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### Overview and effects on Pakistan Studies

Over the summer of 2015, using the AIPS travel grant, I had the opportunity to carry out some initial fieldwork as part of my doctoral work. I traveled to Pakistan during the month of Ramadan, limiting myself to Islamabad and Rawalpindi, and in some cases to villages in their environs, as I interviewed and interacted with Deobandi and Barelvi ulama and imams. My doctoral project, for which this research was carried out, is about Deobandi and Barelvi discourses regarding this important conflict in Sunni Islam in South Asia. I am particularly interested in contemporary Pakistani ulama and imams, both at the level of the famous madrasas and the grassroots and local mosque, as I seek to understand maslaki identity, its key dynamics, and the adherence to traditions from nineteenth century British India. Thus this is a discourse with a solid history but one that now plays out in a different, postcolonial context.

In line with recent and important work on traditional groups and movements and the ulama, this research brings the focus on the ulama as they see themselves, and seeks to uncover their worldviews, both about the nature of their roles in society, and the maslaki and sectarian identity that is part of their training. It is important for the field of Pakistan Studies since it entails bringing to the fore previously unheard voices. In fact, there are grossly misplaced perceptions and assumptions regarding movements such as the Deobandis and Barelvis, especially regarding their "Sufi" nature. In a field often dominated by binaries of religious-secular, modern-conservative, Sufi-legalistic, good-bad, I anticipate my research to bring a more nuanced and complicated picture to reflect the traditional groups that have been described often too simplistically.

I believe that Barelvis and Deobandis are simply misunderstood because of these binaries, especially in the post-9/11 era. The Barelvis in particular have little work done on them. As a group that is often touted to represent the majority of Muslims in Pakistan, this is a huge gap. The Deobandis, while better understood as more work has been done on them, still remain misunderstood as well, perhaps mostly because of a lack of recognition of their internal diversities. It is these misrepresentations and assumptions that are also being addressed in this research. It is an intervention, I contend, that is important for the field of Pakistan Studies.