

Abstract: *Making the Modern Slum and Urbanizing Poverty in Karachi, 1870-1918*

My research overcomes the social formation of the urban poor as transitory figures between tradition and modernity, village and city, or agriculture and industry by bringing Karachi's slum dwellers into historical focus. The two earliest shantytowns of the Bombay Presidency, Lyari in Karachi and Dharavi in Bombay, were connected when merchants, ships, industry, and municipal bureaucrats traveled between them. However, we have a lesser understanding of how peasant migrants connected town and country and built the slummed urban space before diverging from each other through the politics of regionalism, nationalism, and Partition. As a preliminary hypothesis, I suggest that while the process of urbanization produced slums in all major cities of the nineteenth century, including metropolitan London, it also produced ideologies of colonial and regional distinction such that Karachi was separated from Bombay. This obscured the slums' origins in industrial capitalist transformations and subsumed the problems of the urban poor.