



LUMS

Saida Waheed
Gender Initiative

ISSUE 1 : JULY 2021

GENDER BI-ANNUAL



Editor's Note



It is with great delight that I introduce Saida Waheed Gender Initiative's (SWGI) Gender Bi-Annual. Our objective is to bring together different disciplinary perspectives on a range of issues in a vibrant, engaging and accessible fashion. Crucially, the Bi-Annual showcases both academic and practitioner voices on gender and sexuality studies. We especially encourage our contributors to experiment with different mediums and look to feature commentaries, dialogues, picture essays or curation of feminist art and media, along with more conventionally written pieces.

The contributions for each issue of the Bi-Annual will fall under four categories. The first, Practitioner Voices, will provide insight into currently relevant issues submitted by non-academics. The second, Academic Work, will emphasize more academically grounded narratives. In our Gender & Design section, we will carry commentaries on how gender is realized in design both in the classroom and beyond. Finally, Student Features, will shine a light on student work. All types of contributions will be reviewed and edited by our editorial team.

Needless to say, any pieces that you wish to submit, either collectively or individually, are greatly appreciated. Best wishes and thank you for your contribution to the SWGI Gender Bi-Annual.

DR. HADIA MAJID
EDITOR

Lahore University of Management Sciences

This Issue

More than a year into the COVID-19 pandemic, the stark gender inequalities in multiple domains have become even more evident. We touch upon some of these in this first issue of the SWGI Gender Bi-Annual. Featuring a varied set of voices, we consider issues ranging from the digital divide and women's rights to women's work and care burdens. In the end, our contributors provide thought-provoking pieces that document continued gaps that have been exacerbated by the pandemic and otherwise, while highlighting hard-fought gains.

In Practitioner Voices we have a technologist writing about women's rights, especially privacy, in the digital sphere. Academic Work features a dialogue between a sociologist and a linguistic anthropologist about a short film on how women in a conservative setting have carved out space for themselves. In our Gender & Design section we have three separate contributors: one, an architect, commenting on the recognition of women's work in key architectural designs, an economist assessing how gender is represented within the economics curriculum, and two lawyers discussing a program focused on re-writing pivotal legal proceedings of the Supreme Court of Pakistan from a feminist perspective. Finally, in Student Features students share a snapshot of their research on the contemporary feminist movement in Pakistan. They discuss challenges faced by the movement by looking at the online backlash experienced by Aurat March (Womxn's March).

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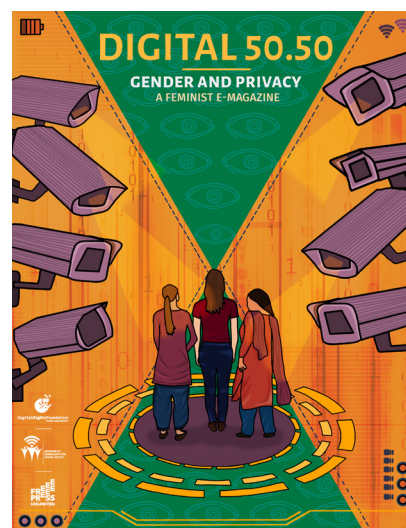
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TAKING A GENDERED AND HUMAN RIGHTS APPROACH TO TECHNOLOGY

SHMYLA KHAN

Digital Rights Foundation (DRF) is a non-profit working on the intersectionality of technologies and human rights for the last eight years in Pakistan, focusing specifically on groups and identities that are more vulnerable in online spaces and with reference to technology. Through the work that we do, we seek to dismantle the assumption that the introduction of technology leads to progress and more neutrality in mediating human relations. Our work, through research, advocacy and engagement with communities, has told a different story about technology that is marked by social structures, inequalities and, depending on your identity, violence. Technologies cannot, and should not, be separated from the social, economic and legal structures that shape our societies.



'Digital 50:50 - Gender and Privacy', 2020

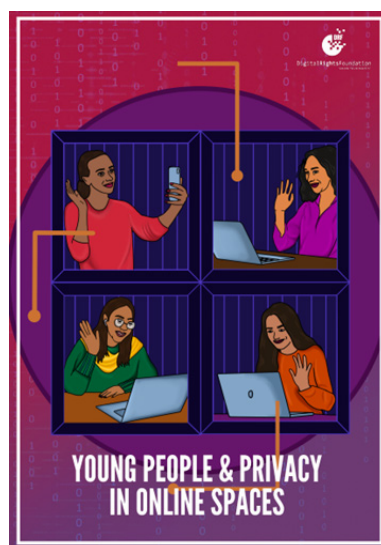


'Measuring Pakistani Women's Experiences of Online Violence,' 2017

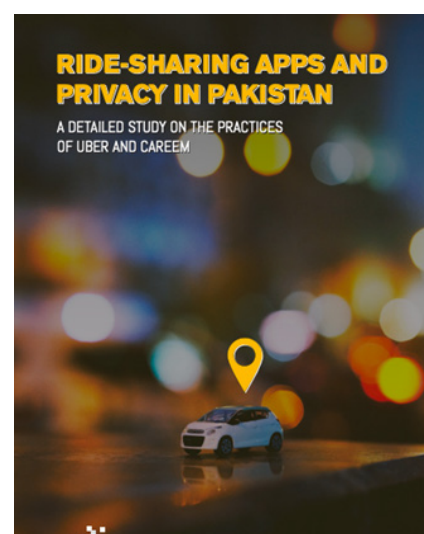
DRF's work has primarily focused on issues of gender-based violence mediated through technologies such as mobile phones and the platforms on the internet. As social media platforms have come to dominate the internet, they have become sites of expression for a lot of women and gender minorities, providing spaces to create communities and express themselves. However, these spaces also give way to online violence, which ranges from abusive comments to serious cases of blackmailing and doxing of personal information without one's consent. We are no strangers to patriarchal violence; however, online violence has exponentially risen in the last decade and is a common experience for women who own mobile phones and access the internet. Our first comprehensive **research** on the subject, conducted in seventeen universities across the country in 2016, confirmed many of these observations. A staggering 70% of the young women surveyed stated that they were afraid of posting pictures online for fear of misuse. This corresponded with very few women having knowledge of the law on online harassment or awareness of policies of social media companies.



'Cyber Harassment Helpline Report,' 2021



'Young People & Privacy in Online Spaces,' 2021



'Ride-sharing apps and Privacy in Pakistan,' 2018

Over the years we also realized there was a severe lack of evidence when it comes to online gender-based violence, particularly quantitative data. Through our cyber harassment helpline, we have sought to fill that gap by publishing annual helpline **reports** since the inception of the helpline outlining the number of cases, the nature of harassment experienced, the geographical spread and the type of recourse taken. This data has served as a basis for further research on issues such as **mental health** as well as advocacy efforts such as lobbying the government to increase the resources dedicated to gender-based violence at cybercrime wings of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA).

Shmyla Khan is the Director for Research and Policy at Digital Rights Foundation.

Over the years we've looked at the type of harassment faced by women **journalists, activists and politicians** in online spaces and found similar patterns, particularly for those with a considerable public profile. Given that online violence occurs at intersectionalities of gender identity, class, religion, ethnicity, abilities and age, we've recently looked more closely at the experience of **religious minorities** in online spaces and **young people's** experience of privacy.

Another major focus of our research has been platform responsibility with reference to issues of violence and privacy. Building on the Ranking Digital Rights framework, DRF published a **study** analyzing the privacy policies of local telecommunications companies in Pakistan and found them woefully inadequate and, at times, completely lacking. We followed it up with an **analysis** of privacy policies for ride-hailing applications and found that these services were lacking in their "protection and ethical use of personal data, in their provision of safe workplaces for drivers and safe services for users, especially women."

Based on our research, we regularly submitted policy recommendations to various governmental and international bodies on subjects such as **online violence, content regulation, surveillance, right to assembly, data protection, freedom of expression and misinformation**. As technologies become more embedded in our lives, especially in wake of the COVID-19 pandemic in particular, we will continue to look at emerging issues and situate technologies within the local context while and as a continuation of the 'offline world'. Lastly, during the pandemic, we worked primarily with women journalists, writers and artists to create the **Digital 50:50** e-zine that creates a feminist space to write about issues as diverse as mental health, privacy, feminist movements and tech by combining the written word, videos and digital art.

Still from *Kheh Kheh Mein* (Playing at the Boundary)

KHEH KHEH MEIN

(PLAYING AT THE BOUNDARY)

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN NIDA KIRMANI & GWENDOLYN KIRK

Kheh Kheh Mein (Playing at the Boundary) is a documentary co-directed by Nida Kirmani and Dostain Baloch, a Karachi-based filmmaker who grew up and lives in Lyari, which explores how practices of fun and enjoyment can challenge gender boundaries. The film follows three characters--a boxer, a cycling instructor, and a gender-rights activist--and is based on a paper published by Kirmani last year in South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies titled 'Can Fun Be Feminist? Gender, Space and Mobility in Lyari, Karachi.' Below is a conversation between Kirmani and Kirk, a linguistic anthropologist who has worked extensively on the Punjabi film industry in Pakistan and who teaches in the Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies stream.

GK: The stories presented in the film show very different characters with very different stories and goals, although they all come from the same area and are close in age. Your film links them in several interesting ways, around axes of gender, of freedom, and in its aesthetic treatment. Can you discuss this a little bit--why did you choose these particular stories to highlight, and how do you conceptualize the link between them?

NK: The three individuals featured in the film, Mehreen, Zuleikha, and Sidu, were selected because we felt they embodied different forms of everyday resistance through their pursuit of fun and enjoyment. We wanted to highlight the ethnic diversity of Lyari, so we chose individuals from three communities, which

have a large presence in the area. Mehreen is Baloch; Zuleikha is Kutchi, and Sidu is Punjabi, and they are from different neighborhoods as well. This is not an attempt to be representative, but we did want to highlight the diversity of Lyari. We also thought these three characters were dynamic in their own ways. Mehreen is situated within a larger tradition of boxing in the area, although she is part of a newer trend of young women joining the sport. Zuleikha is part of a group that has been making waves locally for the past few years, and their efforts speak to a wider trend of young women claiming public space through activities like cycling. Sidu's story is a little different in that it is not about sports but about an individual who is challenging gender binaries within and outside Lyari. We wanted to show how Sidu is carrying on

with their struggle but how enjoyment and fun are also an important part of their lives. We strived to get away from the oppressed victim narrative that is often present in stories of urban localities in the Global South and in particular about Lyari itself.

GK: In your film, you address that most narratives of Lyari that we see as outsiders revolve around violence and gang warfare, whereas in the film your focus is intentionally different. What do you think these stories offer to perspectives on this area? Also, is there something special that they tell us about this particular place, that might be different from other parts of Pakistan?

NK: That was precisely our intention; we really wanted to move away from only viewing Lyari, and Karachi in general, through the limiting lens of violence. I have been working in Lyari since 2012, and I have repeatedly seen people unfamiliar with the area respond to my frequent visits with shock and awe, as if Lyari were a war zone or just a depressing, poverty-stricken place. I also realised that my own previous work was in many ways feeding into this narrative. For this reason, my co-director Dostain Baloch and I decided we needed to

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do something different and really highlight the fun aspects of life in this area. We didn't want to discount the very real experiences of violence and suffering or paint a romantic picture of the place, but at the same time, we really wanted people to see some of the other sides of this vibrant part of Karachi--the parts that make us also love this part of Karachi.

And yes, I would say Lyari is special in that it is one of the oldest parts of Karachi and hence has a really rich

history in terms of migration and labour struggles. It is also particularly diverse, with each wave of migration into the area representing another turning point in Subcontinental history. This diversity also means that the people of the area are constantly living in very close proximity to people who are otherwise very different from themselves. For this reason, it seems to be that Lyari is slightly more liberal than other parts of the city. Of course, there is a great deal of conservatism in the area as well, as we saw with the victory of the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan^[1] in the last elections, so again, I don't want to romanticize the place, but I do think that there's an openness in Lyari that is special. At the same time, the phenomenon I observe in Lyari, including the ways young people are pushing gender boundaries, are things we would also see in other parts of Karachi and in other places in Pakistan and even beyond. Therefore, like any ethnographic research, my research in Lyari and this documentary have relevance even outside this area.

GK: Much as I appreciate this much-needed intervention around the centering of narratives of violence when it comes to Lyari, I am wondering though whether these stories of enjoyment and fun, of pursuing interests and hobbies, can also be read as a story of resistance or agency in the face of what of course is a very real dangerous security situation (as is briefly mentioned in one or two places in the film) but also in a much larger way, systems of state and patriarchal violence?

NK: This is what I argued in the paper that inspired the documentary--that fun and

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enjoyment were important ‘everyday forms of resistance’ to quote James Scott. We wanted to show how resistance does not necessarily have to be in the form of a formal protest or a march and that it did not always have to be serious in nature. The stories in the film demonstrate how the pursuit of joy and pleasure are also important ways in which people challenge gender boundaries. This moves us away from only thinking about feminism as something practiced by a particular class of women who are formally engaged in self-identified feminist activism. We wanted to show how these young people, who may or may not see themselves as part of a wider feminist movement, are also engaged in important forms of feminist politics.

GK: Can you describe the process of making this film, the collaboration that you had? You are an academic and this is your first film; did you find at times that you had to adjust your perspective and approach, coming from a research

Still from *Khel Khel Mein* (Playing at the Boundary)

background and as an outsider to the community (although of course you have been working there for several years)? Did you find certain advantages to the visual medium in terms of telling a particular story about your research site?

NK: Yes, this is my first foray into film direction. I produced a documentary earlier based on another piece of research in Lyari, but this is the first

time I was so closely involved in the actual creation of the film, though I should say that Dostain really did take the creative lead as this is his area of expertise more than mine. In terms of the experience, it was really challenging for me as someone who is used to expressing myself through the written word--trying to get across complex ideas without being able to spell them out for the audience and hoping that the message gets across

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Still from Khel Khel Mein (Playing at the Boundary)

as intended. At the same time, there is an excitement in the medium as the content can only be moulded so much by the director and editor. While we have a huge role in shaping the final product, the characters also have a certain kind of power to tell their own stories in a way that is perhaps not as possible with a journal article. Also, while we are trying to get certain ideas across to the audience, we only have so much control of how they view and interpret the film, which is also quite exciting. This has really come through in some of the conversations we have had with audiences post-screening.

GK: Since the completion of the film, what response has it received, particularly as it travels in different circles? For example, you have shown it in more academic settings, but I am wondering whether it has been shared with audiences in Lyari, or with the people featured in the film, and what reaction has it gotten there?

NK: The film was shared immediately after completion with the folks featured in the film, and thankfully they

seemed to really like it, but because of the pandemic, we haven't really been able to screen the film in the way we might have wanted to during 'normal' times. For example, our previous project *Don Akhbaar*, was screened in various forums within Karachi and in Lyari itself in academic and non-academic spaces. With *Khel Khel Mein*, we have been limited to screening the film online due to COVID-19. It has been shown in a few gender and sexuality-focused film festivals and in various universities including LUMS, the University of Edinburgh and Queen Mary University in London. However, we would really like to screen it in Lyari itself. Hopefully once we are in a better place in terms of the pandemic, we could organize an outdoor screening there as we know online events might not be as accessible as we would like them to be. In a few months, we will also make the documentary available to the public on YouTube, so hopefully it will be viewed more widely.

[1] *Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan* is a far-right Islamist political party in Pakistan.

Dr. Nida Kirmani is Associate Professor of Sociology at LUMS. Nida has published widely on issues related to gender, Islam, women's movements, development and urban studies in India and Pakistan. Her book, *Questioning 'the Muslim Woman': Identity and Insecurity in an Urban Indian Locality*, was published in 2013 by Routledge. Her current research focuses on urban violence, gender and insecurity in the area of Lyari in Karachi.

Dr. Gwendolyn Kirk is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at LUMS. Her research centers on language ideologies and popular culture in Pakistan, and her current book project addresses questions of language, performance, and aesthetics in Lahore's Punjabi film industry. In 2020, with film scholar Dr. Zebunnisa Hamid, she co-founded the open-access online journal *Reel Pakistan: A Screen Studies Forum*. You can also hear her on the podcast *Filmi Happy Hour*.

AN ALTERNATE NARRATIVE:

Agency of other genders in the past and future of Architecture

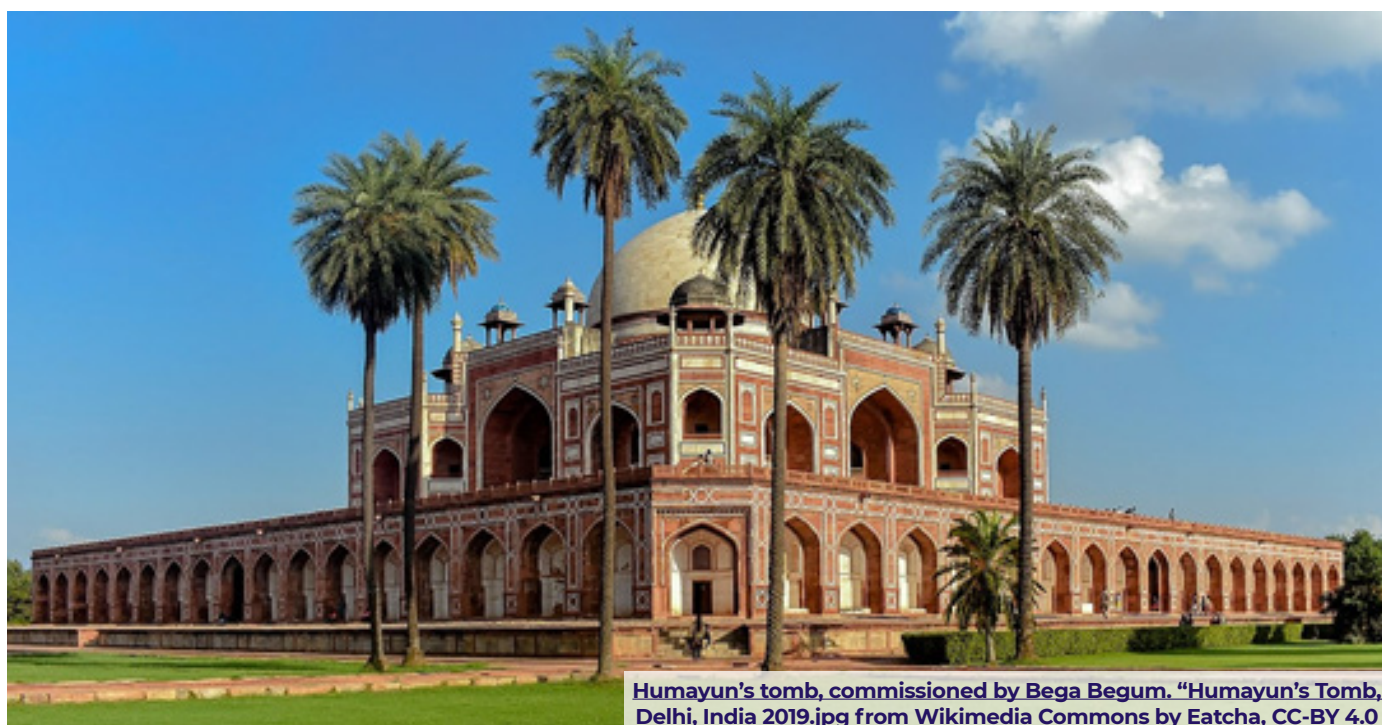
ANAM IZHAR AHMED

The built environment is predominantly a by-product of the male vision, or at least that's what we have been taught and educated to believe. We have inherited design ideologies that influence our homes and our lives which apparently come from a very singular perspective. However, I have often wondered: What agency have other genders

had in contributing to our built environment?

Historically, other genders have, in fact, contributed to very significant structures but their presence and influence remains secondary only to the names of men who were considered a more important association at the time. Seen in the grandeur of the Mughal architecture that spans the subcontinent, there is almost never mention

of the influence of women in the design process, yet one of the most notable structures was the undertaking of a bold Mughal queen. The magnificent sandstone structure laced with marble inlays, Humayun's Tomb, located in Delhi was commissioned by his wife, Bega Begum.[1] This mausoleum served as the template for the Taj Mahal and was largely influenced by Persian design, which Bega Begum sought out by hiring



Humayun's tomb, commissioned by Bega Begum. "Humayun's Tomb, Delhi, India 2019.jpg from Wikimedia Commons by Eatcha, CC-BY 4.0

Persian designers. It was significant as it was also India's first garden tomb with the 'Char Bhag' [2] a design so influential that it was adopted in multiple tombs after.

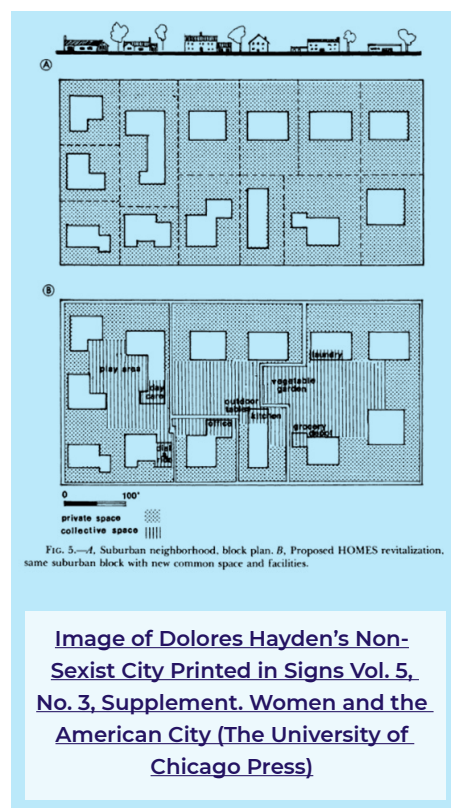
The problem of gender in architecture remains two-fold, one: there has been a great deal of underrepresentation of the other genders in architecture. Even when there have been contributions by other genders, they have lacked acknowledgement, or in the case of Bega Begum, been clumped in with the achievements of a male. Secondly, there have been very limited other gender viewpoints adopted in the built world due to the power structures in place always prioritizing the male perspective. The question remains, where do we go from here?

In the last century, with the advent of one of the most defining movements in architecture, many women have played a valuable role in shaping it. With the celebrated, documented and studied great modern male architects, are the not as well-known female

counterparts. Women who produced large, important bodies of work yet were in the shadows of the male architects of the time, such as Lilly Reich to Mies or Charlotte Perriand to Corbusier, to name a few.

Without these women's contributions - their study of and sensitivity to design and presence - the works of these known masters of the modern architecture movement would be incomplete. Yet even now in academia and beyond we only scratch the surface and wonder where the women are. They are here and they are doing the work.

Women have often used their own experiences to theorize and make contributions to Architecture.[3] As a result, at the very core of the work of many female architects, urbanists and historians, has been a sense of collectivism and care. In her essay 'What would a non-sexist city be like' Dolores Hayden examines how the phrase, "a woman's place is the home"[4] has been a driving principle for domestic design in the United States. With houses designed to define and reinforce domestic roles, Hayden, through



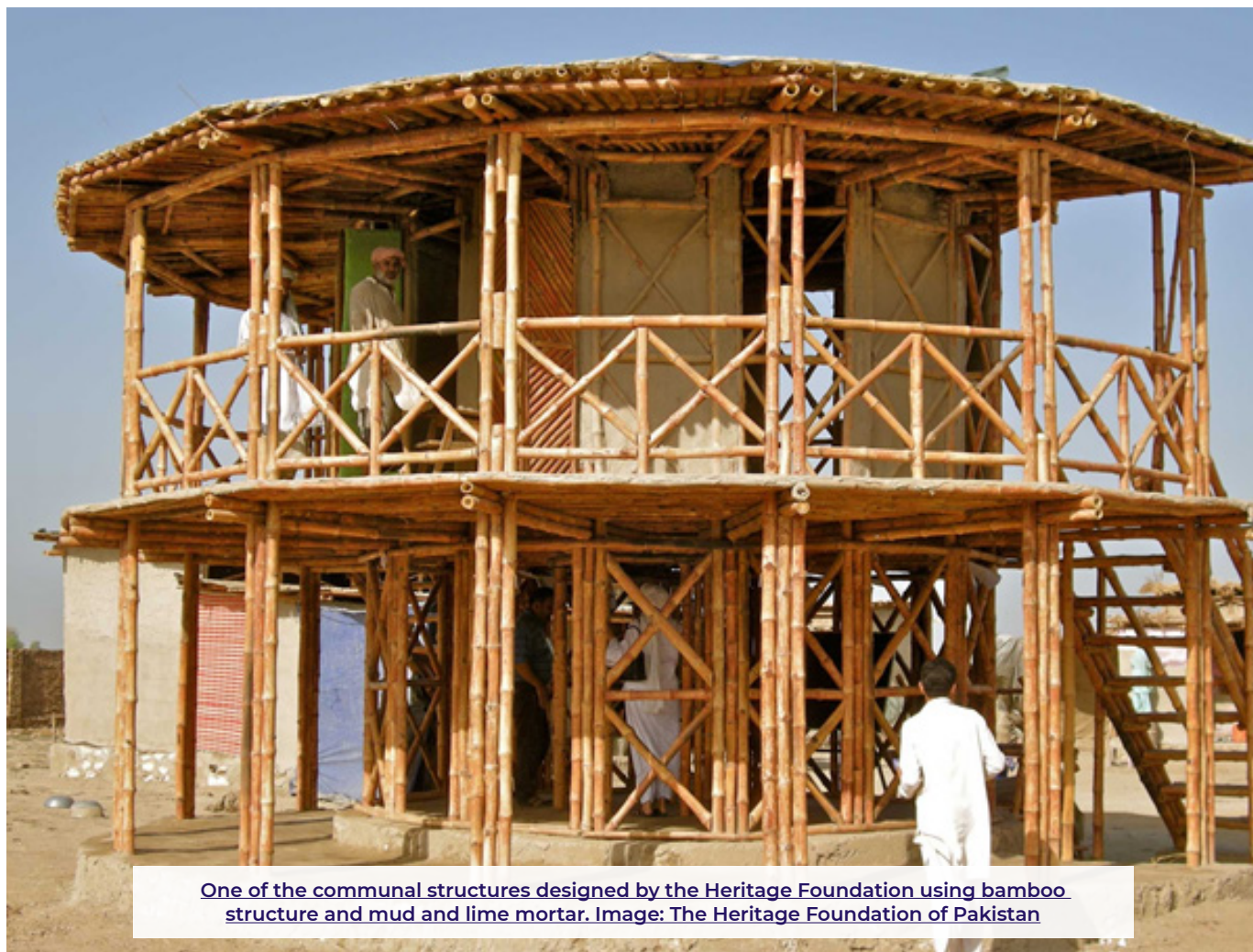
[Image of Dolores Hayden's Non-Sexist City Printed in Signs Vol. 5, No. 3, Supplement. Women and the American City \(The University of Chicago Press\)](#)

case studies, reimagines an alternate domesticity. Through restructuring homes and redefining gender roles in domestic spaces, the possibility of sharing domestic labor is considered a reality. Hayden advocates for neighborhoods which are designed to share the work and support the domestic laborers - the women.

Yasmin Lari, one of the most prominent architects of Pakistan proposes similar ideas through her work. As the first female architect of Pakistan, Yasmin Lari has made immeasurable contributions to the Architectural field in the country. Her contributions include large corporate projects, but in the last two decades she has focused her energy on the Heritage Foundation which she established in 1980 with her husband. Lari states "It's not only the right of the elite to have good design" [5] a critical thought and need for a country that has a massive socio-economic gap. The Heritage Foundation has undertaken



[The Fondation Vuitton, Paris, and Cassina reconstructed Charlotte Perriand works and the interior design of a dwelling for the "Autumn Salon," 1929-2019, in "Charlotte Perriand: Inventing a New World." Artists credit F.L.C./Adagp Paris 2019. Photography courtesy of Fondation Louis Vuitton/David Bordes](#)



One of the communal structures designed by the Heritage Foundation using bamboo structure and mud and lime mortar. Image: The Heritage Foundation of Pakistan

relief work and designed low-cost homes that are realized through communal building. Neighborhoods employ local materials designed around the needs of the user but one of the most visible aspects is incorporating space for the women of these communities. Through providing spaces of gathering and sharing labor, resources, learning, and educating, Yasmeen Lari empowers the women of these devastated communities. Similar to Hayden's vision and critique of rethinking our domestic spaces, to dismantle boundaries of public and private, isolated and shared, we see it in practice in the many neighborhoods Yasmin Lari has helped remake. Volunteering for the Heritage Foundation in my senior year as a young designer was pivotal in shaping my vision for what architecture should be. The

work done by women through the history of architecture is just a glimpse of what the power of gender equity in design can do and provides a roadmap to redefine and reimagine architecture. Perhaps through the balancing of genders, the built world might ever so slowly undo the systemic injustices in place and empower those who have no agency.

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[4] Fainstein, Susan S., and Lisa J. Servon, (2005) *Gender and Planning A Reader*. United Kingdom: Rutgers University Press.

[5] Wainwright, O. (2020) 'The barefoot architect: 'I was a starchitect for 36 years. Now I'm atoning'. *The Guardian*. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2020/apr/01/yasmeen-lari-pakistan-architect-first-female-jane-drew>.

Anam Izhar Ahmed is a Pakistani architectural designer, researcher and educator based in New York City. She holds a Masters in Advanced Architecture design from Columbia University and a M. Arch from Parsons, The New School for Design.



GENDER AND THE ECONOMICS CURRICULUM

—◆—
RASHID MEMON

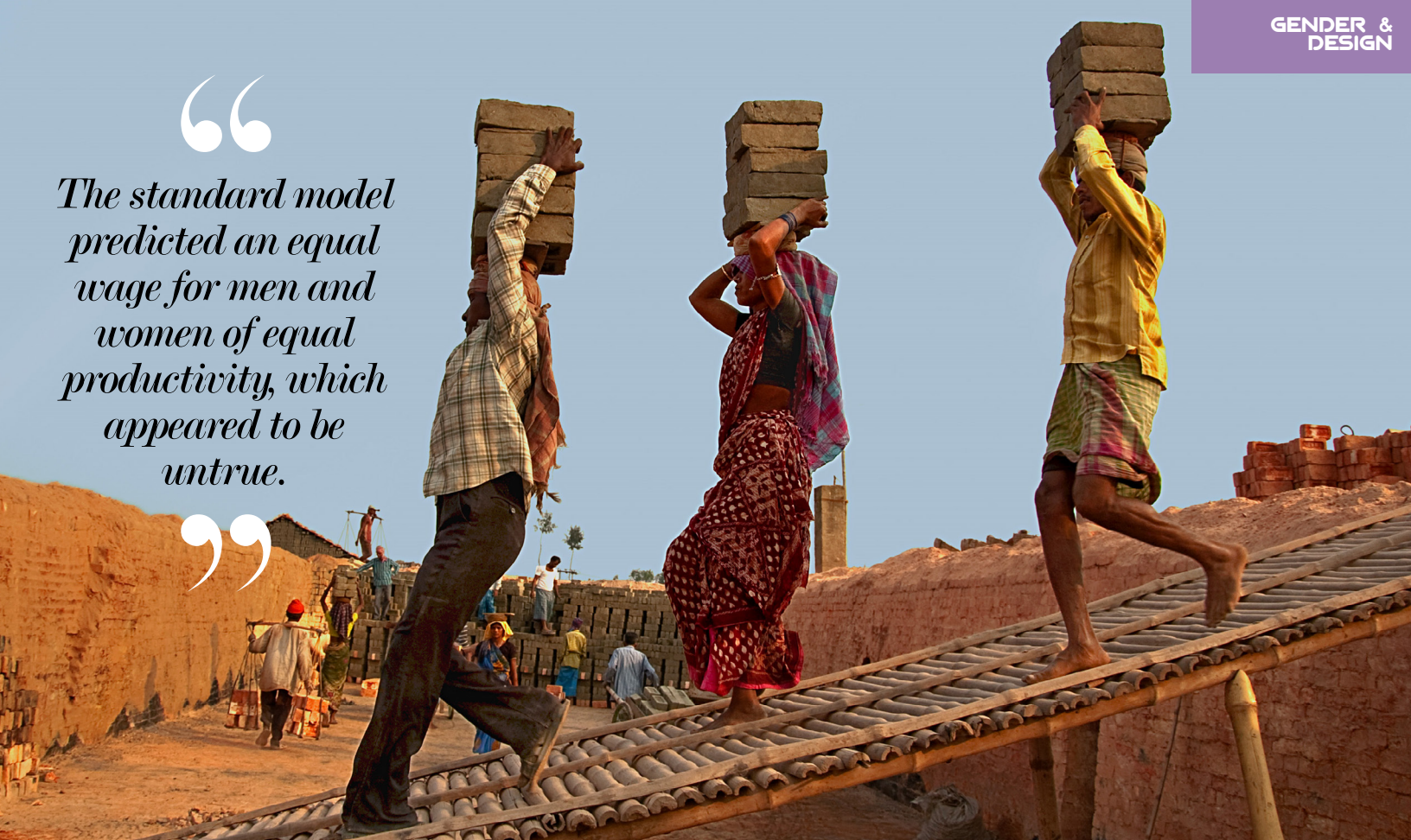
Despite a privileged position in academia and policy making (or perhaps because of it), Economics has many detractors of its treatment of gender.

Critics identify problems not just with the questions Economists raise but the method employed in answering them as well as the way it is taught in undergraduate classes, particularly the introductory classes.

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A woman carries bricks with fellow workers in West Bengal, India. Gender inequality in the work force hurts economic growth, according to a report by the International Monetary Fund. Photo by: UNDP / CC BY-NC-ND

Standard (neo-classical) economics, the dominant strand taught in leading undergraduate programs emphasizes understanding the economy (and recently, the society) by summing up individual choices. This poses the possibility of choice, even if under tragic circumstances, and the notion that the whole is a simple sum of its parts. In the post-world war era, a politically significant conclusion of this theorizing was that individuals in a competitive economy, each maximizing their own happiness, would generate an 'equilibrium' where no one could be made better-off without hurting another. Such is the momentum of this basic model, that it continues to be taught as an introduction to Economics despite many of its assumptions having been thoroughly discredited.

Incorporating gender into this traditional analysis was trivially easy in the first instance. A generic she replaced a generic he! At an abstract level, it really didn't matter if the agent was male or female. The core message – that a free functioning market can resolve the tensions of a complex society amicably – remained intact. But the details were a tad devilish, particularly when applied to the labor market. The standard model predicted an equal wage for men and women of equal productivity, which appeared to be untrue. Given how sparsely the models are constructed, this 'puzzle' could be explained by only two possibilities – by 'imperfections' in the market and/or by peculiarities in women's choices. 'Imperfections' arose in the labor market because women were not as mobile as men – they couldn't leave a job

and move to the next city at a better offer. But this wasn't really the market's fault, for women's immobility arose, strictly speaking, from social and cultural restrictions and not from the market – so there were no implications for economic policy. The other possibility was that women 'chose' occupations that offered the flexibility of looking after a family and simultaneously (and unsurprisingly) paid less than occupations chosen by men. This was ingenious, as it made women ultimately responsible for their own predicament! The third possibility – men, as a group, discriminated against women as a group couldn't really be sustained because (i) it implied behavior that was not profit maximizing and (ii) men simply did not exist in the models 'as a group'. Ontological and behavioral assumptions simply

did not allow for substantial discrimination.

These modeling assumptions have led economists to be regularly puzzled by common occurrences. In the 1950s, when household incomes were rising, economists were quite puzzled by the concomitant rise in women's labor supply. This was also the same decade in which Betty Friedan wrote *Feminine Mystique*, describing in detail the multi-faceted costs of staying at home for women. Even so, the best economics could do, grafting gender onto a standard model, was to highlight economic opportunity cost, eventually convincing themselves that the rise in women's labor was the substitution effect (rising wages increased the opportunity cost of women's time thereby raising the cost of staying at home). Details were unimportant if economists' models predicted well.

The desire for mathematically rigorous but acontextual models also has implications for how Economics is taught and the kind of student an Economics major attracts. To begin with, introductory economics is generally taught as if everyone in the class has the same learning style. The climate tends to be competitive, objective and individualistic. There is often very little interaction between student and teacher. There is even less interaction between and among students. Secondly, Economics is often taught in a way that is conducive for people who take in information through abstract conceptualization and process it through observation and reflection. But not everyone learns like this! Other students tend to take in information from concrete

experiences and process the information through active experimentation. As it happens, research shows that American-European males and Asians show a tendency to learn through abstraction and American-European women and African American students tend to learn through concrete experiences.

Prominent feminist

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Hierarchical dualisms, such as reason over nature and separation over connection are fundamentally tied to a hierarchy that ranks men above women.
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economists have argued that the staying power of this narrow approach as well as its associated pedagogy has much to do with systematic sexism – the systematic devaluation of women and ‘feminine’ ways of knowing. They have also drawn attention to the intellectual roots of Economics in fundamental categories of Western thought:

Hierarchical dualisms, such as reason over nature and separation over connection are fundamentally tied to a hierarchy that ranks men above women. Can a discipline that prides itself in atomistic utility maximizing agents incorporate gender in ways that underscore the relationships of power that characterize gender? Can a discipline that prides itself in being a hard science by virtue of its mathematical rigor imagine other softer ways of knowing? Probably not.

But the criticisms of the mainstream models allow us to construct an inclusive Economics that doesn't get readily puzzled, and Feminist economists have been doing just this for a several decades now. Where mainstream models ignore non-market activities, they break the dualism of market/non-market by drawing attention to unpaid work in and out of the home. Where mainstream models struggle with self-interested/altruistic preferences, they recognize that context helps decide which is relevant. In and out of the market, they draw attention not just to independence of choice but also to the human need for connection, not just to unbridled accumulation but to the fulfillment of the needs of a human family, not just to claims of ‘rigor’ but to a richer, inclusive and pluralistic way of doing Economics.

Dr. Rashid Memon is an Assistant Professor of Economics at LUMS. His work focuses on the role of social identity in economic interaction using survey and experimental data. He may be reached at rashid.memon@lums.edu.pk

PAKISTANI FEMINIST JUDGMENTS PROJECT

MARVA KHAN & ORUBAH SATTAR

We founded the Pakistani Feminist Judgments Project (PFJP) with the aim to write alternative judgments for Supreme Court cases, from a feminist legal perspective. The idea behind PFJP is to envisage the different outcomes of various important Supreme Court cases, had a feminist judge written the judgments. Our project aims to add the voice of feminism by its objectives,

reinvalidate feminist discourse in the legal field, and highlight female and gender non-binary perspectives in this field.

The PFJP is inspired by the Feminist Judgments Projects conducted and initiated in Canada, United Kingdom, United States, New Zealand, Australia, Scotland, Ireland, South Africa,

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“The art of judgment writing” workshop, attended by PFJP contributors, district court judges and lawyers from across Pakistan.

and India to bring together women academics, practicing lawyers, judges and legal researchers to rewrite alternative feminist judgments in significant legal cases. It aims to highlight how the judicial jurisprudence could have practically changed if the cases had been written or decided from a feminist perspective.

All feminist “judges”, while writing their judgments, will be bound by the same ethical and legal constraints, precedents, and laws that bind real-life judges. They can choose to write dissents, concurrences, or agree with the majority. Each re-written judgment will also be accompanied by a commentary which will contextualize the original judgment, discuss why a feminist re-write was essential, and evaluate the rewritten judgment in this context. These re-written judgments and commentaries shall be published in the form of a book. This exercise of developing feminist jurisprudence through re-writing Supreme Court Judgments is especially necessary in Pakistan - a country where not even a female judge has ever been raised to the Supreme Court, let alone any gender diverse or non-binary person.

One of the judgments being re-written is the much-lauded *Shehla Zia v WAPDA* PLD 1994 SC 693. The petitioner, Ms. Shehla Zia, was one of the most notable women lawyers in Pakistan’s history, and was also one of the founding members of Pakistan’s first all-woman law firm. However, the judgment is absolutely silent about the petitioner, and fails to address the hazardous effects of an unhealthy environment on female mortality and maternal health – issues which will be addressed by the re-written judgment. The re-written judgment will also bring in more nuanced arguments, including how environmental factors impacts different classes (in this case, the residents of a nearby dhobi ghat did not have access to same resources as the F6 residents in Islamabad). Similarly, since economic development is a key factor behind many projects detrimental to the environment, the Project will also attempt to devise an inclusive definition of economic development.

The “judges” rewriting these judgements are lawyers, academics, legal research scholars and subject experts from various professions. For the benefit of the authors and commentators, the PFJP conducted a series of online workshops. The first one titled “The Art of Judgment Writing” was held on March 27, 2021. In addition to the authors and commentators, this workshop was opened to the public at large and was very well attended. Attendees included members of the district judiciary, lawyers, and academics. Two other workshops on Environmental law and Criminal

Law were also conducted for our contributors. Another three thematic workshops on discrimination law, family law, and mobility and economics were conducted on April 10, 2021.

Our workshops and the eventual book publication aim to enhance legal discourse in the country. By providing templates incorporating the elements of feminism, equality, and justice within the re-written judgments, these will be helpful for judges, lawyers, and students alike. The Feminist Judgment Projects in other parts of the world have resulted in re-opening of closed cases, being used as guiding tools for adjudication, and also used as teaching material in law schools around the world. With the first ever PFJP, we are excited to see this project’s impact in Pakistan and future editions of the same project.

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A THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE BACKLASH LEVIED AGAINST THE AURAT MARCH



*Illustration by: Sohail Anees
Instagram: @sohailannees*

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DUAA REHMAN &
FATIMA AZEEM

The Aurat March is an annual procession that takes place on International Women's Day (8th March), across major cities of Pakistan. It aims to encourage women to take up public and digital space to demand equality, and focuses on central themes conveyed via a manifesto each year. It marks a first for feminists in Pakistan as they campaign for social change at the individual and domestic level against an invisibilized patriarchal entity. It also features women's increased participation in traditionally male-dominated arenas such as the digital sphere and public spaces. This form of participation, coupled with the March's campaign against socially and culturally embedded patriarchal norms such as the double burden, economic emancipation and bodily autonomy, results

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This paper is an attempt to acknowledge the backlash against the Aurat March in order to rid women of sweeping statements like “yeh toh hoga” (this will happen) that normalize such vitriol as a natural consequence to their actions.

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Scenes from the Aurat Dharna 2021.
Captured by
@_thegraphicfoodie_ on Instagram

in it facing immense amounts of backlash online, which is routinely normalized.

In order to understand the backlash's manifestation, we conducted a yearlong qualitative project as our senior year thesis. Auratnama houses



Captured by @AuratMarch on Instagram

our findings. We conducted a thematic archival analysis of the backlash as seen via public digital interactions on the posts of the official Aurat March Pages for Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad, Multan, Quetta and Sindh, encompassing the 4 Aurat Marches from 2018 to March 2021, across Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Our paper treats the digital sphere in three central ways: as a public space, an online archive, and a cultural text, in order to attempt to outline if there are central themes in the backlash.

Our paper outlines our results across seven central themes. These include gendered performance, body politics, cultural values, questioning the politics of the march, threats of aggression, religious values, and manifestations of the backlash post the March itself. This elucidates the fact that the online sphere is a digital manifestation of the public sphere and women's participation in it is met with resistance due to preexisting cultural edifices of curtailing women to the private sphere. In addition, it establishes that women's participation online is met with backlash, in particular when they express support for a feminist movement that threatens the current heteronormative, patriarchal ideal.

While much of this backlash is levied by men, there is marked participation by women as well. When analyzed, this was seen to exhibit features of internalization of anti-feminist sentiments for societal acceptance. The Aurat March's manner of making the personal political causes discomfort and the vitriol online is seen to be a mechanism of curtailment. With the backlash causing increasingly dangerous offline repercussions, like the blasphemy allegations in 2021, the influence of the online sphere in constructing narratives and forming public sentiments cannot be understated. This paper is an attempt to acknowledge the backlash against the Aurat March in order to rid women of sweeping statements like “yeh toh hoga” (this will happen) that normalize such vitriol as a natural consequence to their actions.

Duaa Rehman is a graduate of the LUMS class of 2021, with a degree in Anthropology and Sociology. They are interested in social movements and social justice as well as gender and feminist theory.

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