

## [10th International THAAP Conference 2019: "Citizens and the City: Urban Dynamics in Pakistan and the Region"](#)

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Call for Papers

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Anthropology, Humanities, Social Sciences, South Asian History / Studies, Urban History / Studies

### **CALL FOR ABSTRACTS - THAAP Conference 2019**

#### **Citizens and the City: Urban Dynamics in Pakistan and the Region**

Urbanism in South Asia is passing through a particularly traumatic phase. Decade old wars at the Western and the Eastern ends with continuous urban turmoil generated as a means to grab power have kept the region in a high state of tension. War, terror, heightened tension among nations is good business for some, however for the vast majority it is a life of misery. Patriotic songs and such rule the electronic media while the quality of life has taken a sharp downward turn.

It is, as if an ugly animal, multi headed and multi fanged stalks the cities and towns of the South Asia Region. It breathes fire and spits hatred, it thrives on humans butchering each other, and it seeks power for its favorites and destroys any who disagree. Its one head dons an old crown and another the hood of the vigilantes; a third takes particular pleasure in torturing the physically weak of the society, women and children. The animal was born from within and cannot survive on its own; it is a pet of a segment of the state and society that nourish it and protect it.

Contradictions of the immense scale are at work, everything seems 'pregnant with its contrary'. Opposing war and terror are the strong age-old traditions of tolerance, forgiveness and inclusion. Rajmohan Gandhi with a wide-ranging survey of history in his book 'Revenge and Reconciliation' (Penguin Books,1999) informs that in the subcontinent there is an equally strong streak of forgiveness and inclusion. He cites Buddha, Asoka to which can be added Kabir, Nanak, and Bullah. Time and again, convulsions in history have shown that War solves nothing and after great suffering and killing, there is no alternative to reconciliation. Today also some isolated social movements of people are challenging their political and economic rulers, striving to gain some control over their lives; they desire nothing less than the power to change the world that is changing them.

The departure of the colonial rulers has not brought the expected fruits of independence - unfulfilled aspirations of the millions of homeless and jobless, living in unacceptable poverty are building to cataclysmic proportions. The present state of Urbanization might, on the one hand, represent development but on the other it is a massive uprooting and transformation of people's life styles. Huge incomes are made while millions are condemned to grinding poverty. Cities also represent hope, perhaps the only escape from the villages but where do the shattered dreams go?

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Who manages the city, who owns it, who is responsible - these are the unresolved questions. The city in Pakistan is a picture of apathy and sloth. Everyone is tired; tired of long commutes, tired of dealing with the lower officialdom of police, tax, permissions, garbage, water, power and so on. Undoubtedly the cities and urban centers of the future carry both hope and despair. Forces of change are afoot but where are they taking us?

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Email us a 300-word abstract of your proposed paper by 30th June , 2019 at [thaap.conference@gmail.com](mailto:thaap.conference@gmail.com). A confirmation email will be sent to you when we receive your abstract. If you do not get the confirmation email within a week of sending your abstract, please assume that we have not received your abstract and send us the abstract again.

**VENUE**

THAAP Premises, 43-G, Gulberg III, Lahore, Pakistan

**IMPORTANT DATES**

Abstract Submission Deadline: 30th June 2019

Final Paper Deadline: 31st October, 2019

Looking forward to your active participation.

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