

Ascriptive Organizational Stigma and the Constraining of Pakistani Immigrant Organizations

Ali R. Chaudhary 

Department of Sociology, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, USA

Abstract

Existing research on the incorporation of immigrants generally celebrates immigrant organizations (IOs) as essential conduits for political mobilization, civic integration, and transnational engagement. Less attention, however, has been given to the external contexts or conditions that can constrain IOs. In this article, I introduce the concept of ascriptive organizational stigma (AOS) and examine how domestic and geopolitical contexts contribute to the stigmatization and constraining of Pakistani immigrant organizational capacities. Data come from 59 in-depth interviews conducted with leaders and members of Pakistani IOs in New York City and London. Findings suggest Pakistani IOs in both cities experienced AOS, and that external pressures to prioritize stigma management over core missions, impeded efforts to serve domestic and homeland constituents. Findings also indicate the stigmatization of ascriptive status markers can contribute to the conflation of immigrants' group and organizational identities. This article contributes to existing scholarship by revealing how external contexts can lead to the constraining of immigrants' domestic and homeland-oriented organizational capacities.

Keywords

organizations, stigma, Pakistani immigrants

Corresponding Author:

Ali R. Chaudhary, Department of Sociology, Davison Hall, Rutgers University, 26 Nichol Avenue, New Brunswick, 08901 NJ, USA.

Email: arc249@sociology.rutgers.edu

Introduction

Immigrant organizations are founded and led by immigrants to serve and represent their communities in places of origin and settlement. A largely celebratory literature in sociology and political science highlights opportunities that immigrant-led nonprofit organizations can generate for immigrant incorporation, civic engagement, mobilization, and transnational engagement (Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad 2008; Jossart-Marcelli 2013; Portes and Fernandez-Kelly 2015; De Graauw 2016). More recently, scholars have pointed to internal challenges immigrant organizations confront as they strive to foster local and transnational civic engagement (Waldinger 2015; Lacomba 2016). However, less attention has been given to how external domestic and geopolitical contexts may restrict immigrant organizations. I remedy this limitation by examining how such external contexts can contribute to an organizational-level stigma and the constraining of Pakistani immigrant organizational capacities in New York City and London.

Existing migration scholarship on immigrant organizations largely focuses on how contexts in receiving societies inform the composition and capacities of immigrant organizational infrastructures (Gleeson and Bloemraad 2012; Chaudhary and Guarnizo 2016; Vermeulen et al. 2016). Research on transnationalism, for example, suggests that homeland contexts are essential for understanding the bi-national embeddedness of immigrants formal and informal organizations (Bada 2014; Portes and Fernandez-Kelly 2015; Waldinger 2015). Fewer studies, however, specifically examine how the combination of domestic, homeland, and geopolitical contexts may affect immigrants' organizational capacities. In this article, my understanding of "geopolitical" draws on the fields of political geography and international relations, which use the term to theorize the nature of states, territories, inter-state power relations, and more recently, global terrorism (Mamadouth 1998; Hyndman 2012). In particular, I use the term "geopolitical" to describe power relations and foreign policy contexts between immigrants' origin and receiving countries (Nagel 2002). Accordingly, I examine how domestic and geopolitical contexts contribute to the stigmatization of Pakistani immigrants, the Pakistani state, and how such contexts impact Pakistani immigrant organizations in London and New York City.

Drawing on past research on stigmatized organizations (Hudson 2008; Devers et al. 2009), I argue that immigrant organizations may encounter a specific type of organizational stigma premised on ascribed status markers (e.g., nationality, religious/cultural identity, and ethno-racial status) commonly reflected in the individual, collective, and organizational identities of Pakistani immigrant communities in London and New York City. Once an immigrant group's ascriptive stigmatization is extended to its associated organizations, the ensuing organizational stigma can constrain subsequent organizing efforts. To interrogate how immigrant organizations come to experience organizational stigma, and how it affects domestic and homeland organizational capacities, I focus on IOs affiliated with Pakistan immigrants—an immigrant community that has been subjected to nearly two decades of

ethno-racial prejudice and discrimination following the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York City and subsequent 7/7 terrorist attacks in London in 2005.

As the largest Muslim immigrant community in the United States and the United Kingdom², Pakistani immigrants were convenient targets for anti-Muslim “backlash” (Bakalian and Bozorgmehr 2009) in the aftermath of each city’s respective terrorist attack. Furthermore, Pakistani immigrants continue to endure heightened counterterrorism-related surveillance and institutional discrimination in both the United States and the United Kingdom (Rana 2016; Jackson 2018; Shams 2019). By examining Pakistani immigrant organizations in New York City and London, I investigate how the stigmatization of group-level ascriptive markers contribute to what I call *ascriptive organizational stigma* (AOS). Ascriptive organizational stigma is the *organization*-level manifestation of a *group*-level stigma, premised on stereotypes and negative attitudes toward ascriptive markers such as nationality, religion/cultural orientation, and ethno-racial identity. The proposed concept extends scholarship on the transcendence of collective and national identities across scales (Herb and Kaplan 1999; Kaplan 2018) by showing how group-level stigmatized ascriptive markers can operate at the level of formal organizations, thereby resulting in the conflation of group and organizational identities.

Two research questions guide this article: (a) How do Pakistani immigrant organizations experience and respond to ascriptive organizational stigma? and (b) What are the consequences of ascriptive organizational stigma on Pakistani immigrant organizational capacities to serve domestic and homeland constituents? Data come from 59 in-depth interviews conducted in 2013 with leaders and members of Pakistani organizations in London and New York City. Interview respondents were selected through a stratified random sample generated from an original database I constructed in 2013 containing all registered Pakistani organizations in London and New York City. Findings suggest that domestic and geopolitical contexts contributed to the stigmatization of select ascriptive markers (i.e., nationality, religious/cultural orientation, and ethno-racial identity) associated with Pakistani immigrants. Furthermore, external conditions fueling the stigmatization of Pakistani immigrants effectively conflated Pakistani immigrants and their organizations, rendering both susceptible to ascriptive (organizational) stigma and constraints.

This article contributes to recent efforts by scholars to develop a comprehensive theoretical approach for understanding the functions and significance of nonprofit organizations for immigrant integration (Babis 2016), civic and political incorporation (Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad 2008; Brown 2016), and transnational

¹Over three decades ago, Mitchell (1989) called on researchers to better integrate concepts and perspectives from international relations into migration-scholarship.

²According to the 2011 PEW Survey of American Muslims and the 2011 Annual Population Survey in the United Kingdom, foreign-born Pakistanis are the largest Muslim immigrant groups in the United States and UK, respectively.

engagement (Portes and Fernandez-Kelly 2015) in three ways. First, findings suggest that in addition to domestic contexts of anti-Muslim sentiment following terrorist attacks (Bakalian and Bozorgmehr 2009; Hussain and Baguley 2012), Pakistani IOs were subjected to a similar organizational stigma in both cities due to geopolitical contexts associated with Pakistan's tumultuous role in the nearly two-decade long US-led Global War on Terror. Second, this article shows how domestic and geopolitical contexts contributing to the stigmatization of Pakistani ascriptive status markers, foster conditions in which immigrant groups, nations, and immigrant organizations are conflated. While the conflation of Pakistani immigrants' individual, collective, and organizational identities is consistent with prior research on the fluidity of national identities across territories and scales (Herb and Kaplan 1999), my findings challenge a common assumption in the study of formal organizations, namely, that groups and organizations are fundamentally different social forms (Perrow 1961; Scott and Davis 2007). Finally, insights gleaned from interviews with leaders of Pakistani IOs indicate that external pressures associated with ascriptive organizational stigma caused many leaders to divert their attention and resources to stigma management, effectively limiting their capacities to fulfill core missions and commitments to constituents.

The article is organized as follows. First, I review existing literature on IOs and organizational stigma, before introducing the AOS concept. I then provide a brief overview of Pakistani immigrants in New York City and London, emphasizing their experiences in the aftermath of terrorist attacks in both cities. Following a discussion of the data and methodology, I present three sets of empirical findings. I conclude by discussing how this article contributes to migration scholarship concerning the opportunities, challenges, and overall significance of IOs.

Theoretical Framework: Immigrant Organizations and Stigma

A diverse set of formal, as well as informal, religious, secular, and ethnic, organizations have long played important roles in integrating immigrants and fostering cross-border ties (Moya 2005; Pries and Sezgin 2014; Babis 2016). Over the past two decades, migration scholars have turned to immigrant organizations (IOs) as proxies for understanding immigrants' labor market integration (Fine 2006; Ameeriar 2017), civic incorporation (Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad 2008; Brown 2016), collective mobilization (Voss and Bloemraad 2011; Zepeda-Millan 2016), and transnational activities (Portes and Fernandez-Kelly 2015). Within this literature, migration scholars have investigated how external contexts of reception and state-centered integration policies shape, the size, composition, and activities of IOs (Bloemraad 2006; De Grauw et al. 2013; Chaudhary and Guarnizo 2016; Vermeulen et al. 2016; Chaudhary 2018). At the same time, a handful of studies have focused on internal challenges confronting IOs, such as in-group fighting and tensions among organizational leaders (Lacomba 2016; Josephides 1991; Werbner and Anwar 1991; Lacomba

2016), high proportions of undocumented members and constituents (Okamoto and Gast 2013), and low rates of associational membership among many immigrant groups (Waldinger 2015). While this research on the challenges confronting contemporary IOs contrasts with past scholarship emphasizing the opportunities and benefits organizations can provide, such analyses tend to focus on *internal* organizational dynamics rather than the external factors impacting IOs. To address this gap, the present analysis advances a new conceptualization of “organizational stigma” (Devers et al. 2009) and examines how it impacts Pakistani immigrant organizational capacities.

Organization scholars concur that formal organizations—collective, meso-level structures with distinct behaviors, resources, and processes—are ubiquitous features of modern life, which are not reducible to individuals or groups (Coleman 1974; Scott and Davis 2007). In other words, empirical research and theoretical perspectives premised on individual- or group-level behaviors may not necessarily aid in analyses of formal organizations. However, research on stigmatized organizations suggests that much like individuals, formal organizations can become stigmatized as a result of their services or core missions (Hudson 2008; Devers et al. 2009).

In his classic formulation, sociologist Erving Goffman (1963) described stigma as both a discrediting character flaw and a relational process that results from a special relationship between stereotypes and negative societal attitudes. While the vast majority of social science research on stigma focuses on the experiences and coping strategies of individuals with stigmatized diseases and other mental or physical conditions (e.g., AIDS, cancer, depression, addiction, etc.), sociologists, over the past two decades, have sought to investigate how stigmatization processes also operate at the level of groups, neighborhoods, and formal organizations (Pescosolido and Martin 2015). Accordingly, an organizational-level stigma is a label evoking a collective perception that an organization possesses a fundamental discrediting flaw or negative social evaluation (Devers et al. 2009). Organizational stigmas may manifest as temporary or as intrinsic conditions that can constrain organizational goals, productivity, and overall capacities (Hudson 2008).

Prior research has examined organizational stigmas in the context of for-profit firms embroiled in scandals (Pauly and Hutchison 2005), and of organizations offering stigmatized services such as abortion or HIV treatment (Galvin, Ventresca, and Hudson 2004; Hudson and Okhuysen 2009; Phillips et al. 2012). Insights gleaned from these works suggest that organizational stigmas cause leaders to concentrate on impression management and stigma management strategies (e.g., decoupling, professionalization, etc.), to improve public and government perceptions of organizational legitimacy and moral accountability (Devers et al. 2009). Yet despite growing interest in stigma among organizational scholars, IOs have thus far received little attention in the field of organizational studies (Chaudhary and Guarino 2016). As a result, existing scholarship on organizational stigma may struggle to account for cases in which the stigmatization of an immigrant group, along with their origin country, becomes intertwined with affiliated formal organizations—a

process that I examine here through the case of a stigmatized immigrant group (Pakistani immigrants) and their IOs.

To do so, I introduce the concept of *ascriptive organizational stigma (AOS)*, which I define as a particular type of organizational stigma that corresponds to the stigmatization of individual- and group-level ascriptive markers. In contrast to “achieved” status markers that can change over time (e.g., merit, skills, illness, profession, etc.), ascribed, or ascriptive status markers tend to be transmitted through family ancestry (Linton 1964; Foner 1979). Examples of ascriptive status markers include race, ethnicity, nationality, and in some instances, religious identity or cultural orientation (Goffman 1963; Werbner 2013)³. Thus, an AOS may emerge when organizations are stigmatized because they are perceived to be direct extensions of the communities they serve (Hudson 2008), or when IOs are themselves suspected of engaging in illegal or immoral activities. While the extension of a group-level stigma to affiliated organizations as an AOS is consistent with previous theorizing on the ways in which racialization processes and collective identities can transcend micro-, macro-, and meso-levels of social organization (Omi and Winant 2015), the potential conflation of a group and organizational-level stigma is significant because it challenges the assumed delineations of thought differentiating individuals from formal organizations (Scott and Davis 2007). In this respect, IOs differ from other stigmatized organizations because their organizational identities often converge with the national, ethnic, racial, and/or religious identities of their leaders, members, and constituents. Equally important, many IOs, and the immigrants they represent, are transnationally oriented. Since immigrants are intrinsically bi-national (Waldinger 2015; Chaudhary and Moss 2019), their collective identities are embedded and informed by their origin and receiving countries. Consequently, many of the IOs they form and lead are also bi-nationally oriented and embedded in external transnational contexts. This multi-layered embedding in domestic, homeland, and geopolitical contexts may expose IOs to AOS in ways that differ from the stigma faced by non-immigrant formal organizations. While many organizations encounter global pressures, most research on stigmatized organizations largely consists of case studies of organizational stigmas confined to a single national context (Hudson 2008; Devers et al. 2009). The present study addresses this limitation by examining how an AOS rooted in both domestic and geopolitical contexts, affects the organizational capacities of Pakistani IOs across two national contexts.

³Membership in a religious group is not normally considered a hereditary status. Yet the historical and contemporary experiences of Jews and Muslims in Europe and North America suggest that groups belonging to minority religions are stigmatized and racialized such that religious/cultural orientations are perceived to be rooted in ascribed religious identities (Love 2017; Omi and Winant 2015; Werbner 2013).

Pakistani Immigrants in New York City and London

My initial study design sought to compare how post-9/11 securitization affected Pakistani immigrants in two major immigrant destinations. I chose London and New York City as research sites because they have substantial Pakistani immigrant populations and because catastrophic terrorist attacks in each city have intensified prejudice against Muslims, immigrants, and ethno-racial minorities.⁴ According to the 2013 US Current Population Survey, New York City is home to the largest Pakistani immigrant community in the United States. Similarly, London is identified in the 2011 UK Annual Population Survey as having the largest community of Pakistani immigrants across England and Wales. In the years since the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York City and the 7/7 attacks in London in 2005, Pakistani immigrants have been subjected to ethno-racial prejudice, Islamophobia, heightened surveillance, unlawful detentions, and overtly discriminatory immigration policies and practices (Hussain and Baguley 2012; Maira 2016; Cainkar 2018). This group-level stigmatization of Pakistani immigrants is similar at both the local and national levels inasmuch as it is predicated on stereotypes and negative attitudes associated with three key ascriptive markers linked to Pakistani immigrants' collective identities: (a) Pakistani nationality; (b) Islamic religious/cultural orientation; and (c) ethno-racial identity (Cainkar 2009, 2018; Vertigans 2010; Meer and Modood 2012; Rana 2016; Shams 2019).

As the project evolved, I became interested in common experiences expressed by many Pakistani IO leaders in both cities. As I continued collecting and interpreting preliminary interview data, the project shifted from a *community-level* inquiry about the effects of counterterrorism policies on Pakistani immigrants in London and New York City to an *organizational-level* analysis of Pakistani IOs in both cities. Data collection and analysis, thus, focused on IOs and how Pakistani IO leaders experienced and responded to AOS.

New York City

Following the loosening of US immigration policies in the 1960s, high-skilled Pakistani immigrants began settling in major cities across the United States (Mohammad-Arif 2002). High levels of educational attainment and high earnings correspondent to professional occupations rendered Pakistani immigrants as "model minority" Asian Americans⁵. The benign presence of Pakistani immigrants in US

⁴While the cities vary contextually with respect to Pakistani immigration, settlement, and integration (Chaudhary 2018), this article refrains from presenting a cross-national comparative analysis of immigrant organizations because such analyses are presented in other publications (Chaudhary 2018, Chaudhary and Guarnizo 2016).

⁵For a review of the "model minority" concept and its use in relation to South Asians, see Shams (2019).

society, however, was shattered after the 9/11 terrorist attacks when domestic “backlash” against Muslims and the new US-led Global War on Terror increased public awareness and fears surrounding both Pakistani immigrant communities and their Muslim-majority origin country (Mohammad-Arif 2009; Rana 2016).

For example, in the aftermath of 9/11, Pakistani immigrants in the Greater New York City region were overrepresented in local immigration raids and roundups, unlawful detentions, hate crimes, and counterterrorism-related investigations of individuals and organizations (Cainkar 2009; Alimahomed 2011; Selod 2015; Rana 2016; Love 2017). While many of the post-9/11 interpersonal acts of violence or discrimination against Pakistani immigrants were likely based on their racialized, non-white “Muslim” identities (Mohammad-Arif 2002; Selod 2015; Cainkar and Selod 2018), state actors also likely targeted Pakistani immigrants due to their national ties to Pakistan—a country that is widely perceived by “western” governments and by the general American and British publics, as an untrustworthy partner in counter-terrorism efforts across South Asia (Jaffrelot 2015; Rana 2016). Furthermore, in 2013, the year of data collection for this study, news media revealed that a covert intelligence-gathering program in the New York City Police Department had been targeting businesses owned by or catering to Pakistanis across the city (Johnson and Weitzman 2017). Given their status as the largest Muslim immigrant group in the United States and their concentration in New York City, Pakistani IOs in the city are ideal for investigating how group-level stigma manifests at the level of such organizations.

London

In contrast to migration patterns seen in New York City, South Asian immigration to London and the United Kingdom commenced in the 19th century during British colonial rule of India (Bayly 1988; Kolsky 2011). However, large-scale Pakistani immigration to the United Kingdom began following the end colonial rule and Britain’s subsequent partitioning of the Indian sub continent and the founding of East and West Pakistan in 1947 (Anwar 1979; Chaudhary 2018). Over the next half century, Pakistani immigrants experienced widespread racial discrimination and prejudice as they sought to settle and build lives in the United Kingdom (Jackson 2018). The decades-long racial prejudice and discrimination endured by Pakistani immigrants because of their “black” and “Muslim” identities increased exponentially after 9/11 and the July 7, 2005, terrorist attacks on the London Transportation System (Hussain and Bagguley 2012).

The July 7, 2005, terrorist attacks in London represented the first major act of terrorism on British soil to be carried out by religious extremists in the post-9/11 era (Hussain and Bagguley 2012). While the 7/7 London attacks’ scale and devastation paled in comparison to the human death toll and devastation of 9/11, the targeting of London’s transportation system by a terrorist cell organized in the United Kingdom by suspected British Pakistanis solidified a group-level stigmatization against

Pakistani immigrants across the country (Mythen, Walklate, and Khan 2013). In the years since the 7/7 attacks, Pakistani immigrants in London have been systematically targeted by counter-terrorism investigators and government programs aimed at identifying signs of radicalization or terrorist sympathizers within Muslim communities (Parmar 2011; Jackson 2018).

In sum, then, the two cities selected for this research—New York City and London—are ideal because Pakistani immigrants in both cities share a three-way group-level ascriptive stigma based on negative stereotypes and societal attitudes linked to nationality, religious/cultural orientation, and ethno-racial minority status. In the years since the 9/11 and 7/7 terrorist attacks, Pakistani immigrants in London and New York City have continued to be stigmatized, and they are routinely subjected to daily microaggressions, heightened surveillance, unlawful detentions, and restrictive immigration policies (Vertigans 2010; Maira 2016; Shams 2019). However, it is unclear to what extent this group-level stigma operates and impacts IOs—the present study’s point of departure for investigating how Pakistani IOs experienced and responded to AOS in both cities.

Data and Methods

The empirical evidence for this article comes from a larger research project on Pakistani IOs conducted in 2013. This larger project considered how the size, composition, and transnational orientations of Pakistani immigrants’ organizational infrastructures varied across London and New York City as a result of divergent Pakistani immigration histories, aggregate socioeconomic attainment, and national-level integration policies (Chaudhary 2018). Data collection took place in two phases. The first involved constructing an organizational database through a census of all registered Pakistani IOs located within metropolitan London and New York City. This database provides the universe of all registered non-profit organizations, charities, and voluntary associations serving or representing Pakistani immigrant communities in both cities. Replicating the enumeration procedures and sources in past research (Hung 2007; Gleeson and Bloemraad 2012), two research assistants and I consulted comprehensive databases and directories of non-profits, charities, and voluntary associations in the United States and United Kingdom, including GuideStar, the National Council of Voluntary Organizations, and the UK Charity Commission.

To make the data for each city as comparable as possible, an identical search process was used for both cities. The search functions within many websites associated with the databases (e.g., Guidestar, NCVO, and Charity Commission) enabled us to search for key terms in names, mission statements, and other descriptions of services. IOs were identified as Pakistani-led or Pakistani-serving by searching the following keywords: Pakistan, Pakistani, Muslim, Islamic, Desi, Punjabi, Sindhi, Kashmir/Kashmiri, Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad, Asian (UK), South Asian (US), and British Muslim. After accounting for obvious false positives, the remaining organizations were closely examined by scrutinizing websites, mission statements, and

other online resources. Large databases such as the ones I used often undercount IOs (Gleeson and Bloemraad 2012). To correct for this problem, I gleaned additional information about organizations in the two cities from ethnic directories, media, and Pakistani community websites. I believe that most organizations absent from these sources are likely to be informal or inactive.

The database enumeration and construction focused on identifying IOs that were primarily serving or representing Pakistani immigrants as opposed to other immigrants or religious groups such as African/African-American Muslims, Arabs and other Middle Eastern groups, and non-Muslim Indians and other South Asian religious communities (Hindus, Jain, Sikh, etc.). Given that more than 98 percent of Pakistan's population identified religiously or culturally as Muslim and that Pakistani immigrants in both the United States and United Kingdom are overwhelmingly Muslim (Lieven 2012; Shaw 2014; Rana 2016), it was appropriate to exclude South Asian organizations appearing to cater exclusively to non-Pakistanis, Hindus, Sikhs, or Christian South Asians. In addition to removing organizations that did not cater to Pakistani immigrants, I also excluded places of worship (i.e., mosques), unless they provided services beyond space and staff to support religious services.

After compiling the lists for the two cities, I replicated past research (see Gleeson and Bloemraad 2012; Okamoto and Gast 2013) and categorized organizations through content analysis of their mission statements, websites, and print materials, when available. Each organization was categorized by its primary mission/objective into one of five following categories: (a) social services, (b) advocacy/political, (c) economic, (d) cultural, or (e) religious. The content analysis of each IO's mission statement and other available information also allowed me to categorize each organization's overall geographic scope. Pakistani IOs focus on local and national issues or communities in either their city or country of operation were categorized as "domestic." IOs exclusively focusing on projects, advocacy, or other issues within Pakistan were categorized as "homeland-oriented." While it is possible that an IO could focus on both domestic and homeland issues, as some studies of Latinx IOs reveal (see Smith 2005; Bada 2014; Lacomba et al. 2015), at the time of my study, I did not encounter a single Pakistani IO that presented itself as focusing on services or issues in both Pakistan and London/United Kingdom or New York City/United States. Appendix A provides an overview of the Pakistani IOs in the database.

The second phase of data collection involved recruiting and interviewing Pakistani organizational leaders and staff to glean information about the sources, experiences, and consequences of ascriptive stigma on their respective IOs. The analytic strategy for the interviews resembled a quasi-grounded theory approach. While the questions asked in interviews were designed to inquire about respondents' past and current experiences with ascriptive stigma, I deployed an unstructured conversational-style interview technique, which allowed flexibility in the topics respondents discussed. Through this flexibility, themes organically emerged concerning respondents' perceptions of various sources and consequences of AOS.

Interview respondents were identified and selected from randomized stratified lists of organizations generated from the original database. Organizations were stratified by their metropolitan locations, programmatic domain (Social Service, Advocacy/Politics, Economic, and Cultural-non-religious or Religious), and geographic scope of action (Domestic or Homeland). Each organization was assigned an identification code. To produce a random sample, every third organization on each list was contacted a maximum of three times. After three unsuccessful attempts, the organization was removed from the list, and the next organization on the randomly sorted list was contacted. Approximately 72 percent of attempts to make contact were successful and resulted in interviews with organizational leadership or members.

All interviews were conducted in English in both cities. Of the 59 in-depth interviews conducted with Pakistani IO leaders or executive board members, 30 took place in London and 29 in New York City. Interviews ranged from one to three hours, with an average length of 1.5 hours. Most respondents were interviewed alone at their organizations' main office or headquarters, although some interviews took place in public settings like cafés and restaurants. Most interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed verbatim, and subsequently analyzed using NVivo, a qualitative software package that allows users to attach coding categories to interview text. However, a few respondents refused to be recorded due to the subject's sensitive nature relative to their organizations. In these interviews, I relied on notes taken during the interview and on notes made immediately after the interviews. Interviews took on a semi-structured conversation style, which lent itself to an inductive approach to analysis guided by patterns and themes that emerged from interviewees' narratives about their experiences. Questions asked in the interviews sought to get background information about respondents' experiences with ascriptive stigma as experienced in the immediate aftermath of high-profile terrorist attacks (e.g., 9/11 and 7/7) and in the years since. While respondents' experiences with AOS following 9/11 in New York City and 7/7 in London were explicitly discussed during interviews, findings concerning perceptions of the sources of AOS and themes concerning consequences emerged organically during the coding and interpretations of interview transcripts.

Findings

Prior studies find that Pakistani IOs and other Muslim and Arab organizations were central in representing and advocating for Muslim individuals and groups that were routinely subjected to profiling and counter-terrorism related discrimination (Bakalian and Bozorgmehr 2009; Rana 2016). Yet in addition to the aforementioned outcomes, findings gleaned from interviews with Pakistani organization leaders in both cities suggest their organizations were often also explicit targets of public backlash and counterterrorism-related government scrutiny. 62 percent of the interviewees described experiencing AOS in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 and 7/7

attacks. In addition, many leaders expressed long-term feelings of AOS due to the domestic and geopolitical contexts of the nearly-two-decades-long US-led Global War on Terror. In interpreting and theorizing organizational-level experiences, two sources of AOS emerged: domestic and geopolitical contexts.

Experiencing Ascriptive Organizational Stigma: Domestic Contexts

Findings from in-depth interviews with IO leaders and members suggest that Pakistani IO leaders perceived AOS as stemming from both domestic and geopolitical sources. When asked about organizational experiences in the direct aftermath of a major terrorist attack in London, the leader of a London-area social-service Pakistani IO stated:

Right after the bombs [on July 7], about one hour later . . . I got a call from some woman asking me if I care to make a statement about the Muslim community's reaction. At the time, I didn't make anything of it. I told her that everyone at the organization was in shock and disbelief. The following day, we get calls from all kinds of news companies . . . here in the UK and from other places. The main questions they wanted to know was . . . Why would a "Paki" born in Britain do this? So we, like, became spokespersons for all the Pakistanis and Muslims in Britain.

Numerous respondents in both cities described similar encounters in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 in New York City and 7/7 in London. These experiences are consistent with findings in past research showing that Muslim organizations were convenient targets for public backlash following the 9/11 attacks in New York City (Bakalian and Bozorgmehr 2009). As these findings suggest, IOs are especially susceptible to public backlash when the collective identities of their leaders and constituents are stigmatized.

When asked about whether law enforcement and state actors targeted their organizations, IO leaders in both cities responded affirmatively. Counterterrorism measures often targeted Pakistani IOs, for instance, by profiling and investigating individual IO leaders and members and by enhancing and intensifying regulatory scrutiny of Pakistani IOs' financial assets and financial transfers to Pakistan. Indeed, respondents made several references to both UK and US government officials using counterterrorism policies to increase regulations and surveillance of their financial resources, social media accounts, and IO-affiliated partners within Pakistan. While most respondents I interviewed had not themselves been subject to a counterterrorism investigation, many described experiences of their colleagues. A leader in New York City explained that "things got really bad in late 2002" when the FBI seized computers and filing cabinets of two Pakistani IOs, leading to increased anxiety and fear for herself and for the broader New York City Pakistani community.

Similarly, a leader in London mentioned a case in which an organization was investigated for allegedly sending money to a religious school known as a

“madrassa” in Pakistan’s Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. The respondent remarked, “the feelings of being accused linger on within us and within the minds of the people. It all adds to the lack of trust.” Thus, the stereotypes and negative attitudes contributing to the stigmatization of Pakistani immigrants and the Pakistani state manifested as an organizational-level stigma premised on the conflation of individual, group, and organizational identities. However, analyses of interview data also suggest that some of the contexts contributing to AOS for Pakistani IOs stemmed from homeland or geopolitical contexts that stretched beyond domestic contexts of terrorism.

Experiencing Ascriptive Organizational Stigma: Geopolitical and Homeland Contexts

When asked about organizational experiences and capacities in the years since 9/11 and 7/7, many respondents suggested that AOS was a result of public and government perceptions of the Pakistani government and the broader Pakistani population. Respondents felt that AOS, in part, resulted from the Pakistani state’s tumultuous relationship with the United States and its allies in the Global War on Terror. Indeed, since the onset of the US-led military campaign in Afghanistan, relations between Pakistan and the United States have been strained (Jalal 2014). The Pakistani government and its intelligence services are frequently accused by the US government of being untrustworthy and sympathetic to terrorist actors in the region (Lieven 2012; Jalal 2014; Rana 2016). The bi-lateral US-Pakistani relationship was further damaged in 2011, when the United States carried out a secret military operation near the Pakistani capital, Islamabad, to capture and kill fugitive Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden.

Over the course of the nearly-two-decade-long US- and UK-led NATO counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan, the Pakistani government has unsuccessfully tried to maintain cooperation with the West, while appeasing its own public fears concerning US and Indian objectives in the region (Jalal 2014; Jaffrelot 2015). However, the discovery of Bin Laden near the heart of the Pakistani capital (Islamabad) marked a new low point in global perceptions of Pakistan (Jalal 2014). Consequently, Pakistani IOs encountered AOS often rooted in geopolitical, rather than purely domestic, contexts. For instance, when asked about recent challenges, a Pakistani IO leader in New York City felt that public trust and faith in Pakistan and the Pakistani people were “destroyed” when the world learned that Osama Bin Laden was “hiding in plain sight of the Pakistan military for over a decade.” The geopolitical contexts of Pakistan via the Global War on Terror, coupled with the Pakistani government’s inability to tackle corruption and religious extremists contributed to negative societal perceptions of the Pakistani state and Pakistani nationality, which, in turn, informed AOS.

AOS stemming from geopolitical contexts was particularly apparent to leaders of homeland-oriented Pakistani IOs engaged in philanthropy and grassroots development. The director of one such IO in New York City commented that she believed

the US federal government was watching her organization's bank accounts because of frequent wire transfers to their partners in Pakistan. She observed, "If an organization is going to do anything in Pakistan, they have to deal with the surveillance, suspicions, and all this War on Terror business." Other IO leaders in both cities commented on the constant negativity projected about Pakistan on news shows and the Internet. An IO leader in London commented:

The only thing anyone ever sees about Pakistan in the news these days is terrorism, killings, and oppression of women. I know these things are real, but the media keeps on showing this and does not show the beautiful people of Pakistan or the resilience of Pakistani women. Our history has good and bad, just like the UK, but when you only show the bad and scary, people just write off the entire country and millions of people as terrorists.

When asked about how negative media coverage of Pakistan affected her organization, the respondent said she felt the media stigmatized Pakistan and scared people away from donating to IOs seeking to address social problems in the homeland. Other leaders expressed similar views on how negative perceptions of Pakistan, coupled with tensions between the Pakistani state and Western powers, created an environment of distrust and increased surveillance of their organizations. In sum, then, findings suggest that domestic and geopolitical contexts can generate stereotypes and negative attitudes that conflate group and organizational identities through AOS, the consequences of which I now discuss.

Impacts and Consequences of Ascriptive Organizational Stigma

Organizational stigmas can operate as external forces, pressuring organizations to make significant changes to leadership, behaviors, and procedures with the aim of minimizing the impacts and consequences of stigma. Accordingly, Pakistani IOs in both cities looked to manage AOS by enacting organizational-level procedures and protocols to ensure regulatory compliance, transparency, professionalism, legitimacy, and moral accountability. Unfortunately, these procedures often caused IOs to incur significant costs in terms of resources and the re-ordering of organizational objectives and priorities (e.g., mission drift), draining resources and energy away from addressing the needs of their constituents. For example, a director of a Pakistani transnational organization in London helping orphans commented:

On two occasions our wire transfers were intercepted and held for weeks. This meant that we could not send money to buy food for the orphanage for two weeks. I had to use my own personal savings. We talked to a lawyer, and he told me that we needed to become more professional and more transparent. Get audits from accounting firms, make a better website . . . but all of those things cost a lot of money . . . money that is supposed to go to the orphanage.

In the example given here, a counterterrorism investigation delayed the transfer of monetary resources to constituents in Pakistan, and the IO leader was forced to rely on personal finances to meet organizational responsibilities to constituencies in the homeland. The fact that this organization leader used personal finances to keep the organization functioning during the investigation suggests that organizations with access to fewer resources might be unable to address pressures from AOS while also meeting their constituents' needs.

The diversion of resources and time for professionalization and impression management caused many organizations to re-order their objectives and priorities, resulting in mission drift. Thus, rather than focusing resources and energies on core missions and constituencies, IOs were forced to re-direct their efforts and capacities to managing AOS. Advocacy and social movement organizations—those focusing on issues of poverty, racism, discrimination, and inequality—were particularly likely to feel such constraints, as their normal activities were suppressed by the need to condemn or otherwise distance themselves from terrorism. For example, a leader of a domestically oriented advocacy organization in London described:

[E]very time there is a terrorist attack or some investigation of a Muslim organization, we have to defend ourselves and show people that we are not some kind of terrorist support organization. So instead of getting people out to protest the government's policies on housing or racism, we are wasting our time responding to some terrorist attack and telling everyone that "Hey, these guys are not really Muslim" and that [terrorists] do not represent the majority of Muslims... I think the racism directed towards Pakistanis and Muslims in general, from the media and politicians, is designed to keep us down and out of politics. The more we have to defend our community and our organization, the less time we can be planning demonstrations and, more importantly, getting people out to the polls to vote.

Other consequences related to mission drift concerned Pakistani organizations' efforts to transform negative perceptions of Pakistan, Pakistani immigrants, and their Pakistani IOs. To address negative perceptions and stereotypes accompanying AOS, many IOs tried to project positive images of themselves, their staff, and their local and homeland constituents. Projecting such an image sometimes required framing organizational missions in line with mainstream concerns such as global literacy campaigns and commitments to curbing religious fundamentalism in Pakistan, instead of what the organizations saw as other, more pressing concerns. For example, some homeland-oriented organizations emphasized that their missions and objectives focused on alleviating illiteracy and poverty among women and children in rural Pakistan. An organization leader in New York City explained:

Our mission is to help raise awareness of the education crisis in Pakistan so that people may be more likely to help us address these problems. We try to explain that if you help the poor get a better education in Pakistan, this will help reduce fundamentalism and

poverty. We often point to Malala [Yousafzai]'s story to show the courage and determination of the Pakistani people because she is a famous person . . . but then we try to tell people there are thousands of Malalas who need our support. This is how we frame our work as a world development goal to increase education and literacy in developing countries.

With this type of framing, organizations emphasized their moral accountability, while paradoxically tapping into public narratives that linked Pakistan and Pakistani immigrants to religious fundamentalists and their attacks on Pakistani women.

Another consequence of AOS was that some organizations were so constrained that they ceased operating as formal non-profits altogether. In a reversal of their earlier trajectory from informal to formal associations, some IO leaders described being in the process of transitioning back to informal status because of the costs and pressures mounting from AOS. This transition permitted them to decrease the amount of time and resources spent maintaining regulatory compliances and professional standards. An informant in New York City who was transitioning his religious education non-profit into a more informal collective shared:

Our organization helped train local people to teach classes and paid for the books on Islam written in English for many children who cannot read Arabic Two years after 9/11, we got a letter informing us there was concern that our organization might be radicalizing young Muslim men. I won't say who the letter came from, but let's just say there are a number of racist, anti-Muslim loudmouths in the city. The negative attention was scary, considering the climate back then. It was a crazy time back then, and Muslims were being detained left and right. Of course, there was no truth to the accusations, and nothing came of it legally, but it really scared me. Then, this year, we find out about all of this NYPD secret surveillance stuff. I think our work would be easier if we stay in our extended networks and stop being so public. So we now plan to stop operating as a nonprofit and will soon begin to offer classes in our basement and at other people's homes.

While informalization was the exception, not the norm, it had dual effects. First, it limited some organizations' abilities to grow and fundraise. Second, by removing themselves from the regulatory eye of the public and the state, these organizations' informalization may have paradoxically undermined the very counterterrorism efforts that regulations governing the operation of non-profit organizations were designed to support⁶.

⁶My methodology did not allow me to account for organizations that may have transitioned to informal status or ceased operating altogether before 2013 because of AOS.

External pressures stemming from AOS were especially pronounced for homeland-oriented organizations because many of their cross-border linkages to Pakistan were under the direct scrutiny of the global counterterrorism surveillance apparatus, as many of their activities required transfer of significant financial resources to rural regions in Pakistan. Since many high-profile counterterrorism investigations of Muslim charities focused on organizations sending financial and material support to constituents in Muslim-majority countries (Howell and Lind 2009), there was a widespread perception among both government officials and the US and UK public that Muslim organizations may have been directly or indirectly channeling funding to terrorist actors abroad (Burr et al. 2006; Choudhury and Fenwick 2011; Benthall 2016).

Potential donors, including Pakistani immigrants, became afraid to donate to organizations due to this perception, fearing that donors to organizations under suspicion could themselves be prosecuted. As a leader from a New York-based charity said, “At fundraisers, people began to tell me that they were afraid to donate to us because they thought the FBI might arrest them later on.” A leader from a grassroots development organization in London explained:

Many of these Pakistanis are scared of what might happen to them if the government decides to investigate a charity because they think that the record of their donation may be used to come after them and charge them with supporting the Taliban or Al-Queda in Pakistan. If Pakistanis are unwilling to donate to organizations like ours but are still willing to send money to Pakistan, it makes sense for them to do so informally so their charitable actions cannot be used later to punish them.

As this comment suggests, Pakistani IOs competed against informal remittance houses for immigrants’ financial contributions to Pakistan. AOS and concerns about counter-terror investigations of IOs may have caused many weary Pakistani immigrants to rely on informal transnational networks rather than formal registered IOs. Paradoxically, the anxiety and fear generated by AOS may actually have undermined official efforts to regulate cross-border financial flows by incentivizing informality.

Discussion and Conclusion

Immigrant organizations have long been ubiquitous features of immigrant-receiving societies (Schmitter 1980; Moya 2005), and migration scholars have revealed their essential roles in immigrant integration (Bloemraad 2006; Jossart-Marcelli 2013; Okamoto and Gast 2013), political mobilization (Wong and Satzewich 2005; Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad 2008), and cross-border transnational engagements (Smith 2005; Portes et al. 2007; Chaudhary and Moss 2019), among other topics. However, in drawing attention to the presence and functions of IOs, much of this literature has inadvertently emphasized their opportunities and potential benefits to constituents,

with less attention given to the external conditions capable of constraining immigrant organizations.

In this article, I introduced the concept of *ascriptive organizational stigma (AOS)* and defined it as the organizational-level stigma premised on stereotypes and negative societal attitudes associated with group-level ascriptive markers such as nationality, religion/cultural orientation, and ethno-racial identity. Using the case of Pakistani immigrant organizations in New York City and London, this article sought to investigate how the stigmatization of an immigrant group's ascriptive markers affected the practices, objectives, and organizational capacities of its affiliated organizations. Findings suggest that Pakistani organizations in both cities experienced ascriptive organizational stigma, and that it pressured organization leaders to prioritize regulatory compliance and stigma management procedures above and beyond their core missions and constituents. The diversion of resources and re-ordering of objectives led to mission-drift and the constraining of Pakistani immigrants' organizational capacities.

By introducing the concept of ascriptive organizational stigma, and revealing its sources and consequences for Pakistani immigrant organizations, this article makes three significant contributions to existing scholarship. First, findings suggest that geopolitical contexts can result in the ascriptive stigmatization of immigrants' home country governments and, by extension, their organizations. While Pakistani organization leaders in both cities perceived the targeting of their organizations to be consequences of domestic backlash against Pakistanis and Muslims in the immediate aftermath of each city's respective terrorist attacks (9/11 and 7/7), others emphasized the wider geopolitical contexts. Indeed, many leaders of Pakistani organizations perceived ascriptive organizational stigma to stem from negative public and government perceptions of the Pakistani state and Pakistan's tumultuous role in the US-led Global War on Terror. This finding is significant because researchers working on immigrant organizations within sociology and, to a lesser extent, political science, rarely consider how geopolitical contexts or international relations affect immigrants' organizational capacities (for exceptions see, Mitchell 1989; Chaudhary and Moss 2019; Dijkzeul and Fauser 2020). Findings from this article suggest future research on immigrant organizations should further engage with the subfields of political geography and international relations to better theorize how geopolitical contexts can foster or constrain immigrant organizations.

Second, this article demonstrates that ascriptive organizational stigma corresponds with a conflation of stigmatized ascriptive status markers across group and organizational scales. The domestic and geopolitical contexts contributing to the stigmatization of Pakistan and Pakistani immigrants led to a conflation of groups and organizations centered on three shared stigmatized ascriptive status markers: nationality, religion, ethno-racial identity. While the portability of identity markers across scales is well documented and is understood at the level of groups and territories (Herb and Kaplan 1999), the observed conflation of groups and organizations under conditions of ascriptive organizational stigma challenges a key assumption in

organizational studies, namely, that groups and formal organizations are different and distinctive features of modern life (Scott and Davis 2007). While formality and rationality are often cited as important attributes differentiating organizations from individuals or groups (Perrow 1961; DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Devers et al. 2009), findings presented here suggest that these assumed delineations of scale may diminish under conditions of ascriptive stigmatization.

Third, findings illustrate how ascriptive organizational stigma and Pakistani organizational leaders' efforts to respond, ultimately constrained organizational capacities to serve domestic and homeland constituents. Indeed, as this article shows, external pressures stemming from ascriptive organizational stigma resulted in a re-ordering of organizational missions and priorities, leading to increased operating costs and the diversion of resources. In drawing attention to ascriptive organizational stigma and how it can potentially impede immigrant organizational capacities, this article provides a necessary contrast to prior research emphasizing the opportunities organizations can generate for immigrant integration and transnational activities.

Prior research has shown that IOs are embedded in multiple contexts that can foster new opportunities and resources for immigrant communities (Babis 2016; Vermeulen et al. 2016). Findings revealed here, however, complement this narrative by demonstrating how the embeddedness of immigrant organizations in multi-layered domestic, homeland, and geopolitical contexts, can also contribute to the stigmatization and constraining of immigrant organizational capacities. By drawing attention to ascriptive stigma and the constraining of Pakistani immigrant organizations, this article contributes to recent efforts in migration studies aimed at theorizing the function and significance of IOs (Gleeson and Bloemraad 2012; Babis 2016) by revealing some of the ways in immigrant organizations can be obstructed from serving and representing domestic and homeland constituents.

Immigrant organizations are meso-level conduits, which help facilitate immigrant integration, civic incorporation, mobilization, and transnational engagement (Babis 2016; Chaudhary and Guarnizo 2016). This article introduced the concept of *ascriptive organizational stigma* and used it to investigate how domestic and geopolitical contexts can lead to the stigmatization and constraining of Pakistani immigrant organizations in New York City and London. In so doing, this article contributes the first empirical analysis of the stigmatization of an immigrant group's organizational infrastructure in two different contexts of settlement. While only applicable to Pakistani organizations, findings presented here suggest that societal attitudes toward immigrants and their affiliated organizations are informed by the level of stigma associated with the ascriptive markers common to an immigrant group's collective and organizational identities. Thus, *the degree to which immigrant organizations are stigmatized and constrained, may correspond to how their immigrant constituents and countries of origin are perceived with respect to domestic, international, and geopolitical contexts*. Future research should examine how the ascriptive stigmatization and constraining of Pakistani IOs compares with that of

other groups. For instance, research on Iranian or Syrian immigrants may uncover contexts of AOS comparable to the Pakistani cases presented here. Alternatively, research on immigrant groups enjoying favorable domestic and geopolitical contexts vis-a-vis their receiving country (e.g., Cubans, Israelis in the United States) may further clarify how and why organizational stigmas and constraints vary in their sources and consequences across different immigrant groups and destinations. Such efforts can help migration scholars better understand the nature of the opportunities and constraints that immigrant organizations must navigate as they strive to serve and represent their interests and communities ‘here’ and ‘there’.

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ORCID iD

Ali R. Chaudhary  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7042-187X>

Supplemental Material

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