Punjabi Domination and the Biopolitics of the Census and Statistics in Pakistan

by

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Abstract

Through this essay, I investigate the widely levelled accusations from non-Punjabi areas that the census is used as a technology of power to further the Punjab's dominance over the rest of Pakistan. I argue that the dominance of Punjab is systematically rooted in development during colonial rule, which continued to the post-partition, as well as post-1971 Pakistan. I show that the census is in fact being used as a technology of power, but not through a systematic undercounting of non-Punjabi regions by a unified *Punjab*, but as a platform that is a link in the chain of making Pakistan a society of control through the use of biopolitics in the hands of a Punjab-dominated state. The Punjabi interests are not as monolithic as postulated by detractors and this creation of a fantastical monolithic Punjab through demagoguery and Punjab-bashing statements in minority regions have hindered a full understanding of the devastation that the biopolitical activities of the sort carried out can have on a nation-state that is as ethnically divided as Pakistan. The findings of this essay are based on seven interviews from people involved in the census all over Punjab but based in Lahore, along with document analysis, analysis of news reports in print and on television, and theoretical research primarily based on the works of Foucault, Deleuze, Appadurai, Rabinow and Rose, and Agamben.

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

In the latter half of the work day on 25th August, 2017, provisional results of the census of 2017 were announced by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, almost three months after the on-field data gathering activities had been wrapped up. Seemingly mere minutes, if not seconds after the announcement, some snippets of the results were broadcast nationwide on all TV channels in the form of sensationalised breaking news. Not much afterwards, accusations of doctoring the results were levied against the *Big Brother* Punjab to extend its own domination over the rest of Pakistan. It stayed as the 'burning issue,' in the words of one of my interviewees, for months.

What made the census so news worthy was the fact that it could be placed perfectly on the larger debate of the Punjabi hegemony since the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, because of what was at stake with the census. The first of this is that, according to Clause 5 of Article 51 of the Constitution of Pakistan, the National Assembly[1] seats for all provinces, FATA and the Federal Capital Territory[2] are dependent on the respective populations according to the latest published census data[3]. Another equally vital, if not more, aspect of the census is

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[1] The country has three tiers of government: central/federal, provincial and local. The central government, based on the 1973 Constitution, consists of a bicameral elected parliament comprising two houses known as the Senate and the National Assembly. The president is indirectly elected by an electoral college made up of the Senate, the National Assembly and Pakistan's four provincial assemblies. The members of the Senate are either indirectly elected by the provincial assemblies or directly elected from two of the territories. The 272 seats in the National Assembly, are allocated to provinces based on their population size as per the last official census. The prime minister is usually the leader of the largest party in the National Assembly.

[2] Pakistan is a federal republic that currently comprises four provinces i.e. Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, and *Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP);* two federal territories i.e. Islamabad Capital Territory and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA); and two autonomous territories i.e., and Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. The provincial capitals of the four provinces are Lahore, Karachi, Quetta, and Peshawar respectively. Both Karachi and Lahore are megacities, and the former is Pakistan's biggest city, and the financial and immigration hub of all of Pakistan.

[3] Due to the very short time span between the data collecting activities and the looming elections, the parliament had passed the 24th amendment to the Constitution so that the election authorities could carry out delimitations for the election on the basis of provisional results of 2017 census, and not on the final results as is mandated by the Constitution. It is also anticipated that final results would be notified before the general elections (Ghauri; "24th Amendment 2017.")

that the distribution of national revenue for different regions of Pakistan heavily relies on the population count. Article-160(2) outlines the formation of the National Finance Commission (NFC) which also uses census figures. According to the most recent NFC award formula, population is the single largest factor in distributing federally collected taxes among the provinces, i.e., it has 82 per cent weightage[4] (Khan). Thirdly, the provincial quota in the civil services, as well as in government colleges and jobs also depends on the population count. The more a province or region was able to show its population, the more political representation, financial reserves, and bureaucratic and educational opportunities would be allotted to it.

From the results that poured out in August, a perception was created, amongst a backdrop of long history of regional, provincial and ethnic grievances that the census was being used yet again to maintain and/or perpetuate the Punjab's economic, military and administrative and demographic dominance, in Foucault's conception of the term[5], over the rest of the country. Following is an excerpt from Herald magazine, published in February 20th, 2018:

> Pakistan is in a league of its own as far as controversies over census are concerned, says Karim[6]. The issue concerning the census in the country is neither ethnicity nor religion – two factors that are extremely important in many other countries, he says – but "in Pakistan [a census has] more to do with the domination of one province over others" (Khan).

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[4] The remaining share is based on development needs or poverty (10.3 per cent), contribution in collection of federal revenues (five per cent), and the inverse population density or vast thinly-populated area (2.7 per cent) (Khan).

[5] Lemke (2002), notes that for Foucault, 'domination is a particular type of power relationship that is both stable and hierarchical, fixed and difficult to reverse' (p.53). He writes that Foucault reserves the term for "what we ordinarily call power" (1988, 19). These are those asymmetrical relationships of power where the subordinated persons do not have much manoeuvrability because their "margin of liberty is extremely limited" (12). Nonetheless, Lemke writes that the states of domination are neither the primary source for holding power nor exploiting asymmetries. Quite contrarily, these are 'the effects of technologies of government. Technologies of government account for the systematization, stabilization and regulation of power relationships that may lead to a state of domination' (p. 53)

[6] Dr Mehtab Karim is the vice chancellor and executive director of the Centre for Studies in Population & Health at Malir University of Science and Technology, Karachi

Through this essay, I investigate the widely levelled accusations from non-Punjabi areas that the census is used as a technology of power to further the Punjab's dominance over the rest of Pakistan. I argue that the dominance of Punjab is systematically rooted in development during colonial rule, which continued to the post-partition, as well as post-1971 Pakistan. I show that the census is in fact being used as a technology of power, but not through a systematic undercounting of non-Punjabi regions by a unified *Punjab*, but a platform that is a link in the chain of making Pakistan a society of control through the use of biopolitics in the hands of a Punjab-dominated state. The Punjabi interests are not as monolithic as postulated by detractors and this creation of a fantastical monolithic Punjab through demagoguery and Punjab-bashing statements in minority regions has hindered a full understanding of the devastation that the biopolitical activities of the sort carried out can have on a nation state that is as ethnically divided as Pakistan.

This research is relevant, first, because it illustrates the nuances within larger debate on Punjabi hegemony over the rest of Pakistan, parallels of which are not found in India. Second, this research is also pertinent because research on the census as a technique of power and its ramifications on society at large, specifically on Pakistan, is largely absent from research done on the census in the Indian sub-continent. Research done on this subject has mostly been limited to the impact of statistical tools on communitarian, caste-base and national politics and identity in India (*see* Appadurai; Cohn; Kothari 1989a; Kothari, 1989b). Research on the census in Pakistan has mostly been limited to analysis of demographic statistics from an economic policy standpoint (*see* Afzal; Rele; Ahmad; Krotki; Sadiq).

I start off with my methodologies and limitations sections, then I try to deconstruct the notion of a united Punjabi interest, yet outline how the state still is Punjab-dominated. I then demonstrate how doctoring of statistics has not been done in the latest census after which I then move on to the theoretical section, where I discuss the concept of bio power and trace its current

use back to the colonial era. I finish off the essay with a discussion of the dark side of biopolitics, by comparing the activities undertaken during this census practice to the ones undertaken by Nazi Germany in the 1930s.

CHAPTER 2: Methodology

This research has been conducted through both primary and secondary research. My primary research involved document analysis, interviews, analysis of news reports in print and on television, as well as some theoretical research. The document analysis was on the most recent census and included items such as the population and housing census forms as well as instruction manuals for enumerators and their supervisors produced by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) - the official body responsible for the collection and publication of national and regional statistical data from and within Pakistan; presentations prepared by Local Government & Community Development, Punjab; the Constitution of Pakistan; federal and provincial court rulings; government orders; press releases; TV programs, commercials, and news reports for the census of 2017, and the results of the census itself. Items published on official websites of various government departments including the PBS, National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) were also taken into account, including their respective historical sections.

Much of my analysis on the census of 2017 was based on interviews. In total, I had seven in-depth qualitative interviews, and two group interviews. More specifically, I interviewed Mr. Najeeb Aslam, Provincial Focal Coordinator, Local Government & Community Development. Mr. Aslam referred me to Mr. Uzair Ahmed Cheema, Assistant Census Commissioner for Lahore from PBS Lahore whom I interviewed on two occasions. On one occasion, we were later joined by Mian Zahoor Ahmed, Assistant Census Commissioner for Faisalabad from PBS Lahore, and Chaudhary Nazir, Assistant Census Commissioner Sargodha also from PBS Lahore for a group interview. I also interviewed the former twice and the latter once more separately. I also had a group interview with Mr. Nazir and Mr. Mohammad Shahid Iqbal, who was a primary school teacher of science and maths at Govt. High School Walton and had worked as an enumerator during the census. My last interview

was with Mr. Syed Tayyab Shaukat, who belonged from the health department and normally worked as a school health nutrition supervisor, but was hired as a charge superintendent, two posts above the enumerator (the circle supervisor comes above the enumerator and below the charge superintendent).

Generally, department-wise, one interview was from the department of Local Government & Community Development, Punjab, while five interviews and one focus group were from the Punjab provincial office in Lahore of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. One focus group was between a member of the PBS and an enumerator from the education department, working on contract, and one interview was from a member of the health department, also working on contract. All of these interviews were conducted in Lahore, the capital of Punjab, where the provincial office of PBS is based.

I was not able to gain direct access to NADRA and all research on the department in this paper is based on either information that was available online, including information on its official website and a detailed report authored by its former chairman. I also relied on the information that I received from my respondents in the PBS on its association with NADRA.

I used accusations made on TV channels and newspaper reports, and the rest of my primary research already elaborated above to address these accusations made. This entire fieldwork lasted about two and a half months.

My research on the theoretical part of the article is based on both primary and secondary research on Foucault's idea of biopolitics and Deleuze's idea of societies of control. The primary research is based on the chapter, *The Right of Death and Power over Life* in *The History of Sexuality* by Foucault, and the article, *Postscript on the Societies of Control* by Deleuze. The secondary research is based on the analysis of biopower offered by Rose and

Rabinow; Agamben; and Lawlor and Nale. Other scholars that I have relied heavily for my theoretical framework are Appadurai; Busse; and Rabinow.

Counterintuitively, though the project is on the census, the analysis on it is a primarily qualitative one.

CHAPTER 3: Limitations

This research was both spatially and temporally bound. Spatially, my interviews were restricted to the provincial capital of Punjab, due to the time it took to get the first lead into the government offices. I could not travel to the federal headquarters of PBS in Islamabad or to the provincial headquarter in Karachi. However, my interviewees had worked in other areas of not only Punjab, but also Pakistan which made the pool slightly more representative.

Nonetheless, I did not talk to any of the detractors of the census, only with those people who were responsible for conducting it, from the lowest to the middle level. These people worked in an area that was generally happy with the data gathering activities, and these were places where there was no history of the use of biopolitics for army operations. I had to rely on newspapers, TV reports and journal articles for the criticism placed on the state's data gathering activities.

The census is a very sensitive subject and the permanent employees, as well as those hired on contract by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics were given strict instructions to keep certain things highly confidential such as the filled registers, etc. and the results generated. This made them have a lot of reservations before they would agree to talk to me. Getting in touch with my first interviewee took about two months, at first, I would run in circles from one department to the next, and from one person to his boss, and his boss, and so on in order to secure permission to conduct research at their department; and second, because people in the Local Government and Community Development were constantly transferred from one department to another, and from one position to the next, from one city to another. Getting in touch with these people proved to be quite complicated and time consuming. Even after gaining interviews, they would remind me of how they had made a special consideration to me. After getting my first interview, I did not face many hindrances in getting referred to other relevant people.

There was also a lot of difficulty in getting in touch with enumerators, who primarily belong from the education and health departments. Schools, in the past decade, in Pakistan have been subject to violent terrorist attacks, and their security is very strict. Getting access inside the schools is very difficult for civilians who are not related to the school in any way. For this reason, I had to rely on PBS Lahore staff to refer me to an enumerator they trained. The teaching staff also have a lot of workload this time of year due to standardised Board exams, which may have been the reason for their reluctance, also.

Staff hired from the health department, in the form of enumerators, charge and circle supervisors was also difficult to get in touch with because, of their extreme workload, and due to the fact that they are often on strike against extreme workload, low salaries, and non-payment of salaries. In such a situation, getting quantitative research in the form of questionnaires from enumerators was neither feasible, nor possible, and I had to rely on qualitative interviews that I was able to obtain.

Document analysis of the PBS was reserved to the documents pertaining to this year's census because they were the only ones available in the PBS provincial office in Lahore. Another limitation was that the library of the PBS headquarter in Lahore was not very well equipped. While I was not able to obtain census forms or training manuals for the first five censuses, I was able to obtain the aforementioned documents for this particular exercise.

I did not have any access to army and NADRA personnel due to security, logistical, spatial and temporal reasons. I also was not able to extract exact information about the involvement of the army in the 1998 census from the PBS staff. All research done on the NADRA and its activities has been done through online research, and the relationship between the state and NADRA could not be investigated, even though the effects of this relationship could be studied.

Moreover, little information was available about how provincial and regional quotas for bureaucratic representation as well as representation in educational institutes would change based on the census results, which is the third factor that was at stake with the census other than the National Assembly seats and the financial resources.

This paper also limits its scope to the examination of the grievances of the three main provinces, namely, Sindh, KP, and Balochistan, and does not examine the grievances of other territories within Pakistan, i.e., FATA, Gilgit Baltistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

CHAPTER 4: The State - Punjabistan or Pakistan?

Yunus Samad, coined the phrase 'the Punjabizataion of Pakistan' in the 1990s to describe the region's post-1971 predominance when there were fears that a Dhaka-like situation of civil unrest that led to the creation of Bangladesh, would repeat itself in the troubled port-city of Karachi (Samad; Talbot). Talbot writes that the Punjab's importance in the economy cannot be gainsaid. It is rooted in the colonial pattern of economic development, as well as military recruitment and administration. Since the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, it has also maintained a demographic majority, with over half of the total population. Talbot notes that it is the home of the Pakistan army, which has wielded power directly for over three decades, and for the rest of its existence it has been subjected to indirect intervention. Even during democratic rule, Benazir Bhutto, whose political party hails from Sindh, during her premiership found to her cost that a national administration in Islamabad could be undermined by a hostile provincial government in Lahore. The situation is interesting because it does not have a parallel in India, which has had no interference from the military in the way Pakistan has, and has a much stronger system of federation (Talbot, 2002). The following section looks at the colonial legacy of the dominance of the Punjab over the rest of Pakistan, which explain the grievances against Punjab. I then try to show that the Pakistani state establishment consists of the army, the democracy, and the bureaucracy, all of which, for historic reasons, are Punjab dominated institutions, yet all of these institutions do not have monolithic interests. This discussion is important for our purposes to show that contrary popular opinion, these three institutions have not collaborated for a systematic doctoring of the national and provincial population count. Nonetheless, later in the essay I show that these Punjab-dominated state institutions are increasingly undertaking initiatives that is making Pakistan a society of control, of which the census is one instrument.

4.1 The Army

Talbot writes that Pakistan's 'military-ethnic equation' can be traced to the colonial legacy of recruitment from a handful of 'martial-caste' communities and regions of the Punjab. The concept of the 'martial races' was introduced by the British army officials in India in the recruitment of the colonial army following 1857 through using caste as a medium for perpetuating their divide and rule policy. Through this concept, the British would categorise different castes as 'martial,' i.e., brave and built for war, and 'non-martial', i.e., deemed unfit for war efforts owing to their sedentary lifestyles, and more suited for agricultural activities (Rand, 2006). It was argued that the traits that comprised a good soldier were inherited, and only some Indian groups possessed these traits (Greenhut, 1984). Only those belonging from the martial races could be recruited in the British Indian army. Punjabis and Pathans were deemed as martial races through this policy, whereas Bengalis and Sindhis were deemed as the non-martial races.

Richard Schultz claims that this concept was a clever ploy used by the British to divide and rule the natives, in an effort to further their own political agendas (Shultz, 2009). In reality, through this colonial army recruitment policy, the British tried to punish those castes who had joined the *Rebellion* and reward those which had remained loyal to them during the episode. Jeffrey Greenhut notes that "the martial race theory had an elegant symmetry. Indians who were intelligent and educated were defined as cowards, while those defined as brave were uneducated and backward." Using the crevices already present in the Indian society, and analysing the inequalities and fierce group loyalty within groups, through the implementation of this policy the British ensured that different groups weren't united against them by creating rivalries within.

Though this practice of recruitment in the army based on the martial castes was given up eventually in the wake of the creation of Bangladesh, Punjabis continue to have a predominant role in what Talbot calls the most important non-elected institution of the Pakistani State.

4.2 The Bureaucracy

Talbot further writes that the colonial inheritance of a Punjabi predominance in the bureaucracy is less well-known. This predominance is a result of a greater share in educational development than that of the other areas that would become part of Pakistan due to the policies promulgated by Mian Fazli-Husain of the Unionist Party who served as Education Minister during 1921-6. In order to improve the social standing of Muslims, he ensured that a quota of 40 per cent of the seats in Lahore's leading colleges. 'Punjabi Muslims thus entered the independence era with a strong position in both the army and the bureaucracy – the future of unelected centres of power in the Pakistan State.' (Talbot).

4.3 The Economy

Moreover, the irrigation projects initiated by the British in the late 1880s meant that Punjab was the breadbasket of Pakistan, just as it had been of British India. When the Green Revolution technology was launched in the 1960s, infrastructure was already present to take full advantage of it. Moreover, the influx of refugee capitalists at the time of partition, along with the state's encouragement of development in the region during the extensive martial law eras further led to the economic flourishing of Punjab (Talbot).

4.4 West and East Pakistan

There have been concerns and perception developed that the Punjab is repeating the trends of dominance that a Punjab-led West Pakistan bloc had over a demographically superior East Pakistan. These have manifested in separatists movements in Balochistan and Karachi[7], resulting in army crackdowns in these regions. With every major decision, or step that is undertaken in the country, it is perceived that it is made to further *Punjabize* Pakistan, of which the census was one. The following sections reveal examples reveal that will elaborate the dominance of West Pakistan had over East Pakistan.

Table 1 is a table originally published in Dawn News on 9th January, 1956 that Talbot uses to compare the representation of the Bengalis, who were in demographic majority in Pakistan, in the ranks of the military service. He writes that this institution, carrying on its colonial legacy, had perpetuated racial stereotypes which had tragic consequences in the army crackdown on civil unrest in East Pakistan in 1971 (Talbot, 2002). Though this table does not show the breakup of the appointees within West Pakistan, and the dominance of Punjabis within, this table shows the success of the martial race theory in the army recruitment policy, within which Punjabis had a good position:

	East Bengal	West Pakistan
Lt. Gen.	0	3
Maj. Gen.	0	20
Brig.	1	34
Col.	1	49
Lt. Col.	2	198
Maj.	10	590
Naval officers	7	593
Air Force officers	40	640

Table 1: Representation of military personnel hailing from Bengal and West Pakistan

In all the superior to middle positions in the army, Bengali representation is almost non-existent. Likewise, Talbot uses Table 2 to show the disparity between the two regions of the country in the central secretariat elite posts. The representation in bureaucracy is also similar to how it was in the army.

	East Bengal	West Pakistan
Secretary	0	19
Joint Secretary	3	38
Deputy Secretary	10	123
Under Secretary	38	510

Table 2: Representation of personnel in elite civil secretariat posts hailing from East Bengal and West Pakistan

4.4 What are Punjabi Interests?

Talbot rhetorically asks whether the Punjabi military, administrative, economic and demographic predominance add up to the *Punjabization* of the Pakistan State, iterating that, 'The answer must be a qualified yes.' He then raises another question which is answers himself,

which is despite 'the Punjabi-bashing sentiments of some minority province politicians, the issue arises, however, whether Punjabi interests are as monolithic as they are some-times portrayed?'. 'The Punjab, it is clear, is by no means monolithic. The perception in the minority provinces is, however, of a unified Punjabi political interest.' It was this assumed unified political interest that came under the debate on the census, that hindered a better understanding of the biopolitical power of the census.

The army is Pakistan's most important non-elected institution without a doubt, probably Pakistan's most important institution.[8] Since its independence Pakistan has been under direct military rule for more than three decades, and for the rest of its existence it has been subjected to indirect intervention. Ethnically, a significant portion of military personnel are Punjabis. To call it a Punjabi army, nonetheless would be erroneous. A survey of army chiefs of Pakistan since independence, especially those that ruled Pakistan directly, is telling. Out of four generals that ruled Pakistan directly, only one was Punjabi.

Similarly, in the past two decades, there has been a spectacular split between Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Pakistan's and Punjab's largest and the most popular party, and the military. Sharif, the supreme leader of PML-N and perhaps the most popular leader of Punjab ever since the introduction of electoral politics, was elected by Punjabis as their representative and Prime Minister thrice and each time he was either directly or indirectly

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[8] Soon after its separation from the British India, Pakistan found itself in a position where it was looking for seeking allies against its hostile neighbours, i.e., Afghanistan and much stronger India. In America, Pakistan found a perfect patron; the USA funded the Pakistani army and supported military dictators (Maj.-General Sikander Mirza, Field Marshal Ayub Khan, and General Zia-ul-Haq) for geopolitical considerations and the fact that India at the height of the Cold War was increasingly leaning towards the Soviet Union helped Pakistani security establishment position itself as a reliable client in the wider South Asia region. With the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and later with the American '*War on Terror,*' the army further spread its tentacles into Pakistani state and politics, much in contrast with India which has had no interference from her military in seventy years of her existence.

unceremoniously thrown out by the military before completion of his constitutionally mandated five-year long term of office[9].

When these Punjab-bashing statements come out of minority provinces, they postulate that the armed forces and the Punjab based democratic parties, as well as the bureaucracy have the same aims, of under-enumerating other non-Punjab regions. While the army has its own various motives, a debate that is very complex, in no way is its motives the same as that of the democratically elected parties. Moreover, in the ensuing discussion, I also show, how the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, a federal institution that is run by bureaucrats tries to maintain its impartiality and professionalism.

What, then, is the Pakistani state establishment? It consists of the military, the Punjab based party (for all intents and purposes it has been PML), as well as the bureaucracy, all of which are dominated by Punjab. The army is the country's strongest institutions, but is not reducible as either the state establishment, or as Punjabi institution although also a Punjab dominated one. Likewise, is the case with the democratic forces and the bureaucracy. All of three institutions have separate interests, though perception outside of Punjab is of a monolithic whole.

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[9] The bone of contention between the PML-N government and the army that have led to the Sharif's ouster is the policy difference over relations with India. PML-N, a primarily Punjab based party has stood for improving relations with India, which the army finds unpalatable, for Kashmir issue is military's *raison d'etre*. The split between Punjabi political class and the military seems to be very deep and the relation between the two are at a historic low point.

CHAPTER 5: Findings: Did *Punjab* Doctor the Numbers?

Following is an excerpt from Dawn News, Pakistan's leading English newspaper, that appeared its website early this year

> Early results of the latest census confirm the status quo — that is, the dominance of Punjab over all others. Many experts as well as political parties and civil society activists have dismissed the numbers as doctored or simply inaccurate precisely because of this. "[Census officials] have done a great disservice. All that the census is doing is maintaining the status quo," says Hasan[10] (Khan).

Opinions such as this were widely articulated across all news outlets, but my research shows that this statement about a systematic effort to doctor results to inflate the population figures for Punjab, while deflating for all other regions are erroneous. Such accusations have diverted a discussion on the extent of ever-increasing biopolitical control of the Pakistani establishment to Punjab-bashing demagoguery. Through this section, I show that these accusations regarding the doctoring of statistics appear to be erroneous, because first, the result of the census hurt Punjab through a decrease in political representation, budget allocation, and through bureaucratic and education quotas set; and second, because accusations of a Punjabi conspiracy have various loopholes. I also show the PBS's attempts of maintaining impartiality and professionalism through the controversy.

5.1 *Punjab* Lost

The provisional results of the census show that the population of Punjab has fallen to 52 per cent from 56 percent, and this would be reflected in the makeup of the upcoming elections. The 272 constituencies in the last two general elections, held in 2008 and 2013, were

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[10] Arif Hasan is a Karachi-based architect, urban planner, researcher and activist.

delineated based on the census results as follows: Punjab had 148, Sindh 61, KP 35, Balochistan 14, FATA 12, Islamabad two (Khan). In late December, the 24th Amendment was passed which updated these constituencies based on the latest population count. According to this amendment, if there is one province that has lost its share of National Assembly seats, it is Punjab, which has lost nine seats, including seven general and two reserved for women. Four of these general seats, as well as one reserved seat for women have gone to KP, two general seats and one for women have been diverted to Balochistan, while one seat has gone to the Federal Capital Territory, while the seats for FATA and Sindh have remained the same ("24th Amendment 2017"). Moreover, since the population of Punjab has fallen, its NFC award share will also decrease as the 82 per cent of its determinant is the population count, when the budget is announced. The share in the bureaucratic and higher education institutes will also go down for Punjab, based on these demographic changes.

5.2 'Fingers will be Pointed'

In an episode of 'Zara Hut Kay[11]' aired on DAWN news channel on 28th August, 2017, journalist and analyst, Faheem Zaman, enumerated a number of factors elaborated below that indicated that Punjab had systematically used the census as a means to cheat the rest of the provinces out of their share of funds, and from political and bureaucratic representation at the national level. Mubashir Zaidi, Zarrar Khoro and Waasatullah Khan, who jointly co-host the show, are residents and natives of Karachi themselves, at one point in the program argue that the points raised does not necessarily mean that there is proof that cheating has been done. Zaman then responded by saying that these factors cause plenty of 'fingers to be pointed.'

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[11] Literally can be translated as *slightly away from the norm*.

Without a doubt, there are various reasons that have cause fingers to be pointed at this entire census exercise as some kind of Punjabi conspiracy because it has been far from a perfect one. Through the following section, I show that that most of the points raised against the activities of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics can be explained through historical grievance, matters of local governance, at times even competence, rather than a systematic effort of doctoring statistics through a collusion with the Punjab-based federal government. I also try to show how the PBS tries to maintain its professionalism and distance itself away from controversy.

5.2.1 Members of the PBS Board

One of the things that Zaman pointed out was the fact that except for one member in the national census commission's governing body, all members including the Chief Statistician, hail from Punjab. This thing was also corroborated by a DAWN news report. (Chandio). One of the hosts hinted that this does not necessarily point towards the fact that cheating has been done but is most certainly a reason for fingers to be pointed. Through this paper I do not intend to argue that Punjab is not dominant bureaucratically or otherwise, and its representation in the high level staff of the PBS is just one proof of that. Quite on the contrary, I show that despite being dominant, the census has not been an instrument to cheat other regions out of all the things that are dependent on the population count.

5.2.2 Lahore versus Karachi

When the results of the census came out, one thing stood out more than all others. The growth rate of Karachi at 60% was far lower than that of Lahore at 116% ("Provisional Summary Results."). This fact alone made breaking news on TV and headlines in newspapers.

It clearly seemed like a Punjab conspiracy to under enumerate people from the provincial capital of Sindh, Pakistan's biggest city and the hub of all in-migration within Pakistan, and inflate figures for its own provincial capital Lahore.

On closer look, all of Lahore district, i.e. Lahore city and its surrounding areas now are categorised as urban areas as they have been declared part of the metropolitan corporations, Metropolitan Corporation Lahore on the basis on PLA 2013 (district councils and metropolitan corporations are respectively the highest rural and urban tiers of local government in the provinces). In 1998, significant parts of Lahore district were classified as rural. Karachi district, unlike Lahore district to this day has significant rural areas. Which meant when comparisons were drawn between the increase in the urban population of Karachi and Lahore districts, Lahore showed a monumental increase compared to that of Karachi.

Amongst my respondents, there were no second doubts whether declaring all of Lahore as urban was the concern of other provinces. It was a matter of local governance, which itself is the provincial matter of the respective province and ideally should not have and involvement from the centre or from other provinces. Neither of the things that are dependent from the census result, i.e. the funds, nor the seats were dependent on urban/rural populations, but on the total populations. Opinions, however, were divided over if the regions under the Lahore Metropolitan Corporation could really be described as urban[12].

Najeeb Aslam perfectly summarised this entire situation in the following words, 'It is not a conspiracy but it something that looks like a conspiracy.'

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[12] For instance, Chaudhary Nazir had no reservations about all of Lahore district being defined as urban. He told me that all of urban facilities had reached rural areas in Lahore, and the construction of the Ring Road had brought all rural areas under the umbrella of the Lahore city. He further argued that societies including Defence Housing Authority and Bahria Town have been created, and that it was impossible to find a plot in these formerly rural areas under Rupees 10 lakh. Najeeb Aslam, on the other hand gave me the example of the area of Sham Bhattyan, which in no way could be described as urban.

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5.2.3 Maps

One of the biggest issues was that regarding the use of outdated maps in Karachi was consistently brought up by the criticisers, which they argued led to their underenumeration, as certain segments of the population would be left out from being counted.

Like in a lot of other developing countries with a rising middle class, rapid urbanisation is taking place in Pakistan, and maps of cities need to be constantly updated. My three respondents working as assistant census commissioners in various regions of Punjab admitted that the process of map making was far from perfect. Uzair Cheema responded that 'we were working on digitising maps from before but the decision came we had to leave everything else and had to use the old maps.' I was informed that complaints came from all major cities about the maps not being updated, though in the mainstream media, including the aforementioned television program, it was presented as a problem that was specific to Karachi, hinting that it was a conspiracy rather than incompetence.

Mr. Nazir, ACC Sargodha, gave me an instance in Lahore how one enumerator's block[13] in Lahore had to be converted into 35 blocks because of the development of a new society (Bahria Town) in the city. My enumerator respondent also informed me that his colleagues in Lahore faced a similar issue. Mr. Zahoor, ACC Faisalabad, assured me that maps were in fact updated, but not that well as in some places it had only been 6 months to a year since the map was made and blocks made depending on it, but by the time of the census it has grown exponentially.

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[13] A block was the area designated to every enumerator and ideally consisted of 200-250 households.

Nonetheless, control rooms had been developed in every tehsil level in local governance, which had to dispatch reserve enumerators especially for this purpose, when mistakes within the maps were discovered by the primary enumerators.

5.3 Professionalism of the PBS

Through the census, the objectivity of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), the institution responsible for conducting the census, staff and its intentions were consistently questioned, where it was seen as seeking for *Punjabi* interests. The department was federal, and the responsibility of it was not shifted to the provinces unlike those of 17 ministries, departments and divisions that were devolved to the provinces through the landmark 18th Amendment to the Constitution. In an interview with Uzair Cheema, Assistant Census Commissioner (ACC) for Lahore, I was told that planning for the entire census was undertaken in the federal PBS office in Islamabad. Despite significant levels of planning taking place in Islamabad, all of my informants whether permanent and contractual employees of the PBS in Lahore, or local government employees who worked in collaboration with the PBS, informed me that a very elaborate network was developed for the entire census process. In this process, the local government systems, which essentially are the terrain of the provinces, were an essential, and inseparable part of the data collection process. Moreover, at every level of local governance, there were checks and balances that would have made doctoring of statistics and getting away with them near impossible.

The PBS staff that I interviewed was frustrated with the accusations of collusion/corruption that are made on its activities, usually without substantial proof and wants to rid itself of such controversy. I asked Mr. Aslam, as well as ACCs of Lahore, Sargodha, and Faisalabad, what would make the census less controversial, for which all four had the same

answer: unhinge the allocation of the NA seats, the NFC award, as well as recruitment quota from the results of the census.

After the failed house count in 2011(details in a later section) , Khan writes, the PBS formally proposed to the Council of Common Interests[14] and made these suggestions but they were not accepted. She also notes that the PBS has raised the issue several times with senior government officials in the years leading up to the 2017 census. In a newsletter published in 2015, the PBS enlisted the minutes of its governing council at the Prime Minister Secretariat in Islamabad which had asked for the same:

> The Chief Statistician informed that PBS has suggested to *delink* the *Population figures* from *National. Assembly Seats*, *NFC Award* and *Recruitment Quota* and freeze the 1998 *Census* ratios, *so* that *ethnic elements may not influence* the *census activities (*"PBS Newsletter Issue 10."*).

Khan notes that experts from both within the government and outside it point to India where seats in the Lok Sabha, the lower house of the parliament have remained unchanged since 1976 despite massive changes in India as a whole and within different states. Hence, the census is not linked to political and electoral representation. She writes that a similar step, which would require a constitutional amendment, in Pakistan may create a similar result.

Using the case of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), Jan Busse shows that it is possible for a census organisation that works in a highly controversial area to maintain independence from political intervention. She shows how the Palestinian Authority has in the past contested the accuracy of PCBS data and unsuccessfully attempted to prevent its publication, but the PCBS still went through and published its findings. Busse acknowledges, and this is true in the case of Pakistan and the PBS, that to a certain degree it is reasonable to

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[14] See
http://www.pk.undp.org/content/dam/pakistan/docs/Democratic%20Governance/Federalism/CCI%20Manual%20(1).pdf

distinguish between attempts by political leaders to politicize statistical data and the effort made by respective statistics offices to maintain the professional independence and assumed objectivity of the data.

CHAPTER 6: Biopower and the Census

By this point, through my primary research, I have shown how the census of 2017 has not been systematically been used by a monolithic *Punjab* to cheat other provinces and regions out of their due share of finances as well as political, and bureacratic representation. Yet, there are other political ramifications for the census in Pakistan, because the census is a biopolitical technology of power in the hands of the Pakistani state, which is bureaucratically, military and politically dominated by Punjab. The rest of the essay is structured as follows: I start of by discussing how Foucault understands the genealogy of biopower in the West, then go on to elaborate the import and adaptation of biopolitics of in British India. Afterwards I trace the evolution of the census in Pakistan and its relationship with the national database registry. I conclude the essay by drawing parallels between the activities undertaken under the guise of the census, and comparing them to those undertaken by the Nazis before the Holocaust. The gist of my argument is that too much attention has been paid to Punjab-bashing statements regarding the doctoring of population figures, which has hindered a debate on understanding potential dangers of the Punjab-dominated state's use of biopolitics.

6.1 Genealogy of Biopower in the West

Technology of power, for Foucault, is an art that determines "the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination" (Lawlor 69). Domination, for Foucault, is a style of power relationship that is stable and hierarchical, and difficult to reverse (Lemke 53). Rabinow and Rose (197), while mentioning that Foucault is somewhat imprecise in his use of the term biopower, postulate that the concept at its most general, can be used to bring into view a 'field comprised of more or less rationalized attempts to intervene upon the vital characteristics of human existence' (196-7). Biopolitics works at the level of the collective and

is a political rationality which make the administration of life and populations as its subject. In a sense then, the census in the hands of a Punjab-dominated state is an end to submit individuals to a stable and hierarchical power relationship through rationalised attempts of intervention on vital characteristics of human existence.

In *La Volonte´ du savoir*, published in 1976, with the English translation coming out in 1984 as the *History of Sexuality*, Foucault dedicates a section in a chapter called '*Right of Death and Power over Life*,' that explores the theme of the concept of biopower. He elucidates that for a long time one of the privileges of sovereign power was the right to 'take life or let live,' though this right, by the classical age, had been restricted to the time when the sovereign himself was threatened from internal and external enemies (Rabinow 196). He called this the juridical form of sovereign power where power. This right, writes Foucault,

> 'was exercised mainly as a means of deduction (prelevement), a subtraction mechanism, a right to appropriate a portion of the wealth, a tax of products, goods and services, labor and blood, levied on the subjects . Power in this instance was essentially a right of seizure : of things, time, bodies, and ultimately life itself; it culminated in the privilege to seize hold of life in order to suppress it' (Rabinow, p. 259).

However, Foucault argued that that since the classical age, deduction became just one element in a wide range of mechanisms to 'generate, incite, reinforce, control, monitor, optimize and organize the forces' under it. While external wars are causing un-paralled losses in terms of human lives lost, and regimes have committed holocausts upon their own populations, these wars are not waged in the name of the sovereign but in the name of the existence of the population (Rabinow 196). Power, for Foucault, then became situated and exercised at the level of life.

6.2 Import of Biopower in the Colony

Foucault has repeatedly iterated that he has tried to study how forms of subjectivity emerged in the Western context. Therefore, his theories cannot be applied to the colony, and the post-colony unadulterated. In order to extend his analysis of biopolitics to the case of Pakistan, I heavily rely in the works of Appadurai, Rabinow and Rose, and Busse.

In *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the College de France 1977–1978*, Foucault stated that the "discovery of the population" at the end of the eighteenth, and the beginning of the nineteenth, as both the primary problem of, as well as target for, political interventions was of extreme importance. This discovery, for him, is inextricably linked to the systematic use of statistics as a modern phenomenon for political purposes (Busse). In a similar vein, Appadurai in in *Number in the Colonial Imagination* notes that, by the late eighteenth century, the idea became implanted in the West that a strong state could not function without making enumeration a pivotal technique of social control. One of these techniques was the census which made great technical strides in Britain throughout the following century and provided the broad scaffolding of the census in India in the latter stages of the same century.

By 1858, the Indian War of Independence had been squashed, formally ending the Mughal rule in India that had been reliant on a juridical form of sovereign mechanism of deduction. In the wake of the events of 1857-58, the East India Company had to be dissolved, and India thereafter was administered directly by the British government. The army, financial system, as well as administration had to be reorganised through the Government of India Act, 1858. Citing various sources, Appadurai argues that statistical thinking had become closely tied to projects of civic control including initiatives on sanitation, urban planning, criminal law, and demography in England and France by this time, and hence it would have been tempting for European bureaucrats to think that sound numerical data would make social control and

reform in the colony easier. With the recent memory of the biggest rebellion to date witnessed by the British against their rule in India, the employment of such data would have been more appealing.

Appadurai's central theme of investigation in the chapter is to see whether there was, 'any special force to the systematic counting of bodies under colonial states in India, Africa, and Southeast Asia, or is it simply a logical extension of the preoccupation with numbers in the metropolis' (315). It is worth mentioning that the emergence of biopolitical technologies of power did not come about through indigenous evolutionary processes, like in the west where juridical sovereignty gave way to biopolitics. It was a direct import from the metropolis to the colony. The Mughals had undertaken exercises to map and measure the land for revenue collection purposes, but conducted no known census of the population.

The colonial state, Appadurai argues, though with some doubts, employed quantification in its rule that differed from both its predecessors in India, the Mughals, and from its domestic counterpart. Appadurai notes that the trajectory of the British rule should be seen as a shift from a more functional use that revolved around revenue collection to a utilitarian use of number that involved discursory, as well as pedagogical and disciplinary roles. He divides the British enumeration practices into different phases: before 1870 is the period where issues of land settlement and taxation are the dominant colonial projects, while 1840-1870 is the transitionary period; between. 1870 to 1931 is the period of the great all India census where the enumeration of the human populations is the dominant project. The vast amounts of data collected on fields ranging from agricultural output to tribal, caste and ethnic groups.

The British census in India did a great deal to understand the entire Indian population, something that it considered exotic in its entirety. For Appadurai, at least, the census in Britain at least if not in France was largely territorial and occupational rather than ethnic or racial, and

the most invasive if investigations were reserved for those on the social margins including the poor, sexually profligate, the lunatic and the criminal. In the colony, however, the entire population was seen as different in problematic ways and it was this shift lay at the heart of orientalism. Much of Foucault's analysis, too, is dedicated to these marginal groups as case studies.

Regarding British enumeration practices, Appadurai notes:

The vast apparatus of revenue-assessment was in fact part of a complex apparatus of discipline and surveillance in and through which native functionaries were instilled with a whole series of numerical habits, (tied to other habits of description, iconography, and distinction), in which number played a complex set of roles… The political arithmetic of colonialism was taught, quite literally, on the ground and translated into algorithms that could make future numerical activities habitual and instil bureaucratic description with a numerological infrastructure (34).

Before the army had gained an upper hand in Pakistani politics, and before democracy had been established, the bureaucracy had a very important role to play in the running of the state (Haq). This bureaucracy consisted of mainly Muslims who had been well versed in these numerical habits that Appadurai has talked about, after having moved up in the social ranks through attaining a British-style education, through attending higher education institutes both in Lahore and at Aligarh, in present day India. I have already discussed why the Punjabis had a significant share in the bureaucracy owing to pre-partition conditions. They shared this position with the Muhajir (literally migrant) ethnicity, from India who were urban, literate, and soon became what Haq calls the "achieving minority" in Sindh. The obsession with enumeration that Foucault and Appadurai discuss in the thinking of the Western policymakers was carried forward by these bureaucrats and is discussed in the following section.

Appadurai is quite insightful when he says that 'there are no easy generalisations to be made about the degree to which the 'effort to organise the colonial project around the idea of

essentialised and enumerated communities made inroads into the practical consciousness of colonial subjects in India' (334). Nonetheless, it is easy to say the these results varied based on various factors of the colonial subject including her gender, distance from the colonial gaze, involvement from colonial politics and involvement within the bureaucratic apparatus.

Uncontestably, as already elaborated in previous sections, Punjab was closed to the colonial gaze, and heavily involved within the bureaucratic apparatus, as well as the British Indian army.

6.3 History of the Census in Post-Colonial Pakistan

From the very onset of Independence, the bureaucracy in Pakistan sought to make rationalised attempts for 'intervene upon the vital characteristics of human existence,' through the use of number. The emphasis that was given to the number by the policymakers becomes clearer from the fact that the country's first census was conducted in the same year as the free movement and migration between India and Pakistan was closed, four years after independence. Equally importantly, with tradition of the decennial all India census in Colonial India, the census was conducted in the second year of the decade[15], 1951, a time when the country was in turmoil caused by the mass migration and refugee crises. Precious funds were used for an activity that was presumed to provide services for a population that found itself in a very new position. Pleas were made to the public for universal participation to the public. The following is an excerpt from Pakistan Times, 9th February, 1951:

> …the Pakistan Census Commissioner appealed to every citizen of Pakistan to see that he is enumerated properly and none of his family members are missed out, that nobody is enumerated more than once, and the enumerator is given a truthful answer to all the questions (Ansari).

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[15] This is in tradition with the first all-India census conducted in 1871. Every ten years since, the census has been regularly conducted in India, eight times as a colony, and seven times since Independence.

The next three censuses were held more or less on schedule, with the only exception on the census of the 1970s, which, instead of being conducted in 1971, was conducted in 1972 due to the outbreak of political unrest and civil war that ultimately led to the independence of the eastern wing of the country. The census of the 1991 took off on time, but had to be called off soon afterwards with the completion of the house listing phase, when highly anomalous data was reported. In 1998, for the first time, in Pakistan's history, the army was called to accompany the data-gatherers to add 'reliability' to oversee their activities, both to see that the enumerators did their jobs professionally and that added pressure was not put on them from the locals they were sent to. Since the enumerator was most likely working in his own area whereas the army personnel could be from anywhere in the country, this would additionally ensure that there was no doctoring of figures for regional political gain. The census, in this way, was completed and the results announced, published and used for different purposes.

The new millennium ushered in the '*War on Terror*' and with an ultimatum of '*either you're with us or against us*' given by the United States, Pakistan was pushed on the forefront of this war. The country's security situation deteriorated so much that in October 2007, Newsweek published a cover story "*The Most Dangerous Nation in the World Isn't Iraq. It's Pakistan.*"[16] Conducting a timely decennial census in such a situation was impossible. Nonetheless in 2011, another attempt was made to conduct the census but the army had excused itself from partaking in the census because of its engagements on terror-related security issues in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP), tribal areas and Balochistan, citing that it could only respond to calls of distress from enumerators in highly-sensitive areas, and not accompany the enumerators country-wide like in 1998 (Gishkori). The census, nonetheless, was cancelled again after the house-listing phase because of the highly anomalous figures coming from some

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[16] For a tally of terror-related deaths since 2000 in Pakistan, visit:
http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/database/casualties.htm

parts of the country. According to Najeeb Aslam, the 2011 census had to be aborted because, 'from one house in Karachi results would show that there were 34 children'.

The reason why the census has become so controversial in recent decades is the fact that the NA seats and the NFC Award became linked to the population count through the 1973 Constitution, which is why in recent decades the census is point of so much contestation. The higher a province was able to show its population, the more funds, political, bureaucratic and educational opportunities would be allocated to it from the national reserve. Since the Constitution was adopted, there had only been one census that had been completed since with the presence of accompanying armed soldiers, in 1981. At that time, however, Pakistan was under military rule itself. According to my informants, all of whom had been employees of the statistical departments since 1989, that without the army men, enumerators came under political pressure.

Another reason that adds to the narrative of a Punjabi conspiracy of under-enumeration of non-Punjabi areas is the fact that both times the house-listing phase was called off, was during the tenure of the Sindh-based Pakistan People's Party, while both times the census was successfully conducted with the presence of the Punjab-majority army, and the Punjab based PML-N is federal power.

In December 2016, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Pakistan (CJP) mandated that the incumbent government conduct the country's first national population and housing census in nearly nineteen years, sixth overall, be conducted between March 15th and May 15th, 2017, after a serious of hearings where monetary and security reasons were repeatedly given by the government for not being able to conduct the census. In previous years, successive governments had attributed the delays to lack of resources, administrative difficulties and to the country's security situation. In a hearing for the census delay case, Chief Justice Anwar Zaheer Jamali iterated that national policies were being formulated out of thin air since no one

knew about the number of people living in the country. He further said that the upcoming

elections in 2018 would be a joke if done without having done a census as democracy depends

strongly on population census. Statements such as these show that the componential

assumption that policies of civic control are inherently dependent on statistics remains

ingrained in the policymakers of the country.

6.4 The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) and the Census of 2017

The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics is a federal department, that was responsible for

conducting last year's census. It was established in 2012, after the merger of three departments,

namely, the Federal Bureau of Statistics, the Population Census Organization, The Agriculture

Census Organization, as well as and the technical wing of the Statistics Division ("About

Us.")[17].

Instead of conducting the entire census in one go, like all previous censuses, this time

around the census was conducted in two steps due to a shortage of the armed staff[18] that could

be spared for census duties. Every enumerator was given the task of collecting data on paper

forms[19], usually from one block only. Data was collected from each block from one of the two

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[17]After the creation of Pakistan, Central Statistical Office (CSO) was setup by the Government of Pakistan in 1950 as an attached department of Economic Affairs Division, and it was this department that had been responsible for conducting the country's first two censuses (1951 and 1961). In 1972, on the recommendation of IBRD Mission, Central Statistical Office (CSO) was upgraded to a full-fledged Statistics Division. The Division was re-organized in 1981 and its technical wing (the then CSO) was converted into Federal Bureau of Statistics (FBS) as one of its attached departments ("About Us.").

[18] *Only* 200,000 troops could have been spared for this task.

[19] The civil enumerator collected information using two forms. Form 1 was filled out in the first three days of the data gathering activities in a block in every phase, and is known as the house-listing phase where the only details filled in were the type of establishment, name of head of household, Computerised National Identity Card (CNIC) number, and any business activity that was takin place in that establishment. A marking would then made on the gate of the establishment that would denote the sequence of the establishment within that block. Then came the main form, Form 2 which would have been filled out between the remaining days dedicated to the block, and the sequence depended on the bases of the marking done during the house-listing phase. It included the name of the head of the household, names of all other people in the household and their relation to the head of household, sex, age, marital status, religion, mother tongue, nationality, literacy, employment status, level of education, type of establishment, and type of materials used in the building. These

phases of the census, depending on the planning from the centre. Each block, ideally consisted of 200-250 houses. The hierarchy of the immediate ground staff was as follows:

At the lowest level of the hierarchy were the enumerators, who were accompanied by army men. Enumerators were the primary data gathers, and a group of five to seven enumerators was called a census circles, which was headed by a circle supervisor. The circle usually consisted of various adjoining census blocks. A group of five to seven circle supervisors and their respective 25-35 blocks was called a census charge, which was supervised by a charge superintendent. All of these were contractual employees hired for a short period of time for the collection of data and most of them were government employees working in the education or health sectors. Depending on their grade (government ranking system), they were hired for one of the three posts.

Above them were the local government employees[20], though that differed from region to region to region, depending on the local governance systems[21].

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forms were bound together in a register, roughly averaging one register for each block. Coding was used to denote different values for each question. For instance, in the question of relationship to the head of household, 1 was used as a code for the person themselves, 2 was used to denote spouse, 3 was used to denote child, and so on. Likewise in the question of mother tongue, 1 was used to denote Urdu, 2 for Punjabi, 3 for Sindhi and so on.

[20] For instance, Mr. Najeeb Aslam, Deputy Secretary Coordination for the census in Punjab and the provincial focal person[20], an employee of the Local Government & Community Development (LGDC), Punjab, told me of the hierarchy above the contractual employees for the 2017 census in his province. The charge superintendent had to, for instance, report to the census district officer (CDO) who is otherwise the assistant commissioner (AC), who in Mr. Najeeb Aslam's words was the 'sarbarah' (leader) of the tehsil. The AC came under the district coordination officer (DCO), appointed as the district census coordinator for this project. The DCO was directly responsible to the divisional commissioner (DC), appointed as the divisional census coordinator. Above him in hierarchy was the provincial commissioner.

[21] One difference between the provinces is that councils are not identified as either urban or rural in KP, and the Deputy Commissioner acted as the District Census Coordinator.

6.5 The Census of 2017 and the Role of the Army

Perhaps the most astonishing thing about this census was that the army's role was neither limited to providing security to the hired PBS personnel, or to play a supervisory role during the data gathering activities to ensure no 'hanky-panky' was done, as Najeeb Aslam put it. Aslam, instead of calling the accompanying army man, as security personnel, called him an 'army enumerator.'

The information provided to me by the contractual staff, i.e., the enumerator and the charge supervisors, gave details that implied that what the army was doing amounted to a parallel census. The same is corroborated by a UNFPA report, which states that "this is not internationally acceptable." This was conducted through a software, where a form called Form 786 was filled out. This was army's own form that they designed and collected their own information. Upon inquisition, the PBS staff said that a parallel census done so that, at the end of the day, the data collected by the civilian and the army enumerators could be tallied to see if any mistakes had been done. One thing that only my charge superintendent interviewee was able to reveal was that the army form had a separate tally for the 'mother tongue' column, that was not present in the civilian forms. The language criteria was essentially used to classify people into different ethnicities. He told me that they were making their own summaries of how they would look at 'how many Punjabis there were' by seeing how many people spoke Punjabi as the mother tongue in a particular area.

Part of the duty of the army man was also to verify the Computerised National Identity Card (CNIC) details of the head of the household by taking his CNIC, sending his CNIC number to a number to the SMS facility provided by the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA). Through this facility, that is available to the general public also for various purposes, the army enumerator would be able to get details confirming that person's

name, family tree, and arms licenses, and the mobile sims under his name, in an effort to ensure that 'people were not lying'.

The UNFPA wrote in its report that "the participation of the military in the census process is not at all a recommended international practice." In the case of Pakistan, however, they iterated that it was essential for two reasons: to ensure the security and to avoid any mishandling of the data (Ahmed).

6.6 The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA)

After the war of 1971, establishment of a national database was one of the projects undertaken by the government. In 1973, in a parliamentary session, the then prime minister, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto stated, "Due to the absence of a full statistical database of the people of this country, this country is operating in utter darkness." The Pakistan government started issuing national identity card (NIC) numbers to its citizens in 1973. This replaced the Personal Identity System of Pakistan (PIS). The PIS was primarily used to facilitate and resettle partition refugees, established in 1947 by Pakistan's first prime minister, Liaquat Ali Khan. Pakistan's first registration office was established by Bhutto under Article 30 of the Second Amendment soon after his address to the parliament (Malik, 2014).

In the late 1990s, the National Database Organization (NDO) was established under the Ministry of Interior as a sister organization of the Federal Bureau of Statistics[22] to handle the data collected using the National Data Forms (NDFs) that were filled out as an additional exercise during the 1998 census. The NDFs were designed to capture maximum amounts of social and fiscal indicators for a comprehensive database of the citizenry. Within eight months during 2000-2001, the paper-based census forms were computerized for the tens of million

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[22] The FBS was the precursor the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

registrations that were done. Because of the enormity involved in the task, the NDO and the Directorate General of Registration (DGR) were merged together to form the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) in March 2000 (Garib, 2009). Garib notes that it is 'an independent corporate body with requisite autonomy'.

Garib (2009) states that the NADRA was formed in order to develop and implement a fact-based system of good governance, and used for everything ranging from city planning and addressing the population growth, and for improved resource allocation.

It was initially set up, Garib writes, to issue state of the art Computerised National Identity Cards (CNICs) to all eligible citizens of Pakistan, which would be backed up by a computerized database and a data warehouse respectively called the Citizens' Database and National Data Warehouse (NDW). At the time registration was voluntary and was limited for people aged 18 and above. Data was also recorded manually, including thumb prints. The CNIC program replaced the paper based NIC system in use since 1973.

By 2007, biometric technology was introduced and things such as fingerprints and pictures were being taken digitally, and this technology helped reduce the prevalence of dual identities and identity theft (Malik). 'We asked the people to register and framed this in terms of a strategic partnership with the state, which in turn would recognize them as citizens,' writes Tariq Malik, former chairman of NADRA. Similar computerised identity cards linked to central databases are also issued to the diaspora in the form of the National Identity Card for Overseas Pakistanis (NICOP) and the Pakistan Origin Card[23] through respective embassies which 'entitles them to transact with Pakistan and has some additional benefits.'

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[23] This card is issued to former Pakistanis who had to relinquish their citizenship living in states such as Germany and France that do not allow dual citizenship. These individuals can transact with the government and enter visa-free in Pakistan.

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Various methods were deployed to maximise registration with NADRA of all adults (defined as people over 18 years of age) at a time when registration with NADRA was still voluntary. These methods included various mechanisms involved for making registration accessible for the remotest regions; through awareness campaigns especially targeted towards women and their empowerment; through the creation of women only registration centres by telling people that the CNIC would make poor people eligible for financial inclusion program geared towards the poor such as the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP); disaster relief, as well as for the eligibility for the Haj (pilgrimage to Makkah) since passports cannot be obtained without CNICs.

Though possession of a CNIC was still voluntary initially, the card become mandatory for voting; opening and using bank accounts; obtaining a passport or driver's licenses; purchasing vehicles, land, plane and train tickets; obtaining electricity, gas and water connections, securing admissions to higher education institutes, and for major financial decisions; and very recently activating a mobile SIM card. In the words of Malik, through these schemes, living without a CNIC in Pakistan was made as difficult, near impossible eventually. Between 2008 to 2014, registration was raised from 54 to 98 million (Malik, 2014). Nonetheless, in the last few years having a CNIC has been made mandatory for all adults aged 18 and above.

The CNIC facility has been linked to a lot of manners of governance including for the identification for social protection, including for the disaster relief for the internally displaced people (IDPs) by the military operation "Rah-e-Rast" against the Taliban in Swat and Malakand and the floods of 2011[24]; for registration and casting of votes on elections for

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[24] In the words of Malik, 'NADRA's model of cash disbursement using a biometric system was a big hit' as he was approached by the United Nations to inquire if a similar cash disbursement system could be deployed in post-conflict situations in Africa.

creating transparency; verifications of their vote registration details and polling station through SMS service; assist election tribunals to investigate complaints[25]; forensic identification of terrorists and victims[26]; activation of mobile SIMS to provide biometric identifier with every SIM card[27]; and arms licensing. Malik mentioned some failed programs and some under the works projects such as the tracking of student and teacher attendance in schools.

6.6 A Pakistan Society of Control

It could be said that Pakistan is moving towards becoming a society of control, without having become a society of discipline in its ideal type, which for Deleuze has been the teleological progression in the West.

For Foucault while tracing the genealogy of the welfare state system, writes Deleuze, these societies of discipline emerged in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and reached their apex in the outset of the twentieth, where organisation was initiated within vast spaces of enclosure, and the individual never ceased from passing from one closed environment to another, each with its own laws: the family, then school, then the barracks, followed by the factory, with occasional visits to the hospital, and possibly to the prison. The societies of disciple followed the societies of sovereignty, which themselves were followed by societies of

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[25] Malik gives the example of constituency NA 202, where in response to a petition filed by a challenger, NADRA undertook a detailed technical examination. Through this investigation, it was uncovered that one man had voted 310 times in a women-only designated polling station. In this situation a repoll was ordered.

[26] Malik gives an example of a suicide bomb attack that destroyed an army vehicle near Muzaffarabad, where NADRA was able to identify the bomber through his remains within three hours. Likewise, 67 victims of the Bhoja Air crash, and 87 victims of the Gayari Sector avalanche were successfully identified through their remains through the government database.

[27] Since mobile phones were used by terrorists and suicide bombers to detonate bombs, their spaces to operate had to be restricted, Malik notes. NADRA was able to achieve this by backing every SIM with identifiable individuals.

control in the West. '"Control" is the name Burroughs proposes as a term for the new monster, one that Foucault recognizes as our immediate future, ' writes Deleuze.

Though the use of biopolitical statistics was introduced to this region, which in the West was intrinsically linked to these vast enclosed spaces of discipline, the link of biopolitics to these enclosed spaces is not so strong. The school, the insane asylum, the factory, and the hospital are not as prolific even now as they were in the middle of the twentieth century in the places such as England and France. To this day in Pakistan, which has incessantly seen increases in the literacy rate, if numbers are to be trusted, the school enrolment rate, by 2010 for children was only 74 per cent, which had been 58 per cent only a decade ago[28] (UNESCO). According to an Alif Ailaan report by the higher-secondary level of education, almost 85% of children are not in school (*25 Million Broken Promises*). This means that school has not effectively been a pervasive disciplinary enclosure for a very significant portion of the population, in the latter half of the twentieth century. Foucault, in addition has written about the obsession of enclosing the mentally ill in institutions, a phenomenon that has never been reproduced in Pakistan in the same way[29]. The mentally ill continue to roam in the streets as was the phenomenon in the West as in the time of juridical sovereignty. Likewise, despite post-industrialisation in the West and the transfer of industries to the global south, the GDP of Pakistan has also remained primarily dependent on agriculture. Perhaps the most *disciplined* society, perhaps would be found in Punjab, due to its 'closeness of the colonial gaze,' in terms

[29] This is not to say that this phenomenon was completely absent, but very limited. In fact one of the most famous pieces of short literature, Toba Tek Singh by Saadat Hassan Manto (1955), was based in a mental asylum in Lahore. It is a satire based on a story of inmates, some of whom had to be transferred to India following partition.

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of education reforms, and military recruitment policies. Nonetheless, half of the country's 25 million out-of-school children are from Punjab.

How, then, is control different from discipline? Deleuze writes that if an enclosure is a mould, a distinct casting, then controls are modulation, which like a self-deforming cast, continuously change from one moment to another, 'or like a sieve whose mesh will transmute from point to point' (4). He writes that through spaces of enclosure, through which individuals are supposed to pass are independent variables, and each time 'one is supposed to start from zero, and although a common language for all these places exists, it is analogical.' Control mechanisms, on the other hand are 'inseparable variations, forming a system of variable geometry the language of which is numerical (which doesn't necessarily mean binary)' (4).

Writing in the closing decade of the millennium, Deleuze writes that the notion of societies of control is not necessarily one of science fiction. He states,

> Félix Guattari has imagined a city where one would be able to leave one's apartment, one's street, one's neighborhood, thanks to one's (dividual) electronic card that raises a given barrier; but the card could just as easily be rejected on a given day or between certain hours; what counts is not the barrier but the computer that tracks each person's position--licit or illicit--and effects a universal modulation (7).

The identity database system in its current form clearly reveals that it is a mechanism of control, where one modulation gives way for another, whether it be the provision of cash disbursement, combating of terrorism, getting electricity and gas connections, going to the pilgrimage, getting mobile sim cards, or going out to cast a vote, or getting forensic evidence for various purposes. Not only, it allows smooth movement from one platform to another, it has meant that one would not be 'able to leave one's apartment, one's street, one's neighbourhood' without it. In the coming years, the system will only intensify where the Smart National Identity Card will take over the CNIC, which will have a chip infused in it, writes

Malik. There are also plans of making the CNIC mandatory for entering into the capital, Islamabad, and getting marriage licenses.

6.7 Several Birds, One Stone

Various questions were raised at the fact that the census required the CNIC to be presented while being counted, which defeats the entire purpose of the census, *universality*, i.e., 'a 100 per cent count of some social entity' (Scott, 2009). The condition of making the CNIC an important part of being counted in the census was a particularly sore spot for people from all non-Punjab areas, especially in Karachi, which is the hub of all migration in Pakistan. According to UNHCR's statistics, Pakistan hosts the largest number of refugees after Turkey at almost 1.6 million people (United Nations), mostly belonging from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Burma. Those who do not live in refugee villages tend to migrate to Karachi, many of whom are without valid Pakistani identity documents, and hence considered as *illegal migrants*. According to a research conducted by Piler, '75% of illegal migrants in the country are living in Karachi' (Aligi, 2010). Moreover, Punjab is the most developed province of the country, in terms of facilities being developed that require the CNIC to be made, hence a higher population is likely to have it compared to people in other underdeveloped areas who did not feel the need to get their CNICs made. PBS officials assured me that at least one person in a household in 99% of the cases has a CNIC, though several news reports argue otherwise (Khan). In this way, the detractors say that the population of Karachi has been undercounted. Nonetheless, I was repeatedly assured by the PBS staff that even families that did not have a single family member with a CNIC were counted as there was an option for them in the census forms.

Upon asking Uzair Cheema, ACC Lahore, why the CNIC was made part of the census activities, he told me that since we were going to homes to collect information, they wanted to do as much as possible. Precedence had already been set for the PBS when its predecessor, the Federal Bureau of Statistics, tried to catch two birds with one stone in 1998: not only enumerating people but also, in collaboration with the NDO, tried to expand the national identity database. I was told that various aims were achieved through making the CNIC as an integral part of the census. The reasons I was given included so that people could not lie to the enumerators about the number of members in a household; that awareness was created among people that the CNIC is mandatory for all adult citizens; and that terrorist and criminal activities could be stopped by linking all activities to the national database system.

My enumerator respondent told me that, 'I am also sure security wise a lot of problems would have been solved.' His charge superintendent also agreed, 'It should not matter if one has a CNIC or not because the census has to do with the resources but Zarb e Azb[30] was going on. So they told us that we should also catch *illegal* (*sic*) people through this. We were successful and the army was able to make the red flags… catch the illegals (*sic*).' He also added that they scared normal citizens without CNICs that they should get them made otherwise they would be thought of as terrorists.

An observation mission, deployed by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) at the request of the PBS was asked to monitor the census. The report that it published on the exercise mentioned that the sharing of census data with a 'third-party institution' as "a breach of confidentiality of the collected data" according to internationally-accepted census practices and procedures (Ahmed). Statements such as these show that the connections between the statistical bodies of the census and national database have not been properly understood and

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[30] Zarb e Azb was a military operation by the Pak armed forces against various militant terrorists groups including the Tehrik-i-Talibak Pakistamn, the Laskar-e-Jhanvi, al-Qaeda, and the Haqqani Network, etc.

disclosed in popular *independent* media, where instead of being seen as the extension of one another, there is a perception that the census departments and national database are two distinct entities. This perhaps points towards insufficient research done on the subject in an independent media that has been more susceptible to demagoguery that is based on Punjab's extractive power over resources, and essentially hinders an understanding of the use of biopolitics in making Pakistan a society of control.

Through the following sections, I try to shed some light on the dark side of biopolitics. Using the example of the Nazi Germany, I show that the Holocaust happened the way it did because of the lethal combination of the creation states of exception and biopolitics. I also highlight that Pakistan has had a history of creating states of exception within its territory and the data collection practices through this census are strikingly similar to those of Nazi Germany. This should have been a major cause of concern for the polity regarding the census, which instead of initiating debates about the ever-increasing control the establishment has over its population that can result in catastrophe, has instead been engaged in Punjab-bashing demagoguery over accusations of doctored results.

CHAPTER 7: The Holocaust, States of Exception and Biopolitics

Some insights raised by Agamben over the dark-side of biopolitics might be useful to explain the potential of catastrophic impact the census could have in various regions of Pakistan. Agamben, in what Rabinow and Rose call 'a series of haunting books', locates the Holocaust as the 'ultimate exemplar of biopower, and biopower as the hidden meaning of all forms of power from the ancient world to the present'. He does so by exploring what Carl Schmitt calls 'states of exception', i.e., when in a time or place the rule of law is suspended in the name of self-defence or national security. They write that Agamban suggests that the birth of biopower in modernity indicates the time in which subjects' biological life enters politics and belongs to the state in its entirety. The ultimate grasp over the lives of the subjects of the sovereign or the state is epitomised in the concentration camps, labour camps and death camps of the Nazis and that the sovereign States depend on their capacity to create states of exception.

7.1 States of Exception in Pakistan

The following section looks at some major examples of the states of exceptions that have historically been created by the establishment in the minority provinces/regions of the country, where rule of law has been suspended in the name of self-defence or national security. As will become clear through the ensuing discussion, in these instances subjects' biological life belongs to the state in its entirety. I then discuss the link between the Nazi census, the Nazi state of exception and the Holocaust and explain why certain activities undertaken by the establishment through the census are causes for concern within a nation state such as Pakistan that has a history of creating states of exception.

7.1.1 Military Operations in Balochistan

Baloch nationalists started the struggle for freedom from Pakistan right from the time Pakistan got independence. These nationalists have consistently refused to accept accession of Balochistan to Pakistan and have advocated an independent homeland straddling on both sides of Pakistani and Iranian borders. With the passage of time, this conflict has only worsened due to a profound sense of economic and political marginalization of Balochistan in Pakistan and exploitation of its natural resources the state, much of these resources being directed towards an energy-hungry Punjab (Zurutuza). Since 1948, there have been four insurgencies: 1958–59; 1962–63, 1973–77, and the ongoing one which broke out in 2003. For each of these insurgencies, there has been a brutal response by the Pakistan army ("'We'").

7.1.2 Military Operations in FATA

The event of 9/11 proved to be a turning point in relationship between the security establishment of the Pakistani state, and the Pashtun tribesmen inhabiting Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), a vast western frontier regions of Pakistan bordering Afghanistan. Since the independence of Pakistan in 1947, FATA had enjoyed a special status within Pakistan and Pakistani military was not deployed in it. In the aftermath of *War on Terror* in Afghanistan, there was a spill over effect on Pakistani and many jihadist militants, particularly from Al-Qaeda, feeling the heat of American military operations in Afghan territory moved to border regions of Pakistan. Pakistan finally moved its military to frontier region in 2004, for the first time since 1947, to drive out these militants. This started a bloody conflict between religious extremists and security forces. Until now the army has launched five major and numerous minor operations against the extremists (Nawaz). These operations have been conducted at high human cost, or what is called collateral damage, for the Pashtun

residents of North-western part of Pakistan. Frequently the military has resorted to illegal detentions, abductions, and enforced disappearances of young Pashtun men, thought to associates of these terrorist groups. Moreover, the military operations have resulted in large scale destruction of property and displacement of millions of Pashtuns (Zahid).

7.1.3 Armed Operations in Karachi

In the last thirty years, the relationship of the Pakistani state with the Muhajir community, that primarily resides in Karachi and Sindh, have soured. This fallout has resulted in two massive operations against their most popular and representative party, the *Muttahida Qaumi Movement* (MQM) by the Sindh Police and Pakistan Rangers (a paramilitary organization led by serving military officers), and the army. There were battles on the streets of Karachi between the security forces and these purported militants, resulting in thousands of abductions, forced disappearances, and extra-judicial killings of thousands of young *Muhajir* men in Karachi (Amnesty International).

7.2 Biopolitics and security concerns

NADRA and government officials including PBS staff are very open about the fact that the census and the CNIC are used to tackle the security issues of the country. This tackling of the security issues often results in the creation of states of exception, but what these security issues are, and how much the 'collateral damage' is, is never fully clear or declared. The inclusion of the army in the census has been a cause of apprehension in places with histories of armed operations, and rightly so. The fact that a parallel census has been collected by the

armed forces, which has a registry of a tally of people's ethnicities, is not very different from the statistical methods employed by the Nazis.

Gotz Aly and Karl Heinz Roth (2004), through *The Nazi Census*, look at the origins of the census in modern Germany, alongside the parallel development of IBM machines that helped first collect data on Germans, then specifically on Jews and other minorities. They iterate how the state collected census data on non-Germans to track racial groups for alleged security reasons, and then how this information was used for catastrophic purposes for these groups. They write that the techniques the Nazis used in order to track, collect information, and control populations initiated the modern system of citizen registration. Similarly, in *IBM and the Holocaust* (2001), Edwin Black, discusses the alliance of IBM with Nazi Germany, where IBM & its subsidiaries helped create enabling technologies, from the identification & cataloguing programs of the 30s to the selections of the 40s, that would help the 3rd Reich embark on its plan of conquest & genocide. Only after the identification of the Jews was done, could Hitler pursue his program of asset confiscation, ghettoization, deportation, enslaved labour & annihilation.

Historians have been amazed by the speed and accuracy of the identification and location of the Jews in Nazi Germany, and Black traces it back to IBM technology that organised everything in Germany and then Nazi Europe, from the identification of the Jews in censuses, registrations and ancestral tracing programs to the running of railroads and organizing of concentration camp slave labour. If need be, the establishment now has similar tools to speedily and accurately get to groups of people it thinks are a danger to the existence of the greater population. For instance, take the example of Operation Clean-up targeted against Muhajir men in the 1990s over their involvement in separatist activities triggered by the ever-increasing dominance of Punjab over the rest of Pakistan. The objective of this operation was to 'cleanse Karachi of anti-social elements' (Haq). If biopolitical control had

been as pervasive at the time as it is now, the elimination and persecution of this ethnic group could have been as systematic as that of the Jews in Europe.

It was the census through which 'Hitler got the names,' and the fact that tallies on ethnicities is being collected by an establishment that has a history of creating states of exception, should at least have some debate initiated regarding the dangers involved. Modernisation does not necessarily involve progress as Bauman reminds us that the persecution of the Jewish community was not a regression to premodern, but the ways that resulted in destructive potential within the apparent civilising process of modernity. Countries such as France have made the collection of data based on ethnic or racial backgrounds is legally prohibited 'due to its egalitarian political culture on the one hand and the political objective of assimilation on the other' (Busse 74), to avoid a replay of these tendencies of modernity. While on the other hand, Pakistan has started to employ them.

Nonetheless, as I have hinted throughout this essay, the use of biopolitics is not necessarily dangerous or catastrophic. Rabinow and Rose assert that Foucault distanced himself from the view that such power over life is unambiguously nefarious. (2006, 200). Busse writes that social statistics both empower and subject individuals to governmental power. Both the census and the identity datatbes have shown that there have been opportunities for empowerment that have been offered for them. For instance, KP, Balochistan, Federal Capital Territory have all had their representations increase in the National Assembly due to the census, and there will be an increase in the financial reserves given to them through the NFC Award when the budget is announced. The resettling of migrants, cash payments made to IDPs as compensation, as well as identification of body remains in the cases of unforeseen circumstances all show the positive impacts of these tools.

CHAPTER 8: Conclusion

Through this essay, I have tried to show how the census fits into a larger debate about the domination of Punjab over the rest of Pakistan. I argue that it, in fact, is a technology of power in the hands of a Punjab dominated state, but the use of this power has not been properly understood in mainstream discourse. In the first part of this paper, I have shown that, contrary to popular belief, the census has not been doctored so that *Punjab* would benefit from it politically, bureaucratically, and financially. I also show that despite the dominance of Punjab, that is rooted in colonial history, in all three institutions that make up the establishment, i.e. the military, bureaucracy and the democracy, these institutions do not have monolithic interests which detractors have call *Punjabi* interests. In the second half of the paper, I show that the Punjab-dominated state has deployed the census as a technology of power that essentially makes Pakistan a society of control.

Foucault has argues that the use of biopower inherently is not a nefarious thing, but has a potential of great destruction within it, as Agamben and Baumen have pointed. Learning from the catastrophic events during World War II, countries such as France have given up the collection of certain kinds of data, which should be seen as a measure on the part of the state to limit the scope of possible destruction through biopolitics. Pakistani establishment, on the other hand, has started collecting ethnicity based data, and considering the history it has of creating states of exception, this should have caused warning bells ringing in the Pakistani polity. The polity instead focused on arguments that were not factually backed. This has hindered the initiation of systematic debate on the use of biopolitics in Pakistan, and their implications, as well as the addressing of certain issues before they get out of hand.

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