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Final Report

My dissertation project focused on the impact of the construction of the Orange Line Metro Train, the first metro train of its kind in Pakistan, on local communities in Lahore, Pakistan. My principle field site was the neighborhood of Old Anarkali where a large number of homes and businesses were demolished to make way for the construction of train station and the a section of the underground route of the train. I had already conducted the bulk of my research during 2017-2018 when the construction on the train line was underway and last of the properties earmarked for demolition in Old Anarkali were razed. The AIPS fellowship funded a follow up research trip in 2022 which enabled me to a) fill in the gaps in data I had collected earlier b) reconnect with interlocutors in Old Anarkali and understand how their lives had changed in the aftermath of displacement and/or the operationalization of the train line in October 2021.

My follow up interviews with interlocutors revealed that families that had become mired in intra family litigation over the division of compensation fared quite poorly after being displaced from the neighborhood. Lawyers' fees and rents for temporary housing drained their savings leading to serious debts by the time legal cases were resolved. Families that had purchased homes immediately after receiving compensation coped better with the displacement even though most of them were unable to purchase housing in the Old Anarkali area.

People remaining in Old Anarkali in the area surrounding the train station and the massive concourse in front of the train station mourned the loss of community even as they praised the speed and efficiency of the OLMT. The train station buildings and the concourse have been unevenly integrated with the surroundings. For example there are few points of access from the western side, which necessitates a longer walk for residents to get to the station. Residents on the eastern end pushed city authorities to provide doorways in the wall surrounding the station buildings and the concourse. Although residents now have easy access to the station they also have to contend with greater pedestrian traffic right outside their homes, which they experience as a violation of their privacy.

The integration of the Mauj Darya shrine with its surrounding has changed radically with the construction of the OLMT. Prior to the OLMT, the shrine was accessed through a narrow alley from the main road. Although the main tomb was located above a few narrow steps, the outer courtyard was relatively easily accessible to those with restricted mobility. Now the shrine is accessed through a staircase leading up to a small courtyard from the concourse.

This research trip helped me gather data necessary to wrap up my dissertation and complete my doctoral degree. My dissertation takes the case of the Orange Line Metro Train to understand the ways in which infrastructural development

constitutes the city and its citizens. Significantly, for Pakistan Studies, this research raises two key points. First, ethnographic exploration of infrastructural construction unsettles linear narratives of development that dominates mainstream discourse in the country by foregrounding the relationship between development and destruction. Just as the benefits of completed infrastructural projects are distributed unevenly, the experiences of destruction caused through the development process is also mediated along axis of class, gender, and caste. Second, my research notes that the disruption caused by infrastructural development is a contested process that is enabled by and occurs at the juncture of colonial era legal and bureaucratic practices and postcolonial development priorities.

