

Abstract for ISA 2022 paper

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“Local Actions, Local Voices in Countering Violent Extremism in Pakistan”

Violent extremism has manifest in myriad ways over the past decades in Pakistan. In response, the Pakistan state and military have sought to counter this extremism through different strategies, albeit these have been fraught with problems. More importantly, many non-state actors are engaging in various kinds of social negotiations and actions to lessen the violence and recapture indigenous cultural identity.

This paper is part of a larger book project, *Countering Violent Extremism in Pakistan: Local Actions, Local Voices*, and addresses a variety of robust, exciting activities that people are using to reclaim identity and meaning, and hence counter the narratives of violence and extremism. Based on research conducted in Pakistan between 2017-19, it addresses spontaneous street art promoting peace, resistance poetry speaking out against hypocrisy, unrestrained power and oppression, and interactive street theatre that enables audiences to finish the dialogues of plays addressing compelling social issues. Their focus is on unique ways people in Pakistan are seeking to transform how they think about their own society as they take stands against extremism.