

## *Urban Informality, Everyday Ethics, and Refugeehood: Re-Creating Community in Lahore*

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### **Abstract**

In the 1980s Afghan refugees were welcomed in Pakistan through a collective humanitarian concern. Thirty years later, despite the ongoing violence in Afghanistan, The Government of Pakistan is repatriating Afghans and the general public increasingly looks upon them with suspicion. The change in governmental and public attitude towards the refugee stranger reflects the changing nature of the war in Afghanistan. But how does the general discourse towards refugees affect the daily lives of Afghans in Pakistan? How do Pakistanis accept or not the Afghan stranger in their midst? What sort of new communities and networks are being forged crosscutting ethnicity and nationality? What values and ethics do the refugees rely upon in the changing context of their welcome in Pakistan to build community, develop networks of support, and forge informal relationships to advance their interests and needs? How much of their everyday lives are shaped by informal relationships and practices as compared to formal, governmental or NGO, support?

I propose to undertake 5 months of research in Pakistan, focusing on the settled communities of Afghans in the Badami Bagh neighborhood of Lahore. The research will engage the interplay between discourses towards refugees and precarious populations, the ethics of hospitality towards strangers expressed or withheld, and the forging of informal relationships that Afghans rely upon to secure their everyday lives. The research will lead to the publication of scholarly articles and my third single authored monograph.