

Empires of the Beat: Policing the Empire, Governing the Colony, Negotiating the Post-colony

Abstract

By focusing on the development of policing in Sindh and Punjab, provinces of colonial India and later post-colonial Pakistan, in the 1840s and the movement of policing practices and personnel across the British Empire to Hong Kong and Kenya in the mid 19th century and early 20th century, this dissertation contends that policing was not simply coercion and domination from above, it was also governance from below. I suggest that the history of modern policing in the colony is an account of managing the disposability of colonial subjects while actively constructing the frontiers of human ontologies of race, gender, and class that were vital to the colonial project at the level of the beat, the territory a police officer patrolled. This project studies citizenship, race, class, and gender across colonies of the British Empire through the analytic of policing connecting several areas of African, East Asian, and Pakistan studies with the field of South Asian history. Furthermore, this dissertation addresses policing as a process of social control that can shed light on and clarify the passage into and out of colonial rule as well as its implications for the state's own conception of its relation to society through its engagement with the fields of history, comparative literature, and the social sciences. Thus, my dissertation aims to provide a new perspective on histories of, and debates around, citizenship, race, class, and gender in Pakistan through a multidisciplinary and multi-locational study of the creation and legal codification of colonial policing forces, the debates around policing practices, the daily reports and memoirs of various policemen, court cases, the rise of labor and crime statistics as well as the popular image of the policeman as seen in newspapers and novels roughly between 1840 and 1970.