# Race and Economic Control: Instituting the Colonial Matrix of Power in the Pre-history of Pakistan

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ABSTRACT: *This paper offers a critical examination, from a decolonial perspective, of the Pakistani nation-state's instrumentalisation of the developmental legacy of British colonial rule which sustained racialised identities contrived for economic control by the Crown. The British had introduced land reforms and to an extent attempted social-engineering in the region which is now Pakistan based on their policy of land acquisitions and racist categorizations of the peoples of the sub-continent. I contend that the present Islamic Republic of Pakistan is intrinsically structured on a social system engineered by the British who instrumentalised 'race' to establish an infrastructure of capitalist economy in the pre-history of Pakistan.*

**Key Words:** *Decolonization, modernization/colonization, race, agrarian capitalism, social engineering, the colonial matrix of power*

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## Introduction

This paper traces and critically examines the two domains of race and economy of the Colonial Matrix of Power (CMP) in the context of the pre-history of Pakistan as British colonial calibrations of local ethnic groups were racialised and integrated into a world system of capitalist economy that resulted in a progressivist modern state[i] imbricated completely into the Colonial Matrix of Power. By adopting a decolonial perspective, this essay will examine the deep connections between racialised identities and an agrarian capitalist economy which is the legacy of Pakistan's former colonial rulers, and will look at the causes behind these links obstructing effective decolonization in its socio-political domains.

The state of Pakistan is often overlooked as a geopolitical region with a history of active resistance against the colonial power that was integral in pushing it onto the path of so-called progress and development for two reasons. One is that it was, until seventy-five years ago, a part of its more culturally visible neighbor India, and second because the collective polity is a product of coloniality itself. Walter Mignolo views coloniality as constitutive of modernity whose point of origination was Europe or the political West (3). The logic of coloniality was undergirded by the concept of 'progress' which transformed into 'development', the praxis of progress. In view of Mignolo's stance on the idea of progress as a basis for coloniality, the outcome of progress is categorically the nation-state which principally advocates material development for its denizens. In this way, Mignolo problematises the concept of the nation-state. He notes

> The emergence of the modern nation-state in Europe, as well as the parallel emergence of the modern/colonial nation-states in the Americas and, subsequently, in Asia and Africa, shows one specific transformation of the colonial matrix of power. The modern nation-state became the imperial tool for the control of authority in the colonies during the process of building (during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries) modern/ colonial nation-states. Nation-states (in their modern European or modern/colonial American, Asian, and African versions) are not "outside" the colonial matrix (162).

Although Mignolo in his thesis provides specific instances of friction between (European) settlers in the Americas and the status of indigenous peoples of the two continents, I will deploy his conceptualization of modernity/ coloniality and bring it into conversation with scholarly research on British administrative policies for North West India (present day Pakistan) during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. This paper is motivated by 'decolonial' concerns and for methodology follows a hermeneutic approach to the key concepts of 'race' and 'economy' constitutive of the Colonial Matrix of Power. It endeavors to interpret the concepts within the socio-political framework of Pakistan and its colonial history, drawing from the existent knowledge base created by seminal background sources which I will refer to as I go along.

The point of departure for this essay is the peripheral position that countries like Pakistan occupy, but nevertheless, follow dominant Eurocentric liberal discourses, constructing ideologies of nationalism, their traditional and indigenous cultures obfuscated in "the mythology of the decolonization of the world" (Grosfoguel 15). But this mythology of progress does more: it obscures the continuities between the colonial past and current racial hierarchies that provide an international division of labour for the capitalist accumulation processes as well as the geopolitical military operations of imperialism.

Thus, in view of how critical opinions on Pakistan as a postcolonial state have remained delimited to and embedded in a Western epistemology (and ultimately progressivism), I offer an examination of the critical historical moment from the nineteenth century into the twentieth as an unexamined timeframe where economic and racial theories embedded in Enlightenment thought were deployed by British colonists to engineer a sustainable societal structure that became foundational to the modern nation-state of Pakistan. Furthermore, this analysis will address the question of how and why the coloniality of power, or as Mignolo phrases it, the colonial matrix of power (CMP), is existent and thriving in the societal structures of Pakistan. Mignolo deployed the CMP from the writings of Peruvian scholar Anibal Quijano who introduced and underscored the impact of the "patrón colonial de poder", which Mignolo (3) explains is constitutive of four interrelated domains: the control of the economy; authority; race, gender and sexuality; and knowledge and subjectivity. Although Quijano's main focus was the place of Latin America in the CMP, the domains that he has identified can be extended

to all colonized parts of the globe which include Africa and Asia. Quijano's broader classification of the four domains of the coloniality of power can principally be identified as world capitalism and the idea of 'race'. He states that because of colonization, a new historical world emerged in which all forms of labour, production, and exploitation were in ensemble around a new pattern of power which was capitalist and "in the same historical movement… was produced a new mental category to codify the relations between conquering and conquered populations: the idea of race as biologically structural and hierarchical differences between the dominant and dominated" (Quijano 216).

From the CMP, this paper will therefore look closely at the two 'heads' of the beast, namely economy and race. I have isolated these two facets of the CMP because they helped prepare the groundwork for the initial establishment of governance and regulatory institutions which have come to form the socio-cultural foundation of the nation-state of Pakistan. This has brought me to the historical moment in colonial history when North-West India (present-day Pakistan) was captured in the world capitalist system, and foundations were laid for a societal structure that engendered a culture compliant with late capitalism and corresponding to imperial control. Formations of a racialised identity thus went hand-in-hand with a political economy that fully integrated North-West India in world capitalism, thus imbricating the other heterogeneous features of the CMP which are Knowledge and Subjectivity, and Authority. As a logical outcome of the entrenchment of the CMP in South Asia and the subcontinent, the political events that unfolded subsequently took a direction that has placed Pakistan in a position from which it cannot de-westernise or de-link effectively. For my argument, within the framework of decoloniality, the modern post-colonial nation-state of Pakistan is viewed as an extension of the Westernizing project, and notions of modernity and progress within its parameters are seen to be irrevocably tied with coloniality and a capitalist economic system, in other words, the CMP. I will demonstrate how the domains of race and control of the economy as opposed to ethnic or cultural localism became the determining factors in the formation of the nation-state of Pakistan and stand to this day in the way of successful decolonization of its subjectivities.

In *The Darker Side of Western Modernity*, Mignolo states in a chapter on the Zapatistas' theoretical revolution that, "Decolonial options are roads to the future. If you follow them, you would break away from the legacies

of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment" (217). The need for decoloniality cannot be met by turning to the Left, because epistemologically, the Left is an ideological constituent of the unfolding of Enlightenment thought. How far it is possible for this modern nation-state to break away from the legacies of the Enlightenment is a problem that can only be tackled by directly examining the concept of race, which postcolonial studies do not associate with the national identity formation in Pakistan and nor does the Left concede its historical emergence, but which nevertheless exists in the national imaginary of the country, albeit at a subconscious level. Even though the ideological ground for founding Pakistan is claimed to be Islam, I will demonstrate that race, one of the most crucial and causal facets of the CMP has a substantial role to play in the formation of the Pakistani nation-state.

Pakistan is a fully and completely modern state in that it functions solely on an ideological principle, and its modus operandi is the apparatus of modern statecraft, which includes all structures and institutions which elsewhere on the globe are normally secular. Its parliament, judiciary, educational system, and infrastructure are all apparatuses of the modern state founded on principles of the European Enlightenment. By and large post-colonial critical discourse tends to take the ontological status of the nation-state as a given, almost an *a priori* condition for the existence of the modern subject. As an upshot of this, the dynamism of modern race theories and capitalist development in structuring Pakistani society is pushed into a blind spot.

Akber S. Ahmed has pointed towards this blind spot of Pakistani intelligentsia thus: "It is interesting that both the contemporary Marxist and Muslim perspectives at opposite ends of the ideological spectrum have the same blind spot, which is to assume that ethnicity either does not exist, or would wither away over time" (56). By ethnicity, Ahmad was pointing to the impact indigenous populations have had in shaping postcolonial social structures but in Pakistan ethnicity has become a taboo topic and it is much easier to discuss Islam, political ideologies, and even the military institution than to touch the sensitive issue of ethnicity and race. But as will be demonstrated in this paper, 'race' has been instrumental in promoting development and infrastructure that became the foundation for agrarian capitalism the Pakistani political economy depends on.

**The Makings of a Hardy Race**

This section takes a close look at the historical events that led to, and provided the reasons behind the constructions of a specific racial type in North West India, which, although based on an idealization of a prototype identified with romanticized notions of masculinity in the Victorian imagination, served the purpose of supplying a military labour force to the British colonial enterprise. The purpose of course is to underscore the constructed nature of this racial type which depended largely on reasons of administrative expediency, and of British imperial interests in maintaining strategic control of trade routes to China.

The many clans of North Western India have been an anomaly of sorts in colonial history. These 'children of the North' and border regions of India were believed to be the 'martial races' of India who were noble savages or diamonds in the rough, comparable to the martial race of Great Britain, i.e., the Scottish Highlanders. They were perceived to be of the same mettle as the Highlanders and therefore the focus of much admiration and vested hopes for progress in the region. And there is a psycho-social context to this perception. Put briefly, the Victorians in the nineteenth century had neatly configured the world's population in categories of racial types and the martial race theory propositioned a sub-group of racial type, deeply embedded in narratives produced and influenced by modern Victorian anxieties about masculinity and the Victorian man's role in society (Streets). These anxieties were projected onto the idea of a martial race, which the British saw Scottish Highlanders as embodiments of, and analogous to them in the Indian colonies were the clans of the northern parts.

In the broader historical scheme of colonisation, the concept of 'race' has been deployed by European science to place indigenous peoples below the 'natural' hierarchy of the human family, with the European white race as the forerunner in human evolution, and it has been instrumentalised by administrators of European colonies to classify indigenous populations within the power structure of the governing colonial regime. Quijano views 'race' as a mental category that codifies the relations between the colonisers and the colonised but it also serves a far more practical purpose in that it places 'inferior' races in the labour market which helps in the control of resources of production (216). In light of this view, it becomes imperative to understand the conceptualization of race in North West India, which later became the modern state of Pakistan, and its practical implementation as an administrative policy for land reforms and social

engineering. Because in this way, 'race' was inscribed into the ecology of the region, and as a consequence took root in the collective subconscious of the population.

The website of the National Army Museum based in London states about recruitment of locals, which made up the majority of the foot soldiers or *sepoys* of the Indian Army, that "In a society where warriors were well respected, it could always attract new recruits with the prospect of good pay, pensions, land grants and honoured status" (Armies of the East-India Company). This idea that Indian society had a natural propensity for "respecting" warriors is contested by Heather Streets according to whom the meaning allotted to 'race' in the concept of 'martial races' was fictitious and its proponents "were consciously using the language of 'race' for specific political and practical ends" (10). What these political and practical ends were, becomes clear once a closer look is taken at the events of the Rebellion against 'Company Rule' in 1857, which I will do so shortly. Notwithstanding that the rebellion is far removed from its national history in the Pakistani imagination, it nevertheless has deep ties with the construction of the racial type that the majority of the denizens of Pakistan are said to comprise.

Mignolo states that "Racism [ ] was the result of two conceptual inventions of imperial knowledge: that certain bodies were inferior to others, and that inferior bodies carried inferior intelligence and inferior languages." (143) Although in Colonial India, local languages and their native speakers were deemed inferior to English and its native speakers but in the mid-nineteenth century, an unprecedented turn of events compelled the British colonists to rethink their conceptualisation of the 'races' of India. Streets in her compelling exposition of the racialization of indigenous identities in colonial India, points out India's unique place in the colonized world where the ideology of the so-called 'martial races' created an immense impact on the imagination of the educated sections of local society. The British colonists took a cognitively counter-intuitive direction when they identified certain races that they perceived to be similar to Scottish Highlanders, being biologically or culturally predisposed to the arts of war (Streets, 1). These were the 'martial races' of India which were put on this unique pedestal, as it turned out, purely for reasons of administrative expediency. Streets notes that

> [T]he idea that some 'races' were more martial than others gave rise to policies that, between 1857 and 1914, radically shifted the recruiting base of the Indian Army from Bengal

> and lower India to the Punjab and Nepal. From a mere 30,000 troops later identified as of the 'martial races' in 1857, by 1893 almost 44 percent of the native Indian Army was recruited from populations thought to produce martial races. In 1904 that number had risen to 57 percent, and by 1914 a stunning three-quarters of the native infantry was composed of martial races (2).

At the risk of stating the obvious and well-known fact, British colonial presence in India began as a trading enterprise in the form of the British East India Company, and colonial rule was also known as Company rule. Under Company rule the Bengal, which was the seat of British military and economic presence in India, was ruthlessly deindustrialized and even local muslin production was stanched. It nevertheless became the commercial hub for British India boasting the highest Gross Domestic Product and numerous banks mushroomed all over the presidency because of a more lucrative and burgeoning trade that interested Western powers, that of opium. Massive production of opium in Bengal and its deployment to gain access to Chinese markets became the cause for the two historical Opium Wars with China that took place in the nineteenth century. So from the onset, an agrarian capitalist economy (on which the British East India Company was thriving) provided material space and resources to the colonial presence. To reinforce control with administrative expediency, each of the Company's three presidencies maintained its own army with the Bengal Army eventually becoming the largest. The precedent was thus set in the most profitable of Britain's colonies i.e., India, of military prowess strengthening in direct proportion to the rising GDP of its most lucrative presidencies via land cultivation (of opium).

By 1857, the Bengal Army had acquired the status of a model Presidency Army and was considered a showpiece for the Indian Army. Its recruits were mostly from the higher Brahmin and Rajput castes mostly from Bihar and Awadh, selected precisely for their high caste status in Indian society. But during the course of the first half of the nineteenth century, resentment against Company rule in North-Central India (primarily Awadh) had built up to fever pitch which climaxed with the Rebellion of 1857, also known as the Mutiny. "[W]hen eighty-five men from the 3rd Native Cavalry in Mirath (Meerut) were publicly degraded and imprisoned for refusing orders to use them, the next day - 10 May 1857 - the whole regiment mutinied in protest and killed their

British commanders" (29), and became an uprising seared in the memory of the British colonisers as it effectively caused the replacement of Company Rule with Crown Rule which deeply restructured the British military and administrative ranks in order to deter any future populist uprisings in India.

Events took a turn in favour of the British in the autumn of 1857 when John Lawrence, the Lieutenant-General of the Punjab reinforced the British forces in Delhi with Sikh and Gorkha sepoys and re-captured the old Mughal capital. From then onwards, the suppression of the Rebellion gained momentum and by mid-1858, North-Central India was under British control again. But after what was seen as major mismanagement by the Company, a complete transfer of power to the Crown took place. The events of the entire Mutiny were fuel for a public spectacle on display in newspaper reports and print media in England in which racial antagonism against the Brahmins and Muslims was riled up and they were classified as sexually degenerate, fanatical "black" men, calling them "'that venom race', 'in heart as black as face'" (44), in stark contrast to their earlier observations of the high caste recruits being tall and fair-skinned.

As the men of the Bengal and its constituencies fell out of favour, the irregular sepoys from the Punjab and clans from the Indus tracts caught British attention. Field Marshal Sir Frederik Roberts in his autobiography published in 1897 wrote of his first-hand experience of the Rebellion where he fought as Lieutenant and witnessed the siege and capture of Delhi. He writes in its preface, "Lucknow could not have been defended without the Hindustani soldiers who so nobly responded to Sir Henry Lawrence's call; and nothing that Sir John Lawrence might have done could have prevented our losing, for a time, the whole of the country north of Calcutta, had not the men of the Punjab and the Derajat [Tracts beyond the Indus] remained true to our cause" (Roberts ii). He further writes, being present at the relief of Lucknow (Wikipedia Commons) and the storming of Sikanderbagh, "It was a magnificent sight, a sight never to be forgotten—that glorious struggle to be the first to enter the deadly breach, the prize to the winner of the race being certain death! Highlanders and Sikhs, Punjabi Mahomedans, Dogras and Pathans, all vied with each other in the generous competition" (181). By the end of the nineteenth century, the 'scientific' and 'natural' superiority of the 'races' from northern India was institutionalized in the selective recruitment of men on the basis of their origins, i.e. whether they were from Northern India, and their

physical features, i.e. whether they displayed features similar to the 'Aryan' race.

The 'heroic' storming of Delhi and Lucknow by the irregular sepoys from the Punjab regiments and other subsequent battles fought in Afghanistan required a positive reassessment of the 'Natives' of Hindustan in the spirit of fairness by the British who categorized the Natives according to racial types, with the best races being the most similar to certain British ethnicities: "the British had infinitely more respect and affection for and more in common with the martial races than with, to use the Indian idiom, the *clerkly-werkly* classes" (MacMunn 345). To this end, local communal identities were racialised and categorized as 'martial races' in a series of handbooks and manuals such as George MacMunn's *The Martial Races of India* (1933) in order to gauge the potential of each and every 'race' to serve the British Crown which was bent on avoiding the 'mismanagement' of Company Rule that had resulted in the Rebellion.

Prof. Tan Tai Yong in his book *The Garrison State* notes that "couched as ethnological and anthropological studies, these handbooks were often nothing more than observations based on colonial stereotypes and racism that imbibed an extreme form of cultural and environmental determinism" and inborn qualities such as masculinity, loyalty and bravery were attributed to the so-called races. The newly structured regiments that became the Punjab Irregular Force, known affectionately as the *piffers*, fought for the British in the Second Afghan War, which was fought to thwart the new enemy Russia making in-ways through treaties with the Shah of Persia and the Amir of Afghanistan. The *piffers* went on to fight in the first and second World Wars as well because the Crown could not trust any other 'races' who would have folded under the extreme conditions of battle in territories outside of India. Yong also quotes Roberts, "I have no hesitation myself in stating that except Gurkhas, Dogras, Sikhs, the pick of Punjabi Muhammadans, Hindustanis of the Jat and Ranghur castes, and certain classes of Pathans, there are no native soldiers in our service whom we could venture with safety to place in the field against the Russians" (qtd. in Yong 59). Yong goes on to add that besides the prominently Sikh and Gurkha identities that were racialised on the simple criteria of "familiarity and fondness with the men under their charge" (62), British officers categorized Muslim Punjabi clans from Rawalpindi and the Salt Tracts such as the Gukkhars, Janjuas, Awans, and Rajput Tiwanas as a martial race.

MacMunn's *The Martial Races of India*, for a long time had remained an almost canonical guidebook on the subject by a 'sympathetic' Briton, and was written by an officer of the British-Indian Army wholeheartedly invested in the truth of the martial race ideology and who represented the view that the Indian Army needed to be 'Indianized' by introducing Indians into positions of higher command. This orientalist monograph offers neat categorization and detailed racial profiles of some of the most 'martially' predisposed communities and clans from India which the author had observed to be mostly from North Western India. According to the author, of these some, even though they displayed admirable propensity towards battle and using the rifle, were not to be trusted completely such as the "jaunty" Pathans (Pashtun) because of inconsistencies in their nature imbibed from their habitat, yet others, such as the Sikhs, Jatts, and Rajputs had proved to be loyal soldiers to the British Raj. This published monograph features on its front matter, as an example of the quintessential martial type and undoubtedly in a position of honour, an image of "Colonel Nawab Malik Sir Umer Hayat Khan, Chief of the Tiwanas (Rajput Mussulman clan of the Punjab), in uniform of his regiment" as a case in point. Such categorisations also helped them in the management and control of local communities and their lands. In fact, the strategic deployment of this racial type helped the British consolidate vast tracts of land that became the bread basket for the Crown.

Of what is now the most economically lucrative part of present-day Pakistan, MacMunn writes

> *Les enfants poussent toujours*, the races increase and the land gets full. For a couple of generations have the great canals by which British engineers have spread the snow of the Himalaya on the parched Punjab land, catered for the increase by the million. But the new land is nearly finished, and it remains to be seen if the close scrutiny of the just distribution of water can be kept up, without which the land cannot produce its fair crop. It is these hardy races who will keep the new land productive, it is they from whom some at least of the engineers must come and indeed are now coming (354-355).

The fondness displayed by the British officers for sepoys enlisted from the regions and communities described above was obviously not based on a careful anthropological examination of a 'racial type', nor did the 'types' so carefully categorized have a natural proclivity towards loyalty

and endurance, but there were, in fact, economic reasons that compelled them to British military service. As most military labour were yeomen farmers and peasants, economic incentives in the form of land grants ensured honour, prestige, and power in their villages (Yong, 91). Besides enlisting men from the Salt tracts and Rawalpindi region in the restructured army, clans such as those mentioned above were bequeathed land grants for their services. Large tracts of land from the Western Punjab, which was previously considered 'Imperial Wasteland' because of its semi-arid topography, was settled by loyalist clans and the entire Western Punjab thus witnessed an impressive feat of British land and social engineering. As the former savannah landscape was transformed by an extensive perennial irrigational system of canals, populated by select loyalist 'martial races' of India, British imaginings of race were translated into imaginings of a landscape that would come to habilitate a future landed elite and civil-military oligarchy. The British military administration was particularly focused on the Punjab as a military labour market for its recruitment as well as for creating a class of men educated in the British value system and technical skills, capable of helping the British engineer and then maintain canal colonies that were being built to cultivate the doab regions, constructing almost literally from scratch a military-fiscal state.

Racialisation of Western Punjabi clans meant that the British saw potential in the natural make-up of men from these 'races', especially landholding clans such as the Noons and Tiwanas who went on to form the politically influential Unionist party in the early decades of the twentieth century, and adopted a paternalistic policy towards bringing them within the fold of 'civilisation' by providing them with material and capitalist infrastructure that would of necessity let emerge a capitalist agrarian economic system. Although feudalism was historically replaced by capitalism, Talbot has pointed out the uneasy coexistence of feudalistic structures with capitalist farming owing to the British colonial government's need for the maintenance of a civil-military oligarchy in the Indus region. To safeguard this two-faced system, the British put in place a legal framework protecting the landholdings of the loyalist settlers in the canal colonies by deploying a 'modern' public law and a 'traditional' private law called customary law (8).

Thus together with the concept of 'race', the British colonists integrated an agrarian economic system, consolidating a matrix of power that would last beyond the official decolonisation of the region.

## Social and Land Engineering as a means of Economic Control

This section looks at why the British Colonists needed, and how they maintained, an agrarian capitalist system on the Indus tracts, retaining the loyalty of the settler clans in the region as well as tightening their economic hold over Western India, which is now Pakistan. One glaring answer, but an overlooked one is the need to gain control over a potential pool of human resource which they desperately needed to man their armies and to bring under their economic domain key trade routes to Western Asia and China. The 'martial' race was instituted through land reforms, developing an agrarian society in Western Punjab, under which the Salt tracts and Rawalpindi region (home to the so-called martial races) fell, and further extended into a *doab* landscape into Sindh. Prior to the Rebellion in 1857, the entire region of the undivided Punjab, constituted a population that was more settled towards the East because the Western part was mostly pastoral savanna known as the western *doabs* and considered to be Imperial 'wasteland'. The development and settlement of Imperial wasteland was really a form of coercive social work, a means of discipline and control, bringing susceptible populations willingly under the paternalistic cloak of British civilization.

With the annexation of the Punjab in 1849, the British took an active interest in building an extensive canal network in what was 'Imperial wasteland' to create a perennial irrigation system and established what popularly became known as the 'canal colonies' in Western Punjab. Imran Ali, in his extensive research on the canal colonies states:

> The great agricultural colonisation schemes undertaken in the western Punjab during British rule turned this area into a virtual human laboratory, as castes, clans, and tribes from different parts of the province converged on the new lands. This ethos has left its mark on the character of the Punjab and its people. The restlessness born of migration is now a century old. This has unhinged the traditional moorings of village society, and freed people for intercourse with the wider world. (viii)

The British administration of the newly annexed Punjab created revenue settlements in the canal colonies and encouraged individualization in property rights, a drastic alternative to a village's pre-colonial system of communal ownership. West Punjab suddenly became irrevocably tied to a world market economy as the development of a transport and

irrigational infrastructure took place. Its agricultural produce was marketed globally, and the land acquired monetary value. The alienation of land rights meant that land could be bought and sold individually and new patterns of consumption emerged in line with modernisation of the money market.

The building of canal colonies was largely based on the grant of Imperial wasteland to clans of the 'martial' race, essentially peasant loyalists who were thus rewarded for their services in the British military, and who then went on to develop and irrigate these lands with support from the British Raj which later even passed legislation to secure the rights of the new landowning families and protect them from "inroads by commercial elements and the disruptive impact of market forces" (Ali 5), establishing what Ali terms a 'hydraulic society'. Just within a span of ninety years, a society was established by the British in barren wasteland (6). There were nine canal colonies in all, founded on one of the largest irrigation systems in the world, a feat of British engineering that would change the course of history for the region. These colonies were the Sidhnai, Sohag Para, Chunian, Jhelum, Lower Bari Doab, Nili Bar, Upper Chenab, Upper Jhelum, and Lower Chenab, with the last one boasting of the largest canal (5). In-migrations were encouraged to populate these former barren wastelands and a series of immigrations from surrounding arid areas and clans such as the Noons, Tiwanas and Daultanas settled in the canal colonies.[ii] The British administration operated the economic microcosm that they had created by simply re-enforcing the already existing agricultural caste system, appending an imperial power to the social structure of the Punjab and thus creating a nexus of colonial capitalism with a local landholding class, as well as expanding this class by allotting capitalist grants to non-agricultural castes as rewards for Military Officers and "well-deserving servants" of the Government, who would eventually "supply leaders for the new society" (20-21).

The canal colonies of the British extended to Sindh, which like the Punjab, was annexed by the British colonial state in the mid-19th century in 1843. As an extension of the Indus region, Sindh gave access to important trade routes to the British towards China in the North. At the end of the 18$^{th}$ century the Talpurs, a tribe of Baluchi ancestory, ruled the Sindh region until its annexation by the British colonial state (Lieven, 308). Generally the annexation of Sindh is attributed to Charles Napier, an ambitious colonial General who brought the Talpur Amirs and other *zamindars* to their knees as he exacted allegiance and collaboration from

them. The ethnic demographics at the time of the annexation of the lower Indus region varied between indigenous *zamindars*, migrant Baluchi tribes, Hindu middlemen, and money lenders, and supplementing this admixture arrived Punjabi settler cultivators who were encouraged by the British to immigrate to the new canal colonies adjacent to the Indus River.

As a consolidated province of India, Sindh required a perennial canal irrigation system to cultivate its arid land. Like the Punjab, it was laid out with an extensive network of canals that provided irrigation water from the River Indus. The incentive for systemized irrigation and engineering new canals in the Sindh province was similar to the agenda behind the development of a hydraulic society in the Punjab, that is, the installation of agrarian collaborators of the colonial state for strategic purposes, generation of land revenue and especially in the case of Sindh, to take control of an important trade route.

Major developments in land irrigation took place mostly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and a socio-economic structure replicating the one in the West Punjab colonies was put together with the additional engineering feat of building barrages, the Sukkar Barrage being the most consummate and transformative for Sindh (Haines). Two points were considered as overlapping priorities for the British in their assessment of colonizing and populating the canal colonies of Sindh: one was the maintenance of political stability and *jagirdar* status of existing influential landlords in order to ensure their loyalty to the Crown, and the other point of consideration was the scientific development and production of irrigated land. Punjabi yeomen and peasants were the foremost preference for the latter point and for the former point in consideration, compromises had to be made for the sake of stability in the region by allotting land to the few but influential aristocratic families that remained in Sindh and its border areas (53). Measures taken by the British for land settlement by outsiders such as Punjabis (settled mainly in the Jamrao tract) and relatively fewer Baluchis, both of whom were also employed as labour for construction of the canals, certainly contained elements of social engineering in the sparsely populated Sindh region but "conscious policies for economic development, accompanied a growing pessimism among British officials in India about their capacity for 'improving' the country" (51). In fact, the building of dams and barrages in Sindh did not prove as productive in the path to material progress as the success story of the Punjab and "presented a rather messier prospect for irrigation development than did the Western Punjab" (266). Admittedly Sindh was not a major military labour market like the Punjab,

but it also offered incentives to the British for social engineering a class of loyalist clans and 'aristocratic' families, and most importantly, a trade route that would give the British an edge over their competitors in the opium trade, which they were already monopolizing.

The consolidation of a frontier by settling families of disparate clans and mercenaries in the Punjab and Sindh was indeed a strategic policy on the part of the British but according to J. Y. Wong's (1997) paper on the annexation of Sindh, it was more of a calculated move to bring under their control the movement of precious opium cultivated in the independent states in central India, i.e., the Malwa region, across the subcontinent towards China so as to cut down on the competition it posed for the opium cultivated in the Bengal by the British. Thus the domain of economy in the CMP reveals another facet that took root in the Western regions of India, laying the ground work for a future nation-state.

The annexation of Sindh marked a moment in Indian colonial history when processes of social engineering based on racial constructs were geared towards consolidating a much sought-after connection in the world capitalist system the British colonists had established. Exactly how social and land engineering was tied in with the global capitalist network becomes clear after examining the role that Sindh, as an extension of the Crown's canal colonies, played as a compliant region for opium trade. Chinese resistance to the opium trade started the First Opium War with China which ended in the defeat of the Qing Emperor's forces and the humiliating Treaty of Nanking which would commit the Chinese to free trade (Opium-War 1839-1842). Wong underscores the timing of the annexation of Sindh as coinciding with the Treaty of Nanking ending the First Opium War with China, and the then Governor-General of British India, Lord Ellenborough encouraged Napier to defeat the Khairpur and Haiderabad Amirs using overwhelming military force because Ellenborough "was in command of the much broader picture and had much wider responsibilities, including that of finding ways and means to monopolize the opium market in China for the benefit of British India" (238). Ellenborough's concerns betray an interest in expanding Britain's trade monopoly to regions as of yet untapped by capitalism and Sindh proved to be central in this regard. The annexation of Sindh opened up Bombay for the passage of Malwa opium *en route* to Chinese markets, which became subject to transit fees levied on it by the British, who were now not only making a profit through opium production in Bengal but also through transit fees levied on its competition (235). The annexation

of Sindh and West Punjab had by the latter half of the nineteenth century become an integral node in a global capitalist network the British had laid down. Wong quotes Ellenborough's speech wherein he states:

> But it is not only in India that the effects of any interruption of our trade with China would be felt. It is a great link in the chain of commerce with which we have surrounded the whole world . . . the cotton of America, the staple of our greatest manufacture, is paid for by bills upon England. Those bills are taken by the Americans to Canton, where they are paid away for tea. The Chinese give them to the opium merchants, by whom they are taken to India, there exchanged for other commodities, and they furnish ultimately the money remittances of private fortunes, and the funds for carrying on the Indian Government at home (241-242)
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> .

The "chain of commerce" that Lord Ellenborough was so hardpressed to maintain was a capitalist world system that David Washbrook highlights South Asia became an integral part of, during colonization. Washbrook also builds the premise of his essay, albeit a structural critique of Wallerstein's World System's theory, on the martialisation of North Indian society, and the feudalization of its agrarian relations, which became direct corollaries with the development of capitalism on a global scale in the nineteenth century (481).

Structural changes engendered in the canal colonies by social engineering and economic policies became so deeply entrenched in the modern and 'scientific' settlements on the great tracts of land described above, that they came to acquire a 'traditional' veneer, and what is generally perceived as a 'timeless' peasant economy had only emerged in the mid-nineteenth century due to the changes taking place in the world economy (Washbrook, 479) by capitalist colonial forces. Washbrook even goes on to term the clans selected specifically for land settlement 'ascriptively defined groups' because they did not fall into the racial categories deemed inferior to the European races and all manner of economic safeguards were put into place that ensured their upward social mobility. In fact the reason behind the 'traditional' veneer of the political economy established in the Punjab and Sindh was that the British coopted the customary laws of the landholding clans and peasantry which were modeled on local hierarchical social order, which ensured an extensive network of patron-client relations (Gilmartin 1989). In fact, it would not

be incorrect to state that patronage politics or clientalism, euphemisms for intra-clan dependency for favors given out within the agrarian capitalist system which found fertile ground in the canal colonies established by the British, is the single most significant feature of the civil, bureaucratic and even military institutions of the modern state of Pakistan (Lieven), which serves to demonstrate how the patron-client model, paternalistically incorporated into the racialised and engineered settler societies of the Punjab and Sindh, has become deeply entrenched in Pakistan at large.

## Conclusion

In view of the historical study conducted on the socio-political forces that formed the most densely populated provinces of the modern state of Pakistan, namely Punjab and Sindh, it becomes increasingly difficult to ignore the process of social engineering deployed in order to facilitate the commercial interests of the British East India Trading Company. Founded on the myth of the 'martial race', social structures and a political economy developed which was held together by a paternalistic patronage politics and clientalism, that in fact continues to this day. Looking at the pre-history of the nation state of Pakistan in the light of the colonial matrix of power (CMP) provides an angle on Pakistan's social structures and consequential modern post-colonial culture which takes the focus away from the much hyped religious and ideological basis of its socio-political formations. The construct of 'martial' races enabled extensive social and land engineering which in turn facilitated a political economy that stood on an agrarian base. This political economy and its agrarian base was made to last, as at the time of its commencement, any structural change in the agrarian capitalist society in West Punjab and Sindh would have jeopardized the existing benefits the Crown was milking from the status quo. This agrarian capitalist society was a colonial establishment which besides offering a free army, import/export trades, and guaranteed payment on the sterling debt to Britain (Washbrook, "Law, State and Agrarian Society in Colonial India" 692), offered routes for the supply of opium that the British wanted flowing to China unabated and cheaply. Such a political economy operated then and operates now under the garb of developmentalism which is considered crucial for strengthening the state. But the development and modernisation that Pakistan hopes for are only part of a rhetoric of progress.

Peripheral states like Pakistan can never really go beyond the limitations set in place by a capitalist world system that is organized around a hierarchical division of labour, of which 'race' is an essential instrument.

European constructs of race served to 'naturalise' certain biological traits for indigenous communities, tribes or ethnicities that would prove to be useful for the colonial administrators to expedite division of labour. This provided a purely scientific basis for justifying and rationalizing the military labour force developed in North-West India, encoded in an agrarian structure, and deployed to expand capitalist control.

The racialization of the dominant communities and clans of Pakistan in its pre-history created the groundwork for 'scientific development' which engendered socio-political structures geared towards the supply of labour to the global capitalist labour force. What remains to be examined further, and which is beyond the scope of this paper, is the impact racialization and its entrenchment in a capitalist economy has had on indigenous knowledges, subjectivities and culture.

The socioeconomic determinants of race and economic control have had such a far-reaching impact on the history of Pakistan, that the sway of powerful landowners (and capitalists), with deep connections to the post-colonial state and military, continues over locals who are either economically dependent on them or carry a 'clientelist' mentality as they seek patronage from the powerful for economic security and stability. The modern nation- state's economic fortunes teeter at the slightest tremor of global capitalist forces as imperialists continue to view this region as a human resource pool, providing soldiers and labour to the Global North's military and capitalist corporations. The modern state of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan is neither efficient in its statecraft nor does it follow any traditional epistemology such as Islamic traditions but it is functional simply because the wheels and cogs in the system, from the clerks to the top echelons of bureaucracy thrive on the giving and receiving of patronage from those in actual control of land in this part of the sub-continent, as they have done for centuries. And as long as this state machinery is serviceable to the comprador class, the denizens of the Islamic Republic will stay embedded in a colonial matrix of power that was established in its pre-history.

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End Notes:

[ii] The Tiwanas were quintessentially a West-Punjabi tribe and their historical origins help give a clearer picture of the historical processes that enabled such clans to settle and populate the former savannah of the West-Punjab. According to Ian Talbot, who wrote a biography on the last scion of the Tiwana tribe, Sir Khizr Hayat Tiwana, “The Tiwanas were not originally Punjabis, or Muslims. According to bardic traditions, they were descended from the Parmaras Rajputs who ruled in the Dhar, Mandu and Ujjain areas of central India (present day Madhya Pradesh) in the ninth and tenth centuries A.D.” For a detailed account of their ancestry and movement towards west-Punjab, see Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana, the Punjab Unionist Party and the Partition of India*, p. 14