



Workshop

Law and governance in Gilgit Baltistan (Pakistan)

Wednesday, 27th and Thursday, 28th April

Nantes Institute for Advanced Study – Salle du Conseil (second floor)

Abstract

This workshop generates from ongoing discussions in Gilgit Baltistan among the national and international scholarship that have reflected upon or, directly experienced, law and governance as everyday practice in a territory which is considered as disputed to varied extents and from different perspectives. Formerly known as Northern Areas, but also designated as Karakoram, and Hindukush, Gilgit Baltistan formed from the merger of the Gilgit Agency, the Baltistan region and the princely states of Hunza and Nagar; hence featuring an extraordinary diversity constantly grappling with geographical isolation and geopolitical sensitivity. This workshop proposes a theoretical and methodological platform for a reflection that will develop along four threads: 1) scrutiny of attempts at democratic empowerment and participatory government in relation to ancestral law and conceptualizations of legitimacy at local, federal, regional, and international levels; 2) investigation of institutional development within and outside the state as well as the increasing role of NGOs and civil society; 3) exploration of the basis for an unprecedented dialogue on rights and indigenous knowledge; 4) formulation of new ethical principles for research in conflict zones.

Thursday, 28th April

9.30-12.30: Session 3

>**John MOCK**, University of California Santa Cruz, USA

A Sociolinguistic Perspective on Language and Governance in Gilgit-Baltistan: Background, Concepts and Issues

My paper introduces the topic of language and governance, provides contextual and scholarly background and identifies common themes, concepts and issues. I employ a critical sociolinguistic framework that places power differentials between individuals and groups at the center of analysis of the interaction of language and governance. The fluid political status of Gilgit-Baltistan within Pakistan and as disputed space between Pakistan and India focuses state and regional pressure on Gilgit-Baltistan's ethnolinguistic communities that obscures their own self-representations. My paper explores questions of language rights, language conflict, identity and indigenous knowledge systems and their interaction with larger social and political structures operating in Gilgit-Baltistan. The responses to homogenizing state and regional pressures contribute to an understanding of the relation of local representations of legitimacy with the processes of policy making in and about Gilgit-Baltistan. I address the important question of collaborative integration of multiple knowledge systems into processes for improved decision-making and problem-solving that promote sustainable self-determination and human rights, or, to put it simply, the sensitive topic of language and governance in a disputed pluricultural and plurilingual territory.

>**Abida ALI**, Aga Khan University, UK

Governance and Customary Laws of Hunza in Burushaski Folktales: an emic approach

The study from which this paper originates was conducted in Karimabad, the district of Hunza-Nagar in Gilgit-Baltistan and is based on some Burushaski folktales which were analysed to find popular representations of the system of governance and traditional laws which were long-established in the past and still play a role in the present of Hunza. The collection of folktales was carried out within a qualitative paradigm of research, firstly by interviewing people who remembered folktales which had been transmitted orally to them by their ancestors; secondly, by examining these folktales on the basis of interviews. The methodology of this study involved techniques of structural and historical analysis on the basis of an emic perspective as insider. Examining the folktales for the presence of themes of customary laws and local governance, resulted in an indication of sub-themes of hierarchical structures, societal norms, political conditions and gender roles, in the Burusho community of Hunza.

Though it is impossible to trace out a particular time for its historical origin - as stories vary with time -, examining phonemic and phatic phrases (spoken units of sounds related to phonology, morphology and syntactic), and individual words provided led to a picture of the world which might be a bit misty because of the uncertainty of the time-period surrounding the origin of these folktales, but holds nevertheless ties with the perception of local governance by the people of Hunza.

>**Mohammad ZAFAR**, Karakoram International University, Pakistan

Educated Youth Killing Heritage Language: A sociolinguistic survey of Shina

Voicing for the rights is a global phenomenon, and preservation and practicing the cultural heritage and traditional knowledge and their recognition have also a great significance in masses' lives, and they may be showcased through language, which is the integral part of non-material cultural. People of a community are known to others through their culture, i.e material or non-material. Material culture may be referred to as food, dress, dances, music etc, and non-material cultural covers language, norms, beliefs, philosophy etc. Language plays a vital role in propagation and presentation of a culture, as culture can be preserved through it, thus it is important to preserve the language first; if not, it may die one day, as many of the languages are at the verge of death, and death of a language is death of a culture, and death of a culture refers to the death of a nation. On the one hand the people of Gilgit-Baltistan are being deprived of their rights (the people have no right to vote in the national assembly; declared as a disputed territory), on the other hand, the people of Gilgit-Baltistan themselves lose their inherited language (Shina), as most of the educated Shina speakers prefer using Urdu and English in their private conversation, which may cause endangerment of their mother tongue in the years to come, as Chilliso (one of the dialects of Shina) is critically endangered like that of Dommaki. Preferring Urdu and English over Shina by the educated people in their conversation may be the result of the identity crises or sense of deprivation they have been going through for years, as they may feel that there is no say in their language, thus, most of the educated people of Gilgit-Baltistan switch from Shina to Urdu and English while communicating with their own people. This paper investigates the peoples' being inclined to use Urdu and English in their day-to-day conversation, giving least importance, ignoring their mother tongue, which may be a threat for Shina being endangered. The study investigates the reasons of preferring Urdu and English by the educated people in their day-to-day conversation, as the study has found that there is approximately 50 % switching from Shina to Urdu and English in a six minute friendly conversation. This may be the reason that the educated Shina speakers may have been affected by the globalization, modern means of education and urbanization as there are two big languages used in their academic, private and official communications, i.e Urdu (the national language of Pakistan) and English (the official language of Pakistan).

14.00-17.00: Session 4

>**Emma VARLEY**, Brandon University, Canada

Through an ethnography of the escalating effects and debilitating impacts of the 2010 monsoon floods on Gilgit-Baltistan's government health system infrastructures, personnel, and patients, this paper traces the ways that the crisis generated the comingling of medical and political concerns, and heated debate concerning Pakistan's uncertain commitments to the region and its marginalized and remote communities. In Gilgit Town, the region's capital, the precarities caused by the flood surfaced in the perilous condition of clinical services, with resources absent and treatment options diminished, and led to significantly worsened health outcomes for patients seeking care at Gilgit-Baltistan's District Headquarter Hospital (DHQ) and Kashrote Government City Hospitals, Gilgit Town's two public sector hospital. By providing an ethnographic 'snapshot' of the impacts of disaster-related governance gaps for medical services in Gilgit Town, I centralize my interlocutors' narratives concerning the inability of the state and Gilgit-Baltistan's regional administration to prevent the adverse health outcomes arising from flood-related damage and impaired service provision. My paper will show how, in response to the state's failure to intervene and offset the flood's direct and indirect damages to health systems, which had correlative impacts on population health and well-being, my interlocutors constructed and reinforced their needs and claims to government medical services not only in reference to the Order and Amendment, but also in terms of their 'biological citizenship' (Petryna 2002, Rose 2003); that is, through their health-related engagements with and expectations from the state. Such critiques, and the contrasting forms of regional and national identity which emerged from them, occurred notwithstanding the personal and political risks believed to accompany overt critiques of a state that has only uncertainty and incompletely incorporated the Gilgit-Baltistan region. Through analysis of the ways that state neglects coalesced with the floods to impair Gilgit's health services and harm vulnerable patients' bodies, my work foregrounds how individual actors interpreted and narrated the flood's complex impacts as being symptomatic of the state's ambiguous and 'uncaring' rule for the region and its peoples.

>**Sylvia VATUK**, University of Illinois at Chicago, USA

Muslim Women Access to Property: Inheritance and Governance in contemporary South Asia

Conclusive remarks

>**Rubya MEHDI**, Copenhagen University, Denmark and **Livia HOLDEN**, Karakoram International University, Pakistan and Fellow 2015-2016, IAS-Nantes (France)