EXALTED ORDER:
MUSLIM PRINCES AND THE BRITISH EMPIRE
1874-1906

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation charts the genealogy of a particularly British Indian form of

colonial government called indirect rule. Indirect rule, which came to be deployed across

several Muslim dominated states of Africa and Asia in the late Victorian period, was by

that time a century old British colonial strategy. First employed by agents of the East

India Company in the middle of the eighteenth century, this form of imperialism

subsumed many of the states which comprised the Indian political landscape in the post-

Mughal period. These so-called princely states were not conquered outright by the

British, but rather came under their control though a range of technologies, from the

deployment of powerful agents and coercive treaties, to the establishment of a discursive

framework which conceived of these states as 'oriental' and hence requiring of a special

form of government. Indirect rule, however, was never the most common form of

administration in the British Empire. Even in India, direct rule, where precolonial social

and political structures were replaced by new modes of government, was much more

common. This work, therefore, explores why in the last quarter of the nineteenth century

the architects of British rule in Malaya, Egypt, the Persian Gulf, Zanzibar, and Northern

Nigeria all elected to impose variants of this unusual form of government invented in

eighteenth-century India. It does so by examining the ideas, assumptions, and strategies

of the officials who were chiefly responsible for the form of these colonial regimes

through a variety of archival and other documentary evidence. In so doing this work

seeks to demonstrate that British Indian ideas and technologies had a definitive impact on

the development of the British Empire across Africa and Asia.

For

Robyn

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Introduction

In April of 1882, British forces occupied Egypt after a prolonged political dispute.

At the same time, British agents were in the midst of absorbing a number of states of the

Malay Peninsula. Less than a decade later the island state of Zanzibar, off the east coast

of Africa, was annexed by the British and a few years after that the Persian Gulf states

were likewise acquired. Finally, at the turn of the twentieth century, an army of African

soldiers raised by the British conquered the remnants of the Sokoto Caliphate in Northern

Nigeria. This string of conquests was not part of a great scheme to expand an already

large empire; indeed, it was not even undertaken by a single branch of the British

Government. The Foreign Office controlled Egypt and Zanzibar, the Colonial Office was

responsible for Malaya and Nigeria, and the Government of British India, reporting to the

Secretary of State for India, was the paramount authority in the Persian Gulf. Moreover,

these disparate territories, spread across half the globe on two continents, were not even

conquered for a single purpose: some were taken primarily for their strategic importance

while others were seized because of their economic value. However, all of these

territories, from tiny Kuwait to densely populated Egypt, were conquered by co-opting

Muslim princes through what was known as 'indirect rule'.

The term indirect rule was popularised in the early part of the twentieth century

by Lord Lugard, himself an architect of British rule in Nigeria.[1] However, it is far older

than that conceptually: indirect rule in the British Empire was a product of an earlier

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[1] Frederick Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (London: Blackwood, 1922), 199.

period of expansion and can be traced back to when the agents of the English East India Company suddenly found themselves in charge of a rapidly growing territorial empire in India in the middle of eighteenth century.

As Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper argue in their *Empires and World History*, imperialism was the usual form of human government, and essential to all forms of imperialism was collaboration between the coloniser and colonised.[2] Across world history there are examples of local rulers, subjugated but not relegated, by more powerful regional actors. The most famous examples of from antiquity are Herod, King of Juda, and Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, who were both clients of Imperial Rome. Thus, as Burbank and Cooper show, where there was imperialism there was often some sort of client relationship or collaboration. This work is broadly in agreement with this view, yet indirect rule as understood and practiced by the British was more than an unequal bilateral power relationship. The central goal of this work is to illustrate that this form of colonialism, as deployed across Muslim-ruled Africa and Asia, was a product of the Victorian conceptualisation of their relationship with 'oriental' states as experienced through their earlier conquest of India, and in particular how they sought to consolidate authority over what had been states under Muslim rulers.

This dissertation charts the genealogy of indirect rule as a distinctly British Indian answer to the problem of governing subject peoples. Indirect rule, after having being used across much of South Asia in more than 600 'princely states' was in turn redeployed to other parts of Asia and in Africa. This Indian form of indirect rule, however, was

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[2] Jane Burbak and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 366.

never the only nor even the most common manifestation of colonial government in the British world. Across the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the British were far more likely to displace pre-colonial leaders and impose direct rule. Even in India, where indirect rule was first widely deployed, only about a third of the subcontinent fell under this form of control, the remainder being placed squarely under British governors and civil servants. Therefore, the central questions this dissertation seeks to answer are, firstly, why was a form of colonial government that was devised in eighteenth-century India frequently redeployed across some parts of Asia and Africa in the last quarter of the nineteenth century? Secondly, why did this renaissance in the use of indirect rule outside of India seem to be particularly though not exclusively favoured in states previously ruled by Muslim dynasties? Finally and most importantly, what were the essential aspects of this form of Indian colonial government that were redeployed, often in highly modified form, elsewhere in the indirectly ruled empire?

This work is broadly divided into two parts, totalling six chapters. The first two chapters constitute part one, and discuss the genesis and consolidation of indirect rule in India after 1757. Chapter I begins with an examination of its widening use by the East India Company in the decades straddling the turn of the nineteenth century, a period when many of the legal and administrative practices that would come to define indirect rule were devised. Yet from its inception indirect rule faced criticism. Neither side of this debate emerged fully triumphant, though by the 1840s officials associated with the Governor General of India, Lord Dalhousie, were successful in challenging the practice to such a degree that several princes were deposed and their territories subjected to direct

British rule. These annexations, however, were in turn believed to have helped trigger the revolt of 1857, lending credence to the arguments in favour of indirect rule.[3]

The events of 1857-58 marked the turning point in the debate over the utility of the princes and Chapter II discusses the post-rebellion settlement. From this juncture the British Government assumed the role of the Company, and the hundreds of princes whose loyalty the British authorities believed had helped them suppress the revolt became a central component of the new regime. In fact, although the political and administrative power of the princes did not radically advance after 1857, their symbolic role and visibility expanded considerably. Colonial authorities used the princes as proof that they were governing India in a manner that was consistent with its own unique historical trajectory, and with the collaboration of its natural 'native' political elites. Post-1857 British authorities placed the princes near the summit of a hierarchal conceptualisation of Indian society. This hierarchy was constructed through the use of an array of techniques, from scholarly works that delineated it to ceremonial apparatuses that sought to display and reinforce it.

These first two chapters illustrate how the practices and ideas that constituted indirect rule in historical and contemporary India were essential to the way that this form of colonial government was redeployed across Africa and Asia in the late nineteenth century. The sources for part one are drawn largely from a range of documentary evidence, much of it published, constituting a cross-section of the intellectual milieu in contemporary Britain and India, from officially commissioned parliamentary reports to

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[3] Thomas Metcalf, *The Aftermath of the Revolt: India 1857-1870* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1964), 32.

more candid personal memoirs. In part two these same types of sources are accompanied by a large amount of unpublished official, demi-official, and private documentation drawn from government, university, and learned societies' archives in the United Kingdom. The most important are the collections of the Foreign and Colonial Offices at the National Archives, Kew (formerly the Public Record Office); the India Office Records at the British Library, London; and the Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies at Rhodes House, Oxford. From these and other repositories in London and Oxford evidence was collected that enabled the analysis of the ideas, techniques, and assumptions which the architects of indirect rule in Malaya, Egypt, the Persian Gulf states, Zanzibar, and Northern Nigeria used to conceptualise their colonial regimes.

Chapters three through six deal with the introduction and early experiences of indirect rule in Malaya, Egypt, the Gulf and Zanzibar, and Northern Nigeria, respectively. Each of these chapters follows the same broad pattern: after an explanation of the pre-colonial history and the reasons for British conquest, the form and function of indirect rule in the given territory or territories is assessed. Questions to be addressed include the justifications for British interference; how the colonial authorities conceptualised their role and the place of indigenous elites within the colonial regime; and how indirect rule was manifested intellectually and symbolically. The form and function of indirect rule could appear to be wildly divergent in some cases yet strikingly similar in others. In Perak, Malaya, for example, the local sultans were highly regarded by the colonial authorities. Here indirect rule began only when locals requested British interference, which was marked by the lavishing of honours and other privileges. On the other hand,

in Sokoto in Northern Nigeria, the local rulers were quite literally compelled at gunpoint to collaborate with the British and were not granted anything like the honours and privileges of their Malay counterparts.

Each manifestation of indirect rule was constructed in a fashion that was highly contextual. These differences were born out of the way each of these societies was understood by the British. In this context 'understood' means more than just the way the British read the political, geographic, economic, and demographic aspects of a territory, but also how the British saw the relationship between local history and culture and their empire. It is this fundamental connection to a broader history of empire that makes this study more than a series of isolated case studies. Despite the highly variegated nature of indirect rule in these places, they all owe much of their intellectual basis, form, and function to princely India. This is not to say that suddenly in 1874 the various branches of the British Empire began to make new Indian princely states elsewhere in Asia and in Africa. This was certainly not the case, save perhaps for in the Persian Gulf and Zanzibar which were very close and deliberate analogues of the Indian princely states. Rather the system of ideas and techniques that were born out of a century of British indirect rule over Hindu-, Sikh-, Buddhist-, and Muslim-ruled states in India were consciously redeployed to draw these Muslim-ruled states under colonial rule.

The term 'Muslim' is employed throughout this work and refers, as broadly as possible, to individuals who professed a faith first heralded by the Prophet Muhammad and conveyed in the Koran. The Prophet was born more than thirteen centuries before the period of this study and in the intervening time various interpretations of the faith

emerged. For the purposes of this study an individual who professed any of these interpretations qualifies as Muslim. This is true whether they are Sunnis who recognised as their secular leader the Ottoman Sultan who also claimed the title of Caliph, or lieutenant, of the prophet; if they were members of the various denominations of the Shia' branch of the faith who recognised the Imamate, or leadership, of the line of the prophet's son-in-law Ali; or if they were any of the smaller regional sects like the Ibadis of Oman or Mahdists of the Sudan. All of these groups are alike considered Muslims and they all profess the religion of Islam. This is not, however, to suggest that 'Muslims' were a monolithic politico-religious block spanning from West Africa to Southeast Asia. The British were acutely aware that the Muslim world was not united and indeed the use of indirect rule was a recognition that 'some Muslims' were more effective collaborators than others. This was especially the case in Egypt and its southern colony of the Sudan, examined in Chapter IV, where the British were keen to have the Muslim Khedive of Egypt as a collaborator, but saw the Muslim Mahdi in the Sudan as a tyrant and dangerous threat. However, the British did recognise that across much of Asia and Africa political elites professing Islam held sway. And it is the political dominance of Muslims that made it especially important to the British and central to the proliferation of indirect rule.

A major text on the interaction between British imperialism and the Muslim world is Edward Said's *Orientalism*. Said argues that the way Europeans saw their relationship with the Arab world in the nineteenth century ultimately led to colonisation of many

middle eastern states by the British and French.[4] This work accepts some of the central

arguments made in *Orientalism*, specifically that the British used their constructed

understanding of the Muslim world to justify their conquests. However, it also rejects a

key aspect of Said's thesis, namely that the Europeans understood the Muslim world in

terms of a strict racial binary. Rather, the fact that indirect rule was predicated on

collaboration between European and Muslim elites demonstrates that there were multiple

and entangled hierarchies of race, religion, and rank at play, thereby complicating the

argument made in *Orientalism*. As will be illustrated throughout this work, indirect rule

was built on defining and reinforcing an array of hierarchies. Foremost always were the

binary relationship between coloniser and colonised as described by Said. However,

there was also a concerted effort to delineate the difference of rank between princes and

their people and amongst the many princes around the empire. There was also a major

focus on differences of ethnicity, both within a given territory and across the empire. The

British were often trying to make sense of territories where they believed that Muslim

authorities had established themselves over local populations, some of whom had

converted to Islam, but who the British felt remained ethnically different. Taken together

the various instances of indirect rule in the Muslim world illustrate that they were

grounded on several interrelated though not necessarily complementary hierarchies.

The British did not expressly seek to conquer much of the Muslim world, but by

the early decades of the twentieth century they had. First came India in the eighteenth

and nineteenth centuries, which was home to a large Muslim minority, as well as several

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[4] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 87.

powerful Muslim rulers, later came more territories in Asia and in Africa, and still later

came the incorporation of territories that came about after the dismemberment of the

Ottoman Empire at the conclusion of the First World War. The reasons behind these

conquests varied. The Persian Gulf states, for instance, were taken largely out of a fear

they would be seized by a rival European power.[5] The Malay states were incorporated

into the empire in part because of a powerful commercial lobby, based in Singapore and

London, who were keen to exploit the region's natural resources.[6] However, while there

was never a single reason for conquering these states, these states all shared a common

trait, namely, a ruling prince or king.

These individuals held a variety of titles: sultan, emir, and nawab were the most

common for Muslim rulers, but others such as khedive, nizam, and undong were also

used. These rulers were all hereditary, meaning that a single family held authority. Strict

male primogenitor, as was the convention in European monarchies whereby authority

passed from father to son, was not always the practice in Islamic monarchies. In the

majority of these states, succession to the throne went to a senior male member of the

ruling family, as likely to be a brother or uncle of the former ruler as one of his sons. Ira

Lapidus has shown that from early in the history of Muslim societies heredity was a

common method for the transition of political authority. And by the nineteenth century

most Islamic states were hereditary monarchies on this pattern.[7] All of the states under

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[5] James Onley, *The Arabian Frontier of the British Raj, merchants, rulers, and the British in the nineteenth-century Gulf* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 213.
[6] Anthony Webster, "The Development of British Commercial and Political Networks in the Straits Settlements 1800 to 1868: The Rise of a Colonial and Regional Economic Identity?" *Modern Asian Studies*, 45 (4) 2011: 925.
[7] Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 103,122.

consideration in this work were monarchical, meaning that an individual from the ruling family was the head of government, though often in association with related members of ruling house and other aristocratic families. The noun most commonly employed by the British for these individuals, regardless of their official title, was 'prince' although 'king' and 'chief' were also used. It was these rulers who were central to indirect rule. The British controlled these territories through their rulers, who were simultaneously stripped of much of their pre-colonel authority, while being integrated into the ranks of a new colonial order and a pan-imperial ruling class.

There are a number of competing perspectives on the place of the prince under British indirect rule that inform this work. Nicholas Dirks, in his *Hollow Crown*, has argued that that the image of indirect rule being a collaborative effort between local and European elites was illusory.[8] Rather, Dirks argues that the prince was a mere puppet wholly controlled by the British, suggesting that indirect rule in practice differed little from direct rule. Dirks was discussing one princely state in southern India but his argument has been extended in part to some of the Malay states by Thomas Metcalf in his *India and the Indian Ocean World*. Metcalf contends that while the colonial regime may have superficially looked like one of indirect rule, in practice it functioned like direct rule as the ruling sultan was politically impotent and the local British authorities totally dominant.[9]

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[8] Nicholas Dirks, *Hollow Crown: ethnohistory of an Indian kingdom*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 384.
[9] Thomas Metcalf, *Imperial Connections, India and the Indian Ocean Area, 1860-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 42.

Broadly, however, this work rejects the idea that indirect rule was simply covert direct rule. In all of the states under consideration, British and local authorities collaborated - always in a fashion that was disproportionately weighted in favour of the British - but nonetheless one that allowed some latitude for the functioning of pre-colonial institutions and the participation of the ruling prince. As such this work expands on that of Hira Singh and Dick Kooiman who illustrated how the local rulers used collaboration with the British as a strategy to retain some authority within their states.[10] This is a persistent theme of this dissertation and will be returned to throughout, with numerous examples of princes effecting some control over the direction of government and even more commonly of the British bending to the interests, real or perceived, of the local authorities.

This definition of indirect rule, however, is not so broad that it includes every 'native' official collaborating with colonial authorities. As C.A. Bayly has shown in his *Empire and Information*, colonial rule was predicated on networks of knowledge formed upon the cooperation between the colonised and coloniser.[11] This was the case quite explicitly in indirectly ruled territories but also in directly ruled ones. Across the empire local people worked with the British in return for status, protection, and advancement; however, this does not necessarily mean that all of these places were under what can be called indirect rule. Around the turn of the twentieth century, for example, as much of

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[10] Hira Singh "Colonial and postcolonial historiography and the princely states: Relations of power and rituals of legitimation" in Waltraud Ernst and Biswamoy Pati eds., *India's Princely States: People, Princes and Colonialism*, (London: Routledge, 2007), 16; Dick Kooiman. "Invention of Tradition in Travancore: a maharaja's quest for political security" *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*. 15 (2) 2005: 151-153.

[11] C.A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 56.

sub-Saharan Africa was falling under the control of the British, another governing

strategy whereby indigenous notables held key government posts proliferated. From

Ghana in West Africa to Kenya in the east, local 'chiefs' were selected by the British to

exercise important government functions.[12] However, unlike the princes of India and the

rulers in this study, the vast majority of these figures were not heads of hereditary ruling

dynasties. Rather, they were local notables selected by the British to hold these new

posts in a form that imitated indirect rule but was functionally and ideologically different.

In Malaya, Egypt, the Persian Gulf, Zanzibar, and Northern Nigeria, the local monarchs

continued to hold precolonial positions after the arrival of the British, though often in

significantly modified form. However, as David Cannadine has shown, the very fact that

this type of government was being mimicked in these other colonies is evidence of the

intellectual power of Lord Lugard and the other champions of indirect rule.[13]

Nonetheless, these figures were appointed and did not hold offices that existed prior to

the arrival of the British, which mark them as a part of a distinct if related form of

colonial government.

The methods employed for achieving indirect rule varied by territory, but one of

the constant attributes of indirect rule was the presence of a powerful British official.

These officials, like the princes with whom they worked, had a variety of titles (resident,

agent and consul were the most common) but they all held effectively the same position,

as part-colonial governor, part-ambassador to the court of the subject-ruler. Their

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[12] See for example D.A. Low, *Fabrication of Empire: The British and the Uganda Kingdoms, 1890-1902* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)
[13] David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: how the British saw their empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 62-63.

individual mandates differed widely. In some instances they were the most powerful

figure in a state and controlled much of the functioning of the government with the

hereditary ruler largely though never completely symbolic. This was the case in Zanzibar

where the British consul-general came to dictate policies to the ruling sultan. At the

opposite end of the scale we find that the local British official in Kuwait, in this case a

political agent, was largely present to ensure that no foreign powers interfered with the

government of the emir who was otherwise left to run his state much as he wished.

Despite the different mandates held by these frontline British officials, they were

often hugely influential in the administration of these states and how indirect rule was

conceptualised. Officials were more than cyphers executing the policy of their superiors;

they were the key figures in a chain of colonial authority that connected the periphery of

the empire directly to imperial authorities in Calcutta and London. The works of

Robinson and Gallagher as well as Malcolm Yapp have shown how these frontline agents

were able to wield great power on the expanding imperial frontier.[14] Michel Fisher and

James Onley have underscored this importance with particular reference to indirect rule

in India and the Persian Gulf, illustrating that even comparatively junior officials had a

major impact on the course of colonial expansion.[15] Moreover, these officials were not

always so junior ranking; Lords Dufferin, Cromer, Curzon, and Lugard, all major figures

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[14] Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher with Alice Denny, *Africa and the Victorians: the Official Mind of Imperialism* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1961), 468; Malcolm Yapp, *Strategies of British India: Britain, Iran and Afghanistan 1798-1850* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 588.

[15] Michael H. Fisher, *Indirect Rule in India: residents and the residency system, 1764-1858* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991), 21; James Onley, *The Arabian Frontier of the British Raj, merchants, rulers, and the British in the nineteenth-century Gulf* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 189.

in later imperial history, were critical to placing Egypt, the Gulf, and Nigeria under indirect rule.

The administrative structure of the British Empire was fairly complex given that there was no central 'ministry of empire'. Three agencies, the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office, and the Government of India, all launched projects of colonial expansion using indirect rule in the late nineteenth century. Each of these agencies had relatively clearly delineated responsibilities, and oversaw discrete though occasionally overlapping spheres of authority. This meant that the ultimate authority for the government of the British Empire was only centralised at the level of the Cabinet in London. For the purposes of this study the key members of the Cabinet were the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary, the Colonial Secretary, and the India Secretary. Later Victorian politics were dominated by a handful of major figures, including most famously, William Gladstone, Benjamin Disraeli, and Lord Salisbury. These three, a Liberal and two Conservatives, who were all prime minister for multiple terms, along with a comparatively tiny political elite controlled imperial politics at the metropole. The rivalry between Disraeli and Gladstone is famous for its vitriol and impassioned and witty exchanges in the House of Commons; however, this masks an overarching ideological consistency held broadly by the political classes in late Victorian Britain. T.G. Otte had shown in his study of the Foreign Office in this period that British foreign policy goals and methods were highly consistent whether there was a Conservative or Liberal Foreign Secretary.[16] While David Cannadine has shown that even though the

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[16] T.G. Otte, *The Foreign Office Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 143.

1832 and 1867 Reform Bills greatly expanded the franchise, the traditional ruling aristocracy continued to exert its control over domestic and imperial government, regardless of party political affiliation.[17] As will be illustrated throughout this work, this was also broadly the case with respect to the use of indirect rule. In effect, no matter what party occupied the government benches in Parliament, collaboration with local princes became the *de facto* official method of colonial government in the Muslim world.

While the political heads of the Government ministries who sat in the Cabinet came and went, under them was a comparatively small coterie of permanent officials who supervised the administration of the British Empire. Like their political superiors, these various departments with their different histories and remits were broadly consistent in terms of ideology and culture and inclined to favour indirect rule.

The Foreign Office was principally the diplomatic branch of the British Government, tasked with administering the many embassies and consulates around the world. The colonial government role of the Foreign Office was, therefore, secondary to its liaising with foreign states, especially the other great powers such as France and Russia. The colonial branch of the Foreign Office, as will be shown, grew out of this diplomatic function. In the two territories that the Foreign Office brought under indirect rule, Egypt and Zanzibar, diplomats found their roles transformed from representatives of the British in an independent state to that of agents of a power that was gaining increasing authority over the local state.

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[17] David Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1999), 711.

The Colonial Office, in contrast to the Foreign Office, was principally tasked with overseeing the administration of the bulk of Britain's oversees possessions. However, not all territories under the Colonial Office were treated alike. The vast majority of the territories under the Colonial Office were either directly ruled, this includes the majority of the Caribbean, Mediterranean, sub-Saharan African, Asian, and Pacific Colonies, or were 'white settler' colonies under a form of self-rule like Canada and Australia. All of these myriad territories came under various levels of control by the Colonial Office which despite the relative antiquity of the colonial empire, dating back in the new world to the sixteenth century, was only created as a standalone ministry in 1854. This came after the office of the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies was divided into two ministries, one to administer the Army and one for the Colonies. Douglas Young argued that this earlier government department was the product of effectively eighteenth century thinking by which a single member of the Cabinet controlled apparently distinct branches of the government, and conversely, where spheres like foreign policy and defence were divided into multiple ministries.[18]

However, by the middle of the Victorian period, the Colonial Office had developed into a standalone department of state, with a corps of civil servants tasked with a clear mandate, in this case to oversee the administration of much of the colonial empire. Young's work is especially important as it demonstrates how in the early to mid nineteenth century dedicated civil servants from the middle classes in the British Government gained the upper hand over the previous administrative model which was

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[18] Douglas MacMurray Young, *The Colonial Office in the early nineteenth century* (London: Longmans, 1961), 4-10.

marked by transitory cliques surrounding political figures.[19] These civil servants, along with their colleagues in the field and political superiors, were key to forming the network of individuals who supported the dissemination of indirect rule.

Several indirectly ruled territories were added to the remit of the Colonial Office in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The majority of these were Muslim states in Malaya and Northern Nigeria and are detailed later. There were some small non-Muslim states like Tonga in the Pacific and Swaziland in Southern Africa that came under a form of indirect rule around the turn of the twentieth century. However, just as with the Foreign Office, the administration of indirectly ruled territories was not the main function of the Colonial Office. For most of the history of the British Empire worldwide, the principal form of colonial government was direct rule. Thomas McClendon has shown that in the case of southern Africa specifically, agents of the Colonial Office were keen to displace pre-colonial elites and impose direct rule.[20] This was often the case elsewhere in the empire, whether in southern Africa, Canada, or Australia. Most colonial officials were opposed to allowing precolonial political structures to retain a significant place within the colonial state. For the Colonial Office then, the integration of local princes, first in Malaya and later in Africa and the Pacific, was a major policy shift.

From 1858 the India Office supervised the administration of British India. However, unlike the territories under the control of the Foreign Office and Colonial Office, India was a large territory under the control of one body, the Government of India.

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[19] Young, *The Colonial Office in the early nineteenth century*, 69.
[20] Thomas McClendon "You Are What You Eat up: Deposing Chiefs in Early Colonial Natal, 1847-58" *The Journal of African History*, 47 (2) 2006: 259-260.

India was not administered through the Colonial Office for reasons that will be expanded upon in Chapters I and II. The India Office was created in 1858 to assume authority over India in the wake of the Indian Rebellion of 1857-58 and the dissolution of the Company's government. The India Office was therefore the last of the three ministries tasked with the administration of the British Empire to be created, though it had its foundations in the long history of the East India Company.

British India in the late nineteenth century was a vast enterprise. In his works James Onley has shown that scope to which the Government of India, headed by a viceroy appointed by the British Government and based in Calcutta, controlled territories stretching from Somaliland in the west all the way to Burma in the east.[21] The relationship between the India Office and the Government of India was slightly different from that of the Foreign and Colonial Offices and the administrations under their control. David Gilmour has shown in his biography of the turn of the twentieth century Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon, that because he was head of such a large and important government and of such high status, he was able to behave at times as the political equal of his notional master, the Secretary of State for India in London.[22] The Government of India was unique within the British Empire and Calcutta was a powerful sub-metropole, not exactly a rival to the power of Westminster but certainly a crucial locus of imperial authority.

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[21] James Onley, "Raj Reconsidered: British India's Informal Empire and Spheres of Influence in Asia and Africa", *Asian Affairs, the Journal of the Royal Society for Asian Affairs,* 40 2009: 44-55.
[22] David Gilmour, *Curzon*: *Imperial Statesmen* (London: John Murray, 1994), 326.

The works of Thomas Metcalf, James Onley, and Robert J. Byth in particular
have highlighted the political importance of British India. Their works view the empire
as multi-polar, with several nodes of political power, as opposed to a radial view of the
empire with metropolitan London at the centre having discrete relationships with colonies
spread across the world. This later perspective is maintained by older works of imperial
history, such as that of Margery Perham, which will be discussed later. From a multi-
polar perspective, metropolitan London remains the principal centre of power in the
empire, but it was joined by several sub-metropoles of which Calcutta was the next most
significant, followed by smaller regional centres like Singapore and Cape Town. Metcalf,
Onley, and Byth all argue that British authorities in India saw the world from a
hybridized British-Indian perspective and sought to extend the strategic and economic
power of Calcutta. Metcalf, in his *India and the Indian Ocean Area 1860-1920,* shows
that the stretch of the Indian Ocean littoral controlled by Britain from Africa to Malaya
was dominated by Indian institutions and practices like legal codes, currency, architecture,
as well as Indian police, merchants, and labourers.[23] Onley has tried to delineate the very
geographical scope of British India by showing where its various agents were posted,
from remote Central Asian deserts to equally isolated East African oasis. Onley as well
as Blyth have also particularly highlighted the role of British India in the Middle East,
with Onley's the *Arabian Frontier of the British Raj* focusing on Persia and the Persian
Gulf, and Blyth's *the Empire of the Raj: India, Eastern Africa, and the Middle East 1858-*

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[23] Thomas Metcalf, *Imperial Connections, India and the Indian Ocean Area, 1860-1920* (Berkeley:
University of California Press, 2007)

1947, paying particular attention to the role of the Government of India in establishing an outpost in Aden in Southeast Arabia.[24]

The works of these historians were all hugely useful in the writing of this dissertation, both in framing the wider work, and especially in regards to the chapters on Malaya and the Persian Gulf and Zanzibar.   However, this work qualifies current scholarship regarding the scope of India within the British Empire by expanding the definition of British India still further. It does so by showing that the intellectual and political influence of the Indian Empire stretched very nearly from the Atlantic in Nigeria to the Pacific in Malaya.

Where this study most conspicuously differs from the above cited works, however, is in its focus. Metcalf sought to illustrate the extent to which British Indian institutions of all varieties, from law codes to architecture, had an impact on the territories surrounding India. This present work, in contrast, seeks to illustrate how one type of colonial government, indirect rule, was born of Indian practice and redeployed elsewhere in Asia and Africa. However, unlike the works of Onley and Blyth, this is not principally an administrative study, focused on the structure and functioning of governing agencies. Rather it is an intellectual and cultural study that seeks to chart the genealogy of this British Indian method of government as it was imposed over several Muslim states outside of India. As such, much of its focus is on some of the same institutions and individuals that Metcalf, Onley, and Blyth studied, but it is particularly interested in how they contributed to the development of regimes of indirect rule.

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[24] Onley, *The Arabian Frontier of the British Raj*; Robert J. Blyth, *The Empire of the Raj: India, Eastern Africa and the Middle East, 1858-1947* (Houndmills, Hants: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003)

Moving beyond an administrative study means that this work looks at not only who were the key actors and what they did but also what they thought about their role. As such, this work deals very little with the day-to-day governing of these colonies. Rather, by looking at a variety of kinds of evidence left by the architects of indirect rule, this dissertation argues that Indian methods of indirect rule became entrenched in what has been called the 'official mind.' This term was popularised by Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher in their *Africa and the Victorians: the Official Mind of Imperialism* in 1961. In this seminal work, Robinson and Gallagher argue that the British imperial classes shared an overarching ideological perspective based on the strategic importance of India.[25] Other writers, like Katheryn Tidrick and T.G. Otte, have further contributed to the study of the 'official mind.' In her *Empire and the English Character,* Tidrick uses several case studies from the empire in the nineteenth century to show that even though imperialism was often predicated on armed force, the British tended to prefer the use of collaboration and cheaper and more peaceful displays of authority to maintain their power.[26] T.G. Otte in his *The Foreign Office Mind* shows how the later Victorian diplomatic headquarters of the empire was dominated by concerns over how to strengthen an empire while also maintaining bilateral relationships with other European powers.[27] This dissertation seeks to expand this existing literature by showing that the 'official mind', in addition to placing the strategic importance of India at the forefront, also used the historical and contemporary example of British India in the repeated use of indirect

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[25] Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, 76.
[26] Katheryn Tidrick, *Empire and the English Character: The Illusion of Authority* (London: IB Tauris, 1990), 197
[27] Otte, *The Foreign Office Mind,* 140-143.

rule. And moreover, the British architects of indirect rule were operating under an overtly Indian framework, meaning that the 'official mind of imperialism' became a distinctly British-Indian hybrid.

Some of the best evidence for the working of the official mind in regards to indirect rule comes from extensive inventing of parallel traditions in each of these territories. The term 'the invention of tradition' comes from a collection of essays edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger. In this work several contributors illustrate how the nineteenth-century British Empire was marked by the deployment of several novel cultural constructs spuriously given the guise of antiquity. An example from the collection is the 'Highland myth' of Scottish culture, with patterns of tartan kilts specific to individual clans being fabricated by small circle of romantics and entrepreneurs around Sir Walter Scott in preparation for George IV's state visit to Edinburgh in 1822.[28] However, with regards to the history of indirect rule, the key section in this work is Bernard Cohn's 'Representing Authority in Victorian India'. In this essay the variety of invented ceremonial and symbolic rituals devised by the Victorians for their Indian subjects, most especially the indirectly ruled princes, is explored.[29] As will be discussed in depth in Chapter II, this included large state pageants, called *darbars*, which included tens of thousands of participants and the creation of exclusive Indian orders of knighthood, including 'the Most Exalted Order of the Star of India' from which this work takes its title. Together these inventions and others like them were the product of a vision

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[28] Hugh Trevor-Roper "The Invention of Tradition: the Highland Tradition in Scotland" in Eric Habsbawm and Terrance Ranger, ed., *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 29-31.
[29] Bernard Cohn, 'Representing Authority in Victorian India' in Eric Habsbawm and Terrance Ranger, ed., *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 165.

of India as an ancient hierarchical civilisation which the British sought to preserve and dominate. Where this dissertation expands on Cohn is by showing how invented traditions were deployed elsewhere, though in modified form.

Another contributor to this collection, David Cannadine, who wrote on the evolution of the domestic rituals of the British Monarchy, has also contributed a broader work on ritual and empire in his *Ornamentalism*. In this work Cannadine argues that the deployment of these invented traditions around the empire was a product of a wish by the ruling classes to impose a pre-modern social hierarchy already lost in industrial Britain.[30] However, while *Ornamentalism* offers insight into the broader intellectual currents within the official mind, this work rejects this thesis, arguing instead that the British sought to preserve local hierarchies, under indirect rule, as they were broadly viewed as the best way to govern 'oriental' peoples. Although the British Empire was a powerful even revolutionary force for change, in the places it dominated this was not the necessarily the intent of its agents. David Washbrook argues that from the eighteenth century the British state was determined to exploit an understanding of India's past to justify and stabilise their regime.[31] Maria Misra claims in her "Colonial Officers and Gentlemen: the Globalisation of Tradition" that the British Empire was not always overtly or intentionally a force for modernisation.[32] Indeed, as the examples of indirect rule of Muslim states discussed in this work will demonstrate, the very reverse was true: the

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[30] David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: how the British saw their empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), xx.
[31] David Washbrook, "From Comparative Sociology to Global History: Britain and India in the Pre-History of Modernity" *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 40 (4) 1997: 438.
[32] Maria Misra "Colonial Officers and Gentlemen: the Globalisation of Tradition", *Journal of Global History* (3) 2008, 155.

empire was often deliberately framed in conservative terms that are seemingly at odds with modernity.

This work contributes to the literature of invented by tradition in two ways. Firstly, as mentioned above, it reverses David Cannadine's position that these traditions were the product of British officials imposing idealised pre-modern European social structures on the colonised. Instead, it shows that these officials widely believed they were preserving existing local social structures in the colonies they were drawing under indirect rule. And secondly, rather than looking at invented traditions like knighthoods and other honours as components of a single technology of imperial rule, as has been the norm in imperial historiography, the work parses apart their various meanings. Cannadine and Cohn identified that the use of imperial honours was a key method of British rule. The following chapters explain why specific honours were given to specific rulers and what this tells us about the relative place of Muslim princes and their states within the empire.

Lastly, this work does not seek to achieve a catalogue of every Muslim territory under indirect rule in this period, although it does discuss the vast majority of them. It excludes territories, such as the Emirate of Afghanistan, whose foreign affairs between 1879 and 1919 were ceded by the Treaty of Gandamak to the Government of India.[33] It also excludes the Sultanate of the Maldives which was under a similar arrangement with

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[33] Charles Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads relating to India and Neighboring Countries (revised and continued up to 1929).* (Calcutta: Govt. of India Central Publications Branch, 1929-33), IX:441-443.

the Government of British Ceylon from 1887.[34] These states, both Muslim monarchies

under a level of British control, were not indirect ruled. Rather they were protectorates

who were shorn of some sovereign powers, namely control over foreign policy, but

whose internal administration the British did not, or could not in the case of Afghanistan,

seek to direct. These situations are similar in some ways to indirect rule, and indeed, in

places like Zanzibar and Oman, it was this type of protectorate which evolved into

indirect rule.

For a small island like Britain to dominate so much of the world it was necessary

to cultivate many types of collaborative relationships: indirect rule is only one of these.

Elsewhere, like Afghanistan and the Maldives, different types of imperial relationships

developed. These places were in a hybrid situation between outright independence and

more formal indirect rule. As opposed to the states under indirect rule, in Afghanistan

and the Maldives no powerful British resident reconceptualised the political structures of

the state, the succession of the monarchs was not dictated by the colonial power, nor were

the emir and sultan, respectively, obliged to participate in the symbolic rituals associated

with the subject-princes of the British Empire. These are some of the core attributes of

indirect rule as will be discussed throughout this work, which originated in India before

being disseminated to Malaya, Egypt, the Persian Gulf and Zanzibar, and Northern

Nigeria.

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[34] Urmila Phadnis and Ela Dutt Luithui, "The Maldives Enter World Politics" *Asian Affairs,* 8 (3) 1981: 168-169.

I

India 1757-1857: the Genesis of Indirect Rule

     In 1757 a colonel in the service of the East India Company connived, prior to the Battle of Plassey, to have the Nawab of Bengal deposed in favour of one of his deputies. For this Robert Clive took home a fortune in plunder; Mir Jafar gained a rich kingdom; and the East India Company dramatically expanded its power. Mir Jafar, as the new Nawab of Bengal, owed allegiance to the Mughal Emperor; however, he also owed his throne to the Company.[1] For the first time in the long history of European activity in India, a large and important territory came under the enduring rule of a Western power.[2] For two and a half centuries previous to the Battle of Plassey, first the Portuguese and later the English, Dutch, and French had been active mostly on the margins of India, engaged in trade and other commercial ventures.[3] In a few instances some of the European trading companies were successful in gaining control of small coastal enclaves that they fortified and from which they directed their commercial activities.[4] The Battle of Plassey was consequently a turning point in Indian history and is often and rightly noted as one of the key events in the British transition into an imperial power in South Asia.[5]

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[1] Peter James Marshall, *Bengal-the British bridgehead: Eastern India, 1740-1828* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 137.
[2] Robert Travers, *Ideology and Empire in Eighteenth-Century India: the British in Bengal* (Cambridge) Cambridge University Press, 2007), 31.
[3] Biplab Dasgupta, "Trade in Pre-Colonial Bengal" *Social Scientist*, 28 (5/6) 2000: 60.
[4] Marshall, *Bengal: The British Bridgehead*, 1.
[5] Nicholas Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2006), 10.

What is less often highlighted is that the British did not take over the direct administration of Bengal at this time. Rather they imposed a system which could be called proto-indirect rule, wielding control through Mir Jafar whose position as Nawab at least outwardly conformed to contemporary Mughal practices.[6] While this system collapsed shortly after and was replaced by a more direct form of rule in 1764, it was by indirect rule through a local prince that Clive and other Company officials first governed Bengal. And although the system of proto-indirect rule did not last in Bengal, partly because the British failed to delineate clearly the role and authority of the ruling Nawab, Clive and his successors, in particular Warren Hastings, continued to turn to indirect rule as a method for imperial expansion. For nearly two centuries thereafter, from 1757 to the creation of independent India and Pakistan in 1947, the British introduced and then manipulated power relationships though local rulers to extend and entrench their control over South Asia. It is also worth noting that from the outset the British particularly but not exclusively favoured the use of indirect rule for Muslim polities - in India, Mysore and the Rajput states are notable exceptions. The Mughal Empire itself was a Muslim state and so too were many of the rulers of its provinces, for example, Awadh in the north, Hyderabad in the south, and Bengal in the northeast. British power in India radiated from the Muslim-dominated south and east, and consequently came to control Muslim states early in their conquest of South Asia. Only later were Hindu, Sikh, and Buddhist ruled states, along with many more Muslim states, integrated into British India. British indirect

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[6] Sushil Chaudhury, *The Prelude to Empire: Plassey Revolution of 1757*, (New Delhi: Manohar, 2000), 162-163; Barbara Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and their States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 49.

rule of Muslim states therefore was a form of colonialism employed by agents of expansion from the middle of the eighteenth century until well into the twentieth.

This chapter will chart the genealogy of the idea of indirect rule in the decades after Plassey when the Company imposed its control over several Indian kingdoms, creating a network of client states that were key to the British expansion throughout the subcontinent.[7] It will then look at how, as the Company was reaching the pinnacle of its influence, some senior officials began to question and even deconstruct the system of indirect rule that had been introduced. In the early nineteenth century, many British officials came to regret the important role that Indian institutions, customs, and practices continued to enjoy under their rule and worked towards extending the direct rule of Europeans over all territories under the Company's sway. Widespread assumptions about the inferiority of South Asian institutions (which became part of the orientalist canon), and the inability of Indians to govern themselves effectively, were common at all levels of the imperial establishment. However, not all British officials in India shared these opinions. Even in the heyday of aggressively modernising and westernising liberalism from the 1820s through the 1840s, many British officials for political and economic reasons remained vocal supporters of maintaining Indian institutions, most especially princely states, as a bulwark of British power. These voices came from more conservative officials in India, including former governors of Indian provinces, Sir Thomas Munro and Sir John Malcolm, who learned the value of maintaining local allies first hand. However, significant individuals in Britain, including even the great liberal

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[7] Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and their States*, 85; Michael H. Fisher, *Indirect Rule in India: residents and the residency system, 1764-1858* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991), 21.

thinker John Stuart Mill, also supported the idea, if not always the practice, of indirect rule.[8] Liberals, and Mill in particular, according to Lynn Zastipoul, were keen to include Indians in the administration of British India, and the princes were the most obvious candidates for this role.[9] And in 1857, a century after Plassey, the opinion of the officials who appreciated the value of indirect rule was apparently validated with the outbreak of a rebellion of soldiers in the directly ruled British provinces, which was supressed with the help of the princes.

One outcome of the 1857-58 rebellion was the end of the East India Company; it relinquished its responsibilities to the British Government. The rebellion also heralded a new phase of British thinking about the value of princes in the governance of India. Gone were the days when the British in India actively deposed allied princes and annexed their territories.[10] The political structure of India of the 1860s and beyond was expressly and overtly conceptualised by the British as being a collaborative - if highly unequal - effort between British officials and the princes and other Indian elites.[11] Consequently, indirect rule, which was born in the early expansion of the Company and came to be employed by Clive and his successors before becoming seen as a barrier to good government, was again embraced by British officialdom as a key method for governing Indian people. As will be shown, this was not an impulsive reaction to the 'mutiny' that

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[8] John Stuart Mill, "A Few Words on Non-intervention" Originally published in *Fraser's Magazine*, December 1859, reprinted in *Dissertations and Discussions* (New York: Holt, 1882), III: 254-255.
[9] Lynn Zastoupil, *John Stuart Mill and India*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 87.
[10] C.A. Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 200.
[11] "Proclamation by the Queen to the Princes, Chiefs, and the People of India, 1 November, 1858" in A. Berridale Keith, *Speeches and Documents on Indian Policy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1922), 1:382-386.

would later fade in popularity as soon as the last of the rebels had been dispersed, exiled, or killed. After the assumption of Crown rule in 1858, the Indian princes and the idea of indirect rule gained an almost permanent institutional favour that lasted for decades.[12] Numerous officials in Britain and India in the years following 1857 expanded and developed an array of institutions and practices to bolster indirect rule in South Asia. By the end of the period of this study, on the eve of the First World War, the princes had become central to how the British conceptualised their Indian Empire.

The first part of this work is divided into two chapters: the first will outline the rise and fall of indirect rule, leading up to the events of 1857-58. The second will look at the rebirth of indirect rule and its place as a central tenet of British imperialism in India, and will show how these ideas were in turn transferred and transformed by experiences of colonialism elsewhere in Muslim Asia and Africa at the end of the nineteenth century. This is not meant to be an exhaustive survey of all opinions expressed by British officials on indirect rule in this period as such an undertaking would occupy many volumes. Rather, the chapter traces the ideological thread of indirect rule in British India from its early territorial foundation to its apogee.

The India that Robert Clive found when he first arrived from Britain in 1744 was rather different than the one he would leave for the last time, shrouded in controversy, in 1767. Clive began his career as a writer or clerk at a time when the East India Company

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[12] David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: how the British saw their empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 41-57.

was still principally a commercial enterprise.[13] Around 1750 the territorial possessions of

the British in India, as represented by the Company, comprised little more than the land

underneath a handful of small fortified costal enclaves they had acquired over the

preceding century. The three principal English settlements in South Asia at this time

were Bombay, Calcutta, and Clive's first port of call, Madras. From these entrepôts trade

was conducted across the subcontinent, in competition principally with the rival French

Compagnie française des Indes orientales. Soon after Clive arrived in India this rivalry

began to change the very nature of the British role in India dramatically.[14] The

Honourable East India Company had been granted its Royal Charter in 1600 during the

reign of Elizabeth I. From that time right down to when Clive began his clerkship in

Madras, the company was a largely seaborne commercial enterprise whose personnel

were meant to facilitate its mercantile activities.[15] The Company did maintain small

armed units which were officered by Europeans and manned by Indians and Europeans.

However, these had not yet swelled to become massive armies of conquest, but were

rather defensive forces raised to protect the Company's small coastal enclaves in the

turbulent political climate born out of the decline of Mughal power.[16]

     Clive was not the only Company official of consequence in eighteenth-century

India; however, for the purpose of understanding the genesis of British indirect rule in

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[13] Philip J. Stern, *The Company-State: Corporate Sovereignty and the Early Modern Foundations of the British Empire in India*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 210-212; James P. Lawford, *Clive: Proconsul in India*, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1976), 27-29.
[14] Lawford, *Clive*, 48-49.
[15] K. N. Chaudhuri, "The English East India Company in the 17th and 18th Centuries: A Premodern Multinational Organization" in Leonard Blussé and Femme Gaastra, ed., *Companies and Trade: essays on Overseas Trading Companies during the Ancien Régime* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 1981), 31.
[16] Chaudhury, *The Prelude to Empire*, 20-26

south Asia, his story is key. When Clive arrived in Madras, the English East India

Company was not even the most powerful European trading company in India, let alone a

significant power. India in the middle of the eighteenth century was politically divided

into a number of states of varying size. The Mughal Emperors continued to reign in

Delhi, but since the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 their direct authority was on the wane.[17]

As Mughal power withdrew back to northern and central India, it was replaced, not with

anarchy as had been the historiographical orthodox until recently, but with a patchwork

of overlapping political entities with varying degrees of autonomy.[18] Some of these

polities were the direct heirs to the Mughals, namely provinces like Bengal in the east and

Hyderabad in the south, whose rulers were the hereditary successors of viceroys

dispatched by the emperors in Delhi decades earlier. However, there were other political

actors in India aside from former Mughal viceroys, the British, and other Europeans. In

central and western India there were the Marathas, a confederacy of Hindu states which

carved out several important kingdoms and challenged Mughal power. So too did the

Sikhs of the Punjab and the Hindu Rajputs in the North West of the subcontinent, while

in the far south there were states that had never been under Mughal rule.[19]

Tossed into this mix were the Europeans. Up to this point the Europeans had been

mostly suppliants, eager to ingratiate themselves with the vastly powerful and wealthy

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[17] Hamida Khatoon "Aurangzeb's Policies and the Decline of the Mughal Empire" *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 37 (1) 1977: 191-192; John Richard, *Power, administration, and finance in Mughal India*, (Aldershot: Variorium, 1993), 309 ; Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Mughal State, 1526-1750*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 416.
[18] Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire,* 14-15.
[19] Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and their States*, 33.

Indian potentates to secure markets for trade.[20] It was not the British, however, but the French who first identified the potential gains to be made in eighteenth-century India for a European company willing to move beyond conventional mercantile activity. Clive's great rival was also in a way his mentor: Joseph-François, Marquis Dupleix. Clive's career was to a large degree a mirror of Dupleix's, who had been sent out to India to be a merchant and rose quickly through the ranks of the *Compagnie des Indes* and finished his Indian career as the head of his country's interests there, as governor-general of French India. Dupleix' successes were not won by his business acumen; he expanded the power of France through diplomacy, war, and conquest.[21]

In 1742 when Dupleix was put in charge of the *Compagnie,* India's geographical isolation from France meant that the office of governor-general, like his British opposite number, enjoyed great autonomy. Taking advantage of this freedom of action, Dupleix put into effect a project to expand French power in southern and eastern India. During several successful campaigns in the 1740s, the French assembled a large and powerful coalition of local rulers, and backed by an army which included units trained on modern European lines, set out to make France politically and commercially supreme in southern India.[22] That part of India included Madras where Robert Clive was working for the rival English company as a clerk. Dupleix's campaigns, specifically his brief occupation of Madras, changed the trajectory of Clive's career. Clive took a commission in the

[20] Philip J. Stern "'A Politie of Civill & Military Power': Political Thought and the Late Seventeenth Century Foundations of the East India Company-State" *Journal of British Studies*, 47 (2) 2008: 274.
[21] Bruce Lenman, 'Colonial wars and imperial instability' in Peter James Marshall, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire II: The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 159-160.
[22] Daniel A. Baugh, "Withdrawing from Europe: Anglo-French Maritime Geopolitics, 1750-1800" *The International History Review*, 20 (1) 1998: 15.

Company's Madras Army so as to help defend it in the face of France's revolutionary agenda in India.[23] The finer points of what came to be called the Carnatic Wars are not germane to this study.[24] However, what needs to be underscored about this period in Indian history is that it was then that Europeans began in earnest to expand their power in South Asia. Clive won his spurs, as it were, fighting Dupleix and his allies in Southern India. In 1754, however, with French power curtailed, the British did not attempt to return to the *status quo ante* Dupleix, but rather combined his military and diplomatic ideas with their élan for commerce and began to expand their power still further into the interior of India where it had never extended before. The conquest of Bengal in 1757 is the paradigmatic example of this sea change in the goals and activities of the East India Company, following the model of their French rival.[25]

The Battle of Plassey came at the end of a series of events that propelled the British from a tenuous position in their city of Calcutta to being a central player in the government of a vast and populous province in northern India.[26] This episode was part of a the Seven Years War, a wider global struggle against France, the outcome of which found British power greatly expanded in the North America, Europe, and India. The excuse for the conquest of Bengal was revenge for the expulsion of the British from Calcutta and the infamous 'black hole of Calcutta' incident that followed it.[27] Calcutta had since the previous century been the entrepôt for British trade into Bengal. Like

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[23] Lawford, *Clive*, 98-99.
[24] For a fuller explanation of the military and diplomatic aspects of this period see: Bruce Lenman, *Britain's Colonial Wars, 1688-1783*, (London: Longman, 2001), 97-103.
[25] Stern, *The Company-State,* 212.
[26] D. C. Verma, *Plassey to Buxar: A Military Study* (New Delhi: K. B. Publications, 1976), 92.
[27] Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire*, 1-2

Madras and Bombay it was just a small port city with a limited number of fortifications

and it was therefore secure only at the pleasure of the local ruler. In Bengal the local

ruler was Nawab Siraj-ad-Daula and in 1756 when the British incurred his displeasure for

disobeying him by expanding the city's defences, largely intended to forestall an attack

from the French, he seized Calcutta.[28] Upon taking the city, forces loyal to the Nawab

rounded up and imprisoned a number of Europeans in a poorly ventilated and cramped

cell. In the extreme heat and humidity of the Bengali climate, many of the Europeans

soon succumbed in the so-called 'Black Hole', an event which rapidly became

mythologised by the British and used as an excuse to justify not only the recapture of

Calcutta but also the conquest of Bengal and the deposition of the nawab.[29] Plassey came

nearly a year to the day after the Black Hole incident and pitted the Company's force of

about two thousand European and Indian troops commanded by Colonel Clive against the

nawab's vastly larger force of in excess of fifty thousand troops.[30] This British victory,

however, was not the story of plucky underdogs defeating an arrogant foe in open combat.

Clive was to demonstrate his skills as a diplomat at Plassey, by arranging for Mir Jafar,

one of the principal generals under Siraj-ad-Daula, and the forces under his command to

defect at a key moment, and causing the day to be won without fully even engaging in

battle.[31] The British were also able to win the support of Bengali merchant and banking

magnates, most importantly the financier Jagat Seth, who backed Clive's gambit and then

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[28] Peter James Marshall, *Problems of Empire: Britain and India 1757-1813* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1968), 18; Chaudhury, *The Prelude to Empire*, 47-48.
[29] Peter James Marshall, *East Indian Fortunes: The British In Bengal in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), 256.
[30] Michael Edwards, *The Battle of Plassey and the Conquest of Bengal* (London: Batsford, 1963), 142-143.
[31] Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire*, 16.

extended the credit that allowed the Company to govern newly-won Bengal.[32] No time

was lost in hailing this as a great victory of British arms; Clive was made a Major-

General and in time was knighted and raised to the peerage as Baron Clive of Plassey.

   In the aftermath of Plassey, Mir Jafar was made nawab and the elements of the

Bengal state were put back into motion after the battle. During this period Bengal came

under a sort of proto-indirect rule where the British wielded power but pre-colonial

political agents, most importantly the nawab, continued to exercise some authority.[33] The

post-Plassey settlement, however, was fundamentally unstable and rapidly collapsed in

the years following Clive's victory. Northern India in the middle of the eighteenth

century was home to several competing powers, the factions that Clive was able to

exploit at Plassey in order to displace Siraj-ad-Daula did not disappear after the battle.

While in later iterations of indirect rule in India and elsewhere the British delineated both

their authority, and the authority of local powers very clearly, in Bengal of the 1750s and

60s the situation was much more turbulent. This led to discord and ultimately a breach in

relations between Mir Jafar and the Company that resulted in him being replaced by his

son in law Mir Qasim.[34] Mir Qasim, however, did not prove to be a compliant puppet

and instead resisted the Company's directives. This, in turn, led to another breach

between the Nawab and the Company, this time resulting in their forces meeting at the

Battle of Buxar in 1764. Present at this battle, in addition to Mir Qasim and his forces,

were also the neighbouring Nawab of Awadh and the Mughal Emperor himself, Shah

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[32] Sushil Chaudhury "Merchants, Companies and Rulers: Bengal in the Eighteenth Century" *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 31 (1) 1988: 90-91.
[33] Marshall, *Bengal: The British Bridgehead*, 80-81.
[34] Marshall, *Bengal: The British Bridgehead*, 85.

Alam II, and their armies. Together these three forces could have proved to have been a formidable opponent. However, despite being assembled together, their forces did not act in unison. Rather the much smaller Company force, under Sir Hector Munro, was able to exploit the divisions in the opposition's camp and win the day.[35] This British victory over a vast Mughal army resulted in a number of political changes in Bengal. The decisive nature of the battle allowed the British to expand further their control over Bengal, largely bypassing the nawab, as they negotiated directly with the Mughal Emperor. The product of these negotiations was monumental as the emperor, through the treaty of Allahabad, granted the office of *diwan* for Bengal, as well as the adjacent territories of Bihar and Orissa, to the Company. The *diwan* was an office in the Mughal state charged with the collection of revenue in the province. In theory this was a middling position, junior to the nawab, but in practice the control over revenue made the Company, with the *diwan*, enormously powerful.[36]

Buxar and the events that followed from it, therefore, spelt the end of any real semblance of indirect rule in Bengal. Simultaneously, however, it also marked the further expansion of indirect British authority beyond Bengal. Clive remained at the centre of this project, despite not being in command at Buxar, nor even in India at the time of the battle. He returned in 1765, placed in overall charge of the Company's affairs in Bengal, just in time to conduct the negotiations to settle the disputes that led to

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[35] Douglas M. Peers, "Innovation and Adaptation: Military Transformations in the Armies of Mir Qasim of Bengal and Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan of Mysore", in Kaushik Roy and Peter Lorge, eds, Warfare and Society in China and India: a Comparative Analysis, New York: Routledge, in press (2013)
 Kaushik Roy, "Military Synthesis in South Asia: Armies, Warfare, and Indian Society, c. 1740-1849" *The Journal of Military History*, 69 (3) 2005: 685.
[36] Marshall, *Bengal: The British Bridgehead*, 89.

Buxar.[37] With these negotiations, Clive, along with acquiring the *diwani* rights to Bengal

from Shah Alam II, also continued his project of expansion by having the Nawab of

Awadh sign the treaty of Allahabad on 25 August 1764. In the key articles of the treaty

the Nawab agreed to join with the British in a military alliance, reduce the size of his

army, pay a large tribute to the Company, allow them to post a garrison in his dominions,

and open his borders to their trade.[38] Clive, in the following passage of a letter sent to the

directors of the East India Company, justifies his actions following the Battle of Buxar:

> I shall not enter into the motives which caused the deposition of Meer
> Jaffer [sic], nor into the fundamental cause of the present war with Cossim
> Ali Khan [sic]. It is sufficient to say, that these two events have lost us all
> the confidence of the natives. To restore this, ought to be our principal
> object; and the best means will, in my opinion, be by establishing a
> moderation in the advantages which may be reserved for the Company, or
> allotted to individuals in their service. If ideas of conquest were to be the
> rule of our conduct, I foresee that we should by necessity, be led from
> acquisition to acquisition, until we had the whole empire up in arms
> against us; and whilst we lay under the great disadvantage of fighting
> without a single ally, (for who could wish us well?) the natives, left
> without European allies, would find, in there own recourses, means of
> carrying on a war against us in a much more soldierly manner than they
> even thought of when their reliance on European allies encouraged their
> natural indolence.[39]

Clive is arguing against moving too hastily without securing local support, a theme that

would be echoed again and again by later architects of indirect rule elsewhere in the

British Empire. The Company, through the treaty of Allahabad, laid the foundations for

its position in Awadh which would in turn evolve into one of the first princely states

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[37] Abdul Majid Khan, *The Transition in Bengal, 1756-1775*: a study of Saiyid Muhammad Reza Khan
(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1969), 64.
[38] Charles Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads relating to India and
Neighbouring Countries (revised and continued up to 1929)*. (Calcutta: Govt. of India Central Publications
Branch, 1929-33), II: 67-69; Roy, "Military Synthesis in South Asia", 664.
[39] John Malcolm, *Life of Lord Clive* (London: John Murray, 1836), II: 310-311.

under British indirect rule.   It was coercive diplomatic agreements, like the treaty of Allahabad, that Barbara Ramusack and Michael Fisher have identified as one of the key tools used by the British to convert autonomous Indian polities into indirectly ruled princely states.[40]

In time the office of Governor of Bengal expanded its authority and became elevated to Governor-General of India, the political head of all of the British territories in the Subcontinent.[41] Clive's role in the expansion of the authority of the Company is hugely important. However, it was his successor, Warren Hastings, who greatly expanded the practice of indirect rule, further subordinating more Indian states to Company's control. Hastings was born in 1732 and was sent to Calcutta in 1750, like Clive, as a clerk in the East India Company's ranks. Hastings was junior to Clive and benefitted from his patronage in the 1750s.[42] After Plassey, Hastings was handpicked by Clive to be the resident to the court of the Mir Jafar and therefore played a major role in the early history of British indirect rule. In 1764 he was involved with the political conflict that led to Buxar, the subsequent treaty of Allahabad, and the imposition of the Company's direct rule over Bengal.[43]

In the wake of the rupture with the nawab that led to the Buxar, both Hastings and his superior, Henry Vansittart, the Governor of Bengal, bowed to pressure from other Company officials and resigned. However, Hastings' resignation was only temporary as

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[40] Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and their states*, 50; Michael H. Fisher "Indirect Rule in the British Empire: The Foundations of the Residency System in India (1764-1858)" *Modern Asian Studies,* 18 (3) 1984: 393-395.
[41] Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties*, II: 67.
[42] Lawford, *Clive: Proconsul of India*, 289.
[43] Marshall, *Bengal: The British Bridgehead*, 89.

he was not rich and was therefore forced to return to the employ of the Company in 1769 when he was dispatched to Madras. His tenure as an official in the southern Indian province was short but successful, as three years later, in 1773, he was appointed to the new post of Governor-General of India.[44] This appointment came with the Regulating Act of 1773, one of Parliament's first major intrusions in the Company's administration, marking the beginning of a series of acts regarding the government of India. The new office of governor-general gave Hastings the authority to govern not only Bengal but also expand his control over the defence and foreign policy of all of the Company's possessions.

Although Buxar and the treaty of Allahabad that followed it occurred seven years before Hastings' return to Bengal, the province was still experiencing serious internal and external problems which threatened the British regime. Over the next thirteen years Hastings worked to consolidate the Company's newly won authority so that by the time he left India for good in 1785 the political and intellectual foundation for the British conquest of India would be in place. Central to this project was the subjugation of a number of Indian states that came to form the core of the indirectly ruled portion of British India. Indeed, during his tenure in Bengal, Hastings was keen to exploit relationships with Indian elites in both the directly ruled territories of Bengal, and in the creation of the bulwark of indirectly ruled states around the British territories.[45] One of the key policies he executed in Bengal was his integration of the landed elite, the

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[44] The title was initially actually 'Governor-General of the Presidency of Fort William', that being the official name of British Bengal, but following convention and for the sake of expediency 'India' is used here.
[45] Fisher, *Indirect rule in India*, 54.

zamindari, into the colonial state. These pre-colonial elites were used by Hastings to

form the revenue-collecting foundation of his government.[46] By pressing the *zamindars*

to collaborate, Hastings not only gained local backing for the British regime but also

badly needed revenue to pay for the large armies required to defend the Company's remit.

This fiscal-military state gave Hastings and his successors the ability to raise large armies

for defence and conquest.[47] However, it also gave the British the leverage to coerce local

princes into signing treaties that joined them to the Company's cause. In the same way

that the traditional *zamindari* class had been employed to reinforce the internal

government of Bengal, Hastings looked to the princes to expand British control further

into the Indian subcontinent.[48]

India in the later eighteenth century was divided into several old and new states

jockeying for power in the volatile political climate. Even though the British in Bengal,

as well as their colleagues in Bombay and Madras, enjoyed important major military

victories and had many local allies, they were far from the dominant power in India when

Hastings became governor-general. In the south they were rivalled by the Muslim

Sultans of Mysore, while in central India they were challenged by the Maratha

confederacy of Hindu states. The way that Hastings and his immediate successors met

these rivals led directly to the creation of the princely state system of indirect rule.[49]

During Hastings' tenure as governor-general one of the principal external threats

was to the immediate west of Bengal. In this period three significant powers operated in

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[46] Travers, *Ideology and empire in eighteenth-century India*, 113.
[47] Douglas M Peers, *Between Mars and Mammon: colonial armies and the Garrison State in India, 1819-1835*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 1995), 15; 244.
[48] Marshal, *Bengal: The British Bridgehead*, 101; Fisher, *Indirect rule in India*, 54.
[49] Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and their States*, 54-55.

this part of northern India: there was the Muslim Nawab of Awadh, who from the time of

the treaty of Allahabad in 1765 was ostensibly an ally of the British. The other major

Muslim polity in the region were the Rohillas, a tribe of Muslim Pashtun émigrés who

had settled in the Central Indian hills in the previous century when the region was firmly

under Mughal rule. By the end of the eighteenth century, however, the region was not so

stable, and during the 1760s the Rohillas came under attack from the third power of note

in the region, the Hindu Marathas. During this conflict the Rohilla leadership turned to

the Nawab of Awadh for military assistance in return for a large sum of money.[50] The

Nawab agreed and his forces ejected the Marathas but afterwards the Rohillas reneged on

their deal and refused to pay. This, in turn, drove Siraj-ad-Daula to ask his new allies, the

British, for help in subjugating the Rohillas.

The Rohilla War of 1773-74, as it became called, gave Hastings the opportunity

to push British power deep into northern India. In a treaty between the Company and the

Awadh in 1783, Hastings managed to persuade the nawab to pay the Company to

dispatch its forces to help defeat the Rohillas. Hastings also conceded to the Nawab the

right to take control of territories that had been under Maratha control, but insisted that

these territories, like all of Awadh, be held under the same onerous conditions stipulated

in the treaty of Allahabad.[51] This secured further concessions for the Company,

including opportunities for trade and for positioning their troops in these territories. In so

doing the dominions of the Nawab of Awadh grew substantially at the expense of the

Marathas and the Rohillas, but it was really the British who benefited as Awadh became a

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[50] Aitchison, *Treaties and Sunnads*, II: 5.
[51] Aitchison, *Treaties and Sunnads*, II: 73-74.

buffer against the Marathas yet remained dependent on the Company for its own defence. The Rohilla war, therefore, further consolidated Awadh as client of the Company.[52] Over the following years indirect rule over Awadh was more fully entrenched through expanded treaties which were enforced by the dispatching of British residents to the court of the nawab.[53]

Hastings was establishing, through treaties, military alliances, and residents, the foundations for an expansive system of indirect rule in India. In 1777 Hastings wrote a letter outlining his diplomatic goals in India. In it he said he was intent on "extending the influence of the British nation to every part of India, not too remote from their possessions, without enlarging the circle of their defence, or involving them in hazardous or indefinite engagements." And to do this he would "accept of the allegiance of such of our neighbours as shall sure to be enlisted among the friends and allies of the king of Great Britain."[54] Hastings was keen to find 'friends and allies' wherever he could, including even the ruler of the defeated Rohillas, who in 1774 was granted a new territory north and west of Awadh, becoming the Nawab of Rampur.[55] Hastings, therefore, managed to have the Company emerge from the Rohilla war with both sides entrenched under its indirect rule.

Michael Fisher had identified the British Resident as the key aspect of Hasting's regime that allowed for the expansion of this form of colonial government.[56] Fisher's studies of the Residency system in the British Empire are useful for showing how

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[52] Jos J. L. Gommans, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire, C.1710-1780*, (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 178.
[53] Fisher, *Indirect Rule in India,* 432-433.
[54] Lionel James Trotter, *Warren Hastings* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1892), 134-135.
[55] Aitchison, *Treaties and Sunnads*, II: 6; Gommans, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire*, 178-180.
[56] Fisher, *Indirect Rule in India,* 54-55.

administrative ideas were born in India and redeployed elsewhere in the colonial empire. In his *Indirect Rule in India,* the genesis of the Residency system devised in Hasting's India is shown to be a vital administrative component in the expansion of the Company before the rebellion of 1857. Fisher argues that indirect rule began when its senior officials used the Company's expanding military prowess and political clout to coerce the princes into unequal alliances.[57] The Company, therefore, was conquering India by a broadly two-pronged method: the first was the outright military occupation of some territories; while the second was the much slower embedding of British authority through the residents in other territories, backed by the threat of armed force.

Indirect Rule in India is especially strong in showing how the 'resident' evolved from an official dispatched *ad hoc* by a presidency governor in the eighteenth century into a 'residency system' made up of a centrally organised branch of the colonial state tasked with administering what in the early nineteenth century became termed the 'native' or princely states. Fisher argues that a three party relationship developed in each state under this system, made up of the Ruler, his Chief Minister, and the Resident, whose distinct rolls are described in the following passage: "the ruler…held political authority within the state. The Chief Minister, in contrast, served only at the will of the Ruler. Nevertheless, as the head of the administration, the Minister controlled the finances and managed the state. Third, the resident, representing the Company, increasingly formed an alternative source of power, protection, and patronage."[58] The power the resident possessed, as described by Fisher, was wielded to impose indirect rule over the various

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[57] Fisher, *Indirect Rule in India,* 432-433.
[58] Fisher, *Indirect Rule in India,* 149-150.

states. This is of particular importance, as this cadre of Residents and their staff, which

after 1858 was called the Foreign and Political Department of the Government of India,

became, as Fisher himself shows, the administrative model for the rest of the indirectly

ruled empire.[59]

This service was from the outset composed of commissioned Army officers and

civilian officials, who were both the instruments of the policy of their superiors as well as

independent actors as Fisher is especially good at illustrating.[60] The works of Barbara

Ramusack and Malcolm Yapp largely confirm the assertions made in *Indirect Rule in*

India.[61] Indeed there is a broad consensus that these officials in the field played a huge

role in expanding the boundaries of the empire and, as will be expanded upon below, they

were also critical to the development of a discursive framework for indirect rule. If

Fisher's work has any faults, it is that, in focusing on the residents, he privileges the

frontline colonial official largely to the exclusion of a discussion of overarching imperial

themes. The work is very much an administrative history, which makes excellent

observations about the relationship between the colonial agents and the local rulers and

their ministers. However, as this work will show, the work of the resident was defined by

a broader intellectual commitment to indirect rule, and not just administrative expediency.

Hastings' deployment of residents, and his broader diplomatic and political

initiatives, while enlarging the Company's power in India, was earning him powerful

critics in India and Britain. In 1784 the British Government again expanded its control

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[59] Fisher, *Indirect Rule in India,* 458.
[60] Fisher, *Indirect Rule in India,* 256.
[61] Malcolm Yapp, *Strategies of British India: Britain, Iran and Afghanistan 1798-1850* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 588; Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and their States*, 53.

over the Company's affairs with the passing of the East India Company Act of 1784.

Usually called Pitt's India Act, after the younger Pitt, then prime minister, the bill of

1784 was actually the successor to an earlier bill, penned by the Anglo-Irish MP Edmund

Burke, and introduced by the Foreign Secretary Charles James Fox in the Commons a

year earlier. Both Burke's defeated and Pitt's successful bills were meant to address a

growing concern that the policies of the Company under the governor-generalship of

Hastings were ruinously expensive and deleterious to the position of the British in

India.[62] As such the act was implicitly critical of Hastings in general and of the

expansion of British control through indirect rule more broadly.

     A passage in the 1784 Act denounced Hastings when it declared that to "…pursue

schemes of conquest and extension of dominion in India are measures repugnant to the

wish, the honour, and the policy of this nation…"[63] It also criticised the vast amount of

power that the office of governor-general was able to wield beyond the control of London.

To address these problems the Act instituted structural controls over the Company's

regime in India, making it effectively a partnership with the British Government.[64] In

London a Board of Control, headed by a government-appointed president, became the de

facto governing council and the president became the cabinet minister responsible for

India.[65] In theory this stripped the governor-general of a huge level of freedom of action

and halted the expansion of British India, but as will be discussed below, this was far

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[62] Fisher, *Indirect Rule in India*, 55.
[63] Panchanandas Mukerji, ed. *Indian Constitutional Documents, 1773-1915* (Calcutta: Spink, 1915), 22.
[64] H.V. Bowen, *The Business of Empire: The East India Company and Imperial Britain, 1756-1833* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 80-81.
[65] Lucy Sutherland, *The East India Company in Eighteenth Century Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 273.

from the case. What it did succeed in doing was force Hastings to retire to Britain in 1785. Hastings, however, while being free of his responsibilities in India, was not free to have a quiet retirement, as Edmund Burke, the author of the failed India act of 1783 was preparing to impeach the ex-governor general in the House of Lords.

In his assessment of this famous trial, Peter Marshall concluded that on balance the actions of Hastings did not merit impeachment and therefore he deserved the acquittal that he ultimately received from the Lords.[66] That said, the trial left an indelible blot on the reputation of Hastings that marked both subsequent appraisals of his career and underscored the picture of early British rule in India as rapacious, violent, and utterly exploitative.[67] The philosopher and Whig Member of Parliament Edmund Burke, more than any figure, deserves the credit for making this the dominant narrative.[68] In his *Scandal of Empire* Nicholas Dirks largely confirms this view of Hastings, and indeed the entire project of Company rule in India as wholly unjustifiable. Dirks' contends that beyond Hasting's individual actions, it was imperial expansion itself that was 'a scandal'.[69] Marshall persuasively argues that Hastings was really just a product of his time and place. Moreover, and unlike Clive, he did not amass a great fortune from his time in India; he was not unusually despotic nor did he completely do away with traditional institutions in favour of his personal rule.[70] In this instance, while Dirks is not wrong in his condemnation of imperialism in general, Marshall's more nuanced

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[66] Peter James Marshall, *The Impeachment of Warren Hastings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), 76-78.
[67] Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire*, 256.
[68] Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire*, 277-278; Marshall, *The Impeachment of Warren Hastings,* 35.
[69] Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire*, 29.
[70] Marshall, *The Impeachment of Warren Hastings*, 180-182.

understanding of the contemporary situation in Bengal and Westminster presents a more accurate appraisal of the events they both discuss.

During the trial, which dragged on for seven years (1788-1795), Burke spoke at length on the many severe crimes with which he charged Hastings. Burke argued that Hastings was guilty not only of personal misconduct but also of establishing a dangerous precedent in British colonial government.[71] In particular there are two aspects of Burke's devastating cross-examination that provide some of the justifications for indirect rule and would be espoused into the twentieth century. Burke was expert at taking Hastings' explanations and rationalisations for his policies in India and reframing them as acts of almost diabolical tyranny. In the following quotation from the impeachment trial, Burke goes to great lengths to show that Hastings had criminally attempted to displace and destroy the existing political and religious institutions in the parts of India under his rule.

> Perhaps you will imagine, that the man who avows these principles of arbitrary government, and pleads them as the justification of acts which nothing else can justify, is of opinion that they are, on the whole, good for the people over whom they are exercised. The very reverse. He mentions them as horrible things, tending to inflict on the people a thousand evils, and to bring on the ruler a continual train of dangers. Yet he states, that your acquisitions in India will be a detriment instead of an advantage, if you destroy arbitrary power, unless you can reduce all the religious establishments, all the civil institutions, and tenures of land, into one uniform mass; that is, unless by acts of arbitrary power you extinguish all the laws, rights, and religious principles of the people, and force them to an uniformity; and on that uniformity build a system of arbitrary power. But nothing is more false than that despotism is the constitution of any country in Asia that we are acquainted with. It is certainly not true of any Mahomedan constitution. But if it were, do your lordships really think that the nation would bear, that any human creature would bear, to hear an English governor defend himself on such principles? or, if he can defend himself on such principles, is it possible to deny the conclusion, that no

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[71] Marshall, *The Impeachment of Warren Hastings*, 57.

man in India has a security for anything, but by being totally independent of the British government?[72]

Burke's argument revolved around the perceived destruction of existing social and political structures in India by agents of the Company. These are arguments that would resurface in Burke's most famous work, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, in which he contends that any political authority based on arbitrary power rather than the immemorial conventions of society was destined to devolve into tyrannical violence.[73] Moreover, it is reminiscent of Burke's prophetic belief in the early peaceful days of the French Revolution that political tumult would bring to the fore first a great deal of bloodshed, followed by the rise of a military dictator, which indeed did happen in the form of the terror and Bonaparte. As regards Hasting's regime in India, however, Burke was a little further from the mark.

This, however, did not stop Burke from contending that Hastings was bent on the destruction of local institutions in favour of his own personal rule. In the following passage from the trial, for example, Burke suggests that Hastings believed that Asian polities were born out of some sort of grim Hobbesian state of nature whereby the powerful preyed on the weak. As such, Hastings was forced, in Burke's version, to sweep away the old order and rule by fiat.[74] Burke then argues that this was only an excuse for gross and criminal acts of repression.

> Here he has declared his opinion, that he is a despotic prince, that he is to use arbitrary power, and of course all his acts are covered with that shield. "*I know*" says he, "*the constitution of Asia only from its practice.*" Will

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[72] Edmund Burke, *The speeches of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke on the impeachment of Warren Hastings: to which is added a selection of Burke's epistolary correspondence*, (London: Bell, 1890), I: 98.
[73] Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 97
[74] Marshall, *The Impeachment of Warren Hastings*, 183.

your lordships submit to hear the corrupt practices of mankind made the principles of government? - No; it will be your pride and glory to teach men intrusted [sic] with power, that, in their use of it, they are to conform to principles, and not to draw their principles from the corrupt practice of any man whatever. Was there ever heard, or could it be conceived, that a governor would dare to heap up all the evil practices, all the cruelties, oppressions, extortions, corruptions, briberies, of all the ferocious usurpers, desperate robbers, thieves, cheats, and jugglers, that ever had office from one end of Asia to another, and consolidating all this mass of the crimes and absurdities of barbarous domination into one code, establish it as the whole duty of an English governor? I believe, that till this time so audacious a thing was never attempted by man.[75]

This line of reasoning did not convince the members of the House of Lords who were trying Hastings, and the former governor-general walked away innocent, if financially ruined.[76] Despite losing the trail, Burke was successful in contributing to the already existing and widely held belief that individuals like Hastings were so-called 'nabobs'.[77]

Nabob is a corruption of the title nawab and was used pejoratively in Britain for several decades after Plassey to denote a British official who gained great power and wealth in India through corrupt 'oriental' practices. Burke and many in the political establishment saw the influx of rich and powerful nabobs returning from India as a fundamental threat to British freedoms.[78] Access to power in eighteenth-century Britain rested on the possession of wealth, and consequently the nabobs were able to buy their way into the House of Commons, and threaten the exclusivity of the older landed families who had for so long dominated parliament. Tillman Nechtman argues that Hastings became the symbol of this class and was correspondingly targeted by Burke and his

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[75] Burke, *Speeches*, I: 98-99.
[76] Peter James Marshall "The Personal Fortune of Warren Hastings: Hastings in Retirement" *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, 28 (3) 1965, 541-552.
[77] Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire*, 83.
[78] Tillman W Nechtman, "A Jewel in the Crown? Indian Wealth in Domestic Britain in the Late Eighteenth Century" *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Volume 41, Number 1, Fall 2007, 73.

supporters.[79] The attack on Hastings focused on his practices as an Indian administrator

because it was feared that the nabobs were returning in droves to Britain to snatch power

and impose Indian style despotism. Ironically, while he loathed Hastings, it was Burke's

impassioned orations in the trial, which were subsequently published, that provided an

early intellectual justification for the nascent policy of indirect rule that Hastings himself

was central to developing.[80] Over the following century, British officials turned to

Burkean ideas of maintaining existing social structures to justify their regimes, while

using the political and administrative tools devised under Hasting's tenure in India to

extend indirect rule.[81]

The trial of Warren Hastings is important to this history of indirect rule because it

placed this particular colonial practice under intellectual scrutiny. As has been shown, in

the years after the battle of Buxar, Company officials with Hastings at the forefront were

establishing the military alliances, implementing the treaties, and dispatching the

residents that together formed indirect rule in India. However, it was after the

controversy of Hasting's regime that the scholarly investigation into the ideal type of

colonial government began in earnest, which would in time supply arguments both in

favour and against indirect rule.

In the decades after the trial, the debate raged on about if it was better to harness

existing social and political structures in India or to impose European ones from without.

At its core, this called into question the value of employing Indian people and practices in

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[79] Nechtman, "A Jewel in the Crown?", 73-75.
[80] Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire,* 80-81.
[81] An example of this can be found in Lord Cromer's *Modern Egypt*, where the architect of indirect rule in Egypt lauds Hastings and cites Burke approvingly in his discussion of British Egypt. Cromer, *Modern Egypt*, (London: Macmillan, 1908), I: 150, 183, 367.

the government of India and therefore indirect rule itself. This was evidence that colonial

governance had become a serious topic of study and was hence open to rival

interpretations. It was therefore intimately related to the British study of India, which not

surprisingly began in earnest around the same time that Burke began to criticise Hastings'

regime. This was no coincidence, as C.A. Bayly has shown in his *Empire and

Information,* "the expansion of knowledge was not so much a by-product of empire as a

condition for it."[82]

The essential link between the British regime and the gathering and exploitation

of knowledge in early colonial British India was typified by the foundation of the Asiatic

Society. The Asiatic Society of Bengal was established in 1784 in Calcutta by senior

officials in the British administration.[83] The central figure in the foundation of the

Asiatic Society was noted jurist and linguist Sir William Jones. Jones was the leading

British scholar of his day working in India and combined his philosophic pursuits with

his professional role as Supreme Court Judge in Calcutta.[84] In his judicial capacity he

was keen to understand and translate the legal codes of Hindu and Muslim communities

in northern India.[85] In so doing he became one of the first western experts on Sanskrit.

Jones's interest in Indian languages, law, and history led him in combination with other

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[82] C.A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 56.
[83] C.F. Beckinham, "A History of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1823-1973," in Stuart Simmonds and Simon Digby, eds. *The Royal Asiatic Society Its History and Treasures,* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1979), 1-2.
[84] Sandra den Otter, "Law, Authority, and Colonial Rule", in Douglas M. Peers and Nandini Gooptu, eds. *India and the British Empire* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012), 171-172.
[85] Travers, *Ideology and Empire in Eighteenth-Century India*, 245-246.

likeminded individuals in Calcutta to form the society.[86] At its inaugural meeting Jones

made a speech marking the creation of "...a Society for enquiring into the History, civil

and natural, the Antiquities, Arts, Sciences, and Literature of Asia."[87]

Both Jones's career and the society he founded illuminate the intellectual milieu

of British rule in India and which furnished arguments for those who would come to

champion indirect rule. However, a broader interest and even sympathy for Indian

peoples did not lead to any consensus on the part of the British administration.   In the

period from from the 1770s until the 1820s, the East India Company's remit expanded

greatly, adding both directly ruled territories and several client kingdoms which became

the indirectly ruled princely states.[88] Expansionist governors-general like Lord Wellesley

added great swathes of India to the British Empire. During this period the rulers of

Mysore and the Marathas were displaced, and states in central and southern Indian were

drawn under the same treaty and resident regime of indirect rule as had been imposed

over Awadh and Rampur by Hastings. Indeed, it was at this time that the Company's ally

against Mysore, Hyderabad, was effectively subsumed by the British. In time the size,

importance, and longevity of the alliance between the British and the Nizams of

Hyderabad led the state to be acknowledged as the foremost princely state of the Indian

Empire.[89] During this crucial period the British appeared to be going from strength to

strength. All other European powers were completely side-lined, and after 1818 only the

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[86] O.P. Kejariwal, *The Asiatic Society of Bengal and the Discovery of India's Past*. (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988), 29-35.
[87] C.F. Beckinham, 'A History of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1823-1973', 1.
[88] Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and their States*, 58-59.
[89] John McLeod, "The English Honours System in Princely India, 1925-1947", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 4 (2) 1994: 244.

Sikh-ruled Punjab remained as a significant autonomous power in South Asia. All of the former Mughal viceroyalties like Hyderabad, Awadh, Arcot, and Bengal had fallen to the British, with only the last two coming under direct rule. In addition to these large post-Mughal states were the numerous Rajput states in the Northwest, the remnants of the Maratha confederacy in central India, all broken and reduced to client status.[90] Therefore, from the first decades of British supremacy in South Asia there was no single formula for British rule. Some territories were forcibly subjugated by the Company's armies and its existing rulers displaced, while in other territories the local rulers were compelled to sign treaties with the British and become client-allies in return for maintaining their thrones. The arguments of Burke and Jones, which would appear to have provided a rationalization for indirect rule, were not powerful enough to convince all levels of British officialdom to adopt it as a common or consistent strategy for colonial government.

Contrary to the image that the long string of conquests might suggest, the British were not in an unquestionable position of strength in the early nineteenth-century India. As C.A. Bayly has argued in these early years of expansion, the British position was tenuous and contingent on delicate relationships between the British authorities and an array of lower and mid-level Indian collaborators. These collaborators supplied intelligence or what Bayly terms "colonial knowledge."[91] When these relationships were not in place, or the flow of this knowledge was interrupted, disasters occurred, like the difficult and abortive Ghurkha War in 1818, and as will be discussed further, the

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[90] Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and their States*, 50.
[91] Bayly, *Empire and Information*, 142-146.

Rebellion of 1857.[92] An on-going assessment of the Company's rule by the British in India and Britain led to changing views on colonial government which effected the Company's administrative policies. Ramusack, Fisher, and Bayly have shown that during these crucial decades after Plassey, all of the key tools and methods for governing the princely state were put into effect, namely bilateral treaties outlining the respective roles of the princes and the British residents based at their courts, and an extensive apparatus for collecting intelligence.[93] However, despite the fact that this system of indirect rule had been so quickly and completely established, it was not immune from attack from within the ranks of the British imperial establishment.

Prior to 1857 members of the ruling establishment who opposed the continued existence of the princely states as part of British India did so largely for one of two broad reasons. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, the most vocal criticisms of indirect rule revolved around the idea that the Indian princes who were nominal British allies were actually a latent military and political threat.[94] Later, there was a growing belief that these rulers represented the 'backwardness' of India and stood in the way of 'progressive' and 'enlightened' British rule. With some in the ruling establishment of British India seeing the princes as a danger and some as a bulwark, the first half of the nineteenth century was marked by a proliferation of ideas surrounding indirect rule that would have major reverberations in India and elsewhere in the empire.

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[92] Bayly, *Empire and Information*, 100-108.
[93] Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and their States*, Chapter 3; Bayly, *Empire and Information*, 142-146; Fisher, *Indirect rule in India*, 54.
[94] Bayly, *Empire and Information*, 90.

The proceedings of the Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company from 1812 demonstrate the early fears that a princely state could incubate political or military opposition to British rule. The Select Committee was composed of MPs tasked to collect expert testimony so as to help frame the renewal of the East India Company's charter. As already mentioned, Parliament had since 1784 acquired significant oversight over the Company, manifested through its power to alter the charter. Between 1784 and 1853 there were a total of six major Acts of Parliament, each of which expanded the level of control the British Government exercised over the Company's administration.[95]

In the hearings leading up to the 1813 renewal of the Company's charter, the House of Commons' committee interviewed a number of British officials with regards to Indian governance. This led to the compilation of hundreds of pages of testimony of which, however, only a fraction was about the indirectly-ruled states. And of this only one issue dominates the Committee's questions in regards to the states: whether they posed a threat to British rule. Chairing the committee was Stephen Rumbold Lushington who was a young and ambitious Tory Member of Parliament who would later become Governor of Madras.[96] Lushington was charged with taking the testimony of numerous figures in the administration of India, of whom Sir John Malcolm and Sir Thomas Munro were perhaps the most qualified to speak to the place of the Indian states in the wider British Indian context. Malcolm and Munro were both Scots born in the 1760s and

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[95] Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire*, 200.
[96] Katherine Prior, "Lushington, Stephen Rumbold (1776–1868)," eds. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison, in *the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/view/article/17215 (accessed February 14, 2013).

entered into the Company service during the heyday of its expansion. After successful

careers in the army both men moved into political roles with the Company, with Malcolm

being made Minister to Persia and eventually Governor of Bombay in 1827, while Munro

became the Governor of Madras in 1820.[97] In addition to their military and

administrative careers, both Munro and Malcolm were prodigious writers and left a large

corpus of private and published works on the history and government of India and its

neighbouring countries. As such, when the two men were giving their testimony to the

Select Committee, they were senior figures in the colonial administration.[98] Indeed,

Martha McLaren has argued that key Scots in the Indian administration, especially

Malcolm and Munro, were heavily influenced by ideas of the Scottish enlightenment on

historical progress and the government of pre-modern people.[99] Douglas Peers, however,

modifies this perspective in suggesting that while these Scots were undoubtedly keen

students of Indian society, they were more focused on imposing a stable regime on India,

rather than establishing an idealised form of enlightened government.[100] As such

Malcolm and Munro's views of the role of indirect rule should be seen as based on the

potential for the princes to help maintain the Company's regime, not as components of an

ideal type of colonial government.

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[97] Jack Harrington, *Sir John Malcolm and the Creation of British India* (New York: Palgrave, 2010), 15 ; Burton Stein, *Thomas Munro: the origins of the colonial state and his vision of empire* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), 246.
[98] Harrington, *Sir John Malcolm,* 39-41; Stein, *Thomas Munro*, 312-321.
[99] Martha McLaren, "From Analysis to Prescription: Scottish Concepts of Asian Despotism in Early Nineteenth-Century British India", *The International History Review*, 15 (3) 1993: 469-501.
[100] Douglas M Peers, "Soldiers, Scholars, and the Scottish Enlightenment: Militarism in Early Nineteenth-Century India" *International History Review*, 16 (3) 1994: 464-5.

The questions posed to Malcolm and Munro by the Select Committee illustrate that the continued support of the princes for the British regime was certainly not taken for granted. Malcolm was asked, "Do you think it likely that any of the native powers in India would, under existing circumstances, entertain Europeans in their service, in defiance of their treaties with the British government?" [101] and "Are you aware of any native power in India, which has not entered into such treaty?"[102] These questions demonstrate the fear that the states under indirect rule, with very few colonial officials on the ground, were ideal breeding grounds for anti-British agitation.[103] In particular the MPs were afraid that soldiers of fortune might join the service of some ambitious prince and lead his forces against the Company. This is also what they asked of Munro: "Would it be possible, in your opinion, for the principal native princes of India, or their feudatories, to entertain such Europeans of Americans in their service, without the knowledge of our political residents at the native courts of those princes?"[104] These parliamentarians, responsible for recommending whether the charter should be renewed and in what form, were sceptical of the value of only having a handful of British officials, 'our political residents', in the indirectly ruled states, and of the loyalty of the princes themselves. They were, therefore, calling into question two fundamental aspects of indirect rule.

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[101] "Record of evidenced given by Sir John Malcolm, 1812-13" *Minutes of evidence taken before the Committee of the Whole House, and the Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company*, (House of Commons Sessional Paper 122 VII.1), 68.
[102] "Record of evidenced given by Sir John Malcolm, 1812-13", 68.
[103] Bayly, *Empire and Information*, 365
[104] "Record of evidenced given by Sir John Malcolm, 1812-13", 68.

Malcolm and Munro were, however, not quite as alarmed as the committee members. Indeed, as will be discussed below, they would actually become some of the most vocal champions of indirect rule in the first half of the nineteenth century. Both Malcolm and Munro answered these questions in a way that seemed intent on calming the fears of the committee. To the question whether he thought the princes would break treaties, Malcolm responded "I do not think that those who have entered into such treaties would." [105] And to the question of whether there were any states within the Company's orbit who were not engaged in these protective treaties, he responded "None of the larger powers; there are a great number of lesser powers which have not entered into such treaties."[106] In a series of related queries he responded in like fashion, as did Munro, who answered the question as to whether foreign officers might be brought into the service of a potentially rebellious prince with: "Such Europeans could not, without the knowledge of the resident, be entertained by the native princes in their own capitals"[107] Despite the apparent dispassionate calm conveyed by these responses, it is clear that the committee chair, Lushington, was biased against indirect rule largely out of a fear of the loyalty of these Indian allies.[108] It is not surprising then that over the following decades, an ideological opposition to indirect rule and the broader integration of Indian institutions under British rule would be a powerful force in Britain and India.

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[105] "Record of evidenced given by Sir John Malcolm, 1812-13", 68.

[106] "Record of evidenced given by Sir John Malcolm, 1812-13", 68.

[107] "Record of evidence given by Sir Thomas Munro, 1812-13" *Minutes of evidence taken before the Committee of the Whole House, and the Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company*, (House of Commons Sessional Paper 122 VII.1), 139.

[108] Katherine Prior, "Stephen Rumbold Lushington". Munro and the Committee chair Lushington had an enduring rivalry of sorts, as the latter succeeded the former as Governor of Madras in 1827, where Lushington reversed Munro's decision to allow Indians to sit as jurors in legal trials. It would seem that Munro and Lushington were consistent in their support and opposition to Indian participation in the government of India for the duration of their careers. Stein, *Thomas Munro*, 307.

The anxieties evident in the Select Committee in 1812-13 are illustrative of a wider array of British officials and intellectuals who began to criticise the continued support for Indian practices and institutions under colonial rule. There are numerous instances of this trend in the early to middle part of the nineteenth century which help illustrate how and why indirect rule was seriously challenged as an appropriate form of colonial government. In 1806 the Scottish utilitarian philosopher and future senior Company official James Mill began work on his *The History of British India*, which was ultimately published in three volumes in 1818. Mill had never travelled to India, nor did he speak any Indian languages; however, he took these apparent deficits to be proof of his ability to write a truly objective study.[109] Despite Mill's limited contact with India, Jane Rendall argues that this picture presented by James Mill in his *History* had a major impact in how the British saw the India for much of the nineteenth century.[110]

Javeed Majeed explains that Mill's history was written as a response to the conservative views of Edmund Burke and Sir William Jones. Where Burke and Jones wanted Indian culture and practices to be preserved under British rule, Mill argued that the Company's regime should be used to alter Indian society so as to best inculcate the utilitarian values of usefulness and happiness.[111] Indeed, James Mill saw both the trajectory of Indian history and its institutions and the role of the British in India in a very dim light. In the following passage condemning Hastings, Mill describes a place that is denuded of morality and where the powerful prey on the weak:

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[109] J. Majeed, "James Mill's 'The History of British India' and Utilitarianism as a Rhetoric of Reform", *Modern Asian Studies*, 24 (2) 1990: 212.

[110] Jane Rendall, "Scottish Orientalism from Robertson to James Mill", *The Historical Journal*, 25 (1) 1982: 43.

[111] Majeed, "James Mill's 'The History of British India", 211.

> No one, than Mr. Hastings, better knew, that in India the obligation of the person who pays tribute to the person who receives it is deemed so very slight, as scarcely to be felt or regarded; and no man was more ready to act upon that principle, when it suited his purposes, than Mr. Hastings. The law of the strongest, indeed, was in perfect force; and whenever any party had the power to enforce obedience, it had no limit but that of his will.[112]

While this particular passage attacks Hastings, the whole tone of the work is critical of Indian rulers and Indian culture in general. In the above-cited passage, Hastings receives special criticism for what Mill sees as his willingness to employ the same base type of perfidious 'oriental' despotism that was the dominant practice in South Asia. As such, the practice of indirect rule through hereditary Indian dynasties was antithetical to Mill's radical improving agenda.

His more famous son, John Stuart Mill, shared James Mill's interests in Indian affairs. The younger Mill, like his father, was a radical philosopher and prolific author, and was also in the employ of the East India Company for much of his career. J.S. Mill is perhaps best remembered for his hugely important work *On Liberty*, which was to become a foundational work of classical liberalism. However, in the same year that this more famous work was published (1859), he also penned an article called 'A Few Words on Non-intervention'[113] In this he modified his father's blanket condemnation of Indian practices with regards to the princely states. Like James Mill, John Stuart Mill thought that the Company could be a power for good in India and he was critical of Indian culture. However, he thought that indirect rule was an acceptable form of government if it could be used to ensure that the princes implemented 'modern' liberal practices:

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[112] James Mill, *The History of British India*, (London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1826) IV: 332
[113] J. S. Mill, "A Few Words on Non-intervention"

But being thus assured of the protection of a civilized power, and freed from the fear of internal rebellion or foreign conquest, the only checks which either restrain the passions or keep any vigour in the character of an Asiatic despot, the native Governments either became so oppressive and extortionate as to desolate the country, or fell into such a state of nerveless imbecility, that every one, subject to their will, who had not the means of defending himself by his own armed followers, was the prey of anybody who had a band of ruffians in his pay. The British Government felt this deplorable state of things to be its own work; being the direct consequence of the position in which, for its own security, it had placed itself towards the native governments. Had it permitted this to go on indefinitely, it would have deserved to be accounted among the worst political malefactors. In some cases (unhappily not in all) it had endeavoured to take precaution against these mischiefs by a special article in the treaty, binding the prince to reform his administration, and in future to govern in conformity to the advice of the British Government.[114]

J.S. Mill is highly critical of Asian rulers and of the past methods of indirect rule practiced by the Company. This led him to call for a form of indirect rule in which the heavy hand of western interference is omnipresent. Although he would be more famous as a champion of liberal freedoms, when it came to India and other non-western people, he had different views.[115] J.S. Mill was keen to impose what Mark Tunick has called 'tolerant imperialism', whereby pre-colonial traditions and institutions need not be swept away, but would be modified so as to ensure the modernisation of Indian society.[116] However, as will be shown below, Mill also supported the deposition of princes when they were deemed unfit to rule.

J.S. Mill exemplifies many elements of the liberal political philosophy prevalent in the first half of the nineteenth century; however, his 'tolerant imperialism' was not

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[114] J.S. Mill, "A Few Words on Non-intervention", 254-255.
[115] Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 138-140.
[116] Mark Tunick, "Tolerant Imperialism: John Stuart Mill's Defense of British Rule in India", *The Review of Politics*, 68 (4) 2006: 603.

representative of all strains of liberal thinking in regards to India at this time. More extreme even than James Mill, Thomas Babington Macaulay was a virulent opponent of what he saw as a repressive 'oriental' society. He was born in 1800 and like the Mills thought that the Company had a progressive mission in India. Macaulay, however, represents the most strident and aggressive blending of liberalising and modernising ideology of the period, one which had very little room for Indian culture and practices. By the time Macaulay came of age in the 1820s the pluralistic ideas of Jones, Burke, and Hastings seemed to have been eclipsed. They were replaced instead by a more dogmatic ideological discourse which was marked by strict liberal principals and backed by a militant form of evangelical Christianity.[117] It is no coincidence that the renewal of the Company's charter in 1813 also opened up India to Christian missionary activities.[118] Although the Company imposed so many constraints that it meant very little in practice, this shift in favour of proselytising Christianity heralded a new and more culturally exclusionary thread in British thinking that would peak in the 1830s and 40s.[119] This burgeoning confidence in British civilization manifested itself in numerous ways in India from the outlawing of certain Hindu religious practices, such as *suttee* or widow immolation, to the displacement of Persian by English as the language of government.[120]

By the 1830s Macaulay had become an important member of the Whig government of Lord John Russell, before being sent to Calcutta to sit as law member, a

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[117] Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: a study in nineteenth-century British liberal thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 30-31.
[118] Arthur Berriedale Keith, *A Constitutional History of India 1600–1935* (London: Methune, 1936), 160.
[119] Penelope Carson, *The East India Company and Religion, 1698-1858*, (Rochester, NY: Boyell, 2012), 183.
[120] Bayly, *Empire and Information*, 88.

new position intended to instigate legal reforms on the governor-general's council, which

was in effect the cabinet of India.[121] In India he was strident in his criticism of Indian

culture, and while the Indian Penal Code that he drafted would be an enduring product of

his time in the subcontinent, he is best remembered for infamous 'minute on education'.

It should be noted that because of the limited resources at hand, the impact of these

reforms on the vast bulk of the people of India was minimal. Nonetheless, Macaulay's

various calls for reforms, no matter their impact, do illustrate his thinking on India and its

people, and none more so than his minute on education.   It calls for the development of

an ambitious education system for the people of India.[122] What made the minute

contentious, however, was the aggressive tone it took in championing a strictly European

curriculum to be taught in English. In the best-known section from the document,

Macaulay declared that:

> I have no knowledge of either Sanscrit or Arabic. But I have done what I
> could to form a correct estimate of their value. I have read translations of
> the most celebrated Arabic and Sanscrit works. I have conversed, both
> here and at home, with men distinguished by their proficiency in the
> Eastern tongues. I am quite ready to take the oriental learning at the
> valuation of the orientalists themselves. I have never found one among
> them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was
> worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia. The intrinsic
> superiority of the Western literature is indeed fully admitted by those
> members of the committee who support the oriental plan of education.[123]

Macaulay's minute is much more than this one passage, but the above section

encompasses an extreme version of a prevalent idea of the age which saw other cultures

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[121] Keith, *A Constitutional History of India*, 171.

[122] Lynn Zastoupil and Martin Moir, *The Great Indian Education Debate: Documents Relating to the Orientalist-Anglicist Controversy, 1781-1843,* (London: Routledge, 1999), 28.

[123] H. Sharp, ed. *Selections from Educational Records, (1781-1839).* (Calcutta: Superintendent, Government Printing, 1920), 107-117.

as devoid of value which justified the imposition of western ideas and institutions.[124]

English language, laws, political institutions, and even the protestant religion were no longer held to be uniquely of and for Europeans. Rather, they were increasingly viewed as the ultimate product of human civilisation and hence to be disseminated to all people. Where Burke had seen Indian people and culture as essentially different to the British, and hence indigenous institutions were appropriate, Macaulay thought that his civilisation had discovered what was best, and that irrespective of race it should be inculcated in all people for their own good. Macaulay was not alone in holding these ideas. Indeed, the minute on education was passed on to the governor-general, Lord William Bentinck, who signed off on it in its entirety, agreeing whole heartedly with its conclusions.[125]

Unfortunately for Macaulay's schemes, however, the Government of India was woefully unable to impose such significant changes on the lives of the people it governed. Douglas Peers has called the Company rule in early nineteenth century India a 'Garrison State'; he argues that the British regime was a fiscal-military state dependent on the twin pillars of an armed occupation and revenue extraction.[126] Under this form of colonial government the British were very thin on the ground and far removed to the day-to-day lives of the mass of the people of India. In effect, because the British did not and could not provide many functions outside of law and order, it was next to impossible for them to effect much social change. Most of Macaulay's plans for reform, therefore, are significant not for their direct impact, but rather for what they illustrate about the

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[124] Thomas Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 40.
[125] Meta, *Liberalism and Empire*, 15.
[126] Peers, *Between Mammon and Mars*, 107; Douglas M. Peers, "State, Power, Colonialism" in Peers and Gooptu, eds. *India and the British Empire*, 35.

contemporary intellectual climate. For this study, however, the most important example of the stridently confident ideology espoused by Macaulay was the reassessment of collaborating with the princes and ultimately the attempt by Lord Dalhousie to end indirect rule in India.[127]

Macaulay presented some of the most forceful opposition to the idea of indirect rule. In particular, Macaulay's essay on the life of Lord Clive, which was published in January of 1840 in the *Edinburgh Review*, provided a broad ranging and detailed appraisal of the life and work of Clive and by extension the early British administration in India, and in so doing offered a scathing reproach to other writers, especially John Malcolm, on the same topics.[128] Most importantly he outlines his quintessentially Anglo-centric view of why British direct rule in India was better than any alternative. In the following passage, he employs classic examples of orientalist stereotypes to show why he thought Indian rulers were unfit to govern India people and in turn why British rulers were morally better suited to rule.

> During a long course of years, the English rulers of India, surrounded by
> allies and enemies whom no engagement could bind, have generally acted
> with sincerity and uprightness; and the event has proved that sincerity and
> uprightness are wisdom. English valour and English intelligence have
> done less to extend and to preserve our Oriental empire than English
> veracity. All that we could have gained by imitating the doublings, the
> evasions, the fictions, the perjuries which have been employed against us,
> is as nothing, when compared with what we have gained by being the one
> power in India on whose word reliance can be placed. No oath which
> superstition can devise, no hostage however precious, inspires a hundredth
> part of the confidence which is produced by the "yea, yea," and "nay, nay,"
> of a British envoy. No fastness, however strong by art or nature, gives to

[127] "The Earl of Dalhousie, 28 February 1856" in Keith, *Speeches and Documents on Indian Policy*, I:284-298.
[128] Thomas Babington Macaulay, *Lord Macaulay's Essays and Lays of Ancient Rome*, (London: Longman, Green & Co. 1885)

its inmates a security like that enjoyed by the chief who, passing through the territories of powerful and deadly enemies, is armed with the British guarantee. The mightiest princes of the East can scarcely, by the offer of enormous usury, draw forth any portion of the wealth which is concealed under the hearths of their subjects. The British Government offers little more than four per cent.; and avarice hastens to bring forth tens of millions of rupees from its most secret repositories. A hostile monarch may promise mountains of gold to our sepoys on condition that they will desert the standard of the Company. The Company promises only a moderate pension after a long service. But every sepoy knows that the promise of the Company will be kept; he knows that if he lives a hundred years his rice and salt are as secure as the salary of the Governor-General; and he knows that there is not another state in India which would not, in spite of the most solemn vows, leave him to die of hunger in a ditch as soon as he had ceased to be useful. The greatest advantage which government can possess is to be the one trustworthy government in the midst of governments which nobody can trust. This advantage we enjoy in Asia.[129]

This passage, along with Macaulay's earlier minute on education and other works, present a case for a form of government that was the very opposite of indirect rule. Macaulay and other Whig thinkers like the Mills had constructed a discourse of colonialism in which British people and their rule became the paradigm of virtue and justice as well as providing the singular path to progress.[130] This was the ideological framework which informed Dalhousie's attack on the indirectly ruled states.

The doctrine of lapse enacted by the Governor-General of India, Lord Dalhousie, was the logical political conclusion of Macaulay's ideology. During Dalhousie's tenure (1848-1856), several states, ruled by Hindu and Muslim princes were annexed by the British. Satara, Sambalpur, Jaitpur, Nagpur, and most significantly, Jhansi and Awadh, all came under direct rule at this time.[131] The doctrine of lapse allowed these states'

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[129] Macaulay, *Essays*, 497.
[130] Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, 40.
[131] Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and their States*, 84.

semi-independence to be abrogated when their ruler either was deemed unfit or when he

died without a legitimate male heir. Since this policy allowed British officials in London

and India to decide what constituted both a fit ruler and a legitimate heir, this became a

powerful tool for deposing princes and taking over their states.[132] How the doctrine

worked is revealed in Dalhousie's justification for the annexation of Nagpur: "the

kingdom of Nagpore became British territory by simple lapse, in the absence of all legal

heirs."[133] The problem of succession in Nagpur and other states was used as a convenient

excuse to annex the state. Although the doctrine would eventually become discredited,

during Dalhousie's time in office his policy against princes had wide support from

figures within India and in Britain. Perhaps the most important supporter of this

aggressive modernisation in Britain was John Stuart Mill whose essay on non-

intervention was expressly supportive of interfering with states whose princes were

deemed unfit to rule. The following passage, using the example of Awadh, explains the

rationale for his fervent support for the annexation some states.

> During this period of half a century, England was morally accountable for
> a mixture of tyranny and anarchy, the picture of which, by men who knew
> it well, is appalling to all who read it. The act by which the Government of
> British India at last set aside treaties…and assumed the power of fulfilling
> the obligation it had so long before incurred, of giving to the people of
> Oude [sic] a tolerable government, far from being the political crime it is
> so often ignorantly called, was a criminally tardy discharge of an
> imperative duty.[134]

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[132] "The Earl of Dalhousie, 28 February 1856" in Keith, *Speeches and Documents on Indian Policy*, 1:290-192; Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and their States*, 82-83.
[133] "The Earl of Dalhousie, 28 February 1856" Keith, *Speeches and Documents on Indian Policy*, I: 291.
[134] J.S. Mill, "A Few Words on Non-intervention", 255.

Mill's vocal backing of the doctrine and other modernising reforms and like Macaulay lent Dalhousie's policy a high degree of intellectual legitimacy.[135]

It is important, however, not to overstate the effects of Dalhousie's annexations; indeed, since only six states were dissolved of the hundreds of mostly small princely states, it does not exactly constitute an unmitigated assault on the practice of indirect rule. Rather, the doctrine appears to have been used to blot out some potential rival centres of power in South Asia. Of the six annexed states, two in particular, Satara and Awadh, were home to powerful dynasties with major historical significance. Satara was a state created as conciliation in the aftermath of the final Anglo-Maratha war in 1818 by the Company for the defeated Maratha leader Raja Pratap Singh. The state was in west central India, near Bombay, in the heartland of the Maratha territories. Raja Pratap Singh, however, was not the pliant collaborator the British wanted, and was deposed in 1839 in favour of his brother, Shahji Raja. In 1848 Shahji Raja died without a legitimate heir, and as was consistent with the doctrine of lapse, the Company used this opportunity to absorb Satara into the Bombay Presidency.[136] The rulers of Satara, however, were not just one of the numerous minor Maratha dynasties. Rather, they were the heirs of Shivaji, whose career in the seventeenth century had established the Marathas as the great Hindu rival of the Mughals. Consequently, his successors were from one of the premier Hindu dynasties in India and could conceivably marshal support from far beyond the borders of tiny Satara. The British were well aware of the powerful historical connotations of

[135] Zastoupil, *John Stuart Mill and India*, 159.
[136] Thomas Metcalf, *The Aftermath of the Revolt: India 1857-1870* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1964), 32.

Shivaji, as is clear from the following passage from a contemporary study of Dalhousie's administration:

> In the case of Sattara it is necessary to retrace the annals of his viceroyalty back to their commencement, for Lord Dalhousie had been but few months in India when the first opportunity was offered, in the case of this state, of adding to the dominions which he governed. Sattara is a beautiful Hindoo city under the shadow of the Mahabuleshwar hills, close by the fountains of the sacred Krishna, the capital of the renowned Mahratta kingdom, the metropolis of the great robber-chief of India, Shivaji.[137]

The doctrine of lapse was being used as a legal instrument not only to expand the direct rule of the Company but also to undercut potential rival centres of power. This was not limited to the Hindu Marathas who had for a long time been a significant rival to the British, even Awadh, one of the first states to come under indirect rule, was not safe under Dalhousie's administration.

In 1765 the treaty of Allahabad, engineered by Clive, began the process of subsuming the state of Awadh under the Company's control. The state had been one of the many large Mughal viceroyalties ruled by hereditary dynasties under the overarching sovereignty of the Mughal Emperor. After 1765 much of this basic structure remained, the nawabs continued to rule and pay homage, at least nominally, to the emperor who continued to reign in Delhi.[138] This was, however, largely symbolic as the legal instruments of the treaty and succeeding agreements, and the expansion of British power, meant that Awadh was really under British indirect rule. In 1856, however, the last

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[137] Edwin Arnold, *The Marquis of Dalhousie's Administration of British India* (London: Sauders, Ottly, and Co., 1865), II: 108-109.

[138] Michael H. Fisher "The Imperial Coronation of 1819: Awadh, the British and the Mughals" *Modern Asian Studies*, 19 (2) 1985: 239.

nawab, Wajid Ali Shah, was deposed for misrule and his state annexed.[139] With this one more of the most significant political remnants of the Mughal Empire was removed. Edwin Arnold, an early biographer of Dalhousie, described the brusqueness of the annexation in the following passage:

> A strong column of troops was moved up to support the delivery of that death-warrant to the House of Oudh, the accompanying treaty. It was curt, stern, and matter-of-fact; it left the Nawabs their title, their palace, a body-guard, and a reasonable stipend; it took from them, and transferred to the British Government *for ever*, all jurisdiction in Oudh outside "the Palace of Heart's Delights" in the capital.[140]

The annexation of Awadh came at the end of Dalhousie's administration and was one of his last acts as governor-general. Later in the same year, 1856, he was succeeded by Lord Canning and he returned to Britain. The examples of Satara and Awadh, annexed at the beginning and end of Dalhousie's time in India respectively, show that his government was keen to find reasons to dispense with indirect rule for a host of reasons, from misrule and an absence of a legal heir, to more strategic rationale, like their important cultural and political significance. No matter what the reason, or perhaps *post facto* rationalizations, Dalhousie and his supporters thought that indirect rule was a backwards and dangerous method of colonial government and he went to great lengths to reduce its use in India.

Less than a year after he left India the people living in areas most affected by Dalhousie's annexations rose up against the British in rebellion.[141] What the British called the Sepoy Mutiny started out as just that, a rebellion of Indian soldiers, sepoys, in

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[139] Faruqui Anjum Taban "The Coming of the Revolt in Awadh: The Evidence of Urdu Newspapers" *Social Scientist*, 26 (1) 1998: 17-19.

[140] Arnold, *The Marquis of Dalhousie's Administration of British India,* II: 371. (original emphasis)

[141] Metcalf, *The Aftermath of the Revolt,* 49.

the service of the Company's Bengal Army. These were the very same soldiers,

incidentally, whom Macaulay said would always remain loyal because the Company was

such an honest employer.[142] The mutiny, however, was not confined to the sepoys for

long, and it soon turned into a widespread rebellion of disaffected groups across northern

India including, forces loyal to the deposed rulers of Jhansi and Awadh.[143]

The events of 1857, however, did not mark the first acts of resistance to the

doctrine of lapse; indeed, there were voices of opposition from within the British camp

much earlier. In 1848, the same year that the doctrine was promulgated, a comprehensive

essay detailed its opposition to Dalhousie's plan.[144] This essay, which was entitled 'On

the Impolicy of Destroying the Native States of India', took the form of a letter to Sir

John Hobhouse, who was president of the Board of Control and as such was the cabinet

member responsible for British India. The letter, which was subsequently published, was

drafted by Mountstuart Elphinstone, former governor of Bombay, but included significant

passages written previously by Sir Thomas Munro and Sir John Malcolm. These were

the same two officials who in 1812 gave testimony in support of indirect rule before the

Commons' Select Committee to little avail. Munro and Malcolm had died in 1827 and

1833, respectively, but left as a legacy a record of distinguished service to the Company

both militarily and in the diplomatic and administrative sphere. They were also prolific

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[142] Macaulay, *Essays,* 497.

[143] Irfan Habib "The Coming of 1857" *Social Scientist*, 26 (1) 1998: 7; Taban, *The Coming of the Revolt in Awadh,* 23.

[144] Mountstuart Elphinstone, *A Letter to the Right Honourable Sir John Hobhouse, BART. M.P. Conveying the Opinions of Sir Thomas Munro, Sir John Malcolm, and Mr. Eliphinstone, on the Impolicy of Destroying the Native States of India* (London: Norman, 1850)

writers and produced a large corpus of works on Indian and related topics.[145] Indeed, as

administrator-scholars, they are something of a template for later practitioners of indirect

rule who are the subject of this study. So too was the principal author of the letter,

Mountstuart Elphinstone, who like Munro and Malcolm was a Scot in the service of the

Company and rose to the rank of Governor of Bombay before retiring from the service

and becoming an author and critic.[146] Together the careers and writings of these three

figures represent the opposite ideological camp to that occupied by Macaulay, Bentinck,

and Dalhousie. Elphinstone, for example, was central to imposing indirect rule over

some of the remnant states of the Maratha confederacy in 1817-1818 despite direct rule

being favoured by his superiors.[147] In his letter to Hobhouse, Elphinstone composed an

argument, supported with Munro's and Malcolm's ideas, which presented a

comprehensive justification for indirect rule and an equally powerful condemnation of

the doctrine of lapse.[148]

   One of the central arguments presented in his essay is a criticism of the idea that

British rule was best. The central thesis of the type of thinking exemplified by

Dalhousie's doctrine of lapse is that Indian rulers were corrupt, self-serving, and

incompetent, and hence British government was by every metric better for the people it

ruled. Eliphinstone argued that this was not the case. In the following passage from the

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[145] Harrington, *Sir John Malcolm*, 39-41; Stein, *Thomas Munro*, 312-321.
[146] C. A. Bayly, "Elphinstone, Mountstuart (1779–1859)," in *the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/view/article/8752 (accessed February 14, 2013).

[147] Rustom Dinshaw Choksey, *Mountstuart Elphinstone: the Indian years, 1796-1827* (Calcutta: Prakashan, 1971), 226-229.
[148] Elphinstone, *On the Impolicy of Destroying the Native States of India.*

essay, he discusses the then prevalent idea that the large former Mughal provinces of

Awadh and Hyderabad ought to be annexed and their hereditary rulers, the Nawab and

Nizam respectively, be replaced by British governors. These were massive territories

with populations in the millions, not small and thinly peopled minor princely states which

made up the majority of indirectly ruled India, and hence they were an obvious target for

annexation.

> …But Hyderabad and Oude will be pointed to as examples of native states,
> and it may be asked, whether it would not be for the advantage of the
> people that they should be brought under British rule. But the people of
> those states have already answered this question-they are at liberty to
> come under British rule whenever they please; the door which leads to our
> own territory is always open, and if they do not enter it, the reason must be,
> either that our rule is less perfect, of theirs less imperfect, than we suppose
> it to be…[149]

Elphinstone's statement typifies the Burkean justification for indirect rule for the British

both in his period as well as into the later nineteenth century in India and elsewhere:

namely, that 'oriental' institutions were best for governing 'oriental' people.

Another prominent supporter of indirect rule prior to 1857 was Henry Lawrence.

Henry and his brother John were senior figures in the military and civil government of

India in the middle of the century. Harold Lee shows that Henry Lawrence was, like

Elphinstone, Malcolm, and Munro, committed to retaining 'native institutions' while his

younger brother John was keen to westernise India.[150] However, it was Henry, a

successful officer in the Indian Army, who was appointed in 1857 to be the Chief

Commissioner of Awadh in the wake of its annexation by Dalhousie.[151] The irony does

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[149] Elphinstone, *On the Impolicy of Destroying the Native States of India,* 9-10.
[150] Harold Lee, *Brothers in the Raj*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 319.
[151] Lee, *Brothers in the Raj*, 333.

not end here. During the rebellion of 1857 both brothers distinguished themselves.

However, Henry, who opposed the policies that contributed to the rebellion died at the

siege of Lucknow, while John who supported these polices, survived and was made

Viceroy of India in 1864. By this time, however, as will be discussed in the following

chapter, indirect rule had become re-entrenched within the structure of British India.

It is important to remember, however, that Henry Lawrence and the contributors

to Elphinstone's essay, along with their contemporaries and successors who held similar

ideas about indirect rule, were not arguing for anything that could be approximated to the

independence of the native states. None of these figures thought these polities should be

free and independent. Just like their opponents who championed direct rule, the British

officials who supported the idea of indirect rule were doing so because they thought it

was what was best for the British Empire and that having familiar figures in place would

allow for reforms to be introduced more successfully.[152] This parallels James Mill's view

that the vernacular languages should be used to teach western knowledge in contrast to

Macaulay's view that the language and the content both had to be western.[153] Both of

these camps supported the continued British control of India: where they differed is in the

methods they thought were best to achieve this end. In the following passage from the

essay, the central argument against the doctrine of lapse is presented. This illustrates the

level to which indirect rule was really and truly a tool of imperialism, rather than some

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[152] Harrington, *Sir John Malcolm*, 15; Stein, *Thomas Munro*, 2-3.
[153] Majeed "James Mill's 'The History of British India' and Utilitarianism as a Rhetoric of Reform", 209-211.

half measure between independence and colonialism, as Macaulay and Dalhousie would have seen it.

> …the extinction of a native state is, in fact, the creation of a field of employment and of wealth for the European at the expense of the Native; the immediate effect of our conquest is the transfer of all places of importance and of emolument from Native to the European - to block up the path of ambition and of wealth to the higher classes of the former, and to deprive the thousands of the lower of the bread; and through a small portion of what their ancestors exclusively enjoyed has been restored to the Natives of late years…No native can aspire to any share in the legislation, or civil or military government of his own country - the Native Officer is still as much below the Ensign as the Ensign is below the Commander-in-chief; we compel the higher classes, therefore, to hate us, and to wish for an end to our rule…[154]

This last statement is, of course, prophetic. Just as Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* foresaw untrammelled violence followed by despotism when the Jacobins first deposed their monarch, so too did Elphinstone, with Munro and Malcolm, forecast a rebellion against Company rule when the British deprived too many Indians of opportunities, status, and power.[155] A decade after 'On the Impolicy of Destroying the Native States of India' was drafted, India was in revolt, the Company was about to be dissolved, and the idea that drove the doctrine of lapse had been widely discredited.[156] As if to underscore further how correct the proponents of indirect rule had been, it was the newly annexed states of Jhansi and Awadh that were at the centre of the mutiny, while indirectly ruled Hyderabad and most of the other native states became bulwarks for the colonial regime.[157] David Washbrook has described the ideological debate in pre-Mutiny British India as a choice "between inventing Oriental society and abolishing it"

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[154] Elphinstone, *On the Impolicy of Destroying the Native States of India,* 9.
[155] Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, 97.
[156] Metcalf, *The Aftermath of Revolt, India,* 31-36.
[157] Metcalf, *The Aftermath of Revolt, India,* 52.

and for a time it seemed that the latter option nearly won the day.[158] The rebellion of

1857-58, however, forced the British into intense introspection and resulted in a sweeping

array of changes to their regime.[159] The post-munity order was based on an invented

'Oriental' version of India, in which the princes became a central focus, and indirect rule

became a doctrine of imperial government, first in the subcontinent and soon beyond into

much of British-ruled Asia and Africa.

[158] David Washbrook, "India 1818-1860: The Two Faces of Colonialism" in Andrew Porter, ed. *The Oxford History of the British Empire III The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 419.
[159] Biswamoy Pati "Beyond Colonial Mapping: common people, fuzzy boundaries and the Rebellion of 1857" in Biswamoy Pati, ed. *The Great Rebellion of 1857 in India* (London: Routledge, 2010), 46-47.

II

India 1858-1912: The Exemplar of Indirect Rule

In November of 1858 Queen Victoria signed a document that appeared to reverse

the doctrine of lapse. In the 'Proclamation by the Queen to the Princes, Chiefs, and the

People of India', she declared on behalf of her government that "[w]e hereby announce to

the native princes of India, that all treaties and engagements made with them by or under

the authority of the East India Company are by us accepted, and will be scrupulously

maintained, and we look for the like observance on their part."[1] Although none of the

princes deposed by Dalhousie's doctrine were restored, with this proclamation the place

of the hundreds of remaining indirectly ruled princes, as a class, was secured until

partition and independence ninety years later. In the future, when British authorities

wanted to remove a prince from office they did not annex his state and impose direct rule.

Instead, they replaced the unwanted ruler with a more plaint member of the ruling house,

maintaining indirect rule.[2] The Rebellion of 1857-58 made it plain to the British that no

longer could the Company be entrusted to rule the subcontinent, and the princes who had,

by and large, opposed the rebels should be embraced.[3]

However, while the rulers of the princely states found new favour in the post

rebellion settlement, one monarchy did not, that of the Mughal Emperors themselves.

Thomas Metcalf contends that while the Mughal Emperor, Bhadur Shah II, was largely

swept up by the events of the revolt and bears little or no responsibility, the British

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[1] Keith, *Speeches and Documents on Indian Policy,* 383.

[2] Ian Copland, *The Princes and the Endgame of Empire 1917-1947* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 183.

[3] Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and their States*, 84-85.

nonetheless held him partially responsible.[4] This blame took an immediate and brutal

form when British soldiers, led by Major William Hodson, murdered some of the

emperor's children without trial immediately following the fall of Delhi in 1857. The

emperor and the remaining members of his family were exiled to Rangoon. The murder,

deposition, and displacement of members of the imperial family had two significant

ramifications for the history of indirect rule. Firstly, it allowed the British Crown to

assume sovereignty over the Indian Subcontinent. Following from this it allowed the

British officials in India, acting as agents of the Crown, to conceptualise Indian society as

a hierarchy, with the vast mass of the people of India at the bottom, rising up through

elite groups like the *zamindars*, to the princes near the top, and the Crown at the apex.

This hierarchical vision of India clearly evolved out of pre-1857 thinking. The post-1858

settlement removed the ambiguity of Indian sovereignty by eliminating both the East

India Company, which had governed India, and the Mughal House of Timor, who had

reigned over India, and combining these two functions in the British Crown. With this

Queen Victoria became an Indian monarch who ruled her new dominion jointly through

British officials and Indian princes.

In the decades following the Queen's Proclamation, the princes were indeed

embraced and exploited by the British authorities. They became a pillar of the British

Indian Empire and the definitive iteration of a new colonial state that was fashioned with

India's imagined past at the centre of the imperial project. After the assumption of

Crown rule in 1858, India was not simply integrated into the British Empire as another

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[4] Metcalf, *Aftermath of the Revolt*, 298.

overseas territory. India was not strictly a colony, governed through the Colonial Office in London. Rather the India Office, headed by a cabinet minister, the Secretary of State for India, supervised the Government of India. The Government of India was based in Calcutta and headed by the governor-general of India who received the additional title of viceroy. The viceroy was responsible to the Secretary of State and Cabinet in London, and was charged with supervising the Government of India, the directly ruled British Indian provinces, and the indirectly ruled princely states.

This chapter will chart how in the late nineteenth century and beyond the British came to exploit the princely class to bolster and define their colonial regime. Over this period the princes would be individually and collectively celebrated by the British. Honours were heaped on them, massive state celebrations focused on them, and British officials constructed a body of knowledge to categorise their place in Indian and imperial society. However, this did not mean that their real political role had changed that dramatically from the Company era. Though the princes were celebrated after 1858 and their position was commensurately more secure, they did not acquire any more authority over their states, nor did they enjoy any power in the governance of India as a whole.[5] This apparent shift in favour of the princes by the British was consequently less dramatic than it appears; the supporters of indirect rule of the 1860s were just like the supporters of the doctrine of lapse in the 1840s attempting to find the best way to entrench British rule in South Asia. For many British officials, the rebellion demonstrated the frailty of direct British rule and highlighted the resilience of indirect rule. The British took this lesson to

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[5] Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and their States*, 92-93.

heart, and with the Queen's Proclamation and the accompanying Government of India Act of 1858, they sought to configure the loyalty and legitimacy of the princes to reinforce the colonial regime.[6] This model, in turn, would be employed in Egypt, Malaya, the Persian Gulf, Zanzibar, and Northern Nigeria, all inheriting variants of the princely state model.

In the aftermath of the rebellion the value of the princes to the British regime was apparent. However, while the princes would remain prominent in imperial thinking until Britain's departure, the reasons for this prominence shifted. Immediately after 1857 British officials focused on the strategic and military value of the princely states, but in time, racial and cultural explanations were developed that further legitimated indirect rule. In 1859, as the last rebel holdouts were being supressed by British forces, the British Government was focused on understanding what went wrong and how to prevent it from occurring again. Central to this mission was reorganising the military forces in India, which was the topic of a Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry, headed by the Secretary of State for War, Jonathan Peel.[7] The commission was tasked with reorganising the disparate forces of the East India Company, which actually comprised three nominally separate presidency armies, so as to secure India from external and internal threats and of course prevent another mutiny.[8] One of the striking characteristics of the massive six hundred page report produced was how the loyalty of the princes was almost taken for granted. This can be seen in a passage from Peel himself, when describing the broader

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[6] Bernard Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian India" in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 165.
[7] 1859 Session 1 [2515] *Report of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the organization of the Indian army; together with the minutes of evidence and appendix* (London: HMSO, 1859), vi.
[8] Metcalf, *The Aftermath of Revolt,* 297.

planned strategic organisation of India: "Calcutta, with a strong garrison, would be the entrepôt for receiving and forwarding all military supplies which could not be more conveniently sent by the Indus. Nepaul [sic] being on one flank, and the independent native states on another, other measures for the tranquillity and military occupation of India must be dependent upon political arrangement."[9] This is a far cry from the committee hearings in 1812 when it was feared that the princely states were a likely centre for rebellion.[10]

Peel and his Cabinet colleagues were hugely important in framing the future government of India, but so too were officials in the field who also shared the belief that the princes were steadfastly loyal. An example of this can be seen in the actions of the Governor of Bombay during the rebellion. In the following passage from a Government of India report detailing the actions of the Bombay Government during the rebellion, the different ways the Governor, Lord Elphinstone, the nephew of Mountstuart Elphinstone, dealt with the directly and indirectly ruled territories under his purview is highlighted.

> Before the occurrence of the outbreak in the northern provinces of India, and the excitement which necessarily occasioned in other parts of the country, the expediency of disarming the people not only of British Guzerat [sic], but of the whole of the Bombay Presidency, had been contemplated by Lord Elphinstone. The design, however, at no time extended beyond the disarming of those parts of the country, which were under the direct control of the British Government. No dangers or difficulties, present or perspective, seemed to warrant any interference in this manner with the Native states.[11]

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[9] *Report of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the organization of the Indian army,* 76.

[10] "Record of evidenced given by Sir John Malcolm, 1812-13", 68.

[11] 1860 (402) East India (disarming the natives). *Copies of correspondence with the several governments of India, regarding the disarming of the natives in Guzerat*, (London: HMSO, 1860), 2.

This is a remarkable passage as it more or less concedes that the Governor of Bombay had little or no confidence in the loyalty of the people under direct British rule, but every confidence in the princes of western India which, as the report concludes, was to be largely justified. Moreover, as the report also shows, the princely states required far fewer Europeans on the ground and paid for their own administration, making them not only more stable but also more economical.[12]

These above passages are representative of the immediate reasons for British support of indirect rule during and after the rebellion, and to a large degree explain why the Queen's Proclamation and the corresponding assumption of Crown rule went to such great lengths to place the princely states at the centre of the new regime. However, in the years following the demise of the Company, the argument in favour of the princes expanded from one of simple political and strategic expediency to a more nuanced racial and cultural rationale. Saul Dubow, in his discussion of race in South Africa, has argued that while Europeans since the Enlightenment had seen themselves at the top of a racial hierarchy, in the middle of the nineteenth century this perspective began to take a different direction. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there was a tendency to see different races as part of a universal human continuum, whereby even the 'lowliest' or most primitive people could 'progress' to reach the advanced state of civilisation enjoyed by western Europeans.[13] In South Asia a similar type of ideology developed that drove the likes of J.S. Mill and Macaulay to call for expanded interference in Indian

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[12] *Copies of correspondence with the several governments of India, regarding the disarming of the natives in Guzerat,* 2-3.

[13] Saul Dubow, *Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 27-28.

affairs so as to help the people of India become, in effect, more British. Dubow argues, however, that this perspective was displaced in mid-century by a more static view of race, whereby each of the various racial groups became portrayed as essentially distinct from Europeans and hence unable or unlikely to 'progress' from their current 'primitive' state.

Susan Bayly, Peter Robb, and Thomas Metcalf confirm that a similar crystallisation of ideas of race was occurring in India after the Rebellion. Bayly, for example, in her *Caste, Society, and Politics in India*, shows how the British enacted legislation in parts of directly ruled of India which marked whole communities as "Criminal Tribes."[14] This type of legislation illustrates the application of what Dubow calls 'scientific racism' as it was based on a skewed understanding of Darwinian speciation, in which it was believed that other ethnic groups were different, and lesser, human subspecies.[15] A similar though far less extreme version of 'scientific racism' is what Thomas Metcalf has identified as the 'creation of difference' whereby the British came to see Indian civilisation as essentially distinct from European.[16] At its core, this was an orientalist binary understanding of Indian culture which enabled the British to conceptualise India as 'special', requiring British 'protection' and hence colonial rule. Peter Robb's contribution to this literature dissects how the artificial binary of 'Hindu' and 'Muslim' was strengthened by the events in 1857 in the minds of the British.[17] Robb shows that rather than seeing Indian society as comprising a myriad of ethic, cultural, and

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[14] Susan Bayly, *Caste, Society, and Politics in India, from the Eighteenth Century to the Modern Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 118.
[15] Dubow, *Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa*, 28-29.
[16] Metcalf. *Ideologies of the Raj*, 66-112.
[17] Peter Robb, "On the Rebellion of 1857: A Brief History of an Idea" *Economic and Political Weekly*, 42 (19) 2007: 1698.

religious groups, the British tended to see the subcontinent as being made up of these two monolithic communal groups. This post-1857 intellectual trend of understanding racial and religious communities as rigid and unchanging would find expression in indirect rule. Unlike J.S. Mill or Macaulay's form of improving liberalism, which saw Indian society as malleable and 'improvable', this more conservative understanding of race contributed directly to the belief the 'Orientals' were essentially different, and were best controlled through 'Oriental' institutions. Hence indirect rule once again found wider favour in official circles.

Race, however, was just one of the ways the Victorians were conceptualising India. Just as important was their understanding of social or class hierarchies. One of the clearest iterations of the importance of social rank was the proliferation of chivalric honours to reward and categorise the upper classes. On 25 June 1861 the India Office in London announced that the Queen had authorised the establishment of an order of knighthood for India.[18] Following in the wake of the Indian Rebellion, this 'Most Exalted Order of the Star of India' was overtly emblematic of the hierarchy the British were trying to impose after the recent disaster. The notice in the official organ of the Home Government, the *London Gazette*, read:

> The Queen, being desirous of affording to the Princes, Chiefs, and People, of the Indian Empire, a public and signal testimony of Her regard, by the Institution of an Order of Knighthood, whereby Her resolution to take upon Herself the Government of the Territories in India may be commemorated, and by which Her Majesty may be enabled to reward conspicuous merit and loyalty, has been graciously pleased, by Letters Patent under the Great Seal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, to institute, erect, constitute, and create, an Order of Knighthood,

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[18] India-Office, *London Gazette*, June 25, 1861.

to be known by, and have for ever hereafter, the name, style, and designation, of "The Most Exalted Order of the Star of India."[19]

This same announcement also explained its constitution and listed the first recipients. Initially, the order was structured in a way that paralleled the domestic 'national' orders of the British honours system, the orders of the Garter for England, the Thistle for Scotland, and St. Patrick for Ireland. All of these, like the Star of India in this first incarnation, were of a single rank, 'Knight of the Order' and were very limited in number, with only twenty-five knights, excluding honorary recipients like members of the Royal family. This is comparable to the Garter, Thistle, and St. Patrick, who were similarly exclusive with twenty-four, sixteen, and twenty-two members at any one time.[20]

The choice of the Star of India's initial recipients also illustrates how the honour was an Indian analogue of British domestic knighthoods. The first knights were exclusively drawn from the ruling elite as was the case with the domestic orders. At the apex was Victoria herself, sovereign of the order.[21] Below the sovereign was the grand master, which the statues of the order granted, *ex officio*, to the reigning Viceroy of India. In 1861 this was Lord Canning to whom fell the task of inducting the first knights. Aside from Canning, Prince Albert, and the Prince of Wales, who were made honorary knights, there were seven Europeans named in the first list of nominees to the order. These included current heads of the larger provinces, like the governors of Bombay and Madras, the commander in chief of the armies in India, and some of the 'heroes' of the rebellion,

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[19] India-Office, *London Gazette*, June 25, 1861.
[20] Peter Galloway, *The Most Illustrious Order: The Order of St Patrick and its knights*. (London: Unicorn, 1999), 269. ; *Statutes of the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle: revived by His Majesty King James II of England and VII of Scotland and again revived by Her Majesty Queen Anne*. (Edinburgh: Order of the Thistle, 1978), 1-7.
[21] Cohn, 'Representing Authority in Victorian India', 181.

Sir John Lawrence, Lord Clyde, and Sir James Outram. Joining these British Royals, proconsuls, and war heroes were a total of nine princes, or rather eight princes and one princess, the Begum of Bhopal. These nine individuals, hailing from the three major religions of South Asia, represented the most significant states that had remained loyal to the British and were being rewarded accordingly. They included four Hindu, two Sikh, and three Muslim rulers, including the very first knight of the order, the Nizam of Hyderabad.[22]

Prior to 1857 the Company employed existing Mughal honourifics like the granting of such titles as nawab or raja to Muslims and Hindus respectively. John McLeod argues that after the rebellion a version of the British honours system was superimposed upon the existing Mughal traditions to further reward service to the colonial regime.[23] Indeed, the creation of a special British Indian knighthood was only possible after 1858 as the confusing situation of who was sovereign of India was only then definitively settled. Prior to the rebellion, the East India Company, operating under a charter from the British Crown and under the direction of the British Government, governed India but they did so by right of a series of legal and diplomatic agreements with the Mughal Emperors who retained *de jure* sovereignty over India. After the Government of India Act of 1858, Victoria was made sovereign of India and the last of the members of the Mughal dynasty were deposed and exiled or had been killed. One of the prerogatives that the British gained with this new legal arrangement was the

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[22] India-Office, *London Gazette*, June 25, 1861.
[23] McLeod, 'The English Honours System in Princely India", 238.

opportunity to devise a uniquely colonial honour system for India, which they did less than three years after reasserting control over the subcontinent.[24]

David Cannadine argues that the rationale for creating orders like the Star of India was to rank and categorise colonial subjects while also rewarding them for their loyalty.[25] The British must have thought that it was well worth it to give away these honours which came with ceremonial medals and robes of great value. For the establishment of the Star of India alone they spent the vast sum of £25, 490.[26] To understand the scale of this sum, the new palatial India Office headquarters, then under construction in the heart of Whitehall with the Foreign Office on one side and St James Park and Buckingham Palace on the other, cost only £11, 950.[27] McLeod argues that the princes also came to value knighthoods, as for to them it became an overt recognition of the concept of *izzat* or personal honour common amongst the Indian elite.[28] The British certainly seemed to appreciate this as the use of orders of chivalry would be expanded in India, and princes were by far the most common recipients of the highest honours.

The Nizam Asaf Jah V of Hyderabad was the first of many Indian princes to be inducted into the Order of the Star of India, which was supplemented in 1877 by the introduction of a more junior Order of the Indian Empire which opened opportunities to even more princes. The Orders of the Star of India and the Indian Empire joined five existing British chivalric orders. The senior and by far the most famous and prestigious was the aforementioned 'Most Noble Order of the Garter', founded in 1348 by Edward

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[24] McLeod, "The English Honours System in Princely India", 237-239.
[25] Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 85-88.
[26] India Office, *Home Accounts of the Government of India* (London: India Office, 1862), 11.
[27] *Home Accounts of the Government of India*, 9.
[28] McLeod, "The English Honours System in Princely India", 241.

III, and which was granted to a small number of English grandees and foreign monarchs. However, the majority of the extant orders of knighthood were much more modern creations that were invented or re-created to reward different segments of domestic and colonial officialdom by the British government. These include, for example, the Order of the Bath for civil servants and soldiers and the Order of St Michael and St George for diplomats and colonial officials which emerged in their modern form in the early nineteenth century.[29] The number of different orders continued to grow with the addition of the Royal Victorian Order in 1896 and the Order of the British Empire in 1917. Most of these had multiple classes within them. The Star of India, for example, was expanded in 1866 from just one rank to three: Knight Grand Commander, Knight Commander, and Companion.[30]

Similar to the other imperial orders, the members of the various ranks of the Star of India received titular and physical representations of their rank. The top two rungs of the order were knighthoods, and hence the recipients were entitled to place 'Sir' if male or 'Dame' in the rare case of female recipients before their given name. The more exclusive Knights Grand Commanders also received diamond studded and colourfully enamelled gold insignia and blue silk robes to wear at official functions, while the lower ranks received more modest medals. However, since all knights were called Sir or Dame and these medals and robes were not always worn, it was through the use of post-nominal letters that the various ranks and order of knighthood were distinguished. Post-nominal letters, the abbreviated notation placed after one's surname representing a civil, military,

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[29] Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 98-99.
[30] *The London Gazette*, 25 May 1866.

academic, or religious awards or distinctions, were widely employed by the Victorians.

Perhaps the most famous was the Victoria Cross, an award for military valour, which is

well known by its post-nominal letters of VC. Other examples, most especially academic

degrees, such as BA for Bachelor of Arts, are still in common usage. In the latter half of

the nineteenth century, however, the use of post-nominal reached new heights and

consequently a given honour is most often referred to by these initials. Indeed, an

individual's rank, as defined by Victorian colonial authorities in India and the rest of the

empire, can be gleaned by their post-nominals. Hence, a member of the top rank of the

Order of the Star of India, a Knight Grand Commander of the order, or GCSI, was

distinguished from a member of the middle rank of Knight Commander, KCSI, or a

Companion of the Star of India, CSI. However, there was opportunity to move up in the

ranks and individuals often began as companions of an order early in their career before

rising in the ranks.[31]

The difference in rank within the various orders is also reflected in the number

and composition of the membership. Again using the example of the Star of India, the

individuals who got the GCSI were very small in number, at most a few dozen, and were

nearly always viceroys, provincial governors, and Indian princes of the larger states.[32] At

the other end of the scale, those who were awarded the CSI were counted in the hundreds

and comprised lower ranking British and Indian officials and princes of smaller states.

The complex array of honours available to the British to bestow on their subjects is

particularly useful as a lens to understand how indirect rule in India and elsewhere

[31] *The India List and India Office List 1905*, 139-149.
[32] *The India List and India Office List 1905*, 139.

functioned. The importance of a ruler and his state to the British can be measured

through the number, type, and level of honour he received. An example of this can be

seen in Sir Mahbub Ali Khan, Nizam of Hyderabad, the son and successor of the first

prince to join the Order of the Star of India. Mahbub Ali Khan also received the GCSI

soon after ascending to the nizamat and he was later made a Knight Grand Cross of the

Order of the Bath, GCB, which was an even more senior pan-imperial order, so important

was Hyderabad to the British.[33] Perhaps the most-decorated prince, however, was Sir

Ganga Singh, Maharaja of Bikaner. The Maharaja played a major political role during

and after the First World War, including as a member of the Imperial War Cabinet in

London, and was inducted into four separate orders of knighthood over his long reign.[34]

The experiences of Mahbub Ali Khan and Ganga Singh, however, were unusual. Most

princes, even of large states, could expect to enjoy induction into one or maybe two of the

orders, and unusually not at the top level but more often at the middling level, that of

knight commander.[35] And even this was a high honour amongst the princes since in the

middle of the nineteenth century there was something in the range of six hundred states in

British India, some so small as to be little more than a large country estate. For the

majority of these rulers, being made a Companion of the Star of India or the equivalent

CIE, Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire was the most to which they could

[33] *The India List and India Office List 1902*, 136; Karen Leonard, "Reassessing Indirect Rule in Hyderabad: Rule, Ruler, or Sons-in-Law of the State?" *Modern Asian Studies*, 37 (2) 2003: 368.
[34] Barbara N. Ramusack, "Singh, Ganga (1880–1943)," in *the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/view/article/31885 (accessed February 14, 2013).
[35] *The India List and India Office List 1905* (London: Harrison & Sons, 1905), 139-140; 144-145.

aspire.[36] Therefore, the history and composition of these orders mirrors the history of

indirect rule. As indirect rule became an increasingly dominant discourse of colonial

ideology in British India, the proliferation of orders and other honours followed.

Quasi-chivalric honours were not the only means that the British employed for

ranking and rewarding the princes. During the period of Crown rule, the British

published an annual list ranking the top princely states which were categorised as 'salute

states'. They were called that because these top 120 princes or so who ruled over the

larger and more significant states were granted the right to have a numerically graded gun

salute fired in their honour.[37] The number of guns fired was commensurate with the

prince's rank within the system of indirect rule, with the top ranked, like the Nizam of

Hyderabad, receiving a twenty-one gun salute while the lowliest enjoying only three.

Other high ranking officials and dignitaries were also allotted gun salutes which allow for

a comparison of the relative ranking of an individual prince. The nizam, for example,

outranked, by this metric, individuals who were arguably more powerful than him, like an

ambassador, who was eligible for a salute of nineteen guns, or the governors of the large

provinces of Bombay and Madras, who were only allotted seventeen guns. Indeed, the

nizam's salute made him equal in status to foreign royals, both European and Asian.

Only the viceroy and members of the British royal family, who were granted thirty-one,

and the sovereign, who was granted 101, outranked Hyderabad. At the other end of the

scale, equal with nine and seven gun salute princes were captains of Royal Navy vessels

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[36] *India Office List 1905*, 141-142; 145-148.
[37] Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 45.

and mid-ranking diplomats like consuls-general.[38] As with the knighthoods, those placed

in the top rank were few in number, only Hyderabad and four other large states, while

there many more nineteen, seventeen, fifteen, and eleven gun princes, and dozens of nine

gun salute states. Five and three gun salutes were reserved for the tiny Arab states of the

Persian Gulf and Aden under British Indian protection. The publication of this 'table of

salutes fired in India' every year in the official *India List and India Office List* was a

method for the British not only to rank these states, but also to show how the indirectly

ruled states were being included in the administration of India as a whole.[39]

If knighthoods, gun salutes, and inclusion in the pages of the India Office List

were not a clear enough demonstration of the place of the princes within the British

Indian polity after 1858, the three coronation *darbars* were. In 1877, 1903, and 1911 a

series of massive ceremonies were held on the plains outside of Delhi.[40] These events

were held by the British Government of India to mark the rule of three sovereigns;

Victoria, upon the assumption of the title of Empress in India, and Edward VII and

George V at the beginning or their reigns. All of these ceremonies brought together both

British and Indian members of the Indian ruling classes along with thousands of British

and Indian soldiers.[41] Medals, knighthoods, and other honours were lavished on the

participants in a setting of parading troops, processions of liveried elephants, and gun

salutes.

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[38] *India Office List 1905*, 176.
[39] *The India List and India Office List 1904* (London: Harrison & Sons, 1904), 176B.
[40] Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 51.
[41] Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and their States*, 124.

In each *darbar* several groups played central roles in honouring the Queen-Empress or King-Emperor, but the key individuals were always the Indian princes. The first *darbar*, 1 January 1877, was at the time a unique cultural, political, and theatrical pageant held to mark the assumption of the title of Empress of India by Queen Victoria.[42] The concept of a *darbar*, as the court of a state, was a long-standing Indian institution. The coronation *darbar*, however, was a uniquely British Indian construct; in effect it was a British coronation stripped of the Christian liturgy and placed in an Indian setting with Indian and British actors.[43] These three massive spectacles can be seen as a representation of an idealised vision of the Indian Empire as imagined by senior British officials.

Queen Victoria had constitutionally been monarch of India from 1858 when the British Government had dissolved the East India Company in the wake of the Indian Rebellion of 1857-58.[44] India, however, despite being drawn under formal Crown control, remained exceptional within the wider imperial context. India was special; at a basic level it was much larger in population than any other possession of the Crown. Moreover, India was understood by many in Britain to be a great ancient civilisation in and of itself which it was the responsibility of the government to protect.[45] The princes, as a class, were a political manifestation of the singular place of India and their maintenance by the British became emblematic of India's special culture, exemplifying

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[42] Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, 75-77.
[43] Alan Trevithick, "Some Structural and Sequential Aspects of the British Imperial Assemblages at Delhi: 1877-1911." *Modern Asian Studies*, 24 (3) 1990): 561-578.
[44] Miles Taylor, "Queen Victoria and India, 1837-61" *Victorian Studies*, 46 (2) 2004: 269.
[45] Cohn, 'Representing Authority in Victorian India", 166

Metcalf's "creation of difference".[46] These characteristics led many to conclude that India was more than one more colony of the British Empire; it was an empire in and of itself. First and foremost amongst people who held this view was Queen Victoria. Her Prime Minster Benjamin Disraeli was ever keen to give his monarch what she wanted, especially if it helped further his political goals. Together in 1877 they would achieve her goal of acquiring the title of Empress of India, and therefore of officially naming the British possessions in South Asia, the 'Indian Empire'.[47]

Making Victoria Empress of India was in large measure intended as an affirmation of the importance and centrality of India within British Empire.[48] This declaration was aimed in a number of directions; because it was the product of a Tory administration, whose leader was a savvy populist, it was in part aimed at a domestic audience.[49] From Disraeli's time a dichotomy began to be propagated in which the Conservatives and their political allies came to be generally seen as the party of empire, and the Liberals, especially Gladstonian Liberals, were seen as being 'little Englanders', sceptical of empire. As later chapters will show, however, this was a false dichotomy, as Liberals and Tory administrations alike expanded the empire in the late nineteenth century. In this context the title of Empress was a point of pride for British imperialists, if also a point of derision for those more sceptical of imperial grandeur.[50] Miles Taylor, for example, shows how some commentators feared the "corrupting" influence of turning

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[46] Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, 66-112.
[47] L. A. Knight, "The Royal Titles Act and India." *The Historical Journal*, 11 (3) 1968: 492.
[48] Taylor, "Queen Victoria and India", 264-266.
[49] Paul Smith, *Disraeli: A Brief Life*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996), 199-200.
[50] Taylor, "Queen Victoria and India", 264-267.

the Queen into an "Eastern potentate."[51] Fears of Victoria asserting the power of an

Oriental despot originate from many of the same anxieties as we saw in Edmund Burke's

criticism of Warren Hastings, namely the overarching fear that despotic Indian methods

of government could 'infect' British authorities and threaten age-old English liberties at

home. This opposition, however, was not sufficient to prevent the passage of the act to

make Victoria empress.

Moreover, the Queen's new title was not solely aimed at domestic circles. In the

Commons Disraeli was also insistent that the members should "…not let Europe suppose

for a moment that there are any in the House who are not deeply conscious of the

importance of the Indian Empire."[52] This demonstrates that this new title was in effect a

warning to other powers, most especially Russia, reminding them that India was central

to British policy. Britain and Russia had been rivals in Asia for much of the nineteenth

century; the Royal Titles Bill was in this context one more diplomatic salvo in a rivalry

often known as the 'Great Game'.[53] Finally the Royal Titles Bill of 1876 was also aimed

at an Indian audience, a declaration to India that it was important to the British Crown.

This was especially directed towards the rulers of the princely states. The Earl of Derby,

the Foreign Secretary in Disraeli's Cabinet, said that the Bill "…will mark more clearly

the relation which she [Victoria] holds to the native Princes of India…"[54] With the new

title there were hopes that Victoria would be seen as an Indian monarch and Britain as an

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[51] Taylor, "Queen Victoria and India", 264.
[52] Knight, "The Royal Titles Act and India", 492.
[53] Peter Hopkirk. *The Great Game: On Secret Service in High Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1.
[54] Knight. "The Royal Titles Act and India.", 492.

Asian power. This was meant to strengthen their position in Asia and Europe by showing

that India and its princes were an integral component of the British imperial polity.[55]

To mark the beginning of the reign of Victoria as Empress, and as an overt

demonstration of the significance of India to Britain, a special ceremony was planned in

India to coincide with the assumption of the title. Lord Lytton, the viceroy at the time,

was in overall command of the first *darbar,* which was called at the time the 'imperial

assemblage'. Lytton himself described the attendees of the assemblage:

> [O]n the historical plain near Delhi, on January 1, 1877 – in the presence
> of the heads of government in India; of 1,200 of the noble band of civil
> servants; of 14,000 splendidly equipped and disciplined British and native
> troops; of seventy-seven of the ruling chiefs and princes of India,
> representing territories as large as Great Britain, France and Germany
> combined; and of 300 native noblemen and gentlemen besides.[56]

The princes and other groups were invited to Delhi to participate in a ceremony which

was meant to both recognise the advent of the Indian Empire, as well as participate in a

forum to honour the various participants in an effort to strengthen their bonds with the

British regime. General, later Lord, Roberts, a member of the committee tasked with

organising the assemblage, noted that "[t]he ceremony was most imposing, and in every

way successful."[57] Roberts, a veteran of the 1857 rebellion, thought that making a show

of authority was helpful in cementing the British regime. In this context the 1877 *darbar*,

and the two that would follow, are expressions of the broader political goal to make the

British regime in South Asia effectively secure. It was vitally important for Lord

Lytton's government to have the Imperial Assemblage go ahead without a hitch. At the

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[55] Cannadine. *Ornamentalism,* 45.
[56] Betty Balfour, *The History of Lord Lytton's Indian Administration,* (London: Longmans, 1899), 110.
[57] Frederick Roberts, *Forty-One Years in India* (London: Richard Bentley, 1897), II: 95.

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time that the final preparations for the ceremony were taking place in Delhi, a devastating

famine was raging in Bombay and Madras. Despite this the imperial assemblage was

neither toned down nor postponed.[58] The demonstration of political authority and unity

in the *darbar* was clearly more vital to British interests than famine relief. In his hugely

important study of the *darbar*, Bernard S. Cohn argues that Lytton and the small group of

people he selected to plan and organise the event were keen to make the event a pivotal

demonstration of the post-1858 order.[59] The viceroy, therefore, was indifferent to all

opposition, including both internal criticisms from the British officials who thought that

the *darbar* was a vainglorious 'oriental' spectacle and Indians who thought it was a gross

misuse of public funds.[60] For Lytton the answer to these critiques was that the *darbar*

was a unifying force and demonstration of the new inclusive, if highly hierarchical,

regime. Cohn argues that to an extent Lytton was vindicated. Despite being derided in

private and in the press, two more *darbars* would be held, in 1903 and 1911, following

on the form of the first one, suggesting that later viceroys and their advisors thought that

the ceremony was of enduring utility.[61]

Lytton's Assemblage came only twenty years after the outbreak of the rebellion;

consequently, the ruling elite in India and Britain were obsessed with maintaining the

loyalty of those who they perceived to be key members of India society to prevent

another revolt. In a letter to Disraeli, Lytton revealed his position on the place of the

princes within the Indian Empire: "nothing struck me more in my intercourse thus far

[58] Balfour. *The History of Lord Lytton's Indian Administration,*114-115; Make Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World* (London: Verso, 2001), 28.
[59] Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian India", 191.
[60] Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian India", 191; 207.
[61] Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian India", 207-208.

with Indian Rajas and Maharajas than the importance they attach to their family

pedigrees and ancestral records. Here is a great feudal aristocracy which we cannot get

rid of, which we are avowedly anxious to conciliate and command…"[62] The viceroy's

statement is representative of the perception by the British who championed India's

hereditary native rulers. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, the ideological tenor

of the British Indian ruling establishment was motivated by what Thomas Metcalf has

called the "medievalist ideal".[63] This was a drive to both preserve and expand what the

British identified as the ancient hierarchical essence of South Asian society. The place of

the princes within the British Indian polity is the archetypal example of this aspect of

imperial organisation.[64] In the same letter to Disraeli cited above, Lytton said that he was

intending the assemblage to be a public way for the princes and other elite figures in

India to "…rally round the British Crown as its feudal head."[65] The medieval nature of

the Imperial Assemblage was exemplified by the use of gothic architectural motifs and

creation of 'coats-of-arms' for each of the senior ruling princes. Like the orders of

knighthood, coats of arms are a form of symbolism developed in the Europe in the middle

ages.[66] Their use in the 1877 *darbar* is demonstrative of this trend in which the ruling

British sought to turn the Indian princes into a feudal order, analogous to the barons of

medieval Europe. By constructing a quasi-medieval social order in India, the British

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[62] Balfour, *The History of Lord Lytton's Indian Administration,*108.
[63] Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, 75.
[64] Cannadine, *Ornamentalism,* 41-58.
[65] Balfour, *The History of Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, 108.
[66] Dick Kooiman, "Invention of Tradition in Travancore: a maharaja's quest for political security." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (Vol. 15 part 2, July 2005. 151-164), 151-153.

were attempting to entrench their position as the head of a great polity comprised of small, stable, and above all else, loyal princely fiefdoms.

Victoria's reign as Empress of India lasted until 1901 when she was succeeded by her son Edward VII. The Viceroy of India at the time of Edward's ascension was Lord Curzon who, like Lytton, was attracted to the idea of holding a formal public ceremony to mark the reign of the new emperor. On the first of January 1903 the second coronation *darbar* was held by the British in Delhi.[67] Once again masses of troops paraded before the princes and numerous lesser dignitaries. Speeches of loyalty to the new imperial sovereign were made and knighthoods and other honours were lavished on the participants in his name. Curzon based this *darbar* on Lytton's 1877 Imperial Assemblage;[68] however, there were several changes that serve to illuminate the differences in how the governing elite conceptualised the Indian Empire at beginning of the twentieth century.[69] In the ceremony of 1903 Lytton's faux-medievalist aesthetic was gone. Rather Edward VII's *darbar* was devised as a celebration of a British interpretation of Indian culture, indeed it was the first to be officially called a 'durbar', rather than the English 'assemblage'. Indo-Saracenic architecture motifs, similar to those used in the Taj Mahal, replaced the Gothic of 1877.[70] By 'orientalising' India, that is demonstrating that the Indians were essentially different from the ruling British, they were attempting to construct a system by which their colonial role would be made more permanent. However, even while they helped sustain a narrative of difference, the

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[67] David Gilmour, *Curzon*: *Imperial Statesmen* (London: John Murray, 1994), 243.
[68] Gilmour, *Curzon*, 239.
[69] Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian India", 208.
[70] Cannadine. *Ornamentalism*, 51.

darbar and associated ceremonials, like the orders of knighthoods and gun salutes, were also unifying institutions which showed that while the princes and the British officials may have belonged to distinct cultures, they were working together in governing India.

Thomas Metcalf argues the medievalist view of was abandoned after 1877 as it suggested that that India would one day progress to a point that did not require British rule.[71] Moreover, as anaesthetic movement, medievalism was related to a particular romantic movement that simply fell from vogue in the 1880s. Indeed, Curzon simply thought the idea of Indian coats of arms lacked authenticity and banned them from 'his' *darbar*.[72] The replacing of the medievalist discursive framework with strictly orientalist one by the time of the 1903 *darbar* shows that indirect rule as an ideology continued to evolve. Under a more orientalist framework, Indian society was presented as essentially different from British society and required either a permanent colonial rule or a long-term trusteeship. This is as opposed to both the medievalist and the liberal ideological rationale for imperialism whereby a given territory would be held only as long as it was deemed unprepared for independence. For the individuals who devised the 1903 *darbar*, this was not the case as they felt that Indian society fundamentally required the British aided by their princely allies to rule .[73]

In 1911 Edward VII died and was succeeded by his son George V as King-Emperor. The viceroy of the day, Lord Hardinge, like Lytton and Curzon, undertook to hold a *darbar* to mark the event which would be the last and largest of the three.[74] Both

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[71] Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, 77-78.
[72] Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian India", 208.
[73] Gilmour, *Curzon*, 227-228.
[74] Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian India", 208.

Victoria and Edward had taken an interest in the administration of the empire and the welfare of their overseas subjects; however, George V saw far more of it than both of his predecessors, having travelled throughout his future dominions during the reigns of his father and grandmother.[75] In 1911-1912 he continued this practice and became the first reigning British Emperor of India to visit his South Asian territories. This extended visit to the subcontinent culminated in December of 1911 with the coronation *darbar* in Delhi.[76] Like the 1877 and 1903 *darbars,* the ruling princes came together in a huge ceremony with thousands of troops, cavalry, infantry, and elephants. Where it differed, however, was Lord Hardinge, the viceroy, was eclipsed in this show of imperial sovereignty by the King-Emperor, unlike Lytton and Curzon who were at the centre of the events of 1877 and 1903. This *darbar* marked the visual culmination of the King's role as the quasi-feudal head of the Indian Empire as it was here that he personally received the homage of a number of the senior most princes.[77]

Delhi had been the site of the previous two *darbars* but was even more important for the third and final coronation *darbar*. For most of the time that the British rule in India, Calcutta had been their capital. Delhi, however, had been the capital of the Mughal Empire and by holding *darbars* there, the British were insinuating that they were successors to the Mughal Empire. In 1911 the trend of constructing British rule as the new Mughal Empire was confirmed by the actual moving of the capital of the Indian Empire to New Delhi, a purpose-built city near the historic capital. With this act the

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[75] John Fortescue, *Narrative of the visit to India of Their Majesties King George V. and Queen Mary: and of the Coronation Durbar held at Delhi, 12th December 1911.* (London, Macmillan, 1912), 78.
[76] Fortescue, *Narrative of the visit to India,* 107.
[77] Fortescue, *Narrative of the visit to India,* 173-74.

British further sought to establish themselves as heirs to the Mughals, obscuring the actual genesis of their rule with the monopoly of the East India Company.[78] The moving of the capital to Delhi was symbolically one more act in the long evolution in British thinking with regards to their place in Indian society. Calcutta, the great metropolis on the river Hugli, was a product of the commercial empire begun by the East India Company. Under the rule of the Company the power of the British spread, often at the expense of and to the detriment of local rulers. Ultimately, the Company was dissolved in the wake of the Indian rebellion and the British Government took over and attempted to distance themselves from their predecessors.

Cohn has argued that after 1858 the British worked hard to shed their role as "outsiders" and become "insiders."[79] This goal revolved around achieving legitimacy for the colonial regime, and explains the rationale behind many of their policies over the ensuing half century and more, including making Victoria Empress of India and moving the capital from British Calcutta to Mughal Delhi.[80] By incorporating the princes, the British were also seeking legitimacy within an Indian idiom as they understood it. The British, of course, were outsiders and would never be insiders despite their efforts to appear as such. European 'outsiders' dominated colonial India from the time of Clive and Hasting's conquests until Sir Stafford Cripps and Lord Mountbatten negotiated independence. However, the princes had a far better claim to be insiders and had

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[78] Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian India", 166.
[79] Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian India", 165.
[80] Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian India", 187.

demonstrated as a class widespread fidelity to the colonial regime, and therefore indirect

rule became a favoured form of colonial government after 1858.[81]

The *darbars* of 1877, 1903, and 1911 were expressions of British authority in

India. Although they met British and Indian opposition and were often dismissed as

trivial and vainglorious ceremonies, they continued to be employed over a long span of

modern Indian history. For the most part it appears that the princes themselves were

willing participants in these ceremonies. In his study of the southern Indian state of

Pudukkotti, which was ruled by a dynasty of Hindu Rajas, Nicholas Dirks calls princes

under indirect rule 'theatre states' in which princes who sport 'hollow crowns' are actors

blindly obeying their British masters. Dirks argues that "under British rule little kings in

India were constructed colonial objects and given special colonial scripts".[82] From Dirks'

perspective, events like *darbars* and other ceremonial aspects of colonialism were

evidence that indirect rule was practically identical to direct rule, save for a veneer of

'native' collaboration. Dirk's perspective, however, has come under sustained critique.

Hira Singh, for example, argues that to dismiss the role of the subject potentate under

indirect rule is to strip him and other local actors of agency, which is ahistorical and

wholly ignores the "two-way process of compromise and accommodation" which defined

indirect rule.[83] Dick Kooiman's work offers another alternative to Dirks' view; he shows

that the Maharajas of Travancore, a large Hindu state in southern India, used the invented

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[81] Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, 60-61.
[82] Nicholas Dirks, *Hollow Crown: ethnohistory of an Indian kingdom*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 384.
[83] Hira Singh "Colonial and postcolonial historiography and the princely states: Relations of power and rituals of legitimation" in Waltraud Ernst and Biswamoy Pati eds., *India's Princely States: People, Princes and Colonialism*, (London: Routledge, 2007), 16.

traditions of the post-1858 British regime to reinforce their own legitimacy. Therefore, in

Travancore at least, the ceremonial inventions of *darbars*, knighthoods, and coats-of-

arms, which were meant to solidify the colonial regime, also aided the princes in securing

their role in their own territories.[84] Nonetheless, Dirks and Kooiman both agree that the

princes tended by in large to be willing collaborators with the British.

Some princes were not as compliant as the rulers of Pudukkotti and Travancore

and even resisted the pressure to participate in colonial ceremonials. The most famous

incident involving a prince publically rejecting his British-defined role came during the

1911 *darbar*. At the ceremony the leading princes were obliged to pay ritual homage to

the newly-crowned George V. The ritual of paying homage involved advancing towards

the King and Queen and saluting, before retiring in reverse, the point being that one never

turned one's back on the monarch. According to eyewitnesses, the Maharaja of Baroda,

Sir Sayajirao Gaekwad III, did just this after approaching the throne. It is not clear if this

was an accident or an intentional snub on the part of the Maharaja; however, as explained

by Charles Nuckolls, it was interpreted as having a sinister meaning by British authorities

and taken as a signal of the prince's support for independence by the Indian popular

press.[85] This so-called incident is especially useful in showing the degree to which the

British controlled the actions of the princes, as soon after the event the maharaja was

pressured by the viceroy to issue a statement saying he turned his back in error and meant

no ill will by the action.[86] This suggests that that the princes were stripped of a great deal

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[84] Kooiman, "Invention of Tradition in Travancore: a maharaja's quest for political security", 151-153.
[85] Charles W. Nuckolls, "The Durbar Incident" *Modern Asian Studies*, 24 (3) 1990: 529-559.
[86] Nuckolls, "The Durbar Incident", 537.

of agency at large public events like the *darbars* and were in effect actors in a British stage-managed play. And while the example of Travancore suggests that some were willing participants, the actions of the Maharaja of Baroda suggest that all may not have been. *Darbars*, along with the Indian orders of knighthood and gun salutes, while apparently superficial, were a consistent and enduring ceremonial manifestation of a commitment by the British to indirect rule.[87]

The ceremonial place of the Indian princes is also evidence of another significant difference between direct and indirect rule in India, specifically with regards to Muslims. In the aftermath of the rebellion, Metcalf contends that the British began a policy of excluding Muslims from positions of administrative authority. He argues that because the mutiny was widely seen as predominantly a Muslim rebellion and Muslim figures like the last Mughal Emperor Bahdur Shah II were seen as its instigators, the British came to distrust and punish Muslims after the assumption of Crown rule.[88] While this may have been the case in the directly-ruled provinces of British India, there is no evidence the British treated Muslim princes any worse than their Hindu, Sikh, and Buddhist counterparts. Indeed, the prestige enjoyed by the Nizam of Hyderabad, the premier prince of British India, demonstrates that Muslim princes faired quite well under Crown rule.[89] And Hyderabad was not alone; many Muslim-ruled states, like Bhopal, Tonk, and Rampur, for example, were all highly placed in the imperial hierarchy. Moreover, as the following chapters will show, even if there was a lingering fear of Muslim rebellion, this

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[87] Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and their States*, 122-123.
[88] Metcalf, *Aftermath of the Revolt*, 298.
[89] McLeod, "The English Honours System in Princely India", 244.

did not prevent the British from granting highly ranked positions to the many Muslim rulers across Asia and Africa who collaborated under indirect rule.

Darbars, gun salutes, and knighthoods were the public iteration of what was evolving into a complex web of symbols and policies intended to sustain colonial government. By the last decades of the nineteenth century an entire field of scholarship had developed around the princely states that enabled and entrenched British indirect rule in India. This corpus of information ranged widely from geographical information like maps and gazetteers to genealogical information on the royal houses, to the more mundane statistical reports on the states.[90] Whether by wealthy gentlemen-scholars, colonial officials in the field, or increasingly professional academics, the nineteenth century was marked by the collection of scholarly information.[91]

In India this information was largely produced by the same people who were to use it: the British residents and other civil servants who oversaw the administration of the Indian states. One of the ultimate products of this drive by the British to 'know' these states was Sir Charles Aitchison's fourteen volume *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements, and Sanads Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries*. Aitchison's work catalogued every known treaty that the Government of India, under the Company and the Crown, had signed with the various princely states, as well as other powers in south and western Asia as far afield as Arabia and Persia. It was a compendium of the

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[90] Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its forms of Knowledge, the British in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 5-6.

[91] John C. Waller, "Gentlemanly Men of Science: Sir Francis Galton and the Professionalization of the British Life-Sciences" *Journal of the History of Biology*, 34 (1) 2001): 83-85.

body of law that regulated the relationship between the British and the princes. So

important was Aitchison's work that it even featured in one of Rudyard Kipling's stories:

> There was a man once in the Foreign Office – a man who had grown
> middle-aged in the Department, and was commonly said, by irreverent
> juniors, to be able to repeat Aitchison's *Treaties and Sunnuds* backwards
> in his sleep. What he did with his stored knowledge only the Secretary
> knew; and he, naturally, would not publish the news abroad. This man's
> name was Wressley, and it was the Shibboleth, in those days, to say-
> 'Wressley knows more about the Central Indian States than any living
> man.' If you did not say this, you were considered one of mean
> understanding.[92]

This is fiction but like much of which Kipling wrote, it was a very good mirror of the

British official classes in India. In this story Kipling captures the importance attributed

by the British to the need to know the states in order to govern them. Aitchison's *Treaties*

and Sanads typifies the quasi-scholarly foundation of the ideology of indirect rule. This

collection is the philosophical descendant of the works of Sir William Jones, Sir John

Malcolm, and Mountstuart Elphinstone, who had prior to 1857 worked to understand the

history of the Indian states within the context of the British Empire. After 1857 this type

of literature proliferated with works on any number of topics ranging from geography to

genealogy.

In his *Colonialism and its forms of Knowledge,* Bernard S. Cohn shows that

earlier in the nineteenth century this work was conducted on a smaller scale and largely

by amateurs and as the century progressed the government assigned officials to undertake

systematic cataloguing of information.[93] This is where figures like Jones, Malcolm, and

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[92] Rudyard Kipling "Wressley of the Foreign Office" in Rudyard Kipling, *Plain Tales from the Hills* (London: Macmillan, 1900), 311.
[93] Cohn, *Colonialism and Its forms of Knowledge,* 174.

Elphinstone differ from the likes of Aitcheson, as the former were conducting their

research in a private capacity, even if it often blurred with their official roles, while the

latter was executing part of a larger programme of information collection. Early in the

nineteenth century some officials had begun to collect statistical and demographic

information. Francis Buchanan, for example, was a physician in the service of the East

India Company who made important surveys of the people and geography of Madras and

Bengal.[94] Others who conducted these types of survey, following on Buchanan, but for

much of the early part of the century the collection of information was conducted, often

informally, on a provincial or regional scale, and on an *ad hoc* basis.[95] In 1848, for

example, the first census of a single British Indian province was conducted, decades after

the first census in the United Kingdom. However, by 1906 an entire department of the

Government of India, headed by a Director General, had been established to coordinate

what had developed into a vast official project of collecting population and economic

statistics.[96] Increasingly, after the middle of the nineteenth century, great efforts were

being made to collect and categorise all sorts of information on British India. Gazetteers,

maps, statistics on economics, agriculture, histories, and demography were being added

to the already vast arsenal of Britain's colonial knowledge, and this was the case in both

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[94] Matthew Edney, *Mapping an Empire, the geographical construction of British India, 1765-1843*
(Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1997), 342.
[95] Mark Harrison, "Networks of Knowledge: Science and Medicine in Early Colonial India, c. 1750-1820"
in Peers and Gooptu, eds. *India and the British Empire*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 209.
[96] J. K. Ghosh, P. Maiti, T. J. Rao and B. K. Sinha "Evolution of Statistics in India" *International
Statistical Review / Revue Internationale de Statistique* , 67 (1) 1999:15-17.

the directly and indirectly ruled empire.[97] Aitcheson's work fits into this later period as

the official repository detailing the history of the legal relationships between the British

and the princes.

First published between 1862 and 1892, and later revised and expanded in 1929,

*A Collection of Treaties, Engagements, and Sanads Relating to India and Neighbouring

Countries*, was compiled by Aitcheson when he was a member of the Foreign Office of

the Government of India. Aitcheson, born in 1832 in Edinburgh, is an example of what

Douglas Peers termed a "gentleman-officer-scholar" who was both administering the

princely states, while simultaneously constructing a rationalization for indirect rule which

would spread far beyond India's frontiers.[98] After finishing undergraduate studies at the

University of Edinburgh, he joined the Indian Civil Service and soon began the

compilation of his *Collection of Treaties*. Unlike Malcolm or Elphinstone, who

conducted their studies of aspects of Indian culture and history privately while

simultaneously working for the Government of India, Aitchison's research was

undertaken in an official capacity. Much of the content of the *Treaties* is brief and banal;

however, *in toto*, the work helped form the legal foundations of British indirect rule in

Asia.[99] Moreover, in the hands of political agents like Kipling's Mr. Wressley,

Aitcheson's *Treaties* was an important informational tool that the works of Felix Driver,

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[97] C.A. Bayly, *Empire and Information*, 369; Felix Driver, *Geography Militant, Cultures of Exploration and Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001) and Ian J. Barrow, *Making History, Drawing Territory. British Mapping in India, c. 1756-1905* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).
[98] Douglas M. Peers, "Colonial Knowledge and the Military in India, 1780-1860," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 33 (2) 2005: 157.
[99] A. J. Arbuthnot, rev. Ian Talbot, "Aitchison, Sir Charles Umpherston (1832–1896)," in *the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/view/article/253 (accessed February 14, 2013).

C.A. Bayly, and others have shown was key to enabling the British to rule India with so few Europeans for so long.[100] In particular, the *Treaties*, by compiling all of the legal agreements with the princely states together, show that the British were thinking of the princes as a class, rather than as hundreds of distinct rulers with whom they had unique bilateral relationships. In a significant way they did not differentiate between large and important states and small peripheral states; they were all included, organised by geographical location. Aitcheson's *Treaties,* therefore, conceptually rendered all of the princes as members of a single ruling class, rather than as individual rulers of individual states.

The compilation of all of these treaties and other agreements, from the earliest military alliance with Hyderabad from 1759 to an 1890 agreement to run a telegraph line through Kashmir, was evidence of how the relationship between the British and the princes was evolving post 1857.[101] In the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, as the many treaties in Aitcheson's work attest, each British-Princely state relationship was built on bilateral legal agreements. In 1768, for example, the British compelled the Nawab of Awadh, to limit the size of his army.[102] Two years previously they signed a treaty with the Nizam of Hyderabad which pledged their forces to work together against common enemies.[103] At this point, in the middle of the 1760s, it best served the British to curb the military power of Awadh, while bolstering that of Hyderabad, which led to unique relationships between each state and the Company. As British power became dominant

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[100] C.A. Bayly, *Empire and Information*, 369; See also Driver, *Geography Militant,* and Barrow, *Making History, Drawing Territory.*
[101] Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties,* VIII: 279 ; Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties,* VI: 370;
[102] Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties,* II: 70.
[103] Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties,* VIII: 288.

in South Asia, however, the numerous relationships with the princes became increasingly

standardised as autonomous polities were converted into princely states. This process

was already well underway before the rebellion; indeed, Dalhousie's doctrine of lapse

treated the princes as a class rather than as individual actors. However, after 1858 this

process was accelerated. Aitcheson's *Treaties* exemplifies this trend which, as will be

discussed below, had a major impact on the way the British conceptualised and interacted

with the princes.

Aitcheson is a example of colonial knowledge employed by the British to rule the

princes, but certainly was not the only one of importance.[104] The central political figure

in the princely state was, of course, the prince. This meant that rules of succession were

as important in these monarchies as electoral laws are in democracies.[105] An example of

how British knowledge of dynastic history affected the administration of a state can be

seen in Mysore. For centuries the Hindu Wodiyar dynasty ruled the southern Indian

kingdom.[106] In the middle of the eighteenth century, however, an officer in Mysore's

army, Hyder Ali, usurped the throne of Mysore and made himself Sultan. Hyder and his

son Tipu provided some of the most significant military opposition to the early expansion

of British rule in peninsular India. Ultimately, however, the forces of the Company and

its allies defeated Tipu Sultan in 1799 at the battle of Seringapatam, after which the

British restored the Wodiyar Maharajas of Mysore.[107]

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[104] Douglas M. Peers, "Colonial Knowledge and the Military in India, 1780-1860," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 33:2 (2005), 157.
[105] Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and their States*, 124
[106] Kate Brittlebank, *Tipu Sultan's search for legitimacy: Islam and kingship in a Hindu domain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 17.
[107] Fisher, *Indirect Rule in India,* 404-406.

1799, however, was the very height of British expansionism and the Wodiyars were not returned their state intact. Under the settlement imposed by Lord Wellesley, the restored Maharajas were obliged to cede territory that their dynasty had ruled prior to Hyder's coup to the British and their ally the Nizam.[108] Wellesley also forced the regent of the newly appointed Maharaja, the five-year-old Krishnaraja III, to sign a treaty admitting a British resident to his court, and obliging him to raise and bankroll a military force which would be stationed in his territory under the command of Company officers.[109] The Wodiyars, therefore, were not so much restored to their former position, as much as they were reduced from ruling monarch to subject prince. This was not the end of the British-enforced erosion of Mysore's autonomy.[110] In 1831 Government of India stripped the ruling maharaja of his remaining power after his state went into arrears. Although they did not depose him, they did place a British administrator with even more power than a typical resident to oversee all aspects of the state government. In most of the larger states, like neighbouring Hyderabad, the resident was removed from the day-to-day administration of the state which was conducted by the prince and his ministers. In Mysore after 1831 the administrator acted more akin to a prime minister in a constitutional monarchy, heading the government and restricting the prince to ceremonial functions.[111] As such the maharaja continued to reign but not rule. Krishnaraja III, Raja of Mysore from 1799-1868, however, survived Dalhousie's tenure and after 1858 began

[108] A. S. Bennell, "Wellesley's Settlement of Mysore, 1799" *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 3 (4) 1952: 128.
[109] Bennell, "Wellesley's Settlement of Mysore, 1799", 132.
[110] Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties*, VIII: 469-473.
[111] James Manor, "Princely Mysore before the Storm: The State-Level Political System of India's Model State 1920-1936", *Modern Asian Studies*, (9 (1) 1975: 34.

to call for a return of his rights and powers, including the right to adopt an heir. The

response from the British Government was an exhaustive and correspondingly slow

investigation of the merits of the maharaja's requests.

British residents in Mysore and other officials submitted reports and memoranda

on the historical and legal position of the Wodiyars to the Government of India and the

India Office. This process was ultimately concluded in 1881 and resulted in the

reduction of the British role in the government of Mysore.[112] However, like Wellesley's

settlement in 1799, the British did not simply hand back control of the state to the ruling

prince. The following passage, from a secret dispatch from officials in Calcutta on the

return of powers to Mysore, illustrates the level to which post-1857 relations with the

princes were built on an understanding of the specific local history of the state in

combination with more general practices applied to all princely states:

> It is to be observed that the Government of India now deals with
> successions in the ruling families of Native States, throughout India, upon
> general principals which, if not formulated in writing, are universally
> recognised in practice. Where there is a natural heir, whose title to
> succeed is indisputable according to law and usage, he succeeds as a
> matter of course, unless he be obviously and totally unfit: though in this,
> as in every other case, a succession is thoroughly understood to require
> formal confirmation and recognition by the paramount Power. Where the
> succession is disputed, the Supreme Government steps in and decides
> authoritatively according to the usage of the race or the family. Where all
> heirs, natural or adopted, fail, the Supreme Government will not only

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[112] 1866 (112) East India (Mysore). *Copies of correspondence between the Maharajah of Mysore and the government of India relative to His Highness's claim to be restored to the government of the territories which were ceded to him under the partition treaty of Mysore of the 22d June 1799; of instructions issued by the Secretary of State for India in council to the government of India regarding this claim; and of minutes, correspondence; or other papers connected therewith; &c.* (London: HMSO, 1866); 1878 (385) East India (Mysore government). *Return to an address of the honourable the House of Commons, dated 14 August 1878; for, "copy or extracts of correspondence between the Secretary of State for India and the governor general, regarding the re-establishment of a native government in Mysore, by the time the maharajah shall come of age."* (London: HMSO, 1878); *Mysore (1881) no. I. Further papers relating to the transfer of the province of Mysore to native rule.* (London: HMSO, 1881)

> recognise such successor to the rulership of a Native State as, on general considerations, may seem best, but may attach to the succession whatever conditions seem fitting and desirable. The principal last mentioned, according to which the relations between a State and the Supreme Government may be revised in certain contingencies, was laid down by the Marquess of Salisbury in his dispatch No. 24 of 1875, in the case of the Ulwar succession.[113]

This passage, in particular, relates to succession rules, and illustrates how the British unilaterally decided what was to be the function of a prince and the level of his autonomy through their own understanding of local history. In the case of Mysore in 1881, because the British approved of the individual who was the heir to throne, Chamarajendra X, they recognised his claim and allowed him to become maharaja. However, as is made clear in the above passage, the British reserved the right to select a new prince by fiat, as the India Secretary Lord Salisbury did with the Rajput state of Ulwar in 1875. The inclusion of this reference to the precedence of Salisbury's Ulwar policy in a memorandum about Mysore is evidence of the level to which the British conceptualised the princely states as components within a single larger political unit. Hence, Mysore was not treated as an individual state in bilateral treaty relations with the Government of India, but rather as one of many princely states which the British governed under the same overarching framework.

Ultimately in Mysore the British gradually returned the internal powers to the maharajas between 1865 and 1881, including the right to have an adopted son succeed to the throne. The end result of this particular episode was that the Maharajas of Mysore actually expanded their power from being effectively side-lined in 1831 to re-joining the

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[113] Foreign Department to Lord Cranbrook, 3 March 1880, *Mysore (1881) no. I. Further papers relating to the transfer of the province of Mysore to native rule.* (London: HMSO, 1881), 127-128.

ranks of the internally autonomous princely states in 1881.[114] Post 1881 Mysore offers a

particularly dramatic example of the high level of autonomy princely state could exercise

under indirect rule. According to James Manor, Mysore underwent something of a

renaissance in the late nineteenth century. Only months after Chamarajendra X was

granted his powers by the British he created an elected Representative Assembly. The

Assembly was not a hugely powerful body; indeed, it only had the power to petition the

Maharaja and his appointed ministers, but it gave the people of Mysore a voice they had

never enjoyed before.[115] Moreover, this was a unique institution in princely India, where

government was always in the hands of the ruler and the resident, and the people were

conspicuously absent. Indeed the maharaja's subjects were some of the biggest

beneficiaries of the 1881 transfer of power. Due to favourable geographic attributes, like

rivers to generate hydroelectricity, and rich gold fields, the government of Mysore was

able to spend lavishly on public education and health programmes.[116] The sweeping

changes to the government and economy of Mysore after 1881 are evidence of the level

of autonomy that the state could enjoy; however, it should not be assumed that the British

had abdicated all control over the state.

While the British had returned the internal administration of Mysore to

Chamarajendra X, they entrenched their power over his government by overtly declaring

that his regime was subject to British supervision. This can be most clearly seen in the

preamble to the 'Instrument of Transfer', the treaty by which the Government of India

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[114] Björn Hettne, *Political economy of indirect rule: Mysore 1881-1947* (London: Curzon Press, 1978), 51-56.
[115] Manor, "Princely Mysore before the Storm", 35.
[116] Manor, "Princely Mysore before the Storm", 36.

returned the government of Mysore to the Wodiyars:

> Whereas the British Government has now been for a long period in
> possession the territories of Mysore and has introduced into the said
> territories an improved system of administration: And whereas, on the
> death of the late Maharaja the said Government, being desirous that the
> said territories should be administered by an Indian dynasty under such
> restrictions and conditions as might be necessary for enduring the
> maintenance of the system of administration so introduced, declare that if
> Maharaja Chamrajjendra Wadiar Bahadur, the adopted son of the late
> Maharaja, should, on attaining the age of eighteen years, be found
> qualified for the position aforesaid[117]

Given that it took nearly two decades to return Mysore to its former rulers, it is doubtful

that the British were all that 'desirous' to give back the administration. However, by

1881 the Government of India chose to return it to indirect rule.[118] Part of the rationale

for this was that the ancient Wodiyar dynasty had a historical claim to the throne that the

British recognised after much scrutiny. This is an example of the central intellectual

components of indirect rule: the British thought that colonial people required European

interference to ensure good government, while simultaneously recognising that

'legitimate' 'oriental' institutions were best for governing 'oriental' people. The

compilation of information on these dynasties allowed the British to extend control over

the states while still preserving something of their historical constitution.

Even before the rebellion there are instances of this type of information being

compiled by the British, with the most famous being Colonel James Tod's *Annals and

Antiquities of Rajasthan*. Published in 1832, this two-volume work attempted to

reconstruct the history of the Hindu dynasties of the states of Rajasthan, a large territory

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[117] Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties*, VIII: 479.
[118] Hettne, *Political economy of indirect rule: Mysore 1881-1947*, 51.

to the southwest of Delhi.[119] Tod's *Annals* was lauded for its detail and erudition on the

topic, and consequently became the standard work on the Rajput states, which included

several whose rulers were in the 19 and 17 gun salute classes.[120] James Tod, like Sir

John Malcolm, Sir Thomas Munro, and Mountstuart Elphinstone, was one of the mid-

level British administrators who well in advance of the rebellion saw the value of the

princes. As resident in Rajasthan he set a precedent for the administrator-scholars that

would follow him in developing an ideology of indirect rule. However, while Tod wrote

about a single geocultural region, Rajasthan, and its dynasties and rulers, later in the

nineteenth century works would emerge on the princes as a pan-Indian ruling class. An

example of was the publication in 1892 of *The Golden Book of India: A Genealogical*

and Biographical Dictionary of the Ruling Princes, Chiefs, Nobles, and Other

Personages, Titled or Decorated of the Indian Empire by the Indian civil servant Sir

Roper Lethbridge.[121] Together with Aitchison, and the above-cited secret report on

succession in Mysore, Lethbridge's work show the princes as a ruling class rather than a

disconnected group of individual rulers.

   According to Barbara Ramusack and C.A. Bayly, these dynastic and historical

works gave officials such as political agents, residents, governors, and viceroys the

intellectual tools required to interfere in key decisions of succession.[122] This power, as

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[119] James Tod, *Annals and antiquities of Rajasthan, or The central and western Rajput states of India*, 3 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1920)

[120] Norbert Peabody, *Hindu kinship and polity in precolonial India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 166-167.

[121] Roper Lethbridge *The Golden Book of India: A Genealogical and Biographical Dictionary of the Ruling Princes, Chiefs, Nobles, and Other Personages, Titled or Decorated of the Indian Empire* (London: Macmillan, 1893)

[122] C.A. Bayly, *Empire and Information*, 369; Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and their States,* 50.

was exercised in Mysore and Ulwar, meant that the ruler owed his throne to the British and could therefore be deposed by them. Although Dalhousie's doctrine of lapse was discredited and abandoned, the British continued to interfere heavily in many aspects of the administration of the states, and preeminent amongst the powers reserved to the British was the right to depose princes in cases of gross misrule and to veto the succession of an undesirable heir to the throne. The 'Instrument of Transfer' for Mysore from 1881, outlined in twenty-four clauses all the rights and privileges that the British would continue to exert over the state, including the power to repeal the transfer and return the state to British rule.[123] The result of this is that the 'autonomy' that princes enjoyed was practically limited to governing in a fashion that was thought fit by the British.

The power to depose was used sparingly, however, with only a few instances occurring in the ninety years of crown rule in India.[124] Another power, which was also used infrequently, gave the British the right to veto the heir to a state. Despite not being exercised often, this prerogative meant that all transitions of power in the states were at the discretion of the British official, in consultation with superiors, who was tasked with supervising a given state. In practice a ruler's selected heir, usually an eldest son, was the one who assumed the throne on the death or abdication of his predecessor but this was not automatic. Unlike Britain, where the heir to the throne becomes the monarch the moment the previous monarch dies, in princely India there was effectively an

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[123] Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties*, VIII: 479-482.
[124] Copland, *The Princes and the Endgame of Empire,* 21.

interregnum following a ruler's death.[125] During this period the British either consented

to or rejected the claims of the heir to the throne, or selected their own from a pool of

qualified candidates if there was no clear heir.

An example of how the British dealt with princely succession in the absence of

'rightful heir' like a son, grandson, brother, or nephew of a prince is the case of the

Rajput state of Idar in the Gujarat region of western India, north of Bombay. In 1901 the

Maharaja of Idar died, his infant son and heir died shortly afterwards, leaving the state

without a ruler.[126] Because this was a Rajput dynasty, there were several related lineages

from which the Government of India could find a successor in Western and Central India.

Rather than doing exhaustive genealogical research to find which Rajput noble had the

greatest claim to the throne, the British selected someone who most appealing to them:

Sir Pertab Singh. Singh was scion of the Rajput house of Jodhpur and as a younger son

was not eligible to inherit the throne of his home state. Born in 1845 Singh had spent

much of his life in military service, both in the forces of Jodhpur and in the Indian Army,

where he served in the Second Afghan War of 1878-1880, and most famously as

commander of a unit that was dispatched to China to help supress the Boxer Rebellion of

1898-1901.[127] As such Singh was the embodiment of the 'martial' qualities that the

British had assigned to the Rajputs. By 1901, when his distant relatives had died in Idar,

Sir Pertab Singh was already a decorated soldier who had been knighted for his service to

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[125] Thomas Raleigh, ed., *Lord Curzon in India, Being a Selection of his Speeches as Viceroy & Governor-General of India 1898-1905* (London: Macmillan, 1906), 226.

[126] 1903 (249) East India (progress and condition). *Statement exhibiting the moral and material progress and condition of India during the year 1901-02* (London: HMSO, 1903), 49.

[127] Reginald Bramley Van Wart, *The life of lieut.-general H.H. Sir Pratap Singh*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1926), 113; 123-124.

the empire, making him an ideal candidate in the eyes of the British to succeed as Maharaja.

The rules surrounding succession were some of the more overt powers the British continued to exert over the princely states after 1858. For the most part these powers were vague and uncodified. Sir William Lee-Warner, an Indian Civil Servant and Legal scholar concluded, "…there is no question that there is a paramount power in the British Crown, but perhaps its extent is wisely left undefined. There is a subordination in the Native States, but perhaps it is better understood and not explained."[128] In the directly ruled provinces of British India, by way of contrast, the chain of political command was much clearer. Local district officers in the provinces were at the bottom of a chain of authority that passed through their superiors in the provincial capitals, to the local governor, to the viceroy, to the Cabinet, and ultimately to Parliament.

In the princely states, however, as Lee-Warner shows, the chain of command was rather more ambiguous. In the more important states, the government was run by the prince and a large administration. In places like Hyderabad there was also the parallel power of the British resident, who was symbolically inferior to the nizam but in many ways his political superior.[129] The resident, in turn, reported either to a provincial governor or the Foreign and Political Department of the Government of India, which was directly supervised by the viceroy.[130] Just who they reported to was based on both the size of the state as well as the history of their integration into British India. This meant

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[128] Lee-Warner, *The Native States of India*, xi.
[129] Karen Leonard, 'Reassessing Indirect Rule in Hyderabad', 370.
[130] Sir Terence Creagh Coen, *The Indian Political Service, A Study in Indirect Rule* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1971), 4-5.

the largest states were in direct contact with the viceroy, while smaller states brought

under indirect rule by the Bombay presidency, for example, tended to remain under the

purview of that province's governor.[131] In public and private the resident would be

deferential to the prince and would interact with him in a manner fitting the latter's high

status. However, in the resident's role as representative of the Government of India and

the Crown, he was clearly operating from a position of great authority and could have a

major impact on the administration of the state.[132] However, as demonstrated in the case

of Mysore, what powers the resident exercised were contextual. Prior to 1881 the

resident at Mysore effectively directed the government of the state. After 1881 the

Maharaja took this role, and the resident was removed to a more advisory capacity, but

retained the power – unexercised in this instance – to countermand the prince's decisions.

  In his 1894 treatise, *The Protected Princes of India,* Sir William Lee-Warner

made an effort to define the legal and constitutional place of the states.[133] This work, as

Fisher shows, was the product of an on-going attempt by British officials to satisfactorily

define the status of the Indian states. This project had begun in the aftermath of the

rebellion by legal scholars Henry Maine and Charles Tupper whose ideas contributed to

Lee-Warner's.[134] In *The Protected Princes of India* Lee-Warner contends that while the

British Government is the Government of all of India, the indirectly ruled states retain a

"semi-sovereign" status, not completely British, but certainly not independent in any

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[131] Coen, *The Indian Political Service,* 27-29.
[132] Fisher, *Indirect Rule in India*, 448.
[133] William Lee-Warner, *The Protected Princes of India* (London: Macmillan, 1894), Lee-Warner, in 1910 Lee-Warner published a revised and updated version of the work, retitled, *The Native States of India (*London: Macmillan 1910*),* v.
[134] Fisher, *Indirect Rule in India,* 445-447.

conventional legal sense.[135] Lee-Warner, born in 1846, spent most of his adult life

working in India in both the indirectly and directly ruled territories. By the end of his life

he had been made a GCSI for his service in the Government of India, and according to

his obituary in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* his *The Protected Princes of*

India had become the "standard" work on the legal place of the princes.[136] Indeed,

according to his biographer Katherine Prior, he almost singlehandedly revolutionised the

legal position of the princes within the Indian Empire by "arguing that the usage applied

to one state was, by the law of precedence, equally applicable to another state, thereby

reducing to the lowest common denominator of rights the complexities of the numerous

treaties that Britain had signed with individual states over the previous two centuries."[137]

Lee-Warner's work was in effect the manifestation of the view that the princes were all

members of a single class as far as jurisprudence was concerned.

Despite conceding that the individual princes enjoyed 'semi-sovereignty', Lee-

Warner also persuasively argued that even though the Company and the Crown had

engaged in relationships with each prince as a discreet legal entity, the princes could be

treated as a corporate whole, outside the purview of international law.[138] Hence, a legal

right that the British enjoyed with one prince as enshrined by treaty or practice, according

to Lee-Warner, could be imposed on any prince. This is really a codification of an earlier

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[135] Lee-Warner, *The Native States of India*, 399.
[136] J. F. Fleet, "Sir William Lee-Warner, G.C.S.I." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, Apr 1914: 518.
[137] F. H. Brown, rev. Katherine Prior, "Warner, Sir William Lee- (1846–1914)," in *the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/view/article/34472 (accessed February 14, 2013).
[138] Lauren Benton, "From International Law to Imperial Constitutions: The Problem of Quasi-Sovereignty, 1870- 1900", *Law and History Review*, 26 (3) 2008: 602.

practice, as was discussed above, when the British were returning to the Maharaja of Mysore control over his state, they did so on the proviso that he would govern only after accepting strict limitations on his power. They justified these limitations by arguing there was a precedent in an earlier succession issue in the state of Ulwar.[139]

Lee-Warner's rationale for coming to this understanding the status of the states, as he explains in the preface to the 1910 edition, is underpinned by an orientalist reading of Indian society:

> The day has passed when the East could "bow low before the storm in patient deep disdain." The legions still thunder by, but Oriental society can never go back entirely to what it was. Tomorrow will not be as yesterday; it is certain that the present century will witness alterations in the character of British relations with the Native states. It is well, therefore, to remember that the policy which has preserved the integrity of about 680 principalities in India has been justified by the loyalty of their rulers to the King, and by improved administration of the territories entrusted to them.[140]

Lee-Warner argues that the princely states were products of the pre-modern East, and could only 'advance' under the unified tutelage and protection of the British. In effect, according to this view of Indian history, the British did not conquer the states, they 'preserved the integrity' of them in the face of modernity.

This is the most overt example of the power of Aitcheson's *Treaties and Sunads* as Lee-Warner was using the entire work as a single coherent body of law to be applied to all of princely India. This was to a great degree the logical conclusion of the entire course of post-1858 British thinking with regards to the princes. Over the last half of the

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[139] Foreign Department to Lord Cranbrook, 3 March 1880, *Mysore (1881) no. I. Further papers relating to the transfer of the province of Mysore to native rule.* (London: HMSO, 1881), 127-128.
[140] Lee-Warner, *The Native States of India*, xiii.

nineteenth century a discourse of indirect rule was constructed by key officials in British India who saw the princes as a class of natural-born rulers who were the ideal ally for their colonial regime. And while it took until the latter part of this period for Lee-Warner to iterate a district legal justification for treating the princes as a class, the British had in fact been doing this for decades, through political, ceremonial, symbolic, and intellectual means. In the following chapters this dissertation will show how the ideas and practices which comprised this discourse of indirect rule were transmitted from British India to diverse parts of Asia and Africa.

III

Malaya

On 20 January 1874 Abdullah, Sultan of Perak, signed the treaty of Pangkor with

the British Government represented by Sir Andrew Clarke. The sultan agreed to receive

a resident at his court and cede a small portion of his territory including the island of

Pangkor, while the British agreed to protect his throne and pay him a subsidy.[1] Clarke

was the newly appointed Governor of the Straits Settlements, as the British possessions in

Malaya were then known, and Perak was a large Malay state bordering on Siam (modern

Thailand). After returning from his mission, Clarke addressed the Legislative Council of

the Straits Settlements in Singapore and heralded an aggressive policy to incorporate the

autonomous Muslim-ruled states of the Malay Peninsula through British indirect rule as

he had just done to Perak:

> Hitherto, perhaps, the work of this Legislature had been confined to
> matters rather more municipal than imperial. This is really a great and
> imperial question to think out and consider…standing as we do here on the
> grave of ancient Empires, let it be now our mission, gentlemen, to gather
> together their scattered fragments and form them into the cradle of a new
> and fair dominion, federated in justice and morality…"[2]

The signing of the treaty of Pangkor was a turning point in Malay history in which the

British role changed from one of a dominant foreign power, with a few small territorial

footholds, to being the imperial power controlling much of Malaya, largely through

indirect means.

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[1] Enclosure in Sir Andrew Clark to Earl of Carnarvon, 4 November 1874, CO 882/3.
[2] Sir Andrew Clarke, Speech to Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements, 15 September 1874, CO
273/76.

In the following years, colonial officials descended on the Malay states and initially imposed a form of indirect rule analogous to that in neighbouring princely India. Ultimately British Malaya evolved into the modern independent state of Malaysia, which is still ruled by the descendants of the Sultans of Perak and the eight other states that the British incorporated into their empire from 1874. This chapter will explore how in a few short years the British transformed their role in Malaya. For much of the nineteenth century, British interests in the region were treated as a secondary theatre of colonialism, one that was on the periphery of Indian interests. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century this changed when the economic value of the region was recognised.[3] From this time Malaya ceased to be seen as peripheral to India.

Malay and Malaya are amorphous terms with no definitive parameters. At its broadest Malaya could include some or all of the territory of modern-day Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and Brunei, all of which are home to Malay-speaking people. For the purposes of this study, however, the geographical parameters are rather more easily defined. In the late nineteenth century, the British-ruled portions of the Malayan world included of much of the southern and central portion of the Malay Peninsula, which juts nearly due south of the Asiatic mainland, as well as the northern part of the island of Borneo. At this time the remainder of the Malay world, namely southern Borneo and the islands of Sumatra and Java, were part of the Dutch East Indies and the northern parts of the peninsula were under Siamese control. This chapter will focus on how the British acquired the southern peninsular states of Selangor, Perak, Negeri Sembilan, Pahang, and

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[3] John Legge, "The Colonial Office and Governor Ord" *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies,* 29 (1) 1998: 7.

Johor in the late nineteenth century.[4] These five states constitute the first group of Malay-ruled territories which came under indirect rule. Later, in the early twentieth century, a second group of Malay rulers in the northern portion of the Malay Peninsula, along with the Sultan of Brunei on the adjacent island of Borneo, were formally brought under British indirect rule.[5] The majority of the remaining portions of the British-ruled Malay-speaking world were directly ruled provinces, like Singapore. As will be discussed further, these territories were small and coastal, with the indirectly ruled states making up bulk of British Malaya. Finally there was Sarawak which was neither a British province nor a Malay-ruled state. Instead, this small territory in Borneo was ruled by the Rajas of Sarawak, a dynasty founded in 1841 when the Malay Sultan of Brunei was forced to hand over the province to the English adventurer Sir James Brooke whose family ruled it until 1946.

This chapter will first outline the long history of British interference in Malaya prior to the 1870s and then will explore how and why Sir Andrew Clarke and others imposed the apparatus of indirect rule. As in India, this apparatus was articulated through treaties between the Crown and the states, creating a similar type of semi-sovereign status that Sir William Lee-Warner described as existing in princely India. This legal relationship was underscored by the placement of British residents and other officials in Malay states who assumed control over aspects of the administration. However, as in India and much of British-ruled Africa and Asia, the colonial officials who imposed

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[4] Enclosure in Sir Andrew Clark to Earl of Carnarvon, 4 November 1874, CO 882/3.
[5] C. M. Turnbull, *A Short History of Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei* (Melbourne: Cassell Australia, 1980), 179-180.

indirect rule worked also to justify the place of the British in Malaya. These officials created a discourse that envisioned the British as protectors of Malay institutions and culture and as successors to the long defunct Malaccan Empire. The Sultanate of Malacca at its apogee in the fifteenth century was a powerful Islamic polity that ruled much of Southeast Asia.[6] The British, by invoking the Malaccans, were interpreting Malayan history to legitimate their role. A central component of this reading of local society privileged the role of the Malay rulers at the expense of other political factions, including the large Chinese communities in Malaya. The Malay rulers became key components of British policy in Malaya and were obliged to perform the role of the subject-princes of the British Empire, receiving knighthoods and gun salutes in exchange for their willingness to collaborate with colonial authorities. The imposition of residents and treaties, the particular understanding of Malay society, and the use of the other technologies of indirect rule illustrate that the Malay sultans were analogous to the Indian princes in British thinking.

British Malaya and British India had quite a bit in common, particularly the extent to which their respective histories were bound up with the East India Company. Indeed, the agents of the Company were active in the region even before moving into India, for Southeast Asia was initially the objective of Europeans trading into the Indian Ocean. The single remnant of this early period was the city of Benkulen on the southwest coast of the island of Sumatra which the East India Company acquired in 1685.[7] However,

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[6] A. B. Shamsul, "Islam Embedded: 'Moderate' Political Islam and Governance in the Malay World" in K. S. Nathan, Mohammad Hashim Kamali, eds. *Islam in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute for Southeast Asian Studies, 2005), 112.
[7] Philip Lawson, *The East India Company: A History* (London: Longmans, 1993), 24.

Benkulen, far removed from the trade routes to China, was not destined to be a

bridgehead for imperial expansion in the region and it languished as an unprofitable

outpost for centuries.[8] The formal British occupation of what would become British

Malaya began in 1786 when Captain Francis Light of the Company signed a treaty with

the Raja of Kedah that resulted in the island of Penang off the west coast of the Malay

Peninsula being transferred to the Bengal Presidency of the East India Company.[9] In

1800 some of the territory on the mainland adjacent to Penang was added to the

Company's territories. The region, called Province Wellesley after the expansionist

Governor-General of India, was the first colonial foothold on the Malayan mainland and

was meant to give access to the lucrative trade on the peninsula and beyond the Malaccan

straits to China.[10] In 1819, however, an agent of the East India Company, Stamford

Raffles, secured the acquisition of another island from a different Malay ruler, and what

would become known as Singapore would rapidly eclipse Province Wellesley .[11]

When Raffles acquired Singapore from the Sultan of Johor, he was deliberately

attempting to establish a great port city that would allow the British to dominate the

Malay world and to control trade between China and the Indian Ocean.[12] Raffles made

his designs for Singapore plain:

> …a commanding geographical position off the southern entrance of the
> Straits of Malacca; which should be in the track of our China and country
> trade; which should be capable of affording them protection and of
> supplying their wants; which should possess capabilities of defence by a

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[8] Turnbull, *Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei*, 89.
[9] Aitcheson, *A Collection of Treaties,* I: 386-387.
[10] Aitcheson, *A Collection of Treaties,* I: 387.
[11] Aitcheson, *A Collection of Treaties,* I: 424.
[12] Nicholas Tarling, *Imperialism in Southeast Asia: 'A fleeting, passing phase'* (London: Routledge, 2001), 137.

> moderate force; which might give us the means of supporting and
> extending our commercial intercourse with the Malay States, and which
> by its contiguity to the seat of the Dutch power might enable us to watch
> the march of its policy, and, if necessary, to counteract its influence.[13]

The acquisition of Singapore came towards the end of Raffles' long career in the Malay world. He was born in 1781 into a middling class family who secured for him a clerkship in the East India Company service much like Robert Clive and Warren Hastings. However, Raffles was not destined for the subcontinent and instead was deployed to Penang where he arrived in 1805. The Malay world in the first decade of the nineteenth century was not insulated from the tumult caused by the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. In Southeast Asia, Britain's great rival, however, was not the French directly, but rather the Dutch who had become for a time a client state under France. The Dutch had been in Southeast Asia for two centuries before the French had conquered their country at the end of the eighteenth century and imposed a puppet regime over the Netherlands and its possessions. In 1807, only two years after arriving and taking up the post of Secretary to the Governor of Penang, Raffles was sent to the ancient fortress city of Malacca on the southwest coast of the Malay peninsula. The British had recently captured Malacca from the Dutch, and Raffles, who had already learned Malay in his short tenure in Penang, was selected as Agent to the Malay States and began planning the British conquest of Dutch Java. Acting on behalf of the Governor at Penang, Raffles

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[13] Hugh Egerton, *Sir Stamford Raffles: England in the Far East*, (New York: Longmans, 1900), 181.

established the relationships with local Malay elites that would pave the way for his two

most significant achievements.[14]

The first important career success was the conquest of the island of Java in 1811.

Java is situated southeast from the Malay Peninsula and was the centre of the Dutch East

Indies. Raffles, as a civilian, was not in overall military command of British forces.

However, his knowledge of the Malay language prompted the Governor-General of India,

Lord Minto, to appoint him Governor of Java following the occupation.[15] The conquest

of Java and the subsequent book he wrote about its history made Raffles well known

amongst the British governing classes. Despite the fact that the island along with the city

of Malacca were returned to the Dutch after the Congress of Vienna, Raffles' reputation

was untarnished.[16] After one mid-career return to Britain, where he acquired a

knighthood, Sir Stamford Raffles returned to Southeast Asia as an official with the East

India Company. His substantive post in this period was as Governor of Benkulen, the

neglected trading fort in Sumatra, but in practice Raffles was the agent of the

Government of India in charge of its Southeast Asian affairs.[17]

In this capacity in 1819 he successfully negotiated with the Sultan of Perak to

acquire the island of Singapore. The island was thought by Raffles to be the ideal base to

counter piracy and build a port city to rival Dutch Batavia. It turned out Sir Stamford

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[14] C. M. Turnbull, *A History of Modern Singapore*, (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2009), 25-26.

[15] Anthony Webster, "The Development of British Commercial and Political Networks in the Straits Settlements 1800 to 1868: The Rise of a Colonial and Regional Economic Identity?" *Modern Asian Studies* 45 (4) 2011: 904.

[16] Peter Carey "Review of Statement of the Services of Sir Stamford Raffles: With an Introduction by John Bastin by Stamford Raffles" *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 43 (3) 1980: 634-635.

[17] Webster, "The Development of British Commercial and Political Networks in the Straits Settlements", 904-907.

was correct. Singapore exploded in size and importance, eclipsing all other trading cities in the region.[18] While Benkulen and Penang had been in British hands much longer than Singapore, they never flourished economically. Singapore, at the southern entrance of the Straights of Malacca, sat on the crossroads of the vast maritime trade between the Indian Ocean and China, making it an ideal base from which to exploit this lucrative trade.[19] Benkulen and Penang, by contrast, were situated in less advantageous locations, with poorer harbours. To solidify British pre-eminence in the region, the British acquired in 1824 a third territory in peninsular Malaya when a treaty with the Dutch permanently exchanged their city of Malacca and its hinterland for Benkulen on Sumatra.[20] While Raffles, who died in 1826, played only a small role in the formal development of indirect rule over the Malay states, he is of huge importance to the creation of British Malaya.[21] The success of Singapore gave the British authorities a great and wealthy city from which the project of indirect rule of the Malay states was later launched.[22]

Long before Singapore and Batavia, Malacca had been the leading trading port in the Malay world.[23] The acquisition of Malacca from the Dutch made the British the third European power to control what had once been the most important city in the East Indies. Prior to the Dutch, the Portuguese had conquered the city in 1511 and in so doing

[18] Turnbull, *A History of Modern Singapore*, 55.
[19] Turnbull, *A History of Modern Singapore*, 29.
[20] Aitcheson, *A Collection of Treaties,* I: 424.
[21] Cheah Boon Kheng, "Feudalism in Pre-Colonial Malaya: The Past as a Colonial Discourse", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 25 (2) 1994: 249.
[22] Clarke, Speech to Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements, 15 September 1874, CO 273/76.
[23] Craig A. Lockard, ""The sea common to all": maritime frontiers, port cities, and Chinese traders in the Southeast Asian Age of Commerce, ca. 1400-1750." *Journal of World History*, 21 (2) 2010: 219.

destroyed the once powerful Sultanate of Malacca.[24] For a century prior to the advent of

Portuguese imperialism in the region, the Malaccan sultans had ruled a state that

controlled much of the Malay Peninsula and the island of Sumatra.[25] The Malaccan

Empire was important not only for the political sway that it held for a century but also

because the ruling dynasty imposed Islam on territories that had previously been largely

Hindu.[26] Anthony Reid argues that the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, when the

Malaccans were politically and culturally ascendant, was a key period in the formulation

of an expressly Muslim Malay identity, which, as will be shown below, had a major

impact on British colonisation.[27] However, with the fall of the city of Malacca in 1511 to

the Portuguese, the state collapsed into a number of Muslim-ruled polities that were the

political ancestors of the Malay states later drawn into the British Empire after the 1874.

The Portuguese held Malacca until 1641 when it was lost to a Dutch force.

Neither of these European powers expanded their control much beyond the environs of

the city. Consequently, although the Malaccan Empire had ceased to exist, several Malay

successors of the Malaccan state did continue to govern the remaining portions of the

peninsula. This is analogous to the situation in eighteenth and nineteenth century India

when the Mughal emperors ceased to wield effective central power but their former

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[24] A. J. R. Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire, 1415-1808: A World on the Move,* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 72.
[25] Lockard "The sea common to all", 228-229.
[26] Christopher H. Wake "Malacca's Early Kings and the Reception of Islam" *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, 5 (2) 1964: 104-105.
[27] Anthony Reid, "Islamization and Christianization in Southeast Asia 1550-1650: the Critical Phase" in Anthony Reid, ed. *Southeast Asia in the Early Modern Era: Trade, Power, Belief* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993) 151-153.

provinces continued to function under local Mughal officials.[28] Moreover, just as

occurred in India, British officials created a founding myth of British Malaya as the

historical successor of the Malaccan Empire.[29] Along with Raffles, who would be held

up like Clive in India as the founder of the British Empire in Malaya, the Malaccan

Empire would be idealised as the best type of government for Malay people.[30] Together

these myths would combine to shape and justify British indirect rule of the Malay states.

After the acquisition of Malacca in 1824 British expansion slowed. Province

Wellesley, Singapore, and Malacca were all controlled by East India Company which

was transitioning from trading company to colonial government. Faced with the prospect

of governing an entire subcontinent, the Company officials were hesitant to add more

territory to their responsibility and hence British expansion in Malaya paused for a time.[31]

In the middle decades of the nineteenth century, the British were the major European

power in Malaya but the states of the southern part of the peninsula remained effectively

autonomous. Following the rebellion of 1857-58, the new Government of India

continued to administer the three Malayan provinces until 1867 when they were

transferred to the Colonial Office in London.[32]

On the face of it this change was simply a bureaucratic reorganisation with

limited impact on the ground. The political structure of the Straits Settlements was

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[28] Turnbull, *Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei,* 44.
[29] Kheng "Feudalism in Pre-Colonial Malaya", 259-260.
[30] Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied "Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles Discourse on the Malay World: A Revisionist Perspective" *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia*, 20 (1) 2005: 1-22; Swettenham, *British Malaya*, 14-15; Clarke, Speech to Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements, 15 September 1874, CO 273/76.
[31] Turnbull, *Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei,* 100.
[32] Emily Sadka, *The Protected Malay States 1974-1895*, (Kuala Lumpur University of Malaya Press, 1968), 38.

largely untouched with an appointed governor, unelected legislative counsel, and civil service composed entirely of Europeans being retained after the transfer.[33] The impact of the transfer of authority to the Colonial Office was, however, considerable. Anthony Webster has charted the rise to dominance of a lobby group of British merchants based in Singapore with trading interests in peninsular Malaya and powerful connections in London in the first half of the nineteenth century. He argues that these merchants worked tirelessly to have the Colonial Office assume responsibility for Straits Settlements so that they could be free of the control of the Government of India, who had no interest in bankrolling or protecting the further expansion of British interests in what was to Calcutta a peripheral region.[34] After 1867 the Colonial Office, not the Government of India, appointed the governor of the Straits, and although the internal governing structure of the colony did not change, the scope and focus of its activities did. Indeed, soon after their transfer to the Colonial Office, the Straits Settlements launched a programme of expansion.[35]

In the other territories in the study, a strategic imperative drove the British to impose indirect rule over a state lest it fall to an undesirable power, like the Nationalists in Egypt, or the Germans or French in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Persian Gulf, as will be discussed in Chapters IV, and V. In Malaya, on the other hand, both Minton Goldman and Nigel Brailey argue that there was little strategic rivalry with the most significant

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[33] Turnbull, *Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei,* 106-108.
[34] Anthony Webster, "The Development of British Commercial and Political Networks in the Straits Settlements", 925.
[35] Legge, "The Colonial Office and Governor Ord", 1-2.

regional power, Siam, or the most likely European power, France, until the mid 1880s.[36]

In Malaya commercial interests pulled the British into the interior of the peninsula.

However, despite the different rationale for conquest, the nature of indirect rule was

broadly similar to that imposed elsewhere in Asia and in Africa. From their capital at

Singapore, the government of the Straits Settlements sought to control the tin mines of

peninsular Malaya which in time would be amongst the most lucrative in the world.[37]

Until the emergence of rubber production in the early twentieth century, tin mining made

the peninsula valuable to British industry.[38] Tin mining, which predated the British, was

economically important for a number of reasons, mostly as a component in alloys of

industrial value, like pewter and bronze, and as the base metal to fashion any number of

objects that in the twentieth century would be made of plastics.[39] To secure access to tin

colonial officials began the project of placing the Malay states under indirect rule.

This project was no easy task. The Malay states for much of the middle part of

nineteenth century were experiencing political, demographic, and economic fluctuation.

In 1848, in Larut, in the state of Perak on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula, a

massive deposit of tin was discovered, which sparked an influx of Chinese immigrants to

extract the valuable metal.[40] Charles Hirschman shows how this demographic shift

fundamentally changed Malay society and politics. He argues the Chinese did not simply

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[36] Minton F. Goldman, "Franco-British Rivalry over Siam, 1896-1904" *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 3, (2) 1972: 210; Nigel Brailey "The Scramble for Concessions in 1880s Siam" *Modern Asian Studies*, 33 (3) 1999: 548.

[37] N. R. Jackson, "Changing Patterns of Employment in Malayan Tin Mining" *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, 4 (2) 1963: 116.

[38] John H. Drabble, *Rubber in Malaya, 1876-1922: the Genesis of the Industry* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1973), 19-21.

[39] John T. Thoburn, *Tin in the World Economy*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), 47.

[40] Jean-Francois Hennart, "Internalization in Practice: Early Foreign Direct Investments in Malaysian Tin Mining", *Journal of International Business Studies*, 17 (2) 1986: 132.

join an existing socio-economic structure, but rather helped to reshape, and for a time

destabilise, the political order in Perak and the neighbouring state of Selangor.[41] Tin

attracted people to the region, but soon Chinese groups were active in other areas of the

Malay economy, and were exerting political influence in several of the states.[42]

These new actors had the most significant impact in Perak. Between 1861 and

1874 a series of internecine conflicts, subsequently called the Larut wars, turned the once

unified sultanate into 'failed state' for a time, with rival factions vying for control of the

tin mines and the state itself. These rival factions, however, were not Malays versus

Chinese, but rather allied groups of Malay and Chinese working together. In his *The

dynamics of Chinese dialect groups in early Malaya*, Lau-Fong Mak shows that there was

an estimated 40,000 Chinese labourers in the Larut region in this period, who formed

large armies along with allied Malay groups.[43] Because these forces were largely made

up of tin miners, when they were engaged in combat, they were also cutting off the

supply of tin to British markets. This was especially so at the height of the conflict in

1871-73 when tin effectively ceased to be exported from Perak.[44] In this study Lau-Fong

Mak shows the underlying reasons for these conflicts were wholly economic, with groups

attempting to wrest control of the lucrative tin mines from their rivals. The faction that

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[41] Charles Hirschman, "The Making of Race in Colonial Malaya: Political Economy and Racial Ideology" *Sociological Forum* 1 (2) 1986: 226.

[42] Mary Somers Heidhues, "Chinese settlements in rural southeast Asia: unwritten histories" in Anthony Reid ed. *Sojourners and Settlers: Histories of Southeast Asia and the Chinese* (St. Leonards, NSW Allan & Unwin, 1996), 168-169; Sharon A. Carstens "From Myth to History: Yap Ah Loy and the Heroic past of Chinese Malaysians" *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 19 (2) 1988: 185.

[43] Lau-Fong Mak, *The dynamics of Chinese dialect groups in early Malaya*, (Singapore: Singapore Society of Asian Studies, 1995), 72.

[44] Sadka, *The Protected Malay States*, 35-40.

was ultimately triumphant was the one that gained the support of the Abdullah, Sultan of Perak, who, in turn, accepted British support in securing his throne.[45]

The conflict in Perak was important in the history of British indirect rule for two reasons. First, although during the Larut wars Chinese and Malay factions worked together to achieve their goals, as Anthony Reid, Charles Hirschman, and A.B. Shamsul, have argued, this was a key moment in the genesis of a Malay identity, which, amongst much else, began to frame the Chinese as an alien and disruptive element.[46] As will be shown below the British contributed to the development of Malay identity and used it to inform the way indirect rule was manifested in the Malay states. This was the long-lasting cultural impact of the Larut wars; they also had a more immediate political impact. The Larut wars provided the British with an opportunity to interfere in Perak which became the first Malay state drawn into the British Empire.

Officials like Governor Sir Andrew Clarke viewed Malayan states in the early 1870s as the shattered remnant of the once great Malaccan Empire, riven by internal strife, to which the presence of the large Chinese minority was an additional strain.[47] In the ensuing decades, colonial officials, seeking to make Malaya safe for British investors, introduced a regime of indirect rule beginning with Clarke's imposition of the treaty of Pangkor on the Sultan of Perak. In his speech to the Legislative Council at Singapore in

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[45] Legge, "The Colonial Office and Governor Ord", 7-9.
[46] Anthony Reid, "Understanding Melayu (Malay) as a Source of Diverse Modern Identities", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 32 (3) 2001: 295-313; Hirschman, "The Making of Race in Colonial Malaya", 330-361; A.B. Shamsul "A History of an Identity, an Identity of a History: The Idea and Practice of 'Malayness' in Malaysia Reconsidered" *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 32 (3) 2001: 355-366.
[47] Clarke, Speech to Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements, 15 September 1874, CO 273/76.

September 1874 after his return from signing the treaty of Pangkor, Clarke expressed his

view of the current situation in the Malay states:

> I say that we cannot at once accept as a fact that enough had been done,
> and that there may not be for you, or our successors to do, to secure that
> future in those elements of prosperity. Passing, then, to where our
> responsibilities have been directly accepted, in the old empire of Malacca,
> there we are surrounded…by states whose history has been, ever since we
> have had occupation in Malacca, more or less one of confusion and of
> disorder.[48]

Prior to assuming his duties as governor, Clark served in several capacities in many parts

of the empire. He was born in 1824 to an Anglo-Irish family with a history of imperial

service.[49] Clarke was sent to the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich in 1840 to train

for the Royal Engineers. As an engineering officer Clarke served first in Australia and

New Zealand and later back in Britain. In 1873, by which time he had risen to the rank

of colonel and had been knighted for his diverse services, Clarke had experience in the

administration of directly ruled colonies of settlement in the antipodes as well as with the

home government in Britain. Aside from his work as an engineer, which including laying

roads and building other public works, Clarke also held political roles such as sitting on

the Legislative Council of Tasmania and negotiating a treaty with the Maori people of the

North Island of New Zealand.[50]

When Clarke arrived in Malaya in 1873 he was faced with the lingering Larut

Wars interrupting the flow of tin from the sultanate.[51] In 1872, prior to his arrival, local

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[48] Clarke, Speech to Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements, 15 September 1874, CO 273/76.
[49] Edward Fairfield, ed. *The Colonial Office List for 1881*, (London: HMSO, 1881), 336.
[50] Fairfield, *The Colonial Office List for 1881*, 336.
[51] D. MacIntyre, "Britain's Intervention in Malaya: The Origin of Lord Kimberley's Instructions to Sir Andrew Clarke in 1873", *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, (2 (3) 1961: 47-69; Sadka, *The Protected Malay States*, 35-40.

Peraki notables with the support of Sultan Abdullah had sent a petition to the governor at

Singapore, Sir Harry Ord, asking for the British to step in and restore order.[52] The Royal

Navy deployed some smaller warships to the sultanate but this did little to resolve the

problems on land. However, before Ord could resolve the situation in Perak, he was

succeeded by Clarke.[53]

Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher in their classic work, and Malcolm Yapp in

his study of Central Asia, have noted that a great deal of imperial expansion in the

nineteenth century occurred when colonial officials in the field took advantage of

political tumult in a frontier area.[54] They argue that these officials pushed expansion for

a number of reasons, ranging from broader strategic goals to more narrow careerist

ambitions. When, as was the case in Perak in 1874, the frontier region was a rich

kingdom with a political faction that was explicitly asking for British intervention,

colonial expansion was highly likely. In Clarke's self-laudatory address to the

Legislative Council at Singapore, he recalled the situation he found upon his arrival on

the scene:

> When I came to this Colony in November last, on my arrival at Penang,
> the first thing that I saw there was two of Her Majesty's cruisers which
> had been in the waters of Larut, the commanders of which admitted to me
> that the petty warfare which was going on, and the condition of the actual
> outrages which were being perpetrated by one set of Chinese and Malays
> on the other set of Chinese and Malays, was one with which they could
> not cope, - that the organisation of the naval force was such that the thing
> might go on ad infinitum, year after year, and no effectual blow could be
> struck, - that no means at their disposal were sufficient to cope with the

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[52] Sadka, *The Protected Malay States*, 45.
[53] Legge 'The Colonial Office and Governor Ord', 7.
[54] Yapp, *Strategies of British India,* 588; Robinson and Gallagher, *African and the Victorians*, 18.

state of things on the coast and in the internal waters of that rich country, Perak.[55]

Very soon after arriving in Malaya, Clarke dispatched a force to that "rich country", ostensibly to support the forces of the embattled Sultan Abdullah. Troops of the British Indian Army quickly occupied key regions in Perak and supressed the Chinese and Malay factions who opposed the sultan. The cost for Abdullah, however, was high. Following on the heels of the occupation forces were the Governor and J.W.W. Birch, newly appointed Resident at Perak.[56] Clarke compelled the sultan to sign the treaty of Pankor and hand control over much of the administration of Perak to Birch. Clarke himself declared that he was "inclined to hope that, with a little watchfulness and forbearance on our part, the people of Perak will cheerfully accept the soverenty of Abdullah, and especially if his rule is assisted by the advice and assistance of an English officer."[57] With this Perak was brought under British indirect rule, with implications that would reverberate well beyond the sultanate itself.

Thomas Metcalf has argued that the form and function of indirect rule in Malaya, while superficially and semantically owing a great deal to the Indian princely states model, was in fact quite different.[58] He argues that after 1874 the British authorities imposed a form of colonial rule over some of the Malay states of Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, and Pahang that was tantamount to direct rule, with British district officers and magistrates deployed to perform much the same duties as district officers in a directly

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[55] Clarke, Speech to Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements, 15 September 1874, CO 273/76.
[56] Sir Andrew Clark to Earl of Carnarvon, 24 December 1874, CO 882/3.
[57] Clarke, Speech to Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements, 15 September, CO 273/76.
[58] Thomas Metcalf, *Imperial Connections, India and the Indian Ocean Area, 1860-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 42.

ruled Indian province. This left the local rulers, according to Metcalf, as impotent

puppets who were retained only to add a veneer of 'native' legitimacy. Metcalf does

concede that some of the states, namely Johor in the far south and Kedah, Kelantan,

Perlis, and Terengganu in the north, did not face such heavy handed rule. They were

instead subjected to more conventional forms of indirect rule where the ruling prince and

his government retained a largely freehand over domestic policy.[59]

However, what Metcalf does not acknowledge is that the ideas of indirect rule that

came out of princely India were never a universalising ideology imposing identical forms

and practices over all states in which it was employed. Indeed, one of the most important

characteristics of British indirect rule in Asia and Africa, despite a broad level of

intellectual coherence, was the inconsistent nature of its application. As was discussed in

the introduction, it was not until the twentieth century and the work of Lord Lugard that

there was even an attempt to coherently define indirect rule.[60] The operational

characteristics of colonial government were highly variegated because the regimes of

indirect rule were constructed on a state-by-state basis.

This was certainly the case in Malaya, but it was also manifest in India where

some larger states like Hyderabad were relatively autonomous when it came to most

internal matters, while in smaller states the British resident had more scope to intervene

in local activities.[61] This was also the case elsewhere: in the Arab world, for example,

the British imposed a tight degree of control over Zanzibar while allowing much more

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[59] Metcalf, *Imperial Connections*, 42.
[60] Frederick Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (London: Blackwood, 1922)
[61] Fisher, *Indirect Rule in India*, 254.

autonomy in Oman though they were ruled by different branches of the same family.[62] In

some of these states, Perak being the primary example but also Selangor, there was a

period of political tumult approaching anarchy in the period before the assumption of

British rule during which the governing organs of the state ceased to function and the

authority of the ruling prince became greatly diminished.[63] Consequently, when the

British arrived, there was not the same level of functioning state apparatus as there was in

other indirectly ruled states, and colonial officials exploited this vacuum to impose

administrative 'reforms'. [64] However, in all of these instances the British retained and in

some cases expanded the role of the ruling prince.

Insisting that indirect rule in Malaya was not true indirect rule because it differed

from an Indian archetype disregards the contextual and circumstantial nature of colonial

practice. At its core, the form of colonialism imposed over all of the Malay states by the

British was indirect rule. It employed local political institutions, most critically their

monarchical structures, after the state was drawn into the empire. Moreover, Metcalf's

view is not shared by other scholars. For example, the celebrated historian of the modern

Malay world, C.M. Turnbull, showed that the British "…put wealth into the hands of the

sultans and served to expand their authority more effectively throughout their states

beyond their own immediate districts."[65] Ernest Chew has argued that there were

significant limits to the power of British residents in Malaya with regards to their

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[62] See Chapter VI.
[63] Kheng, "Feudalism in Pre-Colonial Malaya" 258-259.
[64] Swettenham, *British Malaya*, 104-108.
[65] Turnbull, *Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei,* 152.

authority over local rulers.[66] Michael Fisher agrees with Chew and claimed that the

Residency system set up in princely India under Hastings was exported to Malaya.[67] And

David Cannadine noted that the Malay states were drawn under indirect rule "on the

Indian pattern"[68] Indeed, as will be shown below, there are sufficient similarities

between the princely states and Malay states to conclude that India was the crucible of

ideas of British indirect rule in southeast Asia.

Some of the best evidence of the fundamental similarities between indirect rule in

India and Malaya come from the life and work of Frank Swettenham. Swettenham was

present with Clarke on his mission to Perak where he acted as interpreter and mediator

between the competing factions. In time Swettenhem would come to rival Raffles'

importance in his impact on Britain's colonial role in Malaya. In Perak with Clarke, he

distinguished himself in the negotiations that led to the cessation of hostilities and the

recognition of Abdullah as sultan in 1874.[69] Clark, in turn, dispatched Swettenham to the

court of the Sultan of Selangor, a state on the southwestern side of the peninsula just

south of Perak later the same year. Selangor had to a lesser extent been suffering from

some of the same problems as Perak, namely the ruling sultan's power had been badly

undermined by competition between rival Chinese and Malay factions. The British

usually just called these groups pirates, but as mentioned above, they were in effect

commercial-political blocks of entrepreneurs attempting to maintain control over their

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[66] Ernest Chew, "Swettenham and British Residential Rule in West Malaya" *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 5 (2) 1974: 171-172.
[67] Fisher "Indirect Rule in the British Empire", 424.
[68] Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 59.
[69] Fairfield, *The Colonial Office List for 1881*, 411.

own affairs in the absence of an effective central government.[70] This, however, meant that Selangor was at times not so much a state as a geographical region with two or more rival loci of power. As in Perak, the British had interfered in a limited fashion prior to 1874, but with the arrival of Clarke, indirect rule was thought best suited to 'solve' the state's existing political problems. Swettenham was dispatched to the Sultan of Selangor's court first in a demi-official capacity as in his own words: "British Adviser to the Court of that delightful potentate."[71] A few months later this post would be made official and Swettenham became Assistant-Resident to Selangor. This occurred when Sir Andrew Clarke, with the backing of the Cabinet, sanctioned the assumption of a formal British protectorate over both Perak and Selangor.[72]

The British in Malaya conceptualised the individual states as both discreet political entities and simultaneously as 'Native states', sharing a broad political and cultural identity. This situation was identical to princely India where, as has been discussed, indirect rule was constructed on a bilateral state-by-state basis, though in time the British came to see the hundreds of princes as a single, albeit stratified, social and legal class. In 1874, when the apparently successful occupation of Perak and a less dramatic deploying of a resident to the state of Salangor appeared to bolster British influence and commerce, Clarke and the members of the Legislative Council concluded that this type of action was applicable to all Malay states. Clarke expressly makes this connection in the following passage:

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[70] Lian Kwen Fee and Koh Keng We, "Chinese Enterprise in Colonial Malaya: The Case of Eu Tong Sen" *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 35 (3) 2004: 425.
[71] Swettenham, *British Malaya*, 184-185.
[72] The Earl of Carnarvon, HL, *Hansard, 19 May 1874 vol 219, 467-77.*

In Perak, again, there was a time, apparently, lately in its history, in which there was a hope that, from the successful working of the Chinese who flocked to it in large numbers, - there was a time when it was hoped that there were the elements there of success and of good government. Unfortunately this did not turn out to be so, and latterly we have to interfere directly. The history of that interference I will presently give you; and the moderate and, I may say, fair success which I have reason to believe has attended our interference there, as well as in Selangor, justifies me in presenting myself now to you to ask you to consider this very subject in connection with these states and in relation to others.[73]

Just as when Sir William Lee-Warner devised his legal doctrine that treaty obligations made with one Indian prince could be applied to any other prince, Clarke's policy of indirect rule was thought to be applicable to all Malay states.[74]

Moreover, this policy was backed by instructions from the Colonial Secretary, Lord Kimberley, who sent Clarke to Malaya expressly to expand British influence in all of peninsular Malaya outside of Siamese control.[75] As will be discussed more fully below, this British view of Malay political identity was associated with a particular reading of Malay history and culture and of the role of the British as its protector. However, on a more immediate political level, it confirmed to the British that indirect rule could be successfully employed outside of India to the apparent benefit of the local ruler, his people, Malay and Chinese alike, and most importantly to the political and commercial interests of the British.[76]

James Birch, the resident tasked with imposing British control in Perak, appeared to be succeeding in his job through the end of 1874 and into 1875.[77] The sultanate, which

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[73] Clarke, Speech to Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements, 15 September 1874, CO 273/76
[74] Lee-Warner, *The Native States of India*; Prior, 'Lee-Warner, Sir William'
[75] MacIntyre, "Britain's Intervention in Malaya", 47.
[76] Fee and We, "Chinese Enterprise in Colonial Malaya", 421.
[77] Sir Andrew Clark to Earl of Carnarvon, 24 December 1874, CO 882/3.

had been rent by sporadic internecine conflict for more than a decade, had returned to

quiet prosperity. Soon after his arrival, a proclamation was issued to the people of Perak

in the sultan's name heralding the new order.

> BE it known to all men that we, Sultan Abdullah Mohammad Shah, son
> the late Sultan Jaafar Almoathain Shah, who is now sitting on the throne
> of the Kingdom of Perak, its provinces and dependencies. Now, we are
> desirous to open our country, with a view to afford to all the inhabitants of
> our country peace and security; and for this motive we have applied to his
> Excellency Sir Andrew Clarke [full titles omitted]…and his Excellency,
> the Governor, had sent us one of his officers, who is called British
> Resident of Perak, to live with us, and to afford us full assistance and good
> advice, in order that we may govern our country with justice, and protect
> the lives and property of those who trade or dwell in our country, of
> whatever nationality they may be.[78]

This proclamation encapsulates several of the essential components of British indirect

rule in Malaya and elsewhere. Firstly, it begins by reminding his subjects that the Sultan

remains the political leader of the country despite the recent occupation. It further

underlines his dynastic legitimacy by mentioning his father who had reigned before him.

From here the proclamation explains that it was at the invitation of Abdullah that the

British entered the country and that the imposition of the resident was wholly benevolent

and meant to ensure prosperity and peace for all. However, the proclamation papered

over some important tensions which soon came to the fore.

James Woodford Wheeler Birch, the first resident at Perak, was not well suited to

his post. Unlike Frank Swettenham, who at the same time was enjoying a cordial

relationship with the Sultan of Selangor, Birch was exceptionally chauvinistic and high-

handed, even for a colonial official. Unusually amongst the architects and practitioners

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[78] Proclamation by the Sultan of Perak, Appendix A, Enclosure 28, Clarke to Carnarvon, 6 April 1875, CO 882/3.

of indirect rule in Malaya and elsewhere in the British Empire in this period, Birch did

not support the key tenant of indirect rule, the integration of local elites in the colonial

administration, and from the outset of his time in Perak his lack of commitment

undermined its functioning, which likely contributed to his assassination by an affronted

Peraki chief. Birch was born in 1826 and began his career as a Midshipman in the Royal

Navy before entering the colonial service as a member of the Department of the

Commissioner of Roads, in Ceylon (modern Sri Lanka) in 1846. From this point until

1870 Birch had an unremarkable career.[79] Ceylon, which had been a British possession

since the Napoleonic Wars, was not part of British India and was instead governed by the

Colonial Office. Unlike India, British officials in Ceylon did not strive to integrate

existing Ceylonese institutions and elites into the imperial fold, but rather instituted a

comprehensive form of British direct rule, displacing pre-colonial structures and elites.[80]

In 1870 Birch, educated in Ceylonese methods of colonial government, was made

Colonial Secretary at Singapore. The Colonial Secretary was in effect second in

command of the colony and as such Birch had influence upon the governor and the

Legislative Council and he played an important role in formulating policy for relations

with the Malay states.[81] A few years after he assumed this role he drafted a

memorandum for the new Governor, Clarke, in which he distilled the lessons of his

career: "my experience as an Executive and Judicial Officer for the last twenty-seven

years among an Eastern people has taught me that they are perfectly incapable of good

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[79] Edward Fairfield, *The Colonial Office List for 1881*, 336.
[80] Ian Jeffrey Barrow, "Surveying in Ceylon during the Nineteenth Century", *Imago Mundi*, 55 2003: 82.
[81] The post of Colonial Secretary for the Straits Settlements should not be confused with the cabinet position of Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, which is often shortened to Colonial Secretary.

government, or even of maintaining order, without guidance or assistance from some stronger hand than is ever to be found amongst themselves."[82] This was far from being the most inflammatory or bigoted statement ever uttered by a British colonial official, but it does help to shed light on the personality of Birch, and more importantly, it indicates how indirect rule, in its most idealistic form, would not have found favour with him.

According to eyewitnesses, James Birch was speared to death while enjoying his bath.[83] This occurred in November 1875, just short of two years from when the treaty of Pangkor made Birch the resident at the court of Abdullah, Sultan of Perak. By all accounts, the relationship between Birch and Abdullah and his courtiers was never cordial. The new resident acted from the outset like a colonial governor on a mission to impose western reforms as rapidly as possible. Contemporaries and historians alike agree that Birch's intentions were perfectly sound but that his methods were counterproductive.[84] Birch was unable or unwilling to work closely with Abdullah's court and instead used his sweeping powers as resident to impose his will on the government of Perak.[85]

Iza Hussien's study of the evolution of Islamic law under colonial rule in Perak discusses Birch's methods. Hussein argues that one of the central areas of friction between Peraki elites and Birch was in the resident's unilateral assumption of the powers of taxation. Prior to the arrival of Birch local figures, who were in charge of extracting revenues in a given territory, gathered taxes in Perak. Hussien argues that this was a

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[82] Memorandum by the Colonial Secretary regarding Native States Enclosure in Clarke to Kimberley, 24 February 1874, CO 882/2.
[83] Sir William Jervois to Earl of Carnarvon, 4 November 1875, CO 882/3.
[84] Sadka, *The Protected Malay States 1874-1895*, 79.
[85] Sadka, *The Protected Malay States 1874-1895*, 78-79.

fundamental aspect of not only the economic, but also social and political structure of

Perak. Birch, however, was insensitive to this existing taxation method and instead

centralised the gathering of state revenues under his office, sweeping away the status and

authority of a whole host of once powerful figures.[86] In contrast, Birch's contemporary,

Frank Swettenham, achieved a much more conciliatory and negotiated colonial regime,

which will be discussed in detail below.[87]

The ultimate reason for Birch's assassination at the hands of a senior official of

Abdullah's government, Dato Maharaja Lela Pandak Lam, is not known. Frank

Swettenham, who worked with Birch, claimed it was because Birch had incurred the

wrath of local elites because he had threatened their economic interests.[88] Others have

claimed that it was Birch's persistent disrespect towards the sultan and to Malay customs

and mores that offended Pendak Lam and his co-conspirators.[89] No matter what the

reason, the outcome of Birch's death is rather clearer.[90] Immediately upon news of the

murder reaching Singapore, forces were dispatched to Perak and British control was re-

established. In the following months Abdullah himself, who was implicated in the plot,

was deposed and exiled while other co-conspirators and Pendak Lam were subsequently

tried and executed.[91] During the remainder of 1875 and well into 1876, British forces

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[86] Isa Hussin, "The Pursuit of the Perak Regalia: Islam, Law, and the Politics of Authority in the Colonial State" *Law & Social Inquiry*, 32 (3) 2007): 771-772.

[87] Chew, "Swettenham and British Residential Rule in West Malaya",171-172; Swettenham, *British Malaya*, 184-185.

[88] Swettenham, *British Malaya*, 205-207.

[89] Sadka, *The Protected Malay States 1974-1895*, 78-79.

[90] Hussin, "The Pursuit of the Perak Regalia: Islam, Law, and the Politics of Authority in the Colonial State", 771.

[91] It appears that Sultan Abdullah bears as much blame for the death of Birch as Henry II did for that of Thomas a Becket, which is to say he was not involved with the act itself, but contributed to an atmosphere

occupied Perak. Frank Swettenham was first put in charge of part of the military expedition to Perak to avenge the assassination, later he supervised the prosecution of the alleged murders, and was made Birch's successor as resident.[92]

The most telling outcome of the assassination of James Birch was how very little impact it had. Of course Birch was dead and Abdullah was deposed and exiled. However, this did not lead to any revolutionary change in the way Perak was governed. Abdullah's son and heir, Yusuf, was made sultan and the systems and practices of indirect rule continued.[93] Officials in Singapore and Whitehall only briefly discussed annexation and direct rule before rejecting that option as counterproductive.[94] Instead, the way that Birch's murderers were dealt with mirrored what conceivably could have occurred in an Indian princely state in similar circumstances.[95] Specifically, Pendak Lam was tried in the Peraki court system, as a subject of Abdullah, and not by the British. However, Abdullah, as ruler of Perak, could not be tried by his own courts and consequently faced a tribunal under the direction of the governor. The judicial tribunal took evidence, gave Abdullah an opportunity to plead his case, ultimately found him guilty and sentenced him to deposition and exile.[96] In all parts of the indirectly ruled empire, deposing a ruler was rare, even in India with hundreds of princely states, but

in which it was thought by his nobles appropriate to commit the murder. Hussin, "The Pursuit of the Perak Regalia: Islam, Law, and the Politics of Authority in the Colonial State", 772.

[92] Sir William Jervois to Earl of Carnarvon, 12 November 1875, CO 882/4.

[93] Sir William Jervois to Earl of Carnarvon, 5 January 1875, CO 882/4.

[94] Sir William Jervois to Earl of Carnarvon, 16 December, 1876, CO 882/4; Earl of Carnarvon to Sir William Jervois, 26 December, 1876, CO 882/4.

[95] Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and their States*, 119-120.

[96] Enclosure 6 Colonial Secretary to Sultan Abdullah, 16 September 1876 in Sir William Jervois to Earl of Carnarvon, 13 January, 1877, CO 882/4.

when it did occur it took place in a very similar fashion as the deposing of Abdullah.[97] The British were conspicuously trying to maintain order in Perak, not exact revenge, and by trying Lam in Perak through the local system they were minimising their role in an effort to conform to local institutions and sentiments. In fact, Lord Carnarvon, the Colonial Secretary, was so concerned about unsettling the Peraki people he asked Clark's successor as governor, Sir William Jervois, if it would be possible to commute Pendak Lam's death sentence.[98] Jervois and the Legislative Council, however, did not want to interfere with the internal functioning of the Peraki court.[99] This underscores the broad intellectual commitment to indirect rule by all levels of the British establishment. Even though they disagreed over what Lam's punishment should be, Carnarvon in Whitehall and Jervois and his colleagues in Singapore were all keen to return Perak to the *status quo ante* as quickly as possible.

In the aftermath of the assassination, although the British were careful not to criticise Birch too publicly, there were efforts to make it plain to his successor that they were not to mimic his approach. In August of 1876 the colonial secretary at Singapore, on the direction of the governor, sent a memorandum to the residents at Perak and Selangor which implicitly rejects the late Birch's methods:

> You will observe that in continuing the residential system, Her Majesty's Government define the functions of the Resident to be giving influential and responsible advice to the ruler, a position the duties of which are well understood in the East. The Residents are not to interfere more frequently or to a greater extent than is necessary with the minor details of Government; but their special objects should be, the maintenance of peace

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[97] Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and their States*, 121-122.
[98] Carnarvon to Jervois, 26 December, 1876, CO 882/4.
[99] Jervois to Carnarvon, 30 December, 1876, CO 882/4.

and law, the initiation of a sound system of taxation, with the consequent development of the resources of the country, and the supervision of the collection of the revenue, so as to ensure the receipt of funds necessary to carry out the principal engagements of the Government…[100]

The most significant portion of this document is the reference to duties of the resident "which are well understood in the East." Given that this memorandum was composed only months after unrest in Perak, it can only be seen as a refutation of the quasi-direct rule approach preferred by Birch and a reference to established methods of British residents in India.

Frank Athelstan Swettenham, the second British resident at Perak, took a different approach. While Birch brought a blunt and unswerving zeal to his work, spurred by contempt for Malay people and institutions, Swettenham was a "gentleman-officer-scholar", becoming an expert on Malay, culture, history and language.[101] This made him a model practitioner of indirect rule and earned for him the respect of many people he worked with, Malay and European. Swettenham was born in Derbyshire in 1850 to a middle class family. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Swettenham neither went to university nor was a commissioned officer in the Army or Navy. Instead, similar to earlier generations of imperial officials, he joined the colonial service after leaving school.[102]

After being made Assistant Resident to Selangor in 1874, Swettenham spent the bulk of the next twenty-five years working in the indirectly ruled Malay states. He later held posts at Singapore and served as resident at Perak and Selangor. In 1895 he was the

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[100] Colonial Secretary, Singapore to Residents at Perak and Selangor, 19 August 1876, CO 882/4/9.
[101] Peers, "Colonial Knowledge and the Military in India", 157; Frank Swettenham, *The Real Malay*, (London: John Lane, 1900); Frank Swettenham, *Malay Sketches*, (London: John Lane, 1903)
[102] Fairfield, *The Colonial Office List for 1881*, 411.

principal architect of the Federated Malay States, which united Selangor, Perak, Negeri

Sembilan, and Pahang under a central government headed by a Resident-General of

which Swettenham was the first incumbent.[103] In 1901 he made it to the top of the

colonial ladder in Malaya and was appointed Governor of the Straits Settlements, placing

him in charge of all of the indirectly ruled states and the directly ruled provinces of

British Malaya. Over the course of his long career Swettenham witnessed and

participated in the imposition of indirect rule over the Malay states. When he arrived as a

young colonial official in 1871, the British had very little formal authority beyond their

own coastal footholds; thirty years later he oversaw a regime, like the Indian Empire in

miniature, which was composed of both indirectly and directly ruled territories.

Swettenham's importance as an architect of indirect rule in Malaya, however, lies in the

early part of his career when he was a resident and the deputy colonial secretary, and his

parallel work as a published scholar on Malay history and language.

In the wake of James Birch's death, Swettenham was made resident to Perak. In

this capacity Swettenham was really just the temporary replacement during the

emergency occupation and pacification when the individuals suspected of killing Birch

were tried and exiled or executed.[104] After less than six months in Perak, in March of

1876, Swettenham was made assistant colonial secretary of the Straits Settlements. In

this capacity he was based out of Singapore, but was in effect the governor's itinerant

resident and consequently spent a great deal of time in the Malay states. In the autumn of

1878 Swettenham undertook a comprehensive tour of the Malay states under formal

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[103] "The Durbar", *The Straits Times*, 13 July 1897, 2.
[104] Fairfield, *The Colonial Office List for 1881*, 411.

British protection: Perak, Selangor, and Negeri Sembilan. In 1878, Perak had only returned to British control after Birch's assassination of two years' earlier, Selangor for a year longer, and Negeri Sembilan had just accepted a British resident in 1877. Swettenham's tour, therefore, as documented in his subsequent report, is an important source on the early functioning of indirect rule in Malaya.[105]

The twenty-one page report submitted to the governor by Swettenham upon his return from these three states is remarkable for its banality. It presents evidence of orderly administrations and docile and productive populations, with little indication that the extension of British control and the recent uprising in Perak had caused any enduring instability. The report, which contains information ranging from annual state revenues to the composition of local police forces, is significant because it shows that the British were most concerned with ensuring economic stability. This can be seen in Swettenham's concluding remarks in the section of his report on Perak: "…the present financial and political state of Perak should be cause for congratulation. The resources of the country are great, and, with such careful management as it now enjoys, there can be little doubt that the future of Perak will be prosperous."[106] The report shows that the British, and Swettenham in particular, had no interest in radically changing Malay society, or interfering in its functioning. Indeed, it would appear from this report that the British had not seized control of these states so much as they had seized control of their economies. This is not at all surprising, since it was the tumult in Perak that slowed the

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[105] P.J. Murray was actually resident accredited to Sungai Ujong, which was the central state in the confederation of Negeri Sembilan, the first British resident accredited to Negeri Sembilan as a whole was appointed in 1888. 'Memorandum showing the System under which British Residents have been appointed, and act, in the Malay States', 22 October 1879, CO 882/4.
[106] Mr. Swettenham's tour through the Protected Native States Autumn 1878, CO 882/4/10.

flow of tin to British markets which had spurred Clark's initial interference in 1874. Four

years later, when Swettenham toured the states, this instability was all but gone and the

economic value of the Malay states to the British had been restored.

In much of the British Empire colonial expansion was driven by strategic

necessity. In subsequent chapters, for example, it will be discussed how Egypt was

occupied to secure the sea-route to India via the Suez Canal, and the Persian Gulf states

were subsumed into the Indian Empire to prevent them from falling into the hands of

rival European powers. In Malaya, geo-political rivalry was present only in a later period,

with France exerting pressure from neighbouring Indochina from the middle of the 1880s.

In Malaya in the 1870s it was economic pressures that spurred British expansion. This

partially supports P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkin's theory that imperial expansion was driven

by 'gentlemanly-capitalists' for commercial and financial reasons, rather than for

strategic gain as Robinson and Gallagher had argued.[107] This is all the more important

because it demonstrates that indirect rule was a tool which could be used in different

political contexts and for different long-term objectives. Indeed, as will be shown

throughout this work, no matter what was the principal reason for expansion, variations

on Indian methods of indirect rule were used throughout the Muslim-dominated portions

of the British Empire.

The case of the state of Negeri Sembilan offers further proof that the architects of

indirect rule in Malaya were keen to maintain more than a veneer of the pre-exiting

socio-political structures. Negeri Sembilan translates from Malay to 'the Nine States',

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[107] P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, "Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Expansion Overseas II: New
Imperialism, 1850-1945", *The Economic History Review*, 40 (1) 1987: 1-26.

and was unlike the other states in Malaya, and indeed unlike the indirectly ruled portions

of the British Empire, already a confederacy of states.[108] The states of Negeri Sembilan

in the southwest corner of the peninsula were once part of neighbouring Johor; however,

their local rulers, who reigned under native Malay titles like Dato and Undang in the

early nineteenth century, gained autonomy and ultimately independence from the Sultan

of Johor.[109] Rather than split them into nine component states, a different system evolved.

Initially, the local rulers sought to import a monarch from an important Malay

dynasty in Sumatra to rule over them. However, in 1808 the ruler died without an heir

and once again the rulers of the nine states sent a delegation to Sumatra to seek another

prince.[110] Between 1808 and 1869 Negeri Sembilan came under the rule of Raja

Lenggang, and later his eldest and second son in succession, who reigned as Yamtuan

Besar or 'Great Ruler', before a dynastic dispute arose with no clear heir.[111] Rather than

turning once more to Sumatra to import another prince, the heads of the four most

powerful of the nine states came together to create a new system by which they elected a

monarch. The rules of succession were codified and required that the ruler-elect be a

male heir of Raja Lenggang and an observant Muslim and that none of the electors were

eligible for the top job. While this system was novel when it was devised in 1869, it

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[108] P.E. De Josselin De Jong, "The Dynastic Myth of Negri Sembilan" *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, (*Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia and Oceania*.) 131 (2) 1975: 277.
[109] Turnbull, *Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei,* 82.
[110] Turnbull, *Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei,* 83.
[111] M. B. Hooker, "The Interaction of Legislation and Customary Law in a Malay State" *The American Journal of Comparative Law*, 16 (3) 1968: 419.

reaffirmed the longstanding autonomy of the Undangs of Sungai Ujong, Jelebu, Johol,
and Rembau.[112]

When the British expanded their presence in the 1870s in Negeri Sembilan, they

posted their first resident not to the nine states as a whole, but to the largest of the

confederacy, Sungai Ujong.[113] This initial foray into the administration of Negeri

Sembilan was limited. Swettenham's report of 1878, for example, shows that the British

had little power outside of Sungai Ujong beyond the resident providing advice.

> The relations between the Resident and the Datu Lana (the chief Native
> authority) are excellent, and indeed all the people of the county, Malays
> and Chinese, appear to have great confidence in the Resident. Nor is this
> feeling confined to Sunei Ujong [sic] ; in the short time I have been here,
> several influential Malays from the small states adjoining have visited the
> Resident to ask his advice, as far as I can judge relying on its soundness
> and intending to follow it.[114]

Swettenham is describing the nascent moments of indirect rule over Negeri Sembilan,

though this was not yet a fully formed colonial administration, given that it privileges

Sungai Ujong and essentially ignores the other eight states and indeed the incumbent

Yamtuan Besar, Antah Ibni. This limited British presence remained in Negeri Sembilan

until 1888 when Antah Ibni died and Muhammad Shah was selected to replace him. The

British took the opportunity to expand their power over newly elected Yamtuan Besar

and in 1889 a resident was accredited to his court and the entirety of Negeri Sembilan fell

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[112] Jervois to Carnarvon, 13 January, 1877, CO 882/4; Hooker, "The Interaction of Legislation and
Customary Law in a Malay State", 419; De Jong "The Dynastic Myth of Negri Sembilan", 280-281.
[113] Financial condition and prospects of Perak, Salangore, and Sungei Ujong, CO 882/4/9.
[114] Mr. Swettenham's tour through the Protected Native States Autumn 1878, CO 882/4/10.

under formal indirect rule.[115] This is particularly significant because elective monarchies

were not a common political institution world-wide.

David Cannadine has argued that the British, through the use of indirect rule,

were trying to impose an idealised and invented version of British pre-modern social

hierarchies on their colonies.[116] In some instances Cannadine's theory seems to be

correct: the example of Lord Lytton granting specious 'coats-of-arms' to Indian princes

for the 1877 Imperial assemblage is an obvious example. However, in the instance of the

elective monarchy of Negeri Sembilan, it is clear that the British were maintaining an

existing local political institution that drew little from British history. At nearly the same

time, the Sultan of Pahang on the eastern cost of Malaya also accepted a British resident

in 1888 and became a formal protectorate. These two states were in many ways very

much alike; they both had Muslim Malay ruling elites, large Chinese populations, and a

political history stretching back to the Malaccan Empire. And yet in at least one key way

they were different. Pahang was like the other Malay states a unitary monarchy under the

central control of a hereditary ruler, while Negeri Sembilan was a confederation with an

elective monarchy under a Yamtuan Besar. The fact that Negeri Sembilan was allowed

to retain its unique form of government further demonstrates that the architects of indirect

rule in Malaya were in fact attempting to preserve and subsume the existing socio-

political hierarchies, as they understood them, rather than sweep away old institutions and

impose a form of veiled direct rule.[117]

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[115] Sadka, *The Protected Malay States*, 118.
[116] Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, xx.
[117] M. B. Hooker, "Law, Religion, and Bureaucracy in a Malay State: A Study in Conflicting Power
Centers" *The American Journal of Comparative Law*, 19 (2) 1971: 265.

The experience of Negeri Sembilan's neighbour and former master, the Sultanate of Johor, is further evidence of the variegated nature of British indirect rule in Malaya. Johor, in the extreme south of peninsular Malaya, had one of the longest and closest relationships with the British. It was from the dominions of the Sultan of Johor that Sir Stamford Raffles acquired the island of Singapore in 1819, and for the rest of the century British directly and indirectly ruled territories slowly enveloped the state.[118] By the end of the 1880s, Johor was surrounded by the British Empire, with Malacca on its western border, Negeri Sembilan to its north, Pahang to its east, and the island of Singapore lying just off its south coast. Remarkably it was not until 1904 that Johor accepted a resident at the sultan's court and with that an expanded and formal British control over much of its institutions.[119] However, despite not being subjected to the full authority of a British resident, Johor and its sultan were nonetheless being exposed to many of the tools and techniques of indirect rule that confronted the other Malay states.

From 1885 the British formally recognised Abu Bakr of the House of Temenggong as ruler of Johor in a formal agreement between the two governments.[120] This agreement was significant for several reasons, all of which demonstrate the extent to which Johor was being drawn under British indirect rule. Firstly, Abu Bakr and the dynasty he headed were not that of the traditional Sultans of Johor. Rather they were a powerful family that came to control much of the government of the state, at first in the name of the ruling sultan, but over the course of the nineteenth century they had eclipsed

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[118] N.N.N. Ramanathan, *Johore and the Origins of British Control, 1855-1914* (Kuala Lumpur: Arenabuku, 2000), 11-45.
[119] Metcalf, *Imperial Connections,* 42.
[120] Ramanathan, *Johore and the Origins of British Control,* 21.

and marginalised the previous ruling dynasty. The House of Temenggong got their

dynastic name from a Malay title of nobility. Abu Bakr, who began his reign in 1862 as

Temenggong of Johor, deftly used his family's close relationship with the British to gain

formal recognition as ruler of Johor. To this end, in 1869 he took the title of Maharaja of

Johor, a style that the British would have been familiar with from India, before finally

assuming the title of Sultan of Johor in 1889 once he enjoyed formal recognition from the

British.[121] The relationship between Abu Bakr and the British, however, was not only

favourable to the newly minted sultan. In return for the political support and recognition

of his government, Abu Bakr began to behave more like an indirectly ruled prince of the

British Empire than as a fully independent sovereign. Although Johor did not accept a

British resident until 1904, British officials did play an important role in the state,

including in controlling its armed forces.[122] Indeed he even accepted the legal use of the

currency of the Straits Settlements, the straits dollar.[123] As a further illustration of the

economic impetus underlying British expansion in Malaya, in the same year that the

British signed this formal agreement recognising Abu Bakr as ruler of Johor, they also

arranged for an agreement to increase opium farming in the state.[124] With these

agreements the British were expanding their political and economic control over the state,

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[121] Ramanathan, *Johore and the Origins of British Control,* 32. Isa Hussin explains the rationale for the changes in Abu Bakr's titles, ultimately assuming that of sultan. Hussin shows that 'sultan' was the highest political title in the Malay and wider Muslim world, and Abu Bakr was keen to be recognized as such, but was only able to do so when his position, backed by the British, was secure enough to effectively usurp the title from the previous ruling dynasty of Johor. Hussin, "The Pursuit of the Perak Regalia", 783-784.
[122] Carl A. Trocki, *Prince of Pirates: The Temenggongs and the Development of Johor and Singapore* (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2007), 191.
[123] Straits Settlements: agreement with Sultan of Johore regarding relations between HM government of the Straits Settlements and the government of Johore, CO 882/4/10/21.
[124] Straits Settlements: memorandum of agreement with Sultan of Johore as to opium farms, CO 882/4/10/21.

and as will be shown below, Johor was also being integrated into the intellectual and ceremonial apparatus of British indirect rule in Malaya.

As early as 1874 Sir Andrew Clarke, only months after arriving as governor, began to develop a dramatic new policy with regards to the 'Native states'.[125] This new policy was publicly revealed in his speech before the Council at Singapore on the 15 September 1874. In this long statement Clarke discussed his recent actions in Perak, as well as his appraisal of the present situation of Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Pahang, and Johor, and the imperative of further interfering in their affairs. However, signalling that this was more than a simple change of policy, Clarke also quoted approvingly from a report from his colleague, the Attorney-General of Singapore, Thomas Braddell, outlining the history of European relations with the Malay states.[126] In this report Braddell launched a strident critique of the history of European influence in the region from the arrival of the Portuguese:

> Before the downfall of the Malayan Empire at Malacca, the trade of the Peninsula was collected in certain depots; and there was then a recognised Government, which, although low in the scale of civilization, afforded protection to producers, and encouraged trader to visit the ports. The trade remained at Malacca, under the Portuguese, from the beginning of the 16th century, but gradually declined with the authority of the Portuguese in these seas; and, when the Dutch took Malacca in 1641, the evil effects of the system of European nations establishing themselves in the Native states, and monopolising the trade of those states, and become visible in the decrease of population, the loss of trade, and the growth of piracy. The effect of the establishment of Europeans in the 17th and 18th century was to destroy the power and prestige of the Native governments; and, as the Europeans did not afford any protection beyond the walls of their factories, anarchy and confusion arose. The people were left without protection for life and property; they were discouraged from agriculture

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[125] Sadka, *The Protected Malay States*, 118.
[126] Fairfield, *The Colonial Office List for 1881*, 329.

and trade, not only by oppression and enforced monopolies on the part of the Europeans in their neighbourhood, but also from the want of the protection before afforded by their own governments. Each petty Raja assumed independence of his former Suzerain; and, in his own district exercised, as for as he could, power, at the expense of the people within his jurisdiction.[127]

Although this report was not exactly effusive in its praise of Malayan government, historical or contemporary, it was much more critical of European colonial governments. This criticism was not restricted to the Portuguese and Dutch; it also extended to the British, particularly the East India Company and the Government of India. This suggests that Braddell, Clark, and their successors in British Malaya were intellectually committed to indirect rule and not just champions of British expansion in any form.

Braddell's report continued with a narrative account of Malaya under British dominance:

It was to have been hoped that the establishment of the British Colonies in the Malayan Peninsula, at the end of the last and the beginning of the present century, would have been beneficial to the neighbouring Native States and so perhaps it was at first; but the Indian Government were early dissatisfied with the result of the Establishment at Penang; and soon stringent orders were given to the local Government not to interfere in the Native states on any pretext whatever. The result has been unfortunate, as encouraging the existence, by non interference, of a state of misgovernment and anarchy difficult to describe, and which might, in a great measure, have been prevented by an intelligent fostering of the existing Native governments, protecting them not only from external aggressions but also from internal troubles.[128]

Braddell's version of the history of European relations with the 'Native states' did more than discredit earlier colonial regimes. Clarke's adoption of Braddell's ideas led to the construction of a discursive framework in which all problems in the Malay states were

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[127] Clarke, Speech to Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements, 15 September 1874, CO 273/76.
[128] Clarke, Speech to Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements, 15 September 1874, CO 273/76.

blamed on this destruction of centralised Malaccan authority by the Portuguese in 1511, which was compounded by bad Dutch administration. The only logical conclusion that could be drawn by the likes of Clarke and his council was that expanded interference using indirect rule was needed to return Malaya to stability and prosperity. After 1874 the British became the self-appointed successors to the Malaccan Empire, actively trying to repair three hundred years of failed Portuguese and Dutch direct rule and the corrosive indifference of British India.

Although Clark and Braddell were amongst the first colonial officials to expound a coherent discourse of indirect rule, it was their successors, especially Frank Swettenham, who more fully developed the administrative and intellectual regime in Malaya. He also had a parallel career as a Malay scholar. Like many other figures in this study who will be discussed in other chapters, Lord Cromer in Egypt, Sir Percy Cox in the Persian Gulf, and Lord Lugard in Nigeria, Swettenham spent all or much of his career in one region and became a recognised expert on it. His expertise was illustrated through the production of important books and articles. Swettenham's production of colonial knowledge not only increased the British understanding of Malay history, language, geography, and demography, but helped to construct a narrative of the role of the British as vital protectors of Malay society and culture.

C.A. Bayly has noted the necessity of information in allowing for British expansion in India, which he called colonial knowledge.[129] In Malaya the case was much the same: from the 1870s the expansion of colonial knowledge mirrored the expansion of

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[129] Bayly, *Empire and Information*, 6-7.

colonial authority and individuals like Swettenham were at the centre of this imperial-

information project. The vast information gulf that the British needed to bridge to know

Malaya better was later described by Swettenham in the follow passage:

> In 1874, the ignorance of all Europeans in the colony concerning their
> near neighbours in the Malay Peninsula almost passes belief. They had
> been warned off the ground, and had taken the warning to heart.
> Mysterious Malaya was a *terra incognita* to official and trader alike. There
> were no reliable books on the subject, the whole country was an absolute
> blank on every map; even the names of the States and the titles of their
> rulers were not known to more than half-a-dozen English-men. Of the
> nature of the country, the character of the people, their numbers,
> distribution, sentiments, or condition, there was an ignorance, profound,
> absolute, and complete. An impression, however, prevailed that some kind
> of internal struggle for power, for place, or for the sheer pleasure of
> fighting, was constantly going on. There was also a strong belief that
> Malays were treacherous by nature and pirates by trade, and that there
> were no special inducements for a white man to trust himself in such a
> barbarous country.[130]

For much of his career, and well into his retirement, Swettenham worked to fill the blank

spots on European maps and correct the ignorant impressions of Malaya and the Malay

people.[131] Three instances in Swettenham's scholarly career illustrate the close

relationship between the generation of knowledge and British rule over the Malay states,

all of which have earlier parallels in the genesis of the ideology of indirect rule in India.

These are Swettenham's close relationship with the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic

Society (SBRAS), which was founded in 1877, his compiling of a dictionary of the

Malay language, and his works on the history and culture of Malaya.

  The SBRAS was the local section of the Royal Asiatic Society, based in London,

which itself had been founded as the British branch of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. As

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[130] Swettenham, *The Real Malay*, 7-8.
[131] Sadka, *The Protected Malay States,* 390-391.

mentioned in Chapter I, the Asiatic Society of Bengal was founded in Calcutta in 1784 by

jurist and Sanskrit scholar Sir William Jones and other colonial officials with an

academic interest in newly conquered areas of India. The Asiatic Society became an

intellectual home for British officials keen to understand Indian society and

institutions.[132] While Calcutta was the centre of the British administration in India,

London was the political and intellectual capital of the British Empire and was home to

several important officials of the Indian administration who had returned to Britain for

work or retirement. It was in fact a colleague of Sir William Jones, Henry Thomas

Colebrook, who spearheaded the foundation of an Asiatic Society in London. Colebrook

was Jones' successor as President of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, and he helped found

the Royal Asiatic Society upon returning to Britain after a long career with the East India

Company.[133] What would become the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland

(RAS) was established in London in 1823.[134] In the following decades RAS branches

were established in many parts of British-ruled Asia, where they served as a forum for

colonial officials interested in 'knowing' local society.

    When the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society was founded in 1877, it was

replicating at least in its orientation other branches and affiliates of the RAS from

Bombay to Hong Kong. And like these related institutions, it was founded by colonial

officials and aided in the acquisition and dissemination of colonial knowledge. Frank

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[132] R. Chakrabarty, "The Asiatic Society:1784–2008 An Overview" in Ratna Basu *Time Past and Time Present: Two Hundred and Twenty-five Years of the Asiatic Society* (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 2008), 2–24.
[133] F.E. Pargiter, ed. *Centenary Volume of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland,* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1923), 7-14.
[134] Beckinham, "A History of the Royal Asiatic Society", 10-12.

Swettenham was a founding member of the SBRAS and in 1880 became one of the early editors of the branch's *Journal*.[135] As such he was very much like William Jones in Calcutta, serving in an official capacity in the government of the colony, while serving in an unofficial capacity on the council of the SBRAS. The *Journal of the SBRAS* became an early forum for the dissemination of the amateur scholarship of numerous colonial officials in Malaya on topics ranging from anthropology to natural history.

The contents of a single issue of the *Journal* under Swettenham's editorship illustrates the breadth of the knowledge gathering project in which the SBRAS was engaged. In the edition of the *Journal* published in June 1881, for example, there were articles entitled: "Some Account of the Mining Districts of Lower Perak"; "the Folklore of the Malays"; "Notes on the Rainfall of Singapore"; "Journal of the Voyage through the Straits of Malacca on the Expedition to the Molucca Islands"; and "A Memorandum on the Various Tribes inhabiting Penang and Province Wellesley"[136] As seen in this single issue, which is largely representative of the first several decades of the journal, the SBRAS was clearly a part of the 'information order' that C.A. Bayly identified as collecting and exploiting colonial knowledge for Britain's imperial project.[137] Swettenham and his colleagues at the SBRAS were contributing to a discourse on Malayan societies which justified the British role as protectors of the culture that the British themselves were defining. A central component of this definition was the key role of the Malay rulers and their states. Through the support of these pre-colonial

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[135] Wai Sin Tiew, "History of the Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (JMBRAS) 1878-1997", *Malaysian Journal of Library & Information Science,* 3 (1) 1998: 46.
[136] *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, June 1881.
[137] Bayly, *Empire and Information,* 372.

polities, British intervention from 1874 was construed as a conservative and protecting force.

As a channel for the dissemination of colonial knowledge, the JSBRAS occupied much the same function as its intellectual ancestor, *Asiatic Researches*, the journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. Swettenham became an expert on the language of the people he was tasked with governing, and like Sir William Jones the founder of the Asiatic Society of Bengal a century before, his expertise led him to attempt to understand and use local institutions rather than impose British ones. In this capacity, Swettenham along with his colleague Hugh Clifford published a comprehensive *Dictionary of the Malay Language* in 1894.[138] The *Dictionary* was not an outcome of his official duties, yet it cannot be separated from them. The *Dictionary* was even published by the government printing office of the Straits Settlements. From the outset of the expansion of indirect rule over the Malay states in the 1870s, the officials tasked with drawing the local rulers into the imperial fold did so in the Malay language. It was the British who elected to use Malay rather than compel Malay rulers to communicate with them in English. The *Dictionary* was both scholarly and practical; it presented transliterated Malay words with an English translation, but also included the original word in the Arabic alphabet used for Malayan.[139] As such, the dictionary was a tool for a political agent who needed to translate or communicate an idea, but also for an English speaker to learn to read and write Malay. While in India, there had been a sustained debate over whether to displace

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[138] Sir Hugh Clifford became the effective successor to Swettenham in the Malay states, and continued to have an important role in their indirect rule well into the twentieth century. Simon C. Smith "Piloting Princes: Hugh Clifford and the Malay Rulers" *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 11 (3) 2001: 363- 375.
[139] Hugh Clifford and Frank Swettenham, *A Dictionary of the Malay Language*, (Perak: Government Printing Office, 1894)

or conserve pre-colonial institutions, in Malaya from the outset and for decades to follow the conservative approach was widely upheld.[140] In this capacity Clifford and Swettenham's *Dictionary* supported the continued use of the Malay language by the British in Malaya.

Swettenham's interest in Malay culture by was not limited to language: his other significant publications include *Malay Sketches*, *The Real Malay*, and *British Malaya*, published in 1895, 1899, and 1907 respectively. These works together constructed a picture of Malay society which is both patronisingly laudatory of Malay individuals and social structures, while also highlighting the important role of the British. *Malay Sketches* and *The Real Malay* are quasi-anthropological studies of Malay culture coloured with many anecdotes from Swettenham's personal experiences, while *British Malaya* is a historical justification of British role in modern Malaya and an explanation of its colonial policies. In *The Real Malay*, for example, Swettenham attempts to define what he sees as the essential cultural attributes of Malay people:

> To a European, the ways of Malays are exceedingly peculiar - that is, until you have shared their inner life, and so learnt their code of honour, their religious teaching, and the doctrines and customs of the men of old time. Though great changes have been effected in the last twenty years, ancient tradition is still one of the strongest rules of the true Malay life of the Peninsula. Amongst the principles inculcated for generations, there are two which still have wonderful force. They are these: the obedience which is due to the governing classes, and the sacredness of confidence. The power of the latter injunction is specially noticeable, when a non-Muhammadan seeks information likely to damage a follower of the Prophet.[141]

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[140] Lynn Hollen Lees, "Being British in Malaya, 1890–1940" *Journal of British Studies*, 48 (1) 2009: 97-98.
[141] Swettenham, *The Real Malay*, 150.

Swettenham is employing orientalist generalisations to identify two key attributes of the Malay people. These are, firstly that they are exceptionally deferential to their social superiors and secondly that they are both trustworthy and loyal to other Malays. The reference to the 'non-Muhammadan' is particularly important, and likely refers not to all non-Muslims, but rather specifically to the large Chinese minority who were a major part of the Malayan population and economy. This focus on excluding the Chinese was a persistent attribute of British ideas of Malay culture, and will be discussed in more detail below. In this passage, as in his body of work as a whole, Swettenham is claiming a unique insight into the essence of Malay culture. This expertise is, therefore, a contribution to the body of colonial knowledge, which in turn delineated and justified the British colonial role in their society.

However, Swettenham is presenting more than a justification of colonial rule: he is also making the case for indirect rule, showing that experts like him, working in concert with the legitimate Malay elite, form the ideal type of colonial government. In the following passage from *British Malaya*, in which he is discussing the leading officials in the state of Perak, Swettenham makes it clear that the system of indirect rule was the equal of any form of government.

> The Sultan of Perak, the late Raja Musa, and the Dato Sri Adika Raja were in no sense the product of English education. None of the three ever had any experience of an English school, but all of them learned much by a keen observation, by a desire to serve their country, and by a close association with British officers in all that has been done to bring the Malay States to their present position. A Far Eastern race which can produce men like these, who, under such circumstances, develop

principles as high as those which guide the best Europeans and strive to live up to them, is not to be despised or dismissed as useless.[142]

In this Swettenham overtly dismisses the idea, once so forcefully championed by James Birch and before him Lord Macaulay, that only Europeans and non-Europeans rigorously educated in European ways were capable of good government. Clearly Swettenham does not dismiss the role of the British in the government of Malaya, but he sees their role as trustees to help preserve and stabilise Malay society so that it can be best governed through its own institutions by Malay elites. This was the lesson that the British official classes took from the Indian rebellion of 1857-58 and applied to Malaya.[143]

A group who was conspicuously absent from the intellectual framework through which the British deployed indirect rule over Malaya was the Chinese. As discussed above the various large and economically important Chinese factions had played a significant political role in the peninsula prior to expansion of British control. However, as indirect rule spread, the Chinese became politically marginalised. Indirect rule was overly conceptualised as the government of Malays under British supervision. In this view the Chinese were effectively seen as a foreign element, present in the region only for economic reasons, and hence were not extended, as a group, a place in the government of the Malay states. As noted above Charles Hirschman argues that with the arrival of the British in the latter nineteenth century race relations in Peninsular Malaya were rearranged.[144] Prior to the 1870s different Chinese and Malay factions would work together to seek political and economic ascendancy, with the Larut wars being the

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[142] Swettenham, *British Malaya*, 344.
[143] Lees, "Being British in Malaya", 77; 82.
[144] Hirschman, "The Making of Race in Colonial Malaya", 330.

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primary example. After the treaty of Pangkor, however, British intercession brought also this ideology that privileged Malay culture and the primacy of Malays in the political structure of the states.

A.B. Shamsul has claimed that under the British a clear definition of 'Malayness' was defined through the three pillars of "*bahasa, raja, dan agama*", or language, ruler, and religion.[145] Shamsul argued that this conceptualisation of Malay culture would go on to impact the development of Malayan history and contemporary Malaysia; however, this concept also was critical in defining the nature of indirect rule. In effect, these three pillars of 'Malayness' were also critical attributes of indirect rule, with colonial government being conducted as collaboration between the British and the Muslim rulers, using the Malay language. Under this framework the Chinese people living in Malaya, who were not Muslims, nor native Malay speakers, and who did not enjoy a traditional role in government, were cast simply as 'foreign'.

We see throughout the writings, public and private, of the architects of indirect rule in Malaya that the Chinese are relegated to this secondary and foreign place. In Sir Andrew Clark's speech at the Legislative Council outlining his plans for the expansion of British rule over Malaya, for example, he consistently discusses regional affairs in terms of two monolithic racial groups: the Malays and the Chinese. Despite the fact that the Peninsula was at the time divided into several autonomous states, he does not talk about people as subjects of the states, 'Perakis' or 'Selangoris', and so on. Moreover, the Chinese are framed as a disrupting force by Clark: "I was aware that a mere settlement

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[145] Shamsul, "A History of an Identity, an Identity of a History", 356.

between the two Chinese factions would not be sufficient to secure the peace of

Perak…"[146] Hence to Clark, indirect rule in Perak was in part predicated on re-imposing

the stability upset by the presence of 'the Chinese'.

Frank Swettenham shared with Clark the view that the Malay and the Chinese

were distinct monolithic racial groups in Malaya. However, he further develops the

racial ideology of indirect rule in Malaya by arguing that the Malayans also held similar

views about the foreignness of the Chinese as the British. In the following passage from

his *British Malaya,* he argues that the Malayan people saw the Chinese as fundamentally

and irreconcilably different for cultural and religious reasons:

> Though the Malay is hardly ever a bigot in matters of religion, he has the
> strongest possible objection to a Malay woman marrying or living with a
> Chinese, and this is another of those matters which have caused a great
> deal of trouble in the Protected Malay States. A fairly well-to-do Chinese,
> a small shopkeeper for instance, appears to make a satisfactory husband,
> and it has happened that Malay women have preferred life with the
> Chinese infidel to a harder lot with a man of their own race and faith. The
> common result was, first a warning to the woman to leave the man of her
> choice, and if that failed the Chinese was killed, and sometimes the
> woman also. If the Chinese chose to become a Muhammadan these
> primitive measures would not be resorted to, but there was, and there is, a
> violent objection on the part of the Malay community to these domestic
> arrangements between the Celestial and the Malay woman. Of course no
> one was greatly shocked if a Malay man gathered a Chinese woman into
> his household, but the practice, seldom resorted to, was never regarded
> with favour.[147]

Imposing distinctions between Malay and Chinese people, and moreover arguing that the

Malayans did the same, was an important intellectual tool that the British colonial

officials deployed. Indirect rule was legitimated through the protection of Malay culture,

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[146] Clarke, Speech to Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements, 15 September 1874, CO 273/76.
[147] Swettenham, *British Malaya*, 147.

and fundamental to this view of Malay culture was the belief that the Chinese were, if not

an unwanted presence, certainly not a group to be fully embraced and given an equal

place to 'native' Malays under indirect rule.

This intellectual framework that placed the Malay people, their rulers and their

states within the context of imperial thought, but was also uniquely constructed for the

Malayan context, was mirrored in ceremonial rites of colonial rule. In the 1880s and

1890s, with legal engagements and residents in several of the Malay states, the British

began to deploy more fully the symbolic apparatus of indirect rule. It was this

manifestation of indirect rule that was most strikingly analogous to Indian princes. The

agents of the Colonial Office in this period developed and distributed a system of honours

to the Malay rulers that both rewarded and categorised them within the context of British

Malaya as well as the wider British Empire.[148] To achieve this end the British produced a

hybrid collection of awards and rites that combined existing colonial and Indian practices

and added new invented traditions specific to the Malayan context. After 1857 the

princes of India were granted entry into special orders of knighthood, allowed gun salutes

which numerically categorised them. After 1874, the Malay rulers too were given

knighthoods and granted gun salutes, underscoring the Indian intellectual basis of the

system of indirect rule being established in Malaya.

David Cannadine has identified the widespread use of orders of knighthood by the

British as a tool to honour colonial collaborators in both directly and indirectly ruled parts

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[148] Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 85-86.

of the empire.[149] In this context Malaya was no different from other possessions under

the remit of the Colonial Office. Nearly all of the first generation of Malay rulers to

come under indirect rule were inducted into one or more of the British orders.[150] Unlike

India, however, the Malay rulers did not have honours specifically invented for them, but

were rather granted membership into the order of St Michal and St George or the Royal

Victorian Order, both of which were pan-imperial in membership. From Canada to Hong

Kong, 'the Most Distinguished Order of St Michael and St George' was the most

commonly granted order of kinghood for officials outside of Britain and India. It was,

indeed, the oldest of the 'colonial' orders of knighthood, predating the orders of the Star

of India and Indian Empire by several decades. The order was founded by the Prince

Regent, later George IV, in 1818 to reward individuals connected with the administration

of the Maltese and Ionian Islands in the Mediterranean which had been acquired in the

Napoleonic wars. However, with the return of the Ionian Islands to Greece in 1864, it

was decided to expand the order to all colonial and diplomatic officials of high rank.[151]

With this change the order gained its modern role, and like the Star of India it was

divided into three ranks, the bottom of which, Companion, earned the recipient a medal

and the post-nominal initials of CMG. The middle rank of the order was the KCMG, or

Knight Commander, which earned an even larger medal, and the knightly designation of

Sir, while at the top was the 'Knight Grand Cross', with this came the title of Sir, a

collection of gold enamelled insignia and blue satin robes, and the post-nominal initials

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[149] Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 86.
[150] Sir William Mercier ed., *The Colonial Office List for 1915*, (London: HMSO, 1915), 434; 436-437.
[151] Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 86.

of GCMG. After the 1864 reorganisation the order became so synonymous with the colonial and diplomatic grandees of the empire that a wit, whose name is sadly not recorded, redubbed them the 'Call Me God', 'Kings Call Me God' and the 'God Calls Me God'.[152] By the end of nineteenth century the GCMG, of which there was only ever a few dozen, were held by the likes of British ambassadors to one of the great powers, governors and prime ministers of large colonies and dominions, and other equally senior figures.

In the early decades of indirect rule in Malaya four princes were granted the rank of GCMG, Abu Baker, Sultan of Johor; Aleddin Sulaiman, Sultan of Selangor; Idris Shah, Sultan of Perak; and Muhammad Shah, Yamtuan Besar of Negri Sembilan. In addition Ahmed, Sultan of Pahang, was made a KCMG.[153] Even in India only the senior most princes could expect to be made top ranking members of the orders of the Star of India or Indian Empire; therefore, it is all the more significant that the Malay Sultans were invested into such a high rank. In no other part of the empire under the Colonial Office at this time were a group of non-European officials granted honours of this number and magnitude. In addition to this Idris Shah of Perak, Aleddin Sulaiman, Sultan of Selangor; and Muhammad Shah, Yamtuan Besar of Negri Sembilan were also invested with a more junior knighthood, the Royal Victorian Order, with Idris Shah being granted the top level of GCVO, and the Aleddin Sulaiman and Muhammad Shah, receiving the middle ranking KCVO.[154] The Royal Victorian Order was meant to be a more general award for persons

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[152] Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 86-87.
[153] Mercier, *The Colonial Office List for 1915*, 434; 436-437.
[154] Mercier, *The Colonial Office List for 1915*, 445.

who did service for the Crown. As such it could be given to individuals who were not eligible for one of the other types of knighthood, or, as was the case with the Malay rulers, as an additional honour to heap upon them.

Together the 'Royal Victorian' and the 'St Michael and St George' constituted a system of knighthoods which paralleled the two Indian orders, and allowed the Malay Sultans to receive a similar if slightly more junior ranking honour. These knighthoods played the same role in Malaysia as they had in India: they both rewarded and categorised them. From the ranks and types of orders granted to the five rulers it can be seen that the architects of indirect rule in Malay placed the sultans near the pinnacle of the social hierarchy in both Malaya and of the entire span of the British world outside of the United Kingdom. Using the metric of type and rank of orders of knighthood granted to these five Malay rulers, only the Khedive of Egypt and the top handful of Indian princes were more highly placed in the imperial hierarchy. And this assessment is confirmed with the deployment of that other typically Indian princely measure of rank, gun salutes.[155]

After 1892 all the Malay princes under British indirect rule were granted gun salutes, and just as in India, they were graduated in odd numbers. In Chapter II it was discussed how the top ranked 120 Indian princes were entitled to a salute of anything from nine to twenty-one guns, with the vast majority only receiving nine or eleven and only six being entitled to twenty-one. As will be discussed in a later chapter, at the lower end of the 'salute' scale were some of the sheiks and emirs of the Persian Gulf States,

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[155] Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 45.

who were granted as few as three guns when they came under indirect rule.[156] The gun salutes of Malay princes placed them towards the top of this spectrum. The sultans of Johor, Selangor, Perak, and Pahang, received seventeen guns, and udangs of the four senior confederate states of Negri Sembilan got nine each.[157] These salutes, along with the numerous highly ranked knighthoods, placed the Malay princes, as a class, more highly that the vast majority of hundreds of Indian princes, who had to do without both orders and salutes, and of most of the other indirectly ruled potentates of the British Empire. Perhaps this is not surprising as there were fewer of them and they individually ruled over a proportionately larger territory than did many Indian princes. The granting of knighthoods and of gun salutes illustrates that the colonial officials in Malaya who imposed these imperial and Indian manifestations of colonial hierarchy were overtly looking to rank 'their' princes within a global pan-imperial hierarchy. Moreover, since the granting of knighthoods required the agreement of officials in Malaya and in London, this is evidence that their place near the top of the social hierarchy of the indirectly ruled portions of the empire was broadly agreed upon within imperial ruling circles. Together, the granting of knighthoods and gun salutes to Malay princes are a clear use of techniques meant to categorise and reward collaborators which were overtly drawn from the Indian princely experience.[158]

On 13 July 1897, readers of Singapore's main English language daily, *the Straits Times*, awoke to the headline 'The Durbar'.[159] As in India in 1877, the British authorities

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[156] *India and India Office List for 1905*, 178.
[157] Aitchison, *Treaties and Sunnads*, I: 382.
[158] McLeod "The English Honours System in Princely India", 237-249.
[159] "The Durbar", *The Straits Times*, 13 July 1897, 2.

in Malaya had called the ruling princes and other notables together for a large multiday

ceremony. However, this *darbar* was not to mark the assumption of a new title by the

British monarch, but rather to herald a new political institution, the Federated Malay

States. The article in *the Straits Times* explained:

> To-day, the ceremonial seal is set upon the federation of the Native States
> of the Malay Peninsula, and, with that event it may be said that the
> Peninsula enters upon a new and much wider area of existence. To-day,
> Sir Frank Swettenham, the Resident-General of these territories, sees the
> official completion of twenty years' earnest struggle towards an object that
> has now been successfully achieved.[160]

The Federated Malay States, FMS, was a union of Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, and

Pahang, and was at the time a unique political institution in the British Empire. The

creation of the FMS marks the first major departure from Indian practice in the

administration of the Malay states, as it created a quasi-federal government comprised of

Malay rulers and British officials, under a British Resident-General, who in turn

answered to the governor at Singapore.[161] This post was first occupied by Swettenham,

who was also the champion and principal architect of the federation. Despite its apparent

novelty, Nicholas Tarling argues that the Federation was a product of a strain of British

thinking that sought to create unified regional political entities out of the many British

colonial possessions. The most obvious example of this trend, he argues, was the drive

towards colonial federations that led to the creation the 'Dominions' first of Canada, and

later of Australia, and South Africa.[162] In this context the FMS was the manifestation of

a political idea, which had been effectively reserved for the settler colonies, deployed in a

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[160] "The Durbar", *The Straits Times*, 13 July 1897, 2.
[161] Sadka, *The Protected Malay States 1974-1895*, 391.
[162] Nicholas Tarling, *Nations and States in Southeast Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 14-16.

region under indirect rule. And, interestingly, the FMS provides an example of the reverse flow of ideas of indirect rule back to princely India. In 1920 the British created the Chamber of Princes, with the senior most 120 rulers of the Indian states as members. The chamber was only ever consultative body, it never had legislative or executive functions, but like the Federated Malay States that preceded it, it was meant to be a step towards giving the rulers a place in the government of the larger colonial state.[163]

In time the FMS would evolve into the modern Kingdom of Malaysia which is still ruled by a confederation of the Malay sultans who first came under British indirect rule from the 1870s. However, even though Malaya was set to depart from the model of the Indian princely states in its political development in the twentieth century, even at the moment of departure, with the creation of the federation, the British looked to India for precedent, and took the model of the *darbar* to mark the ceremonial beginning of this novel political institution. The FMS itself, although novel in the history of indirect rule, was still very much based on the collaboration of British colonial authorities and Malay sultans. Indeed Sir Frank Swettenham persuaded the sultans to join the federation on the grounds that it would reduce the power of the residents, while amplifying that of the rulers.[164] However, as Turnbull shows, this was not really the case as the rulers had to struggle to preserve their authority until mid-century, when decolonisation left the sultans in charge of the country.[165]

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[163] Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and their States*, 127-128.
[164] Turnbull, *Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei,* 153.
[165] Turnbull, *Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei,* 187.

For the first twenty-five years of British rule in Malay, the architects of colonial expansion, from Clarke to Swettenham, used tools devised in princely India to draw the Malay states under imperial control. Swettenham himself conceded that the government of the Straights Settlements was "saturated with the traditions of Indian methods of administration", an assertion confirmed by the methods its agents used to take control of the Malay states.[166] They deployed powerful residents and coercive treaties; they invented a discursive framework intended to frame the British as the successors to the Malaccan Empire and protectors of Malay culture; and they drew the Malay rulers under the same ceremonial rites as the Indian princes, granting knighthoods and gun salutes, and even obliging them to attend a grand *darbar*. The practice of indirect rule in the Malay states was of course different to that in the Indian princely states. In the four states that became the FMS, the British were much more invasive and domineering, especially with regards to economic matters. Conversely, however, the examples of the more limited interference in Johor and the protection of the unique form of elective monarchy in Negeri Sembilan demonstrate that the British were not just imposing a veiled form of direct rule, but were rather constructing indirect rule in a contextual fashion. And, even though this would leave Malay indirect rule to evolve in a very different manner from its counterparts in India, this variegated and irregular application of the apparatus of indirect rule even has its foundation in Indian practice, where the British residents dominated some princely states while others were left much more to their own devices.

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[166] Swettenham, *British Malaya*, 104.

IV

Egypt

> Regrets and fury were alike futile. The three brigades advancing drove the
> Khalifa's Dervishes back into the desert. Along a mile of front an intense
> and destructive fire flared and crackled. The 32nd British Field Battery on
> the extreme left was drawn by its hardy mules at full gallop into action.
> The Maxim guns pulsated feverishly. Two were even dragged by the
> enterprise of a subaltern to the very summit of Surgham, and from this
> elevated position intervened with bloody effect. Thus the long line moved
> forward in irresistible strength. In the centre, under the red Egyptian flag,
> careless of the bullets which that conspicuous emblem drew, and which
> inflicted some loss among those around him, rode the Sirdar, stern and
> sullen, equally unmoved by fear or enthusiasm…Before that terrible line
> the Khalifa's division began to break up.[1]

This is how Winston Churchill, present at the scene, recounted the final moments of the

battle of Omdurman, 2 September 1898, at the confluence of the White and Blue Niles in

the heart of the Sudan. The words of Churchill underscore how Britain's role in northeast

Africa at this time was expressed in the most chauvinistic terms. The *sirdar* or

commander of the Egyptian Army was General Sir Herbert (later Field Marshal Lord)

Kitchener. Kitchener was British but he was commanding the army not in the name of

the Queen but in the name of the ruler of Egypt. The battle of Omdurman was the final

step in a process that started two decades earlier when the British began to interfere and

then outright occupy Egypt and the Sudan, its colony.[2] The British imposed indirect rule

on Egypt and the Sudan in 1882, but only three years later, in 1885, they were ejected

from the Sudan by a popular uprising. In the intervening years the British consolidated

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[1] Winston S. Churchill, *The River War: An Historical Account of the Reconquest of the Sudan* (London: Longman, 1902), 295-296.
[2] David Steele, "Lord Salisbury and the 'False Religion' of Islam" in Edward M Spiers ed. *Sudan: The Reconquest Reappraised*, (London: Frank Cass, 1998), 11-13.

their control over Egypt and its ruler, the khedive, to such a degree that by 1896 they were prepared to begin the re-conquest of the Sudan. In so doing the British were using modern industrial implements of war such as machine guns and railways, but they operating under a much older framework of colonial government that had its intellectual foundation in eighteenth century India.[3]

As was the case in all the territories that are the subject of this study, the nature of British rule in Egypt was the product of the way colonial officials justified and conceptualised their role and how these in turn intersected with the function and operation of existing state structures and practices. This chapter will begin with an examination of the events that compelled Gladstone's Liberal Government to occupy Egypt, and to direct the British Ambassador at Constantinople, Lord Dufferin, to devise a method for administering the newly – and in theory temporarily – occupied state. His recommendations, reflected in the Dufferin report, led to the appointment of Evelyn Baring (later Lord Cromer) as consul-general with sweeping powers over the Egyptian Government and backed by British occupation forces.[4] The next section of this chapter will show how the consul-general and his British staff converted the temporary military occupation into a system of indirect rule. Although the power of British political agents and other officials grew, they did not, however, fill all of the civil and military administrative needs of the government. Instead, just as in princely India, these individuals came to supervise and coordinate the existing Egyptian-run organs of the Egyptian state. Following this section will be an examination of just how the British

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[3] Edward M. Spiers, "Campaigning under Kitchener" in Spiers ed. *Sudan: The Reconquest Reappraised*, 74.
[4] Alfred Milner, *England in Egypt*, (London: Edward Arnold, 1892), 77-79

articulated their role in Egypt, and of equal importance, how they reinvented the role of the khedive. By turning a temporary emergency occupation into a more permanent imposition of indirect rule, the British were able in the space of a few years to take a form of imperialism pioneered in India and build a new colonial edifice in Egypt.

In 1882 Egypt became the largest state outside of India under British indirect rule and the largest territory governed by the Foreign Office. Unlike the other territories under consideration in this study, the Khedivate of Egypt was a unitary polity not a group of states. From its capital at Cairo, the Government of Egypt, headed by its hereditary viceroy, styled khedive, governed a state of over ten million subjects.[5] Even before the arrival of the British, however, Egypt's autonomy was limited, for it owed allegiance to the Ottoman sultans. The Turkish Government in Constantinople during the middle decades of the nineteenth century continued to oversee much of Egypt's external relations, as will be discussed below, and was even able to depose a khedive when pressured to do so by European powers.[6] This constitutional situation did not change until 1914 when, upon the outbreak of the Great War, Egypt was formally declared a British protectorate; the Ottoman ties were severed, and the khedive assumed the title of sultan. However, while this clarified the legal status of Egypt, at least in European terms, by removing the vestiges of Ottoman rule, it did not change the role of the Foreign Office whose agents continued indirectly to rule the state through the heirs of Muhammad Ali.[7] Therefore, between 1882 and 1914 there was a curious situation in Egypt wherein the British had

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[5] Roger Owen, *Lord Cromer, Victorian Imperialist, Edwardian Proconsul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 390; Auckland Colvin, *The Making of Modern Egypt*, (London: Seeley, 1906), 277.
[6] T.G. Otte, *The Foreign Office Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 140-142.
[7] Donald M. McKale, "Influence without Power: The Last Khedive of Egypt and the Great Powers, 1914-18" *Middle Eastern Studies*, 33 (1) 1997: 24.

imposed a thinly veiled form of indirect rule, the khedive continued to head the

government, and the Ottoman Sultan remained the legal sovereign.[8] This type of

constitutional anomaly was by no means foreign to the British imperial experience.

Indeed, until 1858, the last of the Mughal Emperors in India continued to claim, at least

nominally, the allegiance of many of the rulers of princely states who were really under

the indirect rule of the East India Company.[9] In India, however, this situation had

evolved over a century of British expansion in the subcontinent during which time the

British slowly incorporated the remnants of the Mughal Empire and its successor states.

In Egypt the situation was rather more dramatic. In the decade prior to the 1882

occupation, the British Government first bought a large share of the newly constructed

Suez Canal and then imposed, jointly with France, a committee to oversee the economy

of the khedival government which had become heavily indebted to both of these

powers.[10] Therefore, in 1882, when the populist Minister of War, Ahmed Urabi Pasha,

led a revolt against the European-backed government, threatening European access to the

vital canal as well as repayment of their loans, the British invaded. The occupation of

Egypt was a hugely complicated undertaking, driven by a complex interplay of strategic

and economic factors. This chapter will discuss how agents of the Foreign Office

negotiated the competing interests and factors at play in Egypt, the largest province of the

Ottoman Empire, set centrally near the confluence of Africa, Asia, and Europe, and

imposed a government based on the princely states of India. By far the most important of

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[8] Colvin, *The Making of Modern Egypt*, 17.
[9] Metcalf, *The Aftermath of the Revolt*, 223.
[10] Michelle Raccagni, "The French Economic Interests in the Ottoman Empire" *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 11 (3) 1980: 358.

these agents was Evelyn Baring who from 1883 to 1907 held the post of British Consul-General in Cairo but was in effect the ruler of Egypt.[11] Baring and his staff reconceptualised a colonial practice born in post-Mughal India, and keenly aware of the context in which they were operating, imposed it upon an Egypt where foreign opposition, revolutionary nationalism, and messianic Islam had become the paramount threats to British interests.

The very fact that until 1914 this was an undeclared protectorate is perhaps the most telling feature of the British colonial presence in the khedivate. In much of the rest of the indirectly ruled empire, the British were keen to show that they were the imperial power and that the local rulers were subject-princes, owing formal allegiance to the Crown.[12] In British-controlled Egypt, this was not the case. As will be expanded on below, much of the form and function of Baring's regime was to effect indirect rule while still maintaining the illusion of a temporary British occupation. This is why, for example, Baring as head of the British regime in Egypt retained the pre-1882 diplomatic title of consul-general, and was not made high commissioner or resident as was common in territories more explicitly integrated into the British Empire. In princely India, Malaya, the Persian Gulf, Zanzibar, and Northern Nigeria, the British conceptualised and presented their role as effectively permanent. But in Egypt, due to the circumstances of the 1882 occupation, they were obliged to insinuate that they were only exerting control over the khedive's government until it could resume self-government.[13] This expectation

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[11] Owen, *Lord Cromer*, 184.
[12] Lee-Warner, *The Native States of India*, 20; Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 113.
[13] A.G. Hopkins, "The Victorians and Africa: A Reconsideration of the Occupation of Egypt, 1882" in *The Journal of African History*, 27 (2) 1986: 364.

as it turned out was unrealistic, at least in British eyes, and they continued to govern

Egypt indirectly until they were forced out in the middle of the twentieth century.

Nonetheless, because of this façade of impermanence, the manner in which the British

justified indirect rule in Egypt tended to be more nuanced than was the case with other

Muslim states that had fallen under their authority. Along with such other factors as the

size and complexity of the Egyptian state and the presence of other European powers, this

resulted in the form and practice of indirect rule in Egypt differing, for example, from

that of a tiny Gulf state or a thinly populated emirate in Northern Nigeria. However,

despite all of these significant differences, in Egypt as elsewhere in the Muslim parts of

the empire, there were some fundamental similarities in the rationale and methods

employed which descended from ideas first developed for princely India.

British interference in the affairs of Egypt began long before 1882. As was the

case in India and all of the territories in this study, colonialism was the product of a slow

expansion and entrenchment of British interests culminating in the imposition of indirect

rule. In 1798 Napoleon Bonaparte conquered Egypt for France. To British authorities in

London and Calcutta this was seen as a direct threat to the East India Company's regime

in India.[14] Even at this early date, some seven decades before the Suez Canal linked the

Mediterranean and Red Seas, the overland route via Sinai was an important transportation

and communication corridor.[15] Bonaparte's conquest of Egypt placed a French Army

between Britain and India, leaving only the vastly longer communications link via the

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[14] Edward Ingram, "The Geopolitics of the First British Expedition to Egypt - I: The Cabinet Crisis of September 1800" *Middle Eastern Studies*, (30 (3) 1994: 435.
[15] Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians,* 76.

Cape of Good Hope to Britain's empire in the East. The French conquest of Egypt set

British authorities scrambling and, as will be discussed in Chapter IV, this was the

catalyst that triggered early British interference in the Persian Gulf. However, the

situation in Egypt was quickly reversed; Nelson defeated the French fleet at the battle of

the Nile and Bonaparte was forced to return to Europe. The British in turn occupied the

country for a short time, ejecting the remaining French forces before withdrawing

themselves.[16] But from this moment, the British state was committed to ensuring their

access to India via Egypt and would repeatedly intrude in Egyptian affairs until finally

they seized it in 1882. Moreover, the French occupation of Egypt was far more than a

military exercise as Napoleon brought large numbers of scholars to study the country's

ancient artefacts. As Edward Said explains, this was a key moment in the European

conceptualisation of the 'orient' which would be so important in shaping later British

imperial expansion.[17]

The Egypt that Napoleon and Nelson found was one province in the vast Turkish

Empire as it had been since the Sultan Selim conquered it for the Ottomans at the start of

the sixteenth century.[18] The convulsion arising from French occupation, however,

accelerated a shift in the power structures of Egypt and a radical reduction in Ottoman

power in Africa.[19] With the withdrawal of the British forces in 1803 a political vacuum

was created in Egypt. A number of factions emerged; some comprised local Egyptian

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[16] C.A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: the British Empire and the world, 1780-1830*, (London: Longman, 1989), 173.
[17] Said, *Orientalism*, 87.
[18] Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire 1700-1922*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 58.
[19] George A. Haddad "A Project for the Independence of Egypt, 1801" *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 90 (2) 1970: 171-172.

groups but others were from different parts of the Ottoman world. Muhammad Ali Pasha

headed the most important and ultimately victorious faction. Muhammad Ali was of

Albanian extraction, born in Macedonia in 1769.[20] He came to Egypt as the head of an

Albanian regiment of the Ottoman Army. Soon, however, he threw off his allegiance to

the sultan in Constantinople and launched a campaign of conquest which ultimately

resulted in Egyptian autonomy under the rule of Muhammad Ali and his heirs.[21] By the

time the founder of the khedival dynasty died in 1849 he ruled much of modern Egypt as

well as its large southern colony, the Sudan.[22] Earlier in his career, however, Muhammad

Ali had threatened to take over the entire Ottoman Empire, and at one point in 1840 his

armies held the Hedjaz on the Red Sea Coast of Arabia as well as Palestine and Syria,

and they were poised to move on the imperial capital at Constantinople.[23] This was only

avoided when several European powers, including the British, interjected and imposed a

naval blockade on his forces.[24] In order to preserve as much as possible the existing

political order in the eastern Mediterranean, the European powers pressed the Egyptian

forces to withdraw, saving the Ottoman Empire, while conceding that Muhammad Ali

could remain the autonomous and hereditary viceroy of Egypt under the sovereignty of

the Ottomans.[25] The British, therefore, for the second time in fifty years, interfered in

Egyptian affairs for strategic reasons. In the following decades the strategic importance

of the state would grow further.

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[20] Afaf Marsot, *Egypt in the reign of Muhammad Ali*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 24.
[21] Haddad 'A Project for the Independence of Egypt, 1801', 177.
[22] Marsot, *Egypt in the reign of Muhammad Ali*, 232.
[23] Frederick F. Anscombe "The Balkan Revolutionary Age" *The Journal of Modern History*, 84 (3) 2012, 577.
[24] C.A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian*, 233.
[25] Anscombe, "The Balkan Revolutionary Age", 578.

The situation in Egypt in the middle of the nineteenth century was analogous to the place of Hyderabad. As Mughal power waned, the hereditary viceroy of Hyderabad, the nizam, grew increasingly autonomous from the emperors in Delhi. Autonomy, however, did not mean independence. Instead, after losing the protection of the Mughals, the Asif Jah dynasty was forced to work with and then under the British to survive the political tumult of eighteenth-century India.[26] A century later in Egypt the heirs of Muhammad Ali, upon gaining autonomy from Constantinople, were also forced to work with and then under the British. This was not, however, from fears of rivals toppling their regime, as was the case in Hyderabad, but because of economic failure and internal rebellion. During the middle of the nineteenth century the khedives made great efforts to develop the Egyptian economy and state. The first seventy-five years or so of rule under the khedival dynasty ushered in a revolution in the function and scope of the Egyptian government. The Egyptian state from 1805 acquired, albeit incompletely, many of the institutions of a bureaucratic state, including a large professional army and civil service. Virginia H. Aksan has identified parallel trends at the centre of the Ottoman world. Here, in the first half of the nineteenth century, she discussed the remaking of the Ottoman Empire in way that was similar to the 'garrison state', described by Douglas Peers in India under the Company.[27] This suggests that that Egypt under the khedives, although politically autonomous from Constantinople, remained closely entangled with the

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[26] Munis D. Faruqui "At Empire's End: The Nizam, Hyderabad and Eighteenth-Century India", *Modern Asian Studies*, 43 (1) 2009: 4-5.
[27] Virginia H. Aksan, "The Ottoman Military and State Transformation in a Globalizing World", *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 27 (2) 2007: 272; Douglas M. Peers, "Gunpowder Empires and the Garrison State: Modernity, Hybridity, and the Political Economy of Colonial India, circa 1750-1860", *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 27 (2) 2007: 245-258.

contemporary developments in the wider Ottoman world and beyond, including British India.

Much of this transformation came during the reigns of Muhammad Ali's successors, Said (1854-1863) and Ismail (1863-1879). Bankrolled by the high value of Egypt's most lucrative agricultural product, cotton, the government was able to expand its power dramatically, if temporarily.[28] F. Robert Hunter argues that over the period of Muhammad Ali, Said, and Ismail, the Egyptian government evolved from a military state run by a handful of soldiers into a bureaucracy staffed by specialised civil servants.[29] The Government of Egypt between the rise of Muhammad Ali and the British occupation was a cosmopolitan venture, like so much of the Ottoman world, conducted by individuals drawn from across the sultan's dominions as well as Europe. Despite the expanded autonomy of the khedives, Egypt was still a legal and cultural constituent of the Ottoman Empire. During this period a political culture developed wherein the Turkish elites who traditionally dominated the government and army were augmented by the integration of Egyptian elites and European-trained 'experts'.[30] This new hybrid Egyptian-Ottoman governing culture began the expansion of the scope of the state, undertaking larger agricultural projects, and organising the military along contemporary Ottoman and European lines, and retaining close links with the Ottoman world.

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[28] F. Robert Hunter, *Egypt under the Khedives 1805-1879: from household government to modern bureaucracy,* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1984), 43-45.
[29] F. Robert Hunter, "Egypt's High Officials in Transition from a Turkish to a Modern Administrative Elite, 1849- 1879", Middle Eastern Studies, 19 (3) 1983: 287-288.
[30] Hunter "Egypt's High Officials", 277, 286.

Hunter argues that the early drive for these systemic changes to the Egyptian state came directly from Muhammad Ali himself. [31] The khedive was keen to insure his hard won autonomy within the Ottoman Empire and hence worked to develop a powerful army to counter the threat from the Turkish Army, which was itself undergoing radical changes at this time.[32] This new Egyptian Army, in turn, required a more advanced revenue extracting mechanisms to pay for it. Hence one of the key changes made at the time was to diversify taxation regime in Egypt. Prior to Muhammad Ali the bulk of taxes were collected from the produce of select agricultural lands. During the first decades of khedivial rule several new taxes were imposed over lands owned by the aristocracy that had been exempt from taxes. Moreover the way taxes on land were assessed changed. Previously it was the *produce* of the land that was assessed; after these reforms it was the land itself that was taxed, meaning that a large amount of uncultivated land became for the first time subject to taxation. This meant that landowners simply could no longer afford to leave agricultural land fallow, and were forced to expand their operations to pay their taxes which in turn expanded the output of Egyptian economy commensurately.[33]

One of the outcomes of this administrative shift was the massively enlarged purview of the state. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Egyptian government had to be content to extract taxes from an agrarian peasantry and small urban merchant class. By the latter half of the century the Egyptian state had taken upon itself to expand infrastructure and promote a modern economy based on producing

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[31] Hunter, *Egypt under the Khedives*, 15-19.
[32] Aksan, "The Ottoman Military and State Transformation in a Globalizing World", 271.
[33] Hunter, *Egypt under the Khedives*, 53-69.

commodities for international trade.[34] A key example of this is the building of extensive

canal projects for the irrigation of rich alluvial soil in the Nile delta which began in the

1830s, and allowed in the following decades for Egypt to become a major exporter of

cotton. The high value of cotton on the export market, for a time, gave Egypt a level of

security and autonomy.[35]

The civil war in the United States of 1861-65 spelled the beginning of the end of

Egypt's economic solvency and in time of its political autonomy. In 1862-64, with the

cotton growing regions of the southern United States blockaded by the north, the value of

Egyptian cotton spiked. This led to a huge though temporary increase in Egyptian

government revenues.[36] The fleeting nature of the cotton boom, however, was not

appreciated by the officials in charge of the Egyptian economy and encouraged them to

overspend, leaving the state coffers quite empty when cotton prices dropped at the

conclusion of hostilities in North America.[37] Ismail in particular was famous for his

spending, using government revenue, for example, to build the lavish Khedival Opera

House in Cairo and to commission Giuseppe Verdi to pen *Aida* for its inaugural

performance in 1871.[38] Having grown dependent on the high cotton revenues, the

Egyptian government was forced to borrow heavily from European banks to continue

operating. This was the beginning of the end of Egyptian autonomy. With expanding

debt loads came increased European interference. Compounding the loss of revenue from

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[34] David G. Surdam "King Cotton: Monarch or Pretender? The State of the Market for Raw Cotton on the Eve of the American Civil War", *The Economic History Review*, 51 (1) 1998: 123.
[35] Hunter, *Egypt under the Khedives*, 17.
[36] Hunter, *Egypt under the Khedives*, 37.
[37] Mahmoud K. Issa "The Economic Factor behind the British Occupation of Egypt in 1882", *L'Egypte Contemporaine,* 319, 1964: 57.
[38] Edward W. Said, "The Imperial Spectacle" *Grand Street*, 6 (2) 1987: 86.

dwindling cotton prices and the debts to European bankers was the building of the Suez

Canal. This huge undertaking was meant to ensure the political and economic

independence of Egypt but instead undermined them both.[39]

A French Company headed by Ferdinand De Lesseps was commissioned by

Khedive Said to build the canal in return for a ninety-nine year lease and a large subsidy

in the form of shares from the Egyptian government.[40] This arrangement turned out to be

decidedly unprofitable for the government and long before the Canal was formally

opened in 1869, Egypt was haemorrhaging money to pay for the massive project.[41]

Initially the idea of a Franco-Egyptian controlled canal was anathema to British

officialdom, as the project was a blow to their position in Egypt and weakened their

control over the shortest route to India.[42] However, the high cost of the canal to the

Government of Egypt, along with the large debt load and the fragility of the Egyptian

economy, forced Khedive Ismail to sell his shares to Disraeli's Conservative government

and his financial backers from the City of London's banks.[43] In 1875, the British

Government bought the Egyptian shares of the Suez Canal Company at only one quarter

of the price the khedive had paid.[44] The purchase of the company shares secured the

Suez route for the British, but made them effectively a shareholder in the Government of

Egypt as the canal was only secure if Egypt was secure, and in the late 1870s this was

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[39] Hunter, *Egypt under the Khedives,* 38-39.

[40] Emily A. Haddad "Digging to India: Modernity, Imperialism, and the Suez Canal" *Victorian Studies*, 47 (3) 2005: 386.

[41] Hunter, *Egypt under the Khedives 1805-1879*, 39

[42] C. C. Eldridge, *Disraeli and the Rise of a new Imperialism*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1996), 28.

[43] J. P. Parry, "The Impact of Napoleon III on British Politics, 1851-1880" *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 11, 2001: 172.

[44] Hunter, *Egypt under the Khedives*, 183.

certainly not the case. The influx of capital resulting from Disraeli's purchase, however, was only a stopgap solution for the Egyptian economy. Under Khedive Ismail, who was pushed by European financiers, public spending on large capital projects like the canal had spiralled out of control, the government was bankrupt, and its creditors, backed by the British and French Governments, demanded major reforms.[45]

In 1875-76 the British and French governments together began to press the Egyptians to restructure their economy. In 1876 the joint Anglo-French 'Goschen-Joubert financial settlement', forced the khedive's government to allow a committee appointed by the British and French governments to take control of the Egyptian economy.[46] This new committee, usually known by its French title of *Caisse de la Dette Publique*, was created to ensure that the state would continue making debt repayments and not default on its European creditors.[47] George Goschen, who lent his name to this settlement, was the British financial expert sent with his French opposite number to arrange the terms by which the Egyptian government effectively surrendered their economy to four European creditor nations: Austria-Hungary, Italy, France, and Britain.[48] In 1877, upon Goschen's recommendation, Evelyn Baring was appointed as British commissioner to the *Caisse de la Dette Publique*.[49] The appointment of Baring in 1877 marks the start of his thirty-year Egyptian career.

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[45] Amiya Kumar Bagchi, "The Other Side of Foreign Investment by Imperial Powers: Transfer of Surplus from Colonies" *Economic and Political Weekly*, 37 (23) 2002: 2236.
[46] Baring, *Modern Egypt*, I:27
[47] Owen, *Lord Cromer*, 91.
[48] Mark S. W. Hoyle, "The Mixed Courts of Egypt 1875-1885" *Arab Law Quarterly*, 1 (4) 1986: 445.
[49] Owen, *Lord Cromer*, 117.

Although Evelyn Baring was born in 1841 into an influential family of Whig financiers, Baring Brothers & Co. was a powerful investment bank in the City of London, he was not destined to follow in the family business.[50] Instead, he was enrolled in the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich which was the school tasked with educating artillery and engineering officers for the British Army. Baring was duly commissioned into the Royal Artillery in 1858 and was sent to join the garrison in British-held Corfu in the Aegean Sea. Between 1858 and 1873 Baring led the congenial if unremarkable life of a British officer.[51] For much of that time he served on British islands in the Mediterranean, both in a military capacity as well as on the staff of the Governor of Malta. His early career, therefore, allowed him a junior role in colonial government. However, in 1872 he would make a major leap in the imperial hierarchy. In this year he was appointed the personal secretary to his cousin, Thomas Baring, Lord Northbrook, the Viceroy of India. As personal secretary to the viceroy, Evelyn Baring wielded enormous power and influence in India, and received a first hand education in the administration of a large and complex British dependency. During his tenure in India under Northbrook, Baring came to be known tellingly as the vice-viceroy, so great was his influence over his cousin.[52] He was, therefore, a well-known figure in imperial circles at the time of his first appointment to Egypt as a member of the *Caisse de la Dette Publique*.

Baring's first Egyptian posting, however, was not destined to last long. The governing regime, in particular the Turko-Albanian Muhammad Ali dynasty under the

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[50] Youssef Cassis, *City Bankers 1890-1914*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 33.
[51] Owen, *Lord Cromer*, 22.
[52] Owen, *Lord Cromer*, 61.

spendthrift Khedive Ismail and the Anglo-French *Caisse*, was enormously unpopular.[53]

In 1879, only two years after Baring took up his posting, the Egyptian National Party was

formed to oppose Ismail and foreign control of the economy. One of the leading figures

of the new party was Colonel Ahmed Urabi, better known as Urabi or Arabi, with the

Turkish honourific suffix of Pasha.[54] According to an autobiography of Urabi Pasha,

which was recorded by W.S. Blunt, the nationalist army officer was born into a

moderately prosperous Egyptian family in 1840. Blunt interviewed Urabi and transcribed

and translated his life from Arabic.[55] This autobiography reveals the nationalist roots of

Urabi's opposition to the khedive and the *Caisse*. Urabi joined the Egyptian Army at a

young age and rose through the ranks with ease. However, he was frustrated with the

high number of Turks, Albanians, Circassians, and other non-Egyptian individuals

monopolising higher posts in the Egyptian Government; at this point, in the 1860s and

1870s, Turkish was still the official language of the Army in a country where Arabic was

spoken by the vast majority.[56] This domination by foreigners, compounded by their

administrative incompetence, drove Urabi and other like-minded Egyptians to call for

major reforms to the state. Juan Cole's *Social and Cultural Origin's of Egypt's 'Urabi*

Movement shows how the nationalists soon garnered support from a broad spectrum of

Egyptian society, extending from powerful merchant bankers to poor labourers, giving

Urabi a base from which to demand concessions from the embattled Ismail.[57]

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[53] Baring to Granville, 27 September, 1883 FO 633/6.
[54] Wilfred S. Blunt, *Secret History of the British Occupation of Egypt*, (New York: Knopf, 1922), 163.
[55] Arabi Pasha, "Arabi's Autobiography", in Blunt, *Secret History of the British Occupation of Egypt*, 373.
[56] Arabi Pasha, "Arabi's Autobiography", 371.
[57] Juan I. R. Cole, *Social and Cultural Origins of Egypt's 'Urabi Movement* (Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, 1999), 250.

For a brief time in 1878-79 a new ministry held power under Ismael and tried to govern in the face of the Europeans and their onerous financial conditions. The Prime Minister of Egypt during this brief period was Nubar Pasha who was a nationalist and remained an important figure after the 1882 occupation. Nubar was born in 1825 in Izmir on the Aegean coast of modern Turkey. Nubar, however, was from a cosmopolitan Ottoman family of means, who secured for him first an education in France and Switzerland and later employment in the Government of Egypt.[58] Nubar rose through the ranks of the diplomatic service to become a senior figure in the government by the 1860s.[59] This background, on the face of it, would place Nubar in the ranks of the many careerists from outside Egypt who came essentially as mercenaries to join the ruling elite. However, despite his lack of a family connection to the country, Nubar was committed to creating a modern Egypt that was free from both European interference and the absolutism of the khedives.[60] The rise of the nationalists under Urabi gave Nubar a brief opportunity to lead a government for six months in 1878-79. For a time this regime, with both Egyptian and European members, attempted to steer Egypt away from financial collapse and political unrest. Unfortunately for Nubar, however, Ismail was not willing to remove himself from government, and undermined his prime minister's authority by disbanding some regiments of the army who in turn mutinied, further destabilising the

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[58] F. Robert Hunter, "Self-Image and Historical Truth: Nubar Pasha and the Making of Modern Egypt" *Middle Eastern Studies*, 23 (3) 1987: 371.
[59] Freda Harcourt , "The Queen, the Sultan and the Viceroy: A Victorian State Occasion" *The London Journal*, 5 (1) 1979: 43.
[60] Hunter, "Nubar Pasha and the Making of Modern Egypt", 364.

country.[61] This led to the fall of Nubar's government and ultimately the end of any vestige of Egyptian autonomy.

According to Selim Deringil, because Nubar's government was operating within the legitimate parameters as the khedive's appointed ministry, it was susceptible to being removed under these same parameters.[62] In the end this is exactly what occurred, the French and British turned to the khedive's master, the sultan in Constantinople, to reassert control of Egypt. Deringil argues that the Turkish authorities themselves wanted to take the opportunity of the instability created by the Egyptian debt crisis to depose the khedive and return the province to closer Ottoman control. The Ottomans had not forgotten that Ismail was the heir to Muhammad Ali, who had nearly destroyed their empire earlier in the century.[63] The Ottoman Empire under Sultan Abdul Hamid II was not, however, in a position to return Egypt to its fold. The Turkish state was like Egypt heavily indebted to western financiers and consequently unable to withstand the external pressures from Britain and France. Therefore, rather than deposing Ismail and returning Egypt to their direct control, the Ottomans were obliged to depose the khedive and replace him with his son, Tewfik.[64] The installation of Tewfik in 1879 ushered in a new regime; the nationalist government led by Nubar Pasha was replaced by a handful of French and British officials including Baring who ran the Egyptian state through the new

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[61] Abdel Aziz Ezzel Arab, "The Experiment of Sharif Pasha's Cabinet (1879): An Inquiry into the Historiography of Egypt's Elite Movement" *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 36 (4) 2004: 578.
[62] Selim Deringil, "The Ottoman Response to the Egyptian Crisis of 1881-82" *Middle Eastern Studies*, 24, (1) 1988: 8.
[63] Deringil, "The Ottoman Response to the Egyptian Crisis", 8-9
[64] Paul Auchterlonie, "A Turk of the West: Sir Edgar Vincent's Career in Egypt and the Ottoman Empire": *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 27 (1) 2000: 56.

khedive.[65] However, this was not the beginning of British indirect rule, but rather the last gasp of the old decaying order by which the Turko-Albanian ruling house and its Anglo-French backers attempted to keep the nationalists at bay.

This political settlement was far from favourable to the likes of Urabi and Nubar. The regime under Tewfik, according to Urabi, was decidedly hostile to native Egyptians, preferring more than ever elite groups friendly to the ruling house and their European creditors. The nationalists, in turn, posed a huge threat to European control of Egypt so the British, according to the anti-imperialist Blunt, attempted to bribe Urabi in return for his leaving the country.[66] Urabi and his fellow Egyptian officers rejected the bribe, and instead led a successful coup against the existing regime in 1881. Foreign authorities were not in a position to stop the rebellion and could only look on from the side-lines as Urabi took charge. This marked the end of foreign cooperation in Egypt. The British and French, who had worked so closely in the *Caisse de la Dette Publique*, and with the Turkish authorities to depose Ismail, ceased to work in concert. Instead, only the British were willing to go to the extreme lengths necessary to remove Urabi and to impose a regime that would continue to repay the national debt and keep the Suez Canal open to British shipping.[67]

As it turned out, the prime minister who occupied Egypt, Gladstone, was the great Liberal rival of the Conservative premier who began the expansion of British control over the state, Disraeli. While the latter bought the Canal Company shares from the Khedive

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[65] Arab, "The Experiment of Sharif Pasha's Cabinet", 571.
[66] Arabi Pasha, "Arabi's Autobiography", in Blunt, *Secret History of the British Occupation of Egypt*, 373; Blunt, *Secret History of the British Occupation of Egypt*, 215.
[67] Hopkins, "The Victorians and Africa: A Reconsideration of the Occupation of Egypt, 1882", 363.

Ismail in 1875, it was the former who was obliged to send in British forces to secure Suez and European financial interests in 1882.[68] While Disraeli was famed for exploiting bombastic expansionist sentiment for domestic political gain, Gladstone was no strident imperialist. As Freda Harcourt has shown, however, even though imperialism went against Gladstone's personal inclinations, his governments were as expansionist as any Tory ministry.[69] For the Liberal Government the great dilemma in Egypt was not whether the British public would stomach another military adventure, but rather was it worth rupturing relations with France to secure British financial and strategic interests in Egypt. According to T.G. Otte in his intellectual history of late nineteenth-century British diplomacy, this was not a terribly difficult decision. In the *Foreign Office Mind,* Otte argues that the French, although theoretically equal partners with the British in Egypt, were seen as an obstacle to British aims.[70] They were, however, also seen as weak by the British, both because their government under Charles de Freycinet was nearing collapse and because France's reputation as a leading world power was still in question after their loss in the Franco-Prussian War a decade earlier.[71]

Otte goes so far to single out the events of 1882 as key moment in Britain's nineteenth century foreign policy. For decades prior to the crisis in Egypt the British had used an alliance with France to maintain a balance of power in Europe and achieve its various diplomatic goals globally. The most noteworthy achievement of this alliance was the Anglo-French victory over Russia in the Crimean War of 1853-56. However,

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[68] Hopkins ,"The Victorians and Africa: A Reconsideration of the Occupation of Egypt, 1882", 372.
[69] Freda Harcourt, "Gladstone, monarchism and the 'new' imperialism, 1868–74" *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 14 (1) 1985: 21.
[70] Otte, *The Foreign Office Mind,* 140-143.
[71] Otte, *The Foreign Office Mind,* 400.

following from this mid-century high point, the relative significance of France was reduced by the rise of Italy and Germany and the continued influence of Russia. By 1882, therefore, the Gladstone ministry was ready to jettison its close relations with the French in favour of securing its interests in Egypt.[72] The result of Gladstone's action, as Robinson and Gallagher have argued and Otte confirms, was that after 1882 the British had a freer hand in Egypt, but in so doing they had turned France into a potent rival in the rest of Africa.[73]

On the morning of 12 June 1882, readers of *the Times* awoke to news that Alexandria was "…in a state of insurrection directed against the Europeans. Several persons have been killed, and an English naval officer of the [HMS] *Superb* was stabbed to death."[74] Reminiscent of headlines from the Indian Rebellion a generation earlier, the British Government was spurred by the prospect of not only losing their strategic and economic foothold in Egypt, but also by the ultimate fear of white colonial powers, the widespread killing of Europeans by subject peoples. In the end the number of casualties, European and Egyptian alike, was much fewer than in India in 1857-58, but nonetheless the temporary loss of control and the anti-European riots had a very similar outcome to the rebellion in India. Fear of insurrection led to a major military intervention, followed by a new political settlement in which indirect rule was employed by the British as a solution to the country's problems.

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[72] Otte, *The Foreign Office Mind,* 143.
[73] Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, 76.
[74] "The Crisis in Egypt. Serious Riots in Alexandria", *The Times*, Monday, Jun 12, 1882; 5.

Britain's occupation of Egypt began in June of 1882 when the Royal Navy bombarded and occupied the coastal metropolis of Alexandria, while in August units of the British and Indian armies landed near Port Said at the Mediterranean terminus of the canal. This force was under the command of General Sir Garnet Wolseley and was tasked with capturing Cairo from forces loyal to Urabi. From the outset of this military adventure the seeds of imposing indirect rule were being sown, with Wolseley's secret instructions from the Cabinet curtly reading "Put down Arabi & establish Khedive's power."[75] On 13 September, at Tel-el-Kebir, located between the Suez Canal and Cairo, Urabi's troops were defeated by Wolseley's forces. After this battle the British occupied Cairo, the nationalist leaders were arrested, Urabi himself was exiled, and the Khedive Tewfik was reinstated.[76]

From the start of British rule in Egypt a debate swirled over the intentions and outcomes of the occupation. Since the occupation was initially meant to be temporary, there was a constant push from Cairo, London, and Paris to set a definite limit to the presence of British soldiers and officials in Egypt.[77] This led to the development of a literature regarding the occupation in which a version of modern Egyptian history was constructed that showed the imposition of British indirect rule to be the only solution to its many internal economic, political, and social problems. Representative of this breed of literature is *England in Egypt* published in 1891 and written by Alfred Milner, a senior member of Baring's staff in Egypt.[78] The beginning of the historiography of British

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[75] Cabinet Minutes, 31 July 1882, CAB 37.
[76] Baring to Granville, 9 October 1883, FO 633/6.
[77] Hopkins, "The Victorians and Africa: A Reconsideration of the Occupation of Egypt, 1882", 364-365
[78] Milner, *England in Egypt.*

Egypt, like that of British India, was also an integral part of the construction of a history that became foundational to colonial knowledge. It did so by creating an Egyptian past and present which required British interference. Milner's work was followed by histories of British Egypt written by other officials from within the regime, including Sir Auckland Colvin's *Making of Modern Egypt* and Baring's own *Modern Egypt*.[79] In Egypt the colonial authorities used the writing of contemporary history to demarcate and legitimise their continued occupation.

These works, however, were more than a justification for colonialism; they were also textbooks of indirect rule, stressing that the cooperation between British authorities and the traditional Egyptian state-structures was central to the success of the post-1882 regime. Milner makes it plain that the British were not intent on westernising the Egyptians, but rather they were working to maintain a form of government that best conformed to their conceptualisation of Egyptian society:

> Our countrymen in the service of the Khedive have steadily acted on the principle that their only business was to make that service as efficient as possible. I have often heard them criticized by outsiders for not trying to make it more of an English Service. As an Englishman I am proud to know that these suggestions have not been listened to, and that the object of the British officials has been, not to Anglicize the Egyptian bureaucracy in political opinion, but only to Anglicize it in spirit, to infuse into its ranks that uprightness and devotion to duty which is the legitimate boast of the Civil Service of Great Britain.[80]

Opinions countering this self-serving official portrait of British Egypt came from many quarters, ranging from the popular Egyptian press to members of the Cabinet in London. Milner wrote this work expressly to answer prevailing criticisms by one of the most vocal

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[79] Colvin, *Making of Modern Egypt*; Baring, *Modern Egypt*.
[80] Milner, *England in Egypt*, 356-357.

opponents of Baring's regime, Wilfred Scawen Blunt.[81] W.S. Blunt, a one-time member

of the Diplomatic Service turned radical anti-imperialist and sympathizer to Arab

nationalists, was a critic of the British occupation. To this end he wrote a number of

scathing public assessments of Baring's regime after 1882 which he would compile into

his *Secret Occupation of Egypt*.[82] In it Blunt responds to the volumes of officially written

histories of British Egypt using an account based on his own privileged information about

the occupation.[83] He argued that Baring's regime was always anything but temporary,

which he called a wrong "…inflicted on the cause of liberty."[84]

Khedive Abbas II, who published his personal views of working under British

indirect rule, shares some of Blunt's perspectives, but takes a more conciliatory tone.

Abbas II sat on the khedival throne from 1892 to 1914 and lived through the reigns of his

father, Tewfik, and grandfather, Ismail, and had the dubious honour of being the second

member of the Muhammad Ali dynasty to be deposed. This occurred at the outbreak of

war in 1914 when the British accused him of siding with his *de jure* sovereign Sultan

Mehmet V rather than his *de facto* master King George V.[85] The memoirs of Abbas,

therefore, are of a deposed and exiled ex-khedive who one would think would bear some

animosity towards British authorities. However, in spite of the way his reign ended, he

takes pains to present an apparently balanced view, especially of officials from earlier in

his reign and in his predecessor's times, most especially Baring. Amira Sonbol, who

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[81] Owen, *Lord Cromer*, 247.
[82] Hopkins, "The Victorians and Africa: A Reconsideration of the Occupation of Egypt, 1882", 365-366.
[83] Hopkins, "The Victorians and Africa: A Reconsideration of the Occupation of Egypt, 1882", 366
[84] Blunt, *Secret History of the British Occupation of Egypt*, 363
[85] Abbas Hilmi II, Amira Sonbol, trans and ed. *The Last Khedive of Egypt*: memoirs of Abbas Hilmi II (Reading: Ithaca Press, 1998), 12.

edited and translated the memoirs, noted that: "Abbas Hilmi wanted to be remembered by the Egyptian people for what he was. It is to them that he addresses his memoirs…he wanted to explain his actions and those of his father, and thereby regain the place due to him in Egypt's history"[86] In so doing Abbas no doubt inflated the achievements of his and his father's reigns, but not by excessively denigrating the British or other Egyptian political figures. Of course he might also have been trying to curry favour with the British, nonetheless the memoir is informative.

One of Abbas' most acute observations was of Baring who he noted "pursued a policy of domination in Egypt that had not yet been comprehended in Gladstone's cabinet."[87] Abbas quite correctly notes that both he and his father, Tewfik, as khedives were at best the second most powerful person in Egypt after Baring. However, Abbas also notes that there were occasions when the khedive was able to win the day against the consul general in significant matters of policy. In particular, he takes pride in recalling an instance when Baring conceded to his refusal to sign a decree changing the laws concerning the charging of interest on loans because the Abbas thought it antithetical to Islamic legal practices.[88] The ex-khedive went on to present an account of Baring as working for the best interests of the British, and not necessarily Egypt.

> For my part, I always enjoyed fighting him and considered it a sort of sport. If [Baring] had defects, he was neither mad nor corrupt; and, all the time that he remained in Egypt, he always fulfilled his mission in the service of his country, England, with great uprightness.[89]

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[86] Amira Sonbol, "Editor's Introduction" in Abbas Hilmi II, *The Last Khedive of Egypt*, 21.
[87] Abbas Hilmi II, *The Last Khedive of Egypt*, 248.
[88] Abbas Hilmi II, *The Last Khedive of Egypt*, 252.
[89] Abbas Hilmi II, *The Last Khedive of Egypt*, 253.

Not surprisingly, given that he was deposed by the British, Abbas was not overgenerous

in his praise of Baring, or any British official, or of the colonial administration as a whole.

Indeed, throughout his memoirs there is an underlying tone of a regret and frustration that

Egypt was placed in a position where British occupation was thought necessary. Abbas

is reluctant to blame this on the extravagances of his grandfather Ismail and instead

focuses much more on the avarice of Europeans in stripping his dynasty of its autonomy.

"The English did accomplish much good in Egypt…But such good was at the cost of that

which was most dear and supreme – liberty."[90] This statement is in many ways a valid

assessment of British rule in Egypt; however, in the context which Abbas is using the

term 'liberty', it must be noted that he really appears to mean *his* liberty as khedive.

Later in the same work he also justifies the use of forced labour in Egypt.[91] Abbas'

memoirs are, therefore, an important perspective on the period under consideration.

Abbas, ironically perhaps as he was attempting to justify his actions and those of

his predecessors in the face of more negative representations by the British, actually

confirms that the khedive was under the British occupation still a critical office.

Certainly its power was curbed and British officials, most notably Baring, took control of

great swathes of Egypt's government, but nonetheless the khedive, just like his fellow

rulers elsewhere in British-ruled Africa and Asia, retained a central role in the

administration and public life of his state. Indeed Baring always made it plain, in public

and private, that the khedive remained an essential political and ceremonial figure. An

example of this is found in a letter to the Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, the

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[90] Abbas Hilmi II, *The Last Khedive of Egypt*, 238.
[91] Abbas Hilmi II, *The Last Khedive of Egypt*, 242.

Duke of Cambridge, where in discussing proposed reforms to the Egyptian Army, he mentions that "all the authorities here, i.e., the Khedive, Nubar Pasha, Grenfell, and myself…" agree on a given issue. This offhanded remark is illustrative of the tiny coterie of both Egyptian and British elites who governed Egypt under British indirect rule.[92]

This historiography of modern Egypt that was born out the debates encapsulated in the works of Blunt, Cromer, Abbas, and their contemporaries tended to focus on the rationale for the occupation itself, as well as the various effects of British presence, rather than the initial reasons for the choice of indirect rule. Indeed for much of the twentieth century, first as Egyptian nationalism re-awakened and came into its own, leading eventually to the ejection of the British and the Suez debacle, scholarly focus looked more at what drove the British to seize Egypt rather than why they selected indirect rule. An important debate in the British historiography of British Egypt for much of the twentieth century looked at the rationale for the 1882 occupation. On one side of this debate was the argument that Robinson and Gallagher put forward in their *Africa and the Victorians* that Egypt was occupied principally for its strategic importance as home to the Suez Canal and the shortest route to India.[93] Cain and Hopkins challenged Robinson and Gallagher with a theory that City of London based capitalists drove colonial expansion, and particularly in the case of Egypt the 1882 occupation was undertaken to secure the debts the khedive's government owed to the British and other investors.[94] Both of these theories have considerable merits, however, they do not engage with the reasons for

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[92] Baring to Cambridge, 17 May 1891, FO 633/5.
[93] Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians,* 76-77.
[94] P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion 1688-1914* (New York: Longman, 1993); A.G. Hopkins, "The Victorians and Africa: A Reconsideration of the Occupation of Egypt, 1882", 363-391.

importing a distinct form of imperial government, indirect rule, from India when so much of the rest of the empire, including much of India, was governed directly.

In 1979 much of the historiography of Egypt, the Middle East, and imperialism was called into question by the publication of Said's *Orientalism*. Said shifted the terms of the debate away from the political and economic rationale for British rule and focused instead on the racialised discursive framework that enabled and empowered colonialism. Said's text deals principally with modern British and French imperialism in the Arab world, and consequently much focus is placed on Egypt and Baring's regime in particular. This is in part because of the rich textual sources left by these actors, no doubt, but also because of the significance Said places on the power of the orientalist discourse, as he defines it, to set the conditions for British colonisation of Egypt.[95] In *Orientalism* Baring is discussed early and often as an almost archetypal imperialist who constructed and exploited a binary understanding of Muslim peoples in relation to their European rulers.[96] Baring left mountains of evidence; his writings are dominated by racialised language which showed that he thought the Egyptian people suffered from a host of essential failures, faults, and weaknesses, which collectively meant that they required British rule. Said argues that "[Evelyn Baring, Lord] Cromer makes no effort to conceal that Orientals for him were always and only the human material he governed in British colonies."[97] Unfortunately, however, by so rigorously forcing Baring and the other subjects of *Orientalism* into the narrow confines of the binary East-West dichotomy, Said fails to

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[95] Said, *Orientalism*, 33.
[96] Said, *Orientalism*, 31-40.
[97] Said, *Orientalism*, 39.

leave any room in Baring's thinking for his decades long support for a regime in which

'Orientals' were not only colonial subjects, but also important actors in colonial

government.[98]

In the wake of Wolseley's military occupation, the Foreign Secretary, Lord

Granville, dispatched in 1882 a special commission to reorganise the Egyptian

government, headed by the British Ambassador at Constantinople, Lord Dufferin.[99]

Dufferin, like so many of the other figures in this study, moved back and forth between

colonial administrations and diplomatic postings. Prior to being ambassador at

Constantinople, he had held the same position at St. Petersburg, still earlier he had served

as Governor General of Canada, and after his mission to Egypt he was made Viceroy of

India. As special commissioner to Egypt, Dufferin was given a wide remit to investigate

the situation. In his report to Granville, he gave his assessment and recommendations for

reforms to the Egyptian government and these would form the basis of British policy in

Egypt for decades.[100] This report, providing as it did the justification for British

interference in the state, is a key document in the history of British Egypt and as such

shaped how the colonial regime was established and functioned.

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[98] Curiously, two important works, David Cannadine's challenge to Said's thesis, *Ornamentalism,* and Roger Owen's major biography of Baring, *Lord Cromer*, both fail to take *Orientalism* to task for the way it presents Baring. In his otherwise excellent life of Baring, Owen makes no attempt to refute Said's attack, nor does he concede that *Orientalism* provided an accurate measure of his tenure in Egypt - in fact it does not mention Said at all. Cannadine, on the other hand, perhaps because Egypt was only formally annexed to the British Empire in 1914, only deals with the post-war settlement. The fact that until 1914 British rule in Egypt was informal and unofficial may explain its absence from this work as Cannadine concentrates on the formal empire. However, the post-1882 Government of Egypt was as much a project of the colonial exploitation of social hierarchies as occurred with the princely states of India, which Cannadine discusses in detail, and hence its absence from *Ornamentalism* is a curious oversight. Owen, *Lord Cromer*, 61-88; Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 77.
[99] Alfred Lyall, *Life of the Marquess of Dufferin and Ava*, (London: John Murray 1905), II: 32.
[100] Milner, *England in Egypt*, 27.

Upon his arrival Dufferin was quick to take charge of the situation and made sweeping changes to the political institutions of the country, the most important of which the drafting of a new constitution, called the 'Organic Law', which he formally submitted for approval to the cabinet in London. Dufferin's authority was derived from his position as the representative of the occupying power; he held no official Egyptian or Ottoman government post, but was able to dictate terms to the khedive and his followers because the British Government had dispatched him to do so.[101] The khedive himself was moved to write in a letter to his sovereign, Sultan Abdul Hamid II, "Le veritable Khedive de l'Egypte, c'est Lord Dufferin. C'est de lui qu' emanent tous les ordres, et le Khedive n'en est que l'instrument de transmission."[102] The Dufferin mission reshaped the way Egypt was governed in the wake of Urabi's rebellion. Most significantly it removed the Egyptian officer corps, of which Urabi was a member, from political power by firmly placing the army under British control. This replaced the professional military elites, who tended to favour nationalist and liberal ideology, with an older more conservative aristocratic figures in government.

The report itself, which takes the form of a memorandum, sent from Cairo on the 6 February 1883 to Lord Granville, is over fifty pages of single-spaced type with five detailed appendices. It contains Dufferin's first-hand account of the situation he found in Egypt, his assessment of the many problems faced by the state, and his recommendations for reform. In a passage from the conclusion of the report, Dufferin reveals some of the limitations placed on him in this task, and the general goals of his mission:

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[101] Otte, *The Foreign Office Mind,* 143-144.
[102] Lyall, *Life of the Marquess of Dufferin*, II:36

Had I been commissioned to place the affairs of Egypt on the footing of an Indian Subject State, the outlook would have been different. The masterful hand of a Resident would have quickly bent everything to his will, and in the space of five years we should have greatly added to the material wealth and well-being of the country by the extension of this cultivated area and consequent expansion of its revenue; by the partial, if not the total, abolition of the "corvee" and slavery; the establishment of justice; and other beneficent reforms. But the Egyptians would have justly considered these advantages as dearly purchased at the expense of their domestic independence. Moreover, Her Majesty's Government and the public opinion of England have pronounced against such an alternative. But though it be our fixed determination that the new regime shall not surcharge us with the responsibility of permanently administering the country, whether directly or indirectly, it is absolutely necessary to prevent the fabric we have raised from tumbling to the ground the moment our sustaining hand is withdrawn. Such a catastrophe would be the signal for the return of confusion to this country and renewed discord in Europe. At the present moment we are labouring in the interests of the world at large. The desideratum of every one is an Egypt peaceful, prosperous, and contented, able to pay its debts, capable of maintaining order along the Canal, and offering no excuse in the troubled condition of its affairs for interference from outside.[103]

From this it is clear that Dufferin, as the representative of the British Government, felt constrained by public opinion, both in Egypt and Europe. Dufferin flatly states that indirect rule, as imposed on Indian states, would be the preferred form of government, but it would be impossible to achieve in the present circumstances. Rather, Dufferin's mission and Baring's regime that would follow it sought to impose a veiled form of indirect rule.[104] The ultimate objective was the reform of government institutions in a fashion which would be acceptable to the Egyptian people, conform to the wishes of the

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[103] Dufferin to Granville, 6 February 1883, FO 78/3565.
[104] Milner, *England in Egypt*, 29.

British Government, and not provoke the French who still played an important though declining role.[105]

The report, on the whole, strikes a conservative tone, which aimed at returning authority to the institutions that Dufferin deemed more 'legitimate' like the khedive. This conforms to the Burkian ambivalence to imperialism identified by Uday Singh Mehta. Mehta argues that much of nineteenth-century 'conservative' thinking on empire was, following from Edmund Burke, opposed to imposing 'new' institutions and was instead keen to bolster what was seen as 'traditional' and 'native' methods of government.[106] Moreover, it is clear that this tone is a product both of the constraints placed on Dufferin's mission by the British Government, and also from his own political inclinations.

Despite the fact that many of the troubles facing Egypt were brought upon by Khedive Ismail's actions which were finically supported and encouraged by his European creditors, there was a broad level of support both for the continuation of the khedivate and Ismail's successor, Tewfik, in particular. Neither Ismail's mismanagement nor the foreign roots of the dynasty were enough to shake Dufferin's belief that the House of Muhammad Ali was the only available institution thought fit to rule Egypt. And this is not surprising; Egypt had been under foreign rule for millennia. Persian, Greeks, Romans, Arabians, and Turks had in turn conquered the state, leaving no indigenous hierarchy or aristocracy thought suitable to replace the khedive. The only alternative loci of power were figures like Urabi Pasha who rose by merit through the ranks of the Army or

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[105] Owen, *Lord Cromer*, 322-323.
[106] Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire*, 155.

bureaucracy into positions of authority. These 'new men', with their modern nationalist

ideology, were not at all the sort of stabilising and obedient collaborators that the British

wanted which underscores the tension between modernisation and imperialism. This left

only Tewfik whose pedigree and personal qualities Dufferin himself thought were ideally

suited for the role as he explains in the following passage from his report:

> Her actual Rulers still supplied, indeed, from a foreign stock, but the
> progenitor of the race was one of the most illustrious men of the present
> century, who proved his right to found a dynasty by emancipating those he
> ruled from the arbitrary thraldom of an imperious Suzerain. His
> successors have carried on the liberation of their adopted country still
> further, and the Prince now sitting on the Khedivial throne represents, at
> all events, the principle of autonomous Government, of hereditary
> succession, and commercial independence. Nor does his personal
> character evince any of these ruthless and despotic instincts which
> signalized the Egyptian Satraps of former days. His disposition is
> eminently benevolent and sympathetic. Well versed in history, and alive
> to the progress of events, he is indisposed either to claim or exercise the
> arbitrary powers of an Oriental autocrat. Having conscientiously at heart
> the welfare of his people, he is willing to accord them such a measure of
> Constitutional privileges as their backward condition entitles them to
> demand.[107]

This passage captures the prevailing view of the Government of Egypt in particular, and

Muslim monarchies more generally, held by British officialdom. Clearest of all in this

passage is the institutional commitment to the hereditary transmission of authority. The

fact that Tewfik was the heir of Muhammad Ali is key to Dufferin. Because the founder

of the dynasty was a 'great man,' his successors inherited not only his office but also the

legitimacy he accrued during his 'illustrious' reign. Luckily, however, this was not all

that was going for Tewfik as Dufferin goes to equal lengths to praise his individual

characteristics as distinct from his ancestry. For Dufferin, Baring, and their British

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[107] Dufferin to Granville, 6 February 1883, FO 78/3565.

colleagues in Egypt, the commitment to retaining the House of Muhammad Ali was constant. The khedivate was indeed central to the British conceptualisation of how Egypt ought to be governed.[108]

As in princely India, allowing the ruling potentate and a small group of unelected ministers to wield authority under the direction of British agents was believed to be the best method to achieve British objectives in Egypt, while giving the appearance that Egyptians remained in control of their own destiny.[109] As such, indirect rule, which had been given new impetus in the wake of the Indian rebellion as a distinctly conservative approach to colonial government was embraced by Liberals, both Gladstone and his Cabinet in London, as well as Dufferin and Baring in Egypt. For Tories like Canning, Disraeli, and later Curzon, indirect rule was seen as the best way for ruling 'Oriental' peoples whose history and culture required a stable social hierarchy through which to govern. Liberals were attracted to indirect rule as it both reduced their likely investment in administering Egypt and also allowed for some element of self-government.

Dufferin's disinclination to exclude Egyptians from the government of Egypt, along with a lack of appetite in Britain for further expansion, led him to ignore a petition signed by thousands of European residents in Alexandria calling for British annexation and direct rule of Egypt.[110] Instead, as he made plain in his report, Dufferin was committed to retaining, and in the wake of Urabi's revolt, bolstering Egyptian institutions though he always made plain that they would require British supervision for an

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[108] Baring, *Modern Egypt*, I: 345.
[109] Owen, *Lord Cromer*, 187.
[110] Baring, Modern Egypt, I: 331.

indeterminate length of time.[111] After categorically rejecting the idea that European

authority and institutions were needed to impose order in Egypt, Dufferin came to the

essential argument of his report:

> I would press upon Her Majesty's Government a more generous policy –
> such a policy as in implied by the creation, within certain prudent limits,
> of political existence untrammelled by external importunity, though aided,
> indeed, as it must be for some time, by sympathetic advice and assistance.
> Indeed, no middle course is possible. The Valley of the Nile could not be
> administered with any prospect of success from London. An attempt upon
> our part to engage in such an undertaking would at once render us objects
> of hatred and suspicion to its inhabitants. Cairo would become a focus of
> foreign intrigue and conspiracy against us, and we should soon find
> ourselves forced either to abandon our pretentions under disagreeable
> conditions, or to embark upon the experiment of a complete acquisition of
> the country. If, however, we content ourselves with a more moderate role,
> and make the Egyptians comprehend that instead of desiring to impose
> upon them an indirect but arbitrary rule, we are sincerely desirous of
> enabling them to govern themselves, under the uncompromising aegis of
> our friendship, they will not fail to understand that while, on the one hand,
> we are the European nation most vitally interested in their peace and well-
> being, on the other, we are the least inclined to degenerate into an
> irritating and exasperating display of authority, which would be fatal to
> those instincts of patriotism and freedom which it had been our boast to
> foster in every country where we have set our foot.[112]

For Dufferin, the solution that his report proposed was the 'middle way.' He was

sensitive enough to the situation and sufficiently appreciative of Egypt's recent political

history to know that direct rule 'from London' would not be acceptable to large sections

of the population. Nor, indeed, does he think that even if the conditions were more

favourable would this be a good option. The whole tone and focus of Dufferin's mission

and report suggest that he believed that the Egyptian elites were capable of a limited

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[111] Dufferin to Granville, 6 February 1883, FO 78/3565.
[112] Dufferin to Granville, 6 February 1883, FO 78/3565.

political autonomy.[113] However, with typical Victorian paternalism, he also believed that in their present condition the Egyptian people and political institutions were not as yet capable of achieving what the British wanted without British supervision.[114]

Therefore, just as he advised against introducing direct rule, he also cautioned against returning full control to the khedive, the Egyptian governing classes, or indeed the Egyptian people. The Dufferin report, therefore, ushered in indirect rule framed as a compromise between full Egyptian autonomy and full British control, resulting in British supervision of an Egyptian regime. The meant that Egypt was still legally an autonomous province of the Ottoman Empire which placated the French who were loath to see another important territory fall to their rivals.[115] To achieve a minimal European presence in the country while also maintaining British strategic and economic goals, a form of government was devised by Dufferin that allowed for the collusion of the British and the powerful conservative landlords under the khedive.[116] This new government was not meant to mark a return to the situation that existed prior to Urabi, but rather a whole new settlement intended to unite the largely conservative landlords against the more liberal and radical middle classes.[117] This was, on a larger scale, identical to princely India where the British residents played vaguely defined but powerful roles in the states

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[113] Owen, *Lord Cromer*, 174.

[114] In a letter penned soon after Dufferin arrived on the scene in Egypt, he confided to the Foreign Secretary that he believed that British intervention is, and will continue to be, well received by the Egyptian people, and he maintained this perspective throughout the entirety of his mission. Dufferin to Granville, 3 January 1883, FO 78/3565.

[115] Otte, *The Foreign Office Mind*, 141.

[116] Magda Baraka, *The Egyptian Upper Class Between Revolutions*, (Reading: Ithaca Press, 1998), 21.

[117] In one section of his report Dufferin went to some length to underscore the importance of the "oochuri lands" which were tracks of land held by families of the original supporters of Muhammad Ali and which enjoyed a special low tax rate. As such the aristocrats who owned this property, even given Egypt's precarious financial situation, were thought by Dufferin to be of too much importance to risk alienating through denying them some of their privileges. Dufferin to Granville, 6 February 1883, FO 78/3565.

that were governed by hereditary rulers. Therefore, while Urabi and his colleagues

looked to modern Europe as a model for their government, the British looked to princely

India to impose an 'oriental' solution on the problem of Egyptian government.

A contemporary witness to Dufferin's mission of 1882-83 was Auckland Colvin

who was at the time a member of the *Caisse*. Colvin came from a family of Indian civil

servants and made his career in several posts in Egypt and India. Ultimately he served in

the powerful post of financial advisor to the khedive between 1883 and 1887, before

returning to India where he was made Governor of the North West Provinces and Chief

Commissioner of Awadh.[118] In Colvin's study of contemporary Egypt, *The Making of*

Modern Egypt, he conceded that the Dufferin report was compromised. Colvin notes that

Dufferin was being pulled in two different directions; on the one hand he thought that an

overtly Indian form of indirect rule, with a British Resident in formal control of a 'native'

administration, was best.[119] However, Colvin also noted that Dufferin was forced by

popular opinion in Egypt, Europe, and Britain, to modify his objectives and call instead

for a subtler form of indirect rule, where the British presence was unofficial and hidden

by a façade of a *de jure* autonomous Egyptian government. Colvin, who wrote this two

decades into the British 'temporary' occupation, observed quite correctly that despite the

initial limitations on Dufferin's mission, the regime his report ushered in under Baring

was essentially the form of indirect rule that Dufferin wanted.[120]

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[118] B. R. Tomlinson "Colvin, Sir Auckland (1838–1908)," in *the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/view/article/32516 (accessed 14 February, 2013).
[119] Colvin, *The Making of Modern Egypt*, 30.
[120] Colvin, *The Making of Modern Egypt*, 31-32.

Colvin was one of several high-ranking officials to commit this perspective to print, and contemporary with his *Making of Modern Egypt* were a number of works by officials who had inside knowledge of Dufferin's mission and which drew very similar conclusions. Baring's opinions were articulated in his *Modern Egypt*. In it he quotes from Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* in describing the situation in Egypt that led to the Dufferin mission:

> The period of transition from an arbitrary to a legal system of government was to be not only painful but dangerous. The minds of the people had been unsettled by frequent discussions about organic changes. "It is unwise," said one of England's greatest political thinkers, "to make the extreme medicine of the constitution its daily bread." The habits of obedience, which the Egyptians had inherited from their forefathers, had been rudely shaken. All this ferment was not to settle down at once. A more serious collapse of the State machinery than any which had yet taken place was to occur before the calm waters of peaceful progress could be reached.[121]

Navigating Egypt back to "the calm waters of peaceful progress" was Baring's justification for his decades-long rule and of the Dufferin mission which launched it. As such his quotation from Burke is telling, indeed post-1882 British Egypt was a decidedly Burkeian enterprise. A government which allowed for cautious and evolutionary change made in the context of existing institutional structures sensitivity to local history and culture were hallmarks of Burke's thinking and of the way British Egypt was constituted.[122]

Iain Hampsher-Monk has argued that central to Burke's response to post-Bastille France was that "not only must revolutionary France be militarily defeated, but the

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[121] Baring, *Modern Egypt*, I:150.
[122] Robert Tignor, *Modernisation and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882-1914*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), vii.

regime extirpated and an ancient regime restored."[123] The same was essentially the case

for the British in Egypt nearly a century later; Dufferin, Baring and their followers

wanted not only to restore the khedives to their throne, but also to 'extirpate'

revolutionary nationalists like Urabi from political life in favour of the traditional ruling

classes. Moreover, despite the widespread use of the term 'modern' by these officials,

including in the titles of both Colvin and Baring's works, in British Egypt modernity did

not mean the imposition of modern political institutions like representative or responsible

governments. Rather, as in princely India, it meant a modernisation of the economy,

infrastructure, the police and armed forces, all under the aegis of a traditional elite-run

government.

    This form of government was the desired outcome of Dufferin's mission, and

despite being overshadowed in the history of British Egypt by Baring, it is why he is so

important to the story of the imposition of indirect rule in Egypt.[124] Dufferin's active role,

however, ended with these recommendations. Upon submitting his report to Cabinet via

the Foreign Secretary, Lord Granville, he left the country and was soon after given the

viceroyalty of India. It is worth noting Dufferin's support for indirect rule continued in

India. His official biographer noted that as viceroy he was especially keen to support the

autonomous government of princely states. Of Mysore, which as discussed in Chapter II

was returned to its ruling dynasty from British control in in 1881, Dufferin declared:

"There is no state within the confines of the Indian Empire which has more fully justified

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[123] Iain Hampsher-Monk "Edmund Burke's Changing Justification for Intervention", *The Historical Journal*, 48 (1) 2005: 65.

[124] Baring to Granville, 2 November 1883, FO 633/6. In this letter to the Foreign Secretary, for example, Baring discusses his enduring commitment to Dufferin's "Constitution", as the Organic Law he had promulgated was popularly called, even though he was within his power to override, ignore, or replace it.

the wise policy of the British government in supplementing its own direct administration of its vast territories by the associated rule of our great feudatory princes."[125]

It fell to Evelyn Baring to grapple with the regime Dufferin left in place and juggle the complex array of interests and actors from Cairo to Constantinople and London who had a role in Egyptian affairs. In *Modern Egypt*, published at the end of his public life, Baring recounts and justifies the previous four decades of British interference in the state. As the title of the work suggests, Barings' work focuses on the modernisation and reform of Egyptian institutions.[126] Unlike, however, the modernising goals of Urabi Pasha and other Egyptian liberals, the reforming goals of Baring were not meant to make Egypt into a modern state on western lines. Rather, the second theme of *Modern Egypt* and of Baring's regime was a decidedly orientalist approach to colonial government based on a belief that the Egyptian state needed to be administered with the help of Europeans.[127]

To Baring and his Liberal and Conservative colleagues, the Egyptian people were different from Europeans and would always remain so. Examples of Baring's patronizing views of Egyptians abound. Statements he made, such as "…competent Egyptians to do the work which is to be done in Egypt are not plentiful" typify the

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[125] Lyall, *Life of the Marquess of Dufferin*, II: 142.

[126] Cromer, *Modern Egypt*, 2:393. The second half of the second volume of Cromer's work was actually dedicated to what he modestly calls 'the Reforms'.

[127] Barings correspondence during his long tenure in Cairo is filled with projects meant to 'modernize' the Egyptian economy and infrastructure. These projects ranged from new banks to laying more railways. However, there were also numerous instances where Baring simply lacked the funds for even important projects. Even as late as the 1896, for example, he writes to deny a request by an army intelligence officer to conduct an expensive modern geographical survey of Egypt on the grounds that the required funds were needed elsewhere. Baring confides that "Like a good many other useful reforms, it must wait." The fact that a majot geographical survey, the likes of which had been conducted in India a generation and more earlier could not be funded suggests that to Baring, the British modernization project in Egypt, even nearly twenty years into the occupation, was far from complete. Baring to Ardagh, 20 November 1896, FO 633/8.

orientalist nature of his thinking.[128] Said noted that Baring: "conceived of British

imperial presence in the Eastern colonies as having a lasting, not to say cataclysmic,

effect on the minds and societies of the East."[129] While Said does illustrate the great

degree to which Baring and his colleagues saw Egyptians as 'different' and requiring

British intervention, where *Orientalism* breaks down is in the non-existent treatment of

social class and hierarchy as fundamental to colonial government. Said's Baring sees

only a mass of 'Orientals' incapable of self-government, while the documentary evidence

does not bear this out. The Baring that is presented by his most recent biographer, Roger

Owen, is much closer to the Baring reflected in the mass of his writings and archival

records. Owen shows that while Baring orientalised Egyptian society by presenting it in

highly racialist and essentialist terms, he also saw it as hierarchical. Owen argues that

Baring "believed that, given Egypt's existing structure of power, the only way to press on

with the reforms was in cooperation with the Khedive."[130]

Post-1882 Egypt, therefore, takes on a curious hybrid nature, with great efforts

being made to re-establish financial solvency in the wake of Ismail's reign, modernise

and expand the economy, especially agriculture, all the while keeping political control in

the hands of an hereditary monarchy and traditional elites, all guided by agents of a

foreign government. Baring himself summed up the nature of Egyptian government

thusly: "One alien race, the English, have to control and guide a second alien race, the

Turks, by whom they are disliked, in the government of a third race, the Egyptians."[131]

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[128] Baring to W. T. Stead, 12 February 1887, FO 633/5.
[129] Said, *Orientalism*, 213.
[130] Owen, *Lord Cromer*, 110.
[131] Baring, *Modern Egypt*, I: 5.

The Egyptians were, under this settlement, given the 'benefit' of British expertise in organising their government and economy, but were not calculated to be ready for British style representative or responsible government.

Baring returned to Egypt in 1883 as the British Consul-General. Typically, a consul-general was a middle ranking diplomat who headed delegations in important foreign cities but which were not capitals of sovereign states. In 1883, of course, Cairo was the capital of Egypt, but Egypt was *de jure* part of the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, the head British diplomatic representative in the Ottoman capital, Constantinople, was an ambassador but his colleague in Cairo was a consul-general. Under Baring, the office of consul-general assumed vastly more power and more autonomy from the embassy in Constantinople than would normally be the case. Baring enjoyed a direct relationship with the prime minister and foreign secretary akin to that of the Viceroy of India.[132]

What is strikingly different between Baring's relationship with his superiors in London and those enjoyed by his counterparts in Zanzibar, Malaya and Nigeria is that Baring appeared to be treated almost as an equal. From Liberals Granville and Rosebery to Conservative Salisbury, the cabinet ministers who were Baring's nominal superiors treated him like a trusted colleague rather than a subordinate. And, most importantly, there was a broad acceptance in London that Baring was to have a largely free hand in Egypt. This is not surprising given his lengthy tenure in Cairo. The collected correspondence between Baring and the prime ministers and foreign secretaries reveal a

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[132] Baring to Rosebery, 1 March 1886, FO 633/6.

close and cordial working relationship with both Liberal and Conservative ministries.[133]

Correspondence between Baring and the cabinet are strikingly similar in tone to those

between, for example, Baring's contemporary as viceroy, Curzon, and the cabinet. In a

letter to Lord Rosebery, then the Liberal foreign secretary, for example, Baring spends as

much time discussing intimate health issues as he does the intricacies of political

relations between Cairo and Constantinople.[134] And this is not where the similarities

between the administration of British Egypt and India end: most importantly, the consul-

general and the British officials under him in Egypt, were given considerable freedom of

action. As Dufferin had recommended, a system of British agents under Baring were

allowed to make much of their own policy decisions for the governance of Egypt, having

a first hand knowledge of the affairs of the state, and established relationships with key

Egyptian officials.[135] An example of the centrality of Baring directing British policy in

Egypt is with the management of the Sudan. As will be discussed in further detail below,

under Baring's direction the British postponed the re-conquest of the Sudan until the late

1890s by which time, he argued, Egypt was secure enough to re-assume governing this

vast territory.[136]

Concurrent with Baring's return to Egypt as consul-general in 1883 was the

promulgation of a new constitution called the Organic Law that created a series of

political institutions in Egypt. The Organic Law did not change the basic status of Egypt

as a province of the Ottoman Empire under the sovereignty of the sultan in

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[133] FO 633/6 and FO 633/7.
[134] Baring to Rosebery, 1 March 1886, FO 633/6.
[135] Owen, *Lord Cromer*, 393.
[136] Owen, *Lord Cromer*, 199.

Constantinople, and it reaffirmed the place of the Muhammad Ali dynasty as hereditary

khedives. Indeed, although Dufferin was the author of the constitution, it was the

khedive who signed it into law. Moreover, it did not significantly alter the essentially

authoritarian nature of the Egyptian state, with legislative and executive powers under the

control of powerful appointed officials who were not responsible to the people. Despite

this, however, the Organic Law did provide a forum for a small portion of the male part

of the Egyptian population in the form of provincial councils and a national assembly,

which functioned as consultative bodies and public fora.[137] Baring, who inherited

Dufferin's constitution, justified this limited role for the Egyptian people in the following

passage:

> Lord Dufferin's law was conceived in a liberal and statesmanlike spirit.
> The leading idea was to give the Egyptian people an opportunity of making
> their voices heard, but at the same time not to bind the executive
> Government by parliamentary fetters, which would have been out of place
> in a country whose political education was so little advanced as that of
> Egypt.[138]

For Dufferin, Baring, and the other architects of British indirect rule in Egypt, the

Egyptian people were certainly not going to be allowed to interfere in the governing of

their own country. Rhetorically, however, the Egyptian people figured prominently in

the way that the British positioned their imperial role. Indeed, while it was the massive

public debt and the strategic importance of the Canal that were the real reasons for the

1882 occupation, many of the key British officials in Egypt were quick to justify their

role there as one of protecting the common people from the excesses of 'oriental

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[137] Zeinab Abul-Magd, "Rebellion in the Time of Cholera: Failed Empire, Unfinished Nation in Egypt, 1840 -1920" *Journal of World History*, 21 (4) 2010: 698.
[138] Cromer, *Modern Egypt*, II: 274.

despotism.'[139] Progress was to be measured by securing for some Egyptians a voice in these provincial councils and other parliamentary bodies, and later the British would work towards ending coercive forms of labour and improving the lives of the Egyptian peasantry. Nonetheless, the Egyptian government post 1883 was far from popular or representative in its makeup; rather, the Organic Law maintained an elite control over the legislative, judicial, and executive aspects of the state.[140]

The Organic Law of 1883 and Dufferin's other reforms led to the creation of a number of ministries under the khedive. These ministries were usually headed by Egyptians and staffed largely by Egyptians, as well a diverse mix of mercenary-bureaucrats from the Ottoman world, continental Europe, and Britain. This was the heart of the Egyptian administration where the day-to-day work of government was carried out. It was also the clearest iteration of how British indirect rule in Egypt functioned. As compared with the smaller Muslim states under British indirect rule, densely populated Egypt required many more officials. At this time the Egyptian civil service comprised about ten thousand Egyptian officials who filled all of the lower level posts, as well as much of the middle and top of the government bureaucracy, right up to the level of ministers.[141] In addition, during this period and into the first decades of British rule, about 1300 European officials occupied mostly higher administrative postings throughout the Egyptian administration.[142] In contrast, in tiny Gulf states or Nigerian emirates, the

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[139] See for example, Cromer, *Modern Egypt*, II: 430 ; Colvin, *The Making of Modern Egypt*, 308.
[140] Abul-Magd, "Rebellion in the Time of Cholera: Failed Empire, Unfinished Nation in Egypt, 1840 – 1920", 698.
[141] William Welch, *No Country for Gentlemen, British Rule in Egypt, 1883-1907*, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 46-47.
[142] Welch, *No Country for Gentlemen*, 51.

entire government took the form of a local ruler, a British resident, and at most a handful

of locals and Europeans.

Because of this, the Egyptian administration was peppered with British officials,

from the officers of the Egyptian Army to engineers in the public works departments.

Technically these officials were servants of two masters as they were usually British

Army officers or civil servants on secondment to the khedive's government. In practice,

however, their role was even more complicated. One of these officials, Alfred Milner,

who from 1889 worked in the Egyptian Ministry of Finance, observed:

> In theory, the British officials of the Khedive are just like his other officials,
> the servants of an absolute master, as liable as his other servants to be
> overruled or dismissed. They are with few exceptions not even the heads of
> their respective services, but under the orders of native Ministers. But
> though this is their formal position, and though the form is most rigorously
> observed by the British officials themselves, no Egyptian for a moment
> forgets that these men - his colleagues, in some instances his subordinates -
> are citizens of the State which holds Egypt in the hollow of its hand. Their
> advice is not like ordinary advice. Their dismissal is not to be lightly
> thought of; in fact, without exceptionally valid reasons, it is not to be
> thought of at all.[143]

Milner cuts right to the heart of British rule in Egypt in this passage. British officials

occupied the Egyptian Government just like the British Army occupied the country itself.

And while the numbers of British officials and soldiers were never terribly large, they

were sufficient to control Egypt for decades.[144]

However, just as the administration of Egypt was being settled after the British

invasion, it was threatened by revolts from its southern possessions in the Sudan. The

dominions of the Muhammad Ali dynasty had since 1819 included the vast and diverse

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[143] Milner, *England in Egypt*, 31.
[144] Tignor, *Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt*, 392-393.

region called the Sudan.[145] This polyglot territory was much larger than Egypt proper

and though more sparsely populated, it was ethnically and geographically diverse. The

heart of the Sudan was the city of Khartoum situated at the confluence of the White and

Blue Niles. This was the capital of the country and was the headquarters of the Egyptian

colonial administration. From here, Egyptian power had radiated outward, backed by the

perpetual threat of force, under which the Sudanese peoples had existed under a brutal

imperial regime where slavery and forced taxation were the basis of khedival authority.[146]

Concurrently with Urabi Pasha's rebellion in Egypt, the Sudanese also rose up to

overthrow foreign dominion. But unlike the modernising nationalism of Urabi, the

Sudanese rebellion took a rather different form under the direction of the self-styled

'Mahdi' or 'guided one', Muhammad Ahmed bin Abdullah. Ahmed, who became almost

universally known by his title of Mahdi, sought to impose his version of Islamic rule on

the Sudan. In 1881 he declared himself to be the ruler of the Sudan and adopted the title

of the Mahdi, a figure in Islamic eschatological beliefs who was prophesised to be the

herald of judgement day.[147] Muhammad Ahmed and his followers went to great lengths

to impose a regime on the Sudan to match the pretentions of the office he claimed. The

Mahdist forces met with success early and often, and once the British found themselves

to be the masters of Egypt in 1882, they were faced with losing Egypt's southern colony

to a revolutionary form of Islam which they feared could spread north.[148]

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[145] Marsot, *Egypt in the reign of Muhammad Ali*, 87.
[146] Marsot, *Egypt in the reign of Muhammad Ali*, 86-87.
[147] Robert O. Collins, *A History of Modern Sudan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 21.
[148] Fergus Nicoll, *The Sword of the Prophet: the Mahdi of Sudan and the death of General Gordon* (Stroud: Sutton, 2004), 69; Otte, *The Foreign Office Mind,* 160.

Prior to announcing that he was the harbinger of the apocalypse, Muhammad Ahmed enjoyed a successful career as a religious teacher. He was born in 1844 in the city of Dongola on the Nile in northern Sudan to an Arab family who claimed descent from the Prophet Muhammad.[149] Like Ahmed Urabi Pasha in Egypt, Muhammad Ahmed prospered under the khedival order but was not blind to its many iniquities. As a religious teacher and leader he gained a significant following while simultaneously developing a philosophy that in time would lead to the successful ejection of the Anglo-Egyptian regime in the Sudan, and some of the most infamous events of the British colonial period in Africa. The Governor-General of the Egyptian Sudan at this time was General Charles Gordon. Gordon was an officer of the Royal Engineers; however, he had spent much of his career in the service of foreign masters, including famously helping the Qing Emperor supress the Taiping rebellion in Southern and Eastern China. Gordon's successes in China and elsewhere had earned him a considerable reputation as a soldier and administrator which drew the attention of the Anglo-Egyptian authorities and led to his appointment in 1884 as Governor-General of the Sudan.[150] He would hold this office throughout the rising tide of Muhammad Ahmed's revolution, fighting a rear-guard action until Mahdist forces finally killed him when they overwhelmed Khartoum in January of 1885.

The death of Gordon was a singular moment in late Victorian history, the famous soldier dying at the hands of 'fanatical' Muslims. When news of his fate trickled down

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[149] Kim Searcy, *The Formation of the Sudanese Mahdist State: Ceremony and Symbols of Authority 1882-1898* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 57.
[150] Granville to Baring, 18 January 1884, FO 633/7.

the Nile and back to London weeks later, there was an outcry from the press and

opposition alike blaming Gladstone's Liberal Government for the death of Gordon and

the fall of the Sudan.[151] There were also reports from India of local reactions to the death

of a British officer at the hands of the Sudanese, which meant that the loss of the Sudan

was more than a blow to the new regime in Cairo but also to British prestige within the

wider colonial world.[152] Soon afterwards the Liberal government fell, in part because of

events at Khartoum.[153] Losing this huge territory to primitively armed peasant solders

highlighted the British belief that their regime in Egypt was embattled and tenuous, and

they took great measures to entrench and strengthen it using the spectre of Muslim

'fanaticism' as justification.[154]

Despite, however, the apparently dramatic impact that the fall of Khartoum had

upon the British political establishment, T.G. Otte has suggested these events actually

"reinforced the trend towards bipartisanship in foreign policy."[155] He argues that Liberal

and Conservative ministries ceased in the late nineteenth century to have widely

divergent stances on Egyptian policy. Rather a consensus was built whereby the elites

who ran British foreign policy in the Cabinet, the Foreign Office, and in the field

converged to pursue broadly unified foreign policy goals. In so doing Otte is expanding

upon John Darwin and Robinson and Gallagher in emphasising the importance of the

official mind as compared to a partisan or ideological mind in driving the expansion of

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[151] Nicoll, *The Sword of the Prophet*, 237-238.
[152] *The Times*, Monday, Feb 16, 1885 (31371) 5.
[153] Bernard Porter, *Britannia's Burden: the political evolution of modern Britain* (London: Edward Arnold, 1994), 86.
[154] Baring to Rosebery, 23 February 1886, FO 633/6.
[155] Otte, *The Foreign Office Mind,* 162.

the empire.[156] In Egypt this meant that Baring enjoyed the support of his Liberal and

Tory Cabinet superiors to direct a policy based on securing British strategic interests in

the region while allowing the khedive and Egyptian elites to control much of their

internal administration.[157] In effect the crisis in the Sudan reinforced the broad and non-

partisan commitment to indirect rule. With Egypt proper remaining pacified under the

khedive, while the Anglo-Egyptian regime in the Sudan under the direct rule of Gordon

collapsed.

The career of the Mahdi on the one hand and of Urabi Pasha on the other help us

to understand the British preference for retaining the office of khedive. For both the

nationalist Urabi and the messianic Mahdi the khedive was an object of scorn and an

impediment to their respective revolutionary agendas. In 1881-82 Urabi displaced

Tewfik and ruled in his stead. While in the Mahdi's Sudan, even more dramatically,

Muhammed Ahmed attempted not only to replace the khedive's government, but also to

create a polity which would try and force the end of the world. When Ahmed declared,

"Know that I am the Expected Mahdi, the Successor of the Apostle of God. Thus I have

no need of the sultanate, nor of the kingdom of Kordofan or elsewhere, nor of the wealth

of this world and its vanity. I am but the slave of God, guiding unto God and to what is

with Him…"[158] he was ensuring, just as Urabi did by deposing Tewfik, that the British

would back the khedive against their more radical agenda. The Mahdi seems to have

calculated that because the British were working hand in glove with the Turkish-Egyptian

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[156] Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, 76; Darwin, John. "Imperialism and the Victorians: The Dynamics of Territorial Expansion" *The English Historical Review*, 112 (447) 1997: 614-642.
[157] Otte, *The Foreign Office Mind,* 161-162.
[158] P.M. Holt, *The Mahdist State in the Sudan 1881-1898: a study of its origins, development and overthrow* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 85.

elites who had governed Sudan, his rebellion would secure support from the Sudanese

masses eager to rid themselves of their hated 'Turkish' overlords.[159] To a degree he was

correct as the Sudan under Mahdist rule enjoyed more than a decade of independence.

However, the career of the Mahdi also helped to perpetuate the image of fanatical Islam.

This is clearly and repeatedly reflected in the British writings about the Mahdi and

khedive. Sir Auckland Colvin's views on the two offices can be seen as representative of

the British in Egypt; in the following passage he illustrates the degree to which the Mahdi

and his followers were seen as both illegitimate and terribly dangerous: "The truth is that

in our habitual ignorance of the forces which stimulate the Muhammadan East, we failed

to realize the extent to which the preaching of the self-styled Mahdi had found an echo in

the fierce breasts of his hearers."[160] While throughout the same work he continually

underscores the legitimacy of the khedives, and even if he criticises some of their

individual actions, his guiding principal is that "the British had landed in Egypt not to

destroy the authority of the Khedive, but to restore it"[161] By being the moderate, pacific,

and malleable party, Tewfik and later Abbas were able to fill the role of the compliant

Muslim prince, the most legitimate counterweight to the forces of revolutionary

nationalism on the one hand and apocalyptic Islam on the other.

The fear awoken by the Mahdi, followed as it was by the fall of Gladstone's

ministry, was a turning point in the early reign of Baring as consul-general in Cairo.

Baring was a Liberal, but was more imperially-minded than Gladstone. Despite his

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[159] Haim Shaked and P. M. Holt, *The Life of the Sudanese Mahdi* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Press, 2008), 201-202.
[160] Colvin, *The Making of Modern Egypt*, 37.
[161] Colvin, *The Making of Modern Egypt*, 25.

decision to occupy Egypt in 1882, Gladstone was disinclined to expand the British

Empire at the expense of the political freedom of other peoples, and of the political

difficulties the occupation caused with France.[162] Like many liberal and radically minded

members of the British establishment at this time, Gladstone was sceptical of the utility

of empire and broadly opposed it on moral and practical grounds.

In the end he only dispatched forces to Egypt in 1882 to prevent what would have

been a critical loss to the British both strategically and financially, and to the Sudan in

1884 because of popular outcry.[163] But unlike Disreali, Gladstone was never attracted to

the idea of empire; to him it was an expensive and immoral necessity. Freda Harcourt

has argued that Gladstone was ambivalent about empire, broadly opposed to it

intellectually and ethically, but understanding that it was sometimes an imperative,

especially in the fevered international climate of the new imperialism from the 1870s

onwards.[164] The imperial reticence of Gladstone and his Cabinet led him to attempt at

least to minimise the British role in Egypt and the Sudan, which was of course one of the

reasons the Liberals employed indirect rule, but their successors on the government

benches would not feel the same way.

When, in 1886, Lord Salisbury became prime minister he also unusually accepted

the position of foreign secretary. Typically the offices of first lord of the treasury and

prime minister were more than enough responsibility for an individual. Salisbury,

however, for much of his tenure in 10 Downing Street during the 1880s and 1890s chose

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[162] Hopkins, "The Victorians and Africa: A Reconsideration of the Occupation of Egypt, 1882." 367;
Harcourt, "Gladstone, monarchism and the 'new' imperialism", 36; Otte, *The Foreign Office Mind,* 141.
[163] Nicoll, *The Sword of the Prophet*, 212.
[164] Harcourt, "Gladstone, monarchism and the 'new' imperialism", 43-44.

also to run the Foreign Office himself.[165] The result of a Salisbury-dominated cabinet

table was that Baring found a great ally and chief who though of a different party was

often of the same mind.[166] Indeed, in a letter to a party colleague written in 1885, as the

Tories were wresting control of the Commons from the Liberals, Salisbury noted that:

> I take the general objects of our own policy to be to keep Egypt from
> European interference on the one side, & from anarchy on the other . . .
> But I do not believe in the plan of moulding Egyptians to our own
> civilization. As long as they are Mohometans that is impossible: & we
> must not forget that though we have often ruled mixed creeds . . . we have
> never yet ruled Mohometans alone. The only place in which we have tried
> it, is Afghanistan, & there it was not precisely a success.[167]

Not only does this show that Salisbury's position on Egypt conformed to Baring's, it also

neatly summarises the prime minister's rationale for indirect rule. For Salisbury Muslim

states like Egypt required a British presence to keep the peace and prevent other foreign

powers from interfering with them.[168] At the same time the heavy Europeanising hand of

direct rule would upset and offend the local population and perhaps, as had been the case

in the abortive occupation of Afghanistan in 1879-81, turn into an embarrassing fiasco.

Lady Gwendolyn Cecil, in her biography of her father, Lord Salisbury, noted that "to Sir

Evelyn Baring, with whom [Salisbury's] relations were unique, he leaves, as a rule, an

entirely free hand as regards all purely Egyptian Affairs."[169] While modern historians

never say anything quite as sweeping as this, both Roger Owen and Michael Bentley

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[165] Michael Bentley, *Lord Salisbury's World*: *Conservative Environments in late-Victorian Britain,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 226.
[166] J.A.S. Grenville, *Lord Salisbury and Foreign Policy: the close of the nineteenth century*, (London: Athlone Press, 1964), 14.
[167] Salisbury to Cairns, 20 February 1885, Cairns MSS 30/51/6/ff.155-6, also quoted in Bentley, *Lord Salisbury's World*, 247.
[168] Bentley, *Lord Salisbury's World*, 245-246.
[169] Gwendolyn Cecil, *Life of Robert Marquess of Salisbury*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1921), III: 206.

essentially agree with Lady Gwendolyn's assessment that Salisbury granted a high degree of autonomy to Baring.[170]

Salisbury, like Baring, was an imperialist who saw the utility of colonial possessions and thought it best that Britain control the strategically and economically important portions of the globe.[171] Both men, however, were not rabidly expansionist, conquest for conquest's sake was never a goal of Baring's administration in Cairo nor Salisbury's in Whitehall. They were acutely aware of the financial and political capital that had to be spent on expansion and were only willing to do so when it was of undeniable value or when it was unavoidable.[172] This is why after the 1885 debacle leading to the death of Gordon at Khartoum, the Anglo-Egyptian forces evacuated parts of the Sudan.[173] Muhammad Ahmad was not able, however, to enjoy a long reign as he died of typhus only a few months after Gordon. But this did not spell the end of the Mahdi's empire in the Sudan, as Abdullah ibn Muhammad, styled Khalifa, or 'the successor,' replaced him. Abdullah, who was present at the fall of Khartoum, was by all accounts a skilled general and political leader, and led the Sudan for more than a decade, supressing revolts, and even launching a successful incursion into Ethiopia. Notwithstanding, however, the presence of what they considered to be a dangerous enemy to the south of Egypt, neither the authorities in Cairo nor London sought to reconquer the Sudan in the short term. Despite the massive loss of prestige following from the defeat of British forces, the death of Gordon, and the fall of a large territory,

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[170] Owen, *Lord Cromer*, 229; Bentley, *Lord Salisbury's World*, 248.
[171] Bentley, *Lord Salisbury's World*, 247.
[172] A.N. Porter, "Lord Salisbury, Foreign Policy and Domestic Finance 1860-1900" in Lord Blake and Hugh Cecil, eds. *Salisbury: The Man and His Policies* (London: Macmillan, 1987), 173-174.
[173] Baring to Rosebery, 23 February 1886, FO 633/6.

Baring was much more focused on ensuring that the affairs of Egypt were put on a stable footing before adding the conquest and government of the Sudan to his responsibilities.[174]

Only at the end of the 1890s did Baring and Salisbury deem it possible to successfully conquer the Sudan. Over several months in 1898 a British and Egyptian combined force under the Sirdar (commander) of the Egyptian Army General Herbert Kitchener invaded and subjugated the Sudan.[175] However, as if to demonstrate that the British were not going to be bound by any single doctrine of rule, the Sudan, though technically under a system called a condominium, which meant that the British and Egyptians shared sovereignty, was in fact governed through methods of direct rule.[176] In Khartoum, beginning with Kitchener himself, a British governor-general supervised a largely British administration of the Sudan. Through this we can see the highly contextual nature of British colonial rule. Sudan, as opposed to Egypt, lacked a monarchical or aristocratic class who could be made to collaborate with the British authorities. Hence, after 1898, Europeans were deployed in larger numbers to fill roles which in Egypt or princely India would have been filled by local elites.[177]

In so many ways Egypt was a territory under British indirect rule but not formally a part of the empire. Constitutionally the sultan in Constantinople was sovereign and the khedive ruled in his name, while the senior British official in Cairo was only a consul-general. While much was done to maintain this façade of Egyptian autonomy, the British were unable or unwilling to forgo the use of some of the theatrical tools of indirect rule,

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[174] Tignor, *Modernisation and British Colonial Rule in Egypt*, 84-85; Owen, *Lord Cromer*, 199.
[175] M. W. Daly, *Empire on the Nile: The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan 1898-1934* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 31.
[176] Daly *Empire on the Nile,* 71-73.
[177] Ahmed Ibrahim Abu Shouk, "Governors of Kordofan (1821-1955)" *Sudanic Africa*, 8 1997: 70.

specifically the granting of knighthoods and using events to capture the symbolic

relationship between the consul-general and the khedive.[178] The dynamic between the

consul-general and khedives was very much like that between an British Indian resident

and a top ranking Indian prince, and the nature of British indirect rule in Egypt was

mirrored in the way these two parties played their public rolls.

The offices of consul-general and khedive were both politically and symbolically

powerful.[179] The khedive's authority came from his extensive legislative, executive, and

legal powers enshrined in the Organic Law, like an Indian prince, he was no impotent

constitutional monarch. The khedivate retained an active political function and made

decisions about the government of Egypt. His powers, however, could be challenged by

other political figures, like members of his cabinet, and of course the consul-general.

Baring's power, on the other hand, was extra-constitutional. Unlike the khedive his

authority was entirely based on the fact that he was the agent of the occupying power

who issued orders to government officials, British and Egyptian alike. He was the power

beside the throne, his role was public but not quite official; he held no Egyptian

government office but directed those who governed Egypt.[180] Tewfik's successor as

khedive, Abbas II, recalled that Baring was so powerful during his reign and that of his

father that the majority of Egyptian politicians of importance simply demurred to the

consul-general's wishes.[181]

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[178] Owen, *Lord Cromer*, 265.
[179] Owen, *Lord Cromer*, 110.
[180] See Baring MSS, FO 633.
[181] Abbas Hilmi II, *The Last Khedive of Egypt*, 71.

The British regime in Egypt, however, was not maintained entirely through bureaucratic means. Baring occupied a ceremonial place grander than the average consul-general, but still less ostentatious than a viceroy. Indeed, many of the symbolic manifestations of his role and the British occupation are similar to those of a political agent in an important Indian state. Michael Fisher has described the ceremonial functions of the British resident in princely India in the following passage: "Because the British normatively recognized the legitimacy of the Indian Rulers, seeking not direct conquest but rather indirect rule through them, the Residents could not simply destroy or totally rewrite the traditions of the courts. Instead, the Residents had to work within these traditions."[182] In Egypt at the end of the nineteenth century the case was effectively analogous. To generalise, in a directly ruled territory the viceroy or governor was supreme within the borders of his colony, and personages, even of high status, would meet at him at his residence. In Egypt Baring, despite being hugely powerful, was always seen to attend on the khedive and to act as his social junior.[183] Khedive Abbas II noted in his memoirs that although he was critical of Baring's policies, he conceded that Baring was publically deferential to him and attended on him in his palace.[184] Abbas was acutely aware of both Baring's power but also of his unofficial place and was keen to note: "Egypt, as far as I know, has never been conquered by England nor has it been counted as one of its colonies."[185] This statement may appear slightly deluded, since the British most certainly did conquer Egypt, or at least occupy it in 1882, but it

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[182] Michael H. Fisher "The Resident in Court Ritual, 1764-1858" *Modern Asian Studies*, 24 (3) 1990: 431.
[183] Baring to Granville, 15 September 1883, FO 633/6.
[184] Abbas Hilmi II, *The Last Khedive of Egypt*, 69.
[185] Abbas Hilmi II, *The Last Khedive of Egypt*, 73.

demonstrates the degree to which Abbas was insistent that he was a monarch and that the British, while clearly powerful, did not monopolise political power in the state. This is a nearly identical relationship, though on a larger scale, to that between a resident and rulers in India described by Fisher, and very much akin to those in other indirectly ruled Muslim states of the British Empire.

A further illustration of the correlation between the khedive and Indian princes can be seen in the use of a common symbol of indirect rule, knighthoods. The British inducted each of the three khedives, Ismail, Tewfik, and Abbas, into multiple orders of knighthood. What is especially interesting about the knighthoods granted to the khedives was how the specific orders of knighthood they were inducted into reflected their role within the empire, and how this changed over the last decades of the nineteenth century. Both Ismail and Tewfik were made knights of the Order of the Bath and of the Star of India at the highest rank, the GCB and the GCSI, respectively.[186] As was discussed in Chapter II, the Order of the Star of India was invented especially to reward Indian princes and other collaborators and senior functionaries in post-rebellion India. The induction of two Egyptian khedives into the Star of India, including Ismail who was the first person without a direct connection to British India to receive the honour, illustrates the place of Egypt in the minds of mid-Victorian imperial elites.[187] Egypt was an 'oriental' state and was important because it was the gateway to India. Just as the Suez Canal was the geographical iteration of this relationship, the two khedivial GCSIs were its ceremonial ones. However, unlike most Indian princes, Ismail and Tewfik were also granted the

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[186] *India List and India Office List for 1885,* (London: Harrison & Sons, 1885), 144.
[187] *India List and India Office List for 1885,* 144.

GCB; this honour was much less common in India and was only granted to the senior

most princes, like the Nizam of Hyderabad, and then only rarely.[188] This was in the

spectrum of British knighthoods a more senior and prestigious honour than the Star of

India.   The granting of the Order of the Bath suggests the singular importance of the

khedive as the sole ruler of a large state, as opposed to the Indian princes who, including

even the Nizam, were seen as members of a ruling class. It also acknowledges, albeit

indirectly, that the khedive was nearly akin to an independent prince. Abbas II would

also receive the GCB like his father and grandfather; however, unlike them he was not

given the GCSI. Rather he was granted the highest level of the Order of St Michael and

St George, the GCMG, the order of knighthood reserved for colonial and diplomatic

officials.[189] Taken together the consistent granting of top-level knighthoods to the

khedives is not surprising. However, it is the shift from hybrid-Indian honours to an

equally prestigious but more generally 'imperial' collection of honours that is significant.

This shows that between the reign of Ismail and his grandson Abbas II the elite British

conceptualisation of Egypt changed. In effect it shows that the Egypt of Ismail was a key

strategic state essentially connected to the security of India, while by the reign of Abbas

II the state had become more fully ensconced within the British Empire and its ruler was

treated as a asset on his own terms, not just as an outpost or gateway to India. As will be

shown later a similar shift occurred in in Zanzibar as well. Through this it can be seen

that while indirect rule may have been born of Indian experience, and was accomplished

through Indian techniques and structures, it was becoming important at a broader

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[188] *India List and India Office List for 1893,* (London: Harrison & Sons, 1893), 135.
[189] Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 86.

imperial level. In Egypt, concurrent with British expansion in Malaya, indirect rule left

the British Indian sphere and became the standard method for governing Muslims in

nearly all of the later British Empire.

However, the British did not jettison all Indian methods of recognising and

categorising Egyptian elites. In Egypt uniquely outside India a political figure subsidiary

to the ruling prince was also inducted into an order of knighthood. This was for Nubar

Pasha who had served in several important cabinet posts and as prime minister of Egypt

several times under the British occupation.[190] Like the khedives, Nubar was a member of

the Ottoman elite who collaborated with Baring during the first two decades of British

rule. In his discussion of Nubar's importance to the administration of the Egyptian state,

Harold H. Tollefson concluded that "Nubar got his way because he seemed indispensable

to the British"[191] His reward for being indispensable was to be made a GCMG in

1896.[192] The only other instances of office holders beside the monarch receiving

knighthoods in the indirectly ruled parts of the British Empire at this time were in the

larger states of India. Nubar's near contemporary, for example, Sir Kishen Pershad, the

long serving prime minister of Hyderabad who was made a KCIE, and later a GCIE a few

years later.[193] The granting of the high ranking order to Nubar, a practice that only

occurred in Egypt and princely India, is further evidence that Baring's regime can be seen

as analogous to the model employed to govern larger Indian states like Hyderabad.

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[190] Hunter, "Nubar Pasha and the Making of Modern Egypt", 363.
[191] Harold H. Tollefson, "The 1894 British Takeover of the Egyptian Ministry of Interior" *Middle Eastern Studies*, 26 (4) 1990: 548.
[192] *The India and India Office List for 1898*, London: Harrison & Sons, 1898), 136.
[193] *The London Gazette - supplement* (30 December 1902), III; The London Gazette (23 June 1910), 4477.

When Gladstone dispatched British forces to occupy Egypt in 1882, it is unlikely that he thought that they would still be occupying the country in 1954. British officials, especially Dufferin and Baring, were able to make key political decisions that led to Egypt acquiring a position analogous to an Indian princely state. From the outset, when Lord Dufferin had only been in Egypt for a few days, the example of the resident-ruler relationship from India was the one model that he thought best suited to govern Egypt.[194] Dufferin knew that no matter how much power he was able to wield as the plenipotentiary of the occupying nation, he was not going to be able to annex Egypt outright for Britain. Instead, the changes he made to the Egyptian state, the Organic Law he had devised, and the instructions he dispatched to the Cabinet in Whitehall, all made it possible for an undeclared and veiled form of indirect rule to be extended over Egypt.

Despite, however, the apparently temporary nature of this rule, under Dufferin's successor, Baring, it was certainly not tenuous. Baring took the structures of the Egyptian state that were a combination of a weak and unpopular khedivate combined with elite-dominated government ministries created by Dufferin's Organic Law and was able to manipulate them into a colonial regime that satisfied his political superiors wish for a stable and secure Egypt. The British consul-general in Egypt operated much like the British agent in Hyderabad or any other large Indian state. He was positioned differently from a viceroy or governor: the latter were firmly at the centre of the public life, the consul-general instead was like a political agent, operating slightly offstage to achieve British goals. To this end the khedives were drawn into the same invented

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[194] Dufferin to Granville, 6 February 1883, FO 78/3565.

ceremonial tradition of chivalric orders of knighthood, placing them in the company of

the princes of India and other hereditary rulers under the British Empire.[195]

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[195] Cannadine, *Ornimentalism*, Chapter 7.

V

The Persian Gulf and Zanzibar

In 1890 the island Sultanate of Zanzibar was declared a British protectorate and over the next few years a comprehensive system of indirect rule was established. This was a project of the Foreign Office whose senior representative in the sultanate was titled Political Agent and Consul-General.[1] To the north, in the Persian Gulf, the Government of India and not the Foreign Office reigned supreme. From 1899 an aggressive forward policy of the Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon, drew Kuwait and Oman under indirect rule and entrenched it in Bahrain and the Trucial States (the modern United Arab Emirates).[2] This was a definitive moment in Britain's imperial role in the Arab world and transformed long-standing informal hegemony in the Western Indian Ocean into a formalized colonial relationship. Though the British had been a major power in the region since the beginning of the nineteenth century, their policy in the Arab world at the end of the century took a dramatic shift, expanded influence was the aim, and the methods for this were drawn from India.[3]

In none of the regions which are the subject of this study were Indian ideas and practices more significant in configuring indirect rule than in the Persian Gulf and Zanzibar. In Malaya, Egypt, and later Nigeria, India was a catalyst or exemplar of indirect rule, but it was officials of the Foreign and Colonial offices who were actually

[1] Rennell Rodd, *Social and Diplomatic Memories 1884-1893*, (London: Edward Arnold 1922), 295-296.
[2] Curzon to Hamilton, 21 September 1899, L/P&S/7/116 (IOR)
[3] Onley, *The Arabian Frontier of the British Raj*, 210.

imposing the new regime. In the Persian Gulf, it was agents of the Government of India

who established indirect rule. And in Zanzibar the sultanate itself was created, in 1861,

by an edict of the Viceroy of India, only later did it come under the authority of the

Foreign Office. Between 1890 and 1904 in Kuwait, Oman, and Zanzibar, Britain's

informal presence dating back a century was converted into indirect rule, which had

already been imposed on Bahrain and the Trucial states in preceding decades. Agents of

the Government of India during Lord Curzon's viceroyalty (1899-1905) transformed

British relationships with the Gulf States into what in effect would become the last

princely states of the Indian Empire and in Zanzibar the Foreign Office imposed a

parallel system of indirect rule during the 1890s.

After outlining the events that led to indirect rule over these states, this chapter

will explore the nature and extent of colonial authority which was imposed onto already

existing political structures. Following that will be a survey of the various methods

through which the British imposed their rule in these states. As in India, each state had a

unique form of indirect rule imposed. This meant that in Kuwait, for example, the

imperial presence was minimal, with only a single British agent and a treaty in which the

ruling sheik ceded control over some foreign policy and defence matters to Calcutta.[4] In

Zanzibar, on the other hand, the Foreign Office imposed much more comprehensive

controls over the sultan's government. Europeans appointed by the British sat in his

cabinet and the political agent had considerable control over many matters of internal

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[4] B. J. Slot, *Mubarak Al-Sabah, Founder of Modern Kuwait, 1896-1916*, (London: Arabian Publishing, 2005), 115.

policy as well as total control over the state's external relations.[5] Yet in each of these cases the effort was made to ensure that essential elements of indirect rule were preserved, namely that the local ruler was retained and pre-colonial institutions continued to function but under the supervision of British agents.

In all of these places the British collected vast amounts of information that was used to construct and justify their dominant role. Part of this dominance manifested itself in ceremonial rituals and these will be considered in the next section of this chapter. The Arab states of the Gulf and Zanzibar were the closest analogues of Indian princely states outside of the Indian subcontinent. Through a mix of knighthoods, gun-salutes, and other theatrical rituals of empire, these sheiks and sultans were placed in the company of the Indian rajas and nawabs. This was not the only way these polities were being recast as Indian states. As the final section of this chapter will show, the political structures of these states were reformulated in a fashion that drew heavily upon Indian antecedents which, when considered in conjunction with the symbolic rituals borrowed from the Raj, illustrates the powerful influence of a distinctly Indian form of indirect rule.

The relationship between the Gulf States, Zanzibar, and the British Indian Empire began long before indirect rule was imposed at the end of the nineteenth century. Indeed, the genesis of British rule in the Western Indian Ocean was brought about by two of the architects of indirect rule in princely India, Lord Wellesley and Sir John Malcolm. In 1800, Wellesley, then Governor-General of India, despatched Malcolm as his envoy to Persia and the Gulf. This mission resulted in a treaty with the Sultan of Oman of the Al

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[5] Arthur Hardinge, "Legislative Methods in the Zanzibar and East Africa Protectorates", *Journal of the Society of Comparative Legislation* 1 (1) 1899: 1.

bu'said dynasty who ruled an empire, based in Muscat, that stretched from Southwest

Asia to the East African coast.[6] At this time the rulers of Oman controlled a state that

was based on a series of fortified ports stretching in the north from Gwadur, in what is

now Baluchistan in Pakistan, through Muscat in Southeast Arabia, and then south to

several ports along the East Africa coast including Mombasa in modern Kenya and the

island of Zanzibar in modern Tanzania. From these ports Omani authority radiated to a

limited degree into the interior of both Arabia and Africa.[7] However, Omani power was

based on seaborne trade not on territorial acquisition.[8] Malcolm's mission to Muscat was

part of Wellesley's larger imperial project which included territorial expansion in India

and in Malaya as well as the rolling back of Napoleon's conquest of Egypt.[9] In response

to French threats, Malcolm persuaded the sultan to engage in a military alliance with the

Company and to allow a British representative to reside in his capital.[10] With Malcolm's

mission the political entanglement between British India and the Arab states of the Gulf

and East Africa began. Over the following decades the British would capitalise on this

foothold to extend their influence in the region.

The next significant British move in the region came in the 1820s when they

made great efforts to extend their control over the sea-lanes in the Gulf.[11] By this point,

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[6] A. K. S. Lambton, "Major-General Sir John Malcolm (1769-1833) and "The History of Persia"" *Iran*, 33, 1995: 99.

[7] Stephen Cooney, "Overseas Companies as Transnational Actors during the European Conquest of Africa" *British Journal of International Studies*, 6 (2) 1980: 158.

[8] Beatrice Nicolini, "Little known aspects of the history of Muscat and Zanzibar during the first half of the nineteenth century" *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, 27, 1997: 193.

[9] John Severn, *Architects of Empire: The Duke of Wellington and His Brothers*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007), 193.

[10] Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties*, XI: 287-288.

[11] Gerald S. Graham, *Great Britain in the Indian Ocean: A Study of Maritime Enterprise, 1810-1850* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 262.

with the Napoleonic threat neutralised and the bulk of India under the Company's control,

the British began to expand their political and economic interests beyond the

subcontinent. This process was seen in Chapter III when on the other side of India Sir

Stamford Raffles was founding Singapore and opening up relations with the rulers of the

Malay states.[12] Agents of the Government of India, aided by the Royal Navy, began to

pursue more aggressively treaty relationships with the tribal rulers on the Arabian coast

of the Persian Gulf. These rulers would a century later gain independence from Great

Britain and form Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates.[13]

In the early nineteenth century, these rulers were not under any other power's

jurisdiction, and were viewed by many as little more than pirate chiefs. Indeed in the

period the region that now forms the United Arab Emirates was labelled by the British as

the 'Pirate Coast'[14] J.B. Kelly suggests that this is something of an overstatement, and

the local residents of the Gulf participated in numerous types of economic activities.

However, he does conclude that there was also certainly what can be called piracy, most

notably in the form of the al-Qasimi tribe, who ruled the emirates of Ras al-Khaimah and

Sharjah, which today form two of the United Arab Emirates. Kelly argues that the al-

Qasimi launched a prolonged assault on European shipping from their base at the mouth

of the Persian Gulf, inflicting losses on the East India Company and other merchants at

the turn of the nineteenth century.[15] The losses to British shipping were significant

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[12] Egerton, *Sir Stamford Raffles: England in the Far East*, 181.
[13] Ravinder Kumar, *India and the Persian Gulf, 1858-1907: a study in British imperial policy* (London: Asia Publishing House, 1965): 17.
[14] James Onley, *The Arabian Frontier of the British Raj, merchants, rulers, and the British in the nineteenth-century Gulf* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 44-45.
[15] J. B. Kelly, *Arabia the Gulf and the West* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980), 61-64.

enough that ships of the Royal Navy were permanently deployed to the Gulf at this time to combat piracy.[16] Kelly's thesis, however, has come under attack from Sultan ibn Muhammad III al-Qasimi, the present Emir of Sharjah. The emir's book, based on his doctoral thesis in history at the University of Exeter *the Myth of Arab Piracy in the Persian Gulf,* argues that Kelly uncritically used British sources which wildly overstated the instances of piracy in the Gulf. Moreover, Sultan ibn Muhammad contends that the British used the 'myth' of endemic piracy in the Gulf as a justification to massively expand their presence.[17] No matter which of these two perspectives is more accurate, the outcome of this period in the Gulf is that the British used the 'myth' or reality of a Persian Gulf that was an untamed maritime frontier to justify an increased role over the local polities.

By labelling the region the 'Pirate Coast', the British were reframing an entire people as a problem which would be 'solved' through the military actions of the Royal Navy and the diplomacy of the Government of India. Through a series of agreements in conjunction with an expanded naval presence, these rulers were compelled by the Government of India to give up raiding ships, thereby making the Gulf safe for British merchant traffic. This was summarised in the first article of the General Treaty with the Arab Tribes of the Persian Gulf of 1820: "There shall be a cessation of plunder and piracy by land and sea on the part of the Arabs, who are parties to this contract, forever."[18] Subsequent treaties with these states, and the powers derived from them,

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[16] J. B. Kelly, *Britain and the Persian Gulf 1795-1880* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 56.
[17] Sultan ibn Muhammad III al-Qasimi, *The Myth of Arab Piracy in the Persian Gulf* (London: Routledge, 1988), xiii-xiv, 99.
[18] Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties*, XI: 235.

transformed the Government of India into an informal ruler over these states, as it secured the legal power to supervise and conduct the relations between them. For the British, with the truce following the treaty of 1820, the once tumultuous 'Pirate Coast' eventually became the pacified 'Trucial States' in which merchants from India dominated trade while the Government of India controlled foreign policy.[19]

The slow expansion of the power of India over the Gulf continued after the end of Company rule. In 1861 Lord Canning, the first viceroy under the Crown, was at the centre of events leading to the creation of a formal regime of indirect rule over the Gulf States and Zanzibar. To settle a succession dispute between two rival claimants to the Omani throne, the viceroy, in what became known as the 'Canning Award', split the Al bu'saidi polity into Arabian and African halves, making one Sultan of Oman and the other Sultan of Zanzibar.[20] The Canning Award illustrates how the British used their dominance in the Indian Ocean region to expand their power by exploiting local regimes. Reda Bhacker explains that the British opportunity came from the last Sultan of both Oman and Zanzibar, Said, who requested British recognition of his wish to disinherit his despised eldest son, Hilal.[21] Although Said need not have worried about Hilal as he predeceased his father in 1851, this move on Said's part to include the British in succession policy led ultimately to the bifurcation of his state. In 1856 Said himself died, leaving in his will a division of property between two of his surviving sons, Thuwaini and Majid, but he did not proclaim a successor to his throne. Bhacker argues that it is unclear

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[19] S. Bose, *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2006), 82.

[20] Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties*, XI: 303.

[21] M. Reda Bhacker, "Family Strife and Foreign Intervention: Causes in the Separation of Zanzibar from Oman: A Reappraisal" *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies,* 54 (2) 1991: 269.

what outcome Said wanted from his will, other than excluding the already dead Hilal, though there were some clues in the division of property. Thuwain, who lived in Muscat, received all of his father's Arabian properties, while Majid, who was based in the southern entrepôt of Zanzibar, received his African properties.[22]

Said's will, therefore, created two claimants for the Omani throne, one based at the capital of Muscat and the other based in the wealthy city of Zanzibar. In the end, however, both of the claimants, secure in their individual bases, were unable to dislodge their rival from power. From 1856 Thuwain reigned as sultan in Muscat and ruled the Arabian territories, and Majid reigned as sultan from Zanzibar and ruled over the African territories. Despite the convulsive nature of breaking a polity into two rival camps, it is not clear if this particular dynastic dispute could have erupted into an open civil war. There were agents of the Company in both cities who cautioned that the British would forcibly stop any aggressive plans the two brothers had. These events were concurrent with the Indian rebellion of 1857-58. However, even during the rebellion British naval forces in the western Indian Ocean were more than a match for any Omani forces.[23] In 1861, with the rebellion in India over and Crown rule firmly in place, the British began to reassert their authority in the region more aggressively. In that year a Government of India mission was dispatched to examine the claims of both parties. The ultimate result of this commission was the Canning Award which effectively confirmed what was by then a five year old status quo.[24] Bhacker, however, also argues that the Canning Award

[22] Bhacker "Family Strife and Foreign Intervention", 272.
[23] Bhacker "Family Strife and Foreign Intervention", 276.
[24] Robert J. Blyth "Redrawing the Boundary between India and Britain: The Succession Crisis at Zanzibar" *The International History Review,* 22 (4) 2000: 787.

did more than give the two brothers official recognition, it also expanded British control by reducing the once large and autonomous Omani Empire to two sultanates who owned their thrones to the British.[25] Therefore, by the middle of the century, British India had become so powerful in the region that they could successfully bifurcate the most important Arab power and create two new states, opening them both up to an expansion of British indirect rule in the ensuing decades.

However, the British did not possess exclusive or legal title to any of the Gulf States or Zanzibar. The region remained only informally under imperial control. James Onley has shown that prior to the last decades of the century the absence of rivals in the western Indian Ocean meant that the British did not need to formalise control to maintain their strategic and economic dominance.[26] It took emerging challenges by other European powers, which occurred over the last quarter of the nineteenth century, to make the British re-evaluate their position in the region, leading to the creation of a more regularized system of indirect rule over these states. The French, Germans, and Russians, were making significant moves that were seen by key individuals in the British imperial establishment as intended to subvert the dominance of the British in the Gulf and East Africa. The French were seen to be challenging the British in Oman in the 1890s, while the Germans first in East Africa in the 1880s, and later in Kuwait at the turn of the century, were gaining influence where the once the British had been the only European

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[25] Bhacker "Family Strife and Foreign Intervention", 280.
[26] Onley, *Arabian Frontier*, 189.

power.[27] The Russians, to make matters worse in the eyes of the British, were especially active in Persia and the Gulf in the 1890s and were closely allied with the French.[28]

The events that compelled the British to impose indirect rule over the Gulf States and Zanzibar came at the conclusion of two of the major geostrategic conflicts of the Victorian era: the 'Scramble for Africa' and the 'Great Game'. British, French, and German rivalry in Africa and Anglo-Russian rivalry in Asia converged in the Persian Gulf states where all three powers had interests. Therefore, to reinforce what they thought to be their threatened dominant position, the Government of India and the Foreign Office underwent an intellectual and political shift with regards to their role in Zanzibar and the Persian Gulf.[29] This shift would ultimately allow for the Arab States of the Gulf to be subsumed by the Indian Empire and a parallel system to be imposed over Zanzibar. By doing this the British were strengthening their control over the Arab-ruled states of the Indian Ocean littoral, and by extension to the Indian Ocean.

In the case of the Persian Gulf states, the British expanded the use of indirect rule, as will be explained more fully below, to prevent them from falling into the hands of other great powers. In Zanzibar the case was reversed. Over the course of the century the British had been the dominant though not exclusive foreign power. In Southeast Africa, Britain's main rival in the 'scramble' from the 1880s onwards was Germany. Like the British, the Germans had a consul in Zanzibar and were actively engaged in

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[27] "German activity" in *Summary of Lord Curzon's Administration: Foreign Department; Volume IV Persia and the Persian Gulf*, 1907, MSS Eur F111/531, 42-45, Marquess Curzon of Kedleston Papers, India Office Records and Private Papers (IOR), British Library.
[28] "Russian designs"; "French activity", in *Summary of Lord Curzon's Administration*, 1907, MSS Eur F111/531, 42, 45. Curzon Papers (IOR)
[29] Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians,* 468.

colonising the mainland of eastern Africa. Their main possession in the region was the

territory directly opposite to the island of Zanzibar, then called German South East Africa,

now part of modern Tanzania. German colonisation of the region began in earnest in

1884 and they rapidly imposed their authority over the large territory.[30] This placed the

Germans in a rather similar position to the British, who were also present in Zanzibar and

were actively colonising portions of the mainland of Africa, north of German South East

Africa, in modern Kenya and Uganda. Therefore, despite the long history of British

interference in the sultanate, including its genesis with the Canning Award, the Germans

at the end of the 1880s were in a position approaching political parity with the British in

Zanzibar.[31]

The Germans, however, under Prince Bismarck elected not to attempt to vie with

the British for control of Zanzibar. Rather following a suggestion from the Prime

Minister Lord Salisbury, they instead traded their interests in that island for that of

another island much closer to Germany: Heligoland, in the North Sea. In an age where

European powers showed little regard for the autonomy or participation of non-

Europeans in their foreign policy, the Zanzibar-Heligoland Treaty of 1890 was one of the

starkest instances. The two powers quite literally exchanged ownership of the islands,

one of which, Heligoland, was indeed British, having been captured and ceded formally

during the Napoleonic Wars, in exchange for the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba, which

belonged, *de jure*, to neither party, but rather to the Sultan of Zanzibar, who had not been

[30] Richard A. Voeltz, "The European Economic and Political Penetration of South West Africa, 1884-1892": The *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 17 (4) 1984: 623.
[31] Emile de Groot, "Great Britain and Germany in Zanzibar: Consul Holmwood's Papers, 1886-1887" *The Journal of Modern History*, 25 (2) 1953: 120.

consulted.[32] This was a classic case of realpolitik in action, in which Salisbury and Bismarck calculated that trading the islands was the best strategic arrangement for both powers.[33] While in Zanzibar, however, what it meant was that any semblance of autonomy that had been enjoyed prior to the Anglo-German treaty was lost and Britain, from 1890, imposed a formal regime of indirect rule whose legitimacy was internationally recognised.

In the Persian Gulf states and Zanzibar, as with the other territories under indirect rule, the primary conduit of imperial authority was the political agent. In Zanzibar the lead British official was titled Political Agent and Consul-General who answered to the Foreign Office in London. In the years following the assumption of the protectorate, the consul-general first gained control over the state's foreign relations and later expanded his control over its administrative and defence operations.[34] A similar situation occurred at the turn of the century in the Persian Gulf, when the informal power of the Government of India was transformed into indirect rule by expanding the number of European officials residing at the courts of local rulers but who reported to Calcutta.[35] During this period there were only ever a handful of British officials in the Gulf and Zanzibar; however, like their counterparts in princely India and the rest of the indirectly ruled empire, they were central to how this type of imperialism was imposed over these states.

[32] D. R. Gillard, "Salisbury's African Policy and the Heligoland Offer of 1890", *The English Historical Review*, 75 (297) 1960: 631.
[33] Gillard, "Salisbury's African Policy", 632.
[34] Conditions agreed to by His Highness Hamoud-bin-Said on his Accession, Enclosure 2 in No. 6. Cave to Salisbury, 29 August, 1896, FO 881/9613.
[35] "British consular establishments, guards and residences", in *Summary of Lord Curzon's Administration*, 1907, MSS Eur F111/531, 52. Curzon Papers (IOR)

This is how Sir Arthur Hardinge begins his account of his tenure as head of the

British administration in Zanzibar:

> Early in 1894, soon after my return to Cairo from Palestine, I received a
> telegram from Lord Rosebery [the Foreign Secretary], offering me the
> post of Political Agent and Consul-General at Zanzibar, in succession to
> Sir Gerald Portal, an old schoolfellow in my tutor's house at Eton, and my
> predecessor in Egypt.[36]

This quotation exemplifies both the tiny size of the coterie of individuals who constructed

the indirectly ruled empire, and the close relationship these middling level administrators

had with top officials like the Foreign Secretary. Hardinge, himself, is also an example

of how individuals and ideas circulated around the British-ruled Muslim world. Like so

many others in the Indian, diplomatic, and colonial services, he was educated at Eton and

Oxford, before beginning his career in imperial administration. Hardinge worked for the

Foreign Office from the beginning of his professional life in 1880 until retirement in

1920. The two volumes of his memoirs divide his professional experiences into a perfect

'Orientalist' binary, *A Diplomatist in the Europe*, and *A Diplomatist in the East*. As these

titles allude, over his life Hardinge moved back and forth between Europe, the Middle

East, and Africa. Tellingly, the volume dealing with his time attached to the British

missions in Spain, Russia, Belgium, and Portugal plays up his diplomatic activities as he

reached the summit of his career as Ambassador to Spain in 1913.[37] The volume dealing

with the portions of his career in 'the East' tends to focus on his role in governing subject

peoples. This shows that for Hardinge and his colleges the job of the Foreign Office was

diplomatic in the West and colonial in at least parts of the East. In effect, the role of

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[36] Arthur Hardinge, *A Diplomatist in the East*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1928), 80.
[37] Arthur Hardinge, *A Diplomatist in Europe*. (London: Jonathan Cape, 1927)

British officials posted Europe was to work with their peers in the governments of other powers, while in Asia and Africa these very same officials did not think the local powers as capable of autonomy, and hence sought to dominate them.

Hardinge's career as a colonial administrator began on Baring's staff in Egypt, before becoming the Foreign Office's man in Zanzibar and East Africa in the 1880s and 90s, and ends with his tenure as Minister at Tehran between 1900 and 1905. These three postings, in Egypt, Zanzibar, and Persia, demonstrate in one life how individuals were transmitted around the indirectly ruled world.[38] In Cairo Hardinge worked under Baring and even acted in his stead when the consul-general was on leave in Britain. In this capacity he witnessed and participated in the functioning of the largest of the indirectly ruled Muslim states outside of India, and expanded his knowledge of Islamic religious, legal, and cultural practices. From Egypt Hardinge was promoted to become Political Agent in Zanzibar where he headed the regime of indirect rule of the sultanate. His last posting in the East was as British Minister at Tehran. As such he was head of the British diplomatic mission in Persia which answered to the Foreign Office, but he worked with the Government of India's Political Resident for the Persian Gulf who supervised the indirect rule of the Gulf States.[39] Therefore, during the half of his life in the East, Hardinge served with British regimes in Egypt, Zanzibar, and the Gulf when the former was in its second decade of indirect British rule, and the latter two were being drawn under this form of colonialism.

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[38] Hardinge, *A Diplomatist in the East*, 350.
[39] Hardinge, *A Diplomatist in the East*, 332-334.

Hardinge was the head of a very small staff of British officials who were aided by a handful of Indian clerks based in the city of Zanzibar.[40] The function of the Political Agency was threefold. Firstly it was the institution through which the government of the sultanate, which by the 1890s meant the neighbouring islands of Zanzibar and Pemba, was supervised. The agency also was charged with overseeing the direct colonial administration of large parts of British East Africa which would become modern Uganda and Kenya. The occupation of Egypt in 1882 and the Berlin Conference of 1884-85 had triggered the European carve-up of Africa. Before this much of East Africa had been under the dominance of the Al bu'said dynasty for more than a century. Some of the first regions affected by the scramble were in the east, with the Germans and British in some cases taking land with the permission of the Sultan of Zanzibar and at other times simply seizing it.[41] The end result, no matter if the sultan acquiesced or not, was that by 1890 his authority did not extend beyond the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba as the Europeans had effectively taken over the mainland.[42] Finally, the agency retained more conventional consular and diplomatic functions, providing aid and advice to British and some foreign nationals in Zanzibar, and liaising with other regional colonial powers like the neighbouring German colonial authorities in South East Africa.[43]

In addition to the agents of the Foreign Office who worked for the consul-general, there were also a few British officers seconded to the Government of Zanzibar itself.

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[40] Rodd, *Social and Diplomatic Memories*, 295.
[41] Gillard, "Salisbury's African Policy", 632.
[42] Voeltz, "The European Economic and Political Penetration of South West Africa", 635.
[43] Hardinge, *A Diplomatist in the East*, 101.

They worked for the sultan and were paid from his revenues. [44] In his memoirs,

Hardinge's predecessor Sir James Rennell Rodd provided a summary of the British

personnel in Zanzibar and their function:

> The staff at the Agency consisted of a Consul, Lieut. Smith (an ex-naval officer), and two Vice-Consuls, Mr. (now Sir) Basil Cave and Mr. Cornish. There was a well-organized office with Parsee clerks and excellent interpreters. Then there were Mathews and Hatch, with Strickland at the Customs, and one or two other Englishmen who worked under the Government…This little group of Englishmen, acting under the much-abused Foreign Office, and using native and in a few cases Indian instruments, held on tenaciously to a precarious position in East Africa with no material force behind them except for the two or three light cruisers or gunboats on the station. [45]

This passage, in addition to demonstrating how thin on the ground were the British in the

indirectly ruled empire, also captures the stoic and 'much-abused' self-image to which so

many political agents and residents subscribed. The architects of indirect rule, like

Hardinge and Rodd, were always keen to highlight how they relied on the force of

personality with only the minimal number of British personnel. Importantly, as will be

shown below, the authorities in Zanzibar and the Gulf could always call on the Royal

Navy which could not be said for other colonies far from the ocean.

It is clear that the consul-general and his staff at British Agency held enormous

power over the state of Zanzibar. What is less certain is how this power effected the

traditional political structures and the powers of the sultan and other local elites. In the

following passage from 1899, Hardinge gives his account of the role of the various actors

in the government of Zanzibar, stressing the centrality of his office:

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[44] Hardinge, A Diplomatist in the East, 89, 95; Rodd, *Social and Diplomatic Memories*, 288-89.
[45] Rodd, *Social and Diplomatic Memories*, 295-296.

The Zanzibar Protectorate consists of the two islands of Zanzibar and Pemba, and is governed by the Arab Sultan of Zanzibar and a ministry largely European, the European members of which can only be removed by the Sultan, with the consent of the British Political Agent and Consul-General, as representing the protecting Power. The British agent is, moreover, the channel of communication between the Zanzibar Government and foreign powers, and manages, under the supervision and direction of the British Foreign Office, the foreign relations of the Sultanate. Zanzibar therefore bears a close resemblance to one of the feudatory states of British India.[46]

Some historians have argued that the colonial apparatus that was imposed on Zanzibar after 1890 was actually British direct rule hidden behind the superficial facade of the sultan's court. Both J.E. Flint and Abdul Shariff contend that during the brief time that Sir Gerald Portal was consul-general between 1891 and 1893, the British permanently seized control of all of the important aspects of the government of the state. Flint states that "Portal undertook what can only be described as a *coup d' etat*. He seized control of the Sultan's finances and administration…"[47] Shariff agrees with Flint's assessment and even quotes this same passage.[48] Their assessment assumes that because the British took charge of some key functions of the state, the role of the sultan was reduced to that of a puppet and hence British Zanzibar became just another part of the empire run on European lines by British officials.

However, this is not the only assessment of this period of Zanzibar's relationship with the British Empire. Norman Bennett in his *History of the Arab State of Zanzibar*, counters this view by arguing that despite the loss of some political power, the system set

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[46] Hardinge, "Legislative Methods in the Zanzibar and East Africa Protectorates", 1.
[47] J.E. Flint, "Zanzibar 1890-1950" in Vincent Harlow and E.M. Chilver, eds. *History of East Africa*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), 462.
[48] Abdul Shariff, *Zanzibar Under Colonial Rule*, (London: J Curry, 1991), 250.

up after 1890 was predicated on cooperation between the British and the sultan's government. Not surprisingly there was friction at times, and the British almost always got their way, but for the most part this was done in a manner sensitive to the interests and traditions of the sultan and the Arab aristocracy that had traditionally governed the islands.[49] An example of this, which will be expanded upon below, was the exceedingly slow processes by which the British ended slavery. Negotiations were handled in a way which would not upset the traditional political or economic power of the Arab elites who governed Zanzibar.

Consequently, a level of continuity from earlier periods marked the post-1890 regime in the sultanate. Flint and Shariff focus on the policies of one short-lived consul-general, Portal, to argue that his actions prove that indirect rule was a veil for direct rule in Zanzibar. While Bennett's argument takes into account the actions of several officials over longer period of time, and is much more consistent with the documentary evidence as found in the secret correspondence along with the memoirs of key actors. Bennett's perspective also more closely conforms to Hira Singh's argument, as discussed in Chapter II, that to dismiss the role of the indirectly ruled prince ignores the bilateral collaboration that defined indirect rule.[50] This is especially marked in places like Zanzibar and the Gulf states where the official British presence comprised only a few individuals, meaning that much of the administration lay outside their control.

In the Persian Gulf states of Kuwait, Bahrain, the Trucial States, and Oman, the situation was much the same as in Zanzibar: British residents were deployed to impose

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[49] Norman Bennett, *A History of the Arab State of Zanzibar*, (London: Harper & Row, 1978), 178-181.
[50] Singh, "Colonial and postcolonial historiography and the princely states", 16.

and exercise indirect rule. In the Gulf, this expansion of British control took place about a decade after that in Zanzibar and replaced a much older and informal system of local and Indian residents.[51] Prior to 1899, India's establishment in the Persian Gulf consisted of the Political Resident, Persian Gulf, who was based in Bander Abbas, Persia, and reported to the Government of India.[52] Under the political resident were subordinate Europeans agents at Muscat and Basra, in Turkish Arabia (modern Iraq).[53] These individuals were expected to liaise with local authorities as well as to represent the interest of local British subjects, mostly Indian, who played a large role in the regional economy as merchants.[54] This, however, was not the only British presence in the Gulf. James Onley has shown in *the Arabian Frontier of the British Raj* that prior to Curzon's viceroyalty, Indian authority in the Gulf was exercised through 'native' agents. Onley's work contends that over the course of the nineteenth century the British in India employed native agents throughout the Gulf. To the British a 'native' was a non-European; in other words, Arab, Persian, or Indian merchants who worked and lived in a Gulf and whose mercantile activities gave them access to local information networks.

These individuals were tasked with both representing British interests and collecting information, all the while continuing to work as merchants, traders and the like. In many ways these native agents were ideally suited for this type of work given that their livelihoods required them to be aware of local events and be in contact with indigenous political officials. Being from the Gulf meant they were fluent in Arabic, aware of local

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[51] Onley, *The Arabian Frontier of the British Raj*, 218-221.
[52] "British consular establishments", in *Summary of Lord Curzon's Administration*, 1907, MSS Eur F111/531, 52. Curzon Papers (IOR)
[53] B. C. Busch, *Britain and the Persian Gulf*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), Appendix H.
[54] Onley, *The Arabian Frontier of the British Raj*, 70.

customs and practices, and thus were able to develop more intimate relationships with key actors.[55] Onley argues that this network of these individuals was ideal for maintaining informal British control over the Gulf throughout the nineteenth century. However, when authorities in Calcutta, the viceroy Lord Curzon foremost amongst them, wanted to impose a formal regime of indirect rule over the Gulf states, native agents were almost completely displaced by European 'professionals'.[56]

Strengthening the British Empire in the East was a role long sought by Curzon. Since being a schoolboy at Eton and later at Balliol College, Oxford, he had been aiming for high imperial office. Oxford, much more so than any other university in Great Britain, was an imperially-minded institution.[57] The man that personified the relationship between the university and the empire was the master of Balliol College during Curzon's time, Benjamin Jowett. Jowett was a classicist who in his long career at the university strove to replace its airy, disinterested, and anachronistic insularity with a broader world view based on public service and duty to the state and empire.[58] In particular, Jowett was instrumental in having several Oxford graduates, particularly from Balliol, join the highest echelons of the colonial service and the Government of India.[59] Curzon would in fact be the third successive viceroy, after Lansdowne and Elgin, to have been an undergraduate at Jowett's Balliol.[60] So too was Sir Walter Lawrence, Curzon's private

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[55] Onley, *The Arabian Frontier of the British Raj*, 218-221.
[56] Onley, *The Arabian Frontier of the British Raj*, 213.
[57] Richard Symonds, *Oxford and Empire* (London: Macmillan, 1986), 10-12.
[58] Symonds, *Oxford and Empire,* 27-9.
[59] David Gilmour, *Ruling Caste: Imperial Lives in the Victorian Raj* (New York: John Murray, 2005), 60-63.
[60] Gilmour, *Ruling Caste*, 63.

secretary in India.[61] After his formal education Curzon launched a career as a part-time

Conservative MP and a full-time world traveller. This allowed him to become a self-

taught authority on numerous topics pertaining to the history, geography, and politics of

Asia in preparation for his goal of attaining the viceroyalty of India.

By the time the prime minister, Lord Salisbury, chose to place him at the head of

the Government of India in 1898, the thirty-nine year old Curzon was already a published

author with scholarly books on the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Far East.[62] He had

also held posts in Salisbury's Conservative administration, beginning as the prime

minister's assistant private secretary and advancing to parliamentary under-secretary, first

at the India Office and later at the Foreign Office. All of his studies, travels, and junior

government posts shaped his viceroyalty, and when he arrived in India he had a long list

of priorities meant to entrench and improve British authority. Chief among his goals was

to consolidate the frontiers of the Indian Empire, of which the Persian Gulf was to be its

western boundary.[63]

Curzon's strategic vision for the frontiers of the Indian Empire, and the Persian

Gulf in particular, was based on securing the interests of the British and excluding those

of other powers. In his 1892 book on Iran and its environs, *Persia and the Persian

Question*, the young Tory MP waxed jingoistically about what he viewed as Britain's

benevolent history in the Gulf. After giving an account of the efforts of the Government

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[61] Symonds, *Oxford and Empire*, 39. See also Sir Walter Lawrence, *The India we Served* (London: Cassell, 1928).

[62] See George Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, 1892); George Curzon, *Problems of the Far East* (London, Longmans, 1894): George Curzon*, Russia in Central Asia* (London: Longmans, 1889).

[63] James Onley, "Raj Reconsidered: British India's Informal Empire and Spheres of Influence in Asia and Africa", *Asian Affairs, the Journal of the Royal Society for Asian Affairs* 40, 2009: 44-55.

of India and the Royal Navy to suppress what they called piracy, Curzon concluded by saying that if a British minister ever conceded a foothold for the Russians in the Gulf he would consider him a "traitor to his country."[64] A little over a decade later, when sent out as viceroy, Curzon's perspectives had not changed. He still viewed the role of the British in the Gulf as one of benign protection. In *Persia and the Persian Question* Curzon wrote of his fears that Britain's position in the Gulf was being challenged and moreover that officials in London were likely to do nothing about it. In this context, therefore, Curzon's policies in the Gulf were his solution to the strategic problem he had identified a decade earlier.

In 1900, largely at Curzon's instigation, the Government of India's European establishment in the Gulf began to expand, first with the creation of two more political agents who were under the Political Resident, Persian Gulf, stationed at Bahrain and the strategically important Musandam Promontory, a peninsula at the mouth of the Gulf that forms the southern side of the Straits of Hormuz. Later, in 1904, an additional political agent was tasked with representing the Government of India in Kuwait. While this may only have constituted a few additional personnel, in reality it was a considerable expansion of British India's presence in the Gulf. Each of these new agencies required offices and living quarters to be constructed in the capitals of the states in which they were based, which meant the physical presence of the Government of India in the form of buildings, each of which was guarded by troops from the Indian Army.[65] These frontline

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[64] Curzon, *Persia*, 465.
[65] "British consular establishments, guards and residences", in *Summary of Lord Curzon's Administration*, 1907, MSS Eur F111/531, 51. Curzon Papers (IOR)

personnel were the face of the Government of India, and they were in close contact with

very senior decision makers in Calcutta, including Curzon and Sir Walter Lawrence, his

personal secretary.[66]

With these individuals residing at rulers' courts, the Government of India was

personally represented and was able to keep an eye on the administration of these states.

An example of this was the appointment of Percy Cox to Muscat. For much of the 1890s

the French had been active in Oman, both granting French flags and therefore legal

protection to a large number of Omani ships, as well as pushing for the establishment of a

coaling station near Muscat.[67] In 1899, Curzon issued a memorandum to Sultan Faisal,

cataloguing in detail his problems with the French and his instructions to the sultan on

how to respond. The memorandum adopted a threatening tone, especially in article

eleven, where Curzon promises to cut off a financial subsidy and any "…assistance,

whether diplomatic or military, which you and your predecessors have enjoyed…"[68]

This was meant to force Faisal to pull back from the French. However, as the ultimatum

alone was not thought sufficient to guarantee a compliant sultan, more permanent

political representation was required to make certain that the Government of India's

interests were respected. Percy Cox was sent to the Persian Gulf to represent this

aggressive new policy.[69] Together, Curzon's memorandum and his appointment of Percy

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[66] Letters and telegraphs to and from the Gulf agents and Curzon and Lawrence can be found in MSS Eur F111/199-215, Curzon Papers (IOR)

[67] Memorandum on the use of the French Flag by subjects of the Sultan of Muscat, 21 October 1901, *Dispatches and Correspondence Connected with the Persian Gulf*, MSS Eur F111/531, Curzon Papers (IOR)

[68] Memorandum [to the Sultan of Muscat], undated, *Dispatches and Correspondence Connected with the Persian Gulf*, MSS Eur F111/531, Curzon Papers (IOR)

[69] Curzon to Hamilton, 24 May 1899, MSS Eur F111/158, Curzon Papers (IOR)

Cox as Political Agent in Oman produced a shift in British India's place in the largest

Gulf state, as is attested in this India Office report:

> It is remarkable fact that the stringent measures of 1899, assisted by the subsequent appointment to Maskat [sic] of Captain Cox, a Political Officers of unusual qualifications whom Lord Curzon personally selected, had the happiest effect upon the attitude of the Sultan towards the British Government, and after the crisis his entire influence was thrown into the British scale…[70]

This is just one example, and perhaps the most dramatic one at that, of the importance of

British agents in the Persian Gulf translating and implementing the Government of

India's policies in the field. After 1899 the French eventually gave up granting their flags

to the Omanis, and any pretence of acquiring a naval base or port in the sultan's

dominions.[71]

The political agents in the Gulf were on the whole officers seconded from the

British or Indian armies who had a penchant for languages and the ability to work in

difficult conditions far from home. Arnold Wilson began his career in the Gulf as a

subordinate political agent under Cox. This period in his career was described in the

preface to his memoirs: in it he attests to the almost missionary zeal that British officials

brought to their role:

> Before the Great War my generation served men who believed in the righteousness of the vocation to which they were called, and we shared their belief. They were the priests, and we the acolytes, of a cult - *pax Britannica* - for which we worked happily and, if need by, died gladly. Curzon, at his best, was our spokesman and Kipling, at his noblest, our inspiration.[72]

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[70] "Oman and Gwadur", in *Summary of Lord Curzon's Administration*, 1907, MSS Eur F111/531, 60. Curzon Papers (IOR)

[71] Busch, *Britain and the Persian Gulf*, 386.

[72] Arnold Wilson, *SW. Persia A Political Officer's Diary 1907-1914* (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), x.

To a large extent this was a self fulfilling prophesy, for while Wilson, Cox and their colleagues were skilfully manipulating the local elites of the Persian Gulf to conform to the dictates of 'pax Britannica' as defined by their masters in Calcutta, they were also manipulating the situation to benefit their own careers. The political agents working in the Persian Gulf demonstrate similar agendas to those serving on the North-West frontier of India who Malcolm Yapp described as working to self-serving ends, by using their "virtual monopoly of information", to influence their superiors.[73] It was through these close relations with local rulers that the political agents were able to implement policies that would intensify British influence over the sheiks and sultans of the Arab shore of the Gulf. In doing so they not only promoted the expansion of the Indian Empire, they did so using the same array of intellectual positions and political techniques that created the Indian princely states.

According to James Onley, the rationale for the replacement of native agents with Europeans was that the officials drawn from the local community were not up to the task of thwarting foreign rivals in the Gulf. While they may have provided the British with excellent service for much of the preceding century of informal dominance, with the arrival of the French, Russians, and Germans, the British needed to send trained individuals who would work fulltime as political agents.[74] In effect, once the Gulf became important on the global stage, it required the presence of full-time officials to ensure that British interests were in safe hands. Of course, experienced native agents,

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[73] Yapp, *Strategies of British India*, 588.
[74] Onley, *The Arabian Frontier of the British Raj*, 214-215.

who were fluent in Arabic and had established relationships with local rulers, were not easy to replace and the few postings in the Gulf that were filled by Europeans prior to 1899, such as the Political Agent at Muscat, were often filled by men sent from India who did not speak Arabic well or at all.[75] Therefore, part of the project of extending indirect rule to the Gulf was selecting qualified Europeans. The individuals that were chosen to replace the native agents were tasked with both conducting relations between Calcutta and the local rulers, and in expanding British knowledge of the region. The first and most influential of these British agents was the aforementioned Percy Cox.

In 1899 Percy Cox was a Captain in the Indian Army seconded to the Indian Political Service. In time he would gain fame as one of the key figures in the British penetration of the Middle East.[76] Before all this, however, came his 'discovery' by Curzon in Somaliland in East Africa. Indian Army officers like Cox, and especially those who had an ability for acquiring languages and an interest beyond the military, were often selected by the Indian Political Service to serve in the more remote and dangerous posts.[77] In 1895 Cox was Assistant Political Resident in Berbera, capital of the Somaliland Protectorate, which was administered by the Government of the Bombay Presidency. It was common for figures of note in the British establishment to stay with Cox on their travels in the area, and in Somaliland the most common purpose for British

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[75] Godly to Curzon, 24 February 1899, MSS Eur F111/158, Curzon Papers (IOR)
[76] Robert Pearce "Cox, Sir Percy Zachariah (1864–1937)", in *the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/view/article/32604 (accessed February 14, 2013).
[77] Edward Ingram, *In Defence of British India: Great Britain in the Middle East* 1775-1842 (London: Frank Cass, 1984), 90-91; Gilmour, *Ruling Caste*, 180.

travellers was big game hunting.[78] However, Curzon was in the region on one of his

numerous pre-viceregal travels through the Indian Empire's sphere of interest and was

evidently impressed with Cox.[79]

In 1899 soon after assuming the viceroyalty Curzon re-established his relationship

with Cox. The new viceroy and senior officials at the India Office were concerned with

the 'quality of the men' then serving as political agents in the Gulf. In a letter to Curzon

in February 1899, Sir Arthur Godley, the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for India,

complained that:

> There seems to be a general opinion here that we suffer from the fact that
> frequent changes are made, and that our men do not, as a rule, know
> Arabic. It is a complaint which I have, of course, often heard before; but
> the other day it was brought up again by Captain Baker, R.N., late of the
> *Sphinx*, who was sent here by Mr. Goschen [the First Lord of the
> Admiralty] to see Lord George [Hamilton] and myself. He spoke highly
> of Fagan and Meade, evidently liked them both, and generally approved
> what they had done; but being led on to discourse further, he spoke
> strongly of the disadvantage under which they lay compared with the such
> a man as the French Resident at Muscat, who has been there a long time
> (and will stay on), knows every one in the place, speaks Arabic well, and
> goes in and out as he pleases. Recent events seem to point to this moral
> pretty clearly. I wonder what you think about it? I confess it seems to me
> that some change is required, *e.g.*, either the Foreign Office should take
> over these posts, or else that you should create a class of specially
> qualified men, speaking Arabic, who would be told that they must spend a
> good long time in the Persian Gulf, and would be paid accordingly. This
> last alternative would be an expensive one; but even so it would preferable
> to the present state of things.[80]

Lord George Hamilton, the Secretary of State for India, went even further in his

criticisms of the men serving in the Gulf:

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[78] Philip Graves, *The Life of Sir Percy Cox* (London: Hutchison & Co. 1941), 33-34.
[79] Curzon to Lord George Hamilton, 24 May 1899, MSS Eur F111/158, Curzon Papers (IOR)
[80] Godly to Curzon, 24 February 1899, MSS Eur F111/158, Curzon Papers (IOR)

"…it is quite evident that Fagan is not quite up to the mark…It seems to me essential that our Agents in the Persian Gulf should, if possible, speak out as to come in direct personal communication with those Chiefs with whom they have to deal. I have an instinctive distrust of Munshis, and I do not hear at all a good account of the individual who acts in that capacity to Fagan."[81]

Hamilton was expressing what was, amongst other things, his concern regarding the acquisition and control of colonial knowledge in the Gulf. Michel Fisher has shown that in nineteenth-century princely India the use of 'Munshis', or translators, came under scrutiny due to a belief they could be corrupted into working against British interests.[82] In the Gulf at the end of the century the situation appeared similar. Christopher Fagan, Resident at Muscat, was thought incapable of doing his job well as he lacked knowledge of Arabic and was forced to rely on his munshi. This posed a problem as it gave far too much power to an individual who Hamilton and others obviously mistrusted, as well as preventing a close relationship between the resident and the sultan. James Onley has demonstrated, however, that while removing the munshi gave the British agent more control, it also reduced his ability to do his job which was to communicate with locals.[83] Cox was sent out to Muscat in 1899 specifically to rectify this problem, and in doing so he became the first of what Sir Arthur Godley called the "class of specially qualified men" serving the Government of India in the Persian Gulf.[84]

In a letter reporting his choice of Cox for this new position, Curzon not only gave a glowing account of his abilities but also a description of the ideal type of agent for the

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[81] Hamilton to Curzon, 3 March 1899, MSS Eur F111/158, Curzon Papers (IOR)
[82] Fisher, "The Resident in Court Ritual 1764-1858", 444.
[83] Onley, *The Arabian Frontier of the British Raj*, 134.
[84] Godly to Curzon, 24 February 1899, MSS Eur F111/158, Curzon Papers (IOR)

Persian Gulf service. These were the individuals who helped to establish the information

regime that would allow for the extension of indirect rule over the Gulf States.

> I have for some time been on the look-out for a good man to replace
> Fagan; and I think I have found him in the person of a Captain Cox, at
> present Political Assistant at Baroda, whom I met in Somali Land some
> years ago, and of whom I formed a high opinion. The officers under
> whom he has served speak in the highest terms of his abilities, tact, and
> power of getting on with Natives. He knows Arabic well, an essential but
> very rare qualification; and he also knows some Persian.[85]

Fagan and his peers were the last elements of the order of political officers who

maintained the informal status quo that had endured for much of the nineteenth century.

Cox is an example of what has been called a "gentleman-officer-scholar"[86] who played a

central role in identifying and collecting colonial knowledge. While Fagan and his cohort

of political agents may have been 'gentleman-officers', they were not 'scholars' of

Arabic and it was knowledge of local languages that Bernard Cohn called the "first step"

in the establishment of the modern colonial state.[87]

The second was for these agents to expand the intellectual basis for colonial rule.

Shortly after the appointment of Cox to Muscat, a full-scale project to expand British

knowledge of the geography, demography, and history of the Gulf was undertaken. To

this end Curzon ordered that two major documents be compiled. These were *The

Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia* and a *Map of Arabia and the

Persian Gulf*.[88] If the commissioning of a gazetteer could ever be called a revolutionary

act, this was one. The image of the Persian Gulf which this work iterated became an

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[85] Curzon to Hamilton, 24 May 1899, MSS Eur F111/158, Curzon Papers (IOR)
[86] Peers, "Colonial Knowledge and the Military in India", 157.
[87] Cohn, *Colonialism and Its forms of Knowledge*, 4.
[88] John Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman, and Central Arabia*, 2 vols. (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, India, 1915), I:i-iii.

ideological justification for British indirect rule. John Gordon Lorimer was commissioned by Curzon in 1902 to lead the mission to produce the *Gazetteer*. He remained in the Gulf leading survey teams and collecting information until 1906 when he returned to India to complete the project.[89] The *Gazetteer* and *Map* together constitute a large repository of physical and political geography. However, in addition to the explicitly geographic elements of the *Gazetteer*, it also contains a detailed history of the region as well as genealogical information detailing the ruling dynasties of the states.[90] The scope and magnitude of the information gathering in the Persian Gulf by the British at this time is unique in the broader history of indirect rule outside of India. While the colonial officials in other territories in this study were overtly employing Indian methods of government, they were doing so with much more limited means. In the Gulf, on the other hand, Curzon, as head of the Government of India, was able to direct substantial resources into the project. It was this direct involvement of the Government of India that explains why the colonial regime in the Gulf was the most closely analogous to the princely states of all the territories in this study. Documents like Lorimer's *Gazetteer*, therefore, represent what the British Indian establishment regarded as information necessary to ensure that they could know and therefore control the Persian Gulf in the same way they controlled the princely states.

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[89] Peter Sluglett, "Lorimer, John Gordon (1870–1914)," eds. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/view/article/38933 (accessed February 14, 2013).
[90] Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf,* I: Part 3 "Tables and Maps".

The compilation of colonial knowledge in gazetteers and maps was a common

practice by the end of the nineteenth century, especially in India.[91] *The Imperial*

Gazetteer of India, first published in 1881, has been described as "one of the largest and

most influential exercises in imperial information gathering undertaken in the nineteenth

century."[92] It was a triumph of centralised cataloguing of geographical and statistical

knowledge. In this context Lorimer's work on the Persian Gulf can be viewed as an

appendix to the *Imperial Gazetteer*. With it the Persian Gulf was added to the same

informational system that the Indian Subcontinent had already been drawn into by the

British, paving the way for the Gulf States to be subsumed under the same regime as the

princely states.

The contents of Lorimer's *Gazetteer* betray both what was considered to be

relevant colonial knowledge and how British officials imagined the Persian Gulf

politically, geographically, and historically. An example of how the *Gazetteer* implicitly

justified British rule over the Gulf lies in its extensive historical volumes. In the guise of

an impartial narrative, Lorimer constructs a history of the region in which the Persian

Gulf is the stage for a triumphal progress that concludes with the rescuing of the Arab

states from other foreign powers by the British. The local elites are relegated to

subservient roles, unfit to rule without outside guidance. The first chapter is titled "From

the appearance of the Portuguese in 1507 to the foundation of the English East India

Company in 1600" and is representative of the historical scope and form of the

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[91] Driver, *Geography Militant*, 39-40.
[92] J. S. Cotton rev. S. Gopal, "Hunter, Sir William Wilson (1840–1900)," in *the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/view/article/14237 (accessed 14 February 2013).

Gazetteer.[93] What is presented in this work is an impressively detailed account of the

role of foreign powers in the modern history of the Gulf. The history consists of a

general political history of the entire Persian Gulf region, followed by more detailed

descriptions of the various states on the Persian Gulf littoral from Oman to Persia, and

concludes with several appendices on numerous topics. The principal actors in this

history are shown to be agents of Portuguese, Dutch, Turkey, Persia, France, Russia, the

East India Company, and its successor the Government of India.

A revealing aspect of this history and its relationship to the expansion of British

rule over the Gulf is Lorimer's chosen periodization. For the sections regarding the

general history of the Persian Gulf in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the

narrative is divided into periods based on the various wars between the powers with

interests in the Gulf. Period IV "From the "First" War between the English and the

Dutch in 1653 to the Invasion of Persia by the Afghans in 1722" is typical.[94] After the

Napoleonic Wars, however, this form of periodization shifts to a completely British-

centric one, starting with Period VIII "From the end of the Napoleonic Era in the East to

the final establishment of Maritime Security in the Gulf, 1810-1836".[95] The

establishment of 'maritime security' was a British project, and from this time on all

periods of Persian Gulf history under Lorimer's consideration are based on events in the

British Empire. By Period XI the chronology is simply divided into Indian viceregal

terms, beginning with the "Viceroyalty of Lord Northbrook, May 1872 to April 1876."[96]

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[93] Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf*, I:1.
[94] Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf*, I: 45-79.
[95] Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf*, I:188.
[96] Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf*, I:265.

This continues through all the viceroys until the history ends with the arrival of Lord Curzon.[97] In this narrative, the British are not presented as an interfering power, as was the case with the Persians, Turks, and French. Instead, they are depicted as a benevolent force upholding the local and legitimate rulers in the face of foreign threats.

The official history espoused in John Lorimer's work conforms to what Thomas Metcalf has called the wider nineteenth-century "united historicism"; this allowed the British to conceptualize India to include the Persian Gulf states.[98] Clearly apparent is the essentialised differencing between East and West highlighted by Said.[99] Therefore, not only did the *Gazetteer* set out a historical relationship between the Gulf and India, it also set the Persian Gulf within a wider historical discourse that defined the British Empire as a whole. Under this definition of the history of the Gulf, the British were not only justified in extending indirect rule, they were obliged to do so to preserve traditional and legitimate authority in the Gulf. The section on the history of Qatar, for example, begins with how the ruling families emigrated from Kuwait, and became locked in struggles first against the Persians and then the Wahhabis from the interior of Arabia.[100] The threats from the latter resulted in the ruling dynasty "seeking aid against the Wahhabis"[101] from the British in 1805, after which time the relationship between the British and the rulers of Qatar becomes the principal theme in the narrative, despite the fact that Qatar was part of the Ottoman Empire until 1914.[102] In this context the *Gazetteer*, and specifically its

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[97] Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf*, I**:**319.
[98] Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, 66-67.
[99] Said, *Orientalism*, 202-203.
[100] Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf*, I:787-789.
[101] Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf*, I:789.
[102] Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf*, I:787-835.

historical volumes, became what M. H. Edney has called an "informational weapon" that allowed the British to see the Persian Gulf as part of the Indian Empire.[103]

The importance of the *Gazetteer* began not with its publication in 1908 and 1915, but with its commission in 1902.[104] As a document of colonial knowledge it became relevant long before it had been completed. When Lorimer, Cox, and others were in the field collecting information, under the auspices of Curzon's administration, they were making an overt commitment to acquiring and constructing the intellectual justification for India's indirect rule of the Gulf states. It is telling that the *Gazetteer* was officially secret until 1930.[105] Prior to this only select officials were allowed to read it and even information regarding its compilation and existence was minimal. This is evident even as late as 1925. In a talk about his explorations in South East Arabia to the Royal Geographical Society, Percy Cox was only willing to mention that he was in this part of Arabia to assist Lorimer in the compilation of "a book of reference dealing with the external spheres of interest…"[106] of the Government of India. This indicates that the *Gazetteer* was not only officially secret, but was also not to be mentioned to even the well informed audience of the Royal Geographical Society. The significance of first acquiring this information and constructing the *Gazetteer*, only then to limit its dissemination to senior decision makers in the imperial establishment, is twofold.[107] Firstly the *Gazetteer* itself was not meant to be in and of itself a declaration of British Indian possession of the Gulf. Rather, in the hands of these decision makers, it became

[103] Edney, *Mapping an Empire,* 340.
[104] The volumes of part II were published prior to those of Part I, in 1908 and 1915 respectively.
[105] *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, "Lorimer, John Gordon".
[106] Sir Percy Cox, "Some Excursions in Oman," *Geographical Journal* 66:3 (1925), 203.
[107] Bidwell, "A British Official Guide to the Gulf: Review," 233.

an arsenal of information that helped them to know, govern, and legitimize their role in the Persian Gulf states.

The establishment of a demi-official history of the region provided an intellectual foundation for an expanded British Indian presence. In the case of the Persian Gulf, the status quo was under threat and consequently aggressive policies were undertaken to preserve Britain's historical dominance. The measures undertaken included the acquisition of knowledge and the deployment of more personnel to defend against the feared expansion of French and Russian influence in the region. The writing of a history of the Persian Gulf, as a reference work for officials in the Gulf, Calcutta, and Whitehall, gave official credence to the view of the Persian Gulf states as historical protectorates of the Government of India and therefore as analogues of the indirectly ruled states of the Indian Empire, and not as independent states. Consequently, when the British began at the turn of the twentieth century to tighten their control over the Persian Gulf states, they were doing so on the pretext that they were simply clarifying and solidifying their long standing dominance over these polities.

This historical understanding was subscribed to by a number of major decision makers; in a 1903 letter to the Secretary of State for India, St. John Broderick, Curzon complains:

> To all intents and appearances the State [Oman] is as much a Native State
> of the Indian Empire as Lus Beyla or Kelat, and far more so than Nepal or
> Afghanistan. And yet the solemn and exasperating farce of French
> equality must be kept up, because the French possess a tattered piece of
> paper which it amuses them to flourish in our faces in order to vex us.[108]

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[108] Curzon to Broderick, 21 November 1903, MSS Eur F111/162, Curzon Papers (IOR). Lus Beyla (or Las Bela) and Kelat were princely (or 'native') states in Baluchistan, in the far west of India, and were only

The history of the Gulf presented in the *Gazetteer* established the British as the sole legitimate historical protector of the Gulf States. This provided an intellectual foil to challenge the 'exasperating farce' of the French presence in the Gulf, enabling the Government of India to move deeper into the administration of the Gulf States. Driven by their reading of the history of the Gulf, the British worked to exclude other powers whose presence was deemed a threat to the autonomy of the local rulers. Curzon and his acolytes were not alone in their belief in British India's privileged position in the Gulf, so too did Lord Lansdowne, a former viceroy, who during Curzon's reign was Foreign Secretary and who added diplomatic weight by declaring in Parliament that the British Government would not accept foreign opposition to their authority in the Gulf.[109]

The central conceptual change that the *Gazetteer* helped to promote was the idea of the Persian Gulf as a homogeneous geopolitical entity. Prior to its publication, the Persian Gulf was positioned ambiguously between the Ottoman and Persian political and cultural spheres. Curzon's own work *Persia and the Persian Question* exemplified this. In a book that is largely a study of Iran, an analysis of the Persian Gulf states is appended somewhat awkwardly in isolation from the rest of the narrative.[110] This ambiguity, and the political and strategic uncertainty that came with it, drove Curzon to focus much of the authority of the Government of India on clarifying the place of the Persian Gulf. A confidential internal India Office report on Curzon's foreign relations from 1907 stated

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separated from Oman by a comparatively narrow stretch of water where the Gulf of Oman meets the Arabian Sea. The 'tattered piece of paper' he derides is the 1862 Anglo-French "Declaration respecting the independence of Muscat and Zanzibar", Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties*, XI: 304-305.
[109] Lansdowne, Lords, 5 May 1903, *Hansard*, 71:1348.
[110] Curzon, *Persia*, II:397.

that "…he had evolved a new and original conception of the Persian Gulf as forming in itself a complete and distinct political entity; this idea, latent rather than expressed, dominated his own policy in the Gulf region and may now be regarded as having entered the domain of established political principles."[111] The construction of 'the Persian Gulf' as a discrete geo-political entity at this time meant that the British had intellectually separated these states from Arabia and Persia. Moreover, by defining the Gulf as distinct, the British were able to justify the extension of the authority of the Government of India through indirect rule. In effect, a fundamental aspect of the British conceptualisation of the Persian Gulf was that the states on its Arabian shore were under the historical protection of India, as evidenced by the information presented in *The Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia Gazetteer*, and the actions of Curzon and Lansdowne.

In the Persian Gulf the best example of how the British justified indirect rule though the manipulation of knowledge was the invention of the idea of the Persian Gulf states themselves and their historical relationship with India. In Zanzibar the relationship between colonial knowledge and indirect rule can be seen in the methods through which the British addressed slavery in the sultanate. Slavery was a problem for the colonial authorities for numerous reasons; firstly, the British Government was officially opposed to the enslavement of and trade in people. This, however, was not the real root of the slavery 'problem' in Zanzibar. Between 1890 and 1897 British officials in Zanzibar and London generated numerous letters, reports, and memoranda regarding abolition. While

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[111] "Political Review of the Period", in *Summary of Lord Curzon's Administration*, 1907, MSS Eur F111/531, 80. Curzon Papers (IOR)

the underlining tone of much of this correspondence is based on moral opposition to slavery, the actual debate over how abolition should be effected focused on the religious concerns and economic wellbeing of the Arab slave owners as opposed to the African slaves themselves.[112] Paul Lovejoy and Jan Hogendorn, in their *Slow Death for Slavery: The Course for Abolition in Northern Nigeria*, show how a very similar sequence of events occurred on the other side of Africa in another indirectly ruled territory. They argue that the British were far more interested in preserving order and maintaining the collaboration of local elites than freeing enslaved peoples.[113] The rationale that the British employed for ending slavery resulted in it fading away in a gradual, conciliatory, and incomplete fashion. This particular episode highlights the degree to which indirect rule in Zanzibar was the product of a belief on the part of colonial officials that its society was defined as 'Arab' and 'Muslim', and hence required an understanding of Islamic legal practices and history to make major systemic changes like the abolition of slavery.[114]

By the late eighteenth century Zanzibar was a leading centre for the trade in African slaves.[115] It was, therefore, not surprising that during the nineteenth century the British exerted pressure on its sultans to end first the slave trade and then slavery. The pressure on Zanzibar was part of a much larger global abolitionist campaign in which the British were engaged throughout the century. The first meaningful success of the policy

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[112] See for example Hardinge, "Appendix I: Letter from Hardinge to Lord Kimberly, 26 February, 1895" *A Diplomatist in the East*, 355.
[113] Paul Lovejoy and Jan Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery: The Course for Abolition in Northern Nigeria*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 263.
[114] Bennett, *A History of the Arab State of Zanzibar*, 35.
[115] Hardinge, *A Diplomatist in the East*, 368.

came in 1873 when the British persuaded Sultan Barghash to promulgate a decree legally

ending the trade.[116] This was significant because slavers operating out of Zanzibar

dominated the trade in people between Africa and the Middle East, North Africa, and

beyond into the Ottoman and Persian worlds. W. G. Clarence-Smith argues that this

action made slaving at least more challenging for the slavers, although it is difficult to

measure precisely how much impact the decree had.[117] One of the many issues the 1873

decree did not address was the huge number of slaves resident in the sultan's own

dominions. Figures are not exactly clear as the first census in Zanzibar did not occur

until 1910, but in the last quarter of the nineteenth century the total population of

Zanzibar was about two hundred thousand of which an estimated three quarters were

slaves.[118]

As British power began to solidify in Zanzibar in 1889, new efforts were made to

curb slavery. The first success in these efforts came when Charles Euan-Smith, then

political agent, persuaded Sultan Khalifa to pass an edict freeing the children born to

slaves after 1 January 1890.[119] In theory, the legal practice of slavery would die out with

this decree, since children could no longer be born into bondage and the importation of

slaves from the mainland had been declared illegal in 1873. This still left a considerable

number of individuals, upwards of 140,000 by British estimates, enslaved in the sultan's

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[116] J.R. Mlahgwa and A.J. Temu "The Decline of the Landlords 1873-1963" in Shariff, ed. *Zanzibar Under Colonial Rule*, 141.
[117] W. G. Clarence-Smith, *The Economics of the Indian Ocean Slave Trade in the Nineteenth Century,* (London: Frank Cass, 1989), 133.
[118] Benett, *A History of the Arab State of Zanzibar*, 180, 279.
[119] 'Euan-Smith to Salisbury, 20 June 1890', FO 300/25.

dominions.[120] Therefore, in 1897, during Arthur Hardinge's tenure as political agent,

Sultan Hamoud was compelled to enact a decree abolishing slavery.[121] What is

remarkable about this chain of events leading to the eventual legal end of slavery was that

it happened so gradually. The British had been actively opposing the slave trade and

slavery for most of the nineteenth century, and they had been a major influence in

Zanzibar for much of that time, and acquired status as the legal protector of the state from

1890. And yet only in 1897 was a decree forced through which legally ended slavery,

and moreover slavery and other forms of unfree labour persisted well into the twentieth

century as the British implemented a system of manumission which required the

individual slave to sue for their own freedom. Not surprisingly, given the high level of

control exerted by slave owners over the lives of their slaves, this meant that many

enslaved people simply never were able to exercise the opportunity to gain their

freedom.[122]

        The rationale for British caution was grounded in the central tenant of indirect

rule, the principle that 'Islamic' and 'Arab' laws and traditions had to be maintained,

even if they were imperfectly understood. Throughout the correspondence between

officials in Zanzibar and London regarding abolition we find a focus on ending slavery in

terms conforming to what would be acceptable to the Arab elites. In 1890, for example, a

detailed memorandum 'respecting Slavery in Zanzibar and Egypt' was produced by

officials at the Foreign Office.[123] In this document the anti-slavery policies used in Egypt

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[120] Hardinge, *A Diplomatist in the East*, 368.
[121] Hardinge, *A Diplomatist in the East*, 196.
[122] J.R. Mlahgwa and A.J. Temu "The Decline of the Landlords 1873-1963", 153-154.
[123] Memorandum by Mr. Robertson respecting Slavery in Zanzibar and Egypt, 22 July 1890, FO 300/25.

are expressly selected as a template for Zanzibar because both countries were "under the Mahammedan religious law."[124] The suggestions in this report were not immediately acted upon, however, as even its comparatively conservative measures, the establishment of a Bureaux of Manumission to which slaves could apply for their freedom, was not implemented until 1897. Rather it was felt by Euan-Smith that the progress made in improving the condition of enslaved people, most importantly by freeing the children of slaves, "comprise not only the utmost concession that could be expected from any Oriental Ruler in the situation of the present Sultan of Zanzibar, but that they afford really good grounds for the hope that by their means a practical solution of the question regarding the continuance of the legal status of slavery in Zanzibar may at last be arrived at."[125] In effect the decree of 1890 was to Euan-Smith as large a step as could be expected that an 'Oriental' state could make at once, and that further progress towards full abolition must be slow and measured so as to not upset the social, economic, and political balance of the state. At the forefront was a fear that immediate abolition could undermine British authority and require costly intervention which, in turn, could mean the end of indirect rule.

This is an example of the way that the British conceptualisation of Zanzibar as an Arab-ruled state under Islamic law shaped the function of their indirect rule. Whereas Edward Said argued that the orientalist construction of knowledge led to a binary European-ruler versus Arab-ruled dynamic in the Arab world, the events in Zanzibar and the Gulf suggest that a more complicated hierarchy emerged. Under this regime the

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[124] Memorandum by Mr. Robertson respecting Slavery in Zanzibar and Egypt, 22 July 1890, FO 300/25.
[125] Euan-Smith to Salisbury, 20 June 1890, FO 300/25.

British were placed above local Arab potentates, but these rulers and their aristocratic peers were ranked above their mostly black and Swahili speaking people. This was the justification for stationing European political agents in the courts of these states, while at the same time attempting to understand and exploit Islamic law to affect colonial policy, like the abolition of slavery in Zanzibar. These same entangled hierarchies of class and race were also made manifest through the establishment of a suite of ceremonial activities which highlighted the roles of the European officials and Arab rulers in these states and the wider empire.

As has been shown in the cases of Malaya and Egypt, the British imposed rituals of sovereignty and homage which paralleled ones developed for the princes in India and were meant to show how the rulers of these states were part of a pan-imperial ruling elite. In the Persian Gulf, and to a lesser degree in Zanzibar, rather than create counterparts to Indian rituals, the rulers of these states were actually integrated into the ceremonial superstructure of the Raj. In 1903 an early manifestation of the symbolic integration of one Gulf state in particular, the Sultanate of Oman, occurred during the *darbar* held to mark the coronation of Edward VII.[126] Included among the many Indian princes paying homage to the new King-Emperor was the eldest son and heir of the Sultan of Oman, Prince Sayyid Timur Bin Faisal. [127] This shows that the Government of India, and Curzon in particular who was obsessively involved in organizing the *darbar*, were explicitly associating Oman with the Indian princely states.

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[126] Stephen Wheeler, *History of the Delhi Coronation durbar* (London: John Murray, 1904), 306.
[127] Wheeler, *History of the Delhi Coronation Durbar,* 306.

Of course Oman was not representative of all of the Arab states of the Persian

Gulf and none of the others were represented at the *darbar*. In a more subtle fashion, but

with perhaps more symbolic importance, was the inclusion of the Gulf States in another

imperial institution: gun salutes. As already discussed, the number of guns fired in a

ceremonial salute to a ruling prince was an important symbol of recognition of his

importance to and relative weight within the Indian Empire as well as in Malaya.[128] Each

year the *India Office List* provided a list of all the individuals eligible for a gun salute in

the 'Table of Salutes Fired in India'.[129] Significantly, many of the Gulf rulers begin to

appear on this list from 1904: the Sheiks of Kuwait, Bahrain, and Six of the Trucial Emirs,

ranging from twelve for Kuwait to three for the Trucial states.[130] In the next few years,

the Sultan of Oman was added to the list, with a full twenty-one guns, giving him parity

with the Nizam of Hyderabad and the other senior-most Indian princes.[131] This set the

Gulf rulers apart from all the other princes who are the subjects of this study, for even the

Malayan rulers, while given gun salutes, were not included in the *India Office List*.

The inclusion of the rulers of the Gulf states in the Indian system of gun salutes,

along with the presence of Prince Sayyid Timur Bin Faisal representing his father, the

Sultan of Oman, at the 1903 *darbar*, are evidence that these states were being

symbolically incorporated into the Indian Empire. Zanzibar was largely left out of this

process, being as it was so far away from India and was administered through the Foreign

Office rather than the Government of India. Its rulers did, however, share in one aspect

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[128] Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 45.
[129] *The India List and India Office List 1916* (London: Harrison & Sons, 1916), 195.
[130] *The India Office List for 1903*; *The India Office List for 1904*, 176B.
[131] *India Office List 1916*, 197A.

of the array of British Indian symbols of indirect rule, membership in the imperial orders

of knighthood. At the turn of the twentieth century, the rulers of Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman,

and Zanzibar were all inducted into one or both of the Indian Orders of Knighthood, the

Star of India, and the Order of the Indian Empire. Like the gun salutes, the order and

rank into which the various rulers were inducted reveals much about their position and

importance in the eyes of the British. Oman and Zanzibar were the largest of the Arab

states under British indirect rule and this was reflected in the honours which their rulers

received. The rulers of the smaller states of Kuwait and Bahrain received lesser awards,

and the Trucial Emirs were not considered significant enough to be given any awards at

all.

In Zanzibar the transition to formal indirect rule was marked by a recasting of the

honours which its sultan received. As early as 1880, a decade before Zanzibar became a

protectorate, Sultan Barghash was made a Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished

Order of St Michael and St George, the GCMG, the top rank of the order which was

usually associated with high ranking colonial and diplomatic figures.[132] Zanzibar, which

was already well within the British orbit though indirect rule had not been formalized as

yet, was being treated as a key local ally. Barghash's successor, Khalifa, was also made a

GCMG, but he was the last. [133] Ali, along with Hamad, and Hamud, the three sultans

whose reigns span the period when British indirect rule was being formalized, received

the highest Indian order of knighthood, Knight Grand Commander of the Most Exalted

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[132] Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 87.
[133] Hugh Montgomery-Massingberd, *Burke's Royal Families of the World II Africa and the Middle East* (London: Burke's Peerage, 1980), 263-264; Bennett, *A History of the Arab State of Zanzibar*, 127

Order of the Star of India, the GCSI.[134] This shift in which chivalric order was thought best suited for the rulers of Zanzibar is significant, as it suggests that as the state came under British indirect rule, even though it was through the Foreign Office rather than the Colonial Office or the India Office, its rulers were seen to be equivalent to Arab sheiks and Indian princes. While other African rulers would continue to receive the colonial Order of St Michael and St George, that the Zanzibari rulers were given the Order of the Star of India after 1890 further highlights the extent to which the sultanate had been recast as an 'oriental' and even quasi-Indian state.

The composition of the Star of India and the more junior Order of the Indian Empire were exclusively made up of individuals with a connection to British interests in Asia. Both orders had hundreds of members, the vast majority of whom were British civil and military officials and Indian princes and nobles. In addition, there were also awards made to figures from other parts of Asia and the Arab world. In 1875, as already noted, Khedive Ismail of Egypt was made a GCSI, as was a Persian Prince in 1887, and in 1900 the Emperor of Korea was made a GCIE.[135] These examples were exceptionally rare and suggest that the two Indian orders were meant to reward individuals directly connected with British India as well as recognize the 'Oriental' allies of the British. This can be contrasted with the other orders of knighthood usually associated with colonial and imperial figures such as the Order of St Michael and St George, and the Order of the Bath.[136] These orders were not associated with a single geographical region; indeed,

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[134] Montgomery-Massingberd, *Africa and the Middle East*, 264.
[135] *India Office List of 1905*, 139; 143.
[136] Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 87-88.

African Kings, Canadian Prime Ministers, and British Ambassadors could all expect to

receive the GCMG at the beginning of the twentieth century. In this context the

successive inclusion of three Zanzibari sultans in the Order of the Star of India suggest

that after 1890 the British deemed it to be an 'oriental' state because of its Arab rulers,

despite being located in sub-Saharan Africa.

In *Ornamentalism* David Cannadine notes the vast array of titles and decorations

that were employed by the British. He shows that by the end of the nineteenth century,

the system of awards provided colonial authorities with tools for both rewarding local

allies as well as a method for ranking the comparative position of the ruler and their

state.[137] The awarding to the Sultan of Oman the higher ranking GCIE, and Sheik of

Bahrain with the mid-ranking KCIE, while the emirs of the tiny Trucial states received no

chivalric honours, reveals much about how the British weighed the relative importance of

their states.[138] What Cannadine neglects to explore is the underlying meaning of the

specific orders.[139] This oversight minimises the individual function of the seven extant

chivalric orders after 1877 and eight after 1896; each was generally awarded to different

geographical, social, or occupational groups. That the Arab rulers of the Gulf and

Zanzibar were being solely included in expressly Indian orders suggests that even more

than Egypt and Malaya, these states were seen as analogous to Indian princes. In India,

John McLeod's work has determined that by in large these types of honours were well

received by the princes, and were even sought after distinctions.[140] Elsewhere, including

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[137] Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 85.
[138] Mongomery-Massingberd, *Africa and the Middle East*, 89; 106.
[139] Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 90-95.
[140] McLeod, "The English Honours System in Princely India", 241.

in the Gulf and Zanzibar, it is less clear what the local recipients thought of being inducted into these honours, though the British clearly thought they had value.

Joining the Sultans of Zanzibar in the Indian orders of knighthood during this period were the rulers of Kuwait, Bahrain, and Oman. Mubarak, Sheik of Kuwait, was made a KCIE, in 1911; Isa, Sheik of Bahrain was made a CSI in 1914, and later, in 1919 a KCIE as well, and Turki, Sultan of Oman, was made a GCSI as early as 1886.[141] The most significant example, however, of the granting of an Indian knighthood to an Arab ruler in the Gulf came in 1903 when Turki's successor as Sultan of Oman, Faisal, was made a GCIE in a ceremony presided over by Lord Curzon himself.[142] The knighting of Faisal came in the midst of the viceroy's 1903 state tour of the Persian Gulf which was itself an expression of the importance that key British officials placed on the theatrical and ceremonial demonstration of power over indirectly ruled territories.

Curzon's tour of the Gulf in November and December of 1903 exemplifies the significance of symbolism to the architects of indirect rule. Over several weeks in the winter of 1903, the viceroy, escorted by ships of the Royal Indian Marine and Royal Navy, made grand progress through all of the states of the Gulf being drawn under indirect rule. The first port of call was Muscat before proceeding to the Trucial states, Bahrain, and Kuwait.[143] Curzon planned and organised the trip to be the maritime equivalent of the traditional viceregal tour in India. These gave the head of the Government of India an opportunity to see the various regions of British and princely

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[141] Montgomery-Massingberd, *Africa and the Middle East*, 89; 105.
[142] Curzon to Hamilton, 17 December 1903, *Dispatches and Correspondence Connected with the Persian Gulf*, MSS Eur F111/531, Curzon Papers (IOR)
[143] "Lord Curzon's Cruise", in *Summary of Lord Curzon's Administration*, 1907, MSS Eur F111/531. Curzon Papers (IOR)

India, rather than remaining in the twin capitals of Calcutta and Simla for the entire year, and mimicked Mughal rituals and even medieval European royalty with its emphasis on the traveling military camp.[144] Curzon wanted to expand Indian authority in the Gulf and fundamental to this goal was the expansion of the visual presence of the Raj in the Gulf.

As early as May 1901 Curzon announced his wish to tour the Gulf to his superior in London, Lord George Hamilton, the Secretary of State for India.[145] As the member of the cabinet responsible for India, it was Hamilton's job to liaise between the British Government and the Government of India. Consequently much of Hamilton's work revolved around coordinating the concerns and policy goals of Curzon's administration with those of the prime minister, Lord Salisbury, and his colleagues.[146] From the outset Curzon had to work hard to convince first Hamilton and then other key members of the government to allow him to make the tour. In the spring of 1901, when the earliest discussions were initiated between Curzon and Hamilton, the Second Anglo-Boer War was raging. While the viceroy thought that a show of strength in the Gulf would demonstrate British resolve, his superiors in London failed to be swayed by this argument.[147] Hamilton was especially wary of a policy in the Gulf that smacked of expansionism and which could provoke a possible reaction from Russia, France, or Germany.[148] Ultimately the combined opposition of Hamilton and Salisbury forced

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[144] Lisa Balabanlilar, 'The Emperor Jahangir and the Pursuit of Pleasure' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 19 (2) 2009: 178.
[145] Curzon to Hamilton, 22 May 1901, MSS Eur F111/160, Curzon Papers (IOR)
[146] Zara S. Steiner, *The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy, 1898-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 234.
[147] Curzon to Hamilton, 22 May 1901, MSS Eur F111/160, Curzon Papers (IOR)
[148] Hamilton to Curzon, 26 Jan 1900, MSS Eur F111/159, Curzon Papers (IOR)

Curzon to postpone his tour until the end of hostilities in South Africa.[149] The principal,

indeed only, reason the cabinet gave for opposing the tour in 1901 was diplomatic. The

casus belli and conduct of the war in South Africa was being roundly criticised by

Britain's rivals in Europe. The cabinet was consequently hesitant to permit the viceroy to

inflame international opposition to Britain's position.

It was not until the spring of 1903 that the idea was resurrected by Curzon. By

then the war in South Africa had concluded and officials in London, especially the

foreign secretary, Lord Lansdowne, were keen to demonstrate more clearly the global

stretch of British authority. On 5 May 1903 Lansdowne made a speech in the Lords in

which he declared that the British Government would consider the establishment of a

rival naval base in the Gulf "a very grave menace."[150] Two days after Lansdowne's

speech, on 7 May 1903, and even though Hamilton was still not fully convinced of the

utility of the tour, Curzon was given permission by the Cabinet to head to the Gulf to

bolster the Foreign Secretary's declaration.[151]

Curzon was given considerable latitude in designing his tour including the power

to make Sultan Faisal a GCIE in person at Muscat. Here Curzon and Faisal met over a

number of days in both private audiences and on the last day of the stop in Oman at a

levee aboard a British warship. At this levee, which the British called a *darbar* just as

they would have called a similar event in India, local Omani and foreign notables met

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[149] Hamilton to Curzon, 21 June 1901, MSS Eur F111/160, Curzon Papers (IOR)
[150] Lansdowne, Lords, 5 May 1903, *Hansard*, 71:1348.
[151] Hamilton to Curzon, 7 May 1903, MSS Eur F111/162, Curzon Papers (IOR)

with British officials.[152] At the conclusion of this *darbar* Curzon left the sultan and his

party momentarily and returned sporting the mantle, chain and star of the Grand Master

of the Most Eminent Order of the Indian Empire. This gaudy regalia was loaded with

symbolic importance. The chain and star combined images of an Indian lotus, elephants,

the English rose, and the British crown, along with a cameo of Victoria herself, all made

of gold, which was worn over a mantle or robe of imperial purple. The sultan then

approached the enthroned viceroy and received similar regalia, making him a 'Knight

Grand Commander' of the order.[153] When Lord Curzon knighted the sultan, he made

Faisal a member of an order of which the viceroy was 'Grand Master' and Edward VII

was sovereign.[154] This, symbolically at least, was an overt indication that the Sultan of

Oman, the largest and most important Arab state of the Persian Gulf, was being treated

like the ruler of a princely state by the British, joining the many rajas and nawabs of the

Indian subcontinent in the Order of the Indian Empire.

As was the case in both Egypt and Malaya, the use of knighthoods in the Gulf

and Zanzibar went beyond highlighting how these rulers were united in common

allegiance - or subjugation - to the Crown. They also provided an overt example of how

the British wanted the relationship between local elites and European officials to appear.

Standing near Sultan Faisal when Curzon made him a GCIE was Percy Cox CIE, then

Political Agent at Muscat. In 1903 Cox was only a junior ranking official, but as his

career progressed he joined Faisal at the top rank of the Indian chivalric orders, with both

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[152] Curzon to Hamilton, 17 December 1903, *Dispatches and Correspondence Connected with the Persian Gulf*, MSS Eur F111/531, Curzon Papers (IOR)
[153] Curzon to Hamilton, 17 December 1903, *Dispatches and Correspondence Connected with the Persian Gulf*, MSS Eur F111/531, Curzon Papers (IOR)
[154] Cannadine. *Ornamentalism*, 90.

a GCIE and a KCSI.[155] This meant that both the Sultan of Oman and the top British official in Oman were both members of the same system of honours. For the British, these orders were valuable symbols which demonstrated the importance of the local ruler to the wider empire, and which were also intended to convey an image of unity between the local elites and European members of the imperial administration. The vision of indirect rule illustrated by these orders of knighthood suggests that indirect rule was a partnership between indigenous elites and their British counterparts. Where Faisal and Cox may have filled very different roles in Oman, they were both tasked with a share in the administration of the sultanate, and were hence granted membership in the same order. In this context, in a very public way, the British were attempting to demonstrate a level of symbolic unity amongst members of the governing classes in the indirectly ruled parts of the empire, thereby trumping ethnicity and religion.

Another example of the importance, however illusory, of governing class equality can be seen in Zanzibar in 1890 when Sultan Ali bin Said was made a GCSI, the very pinnacle of the Indian honours system. Charles Euan-Smith was the Political Agent for Zanzibar when Ali bin Said came to the throne in 1890 and he was keen to convince the new sultan to maintain his predecessor's reforms, especially with regards to the legal place of slavery in the state. Over the first few months of Ali's reign, Euan-Smith noted to Lord Salisbury at the Foreign Office that the sultan was happy to meet his requests and was in effect the model of a compliant subject prince.[156] Because he had proved so obliging, Euan-Smith recommended to Salisbury that Sultan Ali be granted a

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[155] *The London Gazette*, 19 October 1926, 6690.
[156] Euan-Smith to Salisbury, 20 June 1890, FO 300/25.

knighthood.[157] In due time the Queen and Salisbury gave their approval to Euan-Smith, who was commissioned to present the honour to the sultan.[158] Simultaneously with his efforts to gain an honour for Ali, the Queen and Salisbury also knighted Euan-Smith for his work in Zanzibar.[159] Consequently both the sultan and the political agent were elevated to the rank of knight in recognition of their efforts in the administration of Zanzibar, although Euan-Smith was made a 'KCB' Knight of the Order of the Bath, which was the most common order given to civil servants and military officers.

The symbolic and ceremonial activities which the British introduced to the Arab rulers of the Gulf and Zanzibar, while being essentially superficial, did make plain the type of relationship that indirect rule was intended to establish over these states. The gun salutes, knighthoods, and other theatrical events took the conceptualisation of the role between these states and the British Empire as held by the architects of this relationship and made it public. Once these relationships were made possible through the deployment of European political agents, the amassing of colonial knowledge, and the ritualization of political incorporation, the last process in implementing indirect rule was to modify the political role of the ruler.

In Zanzibar the defining moment in the political authority of the sultan came in 1896, six years after the assumption of the protectorate. On 25 August 1896 Hamid ibn Thuwayni, who had been sultan since 1893, died. A power struggle quickly ensued which led to the one claimant to the throne of Zanzibar being forcibly deposed by British

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[157] Salisbury to Euan-Smith, 1 September 1890, FO 300/25.
[158] Salisbury to Euan-Smith, 24 September 1890, FO 300/25.
[159] Salisbury to Euan-Smith, 1 September 1890, FO 300/25.

forces and their client being placed in his place.[160] In what amounted to a forty-minute war the political structure of Zanzibar was rearranged in a fashion which both reinforced British control over the state while simultaneously reaffirming their continued support for the Zanzibari monarchy. This episode and its immediate and longer-term outcomes illustrate the British commitment to maintaining compliant local dynasties even in the face of local opposition. Indeed, the events of August 1896, while brief and brutal, underline the institutional commitment to indirectly ruling the Muslim states within the empire.

The catalyst for the Anglo-Zanzibar War of 1896 was the sudden and unexpected death of Sultan Hamid ibn Thuwayni. In his correspondence with Lord Salisbury, Basil Cave, the acting Political Agent for Zanzibar, recounts that the sultan's passing surprised even his physician.[161] Cave had been at the bedside of the ailing Hamid less than an hour before his death and his own observations, along with the counsel of the doctor, gave him no reason to prepare for a succession crisis. Instead, Cave, who was based about 300 yards away from the Sultan's Palace in the Government Customs House, was surprised to learn at about noon on 25 August that he was obliged to appoint a successor to the late Sultan Hamid. In a legal memo written by Francis Bertie, a Foreign Office official, the function of the British in determining the next sultan was described as follows: "In the absence of any definite law of succession to the Sultanate of Zanzibar. Her Majesty's Government, in the exercise of the general and paramount authority vested in Great Britain as the Protecting Power, decided that Hamoud-bin-Muhammed should succeed to

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[160] Cave to Salisbury, August 29, 1896. No 6, FO 881/9613.
[161] Cave to Salisbury, August 26, 1896. No 238, FO 881/9613.

the Sultanate on the death of the Sultan Hamid-bin-Thwain."[162] Because there was no

law saying otherwise, the British exercised the right to approve the successor to the

sultanate on the death of the incumbent. This power meant that they were able to choose

the candidate they thought most suitable from amongst the members of the ruling family.

They did this while not wildly deviating from conventional Arab succession practices,

which favored the eldest male relative in the family rather than the European fashion of

transmitting authority from father to eldest son.[163] As the senior colonial agent present in

the sultanate, Basil Cave was tasked with placing Hamud bin Muhammad, a cousin of the

late sultan, on the throne. However, before he could move on this, a rival seized the

palace and declared himself Sultan of Zanzibar.

Khalid bin Bargash desperately wanted to be Sultan of Zanzibar. His August

1896 bid was in fact his second attempt at proclaiming himself sultan during an

interregnum. The first attempt was much more abortive and had occurred three years

previously when he attempted to take the throne before his own cousin and brother-in-

law, Hamid bin Thuwayni, could assume it.[164] This ended in complete failure, as he was

unable to garner popular support or the backing of the British. Upon the sudden death of

Sultan Hamid, however, Khalid was keen to make another bid. What Khalid failed to

understand was that despite having a good claim to the throne as a senior male member of

the ruling family, his attempts to take power without British support were detrimental to

his cause. According to Basil Cave's own letters and telegrams to Whitehall, the British

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[162] Francis Bertie to the Law Officers of the Crown, 3 October 1896, FO 881/6913.
[163] Hardinge, *A Diplomatist in the East*, 190.
[164] Cave to Salisbury, August 26, 1896. No 238, FO 881/9613.

authorities were taken off-guard by the rapidity with which Khalid was able to capture the royal palace with an armed force. Reports are not entirely clear on the actual size of this force, but it appears to have been initially composed of three hundred men but swelled, after the successful seizure of the palace, to well over 2500 over the following days.[165]

From the outset Khalid's posture was defensive, as he held the royal palace in Zanzibar and had local forces pouring in to support his claim. Even from the reports of the British who opposed him, Khalid comes off not as a revolutionary trying to restore the independence of his country. Rather he truly seems to have simply wished to be allowed to assume the office of sultan but continue under the indirect rule of the British. Indeed, one of his first acts was to send a telegram to Queen Victoria "stating that he had succeeded to the Sultanate, and expressing a hope the Her Majesty's friendship to him might be continued."[166] Of course this message never made it to Her Majesty as local potentates, and especially alleged usurpers, were always discouraged from going over the heads of local officials to the sovereign. However, this does demonstrate the depth to which even a 'rebel prince' was resigned to the political settlement that British indirect rule had imposed upon his state. Cave himself claimed later he heard from someone in Khalid's camp that Khalid hoped that a quick seizure of the throne and a strong show of force would convince the British to recognize him as sultan.[167]

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[165] Cave to Salisbury, August 29, 1896. No 6, FO 881/9613.
[166] Cave to Salisbury, August 26, 1896. No 238, FO 881/9613.
[167] Cave to Salisbury, August 26, 1896. No 238, FO 881/9613.

Khalid was wrong; allowing him to dictate the terms by which the succession to

the sultanate occurred would have been tantamount to an abdication of British

authority.[168] The few thousand men that Khalid had amassed instead had to face the

massively disproportionate armed force which was the typical response by the British in

situations like this. Within hours of learning that Khalid had taken the palace, Basil Cave

requested via telegraph assistance from the Royal Navy.[169] By the next day, 26 August,

five ships of the Royal Navy were training their guns on the Palace from the harbour of

Zanzibar city.[170] At this point, while no shots had been fired and both sides were

communicating via emissaries, no progress had been made towards a resolution. Khalid

refused to stand down or abdicate. Cave would only accept his unconditional surrender.

This impasse ended finally on the morning of 27 August when the British opened fire

following the expiration of an ultimatum for Khalid to surrender. Less than an hour later

the episode was over; Khalid's forces had dispersed, the would-be sultan escaped to the

sanctuary of the German consulate, and Hamud was proclaimed Sultan of Zanzibar.[171]

While the British had been the leading power in Zanzibar for decades and had

imposed a formal protectorate in 1890, it was the outcome of this brief war and the

Articles of Accession which Hamud signed that further expanded British control over the

state.[172] Basil Cave and later Arthur Hardinge exploited the crisis sparked by Khalid's

attempted usurpation to contain further the political power of the sultanate and to expand

the authority of the British. In this document, to which the new sultan swore "an oath of

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[168] Hardinge, *A Diplomatist in the East*, 192.
[169] Captain O'Callahan to Admiralty, August 25, 1896, Inc. to No 155, FO 881/6861.
[170] Cave to Salisbury, August 27, 1896. No 168, FO 881/6861.
[171] Cave to Salisbury, August 29, 1896, FO 881/9613.
[172] Hardinge, 'Legislative Methods in the Zanzibar and East Africa Protectorates', 1.

allegiance on the Koran to Her Majesty the Queen", the political agent gained the sole

power to appoint the heads of the finance branch of the Government of Zanzibar as well

as control the state's armed forces.[173] On the surface, the political outcome of the Anglo-

Zanzibar War suggests that the British exploited a dynastic dispute to secure an enhanced

level of political control over the state. It is undeniable that the post-1896 settlement left

Sultan Hamud much weaker than his predecessors. However, that any power at all was

left in the hands of the sultan is testimony to the endurance of the legitimacy of Muslim

monarchies to figures like Salisbury, Cave, and Hardinge. From 1896 Zanzibar was very

much like a smaller princely state in India, with the sultan retaining executive and

legislative authority. However, he could use this power, especially on more important

matters like slavery, within parameters set by the British and local custom. Indeed, three

years later in an article detailing the mechanisms and powers of the Government of

Zanzibar, Arthur Hardinge made sure to point out that:

> The legislative authority in the Zanzibar Protectorate over all persons not
> subjects of Treaty Powers resides in the Sultan, who is, like most
> Mahommedan sovereigns, an absolute prince, but is never the less bound,
> by what may be called a principle of the common law, to govern according
> to the precepts of the Mahommedan religion.[174]

At no time during or after this brief emergency of 1896 was it ever suggested that the

sultanate be abolished, nor was it suggested that Hamud be stripped of all of his legal

authority. Certainly he was reduced in status and he retained little discretionary power,

but the very fact that they wanted him to function as more than a symbol is important.

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[173] Conditions agreed to by his Highness Hamoud-bin-Said on his Accession Inc. 2 in No. 6. Cave to
Salisbury, 29 August, 1896. FO 881/9613.
[174] Hardinge, "Legislative Methods in the Zanzibar and East Africa Protectorates", 4.

After assuming the throne Hamud was called upon to end slavery. This key moment in the history of what had been the greatest slaving entrepôt came about not because of the unilateral decision of the British Government. Rather, as discussed above, it occurred with painful slowness as a negotiation between the slave-owning Arab aristocracy, of whom Sultan Hamud was the head, and Basil Cave, Arthur Hardinge, and other officials. The strange death of slavery in Zanzibar is illustrative of the tension between the widely-held liberal abolitionist threads of British political culture and the more narrow conservative official mind, which placed the stability of local institutions and economies at the forefront. This tension led the British to expand their authority over Zanzibar, ultimately forcing the end of slavery, but it did so in a fashion which was meant to preserve the prestige and some of the authority of the ruling Muslim dynasty.

The succession crisis and the long process of ending slavery in Zanzibar make it an interesting case study in the administration of indirectly ruled states. In the other Arab states that fell under this form of colonialism in the Persian Gulf, events were not so dramatic. However, indirect rule, to varying degrees, also led to administrative changes in these states as well. In 1899, for example, Sheik Mubarak Al-Sabah of Kuwait promised the Government of India that he would

> …not receive the Agent or Representative of any Power of Government at Koweit, or at the other place within the limits of his territory, without the previous sanction of the British Government; and he further binds himself, his heirs and successors not to cede, sell, lease, mortgage, or give for occupation or for any other purpose any portion of his territory to the Government or subjects of any other Power without the previous consent of His Majesty's Government for these purposes.[175]

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[175]Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties*, 11:263.

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In comparison to the regime that had been set up in Zanzibar, the level of British intervention in Kuwait was comparatively light, and did not require major internal changes. The British tolerated the different levels of control because each state came under indirect rule under different circumstances. In Kuwait, for example, the British were content with a minimal presence as their primary goal was to insure that the state remained outside of the German orbit, while at the same time not inflaming relations with the Ottomans.[176] The difference between Kuwait and Zanzibar demonstrate the two polar extremes of the levels of administrative interference experienced under indirect rule, with the Trucial states, Oman, and Bahrain falling somewhere in between. These states had much more onerous treaty obligations than Kuwait, but also had a much lighter British administrative presence than Zanzibar. This highlights the variegated nature of indirect rule, even amongst this small group of Arab-ruled states. However, just as in India where some princely states were left largely to their own devices, while others were run and almost overrun by British officials, the subsumation of local political hierarchies took many forms.

The system of indirect rule that was imposed by the British over Zanzibar and the Gulf states was the closest analogue to princely India. Along the western Indian Ocean littoral the old informal influence of the East Indian Company was slowly transformed into several variants of indirect rule. In Kuwait and Oman the physical presence of the British was minimal until much later in the twentieth century, while in Bahrain, the Trucial States, and Zanzibar colonialism was much more overt. In the Gulf, the

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[176] Slot, *Mubarak Al-Sabah*, 115.

Government of India reigned supreme, and even the viceroy himself played a key role in their incorporation. In Zanzibar, responsibility was transferred from the India Office to the Foreign Office in the middle of the nineteenth century, and yet indirect rule still maintained a distinctly Indian nature in Africa. The broad similarities in the form and expression of indirect rule in all of these states are remarkable. From 1890 the Sultans of Zanzibar became increasingly and explicitly treated like Indian princes, enjoying the same array of ceremonial honours but suffering the same loss of legal and political autonomy.

Crucial to this transformation was the British resident. Spread thin though they were, these architects and acolytes of indirect rule interpreted and imposed this ideology as they expanded colonial authority. Kuwait, Bahrain, the Trucial states, Oman, and Zanzibar were not the most sought-after postings in the empire; in consequence, the imperial administrators dispatched by the Home and Indian Governments were often young and expected to shoulder much responsibility with little staff. This, however, is not to suggest these territories lay outside the interest of those in higher office. The consistently large volume of correspondence transmitted by telegraph and post between the likes of Percy Cox and Lord Curzon, or Basil Cave and Lord Salisbury, highlight the deep and abiding interest that many holders of the very highest offices in the empire had for the administration of these tiny and seemingly peripheral states. This shared interest on the part of the local agent and his masters in Calcutta and Whitehall allowed for the expansion of personnel and information which in turn hastened the construction of a new colonial system. This system sought to preserve much of the pre-existing political, social,

and economic conditions, while simultaneously drawing the states under a distinctly

British Indian form of imperial architecture.

VI

Northern Nigeria

On 21 March 1903 an army composed of infantry and mounted infantry entered the city of Sokoto in the northwest of present-day Nigeria. The soldiers that made up this force were black Africans who were largely Muslims and native to the region.[1] Their purpose for taking the city was to depose the Sultan of Sokoto and install a new one. This was not, however, the army of a rival neighbour or claimant to the throne of Sokoto but rather the British West African Field Force under the command of Sir Frederick Lugard. Following their entry into the city, Lugard's forces distributed the following proclamation to the local population:

> Be it known to all people that the British Government have taken over the sovereignty of the territories belonging to Sokoto, because the Emir (who is dead) wrote to the Governor and declared that between him and the white man there was only war. Therefore the High Commissioner has sent troops. But on arrival the white men have found that the new Sultan does not desire war, and wishes to be the friend of the British. Therefore the Government accepts him as a friend, and confirms him in his place of power, on condition that he recognises the sovereignty of the King…[2]

With the occupation of the Sultanate of Sokoto and the allied emirates of Kano and Katsina in 1903, the British were completing a project of conquest that had begun in 1897.[3] Under Lugard, the High Commissioner of the Northern Nigeria Protectorate, the British took the vast territory of the eastern Niger River basin in only a few years. At the

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[1] A. Haywood and F.A.S. Clarke, *The History of the Royal West African Frontier Force*. (Aldershot: Gale & Polden, 1964), 31-39.

[2] Frederick Lugard, "Vernacular Proclamation (To be posted at Sokoto)", Inc. 4 to 14, 21 March 1903, CO 879/80/1.

[3] Chinedu N. Ubah, "The British Occupation of the Sokoto Caliphate: The Military Dimension, 1897-190", *Paideuma*, 40, 1994: 81-82.

Berlin conference of 1884-85 the British had extended a claim to this region, but for political and practical reasons, as will be elaborated on below, they were unwilling and unable to make good on this claim until the turn of the twentieth century.[4]

The Northern Nigeria Protectorate was the last large Muslim-dominated territory added to the British Empire prior to the Great War. It was also the most removed geographically, culturally, and historically from India. Malaya, the Persian Gulf states, and Zanzibar were all within the political and cultural orbit of British India which facilitated their integration into the British Empire using overtly Indian forms of indirect rule. In Egypt, which was conquered in part to protect the sea-links to India via Suez Canal, ideas, techniques and personnel with a connection to princely India were a key feature of the British occupation. Northern Nigeria, far away in West Africa, had a very different history and culture. However, while Northern Nigeria was seemingly far from India, it shared a long history of Islamic civilisation with South Asia, the Middle East, and Malaya. It was through this shared Muslim history that the British understood the place of Northern Nigeria in their empire, and consequently was one of the reasons they imposed an Indian form of colonial rule.

Islam became the dominant religion of what became Northern Nigeria by the middle of the fifteenth century.[5] Before this time Muslims were known in the region, but it was not until the ruling elite of the many small states began to convert that it became

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[4] Ieuan Griffiths, "The Scramble for Africa: Inherited Political Boundaries" *The Geographical Journal*, 152 (2) 1986: 207.
[5] Finn Fuglestad, "A Reconsideration of Hausa History before the Jihad" *The Journal of African History*, 19 (3) 1978: 319-320.

the majority faith.[6] Finn Fuglestad shows from this point in the fifteenth century Muslim

West Africa became intimately connected through trade networks to the rest of the

Islamic world which further affected its economic and political development.[7] Central to

this development was the rise to dominance of a number of powerful dynasties of the

Hausa people. Later, at the turn of the nineteenth century, the Hausa were displaced by

the Fulani people who the British came to see as a ruling elite and natural ally. The

Hausa effectively established the network of city-states with a common Muslim culture.

In the early nineteenth century, the Fulani conquered and welded these states into a single

empire which the British a century later were able to subsume through indirect rule. It

was this long Islamic history that helps partly to explain why, despite never being under

the control of the East India Company or the India Office, or being of strategic

importance to India, the British turned to the example of princely India to impose indirect

rule on Northern Nigeria at the turn of the twentieth century.[8]

This chapter will first outline the history of European interference in the territory

that came to be called Northern Nigeria and which now constitutes the northern two-

thirds of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The first British arrived in the region as early as

the turn of the nineteenth century just as the Sokoto Caliphate was politically unifying the

region under the banner of Islam.[9] Over the course of the century European interference

increased, first in the form of explorers and merchants, and later as colonisers. Just as in

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[6] Heidi J. Nast, "Islam, Gender, and Slavery in West Africa Circa 1500: A Spatial Archaeology of the Kano Palace, Northern Nigeria" *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 86 (1) 1996: 44.
[7] Fuglestad, "A Reconsideration of Hausa History before the Jihad", 320.
[8] Fisher, "Indirect Rule in the British Empire", 425.
[9] Charles W. J. Withers, "Mapping the Niger, 1798-1832: Trust, Testimony and 'Ocular Demonstration' in the Late Enlightenment", *Imago Mundi*, 56 (2) 2004: 190.

India the first colonial regime in Northern Nigeria was not imposed by the Crown but rather by a chartered company starting in 1882 acting on behalf of British interests. The Royal Niger Company, however, was not a success and was soon replaced by Colonial Office control in 1900. Crown rule of Northern Nigeria was proclaimed under the jurisdiction of Frederick Lugard. But the new regime was not just another colony of the British Empire with a British governor and administration. Lugard was made high commissioner of what was called the Northern Nigeria Protectorate. Unlike other collections of states in the Persian Gulf or Malaya, where British control evolved incrementally on a state-by-state basis, Lugard, in the space of a few short years, imposed a regime of indirect rule, by treaty and by sword, over the numerous polities that were the successors to the Sokoto Caliphate. The British sought to fill the unifying role of the caliphate by assuming overall control of Northern Nigeria, but set out to allow the existing emirs and sultans to continue to govern their people under the auspices of the new colonial regime.[10] As in the other territories that are the subjects of this study, the imposition of indirect rule over Northern Nigeria was the product of a complex interplay between ideas born in earlier imperial experiences and local circumstances. The architects of colonial Northern Nigeria explicitly redeployed concepts and institutions invented in India, and already in use in Egypt, Malaya, the Gulf, and Zanzibar to construct a new regime of indirect rule in West Africa.[11]

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[10] Colin Newbury, "Accounting for Power in Northern Nigeria" *The Journal of African History*, 45 (2) 2004: 260.

[11] Fisher, "Indirect Rule in the British Empire", 424-426.

Just as was the case in the other territories that are the subject of this study, the colonisers of Northern Nigeria also became the first historians of their own regimes. After Lord Lugard retired from active colonial service, he worked as a scholar and philosopher of imperial government, producing the hugely important *Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* in 1926. But even before then monographs were being produced on the topic of indirect rule in Northern Nigeria. Indeed, as early as 1902, before all of Northern Nigeria had fallen to British arms, Lieutenant-Colonel Augustus Mockler-Ferryman published *British Nigeria: A Geographical and Historical Description of the British Possessions Adjacent to the Niger River, West Africa*. In it, Mockler-Ferryman used his experiences of the history and politics of the region to champion the nascent regime of indirect rule.[12] In the following passage, for example, Mockler-Ferryman presents a paternalistic appraisal of the ruling classes of Northern Nigeria who Lugard had so recently begun integrating into the British Empire. "[T]heir rulers were generally Mohammedans, who, from long intercourse with Arabs and various Saharan tribes, had acquired sufficient enlightenment to administer the government of their countries with a certain amount of method and intelligence."[13] Therefore, even before Northern Nigeria was fully conquered by the British, its officials had begun projecting a broadly unified narrative in favour of retaining existing elites in power.

In 1911 Charles Orr, who had been a member of the political department in Northern Nigeria, published *The Making of Northern Nigeria*. Orr's work is consistent with Mockler-Ferryman and with the broader genre of colonial narratives of indirect rule,

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[12] Mockler-Ferryman, *British Nigeria*, 310.
[13] Mockler-Ferryman, *British Nigeria*, 154.

and stresses benevolent cooperation. Just like Sir Frank Swettenham's *British Malaya* or

Sir Auckland Colvin's *The Making of Modern Egypt,* Orr constructs a version of local

history whereby the British are necessary to restore peace, order, and good government.

As such British indirect rule is framed not as a foreign conquest but as restoration of the

unity of an older legitimate Islamic order: in Egypt the model was the empire of

Muhammad Ali, in Malaya it was the Malaccan Empire, and in Northern Nigeria it was

the Sokoto Caliphate. And all of these colonial narratives were in turn parallels to the

post-1858 British reconceptualization of their role in India as successors of the Mughal

Empire.[14] In the *Making of Northern Nigeria,* Orr presented an historical narrative that

framed the nineteenth century as a period of decline and political decentralisation. As

such Orr is framing nineteenth century Northern Nigeria much as had already done for

eighteenth century India, where the once powerful Mughal Empire was portrayed as

falling into decline in need of being rescued by the expansion of the Company. This

rendered Northern Nigeria as a problem in need of a solution, which was of course the

extension of British indirect rule:

> The religious upheaval set in motion in the early years of the nineteenth
> century by Sheikh Othman dan Fodio ended, as has been shown, in the
> welding together of a number of independent Hausa States under Fulani
> leadership. Yet each state retained for practical purposes its virtual
> independence, and the various Fulani Mallams [religious scholars] became
> the founders of dynasties, each in his own state. Each looked to the Sultan
> of Sokoto as his spiritual chief, and acknowledged his temporal power to a
> limited extent, but as time went on the descendants of the Mallams began
> to look upon themselves, and be looked on by the people, as hereditary
> rulers succeeding by right to the throne of their fathers. This was the

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[14] Steven Pierce, "Looking like a State: Colonialism and the Discourse of Corruption in Northern Nigeria" *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 48 (4) 2006: 901.

condition of the Sokoto Empire when the British Protectorate was proclaimed.[15]

Orr minimises the role of Europeans prior to the formation of the protectorate in 1900, downplaying the twenty years during which the Royal Niger Company had attempted to expand its authority. In criticising the dual function of the Company, to govern and to return dividends to its shareholders, Orr quotes Evelyn Baring who argued that governments should not be in the business of "commercial exploitation."[16] Significantly, Orr cites Baring and the experience of British rule in Egypt and India frequently throughout his work. As the *Making of Northern Nigeria* was published barely a decade after the founding of the protectorate, the repeated references to other cases of indirect rule show that Orr and his colleagues were being influenced by British experience in Egypt and India. In the preface to the work, Orr even cites the following passage from *The Times*, which sets much of the tone of the work:

> Nigeria is not merely by far the most considerable of our West African possessions, but the only British Dependency in any part of the world which approaches the Indian Empire in magnitude and variety. Our administrators there, in most inadequate numbers and under very difficult conditions, but with our Indian experiences to help them, are confronting problems almost as large and delicate as those which first inspired the administrative genius of Great Britain in the East.[17]

It was often not only ideas and experiences but actual personnel that were important. Orr reminds his readers that, "Officers, more especially those who have served in India, have done some excellent work in Northern Nigeria"[18] Despite the fact that Northern Nigeria is as far east as Germany, it was defined by the British as Muslim and

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[15] J.W.C. Orr, *The Making of Northern Nigeria*, (London: Macmillan, 1911), 73.
[16] Orr, *The Making of Northern Nigeria*, 44.
[17] *The Times,* 12 August 1911, cited in Orr, *The Making of Northern Nigeria*, x.
[18] Orr, *The Making of Northern Nigeria*, 136.

therefore as eastern or 'oriental' and hence India was the best model for its government. An example of this can be seen in Orr's discussion of the Emir of Zaria, who was not keen to bow to Lugard's new regime: "…with the craft of an oriental, the Emir despatched small parties of armed gun-men throughout his dominions to extort levies of tribute"[19] In this one phrase Orr frames the Emir of Zaria as both perfidious and rapacious; classic orientalist stereotypes which justified British efforts to curb their independence.

Mockler-Ferryman and Orr's works are important because they show that other members of the imperial establishment and the Northern Nigerian government subscribed to the ideology espoused by Lord Lugard. However, it was Lugard himself, along with his wife, Flora Shaw (Lady Lugard), and his official biographer, Dame Margery Perham, who defined Northern Nigerian history until quite late in the twentieth century.[20] Flora Shaw had nearly as varied an imperial career as her husband, and is credited with actually coining the name 'Nigeria' for the British-held sections of the Niger River basin.[21] She was also one of the first to produce a significant work on the regime, *A Tropical Dependency*, published in 1905 less than two years after the conquest of Sokoto.[22] In the very first paragraphs of this work, Lady Lugard presages Orr's later comparisons by invoking the colonial governments in Egypt and India as precedents for what was then still being constructed in Northern Nigeria by her husband and his staff:

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[19] Orr, *The Making of Northern Nigeria*, 114.

[20] Alison Smith and Mary Bull, eds. *Margery Perham and British Rule in Africa* (London: Frank Cass 1991), 1-3; Marc Matera, "Colonial Subjects: Black Intellectuals and the Development of Colonial Studies in Britain" *Journal of British Studies*, 49 (2) 2010: 391-392.

[21] Flora Shaw, "Nigeria", *The Times*, Friday, Jan 08, 1897: 6.

[22] J. D. Fage, "When the African Society Was Founded, Who Were the Africanists?" *African Affairs*, 94 (376) 1995: 373.

> The administration of this quarter of the Empire cannot be conducted on the principle of self-government as that phrase is understood by white men. It must be more or less in the nature of an autocracy which leaves with the rulers full responsibility for the prosperity of the ruled. The administration of India, where this aspect of the question has been long appreciated, is among the successes of which the British people is most justly proud. The work done by England in Egypt is another proof of our capacity for autocratic rule. We are justified therefore in thinking of ourselves as a people who may face with reasonable hopes of success still vaster questions of tropical administration.[23]

The strident orientalist assumption that autocracy is needed for 'tropical administration' permeates the writing of Shaw, Mockler-Ferryman, Orr, and Lugard, and provides the intellectual connection between the Northern Nigerian government and the more established 'colonial autocracies' in Egypt and India. From this emerges a 'first principle', namely that the Fulani-Hausa Emirates of Northern Nigeria shared a fundamental socio-political structure with Egypt and Indian states. They therefore required an analogous type of colonial government which would secure the collaboration of traditional political elites. This principle alone trumped the many geographical, historical, and demographic differences between West Africa and the other indirectly ruled states of the empire.

Lugard became a leading evangelist of indirect rule which he thought was an essential component of Britain's unprecedented success as a global imperial power.[24] Lugard came to West Africa with this ideology largely formed: "an arbitrary and despotic rule, which takes no account of native customs, traditions, and prejudices, is not suited to the successful development of an infant civilisation, nor, in my view, is it in accordance

[23] Flora Shaw, Lady Lugard, *A Tropical Dependency*, (London: James Nesbit & Co. 1905), 1.
[24] Susan Pedersen, "The Meaning of the Mandates System: An Argument" *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 32 (4) 2006: 572; Fisher, "Indirect Rule in the British Empire", 425-426.

with the spirit of British colonial rule."[25] This passage comes from a work that Lugard

penned on the conquest of Uganda, before he was sent to Nigeria, and shows that he had

already been inculcated with a view of imperial history that placed some of the central

principles of indirect rule at the centre of colonial expansion. Therefore, when he later

would write some of the key texts that defined the practice of indirect rule, he was not

doing so as the inventor or progenitor, but rather as its chronicler, someone who had

distilled the technology of colonialism out of a century and more of British imperialism

in 'the East'.

Lugard became a giant figure in late imperial history, joining the likes of Cromer

and Curzon. This can be partly explained by his long and varied career from East

African adventurer to proconsul in West Africa and the Far East. It can also, as was the

case with Curzon and Cromer, be partially explained by his self-promotion in an age

when imperial figures were constantly committing their experiences and perspectives to

print. Indeed, even in studies of twenty-first century African politics, the ideas iterated in

the *Dual Mandate* are held up as an exemplar of British rule in sub-Saharan Africa.[26]

However, it was not only Lugard's work but also that of his official biographer that for a

long time defined his life and work in Nigeria. Dame Margery Perham was born to an

upper middle class family in 1895 in Bury, Lancashire. Her progressive parents sent

Perham and all of her siblings, regardless of sex, to good schools and on to university.

With this solid upbringing Perham went on to take a fist class degree in history at Oxford

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[25] Frederick Lugard, *The Rise of Our East African Empire*. (Edinburgh: Blackwoods, 1893) II:651.
[26] See for example William Brown, "The Commission for Africa: Results and Prospects for the West's
Africa Policy" *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 44 (3) 2006: 364-365.

and quickly moved on to teaching history to undergraduates at the end of the Great War.

At this time Perham was a student of contemporary British and European history; it took

a visit to her sister and brother-in-law in British Somaliland in 1920 to shift her focus to

colonial history.[27] For the next several decades Perham was able, with support from

Oxford including a Rhodes Scholarship, to travel in Africa and study colonial

administration. Much of her interest came to be focused on Nigeria. The first major

product of this study was her 1937 *Native Administration in Nigeria*.[28] This work

presents a detailed account of how the colonial government was developed and how it

functioned. It is, as is to be expected, generous in its praise of Lugard, his

contemporaries and successors, and of the regime they devised. However, its principal

failure is not its obvious biases, but its treatment of the form of government employed in

Northern Nigeria as the unique product of the interaction between Lugard and his staff

and circumstances in turn of the century Nigeria. It ignores more than a century of

interaction in which British officials coerced and cooperated with local elites in India and

elsewhere. The same criticism can be levelled at her later two-volume official biography

of Lugard, published in 1956. Her role as official biographer came about as a product of

her earlier work which led her to meet Lugard.[29] As Perham herself divulges, she

became a close friend of his for the last sixteen years of his life.[30] During this time he

was retired from colonial government but still heavily involved in imperial matters in

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[27] Smith and Bull, *Margery Perham and British Rule in Africa*, 2.
[28] Margery Perham, *Native Administration in Nigeria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937)
[29] Mary Bull, "Writing the biography of Lord Lugard" in Smith and Bull, *Margery Perham and British Rule in Africa*, 118-127.
[30] Margery Perham, "Lord Lugard: A Preliminary Evaluation" *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute,* 20 (3) 1950: 228.

Britain. As such Perham became an important bridge between the first generation of historians of Northern Nigeria who were active members of the colonial government and more recent scholars, who were largely removed from the imperial project.[31]

Since the advent of post-colonial studies, there has been an expanded understanding of how the flow of ideas went beyond a simple metropole-periphery binary. In Nigeria, and indeed every colonial territory, the methods of government were determined by an array of factors outside of local conditions and the dictates of officials in Whitehall. Katheryn Tidrick's *Empire and the English Character: The Illusion of Authority*, for example, argues that Lugard's regime in Northern Nigeria was just one of several colonial governments that attempted to use the force of character of the British administrator to coerce and convince the colonial subjects to obey him. Tidrick argues that there was effectively a pan-imperial ruling culture that sought to dominate through personality rather than through violence, and in this she is both useful and convincing. Tidrick, however, is not looking at the genealogy of the idea and practice of indirect rule, but rather at the broader idea of imperial character which spanned all forms of colonial government.[32]

For the most part modern scholarship on colonial Northern Nigeria has focused on the colony itself and its relationship to pre-colonial and post-colonial Nigeria. Works like Muhammed Umar's *Islam and Colonialism, intellectual responses of Muslims to colonial rule in British Northern Nigeria* sheds a great deal of light on the intellectual life of the

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[31] Michael Twaddle, "Margery Perham and *Africans and British Rule*" in Smith and Bull, eds. *Margery Perham and British Rule in Africa* (London: Frank Cass 1991), 118-127.
[32] Katheryn Tidrick, *Empire and the English Character: The Illusion of Authority* (London: IB Tauris, 1990), 197.

colonised, just as Perham's work gives insights into the thinking of the coloniser. Umar's collection is especially helpful in showing how despite the limited amount of armed resistance to British rule, there was nonetheless significant opposition to it.[33] "Muslims responded to the British conquest by confrontation, submission, avoidance, and alliance, and to the political and legal challenges of colonialism in terms of rejection, acquiescence, and compartmentalization of Islam and responses colonialism"[34] Umar's collection goes on to show how despite the pacific nature of the people in Northern Nigeria, there is an array of evidence that they were not all willing or happily colonised subjects, but rather expressed their opposition to the regime in a number of mostly non-violent ways. Lugard and his staff, and even an earlier generation of scholars had incorrectly assumed the absence of armed struggle meant that the people were contented under British rule; Umar shows this was far from the case.[35] *Islam and Colonialism* underscores the key point in Said's *Orientalism* that Europeans constructed a discourse of the oriental that required the intervention of the colonial state.[36] But for Lugard, because the people of Northern Nigeria were not in open revolt, they could be said to have conceded to colonial rule. An example of this can be found in the section of the *Dual Mandate* which discusses the loyalty of the Northern Nigerian rulers during the Great War. Lugard takes jingoistic pride in showing how when French West Africa revolted during the war British Nigeria remained quiet:

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[33] Muhammad S. Umar, *Islam and colonialism: intellectual responses of Muslims of Northern Nigeria*, (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 102-103.
[34] Umar, *Islam and Colonialism*, 6.
[35] Lugard, *Dual Mandate*, 222.
[36] Said, *Orientalism*, 214-215.

A great rising took place in the vast regions under French rule bordering Nigeria to the north. Reports, fully credited by the French themselves, reached the country that Agades - the desert capital - had fallen before a Moslem army well equipped with cannon. Hostile forces were said to be rapidly advancing towards Sokoto. The French asked our assistance. Half our own forces, and most of the officers well known to the natives, had already gone to East Africa [to fight the Germans]. But not for a moment was there the slightest doubt of the loyalty of the Emirs. The garrison of Kano itself was withdrawn, and replaced by police. Sokoto and Katsena, the border States, were eager to raise native levies to assist.[37]

To Lugard this was proof positive of the effectiveness of British indirect rule. Not for a moment was it entertained that the emirs may have simply wished to prevent their cities from being attacked by this rebel army, or that they were afraid of repercussions if they did not obey the British.

All of these works, however, focus on the lives of people in Northern Nigeria, either coloniser or colonised, and are not concerned with tracing the genealogy of this form of rule. Even some of the most recent scholarship on the place of the traditional ruling elites in Nigerian society fails to make the connection between what was occurring in colonial West Africa and the rest of the British Empire. An example of this is Olufemi Vaughan's *Nigerian Chiefs: Traditional Power in Modern Politics, 1890s-1990s*, which, while an excellent study of the role of hereditary elites at the national and sub-national level, does not discuss the many important external forces that shaped the system. Nor does it even mention princely India, despite the fact that the colonial architects of indirect rule made this connection explicitly.[38] One of the aims of this work, therefore, is to

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[37] Lugard, *The Dual Mandate*, 222-223.
[38] Olufemi Vaughan, *Nigerian Chiefs: Traditional Power in Modern Politics, 1890s-1990s* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2000)

correct this deficit and place colonial Northern Nigeria within the broader context of indirect rule in the British Africa and Asia.

At the Berlin conference of 1884, the Concert of Europe began to parcel out what was left of unclaimed Africa, marking the formal beginning of what was called the Scramble for Africa.[39] Yet even before the conference formalised this process, the great powers with an interest in Africa (Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain, the King of the Belgians, and most especially France and Britain) had been expanding their authority more deeply into Africa. In the early 1880s the British presence in what is now Nigeria was limited to the coastal region around the port of Lagos on the Gulf of Guinea. This area had been a centre first of British slaving, and after 1833 anti-slaving efforts, and was formally annexed by the Colonial Office in 1861.[40] The British had been active in this region of southern Nigeria for centuries by this time, the region had been the heart of the Atlantic slave trade by which European and American powers had stolen much of the population of West Africa and transported them into bondage or death. Save, however, for a few minor coastal footholds, the British were unwilling and unable to colonise the interior of West Africa until very late in the nineteenth century.

The reasons for the slow expansion of European empire beyond the coastal enclaves in Africa were numerous. As early as 1788, Sir Joseph Banks, the great botanist and champion of exploration, who was President of the Royal Society, helped to found the 'Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa', usually

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[39] Griffiths, "The Scramble for Africa: Inherited Political Boundaries", 207.
[40] John D. Hargreaves, *West Africa Partitioned: The loaded pause, 1885-1889*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974), 161.

referred to as the African Association. In founding this Association, Banks and his

colleagues were looking to encourage greater knowledge of Africa to benefit Britain. [41]

Banks himself had been with James Cook on one of his circumnavigations of the world,

and was keen to push beyond the maritime realms that the British had mastered into the

more difficult terrain of sub-Saharan Africa. One of the early 'problems' of African

exploration to be tackled by the British was to determine the course of the Niger River

that emptied into the Gulf of Guinea through a massive deltaic plane.[42] For Europeans

rivers were the avenues of choice for African exploration. They afforded the easiest and

cheapest methods of transportation, and their shores were usually the most densely

populated which was key for explorers in search of new markets, converts, and

knowledge. Later in the nineteenth century, quests for the sources of such major rivers as

the Congo, Limpopo, and most famously the Nile, captured the popular attention, making

Livingstone, Stanley, Burton, and Speke household names in mid-century Britain. But

before them there was Mungo Park, a Scott who was sent by the African Association to

explore the middle and upper Niger.

To Europeans of the late eighteenth century it was well known that the Niger was

a vast river. However, tracking the course of the Niger was not as easy as simply

following it even thought it was navigable for much of its course. The people and

climate of the region conspired for a long time to prevent Europeans from mapping West

Africa, with explorers dying at the hands of the local population and pathogens in droves.

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[41] John Gascoigne. *Science in the Service of Empire: Joseph Banks, the British state and the uses of science in the age of revolution*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 179.
[42] Withers, "Mapping the Niger", 178.

Mungo Park was no different, even though he was the first British person who could claim to be a successful African explorer. His first attempt to chart the Niger was in 1795-97; he died on his second mission on behalf of the African Association to the Niger in 1806.[43]

Contemporary with Mungo Park's fateful second exploration of the Niger were some of the biggest political convulsions in recent African history. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the political organisation of what would become the Northern Nigeria Protectorate was based around independent monarchical city-states of the Hausa people. These states were, according to their own tradition, founded when a Baghdadi prince called Bayajidda came to Nigeria and married a local princess. Scholars have suggested that this founding myth is based around a migration from the northwest of people with a connection to the Islamic and Arab world in the tenth century while others attribute it to the wish to establish roots with an original centre of Islamic civilization.[44]

For centuries the Hausa states dominated the vast span of West Africa between Lake Chad and the western approaches of the Niger. In 1802, however, Usman Dan Fodio, a Muslim scholar, like Muhammad Ahmed (the Mahdi) in the Sudan eighty years later, sought to cure the social and political ills of his people by launching a campaign of reform and conquest.[45] Dan Fodio, born in 1754, was a member of the Fulani ethnic group, and although well educated, and at the centre of an important intellectual and reformist movement in Nigeria, as a Fulani he was excluded from the inner circle of

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[43] E. W. Bovill, "The Death of Mungo Park", *The Geographical Journal*, 133 (1) 1967: 2.
[44] W. K. R. Hallam, "The Bayajida Legend in Hausa Folklore", *The Journal of African History*, 7 (1) 1966: 47-60.
[45] Mark D. Delancey, "The Spread of the Sooro: Symbols of Power in the Sokoto Caliphate" *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 71 (2) 2012: 168-170.

Hausa political life. Between 1802 when he was forced into exile from his home in the city of Gobir and his death in 1817, Dan Fodio and his army of followers fought and subjugated the Hausa kingdoms in conscious imitation of the career of the Prophet.[46] From his new capital at Sokoto, he was proclaimed Sultan and Commander of the Faithful of what was to become known as the Sokoto Caliphate.[47] And although its founder soon died, Dan Fodio's family continued to reign as Sultans of Sokoto, ruling a large empire in what would become Northern Nigeria.

Under the rule of the first Sultans of Sokoto, Usman Dan Fodio, Muhammad Bello, and Abu Bakr Atiku, the caliphate greatly expanded in the western half of the Sahel region of Africa.[48] The Sahel is a tract of semi-arid land separating the Sahara in the north from the more tropical south and spanned the widest part of the continent east to west. By employing the cavalry of the traditionally nomadic Fulani people, Sokoto carved out a vast empire which, after subjugating the Hausa states, came to control the lucrative trade in slaves as well as salt, and other natural resources.[49] The decentralised structure of the Sokoto Empire that allowed it to expand successfully in its first decades also allowed for its political decline later in the century. Dan Fodio and his successors did not so much replace the Hausa states as absorb them into their empire.[50] This meant that the basic city-state structures of the old kingdoms remained under the overarching

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[46] Muhammad Khalid Masud, "Shehu Usuman Dan Fodio's Restatement of the Doctrine of Hijrah" *Islamic Studies*, 25 (1) 1986: 60-63.

[47] H.A.S. Johnston, *The Fulani Empire of Sokoto* (London: Oxford University Press. 1976), 312

[48] C. C. Stewart, 'Frontier Disputes and Problems of Legitimation: Sokoto-Masina Relations 1817-1837", *The Journal of African History*, 17 (4) 1976: 497-499.

[49] Paul E. Lovejoy, "The Characteristics of Plantations in the Nineteenth-Century Sokoto Caliphate" *The American Historical Review*, 84 (5) 1979: 1276.

[50] M. Hiskett *The sword of truth: the life and times of the Shehu Usuman dan Fodio*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 146.

control of the new Caliphate, each being ruled by a Fulani emir, who was in theory loyal to Sokoto. Later when local emirs began to challenge the authority of Sokoto, this empire gave way to a politically fractured situation whereby former vassals paid nominal homage to the sultan as spiritual leader but were effectively politically autonomous. [51]

Late nineteenth-century Northern Nigeria was analogous in many ways to eighteenth-century India whereby the Mughal Emperor continued to reign in Delhi but the provincial viceroys in Bengal, Hyderabad, Awadh, and elsewhere were operating as though they were independent rulers. And just as in India this political fractiousness gave the British the opportunity to move in and secure control of Northern Nigeria as well as providing a legitimating myth of their colonial regime as the successor to a declining Islamic empire. However, where this comparison breaks down is with the religious nature of the role of the Sultan of Sokoto. Muslim rulers had a religious function in their state; as in most non-secular states, the ruler's religion was usually the state religion. In Sokoto, however, the religious authority of the sultan was much more significant than simply being the head of the religious community.[52] Sokoto was called a caliphate, an Arabic term that originated in the very early decades of the Islamic period. The first caliphs, or successors, were the religio-political heads of the Muslims after the death of the Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century.[53] The single unified Caliphate, however, was soon rent by political faction with ultimately gave birth to the Sunni-Shia split, after which the Islamic world was never again politically unified. In the ensuing centuries

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[51] Kabiru Sulaiman Chafe, "Challenges to the Hegemony of the Sokoto Caliphate: A Preliminary Examination" *Paideuma*, 40, 1994: 101.
[52] Hiskett, *The Sword of Truth*, 145.
[53] Andrew Rippin. *Muslims: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*. (London: Routledge, 2001), 65.

several dynasties claimed the title of caliph. In the early modern period the Ottoman Sultans claimed the office of caliph and were widely recognised in the Sunni world as the political and religious successor of the Prophet.[54] Dan Fodio, however, was beyond the remit of the Sultan-Caliph in Constantinople. In the early nineteenth century, he came to be recognised locally in West Africa as both the political and religious head of the Hausa and Fulani people of his empire. Although the political power of his dynasty would contract over the nineteenth century, his place and that of his successors as the religious head of the region remained intact.[55] As will be discussed further, although in many ways the Sultan of Sokoto was just one of many rulers in Northern Nigeria, during and after the Lugard's conquest the heirs of Dan Fodio were treated by the British as the premier rulers in deference to their pedigree.

Two individuals dominate the history of British colonisation of Northern Nigeria. Frederick Lugard, the conqueror of Sokoto, will be discussed in further detail below, but Before Lugard there was George Goldie.[56] George Dashwood Taubman Goldie was born in Douglas on the Isle of Man in 1846 to an upper middle class family. His father was an Army officer and politician and George followed his father into the army and attended the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, earning a commission in the Royal Engineers. Lieutenant Goldie's army service, however, was short lived as only two years after gaining his commission he inherited a large bequest from a relative and resigned from the

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[54] Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 100.
[55] A. S. Kanya-Forstner and Paul E. Lovejoy, "The Sokoto Caliphate and the European Powers, 1890-1907", *Paideuma*, 40, 1994: 9-10.
[56] Geoffrey Leonard Baker, *Trade winds on the Niger: the saga of the Royal Niger Company, 1830-1971* (Oxford: Radcliffe Press, 1996), 41-42.

army. It would seem that neither society life in Douglas nor a career as a Royal Engineer were to Goldie's liking, and with this newfound wealth he quickly left Britain for Egypt. Egypt too was apparently not to the twenty-one year old Goldie's taste and he promptly headed south to the Sudan, which in 1867 was still controlled by the Khedival Government. For two years Goldie lived in Sudan, where he learned Arabic, and, most importantly, met pilgrims from the Fulani-Hausa lands en route to Mecca to perform the Hajj.[57]

The mercurial and cavalier Goldie left the Sudan in 1870, but his interest in the sub-Saharan Sahel region would lead him ultimately to return to Africa in 1876. In the intervening years, however, Goldie was busy; he defied social conventions and married the family nanny in Britain, but not before surviving the Paris Commune in 1871. His inheritance, however, was not enough to live on so in 1875 he joined a firm trading in the upper Niger, and the next year went with a small party to what would become Northern Nigeria to investigate its commercial potential. What Goldie found was a country that was rich in natural resources but not so rich that it could support a fiercely competitive market. This led Goldie to seek first a monopoly on trade in the region, and then to attempt to govern Northern Nigeria under the aegis of a company chartered by the British Government to secure its resources.[58]

From 1882 until its dissolution in 1900, the Royal Niger Company was the colonial government of Northern Nigeria; it raised an army called the RNC Constabulary,

[57] Dorathea Wellesley, *Sir George Goldie: Founder of Nigeria* (London: Macmillan, 1934), 16-18.
[58] Wellesley, *Sir George Goldie,* 17-19; Scarbrough rev. John Flint "Goldie, Sir George Dashwood Taubman (1846–1925)," in *the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/view/article/33441 (accessed 14 February 2013).

it worked to delineate its frontiers with the French and German empires in West Africa, and most importantly, it signed treaties with the Sultan of Sokoto and other rulers, thereby beginning the process of indirect rule. The founding premise of the Company was that it could secure profit for its shareholders from a trading monopoly while simultaneously bringing the 'benefits' of British government to Northern Nigeria.[59] Years after the foundation of the RNC, in a speech before Company shareholders in 1897, Goldie gave the following justification for the policy that he was the driving force behind:

> In an unsettled country, where the foundations for the security for native life, liberty, and property are being laid by the efforts of a small number of British subjects, scattered amongst dense populations of turbulent savages, and where the conditions of progress are hampered by climatic and physical difficulties, it is of the utmost importance that these efforts should be united, instead of being wasted in internal jealousies and struggles, which not only retard the progress of civilisation, but must ultimately destroy what has already been effected. I am not ashamed to confess my personal responsibility for the conception and execution of this policy of united effort from the year 1879 - three years before the foundation of this Company - down to the present day. It seemed to me that thus alone could the Niger Territories be won for Great Britain, and British influence be maintained there during the period of foundation and pacification.[60]

This new company was an obvious attempt to mimic the early successes of the East India Company, Hudson Bay Company, and others, by gaining official sanction from the British government to allow a group of investors to exploit and colonise Northern Nigeria.[61] The shareholders mistakenly believed that the interior of Africa held easily accessible mineral riches and their licence from the British government would allow them

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[59] Cain and Hopkins, "Gentlemanly Capitalism", 13.
[60] Quoted in Orr, *The Making of Northern Nigeria*, 19.
[61] Orr, *The Making of Northern Nigeria*, 29.

to exploit them to the fullest. For the British Government this afforded an opportunity to extend their remit, forestall the French, and create new opportunities for British capitalism, all without any expense to the treasury.[62] This was a period when across Africa the European powers were beginning to jockey for colonial dominance and also try to make colonialism profitable. From the 1880s until the turn of the century the British often saw their role in Africa in terms of rivalry with the French or the Germans.[63] By allowing the RNC to operate in this region, the British government were able at the Berlin conference of 1884-85 to have their claim to the area recognised by the stroke of a pen.[64] The people of Northern Nigeria, of course, were not consulted, but it was hoped that the extension of British rule via the medium of the Company would bring all the benefits of 'modern government' while conforming to the existing political structures of the region.[65]

Soon after its foundation, the Company began to engage in treaties with local powers to secure legal rights to a trading monopoly in the Niger plane. This was done to prevent rival European powers, the Germans and French, from gaining a foothold in the region.[66] In 1885 Company agents successfully persuaded the reigning Sultan of Sokoto, Umaru dan 'Aliyu Baba, to sign a treaty with the Company. This agreement did not formally impose indirect rule on Sokoto, no residents were deployed, the British did not yet have the capability or resources to influence in any significant manner the internal

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[62] Cain and Hopkins, "Gentlemanly Capitalism", 13.
[63] Bentley, *Lord Salisbury's World*, 228.
[64] Wm. Roger Louis, *Ends of British Imperialism: The Scramble for Empire, Suez, and Decolonization* (London: I.B. Taurus, 2006), 100.
[65] Perham, *Lugard*, I: 625.
[66] John E. Flint, *Sir George Goldie and the Making of Nigeria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960), 138.

governance of Sokoto, nor to control its external relations. What it and the other treaties made with other rulers did was to set the stage for a later expansion of indirect rule.[67] This was accomplished with a very brief if comprehensive agreement in which the sultan theoretically ceded considerable power. This treaty laid the legal and intellectual framework for the later extension of indirect rule. Although it is not fully clear whether the sultan knew exactly in what he was engaging, in the first two articles of the treaty he gave major concessions to the Company including granting them a legal monopoly of trade in his dominions.[68] However, articles three and four were key as they legally limited the ability of the sultan to conduct foreign relations and bound his successors to this agreement forever, and as outlined in article five, all for the price of an annual tribute.[69]

In the same year that the treaty was made with the Sultan of Sokoto, a similar one was made with the Emir of Gwandu.[70] The Emir, Malike, was a successor of the brother of Usman Dan Fodio who had been put in charge of this important region in the far western province of the Sokoto Caliphate. By entreating only with Sokoto and Gwandu in 1885, the Company was showing that they believed that these two rulers still held effective dominion over the many Muslim polities of Northern Nigeria.[71] In the preamble of the treaty with the Sultan Umoru, one of his titles given is 'King of the Mussulmans of the Soudan', which in this context means ruler of the Muslims of the western Sahel

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[67] Saadia Touval, "Treaties, Borders, and the Partition of Africaz" *The Journal of African History*, 7 (2) 1966: 289.
[68] Flint, *Sir George Goldie,* 162.
[69] Edward Hertslet, *The Map of Africa by Treaty*, 3 vols. (London: Cass, 1894), III:972.
[70] Hertslet, *The Map of Africa by Treaty*, III: 974-75.
[71] Flint, *Sir George Goldie,* 162.

region, and should not be confused with the region in Northeast Africa called the Sudan.[72] This was in 1885 something of an illusory conceit as the power of the Sultan had greatly diminished from the high water mark of the caliphate decades earlier.[73] In the following years the British realised that the power of the sultans had receded and that to extend effective control over the region they needed to engage with the former vassals of the Sokoto themselves. During the 1890s the Company signed additional agreements with other rulers in Northern Nigeria, not only to gain trading concessions but also to prevent them from having to share Usman Dan Fodio's patrimony with the French and Germans. Nonetheless, these agreements with Sokoto and Gwandu were important and played a significant role in Lugard's later actions. At the time, however, their impact was limited and because of the small number of RNC officials on the ground it cannot be said to herald the assumption of indirect rule over Northern Nigeria.

The reasons for the failure of the RNC are numerous, but in short the regime never became a money making proposition.[74] Despite the apparently comprehensive treaties which gave major concessions to the British, the Company lacked the capacity to capitalise on them. Moreover, by the 1890s, with the French to the north and west, and the Germans to the east, the Royal Niger Company was being outcompeted by colonial powers that were backed not by spendthrift shareholders but by major European governments.[75]

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[72] Hertslet, *The Map of Africa by Treaty*, III: 972.
[73] Kanya-Forstner and Lovejoy, "The Sokoto Caliphate and the European Powers, 1890-1907", 9-10.
[74] Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, 402-405.
[75] Orr, *The Making of Northern Nigeria*, 26-27.

Despite the intent of the Berlin conference in the middle of the 1880s to reduce the risk of imperial conflict and competition, the following decades witnessed the colonising powers struggling to make claims to as much territory as possible. Often their claims overlapped and they were forced to negotiate and demarcate frontiers where frontiers had never existed. The most famous example of this occurred in 1898. At this time a large British force moving south along the Nile met a smaller French force encamped at Fashoda. And although the French had undoubtedly reached Fashoda first, the British won the day on the grounds that the *Élysée* was not willing to go to war whereas it seemed Whitehall was.[76] In Nigeria, the exact boundaries had still not yet been demarcated in the early 1890s. For the RNC this led to a series of long drawn out diplomatic confrontations with both France and Germany which, while being resolved largely in the interests of the Company, distracted attention from developing their colonial venture.

During the tumultuous 1890s, as both France and Germany expanded their power in West Africa, the RNC kept rival Europeans at bay and slowly expanding its authority by convincing local rulers in the frontier regions to sign agreements recognising the suzerainty of the Company.[77] The following passage written by Charles Orr, a resident in Northern Nigeria under Lugard, encapsulated the many troubles faced by the Company's regime:

> The introduction of law and order and the prevention of inter-tribal war
> and devastating slave-raiding, which hindered civilisation and paralysed

[76] Asteris C. Huliaras, "The 'Anglosaxon Conspiracy': French Perceptions of the Great Lakes Crisis" *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 36 (4) 1998: 602.
[77] Kanya-Forstner and Lovejoy, "The Sokoto Caliphate and the European Powers, 1890-1907", 7-8.

development in the interior, could not be effected without an enormous expenditure of money which the Company had not at its disposal. The two functions of the Company - commerce and administration - were mutually dependent, since it was commerce alone which could supply the sinews wherewith law and order could be introduced. And on the Niger, unlike India, "there was no pagoda tree," as the Governor [Lord Aberdare] remarked, "to be shaken, with the accompanying shower of rupees. We do not, so far, raise from the natives one penny of direct revenue." It was uphill work, and the Company's hands were very full in these early years of struggle. German and French rivalry called for every quality of energy, tact, foresight, and rapid decision possessed by the directors - and, fortunately, none of these qualifications were lacking - while the pacification of the numerous tribes within its own borders was a task of no mean order, and the little force of constabulary was none too large for its execution.[78]

The significance of quotation from Lord Aberdare in comparing the impoverished nature of Northern Nigeria to comparatively wealthy India is two-fold. Firstly, it demonstrates that at the highest levels of the British establishment, even when discussing colonial government in West Africa, the example of faraway India was always at the front of the mind.[79] Moreover, it illustrates the essentially weak position of the RNC, attempting to do in Nigeria what was accomplished in India under what Aberdare believed to be more advantageous circumstances a century before.

Company rule began to unravel in Northern Nigeria in the last years of the nineteenth century, not as in India because of a disastrous rebellion but rather because of a largely successful war. In 1897 five hundred local soldiers with a handful of British officers under the command of Sir George Goldie routed a combined Fulani army of

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[78] Orr, *The Making of Northern Nigeria*, 29-30.
[79] Indian ideas and concepts had so permeated the official mind in Northern Nigeria that Lugard even continued to use Indian words in favour of English ones, conflating India and Northern Nigeria as equally 'oriental.' In a letter from Lugard to Chamberlin from 16 May 1900, for example, where the newly appointed High Commissioner discusses the problems of crime Northern Nigeria he uses the Hindi word 'dacoity' rather than the English banditry or highway robbery. Lugard to Chamberlin, 16 May 1900, BOD ref. MSS. Lugard s. 62.

about thirty thousand men of the emirates of Nupe and Illorin.[80] Although this campaign

easily subjugated the independent-minded emirs, it highlighted to the British Government

that the treaties that the Company signed with the Sultan of Sokoto and Emir of Gwandu

in 1885 and the boundaries that were negotiated with the French and Germans did not

secure British rule in Northern Nigeria.[81] Certainly they gave the British a legal claim to

the territory, and additionally the personnel of the RNC had made some headway into the

interior. However, some local rulers were not interested in conceding to the Company's

demands.[82] To this end, in 1898 Frederick Lugard was put in charge of the Niger

territories, superseding the Company's authority, and he was tasked with raising and

commanding an army of conquest: the West African Field Force (WAFF).[83]

Frederick John Dealtry Lugard was in 1898 already an experienced soldier and

colonial official. He was born in Madras in 1858, the year Company rule in India ended.

His father was a chaplain in the employ of the Madras Presidency in the south of India.

The younger Lugard, however, chose to follow not his father but his uncle's career path.

General Sir Edward Lugard was a soldier who fought in the Anglo-Sikh Wars in the

1840s before entering the civilian administration of the British Army and becoming

Permanent Undersecretary at the War Office in Whitehall. Lugard's career in the British

Army, although it lasted longer than Goldie's, was not long. In 1886 he resigned his

commission, but not before being decorated for service in Afghanistan, the Sudan, and

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[80] Ann O'Hear, "British Intervention and the Slaves and Peasant Farmers of Ilorin, c. 1890-c. 1906"
Paideuma, 40, 1994: 130.
[81] Touval, "Treaties, Borders, and the Partition of Africa", 289.
[82] Kanya-Forstner and Lovejoy, "The Sokoto Caliphate and the European Powers, 1890-1907", 9-11.
[83] S. C. Ukpabi, "The Anglo-French Rivalry in Borgu: A Study of Military Imperialism" *African Studies Review*, 14 (3) 1971: 454-455.

Burma.[84] Much like Goldie and Burton, Lugard began his professional life as an officer

but this was at a time when it was exceedingly difficult to advance to the higher ranks

and so he was compelled to move on to other ventures.[85]

For the next decade Lugard flitted from job to job as something of an imperial

soldier of fortune. Based largely in East Africa he spent this decade helping the Imperial

British East Africa Company expand its authority over the former African dominions of

the Sultan of Zanzibar and beyond. During this period he also worked in Southern Africa,

and served briefly in 1894-95 under Goldie for the RNC on a campaign to ensure that the

Borgu Emirate did not fall to the French. During this phase of his life Lugard earned a

reputation as an effective colonial soldier and helped to add large tracts, including

modern Uganda, to the British Empire.[86] This resume brought Lugard to the attention of

the Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain who in 1897 selected him for an important

new post in Nigeria. The articles of the RNC's Charter gave the Colonial Secretary the

authority to interfere in its administration, which Chamberlain did when it appointed him

'Her Majesty's Commissioner for the Nigerian Hinterland'. His first job was to raise and

lead the West African Field Force to complete the pacification of Northern Nigeria.[87]

As opposed to the cautious Liberals under Gladstone who had first sanctioned the

creation of the RNC, the government in 1897 was the stridently imperialist Conservative-

Unionist Salisbury ministry. Michael Bentley has shown that Salisbury's imperialism,

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[84] Perham, *Lugard*, I:63
[85] Kennedy, *Highly Civilized Man*, 26.
[86] Neil Kodesh, "Renovating Tradition: The Discourse of Succession in Colonial Buganda" *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 34 (3) 2001: 519-520.
[87] C.9046-28 *Colonial reports-annual*. 'No. 260. Niger. West African Frontier Force. Reports for 1897-8' (London: HMSO, 1899), 3-8.

unlike his Tory predecessor Disraeli, was wholly strategic and not tinged with romanticism. Under Salisbury the British presence, especially in Africa, expanded greatly, largely to forestall rival claims from the French and others powers.[88] The political parallel to Egypt is marked. In 1882 Gladstone allowed for a temporary occupation of Egypt while later Salisbury gave Evelyn Baring the free hand to entrench indirect rule. In Northern Nigeria the Liberals licenced the RNC to sign treaties with local powers and trade, while the Conservatives under Salisbury and Chamberlin launched its formal subjugation.[89]

Lugard returned to West Africa in the spring of 1898 to begin the process of transferring political authority over the RNC's territories to the British Crown.[90] This would not be fully accomplished until 1900 by which time the British Government bought out the remaining company shares and legally established the Northern Nigeria Protectorate under the Colonial Office.[91] In the intervening two years, however, Lugard's mission was to raise locally a two thousand-man army under British officers which could if need be take on the army of any local power and secure the territory's frontiers from the encroachments of European rivals. Just like the Bengal Army of the East India Company, which Hastings and Wellesley had used to break and subsume their rivals in India, the WAFF was to be the blunt object with which Lugard coerced the

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[88] Bentley, *Lord Salisbury's World*, 248-250.
[89] Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, 403-405.
[90] Lugard, *The Diaries of Lord Lugard*, IV: 368
[91] Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, 406; Lugard to Chamberlin, 16 May 1900, BOD ref. MSS. Lugard s. 62.

sultans and emirs of Northern Nigeria to accept the sovereignty of the Crown, in return for retaining a semblance of their former status.[92]

Although the last major holdouts to British power did not even fall until 1903, soon after his return to West Africa in 1898 Lugard had already developed a clear plan for how the protectorate was going to be ruled. Despite being put at the head of an army and enjoying the broad support of the Colonial Secretary and Prime Minister, Lugard never suggested simply doing away with the rulers in Northern Nigeria who had, as a class, not been terribly amenable to British rule. Rather, he continued the practice of the RNC in engaging when possible with the reigning authorities and only when they were not willing to yield did he turn to force.

Lugard first arrived in Lagos, then a separate crown colony on the Atlantic coast, where the officers and men of the WAFF were being assembled in preparation for their planned advance into the interior. From the outset, as is evident from Lugard's diary, his mission to Nigeria was both political and military.[93] Unlike in Egypt where Wolseley first occupied the country and later Dufferin was sent in to establish a political framework, in Northern Nigeria Lugard was sent to achieve both ends simultaneously. His contemporary diary is both detailed and self-serving as Lugard was his own biggest promoter. This document provides good evidence of his views as indirect rule was being

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[92] Lugard to Major Edward Lugard 29 July 1900, BOD ref. MSS. Lugard s. 62.
[93] Undated Telegram from CO to High Commissioner for South Africa in Lugard, *The Diaries of Lord Lugard*, IV: 323.

established, and when compared to his later writing, it shows that Lugard was remarkably

consistent in his views on colonial government across his long career.[94]

From his arrival back in West Africa in 1898, even as he was organising what was

in effect an army of conquest, he was also corresponding with the local rulers trying to

persuade them to accept his authority.[95] For the most part Lugard was unsuccessful in

achieving this end and much of Northern Nigeria had to be brought under indirect rule by

force. Despite the violence used in creating the protectorate, evidence of Lugard's

abiding commitment to indirect rule can be found in the differing tone he takes in

describing Nigerian rulers versus British officials in his secret diary. Local rulers and

even the Sultan of Sokoto who declared jan open war against the British were discussed

in a respectful and measured, if patronising tone, but Lugard was very even rudely critical

of other British officials. He was not, for example, beneath calling the Governor of

Lagos, Sir Henry McCallum, an "idiot" and privately accusing him of cowardice and

being shamefully frugal.[96] A few days later he went to great lengths to ensure the British

enjoyed the good graces of the Emir of Ilorin, Sulaymanu dan Aliyu, and that the

advancing forces of the WAFF did not offend him by passing though his territories

without permission, even though the emir had bowed to British control the previous

year.[97] This one example from the first year of Lugard's regime captures his methods of

colonial government in Northern Nigeria; he had a single-minded and almost messianic

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[94] See for example: Fredrick Lugard, "British Policy in Nigeria" *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 10 (4) 1937: 377-400. In this article Lugard, in the last decade of his long life, celebrates the regime of indirect rule he and his successors created in Nigeria, and demonstrates that he was remained closely informed of the developments in the Government of Nigeria well into his retirement.
[95] Cd. 788-16 'No. 346. Northern Nigeria' *Colonial reports-Annual* (London: HMSO, 1902), 13-15.
[96] Lugard, *The Diaries of Lord Lugard*, IV: 369.
[97] Lugard, *The Diaries of Lord Lugard*, IV: 376.

self-appointed mission to subjugate the territory, but he always intended to do this with the cooperation, or at least the outward appearance of cooperation, of the local rulers when possible.[98]

The arrival of Lugard and the raising of the WAFF, however, was just the prelude to the formal dissolution of the RNC and the assumption of Crown control over the Company's territories. This came via an Order-in-Council of 1899 which called for the proclamation on 1 January 1900 of a new colony to be called the Northern Nigeria Protectorate.[99] Despite, however, the new century and the new protectorate, Northern Nigeria was to be based on decidedly nineteenth-century lines. From the city of Jebba on the banks of the Niger on the morning of the first day of 1900, the new regime was heralded in English and Hausa:

> Proclamation of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria hitherto known as the Niger Territories, situated between the possessions of France to the West and North and of Germany to the East, and bounded on the South by the Protectorate of Lagos and Southern Nigeria, will cease from this day to be vested in the Royal Niger Company, Chartered and Limited, and is hereby assumed by Her Majesty. And be it known further to all men that the treaties concluded by the Royal Niger Company, by and with the sanction of Her Majesty and approved by Her Majesty's Secretary of States, will be and remain operative and in force as between Her Majesty and the Kings, Emirs, Chiefs, Princes or other signatories to the same, and all pledges and undertakings therein contained will remain mutually binding on both parties.[100]

The conceptual and linguistic parallel to the earlier proclamation ending the East India Company's rule in favour of the Crown more than forty years previously was striking: "We hereby announce to the native princes of India, that all treaties and engagements

[98] Vaughan, *Nigerian Chiefs,* 25.
[99] *The Northern Nigeria Gazette*, (1 January 1900, Vol. 1, No. 1), 3.
[100] *The Northern Nigeria Gazette*, (1 January 1900, Vol. 1, No. 1), 3.

made with them by or under the authority of the East India Company are by us accepted, and will be scrupulously maintained, and we look for the like observance on their part."[101] In this way Lugard was an intellectual heir to Lord Canning, who had as the first viceroy enacted the proclamation of 1858 to herald a colonial order which was expressly devised to be based on a collaborative, if unequal, relationship between the British and traditional Indian elites. Indeed, the ideas and practices that shaped the government of this new colony demonstrate the degree to which post-Rebellion princely India supplied the political technology for even a distant West African possession.

Lugard launched a major reordering of the RNC's territories, and asserted British control where the Company had hitherto been too timid or too impoverished. In 1900, however, although the British Government had empowered Lugard to act, most of the protectorate was far from fully under his control. Northern Nigeria even lacked a capital city. Jebba, where the proclamation of 1900 had been read, was a temporary headquarters in the far south of the protectorate.[102] Only later in 1902 was a proper capital city, Zungeru, built near the geographical centre of the colony.[103] Despite lacking both a capital city and even proper control of the territory from January 1900, Lugard was making full use of his sweeping powers granted though the Order-in-Counsel of 1899.[104]

One of his first actions was to divide the entire territory into a number of provinces.[105] It is in this method of political organisation that Northern Nigeria was most different from the other Muslim territories under indirect rule at this time. From Zanzibar

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[101] Keith, *Speeches and Documents on Indian Policy,* 383.
[102] Sir Frederick Lugard to Major Edward Lugard, 29 July 1900, BOD ref. MSS. Lugard s. 62.
[103] Sir William Nevill M. Geary, *Nigeria Under British Rule* (London: Methuen & Co., 1927), 211.
[104] "Order-in-Council for 27 December 1899" *The London Gazette*, 5 January 1900, 69-73.
[105] Cd. 3285-3, 'No. 516. Northern Nigeria' *Colonial reports-annual*. (London: HMSO, 1907) XV:115.

to Perak, most of these states were treated as unitary polities ruled by a single monarch under the overarching control of the British Empire. The Northern Nigeria Protectorate was a unitary political entity, under the sovereignty of the Crown, subdivided into administrative units, provinces, which came under the combined rule, or dual control, of British residents and Nigerian princes. The exact number of provinces fluctuated during the first years of the protectorate, but by 1906 there were sixteen provinces with borders corresponding to the pre-colonial emirates.[106] In a passage from Lugard's *Dual Mandate,* he attempts to show how his system in Northern Nigeria was fundamentally different to that imposed in Malaya, but in so doing inadvertently demonstrates how similar the two regimes of indirect rule were.

> From first to last the theoretical independence of the States was the governing factor in the system evolved in Malaya. The so-called "Resident" was in fact a Regent, practically uncontrolled by the Governor or by Whitehall, governing his "independent" State by direct personal rule, with or without the co-operation of the native ruler. He had no aggressive European neighbours on his frontiers, and in the last resort depended on his armed police and the military forces of the colony, and his abundant revenue made him self-supporting. This, as we shall see, is the very anti-thesis of the Nigerian system.[107]

In a later section Lugard more fully explains the role of ruler in this system, further rhetorically differentiating it from other systems of indirect rule:

> The essential feature of the system (as I wrote at the time of its inauguration) is that the native chiefs are constituted "as an integral part of the machinery of the administration. There are not two sets of rulers - British and native - working either separately or in co-operation, but a single Government in which the native chiefs have well-defined duties and an acknowledged status equally with British officials. Their duties should

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[106] Cd. 3285-3, 'No. 516. Northern Nigeria' *Colonial reports-annual*. (London: HMSO, 1907) II:A 8-56; Vaughan, *Nigerian Chiefs,* 58.
[107] Lugard, *The Dual Mandate*, 130-131.

never conflict, and should overlap as little as possible. They should be complementary to each other, and the chief himself must understand that he has no right to place and power unless he renders his proper services to the State." The ruling classes are no longer either demi-gods, or parasites preying on the community. They must work for the stipends and position they enjoy. They are the trusted delegates of the Governor, exercising in the Moslem States the well-understood powers of "Wakils" [Magistrate] in conformity with their own Islamic system, and recognising the King's representative as their acknowledged Suzerain.[108]

From this it would appear that the system of indirect rule in Northern Nigeria was fundamentally different from that established elsewhere. In Northern Nigeria the British monarch was sovereign of a system in which European and traditional elites worked in concert to govern a number of provinces, all under the overall supervision of the British High Commissioner. This is in apparent contrast to princely India, Egypt, the Gulf, Zanzibar, and as Lugard himself noted Malaya, where the states remained unitary polities under the legal sovereignty or semi-sovereignty of the ruling prince, but with a high level of control in the hands of the British resident. However, Lugard himself undercuts these differences in this passage: "The Resident is the backbone of the administration. He is Judge of the Provincial Court, of which his staff are commissioners. Through them he supervises and guides the native rulers…"[109] Despite the apparent structural difference in the way Northern Nigeria was constituted in comparison to all of the other states we have considered, in its practical functioning it was very much like the others. The traditional rulers maintained some authority and social status and the British residents wielded a high degree of control over the state. This was as much the case in Northern Nigeria as the other states. Indeed Michael Fisher has noted that Northern Nigeria and Malaya,

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[108] Lugard, *The Dual Mandate*, 204.
[109] Lugard, *The Dual Mandate*, 128.

despite their ostensible differences, both inherited the same fundamental system of indirect rule in which the resident-prince relationship was central.[110]

On the face of it, the political structure of the Northern Nigeria Protectorate appears to mark a complete break with the political heritage of these Muslim states. However, it was fully consistent with the way that the British, principally Lugard, saw their relationship with the historical Fulani-Hausa polity. From this perspective the British were assuming the government of the single political unit that had been the Sokoto Caliphate and now was the Northern Nigeria Protectorate. Under this conceptualisation of colonial rule, the emirs and sultans were not powerful national monarchs but were more akin to local hereditary governors. Perhaps the clearest iteration of how this new British order was overtly modelled on a constructed version of the caliphate was a proclamation made three years later, when Lugard finally entered the city of Sokoto itself, finalising the conquest of the territory:

> Now these are the words which I, the High Commissioner, have to say for the future. The Fulani in the old times under Dan Fodio conquered this country. They took the right to rule over it, to levy taxes, to depose kings and to create kings. They in turn have by defeat lost their rule which has come into the hands of the British. All of these things which I have said the Fulani by conquest took the right to do now pass to the British. Every Sultan and Emir and the principal officers of the State will be appointed by the High Commissioner throughout all this country. The High Commissioner will be guided by the usual laws of succession and the wishes of the people and chiefs, but will set them aside if desires for good cause to do so.[111]

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[110] Fisher, "Indirect Rule in the British Empire", 422-423.
[111] Perham, *Lugard*, II:128-129.

Although this is shot through with jingoistic bluster, Lugard, even at the moment of final

conquest, is consistent in his appeals to a historical understanding of the role of local

potentates.

In public and private alike, Lugard was unswerving in his belief that his plan for

Northern Nigeria, based on what he called the 'dual control' of the territories divided

between British residents and hereditary rulers and with a strict division of powers, was

best.[112] Under this model the British resident was charged with control over taxation and

a host of other administrative functions, while the local emir continued to be the head of

the local judicial establishment as well as the leader of religious community.[113] Lugard

was successful in coercing both the local rulers and persuading his British colleagues and

superiors of the utility of this system. In a memorandum by the Parliamentary Under

Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Cabinet, Lord Onslow, it was reported that

"Lugard has repeatedly testified to the fine qualities of the Fulah Sultans, or Emirs, in

Northern Nigeria..." [114] Lugard himself was a tenacious champion of his system; the

following passage is representative of the colourful ways in which he boasted about the

success of his 'dual control' to the Colonial Secretary, Chamberlin.

> On my way through Bida recently, the Emir of Nupe had received me with
> every extreme mark of honour dictated by native custom and
> etiquette…This man, and the able guidance of Major Burdon and Mr.
> Goldsmith, has shown great progress, and has endeavoured in every way
> to assist Government and to show his loyalty in all possible ways. I have
> great pleasure in reporting this incident to you for its significance is

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[112] In Lugard's private papers from this time, whether he is writing to his younger brother or the Colonial
Secretary, he is always congratulating himself and his system of indirect rule. See for example Sir
Frederick Lugard to Major Edward Lugard, 29 July 1900, BOD ref. MSS. Lugard s. 62 ; Lugard to
Chamberlin, 16 May 1900, BOD ref. MSS. Lugard s. 62.
[113] Vaughan, *Nigerian Chiefs,* 25.
[114] Memorandum for the Cabinet by the Earl of Onslow 28 December 1902, CO/879/79/6.

considerable. That an Emir of the rank of Mohannadu of Nupe should ride out 50 miles in the fasting month to voluntarily pay his respects to the British Administrator, with every possible demonstration of loyalty and even of personal friendship, is a contrast to the state of things less than two years ago, when these people were fighting against us, and no white man's life would have been safe both of the banks of the Niger. Such a demonstration is wholly unique in this part of Africa, and the news of it will spread throughout the Hausa States. It is a point of by no means the least significance that this should have taken place at the moment when every chief knows that hostilities are imminent between us and Kano and Sokoto…These results are due to the indefatigable work and the tact and sympathy with the people shown by the Resident, Major Burdon, and his successor Mr. Goldsmith, both of whom are *personae gratissima* with the Fullanis of Nupe.[115]

Not all of the local rulers, however, were interested in this abrasive new British regime. During the period of RNC rule, even the rulers of Sokoto and Gwandu who had signed comprehensive treaties were effectively independent. With the arrival of Lugard, and soon after the establishment of crown rule, the situation changed dramatically and several key rulers were not willing to voluntarily cede more power to the British.

In what the British came to call the Kano war, the WAFF under Lugard's command finalised the conquest of Northern Nigeria by invading the dominions of the Sultan of Sokoto and his powerful allies, the emirs of Kano and Katsina.[116] In a brief conflict at the end of 1902 and early 1903, the British swept in and deposed these rulers in favour of more plaint kinsmen.[117] To the British the rationale behind the war was simple: the sultan and his allies were not satisfying the terms of treaty of 1885, ignoring the fact that the relationship between Sokoto and the British had significantly changed with the end of Company rule in 1900. The following passage comes from the previously

[115] Lugard to Chamberlin, 18 December 1902, CO/879/79/6.
[116] For an account of the war see: Ubah, "The British Occupation of the Sokoto Caliphate"
[117] Cd. 1768-14 'No. 409. *Northern Nigeria' Colonial reports--annual.* (London: HMSO, 1904), 38.

cited memorandum by Lord Onslow to the Cabinet, based on information he received

from Lugard:

> The Niger Company agreed to pay a subsidy to the Sultan of Sokoto, but, owing to the hostile attitude of this potentate, who refused to recognise the transfer to Great Britain, the Government has never paid the tribute; all these places, and others, where we are peacefully established, in former times paid a heavy tribute in slaves to the Sultan of Sokoto, as part of his empire, the tribute of Yola alone amounting to 10,000 per annum, and the Sultan has found this tribute cease from one Emir after another as our rule extended, which would sufficiently account for his hostility.[118]

It is not clear whether this is true or if the sultan and his allied emirs were just not terribly

interested in being reduced in status to that of a provincial governor by the British. What

is evident is that while Lugard and the Cabinet were keen to invade the territories and

impose control over these states, they never sought to do away with their monarchies.

Lugard claimed, *post facto*, for example, that had not the Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammadu

Attahiru I dan Ahmadu, died in battle fighting the British, that he would have reappointed

him sultan if he agreed to the terms eventually imposed on his successor.[119] Instead,

during the conflict a new Sultan Muhammadu Attahiru II, a great-grandson of Dan Fodio,

was recognised by the British and went on to rule Sokoto as a dependable client of the

British. In the report detailing the events of the Kano war for the Colonial Secretary,

Lugard explains just how the new sultan was selected:

> I considered that we were fortunate in the nominee of the chiefs, for Atahiru was a man whose face and manner greatly prepossessing me in his favour. He appeared to be in the proper succession. (*Vide* genealogy, Appendix II.) I agreed to appoint him Sultan, and fixed the next morning to explain to them the future *régime*.[120]

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[118] Memorandum for the Cabinet by the Earl of Onslow 28 December 1902 CO/879/79/6.
[119] Cd. 1768-14 'No. 409. *Northern Nigeria' Colonial reports--annual.* (London: HMSO, 1904), 38.
[120] Cd. 1768-14 'No. 409. *Northern Nigeria' Colonial reports--annual.* (London: HMSO, 1904), 38.

Just as in princely India when there were questions of succession, in Northern Nigeria the twin factors of personal suitability and dynastic legitimacy were used to determine a new sultan.[121] This selection of Muhammadu Attahiru II as Sultan of Sokoto is reminiscent of the selection of Sir Pertab Singh as Maharaja of Idar, and Hamud as Sultan of Zanzibar, as discussed in chapters II and V respectively. All three were legitimate candidates for the throne according to their genealogy, and in the case of Sokoto, he was also the candidate of the leading nobles who recognised him as heir apparent before the death of Muhammadu Attahiru I, but these three were also thought to be suitable individuals by the British authorities.[122] As will be discussed further below, this is an early example in Northern Nigeria of the importance of dynastic genealogy as part of the construction of the colonial knowledge regime.

The selection of the new sultan in 1903 confirms the assertion made by Peter Kazenga Tibenderana who argues that the British played a larger role than has been recognised in the succession of rulers in Northern Nigeria.[123] Tibenderana argues that previous historians have incorrectly concluded that succession practices were largely unaffected by the advent of colonialism. However, as shown by his article as well as in the case of Lugard's heavy hand in the selection of Muhammadu Attahiru II, new pressures came to bear on the way sultans and emirs gained their office after 1903. Lugard's regime ushered in a new system that was based both on traditional legitimacy as

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[121] Peter Kazenga Tibenderana, "The Role of the British Administration in the Appointment of the Emirs of Northern Nigeria, 1903-1931" *The Journal of African History*, 28 (2) 1987: 234.
[122] Tibenderana, "The Role of the British Administration in the Appointment of the Emirs of Northern Nigeria, 1903-1931", 234.
[123] Tibenderana, "The Role of the British Administration in the Appointment of the Emirs of Northern Nigeria", 231-232.

well as political expediency just as was the case in contemporary princely India and elsewhere in the indirectly ruled empire.

The structural characteristics of the Northern Nigeria Protectorate, whereby the emirs were not monarchs of discrete polities, but rather hereditary rulers of specific subdivisions of a larger singular political unit was, strictly speaking, unique in the British Empire. Most of the states in this study owed their model of indirect rule to the top level or 'salute states' of the Indian Empire, the senior 120 princes who ruled over large states with a minimum of internal interference from the British. The rulers of Northern Nigeria were far removed from the likes of the Nizam of Hyderabad and his peers in authority and social status within the empire. This, however, does not mean that Lugard's system was wholly novel. The salute states were by far the best known and constituted the majority of the princely states by population. However, there were over 400 non-salute states in India whose relationship with the British was more like the Northern Nigerian princes than it was like the senior members of their class in India.

Most of the princely states of India were grouped together into what were called agencies. An agency could be composed of several dozen individual states, who usually shared close cultural and historical connections, like the Western India and Gujarat States Agency, north of Bombay, which was made up of over 300 states.[124] As was discussed in Chapter II, a senior British resident who was responsible to the viceroy or a provincial governor ran these agencies. Beneath the head of the agency were a number of British residents and assistant residents who were responsible for coordinating the government of

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[124] John R. Wood, "British versus Princely Legacies and the Political Integration of Gujarat" The *Journal of Asian Studies*, 44 (1) 1984: 67.

usually tiny states with small populations. Under this form of indirect rule, the British

officials played a vastly more important role in the states, often wielding far more power

than the ruling prince. In his study of the residency system in India, Michael Fisher

concluded that although British residents were the representatives of the imperial power

at the state level, their power varied widely on a state-by-state basis, depending on a

number of factors including the size of the state.[125] John Wood, in his investigation of

the Western India and Gujarat States Agency in the decades before partition, shows how

the smaller states were rarely consulted in the lead up to independence, as compared to

the larger 'salute states'.[126] In this context, even though the practice of indirect rule in

Northern Nigeria differed from that in Egypt or Malaya, it owed just as much to practices

devised in princely India as these other states. Lugard himself made this connection plain

in 1902 in reporting on his relationship with the newly appointed Emir of Bida, Abu Bakr

dan Masaba: "I proclaimed him Emir before the assembled people. Following the

custom of British India I gave him a "letter of appointment" containing the conditions on

which he held the emirate."[127] Indeed, the rulers of Northern Nigeria were so analogous

to the lower ranking princes of India that they not only experienced a similar form of

colonialism, but this was also manifested in a similar ceremonial representation of their

place in the wider empire and a similar conceptualisation of the role of the British in

West African history.

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[125] Fisher, *Indirect Rule in India*, 254
[126] Wood, "British versus Princely Legacies", 73.
[127] Cd. 788-16 'No. 346. Northern Nigeria' *Colonial reports—Annual* (London: HMSO, 1902), 14

Lugard's regime, created by treaty and sword and administered by a handful of British residents, was built on a complex intellectual foundation. Of all the territories that are the subject of this study, Northern Nigeria was the last established and hence its form of indirect rule was devised in the shadow of older colonial regimes, especially Egypt and princely India. Indirect rule in Northern Nigeria, however, was not a direct analogue of the form of colonialism in Egypt, India, or anywhere else. Rather it was a hybrid product of British imperial history interacting with the fractured remains of the Sokoto Caliphate. The result of this hybridity was a colonial edifice in which the British subsumed the caliphate and imposed unity on the extant Fulani political, social, and religious institutions.[128] This was done using many of the administrative and legal tools and drew upon many of the ideologies devised decades earlier in India to add yet another collection of Muslim polities to the British Empire.

The vast majority of both the private and published works of colonial officials working to implement indirect rule in Northern Nigeria and the other Muslim states in this study used highly racialized language when referring to their colonial subjects. Most often these officials talk about 'levels of civilisation' as if civilisation was a scale of objective measure of socio-political advancement with the English upper classes at one end and the most 'primitive' tribesmen at the other end. For a number of reasons Muslim societies were placed fairly highly on this scale. A hierarchical view of world civilisations was not limited to colonial officials; during the nineteenth century many key intellectuals in the British establishment viewed the world as such. As already noted, J.S.

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[128] Paul E. Lovejoy and J. S. Hogendorn, "Revolutionary Mahdism and Resistance to Colonial Rule in the Sokoto Caliphate, 1905-6" *The Journal of African History*, 31 (2) 1990: 224-225.

Mill thought it was the role of the British, as self-appointed representatives of the highest

level of civilisation, to help colonised people to progress materially and culturally.[129]

Other thinkers who were influenced by Mill further developed this perspective. Sir

Henry Maine, for example, was a highly influential legal scholar who was ultimately

made Professor of Historical and Comparative Jurisprudence at Oxford. In his most

famous work, *Ancient Laws: Its connection with the Early History of Society and its*

Relation to Modern Ideas, he places the body of Islamic legal scholarship on par with that

of Classical Greece and Rome, the ancient Near East, Hindu India, and China, while

completely ignoring the cultural traditions of the rest of the world.[130] As such Maine

conceptualised the intellectual products of the Muslim world as legitimate contributions

to world civilisation, and hence implicitly placed contemporary Muslims higher on the

'scale of civilisation.'   The thinking of British officials in Nigeria fits with this view of

graduated levels of race or civilisation.   The following passage from Orr's *The Making of*

Northern Nigeria gives an example of what has been called the Hamitic hypothesis,

whereby African peoples were divided into two broad racial categories. Under this now

wholly discredited perspective, the 'Hamitic' peoples of Northern Africa were rated

nearer the top of the scale of civilisation, the 'Negro' peoples of central and southern

Africa at the bottom.

> The Fulanis, known also as Fellata, Fulahs, Pulbe, Puis, and by various
> synonyms, are unquestionably the most remarkable and interesting of all
> the tribes and nations of Equatorial Africa. Their origin is as obscure as
> that of the Hausas, but they differ fundamentally from the latter in almost

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[129] Mark Tunick, "Tolerant Imperialism", 603.
[130] Henry Maine, *Ancient Laws: Its connection with the Early History of Society and its Relation to Modern Ideas*, (London: John Murray, 1861), 215-216.

every particular. The true Fulani is not negroid. His complexion is fair, his features regular, his hair long and straight. He speaks a language which resembles no other African tongue, but which has been stated by more than one authority to resemble that spoken by gipsies, and to be akin to the Indo-Germanic stock. He is nomadic, and is primarily a cattle-owner, driving his herds from pasture to pasture. It is partly for this reason that the suggestion has been made that the origin of the Fulani is the same as that of the Hyksos or Shepherd Kings, who crossed from Arabia and invaded Egypt about 2000 years before our era, and were expelled some 500 years subsequently. However this may be, it is generally believed that the Fulani came from the East, possibly from India, possibly from Arabia...[131]

The starkly racialized language in this passage is evidence of how the British understood the composition of Northern Nigeria. Moreover, it makes plain why they were so eager to include the Fulani ruling classes in administering the protectorate just as they had done in indirectly ruled parts of India and the Arab world already. Orr further differentiated between the ruling Fulani and the subject Hausa people in a 1908 article, 'The Hausa Race'.[132] In it he argued "Mahomedanism, in fact, sits very lightly on the Hausas, and is for the most part merely a thin veneer over their old pagan beliefs."[133] With this Orr shows how British thinking constructed the fundamental inferiority of the 'quasi-Muslim' Hausa as compared to the 'true Muslim' Fulani. Orr was not alone in this sort of thinking; passages in Lady Lugard's work are strikingly similar to this, arguing that the Fulani were an integral part of the westward spread of Islam in the seventh and eight centuries that also led to the conquest of Spain.[134] This is significant as it allowed the British to understand the Fulani as "oriental" racially and culturally, and hence suited to

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[131] Orr, *The Making of Northern Nigeria*, 67
[132] C. W. Orr, "The Hausa Race" *Journal of the Royal African Society*, (7 (27) 1908: 278-283.
[133] Orr, 'The Hausa Race', 283.
[134] Flora Shaw, *A Tropical Dependency*, 11.

the same type of indirect rule as had already to their mind been successfully employed in

India, Egypt, Malaya, and the Persian Gulf.[135]

David Cannadine argues that the monarchical structures of Muslim societies that

fell under British rule appealed to the cultural predilection for hierarchy ingrained in the

British ruling classes. He also, however, suggests that the rationale behind the

institutional bias in favour of Muslims was because these societies reflected back to the

colonisers an image that conformed to romantic visions of pre-industrial Britain.[136] If

this is the case, however, there is little evidence for it in the works of Lugard and his

contemporaries. Rather the documentary evidence suggests that the reason for the

preference of indirect rule for Muslim states was that it was thought to be the best method

for ruling these societies. Best both in the sense that it was economical, requiring a

minimum of personnel, and most importantly, that Muslims were most content under

Muslim rulers. The following passage from Lugard's *Dual Mandate* illustrates how he

believed indirect rule ensured a productive and pacified colonial population:

> The growing wealth of the people renders possible a steady increase in the
> tax, with a corresponding addition to the funds available for local
> development. That the system had been successful is proved by the
> contentment of the people and the loyalty of their chief. The Emirs and
> their counsellors appreciate the liberality of the Government policy and
> the genuine sympathy of the Residents, and any breach of the peace has
> come to be looked on as an almost impossible occurrence.[137]

The belief that Muslim institutions were best for ruling Muslims emerged from a

romantic reading of society in which civilizations have their own internal logic, not

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[135] Philip S. Zachernuk, "Of Origins and Colonial Order: Southern Nigerian Historians and the 'Hamitic Hypothesis' C. 1870-1970" *The Journal of African History*, 35 (3) 1994: 455
[136] Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 72-73.
[137] Lugard, *Dual Mandate*, 222.

primarily, as Cannadine suggests, as an effort to impose a vision of feudal England on colonial peoples.

For the most part, the reasons for the different light in which Muslim societies were viewed were left unsaid by the colonial officials who were content to rely on generalities. In his *Making of Modern Egypt*, for example, Sir Auckland Colvin described Egyptians as "citizens of a State which is now rapidly striding towards an advanced stage of civilization."[138] Despite being a patronizing orientalist generalization, Colvin's views on the Egyptians can be starkly contrasted with his view of the 'dangers' of recruiting black animists from the Sudan for the Egyptian Army: "It is obvious that with so ignorant and excitable a population, and with an army composed of black soldiers in a very low stage of civilization, outbreaks of disorder are always very possible; and unless instantly put down, they may spread with extraordinary rapidity and set the whole country in a blaze."[139] With the sole exception of Egypt and the southern part of the Sudan, however, the territories discussed in previous chapters did not have significantly contrasting Muslim and non-Muslim polities to compare. In India, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, and Muslim states, many of which shared an aristocratic culture born of the Mughal period, were drawn under the same princely states system, and consequently treated similarly, regardless of the religion of their ruling dynasty.

However with indirect rule in Northern Nigeria there was an obvious comparison: directly ruled Southern Nigeria. At the turn of the twentieth century, British Nigeria, in addition to the Northern Protectorate, was composed of the coastal Lagos Colony and the

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[138] Colvin, *The Making of Modern Egypt*, 408.
[139] Colvin, *The Making of Modern Egypt*, 385.

Southern Nigeria Protectorate which together comprise the southern third of modern

Nigeria. In his *Nigeria Under British Rule*, Sir William Geary, a one-time official based

in Lagos, illustrated the radically different way the Muslim north was seen in comparison

to the animist or 'pagan' south:

> The inhabitants of Northern Nigeria are very different from the coast
> negroes, these jolly laughing trading black men. The 'Northern Emirates'
> are black-faced Mohammedan Arabs with an admixture of negro strain.
> The Fulanis under a religious leader, Othman Dan Fodio, conquered the
> county about 1810 in a similar way to the great Mohammedan conquests
> of the seventh century; the head city or capitol was Sokoto, and the Sultan
> of Sokoto was sovereign of suzerain and appointed Emirs for Gando, Zaria,
> Kano, Yola and other cities. These Emirs tended to become independent
> like the vassals of the Holy Roman Empire and of the Great Mogul. The
> Fulanis never…completely conquered the Pagans of the Hills and Bauchi
> Plateau who resisted and plundered caravans; these pagans are negros or
> negroid and wear no clothes…[140]

To officials like Geary, the fact that both these groups were black appears to be far less

important that the fact that one was composed of 'pagans' who 'wear no clothes', and the

other were 'noble' Muslim conquerors who compare favourably with the rulers of early-

modern Europe and India. This passage, like the one from Orr cited above, shows the

impact of the Hamitic hypothesis in colonial thinking. This view of the Africans, in

which race was not a simple binary of black and white but was qualified by more

nuanced views of the relative 'level of civilisation' of a specific people, can be seen

overtly in the political structures imposed upon them by the British. While the Muslim

emirs and sultans of the north joined the ranks of Arab, Malay, and Indian princes, the

people of the south were subjected to direct rule and pre-colonial political and social

structures were largely displaced.

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[140] Geary, *Nigeria Under British Rule*, 214-215.

Philip S. Zachernuk confirms the power of this racial hierarchy with which the British divided Nigeria, arguing that imported ideas of race still fundamentally split the culture of the modern federal republic on north south lines.[141] The dramatically different way that the British treated Muslim and non-Muslim societies in Nigeria and elsewhere also confirms Thomas McCarthy's broader definition of 'race' in its relationship with imperial hierarchies. McCarthy argues in his *Race, Empire, and the Idea of Human Development,* that to colonisers 'race' was not a strictly biological construct based on skull shape or skin colour. Rather colonial ideas of 'race' drew upon a host of cultural factors which contribute to the invention of complex hierarchies of peoples under imperialism.[142] This explains why 'Mohammedan' 'Hamitic' people in Northern Nigeria were treated so differently from their 'Pagan' 'Negro' neighbours in Southern Nigeria. As in India and elsewhere, the British framed the place of the rulers of Northern Nigeria as members of a pan-imperial ruling class on a quasi-scholarly foundation. Through historical, genealogical, and other works, the British depicted the Fulani heirs of Dan Fodio as racially and culturally akin to more highly advanced Arabs and Indians, rather than as black Africans who were considered to be much lower on the 'scale of civilisation'.

As was discussed above, individuals like Lord and Lady Lugard, Sir Charles Orr, Augustus Mockler-Ferryman, and Sir William Geary contributed to a discourse of Nigerian history in which the British were the legitimate successors of the Sokoto

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[141] Zachernuk, "Of Origins and Colonial Order", 455.
[142] Thomas McCarthy, *Race, Empire, and the Idea of Human Development*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 6.

Caliphate. In the published works of these individuals, Dan Fodio and his Fulani

successors who ruled over the Hausa states for the better part of the nineteenth century

were a one-time conquering people who were suffering a period of decline and needed

the British to re-establish order. Mockler-Ferryman summarises the British position in

the following passage from his *British Nigeria*:

> In the Northern protectorate the obvious policy is to strengthen the hands
> of the native ruling classes, and to make them responsible to Great Britain
> for the welfare of their country and its people. The Fulahs, in spite of their
> slave-raiding propensities, are undoubtedly born rulers; they conquered
> the country over which they rule, and they have been for a hundred years
> the dominant race. They are a shrewd people, intelligent and well-
> informed, and intercourse with them has shown that they are what may be
> described, for want of a better term, the "gentlemen" of the Western Sudan.
> As a race they are supposed to be on the decline; yet there is no other
> people ready to replace them, for it is doubtful if the Hausas - the only
> rivals of the Fulahs - have sufficient capacity or intellectual ability to ever
> become rulers. It is through the Fulahs, therefore, that Northern Nigeria in
> the future must, if possible, be governed, the British political officers
> watching over them, holding them in check, supporting them, and giving
> them to understand that as just rulers they will ever be upheld, but that any
> oppression of their subjects will be dealt with summarily.[143]

This perfectly encapsulates the combination of historical and cultural ideas that defined

the role of the British in Northern Nigeria. The heirs of Dan Fodio were a natural

aristocracy, 'born rulers', and despite the weakening of their authority over the century,

they were still the fittest to rule with of course the aid and under the supervision of the

British.

An example of the impact of this racial hierarchy can be seen in the British

approach to ending slavery in Northern Nigeria. In *Slow Death for Slavery: The Course*

for Abolition in Northern Nigeria Paul Lovejoy and Jan Hogendorn describe the decades-

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[143] Mockler-Ferryman, *British Nigeria*, 310.

long process by which the British ended slavery in a fashion which preserved the social status of the slave-owning elites, including especially the ruling sultans and emirs. This was analogous to the situation in Zanzibar where slavery remained legal for seven years after the assumption of the British protectorate. However, in Northern Nigeria, as Lovejoy and Hogendorn show, this process took even longer.

In the first years of the protectorate Lugard legally outlawed the slave-trade and abolished the legal status of slavery.[144] This, however, did not amount to manumitting the slaves. Rather the million or so enslaved, of a population of about ten million, remained in bondage, with the practice being formally outlawed only in 1936.[145] In Lugard's *Dual Mandate*, he even justifies, and verges on celebrating, the particular customs of slavery in West Africa:

> The Koran inculcates kindness to slaves, and the liberation of a slave is an act of piety. Though the native courts are empowered in a British protectorate to administer Mohamedan law, it is superseded by any ordinances enacted by the Government. In West Africa the Malaki law and the local custom are extraordinarily liberal - probably more so than the Mohamedan law of East Africa. The sale of a house-born slave, except for gross misconduct, is regarded as an unjustifiable act, and so is the separation by sale of a slave family. Slaves may attain to high rank and power. Ill-treatment of a slave is strongly condemned, and if a slave can prove it, he would be liberated by the court. Slaves may even be allowed to give evidence in court. A woman who has borne a living child to her master is freed. While Arab owners claimed that since a slave has no existence as a man, his liberator stands *in loco parentis*, and can claim the rights of a father, the Malaki law recognised no rights whatever over the slave once freed.[146]

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[144] Paul Lovejoy and Jan Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery: The Course for Abolition in Northern Nigeria*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 277-280.
[145] Newbury, "Accounting for Power in Northern Nigeria", 263.
[146] Lugard, *The Dual Mandate*, 364.

This is, in effect, an apology for the continued practice of slavery in Northern Nigeria, on the grounds that it existed under a local Muslim legal-customary framework. Indeed, in the nascent years of indirect rule, which is the focus of this chapter, the British, including Lugard, were little concerned with the plight of the enslaved, focusing instead their attention on drawing the slave owning ruling classes under their new colonial regime.

The British placed a high value on determining and defining the legitimate ruling dynasties. An example of this was discussed above when genealogical knowledge was used to justify the selection of Muhammadu Attahiru II as the new Sultan of Sokoto in 1903.[147] This information was compiled for Lugard by Major J.A. Burdon, who was then resident at Sokoto and was a scholar of the Hausa language, later publishing a work on the history of the region.[148] Sokoto was not the only dynasty which came under this type of scrutiny. Mirroring the work of Sir Roper Lethbridge in India and John Lorimer in the Persian Gulf, H.L. Norton-Traill began compiling detailed genealogical records of the ruling families of the territories in Keffi where he was the assistant resident.[149] This type of information was a key tool and as in India and elsewhere it allowed the British expanded control over who was deemed the legitimate successor to a throne. Burdon and Norton-Traill did not publish this information; it remained in secret Colonial Office files. However, a short time later, a large four volume official *Gazetteer of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria* was published in 1920-1. This work bears close resemblance to Lorimer's earlier *Gazetteer* of the Persian Gulf, combining geographical with historical

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[147] Cd. 1768-14 'No. 409. *Northern Nigeria' Colonial reports--annual.* (London: HMSO, 1904), 38.
[148] Cd. 1768-14 'No. 409. *Northern Nigeria' Colonial reports--annual.* (London: HMSO, 1904) ; J.A. Burdon, *Historical Notes on Certain Emirates and Tribes, Northern Nigeria* (London: Waterlow, 1909)
[149] H.L Norton-Traill, "Local revenues census data and genealogical notes", CO 959/2.

and genealogical information of the ruling dynasties and their states. The work of Burdon, Norton-Traill, along with the later official *Gazetteer*, were the kinds of informational weapons of colonialism that the British had already successfully employed to impose indirect rule over the Indian Princely states and the Persian Gulf states. This information was combined with a historical narrative that placed the British in the role of conservative protectors of Northern Nigerian society in such a way as to justify and entrench Lugard's regime.

A key difference between the manifestation of indirect rule in Northern Nigeria and the other Muslim state of the British Empire is the relative place within the colonial government that rulers occupied. In most indirectly ruled states, following from the Indian model, the local potentate was treated as a *de jure* sovereign or semi-sovereign head of their own state under the overarching imperial sovereignty of the British Crown.[150] In Northern Nigeria, by contrast, the local rulers were compelled to recognise the *de jure* and *de facto* sovereignty of the British Crown.[151] In turn they assumed the role of hereditary administrators of their territories that were now part of a colonial Northern Nigeria that was conceptualised as the successor of the Sokoto Caliphate, with the British high commissioner in the place of the once powerful sultan. Under this order the Sultan of Sokoto retained a status higher than the other rulers of Northern Nigeria.[152]

Perhaps the most explicit evidence of the lower ranking of Nigerian princes in the imperial hierarchy lay in the type of honours they received. In every region which has

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[150] Lee-Warner, *The Native States of India*, 399.
[151] Frederick Lugard, Vernacular Proclamation (To be posted at Sokoto), Enclosure 4 to 14, CO 879/80/1.
[152] Mercier, *The Colonial Office List for 1915*, 444.

been a subject of this study, the local potentates were inducted into one or more of the imperial orders of chivalry, and Northern Nigeria was no different. From Zanzibar to Johor, hereditary rulers were admitted to some of the most exclusive orders of chivalry at the highest levels, often eclipsing even the honours given to the local British governor or resident. In Northern Nigeria, however, the case was the opposite; the emirs and sultans were rarely decorated, and when they were it was at the lowest ranks while the British heads of the administration enjoyed the highest honours. In 1906 the Muhammadu Attahiru II, Sultan of Sokoto, was made a 'Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George' (CMG).[153] This was the lowest rank of this order of chivalry which had been set up to reward colonial and diplomatic notables. In the broader imperial hierarchy even the CMG was an exclusive honour, as there were only 725 of them granted at any one time in an empire with a population in the hundreds of millions.[154] However, His Highness Muhammadu Attahiru II, Sultan of Sokoto, to give his title in English, was the premier ruler of Northern Nigeria, and in any of the other states discussed in this study, a dignitary of this station would have received a much more significant honour and potentially more than one. It will be recalled that even the sultans of geographically diminutive Zanzibar were inducted into the top ranks of the Order of the Star of India, GCSI, and the Order of St Michael at St George, GCMG.[155] Other rulers gained admittance to the most exclusive ranks of various imperial orders, putting them in the company of at most a few dozen other select members, often including viceroys of India,

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[153] Mercier, *The Colonial Office List for 1915*, 444.
[154] Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 86; *The Statutes of the most distinguished order of Saint Michael and Saint George* (Order of St. Michael and St. George), 5.
[155] Montgomery-Massingberd, *Africa and the Middle East*, 263-264.

and governors and prime ministers of large colonies and dominions. As a CMG, Muhammadu Attahiru II was being explicitly placed at a much lower level on the imperial hierarchy, alongside figures of local importance rather than pan-imperial grandees. By way of comparison, other figures who could expect to receive a CMG were diplomats posted as consuls to foreign cities of secondary importance, or lieutenant-governors of smaller colonies or provinces.[156]

Moreover, for a great deal of time, the Sultan of Sokoto's CMG was the only chivalric honour received by a Northern Nigerian ruler. For nearly two decades Muhammadu Attahiru II stood alone in being honoured in this fashion by the Crown, and the explanation for this cannot be found in his relative temporal importance. As the hereditary ruler of Sokoto state, Muhammadu Attahiru II had no more temporal power or authority than the Emir of Kano, for example, whose state was effectively equal in the political context of the British protectorate. He and all other Nigeria rulers enjoyed the same clearly delineated administrative authority described above. It was therefore the sultan's role as head of the religious community that encompassed most of the protectorate and his place as heir of Usman Dad Fodio that explains his decoration. Outside of Great Britain, where bishops of the Church of England sat in the House of Lords, it was unusual for religious figures to be so completely integrated into political structures by the British, the sole other example was the Aga Khan. In 1906, the year Muhammadu Attahiru II was made a CMG, His Highness Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah, Aga Khan III was made a GCIE by the Government of India who to all intents and

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[156] Mercier, *The Colonial Office List for 1915*, 444; Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 86.

purposes treated him like an Indian prince.[157]   However, unlike an Indian prince he ruled

over no territory, but was instead the hereditary Imam of the world's Ismaili Muslims,

and great number of whom, including the Aga Khan himself, lived in India. The place of

the Aga Khan was anomalous in India just like the place of the Sultan of Sokoto was in

Nigeria. The British, however, when faced with the challenge of integrating the heads of

important religious communities did not conceptualise them in a novel or unique fashion,

but rather sought to integrate them into an existing model of indirect rule as if they were

analogous to hereditary temporal rulers.[158]

It was not until after the First World War that a few more emirs and sultans were

admitted into the imperial orders. In 1924 Sana Kura, Sultan of Bornu, was made a CMG

as was Muhammadu Attahiru II's successor, Muhammadu, as Sultan of Sokoto, in

1929.[159] The post-war period, however, afforded the rulers of Northern Nigeria more

opportunity for honours as the 'Most Excellent Order of the British Empire' was created

in 1917 with by far the widest remit of the orders of knighthood. To recognise the broad

effort required to win the Great War, the British Government created the Order of the

British Empire expressly to be less exclusive and to reward more people than all of the

other imperial orders.[160] Because of this wide mandate, the order was commensurately

less prestigious than the other colonial orders discussed here, and yet despite this, still

only two Northern Nigerians, the emirs of Muri and Katsina, received the Companion of

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[157] *The India List and India Office List for 1905*, 154.

[158] Gilbert Laithwaite rev. Francis Robinson "Aga Khan III (1877–1957)," in *the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/view/article/30345 (accessed February 14, 2013).

[159] Sir William Mercier, *The Dominions Office and Colonial Office List for 1931*, 535.

[160] Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 93-94.

the Order of the British Empire, CBE, which like the CMG brought only a medal and not a full knighthood.[161]

The contrast between the honours granted to the local rulers and the British officials in Northern Nigeria is striking. In all of the other territories that are the subject of this study, the local rulers most often were granted higher or equal honours to the resident colonial officials. In Zanzibar, for example, the British Consul, Sir Basil Cave only received the penultimate KCMG while the Sultan was made a top level GCSI.[162] In Malaya, Sir Frank Swettenham, with his long and successful career, was made a GCMG but the Sultan of Perak was made a GCMG and a GCVO.[163] In Egypt and India the case was slightly different; so important were figures like Cromer, Lytton, and Curzon that they did ultimately receive a few more honours than the khedive or top Indian princes but even then they did not dramatically outrank them. In Northern Nigeria, however, Lugard was made first made KCMG in 1901, elevated to a GCMG in 1911, and much later in 1928 he was raised to the peerage as Lord Lugard.[164] It could, perhaps, be argued that many of Lugard's accolades were derived from his wider career, first in East Africa and later when Governor of Hong Kong. As such his distinctions were not exclusively related to his work in Northern Nigeria. However, the practice of disproportionately rewarding British officials in Northern Nigeria continued with Lugard's successor as High

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[161] Mercier, *The Dominions Office and Colonial Office List for 1931*, 545.
[162] Salisbury to Euan-Smith, 1 September 1890, FO 300/25.
[163] Mercier, *The Colonial Office List for 1915*, 445.
[164] Lugard did not respond with pleasure upon learning, in 1900, he was to be made a KCMG. He thought that even that high accolade was beneath him and he ought to have been made a 'Knight Grand Cross of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath', or GCB, a honour reserved for political and military grandees second only to the Order of the Garter. Sir Frederick Lugard to Major Edward Lugard, 13 Decembet 1900, BOD ref. MSS. Lugard s. 62.

Commissioner for the Northern Nigeria Protectorate in 1906, Sir Percy Girouard, who was made a KCMG.[165]

The political and ceremonial distinctions between Northern Nigeria and the majority of the other indirectly ruled states in this study demonstrate a difference in the conceptualisation of the British role. In Egypt, Zanzibar, and the larger Malay and Persian Gulf states, the British saw the local potentates as socially equivalent to a high-ranking British official, a viceroy or a governor. While the emirs and sultans of Northern Nigeria, like the rulers of the Trucial states, the junior confederate states of Negiri Sembilan, and the non-salute Indian states, were viewed as being on par with middling British officials, and given honours commensurate to this rank. This is significant because it shows that while the construction of the colonial regime was shaped by local contexts, it could still draw parallels with the Indian princely states. However, rather than looking to the methods for ruling large salute states, like Hyderabad, which were the obvious model for most indirectly ruled states, Lugard's regime owes much more to the agency system which governed collections of small princely states. These polities were ruled by princes who were low on the imperial hierarchy, unlike the rulers of the 19 and 21 gun salute states who were covered in honours, and who had access to the viceroy and king-emperor. Rather, just like the Sultan of Sokoto and his peers, they could at most hope to receive a low-ranking honour in compensation for being forced to share control of their states with low-ranking political officers, far removed from the imperial centres of power.

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[165] Mercier, *The Colonial Office List for 1915*, 424.

In 1906 Lugard was made Governor of Hong Kong and left Northern Nigeria. The value of the system of indirect rule he had overseen was dramatically justified that same year to the British. A local resistance movement had emerged to oppose the advance of the Europeans. Like the revolutionary movement in the Sudan two decades before, this response to colonialism took the form of a 'Mahdist Jihad', led by a blind scholar called Saybu dan Makafo.[166] Between 1905 and 1906 supporters of Saybu dan Makafo rose in rebellion against both the British and their local clients, including the Sultan of Sokoto. Lovejoy and Hogendorn argue the result of this ultimately failed rebellion was to drive the British and the Nigerian ruling elite into an even closer alliance.[167] In this way the outcome of the rebellion of 1905-06 mirrors the results of the Indian rebellion of 1857-58 and Urabi's Rebellion in Egypt in 1882, both of which bolstered British support for the traditional ruling elite. Lugard, therefore, left Northern Nigeria when confidence in 'his' system was strong.[168]

His absence, however, was not long, as in 1912 he returned to West Africa as Governor-General of Nigeria, with the mission of unifying Lagos Colony and Northern and Southern Nigeria Protectorates into a single political entity.[169] The system that Lugard and his colleagues had established in the first years of the twentieth century in Northern Nigeria was seen as so successful that it was thought appropriate to attempt to impose its use over all of British Nigeria. In 1916 Lugard even formed the Nigeria Council, a sort of privy council for Nigeria, which included the Emir of Kano and the

[166] Lovejoy and Hogendorn, "Revolutionary Mahdism", 220.
[167] Lovejoy and Hogendorn, "Revolutionary Mahdism", 244.
[168] Lugard to Colonial Secretary, Lord Elgin, 5 April, 1906. CO 879/92/25.
[169] Perham, *Lugard*, II: 380.

Sultan of Sokoto, giving them a consultative role at the heart of the administration of the large colony.[170] This came barely a decade after the forces of the WAFF had marched into these cities and forced their rulers to submit to British sovereignty. For the British this was a clear sign that the policy of indirect rule was a successful one.

In only a brief span of time the British had taken ideas and techniques that were developed in colonial India decades before and redeployed them to West Africa. The architects of indirect rule in Northern Nigeria not only invaded the territory, but they also took over its past by reconceptualising the history of the Sokoto Caliphate and placing themselves as its successors. For this project the British were constantly referencing, implicitly and explicitly, other regimes of indirect rule, especially princely India. It was, however, the lower level non-salute states of India, organised into the agency system, which bore the closest relation to Northern Nigeria. These small states, like the remnants of the Sokoto Caliphate, were grouped into territories devised by the British, and while they retained some power over their states, they were more clearly subordinated to powerful residents. In so doing the British were constructing a colonial edifice which was wholly new in West Africa, but clearly rooted in both a version of local history and the broader history of British colonial rule of Muslim polities.

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[170] Lugard, *The Dual Mandate*, 124.

Conclusion

> Hussein, as politician, as prince, as Moslem, as modernist, and as
> nationalist, was forced to listen to their appeal. He sent Feysul, his third
> son, to Damascus, to discuss their projects as his representative, and to
> make a report. He sent Ali, his eldest son, to Medina, with orders to raise
> quietly, on any excuse he pleased, troops from villagers and tribesmen of
> the Hejaz, and to hold them ready for action if Feisal called. Abdulla, his
> politic second son, was to sound the British by letter, to learn what would
> be their attitude towards a possible Arab revolt against Turkey.[1]

This is how T.E. Lawrence describes the nascent moments of the Arab revolt, when

Hussein, Grand Sharif of Mecca, transformed from a loyal subject of the Ottoman Sultan

into the figurehead of a British-backed rebellion during the First World War. Over the

previous decades huge swathes of Africa and Asia were conquered by the British and

governed in a manner which mirrored the earlier conquest of India. However, while the

long nineteenth century may have finally ended with the outbreak of war, British reliance

on this earlier mode of colonial government did not.

Vindication for the strategy of indirect rule was claimed on the basis of wartime

experience, namely that the subject-princes from across the British world were broadly

enthusiastic in their support of the imperial war effort. As to be expected, Princely India

was the most significant contributor of the indirectly ruled parts of the empire given that

it was by far the largest in population.[2] However, from Nigeria to Malaya the local rulers

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[1] T.E. Lawrence *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (London: Penguin, 1962) 49-50. Lawrence, in characteristically
cavalier fashion, declared in the preface of *Seven Pillars* that he was intentionally inconsistent in his
transliteration of Arabic, hence the two differed renderings here of 'Feysul/Faisal' Lawrence, *Seven Pillars*,
19-20.
[2] Copland, *Princes and the Endgame of Empire*, 33-35.

remained loyal to the British and contributed to the overall success of the war effort.[3] Of

course not all the rulers were quick to rally to the side of the King-Emperor; as was noted

in Chapter IV, with the outbreak of war with Turkey, Khedive Abbas II was deposed in

response to his alleged allegiance to the Ottoman Sultan Mehmet V. However, under

Abbas' successor, Hussein, Egypt was removed from the Ottoman orbit and provided a

base and resources which enabled the British conquest of much of the remainder of the

Ottoman Sultan's empire. Between 1914 and 1918, the major cities of the Levant and

Mesopotamia, Baghdad, Jerusalem, and Damascus, fell to British arms.

As needs no repeating here, the political aftermath of the war in the Middle East

was disastrous. It sowed the seeds of conflicts which linger still, arising, in part, from the

imposition of colonial rule, witnessed in such developments as boundaries demarcating

nation-states where none had existed before, the beginnings of a foreign-controlled

petroleum economy, and entanglements arising from the 'twice-promised land' of

Palestine. So much of what would mark twentieth-century history came out of the post-

war dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. What is less often noted, however, is just

how much of the post-war settlement rested on the British re-deployment of indirect rule

on a broad scale. Once more, when faced with governing large territories with Muslim

populations, the British exploited relationships with local ruling dynasties. The

aforementioned sons of Hussein, Grand Sharif of Mecca, Feisal and Abdullah, became

rulers of Iraq and Jordan, respectively. Thus, two monarchies of the House of Hashim,

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[3] Hew Stachan, *The First World War in Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 58-59. ; Tarling, *Imperialism in Southeast Asia,* 198-199.

who claimed descent from the Prophet himself, exchanged their Ottoman overlords for British ones.[4]

In return the newly minted kings were drawn under a system similar to what had been employed across the Muslim ruled-parts of the world that the British had previously acquired. British agents, residents, and advisors were dispatched including most famously T.E. Lawrence, who worked closely with Faisal during and after the war. Included also in this list are Sir Percy Cox and Sir Arnold Wilson, who were attached in 1914 to the Indian Army that advanced, with much difficulty, up the Tigris for Baghdad.[5] And as elsewhere in the indirectly ruled empire, justifications were devised for the British authority over these new states. Not unlike in Egypt in 1882, the British legitimated their intervention in Iraq and Jordon on the grounds that they were there temporarily to restore their independence under legitimate Muslim monarchs. In the short term, however, these apparent triumphs of the self-determination of the Arab peoples were little different from other Muslim states of the empire. Evidence of this can be seen by the granting of entry into the ceremonial aspects of indirect rule, with both Faisal and Abdullah receiving high ranking knighthoods like any senior Indian prince or Malay sultan. Indeed, like Lord Lytton's *darbar* proclaiming Victoria empress in succession to the Great Mughals, this was tradition being invented on a grand scale with entire kingdoms being cobbled together out of former Ottoman provinces.

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[4] Hussein himself also became as monarch, as King of Hejaz, but not under British protection, which led to their non-intervention in the 1925 conquest of the kingdom by the House of Saud, and the integration of the Hejaz into what became the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. East K. Meyer, S. B. Brysac, *Kingmakers: the Invention of the Modern Middle East*, (London: W. W. Norton, 2008), 427.
[5] Townsend, *Proconsul to the Middle East*, 123-125.

Indirect rule, therefore, continued to be seen as a viable method for imperial

expansion. From Awadh in 1764 to Jordan and Iraq in 1920, when the British were faced

with conquest of large Muslim ruled states, they consistently turned to indirect rule.

Elsewhere in the empire, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, David Cannadine has shown

that some of the techniques and ideas of indirect rule were being imposed in existing

directly ruled colonies. In these territories local notables and displaced pre-colonial elites

were embraced by the British in an effort to inculcate some of the apparently successful

elements of indirect rule in the years prior to the Second World War, nearly a century and

a half after its origin in north-eastern India.[6]

As was shown in Chapter I it was in India where this practice was devised and

first widely deployed. In the last half of the eighteenth century agents of the East India

Company used diplomacy and armed force to subdue the many rival powers in India. By

the first decades of the nineteenth century British India was a patchwork of political

systems, where some territories were governed directly by British officials and some

remained under local control but subject to British oversight. The methods by which this

system was established and the very inconsistency of it, however, drew the ire of key

members of the political and intellectual elite both in India and in Britain. Individuals,

Edmund Burke at the forefront, were highly critical of the methods employed by figures

like Warren Hastings, the first British Governor-General of India. Hastings was depicted

as representative of a whole class of exploitative and corrupt Company officials who

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[6] Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 64-65.

were subverting India society and would, it was feared, return to Britain to do the same.[7]

Criticism of the methods of these first architects of indirect rule was joined in the 1830s and 1840s by a challenge to the essential attribute of indirect rule: the retention and manipulation of pre-colonial institutions and actors. These decades were marked by the dominance of muscular modernising liberalism in the British world, and a belief that colonial rule should inculcate western culture and institutions. This was the antithesis of indirect rule which had been predicated on the preservation and exploitation of local institutions. The ultimate product of this period was the 'doctrine of lapse' promulgated by the Governor-General of India, Lord Dalhousie, which saw a number of princes deposed and their states annexed to direct British rule.

Dalhousie's tenure in India, while marking the height of institutional opposition to indirect rule, also set the stage for its renaissance. The year after Dalhousie left India, 1857, saw the outbreak of the Indian rebellion. The causes of this uprising, which began amongst the enlisted soldiers of the Company's Bengal Army, are numerous. However, in the aftermath of hostilities, as the British were reasserting their authority, the doctrine of lapse bore a great deal of the blame for triggering the uprising. Part of the reason for this was that the areas annexed through the application of this doctrine were centres of the revolt, while the bulk of the rulers who had survived Dalhousie's tenure remained loyal to the British. It was reasoned that deposing some princes had sparked the revolt which was only suppressed with the support of other princes.[8] The ultimate result was a dramatic reversal of the thinking that led to doctrine of lapse. Perhaps the best

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[7] Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire*, 83.
[8] Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and their States*, 84-85.

illustration of the rapidity of this shift is the actions of the Governor-General Lord Canning. Canning, amongst a host of other changes, oversaw the invention of a special order of knighthood to reward the very princes who Dalhousie had sought to remove.

The half-century following the Rebellion of 1857 marks the high point of the intellectual rationalization of indirect rule. In India, as was discussed in Chapter II, an array of invented traditions were deployed to construct an image of an harmonious multi-ethnic hierarchy under the benevolent auspices of the British Crown. To this end, in 1877 Queen Victoria was made Empress of India by Act of Parliament. This new Indian Empire was heralded by a large state pageant where the senior most maharajas and nawabs paid formal homage to Victoria in the capitol of the previous Indian empire, Mughal Delhi. Conveniently overlooked was that the capitol of British India was in distant Calcutta and that British soldiers in Delhi had murdered the last scions of the Mughal House of Timor only twenty years before.[9] Nonetheless, the massive discursive power of the British colonial state sought to reconfigure Indian history, attempting to legitimate the place of the British in part by showing that they worked with and helped to preserve the 'native' princely class. In reality, however, this class was yet another British invention, devised in the last half of the nineteenth century by the likes of Sir Charles Aitcheson, Sir William Lee-Warner, and Lord Salisbury to control the more than six hundred princely states.

Together the expanded political and legal controls and the widespread glorification of the princes by the British marked the modern form of indirect rule. Prior

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[9] Metcalf, *Aftermath of the Revolt*, 298.

to 1857 this practice was widely viewed as a holdover from the tenuous days in the eighteenth century when British power in South Asia was weak and marginal and local allies were a necessity. After 1857 indirect rule was seen as an ideal solution to integrating pre-colonial institutions into an overarching imperial system. Hence, just as indirect rule was being extolled as an official creed of the British in India, it was beginning its spread far beyond the frontiers of the Raj.

As has been shown British rule came to Malaya, Egypt, the Gulf, Zanzibar, and Northern Nigeria for a variety of reasons. In Malaya colonisation, driven by commercial interests, came slowly over decades after 1874. In Egypt the opposite was the case with the British Government moving on strategic grounds to occupy the entire country in a brief war in 1882. In the Gulf and Zanzibar indirect rule came at the end of long span of British interference which first brought a level of informal dominance before being formalised in response to the expanded presence in the region of other European powers. In Northern Nigeria indirect rule was the product of a relatively brief military campaign which solidified control which the British had claimed for decades but had been unwilling to formalize until the turn of the twentieth century. Over more than a quarter of a century, and across nearly half the globe, despite the many different reasons for British conquest, there remained a host of consistent attributes of these territories under indirect rule, all of which can be traced in some form to princely India.

The most important attribute was the retention of the pre-colonial monarchies and in most cases their current rulers. The territories that fell under indirect rule all had some type of hereditary government before the imposition of British control; in most cases this

was the typical form of monarchy where the male head of a single family governed the state and was succeeded upon death by another member of his family. The sole exception to this was in the Malay state of Negeri Sembilan with its elective monarchy, which was nonetheless exclusive to a single family and where the monarch was selected by a small group of hereditary elites. In each of these states the pre-colonial ruling dynasty continued to hold some power under British control, though there was always the chance that rulers could be replaced. Abdulla, Sultan of Perak, and Ismail, Khedive of Egypt, were deposed in the tumultuous period when their states were in transition, while Muhammadu Attahiru I, Sultan of Sokoto, actually died during the British conquest. However, even where the pre-colonial ruler did not survive, his dynasty did with the British selecting more compliant heirs to collaborate under the new regime. This is significant as it is collaboration with the ruler and his family that marks one the key difference between indirect and direct rule. As C.A. Bayly has shown, local collaboration was vital to the success of all colonial regimes.[10] Whether they were informants, police, soldiers, civil officials, the British depended on hundreds of thousands of their colonial subjects to maintain their empire. However, only under indirect rule could some subjects retain such high status positions as prince and enjoy relative autonomy.

The minimal presence of European individuals and institutions was a crucial attribute of indirect rule for two reasons. Firstly, indirect rule was cheap. In these states local actors assumed political, judicial, and administrative roles that in other colonies

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[10] Bayly, *Empire and Information*, 142-146.

would have been filled by British civil servants. For the British a self-funding indirectly

ruled territory, with only a handful of British officials on the pay of the Foreign Office,

Colonial Office, or Government of India, was financially ideal. However, leaving the

maximum possible control in the hands of locals was more than an economic expediency

for the British. There was a view, born in India and then finding renewed interpretations

in each of these territories, that the best form of government for 'oriental' peoples was

through 'oriental' institutions. Indirect rule was, in effect, orientalism as colonial

government. The ideology that Edward Said argued drove the British to see Muslim

people as essentially different from Europeans also prompted them to devise a form of

government which would simultaneously justify British rule while still making

allowances for this perceived difference.[11]

What Said does not allow for, however, is that in creating a binary understanding

of Oriental-European societies, they were also creating far more complex hierarchies of

class and race. The hierarchies of class were formed, or rather given official recognition,

in the colonies themselves where local rulers and other elites were elevated above 'their'

people. There were also hierarchies of race in these colonies with 'ruling' peoples, be

they Malay, Turkish, Arab, or Fulani, placed over Chinese, Egyptian, Swahili, or Hausa.

Societies, which had once operated autonomously within their own local and regional

power structures, were forced into a new global dynamic by British indirect rule. This

meant that, for example, a Malay sultan who had once been forced to contend with rival

Malay and Chinese factions in his own territory was suddenly elevated to a position of

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[11] Said, *Orientalism*, 31-40.

predominance. After colonisation local rulers, their positions guaranteed by the British, had less need to work with domestic factions. Instead they principally needed to keep the favour of the British resident. In turn the Malay sultans entered the fêted and privileged, if circumscribed, ranks of British client-princes, while the ethnic Chinese were effectively de-recognised as legitimate residents of Malaya. This was the case across the territories examined: the arrival of indirect rule fundamentally rearranged the social relationships in a given state, while simultaneously claiming to protect them. Moreover, there was also a separate pan-imperial hierarchy of race at work, whereby some territories were thought to be lacking vigorous natural leaders which then meant they were better suited to direct rule and excluded from the system described in this work.

This ideological justification for indirect rule also fed back into the economic rationale. British officials believed that a successful regime of indirect rule meant that colonial subjects were far less likely to rebel and therefore did not require expensive military garrisoning. Instead of large military occupations and intimidating colonial police forces, indirect rule was predicated on the relationship between the British agent and the local ruler. Of course British officials always had the power to call in the gunboats as was done in Malaya and Zanzibar, and in places like Egypt and Northern Nigeria there were significant armed forces at the resident's disposal. Nonetheless, these were emergency tools to be used sparingly if at all. Instead, government was supposed to be achieved by small number of British officials using their force of character and understanding of tradition to work with pre-colonial elites.

In some places like Kuwait, the Trucial States, and Muscat, this quite literally meant a single official tasked with liaising with the local emir or sultan. In these places the day-to-day administration was almost indistinguishable before and after the advent of colonial rule. However, in other places, the administrative consequences of indirect rule were more sweeping. In Egypt the 1882 occupation stamped out a short-lived experiment with the modernising and relatively liberal military rule of Ahmed Urabi Pasha, and reinstated the power of the Albanian ruling dynasty and other hereditary elites. In return, these Egyptian elites were forced to employ a myriad of Europeans in middle and high-ranking posts throughout their large bureaucracy. These Europeans were all technically in the service of the khedive but were actually under the direction of the parallel power in Egypt, the British Consul-General Evelyn Baring, Lord Cromer. In Northern Nigeria, the case was even more dramatic than in Egypt. Here the British subsumed all of the local rulers under the overarching control of the High Commissioner, Frederick Lugard, and effectively recast these emirs and sultans as hereditary provincial magistrates, tasked to work in concert with mid-ranking British officials. Finally, in Malaya a middle path was followed. When the British first began to push into the interior of the peninsula in the 1870s, it was wracked with political turmoil, and local sultans often did not control much of the states they claimed to rule. The arrival of indirect rule expanded the geographical scope of the sultan's authority, but at the expense of handing over much of the control of their state to British officials.

The legitimacy of indirect rule was to be confirmed for the British by the acquiescence of the ruled. Consequently much of the intellectual superstructure of

indirect rule focused on highlighting the British role as protectors of local culture. In

each of the territories a counter-revolutionary narrative was promulgated to mitigate the

often-revolutionary impact of colonialism. In Northern Nigeria this meant that although

the function of the Sultan of Sokoto had been reduced politically, the British continued to

treat him as the premier local ruler. As heir to Uthman Dan Fodio and head of the Sokoto

Caliphate, the sultan retained an elevated historical, cultural, and religious status under

the protectorate. In Egypt the House of Muhammad Ali, despite several of its khedives

making disastrous political decisions prior to the advent of British rule, was retained, it

was argued, because of the august status of the founder of the dynasty. The same was the

case in Malaya where the Malaccan Empire, which had disintegrated in the sixteenth

century, was taken as the archetype of legitimate authority for Malay people. In Zanzibar

and again in Nigeria the aristocracy were thought so important to the stability of colonial

rule that their historical right to own slaves was only cautiously and slowly withdrawn.

In the Persian Gulf the Viceroy Lord Curzon, with the support of the Foreign Secretary

Lord Lansdowne, was so convinced that indirect rule actually saved the autonomy of

these states that he worked to prevent foreign powers from diplomatically engaging with

them, lest Russia, France, or Germany undo what British India had preserved. The

British Empire, therefore, due to the myriad of writings, policies, and ideas of its servants,

was recast simultaneously as the protector of the legacy of the Malaccans in Malaya;

Muhammad Ali in Egypt and the Sudan; the several ruling dynasties in the Persian Gulf

and Zanzibar; and of the Sokoto Caliphate in Northern Nigeria. This was all in addition

to the not inconsequential mantle of heir to the Mughal Empire in India assumed after 1857 which was clearly the model for these other claims of historical protection.

The British, however, did not stop at reframing the local history of these places to suit imperial goals: they also sought to integrate them into a broader pan-imperial narrative. This can best be seen in the proliferation of the ceremonial and theatrical aspects of indirect rule. In India two special orders of knighthood were invented to reward princes and other dignitaries, the Order of the Star of India and the Order of the Indian Empire. In addition to these there were also the Order of St Michel and St George for diplomatic and colonial elites and the Order of the Bath, the British Empire, and the Royal Victorian Order, which were available as rewards for broader service to the Crown. Together this array of orders, each with multiple ranks, both rewarded and categorised their recipients. Through these honours the relative importance of each of these states to the British can be measured.

Finally, as Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper have shown in their *Empires and World History*, empires or political conglomerations of many peoples, and not nation states, are the most common form of government across history.[12] An empire is the dominion of one people, class, group, over others. What the history of British indirect rule of Muslim states illustrates is that the British Empire was, to a large degree, a British and Indian Empire. While British individuals may have been the ones imposing their domination on others, they were doing so under a framework devised in India. From the early colonial history of the East India Company came the genesis of indirect rule and its

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[12] Burbak and Cooper, *Empires in World History,* 3-4.

earliest intellectual champions. From post-1857 India came a powerful institutional backing for indirect rule, along with a wide variety of tools and techniques which helped the spread of this form of colonialism beyond India. And in every one of these territories, from Nigeria in the west to Malaya in the east, personnel who had served in India and been inculcated with the governing ideas of the Raj redeployed and modified these ideas in order to draw Muslim princes and millions of their subjects under imperial rule.

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