

A Note for Readers:

Dear all,

Many thanks in advance for reading this draft chapter from my book manuscript. I have included a description and chapter descriptions, in case it is helpful to situate the chapter within the book project as a whole.

A bit of context on the chapter itself: I recently split this chapter off from the previous one (which focuses on the “blocking of identification records) to focus exclusively on processes of citizenship reverification. I have rewritten it to serve as a hinge connecting the ethnographic and historical portions of the book, as well as to conceptually connect digital and paper forms of identification. I would love to know if this restructuring is working (or not). Happy to receive any and all feedback on the argument, references/literature, writing, or any other part of this!

Many thanks,
Zehra

BOOK ABSTRACT

My book manuscript *Technologies of Kinship: Biometric Belonging in Postcolonial Pakistan* is a historical ethnography of Pakistan’s National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA). NADRA produces Pakistan’s biometric-based identity card and manages one of the largest national identity databases in the world. At NADRA, custom-made software integrates and verifies data from individuals as well as kin relations, determining who is and is not a Pakistani citizen. This book examines how NADRA developed its database technology and the uneven implications of this information infrastructure for ordinary citizens. It provides an ethnographic view into the ways that Pakistan’s identification regime—developed in the context of the “War on Terror”—disproportionately impacts Pashtun migrants in Islamabad who experience the direct effects of both new and residual forms of surveillance and militarization. Further, it situates contemporary biometric identification within the history of postcolonial and colonial governance. Investigating the history of identification technology through archival research on early information systems in colonial South Asia and postcolonial Pakistan, *Technologies of Kinship* follows how and why kinship became foundational to the establishment of verifiable individual identity.

CHAPTER OUTLINES

Chapter 1

Kinning Identification: Biometrics and Beyond at the Registration Center

This chapter provides an ethnographic view of the socio-technical dimensions of identification as they play out at the NADRA Registration Center in Islamabad, the site where most ordinary Pakistani citizens would first encounter the country’s identification regime. It focuses on face-to-interactions between applicants, data entry operators and mid-level bureaucrats. It introduces the concept of datafied kinship by illustrating how the salient unit of identification is neither the individual nor the group but the relation. I demonstrate how biometric technologies—along with the software, screens, and databases they rely on *and* produce—come to be “kinned” during identity registration.

Chapter 2**Coding Kinship: Governing Relatedness in the Relational Database**

The second chapter examines how NADRA’s technology evolved since its formation in 2000 in ways that allowed for kinship to be mapped, recorded, and eventually become the basis for identification. It answers one of the central questions of the book: how NADRA’s techno-bureaucracy transforms complex forms of relatedness into data that can be stored in its databases. After introducing the reader to the technics of the database, the chapter centers on NADRA’s own technological categories for problematic individuals—such as “family intruder” and “system independent”—to demonstrate the transformation in governance technologies in South Asia from the classification of identity to its individuation.

Chapter 3**A Databased Frontier: The Blocked Identity Card**

This chapter investigates the complaint of unjustly “blocked” identity cards—a status that marks the “blocked” individual to be of uncertain citizenship status in the eyes of NADRA—widespread amongst households in a Pashtun neighborhood, Tarnol, in Islamabad. It delves into local hypotheses of how individuals and families got “blocked,” and how kinship acted as contagion in this case. This chapter follows the digital affordances of NADRA’s infrastructure to show its spatial effects. It demonstrates how longstanding modes of frontier governance, both colonial and postcolonial, emerge anew in Islamabad, reshaping the lives of Pashtun migrants within new urban forms in the securitized capital city.

Chapter 4**“Bird’s Milk”: Unblocking Identity and Documentary Citizenship**

Milk from a bird is an impossibility. This idiom was used to articulate the nature of documentary requests from NADRA during “citizenship reverification.” This chapter describes how individuals and families with blocked identity cards engage in bureaucratic labor and build documentary evidence of kin ties to unblock their identities. It traces the history of documentary citizenship to the early years of Pakistan’s independence, following how reterritorialization in the wake of Partition in 1947 shaped the landscape of identity documentation.

Chapter 5**Paper Identities: Documenting Individuals in Cold War Pakistan**

This chapter examines NADRA’s most immediate historical predecessor: Pakistan’s first paper-based identity register set up in 1973. I examine why national identity took on renewed significance in the form of documentary technology at this time, approximately two decades after Pakistan’s formation. It situates transformations in bureaucratic information systems in relation to the territorial reconfiguration after Bangladesh’s independence *and* the escalating Cold War on the western frontier. It examines how the identification regime sought to apprehend unsettled populations in the wake of an ongoing process of decolonization.

Chapter 6**Beyond Classification: The Limits of Individuation in Colonial South Asia**

What is the pre-history of individual identification? What does the absence of systematized individual identification during the colonial period tell us about colonial governance? This chapter begins with the historiography of classification and identification in colonial India. It examines how and why the colonial state was ambivalent about identifying individuals. It argues that classification and individuation are not only distinct processes formally but also historically. Simultaneously, it demonstrates how central identifying kin has been for governing populations.

CHAPTER 4
BIRD'S MILK
“Unblocking” Identity and Documentary Citizenship

Introduction:

“The only thing they didn’t ask for was bird’s milk,” said Mir Nawaz in response to my question about which documents NADRA asked him to provide for his citizenship reverification procedure. This process would ultimately “unblock” his identity card. As the previous chapter describes, the national identity database enables the blocking of identity cards remotely, with blocking spreading across family members through kinned vectors of contagion. While blocking is digital, the unblocking process is heavily mediated by paper. For ethnically Pashtun migrants, primarily from the tribal areas on the borderlands with Afghanistan, there was a palpable sense that the burden of documentary proof fell upon them in disproportionate ways. As a result, certain people within Tarnol, a predominantly Pashtun neighborhood, took on the bureaucratic labor required and built communicative channels within and beyond the neighborhood to negotiate the unblocking of identity cards. Documentary requirements forced them to travel across space and occasionally, it seemed, time. Much of what NADRA demanded was directed at demonstrating a descent based claim to Pakistani territory, which would demonstrate, in turn, an indisputable claim to citizenship. Mir Nawaz’s sentiments revealed a generalized exasperation, palpable across the neighborhood, about how documentary requirements rubbed against their migrant trajectories and frontier lives in unequal ways.

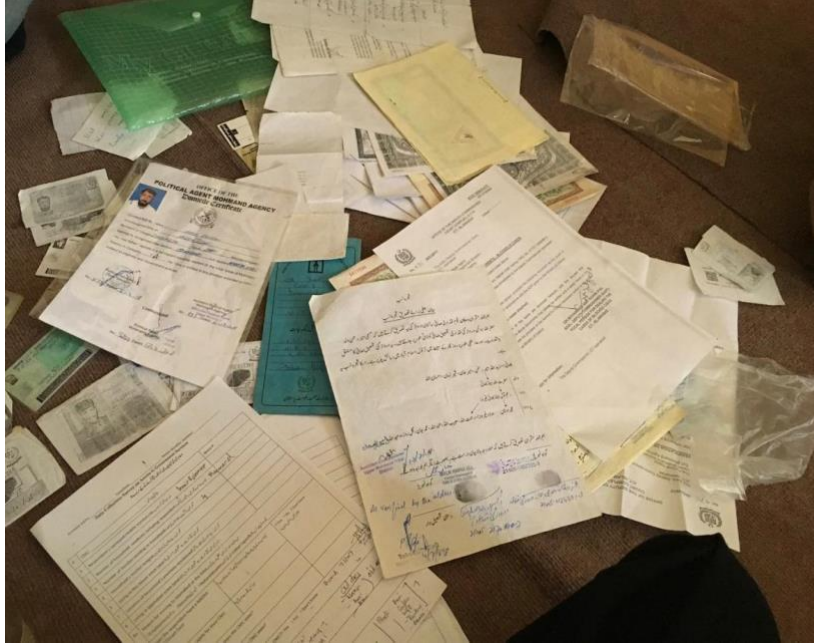


Figure 8: Document dossiers compiled for unblocking procedures in Tarnol (source: photo by author)

The process for unblocking on the part of the cardholders inevitably began with the collection of documents. When blocked card holders are notified that they have been placed under citizenship re-verification, they are also given a list of documents that they will be asked for during their “board” interrogation with NADRA officials. NADRA’s list of supporting documents for cases of re-verification includes land records registered prior to 1978, a genealogical record from the revenue department (*shajarah-yi-nasab*) and, from before 1978, local/domicile certificates, government employment certificates, educational documents and arms or driving licenses or manual national identity cards issued by the Directorate General of Registration that preceded NADRA.¹ In part, the reason for the 1978 date is since that is the time that a large number of Afghan refugees

¹ During my fieldwork with Pashtun migrants, many of those going through re-verification processes referenced these documents. They are also listed in the news report “Method of unblocking CNIC can turn Chaudhry Nisar ‘Sikh’”: PkMAP minister, *The Express Tribune*, June 2, 2017.

entered Pakistan, as a result, if Pakistani Pashtuns are indeed Pakistani, they would have documents preceding 1978.

Importantly, given that the NADRA card is biometric-based, one might assume that the question of citizen re-verification, and by extension unblocking, might involve authenticating the biometric identity of the cardholder. However, as the previous chapter demonstrates, what is under verification is not an individual's identity as established through unique bodily characteristics. Rather, what is at stake is an identity determined through authentic designation as a member of one's kin group. As earlier chapters have described, there are multiple formal reasons behind NADRA's reliance on kinship. This and the following chapters will show how the reliance on kinship is also historically connected to Pakistan's regime of citizenship, and the way it has tied belonging to territory. The second half of this chapter will delve into the historical underpinnings of the contemporary citizenship regime, showing how Pakistan's identification regime was structured around the question of mobility and migration from its inception in 1947.

In Tarnol, we can trace the implications of such a citizenship re-verification process through the lived experience of frontier residents. This chapter will describe how, through the everyday social world of Tarnol, we see that the identity card does not denote individual identity (“does this card index *me*?”) as much as it raises the question of who is entitled to have a clearly designated identity as authenticated by the Pakistani state. Even as all NADRA card holders are apprehended as individuals, some individual identities are recognized while others are constantly challenged, questioned and blocked. As a result, the verification process asks blocked cardholders to embark on a journey of document collection to not only prove relatedness to kin but also their rootedness in specific locations.

The way that a blocked person, likely also a migrant, collects documents from both relatives and government offices reveals a meandering itinerary. Ironically enough, it is this circuitous migrant

path that might have caused the problem in the first place. I will now turn to how the document collection process involves traveling to homes in neighborhoods past, leaning on old friends in offices in towns once lived in and encountering new obstacles in an ancestral place. While this could be read through the lens of hardship and inconvenience—both of which were not absent in the descriptions they provided—I will focus on the underlying assumption, logic and effects of verification that can be observed through these experiences.

Proving Belonging

Mir Nawaz told me that his relatives back in the village complained “you just bring your dead to bury them here.” It was this grievance that prompted his family, living in Islamabad, to periodically send gifts and contribute to the upkeep of their lands, mostly barren and mountainous. Mir Nawaz belonged to the Mohmand Agency bordering Afghanistan but had lived in Islamabad since 1994. He complained that he had heard military officials refer to Mohmand as the “red line” implying that it was considered a dangerous zone. “They don’t want people from the ‘red line’ to be in their precious Islamabad, but why should we not come?”

This rejection was exemplified by the fact that Mir Nawaz’s entire household, a total of thirty individuals, were blocked. Since NADRA requires some documentary proof of residence in Pakistan before 1978—prior to the time that a large number of Afghan refugees entered Pakistan—Mir Nawaz had provided two manual identity cards of two grandparents. These were from Swabi in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the town the family had moved to when they initially migrated from Mohmand. These documents represent one stop in their move towards Islamabad.

Mir Nawaz’s family had been called for a “board” to the Deputy Commissioner’s office in Islamabad, and that is where he took these documents. The board is an interview-style meeting where the individual with a blocked card is asked to bring supporting documents and is also asked questions aimed at verifying their identity. For his board in Islamabad, Mir Nawaz even took his

great grandfather's service card from World War II. His own father had served in the war against India in 1965 and had some documentation from then. "Despite this, are you telling me they can't 'verify' me?" he asked.

NADRA informed Mir Nawaz that they were unable to find the manual cards' record in their database of scanned paper registers.² In the absence of the kind of proof that NADRA required, Mir Nawaz and his family took a trip to Mohmand to acquire the documents needed for the process. As part of this process, they had their family "*lungi*" registered. The *lungi* is a record of tribal leadership, although it is not always in paper document form. Mir Nawaz's maternal grandfather's and great grandfather's physical *lungi*—a headdress—were present in his natal village. However, to produce the proof of this *lungi* they needed not one political agent but four *maliks*, local tribal leaders, along with money and time.³ Mir Nawaz reasserted the position his family held in their natal village which allowed them to have these resources and such a record. "What about those who do not have *lungis* in their family? How do they prove their connection to the tribal areas?"⁴

Mir Nawaz's frustration centered on how close he would come to being unblocked only to have another obstacle emerge. Occasionally officials from the intelligence agencies visit the homes of those who have blocked cards. Mir Nawaz claimed that they had visited their home six times. He also alleged that they once asked for RS. 50,000 and when he refused to give it to them, the official said his file would be sent back into re-verification. In the end, Mir Nawaz and his family went to get a court order from Peshawar. Finally, when he ended up in the Islamabad NADRA office, the family's cards were finally unblocked.

² The following chapter details how "manual" cards were produced and analyzes how they ultimately came to be scanned by NADRA.

³ The "war on terror," military intervention by the Pakistani army, and growing militancy in general in the frontier region, has disrupted the local *maliki* system of tribal governance and leadership. See White (2008).

⁴ As the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas were not fully "settled" by the colonial state in India, the land documentation system (inherited by the postcolonial state) differs significantly across tribal regions and the rest of Pakistan. See Nichols (2001).

However, the women of the house who had been married into the family (affinal kin) remained blocked. While often blocking spreads contagiously across familial lines, unblocking can be more halting in its effects. How some family members remain blocked while others are unblocked exacerbates the quality of indeterminacy and sense of unease and frustration amongst the whole family. Mir Nawaz, for instance, was stumped by this, “these women are part of our family, so it only makes sense that they should be unblocked too.” If it was difficult for Mir Nawaz to collect his family’s documents, it was even more complicated to locate evidentiary documents for the women married into the family. For women, the lack of independent mobility, migration after marriage, and increased spatial distance further compounded their lack of access to documentation from their natal homes.

Most blocked migrants I encountered had a narrative about unblocking that was entangled with experiences of a migrant path. By tracing their documentary lives back to the correct sites and locations, they would be able to pass what appeared to them to be a test of their belonging and arrival. For this, they needed to be located—spatially and materially—in the records of a particular place in a particular time.

For Mir Nawaz, a well-connected man with his own business, the process of collecting documents involved a sporadic and incoherent itinerary between his village in the tribal areas to Islamabad, involving multiple locations in between, such as Peshawar and Swabi. Not to mention, Mir Nawaz encountered various kinds of bureaucratic settings far beyond the NADRA office. The NADRA offices are only one node within a larger ecology of bureaucratic document production. In fact, other offices in Islamabad, such as the District Commissioner’s office or the union council offices, too were only one node in a broader circuit of document collection for those whose cards were blocked. The work of collecting the necessary documents does not disappear with the

centralized identity database; the burden of collecting these documents also constitutes the process of verifying oneself.⁵

The ability to authenticate yourself in various locations requires maintaining ties across space and time, between your current location and those of potentially not of your own past but also of your ancestors.⁶ Quite often this would also require a working knowledge of how different regional systems of documentation work so as to navigate them successfully. When Mir Nawaz described the *lungi* system in the tribal areas to me, he added that it took him a while to figure out how it worked, which contributed to the time it took him to get the proper documentation. Beyond the question of lay expertise, the difficulty of maintaining ties was also a common problem. The importance of being present and playing one's part in the extended clan's celebrations and their tragedies (*ghami-kebushi*) was obviously key. While practices such as intermarriages and a strong sense of obligation to attend weddings and funerals help sustain these larger networks, the resentments nonetheless grow. Unlike Mir Nawaz who took the responsibility for the upkeep of familial relations, not everybody is able to maintain this material and affective connection with their place of origin. In the absence of this tight knit network, which reveals an underlying ethical obligation, the capacity to verify yourself in places linked to your or your families' past is also curtailed.

Yet not all blocked migrants are able to move back and forth between current residence and past homes. Firstly, there are those, especially in a neighborhood such as Tarnol, who are engaged in

⁵ Identification is grounded in material documentary practices and trajectories, where each blocked migrant is expected to carve out their own route according to their unique identity and its material proof. See Riles (2006) on the relationship between documents and knowledge production, Gitelman (2014) on the historical role of materiality in the production of documents in the digital age and Tarlo (2001) on the role of paper and related material practices in producing the everyday state in South Asia.

⁶ In the (formerly) Federally Administered Tribal Areas specifically, given the absence of a regular revenue settlement, the documents connecting families to land—including property deeds as well as the *shajarah-yi-nasab*, a genealogical chart that connects kin units to the land in question—are also conspicuously absent. As a result, many people have to approach the political agent of the tribal agency to obtain a domicile certificate. However, the domicile certificate did not appear to carry as much weight as documents, such as land deeds, which evidenced longer term belonging. Frequently, people also made copies of parents' government service cards, and in quite a few cases, these included militia identity cards issued to the tribesmen who fought the 1948 war in Kashmir.

wage labor (*dehari*) and seek to avoid check posts and other kinds of obstacles to their ability to earn a daily wage. One acquaintance from Tarnol said he knew he had to collect documents from Peshawar but being a taxi driver, he could not take a day off and still make ends meet. Since blocking usually affected whole families, often one person in the family (such as one brother out of many) would take on the burden of bureaucratic labor if his work allowed.

By asking Pashtun migrants, mostly working-class, to return to the tribal areas to collect evidentiary documents, NADRA officials reaffix their identities to the frontier, not by forced return but through the databased forms of identification that they need most in the city for basic functions such as banking, schools and the police. Furthermore, documentary requirements, or “bird’s milk” in Mir Nawaz’s words, is not the only means by which this affixing happens.

Fixing Frontier Identities

Hamida Bibi, an interlocutor I introduced in the introduction to this book, had struggled with a blocked identity card for close to five years. Hamida Bibi’s family was from Mohmand Agency but she had moved to Islamabad as a young child with her parents who were escaping a family feud at the time. Eventually, the feud was resolved but for this reason they did not return to Mohmand for much of Hamida’s childhood. As mentioned in the introduction to this book, the source of blocking for Hamida Bibi was her son. He had given his parents’ original identity cards to his business partner, who was an Afghan. As it turned out, this man was also Hamida Bibi’s distant relative through her son’s wife. This man, who was an Afghan refugee, had used Hamida Bibi and her husband’s identity cards and claimed at the NADRA Registration Center that they were his parents. When he took a repatriation package offered by UNHCR to return to Afghanistan, and likely registered for the Proof of Registration Card, NADRA blocked Hamida Bibi and her family’s cards. At that point, Hamida Bibi and her family’s citizenship reverification process, which included “boards” began.

Hamida Bibi told me that she could not keep track of all of her “boards” (interview style verification) but the most recent one had happened about six months before our conversation. She explained that she and her son went together. They took all the documents they had, which included her father-in-law’s identity card (who was also her paternal uncle) and documents dating to the early 1990s that showed that her and her husband’s family had owned a wood shop in Islamabad. Hamida Bibi told me “There was an official (*afsar*) from the tribal agency of Mohmand there. He asked me where my village in Mohmand was. I told him. Then he asked me where the primary school in my village was, and I told him. *Then* he asked me where the post office was, and that I had no idea about.” Hamida Bibi explained that she had left as a child and hardly went back, or when she did, “I am not mailing letters on my short visit for a wedding or a funeral.” I found it intriguing that it was not only Hamida Bibi’s documents and relations that were under scrutiny but also her memory and her ability to prove that she was in fact familiar with the space she claimed to belong to. In addition to the documents that rooted her in Mohmand, this mode of interrogation also sought to establish Hamida Bibi’s link to the tribal areas. Thus, NADRA’s verification procedures reaffix Pashtun migrants like Hamida Bibi to the geographical location of the frontier.

Hamida Bibi’s card was not unblocked immediately after this. In fact, she heard nothing after this board interview. It took close to another two years until her card was finally unblocked after her brothers went with her to the NADRA office and appealed on her behalf. “My brothers are kind and supportive, thankfully, otherwise many women are not lucky to have such helpful brothers who would do this and even risk their own cards for a sister.” While she appreciated her brothers’ loyalty and the risks they had taken, she was aware of the pressures this produced. “I wanted to go to the NADRA office and tell the officials all the pain this has caused me and my family but my brothers had told me ‘you don’t say a word when we get in there.’ They think I talk too much and might say something wrong in front of the officer.” Hamida Bibi was very frustrated about this and

explained that when she went to finally pick up her identity card after it had been unblocked, she did manage to vent a little to the person who delivered the card to her. The impact of the blocked card on Hamida Bibi, which at one point she described to me as “shredding her heart” (*dil katta ja raba hai*), speaks to the effects of indeterminacy—of not knowing whether it will be unblocked or not, of whether one will have to remain in this situation.

Moreover, being blocked produced a chain of kinned dependencies. Hamida Bibi’s two sons and daughters-in-law were blocked too. Like Hamida Bibi, her daughter-in-law too relied on her brothers to accompany her and her daughter to the Military Hospital in Rawalpindi where her daughter was being treated and they required an identity card for entry. Hamida Bibi’s younger son had given up leaving the neighborhood, since he was harassed by the police so much in the absence of an identity card. “So now I have to take the children to any doctor appointments, to visit any of our relatives who live in Pindi or anything that requires leaving the neighborhood... since the police don’t stop women as much,” his wife complained to me.

Bureaucratic Labor

In addition to maintaining a complex familial network across space and familial generations, the unblocking process seems to require a go-getter spirit and perseverance. Hafiz Sahib suggested this directly, complimenting himself on his “I get things done” mentality. He talked at length about this, starting with a meeting held in the open area outside his house. He said that when he used his contact, a Jamiat-e-Ulema Islam (F) politician, to go meet with an official at the District Commissioner’s office to address the blocked cards problem. He asked twenty others to go with him. “But these people are lazy, they cannot think ahead, and they refused to come with me. The one who came with me, you see, his card has already been unblocked.” Hafiz Sahib impressed upon me that stuff doesn’t just get done like that. “You can’t just sit here wishing your card hadn’t been blocked, you have to *move* to get it unblocked.”

What does it mean to move in the way that Hafiz Sahib implies? This section so far has described how the unblocking process quite literally pushes blocked migrants to travel from city to city and across regions to follow their own documentary past. Such movement simultaneously involves the ability to navigate governmental spaces and protocols. Having a reference from a politically influential person or a reference from any given office is important for this reason: it helps one move, with minimal friction, through an otherwise potentially opaque and complex process.⁷

The ways that people make sense of the ability or inability to move is varied.

“When you go to the thana (jail?), there is no Station House Officer (SHO) there. You go to the Union Council office, there is never a patwari (revenue official) there. This is the very basic level of inconvenience that people face. Then every department has one of those officials who do not want to get any work done. And yet, it is better not to fire them because then they create even more trouble. But it is terrible when you encounter one of these yourself. After everything I have been through, in the end, one of the men I met through this whole blocked card process, he wanted me to get him a refrigerator. When I said no, my card went back into verification.”
(Author’s field notes, November 2018)

Mir Nawaz, quoted above, is referring to what many would understand as corruption. Aside from the openly vocalized demand for a refrigerator, it is often difficult to determine what practices are explicitly corrupt (Sneath 2006). In *Paper Tiger*, Nayanika Mathur shows that while corruption is likely rampant (arguably not only in the global South), corruption as an “explanatory trope” (2016, 17) is insufficient. In the case of NADRA, it fails to account for why blocking happens and how it is dealt with by NADRA officials and blocked persons. More generally, corruption as an explanation does not capture the ways the Pakistani state *does* function, and that too quite effectively as a security apparatus.

⁷ Veena Das (2019) argues that the illegibility of rules and regulations, and by extension of the state itself (potentially heightened in the case of a security state, and its identification regimes) is in fact instrumental to its very operations.

While Hafiz Sahib posited the argument that one needs to build resources—contacts, references, persistence and even a certain kind of charm—to get one’s “bureaucratic work” (*sarkari kaam*) done, Mir Nawaz criticized the need for this in the first place. Mir Nawaz is not only frustrated with the obstacle filled course of unblocking procedures but also the way such procedures further entrench the role of the everyday state—not to mention, the normalized character of such a role—in the lives of ordinary citizens. While complaining about NADRA’s procedures, Mir Nawaz contextualized that he has been fighting incompetent bureaucrats for the last twenty years. He proudly retells a number of stories, ranging from how he got a corrupt village level revenue official (*patwari*) suspended to interventions against the police, who unfairly confiscate local business’s supplies on a seemingly regular basis. Mir Nawaz connected these encounters with local corruption to NADRA, and the inconvenience caused by inefficient regional offices that people have to visit multiple times. He makes implicit references to the “going rate” of certain officials’ signatures, both in the tribal areas and in Islamabad.

Mir Nawaz’s situation highlights how he (and other blocked persons like him) have to become the material compilers and mediators of their documentary existence across a variety of state institutions. As Akhil Gupta posits, in order to grasp the operations of the state we need to understand it as a disaggregated array of institutions (Gupta 2012, 70). In this vein, Mir Nawaz’s frustration at the very structure of things and his inability to access the bureaucratic logic may be quite just. However, it reveals a fundamental aspect of how a security state verifies identity: by running the blocked person through the vast scale, spatial and temporal, of its disaggregated institution.

Mir Nawaz offered a policy alternative to NADRA’s current blocking procedure. He said he accepted that NADRA had a “problem with Afghans” and that they needed to “conduct their inquiry.” However, he suggested, they should not block cards before the inquiry had been finished

and the person concerned was definitively determined as an “alien.” Both Mir Nawaz and Hafiz Sahib represent figures that highlight how encounters with the state are mediated on the neighborhood level, namely through intermediaries who possess contacts, resources as well as lay expertise around matters of paperwork and bureaucratic procedures. The blocked person is hardly ever alone in this process.

Alaina Lemon argues that bureaucratic practices activate dyadic illusions, privileging configurations that produce a “certain *kind* of dyad: decoder reads sender, conceived as an individual who either hides or reveals information” (2019, 136). Building on the work of linguistic anthropologists who “have been fighting the dyadic fetish for decades, drawing from feminist observations about power, as well as from thinkers such as Voloshinov, Bakhtin, or Goffman, who all worked to subvert both the idea that the individual is the only kind of subject or agency that matters and the dyadic, speaker-hearer model of communication,” Lemon (2019, 138) brings attention to not only how dyadic models persist and what they produce but also how multiple participants and overlapping channels can disrupt them. NADRA reliance on kinship relations compels NADRA’s identification procedures to incorporate multiple, non-dyadic points of connection into the identity database. However, through the data-entry and registration process (described in Chapter One) and by generating familial units (through documents like the Family Registration Certificate which list all members of the nuclear family), NADRA does produce dyadic illusions. It simplifies multiple persons and relations into kin units, which are then directly verifiable by government officials. The “family intruder”—as described in Chapter 2, a person who falsely alleges to be related to a verifiable identity in the NADRA database—is a leak in an otherwise established channel between uniquely identified families and NADRA.

Yet such leaks produce their own channels. They can provoke contact between the “intruder” and the family they have intruded into.⁸ Those who are blocked are inadvertently collectivized through their shared experience and identity of being blocked. This was the case in Tarnol and other locations where blocked card-holders have also organized protests.⁹ More broadly, blocking a card is in itself a communicative act: conveying the suspect identity of its holder to other governmental entities and spaces (schools, hospitals and checkpoints) as well as non-governmental ones (banks, telecommunication companies).

In response, mediators such as Mir Nawaz and Hafiz Sahib recognize the “blocked-ness” of the neighborhood as a collective problem and attempt to fix it through multiple (occasionally conflicting) channels both within the neighborhood and beyond it. For instance, by speculating on the *double patta* problem, and entreating people to streamline their records, Hafiz Sahib attempts to organize the threads of connection between people and places. In so doing, he is organizing attention¹⁰ around the information on the card in ways that could potentially clear a channel (to the state) that is currently blocked. Mir Nawaz’s strategy is a little different: when he criticizes the role of the intelligence services, he identifies a parallel channel—external to Tarnol—that is muddying what should be the main channel.

Beyond explicitly identifying and proposing solutions to the problem of blocked cards, much of Hafiz Sahib and Mir Nawaz’s mediating work is grounded in everyday practices of sociality. By turning to politicians and “influential” people beyond Tarnol, Hafiz Sahib builds upon existing

⁸ NADRA’s view of a family is enacted through the dedicated efforts of those who need documents and local connections from “family” that they may not have had much relation to. For instance, women like Hamida Bibi articulate experiences that explicitly speak to the way that fraught kin ties intersect with the pressures of bureaucratic labor initiated by the verification process. The grievances against Mir Nawaz by his family members in Mohmand also highlight how documentary requirements put pressure on family relations. Furthermore, fraught kin relations, and family disagreements, can often translate to family members withholding particular documents (such as a shared grandparent’s manual identity card or government service card) as a means to take revenge and spite an estranged relative.

⁹ “PM Imran Khan takes notice of people protesting against blocked CNICs in Lahore,” *Samaa*, September 1, 2018.

¹⁰ Lemon defines “organizing attention” as that practice which “requires making decisions about which contrasts make a proper difference” (2018, 150).

channels of social connections and expands his circle of reciprocity. Ideally, expanding this circle of connections would not only unblock his card and clarify his own identity status, but also do the same for others in Tarnol who look towards Hafiz Sahib to resolve their collectively clogged channel with NADRA. Julia Elyachar (2010) describes these highly ubiquitous practices of sociality, of which the reliance on connections is but one part, as a form of “phatic labor.” She argues that the everyday social infrastructure of communicative channels is a fundamental component of Cairo’s (her field site) political economy—just as train tracks, bridges or telephone lines might be. At the same time, she does not approach the analytic of the network “as an interlocking web of individuals, as a coordinator of individual interests, or as a framework for action. Instead, I analyze communicative channels that I maintain are an outcome of practices of sociality on their own terms, as distinct objects of inquiry” (2010, 455). This approach allows us to see another aspect of Hafiz Sahib and Mir Nawaz’s work of building, extending, and maintaining communicative channels both within and beyond Tarnol.

Hafiz Sahib, for instance, organized a large gathering (up to fifty individuals) of Tarnol residents with blocked identity cards in an open ground near his house to which I was invited too. He arranged for chai, biscuits, and cold drinks for all those present, and got two to three young men attending college to compile a list of names and blocked ID card numbers. As mentioned earlier, he met with his contact in the political party JUI-F and urged him to reach out to his contacts at the District Commissioner’s office in Islamabad. Even as he was dissatisfied with the size of the group and wanted greater collective action, he ultimately led a delegation of fifteen heads of household to the District Commissioner’s office and requested his political contact to accompany this group. It would be impossible for Hafiz Sahib to call upon his contacts if it were not for the consistent work he puts into keeping those channels open, building into them the potential of clearing up other

blockages. While the identity infrastructure in Tarnol is a primary area of concern, it is not the only one.

Neighborhoods such as Tarnol—newer settlements on the cusp of (in)formality that require developmental work (such as sewers, or garbage removal) that the municipality may not have taken on as yet—especially require this specialized labor of communicating with bureaucrats as well as other local influential persons. In such a space where the rules are only partially delineated, or worked out as neighborhood dynamics are established, the politics of recognition (in relation to the state) is more crucial than ever. Mir Nawaz’s critique, while resonant with a broader anti-corruption discourse, is part of a curious politics where he reproduces a reference-based bureaucratic culture that he criticizes. As Das argues, the documentary practices of the state take on a whole new life in community practices. Even in resisting the state, social practices such as Mir Nawaz’s continue to reproduce it in new ways (Das XXXX, 234). In fact, NADRA compels blocked families to engage in the bureaucratic labor of collecting records and making contact with government officials across departments in ways that NADRA itself, or any other government department for that matter, cannot do. In the localized context of Tarnol, simultaneously both urban space and *ilaqa ghair* (a space beyond governance), the desire for recognition by the state is interconnected with surveillance regimes in the neighborhood and at large. In fact, one does not appear to be possible without the other (Weitzberg et al, 2021).

As Mir Nawaz pointed out, the question is not one of exclusion alone. The political consciousness and dynamics produced, especially during the quest for unblocking, reveal the forms of critique available. The quest for unblocking is not a demand for inclusion in any straightforward way. Rather, re-verifying identity involves engaging with a politics of recognition in an indeterminate and for some, seemingly endless, cycle of evidence acquisition and presentation of the self— “bird’s

milk, in other words”¹¹ What forms of identity and social life emerge then through the process of identifying the self, not only as a subject of the state but also a community engaging in political processes? The struggles of unblocking illustrate how exclusion can be generative of political community. In part, this is because removal from the identity database makes visible the longstanding ways in which inclusion was perhaps always contingent and historically uneven.

While NADRA’s capacity to block and unblock the computerized national identity card is tied to its ability to network kin relations through the affordances of its database, the logic of citizenship reverification—the regime of evidencing belonging through documents—extends further back. The process of deciding who belonged to the territory of Pakistan was fraught from the very beginning, as it was profoundly shaped by the mass migration and displacement that came with Partition in 1947. In this way, as the previous chapter described, NADRA’s current mode of frontierization through digital identification, heightened and visible in places like Tarnol, can be historically situated within the early postcolonial practice of constructing and policing internal frontiers, attempting to harden them into national boundaries through documentary regimes.

The Historical Landscape of Identity Documentation

The terrain of identity documentation in postcolonial South Asia was constituted through not only independence in 1947 but, more importantly, through the violent partition of Punjab and Bengal that provoked a mass migration—one instance in the production of an internal frontier (Zamindar 2007). Mass migration, and the desire to control the flow of persons, motivated many of the

¹¹ Elizabeth Povinelli argues in *The Cunning of Recognition* that “the generative power of liberal forms of recognition derives not merely from the performative difficulties of recognition but also from something that sociologists and philosophers have called moral sensibility, of the social fact of the feeling of *being obliged*, of finding oneself under an obligation to something, or to a complex of things” (Povinelli 2002, 4). This moral sensibility, which might break down under critical argumentation, takes the form of a militarized security logic in Pakistan. Pakistan’s long history of military rule has allowed the military to arrogate to itself, and only to itself, the possibility of safety, stability and orderliness (Siddiq 2007). Post 9/11, securitization has begun to operate as a “good” under which practices of governance are constructed. Since security depends on identification, the ubiquity of securitized regimes such as NADRA has been enabled by such a general moral sense. As a result, most people experience an obligation that sets into motion a spiraling scramble for recognition.

questions around *who* was entitled to inhabit the territory now called Pakistan. While this may seem straightforward—through the assumption that those who “chose” to enter Pakistan or stay in Pakistan would become a Pakistani citizen—the process of determining who had “chosen” Pakistan or more specifically, who had the documents to prove such a choice, had to be established from scratch.¹² Moreover, the documents that were to determine who was entitled to what were themselves under construction.

The most important of these documents, at this time, was undoubtedly the passport. Vazira Zamindar has detailed how the passport in India and Pakistan was a document that was not only for purposes of travel (as it was during an imperial context) but became connected to nationality in unprecedented ways (Zamindar 2007, 182). As Zamindar shows, Pakistan pushed for the transition to the passport from the permit system in 1952,¹³ as there were fraught tensions concerning *muhajirs* in Karachi and contentious debates calling for “damming the deluge,” for Karachi was deemed “full” (Zamindar 2007, 170). The Pakistani government hoped the passport system would stem the flow of what they understood as “one-way traffic,” and so they also put into place a limit date of January 1, 1952, on all incoming migrants. The passport was intended to settle the question, once and for all, of who was a citizen as opposed to a foreigner. Ultimately, the question of citizenship, however, remained open and contested in both public discourse and in the experience of families who were divided across the border. The story of the national identity card, and ultimately NADRA, as the following chapter will show, reveals how the Pakistani state ultimately turned to alternative

¹² The process of establishing citizenship, as I will discuss in more detail below, was highly fraught because officials also made determinations with the question of evacuee property in mind. Zamindar (2007) shows how many who had temporarily fled were dispossessed through this process.

¹³ The permit system was put into place by India, and essentially required governmental permission in the form of a permit to travel back and forth, and it was used to stem the flow of “returning Muslims” who had fled violence during Partition (Zamindar 2007, 84).

means (to the passport) to not only resolve the ambiguities of citizenship but to instrumentalize them.

While I draw on scholarship that demonstrates how Pakistan and India settled the complex questions of citizenship and belonging in the context of post-Partition South Asia, my goal in the second half of this chapter is much narrower: to follow how notions of belonging came to be embedded within the very structure of identity documentation in Pakistan during the post-Partition period. The historiography on this period has established that the desire, on the part of both India and Pakistan, to secure the border and limit the grant of citizenship hinged on “documentary identities” (Roy 2016). Geographical border crossings were far from insignificant to this story, particularly in the experiences of violence during Partition. However, when I refer to preoccupations about “the border,” these preoccupations are primarily in reference to the documentary technologies that enabled or constrained movement across the border.

During the early formative period after Partition, the nascent Pakistani state had to determine the meaning of distinct identity documents—in particular the emergency certificate, the citizenship certificate, the domicile, the passport as well as other supplementary documents such as birth and marriage certificates—linking them to territory and entitlements in order to control the flow of migrants within the context of the newly-formed national territory. In particular, Pakistani government officials struggled to establish a stable link between a given document identifying an individual and an entitlement of citizenship for that individual.

To this end, I closely examine individual cases of adjudicating the allocation of identity documents in order to trace how the context-dependent meaning of securitization—at this time focused on controlling migration from across the border with India—was understood through debates over evidentiary practices in Pakistan. In this section, I trace the internal discussions and occasionally diverging perspectives between government officials at the Interior Ministry, the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Central States, the Ministry of Law as well as the Ministry of Rehabilitation and Refugees. The Ministry of Interior, and its Citizenship Section in particular, was authorized to issue citizenship certificates and these would be put towards applications for passports. Many of the debates I am concerned with in this chapter arise during correspondences between Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Central States (F.A & C.S), as the latter was occasionally the point of contact for Muslim refugees from India and was concerned with foreign policy, external affairs, and diplomatic relations with other countries, most prominently during this period, India. The Ministry of Law would be consulted about nascent citizenship provisions, which were either in the process of being drafted or had been very recently drafted, in relation to the cases the other ministries received. Lastly, the Ministry of Rehabilitation and Refugees would be contacted if the question of evacuee property—property that had been left behind when its owners fled Pakistan during Partition violence—arose in relation to a given case. Specifically, I focus on the debates that emerge after the introduction of the passport system in 1952—as these officials continually redefined the meaning of particular documents and who was entitled to them as they adjudicated individual cases.

In particular, after the passport system was instituted at the insistence of the Pakistani government, cross-border traffic continued to move from India to Pakistan through the then “illegal” border crossing at Khokhrapar.¹⁴ As a result, the ambiguity of who was entitled to

¹⁴ As Zamindar describes, Khokhrapar is a border crossing that emerged “illegally” in Sindh, which Muslim refugees continued to use in the 1950s to enter from India if they had been denied a permit or could not wait for one. While the Indian government policed this crossing such that people could not enter from Pakistan into India, on the Pakistani side there were official and unofficial services for entry. The Pakistani government announced that they would close it after May 1950 but as Zamindar shows, and my examination of documents evidence, this remained relatively unpoliced. Other travel between India and West Pakistan took place through train services (particularly between Karachi and Delhi via Jodhpur) and by air between cities and at other border crossings such as at Wagah in Punjab. Khokhrapar, however, was particularly significant because it was the main point of crossing for Muslim migrants coming from India who were primarily headed for Karachi (in Sindh). In 1965, when war broke out between India and Pakistan, Khokhrapar and other travel services between India and Pakistan were closed. The eastern frontier, between West Bengal in India and East Pakistan was geographically more difficult to police and thus remained a route for those who wished to move

citizenship and, by extension, who was entitled to a Pakistani passport, continued to prove difficult for bureaucrats responsible for determining each case. Correspondence between the Citizenship Section of the Ministry of Interior in Pakistan and adjacent departments such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Law and the Ministry of Rehabilitation reveal the deep and fraught ambiguities around who was entitled to what document. The question of whether an individual's possession of a given document, even a passport, translated to something meaningful, like nationality, remained open for more than a decade. As I show below, officials from the Interior Ministry lamented the fact that this very question had already been settled through the decision to institute the passport system, and yet had to be continually re-adjudicated.

Yet it was precisely because the passport was supposed to signify nationality, according to Pakistan and India's bilateral agreement, that Pakistani officials sought to control access to *other* travel and identity documents that could potentially allow an applicant to eventually apply for a passport. Debates between bureaucrats concerning nationality and citizenship emerged as they discussed the evidentiary value of particularities including the issue of minor age, gender, domicile and kinship. Possessing a Pakistani passport—given that so many Muslims had used it to move back and forth between India—still could not definitively translate into Pakistani citizenship after the passport system came into place. As a result, attempts to control the kind of documentation that could incrementally lead up to a passport moved to other kinds of documents, particularly citizenship and emergency certificates (and domiciles to a lesser degree), whose meaning in relation to citizenship then had to be settled. In short, once the passport system was put into place, the validation ambiguity surrounding other documents that aspiring citizens attempted to acquire also had to be resolved.

across the border (Zamindar 2007, 235). This border, now between Bangladesh and India, has since become highly securitized and regulated (Ghosh 2019; Mookherjee 2019; Cons 2016).

For the purpose of tracking how this crucial period of post-1947 document-formation gave way to a national identity card scheme as we see in the case of NADRA, these early discussions around specific, individual cases as they were adjudicated by bureaucrats were key for connecting individual and citizen identity to distinct evidentiary documents. In this early moment in Pakistan’s history impacted by unprecedented migration, Pakistani bureaucrats struggled to settle the meaning of documents that evidenced both individual identity, and potentially citizenship, by debating the implications of linking a given document to a particular entitlement. I will now turn to three such debates to consider how government officials in Pakistan—*after* the introduction of the passport system—sought to determine the status and entitlements provided by a passport, an emergency certificate, a birth certificate, and a domicile. In analyzing their discussion, I attend to how these documents operated within a broader ecology where it was precisely their interconnections that structured bureaucratic practice around them.

The New Passport

In 1952, Sir Mohammed Currimbhoy applied for a Pakistani passport.¹⁵ Currimbhoy belonged to a Gujrati Khoja (Ismaili Muslim) family that had a shipping and trading business in Bombay, India. According to the Interior Ministry records, his father, Sir Currimbhoy Ebrahim Baronet had arrived in Karachi from India in 1948 on a temporary permit, which was then extended. Travel permits were used to regulate travel between India and Pakistan before the passport system had been instituted, and according to the agreements of this system it was the Indian government that would issue Currimbhoy’s permit to travel to Bombay. For his second application to extend the travel permit, the Bombay Government “adopted a silent attitude”¹⁶ which led the elder Currimbhoy and his family to getting “stuck” in Pakistan. Subsequently, the Pakistani government granted him a passport

¹⁵ Letter from the Assistant Secretary to the Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Interior, dated 24 September 1953. F. 11/32/50-Poll(I), Serial No. 71, Citizenship Section, Ministry of Interior, NAP.

¹⁶ Ibid.

to travel to Ceylon and the Middle East. Sir Currimbhoy then travelled to Bombay from Ceylon, was arrested, and then somehow escaping arrest, he returned to Karachi. From that point onwards, since 1950, the Currimbhoy family had been residing in Pakistan.

The Ministry of Interior noted that according to the Pakistani Citizenship Act of 1951, “every person shall be deemed to be a citizen of Pakistan who before the commencement thereof migrated to the territories now included in Pakistan from any territory in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent outside these territories, with the intention of residing permanently in those territories.”¹⁷ Yet, the Assistant Secretary also noted that the Currimbhoy family came to Pakistan “under peculiar circumstances,” (although he does not detail what these are) and had no intention to reside in Pakistan permanently. The question of intention, and specifically the intention with which travel occurred and passports were acquired, was significant for determining the validity of Sir Currimbhoy Ebrahim’s son’s application.

Not only was there insufficient “proof of his intention,” the fact that Sir Currimbhoy was granted a Pakistani passport was not “prima facie, conclusive proof of Pakistani citizenship of the holder.” This generated a debate about whether the passport—issued before the commencement of the passport system—*could* serve as proof of Currimbhoy’s national status. The Deputy Secretary from the Ministry of Interior requested clarification on whether persons making applications for passports before the enactment of the Pakistan Citizenship Act, 1951 were required to write down “British subjects” or “Pakistani British subjects.”¹⁸ He also questioned when the practice of writing “citizen of Pakistan” on the passport began. Further, if Currimbhoy was not considered a citizen, then why was he issued a passport at all?¹⁹

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Letter from the Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Central States, dated 30 September 1953. F. 11/32/50-Poll(I), Serial No. 71, Citizenship Section, Ministry of Interior, NAP.

¹⁹ Ibid.

The response he received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Law clarified that prior to the commencement of the Pakistan Citizenship Act 1951, all Pakistanis were described as “Pakistani British” subjects. However, given that Pakistan was a member of the Commonwealth and could issue Pakistani passports to the citizens of other Commonwealth countries, the issue of a Pakistani passport did “not necessarily mean that he (Currimbhoy) is a citizen of Pakistan.”²⁰ Not only was the meaning of the passport in relation to nationality unsettled at this point, this discussion and the dual category of “Pakistani British” subject shows how an independent citizenship status took multiple years and significant effort to take shape in the early years of Pakistan.

Further, an official from Foreign Affairs emphasized that Currimbhoy clearly had no intention to settle in Pakistan; he had only acquired a passport to go abroad and “enter India from some other country stealthily.”²¹ Hence, in this case the family’s residence in Karachi prior to the limit date of the 1951 Pakistan Citizenship Act as well as the possession of a Pakistani passport did not entitle Sir Currimbhoy to Pakistani citizenship, or more specifically, another Pakistani passport. The officials determined what a passport could mean and what it would mean, particularly in relation to citizenship, by situating it within a broader set of facts. They took into consideration the intention with which it had been requested and what it had been used for. This reveals how, after the transition to the passport system in 1952, the relationship between an earlier passport under the colonial regime (a travel document) and the new Pakistani one had to be re-established. Not only were officials unsure of whether issuing the original passport might have implied Pakistani citizenship, they also needed to confirm how bureaucratic norms operated prior to the initiation of

²⁰ Letter from Abdul Hamid, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Law to Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Interior, dated 9 November 1953. U.O No.2873/53, Serial No. 71, Citizenship Section, Ministry of Interior, NAP.

²¹ Letter from S.H. Firoz, Ministry of F.A & C.R to Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Interior, dated 21 October 1953. D.9936-PV11/53. Serial No. 71, Citizenship Section, Ministry of Interior, NAP.

the passport system. Possession of a Pakistani passport by a father during the permit system could not guarantee a passport for his son during the passport system. In this way, the sheer fact of movement across the border, as well as seemingly conflicting loyalties, outweighed the ostensible legitimacy of documents such as a passport and legal conditions such as residence in Pakistan.

The Emergency Certificate

Given that the Pakistani state's motivation was to limit migration after the mass movement of refugees in 1947, it attempted to do so by controlling the issue of Pakistani passports since these travel documents were now increasingly connected to nationality. However, the fact that Pakistan was supposed to be a "Muslim homeland" complicated matters, and all documentary provisions to incoming refugees could not be halted altogether. Yad Elahi's case, which I discuss in this section, is one of many that highlights this legal-political dilemma for Pakistani officials.²² In particular, correspondences between the Interior Ministry and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs show that even as the border at Khokhrapar was officially closed, Muslim refugees from India who continued to trickle in were frequently provided emergency certificates, a document that was intended for stateless persons.²³ On the basis of the emergency certificate, some refugees and migrants then made applications for passports in order to travel and visit families across the border in India. Since emergency certificates could only be granted to stateless persons, the officials granting these had to establish that there was no evidence that the person in question was an Indian national.²⁴

²²The discussion of this problem—of Pakistan as Muslim homeland and yet not able to provide refuge to all Muslims—extends beyond Yad Elahi's file (and this is obvious from the file itself) to the discussion of granting emergency certificates to refugees from Jammu and Kashmir wishing to reside in Pakistan as well as those coming from Hyderabad Deccan. Serial No. 145, Citizenship Section, Ministry of Interior, NAP; Serial No. 99, Citizenship Section, Ministry of Interior, NAP.

²³ A stateless person is one who is "not considered as a national by any state under the operation of its law" according to the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons (1954). The concern with stateless persons was heightened after World War II.

²⁴ This anxiety, of allocating an emergency certificate to an Indian, also emerges in relation to residents of Hyderabad Deccan migrating to Pakistan. In their case, it has to be established that they do not hold documents that would classify them as Indians. Serial No. 99, F-NO-44-35-57- Citizenship Section, Ministry of interior, NAP.

“One Mr. Yad Elahi, who entered Pakistan from India through Khokhrapar in the end of the year 1954 has applied to the Government of the Punjab for the grant of Pakistani passport in order to see his wife and children in India.”²⁵ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was of the opinion that although people like Yad Elahi, who were not citizens of Pakistan in the legal sense *yet*, were entitled to documents such as emergency certificates in order to avoid statelessness. Despite the commencement of the passport system and citizenship provisions, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs argued that “if every person who has entered Pakistan through Khokhrapar on or after 13th April 1951 is required to be registered as citizen of Pakistan for the purpose of obtaining passports, this would be a very harsh provision.”²⁶ Further, they argued that if Pakistan refused citizenship to even just a few hundred of such Indians who came to Pakistan on “our implied invitation and whom we are now refusing to absorb...it would create a disgruntled element of our population many of whom would perhaps become fifth columnists.”²⁷ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not see the provision of an emergency certificate, and it ultimately translating into a passport, as a problem. In fact, they thought that this was part of what Pakistan as a state should be providing.

Yad Elahi’s case provoked a contentious debate where the Ministry of Interior responded by saying that such an approach would in fact incentivize entering illegally through Khokhrapar.²⁸ More vitally, the Ministry of Interior expressed annoyance that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Central States “harp on the same string” when the issue had been settled through the commencement of the passport system.²⁹ While they recognized that they cannot turn people away at the border, the

²⁵ Reference preceding note from Ministry of F.A & C.R to Ministry of Interior, dated 26 March 1955. U.O No. D. 884-I(V)/55, Serial No. 80, NO-1-1-56-Citizenship Section, Ministry of Interior, NAP.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Letter from M. Ahmed (no official designation), Ministry of F.A & C.R to Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Interior, dated 25 November 1955. U.O. No. D. 3724-PV(VIII), Serial No. 80, Citizenship Section, Ministry of Interior, NAP.

²⁸ Reference from the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of F.A & C.R, dated 27 April 1955. U.O No. D. 884-I(V)/55, Serial No. 80, Citizenship Section, Ministry of Interior, NAP.

²⁹ Letter from Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of F.A & C.R., dated March 15, 1956. U.O. No. D-674-PV(VIII)/56, Serial No. 80, Citizenship Section, Ministry of Interior, NAP.

Ministry of Interior argued that those who are granted Emergency Certificate cannot be regarded as “bonafide citizens” of Pakistan and cannot be granted travel facilities that would be available to “full-fledged citizens of Pakistan.”³⁰ The debate, to summarize, is over whether the document of an emergency certificate could become the basis of a passport. The stakes of this debate center on whether the holder of the emergency certificate could be a citizen or whether regarding them as such (by providing them with a passport) might then lead them to make such a claim.

Since emergency certificates did not translate into citizenship, since they were for stateless persons, those entering through Khokhrapar, according to the Ministry of Interior, had to apply for citizenship certificates in order to then apply for passports. As a result, there had to be a mechanism in place to ascertain that an individual had in fact entered through Khokhrapar.³¹ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs brings this up as a practical difficulty for following the approach the Ministry of Interior suggested. In the absence of “automatic citizenship,”³² specific individuals had to be identified as simultaneously illegal migrants *and* potential Pakistani citizens.

To this end, the Ministry of Interior responded, a refugee register was maintained with “full particulars” of all those who enter through Khokhrapar.³³ These particulars included fingerprinting forms, name of the individual and fathers’ name as well as serial number and date of entry. In

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ In addition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also brought up the problem of those who, when refused Pakistani citizenship, would also be rejected by India. While the Ministry of Interior responds to the problem of ascertaining who entered through Khokhrapar (through the technology of the refugee register), it is clear that the issue of producing a stateless person, rejected by both states, was an irresolvable problem. Also, see Raheja (2018) for an account of how this continues through an examination of Pakistan Hindu Refugee claims in India.

³² Those who migrated between the date that the Pakistan Citizenship Act was passed on 13 April 1951 and 1 January 1952 had “automatic citizenship” according to the Pakistan Citizenship Act of 1951. While the term “automatic citizenship” and who is entitled to it is prevalent across the records of the Citizenship Section, it did produce tensions. For instance, when discussing government employees who were opting to return to India from East Pakistan, after close to a decade of service, Pakistani officials expressed that the notion of automatic citizenship was troubling as citizenship could not be “thrust upon individuals.” Rather, they claimed, intentions and desires were also key. Note in Reference to Query from Deputy Secretary, Home Division, Ministry of Interior, dated 12 December 1959. Serial No. 88, Citizenship Section, Ministry of Interior, NAP.

³³ Letter from Additional Secretary, Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of F.A & C.R., dated March 20, 1957. U.O. No.1/4/55-Citz. Serial No. 80, Citizenship Section, Ministry of Interior, NAP.

addition, there was an identity slip for the individual with name, parentage, address in India, likely places to be visited in Pakistan, names of family dependents who accompanied him to Pakistan, age and occupation, identification marks, left thumb impression, copy of photograph, reference to serial number and date of entry in the Khokhrapar register. This identity “slip” was then forwarded to relevant officials in Sindh and kept in alphabetical order. The refugee register and its corresponding identity slip were precisely catered to the purpose of tracing an individual. Thus, the technology of the refugee register, operating as yet another document in the mix, was essential to the process of tracing particular individuals and either providing or denying them further travel and identity documents.

While the Interior Ministry claimed (in their response to Foreign Affairs) that they would “always be liberal in the matter of conferment of Pakistani citizenship on Indian Muslims; for Pakistan is a homeland for Muslims only,”³⁴ the construction and maintenance of the refugee register reflects a preoccupation with identity tracking for the conjoined purposes of maintaining security and delimiting citizenship to those who were continuing to enter. Further, Interior referenced the Nehru-Liaquat Agreement—an agreement passed between Pakistan and India to ensure protections for minorities in both newly-created countries, reverse displacements and thus “settle” minorities where they were (in this case Muslims in India)—to refute the notion that all Muslim refugees coming from India, after the agreement had been signed in 1950, would be provided asylum in the absence of regular travel documents. Interior officials pointed to the introduction of the passport system as evidence of the documentary limitations in place. “Now coming to the question of automatic conferment of Pakistani citizenship on those Indian nationals who have come over to Pakistan on the strength of Emergency Certificates and the grant of

³⁴ Ibid.

Pakistani passports to such person, it may be stated that this is a closed chapter; for it has already been finally decided that the grant of an Emergency Certificate does not imply the grant of Pakistani citizenship.”³⁵

Thus, the Ministry of Interior attempted to close the question of what an Emergency Certificate could translate into, in terms of other documents, and what such documents could allow in relation to mobility, migration and resettlement. In particular, as the flow of refugees and migrants continued, the Ministry of Interior deployed this particular documentary technology to disallow citizenship claims—as opposed to enabling them. Furthermore, this debate ensued after the passport system had already been put into place. This timing thus illustrates that when the passport came to signify nationality, both applicants and officials (such as those in Foreign Affairs) turned to other kinds of documents that could keep channels to citizenship open. In response, bureaucrats at the Ministry of Interior labored to reaffirm that only a passport had the capacity to signal citizenship. In attempting to do so, they engaged in contentious debates to distance the meaning of other documents such as the emergency certificate from an entitlement such as citizenship. This shows how concerns about Muslim migrants entering India were managed through documentary structures and, by extension, exclusionary policies around citizenship were embedded into documentary *practice* that restricted access to incremental documents leading up to nationality.

The Citizenship Certificate

Thus far, I have focused on how government officials negotiated and crafted the newly formed identity documentation structure in relation to Muslim refugees entering Pakistan who sought to acquire Pakistani citizenship. Now, I will turn to the cases of Hindus who were at risk of *losing* their Pakistani nationality through their decisions to travel. According to citizenship provisions, as

³⁵ Letter from the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of F.A & C.R, dated 18 July 1956. U.O. No.1/4/55-Citz. Serial No. 80, Citizenship Section, Ministry of Interior, NAP.

outlined above, if Hindus were designated to have migrated to India, then they would lose citizenship. Hence, I use the term travel and not migration because designating travel *as* migration was precisely the legal issue being contested. In analyzing how the Citizenship Section, in collaboration with other government departments such as the Intelligence Bureau, the Ministry of Law and the Ministry of F.A & C.R, decides how and when nationality was lost, I attend to the documentary technologies used and crafted to evidence intention and, by extension, entitlement to citizenship and nationality. At the same time, to understand how the interpretation of these documents was continually in flux, I situate them and their unstable meaning within the shifting political context and pressures at this early stage of state formation in Pakistan.

In early 1953, the Ministry of Interior was attempting to decide whether a minor, Vanraj Lalji, a Hindu who was the son of Pakistani nationals, resident in Karachi, was entitled to a passport that his father had applied for on his son's behalf.³⁶ At the time, Vanraj was studying in Bombay and had travelled there as a minor. The Deputy Secretary (Interior) notes that this case was initially dealt with by the Ministry of F.A. & C.R. who referred it to the Interior as an issue of law, specifically questioning whether Section 7 of the Citizenship Act could be applied to minor children of Pakistani nationals who had left for India after 1947. Section 7 of Citizenship Law conditions that “any person who has migrated from Pakistan to India would cease to be a citizen of Pakistan despite his birth in Pakistan or his descent from a Pakistani parent.”³⁷ In effect, this provision enabled the state to use instances of “migration,” or even movement across borders, to disallow claims of citizenship.³⁸

To determine whether Vanraj could be excluded from citizenship on this basis, despite the

³⁶ Note from Hameeduddin Ahmed, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Interior, dated April 7, 1953, on letter from the Chief Passport Officer, dated March 25, 1953. Serial No. 63, Citizenship Section, Ministry of Interior, NAP.

³⁷ Section 7, Pakistan Citizenship Act, 1951.

³⁸ This was a mirror of Indian Citizenship law, promulgated after the Indian Citizenship Act was passed, and as Zamindar (2007) shows this was used to disallow Muslim refugees from returning to India.

fact that he was born in Pakistan and that his parents were Pakistani nationals, the Ministry of Interior asked a set of questions in relation to his documents so as to definitively categorize his stay in Bombay *as* migration: did Vanraj travel for studies or did he accompany friends or relatives during a “time when there was exodus of population”? What was the importance of Siddharth College where he was a student, and why could he not have received the same qualifications in Pakistan? Does the fact that the rest of his family, particularly his parents, remained in Pakistan while he travelled as a minor mean that he is entitled to citizenship?³⁹ Through the course of the correspondence, officials began to narrow down the possibility of citizenship, especially as intelligence sources in the police communicated⁴⁰ that Vanraj had left Karachi with this mother, sister and brothers and that some of his brothers did settle down in Bombay permanently.

To make an additional argument against Vanraj’s application for citizenship, Interior cited this letter from the Assistant Inspector General (AIG) Police to the Chief Commissioner of Karachi, which communicated the family’s “Congressite” political leanings. The AIG quickly deflected any political motivations for rejecting the application, instead stating that the real reason behind Vanraj’s application appears to be the protection of potential evacuee property.⁴¹ The political circumstances of this case are further complicated by the fact that Shri Chandra Chattopadhyay, the leader of the opposition,⁴² made requests to the Interior Minister to expedite the case. On 11th November, 1953, Hamiduddin Ahmed, the Deputy Secretary of the Interior Ministry, wrote a note in Vanraj’s file that unequivocally stated that since citizenship was “essentially a matter of loyalty to the state,” given the

³⁹ Letter from Ghulam Ahmed DS(P), Ministry of Interior to Ministry of F.A & C.R, dated 15 July 1953. Serial No. 63, Citizenship Section, Ministry of Interior, NAP.

⁴⁰ Letter from Assistant IG of Police, CID, Karachi to Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, Karachi, dated 16 September 1953. ILPS/PCC/3422, Serial No. 63, Citizenship Section, Ministry of Interior NAP.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Shri Chandra Chattopadhyay is well known for his speech against the Objectives Resolution, when he persuasively argued East Pakistan was one-fourth non-Muslim, and that the Objectives Resolution diminished the rights of minorities. See *The Constituent Assembly of Pakistan Debates*, Vol 5, 7th March 1949. On the question of minorities and the objectives resolution see, Asif (2020) and Toor (2011).

family’s political leanings, it would not be advisable to *restore* citizenship to someone who “by training and by environment is not likely to give this loyalty to the State.”⁴³ However, by 16th November, just a few days later, a note from the Secretary of Interior—and likely pressure from the Interior Minister whose letter to Mr. Chattopadhyay⁴⁴ is included in the file—led Deputy Secretary Ahmed to entirely turn his position around. In the following note, he emphasized that Vanraj’s case is “different from those Hindus who have migrated permanently to India and are thereby deprived of their Pakistani citizenship. Since his parents are beyond doubt Pakistani, to refuse him citizenship would entail “splitting the family of a Pakistani national.”⁴⁵ In his new and radically different interpretation, the Deputy Secretary read the parents’ Pakistani status as indisputable, likely on the basis of their current domicile and Pakistani passport. Upon receiving the Secretary’s note, which pushed against the connection between the *family’s* political leanings and Vanraj’s status, the Deputy Secretary was compelled to read the AIG’s note as peripheral to the interpretation of Vanraj’s documents themselves.

Following from here, Vanraj’s father Haridas Lalji was asked to submit an application and form “M” on behalf of his son in addition to the form application for citizenship (Figure 9 and Figure 10). Haridas not only filled out and included this form but also enclosed supporting documents that were not explicitly requested to support his son’s case. These included a letter from the Principal of Siddharth College in Bombay stating that Vanraj was the son of Haridas and a bonafide student at the college. Importantly, there was also a certificate of domicile that included addresses in Pakistan and outside Pakistan (Khattiwari, India). This domicile also listed the name,

⁴³ Note from Hameeduddin Ahmed, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Interior on internal memo requesting update on Vanraj’s case, dated November 11, 1953. Serial No. 63, Citizenship Section, Ministry of Interior, NAP

⁴⁴ Letter from M.A. Gurmani, Interior Minister to Shri Chandra Chattopadhyay, Member of National Assembly, dated 17 April 1953. 13/18/53-Poll(I), Serial No. 63, Citizenship Section, Ministry of Interior, NAP.

⁴⁵ Note from Hamiduddin Ahmed, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Interior to, dated 16 November 1953. Serial No. 63, Citizenship Section, Ministry of Interior, NAP.

gender and age of all of Haridas's children as well as Haridas's personal marks of identification. In addition, Haridas included an affidavit on a Rs. 4 stamp paper to state that he applied for Vanraj's citizenship certification, that he was a citizen of Pakistan and had been granted a passport (with the serial number of the passport) and that he was granted the domicile certificate by Karachi's Chief Commissioner.

APPENDIX VII
FORM 'M' (Vide Rule 17)

Application for Registering Minor as a Citizen of Pakistan.

- 23 - (6)

1. Name of the minor (Block letters)VANRAJ.....
2. Name of the minor's father or mother _____
(If father not traceable) HARIDAS
3. Name of the guardian or applicant with father's name. _____
Haridas Lalji.
4. Address in full of the guardian or applicant . _____
Bombay Bazar, Karachi.
5. (a) Date and place of birth of minor _____
7th January 1933, Karachi.
(b) of his parents. (Father) _____
1882, Khambhalia (Sherashtra)
(c) of his grand parents. _____
Khambhalia -De-
6. If a migrant, how and when did the minor arrive in Pakistan.? _____
No.
7. Minor's relationship with the guardian or applicant, if any. _____
Son.
8. Minor's full address in Pakistan. _____
C/O Haridas Lalji, Bombay Bazar,
Karachi.
now studying at Bombay.
9. Is the guardian, or applicant a citizen of Pakistan? if so, number and date of the certificate of citizenship. _____
Yes. Passport No. 77403,
Dated 3rd July, 1952.

I do solemnly affirm that the above statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Birth Certificate attached. _____ Signature Haridas Lalji

Studying at Bombay, Certificate _____ Place Karachi

of the College Authority attached. _____ Date 25-11-52

Attestation
Designation
Place and date

Attest:
A. D. D. ...
A. D. D. ...
25/11




Figure 9: Form M, an Application for Registering a Minor as a Citizen of Pakistan (source: NAP) ⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Application from Vanraj Lalji, dated 19 November, 1953. Serial No. 63, Citizenship Section, Ministry of Interior, NAP.

No. 13/18/53-Poll(I)

FORM R-1

The Pakistan Citizenship Act, 1951 (II of 1951) and the Pakistan Citizenship Rules, 1952.
Certificate of Registration as a Citizen of Pakistan.

Whereas Mr. Vanraj has applied for a certificate of registration as a citizen of Pakistan alleging with respect to himself/herself the particulars set out below, and has satisfied the Government that the conditions laid down in Sec. 11 of the above-mentioned Act for the grant of a certificate of registration as a citizen of Pakistan are fulfilled in the said Mr. Vanraj's case.

Now, therefore, in pursuance of the powers conferred by the said Act and the Rules made thereunder, the Government hereby grant to the said Mr. Vanraj this certificate of registration as a citizen of Pakistan and declare that subject to the provisions of the said Act he is deemed to be a citizen of Pakistan and shall be entitled to all the rights, privileges and capacities to which a citizen of Pakistan is entitled to and shall also be subject to all the obligations, duties and liabilities of a citizen of Pakistan under any or all the laws of Pakistan.

In witness whereof I have hereto subscribed my name this 19th day of November 19 53

Signed [Signature]
for Secretary to The Government.

PARTICULARS RELATING TO THE APPLICANT

Full Name Mr. Vanraj
Father's Name Mr. Haridas Lalji
Address in Pakistan or abroad Haridas Lalji Building, Bombay Bazar, Karachi
Married, single, widow or widower Single
Name of wife or husband X
Names of children and their ages X
Trade or Occupation Student

Marks of Identification—



Signed [Signature]
for Secretary to the Government.
Date Karachi the 19th Nov'53.

Figure 10: Form R-1: Certificate of Registration as a Citizen of Pakistan (source: NAP) ⁴⁷

Further, Haridas attached a birth certificate from the Register of Births and Deaths, Karachi Municipal Corporation dated 19 October 1949 for Vanraj, who was born in 1933. The fact that this birth certificate was dated 1949 illustrated that it was likely not originally requested for the purpose of this application. Yet, it was also dated after Vanraj had already left for India. This document, in particular, reveals a concern on the part of Hindu minorities about their status in Pakistan, where precautionary measures, given the insecurities felt by minorities during this period, involved collecting documentary evidence precisely for moments such as this one. While it would not be uncommon to backdate such documents, in this case that seems unlikely since requesting one at the time (in 1953) would have been just as sufficient for the citizenship application.

In November 1953, Haridas Lalji sent quite a few follow-up letters to the Ministry to request the citizenship certificate for his son (one such letter is copied below as Figure 11). Eventually, a letter from the Chief Commissioner of Karachi acknowledged the receipt of the certificate from the Ministry of Interior. This case brings to light a nascent documentary infrastructure that aspiring citizens were beginning to draw upon for the purpose of producing evidentiary claims. As officials in the newly formed Pakistani state debated how to ascribe what meaning to which document, claimants simultaneously engaged various parts of the state, drawing on connections like Mr. Chattopadhyay as well as local bureaucracies to produce documents such as the birth certificate. While these documents built on existing systems—for instance, the affidavit on Pakistani stamp paper reflects the continuation of the colonial policy to use stamp paper—there were also innovations within the form. For instance, the domicile certificate was included within the Pakistani Citizenship Act and was one of the documents used to evidence citizenship. Even though a registry

⁴⁷ Ibid.

of births and deaths existed prior to independence (as the last chapter of this book will discuss in greater detail), in this instance it was mobilized, as the date of issue demonstrates, in ways specific to the novel context of a newly independent state.

In particular, this collection of documents was put to use for rendering a single individual—through his connections to both family members (especially his father) and to a specific location (Karachi)—a Pakistani citizen. In short, the documents were intended to establish a link between individual and family as well as the relationship between citizen and state. While this was likely not always a guarantee for success, it shows how the interrelation of documents worked to produce, evidence, and adjudicate claims of citizenship.

In spite of the fact that Vanraj was born in Pakistan and that his parents continued to reside there, he was suspected of being an outsider. For Vanraj's case, the evidence of outsider status was evaluated against the evidence in support of his insider status through the documents that Vanraj and his family present. My goal in attending to the various details of this case is to highlight the intricacies with which documentary practice was developed for both officials and citizen-applicants at this stage. In particular, in Vanraj's case—where citizenship was established through kinship—we see how the evidence of affinity was used as a means to establish insiderness. This focus on affinity will become even more important when I turn to the 1970s when kinship as evidence becomes a primary means of verifying not just those who are suspect, but *all* those already resident within Pakistan and applying for identity cards.

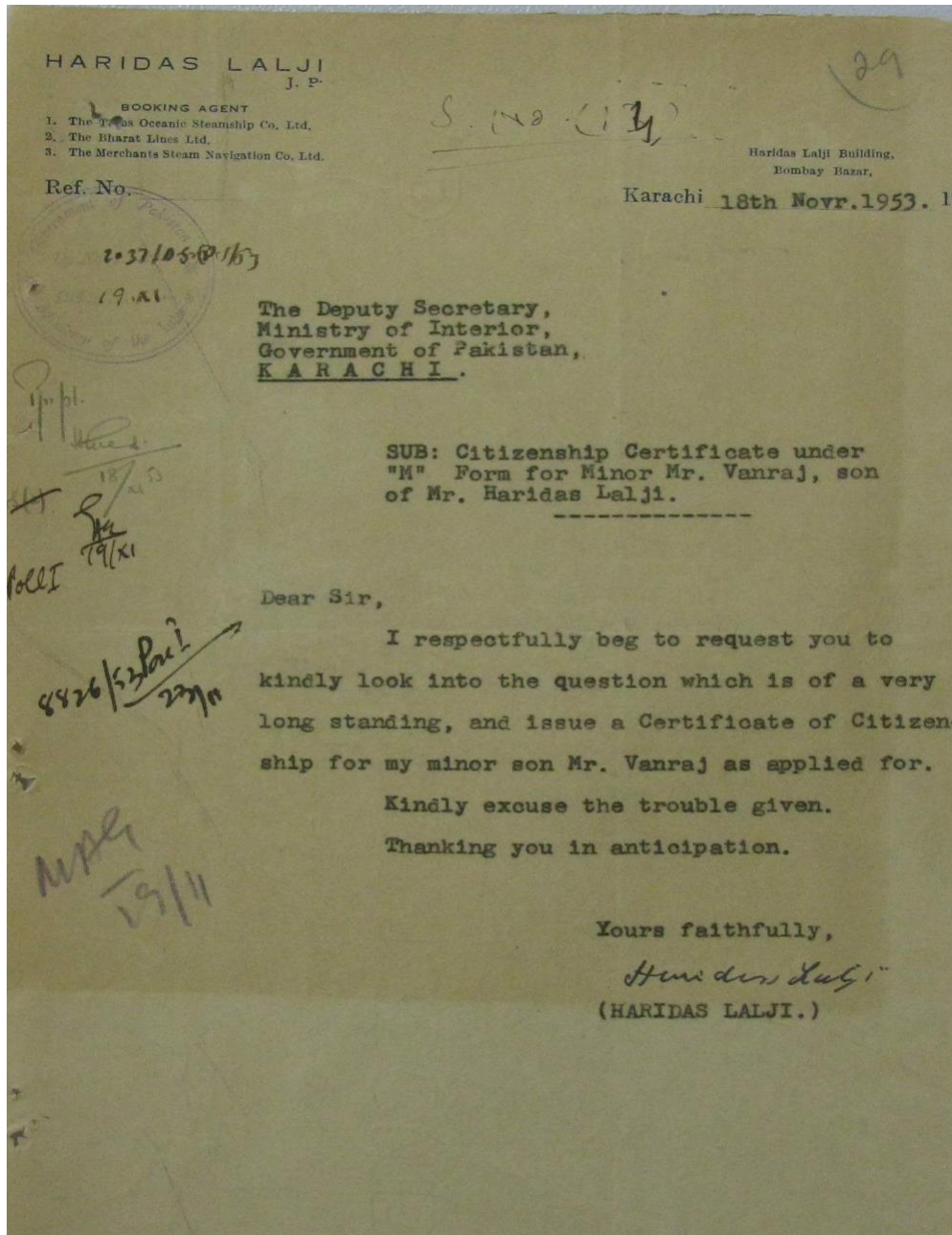


Figure 11: Letter from Haridas Lalji to the Ministry of Interior (source: NAP)⁴⁸

While the circumstances in East Pakistan were significantly different from West Pakistan in terms of migration, since the mass movement of population in 1947 had taken place across the

⁴⁸ Letter from Haridas Lalji to Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Interior, dated 18 November, 1953. Serial No. 63, Citizenship Section, Ministry of Interior, NAP.

border in Punjab and less so across the East/West Bengal border, the Pakistani government was still obligated to mirror policy, particularly in relation to documents, so as to control the potential political repercussions of any discrepancy. I will now turn to the case of Mr. Saha, and how the Ministry of Interior dealt with his return to East Pakistan from India. Mr. Saha, a Hindu man from East Bengal, left East Pakistan for India sometime in 1950, lived there for close to three years and then returned to Pakistan in 1953 on an Indian passport. He petitioned the Pakistani government for citizenship on the argument that he had only migrated to India on account of communal disturbances. The Interior Ministry rejected this plea and its reasoning quite forcefully. They cited two reasons: first, they claimed there were no serious disturbances in East Pakistan in 1950 and second, that Saha presented a “clear cut case” of losing his “Pakistani status under Section 7 of the P.C. (Pakistani Citizenship) Act. 1951” due to migration, given that he lived in India for as long as three years.⁴⁹ Ultimately, Mr. Saha was granted citizenship on the special recommendation of the Minister of Interior but the Interior Secretary made sure to emphasize that this was on a “purely individual basis” and did not constitute a change or relaxation in policy regarding citizenship.⁵⁰ Through such a disclaimer, the Interior Secretary was able to distance the political implication of this particular grant of citizenship from a broader policy in the context of an increasingly narrowing definition of “Muslim homeland.”⁵¹

An anxiety around political implications was evidenced in the fact that before turning to the

⁴⁹ Section 7, as mentioned above, stipulated that nationality could be lost on account of migration. Letter from the Deputy Secretary for the Secretary, Ministry of Interior, dated 10 April 1956. Serial No. 91, Citizenship Section, Ministry of Interior, NAP.

⁵⁰ Reference D.S.(P)'s notes dated 11 April 1956. Serial No. 91, Citizenship Section, Ministry of Interior, NAP.

⁵¹ The officials referencing Muslim homeland seem to do so entirely in the context of making an argument why a particular Muslim refugee should be entitled to Pakistan and why Hindus might not be—even as this particular case shows they might have the evidentiary documents to make a case in support of their application for Pakistani citizenship. In this sense, such discussions are set apart from earlier, pre-independence discussions of Muslim Homeland. See Naqvi (2012) on the tensions surrounding the notion of territory in articulations of Muslim nationalism, and how Muslim refugees, and specifically *muhajirs*' notions of political belonging (to Pakistan as well as to India) fit within such an ideological formation in the aftermath of Partition.

particulars of Mr. Saha’s case, the Citizenship Section outlined their policy regarding the grant of citizenship to non-Muslims. Their first point of consideration was that Pakistan was created as a homeland for Muslims only, and thus liberally granting Hindus (in particular) citizenship would be at odds with the aim with which the separate state of Pakistan was established.⁵² The directness of the Interior officials’ language can be situated within the broader context of the political shifts that led to, and were further cemented by, the Objectives Resolution which declared Pakistan as an Islamic Republic and was opposed by all non-Muslim minority members of the Constituent Assembly.⁵³ The Citizenship Section’s second point of consideration was in direct response to the Indian government’s policy that refused Indian Muslims citizenship, especially if they had lived in Pakistan or served under the Government of Pakistan, however briefly.⁵⁴ Third, they explicitly stated they were “particularly averse to the grant of Pakistani citizenship to those Hindus who have lost their Pakistani status under Section 7 of the Pakistan Citizenship Act, 1951 for their return to Pakistan would dislodge innumerable Muslim refugees who have since been permanently rehabilitated.”⁵⁵

By “dislodging,” the officials here were referring to the problem of evacuee property. Along with the massive number of displacements during Partition, refugees left behind properties amounting to a large but contested sum (Chatta 2012; Zamindar 2007). According to the legislation around evacuee property in Pakistan, the Custodians of Refugees Property were in charge of these properties. According to evacuee property legislation, these properties could not be reallocated until the issues surrounding them were resolved between India and Pakistan given that each country had

⁵² Letter from the Deputy Secretary for the Secretary, Ministry of Interior, dated 10 April 1956. Serial No. 91, Citizenship Section, Ministry of Interior, NAP.

⁵³ Even as many of the Hindu members of opposition cited *hadith* and examples from the Prophet Muhammad’s life to support arguments for a Minority Protection Bill (Khan 2012).

⁵⁴ As Joya Chatterji (2012) has noted, the citizenship regimes of India and Pakistan share remarkable similarities and symmetries. In particular, both started out with *jus soli* as the basis of citizenship, and initially sought to alleviate the fears of minorities.

⁵⁵ Letter from the Deputy Secretary for the Secretary, Ministry of Interior, dated 10 April 1956. Serial No. 91, Citizenship Section, Ministry of Interior, NAP.

claims that it was owed by the other (Schechtman 1953). However, in Punjab migrants and refugees from India had been resettled in “abandoned” properties, including 1.5 million refugees in urban areas in Punjab by 1949 (Chatta 2012, 1190). As a result, a primary concern, as I will detail below and other scholars have noted, was that those who were returning to their homes (in Pakistan) would claim their properties which might have been occupied by refugees from India.

Importantly, in relation to Mr. Saha’s case, officials from the Ministry of Interior note that the Evacuee Law was not yet operative in East Pakistan. They still feared, however, that any changes in policy regarding migrant Hindus in East Pakistan would compel the government to extend similar treatment to migrant Hindus in West Pakistan. On this point, the Deputy Secretary of Interior finally accepted that while there was migration from East Pakistan during 1950 and 1951 following communal disturbances, this migration could not be differentiated from the migration of Hindus who left West Pakistan in 1947.⁵⁶ The officials’ underlying fear was about the continual movement across the border and the “insecurity” such movement would produce. But what did insecurity mean in this context during this time?

The Interior Secretary argued that “The Evacuee Property Law in the West wing is the principal incentive to Hindus to return to it. Quite apart from the possibility of our having to apply the Evacuee Property law to East Pakistan (as a measure of retaliation), any relaxation of citizenship policy in East Pakistan will have serious repercussions in West Pakistan where the return of any appreciable number of Hindus would constitute a serious economic and security risk.”⁵⁷ In this manner, the question of who should legally constitute the population came to be imbricated with notions of security, which were in turn intertwined with migration and, centrally, the question of

⁵⁶ Joya Chatterji’s *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India 1947-1967* (2007) shows how the displacement of population occurred in waves across the East Pakistan-India border, as there was no inter-state agreement on a definitive transfer of population.

⁵⁷ Letter from the Deputy Secretary for the Secretary, Ministry of Interior, dated 10 April 1956. Serial No. 91, Citizenship Section, Ministry of Interior, NAP.

evacuee property. While the security threats posed by spies were used as a justification (by Pakistani state officials) for the passport system (Zamindar 2010, 181), the “security” concerns backing the passport systems were closely tied to the fear of tensions and conflict around evacuee property.

Securitizing Citizenship

The meaning of “security,” as it was emerging in debates between government officials at this early stage, was shaped by the issue of cross-border travel and the so-called “risk” that state officials saw returning refugees posing to the new country’s social and political order—a risk not just in relation to espionage but also for the precariously balanced situation concerning evacuee property. The above-referenced Nehru-Liaqat Act, signed on April 8, 1950 between the two prime ministers of India and Pakistan, was intended to safeguard the rights of minorities in each country, to reverse the displacements that minorities had suffered after the violence of 1947 and thus to “settle” religious minorities where they were (Zamindar 2007, 167). The logic of this Act was that if Muslim rights were secure in India, then they had no reason to come to Pakistan, thus effectively stemming the flow of migrants. Consequently, this Act allowed Pakistan to officially close the border at Khokhrapar after May 1950. While the Nehru-Liaqat Act was supposed to facilitate the freedom of movement for minorities, the institution of the passport system between the two countries two years later, to a large extent, restricted this movement again, as the discussion of the Pakistan Control of Entry Bill will demonstrate below.

The Pakistan Control of Entry Bill was proposed in 1952 “to make better provision for controlling the entry of Indian citizens into Pakistan.”⁵⁸ Given that the India-Pakistan passport system was already in place at this point, this Act was aimed to enforce a decision that had already been bilaterally agreed upon between India and Pakistan. Still, the Bill provoked controversy in the

⁵⁸ Pakistan Control of Entry Bill, Constituent Assembly Debates, November 24, 1952.

Constituent Assembly in Pakistan and, importantly for the purpose of this chapter, the discussion around the Bill reveals how securitization became the justification and came to mean controlling the entry of “Indian citizens,” as they were referred to in the language of the legislation.

Here emerges, more concretely, the question of who an insider to Pakistan was, and who was an outsider. This question continually arose in discussions during the meeting of the Constituent Assembly, not only in reference to the Bill but also in relation to the members of the Constituent Assembly themselves. In particular, the question of whether a given Constituent Assembly member’s position reflected who they were “really” supporting (India or Pakistan) was refracted through the question of security, which some members argued that everybody (members of any religious group) should be on board with.

For instance, Shri Dherendra Nath Dutta, a Hindu member of the Constituent assembly from East Pakistan, began a passionate speech with details of the difficulties that the passport system had already caused—ranging from cross-border kinship networks to missing cricket matches—which the Control of Entry Act would only compound. In addition, Dutta pointed to the important problems of trade and loss of revenue due to the difficulties of moving across the border between East and West Bengal. In opposing the Control of Entry Bill, Dutta recognized that he had opened himself up to the risk of being misunderstood. Towards the end of his speech, he stated “I know it (my position) will be interpreted: ‘that is a propaganda, not for this House; this is a propaganda not for the State of Pakistan, but it is a propaganda for outside.’” The “outside,” it is safe to say in the context of discussing control over a border with India,⁵⁹ referred to India.

Immediately in response, Ghyasuddin Pathan (Minister of State for Finance and Parliamentary Affairs), who had proposed the Bill, quoted the Bengali saying “*thakur ghare ka kola*

⁵⁹ Moreover, Dutta had already mentioned how Nehru was willing to scrap the passport agreement, and others during the Constituent Assembly debate also brought up the opposition to the passport system in India and that those who were opposing it were risking aligning themselves with India (Ibid., p. 621).

kbaina.” This saying refers to someone who is obviously guilty (specifically of stealing bananas from the household shrine) but denies it even when caught red-handed. In short, Ghyasuddin Pathan accused Dutta of being guilty of precisely that which he was denying, that is, partiality to India and lack of loyalty to Pakistan.

Mafizzudin Ahmed, another member of the Constituent Assembly from East Pakistan, doubled up these accusations against Dutta, arguing that Datta’s position aligned with those in India and those who wanted “to bring into play chaos and confusion and disorder in the country which would ultimately undermine the stability and solidarity of the State”⁶⁰ Instead, Ahmed proposed that the difficulties of the current system would be ironed out because “thousands of people from beyond the border are coming. We do not know who are the persons... It was never intended that this passport-cum-visa system was to stop travel; the only purpose of this system was to regulate travels, so that the Government may know who are the persons who are coming and who are going and for what purpose.”⁶¹

The interconnected issues of loyalty and security were thus foundational to how documentary controls were evaluated in this bill. For instance, Mian Muhammad Iftikharuddin argued that “nobody will differ with the Government, if a Bill like this is introduced to prevent the entry of spies, foreign agents, and other undesirable elements into our country.”⁶² At the same time, he also argued that the problem of cross-border traffic and by extension of security could be resolved if minorities in each country were provided adequate safeguards. *Then* the bill would be able to serve its purpose, which was against spies and insecurity.⁶³

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 619.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Mian Iftikharuddin was originally a member of the Indian National Congress, who joined the Muslim League in 1945, and was appointed the Minister of Rehabilitation for Refugees in Punjab. See “Remembering Mian Iftikharuddin,” *Dawn News*, December 8, 2012.

⁶³ Pakistan Control of Entry Bill, Constituent Assembly Debates, November 1952, p. 610.

Yet this logic of securitization was also questioned as a false justification. The debate of the Control of Entry Bill included discussion of the Language Movement, a political movement that had advocated for making Bengali the official language of East Pakistan. While some Constituent Assembly members argued for increased regulations on the eastern border of Pakistan (between East and West Bengal) because they claimed that the language riots had been provoked by those who had crossed in from the Indian side, others like Babesh Chandra Nandy questioned this logic and argued that the Control of Entry Bill, along with the passport regime, was in fact simply to control migrants.⁶⁴ In outlining this debate, I want to highlight how security was discursively mobilized in ways that then embedded it into documentary controls through the Control of Entry Bill, which criminalized entering Pakistan without the appropriate documents. The meaning that security took on during this period was specifically in relation to the “chaos” caused by the “troublemakers,” as mentioned by members of the Constituent Assembly in favor of the Bill, who were presumed to be moving between India and Pakistan. It was their movement across the border that made them troubling. The Control of Entry Bill provides additional insight into how such documentary controls were crafted, at the level of legislation and policy, to contextualize the workings of bureaucracy, which, as I have emphasized in earlier sections, are central to understanding how these questions were worked out on a day-to-day basis.

Debates around the 1952 Control of Entry Bill paralleled, and indeed was connected to, discussions by bureaucrats in the Ministries of Interior, Foreign Affairs and Law. When determining the relationship between a document and its entitlement, government officials in the Ministry of Interior, as well as the Ministry of Law, cited security reasons to justify refusing an individual a given document.⁶⁵ For those such as Yad Elahi, who crossed through Khokhrapar, officials referred to

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 627.

⁶⁵ Letter from Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Law with subject “Prosecution under the Pakistan Control of Entry Act, 1952, dated 6 February 1956. Serial No. 80, Citizenship Section, Ministry of Interior, NAP.

security concerns about the border as it was “fraught with danger possibilities and security risks.”⁶⁶ Those officials also argued that an influx of bad characters and culprits out on bail were turning to Pakistan as a means of escape. After the Citizenship Act had been passed in 1951, the Ministry of Interior could assert that they were not “bound, legally or otherwise, to accept every applicant as our citizen unless we are convinced that his presence in this country will not constitute any security risk.”⁶⁷

In fact, Yad Elahi’s file also contains a report of an Indian spy apprehended through the Khokhrapar border.⁶⁸ No mention of this individual exists in the correspondence between the Ministry of Interior and Foreign Affairs as they debated Yad Elahi’s case. However, the presence of the report suggests that it was used as proof of the security risks entailed in supposedly encouraging movement across Khokhrapar.⁶⁹ When the Ministry of Interior argued that they would treat each citizenship case on its individual merit, they implied and occasionally explicitly stated the necessity of assessing each case’s security risk. The Ministry of Interior emphasized screening every individual to ensure that they had “no questionable antecedents and dark history.”⁷⁰

Concerned bureaucrats in the Ministry of Interior were preoccupied with the entry of migrants across the border, not only because of how the movement of migrants squared (or not) with citizenship laws but also because they believed it would compromise Pakistan’s security. As evidenced in the cases I discuss (Yad Elahi and Saha) as well as the Pakistan Control of Entry Bill,

⁶⁶ Letter from Additional Secretary, Interior Ministry in reference to Ministry of F.A & C.R’s u/o dated 15 March 1956. Serial No. 80, Citizenship Section, Ministry of Interior, NAP.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Letter from G. Murtaza Esq, Assistant Director, Intelligence Bureau, Karachi, with subject “Rao Mehboob Ali, Suspected Indian Agent,” dated 30 July 1956. No. 49/44/54-Poll(I), Serial No. 80, Citizenship Section, Ministry of Interior, NAP.

⁶⁹ The report from the Intelligence Bureau was more of a complaint as it stated that “apart from the legal difficulties in adopting such a course (externment), it is felt that externment will be no punishment for a man who was indulging in espionage. If such persons are allowed to return to their country scott-free. It would encourage others to come for the same purpose as they will feel assured that on being caught they will be able to go back home safely” (Ibid.).

⁷⁰ Letter from Additional Secretary, Interior Ministry in reference to Ministry of F.A & C.R’s query, dated 15 March 1956. Serial No. 80, Citizenship Section, Ministry of Interior, NAP.

security threats were perceived by Pakistani officials to be coming *in* from the other side of the border during this formative period of Pakistani state formation. Thus, during this decisive period, a new relationship was forged between documentary citizenship, securitization and cross-border migration. While surveillance, espionage and security were doubtless colonial concerns (Bayly 1996; Satia 2008; Chandavarkar 1998), particularly in relation to movement and mobility, such concerns became increasingly connected to national borders in the immediate aftermath of Partition. As Farhana Ibrahim describes in the context of the Indian side of the border between Sindh and Kutch, “new contours of border management had to be put in place by the newly independent states of India and Pakistan” (2019, 428). In turn, the question of border management initiated fresh debates regarding whether to use local residents (with connections to relatives across the border) or recruit a professionalized force. Those pushing the latter, such as the Chief Commissioner of Kutch (in India), argued that locals would compromise national security not only because of their cross-border kin networks but also because they were Muslims and their national loyalties were thus suspect.⁷¹ Accordingly, some ordinary residents were seen to be not trusted, as well as others mapping their borderland citizenship onto concerns with securitization. Even as the border had been demarcated, the loyalties of the residents of these border lands remained suspect. In a similar vein, while not physically at the border, Pakistani bureaucrats negotiating identity documentation that would control the flow of migrants from India had to engage these questions in light of new territorial, and specifically national, configurations.

Ilana Feldman theorizes how the state practices of securitization generate ambiguity in the lives of people who are subjected to these practices. She argues that some of the ambiguities in security relations, which are also social and cultural relations, manifest in the blurriness of categories

⁷¹ Also see Pandey (1999).

that are frequently generated through “unstable geographies” (2019, 491). Crucially, as this chapter describes, these unstable geographies—in this case the partitioning of the Indian subcontinent—are tied to the operations of national statecraft. Further, this chapter has brought into relief how Pakistani state actors struggled to deal with unsettled categories in their day to day work. The processes they used and precedence they deployed in order to settle categories, however unsuccessfully, cannot be disentangled from the history of colonial rule. The colonial state not only shaped what came after through its lasting impact on social and political life; it played a direct role in drawing the boundaries that produced nation-states in South Asia.⁷² Accordingly, when we examine the choices and decisions made by government officials during critical historical junctures—not only in 1947 but repeatedly again in 1971 in the wake of civil war and the creation of Bangladesh—it becomes abundantly clear that many of these strategic decisions re-inscribed (in)security in the lives of ordinary citizens.

Looking at the debates on the Control of Entry Act, as well as the broader discursive landscape such discussions were a part of—including the Objectives Resolution where the rights of minorities within Pakistan were the subject of heated debate (Asif 2020)—it is abundantly clear that the growing entrenchment of security was not the only possible response to historical events. Rather, the decision to approach population and territory through the lens of “security” involved specific political rationalizations, which were integrated with techniques of governance, to impact not only those across the border but Pakistan’s own citizens. If the issue of citizenship was imbricated within security concerns in relation to border crossings and the difficulty of marking insiders in relation to outsiders, this relationship became increasingly complicated once applied to those already inside the territory.

⁷² As David Gilmartin argues, it was Partition, more than independence, that “fixed the territorial definition of the nation-state” (1998, 1089).

The India-Pakistan passport too was a technology of a fundamentally *internal* frontier, produced in the wake of portioning what was a continuous space. As internal frontiers metastasized in the wake of this partition, new methods of “remote control” (Torpey 2000) were needed to address the murkiness of identities that confounded clear categorization within the territory of Pakistan. The next chapter will focus on how, through identification practices targeted at security *within* borders, a national population was continually made and unmade. Technologies of identification that depend on the vitality of bodies (in that biometrics/fingerprints require a living body) and vital statistics (the information these bodies produce), proved unable to steadily establish the population as a constant demographic object. In dealing with the shifting nature of populations, in terms of both territory and kin relations, bureaucrats and politicians struggled to deal with the question of citizenship, belonging and most foundationally, identification—especially as all this was unsettled yet again during the 1970s.

The political uncertainty of the 1970s—in the wake of the civil war with East Pakistan that led to the creation of Bangladesh, the dissident ethno-nationalist movements in West Pakistan, and the heightening Cold War on Pakistan’s western frontier with Afghanistan—provoked the Pakistani state to launch an identification scheme that offered the possibility of a uniform documentary and informational infrastructure. A nation-wide identity register promised a solution to the problem the India-Pakistan passport made obvious: no document could definitively and readily establish that certain persons were definitively Pakistani *and* who they said they were. A national identity card, even in its most rudimentary form, promised to address the unknowability of not only those who were crossing borders, but everyone else who was already within. It is this information infrastructure, the national identity registry, that is the focus of the next chapter.