1 Minor sovereignties: Hyderabad among states and empires

Many territorially sovereign polities across the globe circa 1850–1950, the so-called high colonial era, were decidedly not equivalent powers to dominant European nation-states. But neither were they colonial territories subordinated and integrated into European (or American) empires. These *minor* states – neither dominant nations nor colonial possessions – were highly productive political spaces in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They took up international legal sovereignty as a potent language to authorize experimentation with ideologies and institutions of governance, and to position themselves within global intellectual and political configurations.[1] British colonial discourse represented minor sovereigns as 'princely' states (and thus not quite fully sovereign 'kings' or 'monarchs') or 'indirectly ruled'

[1] My use of the term 'minor' to describe varied forms of sovereignty that were decidedly less powerful than dominant empires and nation-states follows postcolonialist and poststructuralist theory and criticism, in which 'minor' literatures, authors, and texts undermine dominant notions of belonging or canonicity. In this parallel, minor sovereigns force a reconsideration of canonical notions about the workings of power during modern imperialism. For the key elaboration of the concept of 'minor literature' see Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), ch. 3. For Deleuze and Guattari a minor literature emerges when a politically and culturally subordinated group composes in a major language (in his case, the Czech Jewish Kafka writing in German). This writing marks a deterritorialization (Czech Jewish distance from Czech or German territorial belonging), but is also a political act productive of solidarity. Minor literatures in turn reterritorialize the minority group in terms of the language's "sense" (20). As shall become clear below, Hyderabad and other minor states took up the emerging 'major' political language of the modern state (dominated by European nation-states and empires) as a way to assert their authority. For the use of 'minor' authors and texts to reframe the early modern literary canon see Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt, *Practicing New Historicism* (University of Chicago Press, 2001). On 'minority culture' as a vantage point for political and literary critique, see Aamir Mufti, "Auerbach in Istanbul: Edward Said, Secular Criticism, and the Question of Minority Culture," *Critical Inquiry* 25.1 (1998): 95–125 and *Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture* (Princeton University Press, 2007).

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316118665.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

polities.[2] Such conceptual frameworks cast states such as Hyderabad as possessors of illusory sovereignty. These marginalizing designations formed key rhetorical elements of colonial discourses that emphasized the primacy of the British Raj. However, these terms and implicit assumptions have problematically shaped scholarly accounts of the nature of modern sovereignty.[3] To understand the dynamic nature of sovereignty it is critical to look to intervening nether zones, which empires and dominant nations endeavor to liquidate, integrate, or pacify.

This chapter situates the 'minor' state of Hyderabad within the complex, multi-tiered, global political geography of the last quarter of the nineteenth century through the middle of the twentieth. Here, state sovereignty across ostensibly imperial space was heterogeneous, and a product of negotiation and contestation between numerous authorities. This position runs counter to presumptions about effective imperial consolidation of state sovereignty by about 1900.

The history of state sketched here – the condition of fragmented sovereignty, and the existence of anomalous sovereign entities such as Hyderabad – has important implications for the intellectual history of South Asian political modernity. Viewed in the context of global political geography, South Asian minor states appear as critical spaces for institutional experimentation carried out by state intellectuals. Further, the coexistence of patrimonial political structures, combined with aggressive appropriation of technical and institutional modernist forms in Hyderabad, underscores the eclecticism and dynamism that characterized sub-imperial statecraft.

In laying out this theory of fragmented sovereignty, I focus on Hyderabad's relation to other places in British India and the world in both transnational connective terms and comparative framework. The chapter sketches the splintered political geography of the world during the high colonial era, then presents examples of three key modes of 'minor' political sovereignty (uncolonized states, sub-imperial polities, and political improvisations in imperial frontier zones). It then elaborates the role of global Muslim solidarity as the foundation of a powerful political vision that provided a template for counter-colonial ideas and practices, and constituted one network for circulation of institutional and technical

[2] On the conceptual foundations and political dynamics of 'indirect rule' as imperial ideology see Karuna Mantena, *Alibis of Empire: Henry Maine and the Ends of Liberal Imperialism* (Princeton University Press, 2010), introduction.

[3] See Chapter 3 on colonial and scholarly discourse on South Asia's sub-imperial states, and the limitations posed by uncritical incorporation of value-laden concepts such as 'indirect rule' and 'princely states.'

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316118665.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

modernist ideas.[4] Before describing the global political architecture, I begin with three anecdotes that elaborate the range of political possibilities in the state of Hyderabad.

I

In the 1880s, after being expelled from Egypt, the anti-colonial Muslim internationalist Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afġhānī, denounced as a fanatic in colonial sources, resided in Hyderabad city.[5] Under the patronage of high nobles and state officials, including the prime minister, he penned some of his most incendiary works on the injustices of European colonialism and the means of bringing about its rapid end. He met, debated, and confabulated with several leading Muslim modernist intellectuals of Hyderabad, and was allegedly offered a post in the state administration, which he declined.[6]

II

In June 1897, after celebrations for the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria's coronation, the conservative brahmin anti-colonialist Chapekar brothers carried out the political asassination of two plague officers, Ayerst and Rand, in Pune, Bombay Presidency, British India. Colonial police quickly captured two of the brothers, but a third, Balkrishna Chapekar, slipped eastward across the British India frontier into Hyderabad state. Despite the large bounty on his head, the fugitive evaded police for more that a year. Balkrishna ranged across southwest Hyderabad state, through hills and valleys, state-administered territories and domains under land grantees who exercised police and judicial power. He hid out with a notorious robber band in the hills, and found shelter in local towns, allegedly owing to popular support for his brand of extremist Hindu nationalism. Despite difficulties sourcing reliable information from Hyderabadi rural society or the Nizam's officials, Raj police finally managed to nab the fugitive in January 1899 as he boarded a train for the Portuguese territory of Goa.[7]

[4] As will become clear, this solidarity was based on Muslimness as a social and political basis for connection. What I describe here was decidedly not an Islamic solidarity based on theological or scriptural content.

[5] On Muslim internationalism in Hyderabad and al-Afghani's network there see Chapter 4.

[6] Aziz Ahmed, "Afghani's Indian Contacts," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 98.3 (1969): 476–504.

[7] *Source Material for a History of the Freedom Movement in India (Collected from Bombay Government Records)*, vol. II: 1885–1920 (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1958), 361–64.

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III

In the early 1920s the Scottish urban planner Patrick Geddes traveled to Hyderabad to select a site and draw up preliminary plans for a new Urdu-medium public university. During the same period planners in Hyderabad took cues from developments in Germany, Britain, the United States, and British India in drawing up a long-term plan for new infrastructures and housing in the rapidly expanding capital city and its suburbs. Simultaneously, Hyderabad State officials struggled against British attempts to prevent construction of new places of worship or eliminate 'sanitary threats' such as workers' housing and urban agriculture in the vicinity of the British military Cantonment in the capital.[8]

The experiences and productivity of people in Hyderabad – such as those sketched above – elaborate structures and developments beyond the formal borders of European empire. Hyderabad's political and geographical space provided a laboratory for experimentation with putatively modern ideas and institutions of governance, and a refuge from colonial practices in a world dominated by imperialism.[9] Intellectual and political flows pulsing through Hyderabad tied the city and state into broader conceptual frameworks of global allegiance. Some of these undermined concepts and practices that envisioned states solely as bounded territorial entities, unsettling dominant narratives of the nature and periodization of the modern state. In Hyderabad, officials took advantage of territorial sovereignty to pursue projects of governance that departed from British colonial initiatives. Hyderabad's ambivalent relationship to empire was founded on the tension between its status as an autonomous territorial state and its nodal position in diffuse, often Muslim, political networks. Hyderabad provides a key vantage point for reconsidering political dynamics in an era often presumed to be one of closure.

The prevailing scholarly consensus on South Asia is that by the late nineteenth century the British had managed to consolidate the entire region under one state, perhaps for the first time in history.[10] However,

[8] On Geddes and Hyderabad see Helen Meller, *Patrick Geddes: Social Evolutionist and City Planner* (London: Routledge, 1990), 171.

[9] On decentering Eurocentric genealogies of modernity by "recast[ing] metropolitan modernity as its dominant form rather than as its (self-proclaimed) universal standard" see Fernando Coronil, *The Magical State: Nature, Money, and Modernity in Venezuela* (University of Chicago Press, 1997), 8.

[10] Standard textbook surveys of South Asia, produced by scholars of widely varying schools of thought, identify the period from the mid-nineteenth century through World War I as the height of modern imperialism. Their narratives describe an era of British imperial consolidation in the region, and the integration of South Asia into a worldwide colonial capitalist economy. Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal suggest that the high colonial period

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the view from minor states suggests that political authority was not so neatly integrated as this claim implies. Hyderabad was one of several hundred sub-imperial sovereign polities in the subcontinent that occupied gaps in the map of European colonial space. Empire was organized around such units, and theoretical claims of imperial integration were in tension with explicit recognition of non-colonial sovereign power over localities or regions. The vignettes above suggest that the South Asian colonial era witnessed more political complexity than simply the generalization of imperial authority and governance, and articulation of an anti-colonial nationalist other.

From the end of the eighteenth century Hyderabad was bound by treaty to the suzerain British.[11] Nevertheless, borderlines were clearly inscribed between Hyderabad and neighboring colonial territories, which surrounded it on all sides.[12] In the late nineteenth century Hyderabad's sovereign territory and state space provided a venue for several related ideological, institutional, and developmental projects. These were possible because the subcontinent during this period was a heterogeneous entity, and sovereign sub-imperial states and unstable border zones that proliferated were key nodes in the global circulation of political ideas and practices. As such, Hyderabad and other sovereign actors in South Asia and elsewhere below the imperial level create a systemic problem for unitary understandings of empire – the imperial 'core' was perpetually unsettled by perceived or actual threats from the 'periphery.'[13] The view from Hyderabad illuminates the conceptual and political geography of a

was defined by a British imperial "monolithic, unitary sovereignty," whose foil was a "shallow, if not 'fake' authority of 'traditional rulers'" (this latter category included the 'princely states'). See *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy*, 2nd edn. (New York: Routledge, 2004), ch. 10, esp. 83. Barbara Daly Metcalf and Thomas R. Metcalf describe the turn of the nineteenth century as the "apogee of the British imperial system," which was characterized by the integral relationship of expanding communication and transformation infrastructures and the consolidation of colonial state sovereignty. See *A Concise History of Modern India*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge University Press, 2006), chs. 4 and 5, esp. 94–99. Burton Stein claims that the Raj became a "unitary state" in 1858, in *A History of India*, 2nd edn., ed. David Arnold (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), ch. 6, 227.

[11] See Chapter 2 for a consideration of the British imperial doctrine of suzerainty.

[12] While these borderlines were unambiguous on maps and in the understanding of the governments of Hyderabad and of different British Indian entities, they did not always appear so clear from the perspective of those on the ground. See Chapter 5 on the limited success of colonial attempts to 'fix' the border.

[13] Sameetah Agha and Elizabeth Kolsky, eds., *Fringes of Empire: Peoples, Places, and Spaces in Colonial India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009). For an earlier critique of accounts of global systems organized on a core–periphery basis see David Washbrook, "South Asia, the World System, and World Capitalism," *Journal of Asian Studies* 49.3 (1990): 479–508.

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subcontinent that remained, despite attempts at consolidation, a remarkably uneven terrain in which the power to exercise political sovereignty was fragmented between numerous entities and animated by often conflicting concerns.

Rethinking political sovereignty in an age of empires

The familiar periodization of South Asian history runs as follows:

Formal political power was flexible, layered, negotiated, and often severely limited in scope and effectiveness from early modernity through the late eighteenth century.

After a period of imperial consolidation culminating in the middle of the nineteenth century, however, the British succeeded in rendering the entirety of the subcontinent a de facto colonial possession.

Authority was delegated within a complex and strategically designed imperial structure, and colonial rulers maintained power through a combination of military force, economic coercion, and the production of consent among subordinate leaders and various segments of the population.

Working through quintessentially modern ideological and repressive institutional forms, the Raj's ability to manipulate South Asian economy and society was unprecedented in its depth and thoroughness.

The late nineteenth century was the dawn not only of full-blown colonial rule but also of modern state sovereignty in the subcontinent.[14]

[14] This rough timeline is an abstracted composite based upon dozens of recent scholarly works on early modern and modern South Asia. On the pre-modern scenario see Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Writing the Mughal World: Studies on Culture and Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011); Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, eds., *The Mughal State, 1526–1750* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), introduction. On the colonial transition see Stewart Gordon, *Marathas, Marauders, and State Formation in Eighteenth-Century India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994); Sugata Bose, *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), ch. 2; André Wink, *Land and Sovereignty in India: Agrarian Society and Politics under the Eighteenth-Century Maratha Svarajya* (Cambridge University Press, 1986); C. A. Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire* (Cambridge University Press, 1988); Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Hollow Crown: Ethnohistory of an Indian Kingdom*, 2nd edn. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993). For accounts of the precolonial past through the lens of the colonial period see Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995), chs. 4, 5; Sudipta Kaviraj, *The Imaginary Institution of India: Politics and Ideas* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010); and Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*. Significant divergences and

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This chronology holds for South Asia, as do variations thereof for many other places in the world.[15] Critiques of postcolonial scholarship on European imperialism have argued for greater emphasis on change over time and foundational differences between empires.[16] Notwithstanding these revisionist impulses, broad terrains subjected to imperial dominance, such as South Asia around 1900, are widely regarded as coherent and relatively homogeneous political entities.

The above chronology of colonialism and the state provides an indispensable foundation for scholarship, but is highly problematic in one respect (at least). The rise of modern power in the subcontinent the chronology centers on is undeniable. Infrastructural and institutional technologies of governance enabled unprecedented depth of state penetration, and these developments were wrought in the subcontinent during the era of British domination. The key problem with the chronology, however, is the presumption of a rapid and thorough transition from complex, multiple, and malleable forms of political power to effectively consolidated state sovereignty under unitary colonial authority.

Revisionist scholarship on modern colonialism from the last few decades has nuanced and challenged the timeline above in certain ways, but has left in place assumptions about the subcontinent-wide scope and

debates continue regarding the details and dynamics of the transition to high colonialism, especially around questions of causality. Few scholars, however, have questioned the thoroughness of de facto British political authority. Some scholarship on the colonial period, however, emphasized the weakness of certain aspects of the colonial state. See, *inter alia*, Anand A. Yang, *The Limited Raj: Agrarian Relations in Colonial India, Saran District, 1793–1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989). K. Sivaramakrishnan, *Modern Forests: Statemaking and Environmental Change in Colonial Eastern India* (Stanford University Press, 1999) has described "zones of anomaly" that existed in relation to a normative all-controlling imperial state. The current argument suggests that much of the world during the colonial era fits into the former category.

[15] For other places see Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats*; Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (Cambridge University Press, 1991); Peter C. Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005); and Lauren A. Benton, *Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History, 1400–1900* (Cambridge University Press, 2002). The story is somewhat different when viewed from the perspective of Europe, but nevertheless the nineteenth century there is also broadly understood as the era during which the modern national state successfully rooted out all opposition. For a classic account of the extension of state institutions and the generalization of national mentalities in rural France see Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford University Press, 1976).

[16] C. A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780–1870* (Cambridge University Press, 1996); Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

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stable nature of colonial power. D. A. Low sought to explain how the British Empire maintained authority despite being vastly outnumbered by subject populations, and focused on networks of collaboration.[17] Low developed a useful argument about the scale and intensity of British power, and the typology he laid out described the spectrum of "imperial authority" (from "quasi-diplomatic" to "administrative"), and in some ways corresponds to the modes of minor sovereignty described here. However, by taking the fact of imperial authority as his departure point, Low's work situated "indigenous political authorities" in a hierarchy controlled by and constitutive of colonial power. As such, the dynamism and eclecticism of minor states for themselves is squeezed out of a quintessentially *imperial* history. More recent revisionist scholarship had increasingly seen colonial domination as uneven across space, or occasionally absent in certain areas. Even when acknowledged, however, anomalous zones tend to be viewed as possessing illusory, insignificant sovereignty neatly 'nested' within a colonized terrain, or stateless.[18]

The political and legal architecture of British colonialism incorporated, in addition to an array of Raj provinces and residencies, several hundred sub-imperial, formally sovereign polities.[19] The continued existence of these states was guaranteed by accords with the British that required official colonial oversight and limitations of minor states' international and military powers. Larger states were obliged to host influential advisors known as Residents, and to provide space and funding for British Indian military cantonments.[20] Nevertheless, sub-imperial states behaved as sovereign entities in internal governance, and often in limited international diplomatic capacity.

Assessing South Asian sub-imperial states as political entities in the era of British colonial dominance requires nuance and attention to particularities. These states, individually or collectively, did not pose a serious

[17] D. A. Low, *Lion Rampant: Essays in the Study of British Imperialism* (London: Cass, 1973), ch. 1.

[18] For studies that make broader arguments see Lauren A. Benton, *Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400–1900* (Cambridge University Press, 2010) and James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). On South Asia see, *inter alia*, Michael Herbert Fisher, *Indirect Rule in India: Residents and the Residency System, 1764–1858* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991); Dirks, *Hollow Crown*; Sivaramakrishnan, *Modern Forests*.

[19] Barbara N. Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and their States* (Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[20] Smaller states were grouped together into agencies under particular British Indian provinces or presidencies, and were overseen by mobile political officers of different kinds. The discussion here emphasizes larger states. On the role of colonial officials in 'princely states' see Fisher, *Indirect Rule*.

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challenge to British imperial power in the subcontinent after 1857. The Raj exercised dominant, coercive, and often violent authority across most of the subcontinent, but their formal legal sovereignty never spanned the whole of the region. In South Asia, as in numerous locations in which European empires were dominant powers, colonial sovereignty remained uneven in both theoretical and practical terms. Textured imperial sovereignty produced spaces for political maneuvering with emerging autonomous domains in imperial cities and provinces, anomalous frontier spaces, and among numerous colonial entities with markedly diverse interests. Formally autonomous polities such as Hyderabad were thus not exceptional: trends there put in clear relief the enduring political heterogeneity of an ostensibly colonized world. Sovereign sub-imperial states produced a complexity in the legal domain through which various actors at state level or well below could undermine the working of colonial institutions. Further, the jurisdictional complexity that set off the social and political worlds of these states from colonial territories (which were in turn offset from one another) foreshadows new configurations of 'major' and 'minor' sovereignty in the ostensibly postcolonial world from the mid-twentieth century onward.

The configuration of *fragmented sovereignty* described here carved out territories that were within the web of empire, but not entirely of it. Their sovereignty facilitated political connections and experimentations. From another perspective, these territories gave shape to empires by providing them with sustaining mythologies and threatening frontiers which authorized official colonial state violence and state illegalities within imperial boundaries. But empires also had outsides. States in Asia, Africa, and elsewhere whose authority paled in comparison to that of dominant imperial formations provided discursive and institutional spaces for the articulation of political visions including but not limited to progressive or exclusivist idioms of Muslim solidarity, anarchist internationalism, radical Marxism, Pan-Asianism, Pan-Africanism, conservative nativist varieties of anti-colonialism, and reformist ideas of liberal European empire.[21] Such political languages cut across and through political,

[21] For a general survey of 'Pan-Islamism' see Jacob M. Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam: Ideology and Organization* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); on Southeast Asia see Barbara Watson Andaya, "From Rūm to Tokyo: The Search for Anticolonial Allies by the Rulers of Riau, 1899–1914," *Indonesia* 24 (1977): 123–56; Anthony Reid, "Nineteenth Century Pan-Islam in Indonesia and Malaysia," *Journal of Asian Studies* 26.2 (1967): 267–83. Pan-Islamism in South Asia, the Ottoman world, and elsewhere will be discussed below. On Pan-Asianism and Pan-Islamism see Cemil Aydin, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007). On Anarchism see Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination* (London:

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imperial, and regional boundaries. The scope and effect of European colonialism was thus tempered by other crosscutting geographical visions within arenas such as the British Empire or British India. These visions, and related institutional experiments, were nurtured against a background of global imperialism, but not always in formally colonized places.

Colonial empires and a world of states

European imperialism was a dominant global force, but formal sovereignty of minor states was of central importance to changing political ideologies and institutional developments. Further, frontier zones of empires and states provided spaces for articulating political authority at lower levels, or refuges for dissidents against or people criminalized by established states. Physical geography and environment often played an important role in carving out zones of anomaly that were problematic to established political entities. However, more so than material factors, formal legal sovereignty was crucial in producing a fragmented political scene. The autonomy claimed by a range of minor states endowed a complexity to the global political geography of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The distribution of sovereignty from the late nineteenth century onward was largely an effect of European imperialism. The geopolitical remaking of world power by empires combined territorial conquest with conceptual hegemony. The latter entailed the generalization of the notion of unitary and territorially defined sovereignty, as well as refashioned notions of society, culture, and the political domain. Scholarship on places beyond the realm of formal European colonial rule has effectively demonstrated the ineluctability of imperial pressures. Recent writings on formally independent states such as Siam, Iran, the Ottoman domains, China, and Japan have shown that sovereignty often meant considerably less than total independence and autonomy in relation to European

Verso, 2005); on Pan-Africanism see P. Olisanwuche Esedebe, *Pan-Africanism: The Idea and Movement, 1776–1991*, 2nd edn. (Washington, DC: Howard University, 1994); on imperial reformism see Antoinette M. Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian Britain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998) and Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Colony and Metropole in the English Imagination, 1830–1867* (University of Chicago Press, 2002); on global radicalism see Khuri-Makdisi, *The Eastern Mediterranean*. For a consideration of global South Asian anti-colonialism see Maia Ramnath, *Haj to Utopia: How the Ghadar Movement Charted Global Radicalism and Attempted to Overthrow the British Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

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imperial powers, in either political or intellectual terms.[22] Scholarship demonstrating the inescapable fact of global European power provides a crucial foundation from which any discussion on world history in the age of high imperialism must begin. Notwithstanding nationalist valorization of continuous independence in places such as Thailand, Iran, and Turkey, the postcolonial scholarly consensus about the age of high imperialism envisions a map of the world conceptually and politically ordered by Western imperialism.

The fact of European global political ascendancy, and the classic modalities of capitalism and liberalism through which colonialism operated, do not exhaust the intellectual and political repertoire of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Political sovereignty in numerous non-colonial states produced contingent or enduring zones of alterity. Colonial territories surely served as laboratories for experimentation with new and increasingly invasive forms of everyday governance in the metropole.[23] But simultaneously, non-colonial polities amidst empires

[22] Imperial powers had widely varied degrees of influence and formal power in these places, with the Ottomans themselves continuing to act as an imperial force despite European pressure, and Egypt largely under British administration by the 1880s. On Siam see Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaiʿi Press, 1994) and Hong Lysa, "'Stranger within the Gates': Knowing Semi-Colonial Siam as Extraterritorials," *Modern Asian Studies* 38.2 (2004): 327–54. On Iran, Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, *Frontier Fictions: Shaping the Iranian Nation, 1804–1946* (Princeton University Press, 1999) and Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi, *Refashioning Iran: Orientalism, Occidentalism, and Historiography* (New York: Palgrave, 2001). On the Ottomans, Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876–1909* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1998). On China, Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003). On Japan, Harry D. Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan* (Princeton University Press, 2000). Sudan was jointly administered by Britain and ostensibly Ottoman Egypt from 1898 to 1856. See Eve Troutt Powell, *A Different Shade of Colonialism: Egypt, Great Britain, and the Mastery of the Sudan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003) and Heather J. Sharkey, *Living with Colonialism: Nationalism and Culture in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). The Ottoman Empire presents an extremely complex scenario, which I shall address in more detail below. I have excluded the Americas from the scope of comparison here, though several locations there would fit the framework. On the anomalous case of Egypt – an autonomous state within the Ottoman Empire, subjected to intensive and quasi-formal French and British imperial rule – see Khaled Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men: Mehmed Ali, his Army, and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), esp. ch. 7; Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991) and *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

[23] Technologies related to criminal identification, gender and sexuality regulation were often developed and experimented with in the context of colonial rule and then re-exported to the metropole. On the regulation of gender and sexuality see Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (University of Chicago Press, 1992) and Philippa Levine, *Prostitution, Race, and Politics:*

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were staging-grounds for wide-ranging political experimentation with concepts and practice of modern governance, and imperial coercion was rarely the primary motivation. Officials who carried out these projects engaged intimately with the intellectual content and institutional manifestations of Western European and other idioms of political modernity, but appropriated and customized received ideas. European developments were neither taken as static modal templates nor did they exhaust the range of political possibilities.

Uncolonized states

Though dwarfed by European world empires, smaller sovereign states that were not colonized provided fertile ground for refashioning political concepts and institutions in dialogue with other global examples as well as local and regional histories. States such as Siam and Qajar Iran were subject to powerful pressures from European 'informal empires,' sometimes via restrictive treaties. This was particularly so with respect to border policy, fiscal management, and external trade.[24] Even if compromised, the formal legal sovereignty and international status of these states provided shelter for autonomous development of institutions, redefining the criteria of legitimate statecraft, and strategically engaging with the emerging global system. This process involved sustained attention to political ideas and practices in the West and in colonized countries on the part of elites, administrators, and intellectuals in uncolonized states. In colonies, political and institutional change was often carried out under direct political compulsion from occupying European powers. While uncolonized states were subject to powerful political and economic pressures, officials controlled the levers of most internal reforms.[25]

Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire (New York: Routledge, 2003). On criminal identification, through the technology of fingerprinting, see Chandak Sengoopta, *Imprint of the Raj: How Fingerprinting was Born in Colonial India* (London: Macmillan, 2003); and on the passport as mode of colonial control see Radhika V. Mongia, "Race, Nationality, Mobility: A History of the Passport," *Public Culture* 11.3 (1999): 527–56 and Radhika Singha, "Settle, Mobilize, Verify: Identification Practices in Colonial India," *Studies in History* 16.2 (2000): 151–98.

[24] Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*; Lysa, "'Stranger within the Gates'"; Kashani-Sabet, *Frontier Fictions*. For a classic account of the economic context of 'informal empire,' cast as an apologetics for imperialism, see John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, "The Imperialism of Free Trade," *Economic History Review* 6.1 (1953): 1–15.

[25] Places where colonialism was quasi-formal and European officials shared political power with state officials, such as late nineteenth-century Egypt or early twentieth-century Morocco, were a mixed form and only partially fit this rubric. The late Ottoman Empire provides one example of internal economic pressures in which European imperial forces applied leverage via state bankers. See Edhem Eldem, "Ottoman Financial Integration

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Siam

Siam underwent extensive internal political change during the era of global European imperialism.[26] Out of a keen awareness of rising colonial power nearby, Siamese state officials drew upon European political concepts and institutional practices, and modified them to suit their own needs.[27] Twentieth-century Thai nationalism has generated an imaginative historical image of an uncolonized state that remained unmarked by imperial power, unlike others in Southeast Asia that fell under British, French, or Dutch control. Recent scholarship, however, has demonstrated that Siam was subject to intensive European pressure, both as economic imperialism and, from the 1890s, threat of conquest.[28] As Siamese officials began to appreciate the dire implications of regional European dominance for their own sovereignty, the state consolidated control of previously autonomous regions and centralized political authority in Bangkok. Integral to this process of 'internal colonialism' were investments in infrastructure (roads, electrification), institutional changes (new bureaucracy, law codes, courts and judicial system), and notions of etiquette reflecting changing elite aesthetic values (dress codes, hygienic practices).[29] These developments evidenced a conscious modeling of the Siamese state and elite culture on European examples. The wide array of changes was in part an attempt to shore up Siam against external threats by strengthening state institutions and to "maintain [a] semblance of sovereignty."[30] The modernization of the state apparatus, as

with Europe: Foreign Loans, the Ottoman Bank and the Ottoman Public Debt" *European Review* 13.3 (2005): 431–45; C. G. A. Clay, *Gold for the Sultan: Western Bankers and Ottoman Finance 1856–1881: A Contribution to Ottoman and to International Financial History* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2000). In earlier moments, similar techniques incorporating finance mechanisms were used to expand colonial authority into new territories, such as Bengal and the Northern Circars in British India. See Bayly, *Indian Society*.

[26] I use Siam rather than Thailand here since the former was the name used internally by state officials and the international community in the period under consideration.

[27] Egypt from 1800 through the 1880s presents a partial parallel, in that state officials drew on a variety of sources, primarily European, to modernize the state in the face of the threat of imperial encroachment. See Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*; Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men*.

[28] Much of this summary on the question of colonial influence in Siam is distilled from the synthetic treatment in Peter A. Jackson, "Autonomy and Subordination in Thai History: The Case for Semicolonial Analysis," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 8.3 (2007): 329–48.

[29] Thongchai Winichakul, "The Quest for 'Siwilai': A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam," *Journal of Asian Studies* 59.3 (2000): 528–49. Winichakul does not use the term "internal colonialism," which is taken from Jackson's account of recent scholarship.

[30] Michael Herzfeld, "The Absent Presence: Discourses of Crypto-Colonialism," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 101.4 (2002): 899–926, here 907.

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Thongchai Winichakul shows, was also tied into a broader attempt to articulate Siam's place in a world defined by relative degrees of *siwilai* ('civilization'):

Unlike the European experience, the Siamese quest for *siwilai* was a transcultural process in which ideas and practices from Europe, via colonialism, had been transferred, localized, and hybridized in the Siamese setting. [This] quest for *siwilai* was not simply a reaction to the colonial threat. Rather, it was an attempt originated by various groups among the elite, later including urban intellectuals, to attain and confirm the relative superiority of Siam; as the traditional imperial power in the region, Siam was anxious about its position among modern nations.[31]

Crucial here was "the active role of Siamese rulers in the transformation," and their capacity to localize quintessentially modern Western modes of governance to establish Siam's position within an expanded world of states. If Europe had replaced China and South Asia as the center of a new global order, "Siam had to reconceptualize itself in relation to the rest of the world."[32] Emerging civilizational discourses located urban Thai intellectuals within a spatialized hierarchy, above the jungle people and rural villagers among their countrymen, and below Europeans.[33]

In spite of largely successful efforts to consolidate authority and develop modern institutions, Siam remained marginal in elite perceptions and international diplomatic clout.[34] European imperialism – felt in the form of political pressure and an emergent elite consensus regarding the nature of civilization – played a significant role in shaping Siamese ideas and institutions. Thongchai's work suggests, however, that the thoroughgoing changes in the late nineteenth-century Siamese political domain resulted from complex and highly productive engagements between established Thai concepts and political practices and malleable Western templates. Despite a palpable degree of humiliation in attempts to behave as peers of their European counterparts, Siamese rulers and administrators retained sovereign authority and developed their state from this platform. Parallel to Hyderabad, Siam was part of a global geography of minor states, decidedly subordinate in terms of power to European empires, but with formal authority that facilitated autonomous development.

[31] Winichakul, "Quest for 'Siwilai'," 529. [32] Ibid., 533. [33] Ibid., 546.

[34] On the exclusion of non-Christian states from the community of nations see Charles Henry Alexandrowicz, *An Introduction to the History of the Law of Nations in the East Indies: (16th, 17th and 18th Centuries)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967).

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Qajar Iran

Qajar Iran (1794–1925), like Siam, was never directly colonized, and played a secondary role on a global stage increasingly dominated by expanding European empires.[35] While uncolonized, the Qajars "never remained immune from the European powers' all-embracing, and often intrusive, presence."[36] From the 1820s the Russian Empire and British India employed a strategy of "geopolitical containment" in Qajar northern and southeastern borders.[37] The experience of imperial pressure and threat of conquest made it imperative that state officials consolidate political authority over highly decentralized domains. The early Qajars put very little investment into fortifying their military and police or developing institutions and infrastructures such as courts, schools, hospitals, roads, and railways.[38] This left them not only vulnerable to pressure from imperial neighbors, but also in need of development paradigms to consolidate internal territories and establish a place on the world stage. This dilemma provided the opportunity for Qajar engagement with methods of statecraft employed by imperial rivals. State officials looked to reforms in Europe and the neighboring Ottoman Empire for exemplary models, but approached these with a decided ambivalence.[39]

Late nineteenth-century Qajar Iran administrators experimented with new political ideas and undertook development projects to communicate changing concepts of authority to the population. Under Nasir al-Din Shah (r. 1848–96) the Iranian state developed a royal style blending notions of Perso-Islamicate kingship, reciprocal relationships between state officials and clerics, and Western-inspired models of government and public displays.[40] Qajar political culture sought to naturalize familiar concepts keyed around established mediators of authority that dated back centuries, such as Shia *mujtahids* (jurisconsults) and the king cast as *zillullah* ('shadow of God [on earth]'). The form in which much of this content was communicated, however,

[35] I use Iran, the name used internally in the Qajar state, rather than Persia. The latter name was used internationally until 1935. My use of Iran rather than Persia is not meant to imply direct continuity between Qajar Iran and the contemporary nation-state.

[36] Abbas Amanat, *Pivot of the Universe: Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar and the Iranian Monarchy, 1831–1896* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 1.

[37] Ibid., 15.

[38] Nikki Keddie, "Iran under the Later Qājārs, 1848–1922," in *The New Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. VII: *From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic*, ed. Peter Avery, Gavin Hambly, and Charles Melville (Cambridge University Press, 1991), 174–212, here 176.

[39] Amanat, *Pivot of the Universe*, 14.

[40] Ibid., 5–18.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316118665.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

was derived in large part through engagements with political practices elsewhere.[41]

According to Afshin Marashi, Qajar encounters with European and Ottoman cities were exemplary for the development of "a new style of politics borrowed from an increasingly available model of state authority."[42] Based on detailed communications from consular officials in Istanbul and Paris and personal encounters with the spaces of public life in Europe, from the 1870s onwards Nasir al-din Shah dedicated extensive resources to the redesign of his capital city, Tehran.[43] His urban policy sought to create a sphere of publicity through carving out "broad boulevards and centralized open spaces in the European style," punctuated by museums and exhibition grounds that could serve as "sites for the transmission of values and meanings to an urban populace."[44] Nasir al-Din Shah utilized these staging-grounds for spectacles of royal authority and legitimacy, targeting both his subjects and the rest of the world. Speaking of Qajar, as well as the Ottoman, territories as "semicolonial zones that had escaped direct colonization but where sovereignty remained precarious," Marashi speculated on the desired effect of public display of royal authority:[45]

> For the international audience, it was intended to convey the equal status of the semicolonial states and thus discourage further imperial encroachments. For the domestic audience the new ceremonies and public spectacles enhanced the position of the state as the main focus of domestic loyalty, providing the basis of modern identity in an age when social forces were producing rival and centrifugal identifications.[46]

Qajar anxieties over loss of territory or political autonomy, then, produced both an imperative and an opportunity to develop new regimes of state authority. This project entailed engagement with models of authority from other places, and reexamining older modes of legitimacy and rule. The integration of new technologies and rhetorics of power into the Qajar system performed multiple functions. On one level, it was a means to solidify control over subject populations. Further, the new imperial style registered a proclamation of sovereign authority in a symbolic

[41] For a consideration of the role of European genres and modes of knowledge in Iran, such as travelogue writing and journalistic reportage, see Naghmeh Sohrabi, *Taken for Wonder: Nineteenth-Century Travel Accounts from Iran to Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[42] Afshin Marashi, *Nationalizing Iran: Culture, Power, and the State, 1870–1940* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), 16.

[43] Ibid., 20–26. On the expansion of city services such as cleaning, lighting, trash collection, and parks see Keddie, "Iran under the Later Qājārs," 198.

[44] Marashi, *Nationalizing Iran*, 18, 26. [45] Ibid., 17. [46] Ibid., 18.

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language of political modernity familiar in London, Paris, Istanbul, Cairo, and beyond.

Siam and Qajar Iran in the late nineteenth century illustrate two prevailing trends in uncolonized places. First, such states were under intensive imperial pressures that obliged them to consolidate authority over their territories and subjects. This was carried out through engagement with global political ideas and practices, and resulted in the emulation and localization of modes of governance employed by European states or empires (or emulation of other implicitly successful 'Westernized' states, such as Japan or the Ottomans).[47] Second, the threat to state territories – or sovereignty itself – posed by European colonialism engendered tremendous anxiety on the part of political leaders of uncolonized states. These leaders addressed concerns through presenting their political sophistication and degree of authority as *comparable* to that of European states. It mattered little that attempts to engage with European states as equals were ineffectual: The fact of formal sovereignty and opportunity for autonomous political development both compelled and enabled uncolonized states to experiment politically in hopes of obtaining a secure physical and conceptual location amidst empires.

Sub-imperial states

In addition to uncolonized states, such as Siam and Qajar Iran, the era of high colonialism featured a wide array of *sub-imperial* states: polities that were not formally colonized, but whose sovereignty was guaranteed by treaties subordinating them to regionally dominant colonial powers.[48] Political configurations of this kind were prominent in different parts of the British Empire, and the imperial geographies of Asia and Africa were

[47] On emulation of European legal ideas and the making of international law see Richard S. Horowitz, "International Law and State Transformation in China, Siam, and the Ottoman Empire during the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of World History* 15.4 (2004): 445–86.

[48] The term 'sub-imperial' here designates sovereign states subordinate to imperial powers, and is distinct from the use of the term to designate smaller-scale imperial projects that emerge in the context of post-World War II US economic imperialism. See David Harvey, *The New Imperialism* (Oxford University Press, 2003), 185–86. There is some affinity between the roles of minor states I sketch here and the capacity Harvey identifies of smaller states to "insert themselves" into the global power matrix. However, I do not contend that the empowerment of minor states necessarily represents a parallel, if lesser, form of imperialism. My use of the term is also distinct from scholars, chiefly of South Africa, who define sub-imperial states as proxies of a larger dominant imperialist force. See Patrick Bond, "Bankrupt Africa: Imperialism, Sub-Imperialism and the Politics of Finance," *Historical Materialism* 12.4 (2004): 145–72; Melanie Samson, "(Sub)imperial South Africa? Reframing the Debate," *Review of African Political Economy* 36.119 (2009): 93–103.

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composed in considerable part of native sovereign territory. The British Empire of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries included hundreds of 'princely states' in South Asia, several emirates in the Persian Gulf, federated and unfederated states in Malaya, and a variety of chiefdoms, emirates and sultanates in southern, western, and eastern Africa. These states ranged widely in size and autonomy relative to the empire. In the case of larger sub-imperial states, variations on political dynamics in uncolonized states, such those considered above, are visible. Owing to their presence as sovereign entities within broader imperial geographies, sub-imperial states complicated the workings of power in colonial space. Further, such states create historiographical problems by undermining the integrity of empire as a unitary object of analysis.

Recent scholarship tends to emphasize the high degree of political subordination experienced by various "princes" (Raja, Maharaja, Nawab, Maharana, Begum, Nizam, Khan), sultans, emirs, and chiefs who retained formal sovereignty within British imperial space. Colonial discourses, attempting to present imperialism as "trusteeship," at times emphasized the independent political status of subsidiary 'native rulers.' Revisionist histories of the last several decades have accordingly stressed that various forms of "indirect rule" (following the British colonial designation) veiled colonial domination equivalent in extent to that in 'directly ruled' territories.[49]

The histories of sub-imperial polities have been marginalized by the discursive power of postcolonial nation-states into whose bodies they were often integrated, and the subsequent redrawing of postcolonial provincial (subnational) boundaries.[50] 'Indirect rule,' however, for a variety of ideological and material reasons, was a key organizing principle of the British Empire from the mid-nineteenth century onward.[51] Developments in British-dominated regions of Malaya and Northern Nigeria elucidate the political complexity sub-imperial polities endowed to

[49] On South Asia see Dirks, *Hollow Crown*; Fisher, *Indirect Rule*. On Africa see Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Decentralized Despotism and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton University Press, 1996). See also Chapter 3 of this book. It is worth noting that Dirks and others often use "indirect rule" to refer to a wide array of colonial policies ostensibly based on established local practice, such as land control regimes or social hierarchies of privilege. My discussion here is exclusively concerned with formal state sovereignties, not the entirety of colonial political practice.

[50] For a discussion of the histories and legacies of South Asian and other minor noncolonial states after decolonization see this book's Conclusion.

[51] Mantena, *Alibis of Empire*, pinpoints in 1857 a key shift from "liberal" empire, premised on the notion of "civilizing" colonized populations through reform, to an imperial ethos based on "indirect rule" through "traditional" institutions. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, 62–63, traces the institutional origins of indirect rule in Africa to British Natal in the 1840s, and its codification as law to 1891.

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the space of empire. Trends in these places – bureaucrat-intellectuals' roles in securing the status of states in emerging global political landscapes; developing Muslimness, if not Islam per se, as a political identity and basis for transnational solidarities; fusions of Muslim state identity with institutional and technological modernity – resembled those in Hyderabad that subsequent chapters of the book examine.

Johor, Malaya

The bulk of territory in the imperial configuration of 'British Malaya' was formally under native sovereign rulers, each subject to different degrees of colonial oversight.[52] Malaya was a heterogeneous political entity composed of directly colonized enclaves (Straits Settlements), states with sovereign rulers closely managed by a British-led federation (Federated Malay States, or FMS), and largely autonomous sovereign states (Unfederated Malay States, or UMS). Both FMS and UMS were obliged to host a powerful British-appointed political advisor. This produced a tension between symbolic and de facto political authority, and "the sovereignty of the Malay Rulers became a sacrosanct principle of British rule in Malaya" in order to "legitimise the residency system and the advisory treaties which underpinned it."[53] Malay rulers' dependence on British patronage facilitated colonial economic and political penetration. The decades around 1900 saw the rapid expansion of colonial capital into lucrative tin and rubber plantations worked by migrant labor across the peninsula.[54]

British power in the Malay states was limited by sultans' authority to determine the content of 'Islamic law' and 'Malay custom.' Control over these domains embedded Malay rulers "within the institutional hierarchy of the colonial state," but gave them a degree of power both within their own states and in Malaya as a whole.[55] London designated political status and was dominant in regional economic administration, but sultans'

[52] 'British Malaya' was not an official designation, but administrative shorthand that came into use in the early twentieth century to describe the governing bodies in what is now western (peninsular) Malaysia and Singapore. As will become clear, British Malaya was not a uniform political terrain in de jure or de facto terms.

[53] Simon C. Smith, "'Moving a Little with the Tide': Malay Monarchy and the Development of Modern Malay Nationalism," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 34.1 (2006): 123–38, here 124–25.

[54] Carl A. Trocki, "Political Structures in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," in *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, vol. II: *The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Nicholas Tarling (Cambridge University Press, 1992), 79–130, here 113–14.

[55] Iza Hussin, "The Pursuit of the Perak Regalia: Islam, Law, and the Politics of Authority in the Colonial State," *Law and Social Inquiry* 32.3 (2007): 759–88, here 784.

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jurisdiction over domains designated as religious or customary produced a fluid legal terrain from the 1880s onward.[56]

Malay states' sovereignty was important in both ideological and institutional terms. Royal courts fashioned administrations, staffed departments, and carried out development projects; they also remained key participants in and subjects of broader ideological debates among political thinkers in the region. As treaties were signed and Residents took up posts in UMS, they encountered "not only the nucleus of an administrative cadre but a strong sensitivity among ruling groups to all attempts to overstep the boundaries of advice and guidance."[57] Malay officials themselves were experimenting with "bureaucratic modernization," customizing European templates to accommodate established modes of governance.[58] Willingness to collaborate with the British in certain areas allowed Malay sultans to retain internal sovereignty in their states.

A closer examination of the Sultanate of Johor, one of the more active UMS, reveals Malay rulers' political maneuvers and their results.[59] Starting as a high port official in Singapore island, in the 1850s the Temenggong of Johor extracted from the British the status of territorial ruler, and proceeded to seize political autonomy in a neighboring area.[60] Late nineteenth-century Johor rulers parlayed loyalty to the expanding empire into increased authority. The process of consolidation brought the British into conflict with the existing Malay state system, which they chose to reinforce and turn to their advantage. This strategic move secured British ascendancy by reinscribing the authority of Malay sovereignty. Abu Bakar (r. 1862–95) amplified his status to Maharaja (1866) then Sultan (1885) in exchange for agreeing to host a Resident in Johor (a post that remained vacant until 1914). Working from allegiances and intimacy with British officials, Johor established a governmental framework during the 1870s

[56] Hussin, "Pursuit of the Perak Regalia," posits legal hybridity, an alternative to legal pluralism, as an optic for describing juridical politics in Malaya as a colonized space. The coherence of Malaya as political space may appear less thorough if looked at from the perspective of state officials or the popular experience of the law in Malay states, where sultans' administrations had sovereign control over internal governance. On legal pluralism in Raj–Nizam frontiers see part II of this book.

[57] Willam R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, 2nd edn. (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1994 [1967]), 94.

[58] Ibid., 94–95.

[59] The British officially designated the ruler of Johor "Sultan of the State and Territory of Johore." This made explicit that he was not heir to the old Johor sultanate, which thrived in the Malay region from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries. See Carl A. Trocki, *Prince of Pirates: The Temenggongs and the Development of Johor and Singapore, 1784–1885* (Singapore University Press, 1979), 191.

[60] Trocki, *Prince of Pirates*, 119. The following summary is extracted from 150–207 of the text.

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incorporating Malay and Chinese officials and hired Europeans. Subsequently, when the British were consolidating political and economic control in the Straits Settlements and the FMS, Johor undertook governmental expansion and reorganization, and developed a lucrative rubber plantation system. The Johor Sultan used his expanding sovereignty to build a state integrating new institutions constructed on the British model alongside royal legislative authority, courtly ceremony, and state support for education and intellectual production. Debates about what constituted legitimate governance in the region often hinged on the activities of Muslim Malay rulers in Johor and elsewhere.

Sultans and their official activities (patronage of scholarship and literature, development projects, representation of Malay Islam) were at the center of the emerging Malay public sphere. Institutional changes, which affected the everyday lives of Malay subjects, became wrapped up in broader debates about political legitimacy. Anthony Milner examines a series of texts that elaborate lively ideological contestations in this context, attempting to "identify elements of experimentation in ideology-making, moments, perhaps, when Malay writers sought to comprehend or reformulate alien doctrines . . . [where] we find evidence of independent momentum, of 'autonomy.'"[61] Milner details tensions within the ideological landscape between liberal nationalism (*bangsa*), textualist Islamist internationalism (*umat*), and loyalism to ruling sultans (*kerajaan*). Liberals and Islamists made the fact and practice of sultanate authority a target for critique, and royalist intellectuals attempted to placate these critiques, as well as advice from British officials, "in a creative manner."[62] Sultan Abu Bakar sought to appease those skeptical of his Muslim credentials by hosting religious scholars and assembling legal texts to be used in courts, and informed the British governor of Singapore "that he had revised his state's legal code to make it 'more comfortable to European ideas.'"[63] Johor writers in the 1890s and 1900s produced articulate works addressed to the wide range of potential critics yoking together Muslim and European idioms of political legitimacy.[64]

Educated at elite English schools in Singapore, Johorean bureaucrat-intellectuals penned texts lauding the sultanate as modernist and nationalist. A state survey officer's 1894 book emphasized advancements in road construction and police administration, surveying and boundary-making.[65] The widely influential *Hikayat Johor* (1908) highlighted the sultan's service to the Malay race, and responded to anxieties

[61] Anthony Milner, *The Invention of Politics in Colonial Malaya: Contesting Nationalism and the Expansion of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), 7.
[62] Ibid., 193, 198. [63] Ibid., 198. [64] Ibid., 204. [65] Ibid.

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of international comparability by emphasizing its independence, modern institutions, and foreign policy achievements.[66] Such writings and the projects they describe suggest that Malay sultans functioned as agents of political experimentation and loci for ideological claims. Sub-imperial states attracted highly trained administrators, and remained in the spotlight of political debates carried out at the centers of British power in Malaya. Even as Islamist intellectuals in the Straits Settlements decried the Johor Sultan for his frivolous ceremonialism and focus on titles, they lauded his achievements in saving an "Islamic country" from "the jaws of a savage tiger."[67] Retaining formal sovereignty during colonial expansion, Malay sultans were key players in ideological contestations, and figures of political desire for colonized Muslim intellectuals.

The case of Johor demonstrates that sub-imperial states, while products of colonial strategy, were venues for political experimentation in concept and practice. Figures who integrated ideas into institutions, such as court circles of bureaucrat-intellectuals, played a central role in combining established and new trends, and communicating results to local critics and global observers. The anxiety of comparability, as in sub-imperial (Hyderabad) and uncolonized (Siam, Qajar Iran) states, consumed state intellectuals in Johor. Nonetheless, accommodations with imperial configurations gave minor states considerable leeway for experimentation.[68]

Sokoto, Northern Nigeria

Sub-imperial political authorities ranged widely in their responsibilities and powers. Chiefs or emirs in British Africa could hardly be called heads of state. They often, nevertheless, used limited sovereign powers to transform social and political relations in imperial space in substantial ways. Lord Frederic Lugard, High Commissioner of British Northern Nigeria from 1901 to 1906, coined the term indirect rule to describe the system of delegation of political authority he established on the frontier of colonial expansion. He formalized an administrative system based on established British colonial practice in western and southern Africa, where "multifarious indigenous authorities . . . were recognized as 'chiefs' by the relevant British governor and were allowed to exercise often quite wide-ranging powers."[69] Indirect rule policies in early twentieth-century

[66] Ibid., 201–2. [67] Ibid., 143–44.

[68] Trocki, "Political Structures," 86, suggests that Siam during the period under study might be seen as "an extreme example of indirect rule" whose position was "quite similar to the situation of one of the unfederated Malay states, such as Johor."

[69] The quotation is taken from D. C. Dorward, "British West Africa and Liberia," in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, vol. VII: *From 1905 to 1940*, ed. A. D. Roberts (Cambridge

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British West Africa reoriented and politicized social cleavages, and in many cases elevated people to the formal political status of 'chiefs' where no such institution had existed previously.[70] Scholars have emphasized that indirect rule in Africa and emerging canons of 'customary law' were not so much examples of European 'invention of African tradition' to serve colonial ends, but rather arenas for complex negotiations between European administrators and African elites.[71] Sub-imperial authorities had considerable power in relation to colonial administrators, since the latter could not hope to meet imperial demand for land, labor, and taxes without availing local authorities' capacity to maintain widespread legitimacy.

'Indirect rule' in Africa may have facilitated imperial dominance with minimal investment, but it provided arenas for political experimentation that at times threatened colonial power. In the case of Northern Nigeria, British policy endowed continued legitimacy and formal political status to a Muslim dynasty that had reshaped the political terrain of the region in the nineteenth century. The Sokoto Caliphate, established by the *jihad* of Usman dan Fodio in 1804, controlled much of the Hausa and Yoruba country throughout the nineteenth century. Conquered in 1903 by the British, the Sokoto Sarkin Muslimi, or Caliph, and subordinate emirs of the cities and provinces that made up the empire, contemplated undertaking *hijra*, mandatory migration to a country under Muslim rule.[72] Sokoto leaders, faced with the difficulty of fleeing the region, and without a feasible destination given that Egypt and the Sudan were informally colonized as well, colluded with the colonial conquerors to retain formal political authority within the new dispensation. This produced the conditions for what Murray Last has dubbed a "Colonial Caliphate," where

University Press, 1986), 399–459, here 403. Dorward also notes "analogous developments" in Southern Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, and the Gambia. See also Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, 62–63.

70 Jonathan Reynolds, "Good and Bad Muslims: Islam and Indirect Rule in Northern Nigeria," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 34.3 (2001): 601–18; Thomas Spear, "Neo-Traditionalism and the Limits of Invention in British Colonial Africa," *Journal of African History* 44.1 (2003): 3–27; Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*.

71 Spear, "Neo-Traditionalism"; Kristin Mann and Richard Roberts, "Law in Colonial Africa," in *Law in Colonial Africa*, ed. Kristin Mann and Richard Roberts (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1991), 3–60.

72 *Hijra* refers to the Islamic jurisprudential distinction between *dar al-Islam* ("Islamic land," implying a place under Muslim rule, but often extended to places where Islam can be freely practiced) and *dar al-harb* ("land of war"). According to dominant legal opinion it was incumbent upon Muslims to migrate from the latter to the former if they were physically capable of doing so. See Murray Last, "The 'Colonial Caliphate' of Northern Nigeria," in *Le temps des marabouts: itinéraires et stratégies islamiques en Afrique Occidentale française, 1880–1960*, ed. David Robinson and Jean-Louis Triaud (Paris: Karthala, 1997), 67–82, here 67–69.

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Sokoto leaders had "institutional authority" as a sub-imperial Native Administration, staffed the government of the region with Muslims, and even presided over areas that had not previously been integrated by the conquest of the nineteenth-century Caliphate.[73] Last describes the integration of urban centers and most rural areas under expanding civil bureaucratic, judicial, and police systems, and the rise of networks of state-sponsored Sufi orders supervised by a core of emirs.[74] Northern Nigeria emirates' sovereign powers operated under severe colonial constraints. Rulers nevertheless developed a stable core of institutions that would have been impossible were the area under direct colonial administration.

Northern Nigerian emirs, as Shobana Shankar argues, have frequently been seen as "quintessential traditionalists and therefore idealized indirect rulers" in a conservative colonial system, but could also be agents of conceptions of modernity.[75] Through Christian leprosy missions in Northern Nigeria, "Emirs translated Islamic ideals of charity into governmental responsibility for medical welfare, demonstrating their modernizing impulse in matters of social progress."[76] After 1933, when missionaries were allowed access to the region, colonial medicine worked by "delimiting spaces of authority" which emirates used to control "new institutions and non-Muslim peoples."[77] Mahmood Mamdani has argued that the autonomous Native Administrations in British Africa were 'decentralized despots' within a carefully designed bifurcated imperial architecture.[78] Notwithstanding the subordination of African rulers within the imperial structure, they also carried out projects that belied the autocratic roles in which Mamdani argues that they were cast. Indeed, as Shankar shows, Northern Nigerian emirs' development of medical services promoted loyalty and interest among the population.

To keep the political structure of sub-imperial sovereignty under British oversight in place, colonial administrators were obliged to exhibit "a certain degree of respect for and deference to this [Sokoto's] particular state-centered form of Islam."[79] Nevertheless, established colonial anxieties about the threat of oppositional Islamist political visions motivated extensive British intervention into Sokoto. Colonial authorities distributed propaganda impugning the Ottomans during World War I, and removed uncooperative emirs to empower leaders they saw as more compliant.[80]

[73] Ibid., 74, 69. [74] Ibid., 73, 77.

[75] Shobana Shankar, "Medical Missionaries and Modernizing Emirs in Colonial Hausaland: Leprosy Control and Native Authority in the 1930s," *Journal of African History* 48 (2007): 45–68, here 47.

[76] Ibid., 47. [77] Ibid., 53, 57. [78] Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*.

[79] Reynolds, "Good and Bad Muslims," 601. [80] Ibid., 605–6.

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Fears of Muslim sedition in Sokoto were often expressed with respect to Sufi orders with connections to other places. The Tijaniyya – an order so prominent in Northern Nigeria that some emirs were initiates – had networks running through French African colonies, and were thought to have links to German spies, 'pan-Ottomanists,' and communists in the Arab world.[81] Emirs' popular legitimacy, based partly on their association with histories of regional Muslim authority, rendered them and the regions they controlled both integral units of and potential threats to colonial power in Northern Nigeria. Emirs' connections to broader Muslim networks rankled British authorities in Northern Nigeria throughout the colonial era there.

In everyday governance sub-imperial authorities enjoyed considerable autonomy. The modicum of sovereignty Northern Nigerian emirs held allowed them scope for political experimentation, such as advancing ideologies of Islamist political authority, or reconstructing the physical space, infrastructure, and bureaucratic architecture of the region.

Beneath and between states: improvising sovereignty

On the lowest level of political sovereignty, below uncolonized states and sub-imperial polities, were anomalous border and frontier zones that were loosely integrated into imperial and state structures. In many contexts such spaces were productive locations for political improvisation by which bandits could expand networks of allegiance into small states. In the early modern world there was direct continuity between small-scale power based on raiding and the state-building process.[82] By the end of the nineteenth century entrepreneurial state-making on this scale was largely impossible. Political improvisation on the margins of stable state forms was not entirely extinct, though. This was exemplified in a number of locations on the fringes of imperial forms: 'statelets' that periodically emerged in the politically unintegrated zones of highland Southeast Asia; 1870s Baluchistan where authorities in Kalat claimed autonomy and eventually emerged as a sovereign sub-imperial state by playing off conflicts between Qajar Iran and British India.[83] In other places wedged

[81] Ibid., 616.

[82] See, *inter alia*, Gordon, *Marathas, Marauders*, on South Asia, and Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats*, on the rise of the Ottomans. On Europe see Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime," in *Bringing the State Back In*, ed. Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (Cambridge University Press, 1985), 169–91.

[83] Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*; Arash Khazeni, "On the Eastern Borderlands of Iran: The Baluch in Nineteenth-Century Persian Travel Books," *History Compass* 5.4 (2007): 1399–1411.

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between dominant imperial states, such as British Malaya and the Dutch East Indies, negotiation and improvisation were prevalent.[84] The interstate jurisdictional complexity – legal powers and forums with overlapping or ambiguous domains of authority – produced by frontiers offered opportunities for those who wished to evade state regulations.[85]

In combination with political and juridical frontiers, physical geography played a considerable role in endowing unevenness and mutability to imperial and national sovereignty. As the cases above suggest, unstable frontier zones – while often elements of 'lumpy' sovereignty within empires – could at times be launching points for competing assertions of legal authority and territorial control.[86] In this regard, formal state sovereignty – even if subordinate to dominant imperial formations – mattered, and was a key precondition for political experimentation. Border and frontier zones, defined by geography or ambiguous jurisdiction (two factors often coinciding and synergistic), undermined the integrity of imperial formations and held out the possibility of political organization at a smaller scale, and the slim chance of improvisation of sovereign stateness.

Despite a shrinking scope for political entrepreneurship, frontier zones during the high colonial period (and into the present) provided spaces of refuge for dissidents against dominant imperial structures or populations whose livelihoods were rendered archaic or criminalized in stable consolidating states. This was not exactly political sovereignty, and hardly a workable route to state power by the dawn of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, political and geographical frontiers continued to unsettle the hold of state sovereignty over territory.

Ottoman Caliphs, Muslim connections, and colonial anxieties

The world of states described above was linked together by complex and varied networks that provided a flexible conceptual architecture for colonial subjects and polities below the imperial level to navigate. Shared investment in anti-colonial nationalist ideas linked political thinkers

[84] Eric Tagliacozzo, *Secret Trades, Porous Borders: Smuggling and States along a Southeast Asian Frontier, 1865–1915* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

[85] On jurisdictional complexity see Benton, *Law and Colonial Cultures*, and Chapter 6 below.

[86] On geography in the making of 'lumpy' sovereignty see Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty*. On environmental friction as a precondition for the elaboration of "non-state spaces" see Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*.

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across imperial space, and especially within formations such as the British Empire. Broadly cast regional solidarities such as Pan-Africanism and Pan-Asianism cut across terrains governed by a variety of colonial and non-colonial state forms. While such ties could provide a foundation for exchanging political strategies and ideas of world order, they did so with little consistency across space or historically grounded emotive appeal. Notions of global Muslim community, however, were frequently invoked by those advancing claims of political solidarity across the imperial world, and resonated with historical memory and, in some places, continuing practice of Muslim rule. As such, Muslim internationalism provided a flexible counter-colonial, and at times anti-colonial, political language that served as a conceptual resource for many of the smaller states below the imperial level.[87]

Ideas of global Muslim political cohesion were crucial in sourcing content for ideological and institutional experiments underway in many minor states that were obliged to accommodate themselves to imperial dominance. Ottoman Sultans actively promoted the institution of the Caliphate, or political leadership of the global Muslim community, as the core locus of Muslim internationalism. The fact that the Ottomans were also extremely active in institutional modernization projects from the mid-nineteenth century onward fixed Istanbul as a key focal point for both ideological and institutional guidance in Muslim-ruled states from West Africa to Southeast Asia. Situating Muslim internationalist politics across the world of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries entails some consideration of the particularities of the late Ottoman world.

By the nineteenth century the Ottomans' state or parts of their empire fell into all of the categories enumerated in the above classification of modes of sovereignty. The Ottoman Empire remained composed of territories incorporated over the course of several centuries of imperial expansion. By this time, however, their power was on the wane and the Ottoman state was under extreme pressure from European powers. Many territories were formally autonomous and exercised different degrees of sovereign power under the imperial umbrella of Ottoman rule. Of these, several, such as Egypt, Algeria, and Tunisia, were subject to different

[87] I use Muslim internationalism rather than Pan-Islam/ism to underscore that these ideas represented contingent, often improvised, political claims – often without scripturally mediated content – rather than a coherent, unified movement. It is crucial to understand these projects during the colonial period in terms of their own specificity rather than echoing colonial discourses that hinged on anxieties about an imagined 'Muslim threat' to imperial power. See Chapter 4 below.

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degrees of de facto or official European colonial control.[88] Ottoman domains also included numerous loosely governed frontier zones where sovereignty could be effectively improvised, such as Iraq, Kurdistan, Yemen, parts of the Balkans, and the border with Qajar Iran.[89] The political complexity of their far-flung domains combined with European pressure to compel a series of state projects to shore up imperial power internally and on the global stage. As such, while a key player in the geography of world power, the Ottomans were in thrall to many of the dynamics acting upon the minor states considered above.[90]

Retaining power well into the age of European empire, the Ottomans were in a position to lay claim to political leadership of the global Muslim community. Since the sixteenth century Ottoman Sultans had made reference to their status as Caliphs of the Muslim world. This claim was based on their assumption of titles previously held by the Egyptian Mamluks and Ottoman political authority over Egypt, Syria, and the Muslim holy sanctuaries in the Hijaz.[91] During the reign of Abdülhamid II (r. 1876–1909) the Ottomans began to systematically deploy propaganda to publicize their status as leaders of the Muslim world for international political purposes. That this occurred after the modernizing Tanzimat reforms of the mid-nineteenth century has often been taken to indicate a dichotomy between Islamism and modernization.[92] On the contrary,

[88] For an examination of contestations between the British imperial establishment, the Ottoman-appointed Khedive (viceroy or governor) of the province, and established Arab elites in late nineteenth century Egypt see AbdelAziz EzzelArab, "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): 561–89. EzzelArab briefly draws a comparison between the power struggle in Egypt and that in mid-nineteenth-century Hyderabad. See also Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* and Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men*, on Egypt. On Tunisia see L. Carl Brown, *The Tunisia of Ahmad Bey, 1837–1855* (Princeton University Press, 1974).

[89] See Thomas Kühn, "An Imperial Borderland as Colony: Knowledge Production and the Elaboration of Difference in Ottoman Yemen, 1872–1918," and Isa Blumi, "Beyond the Margins of the Empire: Searching the Limitations of Ottoman Rule in Yemen and Albania," both in *MIT Electronic Journal of Middle East Studies* 3 (2003): 5–17 and 18–26 respectively. For Qajar–Ottoman conflicts see Selim Deringil, "The Struggle against Shiism in Hamidian Iraq: A Study in Ottoman Counter-Propaganda," *Die Welt des Islams* 30.1/4 (1990): 45–62.

[90] Deringil, *Well-Protected Domains*, and Selim Deringil, *The Ottomans, the Turks and World Power Politics: Collected Essays* (Istanbul: Isis, 2000); Cem Emrence, "Imperial Paths, Big Comparisons: The Late Ottoman Empire," *Journal of Global History* 3.3 (2008): 289–311; EzzelArab, "Experiment."

[91] Ş. Tufan Buzpinar, "Opposition to the Ottoman Caliphate in the Early Years of Abdülhamid II: 1877–1882," *Die Welt des Islams* 36.1 (1996): 59–89, here 63.

[92] The relative power of the later Ottomans in various spheres and the timeline of the decline of the empire is a subject of considerable historical debate. See, *inter alia*, Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire: 1700–1922*, 2nd edn. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), ch. 4; Kahraman Şakul, "Eastern Question," in *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman*

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as recent scholarship has argued, the Hamidian period saw a strengthening of reforms in various institutions and regions simultaneous with increased emphasis on the Muslim character of the state.[93] The Sultans' status as Caliphs of the global Muslim community *and* heads of a powerful modernizing state ostensibly on equal footing with European powers established the Ottomans as a key ally and exemplary model for Muslim political thinkers elsewhere.

The Ottoman propaganda regime was successful in stimulating a global Muslim public sphere that cut across colonized and independent states in Asia, Africa, and Europe. Their ability to mobilize this public, however, was limited. William Ochsenwald has argued that the sole successful Ottoman 'Pan-Islamic' project was their initiative to attract monetary support for railroad construction between Damascus and Mecca, Medina, and Jidda in their Hijaz province between 1900 and 1908.[94] The symbolic import of the Caliphate had greater purchase than its potential for advancing specific projects conceived in Istanbul. Widespread support in South Asia and elsewhere at crucial points in late Ottoman history such as the Crimean War and the post-World War I imperial crisis are well known, and underscore Ottoman status in global Muslim political imagination.[95]

Ottoman-centered Muslim internationalism was not only an important referent among Muslims, but was also a core anxiety that fired imperial security concerns. From 1857 onward the British imperial intelligence

Empire, ed. Gábor Ágoston and Bruce Masters (New York: Facts on File, 2009), 191–92. On cultural efflorescence in the Ottoman eighteenth century see Dana Sajdi, "Decline, its Discontents and Ottoman Cultural History: By Way of Introduction," in *Ottoman Tulips, Ottoman Coffee: Leisure and Lifestyle in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Dana Sajdi (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 1–39.

93 On public welfare and the modernization of policing during the Hamidian period see the work of Nadir Özbek: "'Beggars' and 'Vagrants' in Ottoman State Policy and Public Discourse, 1876–1914," *Middle Eastern Studies* 45.5 (2009): 783–801; "The Politics of Poor Relief in the Late Ottoman Empire," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 21 (1999): 1–33; and "Policing the Countryside: Gendarmes of the Late 19th-Century Ottoman Empire (1876–1908)," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 40.1 (2008): 47–67. On Abdülhamid's reign and continuities with the Tanzimat era see Benjamin C. Fortna, "The Reign of Abdülhamid II," in *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, vol. IV: *Turkey in the Modern World*, ed. R. Kasaba (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 38–61, esp. 40. On Ottoman municipal reforms in relation to local pressures and global models see Nora Lafi, "Mediterranean Connections: The Circulation of Municipal Knowledge and Practices at the Time of the Ottoman Reforms, c. 1830–1910," in *Another Global City: Historical Explorations into the Transnational Municipal Moment, 1850–2000*, ed. Pierre-Yves Saunier and Shane Ewen (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 135–50.

94 William L. Ochsenwald, "The Financing of the Hijaz Railroad," *Die Welt des Islams* 14.1/4 (1973): 129–49.

95 See Chapter 4 below on the Ottomans in relation to Hyderabadi Muslim internationalism.

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apparatus keyed in on 'Pan-Islamism' by enacting a largely clandestine policy of containment and increased surveillance of Muslims on the move between colonial territories and the Ottoman world, among other places. Colonial anxieties centered in particular on Hajj pilgrim traffic from British India to the Ottoman-ruled Hijaz, which was regarded as a key circuit for the potential exchange of anti-colonial propaganda, and the fabrication of concrete schemes.[96] Colonial intelligence officials alternately exaggerated or downplayed the coherence and threat of global Muslim sentiment as a competitor to European imperialism throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[97]

While the colonial perception of Muslim internationalism as an ideology of resistance was unstable, the enduring anxiety on the topic compelled the British to cultivate Muslim allies whenever possible. As such, imperial officials worked to maintain harmonious relations with Muslim subjects (in British India, the Dutch East Indies, and elsewhere) and sovereign Muslim-ruled states that were either formally autonomous (Qajar Iran, the Ottomans) or ambivalently tied into the web of empire (Hyderabad and other Muslim-ruled South Asian 'princely' states, Malay states, Northern Nigerian emirates, Gulf states, Egypt, Sudan). Colonial concerns peaked during the late Hamidan era, World War I, and the early Bolshevik period, when numerous schemes of collaboration between Ottomans, Germans, communists, and Muslim political activists in North and West Africa and South, Central, and Southeast Asia were the subject of close surveillance.[98] Even after the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924, maneuvers to reinstate caliphal authority elsewhere, sometimes via Ottoman connections, continued to occupy Muslim political activists and concern colonial observers.[99]

The Ottomans played a crucial role in infusing longstanding ties between Muslims in different places with renewed political meaning in an era of European imperial dominance. The worldwide Muslim solidarity around the Caliphate that Ottoman officials sought to stimulate though propaganda was of limited effectiveness for the purposes of resuscitating "the sick man of Europe." The Ottomans and their advocates in other locations did, however, establish Istanbul as a key node within an

[96] Michael C. Low, "Empire and the Hajj: Pilgrims, Plagues, and Pan-Islam under British Surveillance, 1865–1908," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 40.2 (2008): 269–90.

[97] John Ferris, "'The Internationalism of Islam': The British Perception of a Muslim Menace, 1840–1945," *Intelligence and National Security* 24.1 (2009): 57–77.

[98] Ibid.; Reynolds, "Good and Bad Muslims."

[99] See Chapter 4 below on Asaf Jah–Ottoman marriage ties and their political valences.

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emergent Muslim public sphere composed of participants with diverse political aspirations. This network incorporated and accentuated existing loyalties, and expanded through colonial territories of almost every European empire, and into autonomous states in search of a global political community within which to contemplate political and institutional possibilities.

Muslim internationalism during the colonial period cannot be easily defined, nor can it be reduced to mere political advocacy of the Ottomans. For minor Muslim sovereigns such as the Asaf Jahs, however, the Muslim public sphere of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries provided several useful things: strategies for state legitimization, exemplary models of development, routes for intellectual exchange, and intimations of a global political geography not defined by European colonialism. These were key resources through which subordinated states in a world of fragmented sovereignty could negotiate their status and relationships. The international or trans-imperial dynamic of engagement is crucial for considerations here, since a persistent tendency to consider South Asian sub-imperial states merely in relation to British India has constrained much scholarship on the topic.[100] Muslim internationalist connections provided a key framework for reconceptualizing global political geography, and it was a crucial component of Hyderabad's claims to sovereignty. The role the state's Muslimness played in political thought there was in part framed by the particular configuration of religious community and politics of colonial South Asia.

Muslimness as reason of state and sub-imperial sovereignty

Hyderabad's status as a Muslim state seeking to obtain membership in the international family of nations made Hyderabad a key node in networks of Muslim modernist intellectuals and activists. The global dimension of political thought in South Asia is a topic that has only rarely been taken up with respect to sub-imperial states, and Hyderabad underscores the importance of considering the international relevance of these polities.[101]

[100] See Chapter 3 on colonial and contemporary historiographies of South Asian sub-imperial states.

[101] The absence of scholarly work on transnational connections in sub-imperial states is indicated by the fact that the comprehensive survey of scholarship on 'princely states' only treats officials from British India when discussing 'foreign' employees: Ramusack, *Indian Princes*, 182–86. On the international dimension of the educational development in South Asian sub-imperial states see Datla, *The Language of Secular Islam* and Manu

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As Ayesha Jalal has argued in work on Muslims in colonial South Asia, "religiously informed cultural difference" served as the key site of political engagement for Muslims.[102] The colonial state marked Muslims as a permanent minority, and in response Muslim political thinkers wielded religious difference to negotiate their status vis-à-vis the Raj and other communities. Because the colonial state parceled out concessions on the basis of social categories such as religion, Muslim status was politicized. Islam or Muslimness in the public sphere, then, had little to do with religion as faith, and served rather as a position from which to voice political demands. Muslimness became useful political currency in colonial South Asia, and functioned to back up demands for concessions in negotiations over the management of the colony or the configuration of the nation-state.

In Hyderabad, Muslimness served to secure the Nizam's position of autonomy and privilege certain networks of international intellectual collaboration that animated politics in the state. The Muslim character of the dynasty became a reason of state to justify Hyderabadi sovereignty and political modernization to colonial interlocutors and international observers. Further, other Muslim states such as the Ottoman Empire, Iran, and Egypt provided a community of fellow states in dialogue with which Hyderabad could define itself. As the ideological contours of the modern sub-imperial state were sketched out, Muslimness – if not Islam – was a key component that assured its place and linked it to other entities in the world of states.

Envisioning modern sovereignty

Comparisons between 'minor' sovereign polities such as those presented above reveal related processes as well as long-distance intellectual and institutional connections between states and people. They provide a sense of political possibilities during the era of colonialism in which power was fragmented between multiple actors. Scanning the world's political geography during this period also shows that the fragmented character of political sovereignty within imperial spaces facilitated intellectual and institutional connections between minor states. Different vantage points

Bhagavan, *Sovereign Spheres: Princes, Education and Empire in Colonial India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003).

[102] This paragraph summarizes some key arguments made in Ayesha Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty: Individual and Community in South Asian Islam since 1850* (London: Routledge, 2000), 100, *inter alia.*

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316118665.003 Published online by Cambridge University Press

within the global scene produced varied foundations for affinity and solidarities.[103]

From imperial state perspectives, the multiple modes of sovereign power in the colonial era at times not only appeared to be impediments to colonial consolidation but, more often, were cast as part of a global repertoire of imperial strategy. As Thomas Metcalf has demonstrated for the British Empire, and Mamdani has argued for colonizing powers in Africa, there was extensive exchange between administrators around indirect rule as a technique of imperial expansion.[104] In many of the instances considered above – uncolonized states subject to imperial pressure, sub-imperial polities in treaties with colonizing powers – minor states reinforced broader imperial dominance. As such, colonial empires used affirmation of sovereign powers by non-colonial political actors as a strategy for extending imperial economic networks and political spheres of influence. Moreover, imperial terrains integrating native sovereigns were less costly to administer, and insulated European officials from ethical critiques of empire in metropole and colony. As such, indirect rule, from the colonial perspective, could be a key modular strategy applicable and customizable in different local and regional contexts.

From the perspective of minor states within an imperialized world, formal political sovereignty enabled prestige, international status, and wealth. Crucially, non-colonial minor sovereignty also produced the impetus and capacity to develop state structures distinct from those in directly colonized places. This is the moment where the political history of fragmented sovereignty sketched here provides critical elucidation for the intellectual and institutional history. Minor states' political experimentation entailed engagement with local and regional concepts of legitimacy and state obligation, European ideas and examples of political development, and also, significantly, with other non-Western repertoires of modern state practice. Experimentation on the part of states, statelets, and other political actors amidst empires availed of and fostered the expansion of emerging counter-colonial – and at times anti-colonial – geographies of power. As Cemil Aydin has demonstrated, putatively anti-Western political visions such as Japanese Pan-Asianism and Ottoman 'Pan-Islam' emerged in the context of global European imperialism. These movements, while informed by the same "global constellation of

[103] This account of perspectives borrows some ideas and structural elements from that in the section entitled "The effect of indirect rule on the principles" in Fisher, *Indirect Rule*, 7–18.

[104] Metcalf, *Imperial Connections*; Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, 86–87.

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ideas" in which European empires were situated, articulated competing visions of international politics.[105] It is no mistake that many key minor sovereigns and their administrative elites looked to these counter-colonial configurations for exemplary political ideas and institutional practices, and to advance their own agendas.

From the perspective of subject populations and potential administrators amidst these varied empires and states, levels of sovereignty below the imperial were significant since they provided opportunities for mobility of many kinds. Administrators and intellectuals – European, Asian, African – unable to find lucrative employment or moral peace in the context of racialized colonial domination, or seeking international experience, obtained postings or patronage in non-colonial places. Al-Afghani and Geddes, mentioned earlier in this chapter, provide examples. Minor states often employed intellectuals trained in languages or administrative methods phased out by colonial policies. Activists, such as al-Afghani and Chapekar, disseminating political ideas not permitted or supported under colonial regimes, could organize or seek shelter in places insulated from colonial surveillance by jurisdiction and sheer distance. Such figures were sometimes linked to state projects, or found social support to assist them in advancing agendas and avoiding incarceration. Peasants or groups whose livelihoods were under threat from colonial policies could flee across borders into non-colonial terrain, or play off the jurisdictional complexity of abutting states to continue their work.

The vantages considered above suggest a political geography of the era of high imperialism radically different from that which frames most current scholarship. Conventional chronologies of modern empire – in South Asia and globally – hold that, by the second half of the nineteenth century, older multiple and malleable configurations of sovereignty were thoroughly contained by a stable, overarching, and unitary colonial authority. Global empires, such as the British, were supple formations that integrated widely dispersed domains within a symbolic and institutional imperial framework. Scholars have articulately and extensively debated the conceptual and political 'shape' of empire.[106] However, as this work shows, other enduring and indelible sinews of solidarities and political imaginaries – such as Muslim internationalism and institutional and technocratic modernity – tied the nineteenth- and twentieth-century world

[105] Aydin, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism*, 14.
[106] On the British Empire see Metcalf, *Imperial Connections*; Tony Ballantyne, "Rereading the Archive and Opening up the Nation-State: Colonial Knowledge in South Asia (and Beyond)," in *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking with and through the Nation*, ed. Antoinette Burton (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 102–21.

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together and helped officials and intellectuals conceive political experiments. The conjuncture of global imperial pressure, new technologies for state development, and potential for participating in and articulating the terms of an emergent international order created a place in the world for minor states such as Hyderabad.

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