

Dreaming of a Nation: Muslim nationalism, Architecture and Cold War modernization of Postcolonial Pakistan (Fellowship am Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient von Dr. Farhan Karim)

Initiative: Postdoctoral Fellowships in den Geisteswissenschaften an Universitäten und Forschungsinstituten in Deutschland und den USA

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In the first decade following the creation of Pakistan, the government embarked on a series of architectural and urban design projects as tokens of new Pakistani nationalism based on religion and democracy. When General Ayub Khan assumed power and reformed the country's public administration to secure his despotic regime, two different types of architectural projects were born: i) new administrative centers to reify centralized state power; and ii) rural and community development agencies, training centers, education institutes and grass roots democratic institutions. Through these projects Ayub's government envisioned a new postcolonial society and a new definition of citizenship that would share its selfhood with Western modernity and regional identity. Through the architectural history of 21 important public buildings of prerecession Pakistan, the research will present a story of a unique nation-building endeavor entangled in debates about Muslim nationalism, democracy, and American Cold War cultural politics. Commissioned jointly by the government of Pakistan, the Ford Foundation, the USAID and the World Bank and designed by the leading Euro-American architects of the time, a history of these buildings documents the connection of U.S. and Pakistani institutions and individuals in one of the most unique 20th century nation-building projects. This research will show that these buildings embody a nuanced meaning - from the U.S. grant agencies' perspective, they symbolized artifacts of the U.S. Cold War soft power and cultural diplomacy; from the Western architects' perspective, they proposed a new definition of architectural modernism for the Third World by combining technological advancement and regional identity; from the Pakistan government's perspective, they were evidences of the country's development towards modernity. This research unfolds an untold history of prerecession Pakistan by placing architecture in a larger geopolitical context.

Projektbeteiligte

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