

Project Title: Processions, Protest, and Identity: Contemporary Shi'ism in Karachi

Abstract:

I propose to use the AIPS Junior Fellowship to conduct archival research on the Shi'i communities of Karachi and the evolution of their ritual practices. This research is part of an ongoing dissertation project that examines how ritual acts of devotion are practiced in the public sphere, through a case study on the Shi'i communities of Karachi. The research seeks to know how members of this community physically and symbolically carve out a public space amid volatile sectarian conditions, and how this persecuted minority announces their right to public space through ritual practices. Under the fellowship, I will be collecting archival documents at the British Library in London, UK and the Robarts Library at the University of Toronto. I will also conduct extensive oral histories/interviews with well-known Pakistani clerics residing in London and Toronto. The AIPS fellowship will enable me to build a solid foundation will serve as a steppingstone for this research, which in turn will shed light on public acts of religious devotion.