

Final Narrative Report

With the AIPS junior fellowship, I was able to spend two months in London collecting research materials at the British National Archives in Kew Gardens and the Asia Pacific Collection at the British Library in Bloomsbury for my dissertation, and now book project, “Selective Leviathans: Explaining State Strategies of Counterinsurgency and Consolidation.” The project seeks to explain how the social terrain of ethno-nationalist and civil conflicts—specifically the geography and identity of the insurgent group—shapes state strategies to manage, combat, and defeat such violent challenges, and empirically it focuses on conflicts in post-independence Pakistan and India. With this archival research, I was able to collect three distinct sets of materials and data: 1) third-party sources evaluating Pakistan’s dealings with ethno-nationalists in Balochistan and the Pashtun tribal regions; 2) Indian and Pakistani involvement in supporting each others’ ethno-nationalist movements and how that shaped threat perceptions and counterinsurgency strategies; and 3) Historic state responses and strategies to ethno-nationalist mobilization and revolt during British colonial rule from 1857-1947.

First, I collected data on Pakistan’s efforts to counter ethno-nationalist mobilization on the tribal areas and border with Afghanistan and in Balochistan in from the 1950s-1970s. This covered the initial Pashtunistan claims and uprisings backed by Afghanistan from the 1940s-1960s. On a hunch, I suspected that because the British government maintained close military and diplomatic ties with the Pakistani state after its independence in 1947 (even leaving British officers in positions of high command in the Pakistan Army due to a shortfall in senior officers), they retained access to a steady stream of information. My hunch was correct as there are continuous cables and strategic assessments of Pakistan’s internal conflicts dispatched by officers, diplomats, and visiting dignitaries or delegations that are now held in the various Dominions Office (DO), Foreign Office (FO), or Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) records. What is particularly useful about these sources is that they are a third-party’s assessment of threat perceptions, motives, strategy, and operational success that can help corroborate or evaluate other historical or personal accounts but have not yet been utilized by most scholars of Pakistan’s civil conflicts.

Second, I was able to collect detailed information on the long history of tit-for-tat “defensive offense” between India and Pakistan where each government and military would exploit their rival’s weakness and support ethno-nationalist insurgent groups. As a third-party source, the British records in the DO, FCO, Colonial Office (CO), and Prime Ministers’ Papers (PREM) provide corroboration of some of these accusations as well as frequent assessments the extent of this support and exploitation in various cases. I found the most useful information on Indian and Afghan support of Baloch and Pashtun movements and insurgents in Pakistan and Pakistani support of Hyderabad Muslim/Razakars, Nagas, and Mizos in India. This material is useful because it shows both the extent and limits of this explanatory variable (rival external support) and how it interacted with the group’s identity to shape threat perceptions. It also reveals that cross-border aggression often attributed to Pakistan was in fact practiced by both countries very early on in their escalating rivalry.

Finally I collected detailed information on British counterinsurgency efforts from 1857-1947 with the hope that these historic cases with a very different colonial incumbent in a much

earlier period might also provide evidence for my theory. My hope is to use this material for an additional chapter in the book on historic cases. Towards this goal, I first collected materials on various types of military strategies to combat rebels and challengers with records from the War Office (WO), Air Ministry (AIR), Cabinet Office Records (CAB), as well as the Home Office (HO), DO, and FO. I also turned to the India Office (IO) records and personal papers of various Governor-Generals at the Asia Pacific Collection at the British Library to collect details on the value of different territories (principally based on statistical data on income tax and revenue from different provinces) as well as the perceptions of the threat posed by different groups to different areas.

The archival portion of my research, supported by AIPS, will be make a major contribution to my book because it will harness new materials that have not yet been exploited by other scholars of Pakistan's history of civil conflict and strategies to manage rebellion. I believe this project has the potential to be of significant value to policymakers and South Asia scholars by offering greater knowledge of Pakistan's state decision-making in response to challenges of sub-national mobilization and consolidation. Situating Pakistan's and other states' choices within the context of post-colonial state-building where a state's grip is incomplete and constraints and external threats abound renders state behavior more legible, particularly in environments of civil conflict.