

My dissertation project focuses on Lahore's land market, considering the relationship between land as a speculative asset and Lahore's growing informal housing sector, which approximately half of the city's population presently belongs to. Land is the most profitable investment in Lahore, and around it has formed a transnational network of local and diasporic investors aiming to make quick trades of plots of land throughout the city. Bridging economic anthropology and urban anthropology, my project seeks to better understand how this market shapes the city of Lahore, but also the inverse, furthering our understanding of both postcolonial cities and markets.

With the assistance of AIPS's Summer Research Grant, I conducted two months of preliminary fieldwork for my dissertation project this summer. I primarily worked through two channels during this time: a property portal and a resident of a local *mohalla*. Moving between these channels allowed me to develop a sense of the different scales of Lahore's land market, a process I describe in greater detail below.

As a hub of Lahore's land market, the property portal was a helpful venue for learning about the mundane details of land transactions. Almost daily, I was able to speak with analysts there about the laws, norms, and practices characteristic of the market. Additionally, in observing and speaking to them about their own work, I glimpsed some of the processes through which expertise about the market is created. Lastly, because these analysts were so well-connected in Lahore's land market, they were able to introduce me to other important informants, such as agents, developers, lawyers, and investors. Each of these interactions was helpful for better orienting me toward the role of speculation in some of Lahore's larger urban developments.

As I learned, however, land speculation was not limited to these sites. Working with a resident of a local *mohalla*, I was able to arrange interviews with agents and developers in working class neighborhoods as well as *patwaris*, stamp *feroshes*, and *katchi abadi* residents. Through these conversations, I learned that speculative activity existed more broadly, but also often conflicted with other relationships to land.

Beyond these two channels, I also spoke with government officials working in land development, employees of local NGOs, and activists and academics working on urban issues. My institutional affiliation with LUMS was particularly helpful, as through it I was able to receive feedback from other anthropologists on my project as well as work with several research assistants (including the *mohalla* resident mentioned above). Finally, on this trip I was also able to make initial contact with local archives, which I plan to follow up on next summer. In addition to daily participant observation and extensive fieldnotes, in total I was able to conduct 25 formal interviews on this preliminary fieldwork trip.