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The self in a time of constant connectivity:

Romantic intimacy and the ambiguous promise of mobile phones for young women in Gilgit, northern Pakistan

ABSTRACT
Ubiquitous mobile phones have transformed not just our modes of communication but our self-perception. In facilitating a direct personal connection, be it via a call, a text message, or social media, they present the unprecedented challenge of synchronicity, in which users must simultaneously navigate different social contexts and plural identities. In the area of Gilgit, northern Pakistan, young women in particular struggle with social scrutiny of their mobile phone use, given the latter's potential to facilitate illicit relationships. They counter such threats to their moral integrity by consciously limiting their range of interlocutors. They invoke "trust" and curate a more transparent, congruent version of themselves as pious yet competent and sophisticated digital users. This allows them to creatively adapt new technologies and, most importantly, to implement and promote an Islamically sanctioned form of courtship. By prompting processes of individuation, mobile phones paradoxically restrict the enactment of plural selves yet allow for creative improvisations. [*personhood, self, trust, digital technology, mobile phone, gender, Islam, Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan*]

موبائل فون کی ہر جگہ موجودگی نے نہ صرف ہمارے طرزِمواصلات بلکہ ہمارے تصورِخود شناسی کو بھی بدل دیا ہے۔ براہ راست رابطے کی سہولت میں ، چاہے وہ کال ہو ، ٹیکسٹ میسج ہو ، یا سوشل میڈیا ،یہ طرزِمواصلات ایسے چیلنج پیش کرتے ہیں ، جس میں صارفین بیک وقت مختلف سماجی پس مناظراورکثیرشناختوں سے نبرد آزما رہتے ہیں۔ شمالی پاکستان کےعلاقے گلگت میں، نوجوان خواتین کو خاص طور پر اپنے موبائل فون کے استعمال پرسماجی تنقید و تشکیک کے رویوں سے مزاحمت کرنا پڑتی ہے کیونکہ تصورِعام میں موبائل فون ناجائز تعلقات بنانے میں سہولت فراہم کرتا ہے۔ اس لئے نوجوان خواتین اپنی اخلاقیات اور پاک دامنی کو لاحق خطرات کا مقابلہ اپنے رابطوں کا دائرہ محدود رکھ کر کرتی ہیں ۔ وہ اس عمل سے نہ صرف ٹرسٹ قائم کرتے ہوئے اپنی پاک دامنی اور شفاف شخصیت کے تصوّر کو مستحکم بناتی ہیں بلکہ ایک ذمہ دار اور سلجھے ہوئے ڈیجیٹل صارف ہونے کا ثبوت بھی پیش کرتی ہیں ۔ یہ انھیں نئ ٹیکنالوجی اپنانے کے ساتھ ساتھ اسلامی و سماجی طور پر منظور شدہ ازدواجی تعلقات کے نفاذ اور فروغ کا موقع فراہم کرتا ہے ۔ انفرادیت کو بڑھاوا دینے کے باوجود موبائل فون خلاف قیاس ہمارے کثیر شخصی تصوّر کو محدود کرتے کرتے ہیں البتہ شخصی اظہار کے تخلیقی امکانات کو فروغ دیتے ہیں۔ [شخصیت، ذات، اعتماد، ڈیجیٹل ٹیکنالوجی، موبائل فون، صنف، اسلام، گلگت بلتستان، پاکستان]

The room was both noisy and quiet. It was cold outside on this evening in Gilgit, the capital of Pakistan's northernmost territory Gilgit-Baltistan, so we all came together around the hearth (see Figure 1). In between preparing dinner in a big pot, a middle-aged woman shouted into her mobile phone, "Hello? Can you hear me?" Her husband was visiting relatives in a nearby valley where the cellphone signal was unstable. When the woman gave up on her broken conversation, she withdrew into the bluish light of her phone screen. A few minutes later, another mobile started ringing in an analog tone; it belonged to the senior woman of the house, who had been quietly sitting next to the hearth. With one hand, she dug under her massive veil to search for her phone in the left side of her bra. Having fetched it out, she conspicuously eyed the screen in an effort to recognize who was calling.

The woman's 18-year-old daughter, Sakina, seized the opportunity to take her illiterate mother's phone.[1] Sakina didn't recognize the number either, and since it might belong to an unknown man, she ignored the call, letting it go straight into the "missed call" log. But instead of returning the phone, Sakina started typing. A shrill beep gave her away: she was obviously exchanging messages with someone. Since everyone else was busy with their own tasks or absorbed in their own phones, Sakina's nervous glances around the room went unnoticed. "Well, they can trust me," she said, reacting to my amused look, showing me the SMS she had just received—it was from her fiancé, who was reminding her to study hard for school.

Figure 1. A family on the outskirts of Gilgit, Pakistan, gather around the hearth one evening in 2014. (Anna-Maria Walter)

In and around Gilgit, where all spheres of life are dominated by varying degrees of gender segregation, mobile phones increasingly allow future spouses to develop an intimate, loving bond before they are married. Many young women, whose marriages are arranged, enthusiastically communicate with their future spouses, after either their engagement or their formal marriage (*nikāḥ*), but before they have moved in together and before the public celebration of their wedding (*shādī*).[2]

Weddings in Gilgit-Baltistan's Shia community—unlike most Muslim communities throughout the world—involve a two-step procedure, in which signing the Islamic marriage contract at the time of a couple's nikāḥ serves as their official engagement, while the marriage is not implemented through shādī often years later. Until recently, this period was characterized by spouses' mutual avoidance and nervous shyness; given the traditionally low marriage age, they had time to grow up, finish school, and, at least for the husband, find a job. Over the last two decades, educated religious scholars (*sheikhs*) and influential descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad (*sayyids*) have argued that the marriage contract is the sole legitimate wedding according to Islamic law. As these interpretations have been increasingly adopted by university students and devoted followers, wedding celebrations around shādī have been revealed as mere cultural rituals. Backed by these Islamic discourses and facilitated by the availability of mobile phones, younger generations have consequently turned this liminal phase into a virtual dating period that at times results in real-life meetings, picnic trips, or even nights spent together at the girl's parents' house. Because the Sunni and Ismaili communities of Gilgit-Baltistan usually conduct nikāḥ during their shādī celebrations, betrothed couples are always chaperoned, and certainly no sexual involvement is allowed.[3]

From the first timid SMS messages and hours-long phone conversations to public displays of conjugal happiness, mobile phones provide young couples a platform to negotiate marital intimacy without necessarily having to meet in person. These couples, who are destined to marry, increasingly compensate for physical distance by staying in constant touch through messages, a mode of "connected presence" (Licoppe 2004) that often creates a sense of alienation from one's immediate surroundings. Older generations particularly mistrust young people's absentmindedness when they are absorbed in a form of communication that both mediates an individualized connection and gives them privacy. At the same time, mobile phones make it difficult to juggle several parallel identities (Sökefeld 1999) because they render diverse contexts present all at once. While technology is generally celebrated for—or at least identified with—the endless possibilities it creates, this article explores the contrary effect. Instead of multiplying choice per se—as in online dating or matching sites, let alone random Tinder swipes—mobile phones can imbue arranged marriages with romantic density. Since Sakina had just gotten engaged but was not yet married, she pushed the boundaries of acceptable decent behavior with her phone liaison. But the moment she became conscious of her divided attention, she justified her slightly devious act by pointing to her respectability. Invoking trust is one means of containing the threat of being accused of moral decay—or of having to admit it to oneself.

Studying Pakistani women's psychology, Katherine Ewing (1990) shows that shifting frames of reference explain inconsistencies in a person's self, allowing her to perceive herself as a congruent whole—or conceive her inner narrative of coherence and continuity, to borrow from Martin Sökefeld's (1999) account of Gilgiti men who manage multiple and situationally conflicting identities. With their constant availability, mobile phones and social media challenge such a chronology of experience: plural selves become synchronized, and people's strategies to resolve subsequent tensions must adapt. Mobile phone communication and online media offer a focus point on such mechanisms of self-formation. Although the same technology is sometimes used in fundamentally different ways, it produces similar effects: presentation and self-perception of one's mediated persona pose new challenges to maintaining the congruence of one's self. What could previously have been held separate must now be reconciled, namely one's private and public personas, which vary in different contexts, such as a loving and beloved yet modest and emotionally resilient wife. I therefore challenge the trope of plurality and multiplicity that runs through contemporary anthropology by showing that mobile phone connectivity and the invocation of "trust" and respectability constrain the possibilities of self-creation and individuality.

In what follows, I first provide a short outline of the field of inquiry, then detail how young women in Gilgit have to position themselves in relation to perceived threats to established norms while pursuing conjugal intimacy over the phone. In parallel I dive into the ethnography of Sakina's gradual shift from daughter to wife. Sakina's personal development, and its wider social context, allow me to discuss existing models of subjectivation and to argue that mobile phones increasingly restrict users' ability to act out plural selves, thus constraining them to more one-dimensional, curated forms thereof. While ethnographies have long demonstrated that mobile phones' use and impact are shaped in locally distinctive ways, we also have to acknowledge that they not only hold liberatory potential but also trouble subjectivities. Sakina's account exemplifies how the lauded opportunities of social media and digital communication for creative self-making can at the same time threaten a coherent self. Through its affordance of surveillance and its constant demand for attention to manage the possibilities of various contexts simultaneously, mobile phones emerge as an ambiguous tool for young women in Gilgit—and possibly users throughout the world.

An ambiguous field

The "trust" that Sakina invoked requires her family to take a leap of faith, to count on her to use mobile phones appropriately and to not disappoint them. This strategy has, how-ever, not always paid off for the roughly 1.5 million residents of Gilgit-Baltistan in the domain of politics. As a part of the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, the region has been locked in the conflict between Pakistan and India since 1947. Although local populations allied themselves with Pakistan at the time of partition, they still lack constitutional rights, and the region has not acquired the status of a province. For the Indian side of Kashmir, scholars have reported a "trust deficit" in state authorities (e.g., Saraf 2020): many inhabitants oppose the annexation to India, whereas the majority of Gilgit-Baltistan's population identify as Pakistani, so their feelings toward the state are instead characterized by disenchantment and failed hope (Ali 2019).

The region's ambiguous political status allows for a strong military presence as well as surveillance activities by Pakistani intelligence services. This has not only given rise to suspicions of state institutions' role in sectarian tensions as part of a divide-and-rule strategy (Ali 2019) but also created a climate of mutual distrust among Gilgit city's heterogeneous population. While the Ismaili minority has largely managed to stay out of sectarian conflicts, skirmishes between the Sunni and Shia communities have regularly erupted since the late 1970s. Such developments were further facilitated by the flow of goods, people, and ideas after the Karakoram Highway (KKH) opened in 1986, connecting Gilgit with China and Islamabad. The city has consequently developed into an administrative, economic, and educational center, and has witnessed the large-scale migration of people from ethnically, linguistically, and religiously diverse backgrounds.[4]

It was in this vigilant environment, in an administrative district near Gilgit, that I conducted 14 months of fieldwork from 2011 to 2015 and lived with (mainly four) families in different urban, suburban, rural, and religious settings.[5] Thanks to mobile phones, my connection to key interlocutors has not ceased since then but has taken on new qualities via WhatsApp and Facebook. While my research mainly took place in Pakistan's lingua franca, Urdu, and my assistants helped with my slowly improving skills in the vernacular Shina, digital connections involve a mix of transliterated Urdu and English. During my fieldwork I conducted dozens of qualitative interviews with both women and men. Many of the interviews were rather generic and general, and only conversations with close and long-term acquaintances proved to offer substantive content. Consequently, much of my data was gathered through participant observation in daily life, in which I, as a younger woman who lived with local families, mostly remained in the private, domestic sphere. This enabled me to follow the matchmaking and (pre-)marital bonding phase of my female interlocutors as well as corresponding negotiations within their families—and I still track them from afar through social media.

In line with the social and religious rules of *parda*, that is, gender segregation and veiling, women in

Gilgit-Baltistan embody a habitus of respectable reserve and modesty toward men (Walter 2021). Even spouses are expected to demonstrate diffidence toward each other in front of others. Because the incessantly practiced distance between women and men has its ultimate inversion in the intimacy of marriage, emotional attachment, let alone the most tacit hints at sexual intimacy, is imbued with feelings of embarrassment. Although it is generally appreciated when a loving bond develops after the wedding (Gratz 2006; Ring 2006), and many Islamic scholars endorse marriage as a form of companionship (Rosenbaum 2017), spouses rarely present themselves as a couple, and they risk only brief expressions of affection. Fondness may be detected through the soft voices they use to speak about each other, the playful tone in which they communicate, or through the silent messages they exchange via eye contact. Before young couples are married, they give even fewer clues about their personal connection, which takes place mostly in the privacy of mobile phone communication and stays largely invisible to those outside the relationship.

Given how sensitive the topic of intimacy is, I refer herein only to the wider geographic area of Gilgit to obscure my interlocutors' identities, to avoid essentializing religious rifts, and to obviate further "sectarianizing" or cementing distinctions between local groups. Even if Sunni, Shia, and Ismaili modes of gender segregation vary slightly, lives within the patri- or virilocal family home follow similar patterns, especially those relating to marriage and the distance between genders. Furthermore, in recent years a high rate of education, exposure to the rest of Pakistan, influence from South Asian pop culture, and transnational social media have all affected the local population. Via the KKH, Gilgit-Baltistan is connected to the Pakistani centers where many of its residents work and go to school. Because employment opportunities are relatively scarce in the high mountains, socioeconomic differences among the population are rather minimal: there is some work in trade along the KKH and in some local markets, as well as a growing tourism industry. Government jobs, which come with a stable income and social prestige, are highly sought after but require an advanced level of education.

Thanks to the efforts of the Ismaili Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), education for rural populations has been on the region's agenda for decades and resulted in high numbers of school enrollment for both genders; in most parts of Gilgit-Baltistan, girls' education is recognized as an important asset (Walter 2021). Sakina's family reflects these dynamics: despite their village background, her college-educated father managed to get a government job. Although he had moved his family to Gilgit's suburbs only in recent years, all his children had received a secondary education, and some of them were now continuing their studies at university. In challenging Orientalist tendencies, such as the stereotype of the op-

pressed Muslim woman, this article features one prominent case study to detail a young woman's process of active individuation. In examining how Sakina uses mobile phones to create conjugal intimacy, I heed Nayanika Mookherjee's (2013, 3–4) call to scrutinize "subjective views of the self, deliberate staging of the self, cultural construction of the self—the way individuals think of themselves and others."

Demonizing a technology of the intimate

Since the first cellphone tower was constructed in Gilgit city in 2006, mobile phone infrastructure has very slowly reached the valleys of Gilgit-Baltistan's high mountains, a difficult and remote terrain barely touched previously by communication technologies.[6] As elsewhere, cellphone users have adapted the new technology to their needs: locals switch between SIM cards provided by various operators; men buy phones for their female kin, who usually do not spend much time in public places nor have enough money; and young women get their own phone only after their engagement or nikāḥ, or when they move out of the family home for their studies. Since official statistics were unreliable, a few students acting as my research assistants conducted a small-scale mobile phone census. They surveyed 30 households in five different locations in the area of Gilgit, covering urban, suburban, and rural neighborhoods, and including all three religious sects. The results approximate a more representative picture for 2014: 54 percent of women and 81 percent of men over 15 years of age owned a phone. There was little difference between rural and urban environments, and most of the women who owned their own device were in their 20s or 30s.

Spurred on by circulating reports of illicit connections between women and men, mobile phone networks quickly expanded, along with public debates about phone etiquette. To camouflage their preoccupation with mobile phones, young women in the Gilgit area use their *parda* practice of reservedly blending into the background. Nevertheless, their parents often deplore premarital or pre-shādī contact as a distraction from not only the family but also school- or housework. These anxieties have made their way out of private conversations into public debates in the form of local poetry and songs. A schoolteacher from Gilgit's rural outskirts, for example, wrote a poem capturing their negative influence on his students in the punch line, "Satan's little brother, the mobile phone, has come" (Shina: *Shaitān'e cūno ɽa mobile alūn*). Moreover, because the virtual eludes public view, it raises the suspicion that the free space it opens up might spoil modest young women. In the worst-case scenario, this means they would elope with a boy of their choice, or even a stranger, gambling away not only their own reputation, let alone security, but also their family's respectability.

Table 1. Translation of a Khowar-language song about the influence of mobile phones. From a video uploaded to YouTube by Kamal Din in 2014 (since removed). Translated from Khowar to Urdu by Sultan Ahmed; translated from Urdu to English by Anna-Maria Walter

Urdu translation	English translation
Mobile! Āpkī vaja se merī 'izzat calī ga'ī	Mobile! Because of you my reputation has gone
Mere vaṭan kī ġhairat bhī calī ga'ī	My homeland's honor has also gone
Sharīfon kī sharāfat bhī calī ga'ī	The decency of the decent has also gone
Sab gharon se barkat bhī calī ga'ī	The blessing has left all houses
SMS kar ke shām ko beṭī ġhā'ib ho ga'ī	After writing SMS at night, the daughter has disappeared
Beṭī ko ḍhūnḍ kar rāt kī tārīkī men bāp ko taklīf hū'ī	Searching for the daughter in the darkness of the night brought troubles to the father
Islāmī laṛkī kī sharm-o-hayā aur acchī 'adat calī ga'ī	The Muslim girl's reserved modesty and good behavior have gone

The popular demonization of mobile phones, as reflected in songs (see Table 1), indicates older generations' fear of and unease with anything that might undermine established norms and values. Dystopian anxieties are a common reaction to new technologies, as Nancy Baym (2010) notes, especially when their usage and social consequences appear beyond one's control. The threat of flirtatious premarital romances mediated through new technologies, such as online or mobile phone chats, has been the focus of many studies in Muslim countries, where societies are generally structured according to gender segregation and the taboo of physical intimacy outside marriage (Carey 2012; Costa 2016; Menin 2015, 2018; Pearl Kaya 2009; Schielke 2015). They highlight the tensions, especially for women, of juggling the desire to search for a loving partner with a growing social awareness of an Islamic morality that disapproves of contact between strangers of the other sex. In Gilgit rumors soar of premarital romances and elopements, but under closer examination, these turn out to be greatly exaggerated.

Although cellphones allow one to connect with strangers or a crush from school, women's phone etiquette mostly follows established gender norms. Just as they do not talk to strangers in the street, neither do they pick up unknown numbers, nor do they befriend young men on Facebook who are not their kin. As other studies have found (e.g., Horst and Miller 2006), cellphones rarely extend one's network. Rather, they resemble preestablished connections between kin or friends from school, university, or work—and exceptions prove the rule (e.g., Andersen 2013). Especially when young women connect with young men whom they do not know very well, the anonymity of mobile phones or digital communication can provide a free space of expression: they "text what they would not normally say in a face-to-face encounter" (Pertierra 2005, 27). When recently engaged or married, couples in the Gilgit area will most likely be unfamiliar with each other, but they can interact over their phones, and thus the content of their messages differs from that of random strangers who do not intend to ever meet, cannot trust each other, and keep the relationship open through ambiguity

and suspense (Archambault 2017; Carey 2012; Pearl Kaya 2009).

The first steps in this interaction are certainly easier in a mobile phone environment, which offers both distance and privacy and thus fewer chances of being affected by feelings of exposure or embarrassment. As a "tool of the intimate sphere" (Ling 2008b, 159), mobile phones provide exclusive access to a privatized interaction (Gergen 2002) and transform social networks into individual ones; thus, before a couple shares a room, phones provide a virtual space through which to connect. To actively counter suspicions about their moral integrity, women in the Gilgit area increasingly embrace a more transparent and coherent version of themselves to keep open avenues for improvisation, such as pursuing romantic courtship within socially acceptable and Islamically sanctioned limits.

Sakina, for example, was proud to be not only educated, ambitious, and self-determined but also pious and modest toward men. In displaying this exemplary character, she gained her parents' trust and maximized her freedom. She commuted to the university alone, roamed the city with her siblings while shopping, visited the beauty parlor or relatives, and tutored younger students at home to earn extra money to spend at her discretion. When it came to her engagement, however, she was hardly involved in the decision-making. After listening to her parents and some older siblings' descriptions of the potential in-laws, she gave her consent and declared that she trusted her family to make the right choice for her. "I always knew that when I grew up, this would happen," she said. "I will also have a life partner. I could have said that I'd pick someone myself, but then *ammī* [mother] and *abbū* [father] liked this one, so I will also like him." Emphasizing her pious devotion, modesty toward men, and commitment to her family, Sakina refused to take any responsibility for the decision.

A growing body of work on love and marriage in India—in line with trends throughout South Asia—focuses on new versions of matchmaking that include a certain level of young women's involvement and consent to be guided by their family members (Donner 2016; Grover 2011; Robinson

2014; Titzmann 2015; Twamley 2014). While the choice of partner is negotiated between children and parents to various degrees, economic, caste, or religious considerations play an important role for both parties, resulting in largely endogamous matches. Given that more and more young couples across South Asia are establishing intimacy over mobile phones after their engagement or wedding (Doron and Jeffrey 2013), it is worth exploring how they own collective decisions and make the marriage their own. What counts here is not only the actual practice but also how young adults interpret and justify at times contradictory views. Sakina, for example, benefited from her strategy of noninvolvement in the matchmaking process when, shortly after the formal marriage, she pursued a loving relationship with her new husband: she was able to counter criticism of their growing intimacy by asserting the purity of their relationship as a commendably arranged marriage.

Sakina had exchanged a few text messages with her fiancé, Saqib, through her brother's phone in the weeks before their nikāḥ, an unpretentious affair conducted by male family members in the presence of a religious authority. The first time the couple actually met was a few days later in a traditional reception ceremony at Sakina's house—the *hatī bishok* (kissing hands), as it is called in Shina, paraphrased in Urdu as *angūṭī* rism (ring ritual). Under the curious eyes of about 80 relatives from both families, the newlyweds were brought together with a short prayer. Although dressed in the ceremonial clothes of bride and groom, they looked very intimidated as they sat next to each other on a decorated sofa that served as a stage. Relatives took turns posing beside them for photos, but the couple did not dare look in each other's direction even once. Saqib seemed to be at least as nervous as Sakina, and when all the visitors had left in the late afternoon, Sakina laughed at their stiff behavior and the cautious gap between them, which was so clearly on view in all the photos I took.

To see herself in the role of a married woman, with all its unspoken implications of sexual intimacy, was an intimidating thought. "I feel embarrassed," she said, "when I have to call him by his name" (instead of "brother," the usual address for men her age). At one point, however, they had to touch each other. The reception ceremony had culminated in the exchange of rings between the couple. Saqib gave her a golden ring with a big ruby, while Sakina shyly slipped a plain silver ring onto his finger. He then solemnly handed her a new smartphone as a wedding gift. After the ceremony, she could now familiarize herself with her husband's outer appearance. Anticipating her interest, Saqib had already filled it with dozens of photos of himself. Sakina studied the pictures, some with his family, others with friends, and many of them selfies in which he gazed longingly toward the viewer, that is, his young wife. His phone number was preinstalled on her new SIM card. And the next day, he sent his wife a first official text message.

For Sakina, although already married, romance had just begun.

After only a few weeks, their relationship intensified considerably. Beep, beep! Something lit up on the thin mattress next to me, and the vibration was followed by a special prayer tune for the month of Muḥarram (the month of mourning for Shia in the Islamic calendar). For what seemed like the hundredth time in the previous two hours, Sakina had received a text message. The SMS caused a smile to spread over her face. "I miss uuuu, januuuu!" she whispered over to me, reading out the text. She crawled closer and pulled the warm, synthetic blanket over our heads to share more details. All day she had been exchanging messages with Saqib. It almost resembled a real-time conversation, albeit written out in the local language, Shina; the national language, Urdu; and a few words of English. The lack of cues expressed through gestures or tone of voice lead users to emphasize their feelings in the instant messaging applications.

In Gilgit, as in many other places, the strength of a relationship is reaffirmed not by the depth of the messages' content but by their frequency, since they substitute for an in-person meeting or a quick check-in (Green and Singleton 2009; Horst and Miller 2006). Such continuous conversations in the form of frequent calls and text messages devoid of essential meaning present a relationship "as a sequence of situated exchanges and mediated interactions," each of which "reactivates, reaffirms, and reconfigures the relationship" (Licoppe 2004, 138). Some of the young spouses I interviewed wrote two to 300 messages a day, while an occasional call could last up to two hours. A young wife in one of the families I lived with told me, "We talk at night, when I'm back from uni and he from the office. If I don't have to do any work [in the house], we keep on talking and talking." She summarized the bulk of her messages as follows:

> Mostly it is just, How is everyone? What are you doing? I say, "I just ate." If I have time, he will start to talk. I will tell him what food I prepared today. "Drink milk," he sometimes says. Then he asks me how the other family members are. And occasionally, for the fun of it, we get into more personal things.

What Christian Licoppe (2004) introduces as "connected presence" does not necessarily describe the bridging of distance—the virtual travel of one interlocutor to the other (Archambault 2012). Rather, it makes interlocutors continually present in each other's lives. The reality they produce in this situation of copresence, however, can result in tensions with their other relationships. When I once mentioned to Sakina that I hardly ever noticed her speaking on the phone, especially not for very long, she admitted that she preferred speaking to Saqib in secret. For reasons of privacy, she would withdraw into the dark, empty guest room

or the store behind the kitchen. Given the personal nature of their exchange, Sakina felt shy about anyone overhearing her words and bearing witness to her growing intimacy with her husband—she avoided the uncomfortable overlap of her differing roles as a modest daughter, a diligent student, and a romantic lover. Moreover, in the secluded privacy of mobile communication, there developed an intimate complicity and secrecy that makes couples accomplices in stretching the older generations' rules (Tenhunen 2015). This was an aspect of mobile communication that young adults cherished but were careful to keep hidden.

Invoking "trust"—or the problem of synchronicity

In the context of young people's extensive use of mobile phones, it is understandable that many local people distrust digital technology's capacity to establish an intimate connection, as well as to synchronize different contexts. Although much anthropological scholarship has found that individuals can competently juggle multiple selves, more mature adults in Gilgit worry that mobile phones undermine social relations. The male head of Sakina's family, for example, once railed against mobiles as causing "the end of love" among family members. Mobile phones can make people painfully aware of their close kin's "absent presence" (Gergen 2002), their minds eluding the private setting around the hearth (see Figure 1). Through media consumption, argues the social psychologist Kenneth Gergen (2002, 231), a person's immediate presence is "*virtually* eradicated by a dominating absence" of mind (emphasis in original). Since cellphones and digital technology allow for interactive meaning-making, they demand even more attention. Thus, users simultaneously, albeit to varying degrees, interact both remotely and proximately, and these interactions can be juxtaposed as well as intertwined (Relieu 2009).

Using the example of a woman walking down a road while texting, Rich Ling (2008a) shows that mobile phone connections do not replace copresence, but they do allow both spheres to run in parallel, in that the user focuses on her phone but still pays attention to her immediate environment when crossing a street or passing other civilians. Although her attention is split, the woman participates in the parallel spheres to various degrees and at times prioritizes one over the other. She continuously negotiates this depending on her interest and involvement in the mediated connection, as well as on her environment's active demands. Yet frequent news headlines of selfie accidents, and even deaths, suggest that this process of attunement is not always successful.

Although mobile phones are characterized as very personal tools, they can render content "public" (Pink et al. 2016), whether by making posts or profile pictures visible or by extending the reach of family members who can check on each other. Sakina once told me that her father never calls her when she is at university, but some of her friends' parents regularly send messages asking where they are and what they are doing. Here, the cellphone is a "digital leash"—a term coined by Rich Ling in 1999 (as noted in Nafus and Tracey 2002) for parents' excessive checking on their teenage children in Scandinavia. But it can also manifest between spouses, given that Sakina and Saqib's perpetual contact resembles a form of implicit surveillance. Just as Saqib uses it to remind Sakina of her duties, for example, to study or prepare meals, many young Gilgiti wives also appreciate this direct line to their husbands; for instance, they can call places they would never physically go, such as tea stalls, to better understand men's routines and to exert their influence, such as by telling their husbands what to bring home from the market. "It has become so much easier," said a housewife in her early 30s from Gilgit's suburbs, referring to life with mobile phones. "I used to sit at home and was worried where my husband went or didn't go, why he hadn't come home. Now I can find out."

Control goes both ways, however, and other women complain that their husbands scrutinize what they do at home alone all day long while they are out at work. Consequently, an incapacitated mobile phone arouses the utmost suspicion. While young women compromise their social standing, pious conviction, or family reputation only very rarely, young men do not have to fear any consequences for misbehavior, and they therefore exploit new opportunities; some call random mobile phone numbers in the hope of hooking up with a girl, some maintain separate social media accounts for family and friends, and others access pornography. Nevertheless, the public discourse in Gilgit identifies women as those responsible for maintaining the social and moral order. A 20-year-old student summarized, "They say, as long as the girl is not bad [*kharāb*], the boy will not be spoilt. Only girls corrupt boys." Young women have to position themselves in line with deprecatory portrayals and counter them by displaying an updated version of piety and respectability. All their behavior is gauged according to this model of informed and sophisticated consciousness, which is visible in Sakina's account of modest matchmaking, while they, at the same time, pursue conjugal romance.

To widen their range of freedom, many young women in the Gilgit area invoke their parents' or husband's "trust." Their use of the English word in an Urdu or Shina sentence signals the concept's novelty; trust itself may not be new, but strategically invoking it to describe one's impeccability of character certainly is. Since trust is needed when something is invisible or obscured, unpredictable, or out of one's direct control, trusting someone implies a risk and requires a leap of faith (Hardin 2002; Luhmann 1979; van den Berg and Keymolen 2017). To prove their own respectability, women consequently have to live up to

their promise. In his seminal book *Mistrust*, Matthew Carey (2017, 22) describes the power equation as follows:

> If I trust my daughter to play in the yard and not stray into the street, I both abandon direct control over the situation and simultaneously try to assert control over her. Because if she does stray, then my trust will be withdrawn, and she will no longer be allowed out on her own. Trust, in other words, is a rather absolute and unforgiving social technology: it requires compliance from those we trust, lest it be lost, perhaps forever.

This definition, however, does not tell us who triggers this spiral of indirect control, nor whether it has different implications if young adults consciously employ it themselves. As Carey (2017) shows, we should define mistrust not as the absence of trust but as indicating a self that is somewhat autonomous and uncontrollable. We must assume, in other words, that people in general can never fully be understood and that their behavior cannot be predicted. A young woman from Gilgit's suburban areas consequently predicts the end of more flexible role switching, which provides negotiating potential, when she talks about how mobile phones have uncovered what used to happen secretly:

> Before the mobile, girls also did dirty things, but people just didn't notice back then without media attention and so on. In the old days, when there were no mobiles, they also did this work [*kām*, referring to romantic affairs]—secretly. They didn't use SMS, so it didn't become so public [*mashūr*]. Today, if I or you met someone, we would message with him to coordinate, and everyone would come to know. To me, it doesn't seem as if mobile phones have spoilt everyone. But because of mobiles, these things have become better known.

So when young women in the Gilgit area invoke "trust," they withdraw from the potential offered by mistrust's ambiguity and maneuvering. Roles and values attached to the self are thus limited: girls want to make themselves known and transparent, to consciously thwart a more dubious plurality. Gilgiti girls' use of "trust" can be read as a counterpart to Aditi Saraf's (2020) description of male traders in Indian Kashmir who refer to "trust" when defining their informal credit transactions and commercial relationships in an unstable political climate. While this division appeals to the gendered divide of lifeworlds into private and public, both spheres are obviously volatile enough that they depend on an insurance of trust, that is, trust as a means of coping with relational uncertainties: in the traders' case these are brought about by the external forces of war and occupation; in Gilgiti women's lives, it is by using new modes of communication. But given that "trust," at least in its English-language connotation, is a concept introduced somewhat recently from the outside, it allows for a more creative and playful self-reflection. "They can trust me" is especially often voiced and used by confident and forward women. This includes not only those who do everything by the book but also those who have to reconcile divergent ideas, such as Sakina when she texted with her fiancé before their nikāḥ: she stayed flexible in her scheme and maintained room for improvisation.

Individuation through self-limitation

In his article on identity and self, Martin Sökefeld (1999) acknowledges all human beings as rich and competent selves who creatively enact different identities. He looks at the competing identities that Gilgiti men, who are tied together by kinship but who adhere to different sects of Islam, live up to. He shows that they can distinguish between their own conscious selves and others in the group and that they use this ability to navigate competing frames of reference to reconcile different actions and motivations.

Similarly, a woman in Gilgit can unite many different roles within herself: She might be a loving daughter, a demanding sister, an obedient wife, a passionate lover, a Shia Muslim, and an adherent of shamanism; she might be a widow living with her late husband's family; she might be a teacher, a great dancer, for which her cousins and friends admire her; a well-reputed na't (Muslim prayer) singer; and she may tend to be lazy or neglect her household, which her mother-in-law argues with her about. And she is many more versions of herself. She can live up to them because she has been exposed to different contexts and sets of behaviors, and she has had time to acquire and embody them: she grew up in a farmer's family in the village, went to college in Rawalpindi, in "down-country" Pakistan, and married into a fairly well-off family belonging to a different lineage in Gilgit city. And she can juggle these at times contradictory selves because she has built herself in chronological form, as a self who constantly readjusts herself to new experiences.

Katharine Ewing (1990) identifies this sequential memory as the reason why her interlocutors experience their own personhood as a gendered, self-continuous whole. To explain inconsistencies and "partially integrated self-representations" (273), she conceptualizes them as "shifting selves" rather than as fixed, plural identities that exist in parallel. This context-based personal history reflects Ewing's key interlocutor's shifting frames of reference when she speaks about herself, at times leaning on Islamic doctrines, at others on family values or maneuvering personal desires. While such a flexible and continuous readjustment anticipates contemporary discussions of emerging and entangled (Ingold 2006) or porous selves (Smith 2012), my research questions this trope of plurality and plasticity. Because mediated synchronicity suspends past and future or the becoming of the present, and because communication exists only in the moment without preparation and

Figure 2. A young woman checks an incoming message while conducting her ritual prayer (*namāz*) on a prayer mat, Gilgit, Pakistan, 2014. (Anna-Maria Walter)

attunement (Casey 2012), it is becoming increasingly difficult to act out one's different affiliations and character traits in the local context of Gilgit. This is true for women even more so than for men. Confronted with public lamentations of their moral decline, young women project a modest, pious persona that penetrates all aspects of their selves. This can take the form of a personal narrative that reconciles plural identities (Sökefeld 1999) or an illusion of that continuity (Ewing 1990). My observations regarding young women's mobile phone use complement Sökefeld's exclusively male perspective, and they challenge Ewing's argument for an update.

Cellphones and social media connectivity interrupt the individual's active construction of her self-account by rendering different contexts present at the same time. More than a serial representation of one's selves, these different personas are suddenly "there," conflicting with each other, making inconsistencies cruelly visible, deflating the careful efforts of self-curation in which everyone tries to perceive themselves as a sensible whole—not a static or a bounded one but one in which splits are reconciled. With technologically mediated communication, neither interlocutor necessarily knows where the other one is located when they interact, and so they don't know which social role or context is prevalent in the other's physical environment. This "anytime, anyplace" nature of the mobile can cause uncertainty and stress, especially when users confront the "incongruity between behaviors 'on' and 'off' the phone"

(Hulme and Truch 2005, 144). Because interactions are deeply embedded in social context (Baym 2010), they affect how a person treats them and negotiates between the addressed side of herself and her role at that point.[7] Mobile technology mediates the copresence of different aspects of oneself, forcing one to decide which role to assign prevalence to, that is, how to act when there is no possibility of shifting frames or distancing oneself (see Figure 2).

Sakina's story demonstrates how overlapping roles can pose a challenge. When she is both daughter and wife at the reception ceremony, her immediate reaction is intimidated shyness; she then gradually fathoms which role takes the more dominant position or how to consolidate them. Mobile phones render these different spheres of reference present at the same time. Although Sakina strives to keep her mobile affair and her proximate family surroundings separate, she does not always succeed, as her excitement about Saqib's messages shows. To avoid mutual embarrassment, her elders ignore these overlaps and thus experience their family member's detachment. The situation and network that a person relates to at a certain moment not only influences the image she portrays but also restructures her own self-perception, whereby the simultaneity of mediated connections and the proximate environment leads her to limit her conflicting roles, thus conflating them and creating a more congruent and transparent version of herself.

Figure 3. A screenshot of a young Gilgiti woman's Facebook page in which she flirts with ideas of feminine allure, 2015. (Anna-Maria Walter) [This figure appears in color in the online issue]

While mutual leniency exists to a certain degree, the individual is highly affected by interactions with others—by how family members, relatives, and the general public think about her or even how they treat her. Contemplating the connection between mobile phones and the often-conjured decay of morals, one of my interlocutors from Gilgit, the middle-aged head of a family, argued that the new technology brings out the user's most intimate character traits:

Some people have been corrupted by the mobile. Suppose that my daughter's heart contained 1 percent immorality [*ghalaṭ*]. A mobile phone would increase it to 2 percent, and after a week it would amount to 5 percent. But if her heart is pure [*sāf*], nothing is going to happen. It depends on the person. If they are good [*ṭhīk*] from the start, then nothing will come of it. If someone's character is loose, the mobile will make him worse. My daughter has my confidence. No matter where I leave my phone, she will stay good.

The man's line of thought effectively negates the existence of plurality in the local construction of personhood, a social perception that is at least true for women. As shown by the honor killing of Pakistani social media star Qandeel Baloch by her brother in 2016, what she exposed on Facebook was taken to represent all of her, not just one side of a persona that runs alongside a struggling working-class woman or a caring family member (Khan and Bari 2017). Based on her media appearances, many people identified her as "spoilt"—showing too much skin, wearing too much makeup, exposing the hypocrisy of religious authorities. These are not accepted as forms of social criticism by a complex personality; rather, they justify a woman's erasure. So what is even more important to one's own understanding of the self as a whole is that society perceives the individual as a congruent entity that will be scrutinized for any mistake; even minor offenses that might be permissible in a certain context will be taken to exemplify a woman's character. To maintain her moral integrity, she therefore presents a caricature of respectability that clearly and consciously negates the diversity of the self.[8]

Reflecting what Emrys Schoemaker (2015) calls "digital purdah" (i.e., gender segregation), social media in Pakistan penetrates rather than breaks up gender roles. Most young women from the Gilgit area keep a low profile on their Facebook pages. Some use fake variations of their names, and almost none of them show their photo. Thus, for their profile pictures, they mostly use babies, fashion models, and colorful backgrounds displaying proverbs (see Figures 3 and 4). Young women in particular rarely post or share updates, and they mostly limit their activity to browsing others' pages. Such "voyeuristic spying" (Lambert

Figure 4. A collection of pictures from a young Gilgiti woman's Facebook profile, 2015. Here, she stages her Shia identity using photos of little girls pulled from the internet. (Anna-Maria Walter) [This figure appears in color in the online issue]

2013, 95) might initially be a way of comparing oneself to others and assessing one's own identity, but it commonly turns into a form of judgmental evaluation, one that users already have in mind when designing their online profiles or gauging their activity. While some young men create plural Facebook profiles to display different parts of their identities to different people, women face much stronger scrutiny from both others and themselves, and they need to develop strategies to participate in new trends. As they consciously choose how and what to display about themselves, their sense of self takes center stage in their lives.

This mode of self-restriction parallels the panopticon effect described by Michel Foucault (1977, 201), in which prison architecture is designed "to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility." Nonetheless, surveillance through SMS or social media is rather indirect, diffuse, distant, and above all random. Because someone can call or send an SMS without warning, obliging the recipient to attend to different roles at the same time, the mobile phone user must become her own overseer (to paraphrase Caluya 2010, 625). This mode of control through communication technologies, indirect but interactive, with its potential for simultaneity, bears out what Benedicte Grima (2007) observed of Pakhtun women in western Pakistan: Instead of aligning their inside feelings with outside requirements,

her interlocutors suppress and negate the existence of an "inside" so that conformity to norms becomes the only "authentic" persona. The dichotomy of an inner self and outer performance is collapsed.

It has long been the concern of anthropologists, particularly those who focus on South Asia (Dumont 2000; Marriott 1976), to question the Western idea of a bounded, autonomous self. While earlier projects on strong social interdependence have been heavily critiqued as simplifying local realities and denying non-Euro-American people the potential for introspection (LiPuma 1998; Ram 1994), they have prepared the ground for anthropology's increasing awareness that self-perception is inevitably a product of enmeshment with the social environment. Anthropological debates on identity, the self, and personhood since the late 1980s have come to universally acknowledge that all human beings are competent selves that cannot be reduced to an ethnic or a cultural identity, and that each person can be more porous and sociocentric, or more introspective and in/dividual, depending on the context (Smith 2012; Sökefeld 1999; Strathern 1988; Taylor 1989). Resonating with the general tendency in anthropology to understand life as in-the-becoming and highly entangled, Tim Ingold (2006) summarizes contemporary debates about the self as constantly emerging, embodied, and enmeshed in complex
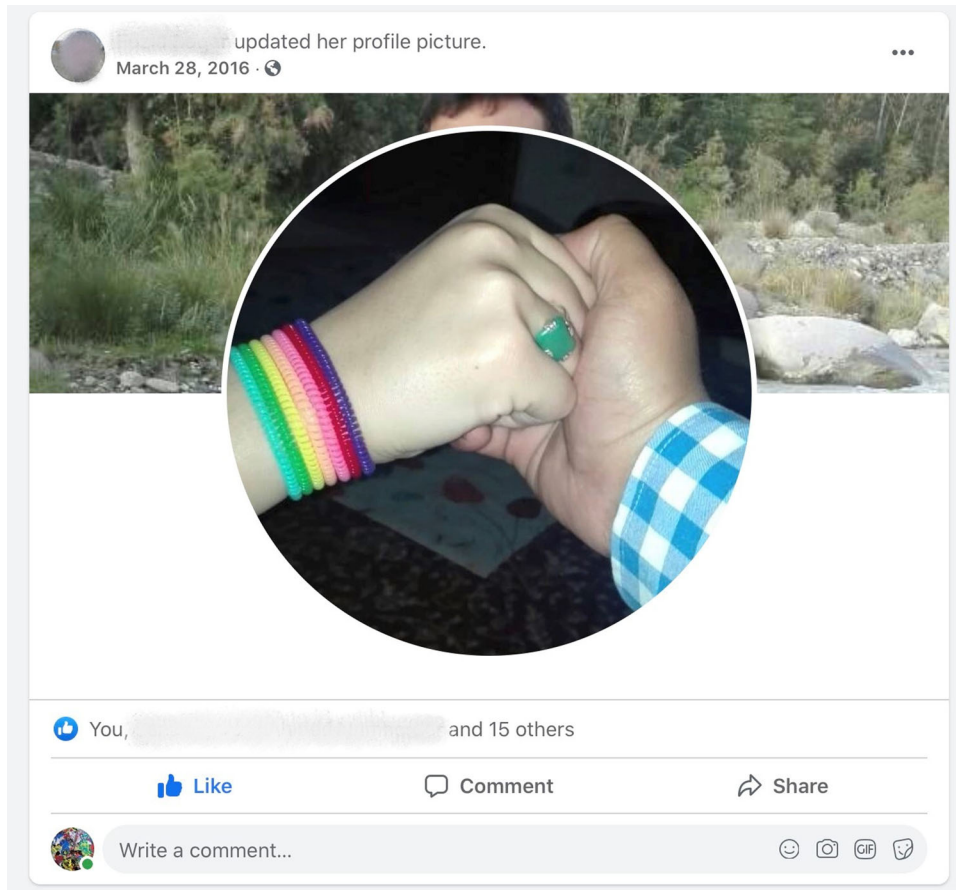
Figure 5. A screenshot of a young Gilgiti woman's Facebook post celebrating the first anniversary of her formal marriage (*nikāḥ*), 2016. (Anna-Maria Walter) [This figure appears in color in the online issue]

relations. Moreover, opposing the conception of private, closed-in subjects, the "*un*folding of these relations in the process of social life is also their *en*folding within the selves that are constituted within this process, in their specific structures of awareness and response—structures which are, at the same time, embodiments of personal identity" (Ingold 2006, 187; emphasis in original).

Ingold captures the crucial entanglement of social environment and the constitution of the person, but this awareness of flexibility and permeability does not necessarily lead to plurality. While Sakina's development clearly displays the self's emergent character, first as a modest daughter and a relatively independent student, then as a constantly connected wife and a confident lover, she always stays true to a consistent perception of herself as a sophisticated, respectable woman who does not have to fear the random exposure of the incongruent sides of her persona. To mitigate accusations that the mobile phone is corrupting them, young women like Sakina protect fundamental moral and religious ideals by using cellphones and the internet to deter the common assumption that

technology will give rise to indecent affairs. Muslim women in Gilgit provide proof of a virtuously romantic form of love, a conjugal intimacy that is sanctioned by nikāḥ, or at least by their intention to marry. They enact a respectable and moral self "*through* and not *in spite of*" (Menin 2018, 67; emphasis in original) mediated interactions with men.

Many married couples use social media to advertise—and normalize—the display of conjugal affection and to promote a domesticated form of adolescent hunger for adventure, one that validates elders' trust in them. In 2016 one of my Gilgiti interlocutors changed her display picture on WhatsApp to a photo of herself with her husband in what is, by Gilgiti standards, an intimate embrace: her husband hugging her from behind, both smiling modestly but contently into the camera. Or, when a young woman posts a picture of her holding hands with her husband for their anniversary (see Figure 5), she openly endorses her happiness, an act that would have been a social taboo a few years ago but now works in line with her self-perception as a pious woman who clearly sets herself apart from wild phone affairs or other immoral things one could do with

the new technology. Norms and values certainly underly constant change, and engagement with new influences triggers a conscious reflection and a curation of the self, ultimately forcing it into a more coherent narrative. In the invocation of trust, and in their elders' acceptance of their responsible autonomy, young Gilgiti women do become less plural, more congruent, and more transparent—a development that does not automatically mean less individual, as shown by their curation of Facebook profiles or by their individualized phone connections.

As mobile phone and social media use makes the self increasingly less divisible into separate spheres, Sakina's case, alongside the efforts of other young Gilgiti women, displays a clear tendency to become *in-dividual*. Ewing (1991, 135) argued against the cultural-relativist notion that a high value of interpersonal relationships in South Asia would negate "well-defined concepts of the individual." While the emerging self is porous and permeable, it does not negate introspection but rather encompasses a conscious positioning of oneself in the public discourse and the constant chance of uncomfortable synchronicities. By highlighting the constraints that continual connectivity poses to users' self-perception, examples from Gilgit-Baltistan show that in the individuation process conscious efforts to ensure self-limitation do not rule out flexibility and creativity.

Flexibility without diversity

Just like Sakina, all mobile phone and smartphone users, regardless of whether they make a simple phone call, send an SMS message, or engage in social media activity, are constantly confronted with balancing their absent and connected presence. Examples taken from young Gilgiti women's development of appropriate cellphone etiquette offer a counterpoint to the common trope of plurality and increasing individualization (as autonomy) that runs through the social sciences. It challenges statements about the "modern" age's open possibilities of independent and flexible self-creation, such as the following posited by Eva Illouz (2007, 80):

> At face value, the Internet enables a far more flexible, open-ended, and plural self, thus marking the epitome of the postmodern self in its capacity to make the self playful, self-inventing, and even deceitful in its capacity to manipulate information regarding the self.

While a person's self-perception is never static and happens in interaction with the social environment, one's construction of the self is more openly scrutinized and validated through the use of social media and continuous connectivity.

New communication technologies' empowering potential comes with a restrictive effect. Users' self-limited freedom is not only a conscious effort to become an exemplary person but also an outcome of the technology itself. Since phones allow tighter surveillance and bring together different contexts simultaneously, they prompt people to consciously reflect on how they are perceived, what they want to portray, who they effectively want to be, and how to present a congruent self, not only to themselves but also to different social environments at the same time. One of my interlocutors, a man in his mid-20s, described the troubling complexity of this process as follows: "Since mobiles entered [our life], it has become stressful [*beskūn*]. When a call is coming in, it means tension. When there was no mobile, there was also no tension." Visibility, social scrutiny, and potential overlaps of divergent roles encourage not just people in Gilgit but social media users worldwide to limit their choices and possibilities, as well as to dedicate themselves to versions of their selves that can be morally or socially justified. People are becoming ever more individualized, albeit not in the sense of a unique and an independent entity but, on the contrary, as less divisible individuals who have to fashion a more congruent narrative of themselves, a congruency that is inherently a product of the person's porosity and flexible adaption.

While I appreciate Gabriella Coleman's (2010) emphasis on provincializing media studies, breaking the narrative of a universalizing experience, and acknowledging local practices, this article makes a case against particularizing local contexts to the extent that we cannot draw wider conclusions about how technologies affect social processes, such as individuation. Certainly, societal control and self-surveillance affect people in different situations to different degrees, but we can all ask how autonomous we still are in a time of constant connectivity. Just recently the German newspaper *Zeit* published an article on the topic of "phone anxiety" (Westerkamp 2021), that is, the stress caused by a call's immediacy, which is perceived as an unsolicited invasion of one's private sphere. This phone phobia is widely ridiculed in Euro-American social media clips and discussed in magazine articles (e.g., Romm 2020), and it goes in line with Edward Casey's (2012, 180) argument that mobile phones diminish personal autonomy because they do not give users the time to "allow one's own *becoming*." Direct connections, whether in Gilgit or anywhere else, demand instant positionality.

Sakina's buzzing cellphone can be read as a sonic and haptic embodiment of the possibilities and hazards of mobile communication—for a virtuous young woman as well as for her self. It renders others affectively present and leaves the receiving end somewhat vulnerable. At the same time, Sakina is evidently happy and excited to have such a private and intimate connection to her new husband. Mobile phones' double-edged efficacy provides an ambiguous promise for young women in northern Pakistan, other Muslim contexts, and beyond. While it allows them to flexibly

appropriate their own sociocultural agenda, it confines diverse and plural selves to a more congruent persona.

Notes

1. Pseudonyms stand in for all personal names.

2. Urdu words are transliterated according to the ALA-LC system. Because the local vernacular, Shina, does not have a standardized form of writing, its romanization is here based on research assistants' transcriptions. Commonly anglicized terms are left in conventional English spelling. All translations and direct quotes from Urdu and Shina were made by the author except where otherwise indicated.

3. While nikāḥ legalizes a relationship, engagements are fragile commitments that can easily be dissolved, though not without social consequences.

4. The population of Gilgit city has increased from about 5,000 at the beginning of the 20th century (Kreutzmann 1991) to 58,000 in 1998 (PCO 2000). At the time of the last census, in 2017, there were about 120,000 people in Gilgit and its suburbs (the census has yet to be published; this figure was provided to me by a government source).

5. One house was located in an old Shia-majority area of Gilgit city, an Ismaili family lived in a mixed Sunni and Ismaili inner-city neighborhood, another Shia one on Gilgit's outskirts of Danyore, and some months I spent in a Shia side valley of Gilgit. Additionally, I frequently visited a family in an urban Sunni neighborhood. Most of these households spoke the local vernacular Shina, which I learned to understand roughly, but the majority of my fieldwork was carried out in Urdu, which serves as the lingua franca in this multilingual region.

6. Because the area is very prone to natural hazards, such as landslides that disrupt cable connections, operating fixed phone lines in the mountainous region is not profitable. Landline networks have therefore been established only in urban areas along the Karakoram Highway and the city of Skardu. Some valleys have been catered to by rare public wireless local loop satellite phones. Until 2006, communication infrastructure was controlled by the Special Communications (SCO) that is operated by the Pakistan Army, whose mobile phone branch, SCOM, is often still the only provider reaching the remote valleys. Today, six network operators are active in Gilgit-Baltistan: Telenor, Zong, SCOM, Ufone, Mobilink, and Warid, although the last three are present only in significantly smaller numbers.

7. Turning toward an appellation resembles how Judith Butler (1997) employs Althusser's concept of interpellation, that is, a person reacting to a call and accepting the assigned role by attending to it.

8. Patricia Jeffery (1979, 104) describes new brides' demure and passive behavior as a "caricature of the modesty which is appropriate for all [Muslim] women and girls [in Old Delhi]."

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