

Project Title: Being Muslim, Being Global: Everyday Ethics, Urban Sociality, and Islamic Modernity in Islamabad

Abstract:

I propose to undertake five weeks of research in Islamabad during winter 2014-15, building upon previous research. In Islamabad I will undertake additional ethnographic research on the “streets”, with particular focus on market areas, informal settlements, and neoliberal sites (i.e. the Centaurus) in and around Islamabad. The research will contribute to the writing of a book and related academic articles. My research in Islamabad is part of a comparative project, reflecting on the shifting terrain of Muslim urbanity in three distinct cities: Dubai, Cairo, and Islamabad. Being Muslim, Being Global, traces the cultural strategies Muslims employ in negotiating global processes in their everyday lives, contextualized within diverse and rapidly changing urban environments. The research interweaves three arenas of analysis, each reflecting a particular tension of urbanity: formality vs. informality; control vs. disruptions; and front spaces vs. back spaces. By comparing tactics of everyday lives in different cities, each reflecting distinct historical disjunctures with modernity, globalization, and national formations, my research will deepen understanding of: the contested nature of public space in cities today; the significance of public space and cities in general in informing diverse Muslim ways of being in the world; and, everyday Muslimness by shifting focus away from issues of piety and identity.