

The Pakistan Conference: 75 Years of Independence

November 29-30, 2022

Lakshmi Mittal and Family South Asia Institute, Harvard University

Call for Papers

From its inception in August 1947, Pakistan was a very peculiar country. Not only was it (with India) one of the first ‘post-colonial’ states to be established after the Second World War, it was also the first modern nation-state to be established on the basis of religion as well as the largest Muslim majority country in the world. Pakistan was the first, and for a considerable period of time, the only, Muslim majority country in the world which tried to bring together the priorities of an Islamic state/republic and weave them into a liberal democracy. The country was also unique in being established as one state but with two ‘wings,’ and that too divided by a thousand miles of India, which due to the exegesis of Partition became ‘hostile’ landmass within a short time.

This conference aims to bring a focused, though not exclusionary, lens to the study of the country, where in a regional context, Pakistan is overshadowed by its much larger neighbor. Taking a long view of 75 years since independence this conference will provide the space to reflect upon the past, but also explore the lingering legacies and challenges that continue to cast a shadow over the country. In doing so, the themes will be framed around the local, the regional, the international and the overarching influence of (pan)-Islamism that informs or influences all these spaces. This approach will provide us with the ability to bring together strong interdisciplinary research that extends into multiple genres.

We are interested in papers and panels which assess Pakistan with the long arc of 75 years covering the following themes, which are not exclusive and are to be broadly interpreted:

Enduring legacies of Partition

Interrogating questions of identity and Islam

Role and place of minorities

Development of politics

Economic-Social change in society

Challenges of extremism

Demographic change and urban development

The impact of climate change

New tech and social media – especially its relationship with politics

The Process

To participate in the conference, please send a 200-word abstract to: harvardpakistanconference@gmail.com by midnight GMT on September 30, 2022. Replies will be sent by October 10, 2022. The conference will then take place on November 29-30, 2022 at the Lakshmi Mittal and Family South Asia Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA. Both individual papers and panel proposals can be submitted, with panel proposals (3 papers plus a chair/discussant) to be submitted together by the convenor.

Some bursaries might be available to early career researchers upon application, so please indicate if you would like to be considered while submitting the abstract.

We anticipate that a major outcome of the conference will be an edited book, selected from the conference proceedings.