



This is a repository copy of *Colonial laws, postcolonial infrastructures: Land acquisition, urban informality, and politics of infrastructural development in Pakistan*.

White Rose Research Online URL for this paper:

<https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/213321/>

Version: Published Version

Article:

Tassadiq, F. orcid.org/0000-0002-6409-3168 (2024) Colonial laws, postcolonial infrastructures: Land acquisition, urban informality, and politics of infrastructural development in Pakistan. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 42 (3). pp. 401-421. ISSN 0263-7758

<https://doi.org/10.1177/02637758241240363>

Reuse

This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial (CC BY-NC) licence. This licence allows you to remix, tweak, and build upon this work non-commercially, and any new works must also acknowledge the authors and be non-commercial. You don't have to license any derivative works on the same terms. More information and the full terms of the licence here: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/>

Takedown

If you consider content in White Rose Research Online to be in breach of UK law, please notify us by emailing eprints@whiterose.ac.uk including the URL of the record and the reason for the withdrawal request.



eprints@whiterose.ac.uk
<https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/>

Colonial laws, postcolonial infrastructures: Land acquisition, urban informality, and politics of infrastructural development in Pakistan

EPD: Society and Space

2024, Vol. 42(3) 401–421

© The Author(s) 2024



Article reuse guidelines:

sagepub.com/journals-permissions

DOI: 10.1177/02637758241240363

journals.sagepub.com/home/epd**Fatima Tassadiq** 

University of Sheffield, UK

Abstract

This article traces (dis)continuities in colonial logics across disjunctures of decolonisation and democratisation through a large infrastructure project in contemporary Lahore, Pakistan. Analysing Lahore's Orange Line Metro Train, a project constructed under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the article shows how colonial extractive and racial logics can limit the redistributive potential of typically inclusive infrastructures like mass transit by continuing to shape the conditions of their development and (re)producing precarious configurations of citizenship in the postcolony. It finds that Pakistan's colonial-era land acquisition law erased a range of land relations and rights from recognition and thus compensation by the state. In an instance of informal policy making, the state eventually created an ad hoc 'grant-in-aid' scheme to compensate landowners in informal settlements. However, the scheme continued the property centric politics of recognition embedded in the expropriation law by only compensating people with long-term land claims. The public script of the scheme invoked welfare obligations of the state but structured these through moral-legal norms of property. The postcolonial state thus bypassed the transition from colonial subjects to citizens and instead repositioned people as humanitarian subjects. The article thus highlights the contradictions of developing subsidized public infrastructure in postcolonial cities, where construction becomes another conduit of imposing land commodification and disciplining pro-poor self-built neighbourhoods that have escaped the rigidity of private property.

Keywords

infrastructures, colonialism, urban informality, citizenship, land rights, China Pakistan Economic Corridor, Belt and Road Initiative

Corresponding author:

Fatima Tassadiq, University of Sheffield, 2 Whitham Road, Sheffield S10 2AH, UK.

Email: f.tassadiq@sheffield.ac.uk

The Orange Line Metro Train (OLMT) seized national headlines in Pakistan in 2014 due to massive dispossession of people and potential damage to heritage sites caused by its construction in Lahore. The first metro train line of its kind in the country, the project was part of the multibillion-dollar China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), one of the key corridors in China's Belt and Road Initiative. However, the high-profile project soon met with immense resistance, in courts and the streets. The proposed train route ran through some of the most densely populated areas in the city. Several neighbourhoods along the route that had developed on different forms of state land were deemed illegal and thus ineligible for any compensation under the country's colonial era expropriation legislation, the Land Acquisition Act 1894 (LAA) (Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Law and Justice, n. d.). People threatened with dispossession, especially those who faced eviction without any compensation, took to the streets to protest against the project. Meanwhile, a group of civic activists dragged the project into legal trouble over violation of heritage protection laws. The state eventually diffused resistance against land expropriation by offering compensation under a 'grant-in-aid' scheme to informal settlers who did not qualify for compensation under the land acquisition law. The heritage case too was eventually dismissed, and construction of the train line completed by 2020.

This article takes the construction of the OLMT¹ as a site to explore the interconnected dynamics of infrastructural development, land relations, and political subjectivities. First, I argue that a historical approach to the contemporary turn to mega infrastructure projects in Asia and Africa demonstrates that colonial extractive and racial logics limit the redistributive potential of typically pro-poor infrastructures like mass transit by continuing to structure the conditions of their development and enabling precarious formations of citizenship in the postcolony. In the case of the OLMT, the colonial era land acquisition law erased a range of land relations and rights from recognition and thus some form of compensation by the state. Its administrative iteration in the form of the grant-in-aid scheme continued the property centric politics of recognition by only compensating people with long-term claims to land. Second, tracing (dis)continuities across the larger disjuncture of decolonisation shows that colonial era legal and bureaucratic practices respond to postcolonial realities through what I call informal policymaking. The ad hoc grant-in-aid scheme used to compensate those officially coded as illegal settlers is an instance of informal policymaking since, like humanitarian aid, it is beyond the ambit of the law but is also simultaneously a legitimate state-sanctioned intervention. The public script of the grant-in-aid scheme invoked moral-legal norms of property to make a moralized assessment of deservingness and thus structure the welfare obligations of the state towards marginalized citizens. However, this unsteady and contradictory assemblage of concerns continued to be underpinned by racial anxieties that had informed the LAA and were now grafted onto middle- and low-income groups by the postcolonial political elite. Finally, I argue that in dealing with demands for a just and equitable society through informal policymaking, the postcolonial state bypasses the transition from colonial subjects to citizens and instead codes people as humanitarian subjects. Perpetuation of colonial racial and extractive logics thus enables contingent configurations of citizenship and casualization of state-citizen relations in the postcolony. Nevertheless, in the case of the OLMT, people rejected this subjectivisation and framed payments made to them as legitimate compensation that they were owed as propertied citizens. This productive gap between the official narrative and its rescription by people lends itself to the imagination of new distributive orders.

In what follows, I begin by theoretically tracing the relationship between infrastructural development, property relations, and configurations of citizenship. This is followed by an examination of how the LAA emerged in colonial India with a particular focus on the

racialised and extractive logics embedded in it. I next explore how the law effaces the heterogeneity of land relations that characterise contemporary Lahore, and the ways in which its implementation by the postcolonial state further undermines the few protections regarding the rights of people built into the law. I also note how the new iteration of land acquisition practice in the form of the grant-in-aid scheme continued colonial politics of recognition based on property ownership. The next section traces how a blinkered focus on the norms of property and prioritisation of the exchange value of land over the multiple use value claims impacted the homeowner status of people. The last section analyses the grant-in-aid scheme as an instance of informal policy making. By studying the details of the scheme, as well as the discourse around it, I identify how class anxieties, legal-moral norms of private property, and disciplinary concerns were assembled arbitrarily to calculate compensation. The section closes with an examination of the implications of the state positioning itself as a humanitarian donor for configurations of citizenship.

This article draws on ethnographic research conducted in Lahore during 15 months between 2016 and 2018. My primary field site was in Old Anarkali, a dense, low- and middle-income, mixed-use area located a couple of kilometres outside the pre-colonial Walled City. Old Anarkali is one of the oldest continuously inhabited areas of the city. When work on the OLMT started, land belonging to three adjacent neighbourhoods (*muhalla*) – Kapoorthala House, Katcha Lake Road, and Jain Mandir – was slated for acquisition. All three neighbourhoods are located on different forms of state land and are home to a large number Partition refugees and their descendants. The land comprising Jain Mandir (named after a Jain temple that once stood there), for instance, was officially under the control of Punjab Auqaf and Religious Affairs Department that manages and administers places of worship. However, the temple had long been defunct and refugees had gradually moved into and settled on the premises after Partition. The neighbourhood of Kapoorthala House is named after the estate of an eighteenth-century Sikh ruler, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, who went on to found the princely state of Kapoorthala. His haveli in Old Anarkali shared the fate of other large *havelis* and estates built in and around the old city during the pre-colonial period: once the political fortunes of its owner declined, the walls of the compound were eventually breached, and encroachments quickly absorbed the buildings in the surrounding area, producing a new *mohalla* called Kapoorthala House named after the estate whose lands it now occupied (Glover, 2008). Today, Kapoorthala House, Katcha Lake Road, and Jain Mandir are a mixed commercial and residential area, with commercial units, that include small grocery stores, workshops, shoe and clothing stores, and lawyers' offices located in the buildings overlooking the main roads. A group of apartment buildings called Postal Colony flats, housing employees of the state postal service, and a tenement building called Maharaja Building located next to Jain Mandir and Kapoorthala House, respectively were also acquired. Despite the preponderance of refugees, the area was never officially declared a refugee settlement. The state preferred to look the other way as refugees claimed space, repurposed buildings and built homes for themselves. About eight acres of land, eventually displacing at least 8000 people, were acquired in the Old Anarkali area for the OLMT.²

During my research, I conducted participant observation, collected oral histories, and conducted interviews with residents and business owners in Old Anarkali and other informal settlements along the route of the OLMT. Although I also met with residents of the Postal Colony and the Maharaja building, in this article, I largely draw on interviews conducted with residents of Kapoorthala House, Katcha Lake Road, and Jain mandir in Old Anarkali. I also interviewed bureaucrats, political workers, Lahore Development Authority (LDA)

employees, lawyers, and activists associated with the OLMT's development in various capacities.

Infrastructural development, land relations, and citizenship in the postcolonial city

Infrastructure-led development emerged as a key global response to the 2008 economic crisis as countries sought to attract foreign investment, foster industrial and infrastructural upgrading, and promote export-oriented growth (Schindler and Kanai, 2021). While a decade of low interest rates in the US prompted investment in infrastructure across the world, China too sought to promote economic growth by funding projects in Asia and Africa through the Belt and Road Initiative (Tooze, 2018). Consequently, Chinese-funded mega-infrastructure projects have come to dominate national policy agendas in the current “global infrastructure turn” (Dodson, 2017; Nugent and Lamarque, 2022). This infrastructure-led development aspires to promote socio-economic prosperity by enabling greater connectivity and circulation of people and goods within and across states (Schindler and Kanai, 2021). However, recent work encourages a long *durée* study of infrastructural development to show how contemporary projects and development initiatives revitalize colonial era routes and flows (Aalders, 2021; Silver and Salamanca, 2023), racial formations of natives (Hayat, 2024; Kimari and Ernstson, 2020), and racialized politics of precarity associated with territorial struggles (Zeiderman, 2016b). These projects thus develop in ways that promote the interests of global capital rather than those of indigenous peoples (Enns and Bersaglio, 2020). This article intervenes in this historically situated scholarship to show that colonial structuring of contemporary infrastructural construction goes beyond the rehabilitation of individual colonial era plans or upgrades of specific infrastructures. By informing the very conditions of construction through the organization of land and design of expropriation laws, colonial extractive logics can shape *all* kinds of infrastructural developments and thus limit the emancipatory potential of even pro-poor projects like mass transit.

Writings on infrastructure often point to the relative openness of their social and material forms and the ways these are nested in larger flows and relations (Graham and Marvin, 2002). Julie Chu notes that infrastructures are “distinctly other-regarding” as “they are partial objects always gesturing to other flows and transactions for their completion as meaningful social forms” (Chu, 2014: 353). This outward orientation of infrastructures has important implications for how we understand them: not only do we need to account for these other flows in our analysis of infrastructures, but it is imperative to track how infrastructures inform other social planes. There is a rich body of work interrogating the ways in which infrastructures emerge as sites for the differentiated administration of resources and thus the formation of citizenship and political subjectivities (Anand, 2017; Lemanski, 2022). These wider flows of infrastructures are even more fluid during processes of development where the underlying imperatives of producing a particular infrastructure leak into, engage, and inform other configurations of distribution (Harvey and Knox, 2015; Mains, 2019). I intervene in this body of work on infrastructures and their relationship to distributive orders, to elucidate how construction of infrastructures like colonial era railways in British India and the contemporary metro train in Pakistan, inform formations of citizenship and political subjectivities specifically by remaking people's relations to land. This reformation of land relations has been enabled primarily through land acquisition laws used to expropriate land for infrastructures. Tracing the emergence of the LAA in colonial

India reveals how the empire's multiple and often contradictory economic and ideological mandates underpinned the construction of railways, which in turn informed the formation of land acquisition laws.

If infrastructures emerge as unstable articulations of financial, technical, and political relations (Anand, 2017), their reordering of these very relations is informed by the broader historical moment in which they are located. A historically situated approach to the relationship between infrastructural development, land rights, and political subjectivities elucidates how colonial dynamics persist and transform over time. Contemporary Chinese investments in Africa and Asia have been theorized within the broader arc of neoliberalism as producing new iterations of urban contestations and dispossessions (Akhter et al., 2022; Mohan, 2013). Recent scholarship has moved away from the understanding of neoliberalism as a universal set of global/national practices and principles of governance and economic policies (Harvey, 2007), and towards treating it as “a set of calculative practices that articulate diverse political environments in a contingent manner” (Zhang and Ong, 2015: 9; see also Zeiderman, 2016b). In this article, I combine a historical approach with ethnographic analysis to highlight the partialities and contradictions of the current neoliberal moment. Scholars have shown how land was a key arena for the expression and management of the varying and often conflicting priorities of colonial governmentality (Bhattacharyya, 2018; Guha, 1982). Thus, a historical approach reveals that the dispossession caused by the OLMT is actually part of longer histories of controlling space in South Asia (see, e.g. Anjaria, 2016; Rizvi, 2019). However, attention to current contestations also shows how older land logics may be refracted through contemporary political imperatives. The development of the OLMT was a particular conjunctural moment marked by political pressure on the ruling party to complete a high-profile Chinese-backed project in the country's heartland, which in turn allowed affected people greater space for negotiation and eventually enabled a partial victory as they secured compensation through the grant-in-aid scheme.

Tracing these changes in land acquisition practices raises the question of how they reformulate state–citizen relations and configurations of citizenship. While much has been written about the informalization of urban political economies as states roll back regulations and welfare programs (Roy and AlSayyad, 2004), little attention has been directed to the ways in which the logics of informality extend to the very workings of the state, thus iterating new forms of state care and neglect. The grant-in-aid scheme provides an instructive example of new hybrid political practices: it sits between the conventional tactics of enabling access to resources in response to moral claims or as part of patronage networks (Chatterjee, 2004; Piliavsky, 2014) usually deployed in dealing with marginalized groups, and institutionalized policy reform. I call the formulation of the grant-in-aid scheme an instance of informal policymaking: informal because it exists, like all humanitarian aid, beyond the law but nevertheless an instance of policy making as it was an official intervention, in a specific context, made through executive order. In tracing the politics of recognition and morality embedded in the grant-in-aid scheme and consequences of the same, I draw on critical scholarship on humanitarian and development aid (Fassin and Pandolfi, 2010; Ferguson, 1990; Ticktin, 2011) to bear on theorization of resource distribution in cities of the Global South (Chatterjee, 2004; Holston, 2008). Far from being premised on a simplistic acceptance of the moral or legal force of claims made by people, the scheme was saturated with boundary-making processes between legitimate and illegitimate recipients that are characteristic of humanitarian interventions. Specifically, notions of property provided the moral framework to determine who deserves compensation and how much. Thus, in only compensating those with long-term property claims, the scheme produced a moralized hybrid public script that articulated welfare obligations of the state with the

propriety of property ownership. These moralized assessments worked to displace responsibility for the consequences of land expropriation onto the victims and normalize inequality.

Thus, focusing on the attendant conditions of mega infrastructural development highlights the contradictions of the contemporary neoliberal moment marked by state provision as well as withdrawal. On the one hand, welfare is provided to citizens, imagined as recipients of programming, in the form of mega infrastructures that offer a spatial fix for global capital (Mains, 2019). On the other, the conditions of their development highlight the state's withdrawal from provision of everyday services like housing, and attempts to discipline citizens according to principles of privatisation and commodification (Lemanski, 2022; Von Schnitzler, 2008). However, these formations of state-citizen relations are fiercely contested. The framing of resource provision as aid is harder to maintain when the state is the involved (as opposed to NGOs for example). The people receiving payment through the grant-in-aid scheme interpreted it as just compensation they were entitled to as property owners. In this productive gap between state messaging and its rescription by citizens lies the possibility of imagining and struggling for more equitable distributive orders.

Colonial infrastructures and expropriation laws

Pakistan's colonial era expropriation law remains deeply contentious due to the sweeping powers granted to the executive to justify dispossession and negotiate compensation, while allowing limited judicial redress to citizens. The country's key expropriation law, the LAA was preceded by earlier pieces of legislation introduced in 1824, 1850, and 1857. In this section, I briefly trace the development of expropriation laws in British India to examine the various, sometimes contradictory rationales, that informed them, and to identify the ways in which they impacted land relations.

Expropriation laws were co-emergent with colonial infrastructural projects and thus the colonial state in India. The exigencies of acquiring land for the East India Railway in the Bengal Presidency during 1850–1857 in particular informed the expropriation laws due to the unprecedented need to acquire and clear vast tracts of land (Samuels, 2013). The need for railways was in turn closely tied to colonial agendas in India. A study of the emergence of the LAA thus reveals the relationship between colonial governmentality, infrastructures, and the production of space – not only in terms of the goals of completed infrastructures but also for the ways in which colonial imperatives (re)shaped agrarian laws and practices to create the conditions of future infrastructural development.

The production of space in colonial India was mediated by two key spatial and economic processes in the nineteenth century. Ideological and security imperatives of imperial governance prompted the opening up of colonial cities to civilize native populations, and render them easier to govern (Glover, 2008; Scott, 1995). This required infrastructural projects and public works, which in turn provided the impetus to formulate expropriation laws that could make land available quickly and cheaply to the colonial administration. Second, the process of making a colonial state space in India was part of the project of making and maintaining a British-centered global imperial economy (Goswami, 2004). By mid-nineteenth century, colonies were increasingly seen, not only as spaces for expanding mercantilist trade and sourcing raw materials, but rather as a potential solution to over accumulation and thus offering a “spatial fix” for British capital through the construction of infrastructures (Bear, 2020). The railways in particular served the dual function of both providing an avenue for the investment of British capital as well as directly promoting British industry and trade interests in the colony by connecting port cities to the interior. State works, like

the railways, were also perceived to exert a civilizing influence on the natives, ridding them of their barbarity, religious prejudices, and promoting royalty to the Crown (Goswami, 2004). Expropriation laws in British India emerged specifically in the context of establishing the railways and were saturated with the multiple, and sometimes contradictory objectives of imperial governance, private capital, and modernisation that informed the construction of railways and other infrastructural projects. That the expropriation laws were designed explicitly to further imperial capital flows was evidenced by the fact that while the colonial state frequently acquired land for industries controlled by British capital, it rarely acquired land for Indian industry (Krishnan, 2014).

Modern expropriation laws in colonial India were derived from British domestic laws and practices (Samuels, 2013). Expropriation in Britain was regulated by parliamentary scrutiny of each proposed private infrastructure project and required individually negotiated, bespoke compensation for dispossessed landowners (Samuels, 2013). Thus, expropriation laws and procedures ensured that infrastructural projects in Britain were, at least in theory, consensual and communal. These ideals of democratic scrutiny and protection of rights of citizens were removed during the adaptation of these laws to the colony. The law in India did away with any external or democratic scrutiny of costs and benefits of proposed projects so that these were approved through executive fiat. In all cases, the compensation, called the 'award', was determined by the executive (the Collector) instead of through private arbitration. There was also no provision for resettlement of displaced neighbourhoods and communities. The law was designed to minimize litigation and speed up the process of land transfer. Its practice enabled the state to sidestep negotiations with landowners, thus enabling massive dispossession (Samuels, 2013).

The transplantation of a modified version of British expropriation laws in British India intersected and affected the land revenue system in two critical ways. Land in Bengal, and other parts of India was tied up in a system of tributary taxation where land markets were essentially markets in rights of collection or use, neither of which recognized the land under question as a freehold property (Samuels, 2013). When the Permanent Settlement in Bengal recognized the *zamindari* rights that existed under the Mughals and nawabs, it recognized their right of collection of taxes from the cultivators who enjoyed the right of use of the land. The expropriation law created a new form of property that removed land from the revenue system as a freehold property under the ownership of the state (Samuels, 2013; Krishnan 2014).

Second, the Company (like its predecessors) only documented the rights of zamindars as it was primarily concerned with the collection of revenue (Wilson, 2008). The land use rights of intermediaries and cultivators remained largely undocumented under the British by the beginning of the nineteenth century. The difference in documentation assumed great significance when disputes had to be adjudicated by law or in matters of expropriation. This is because the expropriation law centred a documentary rather than a customary understanding of property ownership and only paid compensation to landowners but not cultivators (Samuels, 2013). If and when disputes arose between the multiple types of tenants regarding the distribution of the award, these were fought out in the courts at their own cost. The award money was given once these disputes were resolved. But in the meantime, the property in question was transferred to the state as a freehold property unaffected by the outcome of these conflicts. The expropriation law thus also enabled the state to avoid the cost and delays of addressing structural problems in the market for land (Krishnan, 2014).

The document centric nature of the expropriation law continues to play a major role in dispossessing poor rural and urban citizens whose claims to land are frequently undocumented in contemporary Pakistan. The lack of documentation is either because customary

land use rights of landless laborers, artisans, and others dependent on the land under question for their livelihoods are simply not recognized by agrarian documentary regimes, or because people lack the means to acquire the relevant documents that can prove land ownership. Furthermore, payment of monetary compensation instead of resettlement also enables the state to avoid contentious property relations and market imperfections. As an LDA official explained to me, it was relatively easier to divide and parcel out compensation to multiple claimants than to mediate claims and transfer them to a new property.

Undermining the rights of private landowners through expropriation laws was enabled through racialized othering of natives. Although the introduction of private property and its security in India was considered a key pillar of the society that the British sought to remake in India (Guha, 1982), these imperatives were tempered by racialized formations of natives. Holt Mackenzie, who drafted the Regulation I of 1824 replaced the requirement for open deliberation on price during arbitration in British expropriation laws with a formal valuation as the basis of the arbitrator's award in the Indian legislation (Samuels, 2013). He justified these changes by arguing that,

...our Native arbitrators (from whom Public Spirit is scarcely to be looked for) might be seduced into extravagant awards, if it were determined that the property under assessment must be taken at any rate. I have not therefore adopted the British Rule. (cited in Samuels, 2013: 68).

Later attempts to introduce arbitration and democratic oversight by provincial legislatures (which in the 1920s included elected and nominated Indians) were countered by attributing bias to arbiters and ascribing partiality to legislative councils whose members represented the interests of different socio-economic groups (*The Legislative Assembly Debates (Official Report) Volume I*, 1927). Thus, the production of space in colonial India, including the design of agrarian and expropriation laws, was informed by the "rule of colonial difference" – the principle that the presence of the British in India was justified by the inherent difference between the natives and the colonizers and the superiority of the latter (Chatterjee, 1994). Colonial organization of land continues to inform postcolonial state practices where they efface a range of land relations and undermine the rights of working classes and low-income groups.

Colonial laws in the contemporary city

Application of the LAA in contemporary Pakistan brings colonial understandings of space and sovereign power into the present. In addition, its implementation today undermines the few protections embedded in the law. In this section, I take the case of land acquisition in Old Anarkali to highlight the flaws in the execution of the LAA. I then explore how the law invisibilizes a range of complex land relations and rights in contemporary Pakistan.

The LAA dictates that owners of land slated for acquisition be paid at market value of their properties, in addition to some solatium. This market value is to be determined through recent sales of similarly situated and used land (Part III, Section 23). The District Collector (DC) determines the final payment called the "award" which is effectively considered conclusive with very little legal redress available to landowners for contestation. In Pakistan, a District Price Assessment Committee determines the DC's rate of land in a locality based on the average sales and purchases of land in the area over a year. Land sales are usually registered at this rate rather than at the actual price paid, in turn influencing future calculations of the DC rate. The DC rate is usually several times lower than the

market rate of land and registration at this rate enables buyers and sellers to evade taxes. It has been standard practice in Pakistan to acquire land at this DC rate, thus severely under-compensating landowners. According to the local *patwari* (Revenue official) as well as residents of Old Anarkali, the market rate for residential properties in the area was about PKR 2,100,000–2,200,000/*marla*³ (about USD 74–77/square foot)⁴ in 2015–2016. In contrast, the DC rate, and thus the compensation rate under the LAA, was PKR 1,250,000/*marla* (about USD 44/square foot).

The initial engagement with residents of Old Anarkali by state representatives demonstrates the authoritarianism embedded in the law and practices of land acquisition. The LAA (Part II, Sections 4 & 5) requires the publication of several notifications in the official Gazette wherever a parcel of land is slated for acquisition, as well as the provisioning of notifications in the locality under question. However, these requirements are patently insufficient and a vastly outmoded means of communication with local communities. There is also no requirement for state representatives to hold public meetings with local communities.

However, this requirement of notification was also flouted in some cases during the process of land acquisition for the OLMT. A preliminary notification under Section 4 of the LAA was published in an “extraordinary issue” of The Punjab Gazette, Lahore on 30 July 2015, followed by an addendum published in the same gazette on 6 August 2015. Indeed, it did not include the land parcel number of some of the land slated for acquisition in Old Anarkali. It was only the second addendum issued on 21 October 2015 and published in the gazette on 22 October 2015 that first included all the properties earmarked for acquisition. Residents of Old Anarkali first became aware of the possibility of losing their land on 20 October 2015 when a group of low-ranking LDA employees arrived in the neighbourhood and began marking properties slated for acquisition. This was two days *before* the notification, including all land parcels, was published in the gazette. The arrival of the LDA workers caused a massive uproar. Subsequent protests by panicked residents eventually forced the Member of Punjab Assembly from the constituency to come to the area and try to appease the locals. Timely publication of the appropriate notification would have made little difference since residents were not aware of any of the notifications published in the gazette or newspapers. However, violating the minimal protections offered under the LAA, and the heavy handedness with which the government first made contact with the local community are particularly chilling illustrations of the extent to which the marginality of the community and asymmetries of power are taken for granted by the government during processes of land acquisition.

In addition to flawed execution of the LAA, the letter of the law and its implementation also perpetuate the colonial legacy of disregarding the multiplicity of local land relations and uses in contemporary Pakistan. Elsewhere, I have detailed at length the ways in which land ownership for the purpose of the LAA in Pakistan is defined in terms of two Revenue Department documents, *fard-e-malkiyat* and *fard-e-inteqaal* (Tassadiq, 2022). The need for well-placed contacts and bribes to navigate the sprawling revenue bureaucracy severely limits access of low-income and working-class groups to processes of formalising land ownership (Hull, 2012). Consequently, large numbers of people living in land earmarked for land acquisition for the OLMT, including those in Old Anarkali, did not possess the requisite Revenue department documents that would have visibilized them as landowners and thus eligible for compensation under the LAA.

Recognition of land ownership through official documentation and that too exclusively Revenue documents erases the history of land in a city like Lahore. The OLMT route passes through some of the oldest inhabited areas just outside the Walled City. Land relations in

these areas are structured through the processes of (a) informal Partition refugee resettlement, (b) growth of informal settlements, (c) Islamic inheritance laws and (d) long-term residence spanning multiple generations. As refugees poured into Lahore in the years following the partition of India in 1947, inadequate and corrupt resettlement practices prompted many indigent refugees to settle on different forms of state land (Alvi, 1997; Chattha 2011). A large number of these refugees never acquired titles and/or appropriate Revenue documents. The inability and, indeed, refusal of the state to prioritize the provision of low-cost affordable housing for low-income citizens and migrants have prompted the emergence of new informal settlements at urban peripheries as well as the intensification of informal land use practices in urban cores (Anwar, 2014; Daechsel, 2015). According to some estimates, about 30% of the population of Lahore was living in informal settlements by late 1990s (Alvi, 1997). Finally, Islamic inheritance laws spawn a multiplicity of claims on land that is occupied both formally and informally. Consequently, ancestral homes or land that has been settled by long-term residents over generations often have multiple claimants in the extended family who need to be accounted for if and when the property is sold (or expropriated). The land records for such properties are not always updated to reflect the death of some claimants and addition of new shareholders. As a result of and intersection of these processes of urbanisation, land in Old Lahore (the area in and around the Walled City) and its corresponding documents are extremely fragmented and structured by fractious claims that often exceed the state's attempt at documentation (Rahman, 2022). Old Anarkali reflects this broader history of the area. At the time of land acquisition, most of the people in the area were long-term residents: descendants of pre-Partition inhabitants of the locality or second, third, and fourth generation Partition refugees. Most home and business owners in the area were settled on different forms of state land and did not have the required ownership documents for their properties. The LAA entered this complex space of land history, rights, and uses to efface a range of land relations that were not underpinned through Revenue documents.

The provincial government of Punjab eventually announced a compensation programme, called the 'grant-in-aid' scheme, for home and business owners who did not have the relevant Revenue documents. Surveys of neighbourhoods and consultations with local representatives were undertaken to draw up new lists of individual properties and those who claimed ownership. The latter were then compensated after the production of documents like utility bills, property tax receipts, and property transfer orders. These documents, along with testimony of local representatives, were used as a proxy for ownership papers within the grant-in-aid scheme to compensate property owners. Although the grant-in-aid scheme did not provide as much money as could be secured through the LAA, it was unprecedented in compensating those coded as illegal encroachers.⁵

The conjuncture of several developments enabled middle- and low-income citizens to force the government to address some of their concerns. The OLMT was an 'early harvest' project of the much-touted CPEC – widely proclaimed as a game changer for Pakistan's economy. Completion of the project was thus considered vital to ensuring continued Chinese investment in the country. Massive protests in the ruling party's political stronghold of Lahore against the high-profile project did not bode well for the government either. It was popularly believed that the ruling party wanted to complete the project and have the train operational before the national elections in 2018. The project also faced resistance from a collective of civil society activists who argued that it was in violation of the country's heritage protection laws. Court orders had successfully stopped construction work at several points along the route. It is popularly believed in political and bureaucratic circles that these

circumstances together forced the provincial government to take steps to diffuse the resistance to land acquisition to remove at least one major obstruction to the project.

Scholars of infrastructures argue that the latter is a key arena of the iterative constitution of populations and publics through selective recognition of who counts as a rights-bearing citizen (Anand, 2017). The case of the OLMT shows that publics are not just formed and controlled through an extension of infrastructures but are constituted iteratively even prior to their construction. By hailing the state, tugging and pulling at the boundaries of the population formally recognized as propertied (Maqsood and Sajjad, 2021), low-income residents without ownership documents “made themselves visible as demanding subjects of state care” during the process of land acquisition (Appel et al., 2018: 23). However, this new constitutive iteration continued colonial politics of recognition within the dispossession debate by centring property ownership and thus excluded a range of affected social groups from some form of restitution. These included landless people who depended on acquired land for some form of income and subsistence: as tenants, mobile vendors with longstanding spots, wage labour, or providers of services, like cleaning and laundry. The “grant-in-aid” package that stepped in to mitigate some of the inequities embedded in LAA continued to invisibilize issues of dependence and relative needs in how place is claimed.

Impact of land acquisition compensation policies on homeowners

The disbursement of compensation for properties slated for acquisition brought issues of ownership, competing claims, tenancy arrangements, and the lifeways associated with them to the fore with a visceral force. Old Anarkali as a dense, mixed-use locality with a variety of tenurial settings exhibits attributes typical of informal settlements including fluid land use, flexible and incremental development and construction practices, and dense interpersonal and socialized property relations (Caldeira, 2017; Guma, 2021; Moatasim, 2023). In centring the regime of private property rights, the state erased the “spontaneity and liveliness” of the mixed tenure locality and excluded the multiple social and material functions of land from official systems of reckoning (Ghertner, 2020: 577). This section explores the consequences of such an erasure and the ways in which these were framed by the political and bureaucratic elite as private affairs of displaced people and thus beyond the ambit of state concern.

The majority of households in Old Anarkali are multi-generational with multiple claimants across generations. In the area earmarked for acquisition, many households had members of at least three generations living under the same roof due to long-term residence and patrilocal practices. However, in most cases, some members of the family had moved away at some point – these included daughters who got married and moved to their husband’s homes or married sons who could no longer accommodate their growing families in the existing space. Consequently, the number of people living in residential units did not map onto the number of people who could claim a share in the property.

One such household was that of two sisters Samina Bibi and Ghazala Bibi, who were in their 60s and 50s, respectively. Their parents had fled from Amritsar after Partition and eventually settled in the house in Old Anarkali in the 1960s. The couple had four daughters. Although all of them moved away initially after getting married, Samina Bibi came back to live with her parents when her husband died. She did not have any children. She continued to live in the house after her parents passed away. A few years ago, one of her sisters Ghazala Bibi came to live with her along with her husband, and seven children. Her eldest son who was married also moved in along with his wife and children. Thirteen people were living in the 2.4 *marla* house in Old Anarkali when the place was slated for acquisition. Samina Bibi and Ghazala Bibi told me that all the sisters considered the house

as Samina Bibi's property. Their parents had *verbally* left the house to their single daughter who had no other home. However, when the house was slated for acquisition and compensation announced, Samina Bibi and Ghazala Bibi's third sister and the children of their deceased fourth sister came forward to claim their share in the compensation. Once the PKR 3,500,000⁶ received in compensation under the grant-in-aid scheme was divided amongst the claimants, Samina Bibi and Ghazala Bibi could only afford to purchase a house outside the city to the east across River Ravi. They eventually decided not to move to that house and instead rented accommodation in the city so as to remain close to their children's workplaces. However, the rent from their house was only PKR 9000/month (about USD 82⁷/month), while that of the rooms they rented in a tenement building near Old Anarkali was Rs 20,000/month (USD 182/month). The family was forced to make up the difference through their monthly income.

Families that received compensation under the LAA also faced similar challenges to reconstructing their social and material lives. Aside from potential conflicts with non-resident claimants, dynamics between nuclear families within the extended family living in an acquired unit also informed the eventual distribution and usage of compensation funds. Where nuclear families decided to go separate ways, compensation accruing to each family was usually insufficient to enable the purchase of a house comparable to the one in Old Anarkali in a similar location.

Multiple shares in acquired properties also generated several legal disputes. In some cases, non-resident claimants filed inheritance cases to contest the distribution and ensure access to their share. Such litigation disproportionately affected residents since the LDA refused to pay any compensation for properties mired in such litigation until the disputes were resolved while going ahead with the demolition of the properties in question. This effectively rendered actual residents homeless without any compensation whatsoever thereby forcing them to draw on their own resources to find temporary housing and also pressuring them to resolve the family dispute as quickly as possible.

Families that decided to continue living together and were able to defer or did not owe any payment to non-resident claimants fared relatively better when it came to purchasing new homes. Rashida Bibi, a 75-year-old widow, lived in a double storey, 3.5 *marla* house in Old Anarkali with her two sons and two of four daughters and their families. The papers of the house were in Rashida Bibi's name, and since she was still alive, none of her children could legally claim a share in the house through inheritance. Moreover, Rashida Bibi as the family matriarch was the principal decision maker and insisted on keeping the family together. Consequently, the family was able to purchase a house of comparable size and structure in a nearby locality through the compensation received through the aid package. The family also pre-empted conflict by ensuring that the new house was in Rashida Bibi's name which retained all her children, including the two married daughters who did not live with her, as heirs to the property in the event of her death. A fortuitous combination of family dynamics and updated property papers ensured that Rashida Bibi's family was one of the few in the area that was able to avoid irreversible disruption to their socio-economic stability.

In my conversations with bureaucrats, LDA officials, and political workers for the ruling party, issues of intra family conflict and division of compensation were framed as private affairs and thus beyond the scope of state intervention. When I pointed out that expropriation practices enable the eviction of people without compensation from properties under litigation, thereby effectively rendering them homeless, the Land Acquisition Collector responded that, "that is because of people's own *khadani phadday*. Their money is with the government ready for collection. As soon as they resolve their issues they can come and collect it." Other impacts of dividing compensation, like the inability to purchase housing

and being pushed out of the city, were also dismissed as the unavoidable outcome of joint property ownership, which at some point necessitates the division of assets amongst claimants.

This narrative of property ownership elides the fact that division of property or its exchange value is only inevitable if and when the property is sold or expropriated. The properties acquired in Old Anarkali were not on sale at the time of acquisition. The socio-economic circumstances of residents and past patterns of long-term residence made it unlikely that many of these properties would have been put on the market in the near future. In conditions of extreme inequality in land distribution, the use value of land – for example where it confers legal or de facto homeowner status on its inhabitants – far exceeds the exchange value of the property. The dubious discursive framing of expropriation as a market transaction by the political elite erases the involuntary nature of the exchange. This naturalizes the consequences of expropriation and exonerates the state of all responsibility for the same.

One lineament of the (dis)continuities of colonial spatial logics into the present is the contestation of boundaries around infrastructural development. As the construction of infrastructures is ideologically and materially nested in other distributive orders, I argue that delineating their boundaries becomes a terrain of contestation, which raises questions of legibility, and attribution of responsibility for the varied spatial and temporal effects of infrastructural construction. The multiple harms entailed in the development and destruction of infrastructures (Kallianos et al., 2023) are steeped in particular politics of visibility (Nixon, 2011). In the context of land acquisition, the invisibilisation of certain consequences of expropriation have emerged through the contested distinctions between public and private interests and spheres. In colonial era public debates, the ‘public purpose’ of specific projects for which land was acquired was conflated with a more generalized “public interest” and posited in opposition to issues of individual land rights which were framed and subsequently dismissed as “private interests” (The Legislative Assembly Debates (Official Report) Volume I, 1927). Although postcolonial contestations forced a reformulation of the publics worthy of state care, they still discounted a range of social groups who depend on acquired land. Furthermore, even in the case of those compensated for expropriation, either through the LAA or the grant-in-aid-scheme, the script of private property was used to dismiss conflicts emerging from displacement as private “family matters” and thus beyond the ambit of the state.

The logic of commodification also erased the communal socialities and dynamic land use practices that characterise dense mixed tenure localities where local administration often does not impose cadastral demarcations or require formal state sanction for the organization of space (Ghertner, 2020). Bikes, rikshaws, and in some cases cars were routinely parked in lanes outside homes. One homeowner had rented out the empty space outside their house for the stabling of a horse at night and over weekends when the animal was not required to pull carts. One of the larger homes acted as an *imambargah* to hold religious gatherings during the month of Muharram. Many people ran a variety of home-based businesses. For example, cooking snacks at home to sell in the nearby bazaars or using courtyard space to provide laundry services to neighbours. Some of the poorest residents also supplemented their income with the generosity of their wealthier neighbours. Long-term residence in the neighbourhood had strengthened such ties between families and turned them into a reliable resource critical for survival. The uneasy insertion of such collective and dynamic life into market-based distinctions like public versus private space, commercial versus residential property, and built versus unbuilt space erased such diverse occupancies from the arithmetic of the two compensation schemes and irreversibly upended scores of lives and livelihoods.

Scholars of urban informality argue that the issues at stake in informality are those of wealth distribution and social justice rather than property ownership and land use (Roy, 2005). Borrowing their important insights, I argue that the issues at stake in cases of infra-structural development and associated land acquisition are not of recognizing and respecting private property, but of unequal property ownership and urban land markets, as well as broader issues of distribution which hinges the survival of low-income citizens on micro economies of interdependence between land, people, and communities. Land acquisition practices that center monetary compensation and do not provide comprehensive resettlement can have the same impact that formalization and titling drives have on informal settlements where they trigger intra family conflicts (Roy, 2004) and can actually push people out of the city and/or back into informality as they face new pressures to sell the land. Thus, land acquisition policies cannot only concern themselves with land use laws, and exchange values of properties but need to attend to the multiple use value claims of land (Roy, 2004).

The precarities of informal policymaking

The grant-in-aid emerged as a bureaucratic and conceptual device to manage the optics of dispossession, diffuse resistance, and was officially framed as a means of providing relief to vulnerable social groups. In this section, I examine how the compensation scheme was a heavily burdened category gathering within itself a range of concerns in a highly contingent manner as well as implications of the same for the precarious formations of citizenship and casualization of state–citizen relations.

Since the grant-in-aid scheme was not based on existing policies or practices, it afforded the state great leeway in determining rates of compensation. Different compensation rates and formulae for calculation were offered to different areas along the route depending on a range of factors, including numerical strength of people, the official status of land occupied, and bargaining power of local representatives. In Old Anarkali, private residences were offered a rate of PKR 2,500,000/*marla* (about USD 87/square foot) while commercial properties were offered a rate of PKR 3,500,000/*marla* (about USD 122/square foot). The structure of individual houses and shops was not considered and compensation for these was included in the rate offered on the basis of property area.

Commercial properties were only compensated up to two *marlas*. That is, even if a commercial property was larger than two *marlas*, the owners were only paid for two *marlas* (i.e. PKR 7,000,000) and the entire property appropriated by the state. According to officials involved in the acquisition, this measure was taken to prevent excessive illegal profiteering from businesses set up on state land. Compensation for up to two *marlas* of commercial space would ensure that small businesses would not suffer while those who had set up larger enterprises would get some compensation but also be simultaneously punished for illegal accumulation of wealth. The compensation formula thus improvised arbitrary calculations of how much compensation is required to prevent complete destitution which then set the limits to the recognition of private property.

Both commercial and residential units were not compensated for open yard space inside the properties. A senior bureaucrat in charge of land acquisition explained that it was not reasonable to pay people for land that they had not invested in by constructing rooms. In this formulation, meaningful settlement of land was defined in terms of literally sinking money in the land by constructing structures over it. Therefore, the state, exemplifying benevolence laced with the propriety of private property, did not want to cheat people out of this investment. This improvisation completely ignored local lifestyles and modes

of inhabitation. Courtyards are an essential part of homes where many activities, including cooking, dishwashing, laundry, and social calls take place. This is particularly true for the smaller homes where one or two rooms often house several families.

Access to yard space is also important in low-income households as it enables the construction of additional rooms as and when funds become available without necessitating the purchase of additional land. Most homes in Old Anarkali have been built incrementally, both vertically and horizontally. Since the grant-in-aid did not account for structural details of acquired properties, and completely ignored local house-building practices, people who had built up their houses vertically found it harder to purchase housing with comparable space.

Analysis of the LAA and associated practices reveals the various anxieties and norms regarding land, formations of race and class, and distinctions between public and private interests that are 'gathered' (Latour, 2004) in this legislation and the ways they have persisted and transformed in its postcolonial iterations. The initial formulation of the LAA was informed by varying concerns of capital reproduction, civilising mission, private property and enterprise, and racialized anxieties about colonized people. Postcolonial implementation of the law in the context of building the OLMT disrupted entrenched practices of land acquisition. Nevertheless, the new grant-in-aid scheme continued the private property centric norm of the expropriation law in only recognizing long-term property claims. The scheme emerged as a heavily cathected device animated with concerns for respecting private ownership and investment in land but also punitive measures to discipline those coded as informal settlers. Here the private property form was used as a moralizing force, not to socially upgrade marginalized neighbourhoods and/or citizen-subjects but explicitly manage and vitiate claims made by marginalized citizens and speed up the eviction process. These measures were justified as racialized concerns regarding greedy and unethical natives underpinning the colonial era law were mapped onto class anxieties about working class and low-income communities by elite politicians and bureaucrats.

Framing resource provision by the state as aid has critical implications for the configuration of state–citizen relations. The depoliticizing language of humanitarianism turns citizens into passive dependents and replaces the language of rights of citizens with that of humans which are limited to bare survival (Mamdani, 2010). The ad hoc grant-in-aid scheme with its contingent arithmetic of just compensation was underpinned by the broader concern of preventing complete destitution *rather than* enabling reconstruction of socio-economic lives after land acquisition. Providing enough support to allow people to purchase homes and commercial establishments identical to the ones they had lost was in fact coded as enabling profiteering from illegal activities. During an interview, an LDA engineer stated that although the state could have evicted people without any compensation, it would have caused mass homelessness which in turn is also an issue the state is responsible for addressing. Thus, by offering some compensation, the state had adequately discharged its responsibility towards people. In this framing, the responsibility of the postcolonial state during land acquisition was expanded to include all people – but the non-propertied were only entitled to sheer survival.

Framing compensation as aid enables a retreat from accountability in multiple ways. It allows the state to refuse similar 'favours' in the future to people displaced by other development projects. Such a scheme effectively binds the provision of compensation with the incumbent government as a personalized act of benevolence rather than a citizenship right. It also enables the state to act relatively unilaterally in determining rules and rates of compensation. Finally, framing compensation as humanitarian aid depoliticizes conflicts (Ticktin, 2011) by diffusing resistance and displacing attention from structural issues of

inequity in land distribution and exclusionary laws to providing immediate relief. Such an approach externalized the state from being a party to the crisis and instead portrayed dispossession through land acquisition for the OLMT as an “isolated misfortune” (De Waal, 1997: 70; Fassin and Pandolfi, 2010) that could be adequately addressed without redressing systemic inequities.

The grant-in-aid scheme exceeded the more passive approach of ‘looking-the-other-way’ or simplistic patronage-based transfer of resources that are typically characteristic of engagements with marginalized urban groups (Chatterjee, 2004; Piliavsky, 2014). I thus theorize it as an instance of informal policy making, which is reflective of the ways in which the logics of informalization and associated arbitrariness and casualization have permeated state–citizen relations in the contemporary moment. However, ethnographic attention to the ambivalence and contestation that mark moments of rupture also reveals the “always-unfinished” configuration of citizenship and associated distributive orders, and “their processuality, and the labor that goes into maintaining, creating and undoing them” (Streinzer and Tošić, 2022: 3). The implication of the state providing resources as aid rather than as rights is distinctly more complicated than those of private actors stepping in the face of the retreating state (see, e.g. Muehlebach, 2012). It is relatively harder to retain the framing of humanitarianism instead of rights when the state is involved. Most people in Old Anarkali and other settlements along the OLMT route were unaware of the fact that they had been paid through an aid scheme. They considered the payment as rightful compensation they were owed as owners of landed property. The few who were aware of the grant-in-aid programme were contemptuous of the state’s benevolent self-positioning and interpreted the scheme as a partial victory for their struggle against attempts to undermine their property rights. In extracting restitution from a reluctant state and rescripting the narrative around compensation, marginalized citizens unsettled entrenched land acquisition practices and iterated a more progressive distributive order.

Conclusion

The twenty-first century is marked by a ‘return’ to state-led infrastructural development across much of the global South (Dodson, 2017; Schindler and Kanai, 2021). This is particularly apparent in Africa and Asia, where Chinese investments have come to dominate policy and mainstream discourse (Tooze, 2018). In developing economies like Pakistan, this turn is characterized by the state’s renewed focus on new infrastructural construction even as it retreats from other areas of governance and service provision through everyday infrastructures (Mains, 2019). China’s BRI enters these fragmented infrastructural landscapes to create new sites of contestation (Akhter et al., 2022; Apostolopoulou, 2021). Land rights figure prominently in such conflicts as infrastructures are produced through and in turn transform land relations (Levien, 2013). Therefore, in this article, I have used land as an entry point to trace the varied spatial and temporal dynamics of infrastructural construction. I take the case of development of the OLMT to intervene in three overlapping fields of scholarship on infrastructures, neoliberalism, and citizenship that are pertinent to understanding the current moment of infrastructure-driven development.

First, I draw on interdisciplinary scholarship on infrastructures (Appel et al., 2018; Graham and Marvin, 2002) to trace the underlying rationales behind the formulation of Pakistan’s land acquisition laws and their contemporary application. This historical analysis demonstrates how colonial logics of extraction and accumulation can continue to compromise the redistributive potential of infrastructures by continuing to structure the conditions of their development. It is particularly important to attend to the development process of

typically inclusive infrastructures like mass transit. Investment in resource extraction, manufacturing, and marketing logistics, that form the major part of BRI interventions, visibly operate to dispossess local populations to enrich the global elite. However, violence of projects like the OLMT that are geared towards middle- and low-income groups is more easily obscured by larger narratives of inclusive development. Analytic focus on the processes of their development is key to interrogating the relationship between development and poverty alleviation. Furthermore, analysis of the trajectory of colonial era laws and practices intervenes in the theorization of neoliberalism in the twenty-first century to show how multi scalar investment regimes, far from being monolithic top-down projects, unfold in contingent and contested ways in local contexts (Zeiderman, 2016a). A historical analysis combined with ethnographic study of the OLMT's development demonstrates how neoliberal capital flows intersect with longer histories of extraction to perpetuate exclusionary logics but also create unexpected opportunities for resistance.

My second line of inquiry analyses infrastructural construction as a site of (re)constituting political subjectivities and state–citizen relations across the disjuncture of decolonization. In the absence of comprehensive reform, Pakistan's expropriation laws and practices have refused to concede the transition from colonial 'subject' to 'citizen' (Ramanathan, 2009). However, as the scholarship on citizenship demonstrates, configurations of discursive and substantive rights are a contingent, ongoing, and dialectical process (Holston, 2008). Ethnographic attention to moments of rupture, like that of land acquisition, helps tease out the mechanics of distributive orders and their discursive justifications. In partially recognizing people's claims, the state expanded the boundaries of propertied citizenship. However, the informality of the policy intervention ensured a rescription of the colonial subjecthood embedded in the law into humanitarian subjecthood, instead of full citizenship. Colonial era legal and spatial practices along with their racialized underpinnings thus become the socio-spatial foundation of further impoverishing working class and marginalized communities in postcolonial cities and producing what James Holston has called differentiated citizenship where the emphasis is "on differentiating and not equating kinds of citizens" (Holston, 2008: 5). Close analysis of schemes like the grant-in-aid programme also shows how structural patterns of private property ownership and associated class configurations cohere as moral common sense which is articulated with inequality in public narratives about distribution arrangements. However, the moralized humanitarian scaffolding of the grant-in-aid scheme was roundly rejected by people who reframed it as rightful compensation for their properties. This ongoing contestation between the terms of claims-making and claims-recognition, acceptance and rejection opens possibilities of more inclusive iterations of citizenship.

Acknowledgements

This paper draws on my dissertation work at the University of Pennsylvania. I am indebted to Nikhil Anand, Lisa Mitchell, and Deborah Thomas whose support and mentorship enabled me to do this research. Most of the writing of this paper took place at the Urban Institute and was supported by the GlobalCORRIDOR project headed by Jonathan Silver. I am very grateful to Jon and Yannis Kallianos for their detailed reading and feedback. I also thank the editor Asher Ghertner and the three anonymous reviewers for their thoughtful comments. A version of this paper was presented at "The Politics of Mediating Markets in South Asia" co-organized by Indivar Jonnalagadda and Amrita Kurian at Penn in May 2023. I am grateful to the participants for the ensuing discussion. Finally, I thank my many interlocutors in Lahore who helped me with the research, trusted me with their stories, and opened their homes and offices to me. All shortcomings are entirely my own.

Author's Note

Fatima Tassadiq is also affiliated with University Of Pennsylvania.

Declaration of conflicting interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

Funding for research and writing of this paper was provided by the University of Pennsylvania, American Institute of Pakistan Studies, and European Research Council grant for GlobalCORRIDOR: Urbanization, everyday life + techno-social differentiation (Grant ID: 947779).

ORCID iD

Fatima Tassadiq  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6409-3168>

Notes

1. The OLMT was originally conceived as a part of a larger four-line transit system. In 2005, the Government of Punjab hired a private consulting company, MVA Asia, to carry out a feasibility study for a mass transit system for Lahore. The study proposed a four-line transit system consisting of Green, Orange, Blue and Purple Lines. These recommendations were revised under the Lahore Urban Transport Master Plan in 2012. The first line in the system, the Green Line, was eventually built as a Bus Rapid Transit line in 2013 in collaboration with the Turkish government. The Orange Line was built as a 27.1 km line with a 1.7 km underground section. In contrast to the recommendation of the MVA study, the government used the extremely disruptive but cheaper cut-and-cover method for constructing the underground section instead of the more expensive tunnel boring technology that minimizes disruption to surface level buildings. The project was financed through a soft loan of USD 1.62 billion through the Export-Import Bank of China, at a 3% interest rate and a 20-year return period. Construction was contracted out to the consortium of China State Railway Group Co. Ltd and China North Industries Corporation (CR-Norinco) with the civil works sub-contracted to the Pakistani side. The LDA acted as the executing agency for the civil works as well as the acquiring agency for land acquisition.
2. The number of people displaced is estimated on the basis of area acquired and the population density of this part of Lahore, which is 317,000 persons/km² (Malik, 2013).
3. *Marla* is a traditional unit of area used in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. One *marla* equals 272.25 square feet or 25.29 square meters.
4. The exchange rate in February 2016 was about USD 1 = PKR 105.
5. See Tassadiq (2022) for a comparison.
6. The family was only compensated for 1.4 *marlas*. The additional *marla* inside the property was not compensated as it included open yard space. See Section "The precarities of informal policymaking".
7. The exchange rate at the end of 2017 was about USD 1 = PKR 110.

References

- Aalders JT (2021) Building on the ruins of empire: The Uganda Railway and the LAPSET corridor in Kenya. *Third World Quarterly* 42(5): 996–1013.
- Akhter M, Akhtar AS and Karrar HH (2022) The spatial politics of infrastructure-led development: Notes from an Asian postcolony. *Antipode* 54(5): 1347–1364.
- Alvi I (1997) *The Informal Sector in Urban Economy: Low Income Housing in Lahore*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Anand N (2017) *Hydraulic City: Water and the Infrastructures of Citizenship in Mumbai*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Anjaria JS (2016) *The Slow Boil: Street Food, Rights and Public Space in Mumbai*. Redwood City: CA: Stanford University Press.
- Anwar NH (2014) Urban transformations: Brokers, collaborative governance and community building in Karachi's periphery. *South Asian History and Culture* 5(1): 75–92.
- Apostolopoulou E (2021) Tracing the links between infrastructure-led development, urban transformation, and inequality in China's Belt and Road Initiative. *Antipode* 53(3): 831–858.
- Appel H, Anand N and Gupta A (2018) Introduction: Temporality, politics, and the promise of infrastructure. In: H Appel, A Gupta, N Anand (eds.) *The Promise of Infrastructure*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, pp. 1–41.
- Bear L (2020) Speculations on infrastructure: From colonial public works to a post-colonial global asset class on the Indian railways 1840–2017. *Economy and Society* 49(1): 45–70.
- Bhattacharyya D (2018) *Empire and Ecology in the Bengal Delta: The Making of Calcutta*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Caldeira TP (2017) Peripheral urbanization: Autoconstruction, transversal logics, and politics in cities of the global south. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 35(1): 3–20.
- Chatterjee P (1994) *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chatterjee P (2004) *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Chattha I (2011) *Partition and Locality: Violence, Migration, and Development in Gujranwala and Sialkot, 1947-1961*.
- Chu JY (2014) When infrastructures attack: The workings of disrepair in China: When infrastructures attack. *American Ethnologist* 41(2): 351–367.
- Daechsel M (2015) *Islamabad and the Politics of International Development in Pakistan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- De Waal A (1997) *Famine Crimes: Politics & the Disaster Relief Industry in Africa*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Dodson J (2017) The global infrastructure turn and urban practice. *Urban Policy and Research* 35(1): 87–92.
- Enns C and Bersaglio B (2020) On the coloniality of “new” mega-infrastructure projects in East Africa. *Antipode* 52(1): 101–123.
- Fassin D and Pandolfi M (2010) *Contemporary States of Emergency: The Politics of Military and Humanitarian Interventions*. New York: Zone Books.
- Ferguson J (1990) *The Anti-Politics Machine: 'Development,' Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press Archive.
- Ghertner DA (2020) Lively lands: The spatial reproduction squeeze and the failure of the urban imaginary. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 44(4): 561–581.
- Glover WJ (2008) *Making Lahore Modern: Constructing and Imagining a Colonial City*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press.
- Goswami M (2004) *Producing India: From Colonial Economy to National Space*. Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan.
- Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Law and Justice (n.d) The Land Acquisition Act, 1894. *Act no.1 of 1894*. Available at: <https://pakistancode.gov.pk/english/UY2FqaJw1-apaUY2Fqa-bJ6Z-sg-jjjjjjjjjjjj> (accessed 15 March 2024).
- Graham S and Marvin S (2002) *Splintering Urbanism: Networked Infrastructures, Technological Mobilities and the Urban Condition*. London: Routledge.
- Guha R (1982) *A Rule of Property for Bengal: An Essay on the Idea of Permanent Settlement*. Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan.
- Guma PK (2021) Recasting provisional urban worlds in the global south: Shacks, shanties and micro-stalls. *Planning Theory & Practice* 22(2): 211–226.
- Harvey D (2007) *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: OUP.

- Harvey P and Knox H (2015) *Roads: An Anthropology of Infrastructure and Expertise*. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Hayat M (2024) The duty of water: Land, labour, and the racialisation of waste in colonial and contemporary Punjab. *Antipode*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.13021>.
- Holston J (2008) *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Hull MS (2012) *Government of Paper: The Materiality of Bureaucracy in Urban Pakistan*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Kallianos Y, Dunlap A and Dalakoglou D (2023) Introducing infrastructural harm: Rethinking moral entanglements, spatio-temporal dynamics, and resistance(s). *Globalizations* 20(6): 829–848.
- Kimari W and Ernstson H (2020) Imperial remains and imperial invitations: Centering race within the contemporary large-scale infrastructures of East Africa. *Antipode* 52(3): 825–846.
- Krishnan E (2014) *Land acquisition in British India c. 1894–1927*. DPhil Thesis, University of Oxford.
- Latour B (2004) Why has critique run out of steam? From matters of fact to matters of concern. *Critical Inquiry* 30(2): 225–248.
- Lemanski C (2022) Infrastructural citizenship: Conceiving, producing and disciplining people and place via public housing, from Cape Town to Stoke-on-Trent. *Housing Studies* 37(6): 932–954.
- Levien M, (2013) Regimes of dispossession: From steel towns to special economic zones. In: Wolford W, Borras SM, Hall R, et al. (eds) *Governing Global Land Deals*. 1st ed. New York: Wiley, pp. 185–210.
- Mains D (2019) *Under Construction: Technologies of Development in Urban Ethiopia*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Malik AA (2013) Policy options for financing urban transportation in resource constrained environments: The case of Lahore, Pakistan. *The Pakistan Development Review* 52(2): 139–155.
- Mamdani M (2010) *Saviors and Survivors: Darfur, Politics, and the War on Terror*. New York: Crown.
- Maqsood A and Sajjad F (2021) Victim, broker, activist, fixer: Surviving dispossession in working class Lahore. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 39(6): 994–1008.
- Moatasim F (2023) *Master Plans and Encroachments: The Architecture of Informality in Islamabad*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Mohan G (2013) Beyond the enclave: Towards a critical political economy of China and Africa. *Development and Change* 44(6): 1255–1272.
- Muehlebach A (2012) *The Moral Neoliberal: Welfare and Citizenship in Italy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Nixon R (2011) *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Nugent P and Lamarque H (2022) *Transport Corridors in Africa*. Martlesham: Boydell and Brewer.
- Piliavsky A (2014) Introduction. In: A Piliavsky (ed.) *Patronage as Politics in South Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1–35.
- Rahman T (2022) *Land Records, Digitization, and Liquidity in Lahore. Land and the Mortgage: History, Culture, Belonging*. New York: Berghahn Books, pp. 216–231.
- Ramanathan U (2009) *A Word on Eminent Domain. Displaced by Development: Confronting Marginalization and Gender Injustice*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, pp. 133–145.
- Rizvi MA (2019) *The Ethics of Staying: Social Movements and Land Rights Politics in Pakistan*. Redwood City: CA: Stanford University Press.
- Roy A (2004) The gentleman's city: Urban informality in the Calcutta of new communism. In: A Roy and N AlSayyad (ed.) *Urban Informality: Transnational Perspectives from the Middle East, Latin America, and South Asia*. Lanham: Lexington Books, pp. 147–170.
- Roy A (2005) Urban informality: Toward an epistemology of planning. *Journal of the American Planning Association* 71(2): 147–158.
- Roy A and AlSayyad N (2004) *Urban Informality: Transnational Perspectives from the Middle East, Latin America, and South Asia*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Samuels PS (2013) *Dysmorphic sovereignty: Colonial railroads, eminent domain, and the rule of law in British India, 1824–1857*. PhD Dissertation, Stanford University.

- Schindler S and Kanai JM (2021) Getting the territory right: Infrastructure-led development and the re-emergence of spatial planning strategies. *Regional Studies* 55(1): 40–51.
- Scott D (1995) Colonial governmentality. *Social Text* 43: 191–220.
- Silver J and Salamanca OJ (2023) The Freedom Railway: Inscript-tions of an Infrastructure Corridor. *New Geographies Journal* 13:
- Streinzer A and Tošić J (2022) Introduction, deservingness: Reassessing the moral dimensions of inequality. In: Streinzer A and Tošić J (eds.) *Ethnographies of Deservingness: Unpacking Ideologies of Distribution and Inequality*. New York: Berghahn Books, pp. 1–28.
- Tassadiq F (2022) Producing dispossessed and humanitarian subjects: Land acquisition and compensation policies in Lahore, Pakistan. *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 45(2): 240–256.
- The Legislative Assembly Debates (Official Report) Volume I* (1927). Delhi, India: Government of India Press.
- Ticktin MI (2011) *Casualties of Care: Immigration and the Politics of Humanitarianism in France*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Tooze JA (2018) *Crashed: How a Decade of Financial Crises Changed the World*. London: Allen Lane.
- Von Schnitzler A (2008) Citizenship prepaid: Water, calculability, and techno-politics in South Africa*. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 34(4): 899–917.
- Wilson JE (2008) *The Domination of Strangers*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Zeiderman A (2016a) *Endangered City: The Politics of Security and Risk in Bogotá*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Zeiderman A (2016b) Submergence: Precarious politics in Colombia's future port-city. *Antipode* 48(3): 809–831.
- Zhang L and Ong A (2015) Introduction: Privatizing China: Powers of the self, socialism from afar. In: ZhangL and Ong A (ed.) *Privatizing China: Socialism from Afar*. New York: Cornell University Press, pp. 1–19.

Fatima Tassadiq is an anthropologist currently working as a postdoctoral research associate at the Urban Institute, University of Sheffield. Her research interests center on the political ecology of urban infrastructures, land rights and relations, and formations of citizenship in cities of the Global South.