challenges and Opportunities for Pakistan

Tahzeeb Mahreen

Abstract:

South Asia is one of the most climate-vulnerable regions in the world where rising temperatures, erratic monsoon patterns, glacial retreat in the Himalayas and intensifying floods and droughts increasingly threaten livelihoods, infrastructure, and national security (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2022; World Bank, 2021). The transboundary nature of these environmental risks including shared river basins, cross-border migration, and ecosystem degradation—means that climate change is not only an environmental challenge but also a critical security and stability concern (Barnett & Adger, 2007; Ide et al., 2021). In Pakistan, recent catastrophic floods, water scarcity in key agricultural zones, and climate-induced displacement underscore the urgency of integrating climate considerations into national and regional security strategies (United Nations Development Programme, 2023; International Organization for Migration, 2022). Despite growing recognition of climate as a security issue, policy coordination among South Asian countries remains limited, with governance gaps, institutional fragmentation, and geopolitical tensions undermining collective resilience (Detges, 2017; Swain, 2015). This study examines how climate security affects regional stability in South Asia and explores policy challenges and opportunities for Pakistan to engage in coordinated adaptation strategies. It investigates the intersection of environmental risk, national security, and regional cooperation, aiming to provide actionable policy recommendations for enhancing climate resilience while mitigating regional instability. This research study has a targeted focus of analysis on (a) How do climate-related hazards in South Asia contribute to regional instability and transboundary security risks? (b) What institutional and governance barriers hinder effective climate-security coordination among South Asian countries? (c) What strategies can Pakistan adopt to strengthen its role in promoting climate security and regional stability? By adopting a qualitative analysis approach, document analysis of national adaptation plans, climate policies, and regional security frameworks with semi-structured interviews of policymakers, climate experts, and regional security analysts is carried out. The population includes representatives from federal and provincial climate governance agencies, regional organizations, and research institutions specializing in climate-security nexus issues. Purposive sampling is used to select approximately 20–25 participants with direct experience in climate policy and regional cooperation initiatives. Data is analyzed using thematic analysis guided by conceptual frameworks of Climate Security and Transboundary Governance (Biermann & Pattberg, 2008; Busby, 2018). The analysis focuses on identifying patterns of institutional coordination, governance gaps, and policy opportunities that can enable Pakistan to effectively contribute to regional climate security. The study provides insights into how integrating climate security into national and regional policy frameworks can enhance resilience, reduce conflict risk, and strengthen cooperative mechanisms in South Asia as well as contributing in informing policymakers, development agencies, and regional institutions on practical strategies for leveraging climate policy as a tool for promoting stability, security, and sustainable development across the region.

Keywords: Climate security, Regional stability, Climate change adaptation

Climate Change and Conflict in Pakistan: An Analysis of National Security Discourse

Muhammad Irfan Mahsud

Abstract

The study explores the climate change challenge in the context of securitisation in Pakistan's national policy discourse. It analyses climate change catastrophes as a security discourse and threat to the state instead of a governance or development challenge. The study engages Barry Buzan and Ole Waever

framework of securitisation. The paper examines the discursive processes through which climate change has been identified as a security concern and not a policy issue. The article analyses Pakistan's national security policy documents, official statements by the institutions, debates in the legislature, strategic policy documents published since 2010. The security centric policy approach has been legitimised in the wake of climate change catastrophes which have been linked to displacement, resource scarcity, internal instability and governance ineffectiveness. The security centric approach has increased attention of the relevant institutions and resource mobilisation but at the same time it has reinforced state centric militarised approach, thereby marginalising the human security trajectory and civil/community-orientated adaptation. The study emphasises that securitisation of climate change in Pakistan in one way highlights the security centric approach which is a dilemma in a conflict affected states where nontraditional threats are pushed into the security framework. The study contributes to the discussion of climate security nexus within Pakistan's strategic discourse and argues that there is a need of a desecuritized, civil/local community orientated response to climate effects and subsequent disasters.

Keywords: Climate Change, Securitisation, National Security Policy, Natural Disasters

Digital Currency, Regulatory Gaps, and Security Threats in Pakistan

Musarat Amin

Fareena Habib

Abstract

The advent of digital currency, particularly cryptocurrency, has posed a serious challenge to the Global South, particularly Pakistan. Although digital currencies offer opportunities for innovation and global inclusion, the gloomy side is that they also provide channels for terrorist financing through money laundering. Recently published literature identifies crypto-assets as a high-risk vector for illegal financial flows, as developing countries have limited technological capacity and a weak enforcement framework. In Pakistan, the chunk of the informal economy is bigger, and that is why it remains under continuous international scrutiny, like the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and other international organizations. This research is an attempt to answer the question of "What challenges the rise of cryptocurrency has posed, including money laundering and terrorist financing in Pakistan, and how the existing regulatory mechanism can mitigate the threats". This research is based on primary and secondary data, as primary data will be collected in the form of interviews and secondary data from credible sources like FATF, State Bank of Pakistan, SECP, UNODC, and various other organizations. In light of all, it attempts to proffer actionable recommendations.

From Dependency to Digital Sovereignty: Pakistan in the Global South

Kinza Tasleem Chaudhry

Abstract

Developing nations such as Pakistan face structural dependency in the global digital economy, often reduced to passive consumers of imported technologies. This imbalance drives capital outflows, data extraction, and limited local innovation, undermining sovereignty and economic independence. To counter this, Pakistan must invest in domestic AI infrastructure, foster talent retention, and build sovereign datasets in local languages to address pressing national priorities including agriculture productivity, water security, climate resilience, and digital governance. This study proposes Pakistan's leadership in a Digital Non-Aligned Movement (DNAM), modeled on the historic Non-Aligned Movement but oriented toward digital sovereignty. DNAM emphasizes collective bargaining to secure fairer pricing, enforce tax compliance, and embed technology transfer clauses in procurement contracts. Priority areas include data sovereignty, affordable licensing, open-source collaboration, and ethical AI governance. The paper employs a qualitative policy analysis framework, drawing on international

relations theory and digital governance debates. It identifies priority themes of data sovereignty, affordable licensing, open-source collaboration, and ethical AI governance while situating Pakistan's strategic vulnerabilities in agriculture, water security, and climate resilience. With a youthful population, growing IT exports, and diaspora talent, Pakistan can position itself as a bridge nation linking South Asia, the Muslim world, and climate-vulnerable states. While Pakistan alone cannot dictate terms to global tech giants, its leadership in DNAM offers a pathway to collective strength. Through alliances, the Global South can negotiate equitable digital futures, ensuring innovation ecosystems serve local needs and securing long-term sovereignty and growth.

Keywords: Pakistan, Digital Non-Aligned Movement, Global South, AI sovereignty, data governance.

Strategic Stability and Crisis Management Mechanism: Emerging technologies and lessons from the Indo-Pakistan May conflict 2025

Basit Ali

Abstract

Tempered by a decade of upheaval, India-Pakistan bilateral relations, marked by recurring crises, the Kashmir imbroglio, and cross-border confrontation, have imperiled strategic stability. The Pahalgam incident on April 22, 2025, claimed the lives of 26 tourists, ignited yet another stand-off with Pakistan, as India's covert strikes violate Pakistan's sovereignty. The study delves into the Four-Day military engagement between India and Pakistan within the framework of crisis management, emerging technologies, and strategic stability in South Asia. The research critically examined the Indian False Flag Operations (Operation Sindoor) that India used as a pretext against Pakistan following incidents such as the Pahalgam attacks of 2025. Historically, India-Pakistan relations went from pillar to post on Kashmir, with India taking both covert and overt measures against Pakistan under deterrence through the use of proxy and cross-border strikes. The initiation of the Missile Defense system, armed drones, and ISR capabilities in the post-Pahalgam crisis not only blurred the nuclear threshold but also whipped up pre-emptive doctrines. The indispensable role of the US as a reluctant crisis manager and Chinese support to Pakistan highlighted the importance of third-party mediation in Indo-Pakistan conflict. The study contends that the South Asian precarious security environment, which is influenced by territorial conflict, India's preponderance, and asymmetric equilibrium, made escalation more probable. The study concludes that the shattered equilibrium of South Asia requires strengthened crisis management, technology-specific confidence-building measures, and bilateral communication for strategic stability.

Challenges to Ecotourism in Kohistan: A Political Ecology Analysis of the State–Capital Nexus

Izhar Ullah

Kohistan (Upper Dir) is located in the Northern region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. It is situated in the Hindu Kush mountain range. It is bordered by Chitral to the North and Swat to the East. Since the whole region is filled with lush green valleys and abundant natural resources, it has caught visitors' attention over the last few years. The number of visitors in the region varies from half a million to a million per year. On the one hand, the opportunity for the tourism industry to flourish has increased by leaps and bounds, bringing financial gain to the local community as well. However, the rush in (eco)tourism exacerbates sustainability challenges. These challenges include the conflict between the government and the host community over their respective approaches to preserving environmental resources, which serve as the backbone of ecotourism. In an eco-tourism destination, environmental resources such as forests and rivers are not only necessary for tourism in the narrow sense but also for the socio-economic livelihood of the host community as a whole. In the same vein, of course, this study has examined the challenges that ecotourism faces regarding sustainability (both environmental and social) in Kohistan (Upper Dir).



INTERNATIONAL STUDIES CONFERENCE & SUMMER SCHOOL BARAGALI, 2026



Testimonials

Professor Qibla Ayaz (Former VC University of Peshawar and Islamia College University Peshawar)

This theme includes a comprehensive discussion on borderlands and frontiers. The organisers have assembled a distinguished group of scholars from across Pakistan and several international experts.

DR. Rasul Bakhsh Rais (Professor Emeritus and LUMS)

The Baragali International Conference on Borderlands and Frontiers is one of the most successful conferences I have attended during my career. It is an improvement on an event which featured a wider range of complex themes and younger researchers presenting their papers.

Prof. Safia Ahmad (VC Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University)

This conference highlights the core issues of education, community and borderlands. It addresses opportunities and conflicts between nations, making it a culturally and multilingual multi-dimensional event. It is one of the most successful conferences to date.

Professor Hassan Abbas (Professor of (NESA Center) in Washington, D.C)

These conferences and scholarly dialogues, communicating through the world of ideas, are something that is embedded in the history and culture of the region that we talk about: the region of Pakistan, Afghanistan, the borderlands, the frontier, and, in fact, the broader region in itself.

Shah Mahmood Hanifi (Professor of History at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia)

It is a pleasure to participate in this important conference organised in Baragali Summer Campus, University of Peshawar. I appreciate the efforts of Professor Dr Sami Raza and the organising team for bringing together scholars to discuss borderlands from diverse perspectives. The conference provided an excellent platform for meaningful academic exchange on regional and global challenges.

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BUILDING KNOWLEDGE BRIDGING PERSPECTIVES INSPIRING TOMORROW

