

06



**CROSSROADS  
ASIA**

Conflict · Migration · Development

# The Anxiety of Development: Megaprojects and the Politics of Place in Gwadar, Pakistan

Hafeez Jamali

CROSSROADS ASIA Working Paper Series

ISSN 2192-6034

Bonn, January 2013

## Crossroads Asia Working Papers

Competence Network Crossroads Asia: Conflict – Migration – Development

Editors: Ingeborg Baldauf, Stephan Conermann, Anna-Katharina Hornidge, Hermann Kreutzmann, Shahnaz Nadjmabadi, Dietrich Reetz, Conrad Schetter and Martin Sökefeld.

**How to cite this paper:** Jamali, Hafeez A. (2013): The Anxiety of Development: Megaprojects and the Politics of Place in Gwadar, Pakistan. In: Crossroads Asia Working Paper Series, No. 6.

Partners of the Network:



## Imprint

Competence Network *Crossroads Asia: Conflict – Migration – Development*

Project Office

Center for Development Research/ZEFa

Department of Political and Cultural Change

University of Bonn

Walter-Flex Str. 3

D-53113 Bonn

Tel: + 49-228-731722

Fax: + 49-228-731972

Email: [crossroads@uni-bonn.de](mailto:crossroads@uni-bonn.de)

Homepage: [www.crossroads-asia.de](http://www.crossroads-asia.de)

# **The Anxiety of Development: Mega-Projects and the Politics of Place in Gwadar, Pakistan**

Hafeez Ahmed Jamali<sup>1</sup>

## **Table of Contents**

Abstract.....	3
1. Introduction .....	4
2. Anxiety of Development .....	7
3. Life in the Imagined Land of ‘Pipelineistan’ .....	9
4. Territory and (In)security: The Struggle over Identity and Sovereignty .....	14
5. Fishermen’s Luck: Rude Awakenings on the Shores of Desire .....	16
6. Waiting and Watching in the City to be.....	20
7. Conclusion.....	23
References .....	24
Information on the competence network Crossroads Asia.....	29

---

<sup>1</sup>Hafeez Jamali is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Texas at Austin and in 2012, a Visiting Research Fellow of the Crossroads Asia Competence Network at ZMO Berlin. His research focuses on the anthropology of globalization and development, the history of Indian Ocean Trade, and the politics of identity and place in Balochistan (Pakistan). His doctoral research examines how Pakistani government’s investment in mega development projects such as transnational gas pipelines and commercial ports has affected the lives and transformed the political attitudes of local people from the Baloch ethnic group. Copyright of all images displayed in this paper belong to the author unless otherwise specified.

## **Abstract**

This working paper explores the social geography of anticipation, desire, exclusion, and control that has emerged as a result of Baloch fishermen's entanglement with the Pakistani government's plans to develop a large commercial seaport in the small coastal town of Gwadar. Keeping in mind the centrality of everyday experiences in generating social forms, this paper describes how development, transnationalism, and ethnic identity are (re)configured on the ground. It is based on ethnographic encounters that foreground the lived experiences and imaginations of fishermen from *Med* kinship group who occupy a subaltern position within the local status hierarchy. On the one hand, the promise of becoming modern citizens of the future mega city incites new desires and longings among those fishermen who facilitate their incorporation into emergent regimes of labour and entrepreneurship. On the other hand, Pakistani security forces have tightened their control over the local population by establishing a *cordon sanitaire* around Gwadar Port and the town. These mechanisms of control have disrupted local fishermen's experiences of place and intimate sociality and introduced elements of exclusion, fear, and paranoia. By interrupting the fishermen's expectations of their rightful place in the city, it compels them to think of alternate ways to confront the state's development agenda, including peaceful protest and armed struggle.

## 1. Introduction

It was the summer of 2010 and the heat in Gwadar combined with the humidity felt oppressive. Haji Abdul Nabi, a local notable, had invited me for dinner at his newly built hotel at the edge of the small town. En route to Haji's hotel, I had to zigzag my way through a maze of potholes on the main Airport Road while trying to avoid the occasional clouds of dust kicked up by trucks and cargo vehicles passing in the opposite direction. The brightly lit and clean interior of the hotel sharply contrasted with the potholed road that I had just traversed. It was elegantly furnished with modern chic dining tables, chairs, and settees and decorated with chandeliers and lamps in the manner of upscale restaurants in Karachi. A group of workmen and waiters were busy dusting and polishing the new furniture in the reception area when I stepped in. One of them promptly chaperoned me to the garden in the back. A table and some chairs had been set up in a corner of the lawn whose hedges and plants had been recently pruned. It turned out that there were no guests staying in the hotel except for some acquaintances of Haji who had come from Karachi to see him. I would find out later that the hotel had not seen a lot of business activity for the last several months. Waiting in the garden for Haji, I wondered who this hotel was being furnished and decorated for. My host sounded upbeat about the future prospects of Gwadar. He showed me the improvements he had made to his hotel which was his investment, pride, and dream. Yet he appeared very anxious and kept asking me, time and again, what I thought would happen to Gwadar. I replied that I was there to find out the same.

Haji was one of the many people who would pose me this question regarding the future of Gwadar, a small coastal town in Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan Province. Gwadar's fortunes had risen quickly in the wake of the construction of *Gwadar Deep Water Port Project* (2002-2007) and the Pakistani government's declared intentions of turning it into another Dubai. These fortunes declined as precipitously when the speculative real estate bubble in Gwadar burst in 2005-2006 and armed resistance by Baloch nationalist insurgents made the region an inhospitable place for domestic and foreign investors in the following years.

This working paper exemplarily outlines the felt social landscape or geography of anticipation, desire, anxiety, and conflict in Gwadar in order to gain an understanding of how large-scale development projects such as commercial ports, highways, or dams affect the local population in particular places. It seeks to do this by way of an extended meditation and theoretical reflections on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Gwadar Town in summer 2008 and between January 2009 and August 2010. Central questions guiding research for this paper were: How does a distant place like Gwadar come to occupy a central place in the imagination of political leaders, policymakers, and urban publics in Pakistan and become the object of envy elsewhere in South Asia? What kind of hopes does it incite among the local inhabitants, especially the local fishermen and which fears and anxieties does it generate? What happens to this place if the ships of desire fail to anchor on its shores or set sail from there? How do ordinary people, whose cargo of dreams (and nightmares) are carried by Gwadar, live in and outside this city while dealing with and inhabiting this in-between zone?

Within the framework of the Crossroads Asia Competence Network, this paper complements the existing empirical research on conflict (Crossroads Asia Working Group Conflict 2012), contributes to the conceptual discussions on development, and highlights the linkages between the two research foci. Following contemporary anthropological critiques of development and modernity (Escobar 1995; Ferguson 1994, 1999; Li 1999, 2007; Scott 1999) this paper analyses how development projects influence existing struggles and generate new tensions between various social actors and institutions over issues of sovereignty, place, and identity. These issues have also taken center stage in contemporary national and international debates over the desirability of large-scale development projects such as dams, highways, and seaports due to pressure from political parties, social movements and environmental activists. Some recent examples of these struggles are the movements against the *Belo Monte Dam* in Brazil (Deutsche Welle 2012), the *Keystone Oil Pipeline System* in North America (Brune 2012), and the *Villa Tunari - San Ignacio de Moxos Highway* in Bolivia (Elizondo 2011).

Gwadar caught the attention of Pakistani and Chinese policymakers due to its pivotal location near the entrance to the Gulf through which one third of the world's oil supplies pass and for its potential as a terminal for North-South transportation of oil and gas from the landlocked Central Asian countries and western parts of China.<sup>2</sup> Since the early 1990s, Pakistan has considered Gwadar a cornerstone of its strategy to increase its economic and military clout in the Middle East and Southwest Asia. US\$ 248 Million were spent in building the first phase of *Gwadar Deep Water Port Project* with technical and financial assistance from China (Government of Pakistan 2005).<sup>3</sup> The first phase of Gwadar Port was completed in 2007 and its operation and maintenance were handed over to the Port Authority of Singapore (PSA) through an open international bidding process.

#### Images of Gwadar Port and Shipping Activities (Pakistan)



© 2009-12 Hafeez Jamali

---

<sup>2</sup> While the relative significance of the Central Asian oil resources and the various doomsday scenarios portrayed by security and energy sector analysts are debatable, the power of these visions is very concrete and real.

<sup>3</sup> Phase II of Gwadar Port is to be constructed at estimated costs of US\$ 524 Million. Detailed figures were retrieved from Board of Investment, Government of Pakistan, *Gwadar*. Accessed online [http://www.pakboi.gov.pk/News\\_Event/Gwadar.htm](http://www.pakboi.gov.pk/News_Event/Gwadar.htm) on November 12, 2007.

Pakistani policymakers plan to spend another US\$524 Million on Phase II of the port; this will include the construction of nine additional shipping berths (Hassan 2005: 14). In addition, the Asian Development Bank has committed US\$ 500 Million for highways linking Gwadar to Afghanistan and Central Asia (Hassan 2005: 16). The total cost estimates for Gwadar Port, including ancillary facilities, vary between US\$ 1.16 Billion (Niazi 2005) to US\$ 1.60 Billion (Gresh 2012). With the setting up of a Free Trade Zone, an Export Processing Zone, and an Industrial Estate, Pakistani authorities expect Gwadar to serve as a terminal to transport oil and gas from Central Asia, and a transnational hub port for maritime commerce passing through the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf (Arthur D. Little 2006: 5).

However, local Baloch political leadership in general, and the fishermen of Gwadar in particular, have been largely excluded from key decisions over the development and future use of Gwadar Port. As a result, the Port has become an important site of contestation between Baloch fishermen and political activists, and the Pakistani government. Baloch people are a minority ethnic group whose territory is divided between the sovereign states of Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan. The Baloch in Pakistan have maintained historical grievances against the state since the country's inception in 1947, giving rise to four armed insurgencies in the last 60 years (Harrison 1981; Salim 1993; Grare 2006). Within this context, the displacement of local agriculturalists and fishermen from their lands and fishing waters and the threat of the influx of labour migrants from the dominant Punjabi and Mohajir ethnic groups into Gwadar have increasingly fed local people's disillusionment with the Gwadar Port Project. These processes have also contributed to a growing separatist insurgency which has claimed hundreds of lives. While sharing the general distrust of the motives of the Pakistani state, Baloch fishermen of Gwadar from the *Med* occupational group – due to their subordinate position within the Baloch social hierarchy – have an ambivalent attitude towards the rhetoric of the liberatory Baloch national movement. Along with other working class people including boat-makers, miscellaneous crafts-workers, and people of African descent, they occupy a lower position in the local social hierarchy which is dominated by landowners, wealthy boat owners, and local big men (*Mirs* and *Kahodas*). Based on their past experiences, the fishermen find it difficult to trust and identify themselves with the leadership of Baloch nationalist parties who hail from the middle and upper echelons of Baloch society. This working paper focuses on Gwadar fishermen's encounters with the developmental and security apparatus of the Pakistani state as productive sites to understand how new forms of place-making and identity formation occur at the margins of the postcolonial state.

There are a minimum of three interlinked interruptions, which wind around each other in overlapping circles. The interruption of Pakistani desires for becoming a significant node in transnational circuits of material and immaterial capital flows. The construction and promotion of Gwadar as a mega city and trans-shipment hub for oil, Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), and other sea-borne cargoes is expected to fulfill these desires. Secondly, there is the interruption of Baloch ethnic nationalists' desire for statehood, or some form of significant political autonomy, that will allow them to assert sovereignty over their land and natural resources as well as their independent political identity vis-à-vis the nation-states Pakistan and Iran . Baloch nationalist leaders and political activists cultivated this desire during the waning years of the British Raj (1920-1947) and nurtured it through 65 years of postcolonial Pakistani rule, often paying a huge price in blood for their audacity (Baloch 1987; Yousufzai 2007). Lastly, there is the interruption of *Med* fishermen's desire to become residents and citizens of a

mega city and enjoy the fruits of modernity without giving up their customary rights to the sea or leaving their neighborhoods.

## 2. Anxiety of Development

The experience of formerly colonised countries in the global South has been characterised by an intense desire for catching up with the industrialized West in terms of material wealth, physical infrastructure, and other criteria of wellbeing. As James Ferguson points out, the utopian vision inherent in economic development programs and projects advocated by nationalist and transnational elites tends to create expectations of a future 'good life' among their intended beneficiaries from the middle class and the working poor (1999: 5). At the same time, local people inhabiting the spaces that are occupied by these projects tend to bear a disproportionate share of the economic, social, and ecological costs of these projects. In particular, large-scale infrastructure projects transform the existing spaces and rhythms of social life in ways that local people find disruptive, disorienting, and threatening. Contemporary studies of globalization have used terms such as 'landscape' and 'geography' to foreground the importance of spatial relations for understanding these transformations (Escobar 2001; Low and Lawrence-Zuniga 2003: 203). This emergent social geography or landscape – the imbrication of people and places – is characterised by new possibilities for upward social mobility, access to civic amenities, and patterns of consumption. Simultaneously, the threat of dispossession, deployment of state violence, and the loss of familiar material and moral anchors shape the outlines of this new social landscape.

For instance, Baviskar (2005) describes the dispossession of thousands of villagers in the wake of the building of *Sardar Sarovar Dam* over the Narmada River based on long term ethnographic fieldwork among the *Bhilala Adivasi* (indigenous) people in Madhya Pradesh, India from 1990 to 2003. She narrates how the Indian government has pressed ahead with the construction of the *Sardar Sarovar Dam*, a part of the *Narmada Valley Development Project*, despite vigorous protests by the indigenous people from the platform of Save Narmada Movement (*Narmada Bachao Andolan*), extensive litigation by concerned activists, and objections from international environmental experts.<sup>44</sup> Baviskar points out that while large-scale projects are often justified in the name of 'national interest' by ruling elites, experience suggests that it is generally the poorest and most marginal segments of society that have to pay for the unreasonable extent of their costs. Indigenous people, therefore, have good reasons to expect to be the ones obliged to make 'sacrifices' for the greater good (Baviskar 2005: 32-33). Similarly, Kaushik Ghosh's fieldwork among the *Munda Adivasi* people in Jharkhand, India, details the tense relationship between the *Adivasi* people and the Indian state with regard to the construction of *Koel Karo Hydel Project* (Ghosh 2006). He points out that Indian middle classes and government functionaries view indigenous inhabitants as primitive tribals and obstacles on the way to achieve national development and prosperity. These examples suggest that development in the form of mega-projects

---

<sup>44</sup> For detailed statistics, maps, and demographics concerning this project and its social impacts, see "India's Greatest Planned Environmental Disaster: the Narmada Valley Dam Projects" by Nisha Kapadia, available online at [www.umich.edu/~snre492/Jones/narmada.html](http://www.umich.edu/~snre492/Jones/narmada.html). For visual documentary evidence, see Sanjay Kak's award winning documentary, *Words on Water*, available online at [www.ucfilms.in/subject/development/words-on-water](http://www.ucfilms.in/subject/development/words-on-water)



can lead to power constellations regarding money, political power, and knowledge that tend to serve particular agendas of nationalist elites and transnational actors.

I suggest that the development path chosen in Gwadar belongs to a related but distinct category of mega-cities-to-be. Many cities in Pakistan and elsewhere were expected to become models or beacons of modernity but ended up frustrating the hopes of their planners and residents such as Lagos in the 1970s (Lincoln 2008: 187) and Karachi in the 1990s (Gayer 2003: 14). The Pakistani ambition to become a modern country with world class cities and infrastructure is, therefore, always being frustrated and deferred.<sup>5</sup> There is only the anticipation of arrival, the anxiety of what that arrival would entail, and the insecurity of not getting there. Meanwhile, what is actually produced on the ground is a set of interrupted or suspended geographies and temporalities. Places get transformed but not the manner in which policymakers, private investors, or the beneficiaries/victims of development want. I suggest that these interruptions, suspensions, and stasis characterize ordinary people's experience regarding large-scale development projects as much as, if not more than, connection, speed, and mobility. Moreover, if this is indeed the experience of a large number of people in countries at the crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East, then it is important to outline the structure of this experience in spatial, temporal, and affective registers.

In popular Pakistani imagination Gwadar, and by extension the rest of Balochistan, is a land of strategic military importance and economic potential whose realisation will benefit not only the local Baloch but the entire Pakistani nation. For instance, in his testimony to the Senate Committee on Balochistan, the Deputy Inspector General of Frontier Corps, the main federal security force operating in Balochistan, gave the following statement:

“Balochistan is a Golden Land. It needs to be explored. Key to the development lies in mega projects like Gwadar, Saindak, coastal highway, coal, etc. This is not possible unless we allow foreign investments and in flow of technology.” (Government of Pakistan 2005: 13)

I argue that this view of Baloch society and economic development is a discourse which acts as an organising principle or scheme for making sense of, or constituting Balochistan for Pakistanis in general and the ruling elites from Punjabi and Urdu speaking ethno-linguistic groups in particular. They feel that Baloch society is in the clutches of an anachronistic tribal system whereby the indifference of local tribal leadership to formal education and pursuit of their own vested interests is preventing Baloch people from reaping the benefits of development and contributing to overall national prosperity in Pakistan. According to this narrative, 'development' and 'modernity' are the anti-dote for remedying the toxic effects of the tribal system on Baloch society. The building of large-scale infrastructural projects then becomes the key through which Balochistan's economic potential can be unlocked.

---

<sup>5</sup> In the 1980's and early 90s, it was the fantasy of Karachi as a new Hong Kong that had caught the public imagination in Pakistan.

These elites occupied the political center in the immediate post-colonial period and they see themselves variously as those who have sacrificed for the new state, the visionary nationalists, the modernisers, and the deliverers of development (Alvi 1986: 25; see also Alvi 1972). They have had to deal with a recalcitrant Baloch population inhabiting parts of the national territory which were a goldmine for the Pakistani state and yet had resisted assimilation into the nationalist modernization project. Pakistani intellectuals, bureaucrats and opinion leaders read this refusal to assimilate as indicative of an essential primitiveness characteristic of a 'tribal' people. The discourse of developing the tribal Baloch thus brings together attitudes and interests of a diverse array of actors from the dominant Punjabi ethnic group including politicians, bureaucrats, development practitioners, intellectuals, journalists, and ordinary people. It serves to generate a hegemonic consensus among metropolitan Pakistani subjects regarding the presence of a foundational lack in Baloch society. It gives them the authority to prescribe remedies for this lack that range from legislative and administrative measures for reforming the tribal system to the use of outright military force through the establishment of military garrisons or cantonments in districts where oil, gas, copper, gold, and other mineral resources are located. For instance, liberal Pakistani commentator Ijaz Haider, while expressing sympathy for the plight of Baloch people, deploys this representational trope to demand of Baloch political leadership:

"Is it possible, before the Baloch nationalists begin to talk about democracy and rights and resource allocation, that they could show themselves up to be "modern" rather than celebrating one of the worst tribal structures one can find anywhere." (Haider 2010, emphasis original)

### **3. Life in the Imagined Land of 'Pipelineistan'**

Pakistani plans for constructing a deep water port at Gwadar were part of an evolving regional competition for oil and gas resources in Southwest Asia. This contemporary quest for the control of territory in the Persian Gulf and Central Asia is animated, in large part, by the phantom of factories in Europe, USA, and China grinding to a halt due to declining oil and gas resources around the world. Persian Gulf has the world's largest reserves of proven oil (40%) and Central Asia is seen as the future of world oil due to the presence of unexplored oil reserves around the Caspian Sea Basin. This anxiety over energy security has incited a 'gold rush' for Central Asia's oil and gas resources since the 1990s, turning much of Southwest Asia into a virtual *Pipeline-istan* (Escobar 2002; Rashid 2002; See Map1). Much like Imperial Britain and Czarist Russia, contemporary international and regional powers are engaged in a struggle over the control and transport of oil and gas in the Southwest Asia. The USA and China are the major protagonists in this struggle which some have dubbed the *New Great Game* (Rashid 2002), namely, the contest over the control of commercial sea lanes, trading routes, as well as oil and gas pipelines. Smaller states like Pakistan, India, Iran, and Turkmenistan have been jockeying for influence at the regional level to ensure that they get a good share of the spoils. While the metaphors of '*New Great Game*' and '*Pipeline-istan*' tend to oversimplify the complex realities of transformations occurring in Southwest Asia, they do point to certain nationalist and regional ambitions, desires, and longings for modernity that have had a profound effect on the social and political landscape of the countries at the crossroads of Asia.

This new topography of power has been articulated in certain commonsense keywords that are future-oriented and yet share strong parallels with colonial infrastructure projects and ambitions of progress. The more prosaic technocratic vocabulary of 'energy security', 'energy corridors' (Wirsing 2008: vi, vii), and 'energy futures' (Booze-Allen and Hamilton 2004) has replaced the grand metaphors of the British Empire (Orwell 1970)<sup>6</sup>. This time around, oil and gas pipelines have replaced telegraph and railroads as conduits of imperial and territorial desire. In the words of Richard Boucher, former US Assistant Secretary of State:

“One of our goals is to stabilize Afghanistan, so it can become a conduit and a hub between South and Central Asia, so that energy can flow to the South ... *so that the countries of Central Asia are no longer bottled up between two enormous powers of China and Russia*, but rather they have outlets to the South as well as to the north and the east and the west.” (Quoted in Dellawar and Juhasz 2007, emphasis added)

The joining of 'security' and 'futures' with 'energy' by technocrats and political elites inflect them with newer meanings. They militarise geographies and charge private and public imaginations with fantasies of oil bonanzas, mega cities, beach-front houses, and tourist resorts and thereby, generate new spatial and temporal figurations. Inhabited places with their myriad histories and geographies of kinship, livelihoods, and exchange appear on these maps as corridors, hubs, or terminals for the flow of oil and other commodities. These longings and desires create new values. They put different kinds of economic and military premiums on waterways, deserts, and agricultural lands than the uses to which their inhabitants have molded them through generations of labor. At the same time, these territories at the crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East are seen as sources of various kinds of negative potentials such as religious fundamentalism and ethnic strife.

The rhetoric of mega-projects, that is large-scale civilian infrastructure projects, entered the Pakistani political discourse in the 1990s as a gateway to enjoy the benefits of late modernity. Formally, a megaproject is defined as a project that costs US\$1 billion or more and involves extensive coordination between several implementation agencies, financing banks, and national and local governments (Capka 2004; Flyvbjerg et al 2003). During this period, several countries in South and Central Asia region saw a mushrooming of large-scale infrastructure projects purporting to create new East-West and North-South trade and energy 'corridors.' These include the *Chahbahar Deep Water Port* (Iran), and the *Korpezhe-Kurtkui Gas Pipeline* linking Turkmenistan with Iran, the *Kamkol-Alawtaw-Dushanzi oil pipeline* linking Kazakhstan with China, and the *Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline* (1,768KM) linking Azerbaijan with Turkey, and the *Tengiz-Novorossiysk oil pipeline* which connects Kazakhstan with Russia. In addition there are a number of similar projects on the cards which include the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline and the much delayed Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline (TAPI) with its terminus at Gwadar. Mega-projects like big dams, highways, and planned cities had always been part of the policy

---

<sup>6</sup> For example, poet Rudyard Kipling was one of the mouthpieces and the prophet of British Imperialism and expansionism. His poems, which romanticized British colonial and military adventures in South Asia, were hugely popular in Britain (Orwell 1970: 118).

agenda of the Pakistani developmental state since the 1960s<sup>7</sup>. Nevertheless, their second coming in the 1990s was primarily associated with the consumption and production of a transnational modernist aesthetic and the need for attracting foreign investment in contrast to the discourse of nationalist self-sufficiency of the early postcolonial period.

In Pakistan, this transnational agenda was articulated most clearly by General Pervez Musharraf in his developmental vision for Balochistan province. This vision involved leasing parts of national territory in Balochistan that were considered good investments in terms of their natural resources (such as oil, gas, iron ore and copper-gold), probable sites for setting of Export Processing Zones, or having the potential for corporate farming by multinational companies (MNC's). Addressing a gathering of the Pakistani community in USA in 2006, Musharraf declared:

“There are people who say that there is lack of facilities in for Balochistan, but today the budget of development of Balochistan is far bigger than even Punjab. Rs. 135 billion are being spent on it. All mega development projects are being constructed in Balochistan: Coastal Highway, Gwadar Port, Mirani Dam, Subukzai Dam, and a road from Gwadar to Rato Dero linking it with the Indus Highway, Quetta's water scheme, a railway line from Gwadar to Kandhar.” (Quoted in Budhani et al 2007: 1)<sup>8</sup>

Pakistani policymakers and metropolitan publics came to see Balochistan as a 'golden land,' and considered Gwadar as the jewel in their crown. As veteran journalist Amir Mateen puts it:

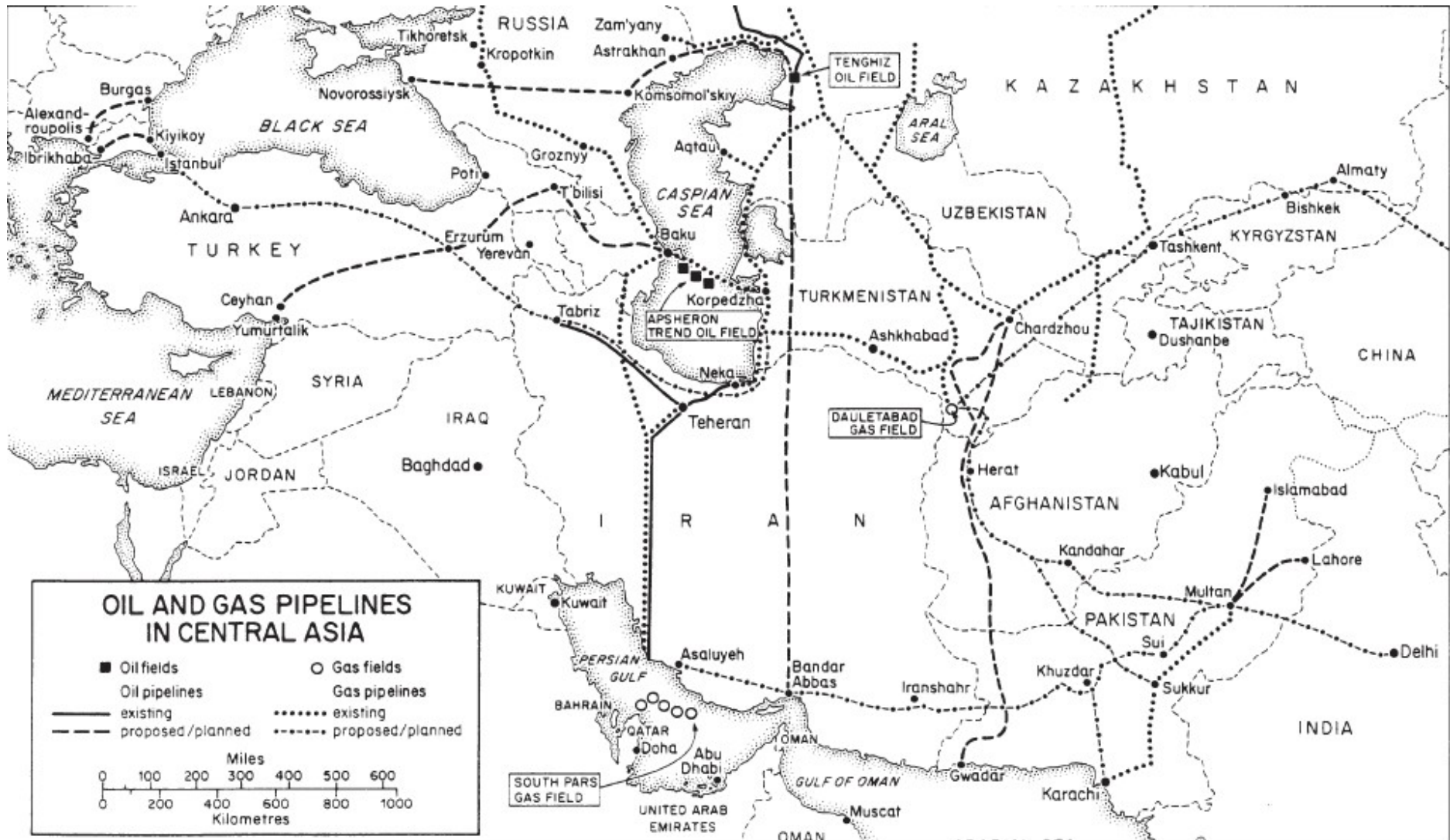
“The dream was that the sight of Gwadar's emerald green waters would make us shake our shoes off to stroll on its white sands. It was supposed to fulfill our longing for the beaches of Bahamas, the skyscrapers of Shanghai and the lifestyle of Dubai. It was meant to be a strategic deep water port that would snatch away trans-shipping business from regional giants like Dubai and Muscat; outsmart Iran's upcoming Chahbahar port in unlocking the gateway to the central Asian markets, and in turn transport their oil and gas to the 'warm waters' of the Persian Gulf. It was designed to be a tax-free trade and industrial hub that would link China's western regions to the outside world through the ancient Silk Route. “ (Mateen 2010)

---

<sup>7</sup> Examples include the settling of the new capital city of Islamabad (1959-69), the construction of Tarbela Dam (1968-74) at a cost of US\$ 900 Million (World Bank 2012), and the construction of Pakistan Steel Mills in 1970s at a cost of Pakistani Rupees 24.7 Billion (Pakistan Steel Mills 2012).

<sup>8</sup> In their fact finding report, Budhani et al (2007) point out that this claim is questionable in view of the narrow reach of these projects in Balochistan.

Map 1: Oil and Gas Pipelines in Central Asia (Source: Rashid 2002: xxiv)



Soon an army of bureaucrats, private entrepreneurs, industrialists, hoteliers, real estate agents, marketers, and builders - many of them Musharraf's cronies - descended on Gwadar. Aided by local middlemen and corrupt revenue officials, they poured in billions of rupees to buy land from local people and turn it into commercial and residential real estate (Ahmed 2008). TV commercials, billboards, and newspaper ads showed urban Pakistani couples walking hand in hand on the golden beaches of Gwadar as the sun set behind them into the Arabian Sea. They invited onlookers in Karachi, Islamabad, Lahore, and even expatriate Pakistanis living in Europe and North America, to buy land in Gwadar. It was touted as a place where dust turns into gold (Jahan Mitti Sona Ban Jaye!), and where one could enjoy "a forty year tax holiday"<sup>9</sup>, that is, not have to pay taxes on goods and services until 2040.

### Popular Adverts depicting the Future of Gwadar (2008-10)



a) Image from an official presentation portraying Gwadar (2008)



b) Site office of an abandoned housing scheme (2010)

In sum, Gwadar had become a cause célèbre in Pakistan and the Southwest Asia region. It was a developmental utopia for Pakistani bureaucrats and policymakers in Islamabad, a speculative opportunity for builders and real estate agents in Lahore and Karachi, a dream of world class living for middle class Pakistanis, and a national pastime for everyone else<sup>10</sup>. The dreaming of Gwadar thus involved a telescoping of the future rather than a compression of space-time pace (Harvey 1999). This summoning of a bright future - a future that was already there in places like Dubai, Qatar, and Muscat - enabled Pakistani leaders like General Musharraf to paper over the messiness of the present and forget uncomfortable pasts, at least for a while.

<sup>9</sup> Online ad for Gwadar Golden Palms residential schemes retrieved from <http://goldenpalms.com.pk/> on December 12, 2008.

<sup>10</sup> It was also a source of concern for Pakistan's economic and military rivals in the region such as India.

#### 4. Territory and (In)security: The Struggle over Identity and Sovereignty

The dreaming of a Dubai-like place at the periphery of the Pakistani nation-state in Balochistan had its own challenges. In frontier regions like Balochistan that mark the inside/outside of the nation, strategic security concerns and economic interests fused together in a complex knot. Untying this knot could help us understand how nation and territory are imagined and produced in Pakistan. In order to ensure the integrity, longevity, and prosperity of the sovereign body of the nation (*Mulki Salmiat, Baqa, aur Khushali*), the Pakistani authorities felt that they had to do more than dreaming and imagining a different geography. Given the Baloch history of resistance to outside rule since the First Afghan War in 1839, Pakistani rulers wanted to reassure themselves and their anxious audiences about the security of the national territory at the edge of the nation in Balochistan. The public was made to understand that the dispossession of Baloch people that would accompany the reorganization of Gwadar was not only good for the Baloch themselves but also critical for the long term survival of the nation. They were accordingly informed, sometimes officially and sometimes through subtle hints and stories leaked to the news media, that foreign powers had set their evil eyes on this jewel in Pakistan's crown. In addition to Pakistan's arch enemy India, these foreign meddlers included a vague and changing assortment of countries such as USA, Russia, Iran, Afghanistan, UAE, and Israel<sup>11</sup>. On the one hand, the desire and longing for becoming global imbued a supposedly empty place like Gwadar with all kinds of developmental potential and value. On the other, this desire also legitimized the militarization of Gwadar to protect this 'national asset.'

Indeed, Pakistani security forces continued to intensify their penetration of territory and tightened their control over people in Balochistan by military means while justifying the appropriation of lands held in common in the name of mega development projects. Accordingly, the promotion of Gwadar as a commercial hub was accompanied by intense militarization of the entire Mekran Coast. These included the allotment of 80,000 acres of forest land to Pakistan Air Force at Hingol National Park (Khan July 26, 2006) and the allotment of 13,500 acres of land to Pakistan Navy in Dasht Valley (Dawn September 10, 2009). Within Gwadar itself, the government allotted 10,000 acres of land to the military for building a new airport and a military cantonment while Pakistan Navy controls 584 acres of prime commercial land (Talpur 2012; Daily Times August 29, 2012). When some observers pointed out this apparent contradiction between rhetoric and reality, it elicited quiet novel explanations from the military leadership. One claim put forward in favor of building military installations in Balochistan was, for example that military cantonments actually foster the process of socio-economic development.

---

<sup>11</sup> One such news article that made the rounds in Pakistani media and the blogosphere proposed that the United States and Russia had joined hands to support the insurgency in Balochistan. For the fantastical details of this story, please see <http://newscentralasia.net/2011/07/18/archive-material-pakistan-unveiling-the-mystery-of-balochistan-insurgency-part-two/http://newscentralasia.net/2011/07/18/archive-material-pakistan-unveiling-the-mystery-of-balochistan-insurgency-part-two/>

This security driven developmental agenda and the ensuing militarization of geography had its roots in a longer history of colonial era policies in Balochistan. Colonial infrastructure projects such as the *Sind-Pishin Railway* and the development of garrison towns like Quetta had been undertaken to safeguard British India against a perceived Russian attack (DaCosta 1891). British authorities viewed Balochistan as an empty and savage land (Dutta 2002) inhabited by tribal peoples who had to be either co-opted peacefully or ‘pacified’ by military means in the larger imperial interest (Bruce 1900; Chisholm 1910). Pakistani authorities drew on this colonial trope to refashion territory and people in Balochistan in the wake of the construction of Gwadar Port. For instance, on the occasion of inaugurating the Gwadar Port in March 2007, General Musharraf exhorted Baloch people to accept the presence of multinational companies (MNC’s) and foreign investors in Gwadar for the good of the nation:

“I am very glad to be standing at a place where 5-6 years back there was *nothing except for sand and dust*, no roads or buildings etc. However, today we see progress – infrastructure is being built, there are roads, buildings, power supply and a hotel has also been constructed which is equivalent to other hotels in Islamabad, Karachi or Lahore. .... Some elements here are reluctant and misguide that foreigners would confiscate the land from locals and pressurize them. *My brothers and sisters, nations who are not afraid of outsiders succeed. But those who resist investors remain backward and poor.*” (Government of Pakistan 2007, emphasis added)

And for those Baloch leaders and activists who dared to ignore the General’s fatherly advice, he issued a stern warning:

“There are two or three tribal chiefs and feudal lords behind what is going on in Balochistan. The past governments have made deals with them and indulged them. My government is determined to establish its writ. It will be a fight to the finish.” (Quoted in Reddy 2006)

In a later TV interview, Musharraf further emphasized this point, in case, his words were misunderstood: “Don’t push us. It is not the 1970s... You will not even know what and from where something has come and hit you.” (Mir 2011) He was referring to the Baloch insurgency of the 1974-1979 when Baloch youth took to the mountains to launch a guerilla campaign under the banner of *Baloch People’s Liberation Front* (BPLF) against the Pakistani state after the popularly elected provincial government was dismissed (Harrison 1981).

Baloch nationalist leaders and activists, however, were not deterred by Musharraf’s threats. His warning to the Baloch nationalist leadership provoked an equally strong riposte from the octogenarian chief of the Bugti tribe and the Chairman of *Jamhoori Watan Party* (JWP), Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti:

“The general [Musharraf] has promised to hit us in such a way that we will not know what hit us. In one sense, it is quick death that he is promising us. He could do this to me, and to a few other Baloch leaders, but not to the entire Baloch nation.” (Mir 2011)



Nawab Bugti and other leaders argued that the government's vision for developing Gwadar was a plot for destroying Baloch identity and cementing the Federal Government's control over their lands through massive influx of non-Baloch population into Gwadar as industrial and maritime laborers and workers. Similarly, Sardar Ataullah Mengal, the head of *Balochistan National Party*, warned that if Gwadar Port was allowed to develop the way the Federal Government had envisaged it, then Baloch people would become a minority in their own land on account of the demographic shift (Daily Times May 6, 2004; Baloch September 28, 2004). They demanded that Baloch people should be given control of their own coastline and mineral resources (*Sahel-o-Wasail*) and sovereignty over the governance of their land (*Haq-e-Hakimiyat*). Gwadar thus became an important symbol of Baloch resistance against Islamabad and a rallying cry for mobilizing the Baloch masses for the defense of the motherland (*Maaten Watan*). It contributed to the resurgence of Baloch identity and opposition to the presence of outsiders in Balochistan province, namely, Pakistanis from the dominant Punjabi and Urdu speaking ethnic groups.

## 5. Fishermen's Luck: Rude Awakenings on the Shores of Desire

Despite the reservations of Baloch nationalist leadership about the intentions of the government, fishermen in Gwadar welcomed Musharraf's call towards progress. Gwadar's fishermen suspected the governmental authorities' intentions but they were also wary of the Baloch nationalist elite on account of their marginal position within the Baloch ethnic group. The response from fishermen inhabiting the small neighborhood of Mulla Band which stood at the proposed site for the construction of Gwadar Port illustrates the dilemmas facing the fishermen and the kinds of choices they made. They initially refused to leave their adobe and thatch houses by the beach because they were afraid that they may lose them forever. Nevertheless, after persistent efforts by the district administration to win them over, including assurances for alternative housing and title to land (*Malkana Haqooq*) they relented. The bargain was negotiated by the District Coordination Officer (DCO) and the mayor (*Zila Nazim*) of Gwadar in person. In return for 'voluntary' relocation from their old houses with adobe walls and thatched roofs near the beach, each family from the community would get their plot of land in the planned New Town Housing Scheme just outside Gwadar. They would also be given money to build their own cemented (*pukka*) house. The government also undertook to provide civic amenities such as sewerage, water, electricity and social services such schooling, healthcare, etc. The people of Mulla Band were resettled into a part of New Town Housing Schemes which was renamed New Mulla Band after the name of their old neighborhood. Noor Bashk<sup>12</sup>, a resident of Mulla Band, recalls vividly the disorienting mix of expectation and anxiety they felt in 2002:

“When construction on the Port started near our neighborhood, people got worried. You could hear the giant cranes working day and night and tearing up the beach. We were all afraid of losing our homes and risking our livelihoods. Many people said that the government could not be trusted. But we were also excited by the promise of a good future. We wanted *pukka* houses, wide streets, and steady income. Price of land was increasing by the day in Gwadar and

---

<sup>12</sup> This and similar other names of persons interviewed in Gwadar are pseudonyms. These are being used to protect the privacy and confidentiality of research participants. The interview was conducted in 2010.

we thought that having our own piece of land and house in New Town scheme will allow us to benefit from the opportunities in the future city. We dreamt that our children would study in an English medium school and grow up to be doctors and engineers, not poor fishermen like us. “

Inspired by the initial boom in Gwadar, Mulla Band residents had started building large *pukka* houses on their plots of land. They also bought washing machines, television sets, and motorcycles. Some opened retail shops in the main bazar selling fishing gear and others opened corner shops in their own neighborhood. Unluckily for them, the town did not grow fast enough. Government offices and businesses remained concentrated in the old part of the town and the residents of Mulla Band remain stuck at periphery of the town. Their houses and streets offer a marked contrast to the palatial bungalows of Gwadar’s newly rich - located just across the road - property dealers, government contractors, engineers, town development officers and revenue officials.

#### **A view of a street in New Mulla Bund neighborhood, part of New Town Housing Scheme**



Seven years on, the residents of New Mulla Band feel abandoned by the government. Although they are grateful that the government kept its promise and gave them a piece of land and money to build their own houses, there are no basic amenities nor any school or hospital nearby. If a woman, child, or an elderly person becomes ill, people have to pay a huge sum to hire a taxi to take the patient to the local hospital because there is no public transportation. Most families in the neighborhood cannot afford to send their kids to school for the same reason. Those members of community still engaged in fishing are suffering debilitating losses. They live far away from the beach on the periphery of the town and it costs a lot of money to travel back and forth.

Several individuals who owned their boats have been compelled to sell them and are now forced to work as hired hands (*Janshoo or Khalasi*) on other folks' boats. For the past two years Noor Bashk and his colleagues have been running from pillar to post to get the title deeds for the land on which they built their houses but without success. They met with the mayor, the district administration, and the parliamentarians from Gwadar but nobody seems to care about them anymore. In contrast to the rest of Balochistan province where people saw Gwadar as a symbol of occupation of their land by non-Baloch outsiders, local people in New Mulla Band appear to be resentful for being abandoned by the state and left to fend for themselves. Their resentment is symptomatic of the interruption, stasis, and the unfulfilled desires of *Med* fishermen.

The more experienced boat captains and young political activists, however, were much more strident in their criticism of the Port and what it did to the fishermen. Allah Bashk is an experienced *Nakhuda* (boat captain) and veteran seaman whose wizened face told of his long years at sea. He made fun of my light skin and warned me that if I kept hanging out with the fishermen, the salt and the sun would get under my skin and darken and wrinkle my face. His voice trembled with frustration and anger as he recounted the fishermen's growing disillusionment with developments in Gwadar (see footnote12):

"I am an old campaigner. I know of many countries and I have travelled to many places. I know what is going on with us and difficult circumstances surrounding us. We see that we are not getting any benefits from developments here in Gwadar. We just labor to feed and support our kids. We hear about the mega projects but these have only taken away our sea (without giving anything in return). Our circumstances have not changed. They have taken away our harbor and we don't have a place to protect our *Yakdars* during a storm. This (harbor) was both our jetty and our belly (food). You know several *Yakdars* were broken into pieces during the recent storms. You saw it with your own eyes! You see how these things are making life a living hell (*Azaab*) for the fishermen. Fishermen are from a weaker class of society and we don't have the wherewithal to suffer these kinds of losses."

When I asked government authorities from various departments about the fishermen's complaints, they tended to dismiss them as spurious claims made by ungrateful and illiterate people. The most common response, in informal conversations, was that people in Gwadar had become addicted to getting free plots of land and money from the government and they would not be satisfied no matter what you gave them. This response is partly correct in that during the initial real estate boom in Gwadar, a class of professional land grabbers and manipulators had emerged who thrived on official largess obtained through political blackmail. It does not explain, however, why the collective demands of the fishermen articulated on behalf of organizations such as *Gwadar Fishermen's Alliance (Med Ittehad)* were ignored. Further interviews and informal conversations revealed that government officers and educated middle class Baloch had deep-seated biases against the fishermen. They considered the fishermen illiterate, ignorant, and unorganized people who did not know what was good for them.

A close friend of mine, a government officer who sympathized with the plight of fishermen and was critical of government policies, exemplified this bias. In an informal conversation during my fieldwork in 2010 we were discussing why fishermen's protests and complaints were not having much of an effect on government policy. Complaining about the fishermen's lack of education and awareness, he jokingly observed: '*Med* fishermen are just like a school of fish: when they are faced with a problem or threat, they tend to run in every which direction without thinking!' This patronizing tone suggests that governmental authorities, including otherwise sympathetic local Baloch officers, believed that fishermen's claims and knowledge could not be taken seriously. In the eyes of the less sympathetic government officials, their protests were nothing more than a form of political blackmail.



a) Fishermen repairing their nets under the Chapra in Gwadar (2008)



b) Author sharing a cup of tea with fishermen in Gwadar (2010)

The fishermen's sense of disillusionment was further deepened by the strangle-hold of Federal security forces like Pakistan Coast Guards, Frontier Corps (FC), Pakistan Navy, and Marine Security Agency (MSA) on Gwadar. Their presence is ubiquitous. When you enter the town, you are greeted by the FC personnel. The beaches on either side of the town are patrolled by soldiers from the Coast Guards and taking a walk after sunset appears a hazardous enterprise. The Port area itself is a closed security zone and an innocent gesture like taking a picture of the port can lead to interrogation by the secret service. The fish-landing jetty and nearby waters are manned by Marine Security Agency personnel. The road leading to the top of Batel Mountain is dotted with Coast Guards and Pakistan Navy checkpoints and the Navy controls much of the land there.

Commercialization and militarization of Gwadar closed out many local places that people used to visit to spend their down time, or as part of their annual Eid gatherings or to make offerings at sacred sites (*Ziarat*).

My friend Barkat, a young social activist, cited a personal encounter with Pakistan Coast Guards personnel that took place a few years back to illustrate this point. He and a friend were walking towards the beach where the Port and the Fish Harbor now stand. At that time the Port was still under construction. It was a full moon night and they just wanted to hang out there and watch the sea. While they were sitting on the beach and watching the moon, a soldier from Coast Guards, who was patrolling the area on foot, approached them. He rudely asked them what they were doing there. Barkat and his friend replied that they were watching the moon. The soldier paused for a moment and then tersely ordered: "Go away from here and watch the moon from your own house!" (*Yahan say jao aur Chand ko ghar say ja kar dekho!*).

The soldier's brusque intervention in what appears to be a poetic moment is a metaphor for the awkwardness of Baloch desires for modernity in Gwadar. It is a future which many desire privately even as they publicly contest it. Land and sea are objects of belonging, attachment and nostalgia for the fishermen and other residents of Gwadar. But, as a piece of prime real estate, a piece of land can be the ticket to a new way of life that is full of modern amenities like a *pukka* house, electricity, washing machines, and clean drinking water. The problem is that they can only enjoy this future if they accept their subordinate position within Pakistani society.

## 6. Waiting and Watching in the City to be

Contemporary Gwadar seems to be a far cry from the future Dubai or Singapore that it has been touted to be. When you take the exit towards Gwadar from the newly built *Mekran Coastal Highway* coming from Karachi, it feels like a landscape of abandonment and stasis. A bit like a frame from a decaying movie reel that has suddenly wound to a halt and the objects have frozen in action. Skeletons of unfinished buildings, parks, stadiums, hospitals and offices litter the landscape. Craters and potholes have developed in the middle of recently built wide-lined avenues and roads. In some places, the *Shamal* wind blowing from Iran has buried unused dual-carriage roads under big piles of sand that render them impassable. If one ventures outside of the town, the windswept sandy plain is dotted by tiny whitewashed concrete cabins, the 'site-offices' of incomplete residential schemes, with shiny names like Sun Silver City, Platinum City, Florida Heights and Miami Villas. The gap between Pakistani dreams and plans of turning Gwadar into a Dubai-like mega city with Chinese assistance and foreign direct investment and the actually existing landscape of a multi-ethnic country has proven to be too large to bridge. In their excitement over Gwadar, General Musharraf and his acolytes forgot that Pakistan is neither a Dubai-like corporate city-state nor does it enjoy the totalitarian authority and grip over its population in the manner of China.

A few weeks after my conversation with Haji, local television channels announced that cyclone PHET was forming as a major weather system in the Arabian Sea (Geo News 2010). The cyclone, after hitting the coast of Oman, headed towards Gwadar and the Mekran Coast. While Gwadar was spared the trouble of a direct hit or landfall, the torrential rains brought by the cyclone PHET poured on Gwadar

and turned it into a veritable lake or cesspool, depending on location. This happened in large part because newly constructed roads, buildings, and boundary walls in Gwadar had blocked the natural flow of runoff water that would usually drain into the sea. Within no time most of Gwadar was submerged in 3-5 feet of water. In the wake of the cyclone's impending arrival, the local administration had organized a marathon meeting of all the volunteer organizations, government departments and representatives of military and paramilitary forces to chalk out a contingency plan for dealing with the threat posed by the cyclone. The District Coordination Officer (DCO) also put in place certain emergency response procedures for mobilizing men, machinery, and other resources in consultation with the local voluntary organizations and representatives of armed forces and paramilitary organizations. Yet the sheer quantum of rainfall was too much to deal with. The gale force winds of the cyclone rammed the bigger fishing vessels into the Port's apron and lashed the smaller boats belonging to the fishermen against the protection wall by the beach. The raging hill torrents from Gwadar's hinterland debouched so much water into the sea that its turquoise green waters remained muddy for days after the storm had passed. Combined with years of neglecting the infrastructure needs of low lying neighborhoods where the fishermen lived, the cyclone gave rise to a humanitarian situation which the local administration did not have the capacity to deal with.

#### **Flooding in the Old Town in Gwadar in the wake of Cyclone PHET in June, 2010**



On the third day after the rain, I headed out with a local friend to take a round of the town and see how people were coping with this situation. Near Mullah Musa Chowk, the road was blocked because a channel of sorts was being dug across the road. I said *salam* to the assembled people and asked what was happening. One person told me that the runoff water coming from Batel Mountain was blocked by the newly constructed Port Road and the boundary wall of the fish-landing jetty from draining into the sea. Angry neighborhood residents had assembled to protest against this situation and fix the problem. Some young people had taken up pick-axes and shovels to dig a drainage channel across the road because the standing water was seeping into the foundations and walls of their already damaged houses. As I watched residents of Kahoda Ahmed Ward and Gaiti Lane desperately struggle to drain storm waters out of their crumbling houses with pick-axes and shovels, a young man shouted to me: 'Come see the future Dubai, brother!' Later that evening, a Gwadari friend of mine summed up the

situation in these words: 'The government could not populate its planned (new) city and the old town is sinking!' (*Sarkare bastagain shahr abad na bita, aw kohanain shahr barbaad beeta!*).

Occasionally, time picks up speed when a large cargo ship, lured by promises of government subsidized transportation, docks at the newly built seaport. There is a flurry of activity in the town and a long line of heavy duty trucks snaking for two miles stretches across the town towards the Coastal Highway. Truck drivers wait patiently for their turn to load their cargo of fertilizer or wheat, imported by the Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP). Near the Monument Roundabout in Gwadar, I try to strike a conversation with one of the drivers and his assistant. They are squatting on the bare ground by the side of the road and sipping chai in cheap cups with chipped edges. They are Pashtuns from Karachi and do not seem to trust me. The *Ustad* (driver) nevertheless informs me that he has been waiting for the whole day and may have to camp for the night in the same place till the line inches forward towards the Port and he gets his turn for loading his cargo. The promised expressway that will connect the Port directly to the main highway outside the town is yet to be built. It looks like everyone, the townsfolk as well as the outsiders, are waiting anxiously for a promised future whose arrival has been delayed or deferred, at least for now.

At other times, important government officials designated as Very Very Important Persons (VVIPs) such as the Prime Minister, the Chief Minister, Federal Ministers, and the Chief of Army Staff descend on the town amid a lot of pomp and ceremony. They give inspiring speeches about Gwadar's future and then retire to Quetta and Islamabad. For instance, on the occasion of the Gwadar Port's inauguration in 2007, the Port authorities failed to attract any commercial ship since importers were not interested in booking their cargo for Gwadar. To make up for this, the authorities duly rounded off two aging ships anchored in Karachi Port for repairs, the MV Yazdan and MV Sibbi, and brought them to Gwadar to grace the inauguration ceremony. Similarly, four years later, the democratically elected Prime Minister, Yousuf Raza Gilani, decided to hold the National Finance Commission Award meeting aboard a ship in Gwadar to promote Gwadar Port<sup>13</sup>. This ceremony cost Rs. 5 Million to the national exchequer at a time when the Pakistani government was celebrating an 'austerity week' beside disrupting daily life and causing severe hardship for town residents. The National Highway Authority (NHA), the Provincial Buildings and Roads Department (B&R) and the Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) worked day and night to clear up the sand dunes and debris covering up the newly built roads in order to give the visiting dignitaries the impression that all is well (*Sab achha hai!*). The Balochistan Chief Minister, accompanied by the Chief Ministers of the other three provinces of Pakistan, fixed the inaugural plaques/foundation stones for Punjab House, Sindh House and Frontier House in a desolate location at the town's periphery which nobody has since cared to visit.

---

<sup>13</sup> The NFC Award or National Finance Commission Award is the formula for sharing of resources among the four Provinces of Pakistan and the Federal Government. A number of taxes collected by the Federal Government are pooled together in the Federal Divisible Pool and then redistributed to the four provinces according to a weighted formula which is based primarily on the population but also includes such factors as relative poverty, natural resources, area, etc. The 7<sup>th</sup> NFC Award meeting was held in Gwadar, Balochistan on Dec 31, 2009.

## 7. Conclusion

The ongoing story of infrastructure development in Gwadar suggests that the process of ‘development’ through mega-projects does not take place in a ‘rational’ or uniform manner. Capital is not a ‘thing’ that comes to inhabit certain parts of the nation’s territory based on its needs and then stays or leaves. Instead, desires for production and consumption of global/cosmopolitan things colonize thought and imagination as a prelude towards appropriation and reorganization of territory. Pakistani leaders like General Musharraf try to emulate neoliberal utopias to the detriment of local peoples. They enact elaborate, at times farcical, public rituals to please and entice these gods and create spectacular public displays to convince their followers that they have the capacity to bring prosperity to the nation. As Chinua Achebe points out in his critique of Nigeria’s development policies, the ritual performances and lofty rhetoric of political leaders in developing countries, are similar to the ‘cargo cults’<sup>14</sup> of Melanesia (Achebe 1984: 9). In a manner reminiscent of the ‘cargo cult’ in Melanesia, their successors keep repeating the performance even after it becomes obvious that the gods have abandoned them and are not likely to return anytime soon. On the other hand, the social and political upheavals engendered by such projects tend to exacerbate existing racial/ethnic and class-based fault lines. These continue to exact a heavy toll on the local people, long after the projects themselves have receded from public debate and popular memory.

---

<sup>14</sup> A ‘cargo cult’ refers to a “... spiritual movement (especially noted in Melanesia) in reaction to disruptive contact with Western capitalism, promising resurrection of deceased relatives, destruction or enslavement of white foreigners, and the magical arrival of riches.” (Haviland and Prins 2009: 314)



## References

- Achebe, C. (1984): *The Trouble with Nigeria*. Johannesburg: Heinemann Publishers.
- Ahmed, M. (2008): *The Great Land Robbery*. *The Herald*, June 2008 Issue. Karachi: Dawn Group Publications.
- Alvi, H. (1986): *Ethnicity, Muslim Society, and the Pakistan Ideology*. In A.M. Weiss ed. *Islamic Reassertion in Pakistan: The Application of Islamic Laws in a Modern State*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
- Alvi, H. (1972): *The State in Post-colonial Societies: Pakistan and Bangladesh*. *New Left Review*, 1(74): 59-81, July-August 1972. London: NLR Publications.
- Arthur D. L. (2006): *Gwadar Port Master Plan: Implications for Energy Sector Development*. Kuala Lumpur: Arthur D. Little Sdn. Bhd.
- Baloch, I. (1987): *The Problem of Greater Balochistan: a Study of Baloch Nationalism*. Weisbaden, Germany: Franz Steiner Verlag.
- Baloch, L. (2004): *Karachi: No Role for Military in Politics, Say Nationalists*. *Dawn*, September 28. Karachi, Pakistan: Dawn Media Group. Retrieved from <http://archives.dawn.com/2004/09/28/local1.htm> on August 28, 2012.
- Baviskar, A. (2005): *In the Belly of the River: Tribal Conflicts over Development in the Narmada Valley*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Booze-Allen & Hamilton (2004): *Energy Futures in Asia: Final Report*. Unpublished Report sponsored by Director, Net Assessment, Office of Secretary of Defense, USA. November 2004.
- Brune, M. (2012): *Tar Sands Pipelines are Even Worse than You Think*. *Huffington Post*, June 27, 2012. Accessed online from [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-brune/tar-sands-pipelines-spills\\_b\\_1628916.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-brune/tar-sands-pipelines-spills_b_1628916.html) on August 29, 2012.
- Budhani, A. & H.B. Mallah (2007): *Mega Projects in Balochistan*. Working Paper. Karachi: Collective for Social Science Research.
- Bruce, R.I. (1900): *The Forward Policy and its Results*. London: Longman Publishers.
- Capka, J.R. (2004): *Megaprojects – They Are a Different Breed*. *Public Roads*, 68(1) Washington, D.C: US Federal Highway Administration. Accessed online from <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/publicroads/04jul/01.cfm> on August 29, 2012
- Chisholm, H. (1910): *Baluchistan*. In *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chakrabarty, D. (2000): *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Chatterjee, P. (2004): *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World*. University seminars/Leonard Hastings Schoff Memorial Lectures. New York: Columbia University Press.

Chatterjee, P. (1993): *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Crossroads Asia Working Group Conflict (2012): *Conflict Research on Crossroads Asia- A Conceptual Approach*. In: *Crossroads Asia Concept Paper Series, No.1*. Bonn, Germany: Center for Development Studies ZEF

Dellawar, S. & A. Juhasz (2007): *Afghanistan's Energy War*. *Foreign Policy in Focus*. October 5. Retrieved online from [http://www.fpif.org/articles/afghanistans\\_energy\\_war](http://www.fpif.org/articles/afghanistans_energy_war).

DaCosta, J. (1891): *A Scientific Frontier or, The Danger of A Russian Invasion of India*. London: W.H. Allen and Co.

*Deutsche Welle* (2012): *Brazil Court Suspends Work on Controversial Dam*. August 15, 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.dw.de/dw/article/0,,16166590,00.html> on August 29, 2012.

Dutta, S. (2002): *Imperial Mappings-- in Savage Spaces: Balochistan and British India*. New Delhi: BR Publishing Corporation.

*Daily Times* (2012): Staff Report. *PSA, Partners Allowed to Sell Shareholding*. August 29, 2012. Lahore: Daily Times Publications. Retrieved online from [http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012%5C08%5C29%5Cstory\\_29-8-2012\\_pg5\\_7](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012%5C08%5C29%5Cstory_29-8-2012_pg5_7) on August 29, 2012.

*Daily Times* (2004): Editorial. *Implications of the Gwadar Incident*. May 06. Lahore, Pakistan: Daily Times Publications. Retrieved online from [http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=story\\_6-5-2004\\_pg3\\_1](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=story_6-5-2004_pg3_1) on August 28, 2012.

*Dawn* (2009): Staff Report. *Violation of Land Acquisition Act*. *Dawn*, September 10, 2009. Retrieved from <http://archives.dawn.com/archives/151846> on August 29, 2012. Karachi: Dawn Media Group.

Elizondo, G. (2011): *Indigenous Bolivians March against Amazon Road*. Aljazeera Online, October 18, 2011. Retrieved from <http://blogs.aljazeera.com/blog/americas/indigenous-bolivians-march-against-amazon-road> on August 29, 2011.

Escobar, A. (2001): *Culture Sits in Places: Reflections on Globalism and Subaltern Strategies of Localization*. *Political Geography*, 20(1): 139-174.

Escobar, A. (1995): *Encountering Development: the Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Escobar, P. (2002): Pipelineistan Part I: The Rules of the Game. Asia Times Online, January 25, 2002. Retrieved from <http://atimes.com/c-asia/DA25Ag01.html>. on August 12, 2012. Hong Kong: Asia Times Online Holdings Pvt.) Limited.

Ferguson, J. (1999): Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Life on the Zambian Copperbelt. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Ferguson, J. (1994): Anti-Politics Machine: Development, Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Flyvbjerg, B., N. Bruzelius & W. Rothengatter (2003): Megaprojects and Risk: An Anatomy of Ambition. Cambridge, U.K: Cambridge University Press.

Gayer, L. (2003): A Divided City: 'Ethnic' and 'Religious' Conflicts in Karachi, Pakistan. Center for International Studies and Research (CERI) Working Paper, May 2003. Paris: Center for International Studies and Research.

*Geo News* (2010): Relief Efforts Continue at Mekran, Sindh Coasts. Friday, June 11, 2010. Karachi: Jang Media Group. Retrieved online from [http://www.geo.tv/important\\_events/2010/cyclone\\_phet/pages/english\\_news.asp](http://www.geo.tv/important_events/2010/cyclone_phet/pages/english_news.asp) on August 29, 2012.

Ghosh, K. (2006): The Modernity of Primitive India: Adivasi Ethnicity in Jharkhand and the Formation of a National Modern. Unpublished PhD Dissertation. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University.

*Government of Pakistan* (2005): Report of the Parliamentary Committee on Balochistan. Islamabad: Senate of Pakistan.

*Government of Pakistan* (2007): President Musharraf's Address at the Inauguration of Gwadar Port. 20 March, 2007. Retrieved from <http://presidentmusharraf.wordpress.com/2008/01/07/gwadar-deep-seaport/> on August 29, 2012.

Grare, F. (2006): Pakistan: The Resurgence of Baluch Nationalism. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Haider, I. (2009): Insight: Balochistan Needs a Rethink. Daily Times, January 07, 2009. Lahore: Daily Times Publications. Retrieved online from [http://dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C01%5C07%5Cstory\\_7-1-2009\\_pg3\\_2](http://dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C01%5C07%5Cstory_7-1-2009_pg3_2) on August 28, 2012.

Harrison, S.S. (1981): In Afghanistan's shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations. New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Hassan, A. (2005): Pakistan's Gwadar Port: Prospects of Economic Revival. Unpublished MA Thesis. Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School.

Kanna, A. (2011): Dubai: the City as Corporation. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Khan, B.A. (2006): PAF Swoops on Hingol National Park. Dawn, July 26, 2006. Karachi: Dawn Media Group.

Li, T.M. (2007): *The Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development, and the Practice of Politics*. Durham, N.C: Duke University Press.

Lincoln, S. (2008): *Expensive Shit: Aesthetic Economies of Waste in Postcolonial Africa*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Duke University. Retrieved online from [http://dukespace.lib.duke.edu/dspace/bitstream/handle/10161/696/D\\_Lincoln\\_Sarah\\_a\\_200808.pdf](http://dukespace.lib.duke.edu/dspace/bitstream/handle/10161/696/D_Lincoln_Sarah_a_200808.pdf) on August 28, 2012

Low, Setha M. & D. Lawrence-Zuniga (2003): *The Anthropology of Space and Place: Locating Culture*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Mateen, A. (2010): *The Agonizing Contrast of Gwadar Dream*. Amir Mateen Dot Com. Retrieved from <http://amirmateen.com/?p=307> on March 31, 2011.

Mir, A. (2011): *Balochistan Caught in a Spiral of Violence*. Asia Times Online. August 12. Retrieved from [http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South\\_Asia/MH12Df03.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/MH12Df03.html) . Hong Kong: Asia Times Online Holdings Pvt.) Limited.

Niazi, T. (2005): *Gwadar: China's Naval Outpost on the Indian Ocean*. China Brief, Vol. 5, Issue 4. Accessed from [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=3718](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=3718) on August 29, 2012

Orwell, G. (2012): *Our History*. Retrieved from Pakistan Steel Mills website [http://www.paksteel.com.pk/organ\\_our\\_history.html](http://www.paksteel.com.pk/organ_our_history.html) on August 29, 2012.

Orwell, G. (1981): "Rudyard Kipling". In *A Collection of Essays*. Orlando, FL: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing. Pakistan Steel Mills.

Peet, R. & E. Hartwick (2009): *Theories of Development*. Second Edition. NY: Guilford Press.

Rashid, A. (2002): *Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia*. London: Tauris.

Redaelli, R. (1997): *The Farther's Bow: the Khanate of Kalat and British India 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Century* Firenze, Italy: Manent

Reddy, B.M. (2006): *Three Sardars and a General*. Frontline, 232), Jan. 28- Feb. 10. Retrieved online from <http://www.flonnet.com/fl2302/stories/20060210000306400.htm>

Salim, A. (1993): *Balocistān: Šūbah, Markaz Taalluqāt, 1947-77*. Balochistan: Province-Center Relations 1947-77 Lahore: Frontier Post Publications.

Saeedi, T., S. Pyatakov, A. Nasimzadeh, Q. Jan & S.M. Kasi (2011): Pakistan: Unveiling the Mystery of Balochistan Insurgency. News Central Asia Online. Retrieved from <http://newscentralasia.net/2011/07/18/archive-material-pakistan-unveiling-the-mystery-of-balochistan-insurgency-part-two/> on September 18, 2012.

Scott, J.C. (1999): Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Todaro, M.P. & S.C. Smith (2009): Economic Development. Essex, UK: Pearson Education Ltd.

Talpur, M.A. (2012): Beware of Greeks Bearing Gifts. Daily Times, January 15, 2012. Lahore: Daily Times Publications. Retrieved online from [http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012%5C01%5C15%5Cstory\\_15-1-2012\\_pg3\\_2](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012%5C01%5C15%5Cstory_15-1-2012_pg3_2) on August 29, 2012.

Wirsing, R. G. (2008): Baloch Nationalism and the Geopolitics of Energy Resources: The Changing Context of Separatism in Pakistan. Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College.

*World Bank* (2012): World Bank Historical Chronology: 1960-69. Retrieved from <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTABOUTUS/EXTARCHIVES/0,,contentMDK:20035660~menuPK:56316~pagePK:36726~piPK:437378~theSitePK:29506,00.html> on August 29, 2012

Yousufzai, F.M. (1997): Yaad'dashten Recollections Quetta, Pakistan: Progressive Writer's Association.

## Information on the competence network Crossroads Asia

The competence network Crossroads Asia derives its name from the geographical area extending from eastern Iran to western China and from the Aral Sea to northern India. The scholars collaborating in the competence network pursue a novel, 'post-area studies' approach, making thematic figurations and mobility the overarching perspectives of their research in Crossroads Asia. The concept of figuration implies that changes, minor or major, within one element of a constellation always affect the constellation as a whole; the network will test the value of this concept for understanding the complex structures framed by the cultural, political and socio-economic contexts in Crossroads Asia. Mobility is the other key concept for studying Crossroads Asia, which has always been a space of entangled interaction and communication, with human beings, ideas and commodities on the move across and beyond cultural, social and political borders. Figurations and mobility thus form the analytical frame of all three main thematic foci of our research: conflict, migration, and development.

- Five sub-projects in the working group **"Conflict"** will focus upon specific localized conflict-figurations and their relation to structural changes, from the interplay of global politics, the erosion of statehood, and globalization effects from above and below, to local struggles for autonomy, urban-rural dynamics and phenomena of diaspora. To gain a deeper understanding of the rationales and dynamics of conflict in Crossroads Asia, the sub-projects aim to analyze the logics of the genesis and transformation of conflictual figurations, and to investigate autochthonous conceptions of, and modes of dealing with conflicts. Particular attention will be given to the interdependence of conflict(s) and mobility.
- Six sub-projects in the working group **"Migration"** aim to map out trans-local figurations (networks and flows) within Crossroads Asia as well as figurations extending into both neighboring and distant areas (Arabian Peninsula, Russia, Europe, Australia, America). The main research question addresses how basic organizational and functional networks are structured, and how these structures affect what is on the move (people, commodities, ideas etc.). Conceptualizing empirical methods for mapping mobility and complex connectivities in trans-local spaces is a genuine desideratum. The aim of the working group is to refine the method of qualitative network analysis, which includes flows as well as their structures of operation, and to map mobility and explain mobility patterns.
- In the **"Development"**-working group four sub-projects are focusing on the effects of spatial movements (flows) and interwoven networks at the micro level with regard to processes of long-term social change, and with a special focus on locally perceived livelihood opportunities and their potential for implementation. The four sub-projects focus on two fundamental aspects: first, on structural changes in processes of transformation of patterns of allocation and distribution of resources, which are contested both at the household level and between individual and government agents; secondly, on forms of social mobility, which may create new opportunities, but may also cause the persistence of social inequality.

The competence network understands itself as a mediator between the academic study of Crossroads Asia and efforts to meet the high demand for information on this area in politics and the public. Findings of the project will feed back into academic teaching, research outside the limits of the competence network, and public relations efforts. Further information on Crossroads Asia is available at [www.crossroads-asia.de](http://www.crossroads-asia.de).

### **Publications in the Crossroads Asia Working Paper Series**

- Marsden, Magnus (2011): Mobile Life on the Frontiers of Crossroads Asia. In: Crossroads Asia Working Paper Series, No. 1.
- Schetter, Conrad (2012): Translocal Lives. Patterns of Migration in Afghanistan. In: Crossroads Asia Working Paper Series, No. 2.
- Ismailbekova, A. (2012): Coping Strategies: Public Avoidance, Migration, and Marriage in the Aftermath of the Osh Conflict, Fergana Valley. In: Crossroads Asia Working Paper Series, No. 3 (Upcoming)
- Hill, Joe (2012): Community-managed Hill and Mountain Irrigation across Crossroads Asia: Between Autonomy and State Control. In: Crossroads Asia Working Paper Series, No. 4.
- Ibrahim, Niamatullah (2012): Shift and Drift in Hazara Ethnic Consciousness. The Impact of Conflict and Migration. In: Crossroads Asia Working Paper Series, No. 5.

### **Crossroads Asia Concept Papers**

- Working Group Conflict (2012): Conflict Research on Crossroads Asia – A Conceptual Approach. In: Crossroads Asia Concept Paper Series, No. 1.
- Working Group Development (2012): Development at the Crossroads. Development Research on Crossroads Asia – a conceptual approach. In: Crossroads Asia Concept Paper Series, No. 2.
- Working Group Migration (2012): Crossroads Asia through the Lens of Mobility and Migration: A Conceptual Approach. In: Crossroads Asia Concept Paper Series, No. 3.