

“The Continuum of Counter-Revolutions: Rethinking the Origins of Pakistan and their Post-1947 Impacts”

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Abstract

The processes leading to the creation of Pakistan continue to be dominated by the narratives of political history. It is maintained that the notion of separatism among Indian Muslims originated purportedly from the unease of Muslim elites over competition and mobility by emergent Hindu professional groups in the Gangetic plain. However, this discourse sits uncomfortably with an adequate explanation for how and why the seemingly continued indifference of Muslims in the Muslim majority provinces was finally converted to a resolute decision in favour of a homeland for Muslims. The outcome, the emergence of Pakistan, is indeed negotiated as the apogee of the process of communal separatism. Little analysis is attempted to try and understand the nature of the ‘great divide’ in terms of deeper historical forces in the very areas that became Pakistan.

This paper explores the long-term trajectory of economic change and its socio-political repercussions in the Indus basin. This region now constitutes the largest contiguous canal irrigated zone in the world, yet the political economy ramifications and social impacts of these developments are hardly comprehended by analysts of ‘Muslim nationalism’. The paper will argue that an entirely revised interpretation of the creation of Pakistan emerges from the contradictions and reactions that growth generated in this region, during the colonial and even late Mughal periods. Moreover, these responses also fundamentally explicate the configurations of political economy in post-1947 Pakistan. Could a ‘continuum of counter-revolutions’ have effectively reversed emerging market forces, thereby retarding modernizing institutions and in turn further embedding incumbent pre-modern formations that display such historic resilience?

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I

The bifurcation of the British-Indian empire in 1947 into two independent states, India and Pakistan, appeared to contradict the expectations of many that one universal state would have been a more natural form of succession. These elements had believed that ‘Indian nationalism’, and the notion that somehow all South Asia must conform to a single national identity, was a historically valid assumption for determining the political future of this region. They had perhaps neglected to recognize the deep fractures that existed in South Asian society, along sectarian, religious, linguistic, ethnic, economic and caste lines. In particular, they had failed to acknowledge that historically South Asia had been predominantly politically divided into at best regional states; and that efforts at enforcing unity had led to state collapse within a generation, as with the Mughal empire and two thousand years earlier the Mauryan empire. Only under British imperialist rule was a single administrative entity imposed on South Asia’s disparate regions.

It was one of these fractures that ultimately determined the post-British political structure of South Asia. This was the belief by certain Muslims that they constituted a separate identity and ultimately wanted a separate nation state. However, religious identity itself was insufficient to maintain the integrity of Pakistan. As the creation of Bangladesh in 1971 illustrated, regional, cultural, and linguistic factors could come to the fore to determine decisive political change. The emergence of Bangladesh also highlighted the impact of political economy structures and processes on historical transitions. Had Pakistan not taken the route of authoritarian power mechanisms and palpable economic extraction, extreme polarization with East Pakistan might have been avoided. Conversely, despite its wide and very obvious diversity, India has survived as a nation and achieved a certain degree of cohesion. Clearly, India’s well established democratic traditions have played a telling integrative role over the past seven decades.

The nationalist movement against British rule, Partition in 1947 and the emergence of Pakistan has predictably received much attention from historical scholars. Put simply, the dominant narrative has centred around the activities of ‘nationalist leaders’, especially those who converged in the Indian National Congress, and how they built in the end an almost inexorable drive towards independence. Of course, other personalities and movements also contributed to the emerging mentalities that moulded modern consciousness in South Asia, like the Brahma Samaj and Arya Samaj among Hindus, the Akalis among Sikhs, and the Deobandi, Aligarh and Khilafat movements among Muslims. The so-called ‘untouchable castes’ also went through a mobilization process under their leader Ambedkar, but failed unlike the Muslims to translate their aspirations into a territorial entity.

The explanations of why Partition actually happened and what were the major motivational factors behind the creation of Pakistan have remained predominantly confined to an analysis of leadership, and that too of a handful of individuals; and to the identification of the regions where Muslims were in a minority as the mainsprings of this movement. Books with titles like *The Sole Spokesman*, and the almost extreme analytical concentration on the activities and contributions of Mr Muhammad Ali

Jinnah, his adversaries and his limited band of colleagues, provides a highly restrictive view of how such an apocalyptic development could have eventuated. One reason for this segmented analysis is the methodology of political history, which concentrates so heavily on some individuals because of the very nature of archives accessed and records consulted. Thus extensive transitions, and even transformations, are ascribed to the agency of those who lead and are vociferous, or are recognized as significant players in such 'original' sources as state papers, media reporting and personal statements, whether correspondence, speeches or dissertations. This is not to say that such historicity is not genuine or in any way an unimportant factor in understanding the unraveling of events and developments. Rather such explanations, while in their own context not unjustified or inaccurate, might only reveal part of the truth, and in a sense even a very limited part. This imbalance needs to be corrected if the dynamics behind the origins of Pakistan are to be properly understood.

Another fundamental assumption around these origins lies in what can be termed as the 'minority provinces explanation'. This comprises the continually reproduced belief that Pakistan owed its creation to the discomfiture of Muslim elites, in provinces where they were in a minority, with competition from emergent Hindu groups. The fall from grace with the conflict of 1857-58, the substitution of Persian with English for governmental work, the opening of English language educational institutions in which Hindu participation outstripped that of Muslims, and the general disenchantment with the loss of power and elite status, could clearly have been a spur to the push for Muslim 'separatism'. Admittedly then, the early running in the evocation of Muslim grievances might not have come from the majority provinces, where Muslim elites either did not feel so threatened, or hardly existed outside the landlord segment. To claim however, and indeed to treat as an almost unquestioned assumption, that these misgivings of minority elite groups were responsible for the creation of Pakistan, is to miss some major logical steps regarding causal relationships. It is not at all clear, or in the face of cold reality even comprehensible, how such sentiments by themselves could have been more than merely a contributory factor in raising Muslim nationalistic fervor. Identifying them as the driving force in the emergence of Pakistan is, again, more a reflection of the limitations of historical analysis rather than an accurate or comprehensive portrayal of the causative factors behind this major transition. Yet author after author has fallen prey to simply accepting this assumption and then moving on to describing the micro processes and activities that led to the outcome of Pakistan.

The major problem with these tropes is the failure of historians to understand and incorporate the developments that were taking place in the areas that actually became Pakistan. Here we will concentrate on the area of current Pakistan: the story behind East Pakistan and Bangladesh has some commonalities, but is significantly different and deserves separate treatment, which is beyond the scope of the present paper. For the Indus Basin, or present day Pakistan, the major gap in analysis lies in the failure to comprehend the impact of changes in economy and society, and their impacts on political economy, that were occurring during colonial rule, and even earlier. It is posited here that these developments, rather than simply the agency of leadership or the concerns of non-majority province Muslims, provided the fundamental dynamics behind the creation of Pakistan. Further, this approach provides a radically different understanding of what Partition meant to this region, especially in the context of the sequence of changes that occurred not only before but also after 1947.

Here too, scholarly research has largely failed to draw out the continuities from colonial political economy that were propelled into the post-1947 decades. For all too many scholars, the study of 'Pakistan' starts very much with Partition in 1947, and the previous period is dispensed with through little more than some throwaway lines and afterthoughts. We suggest here that the creation of Pakistan, while clearly representing a major disjuncture, was part of a continuum of historical processes that began well before Partition and continued well after that event. Moreover, it is clearly inadequate, and probably not even possible, to properly understand the parameters of authority, social distance and economic inequity without substantive reference to the highly formative decades that preceded independence. The term 'counter-revolutions' is employed here to provide an integrative theme for this analysis: the term 'conceptual framework' would perhaps be too arbitrary, and at this stage premature, for what is essentially an effort to suggest alternative ways to address the complex history of this region. The writing of history needs revision periodically, if not continually, and that is the spirit in which this paper is put forward. Yet, the paper suggests that it is through this notion of counter-revolutions, not only political but also in terms of deeper economic and social responses, that a more meaningful understanding of this region's and Pakistan's historical past and present can be achieved.

II

Starting at a more remote point than enquiries into nationalism, independence and country analysis would normally pursue, we can ascribe historical causations to at least three centuries back. The dawn of the eighteenth century saw in this region a well-established 'universal' state, the Mughal empire, whose power seemed preeminent, with the lifestyles of its royal court and nobles giving an impression of great grandeur, if not permanence. Yet cracks had begun to appear. The Emperor Aurangzeb, renowned for pietism, had to spend the final quarter century of his rule in the Deccan, not exactly to spread Islam but rather, in search for external loot, to destroy the Muslim kingdoms entrenched in that region for centuries. Irfan Habib has talked about the agrarian crisis of the Mughal empire. Generations of Mughal over-extraction, to finance constant conflict, lavish elite over-consumption and uncontrollable architectural adventurism, had exhausted the resources of the major productive and revenue-generating class, the north Indian peasantry. The emergent Maratha reaction from the Deccan was also accompanied by growing peasant recalcitrance closer to the Mughal heartland. Resistance over revenue collection, accompanied by the threat of peasant violence, increasingly strained the administrative and fiscal resources of the empire.

In the Gurdaspur area of Punjab from around 1810, an early instance of peasant rebellion, took at least half a decade to suppress. Further resistance continued to grow in subsequent decades, with conversion to a newly militant Sikh faith acting as a mobilizing force for the peasant *misls*, or war bands. The Mughal regional elite was able to hold its own, at the cost of much peasant mortality, till it was itself struck the twin body blows of the Nadir Shah and Ahmed Shah Abdali invasions from Iran and Afghanistan. Territories further east were cushioned from these disruptions, so that elite succession as Mughal power waned was relatively more orderly. Mughal rule was effectively eclipsed in the Indus basin by the mid-eighteenth century. Equally significantly, the incoming Abdali intruders, despite

evident success in pitched battles, were unable to hold on to the Punjab against a militant peasantry. Over the ensuing decades the old elite was either dispossessed or physically eliminated by the resurgent upper or landholding peasantry, whose leaders in many cases established their own princely states or feudatory holdings.

This social revolution provided significant differentiation from other parts of north India, where the families of Mughal governors established successor states. It was these 'kingdoms' that the British had to overcome in expanding their Indian holdings. This acrimonious displacement, along with pressures on the incumbent elites over rent and revenue, saw its greatest catharsis in the armed conflict of 1857-58. While it is debatable whether the 'Mutiny' represented a form of nationalism, the anti-British sentiment certainly provided a historical basis for the nationalist movement of the twentieth century. In the Punjab the old elites had themselves perished in the pre-British phase, easing any resistance from long-standing incumbents. Once the Sikh army had been defeated by 1849, both Sikh and Muslim levies could be recruited to aid the British against their adversaries in 1857. Further heavy recruitment from Punjab into the new British Indian Army cemented a congenial relationship with landlord and upper peasant segments, whose other pillars were direct revenue settlements and acknowledgment of proprietary rights. These alliances were to impact the prospects of nationalism in this region; and further developments, namely the emergence of a hydraulic society, were to significantly reinforce this retardation of nationalism.

Before these are analyzed, further implications of the rebellions of the eighteenth century, and consequent political economy during the nineteenth century, need to be assessed. The Irfan Habib thesis of the agrarian crisis and revenue-rent conflicts between producers and elites is certainly valid. However, there could have been further causes of popular resistance and successful rebellion. Mughal 'stability' had led to much urban expansion: Lahore was larger than any European city till London and Paris overtook it in the early eighteenth century. Many other urban centres also emerged in the Indus basin, thereby increasing aggregate demand for goods and services. Large trade volumes, expanding markets and a substantial secondary sector placed enhanced demands on agricultural and processed commodities, requiring intensified commercialization of agricultural and manufacturing operations. Elite demand for specialized products must have further strained production systems that were already under stress from the predatory state. It is not unlikely that merchants and creditors were increasingly invasive into the peasant and artisanal economies, leading to higher debt levels and perhaps bonded cultivation and manufacture. Groups of proto-capitalist entrepreneurs, no doubt both in league and competition with state functionaries, could have further destabilized an already strained moral economy.

Therefore, the eighteenth century convulsions were then probably motivated as much by retaliations against an emergent proto-capitalist class as against the Mughal state. The effective roll back of both constituted not simply a peasant-artisan rebellion in the traditional sense, but a virtual counter-revolution against the very forces whose counterparts in Europe were forging a new mode of production. The population of Lahore, said to be up to half a million at its Mughal apogee, was down to around 85,000 at British annexation in 1849. The larger merchant families, like the Dewans of Eminabad, had exited from the city. Other urban centres also failed to grow during this time. The social origins of

the *misl* leaders who established new political entities, chief among them the kingdom of Lahore, was upper peasant and artisanal, anything but entrepreneurial or commercial. Indeed, long distance trade had to rerouted away from the Punjab, leading for instance to the rise of Shikarpur in upper Sindh as an alternative conduit.

The contrast between Punjab and Sindh provides a useful lesson in the differential impacts of popular uprisings. The Sindhi peasantry was unable to replicate the eighteenth century activities of their Punjabi counterparts. In part, Sindh lay on the margins of Mughal rule and might have escaped its more intrusive extractive demands, and it was also remote from the footprints of large urban centres, where elite over-consumption was concentrated. The invasions from Iran and Afghanistan also did not reach down to Sindh, leaving the incumbent elites to their own devices. Their continued hegemony, however, restricted the kind of diasporic mobility enjoyed by Punjabis, who migrated to and settled in distant parts of the globe. Continuing under the feudal hold, the Sindhi peasantry did not even make it in any numbers to Karachi, whose benefits in Pakistan have gone to Muhajirs, Punjabis and lately Pathans.

III

The resistance against capitalism, and hence a strong counter-revolutionary ethos, were further institutionalized under colonial political economy. There was no instance of any urban centre rising rapidly in size on the scale of European cities, indicating slow and unimpressive development of the secondary and service sectors. Manufacturing remained small scale and the development of an industrial infrastructure, on the lines that Japan, for instance, developed in its Korean and Manchurian colonies on the Asian mainland, was completely non-existent. Karachi did emerge as a middling port city, but its large proportion of areas designated as military cantonments highlighted its geo-strategic value as a staging post for military operations in the north-west frontier. Later, though, it did become a major outlet for agricultural exports from agrarian expansion in the Indus basin. Lahore too experienced retarded growth during British rule: it stood only at a quarter million at Partition. Also, the smaller cities hardly grew in this period, though a number of new market towns did emerge with agricultural growth. The Pakistan region remained predominantly agrarian under imperialism, beyond the intermediate sector at Partition it has only one textile mill and one sugar mill.

Colonial land policy remained highly solicitous of the interests of agrarian based groups, at the cost of the entrepreneurial segment. Major recruitment into the post-1857 British Indian Army occurred from the Punjab, from the landholding peasantry with whom the British had also reached revenue settlements, along with the recognition of proprietary rights. With revenue now demanded in cash, along with the renewed opportunities for marketing agricultural commodities that came with peace and stability, agriculturists began to resort to creditors. As indebtedness grew, often beyond the ability to repay, the civil law and courts introduced by the British became the new arenas of conflict resolution. With the courts moving in favour of creditors, mortgage foreclosure and subsequently land alienation threatened the viability of the colonial state's major stakeholder group, the landholding peasantry. A great debate ensued among British officials on whether to protect the peasantry from the depredations

of evil moneylenders, or whether to let market forces take their course in rationalizing the landholding structure in favour of an emergent class of agricultural capitalists. The latter process could have replicated Britain's own agricultural revolution, a necessary precursor to its industrial revolution. The ascendancy of the paternalistic advocates was finally embodied in the remarkable Punjab Alienation of Lands Act of 1901, which forbade the transfer of land of incumbents to non-agriculturists, and for this purpose drew up lists of 'agricultural castes' for each district. Further legislation was directed later at controlling threatened mortgage foreclosures, while in times of stress, such as the 1930s Depression, larger landlord holdings were brought into the Court of Wards to avert their dissolution at the hands of creditors. Thus the colonial state endeavoured to protect agrarian incumbents from the impact of market forces and the inroads of entrepreneurial groups, who might have expedited the rise of agricultural capitalism in this region.

The greatest transition in the Indus basin in modern times was the emergence of a 'hydraulic society', through the construction of an extensive network of perennial canals. These canals were laid out in the province first of Punjab and then Sindh, taking off from the River Indus and its tributaries. Since these areas were sparsely populated, mostly by semi-nomadic pastoralists, a wide-ranging process of immigration and agricultural colonization was entailed in achieving a massive increment in agricultural production. These areas, running into millions of acres, were designated predominantly as State or Crown Waste Lands, enabling the British to decide for what purpose and to whom to allot the land. The unfolding of the different 'canal colonies', and the structure of land distribution and types of grants created, has been analyzed in detail elsewhere (Imran Ali, *The Punjab under Imperialism, 1885-1947*, Princeton and Oxford University Presses). Some of the implications of this opening of a new agrarian frontier can be noted here.

First, who were the beneficiaries of land? The largest proportion of land was reserved for 'peasant' or *abadkar* grants of up to 50 acres. The recipients came exclusively from the 'agricultural castes', which controlled village society and also monopolized military recruitment. They indeed were the ones enfranchised under the Government of India Act of 1901, the widest that electoral eligibility reached under British rule. The non-landed masses not only remained disenfranchised, but they were also completely excluded from occupancy or proprietary access to canal colony land; and were expected to remain in their lowly service caste role. Substantial land allocations were also made in larger grants to the landlord segment, thereby strengthening this intermediary class. The provision of such largesse greatly consolidated the alliance between colonial rule and the upper agrarian hierarchy and upper peasant base. The ability to dispense valuable economic resources on a large scale gave the colonial state great leverage in entrenching its position. From favoured individuals, like the 7,500 acre grant to a descendent of Guru Nanak (Baba Sir Khem Singh Bedi), to placating extensive *biradaries* of landholding peasant lineages from selected districts, the colonial state gained substantive political benefits and allegiances from agricultural colonization.

Second, the military made major incursions into land appropriation. Starting initially with soldier pensioners, allocations were considerably enlarged with World War I and devoted to war veterans. Only in the Punjab was such a scale of valuable canal irrigated landed resources available for rewarding war services. This was clearly done to incentivize further war recruitment. Additionally, large tracts were

reserved for land grants for the breeding of animals of military use. The most ubiquitous were horse breeding grants, for which one entire canal colony, the Lower Jhelum, was devoted, as well as substantial parts of the next major project, the Lower Bari Doab Colony. To a lesser extent, land grants were made requiring maintenance of mules and camels, animals important for military logistics. Additionally, each British cavalry regiment was allocated its own horse run, while some landlord families obtained large stud farm grants. Fearing that a global conflict might cut off imports into India from supply areas like Australia and Argentina, the British wanted to ensure a country supply of cavalry horses. At this time, though, these animals were after centuries facing obsolescence from technological change, making these extensive investments, and their social impacts, highly retrogressive. The militarization of the agrarian sector under imperialism was to have dramatic impacts on the assumption of military rule for much of Pakistan's history.

Third, the civil bureaucracy and state functionaries in this hydraulic society assumed much greater authority and manipulative capacity, as well as rent seeking opportunities, than their counterparts in the rest of British India. While the uppermost, British element was not personally corrupt, it concentrated on furthering the goals of empire. The subordinate, native bureaucracy held major powers of influence and manipulation in controlling the innumerable transactions involved in the granting or leasing of land. Official audits revealed quite widespread irregularities and malfeasance by native officials: a precursor to the whirlwind of bureaucratic corruption that Pakistan was to reap. Moreover, through control of irrigation water distribution, both state and officials held the key to agriculturists' subsistence and margins, again greatly extending the scope for misdemeanor and manipulation. Centralized irrigation management has continued in Pakistan more than a century later, and reform efforts at introducing participatory irrigation systems have been effectively negated by the vested interest of irrigation officials conniving with cultivators. This has led to heavy revenue losses and created major deficits in irrigation operations, from a position of significant profitability during British rule.

Fourth, the vast increase in agricultural production and exports was accompanied by the rise of numerous market towns and entire networks of traders and creditors, as well as an educated segment that emerged from modern schools and colleges to meet expanded employment opportunities in both state service and professional occupations. A veritable commercial revolution took place in this region, not only in agri-trade which was in turn accompanied by creditor networks, but also with the rise of agri-based intermediate processing. The great contradiction that emerged was that the business segment was almost entirely non-Muslim, and the professional class very largely so as well. This region became an export zone of agricultural commodities like wheat, cotton and oilseeds, to both domestic and overseas markets. The emergence of this new business class, predominantly Hindu, in both agricultural markets and urban commerce, was bound to create tensions and misgivings in a Muslim-majority area. Private banks, for instance, were entirely owned by non-Muslims, who were also dominant in urban commercial property and in new residential developments (such as Model Town in Lahore). Commodity value chains, from village and market town traders and creditors to the wholesale and retail segments, were thus heavily dominated by commercial castes that happened to be non-Muslim. Not only in the Punjab, but in urban Sindh too, and especially the rising port city of Karachi, non-Muslims virtually monopolized the modern economic sectors and middle class and elite professions. In the North-West

Frontier Province too commercial activity was dominated by non-Muslims, with major population concentrations in the larger towns. Economic tensions were then bound to acquire a communal complexion, and ultimately have communal repercussions.

Moreover, even within the agrarian population, the interface between communal and economic fault lines became a source of increasing tension, especially with the ongoing depression of the 1930s. A disproportionate amount of land grants had been allotted to Sikh agriculturists. In the largest canal project, the Lower Chenab Colony, grantees were obtained from eight selected districts of central Punjab, where the Sikh population was concentrated. They also received grants from the military allocations, for horse-breeding and as soldier pensioners and war veterans. This transplantation was clearly a source of resentment among the majority Muslim population, especially the indigenous semi-nomadic tribes who felt their extensive pasturages and way of life had been decimated by the canal network and incoming grantees. Importantly, the Sikh farmers did represent the most commercialized end of the agrarian spectrum, since their proficiency as agriculturists made them most intensively involved with cash-cropping. The economic crises of the 1930s would have exacerbated their relations with Muslim service groups, landless labourers and sub-tenants. Hence the eventuality of Pakistan contained also an element of retaliation against agricultural capitalism, in addition to the antagonism towards business and entrepreneurial groups. Attacks on Sikhs in western Punjab villages had started occurring well before the murderous mortality associated with Partition itself. Conversely, the Sikh retaliation and killings of Muslims in central Punjab at Partition could have been a response to their realization that they stood to lose the significant economic resources gained in the previous half century through agricultural colonization.

The extension of credit, and consequent indebtedness among agriculturists, began to be blamed on the 'unscrupulous' moneylender in British perceptions. Relations of the trader-creditor segment with agriculturists, as well as the paternalist state, became much more strained with the international depression of the 1930s. As commodity prices, rents and the land market collapsed, and the economy continued in this recessionary phase through the 1930s, agricultural debt, mortgaging and the threat of expropriation acquired critical proportions. The rise of communal politics, and eventually conflict, coinciding with the imminence of the British departure from India, was heavily underwritten by the contradictions of economic growth and social fissures in the Indus basin. The underlying dynamics of these tensions were essentially economic. However, they began to be more and more vociferously expressed in terms of communal divisions and antagonisms. While such strident evocations of communalism began to be analyzed increasingly as the causes of conflict in themselves, they were much more fundamentally the product of the deeper tensions emerging from the rapid rise of capitalist activity, which were then reinforced by a heavy and seemingly endless economic recession.

The communal divide between the capitalistic and agrarian and urban working classes was ultimately expressed in the creation of Pakistan itself. Rather than being simply delineated along lines of communal conflict, or as the consequence of minority concerns in distant locations, the outcome of Pakistan was inherently a consequence of the challenges and disruptions that capitalism posed to incumbent and traditional interests and structures. As such, the origins of Pakistan, which in analyses of political discourse have been described almost solely in communal terms, actually constituted yet a further

chapter in the counter-revolutions against the intensifying capitalism, a brave new world, that have been a characteristic, though hardly acknowledged, feature of the recent history of the Indus basin. Hence Partition and Pakistan were part of a sequence of developments, whose further incidence has indeed continued into the new nation. They can hardly be analyzed as a unique or once off phenomenon, despite the conclusions drawn from a research and analytical perspective based on 'political' events and activities. These are indeed the lines along which analyses of Partition have proceeded. They have remained within this mode without any major effort at revision, even though the volume of scholarship on this subject has increased considerably.

One associated problem might lie in the elitist nature of historical discourse on Partition. There is a concentration in historical writing on prominent individuals, 'political' leaders, their written or verbal expressions, the groups and organizations within which they operated, and their various interactions with other individuals and entities. These theatres of an extreme minority are then made out to be the almost exclusive stuff of history itself. The implication is that it is these actors that made history, or were primarily responsible for historical change. Of course, their success or effectiveness certainly lay in the extent to which they represented or responded to the needs and wishes of wider social segments. Good historical scholarship acknowledges and incorporates these interactions, yet the initiative remains in 'elitist' history with the specific rather than the general. The latter is more intangible, more amorphous, much more difficult to knead into a narrative, and maybe makes less interesting reading. However, such neglect can result in misreading or failing to understand wider but less visible motivational and causative factors.

The incumbency and longevity, therefore, of extant explanations of the origins of Pakistan are clearly due to the absence of a more multi-disciplinary approach. Actually, communal divisions were becoming inextricably mixed with the deeper economic and social dynamics of the Indus basin. Without understanding these developments, occurring in the areas that actually became Pakistan, the search for the origins of the Pakistan movement has also continued to be ascribed to an extraneous, but clearly not inarticulate, source. However, a dramatically different picture emerges if the weight of deeper historical processes and developments, beyond the utterances and actions of activist and vocal individuals and groups, in the indigenous Pakistan area are taken into consideration. This explanation helps to identify and explain how 1947, while clearly a major transition with significant demographic impacts, did not represent a complete disjuncture. Rather, it reflected as well a deeper set of more prolonged historical conflicts, manifested in the longer drawn out struggles associated with the rise of market forces and capitalism, and indeed the institutional changes and socio-cultural transformations associated with the rise of the modern world itself. Through this perspective, we can also better understand the causative imperatives behind some fundamental developments in Pakistan itself.

IV

The momentum of these counter-revolutions did not cease with Partition, but continued to reassert itself in the following decades. So thorough was the roll-back of capitalism in 1947 that almost the entire

business class was evicted within weeks in the Punjab. The trauma of Partition was less severe in the three other provinces than in Punjab, where both the division of the province and population exchange led to genocidal killings. But even in the Frontier almost all Hindus and Sikhs had left for India, and in Karachi within a few years the predominance of Hindus had been completely eroded. To some extent the vacuum was filled by in-migrating Muslim commercial castes from western India, who settled largely in Karachi, and by Punjabi entrepreneurs returning from eastern locations like Calcutta where they had followed the leather trade that Hindus found distasteful.

This emaciation of the business and professional segment was to have serious consequences for Pakistan's political economy and business development. The already entrenched landlord and upper peasant elements, and the institutionally strengthened military and bureaucracy in this hydraulic society, could now remain unchallenged by a strong and vibrant bourgeoisie. These imbalances were reinforced by the weakness of nationalism itself in this area, with no political organization comparable to the Congress Party, and British sponsored nominees retaining their political hold into the new country. Unlike India's land reform measure, enacted as early as 1950, Pakistan failed to implement any effective land redistribution, thereby perpetuating the authority of agrarian incumbents. With institutionally weak political organizations, politicians following individualized agendas, and an elite essentially averse to adopting the democratic route, Pakistan fell under military rule within a decade of its inception. The civil bureaucracy also continued to enjoy an untrammelled decision-making role. The lack of a democratic dispensation precluded adequate expenditures on the social sector and infrastructure, with disproportionately high budgetary allocations to the military.

Despite extensive agrarian growth, the Pakistan area had remained entirely non-industrial during British rule. Margins earned from the Korean War uptake were utilized for industrial investments, largely in textiles to utilize the internal raw cotton supply base. Government incentives and subsidies, as well as congenial divestments of state owned enterprises, facilitated a rapid development of emergent 'big business' families. Unlike Indian business, the oligarchic "22 families" had by the 1960s made their wager with authoritarianism, the military dictatorship of Ayub Khan. Growing rent seeking and resource transfers occurred through such measures as protected markets, tax incentives, subsidized finance, a dual exchange rate, and depressed raw material prices. Heavy concentration emerged rapidly in both the industrial and finance sectors. Meanwhile, real wages stagnated and trade unions remained suppressed, with more rapid growth actually increasing income inequalities. Small and medium enterprises also resented the policy preferences for monopolists. Regional imbalances caused further dissension, especially the claim by East Pakistan that foreign exchange earnings from jute were diverted for industrial investment in the western wing. However, Pakistani big business had also begun to diversify from its textile base into such industries as the chemical, light engineering, electrical, cement automotive and consumer goods. They moved with equal alacrity into the financial sector, setting up insurance companies and private banks. State aided rent seeking and resource transfers to the business elite also alienated small and medium enterprise. Nevertheless, Pakistan began to be regarded as a model of development, with the functional inequality strategy, proposed by a group of Harvard economists, expected to create rapid growth. Coming at the cost of class and regional equity, and

threatening to unhinge the traditional power balance, the emergent capitalists failed to realize that they had little political leverage beyond military rule.

These anomalies were accompanied by growing tensions in the agricultural sector, further deepening apprehension over the impact of market forces. After desultory performance in the 1950s, agricultural growth picked up with the 'green revolution' in the next decade. However, higher aggregate incomes in the rural economy were unevenly distributed. Optimizing productivity and incomes entailed higher input investments: smaller farmers could ill afford these without resorting to credit, which came at prohibitive rates. The new inputs for enhanced production included higher yielding seed varieties, pesticides, fertilizers, tractors and improved agricultural implements, and better land and water management. The squeeze on the landholding peasantry was exacerbated by its loss of tenancy roles, through the adoption of tractors by larger farmers. With stagnant real wages, and authoritarian rule suppressing protest, both the urban and rural masses could hardly be enamoured with Pakistan's growth model and newly rampant capitalistic ethic.

Almost predictably, the notion of 'counter-revolutions' then asserted itself into the course of events. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's Pakistan Peoples Party only came into power owing to the exigency of the Bangladesh secession. The Awami League from East Pakistan, despite winning twice the number of seats as the PPP in the December 1970 elections, was not allowed to form a government by the West Pakistani dominated military, bureaucratic and political establishment. This deprivation of democratic rights, and ultimately the descent into sanguinary conflict, could itself be seen as a counter-revolution against the forces of change, especially those that threatened to dilute the entrenched status quo.

More grievously, reversals in the remaining Pakistan reasserted this continuum with equally profound consequences. The retaliations against market forces and their disruptive impacts returned with a vengeance in the 1970s, which witnessed a complete reversal of the growth and free market strategies of the previous decade. The PPP government, having created a coalition of the disaffected for the 1970 elections, then entered rapidly into an extensive nationalization of big business industrial and financial assets. It created twelve sector-based corporations to take over and manage the high grounds of the economy. These measures did not extend to the staple textile industry, but to those enterprises into which the big business groups had diversified: in effect killing their future. Importantly, Bhutto had tried to cushion these corporations from direct control by the bureaucracy by forming the Board of Industrial Management, composed mainly of technocrats. One of the first acts of the next military dictator, Zia-ul-Haq, was to abolish the BIM, thereby handing over these vast economic assets, indeed almost the entire modern sector, to the military and civil bureaucracy. The rapid rise in corruption levels and lack of transparency and accountability among state functionaries can be traced to this period, to the point that it has now reached uncontrollable proportions and even poses an existential threat to the nation.

A further spate of nationalizations and expansion of state-owned enterprises, this time in the intermediate agro-processing and agri-trade sectors, displayed the true extent of the counter-revolution of the 1970s. Having discarded the socialists who had provided him with a populist façade for the 1970 elections, Bhutto for the 1977 elections sought the support of the traditional landlord segment to which he himself belonged. The price for this was an almost bizarre nationalization of flour, oil and cotton

ginning mills. Further, massive state owned trading corporations were established for the major agricultural commodities, including the Rice Export Corporation, the Cotton Export Corporation, Agriculture Marketing and Storage Limited, and for wheat procurement and distribution the enormous Pakistan Agricultural Supplies and Storage Corporation. The relegation of the private sector to a secondary role in the agricultural value chains, and their incorporation into state run enterprises, marked a major shift in favour of the entrenched classes and interest groups for whom the market posed an irritant and a threat.

While Zia-ul-Haq did denationalize the intermediate industry incursions, the major corporations remained intact. The state only moved towards privatization as it fell more and more heavily under external debt. Conditionalities imposed by multilateral moneylending agencies like the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank forced the Government of Pakistan to let go first, from the 1990s, at the industrial plant level, and then gradually with financial institutions and, anomalously, with the profit making telecommunications parastatal. Privatization in utilities has been confined to a few energy generation units, and in electrical distribution only to Karachi, where the purchaser has indeed turned round a major loss maker into successful profitability. Effective deregulation of the energy sector is still ineffective, while institutional reform in several other sectors, like irrigation management, has been attempted but reverted back to extant and embedded systems of bureaucratic control. Again, the impetus for reform has come from foreign agencies operating through donor pressure, rather than through internal and national initiatives aimed at institutional transformation of obsolete and dysfunctional organizations and systems.

The gestation struggles discussed here perhaps reflected the real balance of power between capitalism and its adversaries, between the progressive and the conservative, and eventually between modernity and atavism. To ensure the creation and perpetuation of its brave new world, capitalism historically had to demolish, or at least to critically undermine, the social, cultural, economic and political structures of the past. It had to replace old and established institutions with new forms of governance and economic interactions. It even had to reshape psyches and mentalities to conform to a new and different mode of production. As one historian of Great Britain has titled his book, these transformations amounted to the world turned upside down. To sustain these multiple revolutions, continual adaptations were required to incorporate ongoing innovations in systems, institutions and technologies. Where extant structures and incumbent interests were too embedded to be dissolved, or even diluted, they could retaliate and roll back the forces of change. The lessons from the Indus basin, of which the Partition of 1947 serves as one in a series of examples, challenge the linearity of progress. They might well represent a case of the victory of the past over the future.

Bibliographical Note

The paper is based on a number of publications and research studies by the author, and on secondary literature on nationalism in South Asia, the Pakistan movement and Partition, and on the political economy of Pakistan.