

## Seminar

# Sufism in Pakistan: A Humanities Perspective

7 November 2014, 13.00-16.00

Copenhagen Business School, Porcelænshaven, 22

Room 417, 2000 Frederiksberg

In international media representations various forces appear to be threatening the vitality of the state in Pakistan – a key regional actor in the broader economic and security landscape of South Asia. These challenges include power concentration in civil and military bureaucracy, corruption, radicalization of religious beliefs, sectarian conflicts, decline in real wages, inflation, migration, terrorist attacks, war in Afghanistan, political infighting, and natural catastrophes. The question is, ‘How do Pakistanis cope in such circumstances?’ Several studies have shown that most Pakistanis do not depend on the state for their survival. As the state cannot provide basic social support in many areas, Pakistanis have to look for alternative sources of support. This could be a local landlord, the family, the *biradari* (clan), religious organizations, and institutions including mosques, *madrassahs*, and Sufi saints’ shrines that provide guidance and counseling in relation to coping with these challenges at personal, family and community levels.

In this seminar, we will explore how institutions associated with the broader Sufi social movement in Pakistan help fill the vacuum in terms of social service provisioning and cultural identity construction in 21st century Pakistan. Historically, the Sufi movement in South Asia was associated with the spiritual or inner aspects of Muslim identity in the Subcontinent. However, in 21<sup>st</sup> century Pakistan, Sufism has been transformed into a broader social movement that is associated with popular culture in the form of public recitations of poetry, texts of modern pop/rock bands, televised concerts on the Sufi-inspired qawali music, and large-scale public festivals held at Sufi shrines throughout the country. In addition, Sufi lodges and shrines play important functions in Pakistan in terms of providing food kitchens, practical advice in relation to Pakistanis in relation to their personal/family dilemmas, and a space for interfaith interaction and dialogue.

We have invited three experts on Sufism in Pakistan to give an introduction to this subject through different lenses that illustrate the multi-faceted dimension of this phenomenon in Pakistan. Dr. Jürgen Wasim is Curator at the Oriental Department at the Ethnology Museum in Munich, Germany. He is also a Professor in Islamic Studies at the University in Erlangen-Nurnberg. He will read excerpts from his latest book "Nocturnal Music in the Land of the Sufis—Unheard Pakistan" (Oxford University Press, 2013) and show excerpts from the movie "The Red Sufi" which was produced on the basis of the book.

Our second guest, Farrukh Zaman, is a movie director and producer at FZ-Media, Paper Machine Films in Lahore, Pakistan. He is known for producing a series of documentaries about Pakistan’s most well-known Sufi poets/Saints from Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, and Khayber Pakhtunkhwa. These deal with the possibility for intercommunity faith and harmony in the country. He will show excerpts from the documentaries and talk about how he made them.

Finally, Dr. Mohammad Youssuf Shaheen who has been involved in the practice of Sufism in Pakistan for more than 40 years will play some of the Sufi-inspired qawali music and explain the meaning of the Sufi poetry which is recounted in this music. Dr. Shaheen manages a Sufi lodge in Pakistan where he teaches Sufi meditation, thought, and practice.

The seminar is sponsored by the Department of Intercultural Communication and Management, CBS. The target audience for the seminar includes academics, South Asia specialists, business (wo)men, government officials, and/or other stakeholders that are studying and/or working in relation to Pakistan/South Asia and who wish to expand their knowledge of the changing socio-economic and socio-cultural dynamics of South Asia.

The seminar is free of charge, but registration is necessary. To register please send an email to: [aha.ikl@cbs.dk](mailto:aha.ikl@cbs.dk) with your name, institution and position.

### **Program**

13.00-13.15	<b>Introduction</b> Peter Lund-Thomsen, Associate Professor, Ph.D. H.E. Ambassador Mr. Masroor Ahmed Junejo, Embassy of Pakistan
13.15 – 14.00	<b>A Travelogue from the Land of the Sufis in Pakistan</b> Dr. Jürgen Wasim Fremgden
14.00 – 14.15	Tea/Coffee Break and Networking
14.15 – 15.00	<b>Documentaries and Documentary-Making on Sufism in Pakistan</b> Farrukh Zamann
15.00 -15.15	Tea/Coffee Break and Networking
15.15-16.00	<b>Qawali Music and Its Meaning</b> Dr. Mohammad Youssuf Shaheen