

Muslims in India: Sciences Po, Princeton and Columbia launch new research with the support of the Henry Luce Foundation

The Universities of Sciences Po, Princeton and Columbia are launching a major three-year research project on Muslim communities in India thanks to the generous support of the Henry Luce Foundation.

This project was jointly developed by Christophe Jaffrelot, Professor at Sciences Po and CERI-CNRS Senior Research Fellow and a leading scholar of India, along with Bernard Haykel, Professor of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University and a scholar of Islam and the Middle East. The resulting research will offer new analysis and insights into the challenges faced by Muslim communities in India today. Bringing together a community of over 30 scholars and researchers in India, the United States, France and the UK, the project will provide a detailed examination of the multiple factors impacting Indian Muslim communities and shaping their future.

Manan Ahmed, Associate Professor in the Department of History at Columbia University, and a specialist in the history of South Asia, will lead the development of visualization and spatial mapping highlighting the results of the research.

The US Sciences Po Foundation and the Alliance Program are also key partners of this project.

Christophe Jaffrelot said: “India has inherited a rich civilization to which the Muslim community has contributed in many different ways. Indian Muslims are facing the same challenges as many other minorities in the world. In order to analyze their condition in cultural, educational, sociological, economic and political terms, our team will systematically promote a mixed research method combining ethnographic fieldwork and survey-based data collection, at all levels – local, regional and national – and in urban as well as rural contexts. This collective endeavor will present the kind of comprehensive picture that one needs in order to make sense of the present situation of the 200 million Muslims of India – the largest minority in the world.”

Bernard Haykel said: “Further study of the Muslim communities of India—a large and diverse minority that has faced considerable challenges since independence—is much needed. Our project aims to generate factual data about the social, economic and political conditions of these communities as well as to produce original scholarly analyses. Princeton University has a long and distinguished history in Islamic studies, has one of the finest research libraries in the world and excellent faculty and students who will collaborate on this project. Our study of the Muslim communities in India will also be informed by a transregional and comparative approach, one that will take into account comparable dynamics in wider South Asia, the Middle East and Central Asia.”

Manan Ahmed said: “Muslims in India are facing significant challenges. It is our goal to illustrate, illuminate and widely disseminate the important research undertaken under this timely project. We aim to do this by marshalling the democratic power of social media. At Columbia, our partnerships with Columbia Libraries and with the Center for Study of Muslim Societies will

allow us to bring critical collaboration on the research produced under this important and timely project.”

The project’s findings will be disseminated through a final report and a collective book. In addition, the project will create a dedicated website which will feature interactive maps and graphs, video interviews with members from various communities in India, as well as podcasts with experts and academics.

For information about the project, please contact: Jasmine Zerini
(jasmine.zerini@sciencespo.fr)