

Measuring Quantities and Conspiracy Theories: Intellectual Gestures and the Alienation of the Self in Europe and in Pakistan

Lecture by Dr. Lukas Werth, LUMS, Lahore, Pakistan

The lecture is about intellectual gestures in popular reasoning, and it tries to demonstrate a particular gesture which very frequently informs arguments put forward in middle-class urban contexts in contemporary Pakistan. An intellectual gesture is understood here as a basic, formal device of relating the self to different features of the world. For reasons of demonstration, features of reasoning in contemporary Pakistan are juxtaposed to those of contemporary Europe, particularly Germany. The paper does explicitly not assume that one way of reasoning is prior or superior to the other, but argues that different intellectual gestures create different spaces of meaning. Thus, in Pakistan explanatory patterns which are commonly referred to as "conspiracy theories" are shown to present only one aspect of a wider pattern of reasons which focuses on personal capacities and primarily locates the self in a web of intentions, whereas in Europe frequently prevails a non-personal, statistical view which alienates the self from its own intentions and those of others.

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Venue: SAI, Room Z 10

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