

## AIPS Junior Fellowship Final Report

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

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Location: London, UK

With the support of the American Institute of Pakistan Studies, I was able to conduct archival research in London, England early this year when COVID regulations finally allowed for travel. I was unfortunately still unable to travel to Toronto, Canada for research purposes.

The AIPS junior fellowship allowed me resources to conduct concentrated archival research at the British Library, Oxford University, as well as speak to numerous people about Shi'ism in Karachi and in Pakistan more broadly. Visits to the British Library in particular were invaluable, as I gained access to newsletters and reports that are unavailable to the public in Pakistan. Newsletters and other historical reports mentioning Muharram in Karachi were especially helpful in establishing a timeline for pre-Partition and early-Partition Shi'i communities. These findings will be incorporated into the first chapter of my dissertation, in which I trace the social and ethnic histories of Shi'i communities in Karachi, and will ground my research in established historical sources. Further, my archival research in London and Oxford has allowed me to establish connections with various librarians and scholars who have helped me greatly in identifying and accessing sources relevant to my work.

The second aspect of my research dealt with conducting interviews in London. For the interviews, I decided to expand my original plan of speaking with just local clerics and religious leaders, to academics, activists, and members of the Pakistani Shia community who travel to Karachi for the Muharram season. These interviews/oral histories provided a great gateway for addressing transnational themes in my project.

The generous support of AIPS allowed me to conduct both archival and ethnographic research that will help me continue to work on my dissertation project on Shi'i public acts of religious devotion in Karachi, Pakistan.