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## Chad Haines. Nation, Territory and Globalisation in Pakistan: Traversing the Margins. New York: Routledge, 2012.

Utathya Chattopadhyaya

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, [Chattop2@illinois.edu](mailto:Chattop2@illinois.edu)

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**Chad Haines. *Nation, Territory and Globalisation in Pakistan: Traversing the Margins*. New York: Routledge, 2012.**

What makes a road central to the designs of the modern state? Is the road itself a method to better explain transnational and global phenomena in relation to what is local and place-based? The book under review tackles such questions head on, leaving the reader with several provocative yet under-analyzed arguments. As a reminder of ways in which exclusion is lived and experienced in the everyday, Haines calls into question the triumphalism of the developmentalist narrative of the modern nation-state, specifically in South Asia. He delves into the experiences of those whose lives are reshaped every day by the Karakoram Highway,<sup>1</sup> such as an apricot trader, a worker at a tourist hotel, a truck driver, and a “down-country tourist.” This formidable cast of characters enlivens the spatial critiques of the modern nation-state in the book, and allows for an exploration of the recent history of post-colonial Pakistan and critical perspectives on globalization.

Best described as an insightful historical anthropology, the book nonetheless leaves much to be desired in terms of analysis and depth. Haines illustrates two central and compelling arguments: (1) that the “de-territorialization” that supposedly accompanies globalization is largely based on unsubstantiated rhetoric, given that new forms of re-territorialization and sub-regionalism typically develop in relation to modernist and global projects and (2) that the effect of the national and the global upon the local is, in fact, a driver of differentiation on the ground, giving rise to a view of a “below” that is rife with internal fissures and cleavages.

The introduction squarely argues that the processes of uneven inclusion and hierarchization that were so fundamental to the colonial reality of Pakistan are re-enacted everyday along the Karakoram Highway, thus making this central road a vehicle for analyzing current local and national realities in Gilgit-Baltistan (the northernmost region of Pakistan). Using the vantage point of the margin, Haines seeks to uncover how roads orient the spatio-temporal worlds of people, both marginal and central, within a relational view of social structures and connections.

This thesis is first subjected to historical scrutiny in the opening chapter. The naming and territorialization of the “Gilgit Agency”<sup>2</sup> under the British Empire, through a process of frontierization that began in 1846 and was consolidated by 1889, becomes Haines’ way of locating the origins of what he calls the “territorial liminality,” in this case, of the then Gilgit Agency. Using narrative accounts, political treaties and land agreements as evidence, Haines presents the strategic interests of both the British and the local rulers, such as the Mir of Hunza, as the key influence on the cartographic history of the region. This cartographic history brings into relief the intersections of map-making exercises and political compromises

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<sup>1</sup> The Karakoram Highway, completed in 1979, is the highest paved international road in the world, which connects China and Pakistan across the Karakoram mountain range. It also serves as a popular tourist attraction due to its high elevation and the difficult conditions in which it was constructed. Owing largely to the extremely sensitive state of the Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan, the Karakoram Highway also has strategic and military importance to the states of Pakistan and China.

<sup>2</sup> The Gilgit Agency was created formally by the British in 1889 as a political unit of the empire in India. The region has always shared ambiguous and shifting boundaries with Xinjiang in China, the Chitral valley and other surrounding regions. The name “Gilgit Agency” survived even after formal decolonization in south Asia in 1947, before giving way to a newer territorial construction, the Northern Areas, in 1970.

and manoeuvres under colonial rule, that become physically naturalized through the specific road-making endeavors of the British. Although the chapter makes a persuasive case for how the vagueness of territorial definitions and the leasing of political districts under the British produce a sense of liminality, one wonders whether the primacy of purely the strategic nature of imperialism in this argument is presumed at the cost of other important forms of resistance, negotiation and consolidation on the ground in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The second chapter reproduces similar misgivings as a lengthy political history of treaties, relations of tribute, and multiple alliances overshadows more pertinent aspects of social organization such as the role of labor in massive projects like the Gilgit Road, which connected Srinagar to Gilgit and facilitated supplies for troops stationed in Gilgit. The chapter barely analyzes the imperial politics of labor and the differential nature of work on the ground or their effects on prevailing understandings of translocal linkages and processes of territorialization. “Landscaping” in the title of the chapter remains a narrative of elite political gameplay peopled by the British, the Chinese, and local powers such as the Mirs and the Dogra kings. The most productive insights on offer, however, are analyses of performativity and technologies of control such as “tours through India,” which become a state ritual, and the introduction of entry passes by the Mir of Hunza to control local mobility and potential settlement in Gilgit.

The book generally suffers from a lack of deep use of primary historical and anthropological evidence, which becomes evident in what is otherwise the most challenging chapter in the book. The third chapter, on the Silk Route’s influence on national horizons in Pakistan, contains the sole travelogue of E.F. Knight and a few other secondary studies as contextual evidence, while the primary anthropological insights remain under-analyzed. At its best, the argument repositions Pakistan within a frame of competing national horizons, namely those of South Asia, those of Central Asia/Islam, and those reflecting the Northern influence of China. The Central Asian horizon in particular, constituted by international alliances with Turkey and Iran in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century for purposes of diplomatic cooperation and infrastructural development, is interpreted as a means of reformulating the traditionally inherited horizons of Pakistan that tie it to South Asia and the British Empire. The use of Islamic and transnational identification appears as a more positive antidote to the negative identification of Pakistan as “not-India,” thus also challenging the implicit Indo-centricity of the category “South Asia.”

The author successfully demonstrates how the silk route becomes a site for “localizing national history,” a process which generates its own modes of belonging for the inhabitants of Gilgit-Baltistan. For Haines, this process is nonetheless open to challenge, as one of myth-making about an ancient and emancipatory glory associated with Pakistan’s place in the trade and cultural exchange along the silk route, the re-institution of which erodes more significant translocal linkages and histories from a pre-colonial time. The argument in the chapter against the definition of local pasts along a linear historical model of local-national-global is extremely significant, despite how conspicuously the role of transnational bodies like the UNESCO escapes emphasis and scrutiny.

The silk route itself, however, only appears as an object of modern myth-making in the book. While one is on board with Haines in his provocative analysis of the silk route’s associations with ‘Aryan’ self-making in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Germany, one is also left short-changed with how the book refrains from penetrating further into the complex narratives and histories of the silk route before the 18<sup>th</sup> century, secondary evidence for which is widely available and difficult to contest.

The final two chapters show Haines’ anthropological depth in the book. That the Karakoram Highway itself is the object of global attention (and metonymic of the entire Gilgit-Baltistan region) becomes clear in the way Haines analyzes how touristic discourse de-

peoples the landscape. The resultant barren-ness is not unilinear, since the production of tourist guides like the Lonely Planet, which manage to ossify the place, the people and the prices, exist alongside powerful regional business interests that present only the Hunza Valley as a worthy destination in the region, thus precluding outsiders from engaging with the local outside of the central point on a tourist map. Haines explains such displacements using two key perspectives: (1) one, from which otherwise significant places like Chilas and Nagar become merely incidental to the dominant map of the region and (2) another, from which a binary between destination and way-station comes to heavily bear upon the region's access to its visitors.

The analysis of sub-regional distinctions is the most formidable contribution Haines makes to the current historiography on frontiers and borderlands in Asia. He exposes the developing discourse of differentiation between commercial/touristic spaces and the more "local" spaces in the region to be a leaky separation. The movement of labor, occasional curious travelers, and small businesses inside village spaces disrupts that separation in the everyday, thus creating palpable tensions and possibilities. Gendered frictions arise simultaneously as women's mobility and their ability to freely associate is policed and renegotiated, and "down-country" male tourists (from the Punjab), mostly college students who perceive "local" women to be of loose morals and, hence, possible subjects of prostitution are effectively rebutted by the locals.

Unfortunately, various productive lines of inquiry only appear in the concluding note. Pressing questions of transnational modernity like Chinese designs on oil imports for its western territories through ports in Pakistan, China's desires for naval outreach into the Indian Ocean, the role of the Karakoram Highway in Pakistan's policy on Kashmir, and the intrusive role of NGO's and donor agencies receive barely a few pages. One is also left wondering whether the book belabors the point about territorial liminality and the function of mapping, since methodologically, both the Gilgit Agency and (later) the territory of Pakistan are liminal for reasons mostly pertaining to indefinite borders. The question of whether or not, by such definition, almost all nations would have to be liminal territories remains crucial, leaving one agnostic about the analytical potential of liminality as a category. Nonetheless, the book substantially succeeds in deracinating the premise of transnational flows, deterritorialized connectivities, and superficial hybridity that accompany perspectives on globalism and transnationalism today. The book promises much more than it delivers, but that does not reduce the contrapuntal potential of its argument.

Utathya Chattopadhyaya  
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign  
[Chattop2@illinois.edu](mailto:Chattop2@illinois.edu)