

I am a first year PhD student in History and Anthropology at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and am applying for the AIPS Summer Research Grant of \$3,000 to contribute towards preliminary research during summer 2017 for my dissertation project on transnational migrations to the Gulf in Sahiwal, Pakistan. My project seeks to explore the connections between the everyday life of this provincial city and gendered, transnational migrations. I seek to theorize Sahiwal as a *Gulfee* city: an urban space where everyday life is shaped by Gulf migrations. To do so, this study aims to collect stories and materials about everyday life to better understand not only material transformations in the city of Sahiwal generated by *Gulfee* investments, but also how everyday life and gendered social relations have changed with several decades of men's migrations to and return from the Gulf. My project seeks to document the everyday experiences of such changes and situate them in the region's historical and geographic context to answer the following questions:

1. What, if any, connections exist between the spatial and material transformation of Sahiwal and Gulf migrations? Situating Gulf migrations and Sahiwal within longer political economic histories of state projects and migrations in the region is essential to explaining why so many men from this city migrated to the Gulf and how they and their families have reshaped the city. I therefore ask: how have colonial and postcolonial histories shaped Gulf migrations from and urban changes in Sahiwal?
2. What have women's experiences been of the absence of men? Several questions emerge from entwinement of issues of exile and gender: How have notions of masculinity and status negotiated the changes in the everyday life and gendered social relations in Sahiwal? Does the absence of men result in the empowerment of women or in more familial control? How do women act and respond to this absence and negotiate societal and familial structures? What representations of Gulf families circulate in popular culture and imagination? Do migrant men perform their masculinities by marking their raised economic or social status through the control of women? Upon return, do these men also perform their masculinity in strident religious idioms in an increasingly Islamized Pakistan?
3. To deprovincialize Sahiwal, I intend to investigate Sahiwal's imaginal connections with other places. Exploring the various social and spatial imaginations of the world vying with one another in Sahiwal will help me understand the drives that fuel migrations from, and transformations in, Sahiwal.

Through my preliminary research I aim to assess the archival and ethnographic possibilities in Sahiwal, and Pakistan more broadly. Primarily, I intend to get an initial handle on the aforementioned core research questions (and their subsidiaries) in my project.

I am myself from Sahiwal. I speak both of the major languages, Urdu and Punjabi, spoken in Sahiwal. As a teenager I moved to Lahore and then, a few years later, I came to the United States where I experienced first-hand the life of a migrant skilled laborer. While Sahiwal is a space I remember from my childhood, it is the ideal site for this project because it is structurally similar to, and representative of, so many small or secondary South Asian cities that provided the laboring bodies for the post-1970s construction boom in the Gulf, and were themselves transformed, as a result, politically, culturally, economically, and spatially. Such transnational connections of these "out of the way" places demand nuanced theorization of provinciality in an interconnected world.

The summer of 2017 offers an opportunity for me to discover the extent to which my research questions hold traction at research institutions, archives and with residents of Sahiwal. I will conduct 80 days of preliminary dissertation research, from June 1 to August 20, 2017. I will base myself in Sahiwal where I maintain a social network that will enable me to build up a sufficient pool of research subjects. I conducted some preliminary dissertation research in 2015, and interviewed some returned *Gulfees* who were warm to the idea of introducing me to other such returned migrants. I would like to pursue these leads this summer. I also made connections

that I want to utilize to explore the Sahiwal municipal offices for what, if any, pertinent documents and maps I can access. This summer would also be a good time to explore the villages around the city itself that I have been told, have been high out-migration areas. I will also start building connections with land developers and realtors in Sahiwal, as well as the academic community in Sahiwal. I will also try to access session court records in Sahiwal to find out the kinds of conflicts and issues migrant households got involved in as they experienced financial and familial changes. I intend to conduct trips of 3-4 days to relevant archives in Lahore: newspaper research in Punjab Secretariat Archive in Lahore to piece together histories of migrations to and from Sahiwal; and Overseas labor migration records in Lahore and possibly Islamabad.