

ECONOMICS RESEARCH SEMINAR SERIES 16-2021

Religious Leaders and Rule of Law

By

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Sultan Mehmood is an Assistant Professor of Economics at the New Economic School in Moscow. He holds a Master's degree in Economics from Tilburg University and Mphil Degree in Public Policy and Development from Paris School of Economics. He received his PhD degree from University of Paris in 2019, after which he worked as a postdoctoral researcher at Aix-Marseille School of Economics in Marseille and Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona. Among his research interests are development economics, political economy and law and economics. His research paper titled 'Judicial Independence and Development: Evidence from Pakistan' was recognized by the European Academy of Institutional Economics as the best research conducted in 2018.

Abstract: In this paper, we provide systematic evidence of how historical religious institutions affect the rule of law. In a difference-in-differences framework, we show that districts in Pakistan where the historical presence of religious institutions is higher, rule of law is worse. This deterioration is economically significant, persistent, and explained by the rise of religious leaders elected to political office. We explain our findings with a model where religious leaders leverage their high legitimacy to run for office and influence Courts. Our estimate of the economy-wide losses attributed to land expropriation by religious leaders through Courts is about 0.06 percent of GDP every year.

Date: Wednesday, March 3, 2021

Time: 03:00 P.M. (PST)

Webinar link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89252792652?pwd=WmRsVnlpeGNENVBaWWgwencyboVsUT09>

Meeting ID: 892 5279 2652

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