Agencies, Friendships, Nationalism and Anthropology

Fieldwork Experiences of Collaborative Research in Gilgit-Baltistan

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Introduction

This paper is an attempt to put together some of the experiences I had during my research in and around Gilgit-Baltistan, particularly as a research collaborator with German academics, from 1982 to 2020 on the topic of surveillance of anthropologists during fieldwork. The idea to write about surveillance crossed my mind after reading two articles by Martin Sökefeld and Sabine Strasser (2016) and Anna Griesser (2016) in a special issue concentrating on ethnographers' experiences of different forms of state surveillance. I decided to write on this topic because I felt that the 'native perspective' of the surveillance was missing or only partially covered by these authors. Local perspectives included many different elements, such as the views of secret agencies doing surveillance, the views of administrators responsible for issuing NOCs, university administration, faculty, local people and especially my personal experiences of surveillance as a collaborating anthropologist in research projects with Sökefeld.

This article mainly builds on my collaboration with Martin Sökefeld, but it also draws on my work with other German researchers in Gilgit-Baltistan, and it is this second part of the experience that relates this article to the theme of this book, namely the multi-sided ethnographer.

From 1982 to 1995, during the *Rock-Carvings and Inscriptions along the Karakorum Highway* project, I took on many roles and duties, such as administrator, negotiator, facilitator, translator, research assistant and researcher. My identity was as a Punjabi, from downstream Pakistan, a Sunni Muslim working, eating and living with Germans (including in Germany) and someone who knew their language. These roles and positions also helped me to examine multiple aspects of suspicion against researchers, including foreigners and Pakistanis.

The broader question for this paper is as follows: why are anthropologists suspected and monitored, what impact does this monitoring have on their research and do anthropologists need to rethink their research methods if they are indeed being monitored? This paper also debates why no objection certificate (NOC) or research permits are issued to anthropologists despite accusations of spying? Another related question is: why do many anthropologists continue their fieldwork despite severe difficulties, and why do they sometimes even secretly continue research without permits regardless of knowing the consequences for their interlocutors, including their research collaborators?

I am of the view that suspicions of spying against anthropologists are neither new nor always baseless, especially when we look at the history of their involvement in spying activities. The nature of suspicion and surveillance of anthropological fieldwork depends upon a number of factors, such as who the anthropologist (foreign, or native, male, or female) is, the location of the research site (border or central area) and the type of population in the locale (multi-ethnic/multi-religious or homogenous). Gilgit-Baltistan as a place of anthropological research provides strong reasons for suspicion, and the insistence of anthropologists wishing to continue their research in difficult circumstances further strengthens these suspicions. Similarly, I believe that denying research permits to researchers is not an individual act, as it affects relations between countries in terms of cooperation. Therefore, it is not easy to do. Moreover, it is similarly not easy for anthropologists to change the location of their research and accept failure. Changing of location would require new research project and funding on the one hand and on the other hand, I think there seems to be a belief among anthropologists that the more

difficult/dangerous, the more distant, the more 'primitive' the field, the better the anthropologist.

In order to provide the reader with a glimpse into my experiences of work, association and research collaborations with Germans, I start this article by providing some background information. Thereafter, I describe my own different roles and positions that have caused suspicion against me in Gilgit. This is followed by some anecdotal first-hand experiences from fieldwork about surveillance and its consequences for my future research, career and life. The attitudes of people other than agencies, in relation to research and associated permits for foreign anthropologists, are then discussed. In order to explain fully why anthropologists are shadowed by agencies generally, and in Gilgit-Baltistan particularly, the special political and historical context of Gilgit-Baltistan, ethnographic methods and the history of anthropologists as spies are discussed.

My relevant background

The aim of this recounting of a number of important collaborations and projects is to provide a brief overview of my experiences with German academics and universities. In all these projects and collaborations, I have been responsible for performing several jobs: translator, interpreter, organiser of different events and activities, securing (in part) NOCs, sometimes even arranging boarding for visiting students and, in some cases, part of the negotiations for collaboration. This gave me the opportunity to meet and understand the points of view of different Pakistani actors about German anthropologists and researchers. The following description is based on my personal experiences of those years of work and collaboration.

In 1982, I became a member of the Pak German Study Group, a multidisciplinary team consisting mainly of Germans, engaged in the socio-cultural exploration of Gilgit-Baltistan, at that time called 'Northern Areas of Pakistan'. In 1989, I moved to Germany for higher studies and remained there until 1995, but in all those years, I also remained an

active member of the Pak German Study Group by working part time in its head office in Heidelberg and by participating in annual research expeditions to Gilgit-Baltistan. In 1996, I joined Quaid-I-Azam University, Islamabad, as a teacher and served the university until 2019, during which time I collaborated with German academics from different universities, including Free University of Berlin, University of Tübingen, Ludwig-Maximilians University Munich, University of Heidelberg and University of Duisburg-Essen.

The first project in which I also served the longest time (1982–1995) was '*Rock-Carvings and Inscriptions along the Karakorum Highway*', funded initially by the German Research Foundation and later on by Heidelberg Academy of Sciences. The project head was Karl Jettmar, an anthropologist from Heidelberg, and after his retirement Harald Hauptmann, an archaeologist from the same university. Every year, a team of mainly German – but sometimes also French and British – scholars took part in a research expedition. My key responsibilities included interpreter, administrator, translator, informant and facilitator, and on occasion, I accompanied the team leadership in their negotiations with Pakistani bureaucrats and counterparts in order to secure no-objection certificates (NOCs) for research in Gilgit-Baltistan. The second project I collaborated on, albeit in a piecemeal manner and only in short bursts, was '*Culture Area Karakorum*' (CAK 1989–1995), funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and led by Irmtraud Stellrecht from Tübingen University. It was within the framework of this project that I first encountered Martin Sökefeld.

I have had a long academic association with Martin, and our joint ventures included summer schools, joint research projects, workshops, seminars, etc. The first joint activity was the research project *The politics of reconstruction: a study of the social and political consequences of the October 2005 earthquake in Pakistan and Azad Kashmir*. This assignment lasted for four years, between 2009 and 2012, and was a multinational (German, Swiss, Pakistan) research endeavour in which one Swiss and one German PhD scholar and four Pakistani MPhil students were engaged. Another project in which both of us collaborated was *Coping with change in Gilgit-Baltistan*, a project funded by the German Academic Exchange Ser-

vice (DAAD 2011–13). Ludwig-Maximilians University (LMU), Munich, National Institute of Pakistan Studies (NIPS) QAU, and Karakorum International University (KIU), Gilgit collaborated in this project and arranged research training workshops for students from Germany, NIPS and KIU, both in Islamabad and Gilgit. In addition, we organised a summer school in 2009 at the National Institute of Pakistan Studies (NIPS), Quaid-I-Azam University, Islamabad, in which about eight German students and an equal number from NIPS participated. This proved to be a very successful pursuit, judging from the fact that most of the German students subsequently did research for their MA thesis in Pakistan; some of them married Pakistanis and have even had children from these marriages (see Grieser et al. in this volume).

Other than that, I also collaborated with University of Tübingen. A group of six students and two professors (Stellrecht and Hardenberg) from Tübingen visited NIPS in 2008 and participated in joint seminars and short research exercises. I also visited Tübingen twice for one semester each as a visiting teacher. Similarly, two groups of students and teachers from Duisburg-Essen (Germany) and Morocco visited NIPS as part of the joint project *Peaceful change and violent conflicts: Middle East and the West-Muslim relations.* This was a three-year multinational project involving universities from Pakistan (NIPS), Germany (Duissburg-Essen), Morocco (Rabat) and Iran (Tehran), funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). Several international seminars, workshops and summer schools were organised (two in Germany, two in Morocco, two in Islamabad and one in Tehran) as part of this project. A senior lecturer/researcher (Wolfgang-Peter Zingel) from the South Asia Institute of Heidelberg University, Germany, taught at NIPS (fully funded by DAAD) for two semesters (Spring Semester 2011 and Spring Semester 2016). Similarly, two senior German scholars (Andrea Fleschenberg and Sarah Holz) taught at NIPS, both fully funded by DAAD.

My multiple sides/roles in Gilgit-Baltistan

I now wish to describe the different roles I played during my research and collaboration in Gilgit-Baltistan, and through this example, I want to highlight the different meanings and roles of a local/native anthropologist versus people in the field and how it can lead to different kinds of suspicion. I have already written about the different roles and duties I performed in Gilgit-Baltistan, initially as a research assistant for a German team doing socio-cultural research, but mainly documenting rock-carvings and inscriptions. In between, I did three months of fieldwork for my Master's degree research in Chilas. I also worked as a translator (between Germans and local people), and I helped conduct interviews with local elders, administrators, etc. for German researchers. Furthermore, I facilitated negotiations between the local administration and the German team. For the people of Gilgit-Baltistan in general, and of Chilas in particular, I was part of the German mission, not only living and eating with them, but also as someone who knew their language and manners, i.e., I was very similar to them.

From another perspective, I was seen as being one of the local people: a Muslim, a Pakistani – a sort of native. This was expressed, for instance, when fixing wages for people who worked for the project or when negotiating the prices of whatever we bought in Chilas. I heard them when our team members from Chilas introduced me to a local person. Additionally, I was also a Punjabi from the lowlands, mostly local people called people like me 'from Pakistan', a negative identity, also for the Pakistani government, including armed forces present there i.e. a non-local exploiting them. This was especially significant when discussing politics, i.e., at election times or when local issues relating to development funds or foreign policy were discussed. Local people like the Chilasi were not all one and the same; naturally, there were differences. The local population was divided into *malik* (original inhabitants) and non-*malik* (migrants), and in this regard I was considered a non-*malik* sympathiser. When we went to Gilgit, or at times of conflict between Chilas (Sunni) and other parts of Gilgit Baltistan, especially Shia, the Chilasi considered me as one of their own. For instance, during an armed conflict between

Sunni (mainly Chilas and Kohistan) and Shia in and around Gilgit, they expected us, including German members of the team, to help them with resources and cars.

In Gilgit, the security forces, including security inspectors and some heads of administration, originated from the Pakistani Punjab. Local Gilgitis were also divided, in that some were happy that soldiers and secret agency people were there to prevent armed conflicts between Shias and Sunnis, whilst others thought they were partisans or actually themselves the reason for conflict. Security force personnel themselves expressed disappointment with the locals, because it was a difficult area for them due to not knowing the local language, the food was different and the area was difficult for them to live in.

International workshop in Gilgit

We travelled to Gilgit to participate in the second leg of the research-training workshop organised as part of a research collaboration between the National Institute of Pakistan Studies (NIPS), Quaid-I-Azam University Islamabad, the Karakorum International University (KIU) and the Institute of Anthropology, Ludwig-Maximilians University of Munich (LMU). I was the collaborating partner from NIPS, Martin Sökefeld represented LMU and Vice Chancellor herself represented KIU. A few days before the workshop, Martin was informed that KIU would not be hosting the workshop, even though it had been agreed a long time previously. The participants were students and faculty from KIU, NIPS and LMU. After the initial training workshop for students in qualitative research at KIU about a month beforehand, participants started to collect data in and around Gilgit on their own topics of interest. The second workshop would take place towards the end of the activity, after about four weeks. All of the students and the KIU faculty simply stopped communication, without giving any reason. Some faculty members who did not want to be identified told us privately that they were afraid of the VC and agencies. There were only rumours, and nobody, except perhaps the vice chancellor of KIU, really knew the true reason.

Martin Sökefeld had already met the top administration in Gilgit before my arrival, and both of us met the police chief in Gilgit, following which, and after clearance from both sides, we decided to hold a workshop at the hotel in which we were staying. Some officers from the intelligence agencies visited us in the hotel to ask questions about who would be participating and what topics the workshop would cover. I explained everything to them in Urdu, and they would leave – only to return again soon thereafter to repeat almost the same questions. On inquiry, they said it was their duty. The city police chief told us shortly before it was due to take place that he could not allow it to go ahead. The same message was relayed to the hotel manager, who was very angry because it meant losing a lot of business.

We met at the breakfast table the next morning and decided to visit German workshop students/participants residing in another hotel later that evening; in fact, they invited us for dinner. We also discussed the possibility of informally holding the meeting in that hotel or even somewhere out in the open. As soon as we reached the hotel that evening, police were already waiting for us at the gate. They stopped us and asked why we had gone there. It was surprising that they knew in minute detail what we had been discussing, and so we tried to guess who could have told them. The Deputy Superintendent of Police personally warned me of dire consequences if we did not stop everything, so we went back to our hotel and left Gilgit the next day.

The consequences of collaboration

Sökefeld and Strasser observed that "while in most cases threat to the researcher will be limited to the danger of being expelled from the field, […], the participant may suffer much more existential consequences that include threats to his or her employment, freedom or even life. Sometimes, the researcher is only indirectly affected by surveillance and threats that directly target her or his partners" (2016:166). I remained under observation for the next few years.

I was a professor at the National Institute of Pakistan Studies and a collaboration partner in a project that included holding a conference. Four students from NIPS were also part of the research and the intended conference. After the first workshop, I travelled back to Islamabad to attend to some urgent university tasks, and I was accompanied by my wife and son on the return journey, in order to participate in the conference. A few days after my return from Gilgit, two officers from the secret agencies visited our Institute, met the director and inquired about me. The NIPS director informed me about this and warned me to be careful. A few days later, they visited again, and this time they interviewed me personally. There were rumours in the Institute that agencies were observing me in connection with alleged involvement in suspicious activities in Gilgit. Some people even warned me that I could lose my job or that I would not be promoted. I did not share any of this with my family, who were already very scared. I stopped almost all contact with Germans for the next several years, and many remain uncontacted to this day. This was the last time I would visit Gilgit for research.

The bits and pieces of information I could gather in the coming months and years included the alleged indecent behaviour of a female German PhD scholar doing fieldwork in Gilgit, which was said to be the catalyst for this fiasco. However, she was not present in Gilgit for the workshop. The KIU administration knew about her case when the workshop was being planned, and they agreed to collaborate. There were also rumours about one speaker invited to the workshop who was not acceptable to the agencies and administration, but nobody told us anything about this. Some of my students from Gilgit told me later that the secret agencies had asked VC KIU to distance herself from the workshop therefore, she has directed the faculty and students to keep away from the workshop. It is also important to mention that, as already alluded to herein, I have worked and collaborated with German researchers for many years, and except for perhaps indirect indications of surveillance, there has never been any direct or indirect threat to me.

Secret agencies are not alone in suspecting anthropologists of spying

Over many years of collaborating with German academics, especially anthropologists, I have learned that it is not only the state and its different 'secret' agencies that suspect anthropologists, but also local university staff, their Pakistani research counterparts and local people. Griesser (2016) observed the following about research in Gilgit: "Correspondingly, though most Gilgitis are fond of contacts with foreigners, many of my interlocutors appreciated the suspicion of intelligence agencies against foreigners" (Griesser 2016: 183).

Many different groups of local people (intelligence agencies, bureaucrats, academics and locals) may have very different reasons, including very personal ones, to suspect or sympathise with anthropologists. Before coming to why all these different people suspect anthropologists of spying, let me share two small experiences that may help us understand this issue. In the first case, DAAD agreed (actually, NIPS agreed) to grant two positions at NIPS. Initially, DAAD wanted to establish a branch in Pakistan and they needed a space that NIPS agreed to on my recommendation. Second, DAAD agreed to a proposal, (actually, an idea given by DAAD), to sanction a long-term professorship at NIPS. The faculty and director of NIPS, in private discussions, had doubts about both of them. NIPS always questioned their whereabouts (questions such as why they go to Peshawar, Lahore, Gilgit, etc.), why they contact certain students (especially why they would invite students from certain areas to their homes) and why certain topics had been chosen by students working under their supervision for their research. Some of these debates were held in my presence, others not, because I was partly held responsible for their presence.

The second case revolved around a teaching position offered to me by a university. In 1995, after completing my PhD at Heidelberg, I was about to return to Pakistan when a senior German professor contacted me and asked if I would be interested in becoming one of two teachers for the soon to be established Department of Anthropology at a university in Pakistan. Since I was desperately looking for a job, I agreed. Mar-

tin Sökefeld was to be the other teacher. I went to that city to meet Amjad[1], who was a research counterpart of the German professor and was supposed to head the department once established. According to plans, I was to be introduced to the Vice Chancellor of the university by Amjad. I stayed there for a couple of weeks without meeting the Vice Chancellor, but during my stay it transpired that Amjad was not convinced about the establishment of the department. He would often ask me questions. Why are Germans interested in establishing this department in Pakistan? Why here and not in Rawalpindi or Islamabad. Why do they want to invest money, even though no request has been made by the university?

Sceptical collaborators

A research project may come into being via many different routes in Pakistan. It may start after a meeting between representatives (minters) of two governments for cooperation, funds are allocated and the universities may be given the task of implementation. Sometimes, it is a result of collaboration between two universities, departments or professors in certain areas. It may sometimes come to fruition after a professor has won a research grant from a funding agency, or it may be an independent researcher intending to do fieldwork in Pakistan. In almost all cases of collaboration, however, funding originates from Western countries and the money goes to professors hailing from those countries.

A foreign anthropologist intending to do research requires an NOC to carry out fieldwork in Gilgit-Baltistan, and generally, the local university initiates/forwards an application in this regard. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) between two universities is helpful for securing a NOC. Individual researchers can also send applications for a research NOC directly to a Pakistan Embassy, for instance in Germany. The relevant Pakistani university, after approval has been issued by authorities,

1 Fictive name.

such as a dean, a vice-chancellor, etc., sends the application to the Ministry of Interior (MOI) for issuance of the NOC. The MOI then sends the application for clearance to different intelligence agencies. After an NOC has been sent out by the MOI, the Pakistan Embassy in Germany can issue a visa. After reaching Gilgit-Baltistan, the researcher has to report to the local administration, who can also demand a local letter of permission for research or may simply verbally instruct the researcher in terms of how they must conduct themselves.

We can divide the different people involved in issuing an NOC and conducting research into three groups:

- State administrative/functionaries: bureaucrats, secret agencies and police
- Dean, Vice Chancellor, collaboration partner, professors and students from the concerned university
- People living where the research will be conducted

The first group suspects anthropologists because it is their responsibility to keep an eye on foreigners in Pakistan, especially in a sensitive area like Gilgit-Baltistan. Bureaucrats from the Ministry of Interior are responsible for issuing NOCs after secret agencies and police give clearance to do so. The ethnographic methods of anthropologists make them an object of suspicion. Many people, especially the aforementioned authorities, do not know – or know very little – about anthropology, and so hanging around, interviewing people, making notes, etc., especially in a locale like Gilgit, which is known for communal conflicts, make them wary. University administrations, faculty and students sometimes may be jealous of colleagues involved in research projects, but they may also know the history of involvement of anthropology in CIA-funded research endeavours, for instance. Local people may be different from locale to locale. In Gilgit city, agencies may consider certain groups as potential accomplices of foreign anthropologists, whilst others may collaborate with agencies against the anthropologists.

A frequently asked question is, why do (German) anthropologists always travel to Gilgit for their research? The other question they raise is,

why do they spend money on this research if, ultimately, there is no direct gain for them? For instance, the people in Chilas, where I worked most of the time, wondered why a German would live in such a miserable place (e.g., spending hour upon hour in the hot field. 'Are they writing a book or trying to understand how people live?' 'Don't they have anything better to do?' 'There must be something they're not telling us'. They never trusted the research team. Even on my last time in Chilas they asked, 'What is all of this about?'

In Gilgit I felt a bit differently, especially when I accompanied my German team in the field and I talked about the local social or political situation. I often had the feeling that they did not like to talk openly and freely in my presence until they had convinced themselves that I was 'absolutely harmless'. I have already written that being a Pakistani from the lowland, a Punjabi, was a negative identity. In other words, the locals seemed to trust Germans more than a person with my identity. But then it also depended upon who the local person was – a Shia, a Sunni, an Ismaili, a Chilasi, etc.

Gilgit-Baltistan as a field of research

There are multiple reasons why anthropologists are shadowed by secret agencies in Gilgit-Baltistan. Before coming to these points, however, it is important to mention that anthropologists are not monitored in Gilgit-Baltistan only, even in Gilgit-Baltistan not all anthropologists are monitored[2], at least not monitored equally. Furthermore, the policy of monitoring has frequently undergone changes over time, owing to the deviations in political and regional circumstances. For instance, after the Raymon David case 2011 (a CIA agent who killed two men in Lahore, and whom the US government accepted as being a CIA agent working for them) and the Abbottabad incident (a CIA-led mission in which Osama

2 This was also observed by Griesser in Gilgit: 'One question that obviously, immediately arises from fieldwork and surveillance is why some are "singled out for suspicions" and others not' (Griesser 2016: 182).

Bin Laden was killed), suspicion of foreign or local anthropologists increased dramatically.

Gilgit-Baltistan as a research location is particularly sensitive because, historically, it has been a part of Jammu and Kashmir, a disputed territory between India and Pakistan. At least two wars have been fought between India and Pakistan on the "Kashmir issue," and there is continuous unrest along the line of control, i.e., the temporary border. Besides India, Gilgit-Baltistan shares borders with Afghanistan, ex-Russian states of Central Asia and especially China, with a huge 3,000-km Chinese infrastructure network project (CPEC) for which Gilgit acts as a lifeline. Furthermore, Gilgit is also sensitive because a number of ethnic, religious and political groups reside there and are often at war with each other, especially during Muharram – the month of mourning for Shia Muslims. It is also very important for Pakistan due to its high mountain ranges and glaciers, which are the source of a permanent flow of water into major dams and along rivers. As a result, there is a significant military presence in the area.

Ethnographic methods that cause suspicion

The subject matter found in anthropology, and its research techniques, are another strong reason for suspecting anthropologists. The more popular topics in this regard include marginalised groups such as prostitutes, transgender, beggars, peripatetic, religious or ethnic minorities, political dissent groups, regions with insurgency, conflict, border areas and peripheral zones. Sökefeld and Strasser also shared this observation: 'Anthropology is increasingly interested in all kinds of "security zones" such as border areas, laboratories, hospitals, refugee camps, prisons, and industrial plants' (Sökefeld & Strasser 2016: 160), while Verdery observed that "[…] our methods are indeed in some ways strikingly similar to the practices of spies and agents, "simply hanging out with people" […] are involved in a comprehensive data gathering operation that goes way beyond our formally-stated research questions[…]' (2012: 17). The basic goal instilled in an anthropologist during their training is

'grasping native's point of view, his vision of his life' (Malinowski 1961: 25) by building rapport, gaining trust, being close to the natives and at the same time remaining unobtrusive. All of these factors offer sufficient grounds to arouse suspicion.

History of suspecting anthropologists of spying

According to Nancy Howell, 25 per cent of the social anthropologists included in her sample had to deal, at one time or another, with this suspicion, and in her view, spying is 'a difficult charge to defend against when one is there in search of information' (Howell 1990: 97). During colonial times, local people suspected anthropologists, as they considered them part of the effort to colonise. Evans-Pritchard's research among the Nuer is a good example at hand: 'Nuer are expert in sabotaging[…] [they] defy the most patient ethnologist to make headway against this kind of opposition. One is driven crazy by it' (Evans-Pritchard 1979: 13). After the end of the colonial period, local people suspected anthropologists for various other reasons, including being sent by their own state to monitor them, to impose taxes on them, to suppress uprisings, to pressurise a religious or an ethnic minority and to impose a law, depending on the region, the community and the state. Clifford Geertz's research in Bali (1973: 412–13), Lincoln Keiser's fieldwork in Kohistan (1991: 32) and above all Pnina Werbner's research of Ghamkol Sharif near Kohat Pakistan, where her ethnography was burned (2003: 193), are a few other examples.

On the other hand, the state may suspect anthropologists of being agents of a foreign power who are supporting an ethnic minority group against the state, a separatist political group striving for independence or a religious minority suspected by the state. In places where the state is weak (peripheral and border areas), or it is not liked by the local people, anthropologists may also make use of this to build rapport with their interlocutors.

Another aspect of monitoring not greatly discussed is the observing of the local anthropologist in a collaborative research team as well as local people working for anthropologists. The interlocutors of anthropol-

ogists and their local counterparts are found on both sides of the suspicion divide. I know of research collaborators who have spread rumours and stated, 'I do not understand why the government gives them permits to do research'. Going back to the previously discussed Gilgit conference that did not take place, we could not figure out who was spying for the police, but they knew exactly what we had been discussing. Grieser (2016) and Sökefeld and Strasser (2016) have written that their interlocutors had been followed and somewhat harassed by security agencies. On the other hand, they also expressed their fears that sometimes their informants were also perhaps agency informers.

Anthropologists as the accomplices of intelligence agencies

'Anthropologists have been active on both sides of the "surveillance divide" [...], in many cases anthropologists have been accomplices in intelligence work' (Sökefeld & Strasser 2016: 161). They have spied and done all kinds of clandestine research in service to their nation by cooperating with their governments and agencies up to and including the First World War. In 1919, Boas condemned anthropologists involved in spying by writing that they 'prostituted science by using it as a cover for their activities as spies'.[3] His colleagues actually excoriated him, and the American Anthropological Association (AAA) censured him for pointing this out (Sökefeld & Strasser 2016: 161).

Similarly, during World War II, approximately half of America's anthropologists (including prominent members Ruth Benedict, Gregory Bateson, Clyde Kluckhohn and Margaret Mead) contributed to the war effort by working for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), Army and Navy intelligence and the Office of War Information. The AAA also secretly collaborated with the CIA. In the early 1950s, its executive board negotiated a secret agreement with the CIA under which agency

3 Some information in this portion has been extracted from an article of David Price 'Anthropologists as Spies: Collaboration occurred in the past, and there is no professional bar to it today' published in *The Nation*, November 2, 2000).

personnel and computers were used to produce a cross-listed directory of AAA members, showing their geographical and linguistic areas of expertise along with summaries of research interests (Price 2000).

Due to the unresolved issue of anthropologists spying and after the 'Project Camelot' for which social scientists including anthropologists were recruited by the US military for doing research about counter-insurgency in Latin America, in 1971 the first draft of the Statement of Ethics (no secret research, first responsibility towards the people they study, etc.) for anthropologists was presented and adopted with a majority vote in an AAA meeting. Almost two decades later, during the Gulf War, proposals made by conservatives in the AAA, namely that its members should assist allied efforts against Iraq, provoked only minor opposition (Price 2000). In the words of Fluehr-Lobban, 'Ironically, just when anthropologists thought they had "decolonized" their discipline, anthropology is being called to the aid of an empire in crisis and decline' (2008: 18).

The clear condemnations of clandestine research mentioned in 1971 'the principles of professional responsibility (PPR)', was removed from the AAA's code of ethics in 1999. Nowadays, the stipulation 'no secret research, no secret reports or debriefings of any kind should be agreed to or given' has been replaced by the guideline that anthropologists are 'under no professional obligation to provide reports or debriefing of any kind to government officials or employees, unless they have individually and explicitly agreed to do so in the terms of employment'. After military and political failure in wars against Iraq and Afghanistan, the 'human terrain systems' project came into being, whereby anthropologists were 'embedded in military teams operating in both countries and the collaboration which never actually stopped has been revived on an unprecedented scale' (Sökefeld & Strasser 2016: 162). The AAA's Commission, formed to deliberate on the engagement of anthropologists, neither opposed nor encouraged engagement in its report (Fluehr-Lobban 2008: 18). The net result is that every anthropologist is a possible spy for his/her country or for her/his paymaster, i.e., what Boas predicted in 1919: 'In consequence of their acts, every nation will look with distrust

upon the visiting foreign investigator who wants to do honest work, suspecting sinister designs'.

Conclusion

Writing about the local perspective on the surveillance of fieldwork as a research collaborator with foreign (German) anthropologists, as "a sort of" native/local anthropologist, is like looking from the fence, i.e., a place where I can see, or at least try to see, both sides, if not many different sides. Due to our research collaborations, I experienced German anthropologists being shadowed and personally being observed, including my research career and perhaps even my life being. In this regard (a research partner educated in German universities, who knew German language and was a good friend of at least some of them) I saw it as unfair and that agencies were cruel or at the very least misguided. This surveillance impacted our research, foreigner or not, and we all had to navigate its pitfalls.

On the other side of the fence sat many different types of people, such as secret agents, administrators (of both universities and ministries), faculty members, university students and the people of Gilgit. Based on their particular position, they were divided in their opinions about surveillance. Secret agencies and administrators are responsible for the security of the country, the area and its people. In their view, there are enough reasons for them to suspect anthropologists in an area like Gilgit, which is a major trouble spot with a multitude of religious, ethnic and political issues. Foreigners generally – and anthropologists particularly – are suspected of being involved due to "questionable" behaviour and research methods. I have already said that university administration, faculty and students all had their own different reasons for being suspected, ranging from why a foreign country was spending money on training of our students and sending paid faculty members to Pakistani universities in order to open new departments. Jealousy over colleagues receiving payment, research funds and facilities and for being collaborators with foreigners was other reasons for creating

hurdles in the way of NOCs. Similarly, the people of Gilgit-Baltistan not only were sceptical of Punjabis, their own government and Germans, but they also sometimes sided with foreigners against their government and people from lowlands.

The question why NOCs were issued to them in the first place despite the general history of involvement of a significant number of anthropologists in spy activities, the sensitivity of Gilgit-Baltistan as a research area and serious credibility issues with some anthropologists. In my interaction with some intelligence officers, they confirmed such reports. In response to my question why an NOC had been issued, they stated that their duty was to keep an eye on the situation and to report anything back to their officers. The issuing or not of an NOC was the responsibility of the government. In response to a similar question put to a senior intelligence officer, I was told that surveillance operations also acted as a deterrent, and NOCs would be stopped only after hard evidence was found.

We further believe that issuing NOCs is part of a complex system of international relations, i.e., a network of economic, political and diplomatic relations – a sort of "postcolonial colonialism." It is not merely a matter of choice for countries like Pakistan, or at least it is a choice only to a very limited extent. Even when very clear evidence has been presented, no or little action has been taken against citizens of strong countries. For example, US citizen Raymond Davis, a CIA agent, who shot dead two Pakistani men in 2011, was safely deported back to the US. The other strong incident that took place, based on spy activity, was the case of killing of Osama Bin Laden by US Navy SEALs a few months later. There were also discussions that some NGOs or individuals had been found involved in spying but they escaped any punitive action.

I believe that it is good that NOCs are issued to researchers, because not all anthropologists, not even the majority of them, are involved in spy activities. Anthropologists may and often do have different opinions and different points of view compared to local people, governments and agencies. Moreover, they also have these differences in opinion in their own countries and against their own national governments and national agencies. This does not make them spies, it is the genesis of

social sciences – and social sciences thrive on these differences. Continuity of anthropological research is not – and should not be – a matter of choice. It must continue, not only because developing countries are dependent on developed countries for resources, including for higher education, but also because most anthropologists bring important, constructive and critical perspectives to the debate on topics such as the marginalised, minorities, the oppressed, political opponents and, above, all the perspectives of local people.

Another often discussed issue with reference to surveillance is related to anthropological research methods. Martin Sökefeld has dealt with this topic quite extensively, and I agree with his and Strasser's view that 'After initial exploration we might come to the conclusion that we have to change our topic and/or site of research, […]. Thus considerable flexibility and readiness to alter timings, sites and questions are significant elements for a methodology under surveillance' (2016: 167). However, I disagree with Sökefeld and Strasser when they say that '[…] research under surveillance will necessarily not be open. […] we have to consider, […] to whom we can disclose what. […]. The use of a voice recorder is probably not advisable' (2016: 168).

I am of the opinion that agencies frequently suspect us because of misunderstandings, but behaving like suspects makes us even more suspect. We need to avoid suspicion by not hiding and instead by explaining our research. Anthropological methods should not be compromised, but if suspicions become serious, we should think carefully about changing the research topic and site. I am further of the opinion that the monitoring of anthropologists should continue, especially because it is a hurdle and a deterrent to spies with a military agenda. Surveillance is almost part and parcel of anthropological research, but it should not turn into harassment.

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