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Abstract

Title of Project: **Political Economy of the Persian Gulf-Gujarat Zone, c. 1650-1720**

This study takes, as its focus, three interwoven and overlapping themes: state-mercantilism, diaspora, and piracy in the Persian Gulf-Gujarat zone, c. 1650-1720. Whereas many European trading ventures into the Indian Ocean World were characterized by direct state initiative and intervention, promotion of private trade through specific merchants and particular “circulation communities,” as well as collaborations with so-called “pirate” groups against competitors, seem to have been central features of the mercantilistic practices of the Ottomans, Mughals, and Safavids during this period. This is the first study that attempts to synthesize the disparate histories and historiographies of the Gulf polities, communities, companies, and empires in the early modern period, bringing together archives, chronicles, and travel accounts in a host of relevant languages. I seek to historicize the dynamism of the differing mercantile practices in a “connected history” of the zone by challenging the existing paradigms of an “Islamic economy,” traditionalism, fiscalism, and provisionism used to describe the trade policies of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals. This dissertation’s contributions to scholarly literature derive from its exploration of previously unstudied regions - especially the Sindh and Makran, its “zonal” conceptualization, periodization, critique of binary externalist/internalist approaches, insights gained from debates on the relationship between state and society, and a more flexible local approach to understanding the formation of mercantile practices.