

AIPS Final Report

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With the generous support of American Institute for Pakistan Studies I have completed eight months of archival and ethnographic research in **London, Zanzibar and Manama**. During the course of the research I have collected sufficient interviews and archival data to complete four out of seven chapters I intend to write for my dissertation titled ‘ **Soldiers now, Citizens later: Baloch military-labor in the Indian Ocean**’. Additionally, I have managed to locate the correspondence between Omani and Pakistani government via the British government on the sale of Gwadar. I intend on utilizing this material to write a stand-alone paper to be delivered at the Annual South Asia Conference at Wisconsin.

London: Even though the original plan was for me to conduct research in India, but due to my Passport situation the India trip was not left as a real possibility. Consequently, in place of the capital of the colony, I decided to work at the capital of the metropole. During my time in London I explored both the British National Library and British National Archives. Being once the capital of the colonial world, to where much of the bureaucracy records from various legs of the empire were transferred; London provided me an excellent opportunity to capture the broad geography of the world of Baloch military-labor networks; operating within the empire and at times beyond it. The material from London was particularly helpful in understanding how such places, underwent the differentiated process of colonial transformation through the changes in the security apparatus. ‘Colonialism’ far from being a unified, uniform and preformed regime; shaped the policing apparatus in these different sites through the experience of dismantling an earlier geography of military market. I ask why the system in certain places changed wholesale was and why was it only adapted according to news logics of colonialism? To answer this question I studying extensively the records on police, levy forces, outlaws and other militaries at two sites in particular: Kathiawar (India) and Manama (Bahrain). While studying Kathiawar I explored in detail the story of Kadu Makrani, a former guard for Nawabs in the region turned into an outlaw with British emerging as the biggest seller of protection services. From the files on Manama, I focused on the schizophrenic policies of the British agent responsible for providing the Khalifa a new levy force. Between a span of half a decade a combination of soldiers from different ethnic backgrounds were tried ultimately settling on British Makrani Baloch recruited through personal connections.

Zanzibar: To this I added the records I collected from Zanzibar about a history that looked not all that different from what was transpiring in Kathiawar and Manama. I in particular followed the case of a mid-19th century Imam assigned to lead prayers inside the fort. When one of the guards at the fort attempted to murder the Omani Qadhi, it was rumored that he acted on advice of the Imam. In the fascinating story that unfolds, it turned out that the guard was indebted to the Imam known to be offering advances to guards on the promise of their future salary. The money he advanced came from an elaborate network of actors at forts in other parts of the Indian Ocean. By following his network through the investigative records, and testimonies of its operations, I look understand the socio-economic workings of the military-labor networks.

Additionally, I conducted short ethnographic interviews in Dar es Salam, a two hour boat ride from Zanzibar, where still exists a thriving Baloch community; at times even organized under the organizational structure of Baloch Club of Tanzania. By asking questions of genealogy I traced their lived geography and of those who lived before them. I asked particularly about what they saw as the role of

Baloch men in structuring the state in Zanzibar and how this role was embedded in their relationships with Indian traders and Omani state officials.

Manama: In Manama I conducted ethnographic research by spending considerable amount of time with employees of the Bahraini police and national guards, sometime after they got off from work and at other moments while they were still at work. I was particularly interested in the minute details of everyday police works and the social relationship built around them. Most of the time it required as chatting during their guard duties outside places like the American Ambassador's house, the national museum, or the airport. I followed how in conversations, the changing political conditions in Bahrain were accessed not just in abstract, but as matters that affected their everyday life: the work hours, their safety and even salaries.

Along with this participant-observation, I conducted detailed life-history interviews with individuals tracing their individual stories of migration. What I discovered was that contrary to what one might expect, given the sensitive nature of their work, not many had stories of following a systematic path to Bahrain. Many joined while still on a visit visa. Others came on the proposal of relatives and friends already in the police. Through these multiple stories, each unique in its own way, I hope to rethink our imagination of how states work.

Lastly, while in Bahrain I also spent time at the Baloch Club of Manama where every evening gathered an assorted group of ethnic Baloch, most of whom had ties to the Bahraini police. In conversations about the ethnic and sectarian divides spanning across Pakistan and Bahrain, I asked how often such identities operating across the seas, put the political conditions from different place in contradiction to each other and how they nested their politics in this complex scenario.

Papers to be presented: On the basis of research conducted while on the AIPS grant, I hope to present my work at various workshops including:

- American Anthropological Association annual Conference
- Many Histories of the Present: Past and Possibilities in the Muslim World' at Duke University
- Gulf Military Research Workshop at Cambridge University

Thank you: Lastly I wanted to again express my gratitude to The American Institute for Pakistan Studies for providing me this opportunity of conducting research not just at one place, but across the Indian Ocean.