

Final Report on the American Institute of Pakistan Studies Grant  
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Site of Research: London, UK  
Purpose: Archival Research

My dissertation project investigates how Sindhi Hindus positioned themselves within the emerging discourse of the Indian nation in the pre-independence era, the extent to which their conception of themselves as part of this entity was shaped by the events of 1947. I seek to analyze the reasons for their migration from Sindh, Pakistan, and the ways in which they have sought accommodation in post-colonial India, even as they continue to identify culturally with Sindh, a constituent province of Pakistan.

Given my research questions it was important for me to spend time in the archives in UK in order to understand the nature of social and political changes taking place in Sindhi society during the colonial period, which led to the post-partition Hindu exodus from Sindh. Funding from the American Institute of Pakistan Studies enabled me to conduct critical research at the India Office Collection at the British Library and at the National Archives in Kew.

Since Sindh was an administrative unit of British India from 1843 to 1947, the India Office Collection at the British Library is home to an incredibly rich collection of related archival material. Some of the colonial documents that I was able to investigate included Fortnightly Reports from the Government of Sind to the Government of India, Private Office Papers (L/PO/), and the Governor of Sindh's Correspondence with the Viceroy. These papers helped me understand the nature of political mobilization in the province. Reading the discourses of the formal arena alongside those of the informal arena I examined how political rhetoric both informed and was informed by incipient communal rivalries. Thus, I read vernacular tracts and political pamphlets in Sindhi and Urdu. I also studied the private papers of British officials stationed in Sindh. These included: Linlithgow Papers, Dow Papers, Mudie Papers, and the Private Diaries of ICS Officer Gordon Meredith Ray. The papers were an important resource shedding light on the British perceptions of the complex nature of the social and political relations between the Sindhis, Hindu and Muslim.

The National Archives at Kew is an important repository which houses documents useful for an understanding the fluid nature of events taking place in the immediate aftermath of the partition of the subcontinent. Here, I scrutinized the Dominion Office Papers, the Foreign Office Papers, Weekly Reports from the UK High Commissioner's Office in New Delhi and Karachi, and the Cabinet Office Papers. Reading these files enhanced my understanding of: a) those turbulent times and demonstrated that social relations between Sindhis were already tenuous at partition; increasingly insidious communal rhetoric, equivocation by political leaders, and the steady influx of Muslim refugees from India were undoubtedly important contributing factors, but these only exacerbated ruptures that were already present in the colonial Sindhi society; b) the efforts of the Sindh Governments to keep their Sindhi Hindu minority while trying the rehabilitate the thousands of incoming refugees; and c) the challenges faced by the Indian Government as it sought to rehabilitate Sindhi refugees.

The materials I gathered at these archives are particularly valuable and will inform a significant portion of my dissertation. I am grateful to the American Institute of Pakistan Studies for funding this trip to the British archives, affording me the opportunity to conduct research vital to my project.