

**The London School of Economics and Political  
Science**

*Class, Power, and Patronage: The Landed Elite and  
Politics in Pakistani Punjab*

Hassan Javid

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the London School of Economics for the degree of  
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## Abstract

Following their conquest of Punjab, the British erected an administrative apparatus that relied heavily upon the support of the province's powerful landed elite. The relationship between the two was one of mutual benefit, with the British using their landed allies to ensure the maintenance of order and effective economic accumulation in exchange for state patronage. Over a century and a half later, the politics of Pakistani Punjab continues to be dominated by landowning politicians, despite significant societal changes that could have potentially eroded their power. In order to answer the question of why this is so, this thesis uses a historical institutionalist approach to argue that the administrative framework emerging out of the initial bargain between the colonial state and the landed classes gave rise to a path-dependent process of institutional development in Punjab that allowed the latter to increasingly entrench themselves within the political order during the colonial and post-colonial periods. In doing so, the landed elite were also able to reinforce their bargain with the colonial state and, after independence, the Pakistani military establishment, perpetuating a relationship that facilitated the pursuit of the interests of the actors involved.

In order to account for this path-dependent process of institutional development, this thesis treats the initial period of colonial rule in Punjab as a 'critical juncture', tracing the factors that led the British to rely on the landed elite for support, and enter into the bargain between the two actors that drove subsequent institutional developments. The thesis then explores the mechanisms used to perpetuate this arrangement over time, focusing in particular on the use, by the state and the landed elite, of legislative interventions, bureaucratic power, and electoral politics, to reinforce and reproduce the institutional framework of politics in Punjab. Finally, the thesis also looks at points in time during which this dominant institutional path has been challenged, albeit unsuccessfully, with a view towards understanding both the circumstances under which such challenges can emerge, and the lessons that can be learnt from these episodes with regards to the prospects for the creation of a democratic and participatory politics in the province.

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## ***Abbreviations and Glossary***

### **Abbreviations**

**BD** – Basic Democracies

**CML** – Muslim League (Councillor)

**CoML** – Convention Muslim League

**IJI** – Islami Jamhoori Ittehad

**MMA** – Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal

**MQM** – Muttahida Qaumi Movement

**NAP** – National Awami Party

**NDP** – National Democratic Party

**PML** – Pakistan Muslim League

**PML-N** – Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)

**PML-Q** – Pakistan Muslim League (Quaid)

**PPP** – Pakistan People’s Party

### **Glossary**

**Biraderi** – Endogamous kin group.

**Panchayat** – Village level dispute resolution and decision-making body.

**Patwari** – Village accountant.

**Qanungo** – Official charged with overseeing the *patwaris* in a given area.

**Lambardar** – Village headman

**Naib-Tahsildar** – Deputy *Tahsildar* (see below).

**Pir** – Religious leader, often descended from or linked to a Sufi saint.

**Sajjada Nashin** – Caretaker of a Sufi shrine.

**Tahsildar** – Official charged with collecting revenue from a *Tahsil* (sub-district).

**Zail** – Group of villages, usually settled by a single dominant agricultural *biraderi*.

**Zaildar** – *Zail* headman.

**Zamindar** – Landowner.

## CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

*Landlords, like all other men, love to reap where they never sowed.*

Adam Smith

In 1849 Lord Elgin, the Viceroy of India, hosted a *darbar* for which invitations to attend were extended to some of Punjab's largest and most powerful landholders. Under the Mughals and the Sikhs, *darbars* had provided local elites and chieftains with the opportunity to present themselves at court and offer their services to the ruling monarch in exchange for wealth and protection. The symbolic significance of Lord Elgin's *darbar* was not lost on either the colonial government or the landholders who constituted the edifice upon which British rule rested in Punjab. For all their economic and military strength the British in Punjab, like their predecessors, required the assistance of local landed elites to ensure the collection of revenue and maintenance of order in the province. Actively ensuring this collaboration required the colonial state to cultivate a close relationship with its landed allies by providing them with a tremendous amount of state patronage in return for their loyalty.

Following the conquest of Punjab in 1849, the British were faced with the task of erecting an administrative apparatus that would ensure order and accumulation. Over the course of the next century, the construction of this framework for control and extraction took place through a series of incremental adjustments, with institutional change and adaptation occurring in response to changing societal contexts, political exigencies, and shifts in colonial policy. Having aligned themselves with the

province's rich peasantry and traditional aristocracy, recognising that these elements of the Punjabi elite were instrumental to the effective exercise of state authority, the colonial government actively undertook institutional interventions that protected the interests of its landed allies. Under colonial rule in Punjab, landed elites were able to virtually monopolise politics in the province, using their privileged position within the colonial administrative schema to bolster their own position relative to other groups and classes in society, while simultaneously using their influence and power to pursue the interests of the colonial regime.

At one level, the British reliance upon Punjab's rural elites was not entirely unexpected. When the Sikhs under Ranjit Singh established their rule over Punjab in 1799, following decades of instability, war, and peasant rebellion directed against the Mughals (Alam, 1986; Gupta, 1996 [1943]), the potential had existed for a complete transformation of the political order. Instead, while the upper echelons of the political hierarchy were reshaped, the hereditary landed elites who had formed the core of the Mughal administrative system at the local level were incorporated within the new regime (Grewal, 1990, 95). Similar opportunities for radical political change arose as a result of the dislocations that accompanied the transition to British control and the creation of Pakistan. While formal control over the state may have shifted as regimes were replaced, these transitions were marked by a significant degree of continuity as the cooptation and cooperation of Punjab's landed elites remained central to systems of governance instituted by successive unrepresentative and largely authoritarian regimes. The enduring strength of this relationship between the state and Punjab's landowning classes, and its ability to reproduce itself over time, is evinced by the fact that post-Partition, despite a range of economic, political, and social changes,

Punjab's rural power-holders continue to play a significant role in Pakistan's politics (Alavi, 1974; Waseem, 1994b).

This study seeks to provide an explanation for the persistence of this landed power in Punjab. It will be argued that this persistence is a result of the reproduction and reinforcement over time of an institutional framework of politics premised on a bargain in which Punjab's landed elites have provided support and other services to authoritarian colonial and post-colonial regimes in exchange for state patronage. It will be shown that this bargain has allowed the landed elite to entrench themselves within a dominant position in the political, social and economic structure of Punjab. The concept of path dependence is used in this study to understand this process of institutional evolution, showing how the institutions that emerge out of key founding moments can come to shape future interactions between actors negotiating the distribution of power within society, creating incentives for adhering to established institutional patterns while increasing the costs associated with alternative institutional paths. Process tracing will be employed as a methodological tool through which to identify and examine the causal mechanisms that have given rise to this path dependent trajectory of institutional development in Punjab, with an emphasis on understanding how transitions from one regime to another, as well as other significant historical junctures, can impact subsequent trajectories of institutional continuity, change and adaptation.

For the purpose of this study, focusing on Punjab as a single case is analytically advantageous for a number of reasons. By virtue of its demographic strength, economic productivity and strategic geographical position, Punjab has historically been of critical importance to successive regimes in the region, and understanding the political role played by the Punjabi elite is vital to unpacking the

dynamics of broader, state-level politics. This has been particularly true in the post-colonial epoch, when the outcomes of elections in the province have always been crucial to deciding Pakistan's political dispensation.

### ***Historical Overview***

The local government elections held in Pakistan in 2001 were significant for a number of reasons. Firstly, they represented the first attempt by the military government of General Pervez Musharraf to garner some measure of electoral legitimacy in the face of growing criticism at home and abroad. Secondly, the elections were conducted under the rubric of reform, with the government arguing that its plans for the devolution of power to the local level through non-party based elections would ensure transparent and accountable governance. It would subsequently emerge, however, that there was little evidence to suggest that this latest exercise in electoral competition constituted a substantive shift away from the traditional pattern of politics in Pakistan. Despite the government's claims that the elections had brought in a new tier of local politicians untainted through association with Pakistan's widely discredited political parties, the results of the elections made it clear that traditionally powerful actors in Pakistan, with the Punjabi landed elite in particular, continued to play a significant role in the political process (Akhtar et al., 2007). Elections to the national and provincial legislatures, held the following year, yielded similar results (Zaidi, 2004; Waseem, 2005).

The results of these elections were not unexpected or unique as elections held throughout Punjab's history have generally followed a similar pattern. In 1951, barely four years after the end of British rule, Punjab's landed elites were able to use their economic and social clout to dominate elections to the district boards and provincial legislatures. Even the elections of 1970, which brought Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's populist

PPP to power following years of agitation against the military government of Ayub Khan, did not represent a significant divergence from this trend. While the PPP's victory arguably brought about an opening up of the political space, particularly given the party's strong support amongst the urban and rural poor, the election results showed there had been little more than a limited redistribution of power away from the traditional landed aristocracy and towards the rich peasantry (Ahmed, 1972; Ahmad, 1978; Burki, 1988). The dominant landed classes in Punjab were able to retain their political position, consolidating it in the elections held under the military government of Zia-ul-Haq in the 1980s, and subsequently in the decade of democracy that preceded Musharraf's military coup in 1999.

The electoral dominance of the Punjabi landed elite in the decades following independence from colonial rule demonstrates how little politics has altered since the colonial era. The first elections in Punjab were held in 1883, with the colonial government introducing limited forms of representative government in the province as part of an attempt to rule more effectively. Based on limited franchise, with the power to vote only being granted to large landowners, these elections brought into power a small number of leaders who were able to act in an advisory capacity to the governor of the province. In the decades that followed, both the franchise and the ambit of elected representatives were gradually expanded, although institutional constraints were introduced that ensured the continual reproduction of the political power of the regimes landed allies. By 1937, repeated rounds of elections at the district and provincial levels had continually returned candidates who were members of the Punjabi landed elite (Yadav, 1987), with the elections of 1946 displaying a similar set of results despite the fact that they had been won by the nationalist Muslim League.

Although it could be argued that the electoral success of the Punjabi elite was a result of the preferential treatment it received from the colonial government, it was the existing power of the landed classes that would eventually make them the cornerstone of colonial rule in the province. In pre-colonial India, where agricultural surplus formed the primary source of revenue and wealth, control over land and, more importantly, cultivators and their produce, was of central significance to any ruling authority (Fuller, 1989). Lacking the infrastructural capacity to centralise control over land, the Mughal emperors in India relied upon a complex chain of intermediaries, ranging from provincial governors and *jagirdars* to local level clan leaders and *zamindars*, to provide the means through which indirect rule could be established over the empire (D'Souza, 2002, 8-10; Hintze, 1997). In addition to collecting revenue for the empire, these intermediaries also performed another incredibly important function – the suppression of dissent and rebellion. Recognising the need to curtail the potential for revolt, either by the peasantry or disaffected local and regional power-holders, the Mughal emperors actively sought to accommodate elites who could use their own social and economic influence, as well as military force, to ensure the stability of the system. In return for these services, elites aligned with the Mughal regime received a share of the revenue collected, and also acquired the political legitimacy that was borne out of association with the Mughal emperor (Alam, 1986, Habib, 2000).

The need for pre-colonial regimes in India to extract agricultural surplus led to the cultivation of a class of landed elites who could pursue the state's economic interests while simultaneously enforcing the state's authority. What strengthened the position of these landed elites, however, was the fact that the possession of land allowed these landholders to consolidate their own economic and political power. The

*jajmani* system that enforced the division of labour between different castes and clans in the villages of India ensured the existence of different occupational groups, each of which had discrete links to the productive process (Fuller, 1989). Thus, a clear divide existed between landless workers, artisans, and landowners, which, in tandem with ties of kinship and caste, provided the basis for the creation of strong group identities. Within this social hierarchy, landholders tended to enjoy the most prestige, and were often able to buttress their power through the use of their influence within the village and through their association with other landholders.

In Punjab, the presence of this village-level division of labour was the foundation for the *biraderis*<sup>1</sup> that would subsequently come to form the basis of political mobilisation in the province. An example of this was to be found in the Sikh peasantry who, drawn primarily from the *Jat biraderi*, had migrated from Sindh and whose presence in Punjab had begun to expand by the mid-Sixteenth century (Grewal, 1990; Major, 1996). Persecuted by the Mughals, and eventually drawn into open conflict with the state, Sikh *biraderi* linkages provided them with a powerful means through which to coordinate resistance in Punjab, and eventually allowed for the creation of a consolidated Sikh polity under the leadership of Ranjit Singh. The conquest of Lahore by the Sikhs in 1799 may have only been made possible after almost a century of constant war and unrest involving an increasingly weak Mughal state, Afghan invaders, and a variety of regional rebels, but it did demonstrate that *biraderi* was an important social and political, as well as economic, source of organization.

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<sup>1</sup> Often incorrectly equated with castes or tribes, *biraderis* are occupationally stratified, endogamous kin-groups. While there can be a number of sub-divisions within a given *biraderi*, the basic differentiation is between *biraderis* of landless labourers, artisans, cultivating tenants, and landowners. See Alavi (1972b), Ahmad (1977), and Rouse (1988).

When the British annexed Punjab in 1849, on the surface it seemed that there were fundamental differences between the new colonial government and the Mughal and Sikh regimes that had preceded it. The biggest difference between them was the infrastructural power at the disposal of the British colonial government in terms of the state's institutional capacity, logistical reach and ability to penetrate society. By eventually setting up a formal, modern bureaucracy that closely regulated and controlled agricultural production in the province on a scale that had simply not been possible under previous regimes (Ali, 1988, 9) and by putting in place a legal system that could implement and enforce a plethora of laws designed to protect the interests of the British government and its landed allies, the British government was able to engender an institutional transformation that greatly expanded the power of the state and its ability to monitor, and respond to, developments at every level of government. Linked to the growth of the state's infrastructural power was the increasing centralisation of its military capacity. While the Mughal and Sikh regimes had depended on local and regional allies to provide troops for campaigns, the British Indian Army existed as a unified force under the sole command of the central government. Given the colonial state's increasing ability to micro-manage governance through the expansion of its infrastructural power, and its military independence, there was apparently little need for the British colonial government to align its interests with those of the local landholding elite in Punjab.

However, as argued by Anil Seal (1971; 1973) and Christopher Bayly (1997), the strength of the British colonial state in India was often exaggerated and their hold over society remained tenuous at best, dependent always on the collaboration of indigenous elites and classes who played an instrumental role within the colonial system of governance. Though the state had a degree of autonomy from social forces

and pressures, its autonomy was circumscribed by its reliance on the traditional power-holders that supported it. In the case of Punjab, this led the British to nurture the support of indigenous landholding elites. Local allies in Punjab, possessing both economic and social power through their access to land and position within traditional networks of kinship, provided a means through which the colonial administration could overcome some of the limitations it faced when governing the subcontinent. Indeed, through their system of district and local level governance, the British emulated the experience of their predecessors and appointed locally influential landowners to be revenue collectors.

One of the more significant aspects of the British government in Punjab was the extent to which it evolved over time, undertaking slow, incremental institutional adaptation in order to cope with changing societal and political circumstances. Initially, in the period immediately after annexation, the province was ruled by a Board of Administration (BoA) consisting of only three members. Constructing the colonial government from scratch, the BoA was forced to confront a variety of different issues, not least of which was devising a system for revenue collection, and often took policy decisions based on the limited knowledge that was available, or in line with prevailing colonial doctrine on matters of government. The colonial state's relationship with the traditional landed elite, at least in the initial phases, was governed by these constraints and it was only after the Indian Revolt of 1857, and the consolidation of the Punjab government in the 1860s, that the British in Punjab were able to institute and maintain a relatively coherent policy with regards to their landed allies. Although this policy was often subject to adjustment over time, and while the colonial government's preferential treatment of the landed elite often led it to undertake measures that altered the institutional framework of governance being

erected in Punjab, illustrated most dramatically by the introduction of the infamous Land Alienation Act of 1900, it was clear that British interests in Punjab were quite firmly and arguably irrevocably aligned with those of the province's landed classes.

As the decades went by, the colonial government in Punjab instituted a number of different measures that, directly and indirectly, benefitted their landed allies. Guided by their quest for greater revenue, as well as their increasing dependence on Punjab as a recruiting ground for the Indian army (Yong, 2005), and informed by their perception of *biraderi* in Punjabi society, the British actively cultivated the support of agriculturalist *biraderis* and local chiefs, making them a focal policy concern. Thus, when the British established the canal colonies in central Punjab at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, bringing into cultivation millions of acres of hitherto barren land, or when they began to include Punjabis within the formal administrative apparatuses of the state, priority was given to the inclusion of landholders within these schemes (Ali, 1988).

State-landholder relations under the colonial regime reached their peak in the first few decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, when the introduction of limited representative government and electoral politics provided a new means through which the power of both the colonial government and the landed elite could be reinforced. In addition to informal associations formed by the landed elite to lobby the government for additional support, political parties such as the Unionist Party came to be dominated by these actors, and would in turn remain the most powerful force in Punjabi politics for decades to come (Talbot, 1988a). In essence, these actions formally institutionalised the province's patronage politics, with the arena shifting from the *darbar* to legislative assemblies and district boards. Having had their economic power guaranteed by the Land Alienation Act, the landed elite were also able to use their

local level influence to acquire greater involvement in the state bureaucracy (Ali, 1988). They were thus placed in a position where they could use their political power to provide patronage to clients and constituents at the local level, becoming conduits to a state that was otherwise unreachable. The ability to establish patron-client ties of this nature strongly reinforced the dominant position of the landed elite in Punjabi society.

The effects of colonial collaboration with Punjab's landed elite were made manifest by the turn of the century, when India had begun to see the emergence of both an indigenous bourgeoisie and an educated elite that sought increasing representation within the state. At a time when nationalist sentiment had started to envelop politics in much of the rest of the country, Punjab remained largely undisturbed and stable. This was not least due to the efforts of the landed elite, who used their influence and power to actively retard the growth of nationalism in the province (Ali, 1991). Cracks did eventually appear in this arrangement, particularly in response to the economic strain of the two world wars and the logic of national electoral politics (Puri, 1985; Jalal, 1999b), leading to the eventual collapse of British rule in Punjab and the defection of the province's landholding classes to the nationalist camp. Nonetheless, British policy with regards to Punjab's landed elites had allowed for a century of largely stable and profitable rule.

In the years following partition, the Punjabi landed elite were able to consolidate and expand their power, using their entrenched position within the institutional framework of the state to adapt to the changed political context in a way that allowed them to continue pursuing their economic and political interests. This was illustrated most starkly during the regime of Ayub Khan, the military general who seized control of the government in 1956. Seeking democratic legitimacy through an

exercise in electoral politics, Ayub Khan instituted a system of 'Basic Democracy' that empowered an elected electoral college to vote for the legislative assemblies and president. As political parties had been banned by the Ayub Khan government, only candidates possessing independent economic and social clout were able to claim electoral victory, and Punjab's landed classes once again became instrumental in ensuring the stability and legitimacy of yet another authoritarian regime (Waseem, 1994b, 145-153), and would continue to play such a role for military regimes in the future as well (Cheema et al., 2006; Dewey, 1991a). Over time, their power to dominate electoral competitions would also provide the landed classes with the opportunity to deeply enmesh themselves within democratic party politics.

Landed power in Punjab was also reinforced by the ability of the landed elite to effectively use their position to stymie successive attempts at introducing more stringent agricultural taxation and land reform (Hussain, 1989). By the 1980s, this political clout had yielded additional economic dividends, with many elements of the traditional landed elite using their power to expand into industry (Husain, 1999). At the local level, the structure of patronage politics that had been constructed in the colonial era continued to operate and while the power of the landed elite to economically coerce their subordinates was weakened over time with the spread of capitalism and the increasing importance of the urban economy, the ability to provide access to a largely dysfunctional state came to constitute one of the key foundations of the power of Punjab's landed elite (Wilder, 1999).

While the institutionalised relationship between authoritarian regimes and the landed elite did evolve and adapt to a changing societal context as the decades wore on, the fundamental exchange of political support for patronage that formed the basis of the relationship between the two remained unchanged in essence, and would

continue to be a central feature of Pakistani politics in the post-colonial epoch. Having entrenched themselves within the formal apparatuses of colonial political control, the landed elite in Punjab were able to hold on to their positions in the state and in the political parties for decades after partition despite a wide array of societal changes that could have potentially eroded their power.

### ***Literature Review***

In this section, a brief overview will be provided of existing literature that is relevant to understanding the persistence of landed power in Punjab. Much of this literature tends to focus exclusively on events and processes within specific regimes, often creating artificial divisions between the colonial and post-colonial epochs that overstate the extent to which political processes in the province are marked by historical disjuncture. In line with the temporal divisions that characterise the literature, this review will begin by outlining relevant work the colonial period before moving on to the post-colonial epoch. In each case, further subdivisions within the literature, along thematic and analytical lines, will also be highlighted and discussed accordingly.

Literature on colonial rule in Punjab can be divided into different themes and analytical categories. These include work done by colonial administrators in their official and private capacities, historians' accounts of British government in Punjab, and more recently, critical appraisals of the effects of colonial rule in the province. The first category, namely the work of colonial administrators themselves, provides interesting contemporary insights into British rule in the province. In addition to the three volumes of district gazetteers that were compiled by the colonial government in Punjab, a number of semi-official publications like Ibbetson's *Punjab Castes* (1901), Tupper's volumes on *Punjab Customary Law* (1880), and Cust's *Manual for the*

*Guidance of Revenue Officers* (1868), all provide glimpses into the workings of the official mind in the colonial period as well as the colonial view of Punjab and Punjabi society. Writing in their private capacities, Trevaskis (1928), Darling (1928), and Thornburn (1983 [1886]) provide firsthand accounts of the circumstances that surrounded many of the decisions taken by the colonial government with regards to the Punjabi landed elite and the defence of their mutual interests. While all of these accounts tend to exhibit a clear bias in favour of the colonial government, they are invaluable supplements to the official reports, correspondence, and other documents that pertain to colonial governance and revenue collection.

In addition to the above-mentioned contemporaneous accounts of the colonial administration in Punjab, historians have sought to provide accounts of the processes that underpinned the development of colonial power in the province. In attempting to understand why the formal apparatuses of colonial rule assumed the form that they did, Eric Stokes' (1959) *The English Utilitarians and India* provides a masterful account of the different debates and ideologies that informed revenue and administrative policy in the founding century of British colonial power in India. This theme is developed by Metcalf (1962; 1964), van den Dungen (1972), Penner (1986), and Lee (2002), all of whom examine how the debates highlighted by Stokes shaped the administrative practices and perceptions of the Punjab government in its initial years. However, by focusing almost exclusively on official debates and the development of the formal apparatuses of colonial rule, these studies leave largely unanswered the question of how these institutional changes impacted Punjabi society.

In attempting to answer this question, Bayly (1973), Metcalf (1979) and Washbrook (1997) examine how colonial governance was premised upon the cooptation of local elites through patronage politics. While these studies do not focus

specifically on Punjab, they do highlight the ways in which colonial governance evolved in response to changing political and economic imperatives, with lasting effects on the structure of local politics. This is a theme that is developed in Imran Ali's (1988) seminal study of the relationship between the Punjabi landed classes and the colonial state in the canal colonies that were created at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Focusing on how the colonies were designed to facilitate greater accumulation by the colonial state, while simultaneously reinforcing the economic and political position of the state's landed allies, Ali's study emphasises the extent to which this project strengthened the ties between the Punjabi landed elite and the state. In particular, attention is given to the way in which the canal colonies project resulted in the greater incorporation of the Punjab's landed classes within the colonial bureaucracy. Another dimension of this relationship is captured by Barrier (1967; 1968) and Puri (1985), who both highlight how the decisions by the colonial state sometimes generated resistance from the regime's allies which, in turn, led to revisions in colonial policy. Talbot (1988a; 1988b) and Gilmartin (1988) also look at the interplay between state and dominant classes in the colonial era, with the former charting the evolution of the relationship between the British and the Punjabi landed elite, and the latter focusing on the patronage the colonial government extended to specific *biraderi* networks and landowning religious leaders who demonstrated loyalty to the regime. On a separate but related note, Yong (2005) and Saif (2010) argue that the political significance of the province, and the fact that its landowning *biraderis* proved to be a reliable and abundant source of recruits for the colonial army, necessitated the implementation of policies that would guarantee stability in the province. For these authors, the governance of Punjab was inextricably linked with the need to protect the broader strategic concerns of the colonial government in India.

These works, while raising critical questions about the relationship between the landed elite and the colonial state, can offer only limited insights into the politics of the post-colonial period. Literature on this period can also be divided into a number of categories, each of which will be discussed in turn in the remainder of this section. The first of these categories specifically looks at the economic dynamics of Punjab, particularly in terms of the legacy of colonialism and the inequality that characterises the rural economy. The second category encompasses work on elections, party competition, and the formal political process. These largely descriptive studies are supplemented by literature that identifies the social bases of different political parties and groups in Pakistan, focusing on how their interaction with each other underpins the dynamics of key political events. A related category is that of explicitly Marxian analyses of the interaction between state and class in Pakistan. The final category of literature discussed in this review is that of 'institutionalist' analyses that attempt to trace out and explain institutional continuity and change in Punjab and Pakistan.

Colonial literature on the economy of Punjab tends to paint a picture of province inhabited by a contented peasantry benefitting from enlightened policies and decades of economic growth. Recent scholarship has, however, increasingly questioned this account. Mishra (1982), Nazir (2000) and Mukherjee (2005) highlight the disruptive effect of colonial economic policy, placing an emphasis on how indebtedness, rising inequality, and declining productivity characterised this period. Ali (1987; 2004) traces out the impact of colonial agricultural policy on growth in the post-colonial period, arguing that institutional structure bequeathed by colonialism acted as a serious impediment to economic development in Punjab. Alavi (1976), Hussain (1988) and Niazi (2004) examine Punjab's Green Revolution and the way in which it allowed the rural elite to invest in capitalist agriculture, deepening their

economic power. The extent to which Pakistan's agricultural economy is dominated by these elites is described in studies by Husain (1999) and Khan (2006), both of which also explain changes in the nature and composition of Pakistan's rural economic elite over time.

Moving on to the literature on the formal political process in Pakistan, Friedman (1961), al-Mujahid (1965), Maniruzzaman (1966) and Weinbaum (1977) provide a descriptive overview of the local, provincial and national level elections that took place in the years immediately following partition. Rais (1985; 1997) and Waseem (1994a; 1994b) offer a more detailed account of electoral competition in the 1980s and 1990s, focusing on the potential for democratic consolidation after repeated episodes of military rule. Focusing specifically on Punjab, Wilder (1999) provides a comprehensive view of the province's electoral history, identifying the existence of completely different rural and urban electoral dynamics in Punjab, and supplying evidence to suggest that politics in the countryside continues to be dominated by patron-client ties and *biraderi* linkages.

While all this work on elections provides valuable empirical data on the political process in Pakistan, little explanation is offered for the underlying processes of political continuity and change that have shaped the country's politics over the decades since independence. In an attempt to understand these processes, considerable scholarly attention has been paid to the regime of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Pakistan's first popularly elected Prime Minister, and leader of the populist PPP. In analyzing the political basis of the PPP's power and its popularity, Burki (1988) and Jones (2003) both trace out the roots of the party to the movement that toppled the military government of Ayub Khan, and argue that despite its popular support, the PPP government was unable to transform its democratic mandate into a shift towards mass

politics, preferring instead to compromise with traditional elites and elements of an increasingly powerful rich peasantry. This was most clearly evident in the regime's lack of commitment to the implementation of land reforms, even though a pledge to implement these had been one of the cornerstones of its electoral campaign. Faced with opposition from powerful landed actors, many of whom would be instrumental in orchestrating the collapse of the government in 1977, the regime remained largely incapable of instituting any measures that would have significantly altered the balance of economic power in the countryside (Herring, 1979; Hussain, 1989).

In addition to these studies, more recent scholarship on elections in Pakistan has attempted to understand the means through which military regimes have attempted to acquire electoral legitimacy. Cheema, Khwaja and Qadir (2006) look at local level elections held under military regimes in Pakistan, and conclude that the banning of political parties at this tier of government effectively allows military regimes to acquire electoral legitimacy without having to bargain with organised parties, while simultaneously empowering sets of local level politicians beholden to the state for continued patronage. A similar argument is made by Shah (2005) who extends the argument to national-level elections and uses the example of the Musharraf regime to illustrate the way in which military governments in Pakistan have actively co-opted political parties in an attempt to shore up their power.

Rich as they are in historical narrative, the works cited above nonetheless fail to offer much in the way of causal explanation for the political outcomes they document, remaining largely descriptive in their analyses of political events. In contrast with this, work in the Marxian tradition has sought to more explicitly highlight the relationship between the state and dominant economic classes within Pakistan. Nations (1971), Alavi (1974), Ahmad (1978), Ahmad (1981), and Gardezi

(1983) attempt to delineate the class structure of Pakistan, and offer accounts of the political roles played by the different classes they identify. Ahmad (1973) and Rouse (1988) provide detailed ethnographic studies of power and domination at the local level in Punjab. However, it is Hamza Alavi's (1972a) article on the overdeveloped post-colonial state that remains the most influential work in this category, arguing that the structure of Pakistani politics must necessarily be understood in terms of the institutional legacy bequeathed by the colonial government. Alavi claims that the state in Pakistan is 'overdeveloped' because of the autonomous power enjoyed by the bureaucracy and military relative to the propertied classes within the country, thus explaining the persistence of authoritarianism in Pakistan.

A different approach to studying the institutional legacy of colonialism focuses more on the impact of colonial administrative apparatuses on subsequent political developments. Lange, Mahoney and vom Hau (2005) compare the developmental levels of former Spanish and British colonies to support the argument that the 'liberal' institutions of British colonial rule were conducive to relatively higher levels of development following independence. Lange (2009) develops this argument to suggest that the extent to which the British employed direct or indirect mechanisms of rule was an important determinant of post-colonial political fortunes. In his study, Lange suggests that direct rule, with an emphasis on the creation of integrated, formal mechanisms of governance, was more likely to lead to the emergence of bureaucratically strong states than indirect rule which, through the use of intermediaries and local authorities, would give rise to weak central states characterised by high degrees of patrimonialism. While Lange's (2009) analysis rests on a comparison of different African colonies, he suggests that India fits a hybrid model, with characteristics of both direct and indirect rule.

Although these comparative studies of the effect of British colonialism describe some of the ways in which colonialism shaped post-independence political and economic trajectories, they do not focus specifically on the persistence of authoritarianism in Pakistan. Ayesha Jalal's (1995b) *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia* provides an answer to this question, and remains an important contribution to the debate on institutional continuity in Pakistan. In her introduction to the book, Jalal argues for the need to focus on conceptualizing the development of the state and politics in Pakistan as being the result of a historically constituted institutional legacy that was bequeathed by colonial rule, and whose roots lay in events that took place well before partition and independence. As such, she embarks upon a comparative analysis of politics in South Asia, arguing that recurrent military rule in Pakistan and the persistence of authoritarian political tendencies within the Indian state, despite the presence of formal democracy, can both be explained by examining the structure of colonial governance and the existence of a colonial state possessing a strong military and bureaucracy. Particularly in the case of Pakistan, Jalal's analysis provides valuable insights by describing how the military's role in politics can be traced back to how it and the bureaucracy were able to supplant civilian politicians who lacked the organizational capacity and popular support necessary to take effective control of the state.

More recent institutionalist analyses of Pakistan's politics have attempted to overcome this problem by focusing more specifically on the processes that underpinned the continuity which characterised the transition from the colonial to the post-colonial epoch and beyond. Stern (2001), Adeney and Wyatt (2004) and Subrahmanyam (2006) argue that the Muslim's League dependence on Punjabi landlords and lack of popular support, coupled with ethnic conflict, posed

fundamental challenges to the consolidation of democracy in an area that lacked integrative political institutions that could have promoted consensus. Aziz (2008) uses the concept of path dependence to account for Pakistan's repeated episodes of military rule, showing how the military is able to consolidate its power by using its control over government to acquire resources and control the political space through the implementation of measures aimed at curtailing civilian politicians, allowing for greater military intervention in subsequent years. While this study provides important insights into how the institutional framework of Pakistan's politics are subject to path dependent processes of evolution, it fails to account for the power that continues to be wielded by groups other than the military, and the ways in which these groups are themselves able to further entrench themselves within the political process.

Although the literature on politics in Pakistan and Punjab provides important analytical frames within which to understand the mechanisms and structures that influence the political process, there is currently a gap in the literature in terms of understanding precisely how institutional continuities have resulted in the persistence of landed power in Punjab. Matthew Nelson's (2002) study of local politics in Punjab is one notable exception in this area. In attempting to explain the, 'microfoundational logic of post-colonial path dependence', Nelson argues that the persistence of the colonial model of local level politics cannot be traced to the effect of formal administrative institutions. Instead, given the scale of agrarian transformation in Punjab since the end of colonialism, Nelson suggests that the power of the landed elite stems from its ability to use political networks formed around access to land, traditional village-level informal institutions, and relations of kinship, to provide local constituents with access to the formal institutions of the post-colonial state, particularly in matters pertaining to dispute resolution and the inheritance of property.

Although this explanation provides a compelling account of the dynamics of land-based, factionalised politics at the micro-level in Punjab, it leaves largely unexplored the way in which these local level processes channel into the structure of provincial and national level politics. Despite changes in the nature of state and society in the post-colonial epoch, politics in Punjab remains determined not only by issues of control at the local level, but also by the crises of legitimacy that prompt an authoritarian state to buttress its rule through the exploitation of social networks dominated by traditionally powerful landed elites. The model of local politics in Punjab that existed under colonialism continues to exist not just due to factional competition at the local level, but also because of the historically embedded institutional continuities between the post-colonial state and the regimes that preceded it, with the post-colonial state's search for legitimacy mirroring the quest for order and support that characterised the colonial epoch.

Finally, drawing on the framework employed by Banerjee and Iyer (2005) to explain the institutional effects of colonial property regimes on contemporary economic outcomes, Cheema, Mohmand and Patnam (2009) use micro-level data from villages in the district of Sargodha to suggest that rural politics continues to be dominated by elements of the traditional landed elite. They claim that the institutional framework of colonial politics and revenue extraction in Punjab allowed these elites to maintain their political and economic dominance despite the *de jure* institutional transformations that characterised the transition from the colonial to the post-colonial regime. Their paper argues that the persistence of the power of these traditional elites can be ascribed to a process of path dependence put into motion by colonial institutional interventions in Punjab. However, it does not outline the exact mechanisms through which institutional reproduction and adaptation took place over

the decades between the introduction of colonial government in Punjab and the present day. Its micro-level analysis also raises questions about the extent to which its results can be generalised to the provincial and national level politics.

The brief review given above of existing literature on politics in Punjab and Pakistan highlights the diversity of approaches taken to analysing political dynamics within the province. It also identifies key variables and conceptual categories employed by other scholars in their attempts to explain the pattern of politics in Punjab. As has been shown, scholarship in this area is rich in narrative detail about the events and processes that have characterised political outcomes in the time period that is the object of this study. The literature reviewed is also useful for tracing out instances of continuity and change from regime to regime in Punjab, and understanding the processes that have underpinned these developments. What this review has also illustrated, however, is that there remains a need to examine how processes of institutional reproduction and evolution have contributed to the persistence of landed power in the province.

### ***Structure of the Study***

In this introductory chapter, the aims of this study have been delineated, and an historical overview of politics in Punjab has been provided, with particular emphasis on the persistent political role that has been played by the province's landed elite. The literature on the subject has also been reviewed, outlining the insights and conceptual tools that can be derived from extant scholarly work while also highlighting some of the gaps and shortcomings that characterise it. In chapter two, the methodological framework employed by this study will be explained, emphasising how path dependence provides a means through which to explain institutional persistence. The use of process tracing to examine the mechanisms through which the

landed elite in Punjab have retained their power will also be considered, with an emphasis on how the concept of critical ‘foundational’ and ‘contestational’ junctures can be used to distinguish between transformational and incremental institutional change. Finally, the chapter will elaborate on the way in which the concepts of state and class are employed in this study.

Chapter three focuses on the period from 1849 to 1901, examining the imperatives that initially informed the construction of British rule in the province. Emphasis will be placed on examining specific instances of institutional development in which the interplay of ideology and interest shaped colonial policy, leading to the co-optation of Punjab’s landed classes during the foundational juncture of 1849-1868. The chapter will also look at how the bargain between the state and the landed elite acted as a mechanism underpinning the path dependent nature of institutional development in Punjab, focusing on how the British and their landed allies set about pursuing their mutual interests. A particular focus is placed on how this was done in the newly-populated Canal colonies, with the analysis showing how the colonial state’s decision to align itself with Punjab’s aristocracy and rich peasantry increased its dependency on these classes over time, as evinced by the eventual introduction of the Land Alienation Act of 1900 and the consolidation of a political regime in which the landed classes played a central role.

Chapter four also deals with the colonial period. However, while chapter three deals with the formative, foundational years of British rule in Punjab, chapter four examines the way in which the introduction of limited representative government in Punjab allowed for the deepening of the relationship between the colonial state and the landed elite in the period from 1901-1947. In particular, the chapter focuses on three main mechanisms through which the bargain between the state and the landed

elite was reproduced and reinforced; the use of electoral politics to maintain the landed elite's monopoly on political power, the utilization of bureaucratic networks and linkages to receive and disburse patronage, and the role of legislation and legislative politics in shaping the institutional framework of Punjab's politics.

Chapter five concludes the section on colonial Punjab with a brief examination of the events leading up to Partition, as well as the events of the first ten years of democratic rule in post-independence Pakistan. While some attention will be paid to the exact circumstances that led to the end of British rule in 1947, and the imposition of Martial Law in 1958, the core emphasis of the chapter is on the role of factional politics in splintering, and re-forging, landed power. Through an analysis of the factional splits that led to the collapse of the Unionist Party, and the rise of the nationalist Muslim League, it will be argued that the period of time around Partition represented a contestational juncture in which the possibility for institutional change was opened up, and then stymied. It will be shown that in the context of state weakness triggered by the Second World War, competition for patronage and power led formerly pro-British landed politicians to defect from their bargain with the colonial state, seeking alternative political means through which to safeguard their interests. While this had the effect of bringing down colonial rule in the province, it will be shown that it also ensured that the landed elite were able to survive as a powerful political force post-independence. The implications of this are then explored through an account of the Muslim League's first ten years in power after partition. Here it will be argued that, like the last decade of colonial rule, factionalism splintered the power of the landed elite, preventing them from potentially consolidating their control of the state. At the same time, Pakistan's powerful military-bureaucratic

establishment was able to make use of this factionalism, playing different political groupings off against each other in the pursuit of its own interests.

Chapter six explores in more detail the relationship between authoritarianism and the landed elite in Punjab, and is divided into three main sections. After first providing an account for the persistence of military power in Pakistan, an analysis is presented of the factors giving rise to the formal re-entrenchment of the state-landlord bargain under Ayub Khan. Following an exploration of the regime's attempts to sideline the landed elite, it will be argued that the military, when faced with the same constraints that confronted the colonial state in terms of effectively governing the country, engineered a rapprochement with the Punjabi landed elite that saw the state exchange patronage for support. This state-landlord bargain subsequently drove the regime to institute a course of institutional development aimed at securing the interests of its landed collaborators through the use of the same mechanisms that had been deployed by the colonial state. The final section of the chapter provides a brief account of how these mechanisms were deployed by the Zia-ul-Haq and Musharraf regimes to bolster their own power, illustrating the path dependent nature of Punjab's political trajectory following the re-instatement of the state-landlord bargain.

Chapter seven examines the mechanisms through which landed power is reproduced in the post-colonial period, emphasising precisely how the landed elite themselves have used their historically entrenched sources of social power to dominate electoral politics, access bureaucratic networks, and legislate, with each of the mechanisms complementing the others to ensure the perpetuation of the landed elite's power.

Chapter eight, which is the final substantive chapter of the thesis, engages in a within-case comparison of the anti-military movements of 1968-69 and 2007,

focusing on how these two instances represented potential ‘contestation’ junctures during which the inertia of Punjab’s path dependent, landed politics could have been overcome. The chapter examines the circumstances that gave rise to these movements, and then explains how the mechanisms underpinning the enduring persistence of landed power in Punjab would ultimately dilute the radical potential of these moments in time.

Finally, the thesis concludes with a summary of the arguments presented. After briefly revisiting the methodological underpinnings of the thesis, an overview is provided of the mechanisms of production and reproduction that have contributed to the persistence of landed power in Punjab, and reinforced the relationship between the landed elite and the state. Then, after a discussion of the insights gleaned from the analysis of failed attempts at changing the institutional status quo, the thesis ends with a few tentative thoughts on the future of landed power in Punjab.

## CHAPTER TWO: Methodology, Analytical Tools, and Concepts

*Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past.*

Karl Marx<sup>2</sup>

### ***Introduction***

This chapter lays out the study's methodological framework. In the first section, a brief review will be provided of some of the classic works of historical sociology, highlighting the key variables and methods that are employed in this tradition of scholarship. The second section provides an evaluation of the qualitative case study method employed in this study, and considers the costs and benefits of using such an approach. Section three, on historical institutionalism, will elaborate on this approach as a subset of historical sociology, and will outline the conception of institutions that informs this study. The fourth and fifth sections are on path dependence and critical junctures respectively, explaining what these concepts are and how they can be used to develop an understanding of institutional persistence and change. Process tracing, which is the method used in this study to trace out the causal mechanisms underlying path dependence, will be described in the sixth section. After a brief note on the use of primary sources, the chapter concludes with two sections on class and state in Punjab. As these two variables are of crucial importance to the

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<sup>2</sup> The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1852/18th-brumaire/ch01.htm>

analysis, these sections will outline exactly how they are conceptualised in this study, thereby informing the overall argument presented.

### ***Historical Sociology***

Informed by an understanding of the ways in which past events can shape and influence contemporary outcomes, sociological analysis has long made use of history to illustrate and substantiate causal claims drawing on Marxian and Weberian traditions of analysis to inform its understanding of how large-scale processes unfold (Skocpol, 1984). Examples of such work include Moore's (1966) study of political outcomes associated with the transition to industrialised societies, focusing on how conflict and cooperation between different classes, in the context of specific agrarian economic frameworks, determining political trajectories. Anderson's (1974) analysis of the emergence of feudal absolutism in Europe relies on comparable conceptual categories, attributing the outcome to the way in which feudal elites modified extant political institutions to maintain their hold on power in the face of increasing peasant autonomy and resistance. Tilly (1978) examines the way in which intra-elite competition and contestation for power can lead dominant groups to cultivate alliances within society, ultimately resulting in the capture of state power by those actors that are best able to utilise the resources at their disposal.

In contrast with studies that primarily focus on competition between different classes and social groups while treating the state as an arena for contestation, Skocpol (1979), conceptualises the state as an autonomous actor whose activities directly influence political processes and interactions between different social groups, defining the setting within which revolutionary groups would be able to successfully seize control of state power. The notion that states can possess varying degrees of independent institutional strength and capacity is also employed by Tilly (1990),

whose analysis of Western European state development focuses on how the growing revenue demands fuelled by warfare led rulers and managers within emerging state bureaucracies to bargain with increasingly powerful capitalist classes trading resources for political patronage. Mann (1986a) examines how the state and different classes in society are situated within networks of economic, political, military, and ideological power, with the ability to draw upon these different sources of power contributing to the ability of these actors to influence political outcomes. The common thread running through all of these studies is a recognition of how the state, and actors within it, can exercise power independently and can pursue interests that may or may not coincide with those of groups in society.

Building on these insights, more recent historical sociological studies have attempted to examine the effect of timing and sequence on political outcomes. Collier and Collier (1991), when examining the incorporation of labour movements and working classes within Latin American states, analysed the effect the timing of such moves had on subsequent political trajectories. Similarly, Pierson's (1994) work on welfare states illustrates how extant institutional configurations of welfare provision in Britain and the USA during the 1980s played a role in constraining the extent to which these governments could subsequently reform and change them. Ertman (1997), in his analysis of European state development, argues that the points in time at which states are drawn into military competition, rather than warfare in and of itself, are likely to have lasting legacies for institutional development.

This brief review of some of the literature within the historical sociological tradition serves a number of key purposes. Firstly, it illustrates the types of variables that are frequently employed by historical sociologists to explain outcomes such as state formation or democratization. Classes and interest groups, along with state elites

and functionaries, constitute the primary actors influencing political outcomes, and variables such as state autonomy, working class organisation, and the timing of military competition, all are examples of factors that can contribute to the construction of robust causal explanations for specific outcomes of interest. Secondly, the literature provides insights into the causal mechanisms underlying different political processes. For example, the reduced capacity of the state to impose coercive sanctions upon actors contesting its power could have the effect of bolstering the chances of revolutionary success, and the types of power resources available to actors can shape the means by which they pursue their interests. Thirdly, these studies illustrate how historical sociology tends not to produce invariant laws governing different political processes. Instead, the explanations provided are largely middle range, identifying structural similarities across cases while remaining sensitive to historical detail and temporality when outlining causal mechanisms. Good historical sociology seeks to explain large-scale processes by incorporating nuance and complexity, rather than by developing blanket models for potentially diverse sets of cases (Tilly, 1995; Clemens, 2007).

### **The Case Study Method**

The qualitative case study methodology employed by mainstream historical sociology allows for incorporating the specificities of the processes being studied while employing organizing concepts derived from a broader range of theoretical and empirical literature. Combining deductive and inductive approaches to arrive at causal explanations, qualitative case studies draw on extant theoretical frameworks to define variables and processes of interest while allowing for the empirical testing of hypotheses and the reformulation of causal propositions in the light of emerging evidence (Goldstone, 1998; Gerring, 2004). They also provide for an approach that is

particularly tailored towards uncovering ‘causes of effects’ particular to specific outcomes relating to a single or small group of cases, as opposed to quantitative research methodologies that are better geared towards evaluating the ‘effects of causes’ across a relatively large number of cases (Bennett and Elman, 2006a, 457-458). This research methodology facilitates the in-depth examination of particular units circumscribed by spatial and temporal boundaries, allowing for a variety of analytical tasks to be performed, ranging from the testing and reinforcement of existing hypotheses to the establishment of new causal claims. Although qualitative case studies have been criticised for having high degrees of selection bias, and for their inability to generate testable theoretical propositions with a wide range of applicability (Collier and Mahoney, 1995; Goldthorpe, 2000), their sensitivity to context, relative lack of omitted variables, and detailed examination of specific outcomes, events, and cases allows for a degree of conceptual validity that might otherwise be lost by employing broader, empirically grounded statistical analyses generalizing across a large number of cases (Bryant, 1994; Bennett and George, 2005, 19).

Although qualitative case study analysis is not suited to large-N comparisons, it has often been used to provide causal explanations for processes occurring across a small number of cases or even a single case. Given this study’s focus on Punjab, a single-N research design allows for an in-depth examination of the processes and mechanisms underlying institutional development. Choosing single-N over comparative case studies does, however, involve methodological trade-offs, with the latter often being considered to provide the basis for more valid causal claims. Rueschemeyer (2003) argues that this need not be the case when considering how single cases contain within themselves multiple data points that can effectively test

and generate hypotheses. Similarly, Tilly (1997) argues that considering a case to be a singular entity obscures the ways in which causal mechanisms and variables function at different levels of analysis within the spatial and institutional boundaries of a case. Indeed, within a single-N study, a range of ‘informal’ units can be analysed concurrently with the primary object of study in order to provide the study with greater analytical leverage (Gerring, 2004, 344). As such, while the primary case could be country, province, or other unit of analysis, focusing on further divisions and levels within such units can greatly strengthen the explanatory power of a single-N research project.

Following from these observations, it is possible to see that even though the main unit of analysis in this study is a single province, comparisons across time and space inevitably lead to a wider set of data points being used to formulate, and test, the thesis’ central argument. Whether it is by looking at the dynamics of local level politics in rural Punjab to ascertaining the effect of federal legislation on provincial state powers, by contrasting the experiences of different districts, cities, and regions, or by examining the relationship between the colonial and the post-colonial, the ‘Single-N’ research design employed in this thesis is one that makes use of within and cross-case analysis to strengthen the causal claims being made by tracing the connections between different spatial and temporal levels of analysis. Therefore, while this thesis uses a ‘Single-N’ design in that it focuses on a specific territory, this emphasis does not preclude the inclusion of a broader range of observations and variables.

## **Historical Institutionalism**

In recent years, drawing in part on developments in economics, analyses of political outcomes have increasingly focused on the role played by institutions. The assumption underlying institutionalist analyses is that institutions, as rules and constraints governing human interaction (North, 1991), are fundamental to understanding the decisions taken by actors in any given political context. These rules can take formal shape at different levels of analysis, from electoral systems and economic regimes to laws and systems of social stratification. Within the social sciences, Hall and Taylor (1996) identify three dominant ‘institutionalisms’, namely rational choice, sociological, and historical institutionalism, each of which is distinctive in how it conceptualises the ways in which institutions develop, how they impact different actors within society, and the different beliefs, practices, and rules that they embody. Thus, rational choice institutionalism views society as being comprised of utility-maximizing agents acting strategically within given institutional contexts, while sociological institutionalism views institutions as embodying particular beliefs and norms that structure interaction between different actors in society, informing preferences, interests, and worldviews. Historical institutionalism draws on both of these traditions and seeks to explore the different factors and processes that trigger and underlie institutional development over time, and the effects these processes have on actors within society. In common with historical sociology, Steinmo (2008) argues that the historical institutional approach simply provides a means through which to understand why actors make particular choices in certain historical contexts, and how these choices can have an impact on subsequent outcomes.

Despite their conceptual differences, however, the different variants of institutionalism can be critiqued for the lack of attention they give to the structure-agency dichotomy (Hay and Wincott, 1998). At the extremes, proponents of rational choice institutionalism assume that actors have unchanging preferences that inform utility-maximizing strategies within exogenously given institutional frameworks, while sociological institutionalists suggest that institutions exert an almost deterministic effect on the actions taken by different sets of actors. Historical institutionalism potentially provides a solution to this problem by conceptualising the interaction between agents and institutions as being mutually constitutive. While institutions can and do impose constraints on actors, playing a role in the shaping of their interests (Immergut, 1998, 20-22), they can also evolve and change over time, often in response to exogenous shocks but also due to strategic decisions taken by actors themselves (Hay and Wincott, 1998). Rather than viewing either institutions or actors as static, historical institutionalism conceptualises both as being subject to change over time as circumstances and constraints develop.

Thelen and Streeck's (2005) definition of institutions provides a way in which to operationalise the conception of action and context within historical institutionalism. Defining institutions as *regimes* that constitute, "a set of rules stipulating expected behaviour and 'ruling out' behaviour deemed to be undesirable" (2005, 12-13), Thelen and Streeck argue that the effectiveness of institutions rests on the extent to which rules can be enforced reliably without contestation. Given that institutional rules are often open to interpretation by the actors that are constrained by them, and that loopholes in these rules can provide escapes from certain types of constraints, the authors suggest that actors can make use of these factors to initiate processes of institutional change. The institutions-as-regimes approach thus allows for

an understanding of how institutional frameworks often contain within themselves the seeds of their own evolution.

Conceiving of institutions as regimes that can be contested and changed allows for several analytical advantages. Firstly, it captures competition and conflict between different stakeholders within any institutional arrangement, particularly in terms of contestation over the exact interpretation and implementation of any given set of rules. Those involved in creating institutions, and those governed by them, can thus attempt to reconfigure or maintain institutional frameworks in line with their own interests by attempting to change or exploit extant rules (Thelen and Streek, 2005, 14-15). Secondly, understanding institutions as regimes governing interaction between actors also provides a means with which to identify the various mechanisms employed by these actors to generate institutional change. As such, differentials in access to power or resources, privileged access to decision-making, feedback loops, and loopholes within formalised rules could all be factors shaping the strategies adopted by different actors to initiate endogenous institutional change. Thirdly, viewing institutions as regimes open to challenges and contestation allows for the possibility of regimes being constantly created and recreated by actors struggling to pursue their own interests (*ibid*,16-18).

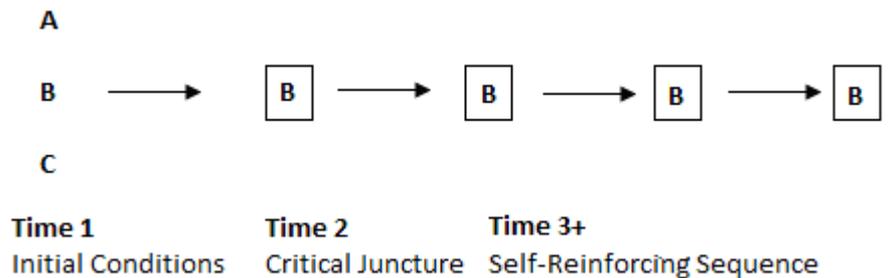
### ***Path Dependence***

Within the methodological framework of historical institutionalism, using the concept of path dependence helps to understand how the relationship between the state and its landed allies has developed and evolved. Put simply, path dependence implies that events that take place at a particular point in history are likely to influence subsequent events. Originally employed as a concept within economics to explain the persistence of specific, often suboptimal, outcomes, path dependence suggests that

institutions, once put in place, become 'locked-in' and increasingly difficult to overturn as the benefits associated with adapting to them outweigh the costs involved in switching to alternatives (David, 1985; North, 1991; Liebowitz and Margolis, 1995). The assumption here is that adopting a specific path of institutional development at a key point in history makes it increasingly difficult to switch to viable alternatives that may have been available at that moment.

One of the key characteristics of path dependent processes is the presence of mechanisms through which entrenched institutions are reinforced and reproduced over time. Pierson (2004) uses the notion of increasing returns to illustrate how institutions and political processes subject to path dependent developmental trajectories persist due to the creation of self-reinforcing feedback loops that increase the costs, over time, of adopting alternatives. As actors invest in the skills required to work within a particular institutional context, and as corollary institutions emerge within the extant framework, institutional reproduction tends to occur as a result of the increasing costs associated with adopting different institutional choices. Given the presence of asymmetrical power relations in society, actors who derive greater benefit from their position within an institutional framework can also use the resources at their disposal to impose constraints on their rivals while endeavouring to maintain the institutional status quo (*ibid.*; Khan, 1995). It is also important to note that the idea of self-reinforcing path dependence does not mean that institutional change cannot take place; instead, institutional change follows a particular path as actors adapt to changing situations. An example of this is the passage of pro-landlord legislation in colonial Punjab; although each new law represents a change in the institutional framework, these changes are informed by previous legislative interventions and the

broader logic of the bargain between the state and the landed elite. Figure 1 below illustrates how self-reinforcing sequences of this type can be conceptualised.



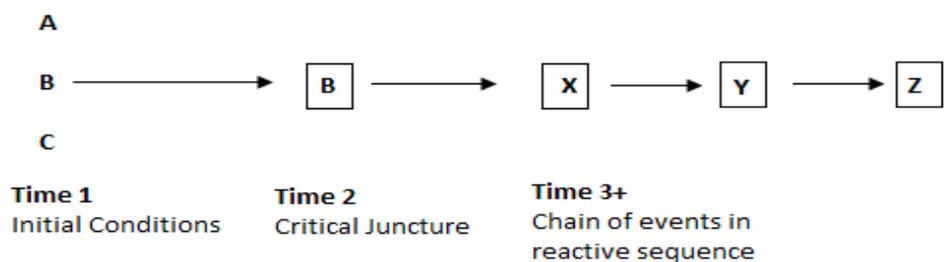
**Figure 1: Self-reinforcing sequences<sup>3</sup>**

The ‘increasing returns’ approach described above is a persuasive explanation for institutional reinforcement and stickiness. However, as argued by Schwartz (2004), few institutional arrangements are able to constantly provide increasing returns to actors, and can potentially lead to diminishing returns as resources are exhausted and avenues for further development are limited. In such situation, explanations for path dependence reliant on self-reinforcing sequences are unable to account for institutional persistence given that the costs associated with sticking to an established institutional path may outweigh those that would be incurred by switching to an alternative framework. For Mahoney and Schensul (2006, 466) while ‘forever increasing returns’ would lead to an increased likelihood of a given institutional framework being reproduced, it is also possible that returns can diminish, possibly due to the exhaustion of avenues for further institutional development, till they reach a point of equilibrium where the probability of institutional reproduction becomes constant. What this means in practice is that the presence of *constant* returns may be sufficient to ensure institutional reproduction provided the costs of adopting an

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from Mahoney, 2000, 514.

alternative institutional path continue to outweigh the benefits of not doing so. For example, the capacity to continually exercise power over rivals or subordinates, even if this level of power were to remain relatively static, would represent a constant return leading to institutional reproduction. On the other hand, in the case of Punjab, the slow urbanisation of the province would be an example of an alternative institutional tendency that could eventually make it too costly to maintain state-landlord bargain of diminished importance amidst the emergence of powerful non-agrarian actors.

The focus on increasing returns can be contrasted with the ‘reactive sequences’ approach advocated by Mahoney (2000; 2001). Here the emphasis is on how the emergence of particular institutions can influence subsequent actions by triggering responses, sometimes unintended, that may not have otherwise occurred. Rather than simply reinforcing initial outcomes, reactive sequences are characterised by, ‘backlash processes that *transform* or perhaps *reverse* earlier events... [in] a chain of tightly linked reactions and counterreactions’ (Mahoney, 2000, 26-27). Where self-reinforcing sequences, defined by the presence of increasing returns and positive feedback, contribute to institutional persistence, reactive sequences illustrate the potential relationship between path dependence and institutional change. This is shown in Figure 2, where ‘X’, ‘Y’, and ‘Z’ represent discrete outcomes linked together by a chain of events initiated by event ‘B’.



**Figure 2: Reactive Sequences**

For the purposes of this study, it is important to note that the two approaches mentioned above are not mutually exclusive; path dependent processes of institutional development can be subject to self-reinforcement or reaction at different points in time, particularly when considering how both approaches allow for the emergence of new actors that can constitute sources of support or opposition for the system. For example, the emergence of the bargain between the colonial state and the Punjabi landed elite led to implementation of a regime of property rights that provided the latter with preferential access to land which, in turn, enabled them to reinforce their institutional position. However, the laws that protected the landed elite also led to the emergence of money-lending capitalists who threatened the rural order by expropriating landlords who used land as collateral for their debts. The very same colonial interventions that set up the self-reinforcing sequence of state-landlord cooperation also had the unintended consequence of creating actors that opposed this new institutional dispensation. As will be discussed in much more detail in the next chapter, these two opposing tendencies came to a head in the years leading up to the passage of the Land Alienation Act in 1900, with the resolution of this particular conjuncture itself being informed by the institutional legacy of the past.

One of the major criticisms of path dependence is that the approach is too deterministic, implying that actors are subordinate to the effects of past events over which they have no control. Also, the notion that institutions may be locked into particular historical trajectories often obscures the degree to which they are contested, with path dependence failing to provide plausible accounts for why alternatives are selected despite the costs associated with such decisions (Thelen, 1999, 396-399). As stated above in the discussion on historical institutionalism, structure and agency need to be treated as being mutually constitutive. In this study, an attempt has been made to

understand not just *why* institutions are reproduced, but also *how* this happens as a result of the actions and strategies of particular actors.

One approach to doing this is suggested by Crouch and Farrell (2004) who argue for the need to examine the ways in which rational actors can, within their societal contexts, calculate the potential benefits and pitfalls associated with institutional switching and, based on the resources and information available to them, choose alternative options even if the short-term cost is high. A related approach conceptualises events within causal sequences as constituting episodes of problem-solving (Haydu, 1998). Here, actors at crucial junctures can draw on their various historically constituted power resources, capacities, and experiences to arrive at updated solutions for recurring problems, triggering institutional transformations and the adoption of alternative institutional paths. Using a game-theoretic model, Greif and Laitin (2004) argue that actors, when responding to their environment, can modify their behaviour and use their resources to influence the processes of negotiation and contestation that lead to institutional change. As will be seen in the following chapters, similar processes of calculation and contestation have informed the institutional development of Punjab over time.

### **Critical Junctures and Path Dependence**

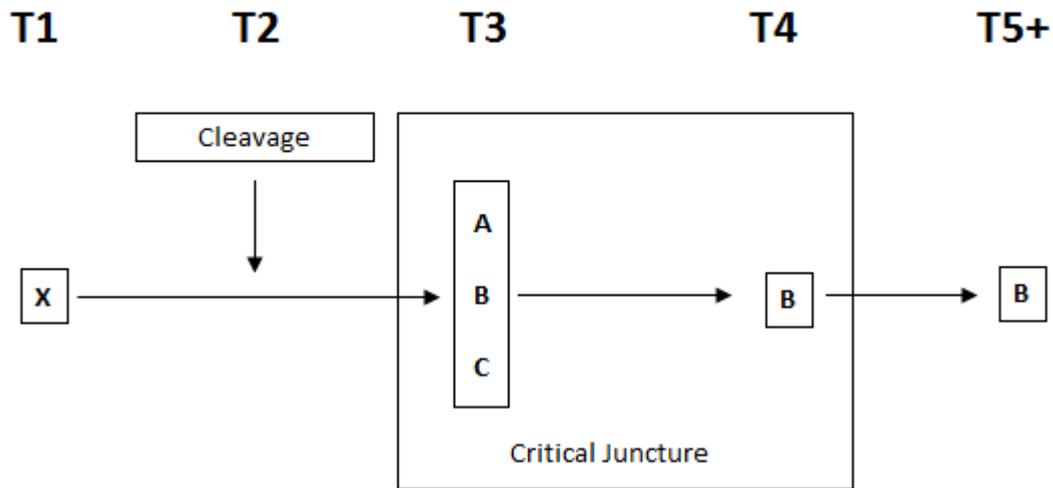
In order to show how contingent events lead to ‘paths’ of institutional development that might not have otherwise emerged, scholars of path dependence have focused on the role played by founding moments or ‘critical junctures’. Collier and Collier (1991, 27) define a critical juncture as, ‘a period of significant change, which typically occurs in distinct ways in different countries (or in other units of analysis) and which is hypothesized to produce distinct legacies’. For a juncture to be critical, it must fulfil certain criteria. Firstly, critical junctures are generated by

cleavages<sup>4</sup> that emerge out of antecedent conditions (Collier and Collier, 1991, 31); these are events or triggers, exogenous and/or endogenous, which initiate the transition from established institutional patterns to new ones. Secondly, critical junctures open up the possibility of institutional change by presenting a range of possible options that could constitute new institutional formations. Thirdly, while the duration of critical junctures can vary, their end-points are marked by the emergence of legacies characterised by the presence of stable institutional outcomes. Finally, and perhaps most importantly for path dependence, critical junctures must be marked by a certain degree of contingency, with outcomes that are theoretically impossible to predict; as argued by Mahoney (2000) the presence of indeterminacy shows how relatively random, small, or exogenous factors can lead to the selection of particular institutions (from amongst a cohort of equally viable possibilities), with this helping to deal with the problem of constant causes.

Constant causes can be said to operate when the persistence of an institutional framework can be attributed to antecedent conditions and causal mechanisms, as opposed to distinct processes of reproduction initiated by its emergence (Collier and Collier, 1991, 37; Schwartz, 2004). An example here would be the causes leading to the co-optation of local elites by agrarian bureaucratic empires for the appropriation of agricultural surplus. In the case of Punjab, for all the institutional distinctiveness of the colonial state, it could be argued that the emergence of a state-landlord bargain was simply rooted in the same constant causes that underpinned similar relationships between landed elites and the state under the Mughals and Sikhs. For there to be path dependence, it would have to be shown that colonial interventions created a 'path' that would not have otherwise been generated.

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<sup>4</sup> This is a *sui generis* use of the term, referring to key events rather than enduring divisions in society.



- T1 = Antecedent Conditions**
- T2 = Cleavage**
- T3 = Possible Institutional Paths**
- T4 = Institutional Outcome**
- T5 = Post-Juncture Legacy**

**Figure 3: Critical Junctures<sup>5</sup>**

Understanding the role played by contingency during critical junctures can help determine the extent to which emergent institutions are created independently of antecedent conditions. However, as Mahoney and Schensul (2006) acknowledge, the extent to which contingency is important is disputed by scholars working on path dependence. For instance, Goldstone (1998) and Mahoney (2000) emphasise the need for there to be high levels of contingency for path dependent outcomes to not be generated through the operation of constant causes. Lacking antecedent influences, critical junctures thus become more like ‘turning points’ within which the adoption of alternative trajectories deviating from established, inertial paths depends largely on ‘availability and chance’ (Abbot, 1997, 93). On the other hand, Collier and Collier

<sup>5</sup> Adapted from Collier and Collier (1991)

(1991), Pierson (2000; 2004), and Schwartz (2004) treat contingency as being of less importance, largely because a focus on chance and indeterminacy can obscure the role played by existing causal mechanisms in generating new institutional outcomes. The point is best expressed by Katznelson (2003, 292), who criticises the causal role played by contingency for, ‘commit[ting] itself [i.e. path dependence] to a particular, highly partial, view of institutional genesis, a haphazard mixture of chance and opportunism’, and argues instead for a recognition of the way in which events are rarely, if ever, entirely contingent and free from the influence of existing factors. Furthermore, as Collins (2007) points out, individual decisions or events are rarely able to generate deviation from broader historical trajectories.

This thesis attempts to navigate between these opposing points of view. Contingent critical junctures are important because they show how institutional outcomes are often the unexpected results of responses to uncertainty. Given that institutional paths can often be sub-optimal, in terms of their persistence despite the presence of alternatives that might be theoretically preferable, understanding precisely why these paths are taken requires an understanding of how the factors shaping such decisions are sometimes arbitrary. Nonetheless, since there can never be ‘pure’ contingency during any critical juncture, the presence of constant causes does not preclude the emergence of path dependent institutional trajectories provided actors are presented with at least two possible policy choices (Pierson, 2000). When deciding between multiple options in conditions of uncertainty, actors will rely on existing experiences, resources, and inclinations to inform their decisions.

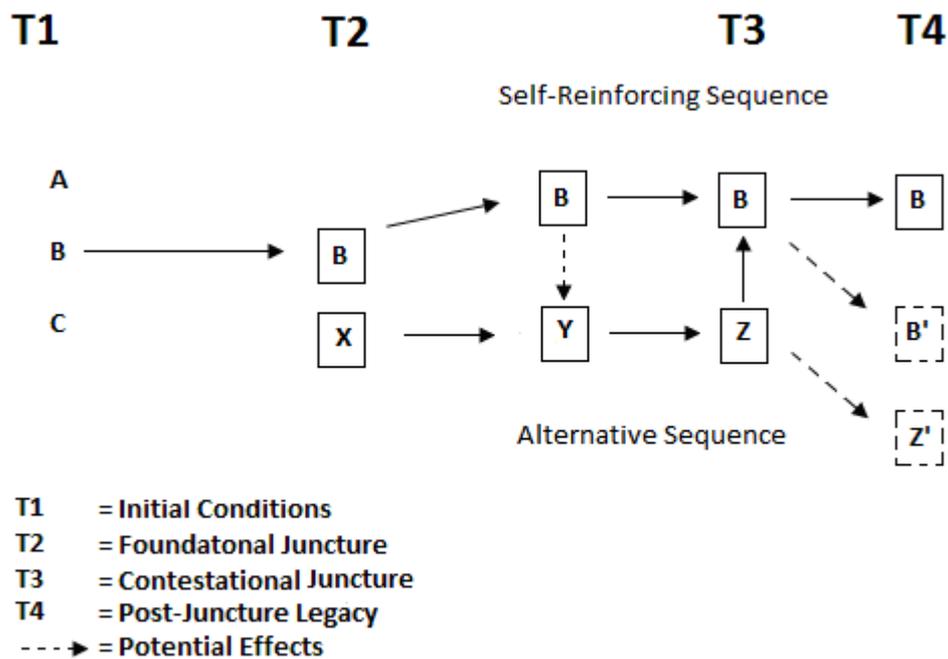
Focusing on critical junctures to explain path dependence also illustrates the importance of initial conditions and events in determining subsequent institutional outcomes, and helps to trace sequences of institutional development. However, as

seen in the discussion of reactive sequences above, path dependent processes can be subject to revision or challenge at points in time far removed from their initial founding moments. As the example of the Land Alienation Act shows, these events, while not necessarily resulting in a fundamental reconfiguration of extant institutions, can nonetheless exert a significant impact. In order to conceptualise the importance of these junctures, this study differentiates between ‘foundational’ junctures, which give rise to particular paths of institutional development, and ‘contestational’ junctures, which represent important challenges to the system. These two types of juncture share a number of characteristics; they represent periods of potential change, they are characterised by a degree of contingency with regards to potential outcomes, and they generate stable institutional configurations. What differs is their effect; foundational junctures lead to the creation of new institutional frameworks, empowering particular sets of actors governed by their own logic of reinforcement and reproduction. Contestational junctures, on the other hand, represent the emergence of new actors and institutional paths that unsuccessfully seek to replace those already in place, and which can sometimes be characterised as failed reactive sequences.

The concept of contestational junctures is important to this study for a number of reasons. Firstly, they illustrate the ways in which path dependent processes can generate contradictory tendencies and conflicts that can surface as challenges to the system at different points in time. Secondly, these junctures provide important insights into the processes of institutional change and adaptation; examining how elites invested in reproducing the status quo respond to the challenges of new rivals can show the precise mechanisms through which institutional reproduction takes place. Thirdly, failure, as a key characteristic of contestational junctures, demonstrates the limits to potential strategies for institutional change, and the extent to which

entrenched, path dependent processes of institutional development are difficult to overturn. In other words, a successful contestational juncture could potentially be a new foundational juncture.

Figure 4 is a stylized depiction of the relationship between foundational and contestational junctures. In the diagram, B represents a set of self-reinforcing actors and institutions generated by an initial foundational juncture. At the same time, X, Y and Z represent a parallel tendency, generated by exogenous factors or even a reactive sequence, characterised by an alternative set of actors and institutions. The two tendencies collide at point T3, which represents a contestational juncture. Again, the clash between land and capital prior to the passage of the Land Alienation Act would be an example of this. Here, the alternative sequence fails to fundamentally alter the institutional status quo, and B remains the primary institutional outcome, albeit with some alterations (in this case, the maintenance of the state-landlord bargain through the passage of the Land Alienation Act). The capacity for change at this moment is captured by B' and Z'. The former represents a potential alternative outcome in which B is fundamentally altered (transforming the contestational juncture into a foundational one). The latter shows how the alternative sequence itself may be transformed, potentially triggering a new contestational juncture in the future.



**Figure 4: Relationship between Foundational and Contestational Junctures**

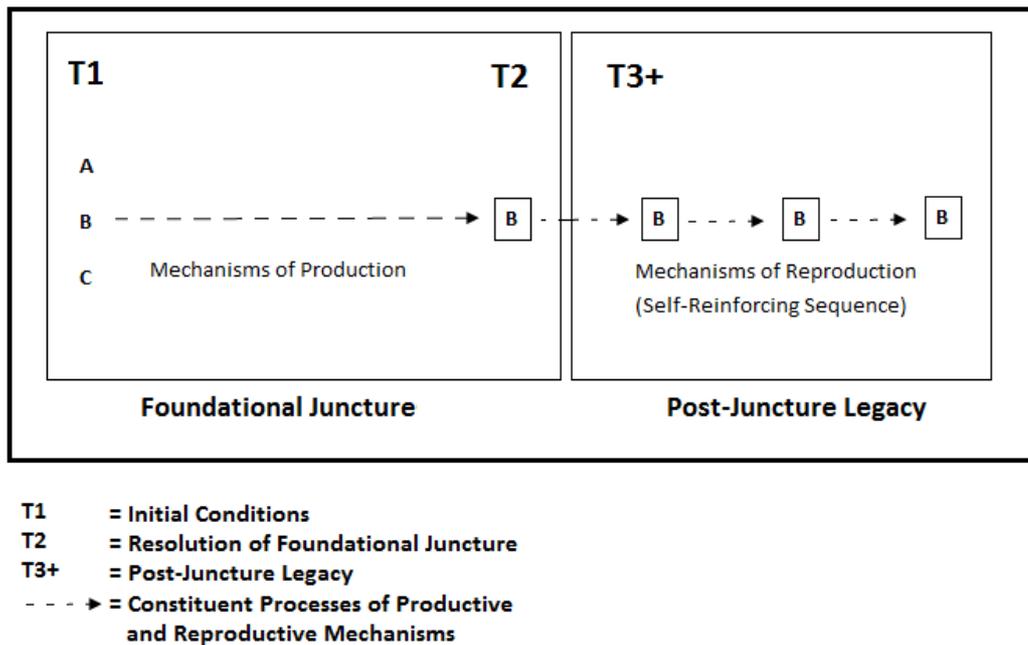
One final point that must be made about critical junctures is that they are relatively rare. This study begins with an analysis of the foundational juncture from 1849-1868, and then focuses on the contestational junctures of 1900, 1944-47 and 1968-1971. While these are not the only episodes of upheaval or even change in Punjab and Pakistan, they represent the most significant instances in which the bargain between the state and the landed elite was challenged. Particularly with regards to the contestational junctures, it is important to note that their uniqueness is in part attributable to the role played by ‘new’ actors; in 1900, these were moneylenders in the countryside, in 1944-47 they were the nationalist political parties and in 1968-1970, they were the urban working classes. This is in contrast with, for example, episodes such as Pakistan’s first military coup in 1958, and the anti-Bhutto movement of 1977, both of which were significant events in their own right, but which did not involve direct challenges to the state-landlord nexus, or the emergence of radically new actors attempting to transform the status quo.

## **Process Tracing**

In this thesis, the form of path dependent explanation used to explain the persistence of landed power corresponds to what Mahoney (2000, 517) calls the ‘power’ approach, whereby institutional reproduction is understood in terms how elite groups actively work to strengthen the institutions that reinforce their position relative to other groups. The exact mechanisms through which this takes place can, following Collier and Collier (1991), be divided into two main types, namely mechanisms of production and mechanisms of reproduction. As can be seen in Fig. 5, the two types of mechanism correspond to different stages in the development of a path dependent institutional trajectory. Mechanisms of production govern the selection of a particular institutional outcome from the range of options available during a foundational juncture. In the case of Punjab and the persistence of landed power, this mechanism would be the bargain that leads the state to extend support and patronage to the landed elite in exchange for ensuring order and accumulation at the local level. Once the mechanisms of production have generated a stable institutional configuration, mechanisms of reproduction govern its self-reinforcement through the provision of increasing or constant returns, and the creation of positive feedback loops.

In order to accurately establish the relationship between these mechanisms and institutional development, it is essential to engage in an in-depth exploration of the empirical and historical evidence available. However, deploying history to bolster causal claims involves more than simply narrating chains of events while relying upon a ‘Seussian explanation’ that asserts, ‘it just happened that this happened first, then this, then that, and is not likely to happen that way again’ (Goldstone, 1998, 833). Instead, as an alternative to narrative accounts rich in descriptive content but lacking in explanatory power, causation can be established by, breaking down big events into

## Path Dependence



**Figure 5: Processes, Mechanisms, and Path Dependence**

causally connected sequences of events, and examining each link in the chain' (Tilly, 1995, 1602). Referred to as 'process tracing' (Bennett and George, 2005; Mahoney, 2003), this approach involves disaggregating narratives into sequences of smaller, interconnected episodes. Selected and demarcated on the basis of broader theoretical assumptions regarding their hypothetical relationships to the outcome of interest, the episodes are then tested for their causal effect by determining the ways in which they are, as determined through the available historical evidence, connected to other episodes within the causal sequence. By tracing out the interconnectedness of different episodes within a broader narrative, and by mapping out the causal mechanisms and variables underlying the particular effects they have on each other, it becomes possible to establish a chain of causality linking the dependent variable to the hypothesised independent variables (Checkel, 2005).

Process tracing itself can take a number of forms, ranging from the provision of narrative accounts of processes, to generating analytic explanations functioning within the context of specific theoretical propositions (George and Bennett, 2005, 210-211). As such, process tracing can be deployed as a research method used to evaluate or establish hypotheses rooted in particular theoretical traditions. Rational choice and functionalist models of political change, for example, could both potentially be tested or generated using the evidence gleaned from process tracing. This flexibility allows a variety of theoretical approaches to be employed when exploring questions involving complex causal sequences characterised by features ranging from the existence of interaction effects to endogeneity and path dependence (Bennett and Elman, 2006b; Vennesson, 2008).

A number of considerations need to be taken into account when employing process tracing. Even when broader units of analysis, such as states, are selected as the primary cases to be examined, the sensitivity of process tracing to questions of temporality and sequence requires that the time periods under consideration be carefully selected. In addition to the way in which chosen starting and end points can influence the relative causal weight and significance constituent events occupy within the narrative (Bearman et al., 1999), the persuasiveness of causal accounts derived through the use of process tracing is largely dependent on the extent to which the hypothesis under investigation is corroborated or negated by the empirical data that is yielded by detailed historical analysis. Restricting the analysis to relatively short periods of time reduces the amount of evidence available to support a particular explanation, and the choosing of too lengthy a historical timeframe opens up the possibility of potentially multiplying the number of disconfirming observations that could bring into question the validity of any causal claims (Bennett and Elman, 2006a,

459). In this study, an attempt has been made to address these concerns by applying strict selection criteria to the timeframe and episodes that are analysed, particularly during episodes of bargain-making and contestation,

Referring again to Fig. 5, it is possible to see the relationship between causal mechanisms and process tracing. Taking the example of the period during which the foundational juncture in which the state-landlord relationship was institutionalised in Punjab, the mechanism linking the annexation of Punjab in 1849 (the generative cleavage) to the passage of the Tenancy Act of 1868 and consequent consolidation of the institutional framework (the stable outcome) can be tested by establishing the relationships between the different constituent events and processes that occurred between these two points in time. As shown in Chapter 3, the state-landlord bargain which drove institutional development in this period evolved as the British responded to basic constraints, namely the need to create an effective administrative system for Punjab, and the co-optation of traditional elites after 1857 to ensure the maintenance of order. Here, the colonial state used its power to bolster potential allies in society who responded by deploying their own resources to buttress British rule and their own institutional position. Process tracing facilitates an exploration of the different factors that underpinned these developments, and the causal links between them, together constituting the mechanisms of production during the foundational juncture. Subsequent chapters in the thesis demonstrate how process tracing also helps to disaggregate the mechanisms of reproduction underlying path dependent institutional persistence; by focusing on the relationships between bureaucratic power, electoral politics, and legislative interventions at different points in time, it becomes possible to see how the state-landlord bargain is reinforced through positive feedback loops and

increasing returns, strengthening the power of the landed elite concurrently with the entrenchment of the dominant institutional trajectory.

### ***A Note on Primary Sources***

As noted by Pierson and Skocpol (2002), historical institutionalists have traditionally relied on secondary sources for much of their data. This is true for this study as well, although some effort has been made to make use of primary sources to supplement the empirical strength of the analysis, especially where the secondary sources themselves are lacking. For the most, archival government documents from the colonial and post-colonial periods, as well as Legislative Assembly Debates, have been employed to demonstrate the logic of state and landlord politics. The use of these specific sources is deliberate; the latter, in particular, have thus far been the subject of very little scholarly attention, and both offer first-hand accounts of how the state and landed politicians arrived at different decisions, and made use of their position to reinforce their power.

Before proceeding, it is important to point out that official government documents in Pakistan are often difficult to access, with this difficulty being exacerbated by the enforcement of stringent rules preventing access to classified documents, the majority of which deal with events from the late 1960s onwards. However, given the emphasis placed on initial founding conditions in this study, documents on the first two decades of independence have been used liberally to demonstrate the persistence of the institutional framework of colonial rule. For subsequent events, Legislative Assembly Debates have been used to fill in the gaps left by the secondary sources.

## ***The Concepts of Class and State in Punjab***

Although existing work in the historical institutionalist tradition provides important methodological and conceptual insights, it is important to bear in mind the fact that the processes of institutional development that took place in South Asia were fundamentally different from those that occurred in the mainly advanced capitalist countries that the majority of the literature focuses on. While certain broad structural similarities are arguably common to these diverse developments, such as the existence of the state and different classes in society, it is necessary to develop context specific versions of these variables to avoid conceptual stretching (Sartori, 1970; Mair, 2008). The term ‘class’, for instance, could potentially refer to a wide variety of different actors, and using the term without any specificity could cause it to lose some of its analytical meaning.

State and class are core to this study because of the way in which they can accurately capture the attributes and interactions of the major actors involved in Punjab’s institutional development. To ensure the validity of these concepts when applying them to the case of Punjab, and to set out the conceptual terrain of the thesis in terms of state-society relations, this section will outline the how notions of state and class inform this study. For class, an attempt will be made to specify the rural class structure of Punjab while paying close attention to the impact of long-term economic change on the development of capitalist classes in the province. When looking at the state, emphasis will be placed on understanding how its autonomy, rooted in the ‘overdevelopment’ of the colonial state, has impacted its relationship with different elements of society over time.

## **Class**

The concept of class is crucial to understanding the social structure of Punjab not only due to the economic stratification of rural Punjab, but also due to the enduring relationship between class and political power in the province. Historically, control over land formed the core of political authority within rural India, with the ability to control cultivators and lay claim to the product of the land being of central political significance during the Mughal and, indeed, subsequent epochs (Fuller 1989). At the local and regional levels, political power inevitably came with control over land and was buttressed by the fact that control over land was also often accompanied by considerable amounts of prestige and loyalty from village- and regional-level kin groups (Neale 1969).

In order to capture the different attributes and dimensions of class power in Punjab, this section draws on the work by Ahmad (1973; 1977), Patnaik (1980), Bhattacharya (1983), and Prakash (1984) to create a typology of class that distinguishes between different classes on the basis of three main features: capital/property ownership, labour exploitation, and social status. Fundamentally, the concept of class derived from these attributes is one that recognizes how class is not merely an economic category, but also a relational one. Hence, while the ownership of capital/property may indicate economic wealth, income and consumption alone are not sufficient for understanding the constitution of a class, even though they may be important determinants of class position and status. Instead, the ownership of capital/property is important precisely because it implies the existence of a particular relationship of exploitation and domination within the broader context of economic production. As such, in the case of the Punjabi countryside, the ownership of land, or lack of it thereof, does not just simply provide a basis by which to differentiate

between different classes on the basis of income—it also suggests that those with ownership of land are in a position to exploit the labour of those who lack property of their own. It is this capacity to exploit and subordinate labour that guarantees the power of the different elements of the landed classes in Punjab, particularly in the period preceding partition in 1947. In addition to providing the landholding class with economic strength, the control over labour that comes with the ownership of property enables the landholding class to more effectively dominate political and social life in the countryside.

Using data obtained from Calvert (1925) and Khan (2006), Tables 1 and 2 show the evolution of landholding patterns in Punjab by setting out changes in land ownership and concentration over time. Table 3 indicates the number of landless households in Punjab as a percentage of the total number of households, while Table 4 displays trends in the use of wage labour in rural Punjab. It is possible to arrive at some conclusions based on the data given above. Purely in economic terms, there is a definite tendency towards the concentration of land ownership and the consolidation of the economic power of the different elements of the landowning class relative to other segments of the population. Between 1925 and 2000, the number of landholders owning less than 12.5 acres increased significantly, even as those owning more than this amount became fewer and fewer in number. The declining number of medium and large landholdings can be explained by taking into account land fragmentation and the operation of market forces after independence (amidst the elimination of laws enforcing primogeniture and the restriction of land ownership to particular segments of the rural population). Indeed, the increase in the number of marginal and small holdings points towards the increasing impoverishment of medium-level landholders

<b>Class Category</b>	<b>Size of Landholding</b>	<b>1925</b>	<b>1972</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
	Marginal holdings (up to 5 acres)	58%	46%	47%	54%	61%
<b>Poor Peasantry</b>	Small holdings (between 5 and 12.5 acres)	26%	30%	30%	28%	27%
<b>Middle Peasantry</b>	Medium holdings (between 12.5 and 50 acres)	12%	21%	19%	15%	11%
<b>Rich Peasantry and Landed Aristocracy</b>	Large holdings (more than 50 acres)	4%	4%	3%	2%	1%

Table 1: Land distribution amongst landholding households in Punjab

<b>Holding type</b>	<b>Percentage of farmed area</b>				
	<b>1925</b>	<b>1972</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Marginal holding (up to 5 acres)</b>	12%	5%	7%	11%	16%
<b>Smallholding (5 to 12.5 acres)</b>	26%	30%	33%	40%	47%
<b>Medium (12.5 to 50 acres)</b>	35%	50%	46%	41%	39%
<b>Large (more than 50 acres)</b>	25%	20%	21%	29%	14%

Table 2: Landholding types as a percentage of the total farmed area

	<b>1972</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Landless</b>	48.2%	50.0%	55.4%	50.3%

Table 3: Landless households as a percentage of total village households

	<b>1972</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Family workers as % of family members</b>	55%	60%	29%	37%
<b>Permanent hired labour</b>	7%	4%	2%	3.4%
<b>Casual labour</b>	30%	45%	50%	44%

Table 4: Types of labour employed in agricultural households

over time, implying the emergence of an increasingly large ownership divide between the largest landowners and everyone else. The increase in the size of the landless in the same time period, as well as the increase in the amount of casual labour employed in Punjab, points towards the growth of wage labourers as a category in Punjab. The rise in wage labour, and the increasing number of small and marginal holdings, can be attributed to a number of factors, ranging from increased mechanization to land fragmentation and even diversification away from agriculture, but the overall picture

remains clear. The agrarian economy continues to be dominated by a small class of landowners who, as the main sources of employment within the village, continue to wield a tremendous amount of economic power in the countryside.

In addition to the criteria of property ownership and labour exploitation, it is also necessary to understand the role played by social status in forging class identities. In this context, social status broadly refers to the position of a given class in the rural hierarchy and can be said to approximate to membership within a *biraderi*. Historically in Punjab, the distinction between those who did and those who did not have access to land formed the basis of the *biraderi* system that structured social relations in the province. Agriculturalist *biraderis*, namely those with de facto ownership over land, or those who cultivated land, occupied an economic and social position that was completely different from that occupied by the *biraderis* of the artisans who performed non-land-related services in the village. At the bottom of the hierarchy were the landless poor who were not members of the artisanal *biraderis*. Although *biraderi* also regulated social life in a wide variety of areas, ranging from marriage to dispute resolution, it was primarily a means through which to enforce occupational specialization and stratification.

In the pre-colonial and colonial eras, membership within land-controlling *biraderis* brought with it political benefits. Seeking to co-opt the dominant elements of the peasantry with a view towards ensuring order and accumulation, these regimes actively cultivated the support of landed *biraderis* like the Jats and the Rajputs. Indeed, the majority of the province's traditional aristocracy was drawn from these *biraderis*, and the rich peasantry comprised almost entirely the *biraderis*. Linked through bonds of kinship and, often, common economic interest, *biraderis* often formed the basis of the political mobilization of Punjab's landholders and were

instrumental in consolidating the collective power of these actors. What must be borne in mind when discussing *biraderi*, however, is that it does not act as a completely perfect proxy for economic class. While *biraderi* did often determine a person's occupation and degree of access to land, *biraderis* were not completely impermeable categories. As such, members of a non-agriculturalist *biraderi* could potentially own land and vice versa. Related to this is the fact that differences could exist, in terms of status and economic power, within *biraderis* occupying similar positions on the occupational scale. Thus, for instance, Jats, Rajputs, and Arains were all agriculturalist *biraderis*, but they did not enjoy equal levels of prestige and power. More often than not, the social dominance of any given *biraderi* would be dependent on geographical and demographic factors, like the region in which the *biraderi* was located and the number of members it had in that particular area. At a purely political level, however, particularly under the colonial regime, these nuances were of little significance. Notwithstanding these variations, *biraderi* membership was a reasonably accurate indicator of land ownership and social position, and it was on this basis that colonial policy was eventually constructed. The institutionalization of *biraderi* as political power that took place under colonial rule would have an effect on developments in the post-colonial context.

Taking the different determinants of class together - property ownership, labour exploitation, and social status - it is possible to then identify two different sets of capacities that can be used to further refine the distinction between different classes and, indeed, fractions within classes. Broadly, and to varying degrees, classes can possess the capacity to impose sanctions on rival groups and to engage in collective action. Sanctions here are understood to be of two types. Negative sanctions are those that impose costs, such as the use of violence or economic dominance against rivals

and subordinates. Positive sanctions, on the other hand, can include the provision of services such as access to the state and dispute resolution. The ability to impose sanctions of either type depends on the economic strength of a class as well as on its social status. In the case of the landowning class in Punjab, the capacity to bring sanctions to bear against other classes in society forms the basis of its importance to authoritarian regimes.

Social status and economic power are also linked to a class' ability to undertake collective action. As mentioned earlier, *biraderi* networks can form the basis for political mobilization, and the resources available to dominant classes can allow them to use these means of informal organization to interact with the state and pursue common interests. Collective action can also assume the form of participation within formal organizations, such as political parties and civic associations. The Unionist Party colonial Punjab would be examples of this, as would be association through political parties in the post-colonial period. Ahmad (1973) suggested that economic independence is fundamental to the capacity to organize collectively in Punjab and argued that the ties of dependence that link the landless and poor to the landed in Punjab severely circumscribe the extent to which the former can mobilize on a common platform.

Based on the attributes and capacities discussed above, it is possible to arrive at a more nuanced picture of class in Punjab than one based solely on economic criteria. While the primary determinant of class is property ownership, there are important distinctions to be made between different fractions of the landed class. The traditional aristocracy, who have historically been at the apex of the rural hierarchy, are large landholders possessing tremendous social status. The heads of regional *biraderi* groups and large *jagirdars* would be examples of individuals belonging to

this grouping. Similar to the traditional aristocracy are the rich peasantry who, like the aristocracy, possess both land and status, but not to the same degree. Village-level *lambardars* and *chaudhris* would be examples of the rich peasantry. Both the aristocracy and the rich peasantry possess land beyond their capacity to engage in self-cultivation and, hence, engage in labour exploitation either through the employment of wage labour or by taking on tenants. Broadly speaking, these actors can also be conceptualized as constituting the dominant element of the landed class in Punjab, historically enjoying the greatest access to the state, and control over politics, in the countryside. References to the landed elite in this thesis refer to this particular coalition of landed class fractions.

Subordinate to the aristocracy and rich peasantry in Punjab's rural hierarchy are the middle peasantry, defined as such by their possession of enough land to subsist through self-cultivation (usually between 12.5 and 50 acres) without having to exploit the labour of others. The bulk of the grantees in Punjab's canal colonies would exemplify this group of autonomous peasant proprietors. By virtue of their economic independence, this group also possesses the capacity for independent collective action and political mobilization, despite lacking the means through which to impose any kind of sanctions on other classes in the rural political economy. As can be seen in Table 1, this category of landowners has been gradually squeezed out of the agrarian economy in post-colonial Punjab due to land fragmentation and demographic pressures. Finally, at the bottom of the rural hierarchy are the poor peasantry (possessing small amounts of land that are insufficient for subsistence agriculture) and the landless, both of which are dependent on, and necessarily sell their labour power to, the landed classes, consequently lacking both status and the capacity to engage in collective action.

Over time, with the development and spread of capitalism, changes have taken place in the class structure of Punjab. In the rural arena, changes had begun to take place by the end of the nineteenth century with the increasing emergence of rural wage labourers as a result of the decline of traditional artisanal occupations. This change was accompanied by a more formal stratification of the hierarchy of landownership, with a clear divide emerging between the traditional aristocracy, the rich peasantry, and small peasant proprietors possessing enough land to sustain themselves and their families. As the process of capitalist development progressed, and as colonial controls on the sale of land were relaxed in the post-colonial period, the stratification of landholdings increased even further. Land fragmentation over time and capitalist development also impacted the rural class structure, widening the gap between the landed and the landless while also resulting in the further development of a rural proletariat (Ahmad 1977).

The development of more 'capitalist' social relations in the agrarian economy has been accompanied by the emergence of a class of industrialists in the cities. The core of this class migrated to Pakistan from the former Muslim-minority provinces of Northern India (Papanek, 1972; Levin, 1974), and was able to take advantage of government policies aimed at fostering the growth of industry in the new country. While this strategy met with mixed results, and was often subject to considerable revision and even contestation (Papanek, 1967; Burki, 1977), it did nonetheless result in important changes to the economic structure of Pakistan. In Punjab, although the power of these large capitalists has remained limited to the cities, except in cases where former landowners have diversified into agro-industry, the rise of these actors

and their increasing economic strength could, in time, constitute a threat to the power of the landed elite in the countryside (Amjad, 1983; White, 1974).

In addition to these industrialists, it is important to acknowledge how the process of capitalist development has also created a new class of capital-owning businessmen and entrepreneurs in the province, spread across dozens, if not hundreds, of small towns and cities. Distinct from Punjab's small class of large capitalists, this new 'middle' or 'intermediate' class has been the subject of considerable debate, not least of all because of the way in which it is conceptualized as being key to economic flows and politics within the province (Alavi 1998b; Cheema 2003; Sayeed 1996; Zaidi 2005).

At a fundamental level, the emergence of the 'middle' classes in Punjab is representative of the broader economic changes that have taken place in the province. Yet, while it is possible to identify actors in Punjab who fit the economic criteria used to identify these middle classes, it is difficult to argue that these actors constitute a single class with clearly defined interests. For one, while these actors may be interested, at an abstract level, in the transfer of land, capital, and state patronage away from the more dominant economic classes (Sayeed 1996), it is necessary to recognize that the middle classes in Punjab engage in a wide variety of economic activities that can give rise to differing sectoral interests and political inclinations. Indeed, rather than articulating themselves as a consolidated class, the middle classes tend to pursue their interests strategically, aligning themselves in a fragmented fashion with the classes and political groupings that can provide them with the most opportunistic gain (Ahmad 1985). Thus, while the middle classes may occupy a substantial economic and even demographic position within the calculus of power and politics, particularly given their economic independence and corresponding capacity

to engage in collective action free from the constraints imposed by rival classes, their tendency towards fragmentation weakens their power as a class (to the extent that the label of 'class' accurately describes these actors).

This is a picture that is complicated by a further observation on the nature of the middle classes and one that is more directly relevant to the argument presented in this thesis about landed power in Punjab. First, capitalists are not new to Punjab. During the colonial period, a predominantly urban class of capitalist moneylenders was an important source of credit for the rural economy and continued to grow increasingly economically powerful until it was constrained by the intervention of a colonial state that was wary of the ability of this class to disturb the rural social order. While this class otherwise remained marginal to the political interests of the colonial state due to its lack of mooring within the countryside itself and subsequent lack of political and social power, it nonetheless constituted a class not dissimilar to the 'middle' classes present in contemporary Punjab (Banga 2005; Daechsel 2006). Once this class had been constrained by the colonial state, however, the provision of rural credit was a task that was taken up by large landholders with a surplus of capital. This illustrates a second important point about the middle classes in Punjab. In addition to being geographically and economically fragmented, it is necessary to recognize that, particularly in the agro-industrial sector, many of the 'new' capitalists in Punjab are old landholders (Alavi 1998b, 29–30).<sup>6</sup> In addition to the class of capitalist farmers that emerged in the 1960s during the Green Revolution<sup>7</sup>, dominant elements of the landed class (both the aristocracy and the rich peasantry) were also able to situate

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<sup>6</sup> It is interesting to note that, as pointed out by Khwaja and Mian (2005), the agro-industrial companies (producing textiles and food), representing the nexus between land and capital, are more likely to be politically connected to sources of state patronage than businesses not directly linked to the agrarian economy.

<sup>7</sup> As has been comprehensively established by Alavi (1976) and Hussain (1988), subsidies and support extended to farmers as part of the Green Revolution in the 1960s were disproportionately monopolized by politically connected landed elites who used them to strengthen their economic position.

themselves within the processes of industrial diversification and accumulation that were initiated in this period, cementing a coalition of class fractions that existed during the colonial period as well. Indeed, in the 1960s, the government itself identified big landlords as being key to the development of industry in the province due to their possession of surplus that did not necessarily have to be re-invested in agriculture.<sup>8</sup> Rather than creating a dichotomy between a 'new' class of capitalists and an older class of 'feudals', the process of capitalist development in Punjab blurred the distinction between these two types of propertied actors. While it would certainly be overstating the case to suggest that the entire middle class in Punjab can be characterized in this fashion, particularly when bearing in mind the fact that not all of the middle classes have roots in the countryside, just as many elements of the middle class in the countryside may not have landowning antecedents, it is nonetheless important to recognize how a significant portion of this new class is not new at all and simply represents another example of how the elements of the traditionally dominant landed class are able to adapt to changing societal circumstances.

The implications of this for the exercise of class power in Punjab are clear. Instead of representing an emergent class carving a niche for itself in an economic and political terrain dominated by the parochial interests of the traditional rural order, elements of the new middle class in Punjab, particularly in the countryside, may simply represent the adaptation of the old elite to the new conditions of capitalist accumulation in Punjab. As such, given their antecedents, many elements of the new middle class may also be able to call upon historically evolved sources of power, similar to those employed by the members of the landed class, to further expand their interests and entrench themselves within the institutional framework of Punjabi

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<sup>8</sup> *Industrial Potential of the Rural Areas of Pakistan*, 1967, Government of Pakistan, London School of Economics and Political Science Library (LSE).

politics. Also, while the propertied classes may engage in real conflicts of interest, between land and capital or between the urban and the rural, they remain united in a common need to continue the domination of the subordinate classes. In the final analysis, considering how they thus remain, 'different segments of a single continuum... without any structural criterion differentiating their interests' (Alavi, 1976, 339) the middle classes are not as antagonistic to the traditional order as might otherwise be expected,

## **The State**

In order to understand the relationship between class and state in Punjab and Pakistan, it is first necessary to begin with the observation that the colonial state in South Asia was endowed with a degree of infrastructural (bureaucratic) power and autonomy (Mann, 1986b; Barkey and Parikh, 1991) that allowed it to operate relatively insulated from the pressures imposed by interactions with society. Predicated on conquest and extraction as an 'instrument for oppressing entire societies' (Chandra, 1980, 280), the colonial state was able to establish a relationship of domination over the different sections of indigenous South Asian society, maintaining the capacity to define and pursue its agenda in the face of potential opposition from both its opponents and collaborators. Indeed, with regards to the latter, the autonomy of the colonial state allowed it to pick and choose its partners in South Asian society, undertaking institutional interventions on their behalf and providing them with a degree of insularity from rival groups in society.

One influential argument that traces the reproduction of this state form in Pakistan has been advanced by Ayesha Jalal (1990a; 1995b), who attributes the ascendancy of the military and bureaucracy in Pakistan to a number of proximate causes at the time of partition, each of which combined to place these two actors in a

position where they could assume formal control of the state. The relative lack of popular support for the Muslim League and its consequent organisational weakness, the threat of war with India and the need to prioritize military spending, foreign support and assistance for the military in the context of the Cold War, and the pressure of setting up a central state apparatus (as opposed to fully-functioning provincial apparatuses, set up under the Government of India Act, 1935) created a situation in which the Muslim League, lacking the organizational capacity needed to cope with the pressures of refugee resettlement, economic management, and inter-provincial discord, ceded policy and decision-making authority to the much more fully developed, organized, and experienced military and bureaucracy that had been the proverbial steel frame of the colonial state. This tendency would come to be reinforced over time, ensuring the persistence of authoritarian control even in instances of democratic rule.

When dealing with the question of why military governments in Pakistan have historically accommodated and defended landed interests, Jalal provides a state-centric account that sees this relationship as being one of the many strategies consciously adopted by the military-bureaucratic oligarchy to gather support and legitimacy for itself. For Jalal, the state chooses its partners and collaborators, reproducing its position of dominance, relative to society, over time. This description of the Pakistani state shares certain similarities with accounts of the developmental state. For example, the literature on South Korea emphasises the bureaucratic professionalism and capacity of a post-colonial state that is able to deploy its resources in pursuit of its chosen developmental agenda. According to Evans (1995), this resulted in the South Korean state pursuing a policy of economic intervention through which it chose to provide particular sections of the industrial capitalist class

with the support and patronage necessary for their further development. In turn, these actors provided the state with information that allowed for better economic planning and resource allocation, thereby embedding the state and capital within a mutually beneficial relationship legitimated by South Korea's economic success. Kohli's (2004) description of the South Korea as a 'cohesive-capitalist' developmental state, while not incompatible with Evans' fundamental premise, focuses instead on how the state was able to narrowly define the country's developmental agenda by equating national security with economic advancement in the context of a hostile international environment. For Kohli, this economic nationalism provided the state with legitimacy and its autonomy, coupled with its tremendous repressive capacity, allowed it to then intervene in the economy as it chose, using its expertise to manage capital while simultaneously ensuring the compliance of labour.

Following the logic of Jalal's argument, the technical superiority of the post-colonial military-bureaucratic state, in terms of its organizational capacity relative to non-state actors, and its ability to draw on external sources of support, allows it to both choose its partners in society, and legitimise itself through appeals to national security. However, it is here that the parallels with the South Korean developmental state collapse, as Jalal's view of the state in Pakistan arguably overstates the extent to which it is able to work independently of domestic political forces. As Leftwich (1995) has demonstrated, successful, autonomous developmental states have historically only emerged under conditions in which 'weak' societies failed to prevent the consolidation of state power before the development of powerful indigenous capitalists, and the intervention of foreign capital in the domestic economy. Even though authoritarian states like Pakistan did legitimise themselves through appeals to national security, this alone was not sufficient to guarantee the state's ability to pursue

an autonomous developmental agenda (Kohli, 2004, 390); the success of countries like South Korea and Taiwan was at least partly rooted in the absence of strong agrarian elites or other domestic actors who could impose constraints on the state's autonomy, with these having been largely eliminated under Japanese colonialism.

This point can be proven further with reference to the case of India, where Migdal (1998), applies his idea of 'weak' states encountering 'strong' societies during the colonial era as an illustration of how state institutions and power are often captured or compromised at the local level by entrenched elites possessing the resources to resist the control of the state. This corresponds with the argument that, even though the colonial state in India possessed a degree of autonomy and capacity, British colonialism's emphasis on indirect rule through intermediaries resulted in the creation of institutions that were imbricated with the power of local elites (Seal, 1971; Lange, 2009). Even in Punjab, where state-led bureaucratic management of society was undertaken on a large scale, landed elites remained key to the establishment and maintenance of British authority. Thus, in a more contemporary context, Kohli (2004, 221-290) categorises India as being a 'fragmented-multi-class' state where, despite the presence of a strong, central state apparatus, the colonial and post-colonial state was unable to effectively exercise its autonomy when faced with the need to accommodate a plurality of entrenched interests in society. A similar argument has been advanced by Hansen (2005) who claims that authority in India is characterised by multiple layers of sovereignty, with the state being subjected to capture by local level elites who, for all intents and purposes, come to perform many of its political, economic, and social functions. As the evidence from the Indian case shows, it is problematic to assume that the state, in both its colonial and post-colonial variants, was confronted by a society rendered entirely subordinate to its power.

Applying these insights to Pakistan, Hamza Alavi's (1972a) analysis of authoritarianism and state power is useful in that it accommodates the historically evolved relationship between the state and the traditional elite. For Alavi, the power of the military and bureaucracy in Pakistan marked a continuation of the colonial political order, with an 'overdeveloped' state continuing to exercise a degree of autonomous power. Under colonialism, the coercive and administrative apparatuses of the state had been used to dominate and subordinate the indigenous classes in South Asia while pursuing the interests of metropolitan capital and its local agents. Post-independence, however, the state in Pakistan had to contend with the power of the landed classes and a national bourgeoisie which, freed from the constraints of overt colonial control, possessed the potential to impose limits on both state power and a metropolitan bourgeoisie functioning in an economy that was still locked in a subordinate position within the global capitalist system. However, in a situation where none of these three elements of the ruling classes could claim domestic political and economic dominance, Alavi argued that the post-colonial state was able to exert 'relative' autonomy, drawing on its own capacities and resources to mediate between these classes, acting to preserve the extant social and political order, while also playing a role in directing, and benefitting from, economic production and the appropriation of surplus. At the same time, its relationship with the propertied classes ensured that the post-colonial state did not remain entirely insulated from society, generating support and legitimacy for itself through these actors.

Although Alavi's theory helps to better understand the relationship between state and class in Pakistan, objections can be raised to his particular view of state autonomy. For one, as argued by Alavi himself (1982), state autonomy in the developing world was necessarily constrained by the existence of the 'structural

imperative of peripheral capitalism' and the role played by the post-colonial state in managing a developing economy within the broader system of global capitalism. As such, while the state could exercise autonomy relative to domestic class actors, it would remain structurally bound to pursue a path of capitalist development dictated by its position in the global economy. When viewed in this way, it is also important to note that external pressures other than the imperatives of global capitalism could shape state autonomy in different ways at different points in time; during the colonial era, for example, the actions of the Punjab government were influenced not only by the central government in India (and, indeed, by developments in Westminster), but also by ideological trends, like utilitarian liberalism, that emanated from the external environment. In the post-colonial context, a similar point can be raised; in the aftermath of partition, Cold War politics and alignment with the United States provided the Pakistani military with external support that arguably strengthened its hand against domestic political actors (Jalal, 1989; 1990b).

With regards to internal political dynamics, Saul (1974) and Wood (1980), argue that the extent of the autonomy of the post-colonial state over time may be overstated, particularly when taking into account the development of capitalism and the subsequent emergence of the national bourgeoisie, or indeed the neo-colonial metropolitan bourgeoisie, as dominant class actors possessing the means through which to curtail their rivals in society and reign in the state through the mechanisms made available by the institutionalization of formal democratic politics post-independence. Omvedt and Patankar (1977) make this argument more explicitly in the South Asian context, suggesting that the post-colonial state is a necessarily capitalist one due to its position within the global capitalist economy, and due to the emergence of a more coherently organised domestic capitalist class enmeshed within the flows of

the world economy. Chibber's (2003) use of path dependence to account for the capture of the Indian state by capitalist interests over time can be seen as a demonstration of the mechanisms underpinning this transition, with his analysis illustrating the processes through which autonomous state power could be eroded as a result of capitalist development. Finally, Leys (1976) shows that far from being overdeveloped, colonial states actually tended to be quite small relative to the populations they governed, and actually experienced greater growth post-independence with the expansion of military and public sector spending. Leys also raises the question of specifying exactly what the class character, and thus interests, of the bureaucracy and military would actually be, given that their origins would not necessarily be in the same social milieu as the dominant propertied classes.

Based on the points made above, it could be argued that where Jalal (1985; 1995) fails to account for the limits to state autonomy and power in Pakistan, Alavi (1972a) insufficiently explains the persistence of these attributes in the face of increasing capitalist development and the entrenchment of elite interests. To navigate between these two positions, and arrive at a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between state and class in Pakistan (and Punjab), it is necessary to first focus on one of the key differences between the two arguments. By partly attributing the autonomy of the post-colonial state to the in-fighting between the propertied classes, Alavi recognises that the relationship between state and class is a strategic one, determined not only by the power of the state, but also by the power of the classes it confronts in society. Therefore, while Alavi's argument does not contradict Jalal's emphasis on the organisational superiority of the state, the effects of state dominance are treated differently; rather than simply impeding democratization and marginalizing civilian politics to pursue an entirely autonomous agenda, the power of

the military-bureaucratic oligarchy represents a means through which the interests of the different elements of the ruling classes are realized and protected through the actions of the state. Instead of confronting and constraining non-state elites, the state actively works with, and even for, them. The implications of this for Punjab are clear; in this study, the very metaphor of a 'bargain' between the colonial state and the landed elite implies the existence of a relationship between two distinct actors possessing capacities and resources being deployed for their mutual benefit. The ability of the state to enter into a bargain necessarily entails the existence of some autonomy, with the landed elite playing a role in perpetuating it by trading support and legitimacy for power and patronage

Here Jessop's (1990) 'strategic-relational' view of the state sheds further light on the paradoxical nature of state autonomy in Pakistan. This approach to understanding state power, which draws on the work of Poulantzas (1978), recognises that the state is a 'social relation' whose power, 'is a form-determined condensation of the balance of forces' but whose form is also, 'the crystallization of past strategies... privileging some over other current strategies. As a strategic terrain the state is located within a complex dialectic of structures and strategies' (Jessop, 1990, 269). For Hay (1999), this approach is useful because it allows for a conceptualisation of the way in which the state and its institutions are 'strategically selective', favouring certain strategies over others even as continued rounds of interaction with different social actors, 'transform... the context within which future strategies are formulated and deployed' (ibid., 170).

This conception of the state is one that complements, and adds to, the views of the Pakistani state advanced by both Jalal and Alavi. Particularly when making use of path dependence to explain the persistence of the landlord-state bargain in Punjab, it

is possible to see how repeated interactions between an autonomous, colonial state and landed collaborators at the local level could, over time, alter the 'strategic context' within which subsequent political developments would take place. As will be shown throughout this thesis, the initial circumstances that gave rise to the bargain between the colonial state and the Punjabi landed elite would be reproduced and reinforced incrementally, giving rise to a situation where, post-independence, the Pakistani military and bureaucracy would continue to rely on these actors to provide them with political support precisely because the autonomous power of the colonial state had developed alongside a structural dependence on local elites to ensure order and accumulation. Even though the post-colonial state did possess institutional capacity that was greater than that of any organisation of class interests in the immediate aftermath of partition, this did not include the capacity to engage in the direct management of society at the margins of state authority. Like the British before them, military-bureaucratic state elites in Pakistan, when choosing between either co-opting and co-operating with pliant agrarian elites, or incurring the costs of organisation and confrontation at the local level, were constrained by institutional inertia to choose the former, and perpetuate the cycle of mutual reinforcement that underpinned the state-landlord bargain.

Following this logic, the factors preventing the state from being transformed into an 'executive committee' of a single, dominant class also become clear. Here, Alavi's emphasis on the conflict between the different elements of the propertied classes assumes greater importance; as the process of capitalist development proceeded in Pakistan, reducing the importance of the agrarian economy relative to urban industry and services, it would have been reasonable to assume that an ascendant bourgeoisie would gradually curtail the power of the state and its landed

allies, eventually eroding their capacity to function as autonomous and politically significant actors. However, in the Pakistani case, these economic changes were not accompanied by a corresponding transformation of the political and social order in the countryside. Indeed, landed power in Pakistan, particularly in Punjab and Sindh, has never been perpetuated on a purely economic basis. While the initial power of the landed elite was undoubtedly rooted in its control over property and labour, supplemented by its status within the rural social hierarchy, the mechanisms that reproduced this power, particularly with the advent of electoral politics in the late 19th Century, would become entrenched within formal political institutions. In Pakistan, the failure of the capitalist classes to seriously challenge the power and authority of the landed elite, despite the declining economic importance of the latter, is rooted in the path dependent processes through which the landed classes have used their institutional position to adapt to changing economic circumstances and, more importantly, dominate bureaucratic and electoral politics in an enduringly rural polity. The perpetuation of the institutionalised political authority of the landed elite, facilitated by their propitious position at the time of independence, has allowed them to remain in a position where they can enter into bargains with the state, while simultaneously limiting the ability of rival classes to assume greater political power. At the same time, as shown in Chapter 5, the landed elite themselves failed to subordinate the state to their authority after independence due to their own factional, intra-class conflict over power and resources, itself institutionalised over time as part of Pakistan's political process.

## CHAPTER THREE: The Foundations of Colonial Rule in Punjab

*The great mass of the population between the Jumna and the Ravee, and from which the Sikh army is supplied, is “Jat”... they habitually as much excel in the arts of peace as they occasionally do in those of war. They make good soldiers but equally good subjects. With the exception of the castes of the Bunniah genus and small loose populations of the towns, and the artificers and people of servile race in the villages, the remainder of the population is Mussulman – not turbulent pattans, but agriculturalists of converted Hindu castes – good cultivators and quiet subjects – with all the industry of Hindoos without their religious bigotry, and at the same time without the pride, nationality, and fanaticism of the Mussulman; in fact, a people who have politically ceased to be Hindoos without politically becoming Mussulmen – just the sort of subjects we want.*

‘Economist’<sup>9</sup>

### **Introduction**

In his letters to the Viceroy on the annexation of Punjab, the officer quoted above spoke at length on the administrative system he felt should be introduced to the province. Remarking on how, ‘but a few years after the establishment of British rule, it is impossible by the minutest search to discover or imagine what has become of the component parts of a Native Government which was at one time dazzling and formidable’,<sup>10</sup> ‘Economist’ expressed what he felt should be one of the core principles

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<sup>9</sup> *The Punjab Series Vol. III: The Annexation of the Punjab*, 1895, Lahore: Sun Printing Press, pp. 6-7. ‘Economist, An Officer of Practical Experience in the Punjab’ was the title used by an anonymous British officer, in letters he sent to the Viceroy following the conquest of Multan in January 1849.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

of British policy in Punjab, namely the elimination of the traditional aristocracy, a class that had, 'become separated from the population' and which, when left in place, 'deprives the "*suseraia*" of his rightful revenue but to retain the power of doing mischief when the opportunity offers'.<sup>11</sup> 'Economist' cautioned against any attempt, 'to make *concurrent* two incompatible systems',<sup>12</sup> suggesting instead that the administrative system be one entirely run by British political officers untrammelled by treaty obligations or the need to accommodate established elites.<sup>13</sup>

At the time, the views expressed by the 'Economist' were reflective of a Utilitarian orthodoxy in the official colonial mind that equated effective administration with the creation of 'modern' markets, bureaucracies and courts (Stokes, 1959). However, while this way of thinking informed the initial British approach to ruling Punjab, it would take less than twenty years for these views to be reversed, with the colonial state embracing traditional institutions and entering into a relationship of mutual benefit with the landed elites it had previously sought to displace (Dewey, 1991b). Focusing in particular on the formative years from 1849-1868, this chapter will discuss the emergence of the state-landlord bargain in Punjab, outlining the causal mechanisms that underpinned the production and reproduction of the bargain by sequentially analysing the key events and political outcomes that shaped the institutional regime of colonial rule.

The first section in this chapter describes the environment in which the British began to erect their administrative apparatus, highlighting the ideological debates that informed the policy decisions of early colonial administrators in Punjab, as well as identifying the different class actors that were present during the time period discussed in this chapter. The second section then treats the British annexation of

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<sup>11</sup> *The Punjab Series Vol. III: The Annexation of the Punjab*, 17.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 23

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 36-46.

Punjab as a cleavage that initiated the foundational juncture within which the subsequent trajectory of colonial institutional development was determined. In the two decades following annexation, it will be argued that the need to ensure order and extract revenue under conditions of initial uncertainty led the British to co-opt Punjab's rich peasant proprietors and landed aristocracy, collectively the province's landed elite, resulting in the emergence of a bargain between the two actors, with the former offering support in exchange for patronage. This bargain constituted the mechanism of production that underpinned the developments leading to the emergence of a stable institutional outcome by 1868. To illustrate this, it will be shown that British policy in Punjab initially underwent two significant phases of development; the first, from 1849-1857, saw an attempt to introduce a regime of peasant proprietorship in the province, not dissimilar to the one implemented in the North-Western Provinces (NWP) at the expense of the traditional aristocracy, while the second, triggered by the Revolt of 1857, resulted in the inclusion of the landed elite within the ambit colonial power. These two paths were incorporated within the institutional framework of colonial rule by 1868 through the passage of the Punjab Tenancy Act which, while guaranteeing the rights of those peasant proprietors already settled by the regime, also ensured that the landed aristocracy would receive preferential treatment in the future.

Expanding upon how the formal institutions of the colonial state developed, the chapter also discusses the Canal Colonies in Punjab, which provide an example of how the state-landlord bargain informed colonial policy with regards to ensuring order and accumulation, and the ways in which the landed elite themselves made use of their power to strengthen their own position and effectively pursue their interests. The final section of the chapter deals with the period leading up to the promulgation of the

Land Alienation Act of 1900, introduced in order to protect the landed elite from the predations of the province's moneylenders. This law was implemented at the end of a contestational juncture during which urban capitalists, taking advantage of the new property regime in land, threatened the rural order by acquiring land through mortgage. Understanding why this episode failed to result in a substantive institutional shift away from the established pattern of state-landlord interaction provides important insights into the mechanisms responsible for facilitating the persistence of landed power in Punjab.

### ***The Institutional Development of Colonial Rule in India***

Upon annexing Punjab in 1849, the first question the British faced was the problem of setting up an administrative system suited to the successful pursuit of their interests. At the time, at least one observer (Smith, 1897), described the province as a 'tabula rasa' upon which colonial administrators had the freedom to inscribe anew sets of institutions that embodied the knowledge and experience the British had gained in other parts of India. After the experience of the early years of Company rule in Bengal, when rampant mismanagement, corruption, and the abuse of power had led Edmund Burke to accuse Warren Hastings of presiding over an administration in India that, 'was one whole system of oppression, of robbery of individuals, of spoliation of the public, and of supersession of the whole system of the English government' (Burke, 1788), it was believed that a system of government lacking institutionalized checks and balances could impede colonial interests in India, and could also potentially have a corrupting influence on government in Britain itself. Towards this end, it was widely believed that more formalised bureaucratic and judicial institutions could ensure more effective governance while simultaneously

reducing the risk of corruption becoming even more widespread and endemic to British government in the colonies and at home.

Amongst the first administrative reforms implemented by the East India Company was the creation of a revenue system based upon the introduction and enforcement of property rights in Bengal. Using liberal ideology as a justification for this measure, colonial administrators argued that property rights were essential to individual freedom and long-term economic prosperity. It was assumed that an investigation of land and tenure systems in Bengal would allow for the identification of individuals who possessed land and could therefore be taxed. What the British found, however, was that pre-colonial India had been characterized by an agrarian order in which multiple actors, ranging from local level cultivators to chieftains and regional governors, were entitled to a share of the agricultural surplus (Fuller, 1989). Clearly delineated and enforced property rights, as understood by the British, simply did not exist.

Faced with this dilemma, the colonial government in Bengal set about the task of allocating property rights to individuals based on its understanding of Indian society. As part of the Permanent Settlement of 1793, proprietary rights were largely conferred upon Bengal's large *zamindars* at the expense of the cultivators and smaller *zamindars* who had previously possessed some claim on the land (Marshall, 1987). The issue of determining exactly who owned the land in India was one that would repeatedly be confronted by colonial officials as British control expanded, and would come to inform the way in which the colonial state was structured. For example, in contrast with the Permanent Settlement in Bengal, the system of revenue assessment in Madras conferred proprietary rights on occupancy tenants, rather than revenue-collecting *zamindar* elites. The *ryotwari* system that was pioneered in this province

was premised upon the assumption that village-level communities of peasants, bound together by caste, constituted local agrarian communities that enjoyed co-parcenary rights to the land and formed the basis of a stable, traditional agrarian order that had to be protected from the predations of a parasitic class of non-cultivating elites. It was believed that village-level political and social institutions were key to establishing political order amidst the creation of a colonial state apparatus designed to meet the objectives of the colonial project. Thus, while private property rights were established, for the purposes of revenue assessment and collection, the revenue system in Madras was designed to actively protect the structure of rural society in order to minimise the disruptive influence of British rule (Stokes, 1959; Cohn, 1987, 213-214).

The differences between the revenue systems of Bengal and Madras are interesting for two main reasons. Firstly, these separate approaches to revenue collection embodied very different conceptions of how British interests in India were to be pursued. The Permanent Settlement of Bengal had been premised upon the notion that large landlords, paying a fixed amount of revenue to the state, would be able to form the backbone of a new economic order that would allow for greater accumulation and political stability. Linked to this was the belief of many colonial administrators, as well as their superiors in London, that an effective government was one whose role in society was kept to a minimum. The system set up in Madras encapsulated a different view. It located stability in the cultivating peasantry, rather than large landlords, and promoted a paternalist view of the governance that promoted state intervention in society to prop up traditional institutions that could be used to rule India more effectively. Although both approaches agreed on the need to strike a

balance between order and accumulation, they differed on the exact institutional framework through which these two interests could be achieved.

Secondly, colonial administrators on both sides of this debate justified their policy choices with reference to contemporary ideologies. Those supporting the Bengali administrative system couched their arguments in terms of liberalism, suggesting that free markets, property rights, and limited state intervention were essential for the effective pursuit of colonial interests. The rival viewpoint drew on the utilitarian tradition, arguing that the presence of parasitic landlords and a non-interventionist state would result in the creation of a fundamentally unjust and inefficient system of governance. What needs to be borne in mind, however, is that while this debate was framed in ideological terms, ideology itself simply served as a means through which to express pragmatic solutions to the problems of governance. As argued by Stokes (1980) colonial administrative reform in India paralleled institutional developments in England, and was driven by the need to reduce the cost of government, maximize revenue, and ensure political stability. Ideology was not a force for institutional change in and of itself. At most, it was employed as a means through which colonial administrators framed the policy decisions that they took. Disagreements over administrative issues were not so much a clash of ideologies as much as they were conflicting viewpoints on how to best resolve pressing problems within society.

In reality, therefore, British institutions tended to be 'janus-faced', representing a mix of both the old and the new (Washbrook, 1981). The implementation of private property rights and the creation of a modern bureaucracy proceeded alongside the maintenance of traditional institutions such as caste-based co-parcenary village proprietary bodies. Ideology notwithstanding, it was episodes of

peasant revolt in Bengal prior to the introduction of the Permanent Settlement that played an important role in shaping the colonial policies aimed at creating powerful landed allies who could contribute to ensuring stability in the countryside (Wilson, 2005). A similar process was be at work in Madras and, later, the NWP where *ryotwari* revenue settlements privileging local level cultivating castes and communities were nonetheless occasionally subject to revision in order to win over traditional elites willing to support the colonial government (Roselli, 1971; Metcalf, 1979). When it came to questions of institutional reform or development, ideology played a secondary role to the realities of political expediency.

Nonetheless, by the time the British finally annexed Punjab, certain institutional regularities had been established which provided the template for the new administrative system that was to be set up in the province. Firstly, British rule brought with it modern courts and bureaucracies, governed by codified law and rules that, while often subject to redefinition and change, nonetheless represented a departure from the more informal systems of administration that had characterized pre-colonial India. Secondly, by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century it had become clear that while economic orthodoxy recommended the establishment of property rights and a market in land, as had been the case in Bengal, the maintenance of order and the pursuit of long-term economic benefit rested upon the creation of revenue systems that were based on peasant proprietorship and village-level, caste-based groups of co-parcenary cultivators (Metcalf, 1962). The disastrous economic impact of the Permanent Settlement in Bengal provided much of the impetus for this coalescing of official opinion, and this development was supported by an increasingly large body of colonial knowledge that ostensibly produced a better understanding of Indian society than had existed during the initial years of British rule in Bengal. Finally, particularly

in the NWP, colonial administrators known as Commissioners came to constitute the focal unit of colonial control in India at the district level. Possessing the power to investigate and allocate property rights, resolve disputes, and exercise magisterial functions, Commissioners represented a fusion of judicial and executive power at the local level that was considered by the colonial state to be the most efficient form of administration possible.

The class structure of Punjabi society at the time of the annexation played an important role in shaping colonial policy, particularly in the initial phase of institutional consolidation. The landed classes of the province were comprised of the remnants of the Mughal and Sikh aristocracies. Many of these elites had survived the transition to colonial rule, and some had even supported the British in the Anglo-Sikh wars. In the absence of clearly defined property rights, class distinctions in Punjab at this point in time were determined by the different tenurial arrangements that governed the cultivation of land. Occupancy tenants were members of landowning *biraderis* who had de facto possession of the land at the local level, were protected against arbitrary eviction, and were part of village-level co-parcenary cultivating bodies. Occupancy tenants would be transformed into relatively well-off peasant proprietors in the British period, and would prove to be an intrinsic part of the colonial order. The aristocracy and the rich proprietors would constitute the landed elite under colonialism.

In addition to the landowning and cultivating classes, other strata of agrarian society included the artisanal *biraderis* engaged in petty commodity production and service provision at the local level, tenants-at-will who did not enjoy a hereditary right to own or cultivate land, and a small but steadily increasing growing class of landless wage workers. These landless elements of the agrarian order were directly dependent

on the landed classes for their economic well-being, and were accordingly subordinate to them in the agrarian social and political hierarchy (Banerjee, 2005). As far as the British were concerned, the non-cultivating and landholding strata of agrarian Punjab could be effectively controlled through by strengthening the social and political institutions that locked them into relationships of dependence on the landed classes.

Given the overwhelmingly agrarian structure of the Punjabi economy, and the relatively low level of urbanization in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Punjab did not really possess a class of capitalists during the colonial period. While there did exist a mostly urban class of moneylenders who provided credit to the agrarian classes, their lack of mooring in the countryside itself and subsequent lack of political or social power caused the British to view them as being marginal to the interests of the colonial state (Banga, 2005). It was only when this class of moneylenders began to expand into the countryside towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, threatening the balance of class power in Punjab, that the colonial state began to include them within the calculus of its institutional decision-making.

### ***Colonial Rule in Punjab: The Founding Years, 1849-1857***

Upon annexation in 1849, Punjab was placed under the control of a Board of Administration (BoA) staffed by a mix of officials recruited from the bureaucracy and the military in the neighbouring NWP. Imbued with the belief that the administrative experiences of the NWP would allow for the creation of a government in Punjab that would be comprised of colonial institutions in their most perfected form, Lord Dalhousie, the Governor-General of India, freed the Board of Administration from the constraining influence of the central government by declaring Punjab to be a Non-Regulation province. It was argued that by introducing this measure, the new administrators of the province would be able to operate independently of the centrally

enforced rules that had effectively limited the extent to which innovation could be introduced in the administrative setups operating in the other provinces. Faced with the challenge of managing what was seen by the British to be a relatively untamed, 'backward' province, and enticed by the prospect of rapid advancement within the government, many of the colonial state's brightest officers and personnel sought to be assigned to Punjab, and applied themselves to the task of establishing an effective government in the province. It was this spirit of innovation and relative freedom of action that would come to characterise what would later be known as the 'Punjab Tradition' of colonial administration (van den Dungen, 1972; Penner, 1986).

Non-regulation status notwithstanding, the different approaches that had characterized colonial institutional development prior to 1849 acted as constraints on the autonomy of British administrators in Punjab. The institutional form to be taken by the colonial state in Punjab was the subject of considerable debate in the years immediately following annexation, echoing the same themes that had been raised in Bengal, Madras, and other parts of British India. This debate revolved around the construction of the province's revenue administration, and was expressed primarily through the actions and opinions of Henry and John Lawrence, two brothers who formed the core of the BoA. Henry, who was placed in charge of the province's political affairs, had been the British resident at Lahore from 1846-49, and had played a crucial role in winning the support of different Muslim and Sikh chiefs during the Anglo-Sikh wars. John, at the head of the revenue administration, had served as Commissioner of the Jullundur Doab following the first Anglo-Sikh war. Both brothers had been part of the colonial state apparatus for years, and also possessed a relatively broad knowledge of the province that they had now been charged with administering. Despite having spent a similar amount of time in Punjab, however, the

two brothers disagreed violently and acrimoniously on the question of land rights in the province. While John adhered to the mainstream view that recommended the granting of property rights occupancy tenants who would become peasant proprietors, Henry believed that it was necessary to retain and cultivate the support of Punjab's landed aristocracy.

At one level, the disagreement between John and Henry stemmed from their different professional backgrounds. John, having been trained in administration by the bureaucrats of the NWP, had come to embody the same logic that had governed the revenue settlements that had taken place there. Henry, on the other hand, had been a part of the military, and had formulated his views on Punjab's landed elites following his stint as Resident in Lahore, a position that had required him to interact regularly with the province's traditional aristocracy (Lee, 2002). Additionally, however, the disagreements between the Lawrence brothers also represented the tension between order and accumulation that had informed colonial policy in India. John's support for a model based on peasant proprietorship was fundamentally rooted in the desire to create a financially sound administration that would be able to extract as much revenue as possible, directly from the cultivator without the costs associated with maintaining an intermediate tier of oppressive *jagirdars* and other elites (Smith, 1897, 60) John's hostility towards the landed elite in Punjab was made evident during his time as commissioner in East Punjab, prior to the conquest of Lahore, where he was, 'bent upon depriving the Jagirdars of their Baronial powers... and resuming as many Jagirs as it was possible' (Sethi, 2003 [1931], 27). This was a view compounded by the fact that the Sikh landed aristocracy had constituted the core source of opposition to the British colonial hegemony in the province. Henry, on the other hand, perceived the Punjabi landed elite to be a potentially powerful source of social and political

support, and felt that they could provide the means through which the British could establish indirect control over the province. Indeed, Henry had at one time argued against the need for British intervention in the province, claiming that effective power could be exercised in Punjab through the co-optation of the aristocracy (Trevaskis, 1928, 213-215). For Henry, considerations of political stability outweighed the need to collect as much revenue as possible.

Ultimately, however, it was John Lawrence's view that prevailed, largely due to the support he received from the Governor-General and other elements of the bureaucracy. By 1853, failing health and an increasingly fraught relationship with John forced Henry to leave Punjab, allowing John to finally be appointed as the first Commissioner of the province following the elimination of the BoA. Having concluded that proprietary rights were to be vested in occupancy tenants who were members of village level co-parcenary bodies, the Punjab government undertook the task of erecting the revenue administration of the province. The assessment of land revenue and the recording of proprietary rights were tasks that were undertaken by Deputy Commissioners in each district, with these administrators using their judicial and executive powers to expeditiously resolve the many disputes that subsequently arose out of the decisions they took with regards to the ownership of land at the local level.

Although the enthusiasm shown by the Punjab government for peasant proprietorship was justified in terms of economic efficacy and justice it was also true that the creation and co-optation of a tier of local level landholders made a considerable amount of political sense. While the British had been able to conquer Punjab militarily, the effective management of the province would have been extremely difficult in circumstances where the countryside was in revolt. This was a

particularly clear and present danger in a province like Punjab, with a long history of peasant resistance to oppressive and exploitative rule, and the danger was compounded by the colonial government's inability to create a legitimating ideology for its rule that was accepted by the local populace (Metcalf, 1995). In the immediate aftermath of annexation, this problem manifested itself in the form of the disbanded Sikh army, whose thousands of members were largely drawn from the province's cultivating *biraderis*, and who represented a potential source of discontent in the province. Mindful of how a contented peasantry was the key to stability in Punjab, the colonial state's provision of ownership rights to hereditary cultivators constituted a means through which the government could forge a strong link with the peasantry in Punjab. It was in this context that the British actively introduced measures to ensure that the former soldiers of the Sikh army were able to return to their traditional position within the agrarian order, albeit as landowners rather than occupancy tenants (Khilnani, 1972).

Despite the fact that his viewpoint was the one that eventually prevailed, John Lawrence and his administration were nonetheless forced to make some concessions to the Punjabi landed elite, for the reasons that had been highlighted by Henry. It was yet another demonstration of how the need to acquire support and maintain order was one of the driving forces of British policy in the province, tempering the extent to which ideological conviction could influence institutional outcomes. One of the first issues that confronted the nascent colonial government in Punjab dealt with the rewarding those landed elites, most of whom were Muslim chiefs, who had aided the British during the Anglo-Sikh wars. The support of these chiefs had been of vital importance to the British war effort in Punjab, and as argued by Major (1991), many of these chiefs deliberately aligned themselves with the British in order to maximize

the benefit they would receive for what they perceived to be an imminent regime change in the province. At a fundamental level, the exchange of military and political support for state patronage that characterized this relationship was reminiscent of the mode of administration that had prevailed under the Mughals and Sikhs, and was indicative of the extent to which the new colonial administration, from the very outset, was constrained by the institutional legacy of the past.

The extent to which the colonial state was limited in its ability to move against the aristocracy was also highlighted by the approach taken by John Lawrence towards the elimination of the *jagir* grants that had existed under the Sikh government. Despite his avowed commitment to the eradication of the traditional landed elite, John Lawrence recognized that any move to suddenly deprive the old *jagirdars* of their holdings would be met with considerable resistance, not only from the *jagirdars* themselves but also from their extended *biraderi* networks. Preferring, instead, to engineer a slow social revolution, John Lawrence embarked upon a policy that provided limited recognition to extant *jagirdars*, allowing them to retain their *jagirs* as non-hereditary grants for the duration of their lifetimes while increasing the state's share in the revenue collected.<sup>14</sup> While the aim of this exercise remained the abolition of Punjab's chiefs and large landlords, the options available to the colonial state to achieve this end remained inherently limited given the power that was still commanded at the local level by the landed elite.

The debate between John and Henry Lawrence was significant primarily because of the way in which it resulted in the initiation of the bargain between the colonial state and the landed classes in Punjab. While the two brothers had disagreed on exactly which class to support, they had both recognised that the key to controlling

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<sup>14</sup> Punjab Administration Report, 1850-51, Punjab Civil Secretariat Library (PCSL).

Punjab lay in the cultivation of allies who owned land. By conferring proprietary rights upon occupancy tenants in the province, John Lawrence was able to co-opt a significant portion of the peasantry whose economic interests were inextricably linked with the stability and continued good-will of the colonial state. Simultaneously, by choosing to retain some elements of the landed aristocracy within the new institutional regime, the Punjab government also entered into a relationship with a group of powerful traditional elites who could be relied upon to mobilise support for the colonial state. The benefits accruing to the British because of this arrangement would have long term effects on colonial policy in Punjab, particularly in the aftermath of the revolt of 1857.

By 1857, the institutional framework of the colonial government had begun to solidify, and the configuration of actors that underpinned it had started to crystallize. In the eight years since annexation, a modern bureaucracy had been established in Punjab, the revenue system had been defined and implemented, and detailed surveys of villages across the province had enabled the DCs to allocate ownership rights over land to occupancy tenants in their respective districts. Rather than adhering to the principles of the free market when making these allocations, British officials simply reproduced the structure of local level rural society, providing ownership to the same cultivating *biraderis* that had traditionally been able to claim a hereditary share in the agricultural surplus. While the government did sometimes recognise 'superior' proprietary rights, of the type claimed by the aristocracy, it only tended to do so in the absence of occupancy tenants who could claim to be part of the village cultivating community (Cust, 1866).

For all its rules, regulations, and bureaucracy, the British government in Punjab retained the ability to back its policies up with force and, as a colonial ruling

authority, was able to exist relatively autonomously of the different social groups within society. This autonomy, supported by coercive force, was what gave the British in Punjab the ability to choose between different social factions when determining how to best govern the province. While it certainly was the case that bolstering the position of the cultivating class of peasants in Punjab was partly the result of an ideological conception of society that sought to maximize agricultural rents through the elimination of parasitic intermediaries, the need to ensure stability through continuity was one of the primary imperatives that led the colonial state to align its interests with the landed classes of Punjab. The threat of revolt arising out of discontent with the new order only exacerbated the government's need for influential local allies who, it was believed, possessed the social and economic power necessary to establish support for the new regime.

Protecting the interests of this class of local level proprietors necessitated a second set of institutional interventions as well. In addition to providing the cultivating peasantry with property rights, the colonial administration also incorporated Customary law within the legal framework that was being erected in the province. Recognising that importance of *biraderi* in Punjab, the British actively sought to protect and promote customs and traditions based on *biraderi*, particularly with regards to questions relating to land ownership and dispute resolution (Gilmartin, 1988, 14-18). As had been the case in other parts of India, however, the maintenance of the traditional order imposed constraints on the operation of a free market in land, privileging certain tribes and communities over others, and ostensibly contradicting the economic aims of the colonial government. Once again, the introduction of these measures reflected the priorities that guided the colonial state in this formative period. Faced with the prospect of instability as a result of the political and economic changes

that brought about by the British, the retention of Customary law provided another mechanism through which it was believed rural discontent could be contained, and the dislocations engendered by the transition to colonial rule. Premising their entire administration upon the promotion of *biraderi* also allowed the colonial government to make use of *biraderi* networks as a means through which to ensure that support for the regime was contiguous with the geographical spread of the agricultural *biraderis* across Punjab. Thus, while accumulation continued to remain one of the driving principles of the colonial regime, it remained fettered by the state's need to ensure order and stability through the cultivation of landed allies in rural Punjab.

The period between 1849 and 1868 represents foundational juncture for the British in Punjab because of the way in which the institutional structures put in place locked colonial governance into a trajectory of path-dependent development. The bureaucratic-legal state structure erected by the British in Punjab would provide the framework within which policy would be debated and implemented by the British, and would also regulate political and economic exchanges and interactions amidst and between actors in Punjab attempting to negotiate the distribution of power in society. The decades to come would also see an increase in both the reach and the infrastructural power of the state as it expanded its role in the economy and society (Ali, 1988), making the bureaucracy and courts increasingly indispensable features of the colonial regime. More importantly, however, the alliance between the state and peasant proprietors that underwrote the new political order under the colonial government would continue to form the core of colonial policy in the province, albeit with changes and modifications made by the colonial state over time in order to better protect and pursue its interests. As the feedback effects from the relationship between the state and its landholding allies strengthened both the parties involved, the logic of

mutual cooperation at the heart of the compact would continue to be reinforced, increasing the costs of adapting alternative political configurations or governance mechanisms, while simultaneously raising the stakes for actors at the margins of the regime's political dispensation.

### ***The Aristocratic Reaction, 1857-1868***

Evidence of the deepening of this bargain can be discerned in the debates and policy decisions that characterised the period following the Revolt of 1857. A combination of mismanagement and elite alienation in Oudh and the NWP had, along with other factors, contributed towards creating an air of resentment that culminated in a full-scale rebellion against the central colonial government (Trevaskis, 1928; Metcalf, 1964). Amidst widespread revolts by members of the colonial army recruited from amongst the local populations of Bengal and Northern India, the colonial government was, for the first time in India, faced with the prospect of collapse. In Punjab, however, the situation remained relatively calm, with the populace remaining largely indifferent to events taking place in Northern and Central India. Furthermore, when John Lawrence was dispatched from Lahore to fight the rebels who had laid siege to Delhi, he was able to recruit a force of mercenaries and soldiers comprised of the peasant proprietors that had been the recipients of state patronage over the last decade. More significantly, many of the large landholders who had survived the transition to colonial rule proved instrumental in mobilizing troops and resources for the British, utilizing their positions of power and leadership within the economic and social networks of their areas to generate support for the government (Talbot, 1988, 46-49). The failure of the Revolt in Punjab, coupled with the support John Lawrence was able to muster, served to vindicate the policies that had been implemented in the province over the course of the previous decade (Smith, 1897, 81-82). The investment

that had been made in the landed classes of Punjab had yielded rich dividends for the British, and only served to cement the view that the landed classes were crucial to the pursuit of colonial interests in the province.

Despite all of this, however, the events of 1857 prompted a wider debate within the colonial government of India, and the blame for the uprising was laid at the door of the same administrators who had advocated the displacement of the traditional landed elite in Northern India. In what would come to be known as the ‘Aristocratic Reaction’ to the Revolt (Metcalf, 1964; Penner, 1986), elements within the government began to suggest that it was necessary to utilise the traditional landed elite within the countryside as a means through which to exercise control over the peasantry. It was argued that by displacing the landed elite, the British government had bred resentment and, more importantly, removed an administrative mechanism that, since the time of the Mughals, had been used to ensure order and stability at the local level. Even though the support of Punjab’s peasant proprietors had been instrumental to the maintenance of the colonial order in the province, the experience of the NWP led many colonial administrators to suggest that a more prudent political policy in Punjab would focus more explicitly on co-opting the province’s traditional aristocracy. As argued by R. H. Davies, secretary to the Governor of Punjab, in a report recommending that members of the aristocracy be invested with magisterial powers<sup>15</sup>,

“Political security is not acceptably attained by just laws, equitable taxation, and material progress; there must also be a right adjustment of forces. In times of disturbance, men will look out for leaders. If there is a

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<sup>15</sup> Proceedings of the Punjab Political Department, 5<sup>th</sup> May 1860, Ref# 11-22, Punjab Civil Secretariat Archive (PCSA).

body scattered throughout the country considerable by its respect and rank it will for certain exercise great influence whether its position be hereditary or not. If this body is attached to the state by timely concessions and moderate honours – if it attains a share of power and importance, it will constitute a strong support to the existing government”.

In recommending that local chiefs and traditional landed elites be given magisterial powers, R. H. Davies was supported by a rising tide of opinion, in Punjab as well as the rest of India, which called for a restoration of the pre-colonial aristocracy not only in terms of its economic power, but also as repositories of political power (Penner, 1986). While certain elements of the aristocracy had, from the very outset, enjoyed the favour of the government, the calls for rethinking revenue policy that now emanated from Calcutta, Delhi, and Lahore, asked for nothing less than a fundamental reconfiguration of the way in which the colonial government had set about dispensing proprietary rights in land.

A variety of approaches were initially adopted by the Punjab government in order to set about the task of reconstructing a rural elite that it had only recently attempted to dismantle. In addition to conferring magisterial powers upon select landed elites in order to bolster the authority of the colonial government, grants of land were also conferred upon officials and local collaborators who aided the British government during the Revolt.<sup>16</sup> In cases where the British had already been in alliance with the traditional elites, such as in the district of Multan, further concessions and allowances were made to reward these elites for their loyalty

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<sup>16</sup> Proceedings of the Punjab Political Department, 12<sup>th</sup> January 1860, Ref# 205, PCSA.

(Roseberry, 1987). In Multan, the British had aligned themselves with the *sajjada nashins* of the local Muslim shrines, making use of their considerable social and political power to defeat the Sikhs in the area. Following the Revolt of 1857, the British increased their patronage of the shrines, granting large tracts of land to the *Sajjada Nashins* and providing them with economic resources to match the ideological power they already possessed. This fusion of religion and economic power would later prove to be one of the regime's most enduring sources of support (Gilmartin, 1988). The Tiwanas of Shahpur were another example of a prominent landholding family who, because of their military and political support of the colonial regime, were able to greatly expand their wealth and influence as a result of the preferential treatment meted out to them by the British government (Talbot, 1996).

However, despite taking some steps towards the reinstatement of Punjab's landed elite, the colonial state faced constraints in its ability to overhaul the province's revenue system. The difficulties faced by the government were illustrated most clearly by the debate that raged over tenancy legislation in the 1860s. When Punjab had first been annexed, the revenue settlements that had been made were designed to be temporary and subject to revision, allowing the colonial state to recalculate its revenue demand. This exercise was undertaken in 1863 by Edward Prinsep, the new Settlement Commissioner of the province. After conducting a thorough investigation into how proprietary rights had been determined in the years immediately following annexation, Prinsep concluded that grievous errors of judgement had been made by the officials who had drafted the record of property rights that underpinned the first revenue settlements. Prinsep basically argued that an ignorance of the history of the province and its traditions of control and administration had resulted in a large number of superior proprietors being deprived of their right to

own land (Metcalf, 1962; Hambly, 1964). In his view, the solution to this problem lay in a restructuring of the revenue system that would see many of the new peasant proprietors revert back to being occupancy tenants tilling land belonging to the traditional Punjabi aristocracy. With regards to the granting of property rights to occupancy tenants, Prinsep believed that, ‘the English government had no power to *confer*, or *create*, such rights if they never existed before’, and that restoration of the aristocracy would simply reinstate the agrarian order that had historically characterized Punjabi society.<sup>17</sup>

Although Prinsep’s suggestions were in line with the principles articulated by the Aristocratic Reaction following the events of 1857, they were not well received by John Lawrence who by this time had become Governor-General of India. Lawrence found support for his position from members of the central government like Richard Temple who had built their careers in the revenue administration he had headed during the formative phase of British control in Punjab. John Lawrence and his allies in government felt that Prinsep’s evaluation of the situation, if not inaccurate, was unduly harsh on the peasantry, and they argued that it was impossible to revert to the pre-colonial system of land tenures. Indeed, in the Amritsar district alone, the implementation of Prinsep’s revised settlement would have reduced 45,000 peasant proprietors to the status of cultivating tenants-at-will (Metcalf, 1962). Countering the claim that empowering the landed aristocracy would prove to be a source of stability for the regime, Lawrence and his allies argued that the dislocations engendered by Prinsep’s plan would lead to widespread discontent, undermining the stability of the government in Punjab.

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<sup>17</sup> Proceedings of the Punjab Revenue Department, 10<sup>th</sup> January 1863, Ref # 1-20, PCSA.

It was in an attempt to resolve this dilemma that John Lawrence and his allies were able to pass the Punjab Tenancy Act of 1868 which established that the proprietary rights granted during the initial settlement period could not be revised or revoked without due cause. However, although the act protected the ownership rights of the proprietors who had been granted land during the initial revenue settlements, it proscribed the granting of such rights in the future provided the existence of superior proprietary rights could be established. Also significant was the fact that the Act endowed landlords with a greater amount of freedom and power relative to their tenants, allowing the former to evict the latter at will. It was, according to W. G. Davies (1882), the commissioner of Jullundur, a compromise between a pro-landlord faction that sought to provide exclusive rights over land to the aristocracy, and a pro-peasant faction that felt that individual proprietors were crucial to economic progress and stability.

More importantly, however, the Punjab Tenancy Act is an embodiment of the process of path dependent, incremental institutional change that characterized the development of the British regime in the province. Examining the dynamics of the debate on this legislation provides insights into how the decisions taken by the colonial state during the regime-founding juncture of 1849-1857 limited the options that were available to it in the 1860s. Having largely created a local level class of landed allies in Punjab, the colonial government could not afford to simply sever its ties with this tier of the peasantry. On the other hand, as shown by the experience of the NWP, the policy of eliminating the traditional landed aristocracy brought with it problems of its own, particularly given how these traditional elites possessed the social standing necessary to mobilize support against the British regime. Cultivating the support of the Punjabi aristocracy also made sense when considering how their

allegiance to the colonial state had been fundamental to the British war effort in 1857. Yet, extending state patronage to these elites, under Prinsep's scheme, necessarily meant alienating the class of peasant proprietors who had thus far constituted the political core of the colonial regime.

Ironically, it was the debate between John and Henry Lawrence in the 1850s that provided the platform for this reconfiguration of British power in Punjab. In implementing a policy, under the BoA, that privileged peasant proprietors while simultaneously protecting the interests of selected members of the traditional aristocracy, John Lawrence's actions had the unintended consequence of ensuring that both elements of the agrarian order would prove to be active supporters of the new regime. Given that an institutional framework had been established through which both elements of the landed elite could use their power to pursue the interests of the colonial state, disturbing the established order in the province would have entailed political and economic costs that would have had a detrimental effect on the power of the colonial state.

In this context, the British were forced to choose between paths of action that would have potentially destabilized the regime, and the maintenance of a status quo in which measured institutional change could strengthen the position of both sets of its landed allies. Ideological protestations notwithstanding, the colonial state in Punjab never really had the option of enacting anything other than a Tenancy Act which catered to both elements of the landed elite. As a result, however, the colonial state could now rely on the aristocracy as allies who, by virtue of their social, political, and economic strength, could mobilise active political support in favour of the government and inhibit the spread of the types of instability that could threaten the political order. At the same time, while peasant proprietors were characterized by

their 'passive' loyalty to the state, it was believed that the landed elites could prove to be more useful in actively building and maintaining support for the colonial regime (van den Dungen, 1972, 100-105).

### ***The Canal Colonies***

Between 1885 and 1926, the British government in Punjab embarked upon an ambitious programme of agricultural expansion, establishing nine new 'canal colonies' between the five western rivers of the province. The principal aim of this project was to bring under cultivation millions of acres of land that had previously been barren and only sparsely inhabited, and this was all made possible through the extensive development of Punjab's irrigation network, and by transferring a large body of settlers from the increasingly congested Eastern districts to this new Western frontier. Amidst rising revenues and production the British often looked to Punjab and the canal colonies in particular, as an example of how the correct balance of institutional design, administrative acumen and social management could make manifest the benefits of colonial rule India. Indeed, in the words of at least one contemporary observer, 'the administration has introduced improvements of great magnitude, resulting in marked and rapid increase of wealth to the people who, to this extent, have been relieved of the pressure of their former poverty' (Calvert, 1922, 68).

The canal colonies were created in a political context within which the colonial state had invested tremendously in Punjab's agrarian order. As such, the entire project of canal colonisation was one that was informed by the same economic and political imperatives that had structured the institutions of the colonial state in Punjab. In the aftermath of annexation and the end of the Anglo-Sikh Wars, the construction of Punjab's canals provided employment to disbanded Sikh soldiers who may have otherwise been a source of discontent and disturbance in the province

(Gilmartin, 1994, 1133). Massive irrigation projects and other Public Works also represented a means through which the colonial state hoped to increase the surplus it could extract from the agrarian economy amidst declining revenues (Babar, 2001, 46). Finally, with population levels in East Punjab leading to increased competition for scarce agricultural land, creating canal colonies provided a means through which to expand agricultural production while simultaneously defusing the potentially explosive demographic situation in the rest of the province.<sup>18</sup> The scale of the project was unprecedented for the colonial government and by 1947, the colonies were spread over, spread over 14,000,000 acres of land, incorporating a dense web of canals, roads and small towns that linked the different parts of Western Punjab together. As argued by Ali (1988, 9) the extent of the canal network, coupled with the tremendous dependence of agriculture on canal water in the absence of reliable rainfall, resulted in the creation of a 'hydraulic' society in which the colonial state, through its control over water, could exercise a tremendous amount of power over those who lived in the region.

Drawing on Lefebvre's (1991) work on the relationship between space and social relations, Ian Kerr has argued that the colonial state used its technological tools (particularly roads and railways) to produce, and impose, a space in Punjab that reduced the agency of the colonized, limiting the extent to which they could exercise power and authority relative to the colonizers (Kerr, 2007). The canal colonies, while embodying a similar logic of control and domination, reflected a different approach to the production of space in Punjab. As opposed to regulating the circulation of capital and labour, the canal colonies project was concerned with creating fixity rather than managing fluidity. As envisaged by colonial planners, the spatial and institutional

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<sup>18</sup> *Memorandum on the Material and Moral Progress of Punjab, 1901-2 to 1911-12*, Government of Punjab, 3, PCSL.

organization of the colonies was designed not only to facilitate maximal economic production, but also to fix in perpetuity that specific set of agrarian social relations that the British felt was most conducive to strengthening the hold of the colonial state in Punjab. Inasmuch as the production and regulation of space was required to ensure the maintenance of order and the accumulation of surplus, the twin imperatives of managing fluidity and imposing fixity were intrinsically linked, informing the institutional basis of colonial rule in Punjab while simultaneously shaping production and social relations in the province.

The implications of this for economic and social life in the new colonies can be grasped by examining the two village plans shown in figures 6 and 7 below. What is most immediately striking about the comparison between the two villages is the way in which space is divided and demarcated. The design of Chak No. 73, defined by straight lines and clearly demarcated spaces for economic production and habitation, highlighted the colonial need for institutional regularity, and exemplified the way in which the power of the colonial state was, 'tied to a legal structure in which the definition of property rights in land was central' (Gilmartin, 1994, 1133). Bhambu Sandila, a village where settlements were scattered across fragmented landholdings in a space characterised by organised chaos at best. The contrast is particularly relevant when taking into account the different effects of organic and artificial settlement; whereas land ownership and settlement in Bhambu Sandila were reflective of decades of exchange, contestation, and appropriation between the different families living within the village, the spaces available inside Chak No. 73 were designed to be carefully allocated to different colonists transplanted into the village from other parts of Punjab.

Having created the physical spaces of the canal colonies, the colonial state was faced with the issue of populating them. Here too the state relied upon the idiom of science to justify the decisions it took with regards to the type of occupants it sought

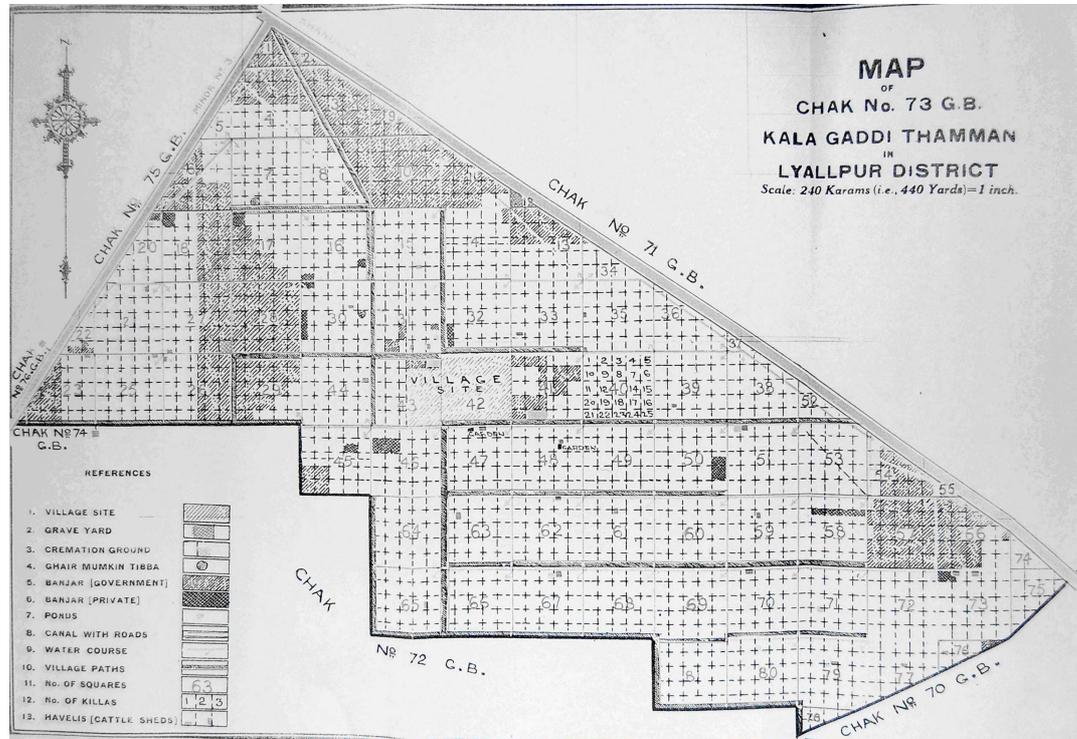


Figure 6: Map of Chak No. 73 GB, a canal colony village<sup>19</sup>

for the new colonies. Drawing upon their knowledge of Punjab’s social structure, as well as administrative and political precedent, the British pursued a policy of settlement in which agricultural land was predominantly awarded only to members of ‘agriculturalist tribes’ from Eastern Punjab. These particular *biraderis* were those that had historically possessed and cultivated land in Punjab, and the large landholders and peasant proprietors who belonged to these *biraderis* had hitherto been the colonial state’s main indigenous allies in Punjab. While colonial anthropology provided a ready social scientific justification for the categorisation of Punjab’s population in

<sup>19</sup> Source: Singh (1932)



that entire communities were relocated to the new villages.<sup>21</sup> What this meant in practice was that in addition to the dominant *biraderi* groups that would be granted land in the canal colonies, artisans and landless workers would also be transplanted into these new settlements. From the perspective of the colonial state, this made sense because it allowed for the retention of the traditional social structures and ties that formed the basis for Customary Law in Punjab. Engineering the shift to the canal colonies with minimal social disruption was of obvious importance to the colonial state, and encouraging settlement in this manner was one of the ways in which dislocation was limited. In practice, however, what this meant was that even though the new villages ostensibly represented spaces within which ‘new’ communities were to be formed, the selective distribution of land and the implementation of the colonial state’s vision of Customary Law ensured the perpetuation of an agrarian order in which the landless remained subordinate to traditional landed elites (Ali, 1988, 192; Gilmartin, 2004).

When the canal colonies were being set up, changes had begun to take place in the economic structure of Punjab that would have an impact on economic life in the new settlements. In the last few decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Punjab found itself being increasingly incorporated within international circuits of capital. Cash cropping and relatively input-intensive cultivation for the market had begun to replace traditional production patterns in earnest, generating the type of stratification between the richer and poorer peasants that was associated with capitalist agriculture (Mishra, 1982). Inequality in land ownership was exacerbated by increases in population that were not, until the establishment of the canal colonies, matched by a concurrent expansion

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<sup>21</sup> It is important to note that these areas were not entirely uninhabited. Many were home to pastoralists who were categorised by the colonial state as being ‘criminal tribes’ unsuited to agriculture. Colonial policy towards these tribes alternated between repression and rehabilitation, culminating in attempts to incorporate some of them within the canal colonies in the 1920s. See Ali (1988, 52-53 and 102) and Major (1999).

in the amount of cultivated land in Punjab. To the extent that growth took place, it was triggered by sustained increases in food prices amidst relatively static levels of taxation, with much of this growth remaining concentrated in the hands of the rich landholders (Hamid, 1982). As a result, greater economic output and escalating competition for access to increasingly scarce agricultural land saw it become transformed into a commodity of considerable value, a development that would also slowly begin to emerge in the canal colonies. Even as the landless and poorer sections of the peasantry were increasingly forced into wage labour, and as proprietors with small holdings were squeezed into the ranks of the landless, the dominant fractions of the landholding class in Punjab were able to consolidate and expand their holdings by using their resources to acquire more land. In the long run, as argued by Ali (1987) and Mukherjee (2005), the trajectory of economic development in the canal colonies would lead to the creation of a political economy in which ecological distortions combined with inequality, corruption and rent-seeking would lead to rising economic inefficiency and productivity, if not declining economic growth. Indeed, the myth of prosperity that informed the colonial discourse on Punjab was one that focused almost exclusively on the province's landed peasantry while ignoring the deeper contradictions accompanying the transition to capitalist agriculture.

Nonetheless, the British continually pointed to the example of the canal colonies to make its case for Punjabi exceptionalism, arguing that the constant economic returns and rising levels of prosperity in the province were evidence of the success of the colonisation project. A measure of the extent to which the colonies proved to be lucrative can be seen in the way in which, by 1913, the state's revenue demand from canal-irrigated lands stood at Rs. 9,383,797, the vast majority of which

was derived from the canal colonies.<sup>22</sup> By 1928, after the major colonisation projects had been completed, and on the eve of the Great Depression and its subsequent impact on Punjab, the revenue demand from canal-irrigated land was Rs. 18,211,230.<sup>23</sup> This tremendous rise in revenue was partly due to the expansion in the amount of canal-irrigated land in this period, but was also reflective both of the rising prices for agricultural produce, as well as the increasing value of land. The profit the state derived from revenue was supplemented by other sources of income as well, most notably by charging for the use of canal water. Given the tremendous size of the initial capital investment required to construct the canal network, the rate at which the British saw a return on their investment varied and some colonies proved to be more successful than others<sup>24</sup>, but by and large the overall picture was one of increasing profits over time. The scale of the wealth being generated in the colonies can be understood by considering how, in 1917, colonial officials noted that, ‘the crops raised on the canals probably represented one-half of the agricultural wealth of the province, and it may be said that in 1916-1917 the canals again stood between the Province and severe scarcity’.<sup>25</sup> By the end of British rule in Punjab, taking into account all investment and expenses, Imran Ali (1988, 168) estimates that the canal colonies provided the colonial state with almost Rs. 1 billion in total profit.

In addition to an interest in profit through the receipt of rents, the state also sought to use the canal colonies as a means through which to introduce new patterns of agricultural production in Punjab. Towards this end, different categories of land

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<sup>22</sup> Report on the Land Revenue Administration of the Punjab for the Agricultural Year ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 1913, India Office Library, London (IOL).

<sup>23</sup> Report on the Land Revenue Administration of the Punjab for the Agricultural Year ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 1928, IOL

<sup>24</sup> Imran Ali (1988) provides detailed figures on the returns received by the colonial state on each major canal irrigation project in the colonies, see 162-167.

<sup>25</sup> Report on the Land Revenue Administration of the Punjab for the Agricultural Year ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 1917, 3, IOL.

grants were established in the colonies in addition to the standardised squares of land that were awarded to the bulk of the cultivating peasantry. These included grants for serving and retired military personnel and members of the civilian administration, horse and camel breeding grants aimed at raising animals for use by the British military, and capitalist 'yeoman' grants that, being larger than regular peasant grants, were intended to promote enterprising farmers and rich peasants who could invest in intensive agriculture. Provisions were also made to make land available for loyal members of Punjab's landed aristocracy in return for their continued support of the government, allowing them to enhance not only their economic power, but also their political and social standing.

Therefore, in the context of the tremendous amount of wealth being produced in the canal colonies, it needs to be understood that for the most, accumulation and appropriation were processes dominated by the state and its landed allies. Rather than benefitting the various different strata in rural society, prosperity remained the preserve of the richer peasant proprietors and large landlords, with the landless, the artisans, and the tenants-at-will continually being squeezed. For both the state and the grantees that possessed land, the ability to manipulate and regulate space was of crucial importance to this process of surplus extraction, and the spatial arrangements put in place at the time of the creation of the canal colonies were of fundamental in facilitating and reinforcing this process. By retaining the ability to control access to land, water, and other resources, the state and many of the landowning colonists were able to bolster their capacity to extract rents from those who were subordinate to them in the economic hierarchy.

The preferential treatment accorded to the landed classes in the canal colonies, and the control they were given over land in the villages, proved to be instrumental in

allowing this section of the populace to pursue its own economic interests effectively. In addition to the prosperity that was engendered through agricultural production, grantees of land in the canal colonies also profited tremendously from the sale of both occupancy rights and property itself. Under certain conditions, particularly after 1907, grantees in the canal colonies could acquire proprietary rights to their land through purchase and short of this, nonetheless had the right to sell their occupancy rights to other qualifying elements of the rural populace. While the sale of proprietary rights to eligible colonists was itself profitable for the state, it was an even greater source of lucre for the grantees themselves. Due to its high level of productivity, canal colony land, for the most, tended to be higher in value than land in the rest of the province. In 1921, for example, an acre of land in the Shahpur district of the Lower Jhleum Colony sold for Rs. 599<sup>26</sup>, as compared with an average price of Rs. 345 per acre for the province as a whole.<sup>27</sup> Even horse-breeding grants, which were generally considered to be less desirable due to the strict conditionalities attached to them, had a value of Rs. 396 per acre in the same year. Indeed, for some grantees it was more profitable to sell their canal colony land and purchase land for cultivation in their villages of origin instead.

The manner in which the canal colonies were settled also facilitated extraction and accumulation through alternative means. The canal colonies were often plagued by corruption at the local level, with powerful local landlords and government officials using their authority to receive a variety of different rents from those subordinate to them. One of the most widespread practices of this nature was the way in which access to irrigation water was controlled and regulated by these actors. While dues were paid to the state for the use of canal water, the system of *warabandi*

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<sup>26</sup> Report on the Punjab Colonies for the Year ending 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1921, 11, PCSL.

<sup>27</sup> Report on the Land Revenue Administration of the Punjab for the Year ending 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1921, 19, IOL.

that was instituted in the colonies to regulate the usage of this water was one that relied heavily upon the use of local expertise and authority (Gilmartin, 1994). In the interests of maximising efficiency, the colonial government sought to integrate indigenous practices into the production process, much as Customary Law had been absorbed into the framework of colonial administration. In practice, however, placing the levers of irrigation in the hands of influential local landlords provided them with the means through which to extract rents from their fellow cultivators and tenants, thereby maximising their own economic gain. In determining who could or could not receive water, and at what cost, the more powerful elements of the landed class were able to regulate the way in which space was used for production in a manner that was similar to the interventions often staged by the colonial state.

The power of the landowning classes in the colonies was also reinforced by the opportunities they had to lock the landless classes into ties of even greater dependence and subordination. In contrast with the agriculturalist grantees, whose homestead land was included in the terms under which agricultural land was awarded, the landless in the canal colonies had to continually pay rents to the state in exchange for the right to live in the spaces provided to them by the colonial state. Moreover, the dominant landlords within the villages were often consulted by colonial officials when it came to the allocation of residential land to the landless and were thus placed in a position where they could wield tremendous influence over the subordinate elements of the village hierarchy.<sup>28</sup> While plans for the villages in the canal colonies provided for separate spaces within which the landless could reside (see figure 8), many of the artisans, wage labourers and hereditary servants who migrated to these villages ended

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<sup>28</sup> Report on the Punjab Colonies for the Year ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 1914, 6, PCSL.

up living in the compounds of the landed families to whom they were attached. In such situations, the colonial state allowed for the grantees to charge rents from the



Figure 8: Plan for a village site in the Chenab Colony<sup>29</sup>

landless occupants of their homestead land<sup>30</sup>, effectively ensuring that the economic power of this class was reinforced by a capacity to control the very spaces within which the landless existed. Finally, the state's strong interest in the micro-management of the new colonies resulted in a tremendous expansion of the bureaucracy at the local level (Ali, 1987, 119), with the result being that landowners engaging in regular interactions with, and possessing links to, state institutions emerged as intermediaries upon whom the subordinate peasantry relied for any kind of access to the state (Raulet, 1971, 297).

<sup>29</sup> Source: Gazetteer of the Chenab Colony, 1904, as reproduced in Glover (2005). The section labeled 'menials' was inhabited by non-agriculturalists.

<sup>30</sup> Annual Report on the Lower Chenab Colony, 1914, 12, PCSL.

In the canal colonies, the logic of agrarian paternalism exhibited by the colonial state in Punjab existed in an amplified form, with the state playing a direct role in the productive process itself to ensure effective accumulation. Towards this end, agricultural production and land were more heavily regulated in the colonies than in other parts of the province, with strict rules covering a wide range of areas, including the planting of trees, the maintenance of roads and waterways, the digging of wells, and even the storage of manure in designated areas.<sup>31</sup> In a different vein, as part of the colonial state's preoccupation with reforming the character of the colonists, efforts were also made to regulate sanitation, with large grants being placed at the disposal of the settlers to initiate and maintain sanitation schemes that, it was believed, would improve the environment of the villages. Most important of all, however, were the regulations governing the inheritance of land and the succession of leases. In the interests of preventing the subdivision and fragmentation of holdings, a possibility that could lead to economic inefficiency, stringent checks were placed on the transfer of land to heirs and relatives (Ali, 1988, 65-66). Paradoxically, even though the state's intervention in the agrarian economy was at least partly responsible for the prosperity of the colonies, the bureaucratic weight all of these measures placed on the peasantry in the canal colonies was a source of considerable resentment, particularly when allegedly corrupt colonial officials resorted to the levying of punitive measures such as fines to ensure adherence to the established guidelines.

However, in a demonstration of the colonial state's increasing dependence on the landed elite, agitation in 1907 against the weight of the regulations imposed on cultivators in the Canal colonies, the corruption of the revenue administration, and the restrictions on land ownership, led the state to withdraw much of its control over

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<sup>31</sup> Annual Report on the Chenab Colony, 1903, p2-4, PCSL.

agricultural production in the colonies, and also concede the right of tenants to purchase the land they leased (Barrier, 1967; Ali, (1988, 66-68). Faced with the prospect of *zamindar* unrest which could threaten the entire edifice of colonial rule, the British had little choice but to accede to the demands of their landed allies, even if this meant compromising to an extent on the state's strategy for economic accumulation. In doing so, the British also reduced the possibility of serious unrest in the future; when *zaminder* unrest began to emerge again, as was the case in 1928 when colonists possessing horse-breeding grants in the Lower Jhelum Colony demanded that the state loosen the conditionalities attached with their land, these disturbances remained small and relatively inconsequential due to the state's willingness to placate protesting grantees.<sup>32</sup>

Setting up the canal colonies allowed the colonial state to expand the ambit of its economic activities while simultaneously shoring up the strength of its landed allies. In addition to creating a new set of peasant proprietors, beholden to the state for granting them property rights, the canal colonies provided existing landed elites with the opportunity to increase their own economic and political standing. This was made particularly possible by the increased bureaucratic state power that accompanied the canal colonies, and the opportunities this afforded to the landed elite to acquire and distribute patronage. All of these measures served to reinforce and entrench the bargain underpinning colonial governance in Punjab, with the path dependent nature of Punjab's institutional development being further demonstrated by the state's willingness to accommodate the demands of protesting peasant grantees in 1907.

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<sup>32</sup> Report on the Punjab Colonies for the Year ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 1928, 30-32, PCSL.

## ***The Debt Crisis and the Punjab Alienation of Land Act 1900***

Even as the British populated the canal colonies and enacted legislation aimed at strengthening the agrarian and political order that had been painstakingly constructed since the annexation of Punjab four decades earlier, a crisis emerged that seriously threatened the very foundations of colonial rule. Although notice had been taken of the phenomenon as early as the 1850s, when John Lawrence had been Chief Commissioner of the province, the majority of colonial administrators in Punjab had underestimated the extent of rural indebtedness in Punjab (Barrier, 1966). While warning signs had been present indicating a steady alienation of land away from the landed classes and into the hands of predominantly Hindu, urban moneylenders, concerns about the extent of the problem were often dismissed by referring either to the relatively small number of instances of civil litigation relating to disputes over land, or to the belief that the majority of transactions were taking place between agriculturalists alone, and not between moneylenders and cultivators.

By the late 1870s, however, it became increasingly clear that this was not the case. The commercialisation of agriculture, a fixed and rigid revenue demand, the rise in the value of land, and the expansion of credit facilities, all contributed towards creating a situation where cultivators and owners struggling to meet their revenue obligations were forced to mortgage their land in order to acquire credit from the moneylenders. More often than not, this ultimately resulted in the landowners being forced to give up their land in order to pay off their debt (Nazir, 2000). Additionally, the traditional checks exercised by Customary Law on the transfer of land outside of the village proprietary body had ceased to be enforced following replacement of the DCs by courts that strictly adhered to the letter of colonial law and the *laissez faire* spirit that now infused it (Barrier, 1966, 9). In the early 1880s, Septimus Thornburn, a

revenue officer in the Punjab government, attempted once again to bring the matter of rural indebtedness to the attention of the authorities, undertaking a detailed analysis of the available statistical data to illustrate how a significant amount of land that had previously been owned by cultivating Muslims in Punjab was now being transferred to non-cultivating moneylenders. In his book on the subject, Thornburn (1983) argued that allowing the transfer of land from the cultivators to the moneylenders would completely upset the balance upon which the government in Punjab had been forged, wreaking havoc with the revenue system while simultaneously generating unrest and conflict. While Thornburn's findings were initially rejected, a sudden spike in alienations during the 1880s, coupled with almost unprecedented agitation and communal rioting between Muslim cultivators and Hindu moneylenders, forced the government to pay closer attention to the issue of indebtedness, and consider the different solutions that were available for resolving the problems.

As shown by Barrier (1966), the ensuing debate over the what had to be done to prevent the transfer of land to the moneylenders rehashed many of the arguments that had taken place over the settlement of Bengal and Madras, and the form to be taken by the Punjab administration following annexation. Paternalists emphasising the need to actively intervene, through legislation, in order to defend the interests of the agriculturalists, were pitted against officials who, adhering to the previously ascendant orthodoxy of free market economics, believed that state interference in the natural operation of markets and property rights would be disastrous for Punjab. The debate was also increasingly informed by the ideas of Henry Maine, whose work on the village economy in India, and belief in the need to preserve traditional institutions in order to ensure stability, had come to eclipse the ideas of the Utilitarians that had shaped the earlier phase of British rule (Dewey, 1991b; Mantena, 2010). Ultimately,

those arguing in favour of protecting the landed classes won the day and were able to draft and implement what would come to be known as the Punjab Alienation of Land Act of 1900. Restricting ownership of land to what the government defined as 'agricultural tribes', the law essentially introduced severe restrictions on the right of private property, preventing non-cultivators from possessing agricultural land. It was the most decisive step the government could have taken to protect the landed classes in Punjab from the threat of losing their land.

While the debate over the Alienation of Land Act had been contested on ideological grounds, the institutional form that had been taken by the colonial government in the decades leading up to 1900 had once again limited the options that were available to the state. Since 1849, governance in the province had been premised upon the support and loyalty of a cultivating peasantry that, in tandem with the landed elite, would be able to provide revenue, recruits, bureaucrats, and political support in exchange for state patronage and protection. In the fifty years since annexation, as the relationship between the state and its landed allies deepened, a number of measures were taken that, within the bureaucratic-judicial framework of colonial rule, had introduced changes and calibrations that reinforced the bargain struck between the state and its landed collaborators. As greater economic, political and legal benefits were bestowed upon the landed classes by the state, they were able to use their increased standing in society to work with the government in its attempts to perpetuate the status quo. This, in turn, generated a process of positive feedback that increased the incentive for the colonial state, and the landed class, to continue investing in the existing institutional setup. Given how land was crucial not only to economic production, but also to the social and political organization of society in Punjab, the colonial government could not afford to let the landed classes in Punjab be

supplanted by a class of urban capitalists with no basis upon which to command the loyalty and support of the Punjabi countryside.

The irony of the crisis that led to the promulgation of the Land Alienation Act was the fact that the moneylenders who acquired land from the cultivators were only able to do so because the British introduced a regime of alienable private property in land that was enforced with greater stringency from the 1870s onwards. In a very real sense, this was an unintended consequence of the British policy in Punjab, and represents how measures taken to strengthen the landed elite inadvertently provided a rival class with the means through which to challenge the institutional distribution of power in society. However, when faced with the prospect of a shift in power in Punjab, the British moved swiftly to alter the institutional rules governing the interaction between the landed classes and the moneylenders. Interestingly enough, the Act was not only opposed by members of the colonial state, but also by elements within the landed elite who felt that the law would restrict their ability to acquire credit for agricultural and non-agricultural purposes.<sup>33</sup> Opposition was also understandably voiced by the moneylending capitalists, who felt that the Act unfairly infringed upon their right to own land. Government opinion, however, was reflected in the words of the Settlement Commissioner of Punjab, who claimed that, 'alienation of land has attained such dimensions... as to constitute an evil of the first magnitude and a grave political danger... It is incumbent on the Legislature... to lose no time in passing some such Act as is now contemplated'<sup>34</sup>. Despite widespread opposition to the Act in society, the government recognized the way in which its previous

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<sup>33</sup> Evidence for this can be found in the dozens of letters traded between different colonial officers in the year prior to the introduction of the Act. See 'Opinions on the Bill to Amend the Law Relating to Agricultural Land in the Punjab', Proceedings of the Punjab Revenue and Agriculture Department, July 1900, Ref #99, PCSA.

<sup>34</sup> J. Wilson to the Financial Commissioner, Punjab, 28 December 1899, Proceedings of the Punjab Revenue and Agriculture Department, July 1900, Ref #99, PCSA.

institutional interventions had provided the moneylenders with the means through which to acquire land from the landed classes. From the viewpoint of the government, a failure to address that institutional loophole would have resulted in the collapse of the landed support upon which the colonial government had been erected,

As a piece of legislation, the Punjab Alienation of Land Bill was without precedent in India<sup>35</sup>, and was all the more notable because of the way in which it flew in the face of the free market ideology that had gripped the colonial and British governments at the time. While it could be argued that state intervention has always, at some level, been fundamental to the operation of free markets, the Alienation Act was an intervention that completely defied the logic of competition that dominated contemporary economic discourse. More than a simple calibration of the extant institutional framework, it represented an institutional readjustment that all but eliminated the possibility of the landed classes being displaced from the position of power in the agrarian order. Yet, in the period leading up to its promulgation, the possibility had existed that the institutional regime would be altered in the face of opposition to the paternalist form of administration that existed in Punjab. This was particularly true given that a similar crisis of indebtedness in Bengal had been allowed to proceed unchecked during the same time period (Bhaduri, 1976). The failure of this contestational juncture to bring about an institutional shift provides important insights into the strength of the relationship between the colonial state and the landed elite in Punjab.

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<sup>35</sup> While the Land Alienation Act was unprecedented in terms of the restrictions it imposed on the ownership of land, it was not the only piece of paternalistic legislation passed by the Punjab government. The Court of Wards Act of 1872, for example, was explicitly designed to protect the interests of the landed classes by allowing the state to manage large estates that passed into the hands of minors, or were threatened by fragmentation due to the absence of an heir. By the turn of the century, the Court of Wards Act was used to administer over sixty estates, See *Report on the Administration of Estates under the Court of Wards in the Punjab*, 1892-93, PCSL.

## ***Conclusion***

In this chapter, an account has been given of the process of institutional development in the first half-century of British rule in Punjab. By focusing on the foundational juncture of 1849-1868, as well as the contestational juncture that preceded the implementation of the Land Alienation Act of 1900, it has been shown that the institutional framework of colonial rule in Punjab was premised upon a bargain with the province's peasant proprietors and traditional rich aristocracy. The mechanisms giving rise to the reproduction and reinforcement of this bargain over time have been explained, and the way in which this bargain engendered a path dependent trajectory of institutional development in Punjab has also been described. An attempt has also been made to highlight processes of incremental institutional change by focusing on how bureaucratic incorporation, legislation such as the Court of Wards Act, and the canal colonies project, all served to deepen the power of the landed elite, and strengthen their relationship with the colonial state.

## CHAPTER FOUR: Reproducing the State-Landlord

### Bargain in Colonial Punjab

*You have amongst you an Aristocracy. Why not make what you can of it... There can be no doubt than an aristocracy is not only a source of strength to the people at large but also to the Government of the land, and it is always recognised as such.*

Sirdar Partap Singh, Founder of the Punjab Chiefs' Association<sup>36</sup>

#### ***Introduction***

In addition to bringing with it the Land Alienation Act, the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century also saw the introduction of electoral and legislative politics in Punjab. This represented an important shift in the way in which landed power was reinforced in the province, and the bargain between the state and its landed allies was reproduced. The expansion of representative government allowed the landed elite to play a more direct role in government, particularly with regards to the receipt and distribution of patronage and the creation of laws, and political parties provided a new method through which landed interests could be mobilized and articulated. This chapter is divided into four main sections. The first of these provides a brief description of the evolution of representative government in Punjab, providing context for the rest of the chapter. The second section focuses on the use of bureaucratic power and networks as a mechanism through which landed power, and the elite's bargain with the state, was reproduced. The third section expands on this point by highlighting the role of electoral politics in this process, emphasizing how the rules of electoral competition, as well as political parties, guaranteed the ability of the landed elite to capture power

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<sup>36</sup> Sirdar Partap Singh (1911) *The Punjab Chiefs' Association*, Lahore: The Tribune Press, pp. 2 and 7.

in the province, and pursue their interests, as well as those of the state, with greater efficiency. The final section of the chapter, on legislative politics, looks at how the landed elite were able to use their power in government to craft laws favorable to the pursuit of their interests, provide support to their allies, and impose sanctions on their rivals.

### ***Punjab in the Early Twentieth Century***

Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the paternalist model of colonial governance in Punjab, premised on the exercise of executive fiat by a bureaucracy relatively insulated from 'Native' opinion began to change as tentative steps started to be taken towards incorporating Punjabi's within the bureaucracy, and introducing limited forms of representative government in the province. Initial forays into representative government were implemented following the Municipal Act of 1862, which introduced committees in the province's towns which oversaw matters relating to sanitation and infrastructural development. By 1874, there were 197 Municipal Committees in Punjab, with a total membership of 2093 out of which 1692 were Indians, a very small minority of whom were elected to their posts on the basis of an extremely limited franchise.<sup>37</sup> The 1870s also saw the introduction of District Committees which functioned like their municipal counterparts at the district level. While these committees, for all their indigenous representation, represented little more than, 'official control masquerading under the grab of elections'<sup>38</sup>, they nonetheless provided the basis for the expansion of local government under the District Boards Act of 1883. These boards, again consisting of members that were British and Indian, elected and nominated, enjoyed greater control over taxation and

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<sup>37</sup> The Development of Local Self Government in the Punjab (1849-1900), Monograph No. 8, Punjab Record Office Publications, PCSL.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 30-31.

expenditure than the committees that preceded them, and existed to effectively coordinate and implement the work of different organs of local government in any given district. In 1888, there were 1305 District Board members in Punjab (a number which would remain mostly constant until 1946), the majority of whom were elected to office.<sup>39</sup>

In addition to the creation of these local governance structures, the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century also saw the introduction of limited legislative representation in Punjab. Although many of the other provinces had seen the creation of Governors' Councils following the Indian Councils Act of 1862, it was with the revision of this Act in 1891 that a similar council was created in Punjab. The first of these new Councils was convened in 1897, and consisted of 41 members, all of whom were nominated, and out of which 18 were Punjabis. After the Minto-Morley Reforms of 1909, limited electoral representation was introduced to the Governor's Council, with a small number of seats being allocated on this basis. The Governor's Council was replaced in 1921 by the first Punjab Legislative Council following the passing of the Government of India Act, 1919. Seventy per cent of the members of the new Legislative Councils were elected on the basis of a limited franchise, and the body also enjoyed a greater amount of power than the councils it succeeded, with ministerial portfolios being created and granted to Punjabis for the first time. The power of the Council was limited to areas such as agriculture, health and education, however, and it was only with the passing of the Government of India Act 1935, and the subsequent creation of the first Punjab Legislative Assembly in 1937, that complete provincial autonomy was granted to the province. The new Legislative Assembly had 175 members, all of whom were elected on a less limited franchise

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<sup>39</sup> Report on the Administration and Accounts of the Punjab District Boards, 1887-88, PCSL.

than before, with provincial ministers now having complete control over the province's revenue and expenditure. This arrangement would remain in place until partition in 1947.

As argued by Washbrook (1997), however, the introduction of representative government in colonial India was ultimately aimed at reinforcing British authority. In practice, this meant the incorporation of the regime's allies within newly opened spaces for representative government while simultaneously maintaining the divide between policy formulation and implementation that had hitherto characterised colonial governance. In line with its ethos of bureaucratic paternalism, the colonial state saw itself as rising above the divisions that fractured Indian society and thus sought to strengthen its bureaucratic power even as Indians were elected to representative posts within the government. By design, representative government in colonial India was subordinated to the colonial bureaucracy, with the Executive maintaining tight control over the workings of government. While the power of the colonial state was weakened over time, particularly after 1935, the concessions made by the British were deliberately incremental in nature, and aimed at maintaining as much control in the hands of the state as possible.

Concurrent with the expansion of electoral politics in Punjab was the emergence of political parties. Elections to Municipal Committees and District Boards remained largely localized, defined by torpid competition between competing local elites. However, once the terrain shifted to the provincial arena, particularly with the granting of ministerial powers to Punjabis, political parties began to coalesce around different poles of interest. The Indian National Congress and the All India Muslim League, established in 1885 and 1906 respectively, were two India-wide parties that were amongst the first to establish branches in Punjab. Based mainly in

Punjab's cities, they would both come to be eclipsed in 1923 with the formation of the Unionist Party, a supra-communal association of loyalist landlords from across the province who would dominate Punjab's politics for a quarter of a century. In addition to these three main players smaller, mostly communal parties also existed, and while these parties had limited electoral weight, they did play a role in shaping the province's political discourse, as well as the positions adopted by the larger parties.

Throughout the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, electoral politics would be the arena within which different communal and class interests would compete for power and patronage. As argued by Barrier (1968), the process through which the colonial state incorporated Punjabis within the state apparatus, particularly in the organs of local, district, and provincial government, inadvertently played a key role in generating religious antagonism between Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs, all of whom sought to protect their communal interests against the possibility of rule by one single community. The threat posed by the politics of representation to communal harmony and the stability of the province was one that the British recognized, and it was for this reason that separate electorates and representation were guaranteed for each of the three major religions in Punjab. While this arguably reinforced the tendency towards the communalization of Punjabi politics, it also represented a mechanism through which the colonial state hoped to regulate and contain religious conflict.

Indeed, rather than being the norm, communal politics proved to be the exception in Punjab. Despite the preponderance of religiously charged communal sentiment in the cities, where the intellectual and bureaucratic elite were instrumental in shaping representative policy in its formative years, electoral politics in Punjab remained relatively impervious to religious influence. Instead, an institutionally

enforced divide between urban and rural Punjab, between the landed magnates of the countryside and the province's nascent capitalist and middle classes in the cities, would come to be the defining political cleavage of this period. As a party of landed interests, the Unionists were, from the outset, geared towards collaborating with the British, reinforcing the bargain between landlords and the state upon which the colonial state in Punjab had been erected. Furthermore, by drawing on the idiom of defending the 'agriculturalists' of the province, the Unionists were able to cobble together an alliance of landed classes that cut across the religious divide. Until their implosion in the 1940s due to factional infighting, opposition to the Unionists remained fragmented, with rivals like the Muslim League and the Congress meeting with limited success in their attempts to cultivate support in the countryside.

From the introduction of electoral politics at the provincial level in 1909 till partition in 1947, British policy was shaped by a number of different forces. On the one hand, in Punjab, the established policy of co-opting the landed classes continued apace, with colonial officials and landed representatives using their power and authority to incrementally strengthen this arrangement over time. The colonial state's interest in a stable, prosperous Punjab was reinforced by the strains imposed by the two World Wars, particularly given the province's role in providing troops and supplies to the war effort, as well as its reputation as being a bulwark of loyalist sentiment in increasingly nationalist times. On the other hand, the dynamics of All-India politics, the rise of both the Congress and the Muslim League, and factionalism within Punjab itself, also had a hand in influencing colonial policy over time, particularly in the areas of constitutional reform and self-government.

## ***Bureaucratic Power and Patronage***

In the years following the foundational decades of British rule, Punjab came to occupy greater strategic and economic significance within British India. After 1857, Punjab started to supply the British Indian army with over a third of its total recruits despite being home to only a tenth of the country's population, with the vast majority of those recruits being from the landed classes. The increasing importance of the province as a frontier between British India and Central Asia also made it essential for the state to ensure that the province did not undergo any kind of disruption that would hamper military recruitment and deployment (Yong, 2005). The increased militarization of Punjab was also accompanied by greater bureaucratization and centralization of authority, as well as the development of networks of roads and railways. The state's logistical reach and its capacity to implement its decisions both grew as the administrative system matured. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the infrastructural power of the Punjab government allowed it to regulate society and micromanage the economy in a way that had simply not been previously possible (Ali, 1988, 9; Talbot, 2007).

It is important to note here that the infrastructural power of the state was premised on the relationship the government had with its landed allies. Throughout their time in Punjab, the British themselves formed an extremely small part of the actual machinery of the government, with increasing amounts administrative responsibility being passed on to Punjabis, most of whom were drawn from the landed classes. At an informal, local level, this was accomplished through the empowerment of prominent peasant proprietors and clan leaders through a continuation of the *zaildari* system that characterised the Sikh revenue administration. As part of this system, villages were grouped into territorial units called *zails*, with the geographical

area covered by each *zail* being as congruent as possible to the settlement pattern of an identifiable agricultural *biraderi* resident in the area. Each *zail* was administered by a *zaildar* who was selected by the government from amongst the leading agriculturalist families in the area, and who combined his social position as the head of a *biraderi* with his formal role supervising local village headmen. The headman of any given village, known as the *lambardar*, would be selected from the dominant agriculturalist *biraderi* in the village, and was given the responsibility of ensuring that all the members of the village proprietary body met their revenue obligations to the state. The offices of *zaildar* and *lambardar* were hereditary and non-transferable, and by virtue of their position within the colonial administrative framework, individuals who held these positions were in a position to access a tremendous amount of patronage and power, further strengthening their position within the agrarian order. This was further reinforced by the fact that *zaildars* and *lumbardars* received 5% of the revenue generated by the villages under their charge (Trevaskis, 1928; Gilmartin, 1988, 20-23).

While the *lambardars* and *zaildars* of Punjab were not formally part of any government department, their presence was supplemented by the appointment of Punjabis to positions within the colonial bureaucracy. Here, it is useful to consider the size and scale of the bureaucracy within this period. While it is difficult to accurately determine the size of each and every department of the Punjab government, figures on the Police and the Revenue Administration provide an indication of just how many people were involved with the colonial bureaucracy. In the context of understanding the reproduction of landed power, the Police and Revenue Administration are important precisely because these two departments were responsible for areas of government that were key to the interests of the elite themselves; links to the police

allowed landlords to play a more effective role in maintaining order at the local level, and control of the revenue administration was fundamental to processes of economic accumulation. As such in the year 1900-1901, the total size of the police department in Punjab was 20,462 personnel, out of which 20069 were native Punjabis<sup>40</sup>, with these demographics remaining largely unchanged until 1947. A similar picture emerges for the Revenue Administration. At the height of its power in the 1930s and 1940s, following the completion of the Canal Colony projects, the Department of Revenue and Agriculture in Punjab employed between 400 and 500 officers who were members of the Indian Civil Service.<sup>41</sup> Working under these officers, in the Land Records Office, were the *qanungos* and *patwaris* who did the actual work of mapping out lands and assessing land revenue. In 1924-25, there were 9282 *patwaris* working in Punjab under 694 *qanungos*, with this number remaining constant until Partition.<sup>42</sup>

While the total number of Punjabis in the Police and Revenue departments constituted less than a per cent of the total population of the province, the figures given above illustrate the fact that the colonial state apparatus was still large enough to have a presence within each and every village in the province, and that each government employee at the local level thus represented a direct conduit to the state. The implications of this for landed power can be better understood when considering how bureaucratic recruitment was deliberately biased towards members of the landed classes and the agriculturalist *biraderis*. This was borne out by the way in which, for example, a third of all *patwaris* and *qanungos* in 1900 were members of agriculturalist *biraderis*.<sup>43</sup> While agriculturalists did not constitute the bulk of the

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<sup>40</sup> Punjab Administration Report, 1900-1901, 53, PCSL.

<sup>41</sup> Yearly figures can be obtained from the Reports on the Land Revenue Administration of the Punjab, IOL.

<sup>42</sup> Punjab Administration Report, 1924-25, 45-48, PCSL.

<sup>43</sup> Report on the Operations of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Punjab, 1899-1900, PCSL.

subordinate revenue administration, this figure is significant precisely because accountancy and revenue assessment were tasks that had not historically been performed by members of these *biraderis*. Yet, under colonial rule, members of these groups were encouraged to apply for these positions precisely because the British sought to widen their participation within the apparatuses of the state. Therefore, by 1917 the agriculturalists constituted nearly half the total number of *patwaris*, and also represented half the total strength of *Naib-Tahsildars* in the province.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, in the police force by 1919, a total of 1827 *zamindars* had ranks equal to Head Constable or higher out of a total of 3608 native Punjabis who held such positions.<sup>45</sup> All of this led the chair of the Punjab Legislative Council to approvingly observe that, ‘there is no province in India which can compare with the Punjab in the extent to which *zamindars* are employed in Government service from the rank of *patwari* and constable upwards’.<sup>46</sup>

One of the reasons why the presence of this many agriculturalists in the bureaucracy was disproportionate was that members of the Indian Civil Service in Punjab generally tended to be based in the cities that acted as the administrative headquarters of each district, and also tended to be recruited from the cities due to the higher literacy levels of the urban population. Nonetheless, in a report compiled by a committee convened to investigate the representation of *zamindars* in the bureaucracy, it was recommended that every department of the Punjab government strive to ensure that 50-66% of its native members belonged to agriculturalist *biraderis*, and that measures such as direct nomination be actively employed to recruit *zamindars* where they were under-represented. When justifying this recommendation, the committee pointed to the services rendered by the agriculturalist *biraderis* as

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<sup>44</sup> Punjab Legislative Council Debates (PLCD), 13 March 1917, 3-4, PAL.

<sup>45</sup> PLCD, 6 February 1919, 54, PAL.

<sup>46</sup> PLCD, 13 March 1917, 25-26, PAL.

members of the military during the First World War, as well as their contribution to the total revenue of the province, as sufficient basis upon which to show them preferential treatment.<sup>47</sup>

Direct induction into the colonial bureaucracy gave the landed classes of Punjab a direct link to the state, and enhanced their capacity to exercise power over the subordinate sections of the peasantry, either through the provision of patronage or the imposition of sanctions. This capacity to extend or withdraw patronage through the bureaucracy was reinforced by the introduction of District Boards, as these bodies had access to funds and resources that could be used on different projects within the areas under their remit. Tasked with administering some areas within departments such as sanitation, health, education, and public works, the District Boards had at their disposal a considerable income, derived from taxes, duties, and government funding, that could be used to build roads, drains, hospitals, and schools. Yet, while District Board members were elected and nominated representatives, their responsibilities were largely advisory, with the task of actually supervising and implementing projects falling under the purview of the district and provincial bureaucracy, which worked with the District Boards to identify areas where funds could be allocated.

As shown in Table 5, the income and expenditure of the district boards increased tremendously over time as greater responsibilities were conferred upon these bodies by the colonial state. The greater resources placed at the disposal of the District Boards essentially represented an increase in the amount of state patronage that was now available to the members of these bodies to disburse. Whereas previously members of the landed elite had been able to command the support of their

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<sup>47</sup> Proceedings No. 546, Home Department, 3 October 1919, PCSA.

subordinates through their economic and social position, as well as their access to the state through the bureaucracy, they could now direct funding towards particular areas, groups and individuals through the District Boards. Furthermore, the separation of powers between the District Boards and the bureaucracy also served to enhance the power of the landed elite to command the levers of state patronage in Punjab. By being made to work together, members of the District Boards and the bureaucracy were able to forge close links that were reinforced by ties of kinship and tribal solidarity. This, in turn, enhanced the capacity of the landed elite to coordinate its actions as a class, and collectively pursue its interests by making use of different tiers of the colonial government.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Income (Rs.)</b>	<b>Expenditure (Rs.)</b>
1892-93	2,777,919	2,921,109
1902-03	2,982,000	2,829,000
1912-13	6,447,063	6,261,994
1922-23	13,474,778	13,987,212
1930-31	23,639,617	23,639,617

**Table 5: District Board Income and Expenditure in Punjab<sup>48</sup>**

Concurrent with the increases in agriculturalist recruitment to the bureaucracy, and the expansion of the powers of the District Boards, measures were also implemented to increase the quasi-bureaucratic space that was available to the landed elite by institutionalising some of the informal sources of power that they enjoyed at the local level. In particular, the Punjab Village *Panchayat* Act of 1912 extended

<sup>48</sup> Figures obtained from Reports on the Annual Working of District Boards in the Punjab, PCSL. District Board income was derived from a combination of taxation and funding from the provincial government. In most years, expenditure by the District Boards exceeded income, with the shortfall being made up public and private loans, as well as reserve funds in the District Board accounts. While all District Boards had the same powers, the way in which they allocated their funds varied. Details on district-level and department-wise funding can be found in the Annual Reports cited above, although the bulk of expenditure across the board tended to be on education and public infrastructure.

official recognition to the *panchayats* that existed within Punjab’s villages as mechanisms of dispute resolution, giving their decisions legal sanction and laying down procedures for the selection of *panchayat* members. Justified in terms of how these were, ‘appreciated by the persons who had recourse to these village tribunals, as a cheaper and more expeditious manner of obtaining justice’<sup>49</sup>, the *panchayats* that were established by the colonial state had the power to arbitrate both minor civil suits and criminal cases. The *panchayats* were also granted funds through which to engage in village-level development work, ranging from the construction of roads, paths, and public buildings, to the maintenance of burial grounds, the hosting of festivals, and the development of cottage industries. The amount of work done by *panchayats* in Punjab can be gleaned from the figures given in Table 6, which lists the number of these bodies that existed in Punjab, and the number of cases that were resolved by them over time.

Year	Number of <i>Panchayats</i>	Criminal Cases	Civil Suits
1925-26	300	1176	5292
1928-29	455	2543	7993
1939-40	1690	5279	14220
1942-43	6978	23616	25135

**Table 6: Number of Panchayats in Punjab and cases adjudicated<sup>50</sup>**

As had been the case with other organs of local government, the *panchayats* were also extremely susceptible to elite capture. To an even greater extent than the higher tiers of government, where rival landed factions often competed for the

<sup>49</sup> Report on the Working of Panchayats in the Punjab, 1925-1926, 1, IOL.

<sup>50</sup> Figures obtained from *Reports on the Working of Panchayats in the Punjab*, IOL. The tremendous increase in the number of *Panchayats* after 1939-1940 can be attributed to the amended *Panchayats* Act passed in 1939, which broadened their sphere of influence considerably and created a provincial *Panchayat* Department granted the manpower and resources necessary to establish a greater number of *panchayats* in the province.

relatively small number of seats available, elections at the village-level tended to be characterised by an extreme lack of participation, with most *panchayat* members being elected unopposed. In the year 1928-29, for example, there were only 663 candidates for 551 *panchayat* seats in the province, with 437 seats of these seats being uncontested.<sup>51</sup> The tendency for *panchayats* to be dominated by *zamindars* was reinforced by the 'official' *panchayat* system, not least of all because, as was the case with other elections in the province, candidates seeking to become *panchayat* members had to own property. For the colonial state, however, the lack of electoral competition at the village level was not a problem and was considered, instead, to be, 'a good omen for the successful working of the *panchayats*... [as] keen contests of elections are not the only criteria of popular interest in the *panchayat* system, and that it is to be hoped that in communities already accustomed to the traditional *panchayat* system the natural leaders will be elected as a matter of course'.<sup>52</sup> Given the state's belief in the ability of the landed classes to promote order and stability in the countryside, the domination of *panchayats* by members of these classes was considered to be desirable.

For the landed elite, incorporation within the state facilitated the creation of networks of authority, patronage, and influence at different levels of government, with the use of these networks of power and patronage being an important mechanism through which landed power was reinforced, and the landed elite's bargain with the state was reproduced. Working within different departments of the government, and at different levels in varying capacities, enabled members of the landed elite who were bound together by kinship and common interest to collectively pursue their agenda as a class across the province, linked as they were through the different organs

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<sup>51</sup> Report on the Working of *Panchayats* in the Punjab, 1928-29, IOL

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

of the colonial state. Being at the head of a *panchayat* would certainly reinforce the power of a landlord within a village, but it also provided that landlord with the means through which to interact with members of the bureaucracy and District Boards who could look to such a landlord for support in exchange for increased funding or backing from the government. Similarly, a *patwari* seeking advancement could call upon the services of a kinsman employed as an officer within the Revenue Administration to forward an application or recommendation, or could even petition a powerful local landlord to intervene with the government towards this end. In return, the *patwari* could potentially perform services for his patrons by altering revenue records or adjudicating boundary disputes in their favour. Instances of rent-seeking of this kind were certainly not rare during the colonial period and were, in fact, endemic, illustrating the extent to which the colonial bureaucracy served not just as a source of patronage, but also a means through which to distribute it. The vertical chains of intermediaries that had historically linked central authority to the local level in Punjab were thus reproduced in an institutionalised, rationalised bureaucratic form under the Raj, entrenching the landed elite within networks of authority that allowed them to share resources and engage in a coordinated pursuit of class interests.

For the British, the inclusion of *zamindars* in the apparatuses of the state served an important political purpose in that it strengthened a set of allies who could guarantee stability in the province, continue to facilitate the process of economic accumulation, and participate in the Indian Army. While officially committed to the elimination of corruption and the creation of an efficient, rule-based administration, the overlapping interests of the state and the landed elite meant that the British were often content to overlook the rent-seeking that characterised the colonial administration, recognising that the status quo reinforced landed power and aided in

the pursuit of colonial interests. It was only when corruption actually threatened to trigger instability in the province, or impede the process of accumulation, as was the case in the Canal Colonies in 1907, that the British felt it necessary to intervene and impose corrective measures.

### ***Electoral Competition, the State, and the Landed Elite***

Electoral competition was an important mechanism through which the state-landlord bargain was reproduced and reinforced in Punjab. Electoral engineering on the part of the state ensured that elections in Punjab would always display a pro-landlord bias, producing loyalist governments, and political parties during this period emerged as powerful platforms for the mobilisation and articulation of landed interests. Between 1897 and the late 1930s, these two factors combined to produce several decades of stable rule in Punjab, with both the landed elite and the state benefitting tremendously from their ability to manipulate and control the electoral process. Indeed, as will be discussed in the next two chapters, even when colonial power began to splinter in Punjab in the 1940s, the landed elite were able to use their entrenched position within the province's electoral politics to guarantee their political survival post-Partition, and once again initiate a bargain with the state under the new, post-colonial dispensation.

### **Electoral Rules**

In 1882 Lord Ripon, the Governor-General of India, stated that the expansion of self-government in Punjab would, 'advance and promote the political and practical education of the people... [and] induce the best and the most intelligent of the

community to come forward and take a share in the management of their own local affairs'.<sup>53</sup> For the British in Punjab, the 'best and most intelligent' of the community were the landlords that were aligned with them, with this framing the rules of electoral competition. Far from representing an open, pluralistic field in which a variety of people representing a plethora of interests, elections in Punjab were designed, from the outset, to be an exercise in perpetuating the power of the rural elite.<sup>54</sup>

From 1883 onwards, right until partition, the British sought to engineer governments that were amenable to their interests by maintaining property qualifications on the right to vote and stand for election. For the District Boards, for example, voting rights were only granted to those who paid Rs. 28 per annum to the state in revenue. Similar conditions applied to the Municipal Committees, where only the landed aristocracy and rich urban businessmen had any hope of gaining a seat (Barrier, 1968, 535). Following the reforms of 1919 which expanded the franchise in Punjab, voters were still expected to pay Rs. 25 per annum in revenue, and only members of the agriculturalist tribes, as defined by the state, could stand for elections in rural constituencies.<sup>55</sup> The only exception to the revenue qualification for voting was in the case of ex-military servicemen, *zaildars*, *lambardars*, and *biraderi* chiefs. Altogether, the electorate comprised no more than half a million voters or less than five per cent of the total population of the province. Even when the franchise was extended further in 1935, only eleven per cent of the total population of the province

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<sup>53</sup> Quoted in *The Development of Local Self Government in the Punjab (1849-1900)*, Monograph No. 8, Punjab Record Office Publications, PCSL.

<sup>54</sup> It is important to bear in mind that the situation in England itself was not very different at the time. As debates over the Reform Acts of 1832, 1867, and 1884 show, even the British electoral system, while gradually moving towards the enfranchisement of the working classes, remained biased towards the propertied classes, and was far removed from the goal of universal suffrage. See Hall (1994), Phillips and Wetherell (1995), and Lizzeri and Persico (2004).

<sup>55</sup> Punjab Electoral Rules, up to September 1926, Schedule II, IOL.

received the right to vote, with the bulk of the electorate located in the countryside (Jalal and Seal, 1981, 425).

Property qualifications on the right to vote and stand for election were only a part of the mechanism through which the government ensured the return of conservative, loyalist, and landed representatives. Significantly, the government also drew up constituencies that aligned, to as great a degree as possible, with existing revenue circles and patterns of tribal settlement. For the District Board and Municipal elections, constituencies were marked that corresponded exactly to *zails* within each district<sup>56</sup> and when the introduction of provincial elections necessitated the creation of larger constituencies, efforts were made to ensure that their boundaries overlapped with the areas of influence of particular tribal chiefs (Talbot, 1996, 58). This was a strategy that lent itself particularly well to implementation in Punjab's canal colonies, where tribal affiliation had informed settlement operations (Ali, 1988, 108). The reasons for designing constituencies in this way were clear; *zaildars* and *lambardars* were selected on the basis of their ability to use their preeminent position within networks of tribal kinship, as well as their economic power, to collect revenue and generate support for the government. By imbricating political boundaries with existing circles of social and economic power, it was felt that these leaders would be able to draw on the existing sources of power to dominate electoral contests as well.

The drawing up of constituencies on this basis was supplemented after 1919 by the requirement that electoral candidates be resident in their constituencies. This had the effect of impeding the election of persons who owned property in the countryside but were resident in a city or town, such as moneylenders and members of the nascent capitalist class, thereby excluding them from the reformed legislative

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<sup>56</sup> The Development of Local Self Government in the Punjab (1849-1900), Monograph No. 8, Punjab Record Office Publications, PCSL.

councils that were now being constituted. The fact that these measures were directly aimed at curtailing the power of rival classes can be gauged from the vociferous reaction of urban leaders and politicians to the proposed rules. Some legislators opposed to the measures argued that the perceived conflict between rural and urban interests was an artificial one, that urban and non-residential landowners had the capacity to understand and represent the needs of rural constituents better than their uneducated counterparts from the countryside, and that regulations such as these, 'might be depriving the new Councils of the services of men of experience and impairing the success of the reforms now being inaugurated'.<sup>57</sup> The position of the government on the question, however, was articulated by the Commissioner of the Jullunder Division, when he stated that, 'rural opinion is not yet sufficiently organised to make itself heard, but... when it does make itself heard, it... will heartily endorse the conclusion that those interests can best be represented by men of its own class. I do not believe that the qualities necessary for a member can be found only in the million and a half townsmen of our urban constituencies'.<sup>58</sup> As had been the case with the Land Alienation Act, British intervention in electoral politics was thus justified in terms of paternalistic concern for the well-being of Punjabi landlords who, it was felt, were particularly susceptible to the machinations of capitalists from the towns and cities. Whatever the justification, the practical implications of this intervention were clear; by limiting electoral competition in the countryside to those who were directly tied to it, the government ensured that there would be no real impediment to the election of landed politicians.

One final set of regulations that cemented the rural electoral bias in Punjab, again implemented after 1919 and revised in 1935, was the creation of separate

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<sup>57</sup> PLCD, 13 March 1920, 178, PAL.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

constituencies for special interest groups including labour and universities, with the highest number of such seats being allocated to landholders from different communal platforms. The creation of seats for landholders, without a commensurate number of counterbalancing seats for urban industrialists or capitalists, exacerbated an extant trend in which landowning *biraderis*, being the only elements of the rural populace entitled to vote and stand for election, had been granted representation far in excess of their actual demographic strength. This was a continuous source of frustration for many urban and non-landed politicians who, working within a body overwhelmingly dominated by landlords, could only bemoan the fact that agriculturalist *biraderis* constituting only 44% of the total population had 80% of the representation in the legislative assembly.<sup>59</sup> The success of these electoral rules in delivering outcomes that fit in with the interests of the colonial state can be gauged from an analysis of electoral returns in the period between 1919 and 1947. As has been shown by Baxter (1974), elections to the legislative councils/assemblies during this period, in the districts that would become part of Pakistan, were completely monopolised by a small number of dominant landed families. Indeed, the majority of the seats that were available in this period were traded between members of just 32 of the province's most prominent landed families, with the remainder also being claimed by powerful landowners.

Shaping the electoral arena was a mechanism through which the British sought to reinforce the power of the landed classes. Working within the context of the bargain upon which British rule in Punjab had been founded, creating space for the landed classes within the new framework of representative politics was a means

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<sup>59</sup> Punjab Legislative Assembly Debates (PLAD), 23 June 1938, PAL. It is worth noting that even though members of the statutory 'agriculturalist tribes', as defined in the Land Alienation Act, constituted 44% of the population, less than a quarter actually qualified as voters even as late as 1935. As such, even within the agriculturalist tribes, politics was dominated by the most powerful elements of the landed aristocracy and, to a much lesser extent, the rich peasantry.

through which the British ensured that their allies would be able to strengthen their position while simultaneously gaining greater access to state patronage. In return, representatives of this class continued to prove their loyalty to the colonial state, effectively preventing the emergence of any real opposition to the British, both communal and class-based, until the 1940s.

## **Political Parties**

While political parties in Punjab first emerged in the cities, coalescing around urban professionals and politicians associated with the educated intelligentsia and the dynamics of Municipal elections, the situation in the province changed radically after 1923 and the formation of the Unionist Party. Unabashedly pro-landlord, the Unionists acted as the guardians of the landed classes in the period following the creation of the first Legislative Council. The dynamics underpinning the formation of the Unionists have been the subject of considerable historical research (Baxter, 1974; Gilmartin, 1988; Talbot, 1988a; 1996; Malik, 1995), with it generally being accepted that the devolution of powers from the Centre to the Provinces caused by the Government of India Act 1919 created the context within which the party was setup, with the decision to form the Unionist party being taken as part of a deliberate strategy to maximize the gain that could be accrued by the landed elite within the framework of provincial governance. The initiative to form the party was taken by Fazl-i-Hussain, a man whose political career had begun with his membership in the Punjab branch of the Muslim League, and who recognised that in an era of provincial politics, Punjab would inevitably be controlled by the landed elite and their allies. It was ironic that the body most committed to the defence of landed interests in Punjab

would be formed, and led, by a politician from Lahore with no aristocratic antecedents or support in the countryside.<sup>60</sup>

When attempting to create a party premised on the defence of rural landed interests, the leaders of the Unionist Party had to confront a reality in which the politics of Punjab's landed classes was ridden with factionalism from the local level upwards. While some areas of the province, particularly those in the West that would become a part of Pakistan, were home to landlords of tremendous power and prestige who could use their influence to effectively neutralise any challenges to their influence, the mobilisation of support was always dependent on the ability of different members of the landed elite to call upon their sources of social power, as well as their access to state patronage, to co-opt their subordinates. In situations where multiple landlords or even agriculturalist kin groups existed within a single geographical area, it was often the case that rival factions would engage in contestation over political power despite the existence of common class interests. This was a tendency that was exacerbated by the introduction of elections and representative government in Punjab, as rival landed networks campaigned against each other in an attempt to acquire positions within the state. Whereas previously such induction within the institutional framework of the state had primarily taken place through the direct appointment by the colonial state, either through bureaucratic incorporation or the granting of lands and privilege, the possibility of competing for state power opened up the political space to powerful landed challengers who had hitherto been unable to entrench themselves within the apparatuses of the state.

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<sup>60</sup> While the Unionists were the first formal political party to mobilize the landed elite on a supra-communal platform, they were not the first organization to do so. At a more informal level, the Punjab Chief's Association, created in 1906-7, performed a similar function, and had a membership comprised of many future members of the Unionist Party. See Singh (1911).

In the broader scheme of things, however, the factional infighting of the Punjabi landed classes was not particularly detrimental to the pursuit of colonial interests, particularly in the phase of electoral politics prior to the 1940s. While there was some evidence to suggest that it could have a deleterious effect on the functioning of local government, as was the case with many *panchayats*<sup>61</sup>, the fact remained that in spite of their internal differences, the landed classes were tied to the colonial state in a relationship that ensured their continued support, as a group, for the regime. By treating the landed classes of Punjab as single entity united by an interest in agrarian prosperity, and by using the Land Alienation Act to provide a clear definition of exactly what constituted an ‘agriculturalist tribe’ in Punjab, the state was able to provide conceptual cover to the coalition of class fractions that constituted that segment of the rural population most closely linked to the colonial quest for order and accumulation. When the colonial state intervened to support its allies, it did so by invoking an interest in the collective welfare of the *zamindars* and the agriculturalists, with this approach quickly being adopted by the landed classes themselves with the advent of electoral politics. As much was stated in a pamphlet published by the Unionist Government in 1942, when it claimed that, ‘the Alienation of Land Act has helped to determine party alignments for purposes of party politics... all agriculturalists, whether proprietors or non-proprietors... have tended to range themselves on one side against what they regard as the money-lending classes’.<sup>62</sup>

Therefore, whatever differences might have existed between different landed factions within Punjab, triggered by competition over the limited opportunities opened up by representative politics, the notion that they all belonged to a single ‘agriculturalist’ bloc, coupled with an awareness of how and why they were looked

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<sup>61</sup> Report on the Working of *Panchayats* in the Punjab, 1928-29, IOL.

<sup>62</sup> *Five Years of Provincial Autonomy in the Punjab 1937-42*, 5, PCSL

upon with favour by the colonial state, ensured that competition for state patronage did not translate into sentiment directed against the state. This also played a role in staving off the communalisation of politics, with the supra-communal alignment of landowners under the Unionist banner providing evidence of secular co-operation between Punjab's different religious groups (Jalal and Seal, 1981).<sup>63</sup> As long as the British were able to provide preferential treatment to the landed elite, and maintain a monopoly on the ability to provide their supporters with state patronage, opposition to the colonial state by any single landed faction was simply self-defeating, especially given the presence of rival groups willing to work with the state instead. As will be explained in the next chapter, it was only when the British were no longer able to guarantee continued support for the landed classes that factionalism led to the defection of landed politicians to rival political forces, as well as the rise of more overtly communal politics.

Another important source of power for the Unionist Party was the support it enjoyed from Punjab's Muslim religious leaders. Islamic authority and religious organisation in Punjab, like much of the subcontinent, revolved around the influence of the *sajjada nashins* and *pirs* descended from India's Sufi saints. Historically enjoying a tremendous amount of prestige, and commanding the support of hundreds of thousands of followers, the *pirs* in Punjab presided over a network of religious authority whose significance had been recognised by successive regimes in the province; the Sikh government of Ranjit Singh had made grants of land to many of the Sufi shrines, and the British had continued this practice. The preferential treatment accorded to them by the state had also, however, transformed Punjab's religious leaders into large landowners in their own right, with the province's most

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<sup>63</sup> The Unionist Party's supra-communal credentials were undoubtedly bolstered by the presence of, and leadership role played by, Fazl-i-Hussain's lieutenant Chottu Ram, an influential Hindu *Jat* from the Rohtak District.

powerful *pirs* and *sajjada nashins* possessing holdings that could rival those of the traditional landed aristocracy.

As such, rather than representing purely religious forms of authority, Punjab's *pirs* were also arguably an important part of the province's landed elite. This can be seen in the close links they had to the landed aristocracy, as well as their relationship with the landless peasantry. Many of the province's largest landlords were disciples of the *pirs*, and some were even related to them through marriage or kinship. Significantly, the power of the *pirs* had also been institutionalised in much the same way as that of the landed classes. Particularly in the South-West of the province, where their influence was greatest, *sajjada nashins* and *pirs* were incorporated within the British administration, and were given state patronage in exchange for their continued support of the colonial government (Roseberry, 1987).

Most significantly of all, however, the link between the *pirs* and the landed elite was exemplified by the way in which their interests as a class overlapped. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, as reformist religious movements began to emerge across India in response to the changes being wrought by colonial rule, organisations were formed in Punjab that directly opposed the traditional structure of religious authority in the province. Primarily urban in character, and led by religious scholars trained in Delhi, groups like the Khaksars and the Ahrars opposed both the colonial government and the feudal order that propped it up, arguing that the *pirs* and *sajjada nashins* of the province represented a thoroughly compromised system of religious authority that had to be replaced in the interests of reinvigorating Islam in India and gaining freedom from British rule. In articulating this position, these movements found support from urban political parties like the Muslim League, which also sought to bring an end to the landed foundations of colonial power in Punjab. Given their close

links to the landed elite, as well as their interests in the maintenance of the traditional agrarian order, the *pirs* of Punjab had no choice but to support the Unionists despite the party's formal commitment to secular politics (Gilmartin, 1988). Once again, class interests trumped religion in Punjab.

Having successfully recruited the support of Punjab's major landowners, particularly in the West of the province, the ability of the Unionist Party to mobilise electoral support ultimately depended on the capacity of its members to organise voting blocs at the local level. This, in turn, largely depended on the same traditional sources of power that had historically been deployed towards this end: economic strength, kinship networks, social status, and access to state patronage. Much like the vertical chains of bureaucratic patronage that tied the landed elite to the local level and bound the landed classes across space, the Unionist party apparatus helped create organisational links between the different fractions of the landed classes. These links were reinforced by the way in which extant networks of landed power allowed individual politicians to draw upon the resources of their allies to mobilise support.<sup>64</sup> The leading families and politicians of the Unionist party were connected through ties of marriage and economic cooperation, and also had extensive family and kin-based connections to the state (Baxter, 1974). When campaigning for votes, these linkages bolstered the already considerable local power of landed politicians and would, over time, constitute a formidable barrier to entry for political parties or politicians seeking to challenge the power of the Unionists in the countryside. In addition to overcoming the social position and economic power of the landlords, challengers would also have to be able to match the organisational strength of the Unionist party, not just in terms

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<sup>64</sup> The cultivation of these links was part of Unionist strategy from the very beginning. In the 1920s, in response to Congress attempts to cultivate support amongst the peasantry, Fazl-i-Hussain pursued a policy of, 'bolstering up the bureaucracy with the help of the rural population against the national movement'. See Ahmad (1970, 459)

of its party machine, but also in terms of the complex chains of patronage and kinship underpinning landed power in Punjab.

While the Unionist Party was not the only party in Punjab, it was certainly the most significant one in the colonial period. Geared towards the defence of landed interests, the party benefitted tremendously from state patronage, as well as from electoral rules that ensured it would dominate the arena of representative government. The party provided a means through which the landed elite could maintain their stranglehold on electoral politics in Punjab, with this being an important mechanism through which they reinforced their power. For the British, the electoral concessions made to Punjab's landed politicians facilitated a quarter century of relatively stable, loyalist government, strengthening the bargain at the heart of colonial power in Punjab.

### ***Legislative Power and the Landed Elite***

After the introduction of an elected legislature in Punjab the landed elite, who had previously largely been the recipients of preferential treatment from a paternalistic state, now gained the capacity to shape policy in a much more direct fashion. The very rules underpinning the institutional framework of politics and governance in Punjab could now be directly altered by the province's most powerful class, placing it in a position where it could pursue its interests much more effectively. Once the decision to introduce representative government in Punjab was taken, ensuring the pre-eminence of the landed classes was a principle that had, from the very outset, informed the colonial state's actions and interventions in this regard. However, the amount of power that the state delegated to its landed allies as a part of this process increased slowly and incrementally. The first Governor's Councils established at the turn of the century were very different from the legislative

assemblies of the 1940s, with the former consisting of nominated members acting in an advisory capacity, and the latter being comprised of an entirely elected membership enjoying complete autonomy over the creation and implementation of policy. While the devolution of power in Punjab from the state to elected representatives was largely the result of constitutional negotiations at the All-India level that led to greater self-rule in the face of demands from the indigenous population<sup>65</sup>, the graduated approach adopted by the British in Punjab allowed them to supervise the maturation of a body of moderate, loyalist opinion filled with members whose support for the state was assured. Nominating members to the Legislative Councils was one of the mechanisms through which this was done, and this practice remained in place until 1938. Until then, these hand-picked members, particularly those who were British, played an effective role in guaranteeing colonial interests in the province, providing guidance to their elected colleagues and exercising a check on the rare few whose agenda conflicted with that of the state. Post-1938, many of these formerly nominated members would occupy key positions in the provincial cabinet, and would continue to play a pro-government role in the

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<sup>65</sup> It is interesting to note the role played by Fazl-i-Hussain, the Unionist leader, in these negotiations. As has been documented at length by Page (1987), Jalal and Seal (1981), and Jalal (1999b), Muslim politics in the interwar years came to be dominated by Punjab largely due to the impact of the Government of India Act of 1919 and the way in which it shifted the political terrain from the Central Government to the provinces through the devolution of legislative and administrative powers. In the face of a lack of popular support for the Muslim League, and factional infighting amongst the Muslim politicians of Bengal, Fazl-i-Hussain was able to use his position as a national-level politician from a Muslim majority province to claim the mantle of Muslim leadership in India. This he used to ensure that the Act of 1935 continued the devolution of powers to the provinces that had been initiated in 1919. This was in contrast with the position adopted by Jinnah's Muslim League, which wished to secure protection for Muslim's in the Muslim minority provinces by strengthening their representation at the Centre. While Fazl-i-Hussain argued that his proposals would be sufficient to safeguard Muslim interests by increasing their power in the provincial governments, it was not coincidental that his plans would also reinforce the power of the landed elite in the Punjab government. While the British were initially reluctant to accede to Fazl-i-Hussain's demands, his threat to withdraw support for the government (thereby plunging Punjab into crisis), coupled with the rise of the Congress across India and the need to splinter its power through the provincialisation of politics, ultimately led the British to accept his proposals. The Government of India Act 1935 thus provided Fazl-i-Hussain and his landed allies with exactly what they needed to guarantee their dominance; real power in the provincial government, continued constitutional safeguards for their electoral representation, and insulation from potentially competitive national parties.

Legislative Assembly. Finally, in order to safeguard against the remote possibility of laws or policies being enacted that were antithetical to the interests of the colonial state, the provincial governor was provided with the power of veto, with all legislation coming out of the Councils and Assemblies requiring his assent to be enacted even after the granting of complete provincial autonomy.<sup>66</sup>

While the nominated members of the council and the governor ensured that Punjab's elected representatives did not deviate from the script of colonial governance in the province, a more subtle institutional mechanism was also at work in Punjab when it came to the introduction of legislation. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Punjab had been administered by means of laws that had been formulated and implemented by British bureaucrats seeking to strengthen their rule in the province. It was through these laws that the British created the basis for co-opting the landed classes, extracting revenue, and maintaining order, and it was inevitable that Punjab's new legislators would have to work within the framework of these laws when attempting to make their own policy interventions. This is borne out by the way in which many of the most significant legislative changes that were made between 1897 and 1947 were amendments to existing laws like the Punjab Tenancy Act of 1868, the Land Revenue Act of 1887, and the Alienation of Land Act of 1900, all of which had a direct impact on the power and position of the landed elite, and all of which were contested vociferously by rival groups in the Councils and Assemblies. By building on the legacy of their bureaucratic predecessors, the landed elite in the Punjabi legislature were able to adjust the existing institutional rules further in their favour, and were also able to challenge their urban and rural rivals on a terrain that had already been laid out and fashioned to their advantage. This did not, of course,

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<sup>66</sup> This power was rarely, if ever, exercised. The pro-regime bias built in to membership of the Legislature all but assured that any legislation that passed was not inimical to colonial interests.

mean that new legislation was not introduced as and when required, but it did mean that when it came to adjusting, changing, or challenging that fundamental basis upon which landed power had been strengthened and entrenched in Punjab, it was difficult to do so outside of the confines of the existing institutional framework. In this regard, the remarks by the Lieutenant-Governor in his inaugural address to the first Legislative Council were quite prescient when he took the opportunity to remind his audience that because Punjab had a 'pretty full statute' book that had been filled by, 'administrators... [meeting] the special circumstances of its growth by proposing legislation suited to those circumstances'<sup>67</sup>, the task of legislation could now safely be delegated to Punjabi representatives who would build upon the work of those that had come before them.

Within this broader context, legislative politics was an important mechanism through which landed power was reinforced, with two distinct processes through which this was done; the acquisition and distribution of patronage, and the formulation and implementation of pro-landlord legislation. The ability to employ in the first of these mechanisms was rooted in how the legislature existed as a body at the apex of Punjab's patronage politics. Comprised of members who were almost exclusively drawn from the most dominant elements of the landed aristocracy, the legislature was home to politicians and representatives who were able to draw upon their resources to mobilise large swathes of support across villages and districts within the province. As illustrated by the workings of the Unionist Party, MLAs tended to possess the capacity to organise and command chains of intermediaries from the legislature all the way down to the local village level. As the most powerful politicians in the province, members of the legislative bodies had close links to the

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<sup>67</sup> Proceedings of the Council of the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, 1 November 1897, PAL.

local, district, and provincial bureaucracies, as well as the District Boards and other organs of local government. Membership within the legislature also provided landed politicians with a platform through which to articulate the needs of their constituents and support bases, and lobby for the provision of resources and preferential treatment to them. The networks of organisation and mobilisation commanded by Punjab's legislators were thus also used to disburse the tremendous amounts of patronage that these politicians had at their disposal, which in itself strengthened their networks and further consolidated their power.

A survey of Punjab's legislative proceedings throughout the first half of the Twentieth Century provides ample evidence for this. For example, in their annual report on the administration of the province for the year 1923-24, the British noted that the new Legislative Council had devoted a considerable amount of its time towards ensuring that *zaildars*, *lambardars*, and members of the subordinate revenue administration, like *patwaris* and *qanungos*, were given higher emoluments in return for their services.<sup>68</sup> Similarly, when it came to the question of recruitment within the bureaucracy, the landed elite constantly strove to ensure that as many *zamindars* as possible be incorporated within the administration. Individual members also used the Question and Answers time allotted to them at the start of each legislative session to inquire into the exact number of *zamindars* employed in different departments, both across the province as a whole as well within the districts they represented. This was a practice that remained in place throughout the life of the legislature and although it was sometimes coloured by communal concerns, particularly after 1909 when quotas were established for the different religious groups in Punjab, the dominant trend displayed by the landed elite was to use the space provided by the legislature to

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<sup>68</sup> Punjab Administration Report 1923-1924, 2-9, PCSL.

safeguard the interests of their *zamindar* clients.<sup>69</sup> Focusing on the question of recruitment to the bureaucracy effectively killed two birds with one stone; it allowed legislators to dispense patronage to the clients within their networks, and it also enabled the cultivation of even stronger links, over time, between these politicians, the bureaucracy, and their landed supporters as a whole.

The direct provision of patronage through the legislature was not limited to facilitating bureaucratic recruitment. Many legislators also used their position to highlight the developmental needs of their constituents and districts, and actively sought to divert state funding and resources towards them. While this was arguably part of the job description for many legislators, what is important to note is that for many representatives, this form of lobbying was often conducted exclusively in terms of the needs of *zamindars* and agriculturalists, to the exclusion of sections of the rural populace. This was exemplified by the case of Mushtaq Gurmani, a nominated member from the district of Muzaffargarh, who repeatedly used the tactic of demanding reductions of Rs. 1 to government grants worth hundreds of thousands of rupees just so that he could use his position, as someone proposing an amendment to a parliamentary resolution, to press for additional funding and resources for his district's landowners.<sup>70</sup> The concern legislators had for the 'plight' of the agriculturalists was also starkly illustrated by the attempt made by Chaudhri Baldeo Singh, a member from Rohtak, to acquire Rs. 2 million in loans from the government, with extremely lenient terms for repayment, to be used for the uplift of indebted *zamindars* in his own district as well as Hissar, Gurgaon and Karnal. For Singh, it was necessary for the government to extend such loans because the credit extended by moneylenders often had exorbitantly high interest rates, and the conditionalities

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<sup>69</sup> See, for example the questions on this subject by Sardar Gopal Singh, PLCD, 6 February 1919, 19-20.

<sup>70</sup> PLCD, 13 March, 1933.

attached to loans provided by government banks and organisations were too stringent.<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, according to Singh, the services extended by his fellow *zamindars* in the First World War justified preferential treatment from the government. Other members in the Council agreed with Singh's demand for money as well as his depiction of the poor economic condition of the *zamindars*, and joined in the debate by suggesting that such loans also be made available for *zamindars* in their own districts.

Ultimately, despite this support, Singh's demand for these loans failed, with the nominated members of the government, some of whom occupied cabinet positions, almost unanimously rejecting the proposed resolution. Significantly, no one actually disagreed with the need to help the *zamindars*, with opposition to the resolution being based in purely logistical and practical terms. Thus Fazl-i-Hussain, at that time the member for Revenue, reluctantly voiced his opposition by saying that he could not support, 'a general, vague, loosely-worded resolution whose intentions are noble, whose object Government is prepared to appreciate and applaud, and whose aim Government will try its best to serve'.<sup>72</sup> Instead, Fazl-i-Hussain and his British colleagues repeatedly stressed that the government had already extended a tremendous amount of assistance to the *zamindars* through its banks, grants, and co-operative societies, and that these existing mechanisms arguably represented a more effective means through which to address the problems that had been raised by Chaudhri Baldeo Singh. The final vote on the issue saw a neat split between the elected and nominated members of the Council; 25 of the 30 votes cast against the resolution were from nominated members, while nearly all 15 in favour were by members elected from rural seats. In addition to showing just how nominated

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<sup>71</sup> PLCD, 4 May 1928, 839-869.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 866.

members exercised a check on the elected representatives in the Council, who in this instance had suggested a scheme that was unworkable on purely practical grounds, this particular event highlights exactly how members sought to divert patronage towards their support base and how, even when opposing such measures, the government could not but agree that any efforts aimed at aiding the landed classes were to be lauded. Other attempts at acquiring such grants would prove to be successful over the years, particularly after 1938 and the start of provincial autonomy.

Although dispensing patronage through their position within the legislature was an important means through which the landed elite were able to strengthen their position over time, it was by altering the institutional framework of colonial rule itself that they were most able to guarantee the maintenance of conditions within which they would be able to effectively pursue their interests. Building on the legislative legacy of the administrators that preceded them, the landed elite, under the guidance of nominated colonial officials and autonomously in the assemblies of the late 1930s and 1940s, created new laws and amended old ones to impose sanctions on their rivals and subordinates while broadening the institutional terrain upon which to further their agenda. Within the first five years of its existence, the Council had passed the Land Alienation Act (finalised and all but implemented before going before the Council) and the Punjab Pre-Emption Act, a law aimed at ensuring that the land of deceased agriculturalists would be inherited or sold to members of the same tribe within any given village. In both cases, it was clear how both the colonial state and its landed allies worked to protect their mutual interests. The Alienation Act and the Pre-Emption Act were both designed to keep land in the hands of the landed classes and 'statutory' agriculturalists, and acted as an effective check on the ability of capitalists to acquire land in the countryside. In later years, legislation was passed

that, among other things, created credit facilities for agriculturalists, and established *panchayats* in Punjab's villages. One of the most significant legislative interventions was made in 1928, however, when Punjab's Revenue Act was amended, reducing the total revenue demand by half at considerable cost to the provincial exchequer. Reducing the revenue paid to the state had been a longstanding demand of the province's landowners and while the exact timing of the amendment was partly due to rising discontent within some sections of the landed classes, representatives within the Council played a key role in articulating the need for such an intervention to be made. Placing their arguments within the context of the loyalty the landed classes had to the state, as well as the services they rendered during the First World War, the landed legislators in the Council urged the colonial state to reduce the revenue demand in order to strengthen the landed classes and ensure their continued loyalty and support. Faced with the prospect of increasing dissent and dissatisfaction from the very class upon whose support the framework of colonial rule was based, the nominated element of the council had little choice but to join the elected members in passing the proposed Bill.

As argued by Yong (2005, 270-72), the debate over the Land Revenue Act illustrated just how the relationship between the landed elite and the state had evolved due to the introduction of representative government. Rather than simply being puppets of a regime upon which they were wholly dependent for their political position, Punjab's politicians could now claim to have the support of their constituents and, as such, could engage in bargaining with the state on a more equal footing. What this meant was that the landed elite could now directly challenge the state in areas where their interests did not coincide, as was the case with the payment of revenue, and dictate the terms under which the landed classes would cooperate

with the government. There were, however, limits to the capacity of the landed elite to engage in this kind of negotiation. The threat of vetoes and direct British intervention in legislative politics was always present, and engineering a significant rupture with a state that was largely sympathetic to the landed classes ran the risk of impairing the ability of the landed elite to acquire state patronage. Like the British, the landed elite were also constrained by the terms of their bargain with the state. However, while instances of outright disagreement between the landed elite and the colonial state thus remained relatively rare in the legislature, even when provincial autonomy granted the former even more control over legislation, it is interesting to speculate on how the balance of power may have shifted over time had it not been for the Second World War and the concurrent drive towards Independence.

By passing legislation like the amendments to the Land Revenue Act the landed elite were able to modify the rules governing their ability to engage in further economic accumulation, but it was by changing the law to target other groups in society that they protected their position from potential challengers. The attitude of Punjab's legislators towards the subordinate peasantry, for example, could be seen in the debates that periodically took place over the Punjab Tenancy Act of 1868. Following the amendment of the Land Revenue Act, it was necessary to change certain clauses in the Tenancy Act in order to bring them in line with the new revenue system. In particular, one set of amendments was subjected to considerable debate when they were finally considered by the Legislative Council in 1933, a full five years after the passage of the new Land Revenue Act (during which time tenants in the province had been forced to continue paying rents according to the old arrangements). The contested amendments pertained to the compensation given to tenants who were evicted from previously barren lands that they had made cultivable.

Under the original Punjab Tenancy Act, a maximum level of compensation had been set based on the rent due from the land in question, and the new proposals simply sought to update this figure in light of the revision of the Land Revenue Act. Uncontroversial as the amendment was, particularly given that the proposed figure was only marginally higher than before, it was nonetheless challenged by a number of landed politicians who employed a variety of mathematical formulae and other justifications to oppose the change. In this instance, in addition to the urban politicians who chided the opposition for, ‘not [being] prepared to tolerate the remote chance and a remote contingency of a tenant getting something a fractional share more’<sup>73</sup>, even Sikander Hayat Khan, one of the leading Unionist politicians and a minister in the government, stated that, ‘it ill-behoves this house or the *zamindar* members of this house who represent the landlord class that they should not allow the tenants that little margin’.<sup>74</sup> Facing the opprobrium of their own party, the landed politicians opposing the amendment withdrew their objections and allowed the legislation to pass.

While this represented a moment in which the party of the ‘agriculturalists’ stood for the rights of the peasantry as a whole, despite some internal opposition, the truth was that for the most part, Punjab’s landed legislators used their power to achieve the opposite. Indeed, this was made evident on the very same day the incident mentioned above took place, when a second amendment to the Tenancy Act was proposed that would have upped the compensation given to evicted tenants by about twenty per cent. This time, condemnation for the measure was voiced by virtually every landholder in the Council, with at least one member clarifying that, ‘the object of the Bill is not to liberalise the provisions for the tenants, but to keep the degree of

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<sup>73</sup> PLCD, 31 July 1933, 1246, PAL.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 1249.

liberalism and consideration for the work of the tenants to the extent to which the previous law allowed'.<sup>75</sup> This sentiment was shared by the vast majority of members in the House, and was reiterated twelve years later in 1945 when yet another proposed amendment to the Punjab Tenancy Act was struck down by concerted opposition from the landed politicians in the Legislative Assembly. The amendment had been proposed by a Sikh member and had been aimed at reducing the revenue demand on tenants, as well as granting them proprietary rights, in order to address the 'hardships caused to them by the ruthless landlords'.<sup>76</sup> The Revenue Minister responded by saying that tenants were lucky to have been given land to cultivate in the first place, and that the proposed changes were akin to, 'punishing the landowners for all the co-operation and good treatment meted out by them to the tenants'. The minister went on to claim that the proposed amendment would damage the fraternal relations that existed between landlords and tenants, and that, 'if an amendment to the Punjab Tenancy Act was really useful for the poor I would have been the first man to welcome it'.<sup>77</sup>

Far from championing the cause of the landless in Punjab, the Unionists and their landed colleagues in the legislature actively worked to develop legal and institutional mechanisms through which to increase their power over the subordinate peasantry. Nonetheless, the landed elite employed the idiom of the greater agrarian interest when justifying their legislative proclivities, emphasising that as the representative of Punjab's *zamindars* they were intimately connected to the Punjabi countryside, and that they sought the welfare of the peasantry as a whole. That only the *zamindars* benefitted from the landed presence in the Legislative Councils and

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<sup>75</sup> PLCD, 31 July 1933, 1251, PAL.

<sup>76</sup> PLAD, 22 February 1945, 124, PAL.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 125-126.

Assemblies was a fact conveniently ignored amidst all the rhetoric that characterised the legislature's debates and pronouncements.

Patronage and the law constituted the carrot and stick employed by the landed elite when it came to reinforcing their control over the peasantry in the era of representative government. These tactics, however, could not work against urban classes that were impervious to the traditional sources of power from which the landed elite derived their strength in the countryside, and who had their own networks of influence and authority within the colonial state (Daechsel, 2006). However, despite possessing superior education and greater exposure to electoral politics, urban politicians remained unable to effectively mobilise against the colonial state's landed allies. This was rooted, to a very large degree, in the inability of these actors to leverage any support in the countryside. The very same insularity that allowed these actors to act autonomously of the landed classes also prevented them from forging any meaningful links with the peasantry, which in turn limited their capacity to pressurise the colonial state into imposing sanctions on the landed elite. For example, when the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act 1937 was passed by the Central Government in response to demands from urban Muslim opinion across India, Punjab's urban politicians were unable to prevent the province's landed elite from securing an exemption from the provisions of the law relating to the inheritance of agricultural land by females (Agarwal, 1994, 233-234).

This lack of political capacity was compounded by the way in which the landed elite made use of their power to directly strike at their urban counterparts. In 1907, just six years after its introduction, the Land Alienation Act was amended for the first time in order to tighten the definition of 'agriculturalist tribe' contained within it. This initiative was taken to prevent moneylenders who owned land from

getting themselves registered as agriculturalists, and was simply the first step in a long legislative to-and-fro that saw the landed elite continually work towards preventing non-agriculturalists from gaining ownership of land in the countryside. Matters came to a head in 1938 when the first Punjab Assembly, dominated almost entirely by the Unionists, was finally able to work independently of the colonial constraints that had hitherto exercised a check on the power of the landed elite. In a stark reflection of the priorities of the landowning classes, the first sessions of the new Assembly were devoted almost entirely to passing four new amendments to the Land Alienation Act. Each of these amendments addressed particular loopholes in the law but what was significant was that, unlike previous amendments of this kind, the proposed changes constituted a direct attack on a significant number of capitalists rather than being preemptive measures aimed at preventing the abuse of the law. In particular, the second amendment, which dealt with *benami*<sup>78</sup> transactions, was seen as nothing less than an attempt to forcibly deprive legitimate property owners of their rights in order to strengthen the landed classes. At first, the urban, mostly Hindu members of the Assembly attempted to prevent the proposed changes from being enacted retrospectively, arguing that moneylenders who had applied for agriculturalist status over the years needed to be granted enough time to have their suits settled in court.<sup>79</sup> This attempt at delaying the implementation of the revised Act was defeated easily, and gave way instead to arguments couched in the language of property rights, with another urban member contending that the proposed changes violated the right to acquire property that had been granted under Article 298 of the Government of India

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<sup>78</sup> *Benami* (literally ‘without name’) transactions involved a trade in which an indebted agriculturalist would transfer ownership of his land to another agriculturalist who, acting as an intermediary, would then channel its economic benefit, such as rents, to a moneylender. Thus, while ownership of the land technically remained in the hands of an agriculturalist, as required by the Land Alienation Act, moneylenders would nonetheless be able to acquire rights to it.

<sup>79</sup> PLAD, 6 July 1938, 687-89, PAL.

Act 1935. Punjab's Attorney General, responded by saying that the opposition's argument had no legal basis, and that *benami* transactions were not entitled to the constitutional protections afforded by the Government of India Act.<sup>80</sup> Finally, the longest and most acrimonious portion of the debate focused on the rights of those who had, over the course of the previous four decades, unwittingly acquired land from the agriculturalists selling land gained through *benami* transactions. This position was forcefully put forward by a member of the Congress, who stated that eliminating *benami* would constitute a monumental injustice towards the thousands who would be deprived of property, and that, 'these *benami* transactions are being set aside on the sole ground that people who have been deriving benefit... are members of a particular tribe who are under the Alienation of Land Act not entitled to secure property by sale or mortgage from a person who belongs to a particular tribe by right of descent... is there any other reason given in the Bill?'.<sup>81</sup>

The response of the government to the opposition's arguments was clear. In the words of Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan, 'as long as the [Alienation of Land] Act is there and has not been repealed and it remains the law of the land we must respect it and unite in punishing anybody... who tries to evade the provisions of the Act'.<sup>82</sup> For all the fire and fury of the opposition's speeches in this particular session of the assembly, the end result was a clear indication of where the balance of legislative power lay in Punjab. The final vote on the amendment was carried by the government with 81 members voting in favour of the Bill and only ten against. Interestingly, when the Opposition asked the government why they had felt it necessary to introduce an amendment to the Alienation Act when the British themselves had failed to do so in the preceding decades, Khan reiterated the Unionist commitment to Punjab's

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<sup>80</sup> PLAD, 6 July 1938, 687-89, PAL.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 691-695.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 701.

*zamindars*, saying that if they could not even do this much with their power then, ‘what was the use of clamouring for provincial autonomy?’<sup>83</sup> Barely a week later, the passage of the Restitution of Mortgaged Lands Bill deprived the province’s moneylenders of even more property which, when combined with the Moneylender’s Registration Act requiring moneylenders to register with the government, ensured that July 1938, the first month of provincial autonomy in Punjab, was also arguably the worst in history for Punjab’s capitalist classes in legislative terms.

It is interesting to note that the British themselves entertained some reservations regarding the Unionist legislative agenda. The Governor, for example, believed the ban on *benami* transactions would add to the work of the revenue administration and open the door for increased corruption.<sup>84</sup> However, while the Governor assented to the law, largely due to the support it enjoyed from the landed classes, the same was not true of the Secretary of State for India, who had been approached by some of the Bill’s opponents and asked to prevent its passage. In response to this, the Unionists, led by Sikander Hayat, threatened to resign from government, prompting the Governor to inform the Viceroy that, ‘[this would] exacerbate the conflict between rural and urban interests, quite apart from the political difficulties with which it would confront us and the exultation which it would create in Congress circles all over India’.<sup>85</sup> Ultimately, and not unexpectedly, the British desire to keep the landed elite on board trumped other considerations, and the Bills were passed.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> PLAD, 6 July 1938, 700, PAL.

<sup>84</sup> Craik to Brabourne, 2 September 1938, *Punjab Politics, 1936-1939: The Start of Provincial Autonomy* (PP-1), 250-251.

<sup>85</sup> Craik to Linlithgow, 26 January 1939, PP-1, 302.

<sup>86</sup> The legality of these laws continued to be challenged in the courts until 1941, at which point the Governor expressed his confidence that they could not now be overturned. Glancy to Linlithgow, 20<sup>th</sup> September 1941, *Punjab Politics, 1940-1943: Strains of War – Governor’s Fortnightly Reports and Other Key Documents* (PP-2), 275-278.

The presence of a vocal, albeit small, opposition in the Punjab Assembly had meant that, in a departure from previous years, criticism of the government and its policies became the norm. The Punjab Governor noted that, during the debates on the amendments to the Alienation Act, ‘the tone of Assembly strikes me as having lost greatly in dignity and decorum... when controversy flares up, the place degenerates into a bear-garden’.<sup>87</sup> The province’s capitalists were also not entirely quiescent outside the Assembly either; in response to the Bills mentioned above, the ‘Non-Agriculturalists Association’ threatened the government with civil disobedience<sup>88</sup>, and actually delivered on this promise following the passage of the Agricultural Produce Markets Act of 1939, and the General Sales Tax Act of 1941, both of which imposed taxes and levies on the province’s traders. Following two years of sporadic agitation which led to the observation that Punjab’s ‘industrial and commercial classes’ were not as supportive of the War effort as the government would like<sup>89</sup>, the Governor informed the Viceroy in 1941 that although it was ‘laudable’ that the Unionists wished to ‘improv[e] the lot of the agricultural classes and distribut[e] the burden of taxation more evenly between the rural and urban communities’, the speed with which this had been done had led the, ‘trading classes to express the belief that their interests were being consistently sacrificed and that the time had come for them to mobilise their forces’.<sup>90</sup> Realising the danger of increased strike action by the traders in a time of war, the Governor sought to appease them by promising them that the government would give them ‘a fair hearing and fair treatment’ with regard to the protection of their interests, and would also investigate the possibility of amending the Markets

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<sup>87</sup> Craik to Brabourne, 5 April 1938, PP-1, 237.

<sup>88</sup> Craik to Brabourne, 6 September 1938, PP-1, 251-252.

<sup>89</sup> Craik to Linlithgow, 27 August 1940, 178.

<sup>90</sup> Glancy to Linlithgow, 28 April 1941, PP-2, 246.

Act.<sup>91</sup> Apparently mollified by these assurances, Punjab's traders called off their strikes in June 1941. However, as the events of the war and the drive towards Partition consumed greater amounts of governmental attention, the stridency of the capitalists' demands faded away, and the legislation that had prompted their agitation remained unchanged. Whether this issue would have eventually led to a more pronounced clash between land and capital, triggering a re-negotiation of the relationship between the state and the different classes in society, is a point that remains open to speculation.

In Punjab, the colonial state conferred legislative powers upon its landed allies through a graduated, incremental process aimed at ensuring that the new Councils and Assemblies that were created acted as bodies that would defend the interests of the state. As greater amounts of power were placed in the hands of the landed politicians who dominated these bodies, this power was used to reinforce the position of the landed classes in Punjab both through the dispensation of patronage, and through the use of legislation to further landed interests and impose sanctions on rival and subordinate classes. The landed elite's rivals in Punjab already had to contend with the constraints imposed by the state-landlord bargain and the different mechanisms that reproduced it. Legislative politics in Punjab, tailored as it was towards the reinforcement of landed power, added to the tremendous institutional barriers that would have to be overcome by those seeking to challenge the status quo.

## ***Conclusion***

The dawn of the Twentieth Century brought with it representative government in Punjab. Rolled out incrementally, in a fashion designed to ensure that the Punjabis who entered the provincial government were loyalist landlords, the expansion of

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<sup>91</sup> Glancy to Linlithgow, 28 April 1941, PP-2, 246.

representative government was accompanied by a deepening of the involvement of the landed classes within the apparatuses of the state. This period also saw the emergence of Punjab's first political parties, with the most powerful of these again being the party of landed interests. These processes all represented a deepening of the bargain between the colonial state and its landed allies, with the former providing the latter with increasing amounts of patronage in exchange for their continued support in ensuring order and accumulation in the province. These developments also further entrenched the power of the landed elite within the institutional framework of politics in Punjab; their increased incorporation within the state, as well as their entry into electoral politics and representative government, allowed for the landed classes to consolidate and expand the linkages between themselves, increasing their capacity to engage in the pursuit of their interests as a class. This also provided the landed classes with greater avenues through which to impose sanctions on their rivals and subordinates by directly shaping policy through legislation, as well as by increasing barriers to entry into the state and politics.

## CHAPTER 5: Factionalism, Elections, and the State-Landlord Bargain

*Odd that these big Punjab landlords should be so dominated by a down-country lawyer like Jinnah.*

Lord Wavell, Viceroy of India<sup>92</sup>

### ***Introduction***

In a letter briefing the new Viceroy on the political situation in Punjab, the Governor, Sir Herbert Emerson, noted that, ‘there are two main causes of instability; first, the ambitions and jealousies of younger members regarding office; and second, personal animosities and partisan factions’.<sup>93</sup> The Governor was stating a fundamental truth about landed politics in Punjab; feuds and rivalries spanning generations, buttressed by tribal affiliations and personal animosities, and exacerbated by competition for political office, meant that the unity of the Unionist landlords was much more fragile than it appeared to be on the surface. Indeed, recognising that when it came to elections, ‘the usual position will be two or more Muslim candidates fighting the same constituency, all of whom are prepared to support the Unionist Party if elected’, the Governor went on to inform the Viceroy that, ‘whoever wins or loses, there is going to be strong resentment’.<sup>94</sup>

Emerson’s words would prove to be prescient. The rivalries that he had identified as being endemic to Punjabi politics played a large part in bringing Unionist rule to an end in the province, and also shaped its political trajectory in post-

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<sup>92</sup> 12 July 1944, from Penderel Moon (ed.) *Wavell: The Viceroy’s Journal*.

<sup>93</sup> Emerson to Linlithgow, 19 October 1936, PP-1, 48.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 53-54.

Independence Pakistan. Indeed, to the extent that this period represented a contestational juncture, in that it was defined by a certain degree of contingency as well as the emergence of new actors challenging the status quo, understanding the role played by factionalism in fracturing and re-constituting landed power helps to explain the failure of this moment to fundamentally alter the political status quo in Punjab. The primary aim of this chapter is to show that while being symptomatic of intra-class competition for power, the factionalism of the landed elite actually had the counter-intuitive effect of protecting the interests of the class as a whole. Through an account of the events leading up to the collapse of the British rule in Punjab, it will be argued that the defection of landlords to the Muslim League, while rooted in traditional rivalries and triggered by the increasingly evident weakness of the colonial state, enabled these politicians to retain their position of political pre-eminence post-independence, thus ensuring that landed interests would dominate Pakistani Punjab. Then, by examining the rise and fall of the four provincial governments that were formed in Punjab during the first decade of independence, it will be shown that while the presence of rival political groupings prevented the emergence of a unified landed elite possessing the capacity to effectively dominate the state, it also lent itself to manipulation by Pakistan's powerful military-bureaucratic 'Establishment'.<sup>95</sup> The Establishment's ability to co-opt powerful landed politicians in the pursuit of its own interests represented a continuation of the state-landlord bargain that had characterised the colonial era, setting the stage for the explicit re-entrenchment of this institutional framework during the Pakistan's first military dictatorship under Ayub Khan.

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<sup>95</sup> 'Establishment' is the term that is generally used to describe the military-bureaucracy nexus in Pakistan, and will be used as such for the remainder of this thesis.

## ***Party Politics, Partition, and the Perpetuation of Landed Power***

In 1936, the Unionists and the British had little to fear from the rival parties in Punjab. Despite the factionalism of Punjab's landlords, parties like the Muslim League, the Congress, and the Akali Dal, had all failed to build the kind of momentum necessary for challenging the status quo. Lacking the patronage of the colonial state, possessing mostly urban support, and employing communal platforms, these parties, while enjoying some limited electoral success, lacked the capacity to both compete against the landed elite in their rural strongholds, and co-opt them to their own causes.<sup>96</sup> While some smaller Communist parties did attempt to make inroads into the countryside, particularly in the Eastern districts, state repression and the entrenched nature of landed power prevented their ideological appeals from gaining any real traction (Sharma, 2008).<sup>97</sup> The same was true for the different communal organisations, like the Arya Samaj, the Majlis-i-Ahrar, and the Khaksars which, while possessing some support in the cities, were not able to establish roots in rural Punjab.

In this context, the erosion of Unionist power to the point where the party commanded only a handful of seats in the Legislature in 1946 is surprising, and understanding how this happened provides important insights into the way in which the landed elite were able to adapt to the changing political terrain of the 1940s. As

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<sup>96</sup> This was not true for the Akali Dal in the 1920s. Founded as movement of reformist Sikhs seeking to take control of *gurdwaras* away from their hereditary caretakers, the movement grew to have a reasonably large following amongst the agriculturalist Jats of Central Punjab as well as demobilized Sikh soldiers returning from the First World War. In response to the colonial government's reluctance to accommodate their demands, the Akalis launched a campaign of agrarian agitation that was only contained through a combination of repression and selective co-optation. For a brief movement, the Akali Dal represented a confluence of religious and landed identity that represented an important exception to the supra-communal agriculturalist identity of the Unionist Party, as well as the loyalist political inclinations of West Punjab's Muslim *pirs*, foreshadowing the communal politics of the 1940s. See Yong (2005, 187-239).

<sup>97</sup> This would change during the Second World War, when different progressive parties would be key to the success of the Congress Party in East Punjab.

has been argued by Talbot (1988a; 1988b; 1996) and Chowdhry (1991), at least part of the reason for the shift in the Unionist Party's fortunes was the impact the Second World War had on Punjab. The 1940s witnessed declining prices for agricultural goods, as well as shortages of different commodities, both of which placed a tremendous burden on the peasantry and stymied the modest economic recovery that had begun to take place in the aftermath of the Great Depression. Even as the Unionists continually tried to justify the demands being placed on the Punjabi peasantry in the name of the war effort, the Congress and Muslim League attempted to use the War to mobilise the peasantry against the state, highlighting how the Unionist government, in its attempts to prove its loyalty to the British, had now presided over a period of unprecedented economic hardship.

Garnering the support of the peasantry through the idiom of economic hardship was a strategy that met with greater success in Eastern and Central Punjab, where the more fragmented landholding structure and relative absence of a hereditary aristocracy meant that landholders there were both hit harder by the war and also not as strongly constrained by the structures of power that underpinned stability in the West. In these parts of the province, also lacking a Muslim majority, the Congress and the Akalis were able to make the most inroads, creating for themselves an independent support base amongst the peasant proprietors who formed the bulk of the population in those districts.<sup>98</sup> The situation was different in the West, however, where despite the dislocations that took place due to the war, the Unionists continued

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<sup>98</sup>The Eastern Districts had undergone land fragmentation in response to demographic pressures. This had resulted in the creation of a tier of landowners possessing land below the amount required for subsistence. Indeed, the majority of owners in Punjab possessing less than an acre, or even five acres, of land were concentrated in the Eastern Districts (Calvert, 1925). These farmers, who also had to bear the costs of the War, were a natural constituency for anti-establishment parties. The absence of as strong an aristocracy as that which existed in the Western Districts also meant that the traditional methods of social control used to contain such sentiment were also strained in this period of state weakness and economic dislocation.

to win local and District Board elections in their West Punjabi strongholds until 1944. While the League continued to dominate urban politics, its appeal within the Muslim-majority parts of the Punjabi countryside remained limited.

One explanation for the League's failure to make any headway in the countryside lies in the effect the 'Sikandar-Jinnah Pact'<sup>99</sup> had on constraining the party's activities. Even though the Unionist Muslims were technically members of the Muslim League as well, there is considerable evidence to suggest that on matters of provincial politics, membership in the former trumped any loyalty to the latter. After signing the Pact, Sikandar informed the Punjab Governor that all he had done was, 'agree to support Jinnah in all-India politics' while instructing his Unionist colleagues that, despite their membership of the League, 'in provincial concerns the position of the Unionist Party would remain unchanged'.<sup>100</sup> How this worked in practice was demonstrated after the outbreak of the Second World War; when Jinnah directed all Muslim League members to resign from the Provincial and District War Boards in June 1940 in line with the League's broader All-India policy, his orders were ignored by 37 of the 38 Unionists who occupied those positions<sup>101</sup>, prompting the Governor to observe that, 'Jinnah's writ does not run in the Punjab'.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> This was an alliance between the Unionists and the Muslim League agreed upon by Sikandar Hayat Khan and Jinnah in 1937. Under the terms of the arrangement, Muslim members of the Unionist Party would also become members of the Muslim League, subject to its directives and its party discipline. For Jinnah, who had thus far failed to generate much momentum for the League in Punjab, this arrangement provided him with much needed legitimacy in a Muslim majority province. For Sikandar, in addition to pre-empting any splits in his party and providing the Unionists with a voice in All-India politics, the Pact arguably provided a means through which the to dominate the Muslim League party apparatus in Punjab. See Jalal (1999b) and Baxter (1974).

<sup>100</sup> Emerson to Linlithgow, 21 October 1937, PP-1, 144.

<sup>101</sup> The only Unionist who complied with Jinnah's demand was Shah Nawaz Mamdot, who had been elected to head the Muslim League in Punjab in 1937. When Jinnah lifted the ban on membership in the War Boards, Mamdot approached the Governor asking to re-join, only to be reminded that, 'he had been allowed by the Government to succeed to the largest landed estate in Punjab... a Jagir worth Rs. 80,000 per annum, and the hereditary title of "Nawab"... [and that] loyalty meant active loyalty and not merely abstention from disloyal acts'. A chastened Mamdot promptly sought to make amends by contributing Rs. 50,000 to the War Fund. See Craik to Linlithgow, 24 September 1940, PP-2, p. 187

<sup>102</sup> Craik to Linlithgow, 20 June 1940, PP-2, 149.

The notion that Jinnah had little or no power in Punjab was belied, however, by Sikandar's resignation from the Viceroy's National Defence Council in August 1941. While Sikandar's decision was reflective of his reluctance to be portrayed as representing purely Muslim, rather than Punjabi, interests at the Centre<sup>103</sup>, it nonetheless played into the notion that Jinnah did have some influence over Punjabi politics. While the landed politicians of Punjab continued to back Sikandar, Jinnah's stature had increased outside the province as he successfully managed to manoeuvre himself into being the 'Sole Spokesman' for Muslim interests in India (Jalal, 1999b). Thus, when the Muslim League's Lahore Resolution of 1940 explicitly stated the Party's demand for Pakistan, Sikandar was alive to the potential the former's communal appeal for splitting Muslim unity within the Unionist Party. According to the Governor, the response to the Lahore Resolution showed that, 'Muslim opinion is now... unanimous in favour of the partition of India. Only a very courageous Muslim leader would now come forward openly to oppose or even criticise it. Such opposition on Sikandar's part... [would mean] possibly serious dissension among his own supporters in Punjab'.<sup>104</sup> Indeed, many of Sikandar's non-Muslim Unionist colleagues had already expressed their unease with his implicit accommodation of the League's communal politics through the Sikandar-Jinnah Pact, and had started to gravitate towards the Congress instead in 1938 (Oren, 1974, 402-403). The Punjab Governor's observation that the, 'more intelligent amongst the Muslims are doubtful as to whether the Unionist Party can remain indefinitely in the ascendant if it is tied to the wheels of the Muslim League chariot'<sup>105</sup> showed that even some of the Unionist Muslims feared the political implications for the Party of the kind of communal

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<sup>103</sup> Moon to Laihwaite, 26 August, 1941, PP-2, 271-272.

<sup>104</sup> Moon to Laithwaite, 1 April 1940, Note by Craik on the Political Situation in the Province, PP-2, 108-109.

<sup>105</sup> Glancy to Linlithgow, 21 October 1941, PP-2, 279.

politics it seemed to be veering towards. It was slowly becoming evident that even though Sikandar insisted that, 'the mass of rural Muslim members would stand by him' in the event of any split with the League, his power had started to wane relative to Jinnah.<sup>106</sup>

Nonetheless, despite, 'the difficulties created by the War, the increasing communal tension in the Province, and the roarings of Jinnah outside the gates'<sup>107</sup>, Sikandar managed to keep the Unionists relatively united and in power.<sup>108</sup> After his untimely death in December 1942, however, things began to change drastically, and it is here that the role of factionalism in both splitting and reinforcing landed power becomes clear. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Unionist party had been beset with factional rivalries from the very beginning. Initially, these were managed by Fazl-i-Husain who, while decrying the 'selfish and personal' nature of the province's politics<sup>109</sup>, was nonetheless able to use his position to mediate between competing landed politicians, as evinced by his resolution of the dispute between Firoze Khan Noon, Ahmad Yar Daultana, and Sikandar Hayat over the appointment of one of them as a Minister in 1930 (Ahmad, 1970, 463). Sikandar's own ascension to the Unionist Party's leadership had been made possible through the creation, and utilisation, of Fazl-i-Husain's factional alliances (Malik, 1995, 314-318). Following Sikandar's death, the conflicts of the 1930s were resuscitated. On the one hand, a powerful bloc of landed families led by the Noon-Tiwana kin group vied for control

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<sup>106</sup> Craik to Linlithgow, 4 March 1941, PP-2, 236.

<sup>107</sup> Moon to Laithwaite, 8 July 1941, Note by Glancy on the Punjab Ministers, PP-2, 108-109.

<sup>108</sup> He was helped in this by an alliance with the Akali Dal who, in 1941, joined their co-religionists in the Khalsa National Party to support the War and the Unionist Government. Their decision to do this was informed by the knowledge that, as a minority community in the province, the tremendous representation of the Sikhs in the Indian Army was a guarantee of continuing sympathetic treatment from the state. In exchange for their support, the Akali Dal required Sikandar to promise he would not support the demand for Pakistan or the partition of Punjab. That Sikandar agreed to this decision, despite his commitments to the Muslim League, illustrates the delicacy of the political balancing act he was engaged in. See Oren (1974).

<sup>109</sup> Diary Entry, 10 October 1930, quoted in Ahmad (1970, 463).

of the party while, on the other, the Hayat-Daultana nexus sought to keep power in its own hands. Not coincidentally, the rivalry between these two groups was, at least partially, rooted in the competition between the Noon-Tiwanas and the Daultanas in the local politics of the Shahpur district. Eventually, Khizr Hayat Tiwana prevailed in his bid for leadership of the Unionist party, but not before the unity of the Unionist party had been severely compromised.

The impact this would have on politics in Punjab became clear very quickly. When Khizr became the head of the Unionist government in 1943, his 'reconstruction of the Cabinet... gave rise to not a little disappointment and heartburning among certain members of the Unionist Party who aspired to a post in the Ministry'.<sup>110</sup> Khizr's position in the government was not helped by the conduct of Shaukat Hayat who, despite having been appointed as a Minister in the new Cabinet, marshalled his resources impede the working of the government and engineer the downfall of the Khizr ministry. The principal means through Shaukat set about destabilising Khizr's position was by voicing support for the Muslim League and its programme. For the British, this simply showed how Shaukat had, 'concluded that complete subservience to Jinnah [gave] him the best chance of a successful career'<sup>111</sup>, and as Shaukat continued to rally allies to his side, it was agreed that, 'one step... [that] would steady things down and frighten away further waverers from desertion [was] the early removal of Shaukat'.<sup>112</sup> This aim was accomplished in April 1944 after Shaukat was dismissed from his ministerial post due to allegations of corruption. At the time, the Governor assured the Viceroy that the fear of a 'general' stampede of Unionist

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<sup>110</sup> Brander to Laithwaite, 21 July 1943, PP-2, 382.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 384.

<sup>112</sup> Glancy to Wavell, 24 April 1944, *Punjab Politics, 1 January 1944 – 3 March 1947: Last Years of the Ministries – Governors' Fortnightly Reports and Other Key Documents* (PP-3), 68.

landlords to the Muslim League had become 'less acute'.<sup>113</sup> He would, as subsequent events showed, be proved completely wrong.

Conflict over the distribution of patronage, and access to state power, had long underpinned Punjab's factional rivalries, and this situation was exacerbated as the economic strains of the Second World War began to be felt (Talbot, 1996, 123). In this context, Shaukat's differences with Khizr were no different, rooted as they were in their conflict over heading the Unionist Government and when the former resigned from the Party following his dismissal, he took with him a group of 20 Unionist politicians to sit on the Opposition benches. Amongst their number were the sons of two of Punjab's most powerful landed families; Iftikhar Mamdot, the son of Shah Nawaz Mamdot, who had succeeded his father as head of the Muslim League in Punjab, and Mumtaz Daultana, the son of Allah Yar Daultana, one of Sikander's oldest allies. These politicians, together with Shaukat would form the core of the Muslim League's political power in the years leading up to Partition (Ahmad, 1985, 169).

Mamdot and Daultana supported Shaukat primarily due to the influence of their fathers and the links their families had with the Hayats.<sup>114</sup> For other politicians, however, Shaukat's defection signalled the emergence of the Muslim League as a credible rival to the Unionist Party. This perception was cemented by the collapse of the Sikandar-Jinnah Pact one day after Shaukat's dismissal from the government. For several weeks, cognisant of the splits within the Unionist party and aware of his own strengthened bargaining position, Jinnah had demanded that Khizr submit to the directives of the Muslim League in line with the Sikandar-Jinnah Pact. When Khizr

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<sup>113</sup> Glancy to Wavell, 8 May 1944, PP- 3, 77.

<sup>114</sup> According to Ahmad (1985, 166) Shah Nawaz Mamdot had been committed to the idea of Pakistan from the very beginning, and had only refrained from leaving the Unionists out of deference to his friend Sikander Hayat.

predictably refused, Jinnah abrogated the agreement and actively began campaigning against the Unionist Party. Prior to this point, Unionist politicians with pro-League sympathies had been able to support the latter by maintaining the fiction that they were members of both parties. Once this was no longer possible, the question of whether or not to remain in the Unionist Party became one of strategic calculation; given that the next round of provincial elections was scheduled to take place following the end of the War, and given the increase in the League's strength due to the inclusion of Shaukat and his powerful landed allies, politicians seeking to maximise their own potential return from the next round of electoral politics had to choose between two potentially viable parties. Indeed, the General Secretary of the Lahore District Muslim League wrote to congratulate Jinnah on the change in the Party's fortunes following the Khizr-Shaukat dispute, saying that the, 'rifts among the biggies [sic] of this province... [resulted in] rival groups [starting] their efforts in right earnest to enlist backing from League quarters'.<sup>115</sup>

For its own part, the Muslim League was more than happy to accommodate the very same landlords it had opposed at the behest of its urban supporters during the 1930s.<sup>116</sup> By its very design, the electoral system in Punjab was geared towards employing the use of landed power to gain votes, and the landed politicians who joined the League brought with them the resources necessary to campaign effectively. Soon after their defection to the Muslim League, Daultana, Mamdot, and Shaukat undertook a successful tour of the Province in which they claimed to generate unprecedented support for the League, as well as acquire the backing of notable

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<sup>115</sup> Rabb Navaz Khan to M. A. Jinnah, 12 December 1943, Quaid-e-Azam Papers (QAP) Vol. X.

<sup>116</sup> At least some of these urban supporters remained skeptical of the intentions of the former Unionists. See 'Letter from Rab Nawaz Khan to Quaid-e-Azam', 7 July 1943, Freedom Movement Archive (FMA) Vol. 162, National Archive of Pakistan (NAP).

politicians from across Punjab.<sup>117</sup> A few months later in Montgomery (now Sahiwal), a member of the League's District Working Committee reported the presence of large numbers of *zamindars*, *zaildars*, and *lambardars* at Party meetings, all members of a class who were otherwise, 'under the Unionist thumb' but were now enthusiastically supporting the League, not least of all due to the encouragement of the local *pir*, Syed Ashiq Hussain.<sup>118</sup> During this same set of meetings, Mumtaz Daultana, 'made a personal appeal to Malik Fateh Sher Ali M.L.A. to join the League', a proposal to which the latter agreed.<sup>119</sup> Similarly, when Firoz Khan Noon informed Jinnah of his intention to join the League a few months before the election, he promised him that he would be telling, 'all my Unionist friends to change over to the League'.<sup>120</sup>

The landlords who switched their loyalties to the League in this period were joined by the majority of West Punjab's *pirs*. Prior to this period, the League had relied upon the religious support of the urban reformist organisations which, with their opposition to both landlords and the structure of traditional religious authority in Punjab, had meshed well with the general strategy of League politics in the province. With landlords gravitating towards the League en masse, however, it became increasingly difficult for the party to portray itself as being opposed to Punjab's agrarian order. Significantly, the creation of links between these landlords and the League created a context within which traditional religious leaders could also declare

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<sup>117</sup> Report by Mumtaz Mohammad Khan Daultana on Punjab ML for June & July 1944, 28 July 1944, QAP Vol. X, 610-615.

<sup>118</sup> 'Report on the Activities of the League Leaders and Speakers in Connection with Organisation and Contacting the Muslim Masses of District Montgomery', 10 January 1945, FMA Vol. 345, NAP. Khizr and his own allies, in response to these activities, undertook their own tour of the province, setting up the *Zamindara* League to campaign in tandem with the Unionist Party. Evidence from the two reports cited above suggests, however, that these Unionist efforts met with limited success, although allegations were repeatedly made about how the Government was using its links with the bureaucracy to impede the Muslim League's campaign. See also Glany to Wavell, 29 September 1945, PP-3, 148.

<sup>119</sup> Report on the Activities of the League Leaders and Speakers in Connection with Organisation and Contacting the Muslim Masses of District Montgomery', 10<sup>th</sup> January 1945, FMA Vol. 345, NAP. Interestingly, the text quoted above was followed by a line which, despite being crossed out in the original file, was still legible and revealingly stated, 'both in the name of their 2 families' great and long friendship and for the solidarity of the Muslim Cause'.

<sup>120</sup> Firoz Khan Noon to M. A. Jinnah, 20 August 1945, QAP Vol. XIII, 37.

their support for the party. According to Gilmartin (1988), the relationship between *pirs* and the Unionists had always been one based on convenience and expediency, rather than principle. Once the League embraced landlords within its fold, thus dropping its opposition to the power of the *zamindar* classes and alienating the reformist religious organisations that had supported it in the cities, the *pirs* could safely support the party much as they had the Unionists. More importantly, unlike the Unionists, the League offered a purely communal platform through which the *pirs* could engage in more overtly religious politics.

Here it is important to note that, as argued by Talbot (1988b) and Jalal (1990c), the suggestion that, for the *pirs*, religious imperatives had primacy over a more strategic calculation of potential material costs and benefits is misleading. Much like their non-spiritual counterparts, the *pirs* of West Punjab were motivated in their political choices by a recognition of the increasing weakness of colonial rule in India. Developments at the All-India level, in which the Muslim League was a key player, had made it abundantly clear that British control over India would soon be coming to an end, and that the League would be a major player in any post-colonial dispensation. This only accentuated the fact that increasingly, the Unionist government could no longer rely solely on its past record of agrarian legislation to guarantee the support of *zamindars* hit hard by the economic strains imposed by the War.<sup>121</sup> The ability of the state to provide its landed allies with patronage and power had been at the heart of the bargain that formed the cornerstone of colonial rule in Punjab, and the declining capacity of the British, and their dwindling supporters in the Unionist government, to deliver on this promise played no small role in engineering the defection of landlords to the Muslim League.

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<sup>121</sup> Brander to Laithwaite, 21 July 1943, PP-2, 382

One counter-argument that can be made against this point is that the League's appeal to religious identity was primarily responsible for this political shift. Certainly, in the eyes of the Government, the Muslim League's campaign was leading the average Muslim voters to choose between being, 'a true believer or an infidel and a traitor'<sup>122</sup>, and the increasingly 'fanatical' tone of the League's propaganda would, 'considerably increase' the number of seats they would win relative to the Unionists.<sup>123</sup> However, even though it was the case that elements of the Muslim electorate were influenced by the League's ideological appeals, the landed politicians who formed the core of the party's political power maintained a more pragmatic approach. As Firoz Khan Noon himself admitted in a private conversation with Governor Glancy, 'he did not believe in Pakistan as preached by the Muslim League', and that the aim was simply to, 'secure as many seats as possible for the League on the Pakistan issue'<sup>124</sup>, with this view apparently being shared by other members of the Muslim League who, despite being, 'much more liberal in private conversation... realis[ing] the difficulties inherent in their official policy', adhered to the demand for Pakistan anyway because it was the platform upon which they had fought the elections of 1946.<sup>125</sup>

If the appeal to religious identity represented little more than a tool to acquire power for many of Punjab's Muslim landlords, it is also clear that the acquisition of power through these means was aimed at ensuring continued access to state patronage. In 1938 and 1939, the Governor of Punjab reported a number of incidents in which disgruntled Muslim landowning politicians expressed their dissatisfaction with the Unionists by leaving the Party. Zaman Mehdi Khan of Rohtak, for example,

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<sup>122</sup> Glancy to Wavell, 16 August 1945, PP-3, 141.

<sup>123</sup> Glancy to Wavell, 2 February 1946, PP-3, 171.

<sup>124</sup> Glancy to Wavell, 27 October 1945, PP-3, 152-153.

<sup>125</sup> Jenkins to Wavell, 15 February 1947, PP-3, 345.

had allegedly joined the Muslim League because he had not been appointed the head of the Unionist Party following Fazl-i-Hussain's death.<sup>126</sup> Mian Nurullah from Lyallpur chose to resign and sit in the Assembly as an independent because Sikander refused to support his demands regarding the reduction of taxes on canal water in his district<sup>127</sup> and finally in Multan, the powerful Gilani *pirs* left the Unionist Party following an electoral defeat in the District Board Elections to their political rivals and fellow *pirs*, the Quraishis.<sup>128</sup> The trend which these incidents were symptomatic of, namely the pursuit of patronage through alternative political channels, accelerated after 1943. Murid Hussain Quraishi of Multan, for example, informed Jinnah that if the plans for Pakistan came to fruition, it would be important to ensure that the interests of the agrarian sector continued to be safeguarded in both Punjab and Sindh.<sup>129</sup> Similarly, Pir Nazar Hussain Shah, who owned 4000 acres of land in Multan and Lyallpur, expressed his desire to contest the forthcoming elections on a Muslim League ticket in order to stand against his Unionist step-brother with whom he coincidentally had a property dispute.<sup>130</sup> Other leaders who defected to the League similarly did so from 'personal motives'<sup>131</sup>, either due to rivalries with fellow Unionists, or due to an inability to advance the pursuit of their individual interests. After the League's victory in the elections of 1946, in which it won 75 out of 86 Muslim seats in the province, thus proving its political supremacy relative to the Unionists, the few Muslim landlords who had continued to support the colonial government also switched their allegiance to the Muslim League. The Unionists were,

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<sup>126</sup> Emerson to Linlithgow, 19 October 1936, PP-1, 56.

<sup>127</sup> Craik to Linlithgow, 27 January 1939, PP-1, 306-307. Two other members of Nurullah's 'tribe' followed his lead in resigning from the party.

<sup>128</sup> Craik to Linlithgow, 23 July 1939, PP-1, 366.

<sup>129</sup> Makhdoom Murid Hussain Quraishi to M. A. Jinnah, 25 March 1944, QAP Vol. IX, 234-236.

<sup>130</sup> Petition for Pir Nazar Hussain Shah, in *Punjab Story*, National Documentation Centre, Islamabad (NDC).

<sup>131</sup> Brander to Laithwaite, 21 July 1943, PP-2, 382.

for example, ‘severely shaken by the desertion of two ex-Ministers’, at least one of whom, Jamal Khan Laghari, allegedly left the Party because he had been rebuffed in his attempts to head the new Coalition government in Punjab<sup>132</sup>, confirming Governor Glancy’s observation that the shifting loyalties of the remaining Unionists were the result of motives that were, ‘obvious enough’.<sup>133</sup>

By exploiting the factional rivalries that existed within the Unionist Party, and in the context of declining state capacity to maintain the bargain that had underpinned colonial rule in the province, the Muslim League was able to displace the Unionist Party as the most powerful political force in Punjab. In doing so, however, the League also ensured that the landed elite would continue to play a powerful political role following the end of colonialism. Rather than engaging in a campaign of ‘mass contact’ that circumvented the role played by the landlords in the political process and would strengthen the League’s organisation, as had been suggested by at least one of the League’s urban Punjab members<sup>134</sup>, the course chosen was one of political expediency; given the institutional bias towards the landed elite the Muslim League, like the British and the Unionists, necessarily had to rely on landed politicians to ensure the success of its political project. Nonetheless, buttressed by a century of institutional interventions that had strengthened them, the sources of social power that made the Punjabi landlords such a potent electoral asset also meant that they dominated the League’s party apparatus, with the full implications of this becoming clear after Partition when Punjabi landlords would come to dominate the new

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<sup>132</sup> Glancy to Wavell, 15 March 1946, PP-3, 180. Despite the Muslim League’s near-monopoly on Muslim seats, it was unable to secure an outright majority in the Punjab Assembly, and was also unable to find any partners with which to form a government. This enabled the formation of a Coalition government comprised of the Unionists, the Congress, and the Akalis, all of whom shared an anti-Partition platform. Headed by Khizr, this government would prove to be incredibly unstable and, in the face of League opposition and a worsening communal situation, would be toppled in March 1947. Although the Punjab Assembly remained in place, a new government would not be formed before Partition.

<sup>133</sup> Note by Glancy, 7 March 1946, PP-3, 177.

<sup>134</sup> Rabb Navaz Khan to M. A. Jinnah, 3 April 1944, QAP Vol. X, 250.

government in the province. Ultimately, the very same factionalism that had crippled the Unionist government, shattering the basis upon which it had been formed, also facilitated the continued survival of the landed elite as a class capable of pursuing its interests by capturing political power through the use of the Muslim League.

### ***Landed Factionalism, Intra-Class Conflict, and Authoritarianism in Pakistan***

The bloodbath that accompanied Partition had been brewing throughout the 1940s as religion and nationalism became increasingly intertwined in Punjab, coming to a head following the elections of 1946 and the denial of government to the Muslim League (Hansen, 2003). The final and unexpected contours of the borders between the two states as determined by the Radcliffe Commission, hasty planning and mismanagement by the provincial administration, and the execution of a genocidal agenda by groups at the local level implicitly encouraged by, and aligned with the major political parties and factions in the province, created the context in which violence could be wreaked across Punjab on such a scale (Hansen, 2003; Khan, 2007; Talbot, 2008, Tinker, 1977). Once unleashed, the violence assumed a self-reinforcing, ‘retributive’ dimension, as actors at multiple tiers, from the central state to the local level, increasingly employed violence as a means through which to enforce, and fulfill, the logic of communal separation that had underpinned the entire process of partition (Brass, 2003). As the chaos of Partition subsided, estimates of the total number who died during the transition ranged from 300,000 to over a million (the vast majority of whom were Punjabi), while the total number who crossed the borders between India and Pakistan numbered between ten to twelve million (Brass, 2003; Wright Jr., 1974, 191). In Punjab alone, between five and seven million Muslim

entered Pakistan from India, with roughly five million Hindus and Sikhs emigrating to India.

Despite the bloodshed that marked Partition, the manner of the transition from colonial rule, namely through elections and constitutional negotiations, arguably gives credence to the argument that British rule, as opposed to other forms of European colonialism, fostered the conditions under which democracy could flourish by putting in place political frameworks conducive to such an outcome (Bernhard, Reenock and Nordstrom, 2004; Olsson, 2009). However, given that representative government in India was introduced with a view towards reinforcing British power, it could also be argued instead that the growth of the nationalist movements in India was an unintended consequence of colonial interventions in politics. Moreover, as the divergent political trajectories of India and Pakistan have shown, the presence of a framework for democracy was not sufficient to ensure successful democratization, nor did the transfer of power away from the British necessarily imply its redistribution away from traditional elites to the hitherto disenfranchised masses (Ahmad, 1981; Jalal, 1995b).

Indeed, even as Lahore burned, and entire villages were depopulated, the landed political elite in West Punjab could rest assured that they, at the very least, would emerge from the transition relatively unscathed. They had little to fear from a Muslim League which was largely beholden to them for its electoral success. The security afforded to the landed elite was reinforced by the fact that, until fresh elections were held and a new constitution was drafted in the post-Partition dispensation, the pro-landlord legislative and administrative framework of colonial rule would continue to form the basis of governance in Punjab. Notwithstanding populist noises about reform, welfare, and equality, there was little chance that the

Muslim League would be able to dislodge the landed classes from their deeply entrenched position of privilege in Punjab.

Nonetheless, even though the transition to independence was characterized more by continuity than change in terms of both the authoritarian nature of state power and the oligopolistic concentration of authority in the hands of a small political elite, the birth of Pakistan brought with it, at least in theory, the promise of greater inclusion and participation within a democratic dispensation. The leaders of the Muslim League, most notably Jinnah himself and his urban allies, were committed to the notion of creating a democratic system in Pakistan. In subsequent years, as hopes for a democratic Pakistan faded amidst military coups and political machinations aimed at limiting popular political participation, the ideal of democracy was one that continued to be invoked as a means through which the state could gain legitimacy. Even the most repressive of Pakistan's dictatorships would hold 'elections' during their tenures and, as had been the case under colonialism, democracy in Pakistan would be employed to maintain the political status quo. However, in a context where universal suffrage and the quest for legitimacy imposed constraints on the ability of the military-bureaucratic establishment to limit the radical potential of democracy, the means through which the system would be manipulated would go on to have important implications for the connection between the state and groups like the landlords of Punjab, and would also shape the relationship between the latter and the subordinate classes over whom they had historically exercised power.

The continuing importance and political relevance of the Punjabi landed elite was demonstrated during the 1951 elections to the provincial legislature. Even though these were the first elections to be held in Pakistan on the basis of universal adult franchise, the results of the election provided scant evidence of any kind of change in

the structure of political power in the province. Despite the presence of some opposition parties on both the left and the right, the superior organization of the Muslim League, coupled with its stature as the party of independence, enabled it to emerge victorious with an overwhelming majority (Afzal, 1998, 97-100). Predictably enough, around 80 per cent of the legislators returned to the Provincial Assembly were members of the landed aristocracy (Maniruzzaman, 1966). As had been the case prior to independence, even absent the colonial rules limiting the right to vote, electoral outcomes were determined by the ability of powerful individuals to use ties of economic dependence, kinship, and patronage in order to mobilize political support (Aziz, 1976).

However, the League's electoral success in 1951 masked the presence of deep rifts within its ranks. Soon after its victory in the elections of 1946, cracks had already begun to emerge in the Punjab Muslim League as Firoze Khan Noon, Mumtaz Daultana, and Iftikhar Mamdot began to compete for positions of power within the party.<sup>135</sup> While Jinnah was able to effectively mediate between their competing interests (Ahmad, 1985, 283-286), the unity thrust upon the League under his leadership began to crumble after his death in 1948. The situation was exacerbated by the assassination in 1951 of Liaqat Ali Khan, Jinnah's deputy and the country's first Prime Minister, whose death meant that there no longer remained any politician of national stature who could command the respect and allegiance of the Muslim League's disparate factions, resulting in Pakistani politics becoming increasingly shaped by contestation between the different provincial governments and the political groupings within them (Taylor, 1992, 101).

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<sup>135</sup> There are several letters in the Quaid-i-Azam papers that allude to this emerging rivalry, some of which are, interestingly enough, written by Viqar-un-Nissa Noon, Firoz's wife, who complained on several occasions to Jinnah about the rough treatment her husband was receiving from his colleagues. See, for example, Letter from Viqar-un-Nissa Noon to M. A. Jinnah, 27 February 1946, QAP Vol. XII, 616-618.

The ensuing decade of parliamentary rule in Punjab was an object lesson in the extent to which the province's factional politics could result in intra-class conflict between the landed elite which, in turn, prevented the province's landlords from exercising the kind of concerted class power that might have allowed them to establish their dominance over the state. Indeed, before the outbreak of the Second World War, signs had already begun to emerge indicating the capacity of a unified Unionist Party to dictate terms to the colonial state, and this may have led to the emergence of the landed elite as senior partners in the arrangement that underpinned British rule. While there were particular moments in which class solidarity of this kind was displayed in the years immediately following Partition, as will be discussed below, the administrative corruption and opportunism fostered by Punjab's deep-rooted factionalism ultimately undermined the emergence of a single vehicle for the articulation of the interests of the landed elite. As had been the case in the last years of colonial rule, factionalism inevitably led to the creation of rival parties and groups, each of which actively attempted to curry favour with the Establishment, ultimately setting the stage for the formal reproduction of the state-landlord bargain during Ayub Khan's military regime.

Soon after Partition, Punjab was plunged into political instability as the Mamdot<sup>136</sup> government was challenged from within the Muslim League by Daultana. In a repeat of the events of the previous decade, when groups of landlords now began to coalesce around Mamdot and Daultana, the decision to align with either the former or the latter was informed not just by ties of loyalty and kinship, but also by calculations of the potential benefit that could be accrued by picking one side or the other. Therefore when the two rivals appealed to Liaqat Ali Khan to resolve Punjab's

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<sup>136</sup> Mamdot had been selected by Jinnah to be the first Chief Minister of the province.

political impasse by presenting him with lists of their supporters in the Provincial Assembly, both claimed to have the backing of 43 and 42 members of the Punjab Assembly respectively, even though several members had signed their names to both lists (Aziz, 1976, 3). The fact that there was an overlap between the two lists served to highlight the opportunism that characterised party politics at the time; rather than choosing between the two leaders on ideological or policy grounds, the decision ultimately boiled down the question of who could provide the most patronage. Under those circumstances, the members who pledged allegiance to both factions had simply been hedging their bets, attempting to ensure that they were part of any political dispensation that emerged once the political situation in the province stabilised.

As two of the largest and most powerful landholders in Punjab, both Mamdot and Daultana presided over large networks of power and patronage. Once in government, the two could use their position to strengthen their networks and bolster the loyalty and cohesion of their factions. The logic of rent-seeking and patronage dispensation at the core of Punjab's factional party politics is clearly illustrated by the way in which Mamdot and Daultana proceeded to manipulate the bureaucracy to ensure the appointment of personnel who would be sympathetic to their pursuit of their interests and those of their subordinates (Ahmad, 1985, 299-300). In fact, it was the level of corruption under the Mamdot administration that gave credence to the campaign against the government, and formed the basis of the decision to impose Governor's Rule in 1949. When subsequently investigating the allegations against Mamdot, Francis Mudie, a British official who had stayed on in Pakistan as the first Governor of Punjab, noted that,

‘The [administrative] services are thoroughly demoralised and disheartened. Discipline is bad owing to the factions among the political leaders. Interference in all branches of the administration by Ministers and M.L.As has been a greater scandal than even it was before. With the close balance between Mamdot’s and Daultana’s groups in the League, M.L.As have been encouraged to be more and more rapacious’.<sup>137</sup>

The manipulation of bureaucratic office was not the only means through which Mamdot, Daultana, and their allies sought ensure control. As part of his investigations into the Mamdot government, Mudie also drew attention to the role played by the provincial police as a tool of political persecution. As argued by Mudie, ‘he [Mamdot] has got into the habit, as have his officers, of making enquiries into the conduct of, and even arresting or starting criminal cases against, magistrates and high government officials without reference to their superiors... add to this a thoroughly corrupt and unscrupulous ministry which... instigates enquiries against those offices that they considered their political opponents, and which protects the most notorious offenders either because they did their dirty work for them or had allowed them to share in their loot’.<sup>138</sup> For Mudie, it was clear that the police formed part of the strategy through which Mamdot and the government maintained power, with attacks on political opponents and recalcitrant bureaucrats being a key mechanism through which the political elite eliminated resistance to the pursuit of their agenda.

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<sup>137</sup> File No. 2(2)/PMS/49, ‘Correspondence with the Governor West Punjab’, Prime Minister’s Secretariat, 10<sup>th</sup> January 1949, 4, NDC.

<sup>138</sup> File No. 2(2)/PMS/49, ‘Correspondence with the Governor West Punjab’, Prime Minister’s Secretariat, 30-31 January 1949, 3, NDC.

In the end, Mudie's attempts to hold the Mamdot government accountable failed for two main reasons. Firstly, even though the political instability that preceded the imposition of Governor's Rule provided a perfect illustration of the mechanics of intra-class conflict in Punjab, with different factions of the landed elite deploying their resources to capture as much power as possible relative to each other, Mudie's investigations represented a potential threat to the dominant mode of politics, with implications for the landed elite as a whole. Indeed, despite the claim that, 'Mamdot's treatment of Firoz and Daultana when the last change in the Ministry took place [made] it certain that they would refuse to serve under Mamdot'<sup>139</sup>, the different factions competing for power in Punjab temporarily put aside their animosity in order to reshape the broader political environment into one that was more conducive to the collective pursuit of their interests as a class. That Mudie did actually represent a danger to all, and not any single Punjabi faction, was evinced by the fact that while attempting to prosecute Mamdot and his allies, Mudie made no secret of his scepticism in the ability of Daultana and other established politicians to work any differently, claiming that, 'even though the leaders of the opposition were not personally discredited as Mamdot is, the feeling is that they might in the end have to adopt his tactics to remain in power'.<sup>140</sup> Similarly, in his discussions with the Prime Minister, Mudie also voiced the belief that the Muslim League be barred from issuing parliamentary tickets in the forthcoming legislative elections, as the factionalism, nepotism and corruption inherent to the party would simply result in the election of candidates no different from the ones being replaced.<sup>141</sup> Mudie's pursuit of

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<sup>139</sup> File No. 2(2)/PMS/49, 'Correspondence with the Governor West Punjab', Prime Minister's Secretariat, 10 January 1949, 3, NDC.

<sup>140</sup> File No. 2(2)/PMS/49, 'Correspondence with the Governor West Punjab', Prime Minister's Secretariat, 30-31 January 1949, 2, NDC.

<sup>141</sup> File No. 2(2)/PMS/49, 'Correspondence with the Governor West Punjab', Prime Minister's Secretariat, 1 February 1949, 3-4, NDC.

accountability, coupled with his lack of faith in Punjab's most powerful politicians, made him a target against whom the established political elite could unify. As such, soon after the dismissal of the Mamdot government, a campaign was started against the Governor, with protests on the street and articles in the press calling for his dismissal on the grounds of his being a corrupt, anti-Muslim League agent of British interests.<sup>142</sup>

Secondly, Mudie's efforts to eliminate corruption in Punjab were stymied by the logic of electoral politics in the province. In Mudie's view, the campaign against him was only to be expected given the hostility that he believed Daultana, Mamdot, and other League leaders had felt towards him from the very beginning of his tenure, and which had been exacerbated by his attempts to hold them accountable for their corruption.<sup>143</sup> However, as explained in a letter to the Prime Minister, Mudie expressed his surprise at a telegram he had received in which Liaquat Ali Khan had said that, 'while the law must take its course, this case should not be used to throw mud at Mamdot... it is absolutely necessary in the interest of Pakistan that no feeling should be created among the public that what it being done is... for the victimisation of a particular set of people'.<sup>144</sup> Mudie's suspicions that the Prime Minister might be involved in trying to protect Mamdot and his allies would later be confirmed by a telephone call intercepted by his staff in which Khwaja Abdur Rahim, one of Mamdot's key supporters, was assured of the Prime Minister's support by the

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<sup>142</sup> File No. 2(5)/PMS/49, 'Charge Sheet against H.E., Sir Francis Mudie, Governor of West Punjab', NDC.

<sup>143</sup> File No. 2(2)/PMS/49, 'Correspondence with the Governor West Punjab', Prime Minister's Secretariat, 20 April 1949, 1, NDC.

<sup>144</sup> File No. 2(2)/PMS/49, 'Correspondence with the Governor West Punjab', Prime Minister's Secretariat, 19 April 1949, 1, NDC.

Ambassador to Burma, and was told that, 'if Mudie were to depart, everything would be settled'.<sup>145</sup>

Liaqat Ali Khan's reluctance to fully back Mudie's investigations can be traced back to the dilemma that had been at the heart of governance in Punjab since the colonial period. Given the centrality of Punjab to the strength of the government at the Centre, and the reliance of the Muslim League on powerful, established landowning politicians to ensure electoral support in the province, the Prime Minister had to choose between alienating his erstwhile allies and thus risking the collapse of his party's government, or glossing over their record in office in order to ensure their continued alignment with the ruling bloc.<sup>146</sup> The problem was exacerbated by how Punjab's most powerful landed factions appeared to be united in their opposition to the Governor and were entirely unwilling to support his quest for accountability. As such, even though the Prime Minister had initially supported the imposition of Governor's Rule, he would subsequently endorse attempts by the Punjab Muslim League to impose constraints on the Governor's power until fresh elections could be held. Following the advice of the president of the Muslim League and its Working Committee, Khan recommended that Mudie constitute an interim government in which five advisors, appointed by the Muslim League and approved by the Prime Minister, would be given ministerial powers and be put at the head of different administrative departments.<sup>147</sup> This proposal was in direct contradiction to one that

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<sup>145</sup> File No. 2(2)/PMS/49, 'Correspondence with the Governor West Punjab', Prime Minister's Secretariat, 9 July 1949, 1, NDC.

<sup>146</sup> As argued by Syed (1989), Liaqat Ali Khan's reliance on the Punjabi landlords was compounded by the fact that he himself, being a migrant, had no real constituency in Pakistan. This would also explain the decision to ultimately support Daultana over Mamdot; while the former was one of the largest landholders in the country, the latter had been forced to abandon much of his estate in India. Although Mamdot was compensated for this, and was also able to appropriate a large amount of evacuee property in West Pakistan, his standing amongst the West Punjabi landlords was arguably not as great as Daultana's.

<sup>147</sup> File No. 2(4)/PMS/49, 'Appointment of Advisors to Governor West Punjab', Prime Minister's Secretariat, 22 June 1949, NDC.

had been put forward by the Governor himself, in which he had suggested the appointment of seven advisors out of which three would be officials drawn from the bureaucracy, and four would be nominated from amongst the different factions and parties in Punjab.<sup>148</sup> Recognising that the Prime Minister's proposals would allow the same old politicians to once again run the Punjab government, despite Liaqat Ali Khan's assurances to the contrary<sup>149</sup>, Mudie resigned from his post, claiming that he could not work as part of a government in which he, 'would have to deal with Advisers who would be committed to make [his] position impossible... [and would] start the old game of victimizing subordinate government servants who would not use their power to get them and their supporters elected'.<sup>150</sup>

The events leading up to Mudie's resignation are significant because they demonstrate how the landed elite, as a unified force rallying against a common foe, possessed the capacity to effectively challenge the power of the state. Nonetheless, once the threat to the collective class interests of the landed elite passed, the underlying factionalism that defined Punjabi landed politics resurfaced immediately. The appointment of Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar, a League stalwart, as Governor signified that business could once again proceed as usual and, having secured control over the provincial Muslim League after Mamdot's departure from the party to form the Jinnah Awami League, Daultana had himself elected as Chief Minister in 1951. Daultana's government was, however, plagued by opposition from the Centre<sup>151</sup>, as

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<sup>148</sup> File No. 2(2)/PMS/49, 'Correspondence with the Governor West Punjab', Prime Minister's Secretariat, 1 February 1949, 2-3, NDC.

<sup>149</sup> File No. 2(6)/PMS/49, 'Resignation of Sir Francis Mudie', Prime Minister's Secretariat, 28 June 1949, 1, NDC.

<sup>150</sup> File No. 2(6)/PMS/49, 'Resignation of Sir Francis Mudie', Prime Minister's Secretariat, 2 July 1949, 1, NDC.

<sup>151</sup> Liaqat Ali Khan's assassination in 1951 deprived Daultana of a very powerful supporter in the Muslim League. Khan's successor, the former Governor-General Khwaja Nazimuddin, disagreed with Daultana over the Basic Principles Committee Report which had been prepared by the Constituent Assembly. This report suggested a plan of regional representation in which East Pakistan would have had greater power in the federal government than the individual provinces of the Western wing. While

well as the same kind of factional conflict that had characterised Mamdot's<sup>152</sup>, and was dismissed in early 1953. This was followed in 1955 by the premature end of the Noon government, partly due to in-fighting within the Muslim League over the One Unit scheme<sup>153</sup> and the question of nominating representatives to the second Constituent Assembly (Ahmad, 1985; Syed, 1989, 62), but also due to allegations of corruption and nepotism.<sup>154</sup> Predictably enough, Noon was replaced by Abd-al Hamid Dasti, a large landowner from Southern Punjab aligned with Daultana. In each of these cases, the collapse of these governments was orchestrated not only by an Establishment that sought to advance its own agenda, but also by disgruntled landlords and politicians who mobilised factions in support of their own political and economic aspirations.

Another key consequence of the factionalism that characterised Punjabi politics post-independence was the emergence of the Republican Party which, though short-lived, would illustrate the confluence between the interests of the landed elite, and those of the military-bureaucratic establishment. In 1954, Nishtar resigned from his position as Governor of Punjab in protest against the dismissal of Prime Minister

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Nazimuddin, a Bengali, supported the report, Daultana was opposed to it as being against the interests of Punjab. This disagreement, coupled with Daultana's inability to manage anti-Ahmediyya communal rioting in Lahore in 1953, led Nazimuddin to force Daultana's resignation. See Syed (1989, 59) and Choudhury (1955).

<sup>152</sup> Daultana's support for land reform arguably provided the pretext for the rebellion against him in Punjab. In 1953, Daultana sought to bring down the new Noon government in Punjab through a vote of no-confidence. Muslim League MLAs were split right down the middle in their support for the two factions, with 86 and 87 members supporting Daultana and Noon respectively. Not unexpectedly, several had once again committed to both sides, although the matter was ultimately decided by the re-admittance of Mamdot and his followers to the party in exchange for their pledge to support Noon. See Safdar Mahmood quoted in Syed (1989, 59-61).

<sup>153</sup> The 'One Unit' scheme, when implemented in 1955, merged the provinces of West Pakistan into a single unit in order to ensure its parity with East Pakistan in any federal setup. More than anything else, this represented an attempt by the pre-dominantly Punjabi Establishment to secure its own position relative to East Pakistan and the other provinces (Choudhury, 1955). Noon, like the Establishment, was interested in curtailing Bengali influence at the Centre, but favoured a plan of action that differed with the Establishment on the exact mechanisms through which to accomplish this (Afzal, 1998, 243).

<sup>154</sup> File No. 111/CF/55, 'Dismissal of Noon Ministry', Cabinet Secretariat, NDC.

Nazimuddin and the first Constituent Assembly.<sup>155</sup> Despite his opposition to the Governor-General and the Establishment, however, Nishtar was able to have himself elected as President of the Muslim League in 1956, a position which allowed him to exercise a tremendous amount of control over the party's legislators. After the introduction of the One Unit plan in October 1955, Governor-General Iskandar Mirza had appointed Dr. Khan Sahib, a prominent ex-Congress member from the NWFP, as Chief Minister of West Pakistan. Opposed to the idea of having the West Pakistan government headed by someone who was not a member of the Muslim League, and who was widely seen as an instrument of the Establishment, Nishtar began to initiate proceedings to have Dr. Khan Sahib removed from his post.

Given that Nishtar's actions could have potentially disrupted the indirect hold the military and bureaucracy had over the legislature, the Governor-General responded to the threat by authorising Dr. Khan Sahib to set up a new parliamentary party to wrest control of the government away from the Muslim League. With the help of Mushtaq Ahmad Gurmani, a prominent landlord who had been the Governor of Punjab (and then West Pakistan) since Nishtar's resignation from the post, Dr. Khan Sahib was able to lure a significant number of West Pakistani legislators to the banner of the Republican Party (Sayeed, 1959; Afzal, 1998). Chief amongst the defectors to the party were those Punjabi landholders and politicians who had been opposed to Daultana; for them, the Republican Party provided a means through which to retake control of the government, curry favour with the Establishment, and once

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<sup>155</sup> The Governor-General used colonial era powers to engineer this dismissal in response to the belief that the first Constituent Assembly was on the verge of producing a constitutional formula that would have granted greater power to the Eastern wing of the country. While legal challenges were launched against this obvious abuse of executive power, the courts at the time sided with the Establishment, validating what was essentially a constitutional coup. This legal decision would set the precedent for subsequent instances of the courts legitimising unconstitutional government dismissals. See Newman (1962).

again be placed in a position where patronage could be received and dispensed in pursuit of their own factional and class interests.

What is interesting to note here is that many of the players involved in the creation of the Republican Party had themselves been previously involved in opposing the designs of the military and bureaucracy. Noon, for example, had been forced to resign in 1955 precisely because he had not been willing to follow the directives issued to him with regards to the One Unit Plan and the Second Constituent Assembly. Conversely Daultana's faction, which pitted itself against the Republicans in 1956, had been brought into power because it had assured the Governor-General of its support in 1955.<sup>156</sup> However, in a clear illustration of the opportunistic calculation of interest at the heart of the relationship between the state and the Punjabi landed elite, those who joined the Republican Party jettisoned questions of principle for the opportunity to acquire state patronage. While personal rivalries and animosity provided the pretext for much of this political manoeuvring, it was the blandishments of the state that ultimately determined political alliances.

The creation, conduct and role of the Republican Party also raises another important point, namely the way in which factionalism amongst the Punjabi landed elite served to provide the Establishment with the opportunity to effectively pursue its agenda in the face of politicians attempting to assert their own authority relative to the state. The defection of leaders like Noon and Mamdot from the Muslim League in 1956 did not, by any means, result in the transformation of the League into a party not dependent on landlords for its power. Indeed, Daultana and his faction remained in control of the Muslim League in Punjab, with their position as large landholders

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<sup>156</sup> Evidence for this can be found in the way that Daultana actively went about championing both the One Unit Plan, for which he drafted a document explaining how he would see it implemented (see Appendix V in Maniruzzaman, 1971a), and his acquiescence to the Governor-General's recommendations for nominations to the Second Constituent Assembly (Syed, 1989).

forming the basis for their continued power. Instead, the League in 1956 found itself in a position akin to that of the Unionists a decade earlier; in pursuit of their own interests, a significant section of the Punjabi landed elite had defected from the incumbent party to support a challenger offering a greater degree of patronage and political security. Lacking the support of these defectors, it would have been much more difficult for the military-bureaucratic establishment to manipulate the organs of representative government to suit its needs.

Given the support the establishment found for itself amongst the landed politicians of Punjab, as well as traditionally powerful political actors in the other provinces, a question could be raised about precisely why Ayub Khan still chose to formally assume power in 1958. What is important to note here is that the pretext for the coup was the belief that the constant conflict between the different civilian political groups had generated an unsustainable level of instability in Pakistan. Given that the institutional and organizational strength and capacity of the Establishment allowed it to effectively displace relatively weaker civilian politicians who were seen as being incapable of effectively governing the country, the coup did little more than formalize the already considerable power of the military and bureaucracy (Sayeed, 1959; Newman, 1959; Wilcox, 1965). The coup also had the effect of staving off any potential threat to the Establishment from the new era of democratic politics that was ostensibly initiated by the 1956 Constitution (Jalal, 1995b). In a sense, therefore, the coup of 1958 represented an attempt by the Establishment to assert its authority freed from the restrictions imposed by partnership with civilian politicians. However, as will be shown in the next chapter, the constraints faced by Ayub Khan rendered it difficult to operate independently of civilian political forces, eventually leading to a

rapprochement with the landed elite that saw a re-introduction of the bargain that had underpinned the governance of Punjab for over a hundred years.

### ***Conclusion***

Despite the strengthening of colonial and landed power in the first half of the Twentieth Century, it would take less than ten years for the political order in Punjab to unravel. This was made possible by a number of factors which, when combined, created the circumstances under which the regime could be effectively challenged. Firstly, the onset of the Second World War imposed serious constraints on the colonial state and its allies by triggering a tremendous amount of economic dislocation within the province. Secondly, the debilitating effect of the War was compounded by the general trajectory of All-India Nationalist politics, due to which an already weakened colonial state was forced to negotiate away its power to an increasingly mobilised and vocal nationalist movement. In Punjab, this translated into greater legitimacy for the Muslim League and Congress, both of which could use their power at the centre to oppose the colonial order in the province. Thirdly, within this broader context of instability, factional conflict amongst the landed elite became a problem of more serious proportions. Rooted in competition for power and patronage, the rivalries of Punjab's landed politicians became more difficult to constrain amidst general insecurity about the future of the province.

For the landed elite, the factors contributing to the breakdown of colonial rule and stability in the Punjab, and the spectre of independence from the British, necessitated an evaluation of the mechanisms through which to guarantee the protection of their interests in the new political dispensation. Given that dissident factions of the Unionist party had already forged links with an invigorated Muslim League, the dissolution of the Sikandar-Jinnah Pact in 1944 opened the floodgates for

defection to the League, with many landed politicians and *pirs* recognising that the defence of the traditional agrarian order would only be possible by supporting the party most likely to preside over the transition to independence. While factional conflict between the landed elite pre-dated the events of the 1940s, its presence facilitated the splitting of the Unionist party in the context of weakening colonial rule. The Muslim League, for its part, welcomed these landed elites into its fold despite its previous opposition to them. Overcoming landed power in Punjab was a task that the League had been unable to perform for decades, and the barriers to entry into electoral politics erected by the landed elite, as well as the various mechanisms through which they exercised control over the countryside, meant that co-opting them represented the most expeditious means through which to ensure electoral victory in Punjab. When the League's strategy paid off in the elections of 1946, it also illustrated how the very same factionalism that split the Unionists had the effect of ensuring the maintenance of landed power in the new political dispensation. Moreover, this also meant that although the events of this period opened up the possibility of institutional change triggered by a contestational juncture, landed factionalism ensured that this did not happen.

Post-Partition, Punjab's landed elite found themselves in a position where they exercised virtually unrivalled power in the province, as evinced by their domination of the legislative elections held in 1951. However, despite the fact that this could have potentially placed the elite in a situation where they could effectively constrain the power of the state through the concerted use of their class power, as shown by the events leading to the resignation of Governor Mudie, the factionalism endemic to Punjab's politics prevented the emergence of this kind of class solidarity. Instead, competition for power and patronage once again became a source of instability,

leaving different factions of the landed elite open to manipulation by an Establishment seeking to safeguard and pursue its own interests.

## **Chapter 6: Military Authoritarianism and the Landed Elite in Punjab**

### ***Introduction***

When Ayub Khan came to power in 1958, the stated aim of the new regime was to usher in a new phase of politics untainted by the influence of the venal politicians it had replaced. However, despite undertaking an attempt to dislodge the landed elites who had hitherto dominated West Pakistan's politics, Ayub Khan found himself reaching an accommodation with the same politicians he had sought to eliminate from the political arena. A similar pattern was followed by the military regimes of Zia-ul-Haq (1977-88) and Pervez Musharraf (1999-2007), both of whom relied on the landed elite to play an important role in providing their governments with support, echoing the arrangement that had underpinned the stability of the colonial state in Punjab. State patronage and power were exchanged for the ability of landed politicians to provide votes and control at the local level, with the latter drawing on their traditional sources of authority, as well as their economic strength and links to the state, to maintain their hold on the countryside.

The aims of this chapter are twofold. Firstly, after providing a brief account of some of the factors that have underpinned the military's dominance of Pakistan's politics since independence, an analysis of the Ayub Khan regime will be presented to demonstrate the conditions under which the state-landlord bargain was re-entrenched as key mechanism through which military rule was strengthened. It will be shown that, despite attempting to govern Pakistan without the support of Punjab's landed politicians, Ayub Khan faced the same kinds of constraints that characterized British

rule in the province, leading to a rapprochement with the landed elite despite the regime's initial commitment to eliminating the traditional political order. Secondly, through a brief account of the Zia and Musharraf regimes, it will be shown that the electoral mechanisms used by the Ayub government to reproduce the state-landlord bargain were also deployed during subsequent episodes of overtly military rule, illustrating both the path dependent nature of Punjab's political trajectory, and the intrinsic connection between authoritarianism and landed power in Pakistan.

### ***The Enduring Roots of Military Power in Pakistan***

As will be explained throughout the course of this chapter, the close relationship between the military and the Punjabi landed elite has been instrumental to the ability of the former to dominate politics in Pakistan. This, however, has historically been supplemented by additional sources of power that have allowed the military establishment to maintain its position of autonomy relative to the different actors it has confronted in society. For example, very soon after independence, the imperatives of Cold War geopolitics, coupled with the country's insecurity vis-à-vis India and the need for armaments, allowed the military to cultivate a close relationship with the United States that would, at the time of the first coup, provide the former with a powerful source of external support (Jalal, 1990b). US support for the military in power in Pakistan would continue throughout the Cold War, peaking with the whole-hearted American backing for the Zia-ul-Haq regime in the 1980s, deemed necessary in order to counter the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan (Alavi, 1998a; Kux, 2001), and re-emerging with the Musharraf regime under the pretext of fighting the War on Terror. Although the relationship between the military and the United States would often be marred by distrust and suspicion, particularly from the 1990s onwards as a result of the close links between the Pakistan military and militant

Islamist groups, American strategic concerns would trump the strengthening of Pakistani democracy (Shah, 2006; Gregory and Revil, 2008).

Domestically, the military was also able to perpetuate its dominant position in Pakistani politics by developing the economic resources at its disposal. The threat posed by India and the conflict in Kashmir, repeatedly invoked to justify greater defence spending, enabled the military to claim an inordinately large share of Pakistan's budget throughout its existence (Jalal, 1990a). Over time, the military's continued involvement in the administration of Pakistan allowed it to build a multi-billion dollar corporate empire of its own, with interests ranging from construction and breakfast cereals to land ownership and agriculture (Siddiqa, 2007). This combination of high levels of public spending and near-monopolistic private enterprise would enrich the military tremendously and, more importantly, make it an important source of economic patronage in its own right, catering not only to its own members but also to its allies when in power. The fact that retired and serving military personnel were often placed in charge of purely civilian government departments, economic units, and even educational institutions, both in times of dictatorship and democracy, only served to cement the military's links with the different sectors of Pakistan's political economy, and enhance their capacity to function as an organisation capable of accessing, and distributing, state patronage (Jalal, 1999a; Wilke, 2001).

Both Zia and Musharraf also tried to use Islam to acquire support and legitimacy, and defuse opposition to their governments. Unlike Ayub Khan, Zia-ul-Haq made extensive use of Islam and right-wing Islamist parties to acquire ideological support for his government through the deployment of a programme of 'Islamization' (Ziring, 1984; Nasr, 2001). This conflation of Islam and national

identity was a key mechanism through which the Pakistani state had historically attempted to garner legitimacy for itself in the face of tremendous ethnic and class cleavages (Jalal, 1995a). However, much more so than Ayub Khan, whose appeals to Islam for electoral purposes had always reflected an opportunistic use of religion as a political tool, Zia's Islamization was a reflection of the changed political situation following the fall of the Bhutto government; in a context where the mass mobilisation of the late 1960s and early 1970s had shown the limits of authoritarian control in Pakistan, explicitly linking the military to Islam, and the latter to politics, provided an alternative means through which to shape the democratic arena (Ahmad, 1996; Daechsel, 1997). Indeed, by the late 1970s, the urban middle and lower middle classes that formed the core constituency for the Islamist parties would become part of the military establishment's sources of support, with appeals to Islam being used to mobilise them against rival political forces (Jalal, 1994; Akhtar, 2010a). This pattern would be repeated under Musharraf who, while lacking Zia's apparent personal religiosity and belief in the Islamization of society, nonetheless relied heavily on the support of the religious right to maintain his control over electoral politics.

The persistence of military power in Pakistan would also be made possible, as pointed out by Aziz (2008), by the path dependent nature of military intervention itself. Having involved itself in government early on, the military was able to shape its own political orientation, as well as the institutional framework of politics, to suit repeated rounds of entry in to the political system. With every successive coup, the capacity of the military to entrench itself in power increased, both in terms of being able to impose sanctions on recalcitrant political rivals, as well as providing patronage to allies. This was a process facilitated by the endurance of *de facto* military power even during periods of civilian rule, as evinced by the continued control wielded by

the military over questions related to foreign policy, internal security, and even the economy, with the threat of overt intervention exerting an ever-present constraint on the autonomy of democratic administrations (Samad, 1994; Rizvi, 2000). Through the cooperation of puppet parliaments and pliant courts, the military also ensured that it received the legislative and legal cover needed to pursue its political agenda, and ensure the legitimation of its authority (Newburg, 2002; Kennedy, 2005; Siddique 2008).

### ***Ayub Khan and the Re-entrenchment of the State-Landlord Bargain***

When the military formally took power following the coup of 1958, the political instability that had provided the pretext for the takeover was primarily attributed to the politicians who had governed Pakistan in the first decade of its existence. In particular, the constant factionalism within the Punjab Muslim League, as well as the reputation for corruption that had accrued to the province's politicians, were seen as sufficient grounds upon which to force the landed aristocracy out of power. Indeed, after assuming power, one of the first acts undertaken by General Ayub Khan was to announce land reforms, and to use the Electoral Bodies Disqualification Order (EBDO) of 1959 to bar approximately 6500 politicians and bureaucrats in both wings of the country from politics until 1966 (Sayeed, 1961, 255).<sup>157</sup> Both of these measures, which were to be applied throughout Pakistan, represented the first real challenge to the established political order in Punjab.

Amidst all the blame and opprobrium being directed towards the political class by the Ayub Khan government, the role played by military and bureaucracy

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<sup>157</sup> The EBDO disproportionately targeted politicians and bureaucrats from East Pakistan, many of whom were viewed by Establishment as being the principal source of both opposition and instability in the country. See Franda (1970).

themselves in contributing to Pakistan's malaise was deliberately ignored, with the coup itself simply signifying the fact that, with the creation of a constitution in 1956, it had no longer been possible for the oligarchy to exercise power through indirectly elected and appointed representatives (Jalal, 1995b, 54). However, the very same features that placed the army in a position where it could take formal control of the state, namely its institutional coherence and autonomy, would also limit its ability to effectively manage it (Rizvi, 1984, 536). Early on in his reign, Ayub Khan ushered in a system of 'Basic Democracies' (BD) in an attempt to reintroduce representative government to Pakistan. The BD system was essentially a form of controlled, limited democracy, in which the electorate would vote in 80,000 'Basic Democrats' who would, in turn, constitute an electoral college that would select the country's president. Furthermore, the system was touted to bring participation down to the local level, with the establishment of successive tiers of government, from the village level upwards, in which elected representatives, together with nominees from the bureaucracy, would be able to participate in policy and decision-making. For the government, this new system was ideal for Pakistan where, 'democracy of the western type is not suited to the circumstances... where the percentage of literacy is low; economic conditions are below normal; distances are great; civic consciousness is not developed; and the nation is underdeveloped'.<sup>158</sup>

In reality, however, rather than being a system tailor-made for Pakistan's unique political circumstances, the BD system was similar to the colonial electoral system in that it strengthened the power of a central, authoritarian state while providing a veneer of representative legitimacy. With political parties banned, the BD system was designed to function on a non-party basis, with voters electing leaders on

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<sup>158</sup> *The West Pakistan Basic Democracies Election Report 1959-1960*, PSCL, 31.

individual platforms rather than as part of any formal political organization. Implemented in order to prevent the re-grouping of the same actors who had been part of the government in past, in practice this measure served to create a tier of local level political collaborators directly beholden to the state for their office and powers, with increasing coordination and cooperation between the elected BD members and the state strengthening the links between the two (Rahman, 1968, 803; Kizilbash, 1973). This was best demonstrated by the way in which Ayub Khan could famously claim to have won 95.6% of the 80000 votes cast by the BD members to elect him president at the end of 1960. Furthermore, the multi-tiered system of local government that was introduced actually involved an extremely limited amount of power devolution; at each successive level of government, the ratio of elected members to those nominated remained extremely low, and the range of actual powers devolved to these local bodies was negligible, ensuring that the actual levers of governance remained firmly in the hands of the bureaucracy (Sayeed, 1961; Rahman, 1968). Particularly after the promulgation of a new constitution in 1962, which formally declared that Pakistan would have a presidential system of government, power remained concentrated in the hands of Ayub Khan and his coterie of advisers from the Establishment who exercised almost complete control over the government (LaPorte, 1977, 56-57).

A further insight into the kind of thinking that formed the basis for the BD system can be gleaned from the official response to the Report of the Franchise Commission of 1963. The report had been commissioned as a means through which to evaluate the success of BD after two rounds of elections, and ultimately produced a set of recommendations which suggested that the indirect system of representative democracy introduced by the Ayub regime was not particularly representative or democratic. Allegedly due to differences of opinion within the Franchise Commission

itself, a Special Committee was convened by the Law Ministry to examine the Commission's report, and provide a final set of conclusions to the government. In the document that emerged from this process, the regime's view of democracy and elections was made clear. On voting, the Committee questioned, 'whether the right [to vote] is a natural right which cannot be circumscribed by any legal or constitutional limitation or is it a legal right... which is conferred by the State upon such persons as are believed to be most capable of exercising it for the public good'<sup>159</sup>, and the Franchise Commission's claim that direct elections would lead to the creation and maturation of the country's political parties was simply dismissed due to there being, 'little evidence to justify such a belief'<sup>160</sup>. In response to the Commission's argument that direct elections were necessary for participatory democracy, the Committee disagreed, using the example of the 1950s to argue that the sense of participation through direct voting, 'can be purely illusory when there is little understanding of the issues involved in election'<sup>161</sup>, and that illiteracy and a lack of political awareness on the part of the electorate in Pakistan meant that the, 'direct vote... has been subject to far greater corruption of the mind and emotions than under an indirect system'.<sup>162</sup> Instead, the Committee suggested the continued use of indirect elections through the BD system, stating that the smaller size of BD constituencies would essentially allow for the electorate to make better electoral choices at the local level.<sup>163</sup> However, the Committee also approvingly noted the tendency of, 'members of an electoral college to be less likely to be swept away by a gust of passion... [and be] more likely to be

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<sup>159</sup> *Report of the Franchise Commission 1963: An Analysis*, 1964, Ministry of Law, Government of Pakistan, 19, Cabinet Division Library (CDL).

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 29

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 25

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 25-28.

amenable to party discipline'<sup>164</sup>, which was important given how, 'if the President is elected on an indirect basis and the Assemblies are elected on the basis of direct election, the latter will claim more representative character and this may weaken the position of the Chief Executive'.<sup>165</sup> For all the Committee's talk of bringing democracy to the people of Pakistan, its rejection of the proposals of the Franchise Commission revealed the Ayub regime's desire to exercise as much control as possible over the political process. While the notions of democracy and representative government had been institutionalised, and the principle of adult franchise established, the regime nonetheless sought to shape the political framework in a way that would allow it to safeguard its power.

Nonetheless, despite the ability of the regime to force through its legislative and institutional agenda, the situation had begun to change by the end of 1962, when two important developments would lead to a rapprochement between the regime and the landed elite. Firstly, the constitution of 1962 had provided the basis from which the regime could call for fresh elections within a political framework that had been tailored towards bolstering the Ayub Khan government. Secondly, Ayub Khan himself now sought to formally join politics at the head of a political party in order to be elected president of Pakistan in elections to be held in 1965. Both these developments pointed towards the same basic issue; amidst increasing opposition to Ayub Khan and his government, coercion alone was not sufficient to hold on to power, and a certain amount of support was required from the populace both in order to govern more effectively, and for the regime to acquire an air political legitimacy. Like the British before him, Ayub Khan had realised that the landed politicians of Punjab were an important asset, rather than a liability, precisely because they

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<sup>164</sup> *Report of the Franchise Commission 1963: An Analysis*, 1964, 26, CDL.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

possessed the means through which to mobilise support for the government and ensure the maintenance of order at the local level. That the regime needed such allies was acknowledged in a Cabinet discussion on the subject in 1967, in which it was stated that, ‘thought and philosophy are usually communicated to the hearts and heads of the people through political parties. It can’t be through official machinery alone... the propagation of ideas can be done only by the workers of a political organization having conviction and faith in them’.<sup>166</sup>

Given Ayub Khan’s earlier hostility towards Punjab’s landlords, as well as his ability to remain in power without their assistance for almost four years, it is important to examine the conditions that gave rise to this change of course at this particular juncture in time. Of particular importance was the fact that, despite being moderately successful in dislodging Punjab’s established political leaders from government through the EBDO and the BD system, the fact remained that these actors continued to wield a tremendous amount of economic and social clout in the countryside. Indeed, even though the regime trumpeted the fact that the majority of the candidates elected in 1960 were from the ‘middle’ class and lower income groups, the reality of the situation was very different. According to data released by the government at the time, 4311 Basic Democrats in West Pakistan belonged to the ‘upper income group’, while only 1061 were landlords. 21,387 BD members were said to belong to the ‘middle class’, while a further 11,028 were persons belonging to the ‘lower income group’.<sup>167</sup> Similarly, according to the government, ‘persons belonging to the lower middle class with income above Rs. 100 but less than Rs. 500

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<sup>166</sup> File No. 96/CF/67, ‘Suggestions for the Activation of the Muslim League’, President’s Secretariat (Cabinet Division), March 1967, 3, NDC. The mention of ‘thought and philosophy’ in the cited passage is with reference to Ayub Khan’s alleged status as, ‘a philosopher and a reformer... who ha[s] led the country and the nation to such advancement in such a short period. Judging from this angle, he can be placed with leaders like Mao Tse Sung’.

<sup>167</sup> The West Pakistan Basic Democracies Election Report 1959-1960, 23, PSCL.

[per month] predominate'.<sup>168</sup> However, given that average per capita income in West Pakistan in 1959-1960 was only Rs. 366 per year<sup>169</sup>, persons earning between Rs.100 and Rs. 500 per month were clearly in a much better financial situation than the vast majority of the population, rendering the label of 'lower middle class' deeply misleading. Furthermore, the category of 'landlord' was not defined in the government's report, making it difficult to establish if the statistics referred to members of the old aristocracy, or to rich and middle peasants owning smaller amounts of land.<sup>170</sup> It is also worth bearing in mind that these figures all referred to those BD members who were elected. The profile of nominated members, who tended to be drawn from the bureaucracy, military and pool of established politicians, would have reflected an even greater elite bias. It was also the case that while members elected at the lower tiers of the BD system did tend to be drawn from the middle or rich peasantry, positions of authority at the head of local Union Councils tended to remain in the hands of large landlords (Alam, 1974, 17). Indeed, according to one study at the time, 62% of West Pakistan's Basic Democrats were affluent landlords (Inayatullah, 1964, 51-61). Therefore, while it was certainly true that the new BD members did not always possess the same level of wealth as the representatives they displaced, they still represented a very small, propertied section of the populace whose interests were much more aligned with the political elite than with any broadly participatory agenda.

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<sup>168</sup> The West Pakistan Basic Democracies Election Report 1959-1960, 23, PCSL.

<sup>169</sup> *The Third Five Year Plan of Pakistan 1965-1970*, 1, PCSL.

<sup>170</sup> Despite the fact that many landed politicians had been disqualified from contesting the elections, a considerable number remained who could have done so, but chose not to. This decision, rather than being rooted in principle, was instead reflective of the aristocracy's disdain for directly competing in local-level politics which, having historically been the domain of their village-level subordinates, may have involved a loss of prestige and social standing. What this did mean, however, was that many had their factotums contest the elections instead (Sayeed, 1961, 251).

Consequently, rather than providing political space to the dispossessed and disenfranchised, the BD system served as a vehicle through which members of the rich peasantry could assume a more formal role in the institutional framework of politics. After all, even though the EBDO prevented some of the most powerful and prominent elements of the landed classes from participating in politics, many, particularly those who had been part of the lower tiers of government, were able to avoid these restrictions. Firstly, the fact that the constituencies drawn up for the BD elections reflected a clear rural bias, coupled with the tendency for politicians to enter the system through nomination as well as election, meant that these elections remained extremely open to capture by the landed classes (Sayeed, 1961, 250-51). This was a fact reinforced by how, even in the absence of large landlords themselves, the election of those who had historically been their subordinates meant that chains of patronage and support remained intact. Secondly, despite the restrictions imposed on political parties, many of the candidates who were elected under the BD system had nevertheless been associated with parties like the Muslim League in the past. Indeed, while the government itself could not obtain accurate figures on this question, it was estimated that 2751 BD members in West Pakistan had been affiliated with political parties prior to their election, out of which the vast majority had been in the Muslim League.<sup>171</sup> Thirdly, even where the absence of formal political parties could have arguably weakened the ability of political actors to mobilise support for election, the non-party based nature of the election process lent itself readily to elite capture as only those possessing significant stocks of economic and social capital could marshal the resources required to gather votes. As such, the same *chaudhris* who had presided over *panchayats*, collected revenue, and formed the lynchpin of control at the local

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<sup>171</sup>As noted in the report itself, the actual numbers were probably significantly higher. The West Pakistan Basic Democracies Election Report 1959-1960, Appendix L, PCSL.

level under the British would, under Ayub Khan, make an entry into formal electoral politics. In the absence of any real opposition or resistance from amongst the landless and smaller landowners in the countryside, who comprised the overwhelmingly majority of the population, and benefitting from decades of benevolent colonial rule that had firmly ensconced them within the organs and apparatuses of the state, the landowning peasantry were perfectly placed to fill the void left by their more powerful class allies. Rather than representing a radical new force in politics, the candidates elected by the BD system demonstrated the robustness of the institutional framework for politics that had been created under colonial rule, and its ability to endure post-independence. Ayub Khan, like the British before him, had essentially ushered in a political order premised upon the support of a coalition of landed class actors comprising the rich peasantry and the landed aristocracy.

The relationship between the authoritarian state and the landed classes in post-independence Pakistan would thus be cemented before the next elections, due to be held in 1964. The first round of BD elections had made clear the persistence of landed power at the local level, and had underlined the fact that measures such as the EBDO had proved to be incapable of displacing the landed classes from the political arena. Their resilience was also displayed by the trajectory taken by Ayub Khan's Rural Works Programme, which aimed to bring development to countryside and instead ended up reinforcing the colonial model of patronage politics, transferring resources from the state to the landlords, and from them to the subordinate agrarian classes (Burki, 1969; Waseem, 1982). With the Constitution of 1962 providing Ayub Khan with a 'legitimate' mechanism through which to retain power by getting elected as president, the utility of the landed elite as mobilisers of political support became abundantly clear. The process through which the regime began to formally align itself

with this class began with holding of elections to the national and provincial assemblies in April and May 1962. The elections were held on a non-party basis, the franchise was restricted to the country's 80,000 BD members, and the regime took the additional measure of issuing the Political Organisations (Prohibition of Unregulated Activity) Ordinance to ensure that any opposition generated by the election results was curtailed (Ziring, 1971, 29). Nonetheless, despite the presence of these restrictions on political parties, groups began to form within the new assemblies, as politicians with prior political affiliations began to coalesce around rival candidates for the positions of speaker and deputy-speaker. Additionally, the public meetings convened by elected representatives after the elections started to provide a platform for politicians who had been barred by the EBDO (Qureshi, 1966, 457-458). In this context, both pro and anti-government groups, within and outside the formal organs of representative government began to clamour for the legalization of political parties, an effort which culminated with the passing of Pakistan's first Political Parties Bill on July 14, 1962.

The Political Parties Bill, while legalizing political parties, was designed to prevent the re-emergence of the old political elite. This was evinced by a clause within the Bill that precluded the participation in political parties of persons who had been disqualified by EBDO, or who had been jailed by the government for violating the Security of Pakistan Act, a piece of legislation used to target dissidents and opposition activists (Qureshi, 1966). These measures were ultimately discarded as the regime itself began to engineer its rapprochement with the established, landed politicians it had thus far remained estranged from. Following the passage of the Political Parties Bill, several dormant organisations immediately moved to have themselves re-registered including the Muslim League. This was a development that

was, yet again, fraught with factional in-fighting that ultimately resulted in the emergence of two different parties that both laid claim to the Muslim League name. The CoML and the CML would become anti and pro-government parties respectively, with Ayub Khan being elected to head the former in December 1963.

While the EBDO continued to bar much of the political old guard from membership within the new parties, both the CoML and CML did nonetheless consist of leaders and politicians who were mainly drawn from those sections of the traditional political elite that had not been charged under EBDO. This can be seen in the composition of the National Assembly elected in 1962, in which 70 of the total 156 members were landlords, out of which 58 were from West Pakistan and thus constituted the overwhelming majority of legislators from that area (Sayeed, 1963, 373). More importantly, many disqualified politicians joined the CML and other opposition groups informally. Thus, when the EBDO expired in 1966 and was not renewed by the government, many of these politicians were left free to join with the government or the opposition, effectively bringing to end Ayub Khan's attempts to restructure the political arena by purging it of its most entrenched participants. Indeed, as can be seen in some declassified memos from the American State Department, many politicians who had been barred under EBDO expressed confidence in the fact that they would be brought back in to the fold of politics. For example, Makhdumzada Syed Hassan Mahmud Shah, a former minister in West Pakistan, 'was buoyant about the prospect of some of them [EBDONians] being brought into political office, either in the government or in the PML'.<sup>172</sup> Syed Hadi Ali Shah Bokhari, a close associate of Muzaffar Ali Qizilbash, the former Chief Minister of West Pakistan, was similarly sanguine about the political prospects of the old political elite, and felt that many who

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<sup>172</sup> Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation, 31 July 1967, in Khan (1999, 229).

were still opposed to Ayub and in opposition parties would nonetheless join the government since, ‘Ayub now needed qualified politicians and that the politicians were willing to work for Ayub but would want the authority of a party or official position from which to work’.<sup>173</sup> For its own part, cognisant of the fact that many elements of the old political elite had preferred to remain opposed to the government, the state itself chose to pursue a strategy of co-opting EBDOnians and opponents on an individual basis, confident that that the Opposition would be incapable of maintaining a united front in the face of the state’s blandishments.<sup>174</sup>

When it was first constituted, the CoML could claim to have the support of 78 members of the existing National Assembly, a majority that gave credence to the notion that Ayub Khan’s primary motivation in heading the CoML was to be able to more effectively, and indirectly, influence parliamentary politics (Dobell, 1971, 70). For their part, the landed politicians now in parliament could count on patronage from the Establishment in exchange for continued political support. The maturation of this bargain between the Ayub Khan regime and the landed elites of West Pakistan was evinced both by the BD elections results of 1964, which demonstrated an even clearer bias towards the landed aristocracy than before (Burki, 1969, 333; Anjum, 1992, 66-70), as well as the results of the presidential and legislative elections of 1965, in which Ayub Khan was able to claim the presidency, and in which the CoML consolidated its position as the single largest party in the National Assembly. In fact, in this round of elections, the vast majority of candidates put forward by the CoML were drawn from the most powerful sections of the propertied classes, including the landed religious elites of Punjab and Sindh, and many of these actors who were unable to get party tickets initially were able to secure election as independents and

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<sup>173</sup> Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation 4 August 1967, in Khan (1999, 231).

<sup>174</sup> ‘Summary for the Governors’ Conference: Annexure A’, 9 May 1967, 1, in File No. 96/CF/67 ‘Suggestions for Activation of Muslim League’, President’s Secretariat (Cabinet Division), NDC.

join the CoML once in parliament (Al-Mujahid, 1965, 543-548; Mayer, 1967; Afzal, 2000).

Thus, by the mid-1960s, the Ayub regime had come full circle; the regime's initial attempts at dislodging and displacing the traditional political class had failed, and had given way instead to an accommodation with these actors that served to buttress the authority of the military and its allies in the bureaucracy, while also reinforcing the influence and control of Punjab's landed politicians. To the extent that the Ayub Khan government was able to effect any lasting structural change in the country's electoral politics, it was in the expansion of formal, representative government to include elements of the landowning classes that had hitherto occupied relatively subordinate, quasi-official positions within the networks of power and patronage that underpinned party politics and governance in Punjab. By re-enacting the bargain that had existed between the Punjabi landowning classes and the colonial state, Ayub Khan demonstrated both the path dependent nature of Pakistan's political trajectory, and the resilience of the mechanisms underpinning the reproduction of its institutional framework; as an authoritarian government having come to power due to a civil-military imbalance inherited from colonial rule, the Ayub regime nonetheless required allies within society to be able to govern effectively. Even though efforts to empower alternative political actors at the local level were undertaken by the government through a combination of land reform, the EBDO, and the BD system, the necessarily restrictive nature of democracy under conditions of military rule, coupled with the tremendous, historically rooted capacity of the traditional elite to adapt to this changed political environment, meant that the government would ultimately fail in its objectives. Faced with the prospect of opposition from politicians and leaders possessing support that the regime itself lacked, Ayub Khan had little choice but to

embrace the same actors he had so vociferously criticized in the past. It was not surprising, therefore, that when opposition to the regime really began to gather some momentum in 1967, all pretence of reforming the political system was abandoned, as the government decided that in order to increase its popularity, ‘estranged politicians should be brought back to its [CoML] fold and influential personalities should be persuaded to join the organization’.<sup>175</sup> Furthermore, in a clear reversal of the regime’s initial emphasis on opening the democratic arena up to non-elite actors, it was also conceded that, ‘political leaders must of necessity be men of reasonable means... [who could] secure patronage for their workers’<sup>176</sup>. That, ‘many leaders of the party... were also distributing favours to the enemies of the party’<sup>177</sup> was simply an unavoidable reality of Punjabi politics, the direct result of attempts by the Punjabi landed elite to maintain links with rival groups should the political situation change.

### ***Dictatorship, Democracy, and the Punjabi Landed Elite***

The Ayub Khan period was significant not only because of the way in which it renewed the bargain between the state and Punjab’s landed politicians, but also because of the mechanisms it put in place to strengthen this relationship. Electoral engineering and the manipulation of party politics were used by the colonial state to reproduce the state-landlord bargain, and the military in Pakistan came to employ the same means to reinforce its own position and that of its allies. Key to this process was the effect factionalism had on generating support the Establishment. As mentioned previously, the factionalism of Punjab’s landed politicians in the first two decades of independence allowed the Establishment to co-opt parties like the Republicans and the

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<sup>175</sup> File No. 96/CF/67, ‘Minutes of the Meetings of the Governors’ Conference’, President’s Secretariat (Cabinet Division), 11-13 May 1967, 3, NDC.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 4

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*

CML with the promise of patronage. Indeed, the ‘divisive tendencies’ of Pakistan’s civilian politicians were actively encouraged by a military establishment keen to cultivate political support for itself (Shafqat, 2009, 92). As had been the case with the Unionists and the Muslim League, factionalism, ensured that the interests of the landed elite as a class would continue to be safeguarded by providing the Establishment with allies willing to enter into a bargain for power with it.

In this context, the template of local and national governance used by Ayub Khan to bolster his regime was one that would be replicated by the military dictators who succeeded him, confirming LaPorte Jr.’s (1969, 860) prediction that the military, as an inherently conservative institution resistant to systemic change, would continue to rely on the same model of politics when in power. Thus, while both General Zia-ul-Haq and General Musharraf used the coercive capacity of the military to suppress civil liberties and cow the judiciary into submission when they seized power, elections and referendums remained a key part of their strategy to acquire legitimacy, both domestically and abroad, and to defuse opposition. In 1979, for example, General Zia oversaw the creation of a local government system that, like BD, provided a façade of electoral representation while retaining the actual levers of decision-making and governance in the hands of the bureaucracy and military. This pattern was repeated by Musharraf, whose Local Government Ordinance of 2000 and subsequent elections in 2001, despite allowing for greater direct ‘democratic’ representation at the local level, resulted in the empowerment of non-party based local level leaders who remained directly beholden to the regime for their position, and who could also be effectively employed to weaken opposition parties that functioned at the provincial and national levels (Akhtar et al., 2007; Talbot, 2002b).

In addition to manipulating the institutions of local government, the Zia and Musharraf regimes also attempted to acquire legitimacy and strength by controlling 'democratic' politics at the provincial and national levels. Like Ayub Khan, both Zia and Musharraf made use of referendums of dubious legitimacy to have themselves 'elected' as presidents of Pakistan, thereby placing themselves in positions where they could more directly influence electoral politics. In 1981, the Zia-ul-Haq regime introduced the *Majlis-i-Shura* to Pakistan, an advisory council at the federal level comprised of nominated members whose job was to legislate and essentially perform the role of the National Assembly. Consisting of 288 members, the *Majlis-i-Shura* represented the regime's attempts to lure sections of the established political elite to its side with the offer of patronage; the fact that most of those who joined were members of the landed classes, and even included a contingent from the PPP, simply reflected the way in which the bargain between the military and the landed elite had been renewed (Laporte Jr., 1985; Jalal, 1994, 176). That these groups would support the Zia-ul-Haq regime was also not surprising given the overt hostility that had existed between Bhutto and many of the more powerful landed factions in Punjab (Kennedy, 1985). When assembly elections were finally held in 1985, albeit on a non-party basis, the representatives who were elected were overwhelmingly drawn from the propertied classes, with the vast majority of these being landlords from Punjab and Sindh (Rizvi, 1986; Noman, 1989).

After the death of General Zia in 1988 and the end of formal military rule, many of the politicians nurtured by the regime re-emerged under the banner of the IJI, a grouping of landed interests, capitalists, and right-wing religious parties that would come to constitute the main source of opposition to a resurgent PPP, itself host to elements drawn from the traditional political elite. The decade of democratization that

ensued bore witness to the rise and fall of four national governments (as well as three caretaker regimes), felled not only by behind-the-scenes interventions from the military in the areas of national security and foreign policy (Shafqat, 1997; Jalal, 1999a; Hossain, 2000), but also by factional in-fighting and opportunistic political manoeuvring, with floor-crossing and defections by politicians at the provincial and national levels facilitating the covert machinations of the Establishment (Waseem, 1992; Rais, 1997; Syed, 1997; Waseem, 2006).<sup>178</sup>

The coup that brought General Musharraf to power was followed by assembly elections in 2002. In a departure from the pattern adopted by his predecessors, Musharraf lifted the traditional post-coup ban on political parties relatively quickly, allowing them to compete in the parliamentary elections. Similarly, even though the first round of local government elections under Musharraf was contested on the traditional non-party basis, the second round in 2005 was not. Despite its greater tolerance for political parties, however, the Musharraf regime engaged in the same kinds of manipulation that had characterised previous military governments. After unleashing a wave of repression that resulted in the arrest or exile of politicians opposed to the regime, the government set about creating a new, pro-Musharraf party comprised of defectors from the PML-N and the PPP, both of which were the largest political parties at the time. The party that was subsequently formed was called the PML-Q which, in association with a grouping of religious parties known as the MMA, formed the bulk of Musharraf's support within and outside parliament. Once again, the combination of repression and state patronage yielded organs of representative government that were filled with members of the old political elite,

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<sup>178</sup> A look at the Proceedings of the Punjab Assembly from the 1990s shows that the major parties were in a constant state of conflict, with those in power using their position to attack and persecute rival factions in a way not dissimilar to the kind of politics practiced by the Punjabi politicians of the 1950s. See, for example, PLAD, 13 November 1994, 56-60, PAL.

chief amongst which were the landed classes of Punjab (Zaidi, 2003; Ansari and Moten, 2003; Waseem, 2005).

Ayub Khan, Zia-ul-Haq, and Pervez Musharraf, all presided over roughly decade-long military regimes. While their initial ascents to power were rooted in the historically institutionalised dominance of the military over civilian political actors in Pakistan, all three dictators realised early on in their regimes that governance, and the containment of opposition, were activities that necessarily required support from society. In each case, the very same autonomy that provided the military with the capacity and insularity necessary to take control also constrained its ability to do so legitimately, resulting in an inevitable rapprochement with the very same political actors that it replaced. In an era of electoral politics and universal franchise, where repression entailed high costs and engendered domestic resistance along with international opprobrium, Pakistan's military rulers sought to bend democratic mechanisms towards the purpose of strengthening their regimes. In doing so, they found willing partners in the shape of the traditional political elite, foremost amongst whom the landed elite of Punjab provided the social and economic resources needed to effectively ensure order in at the local, provincial and national levels. Even though other groups, such as the industrial capitalists and the religious right, would also become part of the military's ruling coalition over time, the primarily urban roots of these actors would relegate them to a secondary electoral position relative to the landed politicians who could manage the predominantly rural populace.

Through coercion and the provision of patronage, the military consequently aligned itself with various factions of the landed elite at different points in time, playing individual leaders and parties off against each other while simultaneously ensuring that the foundations of support for military rule, rooted in the co-optation of

the propertied classes, were maintained. By putting in place rules to govern the democratic arena that enabled the continued return of representatives from the landed elite, the military ensured that, despite the factionalism amongst the landed elite, the state retained a clear, propertied class character. The mechanisms that had underpinned the reproduction of landed power in Punjab under colonialism were thus reinforced by repeated rounds of military intervention, and provided the landed classes with the opportunity to further entrench themselves within the framework of politics.

### ***Conclusion***

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to provide an explanation for the circumstances under which the bargain between the state and the landlord was re-established during the regime of Ayub Khan. When he came to power, General Ayub Khan attempted to challenge the traditional order of politics, seeking to dislodge the agrarian elite in an attempt to initiate a more efficient, if not more participatory, model of politics. However, hamstrung by the same constraints that had characterised British attempts at governing Punjab, Ayub had no choice but to co-opt the support of landed elites who, drawing on their institutional position, were able to adapt to survive the regime's attempts to dismantle their power. Furthermore, the very same factionalism which prevented the landed elite from effectively exerting their influence autonomously of the state served to provide the military establishment with a means through which to ensure the continued support of at least parts of the traditional elite even in periods of antagonistic political activity. Ultimately, this would have the effect of both facilitating authoritarianism over the decades, and ensuring the protection of the interests of the landed elite as a class.

## **CHAPTER 7: Reproducing Landed Power in Post-colonial Punjab**

### ***Introduction***

In the last chapter, the re-entrenchment of the state-landlord bargain was explained in terms how authoritarian regimes seeking legitimacy turned to the landed elite for support. This chapter continues to focus on the mechanisms underpinning the reproduction of the state-landlord bargain over time, emphasising how the landed elite in Punjab have been able to use their position as recipients of state patronage to reinforce their position and pursue their interests, thereby increasing their utility to the state and further entrenching themselves within the broader framework of politics. The chapter focuses in particular on three main mechanisms of reproduction. Firstly, it examines how electoral and party politics in post-colonial Pakistan has contributed to reinforcing landed power, explaining how the enduring power of the landed elite and the constraints imposed by a predominantly rural electorate have resulted in the landed elite establishing their position as indispensable electoral assets. This will be followed by an analysis of the ways in which the landed elite have continued to use networks of bureaucratic power as a mechanism for ensuring their continued access to state patronage, and to dispense it at the local level. Finally, the chapter concludes with a detailed examination of the landed elite's use of legislative power to protect and pursue their interests; in particular, attention will be paid to how the landed elite have successfully circumvent successive attempts at land reform, thus maintaining their control over the source of their social and economic power, and at imposing an agricultural income tax that would have hurt the pursuit of their economic interests.

## ***The Electoral Race to the Bottom and the Class Composition of Pakistan's Political Parties***

By successfully aligning themselves with Pakistan's different military regimes, landed politicians in Punjab were able to sustain their political power and influence in periods of authoritarian rule over long stretches of time characterised by a lack of elections, representative government, and party politics. The ability of the landed classes to do this was rooted in their enduring economic and social power at the local level, as well as their ability to manipulate their networks of patronage in pursuit of their interests. However, the very same attributes that made landed politicians such a vital asset for military regimes would also hold true for civilian parties and governments seeking to win elections, gain legitimacy, and stave off potential challengers.

When Ayub Khan banned political parties and temporarily excised these landed politicians from formal politics at the start of his tenure, his measures had the effect of dismantling extant party apparatuses without really impinging on the power of the politicians he ostensibly opposed. This can be seen by the fate of the Muslim League, whose funds were first frozen by the federal government in 1958, and again in 1970 when the CoML was forced to forfeit its own funds after the re-imposition of martial law under General Yahya Khan. Almost twenty years later, in response to a letter from Shaukat Hayat Khan, now president of a re-constituted Muslim League, the Interior Ministry confirmed that the funds could not be returned because any party now formed, regardless of the name it took, would be treated as if it were an entirely new entity.<sup>179</sup> The Muslim League was not the only party to be deprived of its

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<sup>179</sup> File No. 192/CF/72, 'Funds Belonging to Muslim League – Embezzlement of', President's Secretariat (Cabinet Division), 11 October 1977, NDC. Following his ouster, Zulfiqar Bhutto accused the military establishment of using about Rs. 20 million in confiscated PML funds to finance and then support the group of Opposition parties that constituted the IJI. See Bhutto (2008). Similar accusations

funding, with the same fate befalling all the other parties as well when martial law was imposed and parties were banned. Additionally, many political leaders and workers were also incarcerated and persecuted, particularly when they refused to acquiesce to the new political dispensation. The result of this was that when parties were re-allowed by Ayub Khan, they lacked established organizational apparatuses and identities. While this was arguably not true for parties like the Jamaat-i-Islami, whose clearly defined ideology and politically committed cadre allowed it to emerge relatively unscathed as an organised body, the larger, national-level parties in West Pakistan were necessarily cobbled together on the basis of factional loyalties; membership with the CML and the CoML was defined primarily by pro- or anti-Ayub sentiment, rather than any broader party programme, and was in any case subject to change depending on the regime's willingness to include previously disqualified or marginalised politicians.

More important, however, were the electoral calculations that went into the selection and recruitment of members for these parties. The necessity of recruiting landed elites was not simply linked to their proven capacity to mobilize support at the local level; it was also a reflection of nature of the Pakistani (and Punjabi) electorate. Indeed, in 1951, only 17.8% of the population of West Pakistan lived in urban areas, with this percentage increasing only slightly to 22.5% in 1961 (Philips Jr., 1964, 37). The demographic reality of Pakistan's rural electorate was accentuated by the way in which both rounds of BD elections under Ayub Khan were designed to exploit this rural bias, exemplified by how nearly all of the otherwise urban parts of Punjab were lumped together with large swathes of countryside when electoral constituencies were

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were made by the PPP against the IJI in the late 1980s and early 1990s. At the time of writing this thesis in early 2012, these accusations were being confirmed by a Supreme Court hearing into alleged electoral misconduct during this time period.

delimited.<sup>180</sup> Gerrymandering in this fashion was not something that was new to Punjab; in addition to the state, many of these landowners themselves used the local level machinery of the state to shape the electoral environment in a way that would be of benefit to them. An example of this can be found in the 1952 elections to the District Boards in Sargodha, which were the subject of a rare official enquiry due to allegations of electoral misconduct on the part of the incumbents. As noted in the report, there was ‘little room for doubt that the Daultana Ministry had drawn up a plan of winning the Local Bodies’ elections by hook or by crook’ (Leghari, 1954, 3), with the mechanisms adopted for doing so being the amendment of electoral rules, and the re-drawing of electoral constituencies to favour particular candidates. Much more recently, the transition to democracy following the end of the Zia regime was accompanied by the creation of new districts ‘under political influence’ to ensure that local level politicians could have easier access to state patronage and more direct control over the administrative apparatus in their areas (Shafqat, 2002, 218). Ultimately, shaping electoral constituencies to favour rural politicians had the effect of diluting an urban vote not as amenable to control as the rural one.

The Ayub regime’s success in co-opting landowning politicians to its side in a predominantly rural electorate posed a dilemma for opposition parties seeking to challenge the regime. Given the regime’s demonstrated commitment to the pursuit of the interests of the propertied classes, and its willingness to work with politicians that it itself had expended considerable energy on discrediting, one possible route to electoral success would have been to rely on new candidates, potentially drawn from the subordinate classes, to campaign on a relatively progressive platform of socio-

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<sup>180</sup> As can be seen in the lists of constituencies provided in the official report on the elections of 1962, many of Punjab’s cities were joined with villages located around them. In fact, with the exception of a few constituencies in Lahore, there were no purely ‘urban’ constituencies in Punjab. Election Commission of Pakistan, 1962, *Pakistan General Elections 1962*, Appendix III, PCSL.

economic change. In some respects, as will be discussed in the next chapter, this is precisely what Bhutto was able to do in the 1970 elections, albeit under very specific historical circumstances. By and large, though, opposition parties under Ayub chose instead to rely on traditional politics to establish their political power. The reasons for this were twofold; firstly, the regime's opponents were, for the most part, drawn from the same class background as the regime's supporters. The CoML, for example, was mainly a party of landed interests, with its opposition to the regime being dictated more by the factionalism of Punjab's politics than any principled opposition to dictatorship.

Secondly, however, was the fact that at the local level, even in the contemporary period, kinship and economic power (Alavi, 1974), as well as the historically reinforced role played by landlords in resolving disputes, mediating interactions with courts and the police, providing credit and economic support, and delivering access to the state and public services, continues to form basis for landed power (Chaudhry, 1999; Lyon, 2004; Cheema and Mohmand, 2007, Nelson, 2011). Not choosing an elite platform for politics brought with it the risk of political marginalisation. The established capacity of landed politicians to monopolize votes at multiple levels of representative government through the use of their historically reinforced position and resources meant that the chances of a non-landed candidate prevailing in the rural electoral arena were slim at best. This was a problem compounded by the nature of the parties themselves; lacking a strong organizational apparatus as well as a defining ideology or policy programme, both as a result of the Ayub regime's attempt to dismantle the party system, new parties were inevitably forced to rely on the localized power of individual politicians to capture votes.

In a real sense, therefore, political parties in Pakistan found themselves engaged in an electoral race of the bottom, continually seeking to co-opt landed factions in an attempt to strengthen their electoral chances. Repeated episodes of military rule would only serve to strengthen this tendency, as these governments would inevitably ban or curtail the activities of established parties, thereby preventing them from maturing as organizations even as pliant landed elites aligned themselves with the military in order to strengthen themselves. The ability of landed politicians to adapt to, and even strengthen their power under, military governments, even as parties as organizations suffered tremendously, only reinforced the electoral indispensability of these traditional elites in periods of ‘democratic’ government. Attempts by successive governments to preserve, and even enhance, the enduringly rural nature of the electorate confirm this fact. For example, in the run-up to the elections of 1977, there is considerable evidence to suggest that the Bhutto government, having by then thrown in its lot with landed politicians, actively sought to manipulate the delineation of electoral constituencies in a way that would favour rural politicians in league with the regime.<sup>181</sup> Even in the contemporary period, the constituencies drawn up for the elections of 2008 reflected the same kind of rural bias that had existed in 1962, with only 25% of constituencies for the National Assembly being purely urban, even though approximately 36% of the population was now estimated to live in cities. Of the remaining constituencies, approximately 49% were purely rural, while the remaining 25% were semi-urban constituencies in which urban centres, both small and large, were paired with surrounding villages that, more often than not, contained a

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<sup>181</sup> Government of Pakistan, 1978, *White Paper on the Conduct of the General Election in March 1977*, 43-60, LSE.

larger number of voters than the cities, towns, and fragments of both that they were linked to.<sup>182</sup>

The utility of the landed elite to Pakistan's parties is also demonstrated by an examination of their class composition. As show by Maniruzzaman (1966), nearly 80% of legislators in Punjab in 1952 were members of the traditional landed aristocracy. Between 1985 and 1997, there was little evidence to suggest that this situation had changed in any significant fashion, as shown by the evidence presented by Shafqat (1998) on the class composition of the National Assembly, reproduced in Table 7 below.

	<b>1985</b>	<b>1988</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1997</b>
Landlords and Tribal Leaders	157	156	106	129	126
Businessmen/Industrialists	54	20	38	37	39
Urban Professionals	18	9	46	26	32
Religious Leaders	6	15	11	8	3
Retired Military Officers	0	7	3	5	2
Other	3	0	3	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>207</b>

**Table 7: Socio-Economic characteristics of National Assembly Members, 1985-1997**

Unfortunately, Shafqat does not cite the source of his data, which makes it difficult to ascertain whether or not there were any cases of overlap in this period between the categories of landlord and industrialist. Nonetheless the fact remains that throughout this period, including a decade of purely democratic rule, leadership of Pakistan's most powerful political parties remained firmly in the hands of the propertied classes, with the landed elite being the single largest group within this

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<sup>182</sup> The constituency categories described here have been determined with reference to the constituency maps provided on the website of the Election Commission of Pakistan <http://www.ecp.gov.pk/Delimitation/Constituency/Maps/NA.aspx>. Constituencies are delineated on the basis of population. For the purposes of the 2008 elections, it is important to bear in mind that the population figures used to delineate the constituencies were based on the Census of 1998. Given the explosive growth of the urban population in the decade between the Census and the elections, the rural vote was even more over-represented than the official report would suggest. Indeed, as argued by Ali (2003), it may now be possible to make the claim that the increasingly blurred distinction between 'rural' and 'urban' in Pakistan means that over 50% of the population might now qualify as urban.

category. At the provincial level, comparable data on the class composition of the Provincial Assemblies during this period is not readily available. However, using data provided on the website of the Punjab Provincial Assembly, it is possible to see that the legislators elected to office in 2008 displayed economic and social backgrounds that are not dissimilar to those presented above, and which do not represent a significant departure from the claims that 80% and 63.3% of Punjab’s legislators were drawn from the landed elite in 1951 and 1972 respectively (Maniruzzaman, 1966; Jones, 2003, 488). This data is given in Table 8.

<b>Profession</b>	
Agriculturalist	82
Businessmen/Industrialists	59
Urban Professionals	51
Others	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>

**Table 8: Profession of members of the Punjab Assembly, 2008<sup>183</sup>**

It is worth noting that these statistics do not present a complete picture of the class composition of the Punjab Assembly for two reasons. First, the information is incomplete, as details have not been provided for 150 members of the assembly. Second, as noted in some of the profiles of individual members, the categories of ‘businessman’ and ‘agriculturalist’ often overlap. The net result of this is that despite decades of economic change in Punjab, with the growth of both cities and industry, traditional landed elites have been able to retain their control over political parties and the representative organs of government. This finding is one that is not restricted to the national and provincial legislatures, as confirmed by Akhtar et al. (2007) in their research on the socio-economic profile of elected representatives at the local level.

<sup>183</sup> Statistics taken from the website of the Punjab Assembly, <http://www.pap.gov.pk/index.php/members/stats/en/19>

One final factor that can help to explain the continued dominance of landed politicians in the party system deals with the institutional design of electoral politics in Punjab. Having inherited a first past the post electoral system from the colonial government, Punjabi party politics remained a two-party system as predicted by Duverger's Law (Duverger, 1954). While national level politics has proven to be much more fragmented, largely due to the emergence of strong ethnic parties like the ANP and MQM in the smaller provinces (not to mention Bengal's Awami League prior to 1971), Punjab itself has rarely had more than two major parties competing in elections. Even in situations where opposition parties have coalesced together against incumbents, as was the case with the Muslim League governments of the 1950s, or the Bhutto regime, more often than not these opposition coalitions have remained dominated by single formations of landed interests, with smaller parties from the religious right and the Left remaining largely marginal to actual electoral politics. This was also true in the 1990s, when the PPP and the IJI/PML-N were the only two parties capable of winning sufficient seats to form provincial governments, albeit sometimes with the support of much smaller parties and factions of independents. The tendency of Punjabi politics to gravitate towards two-partyism has had the effect of erecting barriers to entry for new parties seeking to challenge the status quo, and the winner-takes-all nature of the voting system has reinforced the need to field candidates possessing the potential to actually win in their constituencies. Once again, given the rural nature of the electorate, the voting system itself has served to incentivize political parties to recruit landlords to their fold.

The electoral race to the bottom that has been described above has extremely important implications for democratization in Pakistan. Although their electoral importance derives from their continuing ability to mobilize support at the local level,

the entrenchment of the landed elite in party politics has provided them with a mechanism through which to reinforce their formal political power and, consequently, their capacity to more effectively pursue their interests as individual politicians, and as a class. Over time, reliance on the landed elite for electoral support has only deepened as the costs of selecting alternative candidates in the countryside have increased. In turn, these landed politicians have used their position within the party system to further develop the very same attributes that have made them so essential to the electoral process, thereby setting up a cycle of dependence from which parties have largely been unable to escape. Just as the path dependent nature of institutional development put in motion by the colonial government solidified the position of landed politicians within Punjab's politics, similar mechanisms of entrenchment and reinforcement have underpinned the capture of Pakistan's political parties by the Punjabi landed elite.

### ***Networks of Power and Patronage***

“By way of gift, something is to be given by the ruling party to its friends. There is my friend, the embodiment of generosity, Kazi Fazlullah Sahib. He has appointed his friend Jatoi Sahib as President of the Local Board of Dadu. Now everybody knows that Jatoi Sahib will be re-elected as a member of the Assembly; he had just to give him a gift. If the cousin of Abdul Hamid Jatoi is appointed as President of the Municipality, where is the harm; it is a gift to a friend. If another friend of Kazi Sahib, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, is appointed President of the Local Board, Nawabshah, where is the harm. It is also

a gift and a friend will be elected... if gifts are distributed, we should not grudge the Government this distribution of gifts. That is after all what they have got in their hands".<sup>184</sup>

During the colonial period, the vertical chains of patronage that linked the local to provincial and national politics were buttressed by linkages between the landed elite and the colonial state apparatus. As shown in previous chapters, a significant portion of the Punjabi bureaucracy was drawn from the agriculturalist *biraderis*, and military recruitment from the province also disproportionately favoured these groups. The net result of this was to create a situation in which landed politicians seeking to mobilise support or pursue their own interests could call upon their networks within both the military and bureaucracy to do so. Following independence in 1947, it was this very fact that was at least partially responsible for the dominance of landed politicians in the West Pakistani government; the military-bureaucratic establishment was overwhelmingly Punjabi, and remained sympathetic to the very same Punjabi landlords that it had worked with so closely under the British.<sup>185</sup>

While this situation has changed to an extent, most notably after the 1970s following administrative reforms by the Bhutto government that opened the

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<sup>184</sup> Shahnawaz Pirzada, member from Nawabshah District, Provincial Assembly of West Pakistan Debates (PAWPD), 27 August 1958, 234, PAL.

<sup>185</sup> In addition to being 'overdeveloped' relative to Pakistan's political parties and civil society (Alavi, 1972a), the Establishment also exhibited a clear Punjabi bias rooted in the preponderant position of Punjabis within the different organs of the state and armed forces (Alavi, 1988). From the very outset, this 'Punjabization' of the Pakistani state (Samad, 1995; Kudaisya and Tan, 2000; Talbot, 2002a; Naqvi, 2007) gave rise to ethno-national tensions within the country, as the other provinces fought against the Punjabi dominance of the state. Bengal, in particular, constantly strove to secure position for itself within the state that was commensurate with its demographic strength and importance. For its own part the Establishment saw the challenge from the non-Punjabi provinces and as an assault on its own power and would continually strive to reinforce its own position relative to them in the decades to come, with this ethnic tension becoming a powerful force inhibiting Pakistan's democratization (Jaffrelot, 2002; Adeney and Wyatt, 2004).

bureaucracy up to increased recruitment from the smaller provinces, as well as the middle classes (Kennedy, 1982; Islam, 1989), the fundamental nature of the bureaucracy as a source of patronage to be accessed and distributed by the political elite has remained constant. Personal ties of loyalty and kinship continue to provide the basis for rent-seeking and preferential access to the state (Nadvi, 2002; Islam, 2004), with the bureaucracy's broader recruitment base making it less insular and more open to clientelism (Cheema and Sayeed, 2006), thus increasing the capacity of the state to dispense patronage to different social groups, and for the urban middle classes to exercise greater amounts of political power (Jalal, 1994; Akhtar, 2010a). In the countryside, however, local landed influentials have largely retained their role as the primary sources of access to the state, and have continued to use their power to reinforce this position by providing services and negotiating with the state on behalf of their subordinates (Cheema and Mohmand, 2007). The link between landed power and the state in Punjab also continues to be influenced by the nature of recruitment into the military. Even though the military, like the bureaucracy, has widened access to include groups outside of the traditional landed elite, it remains an institution with roots in the Punjabi countryside (Dewey, 1991a).

In order to understand the precise mechanisms through which the relationship between the Punjabi landed elite and the state has reinforced and reproduced the power of both actors over time, it is useful to begin by noting how, even in the contemporary period, the landed elite remain bound to the state by family ties. In his analysis of Punjabi politics in the years leading up to Bhutto's electoral victory in 1970, Baxter (1974) made the observation that, in addition to having a significant number of family members who had previously or currently been involved in politics, many of the landed politicians of Punjab had family members who occupied top

positions in the bureaucracy, military, and industry. Where these ties did not involve direct family, marriage was used as a strategy through which different landed politicians and factions could maximize the size and geographical spread of their networks. This point is also made by Sayeed (1972, 391), Alam (1974), and LaFrance (2002), who all argue that that the alliance between urban bureaucrats, military elites, and dominant economic groups is one cemented not only through the exchange of patronage, but also through marriage. These findings broadly hold true for the current crop of Punjabi legislators as well.<sup>186</sup> The vast majority Assembly members have relatives who have held elected office, and many also have direct familial links to the bureaucracy and military. Significantly, these links are not always restricted to the upper echelons of government, nor are they necessarily restricted to the constituencies of the legislators themselves; many of the relatives of these legislators have been involved in local government, and these ties have often been spread out over significant parts of Punjab, if not Pakistan.

The implications of this for the exercise of landed power are clear. In his work on class in Punjab, Ahmad (1973) noted that part of the power the traditional aristocracy held over the subordinate classes was linked to the size and cohesion of their networks; tenants or workers seeking to leave one village for another would often find themselves receiving unsympathetic treatment from neighbouring landlords with ties to those in their original village. By cultivating direct links with functionaries in the bureaucracy and military, the landed elite are able to ensure that their control is maintained not only through the exercise of their power within their own domains, but also through proxies performing different roles within and outside of the state.

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<sup>186</sup> According to the statistics provided on the website, two-thirds of the current members have family members who are, or were, part of the Punjab Assembly, the National Assembly, the military, and the bureaucracy. See <http://www.pap.gov.pk/index.php/members/stats/en/19>.

Marriage and family are not the only factors that have allowed Punjab's landed politicians to maintain their networks of influence within the bureaucracy. The receipt and provision of patronage have also been key to this process, with the landed elite using their position as elected representatives to repay the military and bureaucracy for their services. As was the case under colonialism, this has most often taken the form of land grants to different government and military personnel. Following Partition, the various bureaucratic committees and boards tasked with managing the evacuee property and allocating it to refugees were constantly criticised for cronyism as successive administrations used them as a tool through which to reward their subordinates (Niaz, 2010, 245-249). Similarly, when the Noon government was dissolved in 1955, one of the reasons cited for its dismissal was the corrupt way in which it, 'had decided to allot land to all Major-Generals in the army, all Deputy Commissioners in the Punjab or their relatives and most members of the legislature. In addition, it was proposed to allot land to certain members of the High Court and Federal Court'.<sup>187</sup> However, the fact that the Noon government had engaged in these activities was hardly a surprise. Indeed, as negotiations were being undertaken to finalise the One Unit scheme, a dispute arose between the Federal Government and Punjab over the right of the provincial government to allocate land which was to be brought under cultivation following the imminent expansion of the irrigation network.<sup>188</sup> Given that the provincial governments of West Pakistan were to be merged into a single entity, the Governor-General had ordered all land allocations to be put on hold until the new government could take final decisions on them. In addition to the financial difficulties imposed on the provincial government by this decision, relating largely to how it impeded the government's ability to lease out land

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<sup>187</sup> File No. 111/CF/55, 'Dismissal of Noon Ministry', Cabinet Secretariat, 1955, NDC.

<sup>188</sup> File No. 17/CF/55, 'Allocation, Distribution, Sale, Lease of the Land in West Pakistan', 1955, Cabinet Secretariat, NDC.

for short-term cultivation<sup>189</sup>, a number of objections to this were raised by the Punjab government, ranging from the, ‘categorical commitment to earmark an area of hundred thousand acres for men and officers of the armed forces’<sup>190</sup>, to the need to confer, ‘proprietary rights on holders of certain categories of grants... including *lambardari* grants’.<sup>191</sup>

Conferring grants of land to select groups, particularly in the army and bureaucracy, was not something that was restricted to any one government or landed faction. Rather, it was a vital part of the process through which the landed elite used their position to strengthen their networks and reproduce their power, and represented the continuation of a practice that had been in place since the colonial era. Despite their acrimonious conflicts of interest with each other, the use of land as patronage by rival groups was something that was arguably seen by landed politicians as being inherent to the process of government in Punjab, and necessary for the perpetuation of their interests as a class. This was illustrated in a letter written by Firoz Khan Noon to the Finance Minister in response to the fear that many of the grants his government had already made would be reversed. Noon argued that, ‘whatever land was granted by Malik Khizar Hayat Tiwana at the time of elections and to which objection could have been taken, the Daultana ministry did not cancel any of these grants. Similarly, this ministry has not cancelled a single grant made by the Daultana ministry. Therefore... whatever land... has been allotted to people, the Central Government is honour bound not to cancel this’<sup>192</sup>.

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<sup>189</sup> File No. 17/CF/55, ‘Allocation, Distribution, Sale, Lease of the Land in West Pakistan’, 21 April 1955, Cabinet Secretariat, NDC.

<sup>190</sup> File No. 17/CF/55, ‘Allocation, Distribution, Sale, Lease of the Land in West Pakistan’, 1 April 1955, Cabinet Secretariat, NDC.

<sup>191</sup> File No. 17/CF/55, ‘Allocation, Distribution, Sale, Lease of the Land in West Pakistan’, 1 June 1955, Cabinet Secretariat, NDC.

<sup>192</sup> File No. 17/CF/55, ‘Allocation, Distribution, Sale, Lease of the Land in West Pakistan’, 21 April 1955, Cabinet Secretariat, NDC.

Using land as patronage would become common practice under both civilian and military governments, with a variety of different schemes being set up to award land to bureaucrats, army officials, and other groups whose support the regime in power would want to cultivate. For example, in the first five years of its rule, the Ayub Khan government conferred several thousand acres of land to some of the province's highest ranking civil servants from departments including Health, Electricity and, ironically, Anti-Corruption.<sup>193</sup> In 1968, in a village in Sialkot where many inhabitants had been displaced by a flood, it was revealed that during the process of resettlement, half of the land had now been allocated to military personnel, with the displaced persons being resettled elsewhere.<sup>194</sup> In the same session of the Punjab Assembly, legislators were also informed that although the government had no plans to award any land to the province's landless cultivators<sup>195</sup>, 37914 acres of land had been awarded to provincial-level bureaucrats, a further 10417 acres had been granted to national-level bureaucrats, and 56191 acres had been allocated to members of the three branches of the armed forces since 1960.<sup>196</sup> At the start of the Bhutto government, a question asked in the Punjab Assembly showed that the practice of granting land to the military continued unabated, with a significant amount of prime agricultural land being allotted to serving and retired soldiers in the district of Sargodha.<sup>197</sup> Furthermore, by 1975 the government had moved beyond just cultivating links with the military and bureaucracy, and had also started to award land to groups like lawyers and journalists.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Provincial Assembly of West Pakistan Debates (PAWPD), 6 April 1963, 2263-2265, PAL.

<sup>194</sup> PAWPD, 1 May 1968, 14-18, PAL.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>197</sup> PLAD, 28 July 1972, 2188-2192, PAL.

<sup>198</sup> PLAD, 12 February 1975, 180-207, PAL.

The landed elite have also cultivated their networks within the state by using their legislative power to directly reward a very particular set of government officials. The proceedings of the different Punjab Assemblies are replete with instances of landed politicians actively seeking to address the concerns of striking *patwaris*<sup>199</sup>, resolve disputes between the local revenue administration and the police<sup>200</sup>, increase *patwari* wages<sup>201</sup>, challenge the transferral and removal of *patwaris*<sup>202</sup>, and facilitate recruitment into local-level administrations on the basis of favouritism rather than merit.<sup>203</sup> That legislators place such an emphasis on looking after the needs of members of the local revenue administration is not surprising; *patwaris* maintain exclusive access to records of land ownership and, therefore, play a fundamental role in determining the revenue landowners have to ultimately pay. Furthermore, in disputes over land, *patwari* records are key to any kind of adjudication or litigation. Without *patwari* support, it would not be possible for landlords to work with district and provincial administrations to manipulate the receipt and disbursement of funds and patronage (Nelson, 2011, 178). The power of Pakistan's estimated 14000 *patwaris* can be gauged not only by their ability to successfully block attempts at reforming an archaic revenue system (Qazi, 2006), but also by examining a revenue case from 1968 involving no less a personage than Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. In a case brought against Bhutto alleging that he had illegally acquired 500 acres of land, the entire matter was dropped once it was discovered that the single existing copy of the local *patwari*'s record of land rights could not be used as evidence because the entry

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<sup>199</sup> PLAD, 1 March 1952, 78, PAL.

<sup>200</sup> PAWPD, 23 May 1968, 4556-4564, PAL.

<sup>201</sup> PLAD, 26 July 1972, 1833-1835, PAL.

<sup>202</sup> PLAD, 30 January 1973, 1108-1110, PAL.

<sup>203</sup> PLAD, 28 June 1989, 1609-1617, PAL.

for Bhutto was not legible, making it impossible to determine if he owned 5 or 500 acres of land in that particular area!<sup>204</sup>

Finally, as discussed in Chapter 5, the institution that best embodied the nexus between the bureaucracy and the landed elite was that of the District Boards, which oversaw public works projects and development at the local level, and which would be replaced post-Partition by a variety of similar institutions. The first of these was the Village Industrial Development Programme, which was initiated in 1952 and envisaged a process of rural uplift that would be spearheaded by the bureaucracy at the local level. However, the plan would prove to be short-lived, partly due to tensions within the bureaucracy itself but also due to a lack of political commitment from the Muslim League (Burki, 1969, 327-329). This situation would change in 1959 with the initiation of the Rural Works Programme (RWP), a project that was envisaged by the Ayub Khan government as being a means through which to link the elected BD members to the bureaucracy at the local level in order to ensure the effective implementation of developmental policies. In the words of Burki (1969), who was the Director of the West Pakistan RWP, the plan ultimately led to the, ‘forging of an alliance between the Civil Service of Pakistan, West Pakistan’s landed aristocracy, and a group of foreign advisors working in the country’ (331). Essentially, when the Ayub Khan regime began its rapprochement with the landed elite in the early 1960s, the involvement of landed politicians with the RWP illustrated enduring capacity to shape local level politics while also allowing them to use the programme as a means

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<sup>204</sup> ‘Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto: Cases Regarding Irregularities in Declaring Landholdings and Tractors, 1968-69’, Acc. No. S. 940, NDC. In a different, more contemporary context, Hull (2010) shows how villagers in the outskirts of Islamabad, as well as local officials, use the opaque and nebulous nature of official ownership records to defraud the government of money, and to initiate legal proceedings against rivals. Again, the ease with which local land records lend themselves to manipulation underscores the importance of local functionaries to the landed elite. Furthermore, as was discovered by Moir and Moir (1990), district-level records on revenue are often difficult to locate and access, with this providing the local level bureaucracy with a tremendous amount of discretion with regards to the use and manipulation of these records.

through which to distribute patronage, with the help of the bureaucracy, and claim credit for any developmental progress that took place. Like the District Boards, very large amounts of funding were placed at the disposal of the RWP, with Rs. 232,655,000 being spent on social welfare, agriculture, education, health, sanitation, communication, irrigation, and other areas between 1963 and 1966 (Burki, 1969, 337). For Burki, the ability to influence the way in which these resources were used played a very important role in reinforcing the power of the landed elite during the Ayub years.

Although the RWP came to an end with the Ayub regime, its successor, the People's Works Programme (PWP) would perform a similar role under Bhutto, as would the Integrated Rural Development (IRD) Programme under Zia, with provincial and national-level legislators being given a direct role in the management of the local organisations charged with rural development (Waseem, 1982, 230). Indeed, by 1985, legislators had been provided with annual grants worth Rs. 5 million, channelled through the district administration, for use on 'local development'. More often than not, these funds were either appropriated by politicians themselves, or used to cultivate support through the disbursement of patronage (Shafiqat, 2002, 216). More recent experiments with local government and rural development have yielded similar results. Under Musharraf, the Local Government Plan's provisions for the creation of associations for participatory development in individual villages remained hamstrung by bureaucratic control and elite influence (Cheema and Mohmand, 2007; Akhtar et al., 2007). As such, while the exact specifications of each of these schemes would differ, their fundamental character remained unchanged; rather than facilitating community-based, participatory development, these organizations would remain

under bureaucratic control, and would essentially be, ‘communication channels between the local bureaucracy and the landlord factions’ (Waseem, 1982, 233).

Where political parties and the organs of representative government have provided the landed elite with an important means through which to acquire access to state patronage, their links with the bureaucracy and the military have allowed for the perpetuation of the mechanisms that have underpinned the reproduction of their power at the local level. Since independence, Punjab’s landed politicians have remained tied to the state by blood and treasure, deploying their own power and influence to curry favour with state functionaries in exchange for services related to the protection of their economic interests, the persecution of their rivals, and the pursuit of their political goals. That this relationship between the state and the landed elite bears considerable resemblance to that which existed under colonialism is yet another illustration of the path dependent nature of landed power in Punjab; the nexus between local bureaucrats and landlords, and the use of state institutions for the pursuit of their common goals, was a system put in place by the colonial government and subsequently reproduced in a post-colonial context in which the state did not experience a significant rupture with the previous model of administration. The reciprocal nature of the relationship between the state and the landed elite has only deepened over time.

### ***Legislative Power***

“There are days when I hear capitalists speak the language of Socialists and there are days when I hear Socialists speak the language of capitalists. If there is anything which touches the pocket of the rich, then party discipline is thrown to the winds, and adequate time is given for

discussion on the floor of the House. If there is any matter that affects the interests of the poor, then party discipline is invoked, and graveyard silence prevails in this House”.<sup>205</sup>

After independence, Pakistan was governed using the Government of India Act of 1935, with many of the laws enshrined in this document either being retained in their entirety, or used as a template for subsequent legislation, even after the promulgation of the Constitution of 1956. The institutional implications of this for Punjab can be seen in how modified versions of the Punjab Revenue and Tenancy Acts remained in place until the late 1990s, and the Alienation of Land Act, while not always enforced, remained on the statute books in an essentially unchanged form. While there were some significant legal changes, most notably with the introduction of laws aimed at bringing rules of female inheritance in line with Islamic teachings, the landed elite possessed the capacity to exploit loopholes in these laws, or even evade them altogether, thus ultimately lessening their impact (Nelson, 2011). The same was true for questions of land reform and taxation; in both cases, landed legislators used their influence to circumvent or dilute measures that directly impinged upon their economic power. By focusing on the laws related to Land Reform, as well on the failure to impose an Agricultural Income Tax in Punjab, this section will show precisely how legislative power was used by the landed elite to shape the environment in which they could pursue their economic interests, thereby reinforcing their power as a class.

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<sup>205</sup> C. E. Gibbon, Anglo-Indian Member, 6 April 1948, WPLAD, 487, PAL.

## Land Reforms

Despite the fact that it was a party of pre-dominantly landed interests, the Muslim League, and its urban leadership in particular, understood the political capital to be gained from the idea of agrarian reform. The League's 1944 'Memorandum on Economic Development'<sup>206</sup> openly attacked *zamindars* and while stopping short of calling for the expropriation of their land, nonetheless outlined a commitment to a more equitable rural economy. Following independence, the Agrarian Committee of the Muslim league produced a report on Land Reform in Pakistan in 1949 which declared that, 'Landlordism in Pakistan is a historical accident which has already conferred vast advantages and profits on generations of its beneficiaries'<sup>207</sup>, and claimed that, 'no time could be more ripe or propitious for the introduction of substantial agrarian reforms'.<sup>208</sup> This document, whose authors included Mian Mumtaz Daultana<sup>209</sup>, made a number of recommendations for agrarian reform, ranging from the abolition of *jagirs* and a reduction in size of the holdings of large landowners, to measures aimed at providing tenants with increased security of tenure and routes through which to eventually claim ownership of land. To this day, the report of the Muslim League's agrarian committee remains, 'one of the most progressive documents on the subject of land reforms in Pakistan' (Chaudhry et al., 1987, 18).

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<sup>206</sup> 'Muslim League: Memorandum on Economic Development', 3 September 1944, FMA, NAP.

<sup>207</sup> *Report of the Agrarian Committee of the Muslim League*, 1949, in Chaudhry, Ghaffar H., Khan, Mahmood H., and Naqvi, Syed Nawab H., 1987, *Land Reforms in Pakistan: A Historical Perspective* Islamabad: Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, 125.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

<sup>209</sup> It is interesting to note that Daultana, particularly in his early years as a member of the Muslim League, claimed to be a Communist, with this forming the basis for his rhetoric against large landlords during his time in government. In office, however, he would go on to prove Governor Mudie correct in his assessment that, 'Mumtaz Daultana is a person who everybody distrusts... he is accused of being a communist, which I don't believe, and of atheism, which is quite likely. I have always doubted whether he possesses the moral courage necessary for a Premier'. Letter from Governor Mudie to the Prime Minister, File No. 2(2)/PMS/49, 'Correspondence with the Governor West Punjab', Prime Minister's Secretariat, 10 January 1949, NDC.

Despite the report's emphasis on the need for action, spurred on by the imperatives of acquiring legitimacy in the Pakistani countryside, it would be ten years before Pakistan would undertake its first attempt at land reforms. In the interim, the Pakistani government was faced with the task of distributing about 7 million acres worth of evacuee property amongst the refugees streaming in from India. This land, which amounted to almost 18% of the total cropped area at the time, presented the state with the opportunity to effect the kind of redistribution of land that would go towards addressing the historical inequalities that had thus far characterized agrarian social relations. As part of this process, Punjab saw the allocation of 2,444,681 acres of land to 2,281,881 refugees by March 1949, with an additional 1.5 million acres being allocated by 1950 (Andrus and Mohammad, 1958, 469). However, rather than resulting in alteration of the established agrarian power structure, the process of resettlement was one riven with corruption and the old model of patronage politics; landowners, of both the refugee and settled variety, were able to appropriate much of this land, with the eventual patterns of ownership established mirroring those that had existed prior to partition (Waseem, 2004; Gazdar, 2009).

This pattern was repeated in future attempts at agrarian reform. When Ayub Khan assumed power, one of his first actions was to introduce land reforms by using his martial law powers to bypass the political process and act on recommendations made by the Land Reforms Commission of 1959. Nonetheless, Ayub's reforms failed to make a significant change to patterns of landownership and control in Pakistan. A similar fate would befall the next attempt at land reform as well, with these being implemented in 1972 by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who, not coincidentally, was able to go ahead with the project by using powers that had been given to him as Pakistan's first, and only, Civilian Martial Law Administrator. A third set of reforms, which the

Bhutto government initiated in 1977, would only be partially implemented before Zia-ul-Haq's military coup brought an end to the process. At this point, much of the limited change that had been accomplished would be brought to a halt, as a raft of legal challenges led to previous attempts at land reform being declared un-Islamic and, hence, illegal in Pakistan (Kennedy, 1993; Lau, 2006, 189-193; Nelson, 2011). As has been comprehensively established by the literature on Pakistan's land reforms, the reasons for their lack of success are manifold, but can ultimately be traced to the nature of the reforms themselves, the ability of landowners to circumvent the measures introduced, and the political importance of the landed elite to the governments of Ayub Khan and the PPP.

According to Herring (1979; 1983), the entire model of land reform in Pakistan was one that sought to limit individual ownership and push landowners towards capitalist, entrepreneurial farming, rather than effecting the redistribution of land itself. This was largely a result of the approach taken by the different reports that preceded the implementation of these reforms; while acknowledging the need to correct the economic and social imbalance created by the inequitable distribution of land, the state's firm commitment to protecting private property and promoting capitalist development precluded the implementation of more radical measures. By the mid-1950s, planners had begun to differentiate between the stagnant, parasitic landlordism that was often referred to as 'feudalism', and the more progressive process of capital accumulation and reinvestment associated with modern capitalist farming (Herring, 1979). To the extent that tenancy reform was on the agenda, inasmuch as traditional landlord-tenant relations were seen as being outmoded from an economic perspective as well as unjust, the assumption that underpinned planning was that incremental attempts at introducing pro-tenant regulations, when coupled

with limits to landownership, would slowly rectify the imbalance of power in the countryside. When Ayub Khan introduced his reforms under Martial Law Regulation 64 (MLR 64), this was the logic that informed the law. The same was largely true in 1972 of MLR 115, the instrument through which Bhutto introduced his first set of reforms. Land reform in Pakistan was always seen as an economic project rather than a political one, with the need to boost productivity trumping any desire to ensure the reduction of landed power (Gazdar, 2009).

The exact details of the reform programmes show the extent to which their impact would have remained limited even if they had been implemented properly which, as will be discussed below, was not the case. Under MLR 64, the limits to landownership imposed were individual holdings of either 500 acres of irrigated land, or 1000 acres of non-irrigated land (or a total of 36,000 PIUs).<sup>210</sup> These ceilings were many times greater than the average landholding size in Pakistan and, indeed, above the official subsistence level of 12.5 acres per household, but were nonetheless viewed as being optimal for capitalist agriculture. Additionally, many caveats and loopholes were included in the regulations, including exceptions being made for the ownership of large orchards and mechanisms being included through which large gifts of land could be made to family members. All of this meant that despite the existence of an official ceiling, it was not uncommon for individual landowners to have holdings of up to 80,000 PIUs, and for entire landed estates to be maintained intact through their redistribution within landholding families (Rashid, 1985). Most importantly of all, MLR 64 provided for the payment of compensation to landlords

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<sup>210</sup> PIU, or Production Index Unit, was a measure used by the government to gauge the productivity of land based on crop yields. The variable character of PIUs, in addition to the number of inputs that went into calculating them, meant that these figures were often distorted by landlords seeking to mask the true size and worth of their holdings. For this reason, landlords using PIU calculations would often be able to hold on to land far in excess of the ceiling as defined in acres. See Hussain (1989).

from whom land was acquired, and also required that tenants who were allotted land would have to pay for it.

When MLR 115 was introduced in 1972, it appeared on paper to be more radical than its predecessor in a number of important ways. While the ceilings of 150 acres of irrigated, or 300 acres of non-irrigated, land still reflected the logic of creating individual farms of a size suitable for effective capitalist farming, these limits were much smaller than the ones Ayub Khan attempted to enforce.<sup>211</sup> Also, unlike MLR 64, the land resumed under these reforms was simply appropriated by the state without compensation, was allotted to tenants without any payment, and was coupled with tenancy regulations that sought to prevent the eviction of cultivating tenants without good reason. Perhaps most significant was the role played by the Federal Land Commission (FLC) in this process; aware of the way in which landed families had evaded MLR 64 by transferring land amongst themselves, Bhutto appointed the FLC to investigate all transfers of land between 1967 and 1971 in an attempt to reverse transactions that had been designed to avoid the impact of the reforms. The reforms of 1977 would have gone even further, setting a ceiling of 100 acres of irrigated and 200 acres of non-irrigated land, albeit with the provision of compensation to affected landlords. However, the figures on the actual amounts of land resumed under MLR 64 and MLR 115 indicate the redistributive impact of the measures remained incredibly limited. The statistics on the amount of land resumed and awarded in Pakistan are given in Table 9 below.

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<sup>211</sup> For a detailed overview of the as yet un-resolved debate over 'optimal' farm size for agriculture in Pakistan, see Herring (1983) and Hussain (1988).

	<b>MLR 64 (Ayub)</b>	<b>MLR 115 (PPP)</b>
Total Land Resumed (acres)	1,902,788	2,826,400
Total Land Distributed (acres)	622,199	1,223,000
Number of Tenant Beneficiaries	150,000	119,182
Distributed Land as %age of Farmed Area	3.9%	2.5%

**Table 9: Land Resumed and Distributed in Pakistan under MLR 64 and MLR 115<sup>212</sup>**

A number of points need to be borne in mind when considering these figures. Firstly, the existence of strong links between the landed elite and local level revenue officials meant that many landowners were able to evade the reforms altogether. Through the exploitation of legal loopholes and the outright falsification of documents and measurements, the landed elite were often able to minimize the impact of the reforms, with the process being facilitated by the bureaucracy (Chaudhry and Herring, 1974, 110-115). Therefore, while there certainly were instances where land was appropriated from large landowners, the ability to manipulate the implementation of the reforms was a key mechanism through which the landed elite ensured that the agrarian structure remained fundamentally unchanged. Secondly, as can be seen from the number of beneficiaries, the average amount of land given to individual recipients was very small; under MLR 64, this amounted to barely 4 acres per head, while MLR 115 gave approximately 10 acres. Given that these sizes were still below the subsistence level for an average household, the ties of economic dependence that linked the landless and cultivating peasantry to the landed elite remained in place (Joshi, 1974; Herring, 1983, 99). Thirdly, the fact that land resumed under both sets

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<sup>212</sup> Data for this table is taken from Herring (1983) and Rashid (1985).

of reforms could only be awarded to landless tenants already occupying the land<sup>213</sup> meant that landless non-cultivators and tenants with marginal holdings of their own were automatically excluded from the process.

In addition to this, a number of other discrepancies hampered the progress of the land reforms. Under both Ayub and Bhutto, a significant amount of the land acquired in both rounds of reform was barren or otherwise uncultivable. With MLR 64, 56.8% of the land resumed was not cultivated and had been deliberately given to the state by landlords seeking to hold on to their most productive land. This was in part a result of the uneven impact of the reforms; in Punjab, over 56% of the land resumed under MLR 64 was from the district of Dera Ghazi Khan, while a further 11.4% was from Mianwalli (Jones, 2003, 32-33). Both these districts were home to powerful Baloch landholders owning very large estates, but also had some of the least developed agriculture in the province. By contrast, the more productive districts of Punjab, which at any rate had higher levels of peasant proprietorship and smaller estates on average, were lightly affected by the reforms. Given that the state still had to pay compensation for this land<sup>214</sup>, the effect was to actually benefit many landlords who no longer had to pay revenue on land that was of marginal economic value to them, and for which they received payment through sale that may not have otherwise been possible (Herring, 1983, 99).

Similarly, in many instances the state simply could not allot land, even if it was cultivable, simply due to the cost it imposed on its beneficiaries. For example, in 1968, legislators were informed that the failure to allot 365,274 acres of land in

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<sup>213</sup> This problem was compounded in Punjab by the continued operation of the Land Alienation Act, as well as the Law of Pre-Emption, which precluded the granting of land to non-agriculturalists in the presence of agriculturalist tenants.

<sup>214</sup> According to Jones (2003, 33), the total amount of compensation paid out by the government came to Rs. 89.2 million, plus an annual interest of Rs. 3.3 million. All of this money went into the hands of the 902 individuals who gave up land under MLR 64.

Punjab was due to the high price per PIU of the land in many of these districts<sup>215</sup> and that a further 20,800 acres had been resumed from tenants unable to keep up with their payments.<sup>216</sup> When later asked if the reason for this was the poor quality of the land and the resulting low level of profit to be had from it, the Parliamentary Secretary disagreed, stating that, 'it was already under their [tenants'] cultivating possession when it was allotted... they could refuse its allotment to them at the very out-set rather than default in the payment of its price after reaping a number of harvest and committing breach of the conditions of sale'.<sup>217</sup>

For the Ayub government, the fact that several hundred thousand acres of land had been resumed was a sufficient indicator of success, even though abundant evidence existed to suggest that little had been done to actually achieve the goals of the reform programme. Evidence for this can be found in parliamentary debates from May 1968<sup>218</sup>, in which the government admitted that while tenants had received only 4 acres each, that much of this land was barren or otherwise uncultivable, and that large swathes of resumed land remained unused because the government had been unable to find buyers for it, 'the purpose of the Land Reforms Scheme was not punitive in character. It was to remove social imbalance' and that, in the eyes of the government, balance was maintained by letting landlords choose which land to parcel out, and by ensuring that tenants received land that they had been cultivating.<sup>219</sup>

Failure to distribute appropriated land was something that also characterized MLR 115, as seen in figures provided in the Punjab Assembly in 1975. By that point in time, 265,093 acres of land had been acquired by the state in the province, out of which 69,686 acres had been distributed to tenants. Of the remainder, 60,692 acres,

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<sup>215</sup> PAWPD, 3 May 1968, 594-595, PAL.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, 493-494.

<sup>217</sup> PAWPD, 12 June 1968, 7620, PAL.

<sup>218</sup> PAWPD, 23 May, 1968, 4539-4544, PAL.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 4543-4544.

nearly 30% of the total, could not be allotted to anyone because it was barren and could not be cultivated.<sup>220</sup> Echoing arguments from almost a decade earlier, a member of the Punjab Assembly asked if it would be possible to have barren, unallocated land returned to its original owners. The argument given for this was that by doing this, the government would at least receive revenue payments from it. While the government categorically ruled out the idea of returning resumed land to its original owners, it also admitted that it had no plans for investing in the development of such land so that it could be brought under cultivation.<sup>221</sup>

Land that was not allotted under the reforms, or which was confiscated from tenants in the case of MLR 64, reverted to becoming the property of the state, which could dispose of it as it saw fit. Although the official position was that such land would be retained for future redistribution, in reality much of this land would find its way back in the hands of the landed elite. An interesting example of this can be seen in Punjab, where Ayub Khan allegedly provided over 200,000 acres of resumed land to Punjabi landlords, bureaucrats, and their family members, who had supported him in the elections (Anjum, 1992, 66-70). Similarly, a considerable amount of land actually ended up being leased back to members of the landed aristocracy for use as stud and livestock farms, or as orchards, all of which were exempted from the provisions of MLR 64 (Jones, 2003, 33).

A more direct method through which this was done, particularly after MLR 115, was to mount legal challenges against the confiscation of land by the government. Examples of the precise mechanisms employed by the landed classes to use the legal system to undo the effects of land reform can be seen in two cases, from

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<sup>220</sup> PLAD, 4 December 1975, 1138-1139, PAL.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, 1141-1142.

the district of Attock, which were discussed by the Punjab Council in 1982.<sup>222</sup> The first case dealt with the transfer of land from the two daughters of a large landowner to a number of persons between 1967 and 1969. When MLR 115 was imposed and implemented, these transfers were examined by the Chief land Commissioner of Punjab and declared to be legal. However, when the tenants residing on the land in question petitioned the FLC to re-open the case, this was done and the initial decision in favour of the landowner was reversed. In response to this, the landowners and his daughters took the case to the Lahore High Court in 1976 and upon losing the case, appealed to the Supreme Court. In 1982, the case was still under consideration by the Court which had, at any rate, issued an injunction preventing the implementation of the FLC's decision. As can be seen, through the manipulation of the legal system, the landlord in question was initially able to evade the land reforms of 1972 and even though the FLC ruled against him in 1976, he was able to prevent the appropriation of his land by involving his tenants in a lengthy legal battle that would ultimately be decided in his favour.

The second case involved the *Pir* of Makhad, whose extensive landholdings in 1972 were spread between the districts of Attock, Multan, Faisalabad, and Sanghar (in Sindh). Between 1967 and 1971, the *Pir* had managed to transfer a significant amount of land to different corporations and individuals and upon reviewing these transfers in 1976, the FLC declared two to be illegal and sought to take control of the land in question. However, the *Pir* was given the right to choose which land could be appropriated by the state, which led to him selecting land that had been transferred to a corporation founded by himself and some of his relatives. Between the imposition of MLR 115 and the decision taken by the FLC in 1976, this corporation had sold

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<sup>222</sup> Provincial Council of Punjab Debates (PCPD), 20 December 1982, 525-528, PAL.

some of its land to a number of additional individuals, all of whom collectively took the FLC to court when faced with the potential confiscation of their land. Like the first case discussed above, this ultimately resulted in a legal back-and-forth which ended with the case being taken to the Supreme Court. In the interim, the land remained in the hands of the *Pir*, his relatives, and those who the land had been transferred to by them.

The case involving the *Pir* of Makhad is also interesting because it helps to highlight the way in which religion would also come to play a role in undermining the land reforms. Early on in the reform process, both Ayub Khan and Bhutto had sought to take control of much of the land that had been owned by the *pirs* and *sajjada nashins* of Punjab. This was a move that was met with resistance by these landed religious leaders, and the subsequent inability of the governments to actually implement the redistributive agenda that had been the justification for these moves was arguably part of the reason why the religious right mobilized against them in 1968 and the mid-1970s respectively (Nasr, 1996). The religious antipathy towards land reform was something that would assume much greater significance after the end of the Bhutto government; upon assuming power, General Zia-ul-Haq setup Islamic courts as part of his attempts to 'Islamize' Pakistan, beginning with Shariat Bench of the provincial high courts, and culminating finally with the creation of a Federal Shariat Court in 1980, and the Shariat Appellate Bench of the Supreme Court in 1982. As has been documented at length by Kennedy (1993), Lau (2006, 189-193) and Nelson (2011), these courts entertained appeals against the land reforms which contested them on the grounds that they were un-Islamic for depriving individuals of their property. While there was considerable debate over the extent to which this claim was correct, with the courts noting that there was an Islamic argument to be

made for redistribution as well, there would ultimately be a series of judgments that would categorically bring an end to the process of Land Reform. In particular, there were specific rulings that eliminated the Pre-Emption rights of tenants, as enshrined in the Punjab Pre-Emption Act of 1913, and the principle of establishing individual ceilings on land ownership. Although these judgments did not apply retrospectively, they did have a bearing on the thousands of cases that were in the courts at the time, blunting already limited impact of the land reforms. More importantly, these judgments also ensured that future attempts at land reform would be doomed unless they could be justified in Islamic terms that were compatible with those enshrined in the decisions of the Shariat Courts.

The limited redistributive impact of the reforms was compounded by the state's lack of political willingness to actively move against landlords who sought to subvert the reforms. By 1963, Ayub Khan's government had embraced the support of the landed politicians it had previously displaced, and the same was true for the PPP government of the 1970s, which had always relied to some degree on landlords from Punjab and Sindh, and which by 1972 had purged itself of its more progressive elements and had begun to deepen its partnership with the landed elite (Ahmed, 1973; Burki, 1988). While the assumptions underpinning the reforms were arguably inadequate for providing a basis from which to transform the agrarian structure, and the nature of the relationship between the bureaucracy and landowners made implementation difficult, the fact that the landed elite were a vital source of support for both Ayub Khan and Bhutto was a fundamental reason why, once initiated, the reforms were not implemented with the fervor that would have been necessary to realize their radical potential.

An illustration of the mechanisms through which land reform was used to cultivate the support of the landed elite can be seen in how the Bhutto government in particular used land reform as a tool through which to persecute political rivals. As argued by Herring (1983, 113-114), the provisions and implementation of MLR 115 disproportionately targeted political elites from the NWFP and Balochistan, the two provinces in which Bhutto's government faced the most opposition and resistance. Indeed, while the reforms as a whole affected only 2.5% of the total farm area of Pakistan, this figure changed to 12% for the NWFP and 10% in Balochistan (*ibid.*). Evidence for the provincial bias in the implementation of the reforms is also borne out the figures provided in Table 10 on the amount of land resumed in Punjab under the different rounds of land reform, corroborating the idea that the Bhutto government was less eager to implement its agenda for agrarian reform in Punjab and Sindh, where significant sections of the landowning political elite had joined with the PPP.

	<b>MLR 64</b>	<b>MLR 115</b>	<b>1977</b>
Total Land Distributed (acres)	441,663	163,448	39,735

**Table 10: Land Resumed and Distributed in Punjab under MLR 64, MLR 115, and the Reforms of 1977**<sup>223</sup>

In order to understand the rationale behind the selective implementation of the MLR 115 reforms, it is necessary to examine the political context in which the Bhutto government operated. In addition to being introduced as a Martial Law Regulation, Bhutto's land reforms were also interesting because, for the first and only time in Punjab (and Pakistan's) history, questions pertaining to land became national, rather than provincial, legislative subjects. This was only possible due to the unique political circumstances that allowed Bhutto to become Civilian Martial Law Administrator,

<sup>223</sup> PCPD, 20 December 1982, 525-526, PAL.

and President, in the period of transition from martial law to democracy in 1971-1972.<sup>224</sup> Using powers conferred on him by the Interim Constitution that had been introduced when the PPP came to power, Bhutto made the land reforms a national legislative subject ensuring that any discussion of the reforms would take place in the National, and not the Provincial, assemblies. Secondly, and arguably more importantly, Bhutto also used his authority to set up the FLC, which was tasked with investigating cases in which individuals had tried to evade the land reforms, and which supervised the operation of the provincial and district-level Land Commissions. Notably, Bhutto also reserved the right for himself, and for the FLC, to take unilateral action on individual cases pertaining to the land reforms.

For the NAP<sup>225</sup>, these measures represented an unacceptable intrusion of the federal government in a domain that had historically always been within the purview of the Provincial Governments. Genuine as these grievances were, however, they were co-opted by opposition landed elites from Punjab and Sindh who sought to wrest control over the agrarian reform agenda back from the federal government.<sup>226</sup> This can be seen from the debate over the Land Reforms Amendment Bill of 1973. This bill sought to extend the powers, relating to the land reforms, that had been granted to Bhutto under the Interim Constitution, and which would otherwise expire with the introduction of the country's new constitution on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1973. In the

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<sup>224</sup> Following the secession of Bangladesh, General Yahya Khan resigned from his position as President, appointing Bhutto as CMLA and President with the understanding that the West Pakistan election results of 1970 would be taken as the basis upon which to form a new democratic government.

<sup>225</sup> The NAP was a broadly secular and progressive party that had managed to capture most of the vote in Sindh and Balochistan, making it the largest opposition party in the National Assembly. Over the years, despite some initial co-operation between the PPP and the NAP over the creation of a new Constitution for Pakistan, Bhutto's resistance to demands for increased provincial autonomy for the smaller provinces would lead to the two parties developing an increasingly fractious relationship, culminating in the arrests of prominent NAP leaders, the dissolution of their provincial assemblies, and the initiation of a military operation against Baloch ethno-nationalists. See Malik (1974) and Swidler and Titus (2000).

<sup>226</sup> An important point worth noting here is that much of the leadership of the NAP itself was also comprised of traditionally powerful landed and tribal elites from the NWFP and Balochistan.

view of the government, opposition to the bill was rooted in a desire on the part of entrenched elites to reverse the land reforms, as seen in the Law Minister Abdul Hafeez Pirzada's statement that, 'the objection that is coming to the land reform [is] because they want to undo the land reform'<sup>227</sup>, and that given the reforms themselves had been provided with permanent protection in the forthcoming Constitution, the PPP was, 'not going to allow the Provincial Legislatures to destroy these reforms'.<sup>228</sup> This was also acknowledged a decade later by Shaikh Rashid, the PPP's minister for Land Reforms, who felt the provincial governments and courts, dominated as they had been by the traditional elite, had been determined to impede the progress of the reforms (Rashid, 1985).

Amidst the NAP's allegations that the Bhutto government was seeking to infringe on the rights of the provinces, landowning Opposition politicians from Sindh and Punjab also joined in this particular criticism of the government. The historical irony of a Punjabi politician speaking in favour of autonomy for the smaller provinces was lost on Chaudhry Zahoor Elahi, a textile magnate from Gujrat in Punjab, as he argued that the PPP's continued infringement on the rights of the provincial governments, despite claims to the contrary, would only serve to fuel the same kind of anti-Centre sentiment that had infused the Bengali independence movement, and that it was necessary that the entire programme of land reform be reviewed.<sup>229</sup> The same position was adopted by Ali Ahmed Talpur, one of the largest landowners in Sindh, who claimed the government arbitrarily abused its power when determining which subjects were provincial and which were national.<sup>230</sup> In this case, however, even though the government's constitutional defence of its position was technically

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<sup>227</sup> National Assembly of Pakistan Debates (NAPD), 10 August 1973, 505, PAL.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, 509.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 579-582.

<sup>230</sup> NAPD, 11 August 1973, 558, PAL.

correct, the NAP's opposition, and that of non-NAP landowners from Punjab and Sindh, demonstrated both the importance of the provincial assemblies to the landowning elite, and the way in which opposition to the land reforms dovetailed with resistance to the centralizing tendencies of the Bhutto regime, providing a platform through which the traditional elite could unite to mobilise against the government.

In addition to attacking the government for encroaching on the powers of the provinces, the landowners of Punjab and Sindh also criticized the provisions of MLR 115 on the grounds that they had a negative effect on agriculture and agriculturalists. For Elahi, the land reforms represented nothing less than a deliberate attempt to eliminate the *zamindars* of Pakistan, as opposed to the country's major industrialists whose assets allegedly remained largely intact despite the government's programme of nationalization in the name of socialism.<sup>231</sup> Abdul Hameed Khan Jatoi, a member of one of Sindh's most powerful landowning families and a member of the NAP, echoed these concerns, suggesting that the government failed to appreciate the extent to which agriculture, like industry, required investment, and that the insecurity generated by the expropriation of land from its rightful owners served to discourage farmers who worked hard to cultivate their land.<sup>232</sup> Since Pakistan had been experiencing a period of food shortages and rising commodity prices at the time, both Elahi and Jatoi were able to make the argument that adding to the strain experienced by landowners would only serve to further weaken the agrarian economic sector. This argument was repeated a speech by Sahibzada Ahmed Raza Kasuri, a member of a landowning family from Kasur, who attacked the Land Reforms (Amendment) Bill of 1975 by saying,

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<sup>231</sup> NAPD, 11 August 1973, 580, PAL.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, 586-587.

‘He [Bhutto] is taking the initiative out of the hands of the agriculturalists... who give the shoulder to the economic edifice of Pakistan... Why are you bringing this lethargy in the agricultural sector because, when people are uncertain about their future, you cannot expect them to work hard... For God’s sake, do not take initiative out of this powerful class, that of agriculturalists who are the be-all and end-all of this country. Do not destroy them. Do not destroy them because you have to establish that you are socialist.... This is a very burdened class, this is a very powerful class... Majority of the honorable Members who represent the people in this House come from that class. Let us not prosecute them’.<sup>233</sup>

Kasuri’s speech was surprising because it provided a rare, direct statement of how the land reforms affected not only an abstract class of ‘agriculturalists’ – the bulk of whom would not be affected by the reforms anyway – but also the members of the landed elite sitting within the Assembly itself.

The speech quoted above is also interesting because it highlighted one of the paradoxes at the heart of the Bhutto government; for all its talk of Socialism and agrarian reform, the PPP was actually quite close to elements of the traditional landed elite. While a number of landowning politicians sat on the Opposition benches in the National Assembly, the fact remained that a significant number from Punjab and Sindh were with the Government, and actually voted for the land reforms. This can be explained by examining the government’s record on the implementation of the reforms, and the questions raised by the Opposition regarding their persecution

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<sup>233</sup> NAPD, 3 November 1975, 203, PAL.

through the use of MLR 115 and the FLC. When MLR 115 was imposed in 1972, it did not really come as a surprise to the powerful landholding elites in the different provinces of Pakistan. The PPP had been campaigning on a platform of agrarian reform since the late 1960s, and there was considerable evidence to believe that many landholders had taken pre-emptive measures, such as the transfer of land to family members, to circumvent the impact of any future reforms before the PPP even came to power (Herring, 1983). The FLC's primary purpose was to address this problem, and the powers it had been given were instrumental in initiating legal action against individual landholders who would otherwise be able to evade the reforms through the use of their links with the bureaucracy and the courts. Indeed, the constant extension of these powers between 1972 and 1976 was justified by how, as argued by a PPP legislator, 'landlords and feudal lords, in league with the revenue administration, doctored land records to transfer holdings to their friends and relatives, thereby maintaining control of their land despite the reforms'.<sup>234</sup> According to Rashid (1985, 46), the fact that the FLC had, by 1977, succeeded in resuming 568,835 acres of land through the prosecution of 2712 individual cases, an amount nearly half as much as the land resumed by the rest of the land reform bureaucracy, was a testament to its effectiveness as a tool through which to detect and prevent attempts at evading MLR 115.

Although the impact of the FLC was undeniable, it was also the case that it was incredibly selective in its pursuit of recalcitrant landowners. Of all the land confiscated by the FLC, 37% was from Balochistan and 23% was from the NWFP, while only 7% was from Punjab (Herring, 1983, 114). This was reflected in the debate on the Land Reforms Amendment Bill of 1973, where the most trenchant

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<sup>234</sup> NAPD, 3 November 1975, 205, PAL. Translated from Urdu.

criticism of the FLC came from Mahmud Ali Kasuri, one of the earliest converts to the PPP, the government's first law minister, and one of the architects of the Constitution of 1973. Kasuri, who had left the PPP to join the leftist Tehrik-i-Istiqlal in late 1972, first accused the government of not going far enough with the land reforms, saying that the ceilings imposed by the government, and the loopholes regarding family ownership that continued to exist, ensured that the project could not succeed in breaking up the estates of Pakistan's largest landowners.<sup>235</sup> Kasuri then argued that the land reforms were being used to victimize the PPP's political opponents, and that the Bill would allow Bhutto and the FLC to use their discretionary powers to initiate cases against individual. Kasuri also said that the government was using the land reform to make Opposition politicians, 'murder their own integrity while having a sword hanging over their heads', even as those sitting on the treasury benches could rest assured that no proceedings would be initiated against them.<sup>236</sup> Three years later, Kasuri would repeat this criticism when the Land Reforms (Baluchistan Pat Feeder Canal) Regulation (Amendment) Bill was brought before the National Assembly in 1976. This Bill, which applied to the implementation of the land reforms in a specific part of Baluchistan, also included measures that would once again extend the powers of the FLC and the President, with this being the fourth time that such an extension was requested. Claiming that the federal government's repeated extension requests were motivated by 'political' concerns, Kasuri said that these powers were dangerous because they granted the government the means through which to deprive its opponents, within and outside of parliament, of their rights<sup>237</sup>, and that, 'the only reasons these powers exist... is so that the federal government can

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<sup>235</sup> NAPD, 10 August 1973, 519, PAL.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, 520. Translated from Urdu.

<sup>237</sup> NAPD, 3 May 1976, 209, PAL.

take *suo moto* notice every time it develops differences with a *zamindar* or agriculturalist group'.<sup>238</sup>

Evidence for the selective implementation of the land reforms also came from Ali Ahmed Talpur when he repeated allegations that had appeared in the press suggesting that prominent PPP leaders, including Bhutto himself, had been able to evade the reforms and hold on to more than 20,000 acres of land each.<sup>239</sup> When making his remarks on the same Bill, Zahoor Elahi also implied that the reforms had seemed to skip the PPP leadership, claiming that not an inch of land had been taken from the large estates of Larkana district in Sindh, Bhutto's own constituency.<sup>240</sup> Elahi would repeat these claims two years later, accusing the Sindhi landlords in government of continuing to own thousands of acres of land, even as martial law era powers were used to victimize the regime's opponents and landowners throughout the country.<sup>241</sup>

Talpur and Elahi, being the PPP's opponents, had every incentive to exaggerate or fabricate the claims they were making. Mahmud Kasuri's criticism of the government, on the other hand, was important because unlike many of the NAP members and Punjabi politicians who opposed the PPP government, he was a committed leftist with an urban background who had absolutely no stake in preserving the power of the landed elite.<sup>242</sup> Kasuri's opposition was also interesting because, as pointed out by Shaikh Rashid, Kasuri had helped draft the laws that the government now sought to extend.<sup>243</sup> That he would now accuse the PPP of lacking

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<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, 210. Translated from Urdu.

<sup>239</sup> NAPD, 11 August 1973, 590, PAL.

<sup>240</sup> NAPD, 10 August 1973, 510-511, PAL.

<sup>241</sup> NAPD, 3 November 1975, 185-187, PAL.

<sup>242</sup> In the words of Tariq Ali (1970, 191), Kasuri was, 'a rarity anywhere in the world of politics – an honest social-democrat'. Kasuri was a radical lawyer who had remained a vocal critic of the Ayub regime, and had also served on the War Crimes Tribunal, convened by Bertrand Russell, that found the United States guilty of war crimes in Vietnam.

<sup>243</sup> NAPD, 3 November 1975, 212, PAL

the political will to implement the reforms properly, and of using the reforms to attack its opponents while ignoring the obvious transgressions of its own members, provided considerable reason to be sceptical of the PPP's commitment to seeing through the reforms in an impartial way.

Criticism of the FLC also began to emerge from within the ranks of the PPP itself in 1975, when the Land Reforms (Amendment) Bill was passed. For example, Begum Nasim Jahan, a female member from a landed Punjabi family, questioned the need to expand the FLC's powers, saying that, 'any landlord today... has got an ownership right... other Constitutions of the world have guaranteed ownership... do not keep this uncertainty... It keeps everybody hanging. Stop this thing we have suffered through'.<sup>244</sup> Speaking on the same bill Rao Khursheed Ali Khan, a landowning PPP member from Sahiwal, claimed that the FLC infringed on both provincial and individual rights, and that, 'just because someone is a landlord does not mean that their rights can be ignored'.<sup>245</sup> Disquiet over the FLC from within the PPP became even more visible when the Land Reforms (Second Amendment) Bill of 1976 was debated in the National Assembly. Rao Khursheed once again opposed the government's stance, arguing that the continuing power of the FLC to take notice of individual cases created unnecessary tension for landowners who had to live with the constant fear of prosecution.<sup>246</sup> Syed Abbas Gardezi, a landlord from Faisalabad in Punjab, argued that the continued prospect of further reforms, as well as the legal costs associated with contesting the state's programme of expropriation, was driving landowners throughout Pakistan to sell their holdings to capitalists who had little interest in agriculture.<sup>247</sup> Replying to these accusations, Shaikh Rashid argued that

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<sup>244</sup> NAPD, 3 November 1975, 193, PAL.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

<sup>246</sup> NAPD, 10 November 1976, 148, PAL.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

there was nothing wrong with powers used by the FLC since these had allowed the Commission to resume over 400,000 acres of land, and that the only people who had anything to fear from this were those who continued to try and evade the land reforms.<sup>248</sup> Rao Khursheed's response to this was interesting, since it provided an illustration of precisely how the Punjabi landed elite viewed their position within the agrarian economy; regretting the fact that a person like Shaikh Rashid who had spent his life fighting for the rights of workers and peasants would now be making life difficult for them, Khurshid said that even though land had been granted to cultivators, those who worked for large landowners were also 'cultivators', and that any uncertainty felt by landlords would also be felt by their tenants.<sup>249</sup>

Like the Land Reforms Bill of 1973, the Bills of 1975 and 1976 were passed by the National Assembly despite opposition from within the party itself. Part of the reason for this undoubtedly lay in the success with which large landholders, particularly those associated with the PPP, had been able to circumvent the reforms. Moreover, the fact that the Bill of 1976 was met with more opposition from within the PPP also indicated the changed nature of the party's powerbase; by 1976, large landowners were a tremendous source of support for the party, and arguably felt they could use their position to be more vocal about their concerns regarding the PPP's actions. At the same time, however, 1977 was due to be an election year in Pakistan and despite increasing opposition to the government, the PPP was expected to win another term in office. As such, many of the landlords within the PPP probably felt it was best to continue supporting the party in its attempts at 'reform', particularly when considering how they had received sympathetic treatment from the government thus far (Herring, 1983, 124). This also provides an explanation for the passage in the

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<sup>248</sup> NAPD, 10 November 1976, 152, PAL.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

National Assembly and Senate of the legislation that sought to initiate another round of land reforms in 1977. Initially announced by Bhutto in January when declaring that elections would be held in March, these reforms were arguably little more than an attempt at shoring up the regime's battered populist credentials on the eve of the elections (Weinbaum, 1977, 603-604). The legislation itself passed through the National Assembly and Senate in just two days, and included measures allowing for the provision of compensation to those from whom land was appropriated, and for the transfer of land to family members (*ibid.*).

While it was not possible to access the National Assembly debates that took place at this time<sup>250</sup>, a look at the proceedings of the Senate shows the type of discussion that informed the passage of these reforms. In his comments on the proposed reforms, the leader of the Opposition, a member of the NDP<sup>251</sup>, supported the principle of land reform but questioned the government's commitment to implementing the programme. In particular, the senator raised the question of the potentially political motivation underlying the reforms, saying that, 'since there is an election coming there is a fear that the ruling party will acquire more land from its political opponents, and will then distribute it amongst its own members... there is also a fear that the government is trying to pull people towards itself and gain votes by bribing individuals with land that they might otherwise not be entitled to'.<sup>252</sup> Given the government's extremely poor track record when it came to the impartial implementation of the land reforms, particularly in Punjab and Sindh, this was not an entirely unfounded accusation. Therefore, when the Sindhi PPP senator Afzal Khoso said that landlords like himself had joined the PPP because they, 'also wanted such

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<sup>250</sup> The one volume of Assembly debates in which the legislation was passed was missing from the Punjab Assembly Library where all the other debates used in this thesis were accessed.

<sup>251</sup> This was the name that was taken by the remnants of the NAP in 1976 after most of their leaders had been incarcerated by the Bhutto government.

<sup>252</sup> Senate of Pakistan Debates (SPD), 8 January 1977, 471, PAL. Translated from Urdu.

reforms even at our own cost<sup>253</sup>, he was being a bit disingenuous given that pro-PPP landlords had been quite successful in evading the reforms of 1972. That the senator would go on to commend the government for its decision to award compensation to affected landlords who gave up land, and for the provision of mechanisms through which to ensure that joint family holdings would be saved from fragmentation to as great an extent as possible, simply illustrated the price the PPP continued to pay for the support of its landowning allies.

Other NDP senators also expressed their concerns with the new law, invoking once again the uncertainty generated by the specter of expropriation<sup>254</sup>, as well as the potentially ruinous economic implications of smaller landholding sizes<sup>255</sup>, and the illegality of depriving an individual of their property.<sup>256</sup> However, while NDP lawmakers did speak against the reforms, they did so in language that suggested they supported the spirit, if not the letter, of the law, reflecting the two imperatives that traditional elites in the opposition had to contend with when it came to the agrarian reform agenda; firstly, in an election year, it was difficult for any opposition party to oppose land reform outright, since doing so ran the risk of losing the battle for votes to the PPP. Secondly, however, there continued to be tremendous unease amongst the landed elite with regards to land reform particularly when being in opposition to the government meant being disproportionately targeted. In the end, the bill was passed by the Senate unanimously; the potential political cost of opposing the bill was one that the NDP and other anti-PPP parties could not bear, particularly when they themselves had included plans for land reform in their electoral manifestos.

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<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, 482-483.

<sup>254</sup> SPD, 8 January 1877, 463-465, PAL.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, 467.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, 468.

Pakistan's three rounds of land reform initially represented a significant threat to the power of traditional landed elites not just from Punjab, but from the rest of the country as well. After coming to power on explicitly anti-landlord platforms, and by using martial law powers rather than legislation to initiate their programmes, both Ayub and Bhutto could have potentially altered the structure of power in the countryside. However, these efforts would ultimately fail for two key reasons; firstly, by drawing on their long-cultivated links with the bureaucracy, as well as their own economic, political, and judicial resources, landed elites were able to repeatedly evade land reform regulations and, in some cases, even profit from them or acquire more land than they had originally possessed. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the central political role played by the landed elite, particularly in Punjab and Sindh, made it difficult for both Ayub and Bhutto to move against them in any meaningful way. The BD elections and RWP had made it clear to Ayub Khan that the landed elite would be an important source of support for the realization of his own political ambitions, and the PPP, which had always included landed politicians from Punjab and Sindh, only grew more accommodating of landed interests as opposition to Bhutto grew.

### **Agricultural Income Tax in Punjab**

Unlike MLR 64 and MLR 115, which were essentially measures over which the landed elite had no direct control, laws governing revenue and taxation largely remained the sole domain of the Punjab Legislative Assembly, allowing landed politicians to design them in a way that would allow them to pursue and protect their interests more effectively. This was not entirely dissimilar to the way in which legislation had been created and used under the British, although there were a few important differences. The more formally democratic and competitive nature of

post-independence politics, even during periods of military rule, meant that elected representatives had to, at some level, respond to the needs of the electorate, and thus limit the extent to which legislation had an explicit pro-elite bias. This was also a function of the presence of more rival groups in the Assembly; the ever-present threat of landed factionalism, coupled with the increasing number of capitalists, urban professionals, and even smaller landholders involved in lawmaking, particularly after the 1970s, added to the obstacles the landed elite had to overcome. More often than not, however, conflict was avoided due to the overlap between these different categories, as well as the clear demarcation of spheres of interest, such as land revenue, that did not necessarily involve a clash of interest between different groups. Lawmaking in the post-independence period was also reflective of the strong fiscal constraints experienced by both the federal and provincial governments which, as will be explained below, sometimes had a bearing on the shape of legislation relating to taxation. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, there remained the fact that formal laws and rules did not necessarily matter at the local level. As argued by Nelson (2011), one of the keys to the enduring power of the landed elite at the local level has been their enduring capacity to evade the law in circumstances where it could work against them. Alternatively, given that evasion necessarily entailed costs of its own, formally shaping the institutional arena through legislation remained an important means through which the landed elite reinforced their power.

Before examining the debates that surrounded the passage of laws regarding agricultural taxation, it is useful to first briefly review the history of such legislation in post-colonial Punjab. As has been pointed out by Qureshi (1987, 169-184), Qureshi (1989, 45-66), Khan and Khan (1998), and Husain (1999, 43-126), one of the most striking features of Pakistan's taxation regime is that agriculture, despite contributing

to over a quarter of Pakistan's GDP even in the 1990s<sup>257</sup>, and employing over half of the total labour force, accounts for a negligible amount of government revenue. In Punjab, where agriculture contributes to almost 30% of total economic output and employs nearly half the workforce, Table 11 below provides an indication of the revenue derived from the agricultural sector.

	<b>1961-62</b>	<b>1967-68</b>	<b>1971-72</b>	<b>1977-78</b>	<b>1987-88</b>	<b>1991-92</b>
Land Revenue (millions of Rs.)	144	163	120.748	100.10	239.5	501.2
Agricultural Income Tax (millions of Rs.)	3	5	n/a	12.0	0.5	n/a
Total Revenue (millions of Rs.)	534	1165	742.683	700.15	2314.5	4649.6
Agricultural Taxation as a %age of Total Revenue	27.5%	20.3%	16.25%	16.01%	10.3%	10.78%

**Table 11: Land Revenue and Agricultural Income Tax Receipts and Total Revenue in Punjab**<sup>258</sup>

The relatively marginal contribution of the agricultural sector to government revenue is doubly surprising because agricultural incomes and productivity have grown tremendously since independence, not least due to a relatively high level of government investment in the sector (Hamid, 1970; Azhar, 1973; Khan and Khan, 1998). For Qureshi (1987), the explanation for this lies in the failure of rural voters to establish the link between government taxation and expenditure, with the argument being that a tax system designed to highlight private returns from public expenditure might incentivize politically dominant agrarian elites to contribute more to the public exchequer. However, as Alavi (1976), Hussain (1988) and Husain (2000) point out, it is precisely the exercise of landed political power that allows the elite to benefit from

<sup>257</sup> In the decade immediately after independence, agriculture comprised 60% of Pakistan's GDP. This percentage has slowly decreased over time.

<sup>258</sup> Data for this table taken from Government of Punjab White Papers on the Annual Budget 1972-73, 1978-79, 1987-88, and 1992-93, and from Hamid (1970). Figures for 1961-62 and 1967-68 refer to the budget of West Pakistan.

government expenditure while profiting from a very low tax burden. Rather than being the result of a flawed tax system, the low levels of revenue generated by agriculture are largely due to the ability of the landed elite to prevent the imposition of higher taxes, and their ability to impede the effective implementation of the taxation regime that does exist.

Part of an explanation for the low level of agricultural taxation lies in the legacy of colonialism; under the All India Income Tax Act of 1925, the right to levy a tax on agriculture was granted to the provinces rather than the federal government, with this particular provision being bequeathed to both India and Pakistan following independence. Concurrently, the amount of revenue generated from agriculture continued to be determined by the various Provincial Revenue Acts which, in the Pakistani case, remained in place unchanged until 1967 at which point the West Pakistan Land Revenue Act essentially reproduced and imposed the Punjab Revenue Act in the rest of the country (Azhar, 1973). Although the Revenue Act included provisions for the payment of certain dues in addition to land revenue itself, such as the local rate, the development cess, and the water rate, the cumulative effect of these measures remained small. Similarly, while an agricultural income tax was imposed in Punjab relatively early on in 1948 it was, as will be discussed below, extremely marginal, and justified only by the government's precarious financial position. While there was an abortive attempt to impose a more stringent tax regime by the Bhutto government in 1977, which abolished land revenue entirely in favour of an agricultural income tax, these measures were reversed by the Zia-ul-Haq government soon after it came to power. The situation would remain unchanged until the mid-1990s, when the dictates of international financial institutions, as well as Pakistan's worsening economic condition, provided the conditions under which the question of

agricultural income tax could be raised once more. Again, however, the strength of Punjab's landed lobby prevented the new taxation system from becoming any more severe than the one it replaced.

Starting with the debate over the imposition of an agricultural income tax in 1948, it is possible to see precisely how the landed politicians in the Assembly maneuvered to dilute the impact of the proposed law. When the law was first put to the Punjab Assembly, it was referred to a Select Committee comprised almost entirely of landed politicians including Mumtaz Daultana, Firoz Khan Noon, and Jamal Laghari.<sup>259</sup> As an initial response to the bill, Noon argued that the provisions contained within it imposed an unfair burden on individuals by taxing them on the basis of their revenue demand, rather than their actual income.<sup>260</sup> During the subsequent debate, Nurullah Ahmad repeated Noon's claim that the level of taxation outlined in the bill was too high, particularly for landowners like himself who paid between Rs. 1000 and Rs. 5000 in revenue and would thus have to pay twice this amount as tax.<sup>261</sup> Ahmad followed this up with the assertion that the Income Tax would lead *zamindars* to lose all interest in agriculture, and that it would ultimately be self-defeating as it would lead to a drop in food production.<sup>262</sup> Taking a slightly different approach, another legislator argued that it would make more sense for the government to generate income from the urban sector by taxing capitalists and their industries.<sup>263</sup> This point was also made by Muzaffar Ali Qizilbash, who felt that as the 'backbone' of the country, *zamindars* were willing to make this sacrifice, but that it only made sense to also tax capitalists and the urban sector at the same level, if not

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<sup>259</sup> West Punjab Legislative Assembly Debates (WPLAD), 2 April 1948, 429, PAL.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, 429-430.

<sup>261</sup> WPLAD, 6 April 1948, 467-469, PAL. Given that average per capita income in Pakistan at this point in time was barely Rs. 200/year, and that the land revenue per acre was roughly Rs. 4 in 1959-60, Nurullah Ahmad was clearly speaking on behalf of the richest elements of the landed elite.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*, 470-471.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, 472-473.

higher, since all were now equal citizens of Pakistan bearing the responsibility to help the nation progress.<sup>264</sup> Finally, in a particularly impassioned speech littered with couplets bemoaning the tragic circumstances of the province's landlords, Chaudhry Asghar Ali declared that the 'zamindar' government of Punjab had managed to accomplish that which even the Congress had been unable to do with regards to victimizing landowners. Bitterly criticizing the government for turning its back on the province's agriculturalists, Asghar Ali claimed that the government had reneged on its promise to create an Islamic state by attempting to impose a tax that had no basis in Islam and, indeed, no parallel in the rest of the world.<sup>265</sup>

These members were not alone in raising these objections, which were echoed by the majority of the legislators present during the passage of this Bill. However, while these opinions were representative of the widespread and deep-seated opposition the landed elite had to any revision of the economic status quo, it is important to note that the Bill of 1948 was only to be applied for a year, as clarified by the Revenue Minister during the debate. Moreover, it was also clarified that the Bill was only being introduced on this temporary basis because of the precarious financial situation the Punjab government found itself in post-Partition, particularly given the need to support the millions of refugees streaming across the border with India.<sup>266</sup> This point had also been made a month earlier, with it being stated that the cost of rehabilitating the refugees from India was extremely high, and that while there was, 'concern at the continual subjection of the resources of a small and mutilated province, which has barely recovered from the cruel wounds inflicted by the sword of

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<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, 486-487.

<sup>265</sup> WPLAD, 6 April 1948, 475-477.

<sup>266</sup> According to Andrus and Mohammad (1958, 464-451), 5.28 million refugees had settled in Punjab by 1951. In its efforts to support them, the Punjab government provided each refugee family with Rs. 500 to use on any land they were allotted, a further Rs. 70 to build a hut on such land, and a monthly allowance of Rs. 35 until their first harvest was completed. The total cost of refugee rehabilitation was estimated to be about Rs. 100 million by March 1951.

partition, to the incidence of such a vast unproductive expenditure<sup>267</sup>, it was nonetheless necessary to impose an agricultural income tax on large landowners who could afford to pay it in light of the profits they had been able to make in recent years due to rising agricultural commodity prices.<sup>268</sup> It was only in the face of this clear financial imperative that Punjab's legislators acquiesced, albeit reluctantly, to the passage of the Bill.

Mild as the Bill was, it would eventually only be passed following amendments that guaranteed the temporary nature of the Tax, ensured that transfers of land would not be rendered invalid, and allowed the Government to exempt individuals and groups from the payment of the Tax.<sup>269</sup> After a year the Bill of 1948 lapsed, only to be replaced in by the Punjab Agricultural Income Tax Act of 1951. This Tax, which like the Bill of 1948 was really just a surcharge on the land revenue rather than a tax on actual income, represented an extremely marginal increase in the total amount of agricultural taxation (see Table 11 above). However, as can be seen in the debate on amendments to the Act that were proposed just a year later, the landed elites in the Punjab Assembly made effective use of their legislative power to further reduce the impact of this new law. As mentioned in the aims and objectives of the proposed amendments, the government sought to change the existing Income Tax Act to bring it in line with the changes that had been made to the terms of tenancy under the Punjab Protection and Restoration of Tenancy Rights (Amendment) Bill passed earlier in the year. Under the terms of this new legislation, the government argued that the incomes of landowners had been reduced by 10% and, as such, it was only fair that the income tax burden on the province's landlords also undergo a reduction.

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<sup>267</sup> WPLAD, 15 March 1948, 3, PAL.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>269</sup> WPLAD, 9<sup>th</sup> April 1948, 555-557.

As always, when the Amendments were presented before the Assembly, much of the criticism took the form of allegations that the government was trying to destroy the livelihoods of the province's agriculturalists. This tendency was epitomized by Mian Abdul Bari, a member of the Opposition from Lyallpur, who claimed that big and small landowners were being robbed by the government in the name of the refugees, and that he could not understand why, 'the Chief Minister [Daultana] has gotten it into his head that landowners are rolling in money'.<sup>270</sup> Bari then claimed that as a result of the tax, agriculturalists could no longer afford food, medicine, and education, and that even those owning 250 acres of land now found themselves in dire financial straits, with the gravity of the situation also being reflected in the way that most of the province's landlords could not even think of buying a car.<sup>271</sup> Instead, Bari suggested that the proposed law be amended to apply to individual harvests, rather than financial years, saying that this would reduce the burden of taxation to a level that would be more bearable for smaller and medium landowners<sup>272</sup>. In response, the government said that this simply was not possible since the tax only applied to big landowners who could afford it, and that even those owning 50 acres of land had average incomes of Rs. 4-5000 a year which was more than enough to bear the weight of an income tax. More importantly, the government argued, that implementing Bari's proposals would lead to the total yield from the income tax being reduced by half.<sup>273</sup>

The government's response to Bari's proposed changes illustrated the way in which the fiscal constraints faced by the Punjab government limited the extent to which the economic demands of the landed elite could be accommodated. Even then, however, there is evidence to suggest that the government's own amendments to the

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<sup>270</sup> PLAD, 29 April, 1952, 117-118, PAL.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*, 118-119.

<sup>272</sup> PLAD, 30 April, 1952, 123-134, PAL.

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*, 135-36.

law had already diluted its impact tremendously. This can be seen in the arguably more cogent criticisms of the Bill by the Assembly's urban members. Mian Amin, an Opposition lawyer from Lahore, accused the government of amending the law to protect the province's biggest landowners at the expense of smaller ones. As proof of this, he pointed to the fact that the biggest beneficiaries of the changes to the law would be the 14 largest estates in the province, including those of Khizr Hayat Tiwana and the Nawab of Mamdot.<sup>274</sup> Amin argued that Khizr Hayat, a former Unionist, would reap a profit of Rs. 150000 due to the proposed amendments, and that the total amount of revenue yielded from the tax would drop from Rs. 7 million to Rs. 3 million per year, with the difference going back into the pockets of the same landowners the government claimed to be targeting.<sup>275</sup> Furthermore, according to Amin, loopholes in the law regarding the transfer of land would facilitate tax evasion by the landed elite and that even if that did not happen, the basis of the tax on outmoded and extremely low revenue assessments, rather than on actual income, would ensure that its financial impact would remain limited.<sup>276</sup> Urban frustration with the government was also voiced by Sheikh Hussain Qadri, another lawyer from Lahore who, when faced with opposition to an amendment he proposed seeking to base the tax on income rather than land revenue, asked the government, 'why are you afraid of big landowners?'.<sup>277</sup> Not unexpectedly, the proposed amendment was rejected.

On a different note, Qadri also accused the government of trying to curry favour with Punjab's landowning politicians. Referring to the factional conflict between Mamdot and Daultana, he said that the, 'Government is legislating to keep a

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<sup>274</sup> PLAD, 29 April 1952, 120-21.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

few big landowners happy for fear that they might defect', and that this also explained why the government was now willing to tax settled refugees while providing relief to people like Khizr Hayat.<sup>278</sup> This point was expanded upon by Chaudhry M. Shafiq, a lawyer from Sahiwal, who criticized a part of the Bill that gave the government authority to exclude any individual or group from the payment of income tax as an escape clause for the landed elite. Arguing that no such provision had been kept when it came to taxing refugees, Shafiq claimed that the government was simply interested in 'class war', and that retaining the power to waive taxation arbitrarily would lead to widespread corruption, bribery, nepotism and tax evasion.<sup>279</sup> Furthermore, the clause allowing the government to waive the tax was deemed to be necessary in case of unforeseen circumstances that rendered particular individuals or groups incapable of paying the tax.<sup>280</sup> When the suggestion was then made that the clause be re-written to prevent its abuse, the government declined to do so.

The debates over Income Tax in the late 1940s and early 1950s would set the tone for this particular aspect of agrarian revenue generation till the end of the Bhutto years, after which Bhutto's abortive attempt at imposing a more stringent tax would lead to the elimination of the income tax altogether until the late 1990s.<sup>281</sup> It was not coincidental that the Agricultural Income Tax Act of 1997 was prompted by IMF dictates instructing the imposition of the tax as a condition for the granting of loans to the federal government (Khan and Khan, 1998). Once again, it was only under conditions of financial duress that the government was able to pass taxation legislation that impinged upon the economic interests of the landed elite. All was not lost however; the legislation that was passed was not very dissimilar from the one that

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<sup>278</sup> PLAD, 30 April 1952, 140-143, PAL.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*, 151-159.

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

<sup>281</sup> Bhutto's tax proposals were introduced at the same time as his second round of land reforms and, like the latter, were shelved by the Zia government.

had existed decades earlier, and essentially reproduced the same kinds of safeguards that had existed then, allowing the government at the time to claim it had successfully imposed the tax even though it made little difference on the ground.<sup>282</sup> More importantly, the imposition of the Tax was accompanied by the repeal of the venerable Land Revenue Act, a law that had shaped the agrarian economy for over a century, and which, even at this stage, found defenders who argued it was preferable to the new and unknown system of taxation being introduced to the province.<sup>283</sup> However, fears that the new Income Tax would burden the landed elite in any way would soon prove to be unfounded. Agitation by landlords throughout the province led to the introduction of amendments that diluted the law even further, and evidence from across Punjab also suggested that the rate of tax collection had been very low.<sup>284</sup> Having failed to prevent the passage of the law, the landed elite simply exercised their capacity to evade it.

## ***Conclusion***

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to show how Punjab's landed elite have used their relationship with the state to reinforce their power and entrench themselves further within the institutional framework of Pakistan's politics. Three mechanisms have been identified through which this has been done. Firstly, the landed elite in Punjab have been successful in maintaining a stranglehold on the province's electoral politics. Partly due to the impact of military rule and partly due to the rural bias in the electorate, landed politicians have been able to maintain their position as the pre-eminent source of rural support by using their historically evolved

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<sup>282</sup> PLAD, 13 June 1997, PAL.

<sup>283</sup> PLAD, 1 January 1997, 62-63, PAL.

<sup>284</sup> PLAD, 23 April 1998, PAL.

sources of power to mobilize votes for rival political parties. This has had the effect of setting up an electoral race to the bottom in which political parties, in an attempt to win elections by the most expedient means possible, have continued to curry favour with the landed elite at the expense of developing their organizational and ideological apparatuses. Like the Unionists and the Muslim League, the political parties of contemporary Punjab remain beholden to landed interests, increasingly incapable of re-orienting themselves towards a more programmatic, participatory form of politics.

The capture of the party system by the landed elite has been supplemented by their use of bureaucratic power and networks as a mechanism through which to reinforce their power. The ties of kinship, family, and politics, that bound the Punjabi landed elite to the colonial military and bureaucracy have persisted throughout Pakistan's history, providing the former with ready access to state patronage, particularly through the organs of local government. The landed elite have returned the favour by using their own influence to further the interests of their allies in government, perpetuating a system of mutually beneficial, self-reinforcing nepotism and rent-seeking that has strengthened the relationship between the state and the landed elite over time.

Finally, reference has also been made to legislation, and the way in which the capacity to shape and evade it has been crucial to the maintenance of landed power in Punjab. In particular, it has been shown that the landed elite were able to use their position within the different branches of the legislature to blunt the impact of the land reforms introduced by the Ayub and Bhutto regimes, with this being supplemented by the reluctance of the two regimes to actively move against the interests of their landowning allies. This has also been illustrated with reference to the case of Agricultural Income Tax in Punjab which, despite the economic arguments in favour

of such a tax, was only successfully imposed in periods of economic stress, and even then in a form that rendered it relatively marginal to the economic interests of the landed elite.

## Chapter 8 Movements, Elections, and Institutional Change in Pakistan

*I am not a rootless phenomenon.*

Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto<sup>285</sup>

### ***Introduction***

In the preceding chapters, the mechanisms through which the Punjabi landed elite have been able to reinforce their political, economic and social power have been discussed, with an emphasis on how landed politicians have been able to do this as a result of their historically evolved entrenchment within political parties and networks of bureaucratic power, as well the institutions of legislative policy-making. Following the logic of path dependence, the previous chapters have also attempted to illustrate the difficulties associated with dislodging the landed elite from their position within the institutional framework of politics; time and again, the Establishment has chosen to continue providing patronage to these actors in exchange for their support, and even the factionalism that characterises landed politics in Punjab has only strengthened the capacity of the state, and indeed of democratic political parties, to enter into bargains with landed politicians for reasons of political expediency.

While the enduring power of the landed elite continues to persist in contemporary Punjab, and indeed in Pakistan, there have nonetheless been moments in time at which the institutional status quo was challenged, opening up the possibility of a departure from the path set in place by colonialism and the political developments of the first two decades after independence. One such contestational juncture occurred between 1968 and 1971, when a popular movement against the military dictatorship

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<sup>285</sup> Taken from Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's statement before the Supreme Court of Pakistan, 8<sup>th</sup> December 1978. A full transcript of the statement is available at <http://www.bhutto.org/bhutto-trial-4.php>.

of Ayub Khan forced his resignation from office, creating the context in which Pakistan could hold its first national-level elections based on universal adult suffrage. This movement would give birth to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's PPP, with this party's socialist rhetoric and slogan of '*roti, kapra, aur makaan*'<sup>286</sup> capturing the imagination of a Pakistani public that had increasingly begun to question a political and economic system in which a few elites prospered at the expense of the majority (Sheikh, 1972). The PPP government that came to power in Pakistan following the secession of Bangladesh in 1971 claimed to represent the country's workers and peasants, and set about implementing a programme of nationalisation, land reform, and bureaucratic restructuring that arguably constituted the greatest threat that had, till then, been faced by the Pakistani state establishment and its allies.

In addition to the anti-Ayub movement, another juncture at which the potential for radical change arguably opened up in Pakistan was in 2007, when General Musharraf, Pakistan's latest military dictator, was removed from power. The anti-Musharraf movement was triggered by the unconstitutional dismissal of Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry of the Supreme Court. Initially spearheaded by lawyers in Pakistan's major cities, the movement quickly grew to include students, intellectuals, and urban professionals, and was also bolstered by the support of Pakistan's mainstream political parties. Amidst a worsening economic and internal security situation, the anti-Musharraf movement came to encapsulate a general dissatisfaction with the regime, and Musharraf's resignation would lead to an election in 2008 that brought the PPP back into power at the head of a coalition government. While it is too early to assess the historical significance of this government's decidedly mixed record

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<sup>286</sup> Translated as 'food, clothing, and shelter'.

in office, it can nonetheless be claimed that like the PPP of 1970, it came to power riding the support of a movement possessing a desire for change.

In this chapter, a comparison will be made between the two junctures described above with a view towards understanding the circumstances under which the otherwise robust institutional framework of Punjabi and Pakistani politics could be challenged. The chapter will begin by providing a brief account of the types of resistance that have historically taken place in Pakistan, and the reasons for their failure to initiate significant structural change. The focus will then shift to 1968-69 and 2007, with a short account of the events leading up to the two movements, as well as a description of the movements themselves and their aftermath. This will be followed by an analysis of the similarities between the two movements, and the insights to be gleaned from these with regards to understanding institutional change in Pakistan. Based on this, an explanation will then be provided for the inability of the movement of 1968-69 to generate any long-term change in the face of the path dependent institutional inertia of Punjabi and Pakistani politics, with the experiences of the first PPP government being used to illustrate the challenges faced by the current one. The chapter will then conclude with an overview of the lessons from the two movements, as well as their failure, and the implications of this for landed power and authoritarianism in Punjab and Pakistan.

### ***A (Very) Brief History of Protest and Resistance in Pakistan***

From the very beginning, Pakistan has struggled to define its identity, and structure its institutions, in a way that could address the often genuine grievances of provinces that have historically seen themselves as being marginalized by a pre-

dominantly Punjabi state (Khan, 2005). As a result, and in addition to the movement that led to the secession of East Pakistan, ethno-nationalism in Sindh, the NWFP, and particularly in Balochistan, has constantly represented a potent threat to the largely Punjabi establishment's ability to rule over Pakistan (Akhtar, 2010a, 109). However, the presence of ethno-national movements in Pakistan, while limiting control over the smaller provinces in Pakistan, has largely failed to have an impact on the structure of politics within Punjab itself. Even the Bengali freedom movement was proof of this, with events in East Pakistan having little bearing on politics in the West. Indeed, in the long run, the secession of Bangladesh only served to strengthen the position of the military establishment, and Punjab, relative to the other provinces. To the extent that ethno-nationalist movements in the non-Punjabi provinces did constitute a threat to the institutional status quo in Punjab, it was only in tandem with the other developments that gave rise to the movements of 1968-69 and 2007. Evidence for this is perhaps best seen in how, despite repeated rounds of militant activity and military intervention in Sindh (Ahmad, 1984), Karachi, and Balochistan (Swidler and Titus, 2000; Akhtar, 2007), the impact of these events has remained geographically limited and external to political developments in Punjab.

Other than the threat of ethno-nationalism, the Pakistani state has also had to confront resistance from the Left and the religious Right. In the case of the former, Pakistan inherited a tradition of progressive politics from undivided India, and did have organisations like the Communist Party of Pakistan, the Mazdoor Kissan Party, and the NAP, but the impact of these organisations remained limited. To a very large extent, this can be attributed to state repression. As has been shown by Malik (1967), Ahmed (2008), Ahmed (2010) and Ali (2011), the vagaries of Cold War politics, and the potential threat of these parties, led the state to actively, and effectively, persecute

and repress those individuals and groups involved with progressive politics. This was exacerbated by ideological splits within the main parties that compounded their already weak organisational capacities; they remained predominantly urban, and centred around a relatively small number of activists and intellectuals. Finally, much of the strength of the Left in Pakistan was derived from East Pakistan, from where parties like the NAP originally emerged (Franda, 1970; Rashiduzzaman, 1970). For an already fractured Left in West Pakistan, the secession of East Pakistan only compounded the challenge of mobilizing as an effective political force. To the extent that the West Pakistani Left was able to make any noticeable impact on mainstream electoral politics, it was through the PPP which, in its formative years, did contain within it elements of the Left who arguably played a tremendous role in shaping its identity as a party. However, the PPP's Left was quickly disenchanted by the party's lurch to the Right once in power, and many of the most vocal and prominent Leftists in the PPP either abandoned the party or were expelled. Particularly in Punjab, this meant that the Left would, over time, become even more marginal than it had been before (Ahmad, 1984).

Another factor underpinning the failure of the Leftist alternative in Pakistan was the rise of the religious Right as a political force. However, unlike Leftist and Ethno-national political forces, the religious Right, while often in apparent confrontation with the state, largely remained in partnership with the military establishment, initially providing it with ideological support and then, from the 1980s onwards, also assuming the form of militant assets to be deployed in Afghanistan and Kashmir (Haqqani, 2005). While this dynamic would start to change under the Musharraf government, as militant Islamists in the regions bordering Afghanistan, with networks and affiliates spread throughout Pakistan, engaged in armed conflict

with the state, the role the religious Right played in mainstream politics would remain unchanged. Having taken their cues from an increasingly marginal Left, organising themselves as vanguard parties with committed cadres (Nasr, 1994; Iqtidar, 2011), the religious Right has exercised disproportionate street power and influence over questions of public morality, law and, increasingly from the 2000s onwards, support for American military operations in Afghanistan, but has largely left unquestioned the role of the military and its allies in the politics of Pakistan.

Finally, it is also important to mention peasant movements in Pakistan, and their failure to challenge the political status quo in the country. Again, what is interesting to note about peasant movements is that, especially in Punjab, they have been notable for their absence. In contrast with Karachi and Lahore, as well as the other cities of Pakistan, which were the focal points of the movements of 1968-69 and 2007, and where protests against the government remain routine, the countryside has remained relatively quiescent. Other than sporadic outbursts of protest, the only notable instance of significant peasant mobilisation in Punjab remains that of the landless tenants on the military farms of Okara in the early 2000s, where farmers and cultivators who had been on the land for over a century rose up to resist eviction by the military (Akhtar, 2006; 2010b). This movement, however, emerged under very specific circumstances that are unlikely to be replicated elsewhere in the province.<sup>287</sup>

While the claim has been made that Bhutto's PPP was able to successfully mobilize the peasantry in Punjab against the dominant landed elite (LaPorte, 1977; Burki, 1988), this argument rests on the assumption that the rural 'middle' classes

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<sup>287</sup> Akhtar's (2006; 2010b) explanation for the susceptibility of the Okara peasantry to political mobilization is rooted in the unique nature of the military farms in the district. As they are owned by the military, they lack the presence of the landed elite as landlords and patrons. The absence of this important source of rural social control, coupled with the relatively affluent and economically autonomous nature of the tenants in question, arguably created the conditions under which the peasantry could organize as a political force.

represented a radically new fraction of the peasantry whose interests were diametrically opposed to those of the landed aristocracy. As has been explained in Chapter 2, this is an assumption that does not bear up to critical scrutiny but even if the argument were correct, the fact would remain that the PPP failed to activate the rural majority, namely the smallest landowners and rural landless, as a political force, with these elements of the peasantry remaining as marginal as ever to electoral politics. As will be discussed below, the general absence of the non-propertied peasantry from politics in Punjab illustrates both the extent of the power of the landed elite, and what is perhaps the most significant reason for the inability of largely urban-based protest movements to initiate radical institutional change.

From the brief descriptions of protest and mobilization given above, it is possible to see that although social movements and resistance in Pakistan have assumed a variety of forms at multiple points in its history, none have really been able to initiate the kind of transformation that would be necessary to challenge the landlord-state nexus at the heart of Punjabi and, indeed, Pakistani politics. Even where movements have had tremendous effects on Pakistan's politics, most notably in the case of ethno-national movements, the bargain between the state and the landed elite has remained insulated from their impact. It is precisely for this reason that 1968-69 and 2007 represent such important junctures in Pakistan's history; unlike other moments of contestation, these two junctures fundamentally questioned the military's role in politics. Furthermore, these particular junctures represented a union of the different tendencies and factors that could create the conditions in which the institutional status quo could be challenged; understanding the combination of causes that generated these movements, as well as the reasons behind their eventual failure, is

vital to explaining potential routes to overcoming the institutional inertia of Punjab's path dependent landed politics.

### ***The Movement of 1968 and the Rise of the PPP***

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of November 1968, a demonstration by students of Gordon College in Rawalpindi was brought to an end by police firing that left one student dead and five others injured. The demonstration had been called to protest the arrests of some of the College's students following a trip they had made to Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) to purchase illegal smuggled goods (Ali, 1970, 156-157). During a period of economic hardship and scarcity, the incarceration of their colleagues for the crime of buying otherwise hard to obtain necessities inflamed the sentiments of the college's students, who were already in a restive mood following the imposition of the University Ordinance which proscribed student participation in politics (Sayeed, 1979). In response to the death of the student on November 7<sup>th</sup>, dissatisfaction with the Ayub regime exploded on to the streets of West Pakistan's cities, with 132 days of non-stop protests, marches, and processions only coming to an end with Ayub Khan's resignation in March 1969. Although this resignation was accompanied by the re-imposition of Martial Law under General Yahya Khan, it was clear that military rule would not be acceptable, or sustainable, for long; given the strength of the PPP in West Pakistan, and the Awami League in the East, both of which had been bolstered by the popular movement against Ayub, the military had little choice but to announce elections to be held on the basis of universal adult suffrage in 1970.

In the literature on the movement of 1968-69, there is considerable consensus on the broad structural causes that underpinned the collapse of a government that had,

until 1965, showed little sign of weakness or instability. Fresh from his presidential victory, Ayub Khan and his military commanders sought to force the Kashmir issue by provoking India into a conflict. The war with India in 1965, which ended in a stalemate at best, marked the beginning of the end of the Ayub government not only because of its abortive nature, but also because it began the process of exposing the economic contradictions at the heart of the government's economic programme. Immediately after the war, prices of essential foodstuffs, like flour and sugar, skyrocketed and as shortages became increasingly common, the government was forced to impose a strict regime of rationing (Ali, 1970, 145). These economic hardships only served to reinforce a reality that would become crystal clear by 1967; for all its talk of ushering in a 'decade of development' during which growth in both agriculture and industry had given Pakistan annual growth rates in excess of 5%, the Ayub Khan government had actually presided over a period in which real wages had decreased, rural and urban poverty had increased, and inequality had grown (Maniruzzaman, 1971b; Guisinger and Irfan, 1974; Jones, 2003, 142-145). The economic injustice of Ayub Khan's Pakistan was best exemplified by the infamous '22 families' who, through the patronage of the business-friendly government, had arrived at a position where they collectively controlled the majority of Pakistan's industrial and commercial assets (Maniruzzaman, 1971b).

Pakistan's dismal economic situation in the latter half of the 1960s was compounded by the boiling over of the ethno-national tensions that had plagued relations between the country's Eastern and Western wings since independence (Tepper, 1972). The consensus over the institutional arrangements for sharing power between East and West Pakistan was overturned after Ayub Khan assumed power and abrogated the 1956 Constitution. The BD system, coupled with the centralisation of

power in the hands of Ayub Khan himself and his core group of military and bureaucratic advisors, compounded the sense of marginalisation felt in East Pakistan which, in turn, strengthened the support for parties like the NAP and Awami League that clamoured for greater provincial autonomy (Maniruzzaman, 1971b; Sayeed, 1972). These demands found even greater resonance in Bengal as it became clear that in addition to presiding over a period of widening inequality between the rich and the poor, Ayub Khan had also overseen a growing economic disparity between West and East Pakistan, with the latter receiving less governmental development spending and investment despite providing the bulk of the country's exports and foreign exchange.

In the context of these economic and ethno-national challenges to the stability of the Ayub regime, it was the small towns of Punjab that began to show the first signs of discontent in West Pakistan. According to Burki (1971), the anti-Ayub movement first began to gather steam in 1967, when a drought-induced economic depression in the agricultural sector began to generate economic hardship in the small towns linked to Punjab's agrarian economy. As the economic crisis worsened, the malaise spread to the cities, where decreases in the per capita availability of food were exacerbated by a declining rate of industrial growth. Having already been excluded from the institutions of decision-making and power under the Ayub government, urban professionals and students, hit hard by the economic downturn, represented a politically and economically marginalised constituency that would form the vanguard of the anti-Ayub protests.

While students and professionals played an important role in mobilising against the regime, they did so at different points in time and in tandem with other urban actors. At the very beginning, the movement was largely dominated by students, who coalesced under the banners of the different provincial-level student

unions in East and West Pakistan to launch daily protests against the government (Maniruzzaman, 1971c). This was followed by the entry of trade unions into the movement, particularly in Karachi and Lahore, as industrial workers gradually displaced students as the most numerically significant force in the movement (Shaheed, 1979; Sayeed, 1979, 117-118; Khan, 2009, 137-142). Finally, following Ayub Khan's offer in February 1969 to not contest the forthcoming elections, urban professionals, particularly lawyers, and government employees also joined the Opposition movement. Amidst the coming together of these disparate urban groups, the major Opposition parties also attempted to capitalise on the general anti-Ayub sentiment with varying degrees of success.

Based on the preceding analysis, the argument could be made that cities were the focal point of anti-Ayub resistance because they were the sites at which the economic contradictions of the regime were most acutely felt. However, when looking at the different urban groups involved in the agitation, it is also possible to see that the presence of extant organisational and associational platforms was key to facilitating their mobilisation. The East and West Pakistani student unions, the trade unions of Karachi and Lahore, the Bar Associations of the legal community, and the unions of white-collar government employees, all provided a basis upon which these groups could organise independently of the influence of the political parties and the government. Indeed, the fact that the trade unions in particular had managed to survive the repression unleashed against them over the course of the decade was a testament to their organisational depth (Sayeed, 1979, 118). Given that they had a negligible role to play in the earliest days of the agitation, the rapid and relatively autonomous emergence of the popular movement was something that took West Pakistan's political parties by surprise (Ali, 1970, 188).

In East Pakistan, the two major political parties, namely the NAP with its peasant leader Maulana Bhashani, and the Awami League under Mujib-ur-Rehman, were more attuned to the public mood and extended their support to the anti-Ayub protests very early on. In West Pakistan, the only party that was able to claim a similar level of prescience was the newly-formed PPP under Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Ayub Khan's former Foreign Minister. A Sindhi politician from one of the province's largest and most powerful landowning families, Bhutto had fallen out with the Ayub government over the handling of the 1965 War and the subsequent ceasefire negotiations at Tashkent. Outside of government, Bhutto became one of the regime's most implacable foes. As has been documented at length by Ali (1970), Jones (2003) and Khan (2009), Bhutto was faced with the choice of finding allies within the regime to support him in his endeavours, joining an existing party to oppose Ayub Khan, or creating a new one altogether. Ultimately, Bhutto would explore all three of these options. While there were elements within the military that were sympathetic to Bhutto, he remained unwilling to enter into an agreement that would see him become subordinate to the dictates of the military (Jones, 2003, 151). This left the option of joining either the CoML or the West Pakistani chapter of the NAP. Given his own Social Democratic inclinations (Ali, 1970, 148), as well as the tremendous political acumen that allowed him to correctly read the rising public disaffection with the Ayub government (Khan, 2009, 269), Bhutto found he had a greater affinity for the NAP's brand of leftist politics than that of the discredited CoML members who had presided over the first chaotic decade of Pakistan's existence. However, in what would prove to be a historic mistake on the part of the NAP's Punjab leadership, Bhutto's desire to join the NAP was met with indifference due to a belief that he lacked the level of ideological conviction that was expected of party members (Jones, 2003, 104-105).

The NAP's rejection of Bhutto was accompanied by splits within the party itself. As documented by Rashiduzzaman (1970), Ali (1970), Khan (2009), and Ahmed (2010), the NAP had long been plagued by internal factionalism, particularly over the question of supporting either the USSR or China following the Sino-Soviet Split. The effects of this would be most acutely felt in Punjab, where the leadership of the Punjab NAP remained aligned with the pro-China Bhashani, opposing the position taken by the rest of the West Pakistani NAP. Furthermore unlike Bhashani who, had a tremendous amount of support in the East Pakistani countryside, the strength of the NAP in West Pakistan was largely restricted to the NWFP and Balochistan, where tribal and ethno-national loyalties formed the core of the party's support, appeal, and identity. The split with Bhashani only reinforced the provincial, conservative strain within the West Pakistani NAP's politics, and this situation was not helped by the fact that the arguably more radical activists and leaders in Punjab had an extremely limited support base restricted almost entirely to Lahore (Khan, 2009, 265-268).

As such, when Bhutto formed the PPP and assumed the mantle of West Pakistani progressive politics in December 1967, his ability to do so stemmed not so much from the promise of the new party as it did from the NAP's state of disarray in West Pakistan (Ali, 1970, 148). The idea of forming the PPP had originally come from J. A. Rahim, a former bureaucrat and Marxist who felt that the time was ripe for the creation of a new progressive party, and that Bhutto had both the recognition and force of personality around which the new party could be organised (Jones, 2003, 107-109). Bhutto was receptive to Rahim's proposals, and spent much of the latter half of 1967 meeting with different progressive groups and intellectuals, building up support for the idea of a new party. Additionally, Bhutto also drew on his own networks of power and influence to recruit members for the party, facilitating the

entry of members of the traditional elite like Ghulam Mustafa Khar, many of whom had either not been involved in politics before or had not been linked to the Ayub government. As will be discussed below, the entry of these elements into the PPP would become a source of tension in later years but during the formative phase from 1967-1970, it was the Leftist tendency within the PPP that was in ascendancy (*ibid.*, 228-237).

The PPP was not the only party that attempted to capitalise on the movement in West Pakistan. The CoML, while initially slow to respond to anti-Ayub sentiment, quickly produced its own programme of radical reform which would prove to be nothing more than mere propaganda as the majority of the party's members rebelled against their leadership and refused to endorse the proposals (Ali, 1970, 188-189). Other elements of the opposition would also join together to form a platform for right-wing opposition to the Ayub regime. Called the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), this formation would consist of parts of the CoML, an anti-Mujib faction of the Awami League, the National Democratic Front and, significantly, the JI and the Nizam-i-Mustafa, West Pakistan's two main religious parties. In the PDM, only the JI and the CoML could claim to have any kind of electoral support base, with the former drawing on elements of the middle classes and petty bourgeoisie in the cities, and the latter relying on its character as a party of landed interests. The JI in particular would go on to play a significant role between 1969 and 1970, first mobilising religious sentiment against the Ayub regime<sup>288</sup>, and then engaging in battles with the 'secular' PPP in the streets of Pakistan during the short-lived Yahya Khan government (Jones, 2003, 231-233).

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<sup>288</sup> Religious opposition to the 'secular' Ayub Khan regime was principally rooted in the government's introduction of the Muslim Family Law Ordinance in 1961 and the creation of the Auqaf Department in 1960. The former introduced laws that many orthodox religious scholars believed to be un-Islamic, and the latter attempted to regulate the various religious endowments and charities run by the *ulama*. See Jones (2003, 147-149) and Nasr (1994, 147-169).

Once formed, the PPP grew very quickly, particularly in Punjab, as a variety of different social groups, ranging from urban professionals and students to *zamindars*, expressed interest in joining the party. In the first year of its existence, the PPP's appeal was largely urban (Jones, 2003, 123), but this began to change partly as a result of the entry of landed politicians, but also because of Bhutto's relentless campaigning. More than any other leader in Pakistan's history, Bhutto was able to bring a tremendous amount of oratorical skill and charisma to bear during the frequent public meetings he held, using the rhetoric of progressive politics to generate support for his party platform amongst the masses of West Pakistan, and to generate opposition to the Ayub regime. When the anti-Ayub protests erupted in Rawalpindi and the other cities of West Pakistan, Bhutto had already been touring the country for a year, holding rallies with mass attendance as the PPP geared up to contest the forthcoming presidential elections. Bhutto's obvious influence led to his arrest on 13<sup>th</sup> November 1968, along with other opposition leaders, but this did not prevent the PPP machinery from capitalising on the groundwork that had been laid by their leader. By effectively deploying a message in which the party pledged to support Pakistan's workers and peasants, and to fight the economic injustice that had characterised the Ayub years, the PPP was able to increase its support exponentially, using the anti-Ayub movement to build itself as a party (Ali, 1970; Jones, 2003; Khan, 2009). Thus, by the time Ayub Khan resigned in March 1969 and handed over power to General Yahya Khan, it had become clear that the PPP would have to be part of any post-martial law dispensation. A year later, after elections were finally held in 1970 the results were testament to the truly meteoric rise of the party. While it was unable to make much headway in the NWFP and Balochistan, where the NAP was dominant, the PPP swept aside the other Opposition parties in Punjab and Sindh, gaining enough

seats in what would become the National Assembly of Pakistan to form a government at the centre following the secession of Bangladesh. At the time, the PPP's victory brought with it the hope that the election of a truly progressive party following Pakistan's first real parliamentary election would finally allow the country to break the pattern of instability, authoritarianism, and elite politics that had characterised its first two decades of independence.

### ***The Anti-Musharraf Movement of 2007***

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of March 2007, Chief Justice Iftikhar Hussain Chaudhry of the Supreme Court of Pakistan was sacked by General Pervez Musharraf. Prior to this dismissal, the court had been actively pursuing cases concerning public interest litigation in the areas of urban development, the privatization of state assets, and the disappearance of individuals from the NWFP and Balochistan, allegedly as a result of the regime's on-going counter-insurgency operations. In a departure from the traditional relationship between the courts and military governments in Pakistan, the Chaudhry-led Supreme Court made use of its judicial power to gradually push for political liberalisation, banking on the notion that the increasingly beleaguered Musharraf government's need for legal legitimacy provided the Court with the freedom to expand beyond its traditional role (Ghias, 2010). Faced with the prospect of additional inquiries into government corruption, as well as his own eligibility to remain president, Musharraf's intervention represented an attempt to stave off an increasingly problematic raft of legal challenges.

Following Chaudhry's dismissal, lawyers from across the country began a programme of protest and agitation, demanding the re-instatement of the Chief Justice who, they believed, had been removed from office for transparently political reasons.

Instead, using his powers as President, Musharraf filed a reference against Chaudhry with Pakistan's Supreme Judicial Council (SJC), the body tasked with investigating the conduct of judges. Amidst rising opposition to the government from the legal fraternity, and a non-stop campaign of marches and protests in the streets of Pakistan's cities, the SJC cleared Chaudhry of all charges on July 20, allowing him to resume his responsibilities as Chief Justice. Tensions between the Court and the Musharraf government continued to build over the summer, culminating in a clash in November later that year.

In 2007, elections were due to be held as the terms of both parliaments and the President were due to end. Elections for the presidency were scheduled for the 6<sup>th</sup> of October, with Musharraf ensuring that the parliamentary elections would take place afterwards in January 2008. The purpose of this was clear; by having the presidential election precede the parliamentary one, Musharraf could ensure that the puppet parliament he had seen elected in 2002 would re-elect him as President. However, mindful of the regime's plummeting popularity, Musharraf also set about securing his position and thus entered into negotiations with Benazir Bhutto, then in exile from Pakistan, pledging to provide her and the PPP with immunity from corruption prosecution in exchange for their support for his presidential candidacy. The agreement between the two was finalised in Abu Dhabi on the 27<sup>th</sup> of July, and led to the promulgation of the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October, the day after Musharraf was elected President. Under the terms of the NRO, Bhutto and the PPP were allowed to contest the forthcoming elections. In response to this, the Supreme Court entertained a petition questioning the validity of the NRO and on 12<sup>th</sup> of October, declared the Ordinance to be illegal. Just a month earlier, the Court had also entertained a petition from Nawaz Sharif, the head of the PML-N,

deeming his forced exile from Pakistan to be illegal, and giving him permission to return to Pakistan and lead his party in the elections.

When Sharif returned to Pakistan on the 10<sup>th</sup> of September 2007, he was arrested and re-exiled by the Musharraf government. This resulted in the Supreme Court initiating contempt proceedings against the government which, in tandem with the NRO judgment, led Musharraf to impose a state of 'Emergency' on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November, dismissing recalcitrant Supreme Court judges, and unleashing a wave of repression against the lawyers and other actors that continued to oppose him. What had initially started out as a movement restricted to the legal community now assumed a more popular dimension, with NGOs, civil society groups, and students coming out onto the streets en masse to protest the regime's reversion to overt authoritarianism (Bolognani, 2010; Ahmed and Stephan, 2010). Having been prevented from assuming the presidency due to legal challenges mounted against his candidacy Musharraf, still seeking to claim legal legitimacy, was forced to wait until the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November before the reconstituted Supreme Court could validate his election. By this point in time, in the face of non-stop protests, Musharraf bowed in the face of pressure to relinquish his position as army chief, and did so a day before assuming the presidency.

In the absence of any moves to re-instate the dismissed judges, or to lift the state of emergency, the movement against the regime continued unabated. When the government did lift the state of emergency on 15<sup>th</sup> December, opposition political parties also joined the fray. While the PPP continued to walk a 'political tightrope', seeking to continue working with Musharraf under the NRO while not alienating the Lawyers' Movement (Ghias, 2010), the death of Benazir Bhutto in a suicide attack later that month triggered a groundswell of support for the party, and intensified

opposition to the government. The movement only abated in February 2008, when elections to parliament saw the PPP and PML emerge as the two major parties at the centre, and agree to form a coalition government pledged to removing Musharraf from the presidency and restoring the dismissed judges. The PML-Q, MMA, and other political forces that had been created by Musharraf were completely routed, illustrating the extent to which this election represented popular discontent with the military government (Adeney, 2008; Akhtar, 2010a, 117-118). Musharraf himself was eventually forced to resign in August 2008, but his unhurried exit, coupled with the relative timidity of the main political parties involved, gave credence to the belief that the transition from military rule in 2008 was not particularly transformative, with the Establishment retaining a considerable amount of power behind the scenes. This assessment would be borne out over the next few years as questions regarding foreign policy and internal security continued to remain within the purview of the military (Akhtar, 2010a; Fair, 2010).

The fact that opposition to the Musharraf regime would come to a head in 2007 was not solely due to the government's tensions with the judiciary. Like Ayub Khan, Musharraf had presided over a period of rapid economic growth, particularly after the events of September 11, 2001, when American cultivation of Pakistani support for the War on Terror, coupled with increased remittances of foreign exchange from expatriate workers in the Middle East, provided the basis for an economic boom (Burki, 2007; Zaidi, 2011). This external economic assistance was supplemented by a programme of economic liberalisation and privatization, all of which contributed to a booming market for real estate, and tremendous growth in the services sector. However, by 2005-06, much of this economic progress was beginning to be exposed as illusory; as a result of the international oil shock of 2005, newly

deregulated oil prices skyrocketed, resulting in inflationary pressures on other commodities as well. This was accompanied most noticeably by a steep rise in the price of sugar, a development that was almost entirely due to the inability of the government to reign in Pakistan's powerful sugar producing cartel (Malik, 2009). The year 2007 also brought with it the start of Pakistan's energy crisis as increasing demand, as well as a ballooning deficit, left the government increasingly unable to purchase electricity from the country's network of private power producers.

The economic crises that engulfed the Musharraf government took place amidst two major sources of opposition to the regime that preceded the lawyers' movement. Firstly, many of the religious parties that had thus far enjoyed an ambivalent relationship with the regime, working with it in exchange for concessions on issues of social policy, began to more openly oppose Musharraf in reaction to two developments; the government's response to the Red Mosque crisis of 2007, and the military's support for the American War on Terror in Afghanistan and FATA in Pakistan. In 2006, the Danish Cartoons controversy had already demonstrated the ability of the religious parties to mobilise large protests in the cities of Pakistan (Blom, 2008), and the willingness of the mainstream Islamist parties to confront the state only increased following the siege and storming of Islamabad's Red Mosque in July 2007 (Blom, 2011).<sup>289</sup> This coincided with opposition to the War on Terror and the role played by the Musharraf government in its prosecution. Already at odds with the government over the decision to stop overtly supporting the Taliban in Afghanistan, the mainstream religious parties also opposed the government's decision to deploy military force in the FATA to reign in Islamist militants believed to have

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<sup>289</sup> In early 2007, the clerics in charge of the Red Mosque, as well as students of their seminary, began to engage in religious vigilantism in the surrounding environs, attempting to impose their own vision of Islamic law. Initially reluctant to act against the mosque administration, for fear of the fallout from doing so, the Musharraf government eventually ended up laying siege to, and storming, the Mosque, resulting in the deaths of 173 people.

links to the Afghan Taliban and Al-Qaeda. These operations, which were initiated in 2004-5, were extremely unpopular in Pakistan and fuelled the belief that the Musharraf government had compromised on the sovereignty of Pakistan by selling itself out to the USA. Capitalising on this the JI, which was the single largest Islamist party in Pakistan, put its full weight behind the lawyers' movement and chose to boycott the elections of 2007 (Ali and Iqtidar, 2008; Akhtar, 2010a, 111).

The second major pre-2007 source of opposition to the government was ethno-national in nature. After almost two decades of relative calm, Baloch nationalists once again rose up in arms against the state over its continued refusal to devolve greater economic power to the province, and to include ethnic Balochis within developmental plans for the province (Akhtar, 2007). The conflict between the state and Baloch nationalists saw the deployment of the Pakistan army in the province on a scale unseen since the 1970s, and culminated with the assassination of the Baloch nationalist leader Akbar Bugti in August 2006. The Pakistan army's assaults on nationalists in Balochistan, as well as Islamist militants in the NWFP, and the indiscriminate use of force in both provinces, only reinforced the notion that a Punjabi, rather than Pakistani, military was actively engaged in subjugating the people of the smaller provinces (Ali and Iqtidar, 2008). It was also not coincidental that the vast majority of people who went 'missing' during the Musharraf years were from these two provinces, and the broader sense of ethno-national resentment that was growing in Balochistan and the NWFP infused the proceedings of the Supreme Court with regards to the recovery of the missing persons.

In this context, it is interesting to note the types of actors that took to the streets against the government in 2007. Like the anti-Ayub movement, the protests had a distinctly urban bias, albeit one that was also on display in the smaller cities of

Punjab and Sindh. The lawyers who formed the core of the movement were once again able to mobilise on the basis of their Bar associations, and the NGOs and civil society groups that joined them also drew on existing organisational forms and linkages (Ahmed and Stephan, 2010; Ghias, 2010). What was exceptional about the movement of 2007 was the involvement of university students; given that student politics, except for that of the religious Right, had been banned since the beginning of the Zia regime, the mobilisation of students against Musharraf was unexpected. To a very large extent, their ability to come together as an organised entity stemmed from their skilful use of social media and the internet. As Bolognani (2010) and Shaheen (2010) have shown, students from elite universities like the Lahore University of Management Sciences, and Quaid-i-Azam University in Islamabad, were able to use the internet to communicate, circumventing controls on the flow of information imposed by the government, and effectively drawing international attention to the situation in Pakistan. Student-led efforts to disseminate information were matched by a sympathetic and relatively independent media; upon coming to power, Musharraf had liberalised the Pakistani media, allowing for the mushrooming of private television channels and radio stations that were allowed to operate free of state interference. That the media could turn on him was something that Musharraf clearly viewed as an unintended consequence of his earlier actions, as evinced by his attempts to muzzle the media when the Emergency was imposed in November 2007. These efforts would largely prove to be fruitless, as the de-centred nature of the media infrastructure and the internet ensured that the state was unable to maintain a monopoly on information.

What was also notable, however, about the anti-Musharraf movement was the lack of participation from the ‘subordinate’ classes (Akhtar, 2010a). This was rooted

in two main reasons; firstly, according to Bolognani (2010), the use of the internet and social media as the primary means through which to organise resistance, outside of the professional associations, necessarily meant that the movement would be restricted to ‘elite’ segments of society. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the two decades since the end of the first PPP government had seen the Establishment actively work towards dismantling and co-opting the organisations that had formed the basis for working class agitation against Ayub Khan (Akhtar, 2010a). Lacking the kind of organisational resources they had possessed in the late 1960s, the working classes in Pakistan’s cities could not effectively mobilise against Musharraf.

This was compounded by the changed nature of the political parties themselves, as well as their demands. Rather than representing the type of progressive forces that the PPP and East Pakistani parties had been in the 1960s, the PPP, PML-N and other mainstream parties were creatures of the 1980s and 1990s, vying with each other for the favour of the military establishment, and committed to the protection of narrow, propertied class interests due to the inescapable logic of Pakistan’s elite and patronage based electoral politics (Ahmed, 2001). This lack of a connection with the subordinate classes was matched by the indifference shown by the PPP and PML-N towards linking the anti-Musharraf movement to broader questions of economic and social justice (Akhtar, 2010a). As will be discussed below, the absence in 2007 of meaningful of resistance from below, and from the mainstream parties, demonstrated both the difficulty of overcoming the institutional inertia of politics in Pakistan, and of the way in which the mechanisms of path dependent elite power reproduction had deprived potential sources of opposition of their capacity to initiate radical change.

## ***The Movements of 1968-69 and 2007 Compared***

When comparing the anti-Ayub and anti-Musharraf movements, it is immediately possible to identify some common trends that arguably hold the key to explaining the emergence of the junctures in which they took place. Both movements occurred in conditions of economic crisis following periods of relatively high economic growth, although the political implications of this were only really expressed in 1968-69. The second obvious commonality between the two movements is the presence of serious ethno-national opposition to the military establishment. This assumed more serious proportions under Ayub Khan, as the Bengali movement for provincial autonomy gathered steam during the last years of his government. For Musharraf, the enduring problem of ethno-national mobilisation in Balochistan, represented serious challenges to the stability of the regime. While not directly bearing on the structure of Punjab's internal politics, or on the military's alliance with the province's traditional elite, resistance in the other provinces strained the capacity of the state to function effectively, and brought into question the legitimacy of the military's role in politics.

The third point of commonality between 1968-69 and 2007 lies in the presence of urban organisations possessing the capacity to effectively mobilise against the state. Under both Ayub and Musharraf, it was students, lawyers, and other urban groups who drew on their associational networks to generate resistance to the regime. Where the two movements differ, however, is in the role played by organised labour and the mainstream political parties. The anti-Ayub movement in West Pakistan was heavily supported by trade unions and leftist political parties that articulated opposition to the regime in predominantly economic terms. This arguably formed the basis for the PPP's reliance on socialist and progressive rhetoric to generate support

for itself. By contrast, the anti-Musharraf movement did not feature the subordinate classes in any meaningful way, and the mainstream political parties refrained from challenging the regime in the same terms that had been employed four decades earlier.

One final point of commonality between the two movements is the effect the international context had on the state when these movements took place. The 1968-69 movement took place soon after an abortive war with India which, in addition to adding to the state's financial strain, also led to the Tashkent Declaration in 1966 which was seen by many, including Bhutto, to be a humiliating capitulation to India. The War had also soured ties between the United States and Pakistan, leading to the temporary withdrawal of American support for the military. Finally, it is perhaps not coincidental that the students who took to the streets against Ayub Khan in 1968 did so at the same time as many of their contemporaries in Europe and North America. While there is no readily available evidence of any links between the two waves of protest, it is reasonable to assume that an international 'demonstration' effect may have been at work.

For Musharraf, the international context presented a similar, yet different, set of circumstances. The War on Terror, in which Pakistan was aligned with the United States, had led to greater Islamist militancy in FATA, presenting serious challenges to the stability of the regime, particularly with the influx of fighters from neighbouring Afghanistan and the initiation of US drone strikes against targets within Pakistan. The difficult international situation was compounded by increasing US suspicion of the Musharraf government's conduct in the War, with the former suspecting the latter of harbouring anti-American militants. Having enjoyed several years of unquestioning US support and aid, the Musharraf government was more internationally isolated in 2007 than it had ever been since 2002.

Based on this comparison of the similarities between Pakistan's two most significant anti-military movements, it is possible to arrive at some tentative conclusions which, while not exhaustive, may be able to provide some insight into the conditions under which the state-landlord bargain could be challenged. First of all, it appears clear that economic crisis has a role to play in weakening the capacity of the state to effectively constrain challengers seeking to change the status quo. This, coupled with the impact of ethno-national resistance, as well as the international context, lends credence to Skocpol's (1979) theory that successful revolutions can only take place under conditions of state weakness of the sort described above.

It is here, however, that it becomes necessary to examine exactly what the outcomes were of both movements. Despite the similar conditions that gave rise to them, the anti-Ayub movement differed greatly from the anti-Musharraf one in a key respect; the former emphasised the need for socio-economic transformation to accompany the end of military rule, while the latter never aimed for more than a transition to democracy. Despite the similarities between the two movements in terms of their urban base, one key differentiating factor was the class actors that were involved. While both movements featured lawyers, students, and professionals, only the anti-Ayub movement featured the urban working class performing any kind of substantive role. It was in response to this worker mobilisation.

From this, it is possible to arrive at the conclusion that any movement aimed at challenging the historically entrenched power of the landed elite can only take place during a contingent 'contestational' juncture in which state weakness is complemented by the emergence of 'new' political actors, like the working class, seeking to change the status quo. While the anti-Musharraf movement met the contingency condition, in that the crises precipitating the movement, and their

outcome, could not have been foreseen, the absence of any mobilisation from below to claim political space meant that the radical potential of the movement remained limited. Nonetheless, subsequent events would go on to show that the promise of the PPP itself was also illusory and that despite the presence of working class mobilisation, the PPP was unable to constrain both the military establishment and its landed allies. The following section attempts to provide an explanation for this turn of events.

### ***Path Dependence, the Land Elite, and the Failed Promise of 1968-69 and 2007***

As has been explained in the preceding analysis, the anti-Ayub and anti-Musharraf movements took place at junctures that had radical potential. While the former was able to deliver on this promise in the short-term, it ultimately failed to radically alter the institutional status quo. This promise was even more short-lived with the anti-Musharraf movement, as the PPP and the PML-N both chose a path of transition, rather than transformation, after February 2008. In this section of the thesis, it will be argued that the failure of the PPP to capitalise on anti-Ayub movement in a radical way was rooted partly in the circumstances that it found itself in, but also in the role played by the Punjabi landed elite in the post-1971 dispensation. It will also be argued that this had long-term implications of transformative politics in Pakistan, and that the same mechanisms that underpinned the reassertion of landed power under Bhutto prevented the anti-Musharraf movement from assuming more radical proportions.

When discussing Land Reform in the previous chapter, the process through which the landed elite became part of the PPP was briefly alluded to. At the time of

the 1970 elections, the PPP's Left was arguably at the height of its power, buoyed by the support for its programme that it found in the popular mobilisation against Ayub Khan. Even at this point, however, elements of the traditional landed elite from Sindh and Punjab had begun to make their way into the PPP, partly due to personal links they had with Bhutto, but also for more nakedly strategic reasons; some sought to hedge their bets against the impending collapse of the Ayub government, and Bhutto recognised the electoral value of landed politicians (Jones, 2003, 218-222). At the time, the entry of these individuals into the PPP was met with some alarm by the Party's Left, but the decision to include them was ultimately justified by the argument that their presence in the party did not necessarily have to mean placing the levers of policy and decision-making in their hands.

Despite these early assurances, it was only two years before the PPP's character had begun to fundamentally change. According to Baxter (1974), Ahmed (1973) and Khan (2009, 292), some of Pakistan's most powerful landowning families had become part of the PPP by 1972, including the Tiwanas, Legharis, Daultanas, Gillanis, and Qureshis, to name just a few from Punjab. By 1974-75, these elements had begun to monopolise authority within the structure of the party at the local and district levels, and were also able to become increasingly close to Bhutto himself. By this time, much of the PPP's progressive wing had either left the party, or become increasingly marginal within it. In 1977, when the PPP began its electoral campaign, the transformation of the party into a vehicle for landed Punjabi and Sindhi interests had been completed; the vast majority of the party's candidates were drawn from the

traditional landed elite, and its local party machinery had become a vehicle for the mobilisation of support for this particular class (Rashid, 1978).<sup>290</sup>

In the literature on this period, there are three main sets of arguments that are advanced to explain the PPP's transformation once in power. The first is the widely accepted argument provided by Burki (1974; 1988), who claimed that Bhutto's economic policies ran the risk of alienating Pakistan's powerful propertied classes and that, as opposition to the regime grew, the PPP had little choice but to begin co-opting elements of the traditional elite that could be used to shore up its support base. A second, influential strand of thought has focused on Bhutto's personality; for Syed (1978), Bhutto's success lay in his ability to characterise and portray himself in a variety of different ways depending on the context and audience, with this masking a tremendous tendency towards the centralisation of authority and indulgence in autocratic behaviour. In the view of Ahmad (1978) and Kaushik (1985), Bhutto was an inherently contradictory man given his feudal background and progressive aspirations. Following this line of analysis, Bhutto's accommodation of the landed elite was partly rooted in his own class background, and willingness to rely on traditional sources of power as a means for support. Finally, Heeger (1977), Lodhi (1982), and Jones (2003) navigate a midway point between these two approaches. Recognizing the Bhutto was faced with tremendous opposition due to his economic and political programme, these authors attribute the decline of the PPP as a progressive force to the inability to the party to become institutionalised as an organisation tied to a social base rooted in the subordinate classes. As the propertied classes, the ethno-national NDP, and the military, ramped up their opposition to the

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<sup>290</sup> Interestingly, it is also important to note that the PPP's relationship with organised labour had also begun to change by this point. While the party remained committed, at least symbolically, to working with workers and unions, the PPP's more authoritarian tendencies led it to clash with, and suppress, labour on several occasions (Ali, 2005; Shaheed, 1983; 2007).

PPP, Bhutto increasingly relied on a centralised network of landed politicians in Punjab and Sindh to buttress his government.

For the purposes of the argument presented in this thesis, it is simply important to note that, for whatever reason, the PPP's reliance on the Punjabi landed elite was rooted in a need to acquire support in the face of tremendous opposition. Even in the period immediately preceding the elections of 1970, it became clear that the support of the landed elite was a tremendous electoral asset and while the PPP did lay some of the groundwork for creating a rural party machine that could circumvent the traditional elite, its efforts to do so remained insufficient and limited. To the extent that the PPP introduced new blood to the agrarian political arena in Punjab, it was in the form of rich peasants who had come to power as BD members during the Ayub years, and who could be used to form factions rivalling those of the CML and CoML.<sup>291</sup> Following the logic of path dependent institutional development, the PPP's reliance on these forces was only to be expected; colonial rule, and the first two decades of independence, had deeply entrenched the power of the different fractions of the landed elite at different levels of politics in Punjab, and the factionalism of the landed elite ensured that even if certain segments were excluded from the political arena, the interests of the class as a whole would continue to be safeguarded.

It is in the PPP's inability to mobilise the rural poor in Punjab that we can begin to find an explanation for the ultimate failure of the party to engage in a long-term transformation of the institutional basis of politics in Pakistan. Just as the direct participation of urban labour in the anti-Ayub movement provided Bhutto with a ready constituency that he could lean on for support against the industrialists in the

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<sup>291</sup> The fact that Bhutto introduced new politicians to the political arena has been well established by Burki (1988) and Jones (2003). Both acknowledge, however, that these new politicians were hardly members of the subordinate classes; while they may not have been members of the traditional aristocracy, they still represented a very privileged, propertied section of the peasantry.

cities, a concurrent mobilisation of the rural poor would have arguably provided the PPP with a very large pool of members, activists, and supporters who could have been relied upon to support the party in its campaign against entrenched landed interests. However, while the unions in the cities provided the organisational basis for labour to become part of the PPP's class coalition, no corresponding organisations existed in the countryside that could have been used to capitalise on rural discontent with the Ayub regime. Even the traditional West Pakistani Left, which could draw upon a stronger history and tradition of progressive politics than the PPP, had failed to make inroads into rural Punjab in the two decades since independence. The villages of Punjab remained the political domain of landed elites who, through the monopolisation of local government and the bureaucracy, could ensure that their positions as rural patrons remained unchallenged. Strategically important as labour were as a support base for the PPP, their geographical insularity within the big cities, coupled with their limited demographic strength, meant that long term support for democratic change had to be rooted in the countryside.

It could be argued that while the PPP should have attempted to generate support in the villages of Punjab independently of already entrenched elites, it simply did not have the time to do so in the period from 1968-1970. Furthermore, even though Bhutto did engage in extensive tours of every district in Punjab and Sindh, and did set up local PPP offices, the fact remained that directly challenging the power of the landed elite at the local level involved costs that the PPP could arguably not afford at that point in its history. Particularly in its initial, formative phase, the PPP's support was largely urban in nature, and a confrontation with the Punjabi landed elite would have diverted resources and attention away from the broader struggle against Ayub Khan and, indeed, the NAP in Balochistan, Sindh and the NWFP.

Thus, when faced with the challenge of winning an election in a predominantly rural electorate against a military regime in the face of tremendous opposition from the religious right and ethno-national parties, the PPP ultimately chose the path of least resistance, wagering that its accommodation of the landed elite for strategic purposes would not necessarily alter its identity as a progressive party. However, as the previous chapter's discussion of land reform shows, the presence of the landed elite within the PPP severely diluted the power of the party to move against rural propertied interests. Having established their electoral indispensability, especially in the face of continued opposition to the Bhutto government, the landed elite were able to use their position to reinforce the underlying mechanisms that had facilitated their entry into the PPP in the first place. As Rashid (1978) correctly points out, the Bhutto period was actually quite profitable for the landed elite, who actually prospered relative to the class of big capitalists and industrialists that the PPP government remained implacably opposed to. Far from being constrained by the PPP's Left, or by the Bhutto himself, the landed elite who joined the PPP emerged from the 1970s as a more powerful force than they had been before the end of the Ayub Khan era; they retained much of their economic strength and, more importantly, were more firmly established within the fabric of electoral politics than before.

The capture of the PPP by landed interests, and the subsequent dilution of its radical programme, can help us understand the reasons why the anti-Musharraf movement lacked the radical potential of the anti-Ayub juncture. In addition to the lack of participation by labour, which itself was representative of a less radical movement, the response of the PML-N and the PPP, the two biggest parties in Pakistan, to the movement exhibited none of the radical promise that the PPP had displayed. According to Akhtar (2010a), this was entirely due to the fact that both

parties had, by this point in time, been entirely captured by the propertied classes, and habituated to the idea of competing with each other for access to state patronage. In this sense, the decision by both parties to contest the 2008 elections with Musharraf as president, rather than boycotting them like several smaller parties, was seen by some segments of the 2007 movement as being a betrayal of everything that had thus far been fought for (Ali and Iqtidar, 2010). Even under Bhutto, the military and the PPP had started to initiate a rapprochement that limited the extent to which the former would move against the latter (Hashmi, 1983), and it would have been unrealistic to expect Pakistan's contemporary political parties to act any differently. Purged of any truly progressive elements they may have once had, and beholden to the support of politicians willing to defect to an opposing side for the right price, the PPP and PML-N had little choice but to once again compete against each other for the spoils of government.

## ***Conclusion***

In this chapter, it has been argued that the anti-Ayub and anti-Musharraf movements presented the only real opportunities in which the path dependent institutional status quo could have been challenged, and a more progressive, and radical, political project could have been initiated to dismantle the political power of the military and the propertied classes. Due to a unique combination of ethno-national resistance, economic crisis, and urban unrest, 1968-71 and 2007 represented junctures at which the military establishment and its allies were sufficiently weakened to be removed from government as a result of popular protest and mobilisation. In particular, the emergence of the PPP during the anti-Ayub movement as an explicitly,

progressive, mass-based party raised the hope that Pakistan would finally be able to escape the cycle of authoritarianism and elite control that had characterised its first two decades of independence.

In reality, the promise of the PPP, and indeed of the anti-Musharraf movement, would prove to be short-lived. This was due in part to the urban nature of both movements; the groups that mobilised against Ayub and Musharraf were able to do so by drawing on existing associational and organisational resources that could be deployed against the two regimes. This was in contrast with the countryside, where the continued hold of elites over local politics ensured that similar kinds of mobilisation could not take place, and also led to the capture of the PPP by the traditional Punjabi landed elite. Contesting the elections of 1970, and subsequently governing Pakistan, in an atmosphere where it faced continual opposition from capitalists, the military, and ethno-nationalists in the smaller provinces, the PPP turned to landed elites as a means through which to bolster its electoral and popular support. This process began slowly, but would accelerate throughout the 1970s, culminating in the emergence of the PPP in the 1977 elections as a party almost entirely dominated by landed interests. This resulted in a dilution of the PPP's progressive programme as the landed elite made use of their position within the party to pursue and protect their own interests.

The PPP that was removed from office by Zia-ul-Haq was very different from the one that had prevailed against Ayub Khan and, over the next two decades, the party would increasingly become part of the institutional framework of the military establishment's politics, competing with rival parties for state patronage and the pursuit of elite interest. Thus, when circumstances gave rise to the anti-Musharraf movement of 2007, the PPP and other parties were simply unable to capitalise on the

opportunity the way they had in the late 1960s. Instead, the PPP chose to go the way of transition, agreeing to work with the military dispensation in exchange for amnesty from prosecution, and the continued support of the state. While the radical potential of 2007 was always going to be limited when compared with 1968-69, largely due to the almost complete absence of the subordinate classes from the movement, the presence of the PPP as a 'progressive' party also impeded the ability of alternative radical organisations to emerge. By investing in the PPP in the 1970s, and subverting it to reinforce their own power, the landed elite of Punjab were thus able to ensure that even in periods of potentially transformative importance, they would be able to emerge relatively unscathed.

## CHAPTER 9: Conclusion

*Bholia! Tu jag da andaata  
Tairi baandi dharti maata  
Tu jag da palan haar  
Jarnal, karnal, subedar dipti, DC, thanedar  
Saray taira ditta khawan  
Tu jay naan beejain tu jay naan gaahain  
Bhukay bhaanay subh mar jawan  
Aih chaakar tu sarkar*

Faiz Ahmad Faiz<sup>292</sup>

Throughout this thesis, it has been argued that the path dependent trajectory of institutional development in Punjab has resulted in the creation and perpetuation of a political framework within which the traditional landed elite have been able to maintain their positions of power and influence, providing the colonial state, and then the post-colonial military establishment, with support in exchange for patronage. Over time, this has allowed the landed elite to firmly entrench itself within Punjab's political parties, legislatures, and bureaucracy, using these institutions to reinforce their power at the local level and impose constraints on their rivals while simultaneously deepening their relationship of inter-dependence with the state. At the same time, the factionalism and opportunism that took the landed elite from the

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<sup>292</sup> Faiz Ahmad Faiz was one of Pakistan's most renowned Urdu poets. A member of the Progressive Writer's Movement and one of the founders of the Communist Party of Pakistan, he was an implacable opponent of Pakistan's military establishment and political elite. This excerpt is from *Uth Utaanh Nu Jatta*, which was written about the peasantry, and was one of Faiz's rare forays into Punjabi poetry. It's translation is as follows:

O simpleton, you feed the whole word  
The whole earth is your slave  
You are rearing the whole world  
Generals, Colonels, Subedars, Deputies, DCs and Police officers  
Everyone eats what you give them  
If you won't plough, if you won't sow  
All of them would die of starvation  
They are servants, you are the master

Unionists to the Muslim League, through to the Republicans, the CML, the PPP, and all of Pakistan's mainstream political parties, has ensured their inclusion within both pro and anti-government formations over time, guaranteeing their place within any new political dispensation.

This chapter is divided into four main sections. The first summarizes the approach taken by the thesis with regards to path dependence, critical junctures, and the mechanisms underpinning institutional development and reproduction. The second section shows how these concepts were deployed to describe the emergence of the state-landlord bargain in the period from 1849-1868, and how this put in motion a self-reinforcing sequence of institutional development that would shape Punjabi politics in the future. Here, reference will be made not only to the use of legislative, bureaucratic, and electoral power, but also to the role played by factionalism in perpetuating the power of the landed class, if not landowning individuals. The third section examines the contestational junctures that led to the passage of the Land Alienation Act of 1900, and the election of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's PPP in 1970, as well as the events leading up to the collapse of the Unionist government in 1946. The implications of these events, both in terms of how they arose as challenges to the status quo, and why they failed, will be considered with a view towards understanding precisely how institutional change can be initiated in Punjab. The thesis then concludes with a few tentative observations about potential sources of such change.

### ***Path Dependence, Critical Junctures, and Mechanisms of Institutional Development***

By using path dependence to explain the persistence of landed power in Punjab, this study has attempted to examine the mechanisms through which institutions are developed and reproduced. In doing so, emphasis has been placed on

three main things; firstly, the roles played by self-reinforcing and reactive sequences, secondly, the processes through which critical junctures create and potentially challenge particular institutional outcomes, and thirdly, the distinction between mechanisms of production and reproduction. Precisely how these three attributes of path dependence, as conceptualized in this study, interact and contribute to the analysis has been shown by disaggregating time periods into smaller sets of events and interventions, and then examining the causal connections between them that constitute the mechanisms through which institutional development takes place.

Dealing first with the question of self-reinforcing and reactive sequences, path dependence, as used in this thesis, is premised upon the assumption that choices made at particular points in time and under particular circumstances have an effect on subsequent events, and potentially generate institutional outcomes that become 'locked-in'. As this lock-in deepens over time, due to the costs associated with switching to alternative paths, or in response to elite interventions aimed at preserving the status quo, established paths of institutional development become self-reinforcing sequences governed by mechanisms of reproduction that serve to further entrench them over time. More often than not, these mechanisms of reproduction involve the creation of positive feedback loops, whereby actors enmeshed within these institutional frameworks continue to invest in them as they adapt to them, thereby further strengthening the institutions in question. Self-reinforcing sequences are also characterized by the presence of increasing or constant returns, which is the benefit actors are able to derive from their adherence to a particular institutional path. Under conditions of asymmetrical power relations, this inevitably entails the strengthening of elites and in the case of Punjab, these mechanisms have served to reinforce and entrench the power of the landed classes and the state. This is in contrast with reactive

sequences, which are simply chains of events that may not have occurred but for the emergence of a particular outcome during a foundational moment.

In order to capture the role played by initial conditions in generating sequences of institutional development and reproduction, the idea of ‘critical junctures’ has been employed by this study. Representing periods of time that are triggered by generative events and which open up the possibility for institutional change, this study has distinguished between two types of critical juncture. ‘Foundational junctures’ give rise to new institutional outcomes that subsequently follow particular trajectories of development. As shown in Chapter 3, the period from 1849-1868, during which the relationship between Punjab’s landed elite and the colonial state was forged, represents the foundational juncture that gave rise to Punjab’s institutional framework of landlord-dominated politics. ‘Contestational junctures’ arise when dominant institutional paths and frameworks are challenged by new actors, sometimes the products of reactive sequences emerging from earlier foundational junctures, attempting to transform the institutional status quo. Chapter 2 provides detailed criteria on how to identify these junctures, chief amongst which is how contestational junctures are characterized by failure; the inability to deliver on the promise of institutional change demonstrates precisely how institutions are reproduced in periods of crisis, and how actors respond to challenges to their power. The passage of the Land Alienation Act of 1900, which is discussed in Chapter 3, the collapse of Unionist government and Partition, which are examined in Chapter 5, and the election of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto’s PPP in 1970, which is analyzed in Chapter 8, are treated as examples of contestational junctures.

Finally, the study also distinguishes between mechanisms of production and reproduction when considering how institutions are created and reinforced. The

former, which come into play during foundational junctures, govern the selection of a particular institutional outcome from amongst a range of possible options during periods of time governed by a degree of contingency and uncertainty. In the case of Punjab, the bargain between the state and the landed elite is a mechanism of production, driving the processes through which the institutional framework of Punjabi politics was developed during the initial foundational juncture. Once stable institutional outcomes emerge out of foundational junctures, mechanisms of reproduction play the role of reinforcing and reproducing these outcomes, with the original mechanisms of production sometimes producing an additional impetus for institutional persistence. In this study, the use of electoral politics, bureaucratic interventions, and legislation have been highlighted as means through which the landed elite and the state have reproduced their bargain and maintained the institutional status quo. These three processes, while not the only ones through which landed power has been reproduced, collectively demonstrate precisely how mechanisms such as increasing returns and positive feedback loops can contribute to institutional persistence over time.

### ***The Persistence of Landed Power in Punjab – Colonial Foundations and Mechanisms of Reproduction***

When the British annexed Punjab in 1849, they were faced with the problem of erecting an administrative apparatus that could be effectively deployed for the maintenance of order and the appropriation of agrarian surplus. Having come to power by eradicating much of the order that had characterized Ranjit Singh's rule, itself a brief respite from the turbulence and conflict that marked the collapse of Mughal authority in North-West India, the British believed that Punjab represented a blank slate upon which they could inscribe an entirely new institutional order.

Drawing on their experiences in the NWP, and informed by the insights of Utilitarian thought, the British set about their task by attempting to introduce a system of peasant proprietorship in the province that, in tandem with the creation of a 'modern' bureaucracy and legal system, was felt to be the most efficient and optimal means through which to collect revenue.

The influence of the so-called 'Punjab tradition' of bureaucratic management meant that the province's earliest administrators displayed a strong tendency towards paternalistic intervention in society, and this was most prominently displayed in their attitude towards the province's traditional aristocracy; while exceptions were made for the predominantly Muslim chiefs who had aided the British in their campaign against the Sikhs, it was generally felt that the abolition of 'parasitic' landlordism in Punjab was necessary for the province's economic and political development. As such, when creating their new system of peasant proprietorship<sup>293</sup>, Punjab's British rulers actively engineered the slow excoriation of the province's agrarian ruling class, believing that the success of colonial rule depended on the creation, and co-optation, of a prosperous peasantry freed from the oppressive control of the traditional aristocracy.

All of this would change with the Revolt of 1857. Spearheaded by dispossessed landed aristocrats from the NWP, the Revolt was a clear demonstration of the enduring power of India's traditional agrarian elite, and served to vindicate Henry Lawrence, Punjab's head of Political Affairs and member of its Board of Administration, who argued that the traditional aristocracy constituted a potential source of support for the British and stability in the province. Although his views were not shared by his brother John, who chaired the BoA and the Revenue

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<sup>293</sup> As discussed in Chapter 2, these peasant proprietors were really rich peasants who constituted part of the landed elite.

Administration, the Revolt had the effect of galvanizing Indian colonial opinion in favour of landed elites. Faced with uncertainty in 1857, and realizing that the initial strategy pursued in Punjab might prove to be insufficient for effectively controlling the province, the 'Aristocratic Reaction' that now gripped the colonial government, and Edward Prinsep's claim that the initial revenue settlements had unfairly expropriated rightful landowners by conferring previously non-existent rights upon the tenants who now formed the core of Punjab's proprietors, provided a rationale for rectifying the institutional framework of the revenue administration by restoring the aristocracy's ownership rights and by conferring administrative and magisterial powers upon them. However, it was also recognized that correcting the initial 'mistakes' in the revenue settlement was not something that could simply be resolved by re-allocating land that had already been granted to peasant proprietors, since undertaking such a course of action ran the risks of generating a backlash from these proprietors. This, coupled with the continued hostility of John Lawrence (now the Governor-General) to the idea of empowering the landed aristocracy, meant that when the Punjab Tenancy Act of 1868 was passed, it contained provisions that guaranteed the rights of proprietors who had been granted rights after 1849 while simultaneously ensuring that preference would be given to the aristocracy's claims in the future.

What is important to note is that the institutional regime that emerged from these events was one that was not exclusively based on either peasant proprietorship or landlordism. Instead, the passage of the Punjab Tenancy Act in 1868 cemented the creation of a hybrid framework in which 'new' peasant proprietors and old landed aristocrats were both brought into alliance with the colonial state. During the foundational juncture from 1849-1868, the initial decision to introduce peasant proprietorship to Punjab, despite Henry Lawrence's misgivings, was one that

represented a radical departure from Punjab's extant agrarian structure, and illustrated the way in which the institutional choices made by the British were characterized by a degree of contingency, even if they were informed by the broader approach being taken by the British to governance in other parts of India at the time. That this initial moment gave rise to a path dependent process of institutional development was shown after 1857, when the decisions made in the previous decade constrained the choices now available to the British. The subsequent fusion of peasant proprietorship with aristocratic landownership was thus not simply a result of careful calculation or informed decision-making; instead, it was a product of contingent historical circumstances and pragmatic choices made under conditions of uncertainty.

While the colonial state explicitly acknowledged the active role that could be played by the traditional aristocracy in ensuring order in Punjab, it also realized that relatively prosperous peasant proprietors could provide it with an enduring source of passive loyalty and stability. Representing as they did the upper strata of the agrarian economic hierarchy, a fact reinforced by their membership in the agriculturalist *biraderis*, Punjab's rich peasant proprietors and landed aristocracy constituted the province's landed elite. After 1849, the colonial state sought to co-opt this elite, albeit in stages, in response to the imperatives of ensuring order and accumulation under conditions of uncertainty. The state-landlord bargain that thus emerged, and whose genesis was examined through the use of process tracing in Chapter 3, was the main mechanism behind the creation of an institutional framework of politics explicitly geared towards strengthening the power of these actors.

Between 1868 and 1898, the colonial state undertook a significant number of interventions in Punjabi society that reinforced the institutional outcomes of the first two decades of colonial rule. In addition to implementing laws that safeguarded the

economic position of the landed elite, and gradually incorporating them within the organs of bureaucratic, military, and representative government, the colonial state actively reproduced the logic of the state-landlord bargain when setting up the canal colonies in the Western parts of Punjab that would eventually become part of Pakistan. Allocating land to a mix of peasant proprietors and elements of the traditional aristocracy, the colonial state explicitly strengthened extant social hierarchies and enhanced the economic control exercised by the landed elite over the subordinate peasantry. For their own part, the landed elite, and particularly the aristocracy, made ample use of their newfound protections and position to deliver on their end of the bargain; for the most, Punjab remained relatively quiescent as the landed elite brought their political, social and economic power to bear on the task of ensuring order and, in contrast with many other parts of India, the province, and especially the canal colonies, remained a source of economic prosperity and political stability.

As Chapter 4 shows, the introduction of a Legislative Assembly in Punjab in 1898, and the gradual expansion of representative government and electoral politics, gave rise to new mechanisms of institutional reproduction. Where the state had previously been the senior partner in the state-landlord bargain, the landed elite were now able to play a more direct role in shaping colonial policy for the pursuit of their mutual goals. Amidst an increasing entrenchment within the administrative apparatuses of the state through bodies like the District Boards and Panchayats, and in the context of electoral rules that were geared towards ensuring the dominance of landed politicians, as opposed to the numerically small but increasingly vocal professionals and capitalists who had begun to emerge in the cities, the rise of the Unionist Party as a supra-communal party of landed interests exemplified the

ascension of the landed elite as the most powerful force in Punjabi politics. Within the province, and even at the All-India level, Punjab's politicians were able to exert a tremendous amount of influence, passing legislation that allowed them to more effectively pursue their interests while simultaneously ensuring the province's continued loyalty to the colonial government at a time of rising nationalist sentiment. Indeed, by the time the first autonomous Punjabi government was elected to power in 1937, the landed elite had reached a point where they could start to extract greater economic concessions from the state while also using their power to impose constraints on subordinate groups, like tenant farmers, and rivals, like the capitalist classes. Collectively, feedback loops created through the use of bureaucratic, electoral, and legislative power ensured that both the state and the landed elite in Punjab received constant, if not increasing, returns from the institutional framework of politics, further deepening the bargain between the two actors.

Independence from colonial rule in 1947 triggered tremendous upheavals in the new state of Pakistan. However, while the bloody fallout of Partition, the urgent need for refugee resettlement, and the presence of a weak civilian government were sources of considerable instability, the power of the landed elite in Punjab remained relatively unchanged. As shown in Chapter 5, the landed elite were successfully able to secure their place within the nationalist Muslim League during the late 1930s and early 1940s, ensuring their continued political relevance and importance during a period of time that might have otherwise resulted in significant changes to the province's pattern of politics. The factionalism endemic to landed politics in Punjab, rooted as it was in competition over power and patronage, had the effect of splintering the Unionist Party at a time when the colonial state, wracked by the strains imposed by Second World War and the Indian national movement(s), could no longer present

itself as an effective guarantor of landed interests. The subsequent defection of landed politicians, and their vote banks, to the Muslim League served to secure the power of the landed elite as a class post-Partition, with this being demonstrated by the ease with which they were able to entrench themselves within positions of power in the new provincial and federal governments. At the same time, Pakistan's powerful military-bureaucratic establishment continued to exercise tremendous influence from behind the scenes during the first ten years of independence, making use of the factionalism and opportunism of the landed elite to pursue its own interests in tandem with allied sections of the landed classes.

Matters would come to a head in 1958, when provincial discord between East and West Pakistan, coupled with the clear incompetence of the civilian government, would lead to Pakistan's first military coup. The first five years of General Ayub Khan's regime, discussed in Chapter 6, were interesting because they demonstrated the resilience of the landed elite and their bargain with the state. Epitomizing the military-bureaucratic establishment's belief that it could rule Pakistan more effectively without the help of incompetent and corrupt landed politicians, Ayub Khan assumed power under the assumption that he could reduce the power of the landed elite while also pursuing a path of capitalist development that would eventually empower alternative classes and actors. By 1963, these hopes would prove to be completely unfounded. The ability of the landed elite to continue dominating the local levers of politics and the state, despite being barred from formal electoral participation, and their enduring capacity to mobilise rural support, led an increasingly besieged and de-legitimized Ayub Khan to initiate a rapprochement with the very same landed politicians he had sought to displace. Rather than fundamentally altering the institutional status quo, Ayub Khan ended up reproducing and reinforcing it.

The implications of this have been explored in Chapters 6 and 7, which examine the role played by the same mechanisms of reproduction that were identified in the colonial period in reinforcing the power of the state and the landed elite. Starting with electoral politics, the history of post-colonial Punjab demonstrates how the system remains completely dominated by landed politicians. Partly as a result of interventions by successive military establishments to ensure the selection of pliant ‘democratic’ partners, partly due to the persistence of electoral rules embodying a rural bias, and partly due to the counter-intuitive effects of landed factionalism, whereby intra-class conflict leads to landed elites enmeshing themselves within a competing political formations, mainstream political parties in Pakistan remain beholden to landed politicians who mobilize support in exchange for patronage. This is supplemented by the continued existence of landed links with the bureaucracy and military which enables the landed elite to continue their manipulation of local level governance for the purposes of receiving and disbursing patronage, evading attempts at regulation, as was the case during attempts at Land Reform, and to impose sanctions on rivals. Finally, the landed elite in post-colonial Punjab have also been able to effectively use their legislative power to reinforce their position, shaping laws on taxation and agrarian reform that have ensured that they remain free to pursue their economic interests, thus reinforcing their power.

Over the course of the century and a half since the imposition of colonial rule in Punjab, electoral, bureaucratic, and legislative mechanisms have reproduced the state-landlord bargain underpinning the path dependent process of institutional development in Punjab. Together, these mechanisms have had the cumulative effect of entrenching landed power, making it increasingly difficult over time for alternative options to be explored. These particular mechanisms also illustrate the active role

played by the landed elite and the state in re-entrenching their bargain, making choices and decisions in response to changing societal circumstances.

### ***Contestational Junctures and Challenges to the Institutional Order***

For all the emphasis that this thesis has placed on the reinforcement of landed power in Punjab, there have nonetheless been episodes where the province's institutional framework was challenged. In 1900, the passage of the Land Alienation Act was part of a contestational juncture during which the colonial state was forced to choose between protecting the interests of either its landed allies or emerging capitalist classes who threatened the stability of the rural order. Between 1944 and 1947, the precipitous collapse of the Unionist government in Punjab represented a similar juncture. In a different context, the rise of Bhutto's PPP from 1968-71 brought with it the promise of a more progressive, participatory politics that had the potential to empower the masses while constraining the power of the traditional elite and their partners in the state.

These moments in time, dealt with at length in Chapters 3, 5 and 8 respectively, are important for two main reasons; firstly, they illustrate the circumstances under which challenges to the institutional order have emerged despite the existence of the state-landlord bargain and the attendant mechanisms through which it has been produced and reproduced. Secondly, their failure provides further insight into precisely how the state and landed elite respond to such challenges, making use of their extant resources and power to weather these storms. The resilience of the state-landlord bargain during these episodes of contention strengthens the argument presented in this thesis about the path dependent nature of institutional development in Punjab.

Despite the obvious differences between the events of 1900, 1944-47, and 1968-1971, three important similarities between these periods allow for them to be treated together as contestational junctures in this study. Firstly, in all three cases, the events that triggered the contestational junctures were defined by a considerable degree of contingency, in that their timing and outcomes could not be predicted beforehand. Secondly, all three junctures failed to deliver on their radical promise. Thirdly, to the extent that it existed, the potential for radical change primarily rested in the hands of 'new' actors empowered by a combination of exogenous circumstances and the unintended consequences of earlier institutional interventions. In the case of the Land Alienation Act, the capitalists who had begun to threaten the rural order in Punjab were, at least in part, a product of the administrative changes introduced by the British in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century; the same legal institutions that protected private property rights and enshrined the power of the landed elite also provided the means through which moneylenders could begin to acquire land by sale and mortgage. In the 1940s, India's nationalist parties were able to successfully peel support away from the Unionists, setting themselves up as a new political alternative in the province. In Punjab under Ayub Khan, the urban working class represented a new political actor that gravitated towards the PPP in the late 1960s.

The events that generated and empowered these actors led them to evolve in tandem with the dominant institutional trajectory set in place during the formative years of British and military rule in Punjab, and their conflicts with the landed elite represented significant moments in which the power of the latter was challenged. The subsequent failure of these contestational junctures to usher in new institutional regimes provides important insights into the mechanisms through which landed power has been reproduced in Punjab. As explained in Chapter 3, the decision to implement

the Land Alienation Act was one that was taken despite the presence of countervailing trends and opinions in other parts of British India, within the Punjabi administrative establishment, and amongst the landed elite itself. Faced with the prospect of instability in the province, the state-landlord bargain that underpinned the framework of British rule constrained the choices that were available to the government, necessitating the implementation of pro-landlord measures and providing a clear illustration of the path dependent nature of institutional development in Punjab. Through their increasing involvement within the military and local government, as well as their proven ability to ensure the maintenance of order and the provision of revenue, as seen in the canal colonies, the landed elite had proven to be effective partners for the British in Punjab. Having produced a structure of government predicated on the co-optation of the landed elite, the bargain between the state and Punjab's landlords ensured that, almost fifty years later, the costs of switching to an alternative model of governance in Punjab were simply too high for the British to countenance.

In the 1940s, the economic strain imposed on the colonial government by the Second World War limited the ability of the state to guarantee the continued provision of patronage to Punjab's landed elite. Already wracked by factionalism, the Unionist Party began to lose support to the Muslim League, whose rising national relevance was increasingly viewed as evidence of its inevitable importance in any post-War political dispensation. However, while the fracturing of landed politics through factionalism could have arguably led to the collapse of landed power in Punjab, particularly given the Muslim League's urban roots, the landed elite were able to use their position in the party to undermine any progressive agenda that it may have had. Lacking popular support in a predominantly rural electorate, the Muslim League had

little choice but to accommodate the interests of entrenched landed politicians who could guarantee its electoral victory. That Partition could not dislodge the landed elite from their position of political strength was evinced by how, despite the persistence of factionalism, landed politicians were able to dominate West Punjab's politics in the first decade after independence.

Similar mechanisms came into play when the PPP's attempts at reform were stymied following their electoral victory. From the very outset, the PPP was a party that had to deal with the contradictory tendencies of the left-of-centre activists who had been instrumental in its formation and the landed politicians from Punjab and Sindh (including Bhutto himself) who had begun to gravitate towards the party as its popularity grew. Between 1968 and 1970, the former remained in ascendancy, formulating PPP policy and effectively using the anti-Ayub movement to bolster the party and mobilize the urban working class. However, by the time the PPP assumed power at the end of 1971, many of its supporters from the Left had been marginalized as the party struggled to assert its authority in the face of opposition from the NAP in Balochistan and the NWFP, as well as from the military establishment, industrialists, the religious Right, and those elements of the landed elite, particularly from the traditional aristocracy, who remained outside of the fold of the party. Faced with these challenges, Bhutto responded by becoming increasingly autocratic and, like Ayub Khan and the British before him, by leaning on the Punjabi (and Sindhi) landed elite for support. While the PPP retained an overtly Leftist orientation, particularly with regards to its relationship with Capital, the power of its landed politicians ensured that, despite attempts at land and tenancy reform, the party was unable to initiate any significant agrarian change in Punjab. By 1977, landlords had become crucial to the

PPP's electoral strategy, demonstrating once again how the landed elite remained a potent force to be deployed in the service of the government.

The relative uniqueness of the contestational junctures described above can be gauged through comparison with the anti-Musharraf movement of 2007-08 which, *prima facie*, represented a direct challenge to the state-landlord relationship. Indeed, the comparison seems all the more compelling when considering how this movement, like the events of 1968-1971, took place under conditions of economic crisis and state weakness. However, despite toppling a military dictatorship, the anti-Musharraf movement lacked the capacity to challenge the state-landlord bargain not least of all due to the urban bias of the movement and the absence of any mainstream political parties committed to reforming the rural power structure. Indeed, the position of the PPP in the movement, as a party largely beholden to landed interests in the Punjabi and Sindhi countryside, provided a stark contrast with its earlier incarnation in the late 1960s, precluded its playing a role as a force for progressive change, and illustrated the enduring capacity of the landed elite to make use of their electoral significance to entrench themselves within the party system. While the junctures of 1900, 1944-47 and 1968-1971 also failed to radically impact the state-landlord bargain at the heart of Punjabi politics, the interests articulated by the regime-challenging actors in these moments at least opened up the possibility of change, as opposed to 2007-08 when such options were not even brought to the table.

### ***The Future of Landed Power in Punjab***

One of the elements of the explanation provided in this thesis for the persistence of landed power in Punjab is that the institutional system that underpins its reproduction is one that is incredibly difficult to dislodge. Over time, the landed elite and their partners in the state have actively sought to prevent rival actors from

challenging their dominance, and have used a variety of mechanisms of reproduction to maintain their pre-eminent political position. The implications of this for politics and democracy in Punjab, and indeed Pakistan, are clear. The intrinsic link between authoritarianism and 'feudal' power in Punjab confirms the point, made by Moore (1966) and Rueschemeyer et al. (1992), that landlords represent the most reactionary impediment to substantive democratization, and it clear that any steps taken in that direction in Punjab are likely to be undermined by a landed elite that retains the ability to control electoral and legislative politics, and evade attempts at curtailing their influence.

Nonetheless, within this thesis, several potential sources of change have been identified that could contribute towards engineering a radical transformation of the institutional status quo. Firstly, as increasing urbanization and capitalist development transform the electoral geography and economic dynamics of Punjab, the landowning classes could eventually be displaced by broader societal transformations that leave them with fewer means through which to maintain their power. Indeed, in the semi-urban 'ruralopolises' that Qadeer (2000) argues are now home to almost half of Punjab's population, the presence of urban population densities in predominantly agrarian economies will inevitably, over time, result in a shift towards more urban social relations and forms of accumulation. It can be argued that the resultant weakening of the ability of the landholders to dominate the social and economic life of the countryside could, in the presence of formal democracy, provide the rural population with the space within which to expand their political participation. While this outcome would not necessarily result in an end to patronage politics, it would certainly allow for the possibility, over time, of alternative actors emerging as sources of political influence and power in rural Punjab. This potential development also fits

with Wilkinson's (2007) depiction of patronage politics in contemporary India. According to Wilkinson, a combination of middle class development, increasing demands from voters, and rising government deficits, have created a situation in which elite politicians and parties are no longer able to provide the level of state patronage required to 'buy' vote banks, leading to a gradual shift towards more programmatic politics. It is possible that repeated rounds of elections in Pakistan in a more urban electoral environment might generate such changes in Punjab.

Of perhaps greater significance is the role that could be played by Pakistan's subordinate classes. The one episode in which the power of the state-landlord nexus was challenged post-Partition was during the period from 1968-1971, when the PPP espoused a platform of socio-economic reforms in an attempt to cultivate the support of the urban working class and the peasantry. While the party was successful, to an extent, in winning the support of the former, the lack of support from the latter arguably limited the PPP's prospects of effectively challenging the power of the landed elite. As has been argued by Sandbrook (2006), the mobilization of the subordinate classes, both urban and rural, by a political party committed to political reform, holds the key to facilitating a successful transition to democracy in the Third World. Whether or not such a strategy could succeed in Pakistan, or indeed come to pass at all, is open to speculation. But, given that there have been successful mass movements in Pakistan in the past, not just in the cities but also in rural areas, like the farms of Okara, it seems clear that future movements would have to generate a broader 'geography of opposition', linking the peasantry to the urban working class as a means through which to effectively challenge the state and its allies in the propertied classes.

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