

The summer short-term research grant from AIPS allowed me to travel to Pakistan to conduct follow-up research for my dissertation during July-September 2018. In 2016-17, I had conducted a two-pronged ethnography of Shari'a experts straddling the domains of the Madrasa and the Islamic bank. After a year of dissertation writing, this summer I travelled to Lahore and Karachi to meet my ethnographic interlocutors at the Jami'a Ashrafiyya seminary and the headquarters of Meezan Bank Ltd. At the former site, I reconnected with jurist-interpretors of Islamic commercial law and gleaned textual guidance on the juridical structure articulated for the modern Islamic insurance corporation, also known as Takaful. This ethnographic and textual encounter will inform my analysis of charitable endowments and gift exchange in Islamic law, which I am scheduled to present at this year's meetings of the American Anthropological Association and the Middle East Studies Association. At the Islamic bank, I touched base with Shari'a Advisors and received updates on the state of debate over the State Bank of Pakistan's new regulations concerning Islamic banking current accounts. I was further able to interview Shari'a Compliance Officers from other Islamic banks and gained a comparative perspective on the state of Shari'a Governance practices in smaller private Islamic banks. These exchanges were particularly useful as I am currently co-authoring a chapter on Shari'a Governance practices in Pakistan with a Shari'a Advisor at Muslim Commercial Bank Ltd. The chapter will be published in an edited volume by Edinburgh University Press. Apart from these critical interactions, I was able to collect rare books by the towering Deobandi socialist cleric, UbaydAllah Sindhi, from the Urdu Bazaar of Lahore and Karachi. In sum, the AIPS grant helped me cement my dissertation research and fill in the lacunae from my previous ethnographic fieldwork.