CRISIS, NEW IMPERIALISMS, AND ACCUMULATION BY DISPOSSESSION:

THE CASE OF THE PAKISTAN RAILWAYS

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My research examines the three interrelated concepts of crisis; new imperialisms, spatial-temporal fix and accumulation by dispossession (ABD) stemming from the work of David Harvey as a way to understand the contested history of the Pakistan Railways. For the first thirty odd years after Pakistan's inception in 1947, the railways, a state-owned institution, was the primary mode of transport for the public, cargo, and workers. Alongside basic infrastructure, the railways had a vast network of hospitals, schools, workers' colonies and an array of physical infrastructure connected to production, operations and other aspects of the economy. The systematic ransack and decline of the Pakistan Railways reached its peak in 2010. Despite several attempts throughout the 1990s by successive democratic and military-led governments backed by the IMF/World Bank in 2015, it was announced that Pakistan railways would be revived under the banner of the 46 billion dollar China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as part of the changing geopolitical context of growing regional connectivity and new Chinese imperialism. By examining the processes that underlie ABD, such as spatial-temporal fix, the following research shows that these processes not only reflect a shift of resources away from the public domain, but in Pakistan also entailed the transformation of the railways from a utilitarian welfare organization to an entity that facilitates looting, unbundling, and dispossession of shared resources and infrastructure.

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CHAPTER 1

THE CASE OF THE PAKISTAN RAILWAYS

1.1 Introduction

In the spring of 2017, I was assigned an investigative report for Herald Magazine titled *Parallel Lines* that investigated the increasing number of train accidents in Pakistan that had come on the heels of reforms implemented under conditions of expanding financialization, marketization, and securitization. Public and media discourse around the railways tends to revolve around the proverbial image of a lumbering bureaucratic relic that needs to be sold off for it to become efficient. In order to understand the reasons behind the apparent crisis that had cost many lives in a few months, I spent two months traveling the length and breadth of the railways, spending time at junctions and workshops, and exploring all the parts that make up the mammoth infrastructure. These experiences pushed me to develop a more comprehensive understanding surrounding neoliberalism, uneven development and the overall political economy of Pakistan.

The main scholarly work around colonial state-owned entities in South Asia tends to highlight the utilitarian-welfare role of the railways in remaking the British-centered economy and state space (Goswami 2004). There has been important work done on the role of railway worker militancy in anti-colonial and nationalist struggles during the 1920s and 1930s (Ahuja 2013), as well as critical work on privatization regimes (Zaidi 2005; Munir and Naqvi 2017; Akhter 2015). However, there has been scant research around the centrality of the railways in the larger development of capitalism in Pakistan and the complex array of processes that go into its operations, or the detailed history of how it went into decline (For examples: Looney 1998; Tahir 2012; Li et al 2018). In the context of critical and Marxist geography there is growing recognition of the centrality of modern logistics infrastructures as a spatial fix (Danyluk 2018) and the making of a global economic order (Cowan 2010) through a military-corporate nexus. This research aims to fill the gap in scholarly work around the questions of dispossession and the Pakistan Railways as a site of new imperialisms.

The mammoth logistics and transport infrastructure of the Pakistan Railways has historically held strategic importance in projects of empire building. Over time, it became a site for new imperialist powers that sought to create new regimes of dispossession. In this regard, international financial institutions played an important role in expanding the scope of expropriation, privatization, and its associated processes through developmentalist regimes in the postwar period. The Third World debt crisis of 1980s gave rise to new visions of development under a neoliberal paradigm and later paved the way for a new round of dispossession framed by Chinese imaginations of growth starting in the early 2000s.The range of actors involved in the contested and contradictory processes of extricating the railways from its welfare role towards a site for capital accumulation demonstrates the relative autonomy of global regimes, nation-states, organizational forms, institutional change as well as other actors and processes. Accordingly, this research focuses on three research questions that look to explore the political and economic processes that underlie the crisis of the Pakistan Railways, which are laid out in detail in the following section.

1.2 Conceptual Background

My paper is guided through three interrelated concepts from the work of David Harvey (2003, 2005) in which he reworks and adds to the classical debates around primitive accumulation, imperialism, and crisis theory. These concepts will be explained in greater detail in Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

1.2.1 Crisis of Capitalism

Harvey writes that the goal of the book *Limits to Capital* was to expand upon 'undeveloped Marxist categories' of 'fixed capital, finance, credit, rent, space relations and state expenditures' to better comprehend questions of 'urban processes, property markets and uneven geographical' (Harvey 2018, 10). The role of crisis or the debate around capitalism losing its steam has been the source of significant debate among classical economists such as Adam Smith, Ricardo, and Malthus. Marx's own formulation takes a departure from these perspectives, which have either looked at capitalist crisis or the declining rate of profit as tendency rather than a law due to the fact that barriers to capital accumulation can be averted through a variety of mechanisms. Harvey's three-cut theory of how capitalist crisis forms and is displaced is discussed with greater detail in Chapter 2. The concept of crisis is particularly important given the overall state of the railways at the time of partition in 1947 and the recurrent theme of crisis that has influenced the larger development of the railways.

1.2.2 New Imperialisms

Harvey's usage of the term new imperialisms incorporates the logics of territorialism and capital to understand the role of imperial powers in relation to capitalist crisis. The theory highlights the role of global imperial powers, international financial institutions such as the World Bank/IMF and other actors in maintaining or consolidating financial and territorial hegemony and opening up new spaces for capital accumulation. Chapter two details the array of processes that are deployed under various development regimes to consolidate the control of imperialist powers.

1.2.3 Accumulation by Dispossession (ABD)

The third concept that is central to this thesis is the role of ABD. This concept concerns the predatory role of and violent tendency of capitalism that occur through a variety of tactics such as dispossession of people from land or corruption. Harvey argues under neoliberalism the transfer of state-owned entities and resources to the private sector (or privatization) has been a recurrent form of ABD. The importance of ABD stems in its interrelation with crisis and new imperialisms. Chapter 2 will examine the role of ABD in the larger transformation of Pakistan railways and how it has worked in relation to crisis.

1.3 Questions

- How does the crisis of capitalism get relocated on infrastructure projects in Pakistan to generate possibilities for capital accumulation?
- How does the railways function as a site of imperialism geared toward creating new regimes of dispossession?
- How do strategies of privatization and commodification reconfigure relationships of the state, imperialist regimes, and international financial institutions?

1.4 Methodology

This research draws on a wide array of archival materials to compile a political-economic background and analysis of various development regimes in Pakistan and their impact on the Pakistan Railways. Under the British Empire, the railway covered 5,048 miles of track in what became West Pakistan. Today it stretches over 4,841 miles of rail tracks from the Torkham border with Afghanistan to the Karachi Port and owns 1,67,690 acres of land in the country. According to the Ministry of Railways (2017), a large portion of its assets are prone to 'encroachment' for which the government launches anti-encroachment drives to repossess those assets. A closer look at the various levels of looting, fraud, and encroachments reveals the role of hegemonic development paradigms that allow for such processes to occur in order to displace a crisis of overaccumulation of capital elsewhere, or to further new imperial designs. Given this context, this research asks: How does the crisis of capitalism get relocated on infrastructure projects in developing countries to generate possibilities for capital accumulation?

I also utilized World Bank project documents from the 1950s to 2000 that include loan agreements, audits, and internal declassified material related to the Pakistan's railways program, transport sector, road development and global lending practices. These have been instrumental in helping understand the role of such programs, and the details surrounding the railway operations and an array of other factors. The second source of archival material I use are consultancy reports from 1970s and 1980s written by lead railway consultancy groups based in France and Canada. These provided me with insight into the longstanding decline of the Pakistan railways and what challenges the railways were facing in terms of operations. The Pakistan Railways Year Books represent another resource that I have collected dating back to 2010-11 that provide details surrounding the government's policy towards the railways, development initiatives, operational changes, and comprehensive data such as revenues, operating costs or labor size. These documents have been a valuable resource in terms of understanding the changes that have taken place under various governments and financial/developmental regimes. These materials provide me with rich details and descriptions and the insights necessary to answer the second question: How does the railways function as a site of imperialism geared toward creating new regimes of dispossession?

Apart from conducting participant observation and interviews of railway passengers, workers, and officers, as well as travelling to abandoned railway junctions, I have discussed the crisis of the railways with several journalists. News reports have provided invaluable information regarding the shifting relationships and politics that drive new policies in the railways. I use discourse analysis and the insights gained from detailed conversations with multiple actors involved in the railways to answer the last question: How do strategies of privatization and commodification reconfigure relationships of the state, imperialist regimes, and international financial institutions? Working alongside union members, I had access to the day-to-day workings of various levels of employees in the organization, and these observations have provided the insight necessary to explore these topics through the lens of accumulation by dispossession, new imperialisms, and crisis.

1.5 Significance of Study:

This thesis intends to broaden understandings surrounding the concepts of ABD, Crisis and New Imperialism through a detailed study of the Pakistan Railways. Its broader implication will be towards developing a more comprehensive understanding surrounding the role of logistics infrastructures, uneven development, and the spatial logic of capitalism in Pakistan.

CHAPTER 2

CRISIS, NEW IMPERIALISMS, AND ACCUMULATION BY DISPOSSESSION

2.1 Introduction

The Pakistan Railways inherited a lumbering infrastructure and bureaucracy from the colonial empire, which had a starkly different plan for the railways as compared to today. For the first thirty odd years after Pakistan's inception in 1947, the railways, a state-owned institution, was the primary mode of transport for the public, cargo, and workers. Alongside basic infrastructure, the railways had a vast network of hospitals, schools, workers' colonies and an array of other physical infrastructure connected to production, operations and other aspects of the economy. The systematic ransack and decline of the Pakistan Railways reached its peak and became apparent in most vivid ways around 2010. It faced an array of issues ranging from decaying infrastructure, shortage of trains and basic resources, alongside rising debts and costs, accompanied by an acute pressure on an overworked, undermanned and aging labor-force that struggled to maintain railway operations. By 2010, the railways had nearly arrived at a standstill. The railways were faced by increasing unrest in the form of protests, rioting and strikes from passengers, railway administrators and workers. Several attempts throughout the 1990s, by successive democratic and military-led governments, backed by the International Monetary Fund, failed to privatize the railways due to a variety of reasons. By 2015, it was announced that the Pakistan railways would be revived under the banner of the $46 billion China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which would channel loans and financing into the transport and communication infrastructure as part of the changing geopolitical context of growing regional connectivity and new Chinese imperialism.

In this chapter, I examine the interrelated concepts of crisis, new imperialisms, and accumulation by dispossession (ABD) stemming from the work of David Harvey (2003, 2005) as a way to understand the contested history of the Pakistan Railways. Harvey reworks Marx's theory of primitive accumulation, which is understood as a process of violent expropriation and dispossession as necessary means to create preconditions for capitalist accumulation. Contemporary literature around the violent origins of capitalism has seen a growing consensus that primitive accumulation is an on-going process that is necessary for both commodification of nature but also the reproduction and expansion of capitalism in a geographical sense (Amin 1974; De Angelis 2001; Federici 2004; Harvey 2005; Perelman 2001). Harvey reworks the term primitive accumulation by introducing the concept of accumulation by dispossession to consider the 'predation, fraud and thievery' that has occurred under neoliberalism. Accumulation by definition (ABD) consists of neoliberal policies that concentrate wealth, infrastructure, and property into the hands of a small contingent of wealthy individuals through privatizing government held resources. By examining the processes that underlie ABD, such as spatial-temporal fix (see below), the following research shows that these processes not only reflect a shift of resources away from the public domain, but in Pakistan also entailed the transformation of the railways from a utilitarian welfare organization to an entity that facilitates looting, unbundling, and dispossession of shared resources and infrastructure.

The following sections explore the literature and history of how accumulation by dispossession is made possible under contested imperialist designs and disparate visions of development at multiple scales. This chapter is organized in the following manner: The literature review section introduces three core concepts that guide this paper stemming from the work of David Harvey. This is followed by a question section that breaks down the various aspects of what this research covers. The empirical sections provide a detailed history and background of various processes based on archival research of documents from the World Bank, consultancy reports, news articles, interviews, and discussions with railway workers.

2.2 Literature Review

David Harvey (2005), in his book *New Imperialism*, highlights that ABD reflects the integral necessity of capitalism to create its own 'other'. He argues that aside from the classical forms of capital accumulation known as expanded-reproduction, capitalism expands spatially through incorporating non-capitalist frontiers or those resources that function outside of the circuits of capital. 'Accumulation by dispossession' as a key tactic emerges more overtly as privatization and liberalization policies under neoliberalism become more common. Harvey argues that privatization of public resources and institutions represent a new, contemporary round of what Marx termed the 'enclosure of the commons'. The hallmark of 'accumulation by dispossession' is the transfer of productive public assets and natural resources such as 'earth, forest, water, and air' from the state to private companies. In this context, the new enclosures of common resources, formerly state-owned enterprises such as the railways and an array of services, rights, and lifeways become incorporated by market logics. The four key elements of ABD are further elaborated upon by Harvey (2006):

1) Privatization: As a central feature of Neoliberalism, this refers to the "corporatization, commodification, privatization of public assets' with the main goal of opening new fields of capital accumulation 'in domains hitherto regarded off-limits to the calculus of profitability." (Harvey 2006, 149)

2) Financialization: This refers to deregulation policies at the global scale and to the fact that the predatory role of the global financial system has been central to redistributive activity through "speculation, predation, fraud and thievery." (Harvey 2006, 154)

3) Management and manipulation of crises on the world stage: This refers to the creation and manipulation of crises with practices such as "debt traps" that deliberately redistribute wealth from poor countries to rich countries at the global scale. (Harvey 2006, 154)

4) State redistributions: This refers to the changing character of the state through tax and fiscal reforms that target social expenditures from the social democratic, Fordist era. (Harvey 2006, 155)

The importance of ABD hinges upon Harvey's concepts from his earlier work titled *Limits to Capital* (1982; 2018), in which he codified and attempted to resolve debates surrounding Marx's theory of capitalist crisis, imperialism, regimes, and the expansionary tendency of the capitalist mode of production. The role of crisis as a necessary condition of capitalism to ensure equilibrium or to counterbalance the overaccumulation of surplus capital has been discussed from a wide array of perspectives. Classical economists such as Smith, Ricardo, and John Stuart Mill recognized the tendency of capitalism to run out of steam and hurtle towards a "stationary state" of zero rate of return (Harvey 2018, 209). Ricardo saw declining agricultural productivity, increasing population, accumulation and technological change as drivers of crisis (Marx 1861-63). Whereas, Adam Smith saw the falling rate of profit as a positive, as this compelled capitalists to invest in industry and minimize their dependence on credit (Marx 1861-63). Marx, in his theory of the declining rate of profit from Volume III and Gundrisse, argued that there is a long-standing tendency of capitalism to over-accumulate or 'produce surplus capital relative to opportunities to employ that capital'. This occurs due to technological change that creates a surplus population and adds to capitalism's tendency of "accumulating for accumulation's sake" (Harvey 2018, 224). In contrast to the classical economists such as Ricardo and Smith, Marx regards the declining rate of profit as a tendency rather than a law due to the fact that barriers to capital accumulation can be overcome through counteracting influences that can function as means to avert crisis such as devaluation of capital or depression of wages of labor (Harvey 2018, 211).

From these roots, Harvey's primary contribution to neo-Marxist theory has been to demarcate Marx's insights into a three-cut theory of how crisis forms in a geographical sense and is displaced or resolved. The first two cuts of crisis are temporal fixes that occur through devaluation and the expansion of credit/finance systems. Devaluation or depreciation of monetary forms of capital occur through inflation, unemployment, falling real wages, unfinished commodities, or even as value of fixed capital, such as infrastructure that loses value over time. Harvey's second cut of crisis is also temporal and highlights the role of credit and the financial system. These function to smooth out over-accumulated capital and to address devaluation by moving capital from less profitable to more profitable areas of an economy. This point is crucial in that financial capital has been central to raising large sums of money for large-scale investments such as infrastructure or new technologies that may become profitable in the future. Thus, what was disposed of in the first cut is reinvested in the second for accumulation of future capital. Further, investments within the second cut can be speculative, allowing for the growth of fictitious (or credit moneyed) capital and moneyed capital in tandem. The role of the second cut of crisis displacement is to allow for the temporal easing or "smoothing out cycles of over-accumulation and devaluation, and fictitious capital multiplies investors options and flexibility" (Sheppard 2016, 77).

In contrast to the first two cuts, Harvey's contribution to existing theories of crisis is the role of what he terms the third cut—"the spatial-temporal fix" — which is geographical and has a markedly different role in addressing crisis and the metabolic cycle of capitalism. It has a dual function literally and figuratively. In a literal sense, spatial-temporal fix means fixing capital into the built environment to create a landscape. Figuratively it represents the 'geographical expansion of the realm within which capital can circulate' (Glassman 2007, 352). Harvey argues that a major portion of total sitting capital is recycled through typically speculative investments into the built environment (such as highways, roads and overpasses) to create a new landscape that would support further processes of capital accumulation. State-owned enterprises, though not physical infrastructure, can be "territorialized and rendered geographically immobile through state commitments" (Harvey 2005, 86). World Bank backed development investments, for example, in large-scale infrastructure in transport or communication are installed as fixed capital but have an important role in the circulation of capital and commodities. The 'productivity' of these spaces is only 'provisional' since they are likely ideal for one phase of capitalism but due to technological change and devaluation can slow down capital accumulation in a later era (Sheppard 2016, 126). This provides the base for a theory of uneven development and commodification of nature as Harvey explains:

> The production of space, the organization of wholly new territorial divisions of labor, the opening up of new and cheaper resource complexes, of new dynamic spaces of capital accumulation, and the penetration of pre-existing social formations by capitalist social relations and institutional arrangements (such as rules of contract and private property arrangements) provide multiple ways to absorb existing capital and labor surpluses. Such geographical expansions, reorganizations and reconstructions often threaten, however, the values fixed in place but not yet realized. Vast quantities of capital fixed in place act as a drag upon the search for a spatial fix elsewhere. (Harvey 2005, 86)

The relationship between crisis and spatial-temporal fix explains how capitalism must be continually restructured, re-scaled, and re-territorialized as a way to restore the spatial equilibrium of capitalism. As barriers to formal capitalist accumulation increase, the outlet or fix is not simply about creating equilibrium for the capitalist system but also a question of state power and imperialism. Harvey understands imperialism as an 'analytical' term rather than a 'polemical' term and looks to incorporate the logics of territorialism and capital. These two logics, which underpin his definition of imperialism, are derived from the work of Marxian World Systems theorist Giovanni Arrighi (1994) who sought to break away from historic analytic frameworks of class struggle and core periphery relations that had dominated World Systems theories in the 1960s and 70s. He critiqued the Leninist paradigm's tendency to conflate imperialism with the monopoly stage of capitalism and instead differentiated between the two drivers of imperial strategy: territorial logic and capitalist logic. While Marxist frameworks have generally focused on the accumulation of wealth through the capture of territory and its resources, Arrighi contextualizes the various ways in which these logics play out. For example, under merchant capitalism, prior to the Industrial Revolution and birth of the capitalist system, accumulation of wealth was subordinated to accumulation of territory in so far as wealth was a means to acquire territory. The 19th century, according to Arrighi, saw the rise of a more powerful logic that combined with the logic of territoriality to construct a 'non-territorial' new imperialism. For Arrighi, these two logics help illuminate the dual nature of capitalist accumulation: it casts the relationship between the wage earner and capital owner as transactionary while at the same time involving oppression and political violence. For Arrighi, looting and oppression was the hallmark of old imperialism, however, these characteristics continued into contemporary forms of imperialism.

Harvey's departure with Arrighi can be seen in his analysis of US imperialism and its attempts to maintain hegemony in the context of globalization. The Gramscian notion of hegemony involves constellations of institutional and political arrangements that reproduce asymmetry in exchange relations to consolidate hegemonic power (Harvey 2005, 61-62). For Harvey, this is accomplished through the deployment of international institutions that secure hegemonic power through free market and trade systems. Institutional pressures from organizations such as the IMF and World Bank exercise influence to force open resource and labor markets throughout the world while closing off markets in the Global North to those who fail to fall in line with its policies. For Harvey, this punitive power is exercised in lieu of problems of overaccumulation of capital through expanded reproduction and refusal to enact internal reforms. The crisis unfolds through periodic bouts of devaluation of resources and assets in various parts of the world. For Harvey, the world's contemporary imperial powers appeared to have learned from their colonial predecessors that processes of accumulation must be repeated constantly out of necessity or else it may just come to a halt. The most prominent example cited by Harvey at this scale is how declining US hegemony in terms of capitalism led to the US war in Iraq to open up new spaces of capital accumulation but also to capture territorial power and critical resources such as oil.

As a result, it is important to remember that ABD or 'accumulation by predation, fraud and thievery' can be attributed to a variety of multi-scalar processes or tactics that resonate with what Marx describes as the violent origins of capitalism, which included usury, war, the commodification and privatization of land, conversion of property rights, suppression of the rights to commons, appropriation of assets through colonialism and imperialism, monetization of exchange and taxation, the formation of national debt and credit systems (Harvey 2004, 74). An example of this can be seen in the context of vulture capitalism, which is dedicated to the appropriation and devaluation of assets, which represent 'other means' of capital accumulation (Harvey 2004, 72). The larger implication of this is as Prudham (2004) explains is that privatization, commercialization, and other processes of 'accumulation by dispossession' function as the means through which capital accumulation is expanded in scale and scope via extra-economic means. In this sense, privatization and ABD are 'relational moments' within specifically capitalist commodification (Prudham 2007, 7).

Examined through the lens of crisis and imperialism, the Pakistan Railways thus has developed its own logic of ABD that centers around processes of commodification, privatization, expropriation, and looting. In the context of new imperialisms, attempts to revive the railways has seen major contestation around questions of who can own or control it. For example, the World Bank-led privatization during the 1990s required to a large extent the unbundling of various assets and resources as well as ceding ownership of the profitable main-line from Karachi to Lahore to international freight companies. A series of failed privatization attempts not only transformed the relationship between IMF/World Bank and the Pakistani State but had implications for the Pakistan Railways that was never really geared towards corporatization and privatization (see more details below). It is in this context that ABD features in opening the railways for further investments and in radically transforming the operations of the railways. The question of crisis as discussed by Harvey is never something that is resolved but rather is something displaced in a spatial-temporal sense through an array of tactics. Finally, an examination of the history of the Pakistan Railways enables an understanding of the effects of commodification and impoverishment of the welfare components of society and the large-scale transport infrastructure.

2.3 Old New imperialism and the Development of the Pakistan Railways

In 1947, East Pakistan, which is now Bangladesh, had 2550 rail track miles compared to the railway in West Pakistan, which at the time had 7,540 track miles consisting of broad gauge and narrow-gauge lines. The condition of the railways declined due to heavy military traffic during World War II and attacks on carriages and rail lines during the violence that erupted during the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 (Sofrerail 1971). Pakistan faced stagflation during the 1950s due to overdependence on an agricultural economy and a limited industrial base, factors that led to a nominal growth rate of 2.3 percent that failed to hit an equilibrium of self-generating growth. The agricultural economy was not productive, partially due to structural problems that led to a food and wheat crisis. The country had a very low rate of accumulation and growth, new and unestablished credit institutions, little to no foreign reserves, and an almost non-existent tax base due to lack of industry and widespread poverty (Bhatia 1990, 78). These circumstances were coupled with an unending political crisis: the decline of potential India-Pakistan cooperation due to the Kashmir issue, food and commodity crises, economic and balance of payment crises, sectarian/religious violence, and the growth of a communist movement in Pakistan that had placed immense pressure on early governments. Despite these visible constraints, the primary goal of the state was to expand the economy through capitalist industrialization using import-substitution—thereby building a home or domestic market as well as promoting development.

The Pakistani government signed the Colombo Pact in 1950 that opened the door to much needed foreign aid and a strategic partnership with the US as a frontline state in the fight against communism. Foreign aid was the primary element of US foreign relations in the 1950s and the reason Pakistan began to lean towards the US as an international partner. As part of this strategic relationship, Pakistan received US grants that included commodity aid and technical assistance as well as loans at three percent interest[1] (Bhatia 1990, 196). Much of this assistance was invested into fixed capital such as roads, dams, ports and military upgrades. The support from the US was supplemented by a consortium of donor countries and the World Bank through efforts of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. In 1950, the government pursued a 137-million-dollar government-funded program for the railways, of which 97 million dollars was financed through foreign reserves. Other forms of aid and loans came from the US Development

[1] US grants accounted for 99,457,300 dollars which was 76.08 percent of the total grants 1,307, 202 received by Pakistan and 149,649,600 or 44.5 percent in loans.

Loan Fund[2] as well as from assistance typically associated with countries party to the Colombo Plan, such as Germany and Canada. The Pakistan Railways became heavily dependent on these payments for equipment, rolling stock (e.g., locomotives, box cars, and passenger cars), and technologies that were shipped in exchange for credits and loans.

In the 1950s, the railways received approximately 70 million dollars through four loans from the World Bank, of which roughly 58 million dollars was invested in the North Western State Railway (NWR) (World Bank 1968). Between 1947 and the mid-1990s, the railways received 'serial loans' for 12 projects initiated by the World Bank. These programs focused on providing technical assistance and ensuring that the railways remained operational as the primary form of transport in Pakistan. The first World Bank railway rehabilitation project cost 25 million dollars and focused primarily on maintaining its operations rather than aiming for a complete overhaul of infrastructure. According to the loan document, NWR (the main rail network in present-day Pakistan) maintained the capacity to handle a majority of its traffic but was incurring increasing maintenance and operating costs. In contrast, the Eastern Bengal Railway (EBR) was in considerably worse condition and had already become insolvent due to its inability to handle cargo services. The context of the World Bank loan was to ensure the conversion of the railway main lines in both systems towards 'diesel power, the acceleration of track and equipment maintenance now in arrears and the replacement of locomotives and rolling stock that were outdated and beyond repair' (World Bank 1952). Designed to 'prevent further deterioration', the World Bank viewed growth in terms of operating revenues and working expenses, which is standard railway accounting practice. The bulk of investment in the railways in the previous

[2] The Development Loan Fund was enacted as part of the mutual security act of 1957 was a way to phase out the practice of grants. This loan allowed for a borrowing nation to return the money in the form of their own currency.

decade had been funneled towards rehabilitating the railway system in West Pakistan. A Railways Expert Committee report from 1957-1958 underlined that the performance of the railways was declining due to the lack of autonomy of local and regional experts, bureaucratic incompetence, petty corruption, and poor funding because of ticketless traveling that had become common since the government had centralized the railway administration (Services, C. P. C. 1987). The report warned against the colonial organizational form that would return to regional railway boards as part of 'unity of command' administrative structure. Instead, the report favored running the railways as a 'public enterprise', thereby focusing profit-making on freight and cargo transport, while passenger services would be an added function.

The decade of stagnation and the crisis of capital formation after the 1950s was addressed through a form of internal colonialism. The dictatorship of Ayub Khan in 1958 marked an extension of the existing military-bureaucratic apparatus in order to centralize power. In 1955, the government initiated the One-Unit Scheme that coupled all of West Pakistan's provinces into one province and sought to bring it to parity with East Pakistan in terms of population size. In addition to centralization of power, the role of technocrats grew in the realm of planning and development. The Planning Commission, which was formed in 1962 under Ayub Khan's dictatorship, was run and funded by the Harvard Advisory Group and the Ford Foundation[3]. This vision of developmentalism can be traced back to President Harry Truman's 1949 speech announcing that US imperialism would be unlike the Old imperialism and that the "benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress will be available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas". McMichael (2003) argues that the stages of development became a

[3] According Historian Ayesha Jalal (1990) in 1953, the government wanted an international team of experts who would be able to frame the first five-year plan, and the same year an agreement was signed with the Ford Foundation.

hegemonic standard through which newly decolonized societies were judged. It also represented a new order defined in terms of “the bureaucratic state, industrial production, rational law, specialization, professionalism, technical innovation, [and] price-based value”. The World Bank became the primary vehicle for this system. In Pakistan, the Planning Commission was led by Mahbub Ul Haq and Gustav Papanek, who argued that underdeveloped countries, such as Pakistan, should shelve the notion of balanced growth in favor of an aggressive economic growth strategy called ‘functional inequality’[4]. The generation of surplus value, which required something ‘outside’ of the economy to ‘take-off’, became the primary goal. This was to be accomplished through a form of internal colonialism in which the development of West Pakistan’s ‘take-off’ would draw from the surplus earnings of agriculture in East Pakistan. Instead, what occurred was the centralization of wealth in the hands of 22 families in West Pakistan and economic and political crises, which eventually led to the separation of East and West Pakistan, and the creation of Bangladesh in 1971.

Beginning in 1960, at the start of the second-year plan the railways faced arrears of 1,460 miles in rail renewals and 1,860 miles of ‘network renovations’ (Sofrerail 1971). The addition of the 190-mile Kashmor to Kot Adu line, which was necessary to connect Sindh with the northern part of the country, was considered an important investment by the government. The completion of Karachi Circular Railroad and other branch lines occurred during this period, and the three-year plan (1965-1970) also scheduled electrification of the Lahore to Khanewal route to reduce the burden on oil imports with funding from the United Kingdom. Another key investment was

[4] Functional inequality was based on the premise that during initial stages of capitalist development higher inequality was a precondition. Mahbub Ul Haq argued that underdeveloped countries must shelve the notion of equitable growth to reach higher levels of savings and investment. This meant channeling both surpluses from the agricultural economy in Bengal and keeping an undervalued labor force. The other important component of this was the role of foreign capital which supplemented any short fall in development expenditure. See Omar Nauman’s PAKISTAN: A Political and Economic History Since 1947.

in a carriage factory that would offset the foreign exchange burden by providing local employment through production of freight and passenger cars and concrete sleepers. The materials and technology for these investments were bought from leading German and British rail companies. The World Bank, however, indicated that this investment would have to be cut over the next ten years if the railways did not increase its share of passenger traffic and revenue. The US aid was stopped in 1965, and Pakistan's economy entered a downturn accompanied by political instability.

The first five-year plan (1955-1960) saw the railways grow in what was termed the economy's 'take-off'[5] period with a 45 percent increase in goods transport and 36 percent increase in passenger use that corresponded with 11 percent GNP growth rate (World Bank Transport project 1968). At the time, the World Bank explained that these numbers were high compared to other countries attributing this growth to the fact that Pakistan was an agricultural economy, but the GNP would decline as market-forces deepened. The second five-year plan (1960-1965) saw public investment in road infrastructure, up to 35 percent of the total transport investment through 1.18 billion rupees (World Bank Transport project 1968). In the late 1950s, Pakistan had approximately '10,000 miles of paved roads' and '15,000 miles of unpaved roads of which 90 percent was situated in East Pakistan' where the network was very weak (World Bank Transport project 1968). Considerable funding and construction delays marred road development during the first five-year plan; further, the use of high cost materials was common due to the lack of local resources and ability of the government to maintain or build roads.

[5] Rostow (1959) argues that take-off is a specific stage of development within the capitalist mode of production which hinges upon three preconditions which radically change traditional society through the build-up of social overhead capital through investment in transport, technological revolution in agriculture, and capital imports which allow for first world countries to help exploit local resources, develop industrial raw materials/technologies. This view these three areas as necessary for the creation of new markets and new investments in industrialization of the economy.

The movement towards road development coincided with a ‘road building boom’ that took place in the 1960s and 1970s[6] in developing countries. Throughout the sixties, there was broad involvement of the World Bank in providing technical assistance, loans, and direction towards the road development impetus that dominated developmentalist aspirations of newly decolonized countries. The transport planning cell was set-up, and it included economists, UN-funded transport economists, and Harvard Advisory Group experts for transportation planning and development in Pakistan (World Bank, 1968). While the government had tried to protect the railways from road competition through licensing provisions, there was steady growth in both road passenger and cargo traffic. It is important to note that the manner in which road transport was encouraged was based on incentives and subsidies for the trucking industry. In practice, this meant that truckers who were close to the regime got licenses for large-scale commodity transport. This represented an equivalent to the dispossession of the means of production for the railways as it centered on their primary operations. A second development was the privatization of public transport, which continues even today. It represented a redistributive dispossession of railway surplus towards roads. At the same time, as for road development, the railway was a site of spatial fix for the over-accumulated capital of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and West Germany, which revived an industry around road and railway development, consultancy and planning.

The railway’s so-called ‘take-off period’ (Sofrerail 1971, Looney 1998; Tahir 2012; Li et al 2018) was heavily dependent on receiving strategic cargo contracts for mega-development projects during the 1960s. For example, the growth of the railways freight increased during the

[6] See the World Bank report titled Road Deterioration in Developing Countries report (1987) which argued that roads built in the Third World now required billions of dollars of investment for rehabilitation of roads built during the 1960s and 1970s.

USAID and World Bank-funded Indus Basin Project that included the development of two hydroelectric dams. It was also the primary form of transport from the Karachi Port from where imports and US-funded commodity aid arrived. From 1965 to 1975, the railways showed considerable profits as a result of its dependence on such infrastructure development projects[7]. In reality, this profit was considerably less than reported due to the dividend that had to be paid to the state in which the railways had to cover 70 percent of the gross investment (1,293 million rupees) actually made in the railways from 1959 to 1969 (Sofrerail 1971). In terms of passenger growth, the majority of passengers were in what was called third-class seating[8] compared to higher-class passengers. The practice of opening branch lines to various remote areas became entrenched at this time. The theme of closing unprofitable lines became a central point of contention with the World Bank who viewed the railways as a purely profit-making enterprise. Development during the takeoff period shaped the manner in which the railways was divided between its welfare responsibility and its desire to become the primary freight transportation business from the Karachi Port to the rest of the country.

By 1971, the World Bank had minimized its lending to Pakistan after the rise of the Islamic-socialist Pakistan People's Party government led by Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. The loss of a captive market in East Pakistan, which was now Bangladesh, was marked by widespread political and economic crisis. Pakistan was forced to devalue its currency in 1972, which led to greater dependence on foreign aid to cover its international balance of payments. Bhutto's regime, inspired by centralized planning models of the Soviet Union and China through nationalization of major industries, attempted to build a strong industrial base. The earlier Ayub

[7] According to Sofrerail (1971) earned in rupees an accounting profit: 1965-66: 95.7, 1966-67: 89.5, 1967-1968: 75.8, 1968-69: 71.8 million, 1969-70: 100.8

[8] Around 95 percent of the passengers using the rail in 1969.

dictatorship, in contrast through its developmentalist policies, had created strong vested-interests which controlled the economy and were referred to as ‘robber-barons’ (Bhatia 1990, 135). The decisive shift away from US-centered foreign aid policy was replaced with a non-aligned foreign policy that led to closer relations with China and Middle Eastern countries such as Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. The gap in funding from the World Bank put enormous strain on the railways. It was not until 1977 that the World Bank returned with additional funding from the Kuwait Fund.

Railways Minister Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi rang the alarm bells of the declining condition of the railways in 1973 during the announcement of the Railways Budget 1973-74. He explained that the railways had received only five percent of the total allocation of the national budget and 27 percent of the total allocation of the budget until the aborted fourth five-year plan. The overall condition of the railways, which was considered an integrated unit, had continued to deteriorate predicating a decline in financial and operational performance. The oil crisis in 1971 had already increased the cost of oil imports for the railways. Floods in both 1973 and 1974 considerably impacted the railways in terms of destruction of its infrastructure and overall capacity. Jatoi’s budget speech explained that serious notice had been taken of the railways’ capacity to move large quantities of food grains, wheat, fertilizer, and petroleum. The 1977 World Bank Project was worth 247 million dollars plus 60 million dollars from the Kuwait Fund. This project focused on attempting to improve the railways’ efficiency in terms of freight transport. This era would mark a precursor to change from developmentalism towards structural adjustment as the primary means of engagement of the World Bank and IMF with Third World countries.

Adjustments were made by the railways to increase freight output, such as grouping of passenger trains to allow for a separate line to be used for cargo transport. These initiatives were supplemented with an increase in rates and fares that consistently rose by 25 to 30 percent per year until 1982. These approaches had almost no impact as the operating costs of the railway reached 108 percent of the total revenue. By 1978, railway capacity was compromised due to wheat and fertilizer imports that were supposed to be distributed on an emergency basis but were delayed at ports due to logistical failures. The same year, Bhutto had been deposed and martial law was imposed by General Zia Ul Haq, who announced Operation Survival to remove logistical bottlenecks in the distribution of wheat from the ports. Under Operation Survival, the military cleared and took control of the main port in Karachi, which would lead to the creation of the National Logistics Cell (NLC). This was a 'replacement institution' in which the military was brought in to fill the gap to replace inefficient civilian institutions through the creation of parallel structures under the control of the armed forces' (Siddiqa 2004;139). The process was not one of privatization of the cargo transport industry; rather, it shifted and centralized the distribution of resources from the railways to another public-sector institution, the military. The military was entrusted with a fleet of '500 new 20-ton' trucks and took control of day to day operations of the port in Karachi (World Bank 1982). It was not that the NLC was inherently efficient in its role as the primary mode of freight transport, rather it was its connection to the armed forces that allowed it to monopolize government contracts (Siddiqa, 2004, 139). By 1984 and 85, the railways had accrued a 1.595-billion-rupee annual fiscal loss. This deficit would increase to 400,000 dollars a day in 1989 (World Bank, 1991).

The World Bank, in its policy report titled *Railway Problems* (1982), indicated that its railway programs, which had loaned 5 billion dollars to countries across the globe, had produced limited results. Instead, now the railways would employ sectoral adjustment as a condition for railway funding marking the beginning of a neoliberal era. The World Bank would force greater steps by the government to turn the railways from predominantly welfare-organizations, which functioned as primary sources of transit for working-people, towards a modern logistics program. Following the merger of the railway board with the ministry in 1984, the United National Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)—at the request of the then railway minister—proposed an alternative to replace the colonial-structure of the railway board with direct management by the railway board and ministry in Islamabad (Services, C. P. C. 1987). A second alternative proposed in this model was to transfer management powers to the railway headquarters in Lahore, underlining a desire by foreign consultants to limit the influence of the government. These alternatives were set forth in a report titled Action Program For The Pakistan Railways Restructuring (APPRR 1987), which reiterated the larger demand of international-monetary institutions, such as the World Bank, to end government interference in pricing and minimize the role of the Railway minister. Further, this report recognized the tension between government control and the imposition of public duties that could be reconciled with efficient management and a competitive role in the transport market. The report emphasized management autonomy and the separation of the services and fixed assets of the railways. It reported that under the Zia government, around 6,000 employees had been hired on requests of politicians seeking to reduce unemployment in their areas. The railway was to be rebuilt as an industrial organization that would compete for a share of the transportation market and not as a public utility. This was inherently different from the previous welfare model of the 'customer having to come to them…' (Services, C. P. C. 1987). The key problems defined by the report were growing debts, loss of market share, excessive manpower due to political hirings encouraged by the military government, and unprofitable branch lines. The report also argued that the newly appointed CEO should be relieved of responsibility for activities or assets that were not a normal or necessary part of the operations. This indicated the tension between the government and the World Bank and other consultants over how to revive the railways to make the railways a profitable enterprise or corporation. The plans described in the report represent a precursor to privatization attempts that were to come in the 1990s and demonstrates that the international consulting firms and International Financial Institutions such as the World Bank were certain that without this division of powers the Pakistan Railways could not be saved.

Similarly, the APPRR report argued that the land assets of the railways should be given to professional real estate agents instead of allowing the railways administration control over these precious land assets. The argument was that railway land that was not used in operations could help in promoting urban growth because previously, growth had centered around railway terminals leading to a surge in land value. Similarly, the report calls for separating the railway manufacturing unit altogether as a private company which could maximize the capacity of the 'various equipment and concrete sleeper factories' dedicated solely to the railway. According to the report, the concrete factory was operating at only 20 percent of its design capacity and the carriage factories were working at only 1/3 of their rated capacity. Lastly, the report was critical of the railways being burdened with the cost of providing houses, schools, hospitals and medical services for their employees. This marks a turning point in the relationship between the government, the Pakistan Railways, and the World Bank.

2.4 Shock Therapy and Unbundling the Railways

The country was facing a severe economic crisis after the 1980s Zia dictatorship with doubled public debt and an increasing role of the military in the economy and politics. The return of democracy saw alternating governments between the Pakistan People's Party led by Benazir Bhutto (1988-1990; 1993-1996) and the Pakistan Muslim League led by Nawaz Sharif (1990-93; 1997-99) that faced pressure from the IMF/World Bank to implement market reforms. The Third

World debt crisis of the 1970s and 1980s factored into the change from developmentalism towards neoliberalism (Bhattia, 1990). The World Bank and IMF were central in using their longstanding relationships from the developmentalist era to confine the cost of the crisis to the Third World to protect G7 countries through consolidation of the developmentalist regime into a unified globalized market. Hence the role of the World Bank shifted to, "stabilizing global financial relations and opening up southern economies to accelerated resource extraction, rather than funding national projects" (McMichael 2003, 166). Contextualizing the new set of policies, McMichael (2003) explains that neoliberal globalization sought to undo the emphasis on economic nationalism that was envisioned under the developmentalist regimes of the 1950s and 1960s in newly decolonized nations. The new regime of neoliberal globalization was imposed in the Third World through the idea of financial discipline and integration into a global economy. The International Monetary Fund instituted a set of institutional reforms under the structural adjustment program for Pakistan that would allow the country to avert its recurrent balance of payments crisis and seek further loans. Development, which had in the past been measured in terms of national economic development, was replaced with "successful participation in the global market" (McMichael 2003, 114) as a measure of economic progress. Munir and Naqvi (2018) explain that in the context of Pakistan this had tremendous impact since economic liberalization and more specifically privatization had hindered the state's ability to 'discipline' business interests' while 'shifting the bulk of the associated risk to the public sector'. Similarly, in the context of the railways this would mean almost complete removal of government subsidies and instituting austerity measures to deal with the burden of debt, which led to a rapid decline in the railways' operations. The profitable element of the railways, the main line from Karachi to Lahore, due to the pressure from the IMF/World Bank would be prepared for privatization in hopes that foreign companies would take ownership and help modernize the Pakistan railways along the lines of modern logistics industry. The privatization of the railways was part of a ten-year World Bank Transport reform program that called for “shock-treatment” through a rapid unbundling[9] of the railways (JICA 2006).

Politically, during the 1990s, a shift among political parties took place in favor of privatization of key state enterprises and industries. The failure of governments to intensify privatization of state-owned enterprises was framed as a failure of democracy. The leadership of the government oscillated between the Pakistan Peoples Party and the Pakistan Muslim League amid allegations of financial corruption and gross incompetence, and allowed for the installation of World-Bank supported technocrat governments between 1993 and 1996 with a vision to implement the ‘shock treatment’.

The radical reform agenda that was imposed through the IMF and World Bank required states across the Third World and beyond to follow policies that included removal of price controls, subsidies, balance of payments and debts, devaluation of currency, and privatization of state-owned enterprises. The caretaker governments of 1993-1996 were headed by World Bank advisors Moeen Qureshi and Meraj Khalid, who were installed with the support of the military to implement policies that civilian governments were unwilling or unable to implement. These included the implementation of key IMF/World Bank conditionalities such as devaluation of currency and privatization of public enterprises to avert the default that would allow for IMF/World Bank funding to continue (Fatima 1997, 48). The impact of such policies was in line with neoliberal orthodoxy, which included a reduction of the fiscal deficit, public-sector

[9] Unbundling is used as World Bank jargon for separating publicly owned systems into different parts. This has been used extensively in Energy sectors where distribution and production were separated. In the context of the railways it was divided between Freight and other services.

reduction, removal of subsidies, trade liberalization, and tax structure reform (Usmani 2010).

The World Bank's audit report titled 'Lending for the Pakistan Railways' (1991) claimed that the 100 million dollars in loans to Pakistan had failed to spur development and any new loans would be contingent on 'reducing operating costs' and 'recapturing some of the freight traffic that had shifted to road transport'. The failures listed in the report included that the government had continued to support 'uneconomic passenger services' instead of focusing its energy on developing modern containerized traffic (Weaving 1991). Any World Bank assistance would hence be contingent on the closure of uneconomic lines, substantially reducing staff, raising tariffs to cover variable costs, adjustment of passenger fares in line with inflation (Weaving 1991). The report also identified with clarity that the most profitable aspect of the railways was the main line with a modernized freight system for circulation of commodities in South Asia. In 1990, the World Bank Transport project argued that by 2005, Pakistan would need significant investment in both highway and railways infrastructure to cater to growing demand. The railways was put in a precarious situation because its agreement had called for a greater restoration of freight capacity and greater coordination with the NLC. This entailed an overhaul of the transport sector at large. In order to encourage private competition, there was a focus upon ending the monopoly of the NLC, which had received significant income from the transport of 'politically sensitive' commodities such as fertilizers and wheat (World Bank 1990).

Eventually, political parties began to fall in line with the plans to privatize the railways. In 1990, the Nawaz Sharif-led government announced its plans for privatization of the mammoth transport infrastructure. World Bank economist Javed Burki's report titled 'Probing Committee of the Pakistan Railways' (1992) gave formal acceptance to the World Bank's diagnosis to end the railway subsidy, to close uneconomic lines, and reduce staff down to 40,000 workers (Bin

Rashed, 2011). Railways investment was limited to locomotive procurement through increasing tariffs and the funding of uneconomic trains through a public service obligation until about 1995 (World Bank 1999). In 1996, government funding for uneconomic lines came to a complete halt.

The closure of branch lines led to the eventual desertion of areas and towns once built around railways. For example, the small-town of Mianwali was a railway-town that bordered Punjab and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. The railway was the primary mode of transport for crops, industrial materials such as cement, and passengers who worked in big cities. In 2017, I interviewed a local trader in Mianwali who had for years been putting out an advertisement in the local paper calling for a restoration of the rail service in the area. He explained that Mianwali was considered a 'backward district', which meant that it had a limited 'road network'. The trader thought the railways would help 'locals who are mostly poor, in their small businesses' (Khan 2017). In the 1980s, the area had been an important border town connecting Punjab, the largest province in the country, with Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. The famous narrow-gauge railways that had been built by the Kalabagh princely state linked the area with Tank and Bannu in the tribal areas of Pakistan. This historic railway line was torn apart and sold as scrap during the first government of Nawaz Sharif between 1990 and 1993 (Khan 2017). The only remnant of that line is a rail bridge.

Another prominent railway closure was the Samasata Junction located near the de facto capital of South Punjab, Bahawalpur. A 2011 report published in the Daily Tribune described the junction as a ghost town with empty sheds, platforms, workshops, and operational facilities. The railways there formerly boasted 1,350 residential quarters of which now only 300 were being used with the area occupied by 'criminals and druggies' (Ansari and Shaheen, 2011). This junction was an important transit from Karachi to Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and the famed branch line to Fort Abbas, which was important to the Bahawalnagar area in the southern part of Punjab as it had the only hospital in the area. Other forms of devaluation emerged due to the closure of various industries that had been connected to the railways. For example, Rohri which is an important junction on the route from Karachi to Lahore, saw a drastic drop in economic activity after a cement factory known to process raw material, which the railways transported from districts of Balochistan, was shut down. Withdrawal of the state from the railways and the closure of prominent branch lines left railways areas across Pakistan vacated and susceptible to land encroachments, looting, as well as social, economic, and infrastructural decay.

Another emphasis of structural adjustment was to reduce labor costs through 'staff attrition', which decreased the total size of the railway workforce from 133,300 in 1989/90 to 96,100 in 1997/98 (World Bank 1999). The World Bank and government found the policy less controversial than mass-firing surplus workers, which would have ranged from 30,000 to 40,000 employees. This workforce reduction was embraced by the government and the World Bank as a seminal reason for why railway debt did not further skyrocket. The policy was supplemented by a banning of new recruitment. This had long-term impacts for railways workers in terms of increasing job insecurity and loss of bargaining power. Hiring freezes in the public service allowed for the emergence of contractual labor without service structure or perks such as housing, health services and education for children, causing a larger marginalization of their work. The fracturing of the power of unions was a political maneuver instituted by the dictatorship under General Ziaul Haq and subsequent democratic governments in order to reduce the mobilizing power of workers. For example, the Railway Workers Union, which at one point was the largest union in Pakistan, lost significant power over the years. In 1978, the Bhutto-led government split the railways into two sections open-line operations and workshops, which meant that two unions would represent the railways, thereby splitting railway workers' unity (Khan 2017). The Zia dictatorship using martial law powers, placed an outright ban on labor unions, which correspondingly lost their right to hold union elections and as well as their mandated privilege of collective bargaining with the railway's administration (Khan 2017). This was coupled by Caretaker PM Moeen Qureshi declaring the mainline from Karachi an essential service—banning strikes by declaring the railway's operations a matter of national security (Khan 2017). The policies of staff attrition and hiring freezes led to workforce reduction of 6,000-8,000 workers per year. This put increasing workload on the aging and overworked labor force.

By 1997, the Nawaz Sharif government returned to power and announced a privatization strategy under an agreement signed with the World Bank. The announcement was made by the government in line with the bank's requirements that the railways would be broken into three core businesses for passengers, freight, and infrastructure that were expected to be corporatized and privatized (World Bank 1999). The Railway Resettlement Agency was also to be built to retain surplus assets and liabilities. The new railways system would function under a new authority called Railway Regulatory Authority in which the railways would be completely deregulated and privatized. Union mobilization against the plan and strikes sent a strong message to the administration against privatizing the railways. The plan was adopted for three years with the expectation that the private sector would be interested in taking control of the freight and trade operations, but due to limited investment the plan was scrapped (Khan 2017).

The overall impact of the program was that railways losses went from around 2.75 billion rupees in 1988 and 1989 to 5.5 billion rupees in 1998 with the highest amount of losses occurring in 1995 to 96 at 6.6 billion rupees. Government disinvestment meant that the railway was heavily dependent on overdraft facilities from the State Bank of Pakistan to maintain operations. The freight service remained contingent upon government sponsored businesses of wheat and oil transport. The condition of the railway declined significantly with limited investment in infrastructure, decreasing size and aging of its workforce and rolling stock (locomotives, carriages, and freight cars) and other basic aspects of its operations. The outcome of the project highlighted a disjuncture between the government and the World Bank. The World Bank, in its Performance Audit Report (2000), blamed the government for not fully supporting privatization of the railways. The example given was that the Bank had almost arrived at a deal with the second Benazir Bhutto government to concession a whole freight line of the railways to terminal operators at the Port Qasim and Karachi so that they could run the trains from Karachi to the north, however, those negotiations had failed due to the dismissal of the government in 1997. The World Bank blamed failed privatization attempts entirely on political governments, the railway administration, and staff for not being serious about privatizing the railways due to a potential loss of rent-seeking opportunities for politicians, high-level railway officials and its staff. The other fear highlighted by the World Bank was that passenger service operations that were important for the public would be lost entirely due to the privatization. The relationship of the Pakistan government during the late 1990s with the World Bank had to a large extent been ruptured, which signaled an end to five decades of comprehensive cooperation in the context of the railways. Another impact was that these shifts forced the state and successive governments to look for alternative sources of funding and technical assistance in the form of China. The World Bank's 'shock therapy' of the railways had only intensified the crisis due to its requirement to remove government subsidies and funding. The crisis would open the door to both developmental regime change that would change the railways institutionally and open it up for a new round of dispossession.

2.5 Regime change and Dispossession of Non-Core Functions of the Railways

General Pervez Musharraf came to power in 1999 via military coup and appointed a former intelligence chief, Lieutenant General Javed Ashraf Qazi as railways minister. The new regime would radically reform the economy through growth of the domestic market and in turn reduce its dependence on industrialization as the road to modernization. The economy's growth hinged on the privatization of the banking sector, telecommunications, and an array of other service industries. The economy grew significantly through an upswing from inflows because of the War on Terror, debt right-offs, and long-term debt rescheduling with the G7 countries. The other development was a movement towards greater cooperation with China in terms of the defense and the economy. The new government quickly embarked on the Emergency Repair Plan (ERP) with the Chinese-owned Exim Bank worth 40.8 billion rupees to cover the backlog of investment that was necessary for the running of the railways (NTRC, and JICA 2006). The new plan for the railways was a departure from the privatization model designed by the World Bank, which included restructuring of the railways. This involved increasing coordination between two main divisions, administrative/maintenance and operations, and bringing them in line with a unity-of-command system to commercialize the passenger and freight services. This was a reaffirmation of the power of the railway's bureaucracy and the railways being a strategic asset for a larger geoeconomic formation. Foreign investments were now heavily centered around Japanese and Chinese loans and technical assistance. The timing of the Musharraf coup, which took place during a time of global isolation, meant that the invasive relationship of the railways and World Bank had been broken for the first time.

The former intelligence chief Qazi noted that the railways could have received 100 million dollars from the World Bank, had it accepted the privatization requirement[10]. Instead the railways pivoted towards what was recommended in a transport study by Japan International Cooperation Agency[11] (JICA) in 1995 that instead of privatization the railways could be turned into the Pakistan Railways Corporation (NTRC and JICA, 2006). This meant that the railways would become a publicly owned corporation with a CEO. Chinese involvement replaced World Bank funding in the form of soft loans and railway related infrastructure, such as rolling stock from Chinese rail companies that proved to be particularly important. Unlike the World Bank, which advocated ‘shock therapy’, Chinese investment was based on improving the productive capacity and train speeds of the locomotives. For example, the Railways signed an agreement with a Chinese company to manufacture 175 coaches each year for Pakistan Railways. Out of these, 120 were to be manufactured in Pakistan under a technology transfer clause in the agreement (Khan 2017). This was also done in 2009 with another Chinese company, which added further technological abilities and productive capacity for Pakistan to manufacture its own railway carriages.

Overall, these investments improved the capacity for speed of the railways, which was severely lacking in the 1990s. These developments reflected a transformation of the relationship between China and Pakistan. In the 1970s, Pakistan was a competitor of Chinese commodities and had limited economic cooperation. The large-scale investment by China in roads, railroads, and pipelines sought to connect China’s western regions into central Asia towards the Arabian sea (Cooper 2016, 66). In 2006, Pervez Musharraf would link this to a larger vision for a potential future energy and a trade corridor. This was reflected in the inauguration of the

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[10] https://www.railwaygazette.com/news/pr-seeks-concessionaires/29659.article

[11] https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/8915060/pakistan-transport-plan-study-in-the-islamic-republic-national-

Karakoram Express, a non-stop train from Karachi to Lahore that was launched in 2002 as an Independence Day gift from China. Yet it was not without controversy, as only 7 out of the 69 locomotives ordered from China actually worked, and the company was blacklisted for selling faulty engines. The platforms of railway stations also had to be adjusted to fit the new locomotives.

Another part of the Chinese investment policy was to undermine the traditional utilitarian structures of the railways through deregulation, austerity, and an array of other measures. A corporate façade was created in a haphazard manner through which the development of Railway estate and development company occurred. The policy was touted to be one of self-reliance, which in practice meant the deregulation of railway lands, assets, and welfare organs such as schools. The railways became a network of dispossessions embodied through the sell-off and looting of non-productive, non-profitable entities or capital. The railways had at the time of partition been the largest land holding enterprise, but had been systematically and informally opened for a range of actors to repossess or sell-off resources and lands in the open market, adding to the new urban real estate market and other local markets.

The role of ABD in the context of railways lands can be traced back to when the Musharraf dictatorship argued that the railway was 'inoperative' during a period when the state was facing sanctions and no funds were available to the military government (Pak Destiny 2018). It was during this period that the bar on leasing railway property was removed to allow the takeover of a 103-acre country club, which was once used for colonial officers. Situated, next to the main road artery of Lahore, the land had immense value. It would be handed over to a private consortium of businessmen close to the regime at a throwaway price allowing for the first state-of-the-art country club for the elite called Royal Palm Country Club. The project would demolish

33 officer-bungalows and 109 houses for workers for which compensation was never given to the railway authorities. The transfer would increase the consortium’s landholding in the area to about 140 acres (Pakistan Today 2016). During this period, railway lands worth billions were also sold to the military-owned National Logistics Cell and businessmen for prices as low as 65,000 rupees per acre (Daily News 2008).

The opening of the Royal Palm Country Club was important in that it enabled a multi-trillion rupees industry around marriage halls, recreation, and other services for the elite (see: Abduhu 2016). However, it must be noted that despite this development the control of the Royal Palm Country Club is deeply contested. In 2013, following the return of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz government, which was based in Lahore, the city became hub of development in which various services, roads, and infrastructure were developed. It also planned to revive the railways through investment and by increasing the role of transport. In 2016, the railway police were sent to reclaim the country club. The matter was taken to court and the case was finally resolved in 2019 with the Supreme Court ruling that the country club was illegal and should be handed over to the railways. Reports indicated that the railways administration was floating international tenders for the property, thereby marking another round of capital accumulation. These processes played out in the context of a larger new-elite formation built around urban- and military-industrial capital that developed under the Musharraf dictatorship. Thus, urban encroachment—or the taking of public railway lands—was an important impact of policies and practices during the last few decades.

Urban encroachment occurred in an uneven manner and encompassed a variety of people from different socio-economic backgrounds. This was a product of the contested nature of railway lands, something that is poorly understood due to lack of surveys and mapping of properties. During my interviews with officials of the land directorate in 2016, it was revealed that approximately nine percent of urban encroachment upon railway lands in Pakistan was done by private individuals, government agencies, and armed forces. The word ‘private individuals’ makes it difficult to define who encroached upon the land. Areas near the Royal Palm Country Club indicate that settlements of all kinds have developed in this location. Due to the enclosure of railways dating back to the colonial era, the formation of shantytowns, slums and an array of other settlements are deeply enmeshed in the railway’s history. Better understanding of encroachment requires emphasis on new class-formations and the role of ‘quiet encroachments’ (Asef Bayat 2011).

The condition of the railway ‘subaltern’ can be seen through the growing precarity of workers, officials, and individuals whose livelihoods have historically depended on the industry. For the better part of the last century, workers were part of a nursery system of hiring that gave priority to sons of railway workers. This dates to the time of a utilitarian welfare-compromise under the colonial regime that provided widespread union rights and privileges to workers. However, in that context the total cost of labor in the railway had always been heavily devalued and never impacted the overall running of the railways. In fact, staff attrition and the creation of parallel hiring streams that typically employed workers on a contract basis became the norm during the last few decades. This instigated an overall reduction of union power in the railways and the rise of informal groups or non-registered associations to negotiate with the railways.

Today there is ample evidence of urban encroachments in the Railway Area of Lahore. The railway crossing of Chobacha, for instance, is the last one before trains reach the historic Lahore Station and is located near the boundary wall of the country club. Only two years ago, a large underpass was made to decongest the oversupply of automobiles on the main thoroughfare of Lahore. This decorated two-lane underpass was named "Beijing" to pay tribute to growing Chinese-Pakistan relations and to announce a new era of development. The Chobacha Chowk Abadi is a row of informal houses that were regularized[12] by the state during the Musharraf dictatorship in the 2000s. These lay almost on top of the train track. The surrounding area includes the aforementioned Royal Palm Country Club. Other settlements such as gated communities, permanent settlements, and shops have encroached upon the area that was once regulated and owned by the railways. Most people here have some connection or attachment to the railways in the area. The houses of the Chobacha Chowk are described in Urdu as Katcha, meaning that they are made of non-permanent materials; put succinctly, the area is a slum. Members of younger generations have experienced fractured links with the railways, meaning that the children of railway workers who used to be hired as part of a hereditary system are now worse off and are becoming a part of a flexible labor market in which jobs are scarce, temporary, and contractual. The encroachment on railway lands can be seen as a response to and symptom of these conditions.

In addition to the Chobacha Chowk Abadi, near this settlement are several slums abutting the opposite boundary wall of Royal Palm Country Club near and surrounding the Taj Din Mosque. Taj Din was a lower-middle class neighborhood with permanent structures made with bricks and concrete construction materials. Most of these initial settlements tie back to workers or officials who worked in this area. During my conversations with residents, I found that growth had been attributed either to the role of land brokers and officials of the railways who gave permission to build these houses on an informal or illegal basis. This informal practice is said to

[12] Land regularization or regularization in this paper refers to the, "legalization of interests in land which is owned and/or acquired irregularly and thus lacking legal status" (Boshe 2007, 1). In the context of the railways we are here talking about how railways lands which were owned by the railways were illegally or informally dispossessed through a variety of processes.

have begun in place since the 1980s. For example, one of the owners of the large bungalows in the gated community claims that he never illegally held the land. Instead, he maintains that these land leases were part of perks received by the railway's officers who later sold them to private owners. In comparison the slums that formed in the Choubacha Chowk were built by workers within the railways, who utilized contacts within the railway administration to gain access to these railway lands. In both cases, land ownership and type of settlement was determined by who had the access to power and could get permission and necessary documents to build on railway lands, which officially should not have been sold due to regulations and laws.

The first decade of the twenty-first century saw a consolidation of the most productive element of the railways—the main line—and dispossession of its welfare non-core components. Marketing and public image was made central to the running of the railways, and passengers became regarded as consumers. These shifts did not resolve the larger contradictions of the railways, which included inherent barriers to capital formation such as debt, lack of technological innovation, aging workforce due to staff attrition, and rising costs due to inflation. At the end of the Musharraf dictatorship in 2009, the country returned to a state of economic crisis, and the broader impact of the era was a shift in the balance of powers in the railways away from traditional organizational hierarchies such as unions.

2.6 Railways at a Standstill, Crisis, and the Commodification of Railway Services

In 2008, the Pakistan People's Party government came to power during what has been described as the worst financial crisis in Pakistan's history (Husain, 2019). Awami National Party's Ghulam Ahmed Bilour, who was the minister for railways during this time, owned a leading private road transport company that competed with the railways for passenger and freight transport. This created the suspicion that the railway was being purposefully made to fail. The crisis of the railways turned out to be one of the worst in its history.

During this time, the institution faced an array of issues ranging from decaying infrastructure to shortage of trains and basic resources, alongside rising debts and costs, accompanied by acute pressure on the overworked, undermanned, and aging traditional labor-force that struggled to maintain railway operations. The railways had become a target of rioting and looting amid the deteriorating political environment in the country.

Following the assassination of Pakistan Peoples Party leader Benazir Bhutto in 2007, riots erupted in the southern part of the country, increasing the average time for south-to-north passenger trains by three to four hours. Rioters torched 35 locomotives, 139 coaches, damaged 36 bridges, and destroyed an array of other key components of railway infrastructure (Siddiqui 2008). According to the Daily Dawn, service for 10 passenger trains out of 32 had to be suspended, freight service was paralyzed, and a key stretch of 465-kilometres of track had to revert back to a 18th century paper line signaling system (Siddiqui 2008). This sort of rioting and attacks on railways infrastructure had occurred during previous periods of political insecurity. The increasing political insecurity due to a rise in terrorism saw 136 terrorist attacks on railway installations and trains between 2009 and 2017 resulting in 96 deaths (Khan 2017). The following year, heavy floods damaged railway infrastructure incurring losses of nearly 6.7 billion rupees and loss of over several hundred kilometers of railway lines. By 2010, the delay of trains was routinely amounting to 12 hours, and passenger sit-ins, engineers' strikes, and worker protests became routine. Looking to address the state of the railways, now in complete shambles, the government promised that privatization would provide the way out of the mess.

In 2008, the PPP government signed a 7.6-billion-dollar loan to avert a balance of payment crisis. By 2011, the balance of payment crisis had not subsided, and the government ended up appointing the head of the Saudi Arabia World Bank section Abdul Hafeez Sheikh as finance minister in hopes of getting relief from global lending institutions. Within a few months the government would reject IMF conditionalities and reneged on signing a new IMF deal. The decline in public investment towards railways was furthered after railways asked for 3.5 billion rupees to remain running and to pay for worker salaries (Rana 2011). Dependent on emergency funding, the finance ministry responded by providing 2 billion rupees to improve its own efficiency and find alternative forms of funding[13]. In its most dire state during this period, the railways faced increasing debts to the tune of 9 billion rupees per year in the form of pension bills, 40 billion rupees in loans from State Bank, and 21-billion-dollars of Chinese loans (Railway gazette 2010). The government would end up having to bail out the railways to the account of 26 billion rupees (Haq 2012). Freight services were stalled completely with the exception of one train that ran from Karachi to Peshawar, the capital city of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. These circumstances related to a wider policy instituted by the railways administration to focus on passenger service, which marked a departure from World Bank prescriptions calling for shock therapy. Further, there was hope that foreign investment would remake the railways as a logistics/freight service.

The crisis opened the door to commodify and corporatize the railways to make it a 'profit-making' institution. This allowed the dormant but publicly listed railway-owned company Pakistan Railway Advisory and Consultancy Services (PRACS) to take over the productive parts of the railway network and begin negotiations with the private sector. Similar to the military-owned NLC, this organization is essentially a planning company that carries out an array of

[13] https://tribune.com.pk/story/214092/fuel-and-salaries-railways-given-rs2b-to-avert-crisis/

services including ‘planning, construction, operation, maintenance of the railways, management of men, and material, marketing, tourism and training’ (PR Yearbook, 2011-2012). It also had a vast portfolio of helping in railway and road development in foreign countries. The company originally was meant to serve as a way for railways services to be outsourced to countries in the Middle East. The first privatization of specific portions of the railway network and two key non-stop trains namely the Hazara and Rohi express lines were handed over to PRACS as a pilot project. This was followed by an agreement signed by Four Brothers and Shalimar Express with Air Rail Services. These services were geared towards middle and upwardly mobile class passengers who could afford an alternative to luxury bus services. Also, greater cooperation emerged with the National Logistics Cell for running and repairing freight services.

This turn toward commodification was accompanied by allegations of massive corruption. In 2012, former Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry ordered the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to investigate the disposal of 39,000 tons of railway scrap that was allegedly sold in violation of prescribed rules (Khan, 2017). The case was significant not because it was alleged that the scrap was sold to a close friend of the then Railway minister Ghulam Ahmed Bilour but that it consisted of selling off resources in the open market. During the same period, it was reported that 400 tons of railway iron was found in a warehouse in Lahore in 2012 (PT 2012). Saeed Akhtar, who was working as general manager of operations at the time, was due to retire on March 14, 2012, but the then Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani gave him an extension. He was arrested on allegations of purchasing 69 engines from China during the Musharraf government at a price of 98 million US dollars without determining if they suited local lines and railway stations. He was also accused of participating in the wholesale of scrap materials from the railways (Khan 2017). Other resources, such as the sale of diesel and other materials, have regularly shown up in audit reports. In 2017, Gulf News reported that 44,000 liters of oil was stolen from the Signal Engineering Department in Lahore and sold on the open market. These examples represent the overall movement of resources away from railways that underlined an era of underinvestment. In sum, depreciation of railway assets that had occurred over many decades allowed for the commodification and corporatization of the railways.

2.7 Supra-Exploitation, New Round of Accumulation and New Chinese Imperialism

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz government in 2013 returned to power after a period of 16 years. The government, its confidence bolstered by low oil-prices, promised to help end an era of crippling energy crisis and insecurity due to terrorism that had emerged in the aftermath of the Musharraf dictatorship. The railways was marked for revival as the government outlined that it would increase its share in transportation from 4 percent to 20 percent as part of its Vision 2025 (Khan 2017). The announcement of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor—as part of the Belt and Road initiative by China—opened the door to a 46 billion-dollar Chinese loan and investment package for infrastructural development. The ascendency of Chinese imperialism has been tied to the south-to-south protectionism that emerged in response to the 2008 financial crisis, where the question of large sitting-surpluses of capital, stagnation, and the slowing of the export-oriented industry had as David Harvey remarked led China towards a "full-blooded Keynesian" response to crisis (Khan and Butt 2015). It was a maturation of this response that allowed for China to replace the US as Pakistan's primary vehicle for development.

Shahid Javed Burki, a former caretaker finance minister and senior World Bank economist, had long advocated that by increasing trade relations with China, Pakistan, barring improved relations with India, could become a four-way hub for the movement of goods and commodities in south Asia (Khan and Butt 2015). The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

(CPEC) would intertwine the developmentalism alongside the discourse of Pakistan's "War on Terror" by declaring key logistics apparatuses, such as the railways, strategic assets. The Pakistan Railways Transport Planning study 2014-2030 as cited in the Daily News (2019) explained that Main Line Project 1 would focus during its first phase on reinforcing and modernizing the main line under the vision of growing a logistics corridor. The project, which is still pending, was tabbed for 8.2 billion dollars that would be funneled through the federal government in forms of Chinese aid and loans (Gishkori 2019). A focus on freight capacity would be a leading feature of the development of the railways by emphasizing an increase in speed from 65-105 km to 120-160 km/h and capacity to accommodate volume from 4 to 20 percent (Gishkori 2019). The focus on speed and capacity is central to railway development because better efficiency of the movement of goods and commodities is linked to increase in revenues.

The large-scale investment by China during the Muslim league government was a departure from the Pakistan People's Party regime that had given considerable control to PRACS in consolidating the profitable elements of the railways through privatization and commodification of the passenger services alongside dispossession of non-core assets. The Muslim league attempted to formalize the railways as a public corporation that was of national security importance. This entailed processes of overloading and exploitation in order to generate greater revenues and make the railways a profit-making entity. Instead of dispossession as had become routine prior to CPEC, the railways administration began to regularly pay salaries to employees but continued the staff attrition policy by reducing the number of workers to 70,000 workers. The larger impact of this was that the workers were overworked and were employed without a service structure that could determine promotions, raises, or benefits. Due to a scarcity of new employees, unions had lost negotiating power and for the most part had aligned themselves with the new railway administration that promised not to privatize the railways. This occurred while the new administration put forth public-private partnerships and continued the corporatization of the railways.

Railway lands were reorganized and regulated through the creation of the Real Estate Development and Marketing Company (REDAMCO), which was put under the control of the federal government's ministry of railways. Their duties included the responsibility for commercial land leasing, whereas short-term leases were delegated to the directorate of property and land under the Railway administration. PRACS, REDAMCO and RAILCOP were all entrusted with the ability to carry out development of lands through the construction of shops and markets. This would later be accompanied by an attempt to reclaim land and other assets that had been outsourced by regimes. For example, the railways police were sent to repossess the Royal Palm Country Club and later the privatized passenger trains that were brought in by the Pakistan People's government. Companies running such privatized trains saw their contracts challenged under the allegation that they owed billions to the railways. The argument provided by the railway administration was that these contracts had been arranged in an underhanded manner, and the repossession of outsourced railways services and assets would ultimately allow for foreign investment in the railways. The construction of a modern logistics supply chain was integrated with a public-private vision to make the railways profitable and to accommodate investment that was to come from CPEC.

The revival of freight services was done through the Pakistan Railway Freight Transportation Company (PRFTC), a subsidiary company of the railways that like REDAMCO was brought to separate various portions of the railway's operations and development. In 2014, the railways signed an agreement to transport coal to power plants in the Punjab built under CPEC. These projects required government investment alongside Chinese development aid to upgrade locomotives to greater hauling power, to rehabilitate cargo carriages, and to purchase new brake vans. Long-term agreements were signed to transport cement, coal, and other materials to major cement factories. The expansive role of CPEC was witnessed in Sibbi, a border town in the province of Balochistan. The NLC was rebuilding the famous cargo line called the Harnai Line, which was a prominent source of minerals for cement and other industries (Khan 2017). A quick turnaround in revenues was attributed to the expansion of freight services. Passenger service was also expanded through what was gentrification of the major railway stations—with the opening of local food chains, restaurants, an emphasis on cleanliness, and ensuring on-time trains on the main line from Karachi. Another important intervention was the promulgation of an e-ticketing system that it was hoped would curb petty corruption and streamline revenues from passenger sales.

The emphasis on ensuring speed of trains and increasing revenues however led to an increase in train accidents. Between 2012 to 2017, Pakistan witnessed 757 train accidents with the most occurring during the year 2015 when there were 175 accidents (BBC News 2019). The cause of the accidents was traced to outdated signaling systems, unmanned level-crossings that intersect with roads, and the decaying quality of the rail. The reduction of workforce and regimes of austerity since the 1990s led to the creation of an overworked, under-skilled, and aged workforce with many workers nearing the age of retirement. The railway administration had provided promotions to only one class of workers, the guards who deal with ensuring that the drivers and train operating staff reach destinations on time. The designation of "guard" in hiring practices was changed to "train manager" for those who worked on profit-making express and mail trains to reflect the corporate intent of the railways (Siddiqui 2016). Unions had, by this time, lost all credibility as they adopted a largely conciliatory position of working for the national interest and revival of the railways. This was coupled by a lack of mobilizing power and the outlawing of strikes on the main line. The vacuum left by the unions has been filled by informal associations that function as lobbies for specific groups of workers, such as guards or drivers. The lack of coordination between drivers, stationmasters, and guards is emblematic of the lack of investment in labor in terms of basic rights, dignity, training, support, and resources. For example, the railways does not provide communication devices, and workers use their personal cell phones to communicate (Khan 2017). The drivers in response threatened to go on strike if they were not given basic workers' rights such as a service structure, mileage allowance, and benefits.

After talks with the government broke down in July 2017, drivers went on strike marking the first contemporary major labor mobilization. The strike lasted for 18 hours and managed to choke the traffic on the railways, but it had a negative impact regardless of the legitimacy of the drivers' demands. The railway administration threatened to fire striking drivers and alleged that they were working against the national interest and consumer rights. Drivers were hindered by the fact that unions and associations refused to publicly support the strike. After the strike ended without reconciliation, the government lodged cases against the striking railway workers under terrorism laws. In the case filed by the railway administration, leaders of the driver's association in Lahore were charged with conspiring against the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and damaging the trust of China-Pakistan relations while causing distress to passengers (Khan 2017). In this case, it was alleged that the railway workers had become a barrier to capital accumulation and, as a result, the state criminalized the strike as against the national interest. By 2017, the

Railways Minister Saad Rafique would announce that the railways were out of crisis and has become a profitable company[14].

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz went on to lose the general election in 2018 to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (Movement for Justice) Party (PTI) led by cricketer-turned-politician Imran Khan. With the regime change, the country was once again thrust back into an economic downturn in the form of a balance-of-payments issue and sovereign debt crisis. The new government had come to power on an agenda of accountability and ending corrupt politics but also with an intention to end dynastic politics and dependence on foreign aid. The new government, however, found itself returning to the International Monetary Fund for budgetary support. The (re)turn towards the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in a 6-billion-dollar agreement called for extensive shock therapy of Pakistan's economy through implementation of market-based exchange rates, devaluation of currency, and an array of other measures[15]. A central point of contention between the government and IMF centers on the secrecy surrounding the role of CPEC and soaring external debt in the country. This is coupled with the new government's rhetoric on debt dependency that has entailed a slowing of the pace of the CPEC project. The railways component of the project has invariably been put on the backburner.

According Gishkori (2019), the PTI government amended the 8-billion-dollar project under CPEC to a reduced cost of about 6-billion-dollars that would be split it into many parts and

[14] Pakistan railways minister Saad Rafique in his final speech on the progress of the railways said that in 2013 his goal was to reduce expenditures and improve earnings. The target for 2016-17 was 36 billion rupees and the railways had earned 40.01 billion rupees. In 2013, when the government came to power revenues from passenger services accounted for 78 percent of the total revenues and 13 percent from freight. This by the end of 2017 was 55 percent from passenger services and 30 percent from freight. The total freight trains increased from 2,172 trains in 2013-14 to 6,940 trains in 2016-17 which was projected to increase to 7,858 trains by the end of 2018. He also attributed the punctuality of trains had increased to 77 percent in 2017-18 in comparison to 42 percent in 2013-14. This increase the passenger numbers from 12.5 million passengers in 2013-14 to 54.5 million passengers per year. https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/05/25/saad-rafique-unveils-five-year-progress-of-pakistan-railways/

[15] https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/12/world/asia/pakistan-imf-bailout.html

would take about six years to complete[16]. The project had originally been tabbed to begin in 2016 but was now facing the axe on the auspices of budgetary constraints. The new railway minister Sheikh Rashid attempted to allay fears that the Railways project might be dropped as it was rumored that the project cost would now exceed 10 billion dollars. The debate within the railways centers on who will run the project after completion as the existing workforce in that the railways is not skilled enough to run a computerized system (Ahmed 2019). This has been further complicated by the interventionist role of the Supreme Court of Pakistan that, during the Muslim League government in 2018, initiated suo motu[17] proceedings surrounding 60 billion rupees of irregularities in the railways. The case would continue into 2020 with the court asking the railway administration to submit a business plan regarding the long-term management of the railways amid allegations of large-scale corruption and institutional decay. The business plan submitted by the new administration expressed that the railways would have to sign a joint-venture partnership with an international company to become a profitable entity, computerization of the network, and an array of other measures. Finally, the court ordered a revival of the project to commodify and privatize the main line from Lahore to Karachi within two years, a plan that has been on the cards since the 1980s and 1990s.

2.8 Discussion

The recurrent themes of capitalist crisis, new imperialisms and accumulation by dispossession have functioned in a multi-scalar and contested manner to influence the larger development of the Pakistan Railways. David Harvey (2005) argues that ABD represents

[16] https://www.thenews.com.pk/tns/detail/568029-train-cpec

[17] Article 183(B) of the Pakistan constitution set outs parameters for the Supreme Court to assume jurisdiction on cases of “public importance” with reference to the “enforcement of any of the fundamental rights” (Omer 2018).

moments, or to quote Prudham (2004), a ‘means’ to expand the scale and scope of capital accumulation through so-called ‘extra-economic means’. In this context privatization represents ‘relational moments’ of specifically capitalist commodification. Applied to the railways, the commodification of the rail services required the dispossession of the welfare and non-core portions of the railways. The era of supra-exploitation under Nawaz Sharif (2013-2018), which coincided with the announcement of CPEC, represented a shift toward a new developmental regime centered around state capitalism. This had a political motive that stems from growing Pak-China cooperation and the potential to make the railways a part of the freight transport corridor. What is also telling about this is that ABD, which occurred after the failed privatization attempts of the 1990s, functioned in a spatial-temporal relation to the crisis.

The World Bank under the auspices of ‘Shock Therapy’ saw the removal of state investment from the railways, the closure of branch lines, and staff attrition. The economic and political devaluation of its labor force radically transformed the institutional direction of the railways. On a political level, the failure of privatization plans that envisioned a foreign company taking control of the railways meant that it would see Pakistan look towards China for aid. In the 2000s, Chinese aid helped boost the productive and manufacturing capacity for train engines and coaches but also saw a greater intensification of ‘accumulation by predation, fraud and thievery’ in its social welfare areas, labor rights, and productive property and land assets. The sale of the Railway Country Club in Lahore and decrepit state of the Rohri Junction are examples of this.

By 2009, the crisis of the railways had returned which opened the door to the commodification of passenger services and outsourcing of trains to local companies. The railways, for the first time, managed to outsource major trains, freight operations and functioned essentially through dormant companies, which shifted organizational power away from the railways administration. The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz government that came into power in 2013 announced that the railways that had been in crisis would now not be privatized. The government also announced that the railways would be revived as part of CPEC. This marks the beginning of a new developmental regime in which the state has intertwined national-security and economics to reflect long-term ambitions to transform the circulation of Chinese capital and commodities. The state's renewed interest in developing the railways involved attempts to repossess certain assets that had been disposed of under previous development regimes of the World Bank and IMF and Pervez Musharraf's military dictatorship.

An examination of the interplay between various regimes and actors, demonstrates the disparate ways in which the railway is opened for new rounds of dispossession. As an infrastructure that has become central to the geopolitical aims of the CPEC, it has also transformed the state's relation to the railway. The processes set in place to revamp the railway involve a spatial-temporal fix and coercion in order to generate revenue for the state. The court's intervention in this regard becomes particularly interesting in how it has taken notice of labor strikes and capacity of revenue generation in the name of national interest and to uphold China-Pakistan relations. The court's verdict on the Royal Palm Country Club case indicates a new round of attempts to reclaim assets from private interests and demonstrates the contested ways in which imperialist powers, state, workers, private entities and international financial institutions influence the larger trajectory of the railways.

The historical tracing of the developmental regimes, new imperialisms, crisis, and ABD in the Pakistan Railways reveal that decisions are not simply made in terms of what bourgeois or classical economists would consider key markers of 'efficiency', 'growth' and other key indicators. Instead, the question of capital accumulation is deeply intertwined with questions of power and politics. Interrogating these aspects of the railway provides insight into the conditions surrounding a decline of workers' resistance and the labor movement as a response and consequence of new strategies of capital accumulation. An analysis that brings together disparate strategies of development and capital accumulation in conjunction with the vision accompanying shifting new imperialisms can improve understanding of the political economy of the railways and Pakistan.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

3.1 Summary

The railways, which was inherited from the British empire at the time of partition in 1947, was facing an array of issues stemming from the dilapidated condition of the rail infrastructure, dependence on imported resources such as oil and coal, outdated technology, lack of technical expertise and the reorganization of the railway network from an east to west pattern to a north to south pattern. In the backdrop of the Cold War, the Pakistani state chose to align itself with the US, which provided foreign aid and technical assistance under various development projects. The Pakistani state at this point, leading into the first dictatorship in 1958, adopted a developmental policy of 'functional inequality' or what critical scholars would argue was internal colonialism that redistributed surpluses from East Pakistan towards the industrial development of West Pakistan. This took place in the context of investment in the railways where West Pakistan railways received the bulk of the support and planning. The profitability of the railways in terms of freight was heavily dependent on receiving strategic cargo contracts for mega-development projects such as the USAID and World Bank-funded Indus Basin Project that developed major dams in the country.

During this time period, the main-line from Karachi to Lahore was constructed with the intention that it could have a profit-making role in the future but in the realm of container transport. While the World Bank had encouraged the railways to modernize and become an efficient public enterprise, the railways in the developing economy of Pakistan had more of a welfare-role that included providing mass employment and being the primary mode of transport for working-people in the peripheral areas of Pakistan. After Pakistan-US relations fell apart due to the Kashmir war in 1965, the railways returned to a state of crisis. By the late 1970s, the railways would be replaced from its function of strategic freight transport with creation of the NLC, a move which would further plunge the railways into debt reaching 400,000 dollars in 1989.

In the section titled *Shock therapy and unbundling the railways*, this research explored the complex arrangement of actors and institutions that created the conditions for the attempted privatization of the railways in the 1990s. Despite support from political parties and non-elected governments to privatize the railways, in the backdrop of pressure from IMF/World Bank to implement greater market reforms in Pakistan, various democratic, and non-elected, governments found themselves incapable of implementing those reforms. The recurrent crisis of the Pakistan Railways came at the heels of competing imaginaries of control and the policies that would allow the railways to become a profitable entity. The World Bank's imagination saw the main line from Karachi to Lahore as the most potentially profitable entity for container transport that could only be unlocked through privatization for a foreign investor to buy. It also called on the government to provide strategic contracts, which were going to the NLC, back to the railways under a free-market setup that did not hold purchase. However, the closure of branch lines, the enactment of staff attrition, and the removal of government subsidies ahead of the final push at privatization that sought to bundle the railways into separate companies would fail due to lack of interest from investors and strikes by the railway unions. This became a turning point in the relationship between the World Bank and the Pakistan Railways as the country faced sanctions and global isolation.

This is followed by a section on regime change and the dispossession of non-core assets examines the Musharraf dictatorship. At a broader level, this period saw the growth of a domestic economy through privatization and financialization, a growing relationship with China and War on Terror inflows. This section explains how Chinese investment or loans differed from the World Bank practices both in terms of vision, implementation and in terms of investment. Granted greater autonomy, the government utilized the crisis to further undermine the traditional utilitarian welfare structures with the railway through setting up shell companies and departments that would become of use during a later period in the commodification of railway services. The railways during this period experienced dispossession in multiple forms, which ranged from the sell-off and looting of precious non-core assets to scrap metal sell offs in the railways. By 2009, the period of crisis would return following the collapse of the Musharraf regime and the return of democracy under the Pakistan People's Party government.

The section titled Railways at a Standstill, Crisis, and the Commodification of Passenger and Freight Services examines in detail how the crisis opened the door to greater intensification of ABD that allowed the PPP government to utilize dormant public-private companies, such as PRACS, to take control of productive parts of railway operations and outsource train operations towards local companies. Freight operations were handed to the military owned NLC. These two companies were state owned, and they functioned as necessary intermediaries to facilitate movement of capital away from the railways towards the private sector.

This leads into the final section of Chapter 2, which examines the role of supra-exploitation marking a departure from processes of ABD, a new round of accumulation and new Chinese Imperialism. The return of the PML-N government after a span of 16 years was bolstered by CPEC which had set forth 8.2 billion dollars to modernize and upgrade the Main Line 1 as part of a larger developmental vision that sought to create a logistics corridor in Pakistan. This, I argue, marked a new developmental regime in which the notion of development became deeply intertwined with national security and gave the railways a newfound importance. This was reflected in the new government's approach to shelve privatization as a policy and instead focus on making the railways a state-owned profit-making enterprise. The influx of Chinese capital went into improving the productivity capacity of the railways, increasing the number of trains, hauling power and more importantly the speed of the trains. The emphasis on speed and high turnover of trains at platforms would result in increased revenue and demonstrate the profitability of the Pakistan Railways. This was accomplished by an overworked, aged and divided workforce. Facing an array of barriers in terms of decaying railway infrastructure, capacity, protections and salaries, the pressure on the workforce resulted in an increase in train accidents. Of equal importance is the new round of tactics of repossession, which included reclaiming outsourced trains, country clubs, assets or services that were dispossessed or privatized during past regimes and governments.

3.2 Conclusion

The main contribution of this research is in its conceptual framing of the Pakistan Railways as a site of new imperialisms, which is heavily contested by an array of actors, institutions, and nation-states around the question of who will control the railways. If the World Bank's attempts at privatization had hinged upon privatizing the railways for an international company to take control of the railways main-line, the current regime under Chinese investment is looking in a different direction. Worker control is probably not an option due to the weakness of the railway workers' movement and its inability to claim the means of production.

The regime of new Chinese imperialism has opened space for the state to claim increased control. The repossession of the once dispossessed assets reflects this larger attempt by the state to regain control of the railways for further capital accumulation and in terms of national security. It is important to highlight the primary barriers to capitalist accumulation through which crisis can be broadly tied to rising debt and costs, decaying rail infrastructure, lack of technical expertise and declining condition of railway workers. The second option is reflected through ABD, a return to crisis, which was articulated in the court order to privatize and commodify the main-line from Lahore to Karachi, something that competing powers dating back to the 1960s had imagined as being possible down the road.

Other avenues of research that can emerge from this study would examine the variety of tactics that have been used to disempower railway workers and the union movement. The important aspects surrounding labor, which I could not outline here, would examine more thoroughly the class-struggle at the point of production and struggles around wages. This research exposed me to data that indicate railways workers have never actually been a burden on the railways operating budget and were in fact underpaid despite assertions since the 1960s that workers had become a burden on its operations. The other crucial area for future investigation is to develop a greater understanding of the neoliberal security-state that is reflected through the growing role of the War on Terror and national security but also from an economic perspective when understanding organizations such NLC or PRACS. A final potential avenue for continuing research concerns the generalization of neoliberalism as a catch-all phrase to attribute to various developments taking place in the Global South or Pakistan where the crisis of Fordism or Keynesianism from a global north perspective did not occur.

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