



Habib University
shaping futures

PRESENTS THE CONFERENCE

وَجُودِ

REFLECT. RESIST. REIMAGINE.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2025

8:30 AM - 6:30 PM

ORGANISED BY **ACADEMIC CENTERS**

In view of the upcoming **International Women's Day**, the '**Wujuud-i Zan'** conference brings together leading women scholars, artists, and activists from Karachi to engage with the notion of a reparative future critically.

Organised by Habib University's **Academic Centers**, this day-long event will revolve around a transdisciplinary dialogue that explores the intersections of gender, history, and futurity within the context of **Pakistan** and the wider **Global South**.

Focusing on the transformative potential of scholarship, '*Wujuud-i Zan'* interrogates **historical injustices**, **colonial legacies**, and **structural inequalities** while foregrounding the contributions of **women scholars** in efforts to reimagine societal structures in ways that repair harm and centre equity, care, and inclusivity.

Discussions will explore the politics of **memory**, the role of **archives**, decolonial methodologies, environmental **justice**, science and technology, and community-centred approaches to **social change**. This conference is a springboard to build a critical reflection and action platform, envisioning futures rooted in equity, sustainability, and collective care, and highlighting research done on/by women.

The programme includes panel discussions and roundtable sessions, encouraging **interdisciplinary engagement**, allowing students to gain direct experience of debates in different fields and ideas for potential projects and research collaborations.

SPEAKERS

Ms. Abira Ashfaq is Assistant Professor of Practice at the Department of Social Development and Policy at **Habib University**, where she teaches law and human rights. She is a legal educator and practitioner working on housing and climate justice. Her research is on forced conversions, land and natural resource rights, urban violence, and displacement.

Dr. Anum Tariq Dada is Assistant Professor, and the coordinator of the Literature cluster, at the Department of Social Sciences and Liberal Arts at the **IBA Karachi**. She has a PhD in English and an MA in Medieval and Renaissance Studies from the University of Durham, UK. Her research deals with representations of otherness, and in particular, the portrayal of Saracen women and religious alterity in the late medieval period. Her other interests lie in representations of gender and race; the marvellous in medieval literature; and the medical humanities.

Dr. Coline Ferrant is Assistant Professor at the Department of Social Development and Policy, as well as Director of the Dean's Fellowship Program, at **Habib University**. She received her Ph.D. in Sociology from Sciences Po and Northwestern University. Her professional interests include food & eating, urban & rural sociology, and public writing.

Dr. Humaira Jamshed is Associate Professor in Bioscience at the Department of Integrated Sciences and Mathematics at **Habib University**, where she serves as the Chair of the Institutional Review Board. She has a PhD in Health Sciences from Aga Khan University, postdoctoral fellowships in Nutrition and Metabolic Health, training in translational research, and a certification in Mentoring and Leadership from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, USA. She has actively mentored students in research projects aimed at enhancing youth health, and is committed to fostering gender equality in STEM fields, both in the classroom and in research.

Ms. Jovita Alvares is Assistant Professor at the Department of Communication and Design at **Habib University**. Her artistic research is fuelled by finding alternative ways to exorcize marginalized narratives/counter histories that have been lost as a result of colonial/imperial legacies. Drawing on firsthand experiences, her research often begins by parsing through photographic archives as a guide to challenging modes of meaning-making through form and gesture. She has an MFA from the School of Art and Art History at the University of Illinois Chicago, as a Fulbright Scholar. She graduated with a BFA and the title of Valedictorian from the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture. She has been the recipient of several residencies and awards, including the Imran Mir Art Prize for emerging artists. Additionally, as a researcher, Alvares finds intersections between her art-making and writing, and allows both facets to inform and complement each other.

Ms. Muneera Batool is Assistant Professor of Practice at the Department of Communication and Design, as well as Associate Dean for Teaching & Learning, at **Habib University**, where she teaches theatre and other interdisciplinary courses. Her pedagogy centers on the idea of play, creating from intuition, and silencing the mind through meditation. She is a practicing theatre director and media designer. In her practice, she takes a phenomenological approach to research that leads to collaborative interdisciplinary performances. She earned her MFA in Theatre with a concentration in interdisciplinary digital media from Arizona State University, as a Fulbright scholar. She also holds an MA in Multimedia Arts from the National College of Arts, Lahore.

Dr. Nahrain Al-Mousawi is Assistant Professor at the Department of Comparative Humanities at **Habib University**. She has postdoc'd and taught at universities in the US, Germany, Lebanon, and now Pakistan. Her book *The Two-Edged Sea* (2021) explores narratives of undocumented migration from Africa across the Mediterranean. Beyond academia, she has written on popular and literary culture from the MENA region and her work has been published in Al Jazeera, The National, Globe and Mail, and Chicago Tribune, among other publications.

Ms. Ramsha Siddiqui is Lecturer in History at the Department of Social Sciences and Liberal Arts at the **IBA Karachi**, where she teaches courses on gender in South Asia, Indian Ocean history, and Global History. She has an MA in South Asian Studies from the Columbia University at the City of New York, as a Fulbright scholar. She is a Research Associate with MaritimEA, Karachi, where she works on historical cities in the Indus Delta while exploring their ties to local communities.

Dr. Sameena Shah Zaman is Associate Professor at the Department of Integrated Sciences and Mathematics at **Habib University**. She received her PhD in Magnetic Nano-materials from Technical University Vienna, Austria. Her academic interests include teaching and experimental research in the pedagogy of foundational physics courses, and is also interested in the study of design thinking as an academic discipline.

SPEAKERS

Dr. Shumaila Ahmed is Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Sciences and Liberal Arts at the **IBA Karachi**, where she teaches courses in Sociocultural Anthropology and Development Studies. She has a PhD in Social Anthropology from the University of Cambridge, where her research examined ethical cultivation of self and others among women Islamic scholars ('*alimat*') in the UK, focusing on their efforts to interweave Islamic and secular-liberal registers and values to render the Islamic tradition and their own religious authority relevant to contemporary British Muslim lives. Her current research continues in the anthropology of morality and values, and her focus has shifted to the ethics and politics of care in experiences of chronic illness in middle to low-income neighborhoods of Karachi. This work analyses care practices and the moral dilemmas, deliberations, and conflicts that arise as people give and receive care. It asks what subjectivities and configurations of responsibilities are emerging for the self, God, state, and kin among others in southern urban contexts of chronicity and affliction.

Ms. Soha Macktoom is Lecturer in Urban Studies at the Department of Social Sciences and Liberal Arts, as well as Associate Director at the Karachi Urban Lab, at the **IBA Karachi**, where she teaches courses on Karachi, climate and architecture, infrastructures and urban sustainability, along with practice-based courses such as Urban Studio. She is an architect and urban planner, and her work looks at the physical transformations of the built environment and how architecture, design and history are tools for understanding the city's informal settlements, urbanization trends, infrastructure and climate. Her work has been published in academic journals, such as Urban Studies, City, Future Anterior and Economic and Political Weekly (EPW), and she has also written articles for local and international media outlets such as Prism, Express Tribune and the Urban Violence Research Network. As an architect, she has worked on several projects with the architectural firm Shahab Ghani and Associates (SGA), including the TDF Ghar and The MagnifiScience Center and other residential and commercial projects.

Ms. Tajreen Midhat is Lecturer at the Department of Social Development and Policy at **Habib University**. She has a master's degree in Globalisation and Multinational Corporations from the Centre of International Studies and Diplomacy (CISD) at SOAS, University of London. Her research develops a conversation between environmental politics, climate change, and the various facets of development. She has designed courses on urban development, environmental politics, conflict and development, food security, and petrocultures. Tajreen employs innovative pedagogical techniques in her classroom which include fieldwork, writing blogs, documentaries, and podcasts. Prior to entering academia, Tajreen was involved in the implementation of various sustainable community development projects in rural areas of Sindh.

Dr. Yasmeen Jamali is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Social Development and Policy at **Habib University**, where she teaches Demography and research methods. She has a PhD in Demography from Panthéon-Sorbonne University. Her doctoral work examines the relationship between educational attainment and women's decision-making power, highlighting the role of education in shaping autonomy and opportunities for young women in Balochistan. Her broader research interests include women's reproductive health and contraception.

Ms. Zahra Sabri is Lecturer in Indo-Islamic History and Urdu Literature at the Department of Comparative Humanities at **Habib University**. She received her MA degree from the Department of Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies at Columbia University, as a Fulbright scholar. Her research focuses on Mughal History and the influence of the Persianate on Indo-Muslim languages, cultures, and traditions of learning, as well as on politics of identity centred around Urdu in South Asia. She has published an academic article on the Mughal poet Mir Taqi Mir's Persian hagiographical/historiographical writing (*The Medieval History Journal*, 2015). She is the curator of *Koozah* -- an anthology of Urdu short stories by new and little-known Pakistani writers (Oxford University Press, 2015). She is a literary translator, and has translated folk and classical poetry from over a dozen Pakistani languages for eleven seasons of the popular music programme *Coke Studio*, Pakistan. She has also worked as a journalist for the Herald magazine (DAWN), winning the Zubeida Mustafa Award for Journalistic Excellence (2013), and has contributed articles to Pakistan's national press on diverse political and educational issues.

Dr. Zoya Sameen is an Assistant Professor of History at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at the **Aga Khan University**, Karachi. She is a historian of gender, law, and empire in nineteenth- and twentieth-century South Asia. Her current book project examines the defiant responses of Indian and European women to legal regime of policing prostitution from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century in colonial India. Her research interests also include writing South Asian history in transnational perspective and understanding gender history at the intersection of law, technology, and the environment. Prior to joining the Aga Khan University, she taught as a lecturer at the University of Chicago from where she also completed her PhD in History.

SPEAKERS

Ms. Zubeida Mustafa is an independent journalist in Pakistan. She became the first woman to work at the policy-making level in Pakistan's mainstream media, after she joined the **DAWN** newspaper in 1975. She completed her BA and then her MA in International Relations from the University of Karachi, and also studied at the London School of Economics under a Commonwealth Scholarship. She is the recipient of the Global Media Award for Excellence (1986 and 2004) by The Population Institute, Washington D.C. for her research on population control; the Pakistan Publishers and Booksellers Association Award (2005) for her contribution in the publication of the literary supplement Books & Authors; a Lifetime Achievement Award (2012) by the International Women's Media Foundation. She is the author of books such as *The Tyranny of Language in Education: The Problem and its Solution* (2015), *My DAWN Years: Exploring Social Issues* (2018), and editor of *Reforming School Education in Pakistan and the Language Dilemma* (2021). She currently writes a fortnightly column for DAWN.

Ms. Zuha Siddiqui is Visiting Assistant Professor of Practice at the Department of Communication and Design at **Habib University**. She is a journalist who reports on technology and climate in South Asia, and her reporting has appeared in WIRED, Foreign Policy, VICE, Slate, BuzzFeed News, and other publications. Most recently, she was a Labour Fellow at the global nonprofit publication Rest of World, where she covered how technology impacts work and the way we work in South Asia. Her work has been supported by fellowships from the South Asian Journalism Association, One World Media and the EU Journalism Fund. She was a journalism fellow with Fellowships at Auschwitz for the Study of Professional Ethics (FASPE) in 2020, and a finalist for the Thomson Foundation's Young Journalist Award in 2023.



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Conference

Friday, Feb 21, 2025

All sessions are to take place at the Tariq Rafi Hall, Habib University.

REGISTRATION AND TEA | 8:30 AM – 9 AM
Opening Remarks | 9 AM – 9:30 AM

9:30 AM – 10:45 AM

PANEL 1 | GENDER, AUTONOMY, AND THE POLITICS OF SELFHOOD

Young Women's Agency in Balochistan: What Do They Say?

Yasmeen Jamali, HABIB UNIVERSITY

'I want to pray but my heart's just not in it': Salah, Sincerity, and the Pursuit of
'Iman- highs'

Shumaila Ahmed, IBA KARACHI

Moderator: Zahra Sabri

10:45 AM – 12 PM

PANEL 2 | HEALTH AND HEALING FROM THE GLOBAL SOUTH

Simple Cooking Using Fresh Produce: Immigrants' Recraft of the Quotidian Diet in
Paris and Chicago

Coline Ferrant, HABIB UNIVERSITY

'Bope fysik and Sirgirie zhe hadde lerned': Saracen Knowledge and Agency in Late
Medieval Romance

Anum Tariq Dada, IBA KARACHI

Moderator: Zoya Sameen

PANEL 3 | COLONIAL MODERNITY AND THE GENDERED SUBJECT

A Discursive Analysis of Midwives in Colonial India

Ramsha Siddiqui, IBA KARACHI

“This Woman is a Most Undesirable Person”: Tajo vs. Frontier Crimes Regulation in the Balochistan Agency

Zoya Sameen, AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

Moderator: Abira Ashfaq

LUNCH BREAK | 1:15 PM – 2:15 PM

2:15 PM – 3:30 PM

Roundtable Discussion

WOMEN IN ACADEMIA:

Institutional Barriers, Epistemic Resistance, and Knowledge Production

Participants:

Nahrain Al-Mousawi, **Muneera Batool**, **Tajreen Midhat**, **Sameena Shah**

Zaman, **Abira Ashfaq**, **Humaira Jamshed**, **Zahra Sabri**

3:30 PM – 5 PM

PANEL 4 | MIGRATION, SPACE, AND MEMORY IN KARACHI

Roots that Hover: A Case of Nonbelonging in South Asia

Jovita Alvares, HABIB UNIVERSITY

Climate, Comfort, and Karachi: Thermal Transitions in Architecture

Soha Macktoom, IBA KARACHI

North Indian Wedding Songs among Urdu-Speaking Migrant Families in Pakistan

Zahra Sabri, HABIB UNIVERSITY

Moderator: Zuha Asif Siddiqui

5 PM – 6 PM

Book Discussion:

“TAPESTRY:

Strands of Women’s Struggles Woven into the History of Pakistan”

Discussants: **Zubeida Mustafa**, and **Abira Ashfaq**

Moderators: Zuha Asif Siddiqui, and Zahra Sabri

Closing Remarks | 6 PM – 6:15 PM

Panel 1 | 9:30 AM - 10:15 AM

Gender, Autonomy, and the Politics of Selfhood

Dr. Yasmeen Jamali (Demography, Habib University), *Young Women's Agency in Balochistan: What Do They Say?*

The aim of this research project is to explore the effects of education on young women's agency/autonomy in Balochistan, using qualitative methods including observation, informal conversations, and interviews with young women students in universities. While a woman's agency is conceived of as the ability to make decisions, evidence suggests that there is little to no correlation between education and agency. Yet during interactions with young students in classes, cafes, and libraries, it became clear that women are adapting themselves to meet both traditional roles and new challenges. These negotiations may not be strategic in nature and are tactical, but still reflects new desires, expectations and wishes. Can we include these into the notion of 'agency'? If not, then how do we explain these negotiations? Thus, it is pertinent to understand how these young women understand the concept of 'agency', and how they assert and invoke this concept in everyday situations. This study takes a constructivist turn to understand 'agency' as an emergent category of action that actualises itself amidst the overlapping boundaries of private and public spheres. To elucidate forms of agency, other than direct decision-making, that are manifested among young women, I adopt an inductive approach, as evidenced by university students' daily activities. I draw on the concept of 'public space' to present the university as an alternative 'free space' for young women, and education as a source of 'potential agency' that could have the potential to alter the future course of their lives.

Dr. Shumaila Ahmed (Social Anthropology, IBA Karachi), *'I want to pray but my heart's just not in it': Salah, Sincerity, and the Pursuit of 'Iman'- highs'*

This paper examines the everyday struggles of performing the Islamic obligatory prayer (namaz/salah) among Sunni Muslim women of Indian-Gujarati origin in the United Kingdom. Two orientations to salah conflict with each other, as these women strive to incorporate regular and disciplined ritual prayer into their lives. Firstly, the desire to offer sincere, authentic prayer in which one feels connected to God, a prayer that is offered freely out of love and devotion. Second, offering prayer no matter how one feels about it since it is obligatory. The latter is emphasised by local Deobandi 'ulama who teach that ritual performance itself is the key to cultivating the inner states of sincerity and closeness to God. But such feelings most often fail to materialise even when one does offer prayer, and the routine of prayer – ever fragile – falters. Local 'alimat (female religious scholars) address the struggles of sincerity and presence in salah by elucidating an aesthetics of imagination and communication within the prescribed form of the ritual prayer. They teach how, by learning and focusing on the meaning of the Qur'anic verses recited in salah, one can come closer to the possibility of experiencing God as present, near and responsive. Women often described the experience of such a prayer as an 'iman-high' – a feeling of hope and potentiality surging through their spirits and bodies. Iman-highs, however, are transitory experiences which need to be pursued and replenished as part of the larger ethical labour of becoming a pious Muslim woman. Hope, thus, emerges as a crucial modality for continuously propelling oneself into a future where the self might finally become ethically perfect and coherent.

Moderator: **Ms. Zahra Sabri** (Habib University)

Panel 2 | 10:15 AM - 12 PM

Health and Healing from the Global South

Dr. Coline Ferrant (Sociology, Habib University), Simple Cooking Using Fresh Produce: Immigrants' Recraft of the Quotidian Diet in Paris and Chicago

This research explores dietary tastes and culinary practices among immigrants in Paris and Chicago. I identify three theoretical insights in research on food and immigration: the immigrant nutritional paradox, the reinvention of food traditions, and the deromanticisation of culinary authenticity. Using ethnographic data (including in-depth interviewing and observation), the analysis centres on immigrants as creative agents endowed with personal experience of various cultural contexts. First, I describe a shared taste for freshness and naturalness. Second, I show how immigrants craft quotidian culinary practices that they qualify as simple. Third, I outline their perceptions of commonalities and singularities between the cuisines of the various countries they have lived in and the cuisines of fellow immigrant groups. Ultimately, I reach the insight that in both cities alike, immigrants recraft their judgement of the good quotidian diet as simple cooking using fresh produce. This has implications for recent research on immigrants' environmental values, knowledge, and behaviour, and for the design of dietary guidelines in France and the United States alike.

Dr. Anum Tariq Dada (Literature, IBA Karachi), 'Bope fysik and Sirgirie zhe hadde lerned': Saracen Knowledge and Agency in Late Medieval Romance

This paper will focus on the marvellous medicinal knowledge of Saracen women in Sir Beues of Hamtoun and the three English redactions of the Fierebras tradition. Saracen women in medieval romance are notoriously known for their knowledge of medicine but the kind of medicine practised by these women shirks modern expectations and is shrouded in the mysterious and the marvellous. While characters like Morgan le Fay in Western romances possess magical and medicinal healing skills, for the most part, medicinal knowledge remains the realm of Saracen women as the East was largely renowned for the fostering of Greek medical knowledge. While these women traverse the boundaries of the medical and the marvellous, Josian from the Fierabras tradition, as the quotation in the title of the paper explains, was trained in both herbal and Hippocratic medicine and she is associated with two the large learning centres of medicine in the late Middle Ages: Bologna 'la grassa' in Italy and Toledo in Spain. Therefore, her knowledge is situated in the intersection of Western and Arabic medical knowledge. This paper will explore the representation of Saracen women as a testament to the growing medical influence of the East, while making reference to matriarchal herbal practitioners who made themselves a nuisance to male practitioners.

Moderator: **Dr. Zoya Sameen** (Aga Khan University)

Panel 3 | 12 PM - 1:15 PM

Colonial Modernity and the Gendered Subject

Ms. Ramsha Siddiqui (History, IBA Karachi), *A Discursive Analysis of Midwives in Colonial India*

This paper offers a deconstructive reading of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century archival materials related to Indian midwifery to demonstrate the centrality of the indigenous 'da'i' and certified midwife as signifiers within colonial medical discourse. By analysing sources such as a certified midwife's letter in *The Times of India*, Viceroy Curzon's speech at the Lady Dufferin Zenana Hospital inauguration, *The Indian Ladies' Magazine* (1917), and Vernacular Newspaper Reports, I show how the trained Indian midwife emerges as a native subject transformed by Western science to save the Indian woman in *pardah* by replacing the ignorant indigenous *da'i*. In this way, the discursive formation of the trained midwife, along with the *pardah-nishin* woman and the indigenous *da'i*, serve as the ground for various debates between Indian reformers, nationalists, religious revivalists, and the British to advance their own political agendas.

Dr. Zoya Sameen (History, AKU Karachi), *"This Woman is a Most Undesirable Person": Tajo vs. Frontier Crimes Regulation in the Balochistan Agency*

The paper examines the case of 'Musammat' Tajo who was expelled from the Quetta-Pishin District in 1923 under the Frontier Crimes Regulation. The official charge against Tajo was that she was likely to provoke quarrel among tribes; however, it was arguably her status as a troubling prostitute that was key to her expulsion. Tajo was condemned as an 'undesirable' woman across many levels of administration in the Balochistan Agency from district magistrates to the Agent to the Governor-General. Yet, beyond the officials who shaped her fate, Tajo displayed a significant resilience in the face of adversity. Across fourteen years of expulsion from her hometown and separation from her family and sources of livelihood, Tajo petitioned multiple times to be able to return to Quetta, citing hardship, legal precedent, and procedural errors as reasons to overturn her exile—a persistence that amounted to her expulsion finally being quashed in 1937. Her story is ostensibly one of subaltern women resisting harsh legal regimes such as the FCR, but also one of unwavering perseverance as her petitions were rejected one after the other. Tajo's case contributes to our understanding of how the paradigm of removing and relocating women engaged in sex work from urban spaces during the interwar period was implemented via criminal legislation under frontier governance. Moreover, it is also a window into recognising the resilience of individual women against the policing of gender and sexuality even when they were ensnared within harsher colonial jurisdictions. This paper ultimately argues that Tajo's story proves a rich source for further exploring the entanglements between gender, law, and the colonial state at the periphery of empire.

Moderator: **Ms. Abira Ashfaq** (Habib University)

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION | 2: 15 PM - 3:30 PM

Women in Academia: Institutional Barriers, Epistemic Resistance, and Knowledge Production

A free-flowing discussion on the challenges and opportunities relating to women scholars' experiences of working as teachers, researchers, artists, and activists at universities in Pakistan, and globally.

PARTICIPANTS:

Dr. Nahrain Al-Mousawi (Habib University)

Dr. Sameena Shah Zaman (Habib University)

Dr. Humaira Jamshed (Habib University)

Ms. Muneera Batool (Habib University)

Ms. Abira Ashfaq (Habib University)

Ms. Tajreen Midhat (Habib University)

Ms. Zahra Sabri (Habib University)

Panel 4 | 3:30 PM - 5 PM

Migration, Space, and Memory in Karachi

Ms. Jovita Alvares (Visual Arts, Habib University), *Roots that Hover: A Case of Nonbelonging in South Asia*

After how many generations can we call a land a home? My research explores how colonial erasure, migration, the Indo-Pak Partition of 1947, and present-day state violence continue to affect notions of identification and belonging within marginalized communities of the Subcontinent. It focuses mainly on the Goan diaspora community of Karachi, Pakistan who are an ethnoreligious minority in the country. As a group of people, they have continued to face violence, be it during the Portuguese colonial rule of Goa that lasted for 450 years, or even presently, as a religious minority that makes up less than two percent of the country's population. Despite this, what keeps them moving forward? The answers, though abstract lie somewhere within the vernacular archive. By studying family photographs, there is an exploration of the various factors, traditions, and rituals that possibly keep communities going. This research juxtaposes vernacular, state, and colonial archives as a way of bringing stories of the subaltern from the edges of history to the forefront.

Ms. Soha Macktoom (Urban Studies, IBA Karachi), *Climate, Comfort, and Karachi: Thermal Transitions in Architecture*

This paper examines the thermal transitions in architectural design in Karachi, spanning pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial periods up to the present day. In a climate-changed world, urban centres are becoming increasingly uncomfortable to inhabit. The desire to achieve thermal comfort has overly relied on fossil fuel-dependent regulated comfort, with little consideration for localised understandings of passive ventilation techniques. For southern contexts, including Karachi, heat has been a familiar foe and techniques to shelter oneself from heat are rooted in embedded knowledges for residents, who continuously navigate and negotiate their thermal experiences through materials, cuisines, routines, and architecture. As early as in 1729, inhabitants of the Old Fort Area (modern-day Kharadar) employed wind catchers and mud construction as a response to the harsh climate, while the architecture of the British empire through 1839 to 1947 was centred on the logics of climatic control in building design. Post-colonial transitions in architecture marked a shift towards modern design, symbolizing the emerging identity of a newly independent state. However, the pursuit of comfort has since been characterized by two parallel developments: the rise of "world-class city" aesthetics reflected in contemporary materials and designs, and the retrofitting of older structures to align with regulated, fossil fuel-dependent thermal comfort standards. What does this mean for the future of buildings in an infrastructurally ill-equipped, energy poor, and spatially segregated city? How can insights from the past inform solutions to re-examine architectural interventions of habitable spaces in the 'hot' city, after comfort?

Ms. Zahra Sabri (Literary History, Habib University), *North Indian Wedding Songs among Urdu-Speaking Migrant Families in Pakistan*

This paper relates to a project I have undertaken to archive a rapidly dwindling tradition of Urdu wedding songs, gathered from (mostly Karachi-based) families of post-1947 Partition migrants to Pakistan from various regions in North India (UP, Bihar, Bhopal, Awadh) and Hyderabad Deccan. Like families in most other parts of Pakistan and greater South Asia, there has been a long tradition for women in Urdu-speaking households to sing special songs in Urdu (and related dialects such as Awadhi, Braj Bhasha, Bhojpuri, and Dakkani) to mark various wedding customs. Today, with recorded music from sources such as Bollywood displacing this tradition, the lyrics for these traditional songs are becoming harder to remember (and even understand), and hence I have endeavoured to create, through field interviews, a repository of lyric poetry which can become/remain a focus of literary and linguistic examination. The songs now available to me, through my own efforts or that of my enthusiastic team of research assistants, provide an interesting window into regional, cross-border expressions of femininity and womanhood, being a curious mix of playfulness, indignation, and sorrow at women's historical burdens within traditional familial and marital structures, and aspirations to achieve romantic tenderness, financial prosperity/stability, and social power within the limits of these traditional structures.

Moderator: **Ms. Zuha Asif Siddiqui** (Habib University)

BOOK DISCUSSION | 5 PM - 6 PM

On Dr. Fouzia Saeed's

"Tapestry: Strands of Women's Struggles Woven into the History of Pakistan"

"Tapestry (2022) traces the evolution of women's struggles throughout Pakistan's socio-political history. It brings to the younger generation the heritage of the brave women and their courageous movements as they fought against repression and social discrimination to achieve the rights and space we enjoy today. The book establishes the continuity of past struggles with those of today by building an understanding of their strategies as they evolved. The dominant strategic trends are referred to as 'Strands'. Seven have been identified and analysed to improve our understanding of the ways women have modified their use of collective agency to match the political environment. Tapestry presents Pakistan's political history as the main context against which women's collective actions and the resultant reforms are presented. Close-ups of individual women have been included to deepen the reader's understanding of women's lives and the resistance they faced. These vignettes complement the description of the larger trends with the realities faced by individuals on the ground. Although not a thorough documentation of all the women and their movements, this book serves to introduce how women of different eras in Pakistan's history dealt with their own collective issues while building a base for the women of today."

Discussants



Ms. Zubeida Mustafa

Independent Journalist



Ms. Abira Ashfaq

Law and Human Rights, Habib University

Moderators: **Ms. Zahra Sabri**, and **Ms. Zuha Asif Siddiqui** (Habib University)

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Conference Committee
Ms. Zahra Sabri
Dr. Behzad Khosravi Noori
Dr. Muhammad Haris



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