SOCIAL IMPERIALISM – And how it was applied in the Bombay Presidency 1895-1925.

Ph.D. thesis by Henrik Chetan Aspengren,
Department of Politcis and International Studies,
School of Oriental and African Studies.

ABSTRACT

This thesis traces how British imperialism, as an ideology of empire, developed a social dimension by the turn of the twentieth century. Drawing on archival sources, the thesis explores what motivated British social imperialism, how knowledge and political thought operated within it, and how it translated into local colonial policy in the Bombay Presidency, British India, between 1895-1925. The study uses Michel Foucault's concept of bio-politics to engage the ways in which emerging social liberalism, and British sociology, enabled the conceptualisation and politicisation of a distinct social domain, and helped putting 'the social' into British imperialism. Sociology and social liberalism defined the social in vague terms. Yet, I will show, it was seen as key to stability and progress. It was perceived by contemporaries as contingent of, but not determined by, industrial capitalism and the emergence of modern industrial society. Liberalism, the thesis points out, had always been closely related to British imperialism in general, and the British administration of India in particular. The introduction of a social element in liberalism did not end that relationship; rather, it enabled a shift in preferred domain of intervention from the moral to the social. I outline what constituted social liberalism and how it influenced imperial thought. Sociology, in turn, delineated the social domain and made it known. I revisit turn of the twentieth-century debates within British sociology and trace how these debates informed the official introduction of sociological research into colonial India. The study examines various angles of how social imperialism translated into the Presidency. It shows how administrators began to frame interventions through social-political language, and how they utilised sociological methodology and research. It analyses actual social interventions of sanitation, education, and housing. I suggest that social interventions, evoked in the name of stability and progress, formed as measures to draw on and channel movements and tendencies within colonial society, while simultaneously promoting the state as vehicle for reform. Social interventions widened the scope of colonial state action, and so limited society- and market based approaches to conditions of life.

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Henrik Chetan Aspengren

Department of Politics and International Studies

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University of London

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This thesis traces how British imperialism, as an ideology of empire, developed a social dimension by the turn of the twentieth century. Drawing on archival sources, the thesis explores what motivated British social imperialism, how knowledge and political thought operated within it, and how it translated into local colonial policy in the Bombay Presidency, British India, between 1895-1925. The study uses Michel Foucault's concept of bio-politics to engage the ways in which emerging social liberalism, and British sociology, enabled the conceptualisation and politicisation of a distinct social domain, and helped putting 'the social' into British imperialism. Sociology and social liberalism defined the social in vague terms. Yet, I will show, it was seen as key to stability and progress. It was perceived by contemporaries as contingent of, but not determined by, industrial capitalism and the emergence of modern industrial society. Liberalism, the thesis points out, had always been closely related to British imperialism in general, and the British administration of India in particular. The introduction of a social element in liberalism did not end that relationship; rather, it enabled a shift in preferred domain of intervention from the moral to the social. I outline what constituted social liberalism and how it influenced imperial thought. Sociology, in turn, delineated the social domain and made it known. I revisit turn of the twentieth-century debates within British sociology and trace how these debates informed the official introduction of sociological research into colonial India. The study examines various angles of how social imperialism translated into the Presidency. It shows how administrators began to frame interventions through social-political language, and how they utilised sociological methodology and research. It analyses actual social interventions of sanitation, education, and housing. I suggest that social interventions, invoked in the name of stability and progress, formed as measures to draw on and channel movements and tendencies within colonial society, while simultaneously promoting the state as vehicle for reform. Social interventions widened the scope of colonial state action, and so limited society- and market based approaches to conditions of life.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments

List of abbreviations

C.R.	Contemporary Review
D.D.	Development Department
E.D.	Education Department
F.D.	Finance Department
G.B.	Government of Bombay
G.D.	General Department
G.I.	Government of India
M.S.A.	Maharashtra State Archives
N.C.	Nineteenth Century and After
O.I.O.C.	Oriental and India Office Collection
P.W.D.	Public Works Department
R.C.S.	Records of the Commissioner in Sind
S.A.	Sindh Archives
S.P.	Sociological Papers
S.R.	Sociological Review
T-GED.	Sir Patrick Geddes Collection
U.B.	University of Bombay
Univ.S.A.	University of Strathclyde Archives
W.R.	Westminster Review

Preface

Thomas Henry Holland was an energetic man. As a trained geologist, he went to Calcutta for the first time in 1890 in order to pursue studies of local geological questions. Holland soon settled into the daily routine of the Anglo-Indian community in that administrative centre of the British Raj: he joined the Calcutta Volunteer Rifles, he lectured in geology at the Presidency College, and he rose within the ranks of the Government Geological Survey. In 1903 he was appointed President of the Survey. The exclusivist character of the Raj helped Holland to sidestep Pramatha Nath Bose, who was ten years his senior in service and was considered next in line for promotion.

Holland travelled widely to study mining and industrial development. He travelled in India. He went to Europe, Australia, and to North America. Holland saw himself as an advocate for using practical scientific discoveries in processes of modern industry; he thought it would help advance the Indian economy. Holland happily accepted to lead the Indian Industrial Commission in 1916 when he was appointed to the chairmanship. Soon he was promoted to take charge of the newly formed Department of Munitions and Industries of the Government of India – and in that capacity he joined the Viceroy's Executive Council as its youngest member.[1]

But something was troubling Thomas Holland. On 19 February 1920 he was engaged in a debate in the Indian Legislative Council in Delhi concerning industrial progress in British India. In the course of debate Holland made the following remarks:

> A question of more immediate importance is that of housing of workers, especially in those industrial areas that have recently developed at a rapid rate. The reduction of factory hours is of no use to the worker so long as his so-called home is even less comfortable than the [cotton textile] mill...In addition to the general question, the [Indian] Industrial Commission

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[1] MacLeod, R.M. Entry on 'Holland, Sir Thomas Henry'. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Accessed online at http://www.oxforddnb.com 16 December 2008.

devoted very special attention to the alarming conditions at Bombay, where the difficulties are greatest and the necessity for improvement is most urgent. Every time there is a strike at Bombay, one cannot help sympathising with the strikers, because of the degenerating conditions under which they live...I have had opportunities of studying the social welfare of workers in the principal industrial areas of India, in England, in America and Australia; but I have never seen anything quite so depressing as some of the labour quarters in Bombay. On the whole, I think it not unfair or even indiscreet...to say that I would rather see the mill industry of Bombay wiped out than accept an indefinite perpetuation of the conditions under which many of the workers are necessarily compelled to live...At Bombay, the question is urgent on economic as much as humanitarian grounds.[2]

Thomas Holland's fellow members in council did not object to his social language and welfarist approach. Nor was he met by surprised comments from other British officials participating in the discussion. Some decades earlier, his statement would have been unusual, if not controversial, coming from a colonial official. But on that day in February 1920 Thomas Holland's topic – housing in Bombay – must have sounded familiar to council members; social welfare in relation to industrial development was debated frequently at this time throughout the industrialising world, and in Britain.

Holland's statement reflects how during the first quarter of the twentieth century, socialised political language instilled itself into a section of influential administrators in India, who now formed part of a wider, initially metropolitan, movement of thinkers, bureaucrats and politicians. This movement expressed concerns over the conditions of life in modern industrial society. The movement had, since the concluding decades of

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[2] Maharashtra State Archive, Mumbai [M.S.A.] Proceedings of the Indian Legislative Council 1920. Holland, T. Proceedings of 19 February 1920, 816.

the nineteenth century in Britain, helped to make political the domain of human existence called 'the social'.

What defined 'the social' as a political space was not entirely clear. The social was an elusive and ambiguous concept. Perhaps it is best described with Mitchell Dean's words as a set of 'problems, agents, institutional sites, forms of knowledge, and types of action'.[3] As such the social was conceptualised as a secularised and disenchanted domain. The idea of 'the social' framed modern society as a lived experience. It brought together the existence, effects and experiences of wage labour, of mechanisation of industry and agriculture, of rural-urban migration, and of new divisions of labour.

The social was conceptualised as a modern space that could be known rationally, and as we shall see, even scientifically. It had evolved from (but sometimes co-existed with) what were perceived to be customary and traditional ways of life. The social existed as a domain separated from, yet closely interrelated to, the domains of economy and polity. The notion of a distinct modern social domain was intimately linked to, yet not exclusively derived from, a growing awareness of the transformative force of capitalist market relations, and contingent new developments of modern industrialisation.

The politicisation of the social was also linked to a positive notion of political power. There existed at this time an optimism concerning the prospect of state machineries to tend to the side effects of industrial capitalism, and of ways of life in modern society. As will be further discussed below, the invention of a social domain now enabled this movement to connect a wide range of previously unconnected aspects of life in modern society – health, education, poverty, sanitation, living conditions, and leisure – and to question their effect on economy and polity. Such aspects of life had previously been understood as being governed by their own laws – moved by history – and left without notice by bureaucracy and politicians. Now policy makers found that in order to tend to the side effects of modern industrialisation, which they thought gave rise to radicalism, while simultaneously turn society stable, as well as accommodating towards new modes of production, previously unregulated conditions of life needed management. The social domain fell under the aegis of bureaucracies and public agencies, as it was thought that political involvement could help preserve life, increase productivity and reduce discontent.

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[3] Dean, M. (1999) *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society*. London: Sage, 66.

The ideas of this movement, which had mobilised progressive circles in Britain, were initially for domestic consumption. Later however, and this is where this thesis makes its contribution, they came to influence imperial thought and layers of imperial operators. To use Michel Foucault, and I will explain this further in chapter one: to tend to the welfare of subjects, to work through society by moulding its capacities, to come to know what mobilised society and what need it had, now seemed a more effective form of government to influential sections of imperialists than to simply dominate and coerce subjected populations. In short, for them, bio-politics, that is, the shift towards a greater concern of governing institutions for conditions of life of populations, their health and welfare, became an acknowledged aspect of imperial power.[4] To return to Foucault's vocabulary, with this shift in imperialism, sovereignty did no longer only signify power over death, but also power over life.

As I will show, ideas forming within this movement came to inform colonial administrators in India as well, especially those so-called liberal governors of the Presidencies of Bombay, Bengal and Madras. Bio-politics emerged as a motivation for colonial administration. The assertion that colonial officials considered the conditions of life of Indians may seem strange given that the already high death rate in India in the 1880s rose to disturbing 48.6 per 1000 during the period between 1911 and 1921.[5] For sure, new ideas about how to study the social and to design social interventions, as I will show, would be applied selectively in India. But the notion of a socialised imperialism that took seriously social conditions of industrialising areas of the empire left imprints in India by the turn of the twentieth-century. Tentatively at first, more pronounced around the First World War, growing social concerns in industrial areas of India would begin to have a real impact on local colonial practice.

This thesis will investigate the birth of social imperialism, its motivations, and how political thought and knowledge operated within it. This study will also show how social imperialism translated into political language, new demands for social science, and newly designed interventions of sanitation, education and housing in colonial Bombay Presidency.

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[4] Foucault, M. (2000a) 'The Birth of Biopolitics'. In Rabinow, P. (Ed) *Ethics: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984 volume 1*. London: Penguin Books.
[5] Arnold, D. (1993) *Colonizing the Body: State Medicine and Epidemic Disease in Nineteenth-Century India*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 200.

The period revisited here was, as we shall see, a time of great upheaval, anxiety and crises within empire, but also one of great optimism. The twentieth-century brought with it reformulated visions of the state's obligation to society and of how social science could contribute to disintersted statecraft. It carried ideas of participation and prospects of prosperity that would penetrate layers of both domestic and colonial society.

In Europe the practice of inventing, then regulating, the social domain contributed to the foundation of welfarism and the welfare state. The reinscription of such practices into a colonial context would, of course, leave out many positive contributions. Social imperialism did not ultimately change the focus of colonial administration in India. Undoubtedly, as Sudipta Kaviraj points out, the 'thin' colonial state remained structured around its main functions of extraction and the upholding of public order.[6] Nonetheless, the records produced by British administrators and their Indian colleagues tell of a growing imperial concern over conditions of life.

My assertion is that the birth of social imperialism reflected an important change in how sections of British administrators in India, and politicians and thinkers in Britain, conceptualised how the imperial connection might best be maintained with industrialising areas of their empire. Operators within the imperial machinery felt a need to formulate ideas about imperial rule that would answer to questions over the legitimacy of empire in the twentieth-century, while still help ensuring what they believed to be stability and progress in British dependencies. Social imperialism, I find, formed out of such efforts of formulation.

Although the force with which the social argument helped transform state society relations in Britain was watered down in India, it helped – as I will show – to reconceptualise the ways in which imperialists 'at home' and administrators 'on the spot' perceived political power as a force to employ in their formative attempts to manage society.

I will argue that emerging social imperialism brought about certain shifts in how imperialists viewed the capacity and role of imperial power and colonial government in

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[6] Kaviraj, S. (1997) 'The Modern State in India'. In Doornbos, M. and Kaviraj, S. (Eds.) *Dynamics of State Formation: India and Europe Compared.* Delhi: Sage, 225-250.

colonial society. First, with the introduction of a social component in imperialism, nineteenth century imperial obsessions with moral reform were reduced, and more comprehensive interventions were promoted. Social imperialism departed from previous ideas about moral improvement or betterment of character of colonial subjects, in that it explicitly took the social and aggregated populations as its object of reference and intervention.

Secondly, social imperialism presented bio-political measures of reaching into the social domain as effective alternatives to the use of force in the management of colonial society. When translated into a colonial context, social imperialists would have political power working through society, rather than to simply dominate or discipline it. The new approach implied that local colonial administrators must better come to know colonial society; it was an approach that demanded new forms of action-oriented and applied social knowledge to become integrated into local policy.

Thirdly, social imperialism called forth a positive notion of state power in the management of colonial society, at the expense of market- and society based action. Translated into colonial practice, social imperialism would increase social concerns of local administrations, and chalk out an expanded scope of state action. The birth of social imperialism instilled into alien and unrepresentative forms of administration a sense of urgency to tend to social problems. The sense of urgency derived from a belief that would the state not act upon social problems, neither markets nor polity would continue undisrupted.

I will argue that the introduction of a social component into imperial thought was enabled by a social turn in liberalism, and the emergence and imperial reach of British sociology. Contemporary liberalism, of course, was a broad strand. By the turn of the twentieth-century, however, the arguments of radical social liberals came to exercise great influence over liberal thought, especially during the years of Liberal Party government in Britain, 1906-14. But the social liberal movement was broader than its party; it included prominent British thinkers and economists, as well as support of subaltern classes in Britain who rallied behind the idea of a politics beyond contemporary liberal individualism. The social liberal movement's linkages to trade unions and the co-operative movements, and its broad middle-class base helped it to become a force, which, as Nikolas Rose writes, sought more than parliamentary power:

it aspired to rework liberal tenants of minimal state intervention and to transform state society relations as to 'mitigate what were now seen as the inevitable social consequences of capitalist economic arrangements'.[7]

I will show that ideas from within this movement in liberalism came to influence contemporary imperialism and its views on the reformist capacity of British imperial power. I will discuss liberalism's history of being the most active reformist ideology under British rule on the Subcontinent. Now the issue of whether to project new social liberal views within the British Empire – and if so, how to do it – posed a range of intricate questions to British imperialists and colonial administrators. Yet, as I will suggest, socialised political language and strategies seemed convincing to them; it even made a reformist Tory with gusto for precedence and glory – the then Governor of Bombay Presidency George Lloyd – embrace a social interventionist language.

Simultaneously, the new discipline of sociology came to influence domestic social liberalism and emerging social imperialism. Politicians in Britain and administrators in India alike hoped that utilising sociology would help them to 'scientifically' probe those social conditions that caused them so much anxiety. Although the work of early sociologists like August Comte and Herbert Spencer was decisive for the development of the sociological discipline itself, it was the views of practically oriented sociologists like Charles Booth, Seebohm Rowntree, and the early Patrick Geddes, that first came to influence administrators within British India. During the latter part of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth, wide surveys of the conditions in industrialising urban areas in India began to emerge.

In India, and in Bombay, administrators tried to institutionalise sociology within their reach. Traditional political economy, it seemed to some of them, could no longer provide the necessary knowledge about conditions of life in Bombay Presidency. In modern society, as Percy Anstey, principal of Sydenham College in Bombay, argued, 'progress' could not only be measured through flows of commerce and trade. One must

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[7] Rose, N. (1999) *Powers of freedom: reframing political thought.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 118.

also rigorously study and compare 'the general conditions of life, as regards housing, sanitation, education, intensity of work, and so on'.[8]

Colonial Bombay Presidency makes a compelling case for a study of how social imperialism actually translated into colonial administration. The Bombay Presidency covered a large section of the western flank of British India. It started in the lush palm groves just north of Goa in the south, ending in the harsher climate in Sind [Sindh] in current Pakistan. The port and industrial cities of the Presidency were all expanding rapidly, and many of the perceived characteristics of modern industrial society would make themselves known in these urban areas.

The city of Bombay, for a long time India's largest city and second only in size to London in the British Empire, was of great importance to the Raj. Other urban centres of the Presidency, Karachi, Ahmedabad, Allahabad, Poona, and Surat were all of great political and economic importance to the British Raj. Some of these urban centres showed early segmentation along class lines, with indigenous as well as foreign industrialists and expanding labour forces. Housing, education and sanitation – issues in any large industrial or commercial centre – became urgent problems. Congestion, ill health, illiteracy and high mortality rates began taxing local business as well as to translate into nationalist and radical political consciousness.

The cotton textile industry dominated Bombay City, as well as Ahmedabad. Trade around the port made up most of Karachi's business. Both Bombay and Karachi attracted a regular, although cyclical, influx of migrants from rural areas. As will be further detailed in chapter two, urban Bombay Presidency grew enormously during the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The city of Bombay had seen a remarkable growth since the 1850s, putting its social and economic infrastructure under intense pressure. As the British opium trade temporarily ceased during the 1860s, indigenous capital was re-directed into the cotton textile industry. By the turn of the twentieth-century the wider Bombay region was strongly integrated into the world economy, and was closely linked to neighbouring

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[8] University of Strathclyde Archives, Glasgow [Univ.S.A.]. Sir Patrick Geddes Collection [T-GED] [item nr.] 12/2/123. Anstey, P. (22 July 1922) 'Moral and Material Progress of India'. *Bombay Chronicle.*

cotton producing areas in British India. After the first textile mill was erected in the 1850s, a textile industry soon burst with activity. The city of Bombay became, along with New York and Liverpool, one of the main market places for the global cotton trade.

The cotton textile industry formed the backbone of the city's economic life for decades. From its outset, Bombay was a haven of indigenous Indian capital. Later, by 1914, Bombay City received more than 87 per cent of the total value of Indian capital investment; most of these investments were directed towards the cotton industry.[9] In 1912 the cotton textile mills employed around 110,000 workers. In 1922 the number of workers in the mills had increased to over 150,000, which, in turn, made up 73.5 per cent of the total number of workers in Bombay City.[10]

The social texture of the urban setting was very much a product of the migration patterns of workers and the lower middle-classes. Mostly, the manual workers of Bombay had arrived from the Konkan area of the Presidency, and many skilled artisans came from the Punjab. This varied social composition was, in fact, a continuation of the multi-ethnic history of Bombay. Beginning in the early 1670s, the British had invited prosperous merchants and traders from various ethnic groups to resettle in the area. These merchants and traders would, in turn, set up businesses and attract artisans from their respective regions.[11] Yet the latter period of the influx of migrants was on a much larger scale. Especially during the years surrounding the First World War, Bombay – as did Karachi – witnessed a considerable increase in population.

Karachi was of great interest to British India's northwestern regions. The city was vital for the province in Sind, which formed the northern part of the Bombay Presidency. Sind was made into a province of its own in the mid 1930s. The province differed in many ways from the rest of the Presidency. British rule was established almost 20 years later in Sind than in the southern parts of the Bombay Presidency. The population of the province was mainly Muslim, and large landowners dominated social and political life. Although the Governor of the Bombay Presidency was formally the highest authority of

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[9] Chandavarkar, R. (1994) *The Origins of Industrial Capitalism in India: Business Strategies and the Working Classes in Bombay, 1900-1940*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 26.
[10] Ibid., 78.
[11] Conlon, F.F. (1985) 'Ethnicity in a Colonial Port City, Bombay 1665-1830'. In Basu, D. (Ed.) *The Rise and Growth of the Colonial Port Cities in Asia*. Lanham: University Press of America, 49-53.

the province, it was the Commissioner in Sind who actually called the shots in the administration.

The port of Karachi began to grow significantly by the turn of the twentieth-century. Karachi lacked the great cotton industries of Bombay City; it built mainly on an entrepreneurial economy dominated by families or self-made merchant princes. To a large extent, Karachi was for a long time free from the kind of erupting tension Bombay showed. Various ethnic and sectarian groups were represented within the Municipality Commission, which was set up in the early 1860s. However, although Karachi had a Muslim majority, Hindu groups dominated its public life: charities and merchant associations were dominated by Hindu tradesmen.[12]

The trade in the port of Karachi grew as British military operations began in Mesopotamia, and as the Anglo-Persian oilfields expanded. This activity was intensified during the 1920s when cotton trade was diverted from the port in Bombay due to the cotton cess imposed there as a result of housing operations in Bombay. The East Indian Cotton Association in Bombay City suggested that between the years 1921-25 exports from Bombay port had remained stationary, while those from Karachi had increased between 400 and 500 per cent.[13]

Before turning to the actual study, I need to clarify my use of the terms 'imperialism' and 'colonialism'. I follow David Armitage in spirit, as I treat imperialism and colonialism as intertwined but separate. I will use the term imperialism in its original meaning, that is, how most contemporaries used it: as an ideology of empire within which a collection of shifting cultural, economic, and political ideas co-existed for the legitimation, and justification, of foreign dominance over discrete peoples. This ideology, in turn, structured an array of practices that underpinned and made possible the existence and running of an empire.[14] Although this study concerns exactly the time when the concept of imperialism was partly reformulated and reduced to an ultimately

[12] Metcalf, T.R. and Freitag, S.B. (1985) 'Karachi's Early Merchant Families: Entrepreneurship and Community'. In Basu, D. (Ed.) *The Rise and Growth of the Colonial Port Cities in Asia.* Lanham: University Press of America, 55-60.
[13] Oriental and India Office Collection, London [O.I.O.C.] Bombay Millowners' Association (1934) *Annual Report of the Bombay Millowners' Association.* Letter no. 3456/G/324A. East India Cotton Association to Bombay Millowners' Association 21 April 1933.
[14] Armitage, D. (2000) *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 3-4.

economic, and more precisely financial process, I will insist in using the term in its broader sense.[15]

I take colonialism to mean a set of ideas, and actual local practices, aiming to make dominant or actually imposing alien forms of government in order to diminish or replace indigenous or previous structures of government within an occupied territory. Colonialism will, in this study, exclusively relate to structures and forms of governance. In the era of formal empire, colonial structures were imperative for translating and projecting imperialism within the realm of their occupied territories.

The British governing apparatus in India was of course a complex, and multilayered, construction. The British Viceroy in Calcutta (Delhi after 1911) answered to the Cabinet in London, while formally representing the British monarch. The India Office, integrated into the day-to-day running of British India, was led by the Secretary of State for India, who formed part of Cabinet and answered to Parliament in Indian affairs.

The Viceroy in India presided over executive and legislative councils, and later over the legislative assembly. The Viceroy also led the Government of India, with its various members. Between London and Calcutta/Delhi existed a strange connection: the Government of India was vested with vast powers, yet still, petty details like official allowances or hiring of individual administrators had to be run by the India Office.

Local governments, in this case the Government of Bombay, formed part of the fiscal and military structure of British India, but exercised independence in certain matters. The Governor of Bombay presided over the Bombay Presidency's executive and legislative councils, its Government, and later, formally, over its assembly. The Governor was in regular contact with the Viceroy, as well as with the Secretary of State for India in London. Further down in the organisational chart of the Raj existed local Municipalities and local boards.

Much of the daily work of the Raj was, of course, done by the administrative body of the public services, especially the Indian Civil Service (ICS). The ICS provided the various governments in British India with influential secretaries. It also made up the bulk of the

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[15] See: Hobson, J.A. (1902) *Imperialism: a study*. London: J. Pott & Co; Lenin, V.I. ([1917] 2000) *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*. Delhi: LeftWord Classics.

Raj's lower rungs of collectors, deputy-collectors, instructors, superintendents and so forth that, taken together, made up local bureaucracy. Indians were restricted, and subsequently given a slow introduction, to the various levels of this multilayered machinery. When not further specified, it is to this complex I will refer when using the terms 'colonial state' or 'colonial administration'.

How this study combines 'social' and 'imperialism' begs a comment. Social imperialism has occasionally been used to describe the policies of radical early twentieth-century British politicians like Joseph Chamberlain, who would argue for territorial expansion and more intense exploitation within British colonies as a way of financing domestic social policy. The term has also been used to describe the ideology of Soviet Union expansionism. Rather, I take it to mean the ways in which imperial power was perceived as a force for tending to social conditions within overseas dependencies, often, but not always, through colonial governance.

Finally, as Thomas R. Metcalf points out, it is important to note how the British were less interested in jotting down a structured theory of their imperial venture, than in articulating their underlying ideals in response to particular crises or events.[16] This approach will inevitably influence my use of sources. Much like Metcalf – and I discuss this further in chapter one – I will draw on a variety of debates within British intellectual and governing milieus, as well as on discussions surfacing at the instance of implementation of particluar interventions in colonial Bombay.

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[16] Metcalf, T.R. (1995) *Ideologies of the Raj*. The New Cambridge History of India 4 (4). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, x-xi.

1. Introduction: the birth of British 'social' imperialism

The birth of social imperialism was influenced by a long British imperial engagement in South Asia. Ideas about the need to intervene into life and its natural surrounding had accompanied the British throughout their presence on the Subcontinent. In chapter two I will discuss how social imperialism built on, though departed from, ideologies and practices formed through that British engagement. In this chapter I will elaborate a conceptual framework through which the shift in imperial thought and practice that I identify can be analysed and understood.

I will discuss this in depth in chapter two, but what was distinctively new with the birth of social imperialism were the ways in which the social domain gained colonial attention as a space of intervention. Where previous interventions of the Raj had taken either the individual or the natural environment as its primary referents, social imperialism relocated those concerns to 'the social' or the 'population'. Instead of primarily focusing on the barbarian character of colonised subjects, or seed or cattle breeding, irrigation or land reclamation, 'the social' now emerged as a location for colonial intervention.[17]

Imperialism at this point attached to the colonial administration an obligation to manage colonial society and its conceived concoction of local pressures in order to – or so it was claimed – realise the potentials of that society, as well as to check its possible sources of unrest. The anxiety among those who governed India in general, and the Bombay Presidency in particular, during the first quarter of the twentieth-century was increasingly ill-concealed. Facing assertive nationalism and deteriorating conditions in industrial towns and impoverished villages, administrators worried about discontent turning more political, or even militant. But, as I will point out, among influential colonial officials there was also a growing belief in a managed society as a condition for

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[17] See for example: Arnold, D. (2005) 'Agriculture and "Improvement" in Early Colonial India: A Pre- History of Development.' *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 5 (4), 505-525; Prakash, G. (1990) *Bonded Histories: Genealogies of Labor Servitude in Colonial India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

future progress, and that life might be externally managed to support colonial society's internal yet unrealised capacity.[18]

In Britain, as I pointed out earlier, the idea of the existence of a distinct social domain was intimately bound up with the perceived emergence of modern industrial society. However, the notion of industrialising or modernising India was, as Bernhard S. Cohn has aptly described, a complicated one to handle for British officials. The Raj encompassed both an intention to enforce and sometimes invent a feudal social order based on a loyal landed feudatory, and a modernising impulse.[19]

David Cannadine finds British colonial officials influenced by a perceived affinity between the ruling classes within the realm of empire. Cannadine argues that British officials and administrators attempted to find ways to replicate the British domestic social order elsewhere. As industrial society developed, Cannadine suggests, nostalgia over a lost world at home drove administrators to resurrect an ordered and hierarchical society abroad. The dual mandate promoted by Frederick Lugard in Africa, and the protection of the native princes in India, aspired to keep in place a model of governance within the empire, with which the ruling British elites felt most at home.[20]

This ambivalence towards both past and coming ages, Michael Adas points out, ran through British society as well during the Victorian and Edwardian periods. During these periods a paternalistic conservative like Thomas Carlyle was joined in sentiment by a champion of the British working classes like Robert Owen in celebrating the prospect of improved factory and living conditions through technological advance. Scientific and technological progress marked a sign of British cultural or civilisation superiority for them both. Yet they would, although for different reasons, dull their celebratory mood by reminding themselves of the human cost of that advance.[21]

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[18] Escobar, A. (1992) 'Planning'. In Sachs, W. (Ed.) *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power*. London: Zed Books, 132-145.

[19] Cohn, B.S. (1983) 'Representing Authority in Victorian India'. In Hobsbawm, E.J. and Ranger, T.O. (Eds.) *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 165-210.

[20] Cannadine, David (2001). *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire*. London: Alllen Lane.

[21] Adas, M. (1989) *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 138.

We will see how the ambivalence towards modernisation, conservation, and reinvention was reflected also among those involved in the actual running of the empire, or those engaged in debating it during the time here under review. The ambivalence described above was dramatised by the emergence of social imperialism. It made obvious the ways in which colonial officials both nourished the romantic idea of how their rule would shield India from the onslaught of modern industrialism, while claiming to promote exactly the opposite: the rapid making of modern industrial society.

Yet very little has been said about the ways in which those ideas that underpinned greater social concerns in Britain during the latter part of the nineteenth and the first quarter of the twentieth century transplanted into imperial thought and practice. An answer to the lack of attention given to the birth and application of social imperialism could be found in the division of labour within academia itself, where rigid geographical focus sometimes tends to obscure-cross border movement of ideas.

However, what was going on in the metropolitan state and society is of great interest when trying to understand the history of South Asia, suggests historian of South Asia C.A. Bayly. I agree. In a discussion on early forms of nationalism on the Subcontinent, Bayly mentions in passing how a new 'ideology of empire' emerged during the mid 1880s in India, simultaneously as ideas about 'national efficiency' formed in Britain. Bayly points out how an expansion of scope of the British Indian administration and its wider bureaucracy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries coincided with the growth of the British domestic state.[22] The idea that the state ought to have a wider scope of action in order to more effectively manage society than was previously conceived, as we shall see in following chapters, found resonance within contemporary administrations in India.

Curiously, in his well-informed and wide-ranging study into how the British attempted to legitimise and justify their rule over India, Thomas R. Metcalf does not explicitly mention this innovation in imperial ideology that Bayly suggests was taking place during the concluding years of the nineteenth century. Metcalf organises his work on the ideologies of the Raj around the most glaring contradiction internal to British rule: whether to approach Indians as different from British people, or as similar to them. In

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[22] Bayly, C.A. (1998) *Origins of Nationality in South Asia: Patriotism and Ethical Government in the Making of Modern India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 288.

other words, were there unbridgeable differences between rulers and ruled, where the British right to govern lay in exactly that difference. Or were Indians and the British essentially the same, meaning that Indians could, under British tutelage, reach levels of European civilisation and eventually govern themselves? This was, of course, a central question miring the British Raj throughout its entire existence. Liberals, suggest Metcalf, believed in the essential similarity between discrete peoples. Contingent to whether the liberal influence over policy in India waxed or waned, Metcalf suggests, the notion of Indians and Britons as similar or different flowed and ebbed. However, Metcalf's focus never leaves the Raj and internal developments on the Subcontinent, except for a brief moment in the epilogue. Therefore, ultimately, Metcalf is unable to detect how shifting liberal ideals in turn of the twentieth-century Britain inspired new approaches to government in the colony, and his discussion on the first decades of the twentieth-century remains unnuanced.

Bayly, however, insists on the significance of the shift occuring within imperial thought around the early 1900s, and he names the Indian application of this new ideology 'Curzonism', after the British viceroy between 1899 and 1905, Lord Curzon. Curzon's viceroyalty implied a feverishly active phase in the history of the British Raj. This new 'ideology of empire' when applied in India, Bayly notes, 'projected the Indian criminal tribe, the outcast of London, and the disease-ridden slums of both colonial and metropolitan cities as sources of disorder. The state had begun to expand again to pre-empt disease and social conflict'.[23]

Bayly is right to note the globality of this approach. I will, throughout this thesis, describe how the intellectual movements at work transcend boundaries of metropole and colony, stitching them together into a single analytical field.[24] Indeed, returning to Thomas H. Holland's speech in Council in Delhi, mentioned earlier, we find that by referencing his studies of welfare in India, as well as in Australia, England and America, he indicates that the nature of the problems he draws attention to, and the causes he sees behind them, were similar across the industrialising world, while the extent of the problems, and the policies to deal with them, might differ according to context.

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[23] Bayly, 1998, 290-91.
[24] Stoler, A.L. and Cooper, F. (1997) 'Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda'. In Stoler, A.L. and Cooper, F. (Eds.) *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeoisie World*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1-56.

C.A. Bayly recognises the overseas reach of those ideas and practises he outlines. Yet, unfortunately, he does not show exactly how this new ideology of empire asserted itself, what were its influences and constituent parts, or how it was articulated and actually embedded in India through British policy.

Moreover, I disagree with Bayly on specifics. Clearly, fear of disorder and disease was most certainly a constitutive dimension of this new approach, as Bayly writes. However, there was more to it. I will show how the new approach was firmly linked to a wider reformulation of liberal tenets about the necessity of political power to address social issues, about the possibility of continued development in the face of transforming social order, and about the contemporary reconsideration of the conceived imperial obligation to lead colonised subjects on the alleged path of progress.

Bayly notes how new ideas and practices of interventionist state action evolved during a time of great material change in larger urban areas in India. Such changes were clearly felt in the Bombay Presidency, the setting in which I investigate the application of social imperialism. These transformations in social experiences have been detailed by Indian historians. Rajnarajan Chandavarkar makes ever-pressing everyday issues of housing and sanitation central to his discussion of the formation of capitalism, as well as working-class mobilisation, in India. He particularly teases out how changing social contexts in the city of Bombay became a driving force in the very formation of an urban working class.[25]

Prashant Kidambi's recent study of the Bombay City successfully draws out the ways in which the imperial connection framed urban culture and forms of governance in the face of industrial expansion and global markets.[26] By revisiting certain actual practices of government, such as housing, as well as looking into the ways in which local elites not only mediated but hybridized impulses of philanthropy, he gives an interesting case study of the ways in which a limited public sphere emerged in relation to the activities of 'the state of colonial modernity'.[27]

[25] Chandavarkar, 1994; (1998) *Imperial Power and Popular Politics: Class, Resistance and the State in India, c. 1850-1950.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[26] Kidambi, P. (2007) *The Making of an Indian Metropolis: Colonial Governance and Public Culture in Bombay, 1890-1920.* Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing.
[27] Kaviraj, 1997, 232.

Sandeep Hazareesingh's study of Bombay City takes a similar departing point to that of Kidambi. Hazareesingh, however, more clearly focuses on how modernising discourse was also appropriated by influential sections of Indian society, and as it consolidated, turned into a space of contestation.[28]

The lineage of the ways in which native elites appropriated and hybridized the various languages of modernity is, of course, important for post-colonial experiences. In two recent anthologies, authors connect Bombay City's history of growth, governance and public culture with Mumbai's current affairs.[29] These broad-ranging approaches described above have been complemented by specific historic investigations into singular topics, such as Darryl D'Monte's in-depth study of the rise and fall of Bombay's mill industry.[30] Taken together these various studies of the local setting of the Bombay Presidency provide a rich background for my discussion on the rise of social imperialism and its application in western India.

1.1. Analytical framework

In this section I will suggest an analytical framework through which the emergence and application of social imperialism, with its new concern for conditions of life of colonised populations, can be analysed. Naturally, there is no single cause driving the kind of shift in ideas with which I will be concerned here.

As I will discuss in chapter two, previously dominant imperial ideologies of reformist intervention under empire provided a conceptual scaffolding upon which new ideas formed and cut themselves loose. Material changes in local and global economic conditions, technological and scientific innovations, and demographical and

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[28] Hazeeresingh, S. (2007) *The Colonial City and the Challenge of Modernity: Urban Hegemonies and Civic Contestation in Bombay City (1900-25)*. Delhi: Orient Longman.
[29] Patel, S. and Thorner, A. (1995) *Bombay: mosaic of modern culture*. Bombay: Oxford University Press; Patel, S. and Masselos, J. (2005) *Bombay and Mumbai: The City in Transition*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
[30] D'Monte, D. (2002) *Ripping the Fabric: The Decline of Mumbai and its Mills*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

sociological factors all had a real influence on new ideas about imperial intervention, and actual practices thereof.

There is of course an intimate and dialectical relation between material change and shifting ideas, sensibilities and mentalities. Clearly, changing material circumstances are often coupled with shifts in the ways policy-makers think about the utility of political power in the management of society, why they think governance is at all necessary in particular situations, and how they imagine modalities of government be designed. At a certain point, these shifts in conceptualisation will reflect back from positions of power on a reality they were once moulded from. And so, they too contribute to historical and material changes.

In my attempt to keep focus on the rise of social concerns in imperialism and in local colonial government, I will go beyond presenting a story of how successive administrations responded to social conditions in the Bombay Presidency. I will analyse what influenced local administrations to respond the way they did, and what formed their motivations. When administrators in Bombay institutionalised social science in the Presidency in order to gain from new forms of social knowledge, or when they concerned themselves with mundane issues of sanitation, education, and housing, they did so informed by specific ideas about the necessity of turning the social domain into a political enity, and paying close attention to its effect on their future possibility to govern. As such it is not the rise of the social per se that interest me here, but the politicisation of the social within the confines of empire, and the formation of local colonial strategies for intervening into that social space. That is, I will study the social less as an object of cognition, but as a domain of state-led intervention.

Analysis of the ways in which the colonial state has shown interest in improving and reforming society and human conditions through state action has been a topic for historians and social and political theorists alike. In his study of why schemes for the improvement of human life and conditions often fail historically, James C. Scott finds explanations in what he perceives to be central to social engineering under a modern state: administrative ordering of nature and society, a high modernist ideology, an authoritarian state, and –finally – a civil society that cannot resist state interventions.[31]

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[31] Scott, J. (1998) *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Scott asserts social control as a main motivation behind social action of the state. The main object for the modern state to embark on such a project is to create order and intelligibility among objects under its rule, Scott argues. He suggests that the opposite, that is '[a]n illegible society', would be a 'hindrance to any effective intervention by the state, whether the purpose of that intervention is plunder or public welfare'.[32] In this apparently self-perpetuating process, the modern state attempts to reconfigure what Scott calls local knowledge in order to impose transparency, commonality and simple standardised planning and knowledge. This process of abstraction Scott calls 'state simplification'. For Scott, improvement of the human condition has provided an argument for penetrating every sphere of human life by the modern state.

I agree with Frederick Cooper when he suggests that this is a poor analysis of social governance. Social interventions in, for example, the Bombay Presidency were never to obtain the totalising character that Scott outlines. Clearly, the colonial administration was never in a financial position to design projects to that end; it is even highly doubtful that it was inclined to order colonial society in such ways Scott suggests. In fact, as Cooper writes, the only case of actual high modernist simplification to note in Scott's study is his own form of analysis.[33]

Of course, the coercive branches of the administration in Bombay were capable of mobilising brute force and much violence, but these were outbursts of violence rather than constant repression. In fact, it is curious how, according to Chandavarkar, India in general was far less densely policed than England. The ratio during 1900-10 in England and Wales was one policeman to every 772 people. In the Bombay Presidency the ratio was one to 1,360 people. In Bombay from 1865 onwards, local police forces were constantly under funded. Due to its insufficient funding and staffing, the police force was dependent on the neighbourhood to carry out its policing. The police force itself refrained from intervening in local issues that could be handled by local power structures.

A more sophisticated approach comes from historian Ranajit Guha. Guha, who elaborates on the notion of hegemony – or rule by consent – developed by the Italian

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[32] Ibid., 78.
[33] Cooper, F. (2005) *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 140-42.

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social theorist Antonio Gramsci, characterises the general British idiom of 'improvement' as a rather weak colonial strategy of persuasion, aiming at winning over the attachment of indigenous elites; a strategy with liberal inclination, he argues, yet a shadow of the forceful liberalism that was reforming metropolitan society.[34] Yet Guha rejects the claim made by liberal historians of the 1960s who argued that the British Raj ruled India by consent.

Guha's is a compelling analysis of colonialism as the limit of universalist aspirations of reformist metropolitan bourgeoisie, and the reluctance – or incapability – of indigenous elites acting within the strict confines of metropolitan power to establish hegemony. For Guha, the colonial state would ultimately rely on force – that is, dominance – to secure its rule.

But, I will argue, during the first quarter of the twentieth-century, the colonial state struggled to do more than simply dominate – if by domination we mean to ignore or attempt to crush the capacity for action of the dominated. In fact, during the time here under review, strategies of colonial social intervention did not win over indigenous elites; rather, administrators often faced vocal opposition from local urban business elites and influential landlords. Rent Acts or education initiatives were actively opposed by influential sections of society. Still, these interventions were not forcefully imposed upon colonial society.

It is more accurate to say that these interventions attempted to counter growing discontent among local working and middle-classes in order to win over subaltern groups. Anxious at the prospects of mobilisation or even sporadic discontent among urban subaltern groups, as we shall see in chapters three, four and five, views of how to govern colonised populations were turning towards recognition of a real capacity for action of the governed, radical or otherwise. With the colonial administrators acknowledging this potential, followed the question of how they could better draw on, channel, and also discipline this energy under the new circumstances of modern industrial society. So to argue, as Guha does by way of extending his discussion based mostly on work on the nineteenth-century Raj, that the relationship between ruler and

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[34] Guha, R. (1992) 'Dominance Without Hegemony And Its Historiography'. In Guha, R. (Ed.) *Subaltern Studies VI*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 243.

ruled during the first quarter of the twentieth-century was one of 'dominance without hegemony' is disputable.

Guha fails to acknowledge the distinct shift in how influential imperial operators – from imperialists in Britain to sections of local colonial administrations in India – began to question the effectiveness of rule by force. I will outline this in depth in chapters three and five, but during the period here under review, imperialists and local administrators began to view active management of the social realm as a more efficient way of ensuring stability and progress. To work through society and the capacity of its social domain, rather than to repress it; to improve sanitation, education and housing, might in according to the views of social imperialists, turn out a more sustainable way to reduce discontent, violence and anti-colonial sentiments. To govern successfully, thus, implied trying to understand what mobilised sections of the colonised population – and then relating to those issues. Ideas of how to carry out effective governance, in India as well as in Britain, began to link progress and stability in modern society to the further regulation of the social domain. In effect, colonial governance was at this point neither explicitly dominating nor explicitly hegemonic. Rather, it was simultaneously both.

A better understanding of the motivations of social imperialism can only be arrived at when one concentrates on exactly this aspect of modern power: its simultaneous manifestation in positive and negative forms.

1.1.1. Organising concept: bio-politics

The analytical framework of this thesis is inspired by the work of Michel Foucault. I use Foucault's conceptual apparatus selectively to point out a direction to explore, rather than being overly prescriptive. As I will discuss below, I find his conceptualisation of the new forms of government emerging at the time of the birth of liberalism highly suggestive when studying imperial relations. Liberalism and liberal forms of government were, as we shall see, constitutive in the emergence and continuation of British Empire.

A selective use of Foucault allows me to frame the various ways in which the colonial state actively began turning colonial society into an arena for social interventions, and it enables me to place within a longer intellectual history that conceptual shift, within which imperialism turned to the social. I will use Foucault to chart several reformulations in the practices of the colonial state, as well as in the ideas underpinning those practices, occurring at a time when social costs of modern industrial society in India began to have an effect on the working of government and market. In connection to this, Foucault's notions of 'bio-politics' and 'governmentality' become central to my analysis of social interventions enacted by the colonial administration.

I will hold bio-politics to be a particular form of governmentality, in which the social interventions described here formed as state-led techniques, designed to reach into society in order to manage it.[35] However, Foucault's work on bio-politics is not only useful to me as an analytical lens – I also find his historiographical account of its development helpful. Working along side Foucault's historical narrative is, as we shall see, unusual in studies of empire. It is true that bio-politics, as described by Foucault, emerged during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, that is, before the period here under review. Yet Foucualt acknowledges that the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, that is – the period of concern here, implied an intensification of state centred interventions into the social domain.[36]

Foucault outlined his concepts of governmentality and bio-politics in different series of lectures at the Collège de France during the 1970s and early 1980s. Although he reformulated his positions several times, Foucault's main problematic throughout that period remained the genealogy of the modern state. During the latter part of the period, he came to concentrate on a shift he located to the late eighteenth century, when disciplining regimes of power centred on the individual body, turned into regimes of power concerned with the management of life through various forms of government.

In his treatment of the concept of governmentality, or the art of government, Foucault takes his readers back to the the late sixteenth century, when a new kind of literature and a subsequent debate emerged concerning the relation between rulers and ruled.

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[35] See: Proccaci, G. (1991) 'Social Economy and the Government of Poverty'. In Burchell, G. (Ed.) *The Foucualt Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
[36] See: Hindess, B. (1993) 'Liberalism, socialism and democracy: variations on a governmental theme'. *Economy and Society*, 22 (3), 357-72.

What this literature did, argues Foucault, was to query the qualities of good governance. One of the more defining features of this debate, Foucault argues, was the emergence of an idea of economy as a quality within governance. Economy as a quality in governance had less to do with public revenue and public expenditure; rather, what was indicated was a measure of how to effectively exercise power while ensuring the creation of prosperity, happiness and wealth of those ruled.[37]

Philosophers of the late sixteenth century developed this idea of economy, suggests Foucault, around a certain model of governance: the family. The main responsibility of a head of the family, it was argued, was to ensure present and future welfare and prosperity for family members. Hence, in analogy, this was how the essence of statecraft was conceived during the early modern period.

However, the model of the family was not robust enough to meet the needs of territorially and demographically expanding states of the late eighteenth-century. It was too thin and too restrictive, argues Foucault as ever more phenomena were documented that were irreducible to the family. Instead, he suggests, the model of governance based on the family shifted, and re-centred the need of economy on a higher aggregate: that of 'population'.[38] This shift implies nothing less than a new technology of power, argues Foucault. Because, while previous technologies of power had been disciplinary towards the individual, and especially the body of the individual, the new population based form of government sets itself out to address human beings as a mass, or 'man-as-species'.[39]

The notion of the population was an invention without precedence. New forms of scientific knowledge helped to define populations as being entities, which were moved by certain dynamics, and inhabited and expressed certain patterns – of epidemics, of rates of birth and death. Moreover, Foucault suggests, these new dynamics internal to populations, proved to have effect on economy and polity. Epidemics, for example, caused migration that in turn caused falling productivity in cities and in the countryside. Hence these dynamics that were internal to the population had to be managed in order to

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[37] Foucault, M. (2000b) 'Governmentality'. In Faubion, J.D. (Ed.) *Power: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984 volume 3*. London: Penguin Books, 207.
[38] Ibid., 215.
[39] Foucault, M. (2003) *"Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976"*. New York: Picador, 242-243.

reduce disruptions. The dynamic of populations, in short, had 'economic effects'.[40] The integration of statistics and modern medicine into governmental policy was imperative in the process of forming the population as an integrated entity, as was ethnography, and later during the latter part of the nineteenth century, sociology.

Subsequently, populations become in Foucualt's words a 'great technological core around which the political procedures of the West transformed themselves' during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[41] That is, at this point in time, particular forms of interventions were designed to address issues at the level of the population, and so housing, urban conditions of life and public hygiene thus became concerns of government.

However, Foucualt points out, it was not necessarily the state that took the lead in social interventions; 'sub-state' institutions like welfare funds, and medical institutions were as important. Still, the invention of the population as an object of rule implied its emergence as a political problem. As such the state would, on one level, deal with the population through processes of regulation.[42]

But as bio-politics emerges, and 'power…takes life under its care' during the nineteenth century, racism asserts itself in government in new ways.[43] Racism provides, as it were, the eugenic impulse into statecraft at this point in time. It becomes an intrinsic aspect of the modern state as the denominator over life that may live and life that may die, argues Foucault. In fact, he asserts, to the notion of life as subject for improvement and development, comes attached a waiver of what life that is not .[44]

The shift towards a population-based model of governance was associated with wider changes in the context of 'political rationality', argues Foucault. Late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century liberal thought highly influenced that emerging intellectual context, he suggests. But, Foucault explains, this was not liberalism as a normative theory, or as a coherent political ideology *per se*, but liberalism as practice – 'as a

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[40] Foucault, 2000b, 216.

[41] Foucault, M. (2007) 'The Meshes of Power'. In Crampton, J.W. and Elden, S. (Eds.) *Space, Knowledge and Power: Foucualt and Geography*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 161.

[42] Foucault, 2003, 250.

[43] Ibid., 253, 254.

[44] Foucault, M. (2000) 'Security, Territory, and Population'. In Rabinow, P. (Ed.) *Ethics: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984 volume 1*. London: Penguin Books, 70.

principle and a method of rationalizing the exercise of government' or as a 'form of critical reflection on governmental practice'.[45] In short: a framework, or a form, for negotiating economy in governance.

Foucault argues that liberalism of the nineteenth century broke with the idea that government had a reason in itself; that there was such a thing as a reason of state. Instead, it was asked within liberal thought 'why, in fact, must one govern?'[46] A healthy and functioning society, contemporary liberals argued, did not need governmental intervention.[47] For contemporary liberals, the most economic model of government, Foucault points out, the model with least governmental interference, proved to be people governing themselves. Subsequently, Foucault formulates his understanding of liberalism around a notion where 'the advent of liberalism coincides with the discovery that political government could be its own undoing'.[48]

Yet if people were to be entrusted with governing themselves, they must be fit to do so, morally and materially, liberals argued. Still there existed in liberalism of that time an underlying question as to the collective capacity of a population to manage its own affairs.[49] This questioning of the self-governing capacity of populations played itself out in contemporary narratives of evolution.

However, as Foucault points out, with the intensification of bio-politics during the nineteenth century emerged a productive tension in liberal thought of the time: management of society seemed necessary, but increased management would inevitably increase the scope of the state. So from the mid nineteenth-century problems of collective welfare – public health and sanitation, for example – became problems of government, and were given wider political considerations.[50] Foucault discusses the example of early British social legislation. At first, he suggests, occasional campaigns pushed for sanitation and public health. Later, and I will discuss this more thoroughly in

[45]Foucault, (2000a), 74, 77.

[46] Ibid., 75.

[47] Osborne, T. (1996) 'Security and vitality: drains, liberalism and power in the nineteenth century'. In Barry et. al. (Eds.) *Foucault and political reason: liberalism, neo-liberalism and rationalities of government*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 99-121.

[48] Barry, A., Osborne, T. and Rose, N. (1996) 'Introduction'. In Barry et. al (Eds.) *Foucault and political reason: liberalism, neo-liberalism and rationalities of government*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 8.

[49] Duffield, M. (2005) 'Getting savages to fight barbarians: development, security and the colonial present'. *Conflict, Security & Development*, 5 (2), 146.

[50] Foucault, 2000a, 73.

chapter three, more elaborate legislation concerning conditions in factories and dwellings was enacted. Foucault later argued that as the prospect of social upheaval became acute around the time of the First World War, these interventions shifted into forms of social security systems.[51]

I will discuss this in depth in chapter three, but during the concluding decades of the nineteenth century, sensitive to changing social realities of the time, philosophers and politicians began to view markets as conditioned by the interlinked set of issues of 'the social'. This realisation caused much tension within liberalism; if markets proved unable to regulate themselves, to what extent could laissez-faire be practised in all aspects of life? If markets were linked to, even conditioned by, social realities, was the undoing of government really the best alternative, when facing growing social costs?

For contemporary liberals the state needed to effectively manage the social in order to uphold effective government.[52] Whereas the old Poor Laws and other forms of legislation in Britain had tended to patch up scratches in the social fabric, new interventions attempted to rise above the occasional campaign and to act upon the social through concerted interventions.

With the realisation that state action was necessary to tend to social costs, Foucault argues that liberalism of the interwar and post-Second World War periods broke with classical liberal bio-politics and its faltering attempts to ameliorate social conditions.[53] Foucault uses the work of the German so-called Freiburg-liberals to date the beginnings of this new liberal bio-political doctrine, which was then further elaborated by members of the same group, but after the Second World War. Economists previously associated with the Freiburg-school were highly influential in the founding phase of West German social-political policy.[54]

The Freiburg economists, according to Foucault, found state-led social interventions necessary. To their understanding, markets were never naturally given, they were always socially constructed. For them, capitalism in the Marxist sense – that is, as a

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[51] Foucault, M. (2000c) 'The Risks of Security'. In Faubion, J.D. (Ed) *Power: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984 volume 3*. London: Penguin Books, 366.
[52] Foucault, 2000a, 79.
[53] Lemke, T. (2001 May) '"The Birth of Biopolitics": Michel Foucault's Lecture at the Collège de France on neo-liberal governmentality'. *Economy and Society*, 30 (2), 193.
[54] Ibid., 192.

naturally given force with an inner logic – did not exist. Rather, what existed was a capitalist system that functioned only through political will and politically established institutions. Social realities, the Freiburg-economists argued, must be actively engaged in order for markets to function. In this sense, social interventions would create the 'historical and social conditions for the market'.[55] In other words, the workings of markets were conditioned by both conditions of life and by active state intervention. The acknowledgment of a centrality of social experience to the function of market-mechanisms marked the birth of new liberal bio-politics, Foucault argues.

However, Foucault's historiography over the increased willingness in liberalism to rely on social interventions could be complemented by a look at the rise of new liberalism in Britain, I would argue. Because in many ways, the rise of British social liberalism in the latter part of the nineteenth century actually anticipated aspects of the new liberalism of the Freiburg economists and later early West German social policy. Although British social legislation during the early twentieth century never turned out so systematic as the German new liberal program, the two strands were influenced by similar impulses. New social liberal interventionism in Britain, influences of which I will trace in the rise of social imperialism, thus constitute a specific kind of liberal bio-politics that in turn gave rise to certain techniques of intervention in the shape of social policy that were then selectively applied in the empire. However, when doing this one needs to account for a process occuring during this period, in which the category population, becomes folded in to the more abstract conceptualisation of 'the social'.

Foucault would move further, however, as he attempted to give an account for the radicalisation of liberalism under the influence of the Chicago School. Bio-politics runs as a thread through new liberal thought, according to Foucault. With the Chicago-school, he asserts, economic rationality was moved into the social domain. Within this market society political power was marginalised and even made redundant. This form of liberalism Foucault characterised as a reformulation of –although an intellectual kin to – the new liberalism of the Freiburg economists. With the experience of totalitarian ideologies in Europe fresh in mind, neo-liberals tended to mistrust political power and state-apparatuses as managers of social domains. Regulatory impulses were now to come not from the state, but from within this merged socio-economic domain. Self-help

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[55] Lemke, 2001, 195.

and self-care, rather than political power, must tend to social problems, Chicago liberals argued.[56]

1.1.2. Reception of Foucault in studies of empire

Foucault occupies a special place in contemporary social sciences and the humanities; his work has been highly influential, but also criticised from a wide range of academic perspectives. Historians, like Frederick Cooper, have been troubled by his sweeping use of sources and lack of historic specificity, and important questions have frequently been raised in this connection about the use of his terminology when analysing historical processes.[57] Cooper has also argued that when analytical concepts furnished by Foucault are put to work in historical situations, they come to sanitise the meaningful messiness of history, and repackage events into neat but flawed contrasting positions of power and counter-power.[58] It is a relevant critique, and in his lectures at the Collège de France, Foucualt often acknowledged the sketchy character of his ideas on liberal governmentality and bio-politics. Unfortunately, his premature death implied that no major works of his were to published on these issues. Yet, that does not discredit his whole suggestive approach. In fact, it leaves Foucauldian frameworks open for innovative contributions and further elaboration.

Historical sociologists have found his early work on disciplinary regimes of power in the histories of sexuality and psychiatry unconvincing, as they tend to overvalue, or so it is claimed, the ability of those regimes to actually exercise totalising social control.[59] Foucault has also been criticised for his insistence not to study practices of government in normative ways. Also, his ideas about the structuring effect of discourse have been described as unclear in terms of who could actually exercise power and agency in

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[56] Lemke, 2001, 201.
[57] Cooper, F. (1996) *Decolonization and African Society: The Labour Question in French and British Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[58] Cooper, 2005, 48-49.
[59] Haskell, T.L. (1985 April) 'Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility, Part 1'. *The American Historical Review*, 90 (2), 339-361; Haskell, T.L. (1985 June) 'Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility, Part 2'. *The American Historical Review*, 90 (3), 547-568.

political terms.[60] Moreover, Foucault has been accused of not paying attention to the constitutive role of colonial experiences in the formation of modern Europe.[61]

Yet a most heterogeneous literature has sought inspiration from Foucault, and has engaged his work critically when analysing colonial situations. Theorists of British rule in South Asia have studied the ways in which relationships between ruler and ruled constituted themselves at the level of discourse. Partha Chatterjee, for example, has consistently applied a Foucauldian framework to his studies of the construction of colonial society as an object of rule. Chatterjee explores the productiveness of discourse through a close reading of the sites where colonial power and knowledge combine: the map, the census, and the planning proceedures of the state.[62] Other scholars of colonialism, like Achille Mbembe have inverted Foucauldian terminology in their studies of liberal forms of government in order to describe colonial practises. Mbembe speaks of necro-politics, as a way to describe racialised and genocidal colonial government.[63] Timothy Mitchell also applies a Foucauldian vocabulary to colonial contexts, yet persist in a critique of what he find Foucault's euro-centrism.[64] For Mitchell the aim has been to show whether actually many of the various elements that constituted the rise of European modernity – the subject matter of Foucault's studies – in fact formed throughout European empires, not only in Europe.

A common critique of the wide use of a Foucauldian terminology, is that it works better when historicising liberal governmental practices in the 'West', than when discussing actual colonial experiences. Arun Agrawal, for one, stresses the portability of Foucauldian concepts between contexts; it is as an 'analytical optic' rather than as historical experience that makes Foucauldian concepts 'obviously relevant to other places and historical periods'.[65]

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[60] Vanaik, A. (1997) *The Furies of Indian Communalism: Religion, Modernity, and Secularization*. London: Verso.

[61] Spivak, G.C. (1988) *In Other Worlds*. New York: Routledge.

[62] See: Chatterjee, P. (1993) *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; (2004) *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World*. New York: Columbia University Press.

[63] Mbembe, A. (2003) 'Necropolitics'. *Public Culture*, 15 (1), 11-40.

[64] See: Mitchell, T. (2000) 'The Stage of Modernity'. In Mitchell, T. (Ed.) *Questions of Modernity*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1-34.

[65] Agrawal, A. (2005) *Environmentality: Technologies of Government and the Making of Subjects*. Durham: Duke University Press, 219.

Historian Gyan Prakash shares this understanding. As was the case with governance in Europe, writes Prakash, views on how to govern British India developed in relation to shifting conditions of life on the Subcontinent. Yet for unspecified – but for Prakash apparently obvious reasons – colonial ways to govern were to be 'radically discontinuous with the Western norm'.[66] Indeed, for Prakash, colonial rule was 'fundamental dislocation' of liberal forms of governance.[67]

I will argue that this is a misleading analysis, as it makes 'the West' and 'the colony' into oppositional extremes, the experience of which seems to be historically unbridgeable. Unfortunately, while assuming this, we lose out on an analysis of the ways in which the bio-political impulse internal to social imperialism adapted to changing historical circumstances, and, in fact, came to integrate metropolitan and colonial forms of governance during the period here under review. Therefore, I suggest, a more productive approach to Foucault would be to engage not only his analytical framework, but also his historiography, and apply them both onto the multifaceted experiences of empire.[68]

Because when looking closely into speeches, tracts and records produced during this period, it becomes clear that how social interventions were legitimised through political language and discursively framed, they differ less within empire than one might first assume. Considerations and inclinations that influenced ideas about how to effectively govern modern industrial society in Britain were carried into imperial thought. They even translated into local interventions in India thus furthering the integration between colony and metropole. Socially oriented projects in India during the first quarter of the twentieth century came about under the same influence that formed programmes in Britain.

Of course, the similarities I discuss are not structured around contemporary liberal political doctrine of freedom of speech or citizenship; India would be granted very little or none of that. Rather, similarities become clear when looking into the social

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[66] Prakash, G. (1999) *Another Reason: Science and the Imagination of Modern India*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 125.

[67] Ibid., 126.

[68] See: Stoler, A.L. (1995) *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things*. Durham: Duke University Press; (2002) *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

component in liberal thought and the ways in which the social side of liberalism was ideologically framed and technically operated in British and Indian society. That is, how the ideas of social intervention as necessary for the continued stability and progress of market and polity, found its way into administrative language and actual projects in India and Bombay.

1.2. The study: structure, method, sources

I have chosen to narrate the conceptual shift in imperialism – its social turn – by staying close to a range of unpublished primary and original published sources. The study relies predominantly on discourse and content analysis of English language texts: official records, departmental and committee reports, newspaper and review articles, speeches, pamphlets, and private letters.

During the course of this project I have been fortunate to become familiar with four different but very rich archives: The Maharashtra State Archives, Mumbai; The Oriental and Indian Office Collection, London; The Sindh Archives, Karachi; and the University of Strathclyde Archives, Glasgow. These archives organise the material they keep in different ways. While the collection of the private papers of Sir Patrick Geddes held in Glasgow is indexed at the level of discrete documents, the Maharashtra State Archives and the Sindh Archives lists volumes, compilations or files that, in turn, includes several discrete items. In order to be consistent I have imposed the following system. When citing archival material, I start with a reference to the archive within which the particular document could be located. I then refer to the broader series to which the cited document relates. This information is followed by a reference to the volume, compilation or file of the document. Finally I refer to the specific document, that is, for example, the letter, departmental note or government order. Information about citations is given through footnotes at the bottom of each page, along with references to the secondary literature that I have used for this study.

I have looked for and found different things in these rich archives, but while working in them I have learnt how to stick to detailed reading plans, while keeping eyes and mind open. It is the beauty as well as the strain of writing about changes in mentalities, rather

than particular historical events, that it is often not obvious which records might be more helpful.

In fact, this project started out as a much narrower enterprise. Initially fascinated by responses to spatial interventions, I ventured to study housing- and town-planning records, looking for resistance to colonial infrastructure projects, in order to connect those instances to protests in today's Mumbai. However, my interest shifted as I spent more time in the archives.

I was struck by how often I found the prefix 'social-' attached to early twentieth-century official conversations. In records produced earlier, say during the late 1870s and early 1880s, that prefix was nowhere to be found. The ways in which the term 'the social' was grafted onto these conversations seemed to escape narrow definitions of partisan or bureaucratic organisation; it presented itself in debates between members of colonial administration in Bombay, despite whether the department itself was primarily concerned with housing, finance, education or sanitation. It became the topic of new schemes of state-sponsored research in India, as well as of newly formed scientific associations in London. The social prefix emerged as a central component especially in liberal political texts about why state intervention was needed in Britain, as well as in speeches on Indian affairs and why a continuation of imperial presence was necessary in India. I realised that the ways in which that prefix of the social had found its way into imperial thought and practice was an issue rarely studied. I decided to pursue the question of why and how 'the social' came to appear in imperial thought and practice.

My study of social imperialism contains three main components. Research into each component builds on varying degrees on original and primary sources. The first component of the study – presented in chapters two and three – is a close reading of the emergence of social liberalism as a reformist ideology with imperial reach. In chapter two I look into the connection between nineteenth-century British reformist ideology and British rule in India. Historicising the application of reformist ideology under the British Raj enables me to highlight the specifics of the shift towards the social in the imperial approach in India that I detect happening by the turn of the twentieth-century.

I discuss the ways in which a broad tradition of early liberalism initially, when projected in India, formed around moral interventions aiming at reforming the character of

Indians. After the Indian Mutiny of 1857, and the subsequent consolidation of the colonial state, I suggest that moral reforms gave way for what I call revenue-enhancing reforms. These reforms were mainly environmental and spatial. They targeted specific sections of the economy, and aimed at increasing the income of the state. By the 1880s, however, a new form of intervention began to emerge, which, when described by the British themselves, was designed to preserve life. This, I argue in chapter two, makes up the preamble to the social turn in imperialism and colonial governance. Material for this chapter is, for the most part, secondary.

This overview is followed by a more detailed chapter three, where I will discuss the ways in which liberal thought and practises during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries began to place social issues at the core of its doctrine, in a much more systematic way than before. I will describe how, with the rise of social liberalism in Britain, the social domain was turned into a significant arena for governmental policy, not only in the metropole, but in India, and more specifically the Bombay Presidency. I suggest in chapter three that social issues became a concern for state action partly through the sheer force of surfacing social problems in industrial society, and partly through a new liberal philosophical emphasis on a managed social domain as a condition for economic and political progress. Social liberalism significantly expanded the bio-political assumptions of nineteenth-century liberalism: it placed political power in an active role centre stage. This shift was not simply ephemeral, it was rooted in attempts to continue yet reformulate a liberal intellectual tradition in the face of changing social realities.[69]

The invention of the social in liberalism, I will argue, influenced imperial thought. It did not constitute a full break with previous liberal ideas about empire as a civilisational force; yet it downplayed imperialism's obsession with moral reform. Instead, I will suggest, the invention of the social in liberal thought introduced into imperialism a social concern. Imperial power, it was now argued in liberal circles, could be a force for tending to the side effects of modern industrialism. And when translated into existing colonial administration, liberals now argued, socially oriented imperial power would prove much more effective in the management of society than would force.

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[69] Lemke, 2001, n. 7, 193.

Chapter three builds on original published articles from monthly or quarterly British reviews, in which radical debates about culture and politics were ongoing. Not all writers publishing in those periodicals considered themselves to be social liberals or socialist; yet they all published in those reviews to reflect standpoints of radical debate, either in the positive or negative.

The publications used in this chapter are *The Contemporary Review, Nineteenth Century (and after), The Westminster Review, The Westminster Gazette,* and occasionally *The Sociological Review.* Many of these reviews had for a long time been pillars in Victorian intellectual life, and were at the time discussed here, still vital and frequently progressive.[70] I read closely a selection of contemporary published liberal tracts on imperial issues – speeches and monographs. I also looked into correspondence between high officials in Britain and India. These are all of course biased sources, written to convey a certain point of view. One needs to engage with them critically and with caution.

The second component of the study, presented in chapter four, concerns how sociology, as a new discipline for social scientific knowledge at this time, contributed to the invention of the social in political thought, as well as how it influenced emerging social concerns of empire. This chapter uses unpublished and published primary sources. Initially, I use a specific publication: the Sociological Society's annual collection of *Sociological Papers,* which later, in 1908, became the *Sociological Review.* This publication was a vital forum for debates during the formation of modern British sociology.

More importantly, however, the Sociological Society, which stood behind the Review, helped create an institutional platform upon which contemporary British sociology was then constructed. Some researchers who frequented the sessions of the Society were, or would soon become, active within empire. I follow two of them – Harold Hart Mann and Patrick Geddes – to the Bombay Presidency. I use the papers of the Society to stress two main debates of the time: whether to restrict the influence of biology in sociology, and whether sociology was primarily an abstract, theoretical science or an applied,

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[70] Collini, S. (1991) *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain 1850-1930.* Oxford: Clarendon.

practical one. That is, crudely put, whether sociology ought to lend its hand to practical social work of the state. I also use the debates to introduce Mann and Geddes.

I then turn to a use of detailed archival sources – most of them unpublished – in order to chart the early career of sociology in India, and in particular in Bombay. This material shows the inception of sociology as a research subject in Bombay and how it, in a colonial context, became applied and was taken up by the colonial administration in Bombay, and included into its actual practises of governance. Just as it did in Britain during the time here under review, sociology as a 'science of society' in India, I will argue, worked as a methodology for coming to know the new circumstances under which the population lived in modern industrial society. And just as sociology in Britain helped promote stronger state and political involvement in social issues, it provided an argument in India for new forms of colonial social intervention. Sociology, as it were, helped promote a wider bio-political scope of colonial administration. The close connection to colonial power circumscribed the production of social knowledge. The quality of knowledge operating within social imperialism was measured by its utility for administrative action – that is, how it contributed to doing rather than to knowing.[71]

Finally, the third component of this study is presented in chapter five. Here I use detailed archival sources in order to show how social imperialism translated into actual colonial governance in the Bombay Presidency. The two South Asian archives that I have frequented, Sindh Archives in Karachi and Maharashtra State Archive in Mumbai, are very rich on detailed material. These archives mostly contain unpublished volumes, files and compilations. Printed annual reports of governmental departments, committees or other government agencies I found in London. Chapter five presents detailed accounts of the nitty gritty of colonial administration in Bombay; reflections of its internal tension, and peculiar mix of self-righteousness and constant anxiety over occupation are, of course, invaluable for this thesis. Detailed archival material shows with clarity those 'mundane governmental questions of how to rule the population of a state or an occupied territory'.[72] It elucidates how the bio-political impulse internal to social imperialism worked within quotidian life.

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[71] Adas, 1989, 142.
[72] Hindess, B. (2004) 'Liberalism – what's in a name?'. In Larner, W. and Walters, W. (Eds.) *Global Governmentality: governing international spaces*. London: Routledge, 29.

I discuss three cases. The cases are organised chronologically; this will bring out their internal connections. These three cases show, in different ways, how the colonial administration expanded its social concern by the turn of the twentieth century. I show how the administration reworked borders between state, society and markets by chalking out an enlarged bio-political scope of action on the level of everyday government.

The first case discusses the colonial administrations policy for handling an outbreak of plague in the city of Karachi, 1895-1900. This case describes how coercive social interventions were enacted by the administration, and how the colonial state marked the limit to societal self-care in the face of major social crises. The case also shows how local administrators realised that their lack of knowledge about local conditions of life, reduced the administrative ability to carry out effective governance when facing social breakdown.

The second case concerns how free and compulsory primary education was introduced to the Bombay Presidency. I pay particular attention to how debates around education were becoming increasingly interlinked with questions about productivity and stability of the work force; previously, education had a moral or civilisational slant towards reforming the character of Indians. For example, the introduction of compulsory education for children employed in factories was discussed partly on humanitarian grounds, partly as a measure to keep children from migrating from factories. With the introduction of productivist arguments for compulsory education, I argue that the state began to reach into society in innovative ways in order to define the limit to voluntary action in education.

The third case deals with urban housing and town planning in the city of Bombay. Here I discuss how the colonial administration embarked on projects to provide housing for the working and middle classes of the city. I also discuss how rent regulations were enacted in order to fix rent levels relatively lower than what local landlords claimed were market value. The issue of poor urban housing conditions formed a microcosm of official anxiety of modern society. Housing was related to a series of 'problems' of modern society: instability, alcoholism, and political radicalism. When engaging the question of urban housing, the colonial administration blended political tactics for addressing unrest with more wide ranging ideas about the making of modern society.

Urban housing policy, however, revealed the ways in which colonial officials saw a limit to what markets could accomplish in these terms, and how officials began to consider markets failing to tend to the social costs they gave rise to. That is, officials here saw the limit of laissez-faire.

The archival method I have chosen agrees with Katznelson's suggestion that broader theoretical questions of a political kind must be guided by 'historically-grounded inquiry'.[73] However, to study a colonial situation through archival research presents some intricate methodological questions. In general, as Michel-Rolph Trouillot points out, people get involved in history and produce historical 'evidence' in different capacities: as agents, but also as subjects.[74] Consequently, when using archival material produced by colonial authorities one has to be aware of how the constitution of archives themselves reflects power relations within a given social context. Official records give voice to perspectives that speak from positions of power. But while doing so, records not only gather biased information about past events. They also, in themselves, constitute a narrative of those events. An historical account for Trouillot may perhaps not even be an approximation of what happened, but an approximation of a story told by selected voices represented in the archive.

It is an important point. Having said that, however, it is easy to fall into a discussion about why certain political vocabularies were used by officials and administrators in the first place, and particularly in relation to their political behaviour. One may think that the use of certain ideas in policymaking is a mere façade, brought in to serve as rationale for an underlying political motivation. Yet, to study closely how a new set of concepts, or how a new tone, becomes introduced in political language at a certain juncture in time is important. Quentin Skinner points out why. For him the formation of ideas and ideologies is closely related to grounded historical realities, and, ultimately, agency. His is an eloquent defence of a kind of investigation between intellectual history and historical sociology attempted here. Skinner suggests that:

> what it is possible to do in politics is generally
> limited by what it is possible to legitimise. What you

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[73] Katznelson, I. (1997) 'Reflections on History, Method and Political Science.' *The Political Methodolgist*, 8, 11-14.
[74] Trouillot, M. (1995) *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

can hope to legitimise, however, depends on what courses of action you can plausibly range under existing normative principles. But this implies that even if your professed principles never operate as your motives, but only as rationalisation of your behaviour, they will nevertheless help to shape and limit what lines of action you can successfully pursue.

The bottom line for Skinner is that discourse is productive beyond the conceptual realm, it shapes ways of seeing and thinking, which, in turn, form ways of doing. So, even though it is difficult to wholly assess the role of political principles in political behaviour, it is none the less vital to discuss the intellectual conversations in which statements were made. These conversations, Skinner asserts, form a part of the expanding and changing 'political languages in which societies talk to themselves'.[75] Yet, says Skinner, studies of political language must not stand alone, they need to be combined with an historical sociological effort to contextualise the language, and to point out how it came to influence policy at a given time.

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[75] Skinner, Q.R.D. (1998) *Liberty before liberalism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 104-106.

2. Early reformist ideology under the British Raj: a history

This chapter will situate my argument of the birth of social imperialism further by way of providing an historic background to the introduction of social concerns in imperialism. Social imperialism in India formed part of a long history of reformist ideology activated through British presence. In this chapter I will suggest that the rise of social imperialism marked a departure from previous reformist ideas and subsequent interventions. In what follows I will categorise older forms of reformist ideology into two main parts: those aiming at moral reform, and those aiming at enhancing revenue. Whereas the former ideology held as its main objective to civilise Indians by reforming their character, the latter sought to increase state income. As I will point out below, there is a chronology here to be accounted for: early British reforms, that is, those occurring before the Indian Mutiny of 1857, were morally toned. Post-mutiny, and after Queen Victoria's declaration of non-interference into indigenous ways of life, revenue-enhancing reforms increased.

2.1. Liberalism and early reformist ideology under the Raj

Early nineteenth-century British reformist ideology owed much to emerging liberal thought in Britain; recent scholarship has begun to connect the history of empire with the history of liberalism and its views on betterment and improvement.[76] This literature has successfully traced how nineteenth-century liberalism evolved in close relation to the expansion and consolidation of the Second British Empire. Clearly, nineteenth-century liberal commentators did oppose particular colonial administrations, and were critical to the effects of an imperial economy. Yet often enough liberals came out supportive of empire on social as well as political grounds. And although the existence of empire and British rule in India posed a serious concern for the internal coherence of nineteenth-century liberal thought, it was to a high degree able to find justifications for it. Not only did nineteenth-century liberal philosophers like James and John Stuart Mill,

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[76] Sartori, A. (2006 September) 'The British Empire and Its Liberal Mission'. *Journal of Modern History*, 78, 623-642.

Thomas Macaulay and Edward Strachey write extensively on the subject of empire and British Indian affairs, they worked for a living within the machinery that governed British India.

The welfare of Britain and its citizens was the main focus of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century liberals' writing on the British Empire. Utilitarians like Jeremy Bentham and James Mill mainly focused on whether a British economy would benefit from British imperialism and British rule in India. Bentham disagreed with the idea that British colonies would be beneficial locations for surplus capital and surplus population. He found that money-capital invested in colonial trade withdrew investments from England. Further James Mill argued that investments in the colonies meant a real loss at home. He asserted that colonisation was actually driven by a few powerful investors, which drained the metropole of both labour and capital.[77]

However, Mill asserted, the British were in India for reasons beyond the economy. Rather, Mill suggested, British rule on the Subcontinent was beneficial as it brought civilisational advancement to Indians. James Mill incorporated in his theory of empire a belief in a singular hierarchy of human society and morals. Societies, argued Mill, could be placed on a ladder of development that was crowned by European culture. If Britain committed itself to improvement and to disperse modern civilisation on the Subcontinent, India would advance within that hierarchy of cultures.[78]

His son, John Stuart Mill, embraced the British Empire and British rule in India in general terms. His views on the scope and design of actual interventions and reforms in India shifted during his long career within the East India Company. Working alongside his father in the India House, Mill predominantly busied himself with issues regarding Indian education and Indian princes, but he took interest in various other issues concerning the administration of India. Although he initially inherited his father's views on most Indian affairs, he soon revised these into a perspective of his own. In fact, his whole intellectual career was strongly influenced by his work with Indian affairs. His years inside the India House left clear marks in his overall political philosophy.[79]

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[77] Sullivan, E. P. (1983 October) 'Liberalism and imperialism: J.S Mill's Defence of the British empire'. *Journal of the History of Ideas,* 44 (4), 599-617.

[78] Pitts, J. (2005) *A turn to empire: the rise of imperial liberalism in Britain and France.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 126.

[79] Zastoupil, L. (1994) *John Stuart Mill and India.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

John Stuart Mill never doubted the ability of British administrative power to carry out social change on the Subcontinent, or elsewhere in empire. Clearly, Mill had his reservations about colonial rule. As proved by his vocal and public criticism of the policies of Governor Eyre in Jamaica, Mill was critical to obvious abuses of power by particular colonial governments. Yet as we shall see below, his general attitude towards existing empire was positive.

The younger Mill played down economic factors in his justification of the British imperial connection with India. He argued that Indians would benefit socially and culturally under British rule. British governance would bring peace and civilisational advance, he thought, and it is in his philosophy of progress one finds his strongest justification for imperialism.[80] Mill often used India and China as illustrative examples of civilisational progress gone awry; these civilisations had, he argued, first flourished, then they became stagnant or even backward. Yet although India lacked Europe's contemporary dynamism, he suggests, it was not inherently backward. Neither was its backwardness biologically determined. Rather, just as Europe had passed through periods of stagnation, so did India. What India needed now, Mill argued, was British imperialism to stimulate its progress. This ought to be the main concern of empire, argued Mill: to uplift and improve backward Indian traditions and ways of life. Only then could India move up in the hierarchy of civilisations.[81]

On one level, suggests Bhikhu Parekh, the use of India as an example of a stationary civilisation was a pedagogical manoeuvre designed by Mill to warn his audiences in Europe what would happen to European civilisation were it not to advance. More importantly though, argues Parekh it indicates Mill's view on history. Mill's understanding of history as a teleological movement is particularly important since it so clearly shaped his view of governance.

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[80] Jahn, B. (2007) 'Barbarian Thought: Imperialism in the Philosophy of John Stuart Mill'. *Review of International Studies*, 31, 599-618.

[81] Parekh, B. (1994) 'Decolonizing Liberalism'. In Shtromas, A (Ed.) *The End of "isms"? Reflections on the Fate of Ideological Politics after Communism's Collapse*. Oxford: Blackwell, 85-103.

According to John Stuart Mill the capacity of national self-government could only be achieved by societies at a certain level of development.[82] National self-government was not there for all societies to exercise; nonetheless, it was there for all societies to aspire to. Accordingly, Mill suggests that the government of 'backward' societies such as India has to be exercised in a way which would cater for the progress of those societies, and for their moral and material development. Indeed, '[c]onduciveness to progress...includes the whole excellence of a government', he wrote in his *Consideration on Representative Government.*[83]

In a less developed society like India, Mill asserts, progressive governments face traditional obstacles that hold progress back. In order to effectively reduce such obstacles, backward societies may be ruled, and benefit from, 'despotic and civilizing rule'.[84] Moreover, Mill argued, this form of civilising despotism was not only justified in India by its capacity to undermine existing oppressive structures, but because Indians had underdeveloped capacities for reason, which made them incapable of improving when guided by their own conviction. So, Uday Singh Mehta notes, the nineteenth-century liberal justification of British rule in India came to rely on the:

> dual props of progress for India and a history that
> makes evident the need for such progress, along with
> the accompanying claim that such progress can be
> brought about only through the political interdictions
> of the empire.[85]

This acceptance and even promotion of imperial power as a progressive force by nineteenth-century liberals, Jennifer Pitts suggests, does not simply represent a gap between liberal theory and liberal practice. Nor does it mean that liberalism under the political pressure of empire was unable to live up to its theory. Rather, there exists an internal tension in nineteenth-century liberalism that forms around how it perceived and related to the different ways of life liberals actually encountered within the British Empire on one hand, and their understanding of history as an ongoing forward

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[82] Mehta, U.S. (1999) *Liberalism and Empire. A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought.* Chicago: Chicago University Press, 30.
[83] Quoted in Mehta, 1999, 103.
[84] Pitts, 2005, 139.
[85] Mehta, 1999, 87.

movement crowned by European civilisation on the other.[86] Touching India's stagnation with the industrial spirit of European (read British) civilisation, became a nineteenth-century liberal prerogative. Reforms to cater for that revival of India would only be effective under actual British rule.

2.2. Application of early reformist ideology in British India

Whether early reformist language and ideology had any real effect is, as I will show, a matter of controversy. There are at least two main scholarly approaches to the history of the Second British Empire's early interventions on the Subcontinent. While C.A. Bayly argues that India saw few actual reforms being undertaken during the years between the Battle of Plassey in 1757 and the immediate aftermath of the Indian Mutiny in 1857 – that is, the years it took for British India to geographically complete its form – Uday Singh Mehta, Richard Stokes and Thomas L. Metcalf suggest a much more active interventionist agenda.[87]

Stokes argues that early nineteenth-century reformist ideology found its practical application on the Subcontinent. He suggests that the British openly proclaimed its application of contemporary political philosophy through what they conceived an action-oriented form of governance. The preamble to this view on actual reform under empire was an Evangelical impulse, which made headway already during the last decades of the eighteenth century. Evangelicals created an intellectual framework, set on moral reform, and centred on the mission to evangelise India. This, they argued, was the main purpose of British rule in India.[88] The notion infused administrators 'on the spot' with a sense of mission to British rule on the Subcontinent, and they actively set themselves to reshape social relations as they encountered them.

Evangelicals thought that missionary work would revitalise Indian society. India had, in their view, made very early civilisational advances of 'progress of improvement', but had then been rendered 'stationary', even 'retrograde'.[89] Were India to be revived, and

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[86] Mehta, 1999, 46.
[87] Bayly, C.A. (1988) *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire*. The New Cambridge History of India, 2 (1). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[88] Stokes, E. ([1959] 1989) *The English Utilitarians and India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
[89] Ibid., 33-34.

toned in European sensibilities, these Evangelicals argued, not only would Christianity prevail, but new market opportunities would eventually open up for British manufacturers. [90]

The subsequent period, ending in 1856, has been referred to as 'the Age of Reform' in imperial relations. During this period, argues T.R. Metcalf, India was to become a laboratory for reforms under empire. British intellectuals argued that the 'spirit' of British law would frame a civilising project, underpinning British rule in India. At this time, he says, '[a]way from the contentious political environment of England, Liberalism, as a programme of reform, developed a coherence it rarely possessed at home'. [91]

With this Bayly again disagrees. He challenges the view that an 'Age of Reform' had any effect within empire. 'As for reform in Britain's greatest colony, India', Bayly writes, 'this also promised more than it delivered'. [92] Yet Metcalf's reading is shared by Mehta who writes '[f]rom the writings on India and the empire more generally, one gets the vivid sense of thought that has found a *project*'. [93]

In fact, moral reforms were riddled with tension. Administrators continually showed a deep reluctance for backing up their reformist language with actual use of political power. They were wary of what they found to be the corruptive character of power. Even so, argues Mehta, the ways in which ideas were projected within empire in general, and on the Subcontinent in particular, during the 1830s was both 'reformist and activist'. In the exercise of imperial power, Mehta suggests:

> one sees with stark clarity the sense in which the
> liberal imperialist project was paradigmatically
> political in the capacious sense, and not as an

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[90] Bayly, C.A. (1989) *Imperial Meridian. The British Empire and the World, 1780-1830.* London: Longman.
[91] Metcalf, 1995, 29.
[92] Bayly, 1989, 236-237.
[93] Mehta, 1999, 12.

instance of the various ways that liberals have sought to limit the domain of the political.[94]

The Indian Mutiny of 1857 put moral reforms on a back foot. Conservative critics argued that reformist policies were partly to blame for the uprising. Queen Victoria's proclamation of an end to interferences with Indian ways of life made reformers re-think elements of British rule in India. Instead of emphasising universalism and essential human similarity, British officials now emphatically pronounced differences between Indians and Europeans as being imperative for the British self-proclaimed right to rule.

The aim to reform Indians in order to stimulate their civilisational advance was discredited; character formation was out of fashion. Instead, ideas about racial superiority took a much stronger hold on colonial imaginations at this time. British officials now found it unnecessary to intervene into Indian society; their right to rule was given them simply through their racial capacity. Right to self-government and democratic influence became related to colour in the eyes of British imperialists.

Furthering this process of segregation, somewhat paradoxically, were domestic political reforms in Britain aimed at increased enfranchisement of urban workers in England and the granting of responsible government to white settler communities in the empire. Arguments had to be found why certain communities under empire might be extended political rights, while others clearly were not – race became the answer.[95]

Ideas promoting moral reform receded, and with the 1870s began an era of intensified revenue-enhancing interventions by the British administration.[96] This intensification was related to the consolidation of the colonial state in India, as well as to the global transformations under what Eric Hobsbawm has labelled 'the Age of Empire'. The colonial state in India formed its methods of revenue-enhancing interventions at a time in world history characterised by the systematic conquest and spread of metropolitan state power by advanced capitalist countries. During the period 1880-1914, most of the

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[94] Ibid., 80.
[95] Metcalf, 1995, 55.
[96] Bose, S. (1997) 'Instruments and Idioms of Colonial and National Development: India's Historical Experience in Comparative Perspective'. In Cooper, F. and Packard, R. (Eds.) *International Development and the Social Sciences: Essays on the History and Politics of Knowledge*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 46.

world was being formally or informally annexed and ruled by a half-dozen metropolitan states.

These developments are of course complex, but Hobsbawm stresses the increasing global economic integration of that time as the main underlying force. Technological innovations called for new types of raw material for emerging industrial sectors, and new webs of transport facilitated the connection between natural resources and production. New tastes developed in metropolitan societies, and with that changed consumer patterns. Colonial possessions were important distributors of raw material and havens of cheap labour, but they were also potential markets. For Hobsbawm, the main driver of the formation of colonial empire was the shifting and transformative structure of the capitalist world economy; the main consequences, an asymmetric relation between a capitalist metropolitan core, and a dependent periphery.[97]

2.2.1. Areas of application of early reforms

The primacy Hobsbawm assigns to economic forces in this new imperialism might be questioned. C.A. Bayly, for example, insists on the important role of political nationalism in the expansion of empire. The incorporation of new territories, Bayly suggests, formed part of an agenda of national interests on behalf of metropolitan countries.[98] What is beyond doubt, however, is a growing intensity in British revenue-enhancing interventions in India, at the cost of moral reform intervention.

New revenue-enhancing interventions targeted specific domains of economic activity in India. The agricultural economy was the preferred domain of intervention at the time. Beginning in the 1850s the British began to survey agricultural land in India. By 1920 almost all land was integrated into official documentation. During this period, the colonial state in India began to prioritise state works. Many of these projects centred on the wider Bombay region and demanded large labour forces. Initially, the British

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[97] Hobsbawm, E.J. (1987) *The Age of Empire 1875-1914*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
[98] Bayly, C.A. (2004) *The Birth of the Modern World 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons*. Oxford: Blackwell, 230.

administration restricted its own role in the works by guaranteeing private capital investment into infrastructure projects. In the 1870s, however, it took over much of the state works itself.

The vast spatial grid of irrigation and railway networks connected areas of agricultural interest to the colonial state. With irrigation systems and canal colonies in Punjab, or railways into Deccan, the British hoped to serve the double purpose of creating loyal merchant and agricultural elites, and increasing revenue from tilled lands. Ludden describes how the agricultural interest of the colonial state left imprints on political institutions: landed elites with much yield-producing land found their way into district and local boards.[99]

David Washbrook is right when he suggests that these interventions should be thought of as productivist – in other words, carried out in order to increase the profit of the state, rather than developmental.[100] But it is also important to keep in mind a point elaborated by Manu Goswami: the mobilisation, and intensified use, of labour for state works coincided with increased global economic competition. Although strategies differed between states, the view of state as the manager and developer of resources of a national economy was a similar feature in Japan and USA, as well as in Europe.[101]

2.3. The preamble to social imperialism: returning to an interventionist ideal

Revenue-enhancing interventions continued into the 1870s and 1880s. However, facing criticism in India as well as in Britain over policies of economic exploitation, new notions of British imperialism as a life-preserving force would be introduced into imperial discourse by the British themselves. With tentative ideas of imperialism as a 'humanitarian' impulse, views on imperialism as reformist and activist returned. These

[99] Ludden, D. (1999) *An Agrarian History of South Asia*. The New Cambridge History of India, 4 (4). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 180-181.
[100] Washbrook, D. (1997) 'The Rhetoric of Democracy and Development in Late Colonial India'. In Bose, S. and Jalal, A. (Eds.) *Nationalism, Democracy and Development: State and Politics in India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 36-49.
[101] Goswami, M. (2004) *Producing India: from colonial economy to national space*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 67.

new prerogatives of imperial power on the Subcontinent did not leave substantial overall imprints on the everyday life of Indians. For much of the time the idea of imperialism as life-sustaining remained a rhetorical construction. Soon however, new campaigns to address particular crises of famine, cholera, and later plague, intervened into Indian everyday life in more comprehensive ways than moral or revenue-enhancing reforms had done before. Imperial interventions into life on the Subcontinent would still not be framed as 'social' interventions, yet the build up towards such a conceptual shift was becoming evident. As such, interventions during this period anticipated and paved the way for the coming bio-politics of social imperialism.

The new inclination of the latter part of the nineteenth century to preserve life has partly been investigated in terms of its economic developmental quality.[102] Yet such accounts, however valuable, treat colonial interventions of this time as an intensified form of revenue enhancing, instead of viewing them as part of a build-up towards a new social emphasis in imperialism and colonial government.

New ideas about the capacity of imperial power to tend to conditions of life emerged at a time when the British started to feel real pressure from modern nationalist mobilisation in India. Nationalism rose as a force in India around the 1870s, as patriotic and nationalist sentiments were being recast into modern forms of association. This, argues Sumit Sarkar, manifested an 'extremely important shift' taking place within Indian intellectual milieus.[103] The Indian National Congress was the most prominent organisation to embody a nationalist position around the mid 1880s. It first met in Bombay in 1885. At this time, however, it lacked the popular base that it was later to attain.

Nationalist critique began to focus on the exploitative character of British rule, and colonial officials recognised the heat of Indian discontent. This critique found rhetorical form in the 'drain of wealth' theory, expanding into a fully-fledged nationalist economic theory. It has even been argued that the economic dimension, rather than the political, of

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[102] Sinha, S. (2008) 'Lineages of the Developmentalist State: Transnationality and Village India, 1900-1965'. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 50 (1), 57-90.

[103] Sarkar, S. ([1983] 2005) *Modern India 1885-1947*. Delhi: Macmillian India, 81-83.

the British occupation became the main focus of Indian nationalism between the early 1890s and the partition of Bengal in 1905.[104]

Nationalists like Dadabhai Naroji, R.C Dutt and Subramania Iyer now argued that the poverty of India was the result of a deliberate British economic policy, with bias towards export surplus, excessive land revenue, and destruction of indigenous handicrafts. Most British officials dismissed that claim. Very few would, like William Wedderburn – who served as president of the Indian National Congress in 1889 and again in 1910 – argue that the question whether the Government of India 'had, or had not, promoted the general prosperity of the people in its charge' ought to be addressed properly.[105]

The Congress consisted mostly of a recently formed social strata of 'professionals': lawyers, journalists, teachers and so forth who had moved towards political consciousness and middle class sensibilities through education attained within the colonial system. Landed elites were initially almost absent within the ranks of Congress, as were representation from the aristocracies of the Princely States. Even industrialists and urban merchants in Bombay and Calcutta, Sumit Sarkar points out, were wary of lending financial support to Congress's then modest ambitions. At this early point nationalist ambitions were not political in any comprehensive sense, and at the time of its formation Congress was mainly concerned with fiscal policy and taxation.[106]

The 1870s and 80s also saw a lot of localised communal, civil and religious mobilisation and unrest. A wide range of indigenous reform movements formed with religious or sectarian base. Both Muslim and upper-caste Hindu movements emerged, as well as anti-Brahmin movements.[107] There was also a rise in localised uncoordinated militant conflicts articulated through small-scale movements, addressing questions of local inequalities.[108] The energy of these latter movements was often immediately directed towards landlord oppression, yet in their extension, they resisted the

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[104] McLane, J. (2003) 'The Drain of Wealth and Indian Nationalism at the Turn of the Century'. In Balachandran, G. (Ed.) *India and the World Economy 1850-1950*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 70-92.
[105] Ibid., 72.
[106] Sarkar, 2005, 160.
[107] Jones, K.W. (1990) *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*. The New Cambridge History of India, 3(1). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[108] Sarkar, 2005, 180.

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representatives of an often far away colonial state that did little to address local subaltern demands.[109]

Fears over external threats to the borders of empire had been deeply engrained within the British imperial imagination for a long time. Suspicion of any signs of large-scale military rebellions followed in the wake of the mutiny in India in 1857. During the concluding decades of the nineteenth century, however, officials were becoming anxious over the eruptions of internal conflicts of the kind mentioned above. British officials began to view these eruptions of unrest as un-connected to ideology and political consciousness, but related to mundane problems and everyday issues in various forms.

So, during the 1880s and 1890s, the colonial administration began to take an interest in mounting ecological and economic problems, and human suffering, in India. Both the Government of India's own fact-finding missions and public opinion brought attention to growing local pressures, particularly within the agricultural sector.[110] Questions were raised over how links between British failures to handle everyday issues of nutrition, sanitation, housing and health, could conflate with wider anti-colonial sentiments.

It was the occurrence of crippling famine in Bengal, and elsewhere in British India during the 1870s and again in the 1880s, that would most decisively push the British towards returning to a more interventionist agenda in India. For Evelyn Baring, later Lord Cromer, famine in India proved to be a formative experience. Cromer formed part of a radical wing of the Liberal party, and he was at times much associated with Gladstone. His experiences in India made Gladstone suggest him as Viceroy in 1894-95; a proposal never realised. Today he is perhaps most remembered for his work Egypt, where he served as High Commissioner. I take Cromer's views as representative of an emerging focus in imperialism forming around the 1880s. Imperialism at this point, as translated into colonial policy in India, now called forth the return to a reformist and interventionist agenda. However, it was still not distinctly framed and

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[109] Guha, R. (1999) *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*. Durham: Duke University Press.
[110] Prakash, 1999, 170.

perceived as social imperialism that acted upon an integrated social domain; rather, it looked for *ad hoc* occasions to intervene and work through society.

Cromer first went to India in 1872-76 as private secretary under the Viceroyalty of Northbrook. Most of the time there he spent dealing with famine measures. He was in charge of the secret imports of rice from Burma. Many of his views on how to address social crises found resonance with Northbrook: famine committees, food handouts, and food for public work employment programmes. He also designed the controversial decision to keep exports of rice from Bengal open during famine there. As a result, secretly imported shipments of rice for famine-struck Bengal passed ships loaded with rice for export from the same area.

After a first stint in Egypt, Cromer returned to India in 1880-85 as finance member under the former Christian Socialist – now Liberal – Lord Ripon. Cromer was, according to one of his biographers Roger Owen, 'completely devoted to the idea of using Ripon's viceroyalty as an instrument of bringing Gladstonian liberalism to India'.[111] Many aspects of Cromer's thought on the British Empire and its future related to British rule in India. This is evident in his book *Ancient and Modern Imperialism,* where he compares the British Empire with the empire of the Romans. Indeed many examples of modern imperialism that he uses in his book were derived from his experiences of the British Raj during the 1870s and 1880s.[112]

In his book Cromer suggests that by the mid 1870s the Government of India had departed from previous practises of the Raj, as it became more and more concerned with the sustenance of life of its subjects, as well as their conditions of life. For him, this marked a new take, an outstanding new dimension of a modern empire. He discusses this new concern with life as the empire's 'humanitarian symptoms'. Even if the Romans might have had the will to mitigate the cruelties of nature, they did not possess the scientific knowledge that the British possessed, Cromer argues.

It is only now that imperial power has had the capacity to mitigate famine or disease, he suggests. Therefore, it was only very recently, Cromer writes, 'beneficent imperialism

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[111] Owen, R. (2004) *Lord Cromer: Victorian Imperialist, Edwardian Proconsul.* New York: Oxford University Press, 144.

[112] Cromer [Lord] (1910) *Ancient and Modern Imperialism.* [Published by permission of the Classical Association]. London: John Murray.

has been brought to bear on the subject of preserving life'. This has brought out new contradictions to empire, the consequences of which imperialists will have to work out. 'The policy of preserving and prolonging human life – even useless human life – is noble', Cromer writes, '[b]ut its execution inevitably increases the difficulty of government'.[113]

Cromer did not explicitly formulate the work of the colonial administration he had joined as 'social'; in the early 1880s he would not have thought about it as such. Yet he would conceptualise the 'humanitarian impulse' to 'prolong human life' as a novelty in imperial history. The new scope of imperial power and state action would have imprints on how governing in itself was conducted. Obviously, new forms of interventions needed elaboration, because, in order to prolong life, a colonial administration would have to reach a lot further into society. Moreover, it would need better information concerning conditions of life in both rural and urban India.

For Cromer, modern science makes an imperative component for the realisation of successful imperial interventions, and it ought to become intrinsic to imperial practises. For him science could be made to serve the state in its attempts to prolong life; knowledge could operate within modern imperialism in new ways, compared to before. Science, Cromer argues, must underpin a reformist and interventionist colonial agenda.

Lord Dufferin, Viceroy in India from 1884-88, would partly bear Cromer's standpoint out. His *Report on the Conditions of the Lower Classes of Population in Bengal* pointed in the same direction as Cromer did: a new scope of imperial involvement in everyday issues seemed necessary for the Raj to prosper, Dufferin argued. Dufferin's report was published in 1888, after Cromer had departed. The publication of the Dufferin report was a direct consequence of public, as well as official, demands of a more engaged imperial policy after those massive famines in Bengal 1876-78. The report was an empirical study of 100 villages in Bengal, discussing whether there was an insufficiency of foodstuff in India. Its findings proved controversial to London: it promoted an argument of wider inclusion of Indians into the political structure of British India, for real improvement of conditions of the lives of Indians to come about.

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[113] Ibid., 113.

For David Ludden, the period in which the Dufferin report was published marked a starting point for a new form of discourse in British India. It meant the early beginnings of a conceptual shift where the colonial state felt bound to partly reformulate its relation to Indian life and society. Thomas R. Metcalf makes a similar suggestion, but with reference to the field of state medicine. For him, the new form of interventionism was brought out by the British sense of India as a space apart, ravaged by disease and dirty environments that would ultimately make life miserable for the British.[114] According to Ludden, however, this discourse was formed within the shifting parameters of an already existing 'development regime', which had emerged simultaneously in Europe, India and the United States in the 1770s.[115]

In the late 1880s, more than 100 years after the formation of that 'development regime', Ludden goes on to argue, public opinion in India began to make demands for a broader scope in colonial interventions. A modern state in any form, it was now argued, needed to expand its efforts in looking after the well-being of its subjects, compared to before. The idea that the state had a role to play in catering for the welfare of the Indian population found resonance within urban elites, as well as within sections of the imperial administration. For the latter category, it was becoming apparent that the occurrence of '[e]veryday starvation' might threaten 'the legitimacy of a modern state', as Ludden points out.[116]

2.3.1. Late nineteenth-century interventions in Bombay

The impact of the conceptual shift Ludden describes above could be seen in colonial thoughts about how to design effective government within urban areas in India as well. However, epidemic disease and congestion formed the backdrop to which the colonial return to a reformist and interventionist agenda was set in urban India. Clearly, by the first quarter of the twentieth century, pressures on life in the urban areas were indisputable. Average life expectancy was low, levels of child mortality high, and

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[114] Metcalf, 1995, 176.
[115] Ludden, D. (1992) 'India's Development Regime'. In Dirks, N. (Ed.) *Colonialism and Culture*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 253.
[116] Ludden, 1999, 179.

overcrowding rampant. Official statistics from the city of Bombay showed how death rates rose from 27 per thousand on average during the period 1881-85, to 40.9 per thousand on average during the period 1906-10.[117] Although death rates always varied strongly when related to class, figures tell of appalling general living conditions in larger cities of the Presidency.[118]

Yet successive colonial administrations did almost nothing to avert the situation. The Government of Bombay blamed its own inefficiency in providing amenities to urban populations on the effect of the fiscal settlement it had with the Government of India in Calcutta. This settlement, it argued, made it constantly balance on the verge of bankruptcy and left with no money to look after its own subjects. However, the Government of Bombays's poor track record and previous inaction is better explained by its own former priorities; as long as the major industrial heartland and production was unaffected by the deteriorating social conditions, governing bodies paid scant attention to the situation.

Inaction did not mean that improvements were not debated. Ideas about proper drainage and better health facilities were on the table, although plans were rarely implemented. Mariam Dossal described how people like Henry Conybeare and Dr. A.H. Leith pushed for sanitary reforms in Bombay. They studied drainage systems in Britain and tried to apply the ideas to Bombay during the decades of the mid nineteenth century. For example, Conybeare argued that diseases and high mortality rates in Bombay slowed down productivity.[119] Nonetheless, little was actually done. In 1895, the Municipal Health Commissioner in Bombay City exclaimed after finding his proposal to create open drainage in parts of Bombay again rejected: '[w]e, in trying to do too much, do too little. Whenever I hear of any matter in sanitation being dependent on a big scheme, I know that such a matter will be neglected or put off for years. Big schemes are a sort of sanitary fetish for doing nothing'.[120]

[117] Klein, I. (1986) 'Urban Development and Death: Bombay City, 1870-1914'. *Modern Asian Studies*, 20 (4), 729.

[118] Raychaudhuri, S. (2001) 'Colonialism, Indigenous Elites and the Transformation of Cities in the Non-Western World: Ahmedabad (Western India), 1890-1947. *Modern Asian Studies*, 35 (3), 685.

[119] Dossal, M. (1996) *Imperial Designs and Indian Realities: The Planning of Bombay City 1845-1875.* Delhi: Oxford University Press, 135.

[120] O.I.O.C. Government of Bombay Administration Reports. *Annual Report of the Municipal Commissioner for the City of Bombay for 1894-95*, 534.

In early 1897, following the outbreak of plague in the Bombay Presidency – something I will return to in chapter five, with reference to plague measures in Karachi – the Government of Bombay began to consider a comprehensive scheme for the improvement of the city of Bombay, and this marked the return to a reformist agenda in Bombay. The initiative focused its effort on 'better ventilation of the densely inhabited parts, the removal of insanitary dwellings, and the prevention of overcrowding'.

A proposal of how to organise and finance this scheme was put before the Municipal Corporation in September 1897. The proposal included the formation of a 'City Improvement Trust'. The Trust would be the first of its kind in India, and it would have as its objectives to initiate the making of new streets, the opening up of crowded localities, and reclaiming lands from the sea to provide room for the expansion of the city of Bombay. The Trust would also construct 'sanitary dwellings for the poor'.

A year after the proposal was made public, the Governor-General of India published his assent to the scheme, and in November 1898 the Bombay Improvement Trust began to work. The Trust began to survey Bombay City in order to get a sense of current conditions. The Improvement Trust found how 'providing better housing for the working classes...being a matter of great urgency, second only in importance to the measure to be taken to develop the revenue resources'.[121]

In its work the Trust was much helped by the Indian Census of March 1901. It had previously encountered a shortage of information during its first year of work, but now, census statistics included:

> [t]he numeration of the population by blocks of small area...the number of people living in tenements, and the number of rooms occupied by each family...

So, the Trust found:

> '[w]hen the results have been classified Bombay will possess, for the first time, data showing exactly what areas are most

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[121] O.I.O.C. Government of Bombay Administration Reports. *Annual Report of the City of Bombay Improvement Trust. Administration Report for the year ending 31ˢᵗ March 1899*, 1-2.

densely populated, the classes which cause such crowding, the nature of accommodation which finds most favour with the people, and the scope of schemes intended to move bodies of persons united together by common occupation, village ties, &c.[122]

Although it had first-hand and, for the first time ever, detailed knowledge about conditions of life in Bombay, the Improvement Trust found its work difficult. The main problem was that the low wages of the working classes made it difficult for prospective tenants to pay rents according to market value. Therefore, the Trust suggested, 'exceedingly low rents' were to be fixed for the new tenants of the houses it would construct.[123]

Prashant Kidambi has detailed the failure of the Improvement Trust, and this will be further discussed in chapter five.[124] To put the real effects of those early interventions into perspective: nearly 25 years later conditions had not improved. Governor George Lloyd found in 1920:

sufficient proof of the horror of the conditions that two-thirds of the people in this city live in insanitary and airless one room tenements, and that more than 50 per cent. [SIC] of the children in this city die before they reached the age of eighteen months. For all that makes home life pleasant – light, air space and cleanliness, it is indeed a city of dearth – for the children it is a city of death.[125]

In fact, conditions were steadily deteriorating, and after Lloyd had moved on to a High Commissionership in Egypt, they still – to use the words of Stanley Reed, the long-time

[122] O.I.O.C. Government of Bombay Administration Reports. *Annual Report of the City of Bombay Improvement Trust. Administration Report for the year ending 31ˢᵗ March 1901*, 4.

[123] O.I.O.C. Government of Bombay Administration Reports. *Annual Report of the City of Bombay Bombay Improvement Trust. Administration Report for the year ending 31ˢᵗ March 1902*, 13-14.

[124] Kidambi, 2007, 71-114.

[125] O.I.O.C. Bombay Legislative Council Proceedings 1920. Lloyd, G. Proceedings of 3 August 1920, 562.

editor of The Times of India – 'sadly perplex[ed] the industrialist, the humanitarian and the sociologist'.[126]

2.4. Conclusion

In this chapter I have described different phases of imperial thought with reference to reformist ideology, and how it was applied on the Subcontinent. The discussion shows how liberalism enjoyed a privileged place in the history of reformist ideology in empire, and especially under the British Raj.

Whether reformist ideology left any real material inprints in India has been debated. However, certain interventions under the Raj clearly carried the mark of reformist ideology. The character of actual interventions, I argued, shifted over time. I made a categorisation of three phases of interventions on the Subcontinent. I introduced this categorisation in order to better elucidate the shift towards the phase of reforms I argue occurred with the rise of social imperialism.

I suggested that the first phase of interventions was characterised by moral reforms, aiming at transforming the moral character of Indians. This phase, I argued, receded after the Indian Mutiny of 1857, when stability and non-intervention became watchwords in British policy. The second category I suggested, revenue-enahancing interventions, soared as the colonial state consolidated in India around the 1860s. This phase was carried into the age of inter-imperial competition during the latter part of the century. Interventions of this kind helped to increase the income of the colonial state in India.

However, I suggested that during the latter part of this phase – as human suffering and ecological consequences of earlier phases of reforms became all too obvious and as a nationalist critique of British policy asserted itself - a third phase of reformist ideology began to surface. I discussed how famine and epidemics enabled the introduction of a new type of rhetoric within imperialism. Interventions emanating from this rhetoric

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[126] Reed, S. (1925) 'Introduction'. In Burnett-Hurst A. R. *Labour and Housing in Bombay: A Study in the Economic Conditions of the Wage-earning Classes in Bombay*. London: P.S. King, 10.

were highly tentative at first, but allegedly aimed to preserve the lives of colonised subjects. These interventions had yet to be framed as social. Nonetheless, I suggest them in order to mark the preamble to a phase of social interventions. In my next chapter I will show how a returning reformist agenda in India would increasingly be framed in terms of intervening into a newly conceptualised dimension of human existence: 'the social'. To this process we must now turn.

3. Social imperialism and liberal thought, with reference to colonial Bombay

I have discussed how liberalism remained the most pronounced reformist ideology within empire throughout the nineteenth century. To early nineteenth-century liberals, colonial forms of governance were tolerable, given they improved what was perceived to be a savage or backward way of life. The liberals' concern was a moral one at this point and did not concern conditions of life but the character and customs of various peoples. Later, after the Indian Mutiny in 1857, and at the time of the consolidation of the colonial state, the reformist agenda turned more explicitly towards revenue-enhancing reforms. At this time, occasional interventions by the colonial state into colonial society were not really sustained by a coherent programme. That is not to say that those interventions did not have real social consequences, which of course they had. But colonial administrations in India had yet to make a conscious distinction between interventions with social consequences on the one hand, and a coherent body of ideas and strategies utilised to actually work through society, on the other. For this to happen we have to wait until the birth of social imperialism.

Mark Duffield brings to attention how it has been discussed whether liberalism at this early point really embraced empire *per se*, or whether liberalism only came to be exercised through an imperial structure.[127] For C.A. Bayly the question is not whether imperialism forms an important part of liberal throught, but how empire as an historical entity came to express and embody aspects of nineteenth-century liberalism. To that, Bayly suggests liberal ideals were not taken up in their entirety when diffused within empire. Rather, they found new shape as they were articulated locally.[128]

Both views are important to reflect upon. In this chapter I will show how a section of influential liberal thinkers and politicians of the late nineteenth century and first quarter of the twentieth continued to embrace the ideological underpinnings of empire as partly a product of liberalism. But I will also show how the application locally of new liberal

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[127] Duffield, M. (2007) 'Development, Territories, and People: Consolidating the External Sovereign Frontier'. *Alternatives*, 32, 228.
[128] Bayly, 2004, 295.

reformist ideas was always conditioned by their operation within a specific – read colonial – historic context.

In this chapter I will show how liberalism would continue to inform imperialism during the early twentieth century, yet that it would do so from a new position. Liberal imperialism, I will point out, was influenced by a shift in liberal thought that implied the formation of 'the social' as a political entity.

During the time under review in this thesis, liberalism developed and included an explicit social dimension. Following on from this process liberal ideas and political language came to express a positive view of state-guided interventions into conditions of life. My argument in this chapter is that this positive view exercised a strong influence over liberal views on the use of imperial power, and in extension, the role of the colonial state *vis à vis* colonial society. This view, in fact, partly altered the idea of how successful and effective colonial governance must be designed: bio-political consideration became an alternative to force.

As we shall see below, the new outlook of liberalism was historically anchored in a wider rethinking of industrial society, assessing its potentials and pitfalls. Subsequently, this chapter takes the story forward into the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It does so by describing the ways in which radical liberal thought began to intensify its bio-political considerations by constituting the social as a distinct domain, with similar qualities, wherever geographically industrial society would emerge, and to assign to political power an evident role in the managing of this domain.

Faced with experiences of industrialising areas in India such as Bombay, liberals partly reframed their ideas of existing colonialism around a sense of similarity rather than difference. For them, it was the conceived resemblance of social life in places like Bombay and Birmingham that made a continuation of colonialism justified; through experience, they argued, Europeans knew how to effectively govern emerging industrial societies. Moreover, believing that Bombay now faced similar social problems that industrial Europe had once faced – and to a certain extent still faced – proved, paradoxically, how the liberal idea of progress had universal applicability.

Liberals were now less inclined to think of laissez-faire as the solution to societal problems. Indeed, they outlined radical approaches to increased interventions into society. Returning to my argument in this chapter: as the liberal case for new forms of social governance found form in Britain, it influenced ideas on imperialism in a specific way. While colonial administrators of the 1880s, as we saw at the end of my last chapter, began to believe again in a more interventionist agenda, they did not conceptualise such interventions holistically, or as social. During the first quarter of the twentieth century, however, liberals as well as colonial administrators increasingly began to portray social questions as questions of governance. Effective colonial government, they argued, needed to pay attention to the conditions of the newly conceptualised social domain; to manage modern industrial society turned into an aspect of imperial power. In order to begin managing society, however, those liberals engaged in the running of India found they needed to rely less on force, and more on working through the capacities of society.

3.1. The invention of 'the social' in liberalism

In this section I will revisit a period starting in the latter part of the nineteenth century, continuing in the first quarter or so of the twentieth, within which British liberal thought and action were partly reformulated around the notion of a social domain in need of formalised regulation.[129] I will discuss how the surfacing pressures of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Britain produced a British liberal criticism of both the basic assumptions of previous forms of liberal thought, and the kind of society liberals of that time saw emerging. I will demonstrate how early twentieth-century liberal thought developed new dimensions by acknowledging the fabric of society put under stress by the entrenchment of the modern industrial system, while retaining some old presumptions; early twentieth-century liberals were still hostile to the landed aristocracy.[130] In a later section I will tease out the ways in which the emergence of social imperialism was influenced by the invention and politicisation of the social domain within liberalism.

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[129] Freeden, M. (1978) *The New Liberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[130] P. J. (2002) *Hobson and Imperialism: Radicalism, Imperialism and Finance 1887-1938*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

As will be pointed out later in this section, liberal politicians, activists and commentators like J.A. Hobson, L.T. Hobhouse, Herbert L. Samuel, and E.S. Montagu – to mention only a few – found the destitution of modern industrial towns harmful to both individuals and society. Governments and authorities, liberals now argued, had an obligation to act on these issues. Early twentieth-century liberals picked up on John Stuart Mill's assertion that recent periods of material progress had done little to create a more advanced, sustainable and socially orientated society. In fact, large sections of society had gained very little from the coming of industrial society, they argued. Instead, they found that years of recent rapid development of modern industry had not really improved, but rather worsened the conditions under which society evolved.[131]

The radical liberal movement of this period pushed for a conceptual shift, pronouncing social rather than moral reformist action. This conceptual shift, as we shall see, had an impact on imperialism: imperial thought projected in India, which had recently retrieved its interventionist energy, began to reframe its agenda in a social language. The invention of the social helped articulate a liberal critique of capitalism, and helped to promote a new ideal of governance. This was an ideal that came with expanded bio-political assumptions firmly at its core: in order for industrial society to peacefully evolve, to avoid friction and allow for progress, the welfare of populations must be an active concern of governments.

Very soon, as I will show, this line of liberal thought turned into a distinct view of progress, freedom, civics and ethics, stressing the need for an active utilisation of political power within society.[132] This notion, as I will point out, applied domestically as well as within empire. Subsequently, as I will discuss in this section, by the late nineteenth century, contrary to the tradition of liberalism, liberal politicians and thinkers found much more extensive social interventions justified. As we shall see below, they found in comprehensive programmes of state-led reform in areas of sanitation, housing and education one of social liberalism's more defining expressions.

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[131] Hobson, J.A. (1920 November) 'The new Industrial revolution'. *Contemporary Review* [C.R.], 98, 638-645.
[132] Rose, 1999, 114-33.

As will be discussed in depth in chapter four with reference to both Britain and India, this movement was closely related to the emergence of the new discipline of 'sociology'.[133] Sociological surveys of urban settings provided telling evidence of the extent of poor housing conditions, meagre household budgets, and low levels of education in industrialising areas of turn of the twentieth-century British Empire.

3.1.1. The constitution of social liberalism: movement and milieu

Of course, this form of social liberalism did not evolve out of touch with experiences in contemporary society: it was anchored in an intellectual, social and political milieu. The way liberalism constituted the social domain as an area of political concern was much indebted to popular nineteenth-century movements in Britain. Obviously, British social liberalism was closely related to the politics and ideas of the period of Gladstonian liberalism and Disraelian reformist Toryism. Indeed, during the period 1867-1894, several socially informed Acts were piloted through Parliament. Yet although both Gladstone and Disraeli led governments that emphasised political and social reform, they still primarily focused on single issues rather than proposing systematic reform.[134]

Gladstonian reforms were indebted to the constitution and mobilisation of the liberal political constituency during a period connecting the first and second half of the nineteenth century. This constituency had a broad social base; in fact, it was a popular liberal movement with strong subaltern influence. Historian Eugenio Biagini even points out the resemblance between the social composition of this early popular liberal movement and that of the sans-culotterie in revolutionary France. Already around the 1830s, Biagini suggests, the British liberal movement built on the support of workers, artisans and petty traders.[135] What bound the movement together, Gertrude Himmelfarb as well as Biagini argues, was a sense of shared values and virtues, rather than class

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[133] Collini, S. (1980) 'Political Theory and the "Science of Society" in Victorian Britain'. *The History Journal*, 23 (1), 203-231.

[134] Lee, S. J. (2005) *Gladstone and Disraeli*. London: Routledge, 46.

[135] Biagini, E.F. (1992) *Liberty, retrenchment and reform: popular liberalism in the age of Gladstone, 1860-1880*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 10.

consciousness. These groups saw themselves in combination as 'the people', in opposition to the 'old corruption' and 'privilege' of landed aristocracy.[136]

By the mid nineteenth century, with the subsequent rise of Gladstone as the liberal politician *per excellence*, radical reformers in Britain found a home in the liberal movement, rather than turning to revolutionary socialism as their counterparts in continental Europe did. The ability of the liberal movement to mobilise radical elements was not restricted to urban areas, Biagini argues; it extended into the countryside as well. Moreover, by the mid nineteenth century the liberal movement had developed a close attachment to organised labour. Consequently, as P.J. Cain points out, the Liberal Party itself was a grand coalition of various forces.[137] This broad popular liberal movement showed support for certain protective social legislation such as the Factory Acts of the 1860s and 1870s.

Yet with reference to such acts as the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864-69, and Disraeli's Artizans' Dwellings Act of 1875, Biagini points out how hostility towards excessive state intervention prevailed.[138] Workers often saw social interventions as reactionary in that they hit at alternative forms of welfare provision by cooperatives and Friendly Societies. When workers failed to sustain themselves, Biagini argues, they would rather turn to trade unions or co-operatives for relief, than place their demands at the level of the state.

The co-operative movement rendered strong public support among prominent liberals such as John Stuart Mill. Communal production and distribution of resources without state-interference signified independence, co-operativists argued. When it came to combating ever-more accentuated social problems though, trade unionists and co-operativists turned to the state. They ascribed to the state a responsibility to remove intemperance, poverty and crime.[139] Workers and artisans argued for a liberal minimalist state. However, as we shall see, with the rise of social liberalism in Britain, these views were changing.

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[136] Himmelfarb, G. (1994) *The De-moralization of Society: From Victorian Virtues to Modern Values*. New York: Vintage Books.
[137] Cain, 2002, 15.
[138] Biagini, 1992, 85-87.
[139] Ibid., 144-148.

Clearly, the mobilisation of a broad popular base helped metropolitan liberalism to develop more nuanced social thought. It made it possible to conceptualise, and then to enter, the social domain through a concern for everyday issues. At one level it was important to act on issues that in a direct way affected a significant part of the liberal constituency. Previous claims, made by historians, that support from subaltern groups for liberal politics in Britain was irrational, or was instilled into their political consciousness by a detached workers' aristocracy, seem contestable, Biagini argues. In fact, he suggests the opposite. For him, 'the programme of reforms proposed by the party leaders offered convincing solutions to some of the problems perceived to be real and urgent at the time'.[140]

The liberal concern for everyday social issues became even more pronounced during the end of the 1880s and the beginning of the 1890s, that is, during the formative years of British social liberalism. At this time Britain had seen significant slumps and recessions, a situation liberals believed Gladstonian politics was unable to correct. Productivity in manufacturing and agricultural sectors fell sharply in the 1870s, causing high unemployment as well as migration into industrial towns. During the late 1880s, rural recession again forced country people on the move. London was the foremost magnet for both domestic and international migration. However, London had already lost out on some of its major employers – the shipbuilding industries – and increasing pressures and competition for resources, such as housing and employment, began to surface. The eastern parts of London saw rioting during the 1880s as a consequence thereof.[141]

The influential liberal philosopher T.H. Green argued that politics had to respond to the problems facing industrial society, not merely because individuals suffered, but because these problems threatened social harmony and moral community. Green feared emerging tensions might result in widespread class conflict. T.H. Green strongly influenced a generation of young British radical liberals, who would later become instrumental in the development of social liberalism. Two of them, Herbert Luis Samuel and L.T. Hobhouse, will be discussed below.

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[140] Ibid., 6.
[141] Marriott, J. (2003) *The Other Empire: Metropolis, India and Progress in the Colonial Imagination*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

The liberal social philosopher and sociologist Leonard T. Hobhouse was to become one of the leading lights of the early twentieth-century radical intellectual milieu in Britain. Being one of the foremost theoreticians of social liberalism, his reworking of liberal principles expressed, and also influenced, the wider social turn in liberalism. Hobhouse wrote frequently for the press, and lectured and published through his affiliation with the London School of Economics.

It is perhaps unfair to include an ardent anti-imperialist like Hobhouse in an introduction to radical liberalism and its influence on colonial governance. Hobhouse was a member of a 'Foreign Policy Committee', which was created to inform Members of Parliament and journalists about world politics. Through this platform Hobhouse voiced his critique of the contemporary Fabian endorsement of expansive imperialism. And he clearly distanced himself from an emerging group of liberal imperialists including Rosebery, Asquith and Haldane, who viewed territorial expansion as important for financing domestic social policy.

However, being an anti-imperialist in the economic field, and having a nuanced view on the need for self-government within empire, did not prevent Hobhouse from keeping John Morley's modest pragmatism during the 1900s towards political reform as a Secretary of State for India in high esteem. Also, describing himself as influenced by a "Gladstonian principle of interventionism" in foreign affairs, Hobhouse had a complex view on empire as a historic reality.[142] He saw himself as an internationalist but was not anti-empire.

Hobhouse entered Oxford in 1883, when liberal disenchantment with Gladstonian politics began to emerge. He elaborated his view on social reform through work in several disciplines, predominantly philosophy. In his study of organised labour, which was published as his first major work *The Labour Movement*, Hobhouse engaged the question of how to integrate forces of trade unionism with radical liberalism. Aiding the labour movement, as well as educating co-operatives in economics, were his principle

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[142] Collini, S. (1979) *Liberalism and Sociology: L.T. Hobhouse and Political Argument in England 1880-1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 81-84.

activities outside his academic work. During the late 1890s Hobhouse began to write for the Manchester Guardian, and he moved to Manchester in order to devote his time to the newspaper. Yet he stayed loyal to his political activities in London, and kept in close touch with developments in the capital.

In the early 1900s Hobhouse began to produce ideas about a reformed liberalism. He was convinced that the principle of laissez-faire could not fully apply to contemporary state society relations, as the liberal tradition would have it. So when Hobhouse moved to London in the beginning of the 1900s, he became involved in practical politics concerning labour issues. Through this involvement he began to outline what he called 'liberal socialism'. His idea of liberal socialism led him to reconcile forms of collectivism and individual freedom: he called for liberals and collectivists to stay close, although not merge organisationally.

As mentioned above in the introductory chapter, at this time Hobhouse shifted attention to sociology as a scientific approach to resolve problems of progress, freedom and politics in modern industrial society. Hobhouse was instrumental in the founding of the Sociological Society. He found sociology could work for advancing his political thinking. We shall see below, and again in chapter four, how Hobhouse's sociological studies became strongly linked to his political ideas, not least his ideas about state-society relations. The work of the Sociological Society will be further detailed in chapter four, but it was initiated by amateur sociologist Victor Branford, and he was, in turn, closely aided by Professor Patrick Geddes. We will come to know Geddes better in chapter four.

Hobhouse and Geddes shared many assumptions concerning sociology, although they differed in ideas about methodology and the scope of the sociological discipline, and often collided on administrative issues of the Sociological Society. Moreover, Geddes was less politically active than Hobhouse. In 1907 Hobhouse became the first professor of sociology at the University of London. The post was initially designed for Geddes, but the position went to Hobhouse after Geddes performed awkwardly in the interview.

Hobhouse was contemporary to, and were also to influence, Herbert Luis Samuel. The two of them worked together on several occasions. They belonged to a broad radical milieu that included Fabians like Beatrice (Potter) Webb and Sidney Webb, and George Bernhard Shaw, and Christian Socialists like Sidney Ball. Both Samuel and Hobhouse took part in debates with the liberal coterie The Rainbow Circle, that was founded in 1894. Its members initially met in the Rainbow Tavern on Fleet Street in London, and at the National Liberal Club. Here contemporary political issues would be hammered out among influential figures like the Fabian and later Colonial Secretary Sidney Olivier, economists J.A. Hobson and William Clarke, and future Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald. They frequented Beatrice Webb's social gatherings and debates held at her home, although none of them were members of the Fabian Society. As I mentioned earlier, Hobhouse would soon become highly critical of the Fabian Society, and he officially denounced their tract of 1894 *Fabianism and The Empire.*

Herbert Luis Samuel was a liberal party man, two-time Home Secretary and also High Commissioner for Palestine 1920-25. The main political turning point for Samuel had been the London Great Dock Strike in 1889. He describes the years around the strike as decisive for a growing political consciousness among a whole group of young radical liberals. The strike in the docks, and the mood developing in London at the time of the strike, especially in poorer working-class areas, proved most important also for Samuel's cousin, the future Secretary of State for India E.S. Montagu. Both Samuel and Montagu were attached to the poor East London neighbourhoods of Whitechapel, where E.S. Montagu's father served as a Liberal MP for Tower Hamlets between 1885-1900.

H.L. Samuel was first introduced to the poverty of urban England as he campaigned for his brother Stuart Samuel in Whitechapel for the London county council elections in 1888.[143] Knocking on doors in Whitechapel was an eye-opener for Samuel. These events were formative for his later political career, which was devoted to social reform, and as we shall see, imperial issues.[144] For the first time he went into workers' houses, and to the docks, and he saw sweatshops and home industries. While his brother believed in charity as a way of countering poverty, Samuel now found state action vital:

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[143] Samuel, H. L. (1945) *Memoirs*. London: The Cresset Press.
[144] Wasserstein, B. Entry on 'Samuel, Herbert Louis'. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.* Accessed online http://www.oxforddnb.com 9 April 2008.

'[i]ndispensable as the charities were it was obvious that the task was beyond their scope'.[145]

Soon after the election Samuel went to Oxford, where he met Hobhouse. Together with Hobhouse, Samuel and a group of friends – including H.E.A. Cotton who would later be posted in Bengal, and sit in the legislature there, and who would also preside over the Indian National Congress – regularly went out to the countryside with a William Hines, the college chimney sweep and a vigorous organiser of radical political meetings.

However, it was to London, not the small university town, this group of young radical liberals longed for and belonged to, as London was at the centre of the reformulation of liberal ideas by the turn of the twentieth century. Social liberalism related closely to social realities and experiences of industrial society. It was at the docks, in the working-class areas, and in the newspaper rooms of Fleet Street, where the sense of urgency to reconceptualise political responsibility to act on conditions of life in the face of the pressures of modern society was most closely felt.

That urge to solve recurring crises and their effect on society caused much activity within liberal circles, and new legislation had made the emerging liberal concern for social issues even more important. Samuel identified that the 1870 Reform Act – and the expansion of franchise in 1868 and 1884, had begun to have a real impact on political thought. Politicians, Samuel writes, had to take into account an electorate that included large sections of the working classes. 'The voters were concerned more and more to better the conditions of their own lives', he writes, and so promoting social reform became increasingly important in order to win votes. Still, however, in the early 1890s, the understanding of urban poverty among liberals could be highly un-nuanced. Following sociologist Charles Booth's conclusions in his surveys of London, liberals such as J.A. Hobson found the urban poor an unemployable 'residuum' whose living environment would ultimately cause their degeneration. Life in the city was ugly and full of strife, liberals argued, and for that reason it needed active management.[146]

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[145] Samuel, 1945, 7.
[146] Cain, 2002, 28.

3.1.2. Early social liberal views

The problem emerging for liberals during the first quarter of the twentieth century was chiefly that wellbeing and liberty did not seem to come about in society when removing those obvious restrictions that had been imposed on individuals. Although people were freed from the old traditional bonds of a feudal society, or were left alone from state interference, the realities of industrial urban Britain seemed far from prosperous. This acknowledgment was bound to have a clear effect on how one may think about the realisation of progress, liberal political observers of the time suggested. In the face of the new kind of inequalities produced by industrial society, liberals were forced to think in new ways about how to successfully strike a balance between coercion and liberty, individualism and collective action, and how to govern according to new times.

On a discursive level, the question was analysed, as we shall see below, by liberal commentators like L.T. Hobhouse and Robert G. Davis. For them, and for their fellow liberal activists, the kind of individualism promoted by nineteenth-century liberalism had come to the road's end; it had to be replaced by a 'social' liberalism that saw the freedom and prosperity of the individual linked to the freedom and prosperity of others. To what extent debates within the liberal press influenced actual politics is always difficult to measure. Anyhow, discourse helped to conceptualise growing social concerns, and reframe and update previous bio-political ideas.

Late nineteenth-century liberals stayed true to their liberal heritage by delivering an economic critique of how landed elites monopolised the rural economy, thus keeping it unproductive, and thereby causing large inflows of labour into industrial towns. They would, however, develop original ideas about life in modern industrial society, originating from what they saw and experienced in industrial areas. Many of these liberals were greatly influenced by John Ruskin's views on the destructive dimensions of modern industrial capitalism, which, they thought, made humans into slaves of machines.

For example, the radical liberal economist J.A. Hobson, Cain suggests, was able to combine a liberal evolutionist outlook with these dimensions of Ruskin's paternalistic Toryism.[147] Interestingly, in the Indian context, Gandhi argued similarly. In his *Hind Swaraj* from 1909, Gandhi explicitly criticises modern industrial society and its foremost expression, the machine. Gandhi points out how workers in the mills of the cotton textile industry in Bombay had become slaves under the machine – a view, as we shall see, he shared with sections of the colonial administration. A greater aim of independence, he argued through his vision of a fully independent India, was to free those held captive by modern civilisation.[148]

The writer Robert G. Davis actively contributed to the influential liberal journal the *Westminster Review*. There he discussed the future of industrial society in a similar vein as Ruskin and J.A. Hobson. For Davis, it was modern commerce and industrialisation that had entrenched inequalities, and had created 'impediments to moral and intellectual awakening, and so the development of widespread social freedom and happiness'.[149] Ill health and ignorance had, as it turned out, Davis asserted, developed into a full-blown obstacle to progress. And this obstacle lay not in the political organisation of contemporary industrial society.

In fact, like others influenced by Ruskin, Davis was not overly enthusiastic about democratic reforms. He found that popular political mobilisation was given far too much importance, while it was actually only a means to enhance social freedom.[150] For Davis, it was not even an economic problem that hindered development at this time; it was a 'social problem' of ignorance, poverty, and general destitution. This 'social problem' had to be resolved at its root causes: better housing, improved education, and an end to aristocratic privilege.

Subsequently, on this discursive level, beginning in the late nineteenth century, liberal concepts of 'freedom' and 'progress' came to operate within a new political landscape

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[147] Ibid., 35.
[148] Gandhi, M. K. (1946) *Hind Swaraj, or Indian Home Rule*. [Revised ed]. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House.
[149] Davis Gunn, R. (1909 June) 'Some Obstacles to Progress'. *Westminster Review* [W.R.], 171, 639-645.
[150] Davis Gunn, R. (1911 June) 'Equality: A Study in Social Philosophy'. *W.R.*, 175, 648-653.

where various liberals, reformist Tories, Fabians and socialists moved. They were bound together by a concern that the conditions of modern industrial society might produce obstacles to progress, and create instability. For this heterogeneous group of activists, politicians and thinkers, the social now became the lens, the optic through which anxieties and critiques were articulated.

'Progress', of course, was a wide term, embraced by many. As Stephan Collini has pointed out, it functioned more as a 'pattern into which the educated late-Victorian Englishman naturally fitted both his perception of the past and his expectations of the future'.[151] Economic and technological growth were obvious manifestations of progress, it was argued – as were moral and intellectual advance. But the paradox to many a radical mind of the time was that the modern world being, as Collini points out, 'the product of Progress to some extent', simultaneously brought with it social ills, squalor and sceneries of despair.[152]

Hence, this liberal progressive discourse emerged self-conscious and sensitive to the socio-historical context in which it took shape. The shift concerned the central conceptualisation of how societal progress would actually come about. With the emergence of a more socially informed liberalism and its practical action-oriented reform agenda, focus was expanding from individual self-development, to the collective development of populations and the conditions of life of those populations.[153] It was becoming a shared notion among liberal commentators in the early twentieth century that social progress was not only dependent on the reduction of constraints on the individual, but on the actual possibilities for all to actively engage social life.[154]

R.G. Davis found that '[o]ur social civilization is restricted because the physical environment of the majority is still savage'. And the only thing coming out of such savage conditions was menace to society: intemperance, crime and ignorance. In fact, for Davis it was primarily want which slowed the progress he had in mind, and he found that all 'objectionable things in life exist and flourish amidst poverty'. Davis makes few

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[151] Collini, 1979, 160.
[152] Ibid., 170.
[153] Alden, P. (1919 April) 'A new liberal programme: liberalism and labour'. *C.R.*, 115, 396-403.
[154] Muirhead, J.H. (1910) 'Liberty-equality-fraternity'. *S.R.*, 3 (3), 197-204.

explicit references to contemporary research, but it is clear that he and others within the liberal press had been highly influenced by contemporary studies of British industrial towns. I will discuss this in detail later, but the genre of urban reporting emanating from Charles Booth's study of London and Seebohm Rowntree's study of York had a tremendous effect on domestic social and political thought of the time. It is not surprising that Davis concludes that the deteriorating conditions of modern industrial society, and their foremost expression – the congested city – had to be 'operated' on thoroughly. Only then, he asserted, could the twentieth century carry a 'wider realisation of civilisation' than did the nineteenth century.

Davis found a beginning of a new outlook in the movement of 'improvement of the social environment' taking place within various sections of society. This movement, he argued, 'is one of the most encouraging signs of the humanist tendencies of modern times'.[155] It was an 'optimistic' outlook, Davis argued, believing in the plasticity of individuals and populations, and the possibilities for change.[156]

3.1.3. Social liberalism expands the bio-political concern of state

While new social liberal ideas formed within the milieu described above, they crystallised specifically around the question of how to reformulate the relationship between political power and society. These ideas called forth an expansion of previous bio-political considerations in liberalism; laissez-faire, voluntarism, charity and self-help seemed to have met their limit in the age of modern industrialism. To many liberals collective mobilisation and state action seemed necessary for the realisation of better conditions of life for all. In order to avoid social tension, even class conflict, but also in order to increase productivity and human capacity, official agency must be designed to reach into previously untouched domains of life, and act there, liberals now suggested.

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[155] Davis Gunn, R. (1908 January) 'Some Tendencies in Social Evolution'. *W.R.*, 169, 25-28.
[156] Davis Gunn, R. (1910 May) 'New Tendencies in Political Thinking'. *W.R.*, 173, 505-510.

For social liberals like Hobhouse or Davis the pressures of industrial society had to be addressed in a much more comprehensive and holistic manner than ever before. Policy could not afford to take the individual as its primary unit of action, R.G. Davis asserted, and therfore charity must only play a background role in social action.[157] Davis was not alone in liberal circles to make such a claim. For Davis, individualism and charity based approaches had two main flaws. First, reforms and interventions must build on exact studies of the problems identified. Secondly, after thorough investigation, the problems themselves must then be addressed by those with adequate power to produce a difference.

Here, Davis argued, nineteenth-century charity oriented approaches towards social amelioration had gone wrong. These approaches did not systematically and scientifically attack the social evils preying on social relations under modern industrial society. And they did not have authority to back up their projects properly in order to create sustainable change in people's lives. Davis found that 'the self-sacrificing labour of many of these good people have been in vain, and have seriously hindered reform'. Subsequently, Davis suggested, social problems could not be solved at the level of the individual, by doling out food or clothing to the poor. These issues, he asserted, must be addressed on a collective level.[158]

Davis saw liberals and socialists share common ground in this analysis. Indeed, some liberals elaborated these views at some length, arguing for the 'socialisation' of industries, and 'right to work' policies as security for the unemployed.[159] Collini describes this aptly when he points out how 'much which was condemned as "socialism" in the 1890s was in the vanguard of Liberalism in 1910'.[160] The ideological integration between socialist and liberal positions had come about due to an emerging liberal emphasis on the strength of collective solutions and action of state. For early twentieth-century liberals, individual-centred tenets of mid nineteenth-century liberalism were inadequate to face the tests of modern industrial society.

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[157] Quoted in ibid.

[158] Davis Gunn, R. (1906 September) 'Slum Environment and Social Causation'. *W.R.*, 167, 249-257.

[159] Alden, P. (1919 April) 'A New Liberal Programme: Liberalism and Labour'. *C.R.*, 115, 396-403.

[160] Collini, 1979, 79.

Previously, argued Davis, 'individualists' had 'insisted on unrestricted economic liberty as the one thing necessary to ensure progress, forgetting that its operation would ultimately render liberty for the majority impossible'. For Davis and other commentators like him, this form of economic liberty within the emerging industrial society had had an overwhelming effect on social structures.[161] They argued that in order to deal with the social consequences of nineteenth-century economic laissez-faire, one must now begin to elaborate new intellectual and conceptual frameworks, where the state was made central. And they blamed Gladstonian liberalism for being incapable of carrying out the proper measures to alter developments in industrial society.

H.L. Samuel describes how, between the end of the 1880s and the mid 1890s, Gladstonian liberalism was thus being 'transformed'. True liberty, he asserts, could not exist amid ignorance, poverty, excessive working hours and a generally poor environment. He writes in his memoirs:

> The theory that State action must be kept to a minimum, if liberty was to flourish, was being discredited by facts that were obvious on every hand. Laissez-faire had never been a dogma to be accepted by Liberals without qualification.[162]

A majority of social liberals now viewed positively state action as a means to enable individual and societal progress through, for example, enabling the distribution and provision of better social security. Nonetheless, liberals were divided among themselves to which extent the state could function as a vehicle for social change.[163] Still, many liberals viewed state interference with some scepticism, and would rather restrict state involvement to financial assistance to programmes actually carried out by non-state actors.

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[161] Davis Gunn, R. (1912 August) 'Individualism and Socialism, and Liberty'. *W.R.*, 178, 144-151.
[162] Ibid., 25.
[163] Cain, 2002, 22-23.

L.T. Hobhouse worked along these assumptions. In his later work, Hobhouse identified the increasing social responsibility on the part of the state. The state had a role in organising the industrial energy of a society, but also to smoothen the social upheavals caused by rapid social change. Contemporary social economic features of industrial society were coercive and, as such, they restricted the realisation of freedom for classes of individuals, Hobhouse found. Only the state, wrote Hobhouse, could remove these negative features.[164] The state, he suggested, was now responsible 'for the provision of the fundamental conditions of healthy development for all its citizens'.

However, he argued, how much the state should do 'outright' in these matters, and how much it could depend on the contribution of individuals, had 'not yet been settled on any clear principle'. Hobhouse was not a friend of an omnipotent state, yet he assigned it a role beyond its contemporary confines. He stressed its managerial role in welfare efforts. Hobhouse suggested that the expansion of state action that he called for had actually already commenced: old age pensions and regulations concerning child labour in factories were obvious examples, he suggested. Also, the Elizabethan Poor Laws had recognised a level of common responsibility for the welfare of individuals. However, in the case of the Poor Laws, the principle of communal responsibility had been unproductively applied, Hobhouse asserted.

He found that 'the once beautiful name of Charity' was losing its allure. Perhaps, Hobhouse suggested, ' [s]uch an ideal might have been applicable to a different structure of society'. But in 'our industrial society', he continued, there was clearly a great need for another social ideal. This ideal had begun to take shape through studies of societies forming under industrial competition, and under the stimulus of a 'socialistic critique'. The ideal crystallised around the notion that 'elementary human needs are a matter of common concern...and public service better than personal profit'. And, Hobhouse continued, it built on the assertion that 'if the community cannot make its members happy or morally wise, it can provide the conditions under which they may cultivate their own faculties and sweeten the lives of their own circle'.[165]

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[164] Ibid., 123.

[165] Hobhouse, L.T. (1931) 'The Problem'. In Hobson, J.A. and Ginsberg, M. (Eds.) *L.T Hobhouse. His Life and Work, with Selected Essays & Articles*. London: Allen & Unwin.

For Hobhouse, Davis, and other social liberal commentators, this understanding of state-society relations should not be understood as being contrary to liberal principles. Instead, social liberals argued, they corresponded to liberal principles of the obligation of the state *vis à vis* society. In his book *Liberalism* from 1902, Herbert L. Samuel attempts to bring these principles out.[166] In fact, Samuel argued that social interventions correspond to that foremost liberal principle: the first task of the state is to secure for its citizens their possibility to live happy lives. A life in poverty could never be happy, Samuel asserted. And therefore, 'to lessen the causes of poverty and to lighten its effect are essential parts of a right policy of State action'.

When introducing Samuel's tract, future Prime Minister Herbert H. Asquith pointed out that this new 'positive' conception of freedom implies that to 'be really free' people 'must be able to make the best use of their faculty, opportunity, energy, life'. It is here, Asquith asserts, 'in this fuller view of the true significance of Liberty that we find the governing impulse in the later developments of Liberalism in the direction of education, temperance, better dwellings, an improved social and industrial environment'.[167]

In the rest of *Liberalism*, Samuel outlined the circumstances that had been leading up to a rethinking of social reform policy within liberal circles. Gone is the time to rely on a laissez-faire approach, argues Samuel. Modern life and industrial society demands a view of state action as positive and enabling. He writes, '[s]elf-reliance is a powerful force, but not powerful enough to cure unaided the diseases that afflict society. Liberty is of supreme importance, but State assistance, rightly directed, may extend the bounds of Liberty'.[168]

Actually, extending regulations within the social domain had not proved to diminish freedom, according to Samuel. Instead, further regulation of the social domain had slowly come to ease intolerable social conditions. Consequently, housing and education top his list of future reform, but the list also includes temperance, conditions of

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[166] Samuel, H.L. (1902) *Liberalism: An Attempt to State the Principles and Proposals of Contemporary Liberalism in England*. London: Grant Richards.

[167] Asquith, H.H. (1902) 'Introduction'. In Samuel, H.L. (1902). *Liberalism: An Attempt to State the Principles and Proposals of Contemporary Liberalism in England*. London: Grant Richards, 10.

[168] Samuel, 1902, 29.

employment, aid to the distressed and much more. Indeed, Samuel's is an attempt to argue how state-guided social action along the lines prescribed by him actually conforms to existing liberal tenets. Samuel, as did Asquith, used the occasion of the book to outline how the state must work through society by way of intervening into it. Only then could welfare be realised.

The liberal encouragement for more intense social interventionism by the state was a break with the past, philosopher John MacDonnell wrote. It was a significant break, he argued, since liberals of late had ushered in a sort of modern 'benevolent despotism', by imposing temporary yet coercive means to ensure reform throughout society. This new encouragement for a socially engaged state was not necessarily wrong, MacDonnell argued. In fact, he also found that the position could be defended with traditional liberal principles. MacDonnell formulated the new problem of freedom in modern industrial society by suggesting that:

> a starving man is free even as is one well fed. So, too,
> is one who lives from birth to death in an
> environment of dirt, squalor, poverty. But such
> freedom scarcely compatible with a higher life might
> be little more than nominal; in effect it might be
> almost indistinguishable from servitude. Accordingly,
> to secure the reality of freedom we have seen
> coercive measures passed.[169]

However, he argued, it would demand new and much more elaborate techniques of governance. In order to address this situation, regulations and governmental interventions within social spheres may in fact be 'inevitable' under a 'prolonged stage', wrote MacDonnell. Yet 'there is something beyond' this phase, he asserted, 'something better'. What lay 'beyond', however, he did not formulate. For socially informed commentators of the time good government was no longer understood to be as little government as possible.[170]

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[169] MacDonell, J. (1914 August) 'The Modern Conception of Liberty'. *C.R.*, 106, 190-202.
[170] Hobson, J.A. (1917 January) 'Shall we be poorer after the war?'. *C.R.*, 111, 37-55.

How social liberals turned from voluntary action, charity oriented approaches, and the minimal state, towards state action within the social domain marked an intensification of liberal bio-political concerns. One must be cautious, however, to think the shift total. Charity, of course, had long lineages as being complementary to state action in the British history of poor relief, and those lineages structured turn of the twentieth-century social policy as well. Charity would form a significant part of what Alan Kidd has called 'the mix economy of welfare' in Britain. In reality, the state did take a greater responsibility during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries than it had before, yet charity still contributed significantly to official efforts to ameliorate social conditions.

For example, both Charles Booth's first volume of his *Life and Labour of the People of London* (1889) and Seebohm Rowntree's study of York, *Poverty: A Study of Town Life* – published a decade after Booth's seminal research effort – had shown how about 30 per cent of the population could be categorised as poor. Still, only 2.7 per cent of the population received state granted poor-relief Kidd shows. In fact, Kidd points out how in 1899 the national cost of poor-relief was £11.2 million, while charity in London alone contributed with £6 million towards amelioration of poverty.[171] The political ramifications of organised charity were not reduced in late Victorian or Edwardian Britain. Kidd describes it as 'the principal expression of middle-class resolve to manage the forces, as well as to alleviate the suffering created by urban growth and social change'.[172]

Yet, clearly, the ways in which L.T. Hobhouse, R.G. Davis, H.L. Samuel, and their contemporaries turned to state action for the managing of society reflect a shift in liberal conceptual frameworks at this time. These examples show how the social domain was first invented, and then politicised within liberal thought. The way socially oriented liberals and other reformers conceptualised actual state-led social action was, as I have pointed out, multidimensional and, quite often, vague. The meaning given to the concept could easily include technical ideas on how to ameliorate the conditions of the poor and labouring classes through housing and education, and it could include philosophical discussions on how to bring long-term progress to the whole of society.

[171] Kidd, A. (1999) *State, Society and the Poor in Nineteenth-Century England*. London: Macmillan, 67.
[172] Ibid., 66.

Liberals believing in social interventions began to view such interventions as ongoing, and perhaps never fully realisable. And so, interventionist agendas turned into an end in itself; it became an ethical process as much as a social-political one.[173]

Still, this debate and reformulation of liberal ideas show how liberals saw that, in order for industrial society to evolve, it was imperative to invent a form of politics that would look to state intervention not as infringements, but as mechanisms that would enable human competence and capacity. It was not yet a discourse centring rights to social security; it was an acknowledgement that modern industrial society presented a new set of problems that would ultimately have an effect on markets and government. These new problems demanded a new form of management that would explicitly take life as its referent object. In the next section I will outline how this movement introduced a social component into imperial thought, and how an impetus for new ways to govern within empire emerged within influential liberal imperialist circles.

3.2. Social liberals and their empire

During the latter part of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century, when the 'Age of Empire' reached its zenith, imperialism and empire continued to be discussed within British liberal circles. In this section I will describe how British liberals during this time began to partly re-conceptualise what they thought already existing empire was intended to achieve within dependencies. I will show that the idea that governments need to act on social problems for the sake of stability and progress was given much more attention by liberal imperialists. Below I will discuss how the notion of social intervention as a legitimate aspect of state responsibility transplanted into views on how to successfully run the empire.

This movement helped focus the previously tentative return of an interventionist agenda on the Subcontinent, discussed in an earlier chapter. The moral emphasis that had toned early liberal justifications of empire was reconceptualised as a social one. Social interventions were not to reform the character of Indian subjects; they would, instead,

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[173] Hobhouse, L.T. (1911) *Liberalism*. London: Williams and Norgate, 41.

tend to conditions of life of Indians. Effective management of society, its condition and environment, made a strong argument for the continuation of existing empire. It was even used as an argument against expansionist imperialism: if the British Empire sought more territory, how could it, then, still tend to the welfare of the colonies it already had?

My argument here is this: the liberal demand for a social imperialism was grounded in the understanding that bio-political management of society might prove a more effective means to govern, than force and domination. In order to govern successfully, the colonial state had to continuously work through society, rather than treat it with indifference.

Not surprisingly, as was the case with nineteenth-century liberal tradition, a notion of universality of movements in world history was widely spread in the twentieth-century form of liberal thought and action. The image of industrialising areas outside Britain – such as Bombay – was put up to mirror western progress. The ability to influence this process, to supervise it, and to directly intervene into it, now became the aim of colonial statecraft. This helped to cement the notion of primacy of western ideas.

3.2.1. Twentieth-century liberal critique of expansive imperialism

Clearly, by the turn of the twentieth century, as had been the case during the early nineteenth century, proponents as well as antagonists of British imperial expansion co-existed within the broad British liberal camp.[174] Most liberals still found that continued overseas expansion was essentially an aristocratic project of extending landed estates through militaristic means. This aristocratic militarised enterprise was upsetting free trade, liberals argued, and finance driven imperialism would only promote the privilege of rent-seeking elites.[175]

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[174] Howe, S. (1993) *Anticolonialism in British Politics: The Left and the End of Empire 1918-1964*. Oxford Historical Monographs. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 27-77.
[175] Hirst, F. W., Murray, G., Hammond, J.L. ([1900] 1998) *Liberalism and the Empire. Three essays: Imperialism and finance; The exploitation of inferior races in ancient and modern times; Colonial and foreign policy*. London: Routledge.

Moreover, in concurrence with a long radical tradition of liberal views on imperialism, some liberal critics argued that an empire threatened the stability of Britain in two ways. First, it militarised government. When new areas were conquered by the sword, rather than trade, military branches of the state were made disproportionately influential.[176] Secondly, homecoming administrators and officials had no sense or experience of democratic governance from the colonies or dependencies, and therefore they corrupted political relations on their return to Britain. This argument was not new; returning higher servants of the East India Company who had made fortunes in India, so-called Nabobs, found it hard to integrate into British high society and politics. The Nabobs were met with disdain, and were caricatured as petty despots.[177]

An influential contemporary argument against imperial expansion, however, was that an ever-expanding empire diverted interest from the pressing need for social reform in Britain. In fact, it was argued, territorial expansion of the late nineteenth century proved costly for Britain, and seemed to increase state expenditure and put interventions for social reform at risk.[178]

3.2.2. Social liberal views in imperialism

While being critical of ongoing overseas expansion, a majority of turn of the twentieth-century British liberals did not object to already existing empire. Liberals would not argue for the abolition of empire. Cain suggests that most liberals who were against colonial expansion still 'assumed that Britain had a duty to bring civilization and good government to Africa and Asia and few questioned its ability or right to do so'.[179] Gladstone, for example, Cain points out, regretted that Britain took control over the

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[176] Armitage, 2000, 142.
[177] Collingham, E.M. (2001) *Imperial Bodies: The Physical Experience of the Raj, c. 1800-1947.* Cambridge: Polity, 35.
[178] Hobhouse, L.T. (1908 March) 'The prospect of liberalism'. *C.R.,* 93: 349-358.
[179] Cain, P.J. (2002) *Hobson and Imperialism: Radicalism, New Liberalism, and Finance 1887-1938.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 53.

Subcontinent. However, that being the case, he argued, when in India Britain had a duty to bring its industrious energy and progress there.[180] Gladstone had a vague idea about how to achieve these ends in India, historian David Gilmour writes. The Gladstonian policy towards India seems to have been riddled by intellectual tension. If aspiring to anything, it looked for slow change on the Subcontinent so that 'when we go, if we are ever to go', Gladstone told his newly appointed Viceroy Northbrook in 1872, 'we may leave a good name and a clean bill of health behind us'.[181]

In this section I will discuss, how from the late nineteenth century onwards, conceptualisations about a distinct social domain, and in extension how it formed a proper and politicised object of government, began to influence British liberal ideas about government within their empire. Many leading liberal politicians and thinkers who would argue progressively for addressing social questions in Britain, would use similar arguments in their defence of existing British Empire. For them, the side effects, and also the benefit, of industrial society became obvious to all by the turn of the twentieth century, and, as H.L. Samuel writes with hindsight in his memoirs, similar social problems and similar positive prospects called for a unified perspective on modern industrial society. For Samuel and his contemporaries, this meant that:

> [t]he same motives which led us to be social reformers at home made us favour, for the backward peoples, a stage of colonial administration, as the best means of helping them to reach a higher level of civilization.[182]

In fact, Samuel saw no contradiction between progressive social policy and the continuation of empire.[183] Prominent liberals like Lord Cromer, Prime Ministers Rosebery and Asquith, Herbert L. Samuel, E.S. Montagu, as well as J.A. Hobson, were all at some point finding in progressive views on social reform within British dependencies arguments for a continuation of existing empire.

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[180] Ibid., 53.
[181] Quoted in Gilmour, D. (2005) *The Ruling Caste: Imperial Lives in the Victorian Raj.* London: John Murray, 23.
[182] Samuel, 1945, 33.
[183] Harris, J.H. (1917 July) '"Empire resources development" and Britain's war debt'. *C.R.*, 112, 65-71.

Samuel elaborates further in his book *Liberalism*, referred to above. Empire, Samuel recalled, was a 'trust as well as a pride'.[184] Still, imperialism has been questioned from a liberal standpoint, he asserts. How could an empire, which was ruled despotically, ever conform to principles of liberalism, Samuel asks rhetorically.

> [I]ndependence, however valuable to a people, is not their highest good. Liberals hold that the ultimate purpose of politics is nothing narrower than to help men to advance towards the best type. No people can reach the goal, indeed, unless they have liberty; but there may be stages in the march when unrestrained liberty is rather a hindrance to them than a help. A barbarian race may prosper best if for a period, even for a long period, it surrenders the right of self-government in exchange for the teaching of civilization.[185]

H.L. Samuel even found liberalism intrinsic to, and constitutive of, empire. Samuel argued that '[n]o accusation can be more false than that Liberalism is identified with ideas of uncompromising opposition to empire...The empire is indeed largely the creation of the statesmen of this school'.[186]

Ten years after Samuel's take on the intimacy of liberalism and empire, his views were echoed by his cousin E.S. Montagu, then Liberal Under Secretary of State for India. I will return to E.S. Montagu in a following section of this chapter. In a speech delivered in Cambridge, Montagu tried to prove how 'the Empire, as we know it, and the ideal it fulfils, is the production of the Liberal Party'.[187] Entering into the British Parliament in 1906 at the age of 27, Montagu arrived as an M.P. for the Liberal Party at the very beginning of a social liberal era. He had for a long time shown a keen interest in the administration of India. Montagu was, as was L.T. Hobhouse, highly influenced by the

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[184] Samuel, 1902, 327-329.

[185] Ibid., 330.

[186] Ibid., 327.

[187] Montagu, E.S. ([1912b] 1917) 'Liberalism in India – Speech at Cambridge, Guildhall, February 28'. In Montagu, E.S. *On Indian Affairs*. Madras: Nateson, 295.

liberal philosopher turned Secretary of State for India, John Morley. Montagu's interest in India found practical outlet when he was appointed Under Secretary of State for India four years later. When Montagu left the India Office to become Financial Secretary to the Treasury in 1914, he always looked for ways to return.

So he did, in 1916, but now as Secretary of State for India. During his latter cabinet period, Montagu left some significant imprints on imperial high politics. He was the architect of the scheme of reforms that he and the then Viceroy Chelmsford piloted through Parliament in 1917-19. The scheme moderately changed the political structure of government in India.[188] Moreover, he was Secretary of State for India on that disastrous day, 13 April 1919, when a peaceful protest at the Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar against the Rowlatt Act – a piece of legislation which, in effect, agreed to detention without trial – ended in a massacre leaving more then 370 people dead and more than a thousand wounded. I will return to the massacre below.

Montagu finally resigned from his post in 1922, in protest against the peace treaty with Turkey, which he thought unfair for the Muslim world and dangerous to imperial sentiment. Although he struggled with the conservative bureaucracy that administratively governed India, he did apply for the Viceroyalty upon his resignation from cabinet. His application was rejected and he died two years after leaving the India Office. For Montagu, as for many social liberals, it was the Liberal Party that had contributed to the good of the empire. Many in the Liberal Party found in empire a progressive force of governance and a moral and material commitment on behalf of Britain.

The Liberal Party had, Rosebery argued in 1885, turned empire into a progressive force. Empire had 'struck the chains off the slaves' and had fostered trade among its constituent parts and the rest of the world. That the British Empire freed slaves was, as we know, a dubious claim when referring to India. The existence of bonded agricultural workers had been a source of debate within various administrations on the Subcontinent, yet very little had actually been achieved to free the unfree. There were widespread hopes among officials of the Raj that education might erode the feudal grip over landless labour, and there were some more forceful attempts to legislate on the

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[188] Montagu, E.S. (1930) *An Indian Diary*. London: W. Heinemann.

issue in the 1930s. However, ultimately, the need for feudal landlord loyalty weighted heavy on successive administrations.[189] Nonetheless, Rosebery continued:

> having so saved and developed it, I hope and believe we will yet be permitted to broaden and strengthen the foundation of that noble structure by basing them on affection, sympathy, and intelligence of the scattered but united races of the Empire.[190]

As social theorist Barry Hindess concludes – there were many liberals in favour of empire by the turn of the twentieth century.[191] Moreover, as this section has begun to outline, there were many liberals in favour of an interventionist imperialism who made connections between social reform in Britian and India.

What influenced the return of a reformist and interventionist imperialism in India by the turn of the twentieth century has been a matter of debate among historians. The main quarrel concerns whether nineteenth-century evangelicalism continued to inform reformist liberal imperialism at this time. Metcalf suggests it did not. He finds a form of secularised moral action replacing evangelicalism at this time.[192] Lord Curzon, perhaps the most influential viceroy during the period here under review and an advocate for a reformist and efficient colonial state, seems to prove him right. Curzon called reforms in India a 'secular religion, embodying the most sacred duty of the present'.[193]

But C.A. Bayly challenges Metcalf. Bayly underlines a lingering Christian Anglican influence on late colonial reforms. He finds that recent studies of imperial ideology – including Metcalf's – exaggerate how a 'secular post-enlightenment rationality' underpinned reforms during the period here under review.[194] Rather, Bayly suggests, '[c]hristian moralism influenced the agenda' throughout all periods of British presence

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[189] Prakash, G. (1990) *Bonded Histories: Genealogies of Labor Servitude in Colonial India.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[190] Coates, T.F.G. (1900) *Lord Rosebery: His Life and Speeches vol. 1.* London: Hutchinson and Co, 483.
[191] Hindess, 2004, 31.
[192] Metcalf, 1995, 28-65.
[193] Curzon [Lord] (1908 January) 'The true imperialism'. *Nineteenth Century (and after)* [N.C.], 63, 151-165.
[194] Bayly, 1998, 285.

on the Subcontinent, including the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[195] For Bayly, religious views and commitments continued to inform colonial officials in India until they left at independence.

The tension within reformist rhetoric was expressed by that prominent radical liberal coterie The Rainbow Circle, when it met for its session in 1899-1900. The theme for the session was 'Liberalism and Imperialism'.[196] Debates such as this of the Rainbow Circle point out how a reframing of moral language within liberal circles was under way, but is lost to both Bayly and Metcalf: reformist action, underpinned by moral language, was re-inscribed into the newly invented social domain. It used 'the social' as a new framework through which forms of intervention could be elaborated. The re-emerging reformist agenda began to tone down its urge for moral reform aiming at the character of Indians'; rather, it invented a self-proclaimed responsibility to address social problems and conditions of life within India and empire in general. It extended social liberal language and mode of action from the metropole into the context of empire.

H.L. Samuel, who was known for his interest in imperial issues as well as social reform opened the discussion of the Rainbow Circle that day. He did so by bringing his favourite themes together: he called his paper 'Imperialism in relation to Social Reform'. In his paper before the Rainbow Circle, Samuel describes how empire has become 'the most valuable ally of Social Reform'. Empire, Samuel argues, 'subserves the welfare of other peoples'.[197] Empire could help tend to the effects of modern society, he argues, while simultaneously reforming conditions of life. Through an active reformist policy, members of the Circle argued, it could be developed between 'ourselves & our subject peoples' a bond of 'moral responsibility – a kind of imperial strength which no other empire has enjoyed'.[198]

The liberal idea of empire as a community where its constituent parts link together not by force, but by affection, influenced social imperialists. Of course, an imperial community, according to them, did not necessarily have to be an equal one, or a democratically governed one. The order underlying it could easily be both hierarchical

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[195] Ibid., 291.
[196] Rainbow Circle ([1899-1900] 1989) 6th Session 1899-1900, Minutes 47-54. In Freeden, M. (Ed.) *Minutes of the Rainbow Circle 1894-1924*. London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 70.
[197] Ibid., 74.
[198] Ibid.,71.

and exclusive. E.S. Montagu gave word to that emerging liberal imperial ideal. Empire, he argued, was 'not a question of land, but of hearts'.[199] Lord Cromer echoed Montagu: empire, Cromer argued, must build on 'affection' not 'coercion'.[200]

3.2.3 Social liberals and India: E.S. Montagu's outline of a new imperial approach

During the early years of the twentieth century, social liberals began to argue that local colonial governance in an industrial age had to express a new ideal of how imperial power could work within colonial society. The social liberal fear that increased squalor in British industrial society might threaten moral sentiments and create tension among sections within the community, now extended outwards into industrialising areas of empire. Obvious destitution in areas under the British might have a negative affect on the prospects of future progress.

Modern industrial society placed before liberal politicians and administrators a set of new challenges: perceived urban sprawl, and, as I pointed out earlier with reference to the famine reports in India, the existence of rampant poverty within areas under British rule, could threaten the legitimacy of the colonial state. In order to build a form of modern colonial government that would endure under shifting circumstances, social liberals found that any action taken over many new questions of governance needed serious thinking through.

Social liberal imperialists of the early twentieth century now began to describe empire as a platform for launching, in their view, progressive social projects in extension to the programmes attempted in Britain. Indeed, it took only a few years of social legislation and action in Britain for commentators in the liberal press to proclaim that 'interest in humanity need not stop with the shores of England'. Instead, they found that '[e]mpire

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[199] Ibid., 296.
[200] Cromer [Lord] (1917) 'Imperial Federation'. In Dawson, W. H. *After-war Problems*. London: George Allen and Unwin, 17-38.

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offers a magnificent field for social experiment' and that 'Liberal Imperialism goes hand in hand with social reform'.[201]

Entering the twentieth century, the liberal argument for a continuation of colonial governance within industrialising areas, thus, slowly shifted towards protecting colonial industrial society from further menace, to ameliorate conditions of life, and to manage populations in order to make them productive and less inclined to dissent. The introduction of an idea of 'the social' into liberal imperialism enabled this conceptual shift to occur. So did the sense of a new age and society emerging – a globalising industrial society under empire that would demand up-dated forms of socially informed governance.

The emergence of social liberal ideas into the long tradition of liberal imperialism helped re-focus the interventionist agenda within industrialising areas on the Subcontinent, such as the urban Bombay Presidency. Liberals began to reformulate interventions so that they would regroup around the newly invented social domain. This implied a reframing of interventions through social language. The social domain as a political entity was being discovered in imperial discourse, and several previously unconnected issues, like education and housing, were being linked together and placed therein.

The new view of empire differed from that of nineteenth-century liberal imperialists by its emphasis on the aspect of social welfare of the population as a justification for continued empire. The view reinvigorated the argument for increased action of the colonial state.[202] Social liberal imperialists increasingly found *laissez-faire* unable to deal with the many problems facing developing industrial societies, wherever that society may be located.

In a series of speeches on Indian affairs the liberal then Under Secretary of State for India, E.S. Montagu, began in 1910 to formulate into politics the views discussed above. Generally, Montagu often and openly admitted that early twentieth-century debates in the House of Commons over Indian affairs were lacklustre events, and the

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[201] Cook, E.T. (1914 January) 'Eight years of Liberal Imperialism'. *C.R.*, 105, 1-11.
[202] Kylie, E. (1911 January) 'Liberalism and Empire'. *C.R.*, 99, 71-76.

attendance at the time of debate was usually low. Most external military threats to British rule on the Subcontinent seemed to be under control, except tribal raids on the northwestern frontier. Rather than dealing with military matters, debates over India focused on how to carry out effective and economic administration. However, when Montagu delivered his series of speeches, as we shall see below, British rule in India was being tested, and this fact influenced his account.

Although written before the massacre in Amritsar that rallied nationalist support, and before nationalist mobilisation had broadened its base into a popular movement, tension was mounting in India. When he began to lay the Indian Budget before the House of Commons in 1910, Montagu elaborated a narrative wherein he made the case for the need of a new kind of imperialism in India – a form of colonial governance that would include social concerns, that would work through society, and build on the capacities and industrial energy of the governed. He found old style repressive government counter productive and impractical.

Curzon, Viceroy in India 1899-1905, had forced through the first partition of Bengal in 1905 for the purpose of administrative convenience. The partition was later revoked, but at the time it pitted the Bengali intelligentsia against the Raj, as well as mobilising sections of the emerging nationalist movement. Soon, local protests against partition formed into a much wider struggle for *Purna Swaraj* – full independence. Within this struggle, which levelled out around 1908, traditional means of political protest, such as petitions and open meetings, co-existed with more radical ones, such as the boycott of British goods. Some within the movement in Bengal turned towards terrorism and violent anti-British action.[203]

A nascent nationalist movement soon had an impact elsewhere in British India. Maharashtra and Hindu chauvinist Bal Gangadhar Tilak was successful in rallying anti-British political mobilisation in Bombay. Tilak's revival of certain Hindu festivals in order to score political points, especially the processions in honour of Ganpati, provoked clashes between communities in Bombay. Although Tilak's boycott of British goods between 1906 and 1908 led to increased profit margins for indigenous industrialists, his sectarian approach had little appeal to influential Bombay based textile mill-owners who often belonged to other regional or religious groups. Tilak, however,

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[203] Sarkar, 2005, 123.

made a great effort in connecting with mill-workers in an attempt to mobilise them for political purposes.

Repression followed in the wake of the first *Swaraj*-movement, not so much in Bombay as in Bengal. British tactics raised much indignation among influential Indians. Nonetheless, revolutionary activity receded in Bengal, and the Indian National Congress was on the back foot. Soon, a scheme of political reform was being developed in Calcutta by the then Viceroy Lord Minto. He and the Liberal Secretary of State for India in London, John Morley, agreed on the Indian Councils Act of 1909, which introduced the minor element of elections into local council. The Act also gave Indian members of the legislative councils more influence over budget decisions. This effort to please influential Indians was short-lived, and was reworked in 1916-17 when Montagu himself presented another, more far-reaching reform scheme.

In Montagu's first speech on the Indian budget in particular, and on Indian affairs more generally, he set out to address the situation described above by addressing 'the political unrest and its genesis'.[204] Montagu was surprised, he said, by the fact that recent unrest in India had upset British political circles. Unrest, he argues, must be welcomed. Suggests Montagu:

> what ever was the reason for British occupation, it must be
> obvious that Eastern civilisation could not be brought into
> contact with Western...without bringing new ideas into
> play...without, in a word, causing unrest.

In fact, India was changing rapidly, said Montagu, and suggested that rapid changes must have been felt and left its mark in society. 'Viewed broadly', Montagu said,

> India may be said to be passing from the stage of society in
> which agricultural and domestic industries of the cottage
> order have predominated, in which each village has been an
> isolated community, and each individual attached to a

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[204] Montagu, E.S. ([1910] 1917) 'The Indian Budget – 1910'. In Montagu, E.S. *On Indian Affairs*. Madras: Nateson, 26-27.

particular spot and hereditary occupation, to a stage of
organised over-seas commerce and capitalised industry.[205]

Until now – that is 1910 – the development was only visible in a few districts, Montagu argued. But already the process of industrialisation touches the whole Subcontinent: it causes labour migration; it transforms wages and payments; it changes the market value of local produce and even the variety of crops produced. These new circumstances, Montagu argues, will and must eventually produce unrest. Instead of suppressing unrest, British rule must now turn to foster 'germs of progress'.[206] Colonial administrators must locate sources of discontent in society and address those grievances. They must learn how to channel unrest so that it may produce beneficial outcomes.

In 1911 Montagu told his honourable friends about new signs of progress on the Subcontinent. The industriousness of Indians under British tutelage, said Montagu, was now channelled in new, but for the British, familiar ways. Modern industry was establishing itself in India, he suggested, and this movement was expressed through the forming of a modern industrial society. However, it was imperative that this movement in history was guided carefully, he said, for India was at a critical juncture:

> This period in a country's history brings with it many
> possibilities of evil...but it brings also possibilities of
> wealth and greatness...if the industrial revolution has
> begun, nothing can stop it...Our task is rather to
> guard against the evils that our Western experience
> enables us to foresee. [207]

Imperial presence in India, according to Montagu, could prevent inherent problems of industrial society from tainting India. For Montagu, industrialising areas in India and Britain were obviously similar. He found that modern industrialisation in India would inevitably enable India to develop Western political institutions. Yet this achievement would not come about if the process was left to its own devices. In order to wholly realise the prospect of industrial society, India must go through what Montagu called

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[205] Ibid., 29.
[206] Ibid., 59.
[207] E.S. Montagu, ([1911] 1917) 'Budget speech 1911'. In Montagu, E.S. *Speeches on Indian Questions*. Madras: Nateson, 82-92.

'Western social development'. Indians, Montagu asserts, 'must turn their attention to organizing an industrial population which can reap the agricultural and industrial wealth of the country, and attain a higher level of education and a higher standard of living'.[208]

British colonial government would be there to guide this process, Montagu asserted. With the help of the British, the Subcontinent could then, Montagu argued in 1912, move faster through history than Europe, 'because it is governed and created by men who have inherited the results of European and British development'.[209]

Montagu lists signs of progress: there is increasing concentration of labour in factories in British India. There is a stricter division of labour. He describes how mechanical power rationalises the production processes in factories. New loyalties and aspirations well-known to modern Europe have emerged as well: new social reform associations form in urban India to do social 'good'. In these associations Montagu spots an emerging bourgeoisie taking its historic responsibility in the form of 'civilising and educational movements which are summarised in the word "progress"'. These associations, Prashant Kidambi shows, were gatherings of professionals and businessmen who found ways to address what they perceived to be the ills of society. Women in general, but also workers of all kinds and the urban poor, were the immediate beneficiaries of voluntary social work.[210]

Montagu then curbed his enthusiasm. With modern society evolving, India might experience new sorts of pressures. In Bombay he found the case to prove his point. Using Bombay as an example, Montagu calls attention to how the 'evils of town life' – overcrowding and destitution – 'with which we are too familiar' now were being 'reproduced in India'. He vividly describes the social conditions in Bombay, and concludes that India may 'profit by the abundant mistakes that we have made in this country if she takes advantage of our experience, and with a wise forethought, closes the door to industrial abuses before they have grown strong'.[211]

While acknowledging the effect industrialisation will have on social relations, Montagu points out where to look for mitigation: after describing the social situation in Bombay

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[208] Montagu, [1911] 1917, 80.
[209] Montagu, [1912] 1917, 161.
[210] See Kidambi, 2007, 204-233.
[211] Montagu, [1911] 1917, 118.

in some detail, he concludes 'of course a situation such as that demands activity from the Government'.[212]

Some years after delivering his last speech as Under Secretary of State for India, Montagu took charge of the India Office. When he entered his post the situation in India was still unsettled, if seen from a British point of view. In 1915 the Indian National Congress had still not developed into a political party, and had no real mass appeal and very little radicalism in its ranks. Yet as an organisation, it began to develop better co-ordination and had begun to work its message within new sections of society. Already in 1916, the Congress and the Muslim League worked out a joint programme.

At the same time the British theosophist Annie Besant, and Tilak, started two separate Home Rule Leagues. These associations drew large crowds to public meetings. They also formed study groups and debating societies where the question of Home Rule for India was discussed. When Gandhi entered the political scene in India around 1918, much groundwork had already been done for mobilising nationalist sentiments.

The British were still anxious about the level of rising political consciousness in India. However, they insisted it was only a small section of educated Indians who actually shared nationalist ideas. That perception would soon change: the years between 1919 and 1922 saw significant mobilisation in various social strata, outside the educated urban middle classes. Apart from a widespread peasant awakening, where anti-colonial resistance and bits of nationalist discourse often forged into protests against oppressive landlords, British policy towards Turkey aroused Muslim discontent. Subsequently, the Khilafat movement grew strong, especially in the northern parts of India, and Gandhi was quick to forge alliances with Muslim leaders. An All-India movement was clearly on its way.[213]

For liberals like Montagu, the question of how colonial rule ought to handle Indian nationalist mobilisation was complicated. He was clear that old forms of colonial repression were out-dated; still, he did not waver his support for continued British rule. In his speeches in Parliament, that I discussed above, Montagu had made tentative suggestions towards a new approach of imperial power on the Subcontinent that took

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[212] Ibid., 93-94.
[213] Aziz, K.K (2002) *Pakistan: Studies in History and Politics*. Lahore: Vanguard, 42.

into consideration movements within society, social problems, and conditions of life of Indians. He had made a start from a liberal standpoint to expand the bio-political framework of existing colonialism in India.

Montagu would go further, however, and suggest a bio-political approach as an alternative to force. His outline of a new approach is highlighted with some clarity in the correspondence between him and then Viceroy Chelmsford regarding the massacre in Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar on 13 April 1919. On this day the British Indian Army caused the death of more than 370 innocent men, women and children. The atrocity naturally caused outraged in India, as well as in sections of British political society. However, many British politicians agreed with the British Indian Army officer responsible for the miltary employment in Amritsar that day, General Reginald Dyer. In fact, Dyer was awarded promotion and a medal after the massacre.

Montagu described Dyer's use of indiscriminate firing upon unarmed and peaceful protesters as an act of 'terrorism'. He found the decision to promote Dyer disastrous, yet he conformed to it. Purnima Bose has suggested that for Montagu, and the section of British parliamentarians that denounced the violence, Dyer was a bad character, a 'rotten apple' that had acted according to his own impulses.[214] By blaming an individual, Bose argues, Montagu and the British could avert attention from the systemic failures and internal contradictions of colonialism. For Bose, the massacre proves how the colonial state would always rely on force to secure and maintain its rule, despite its rhetoric of liberal values. The blame-game in which Montagu and others involved themselves only left intact 'the structurally asymmetrical relationship that binds the colonial centre to its peripheral territories'.[215]

But, I would suggest, Montagu was not unaware of the contradiction within colonial rule; he expressed this quite openly in his letters. He complained about the differences in attitudes between more progressive views of the India Office, and the reactionary 'machinery' of the Viceroyalty and its Services. In the ways in which the Punjab was governed, and in the massacre in Amritsar, Montagu saw expressions of a tradition of government under the Raj that he found it necessary to move away from.

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[214] Bose, P. (2003) *Organizing Empire: Individualism, Collective Agency, and India.* Durham and London: Duke University Press, 47-48.
[215] Ibid., 12.

Turning to the period immediately surrounding the massacre Montagu wrote on the subject to Chelmsford, then Viceroy, on 8 March 1919. The letter concerned 'revolutionary crime' and 'extremism' in India. In his letter Montagu suggests to Chelmsford that there are two kinds of extremists on the political scene in India. One is the 'Congress Wallah of no particular political wisdom or training or knowledge'. This category, Montagu writes, uses catch words and becomes excited by agitation. The Congress Wallah 'loves caste' but 'steers clear of crime'.

The second category, says Montagu, is 'a real social reformer'. These men are 'anxious to elevate the Depressed Classes, to do social service'. They are intellectual, Montagu continued, they are young, and full of political will. These are the real revolutionaries, writes Montagu. If they were to be won over with all their reforming spirit, Montagu suggests, 'how ridiculous the Extremists of the Congress would appear!'.

In several places in India, however, the opposite was being done, Montagu writes. 'There is nothing so easy at any particular moment as to govern through the Police', he writes to the Viceroy. But the result of such governance, he argues, is that 'you sow the whirlwind for your successor to reap, and you bring down the Government in God's own time as certainly as it was brought down similarly in Russia'.[216]

In his approach to revolutionary activity, E.S. Montagu echoed the British sociologist Professor Patrick Geddes, who will be further discussed in chapter four. Geddes had done plenty of work in British India and in the Princely States, and had come to reflect on revolutionary activity and political extremism. Soon after the Bolshevik revolution in Russia in 1917, Geddes argued that the revolutionaries on the Subcontinent functioned without ideology. Their actions were not even grounded in real resentment of British rule, he asserted. Rather, he argued, revolutionary action expressed frustration over poor social and economic conditions.

Geddes argued that Indian revolutionaries had, in fact, made correct observations of their everyday realities when they found that their conditions of life hindered social progress. But, he said, they were wrong in their conclusions. They blamed the British

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[216] O.I.O.C. Montagu Papers Mss Eur D523. Collection 3. Private letter Montagu to Chelmsford 8 March 1919.

for their situation, when they ought to turn their energy to reform their own conditions of life in industrial society, Geddes asserted.

In Calcutta, Geddes put his views before W.R. Gourlay, Private Secretary to the Governor of Bengal. Geddes had suggested to Gourlay that the revolutionaries in Bengal were not driven by 'entirely bad' motives. Actually, 'if they had only been shown what the real cause of poverty, disease and death is, they would have become as active social workers as they have become active revolutionaries', Gourlay reported Geddes to have said. They could, as it were, be set straight, and their destructive energy could be channelled into 'social service', Geddes assumed.[217]

E.S. Montagu continued his exchange with Chelmsford on the issue in early May 1919. He ventured to put his view across: government needed to change tact. Again writing to Chelmsford about unrest in Punjab, Bombay and elsewhere:

> [a]s regards the causes, the more I read of these occurrences, the more I am struck by the fact that there is every reason to believe that they are the inevitable consequences of that easiest of all forms of government, firm, strong government.[218]

If British rule addressed the sources of discontent, rather than repressed its manifestations, if it realistically tended to the welfare of its subjects, and managed society better, it would govern more effectively. The idea that the 'social' could function as a space for productive politics was being integrated into Montagu's call for a new imperial approach.

The colonial state needed to expand its bio-political concerns because, for Montagu, it now had to compete with the agenda of those anti-British elements he called 'real social reformers'. That is, the power of the colonial state must be put to work within the social domain to channel, and manage existing but misdirected energies. The colonial government must acknowledge those capacities internal to colonial society, and work

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[217] Univ.S.A. T-GED 12/3/58. Private letter Gourlay to Cuming 24 July 1917.
[218] O.I.O.C. Montagu Papers Mss Eur D523. Collection 3. Private letter Montagu to Chelmsford 1 May 1919.

through them. Social interventions seemed indispensable; nowhere more so, as Montagu pointed out in a speech mentioned above, than in Bombay.

The First World War had proved a turbulent period in Bombay. Real wages in the cotton textile industry fell and prices rose considerably. Shortage in supply made for speculation in cotton, in land, and in staple foods. This period saw much industrial action, partly triggered by high inflation. Before 1914, writes historian Rajnarajan Chandavarkar, strikes in the cotton textile mills occurred, but were rarely, if ever, co-ordinated. Between 1919 and 1940, however, the mill industry in Bombay experienced eight well-co-ordinated general strikes. Soon Bombay, the most important area for modern industry in India, turned into what Chandavarkar calls 'the most dramatic centre of working-class political action'.[219] Simultaneously, during this period, A.D.D. Gordon suggests, the local arena became an 'essential area of policy concern'.[220]

George Lloyd, newly appointed Governor of the Bombay Presidency, had several interviews with E.S. Montagu before Lloyd took up his new posting. Montagu was hoping Lloyd, along with other 'liberal' Governors, would promote his reformulated liberal approach to colonial governance. In a letter, Montagu writes to Lloyd that he had enjoyed the ways in which Lloyd went to India 'with an enthusiasm for the progressive development of your Presidency'.[221] Later George Lloyd recalled the intensity with which Montagu, as Secretary of State for India, pressed the issue of social intervention, especially into housing conditions. In fact, Montagu had several times declared 'the urgency of the problem', said Lloyd to an enquiry committee in 1926. Lloyd continued:

> I had not until I went to Bombay any knowledge of what the
> Government there had thought, but he [Montagu] pressed it
> upon me, saying that the last four or five Governments had
> failed to deal with the problem, he considered it was vital and
> I was to take it up with the greatest urgency that I could.[222]

[219] Chandavarkar, 1994, 6.
[220] Gordon, A. D. D. (1978) *Businessmen and Politics: Rising Nationalism and a Modernising Economy in Bombay, 1918-33.* New Delhi: Manohar.
[221] O.I.O.C. Montagu Papers Mss Eur D523. Collection 22. Private letter Montagu to Lloyd 1 May 1919.
[222] O.I.O.C. Government of India (1926) *Report of the Bombay Backbay Enquiry Commission, part 2.* Written and Oral Evidence. Witness 54 Lord [George] Lloyd. Oral Evidence 15 October 1926.

Although considering himself a reformist Tory, Lloyd shared Montagu's social liberal view that the colonial state needed to be reformist, even activist, within the social domain in industrialising areas in India. He described before the committee the appalling living conditions for all sections of the population. Not only were the working classes affected, said Lloyd; the situation was equally intense for the middle classes. In fact, Lloyd argued, the majority of the population was living 'under conditions which were a menace to public health and probably dangerous to society'.[223] His government had to take urgent steps to 'try to put an end to so grave a social ill'.[224]

After his arrival in Bombay as the new governor of the Presidency, Lloyd regretted that he had not been more studious on the parliamentary social reform committee.[225] Facing the 'social problem' of Bombay, he thought he ought to have studied issues of housing and education in much more depth. This did not, however, prevent him from arguing for a social interventionist agenda while speaking to the Legislative Council of the Bombay Presidency. Lloyd sent a draft of his speech to Montagu. 'I desire now to say a few words in regard to the general question of social reform, especially in regard to housing, sanitation, primary education', Lloyd would argue in his speech, and he continued,

> I conceive that there is no greater thing a Government can accomplish, no greater task that a Government can apply itself to, than that of attempting to ameliorate the lot of the great mass of the work people who labour in its urban and rural areas. Rhetoric on these questions is apt to be cheap, pious aspirations very easy to make…It is far more difficult to find a remedy for evils which have been allowed to grow up and be fair to wreck the very foundations of the social life in our midst. Better conditions are useless without better education…The problems…can only be solved by the cooperation of all concerned. I have only this to say…that Government alone cannot solve these problems. It

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[223] Ibid., 392.
[224] Ibid., 393.
[225] O.I.O.C. Lloyd Papers B158. Private letter Lloyd to Halifax 22 December 1918.

can, it must, and it will provide the impetus for reform. It will go further; it will assist in practical manner those public bodies who attempt to make these reforms...[226]

The statement made by Lloyd reflects the extent to which social language, as well as the idea of social intervention as a legitimate aspect of imperial power, had penetrated various layers of imperial operators. Montagu's new approach stressed the need of working through colonial society: by amending problems within in society, and channelling its capacities, colonial society could be effectively governed. For Lloyd it seemed not far-fetched to propose large-scale interventions into society, and he enjoyed the backing of the India Office when doing so. Interventions into the social domain were considered well within the capacity of the colonial administration.

3.3. Conclusion

This chapter has shown how turn of the twentieth-century British liberalism carried some nineteenth-century liberal ideas into the new century, while reframing others. Experiencing conditions of life in industrialising Britain, witnessing rural poverty, and sensing growing polarisation in British society, impressed upon sections of twentieth-century liberals an urgency to reformulate their political standpoint. It also became increasingly important for them to hear out the voices of the liberal movement's subaltern base, after continuous expansions in franchise.

I pointed out how the social and intellectual milieu of London was at the centre of this reformulation in liberal thought. New liberal ideas were worked out in radical networks of politicians and thinkers. These networks were not exclusively based in the liberal party: Fabians and Christian Socialists contributed as well. The press provided an important platform for carrying out and debating new political ideas.

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[226] O.I.O.C. Montagu Papers Mss Eur D523. Collection 24. Private letter Lloyd to Montagu 18 March 1919.

The most radical shift in liberal thought of the time, I showed, came with the ways in which liberals attached and contributed to the conceptualisation of a new terrain of human existence: 'the social'. The social domain was thought of as interrelated though distinct from domains of polity and economy. This newly defined social domain was considered key to future progress and welfare, as well as to possible discontent. What the social actually constituted was, perhaps purposefully, loosely defined in liberal discourse. Debates referencing this newly invented domain ranged from abstract views on the future evolution of industrial society, to exact estimations of various indicators of conditions of life measuring overcrowding, nutrition and household budgets in society.

The social domain was soon given political charge, and, accordingly, the role of state action and of political power within society was reassessed and reformulated in liberal circles. In contrast to their tradition, early twentieth-century liberals saw a need to regulate the social and keep it under the gaze of the state. Accordingly, I pointed out, social liberals sought to increase state action and expand the state's bio-political scope.

The rise of the social in British liberal thought, and the formation of social liberalism, I argued, influenced contemporary imperialism in original ways. While demands of the popular base of the liberal movement were important in furthering the social agenda in Britain, I showed that it was squalid conditions, assertive nationalism, and the forming workers' politics that began to influence contemporary liberal imperialists. Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century social liberals might sometimes have opposed British territorial expansion, yet as industrial society developed elsewhere – for example, in Bombay – social liberals began to argue that already existing colonial administrations might guide dependencies through the perils of modernity, without giving up on modernisation.

I argued that the rise of the social within imperial thought provided a new dimension to liberal imperialism. I used the political speeches of the then Under Secretary of State for India, E.S. Montagu, to exemplify my argument that for high-placed liberals within the imperial machinery, new social interventions proved effective in the government of colonies. To reach into colonial society and address mundane bio-political questions of housing, education and sanitation, proved a more sustainable strategy of government than the use of force. The return of an interventionist agenda, I argued, and the

socialised language framing that return, bore witness to the strong social liberal influence over actual policy in colonial Bombay.

In Britain, the social liberal challenge to previous liberal tenets was greatly influenced by the formation of British sociology as a distinct discipline. Sociology provided methods to approach, and theory to conceptualise, new realities of modern industrial society. Sociology helped advance social liberal arguments. I will now turn to how this formative and productive relationship extended into the context of colonial India.

4. Knowledge in social imperialism: sociology in colonial Bombay

Above I discussed a late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century movement within liberal thought, which helped create a distinct social domain, and turn that domain into a political entity. This movement reformulated liberal ideas about the necessity to tend to questions of welfare and conditions of life. It marked the birth of social liberalism. Social liberalism, I found, stressed the need for increased state engagement with the social domain. The movement, I argued, expanded bio-political considerations within liberalism.

I further suggested that the social turn in liberalism had imperial ambition and reach. Liberal activists, as well as politicians and administrators, I argued, began to discuss social conditions in the industrial towns of the empire and wondered what affect those deteriorating conditions of life would have on progress and stability. These liberal activists began to stress the need for imperial power to act on these issues and to elaborate forms of government up to date with developments in modern industrial society. They looked for ways in which imperial power could work through society, and enable energies therein, rather than suppress them. They, in short, looked for a new approach centred on the expansion of the bio-political scope of government, and began to re-inscribe earlier moral or civilisational agendas into the social domain. The final section of my previous chapter discussed how a social approach was considered more effective in colonial government than the use of force.

Clearly, the emergence of social liberalism in Britain and the rise of 'the social' in liberal imperialism reflected a growing awareness of the potentials and pitfalls of the new realties of industrial society. Such a social focus of politics and state built on existing social investigations and knowledge, and also demanded more specialised knowledge about the newly invented social domain.

The invention of the social as a political entity happened at a time when sociology consolidated as a field of knowledge in Britain. This was no coincidence. British

sociology, described by L.T. Hobhouse as the 'science of society', had a constitutive role in the expansion of the bio-political scope of domestic policy and legislation.

An outstanding question, which I will answer in this chapter, is whether the corresponding social focus we saw emerging in imperialism at this time placed increased demands for sociological knowledge in governance elsewhere in empire. In this chapter, with reference to India and the Bombay Presidency, I will argue that it did: the rise of the 'social' in imperialism corresponded to a demand for sociology within reach of the colonial state.

My aim in this chapter is to explore, with particular reference to the Bombay Presidency, how the colonial administration actually met new demands for sociological knowledge in colonial state action, how sociology formed and operated within the colonial context, and what was the function of sociology when utilised by a colonial administration.

I will pursue my argument as follows. Initially I describe the early debates in Britain through which sociology found its form as a discipline. This helps me introduce certain people of interest for the argument. It also allows me to pin-point certain constitutive debates inherent to sociology by the turn of the twentieth century that would influence its operation within social imperialism: the debate over 'social' or 'biological' explanations to changes in society, and the debate over whether sociology ought to be abstract (theoretical), or applied (practical).

I then turn to how sociology moved eastwards from its initial moorings in Britain into colonial Bombay. I will initially, and briefly describe the context of social science under the Raj, in order to underline the extraordinary circumstances under which knowledge was produced in a colonial situation. I then turn to a close reading of the records produced when colonial officials in Delhi and Bombay began to discuss how the new demand for social knowledge in colonial administration could be met. I look into the ways in which the first sociological research facility in British India – the School of Economics and Sociology in Bombay – was initiated.

I will show that although the School of Economics and Sociology was established only in 1919, it had been discussed since the beginning of the twentieth century. The School

would be granted some freedom from official governmental influence, or so it was said, although the government controlled its funding as well as the recruitment of staff. The School of Economics and Sociology would be awarded an independent chair of sociology, which in itself was a powerful expression of the significance attached to the discipline by local officials. I will investigate into the establishment of this school, and the hiring of sociologist and city-planner Professor Patrick Geddes as its first professor.

Helen Meller has briefly but nicely described how Geddes experienced great difficulties in developing fresh sociological insights about life in Bombay, as well as in promoting his Department with any real success.[227] However, my interest lay not with Geddes's professional accomplishments, but with what the founding of a School of this kind could tell us about the new governmental focus on social issues and the need to understand social questions through sociological methods and theory, in the face of modern industrial society. The enthusiasm shown by colonial officials when incepting the School is revealing, I argue, for an underlying belief in the necessity of a continuous and scientific production of sociological knowledge for administrative purposes within the Presidency.

Clearly, empire's relationship with science in general was riddled with contradictions. On one hand science provided authority and legitimacy for colonial state intervention into colonial society. Especially from the late nineteenth century onwards, writes David Arnold, 'the colonial regime employed science as both a means of self-legitimation and an aid to more effective government'.[228] On the other hand, the freedom of science in the context of empire was limited; science was always measured by its utility for colonial administration.

James Ferguson's investigation into how the colonial situation framed early encounters between modernising aspirations of colonial administrators, and the discipline of anthropology, sheds further light on this discussion. Ferguson points out that social science in the context of empire carried with it an internal tension between what was perceived as 'pure' or theoretical social science, and 'applied' or practical social

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[227] Meller, H. (1990) *Patrick Geddes: Social Evolutionist and City Planner*. London: Routledge.
[228] Arnold, D. (2000) *Science, Technology and Medicine in Colonial India*. The New Cambridge History of India, 3 (5). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 129.

science.[229] Ferguson suggests that anthropology became increasingly 'applied' and promoted its own utility exactly at a time when it looked to become more integrated into the colonial self-proclaimed project of modernising governance.[230]

This experience is telling also for how sociology would operate within social imperialism, I will argue in the last sections of the chapter. The debate by the turn of the century concerning whether sociology was to be abstract and predominately of theoretical import, or applied and of practical administrative use was, in the colonial context, always won by the latter. I use the ultimate marginalisation of Patrick Geddes in Bombay to illustrate this.

The ways in which the administrative apparatus would utilise sociological knowledge only in applied form interplays with the expanding bio-political concern of the administration in important ways. Gyan Prakash's discussion on science as modern technology points out a way to conceptualise this relation.[231] Prakash relies on Martin Heidegger's ideas about the 'essence' of modern technology not being 'technology itself', but a 'form of revealing' resources that lay beyond the procedures and measures or machinery employed. Technology is an instrument which both delineates, and 'enframes' – that is, confines but also makes known a resource to be explored and exploited. Technology enables the state to tap into energies and resources. It inserts itself in between the resource and the state.

In analogy, I will argue in this chapter's final section that during this time the social emerged as a new set of problems to enframe. Applied sociology in the colonial context inserted itself between the ruler and the ruled, in order to 'reveal' the social domain as a source of discontent, and as a resource for future development. Sociology made the social known to colonial administrators and helped enlarge the bio-political scope of action of the colonial administration.

[229] Ferguson, J. (1997) 'Anthropology and Its Evil Twin: "Development" in the Constitution of a Discipline'. In Cooper, F. and Randall, P. (Eds.) *International Development and the Social Sciences: Essays on the History and Politics of Knowledge*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 150-175.
[230] Ibid., 157, 161.
[231] Prakash, 1999, 159-161.

4.1. Approaches within early British sociology: constitutive debates

The years between 1900 and the outbreak of the First World War were decisive in the formation of a sociological discipline in Britain. For sure, during the latter part of the nineteenth century, several outstanding sociological studies were published in Britain, and British sociologists like Herbert Spencer, Charles Booth and Seebohm Rowntree all published with some frequency. Yet it was only in the early years of the twentieth century that a full-fledged disciplinary debate emerged and regular transactions of sociological papers were established. The consolidation of British sociology owes much to debates and transactions of the newly established Sociological Society in London, and I will revisit some of these debates in this section.

The modern discipline of 'sociology' opened up fresh avenues for research, and enabled connections between disciplines. 'Sociology', explained L.T. Hobhouse in his editorial of the first issue of the quarterly Sociological Review, was nothing less than a 'Science of Society'. To frame sociology as a *science* of society, Hobhouse suggested, meant to understand life as 'a distinct field for investigation', rather than as various unconnected elements of interest.[232]

More importantly, however, sociology connected social knowledge to ethical consideration and political action in innovative ways. While studying everyday realities, Hobhouse argued, sociologists frequently came across positive and negative aspects of life where some negative aspects formed actual obstacles to progress. When encountering these obstacles, it was the duty of the sociologist, wrote Hobhouse, to suggest their remedy. For him, sociological studies produced actionable knowledge, where 'scientific truth is at once translatable into a moral command'.[233] Or as Hobhouse's fellow in the Sociological Society Patrick Geddes pointed out: social survey and social service were closely related.[234]

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[232] Hobhouse, L.T. (1908 January) 'Editorial'. *Sociological Review* [S.R.], 1(1), 3.
[233] Ibid., 6.
[234] Univ. S.A. T-GED 3/4/17. Geddes, P. (1904) *Observation and Method in Sociological Studies. An Introductory Course by Professor Geddes. Synopsis of a Course of Lectures for the Second Term. School of Sociology and Social Economics.*

Sociology, as discussed by Hobhouse, had travelled far from its original propositions in the latter half of the nineteenth century. However, Hobhouse's editorial was not representative of the views of the entire sociological community. Still, at the time of Hobhouse's editorial, not a few sociolgists adhered to ideas of scientific selection of 'human stock' for the evolution of human kind, or general biological explanations of social development.[235] Hobhouse, however, found the idea reactionary.[236] The sociology formulated by Hobhouse took a clear collectivist view of social development. For Hobhouse it was not nature that was the 'environment of men', but 'society'.[237] But written in 1908, Hobhouse's article reflects the growing confidence felt by adherents of his views.

In order to understand the early development of British sociology as reflected by Hobhouse, and the ways in which constituting debates within circles of sociologists later came to influence the official establishment of sociology in India, it is necessary to revisit the early transactions of the Sociological Society in London. Victor Branford originally founded the Society. It met for its first session in the spring and summer of 1904, but plans and details of its inception were hammered out in early 1903.[238] Branford would continue to run the Society for years to come. The Society was initially housed close to the Strand in London, but moved to the London School of Economics in 1917. Branford himself published several sociological books and articles, while following a profession in corporate finance.

Already at its inception the Society drew several well-renowned British researchers and politicians together for readings and discussions. Charles Booth and Professor Bosanquet shared many sessions during the following years. The Society's first editorial committee was chaired by L.T. Hobhouse; with him in the committee were radical economist J.A. Hobson, eugenicist Benjamin Kidd, liberal M.P. J.M. Robertson, and Branford. .

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[235] For a contemporary summary see: Barnes, H.E. (1925 April) 'Representative Biological Theories of Society: Introduction'. *S.R.*, 17 (2); Barnes, H.E. (1925 July) 'Representative Biological Theories of Society: The analogy between society and the individual organism'. *S.R.*, 17 (3); Barnes, H.E. (1925 October) 'Representative Biological Theories of Society: "Social Darwinism"'. *S.R.*, 17 (4).
[236] Hobhouse, L.T. (1911 October) 'The value and limitations of eugenics'. *S.R.*, 4 (4).
[237] Collini, 1979, 172.
[238] Collini, 1979, 198-199.

Members of the Society did not adhere to a common view. A wide variety of perspectives were represented: positivist, eugenic, evolutionary, biological, and ethnographical. In its formative years the Society successfully linked its work to that of leading sociologists in continental Europe and the United States. Papers were submitted by Beatrice Webb, Höffing and Durkheim, and commented on by Talcott Parsons and Tönnies – to name only a few. The British press commented vividly on the proceedings. *The Times, Westminster Gazette* and *Daily Chronicle,* among others, wrote reviews and lengthy notes on debates and presentations.

The wide range of papers and articles that were presented before the Society were published annually as a collection of *Sociological Papers.* Beginning in 1908, the publication *Sociological Papers* turned into the quarterly *Sociological Review,* as a measure to keep abreast of the output of this fast-developing discipline.

In India, as we shall see later in this chapter, the start and consolidation of the discipline of sociology was inevitably slower, and the introduction of the discipline was much more linked to official agency than was the case in Britain. In fact, as I shall show, sociology was promoted by the colonial administration and incorporated into its governmental practises.

Revisiting the early transaction within the Sociological Society gives an indication of the constitutive debates in British sociology in its early years. A substantial amount of papers presented, as well as points made during discussions following presentations, deal with the aim, scope and character of the scientific discipline of sociology. The question of originality of sociological research is always present in these debates. It was asked what actually distinguished sociology in relation to disciplines of biology, economics, ethics or anthropology. There existed two main fault lines causing tension within the proceedings of the Society.

First: the stress put on contemporary sociology's affinity to the discipline of biology.[239] Some members or commentators, like Francis Galton, Benjamin Kidd and Karl Pearson, promoted eugenics as an essential part of sociology. Pearson, who travelled widely, and Galton drew parallels between their experiences elsewhere in the British Empire and

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[239] Collini, 1979, 200.

what they saw in the industrial towns of England. Galton argued that among the unemployed of the European working classes existed the 'same lack of endurance' that he had observed in 'savage' Africa.[240]

Others, like L.T. Hobhouse, forcefully argued against the 'attempt to deal with the science of society as if it were a department of the science of biology'.[241] Despite differences of opinion on the disciplinary classification and location of sociology, it was mostly agreed that sociology must provide a wide approach to the study of life in its various aspects and development, that it was closely related to social service and social reform, and that it would attempt to synthesise knowledge from various disciplines. For Hobhouse, sociology provided the experience upon which ethical considerations could be made. For parliamentarians like Charles Booth or J.M. Robertson, sociology systematised experience upon which politics could rest.

The second issue of debate was to what extent sociology, as a science, ought to be mainly applied or mainly theoretical. At first glance, it seems a minor point. In the colonial context, as we shall see in a following section, it would prove of great importance. In fact, what was at stake here was the prospect of an autonomous social science, or one measured by practicability and often bureaucratic or administrative utility. For many, as for two of the members of the Sociological Society with whom we will soon become better familiarised in the Bombay context, Harold H. Mann and Professor Patrick Geddes, sociology implied on one hand detailed analysis of actual social situations that could enhance knowledge of the public and government alike, and on the other hand sociology could provide facts for grander schematisations of social evolution.

Both Mann and Geddes presented papers during the Society's first sessions in 1904. Mann's paper 'Life in an Agricultural Village in England' was submitted with the assistance of the sociologist Seebohm Rowntree, whose social survey of York had already become a sociological classic.[242] Mann's paper was a social-economic study of

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[240] In Adas, 1989, 209.

[241] Hobhouse, L.T. (1905 11 May) Chairman's oral introduction to Bridges, J.H. 'Some Guiding Principles in the Philosophy of History'. *Sociological Papers* [S.P.], 2, 221.

[242] Mann, H.H. ([1904] 1905) 'Life in an Agricultural Village in England'. *S.P.*, 1, 161-193.

Ridgmont village, in his native region Bedfordshire. Mann was inspired by the research approach designed by Rowntree, but also by Charles Booth and his survey of London. Mann suggests that by applying the methodology of Booth and Rowntree to a study of village life, he aims '[t]o complete the chain of evidence as to the economic position of the people'. Subsequently he outlines in great detail household budgets, rent levels on housing, prices of staple food, family income, occupation, and percentages of families in poverty. Armed with his data Mann tells of a bleak prospect for village-England; the living standards in the countryside seem lower than in the industrial cities. This leads him to conclude 'the cry of "back to the land" has a curious commentary in the results I have obtained'.[243]

The inclusion of Mann's paper in the proceedings of the Society was awarded some editorial remark. The editorial committee found Mann's paper embodying a 'sociological re-orientation of economics'. Mann's approach was significant, the editors pointed out, because it applied Booth's sociological methodology for the first time to English village life.

The audience was more excited, but a little confused, by papers presented by Patrick Geddes. Geddes was a student of T.H. Huxley. He considered himself an entrepreneur in social sciences and, as such, as Helen Meller has pointed out, his work is notoriously difficult to pin down. Geddes's focus was 'man in his environment'; he was an idealist in the sense that he strongly believed in modern knowledge as a force for change in society.

He made a point of being in constant motion, both with regards to subject matter: transgressing academic disciplinary boundaries, and geographically: he travelled almost obsessively. Geddes worked on sociological, botanical, historical, geographical, architectural and educational questions. He wrote between 40 and 50 town-planning reports. He worked all over Britain. He worked in Palestine, and both in British India and in several Indian Princely States.

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[243] Ibid., 193.

Social issues, according to Professor Patrick Geddes, must be studied in the multifaceted 'everyday life'.[244] Accordingly, his experiences of late nineteenth-century urban Britain made him think seriously about urbanisation and what he perceived the related social problems. He aimed at finding ways to channel social change into less destructive trends than those he saw developing in Britain. Geddes also claimed that nationalist and revolutionary movements with their urban base could, and indeed must, be turned into education and social reform.

Meller points out that although critical of capitalism, Geddes distanced himself from socialist movements. He had much scorn for the Fabian Society and believed that their views on the efficient state could become outright dangerous for state-society relations.[245] In fact, Geddes opted out of political debate; his energy was directed towards research and social action.

Charles Booth himself chaired the first two sessions when Professor Patrick Geddes read out a series of papers before the Sociological Society. Geddes's first paper 'Civics: As Applied Sociology', was delivered in July 1904.[246] Sociological studies must be 'concrete' and appeal to 'practical men', argued Geddes in his introduction to the paper. Nonetheless, he ventured on a very abstract exploration of the historic evolution of cities. Geddes described the civic evolution as a climax of historical forces, which he then schematises through various tabulations. To understand this process, suggested Geddes, the sociologist must engage both geography and history of the city, and combine those into a social and regional survey. Geddes concludes his discussion by outlining forms for civic evolution.

In a subsequent paper, read before the Society in January 1905, Geddes fleshed out these ideas. He positioned them between pure sociology and pure biology. The researcher, he argues, should aim to study civics by combining the investigations of the categories of place, work, and folk. These categories correspond as social analogies to

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[244] Geddes, 1904.
[245] Meller, 1993, 67.
[246] Geddes, P. ([1904] 1905) 'Civics: As Applied Sociology'. *S.P.*, 1, 101-118.

the biologists' environment, conditions and organism.[247] These aspects of Geddes's approach had a profound impact on the young, but soon to be influential, writer and historical sociologist Lewis Mumford in New York.[248] However, Geddes's sociologist collegues in London were not easily won over, and his presentation before the Sociological Society was followed by a discussion that brought out some interesting themes.

Charles Booth congratulated Geddes on his 'charming' paper, but emphasised the need for sociologists to conduct practical research and focus on real problems. For Booth it was 'practical work [which] at the present needs most attention'.[249] Liberal M.P. J.M. Robertson joined him in his criticism. Robertson argued that sociology would become a dead science if it only dealt with forms and ideal types. But Robertson also challenged Booth's study of London. Booth had studied the social conditions of London in great detail, he argued. But he had merely replaced general knowledge with more exact knowledge, argued Robertson. Booth's study did not prescribe ways to deal with those conditions. Instead, he suggested, sociology must 'grapple with political questions'. A sociologist must always ask '[h]ow has this inequality of wealth and of service arisen, and how is it prevented in the future?'.[250] Sociology could provide an argument for political considerations, thought Robertson, and as such it was explicitly linked to political action and action of state.

In his third paper presented before the Society – 'A Suggested Plan for a Civic Museum (or Civic Exhibition) and Its Associated Studies' – Geddes further developed his approach and returned to some of the criticism of his previous papers.[251] This time he focused on trying to theorise everyday realities of cities. He argued that only 'in the general everyday life and aspect of our urban environments' could ideas and ideals that defined polity and cultures become 'deciphered'.[252] It was the role of the sociologist to construct analytical frameworks for that deciphering. In this ambitious endeavour,

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[247] Geddes, P. ([1905] 1906) 'Civics: As Applied and Concrete Sociology. Part II'. *S.P.*, 2, 55-111.
[248] Szakolczai, A. (2000) *Reflexive Historical Sociology*. London: Routledge, 75.
[249] Booth, C. ([1904] 1905) 'Chairman's concluding remarks'. *S.P.*, 1, 127.
[250] Robertson, J.M. ([1904] 1905) 'Discussion'. *S.P.*, 1, 23-124.
[251] Geddes, P. ([1906] 1907) 'A Suggested Plan for a Civic Museum (or Civic Exhibition) and Its Associated Studies'. *S.P.*, 3, 197-230.
[252] Ibid., 198.

studies of the present as represented by Booth's study of London brought valuable, yet inconclusive, insights. The sociologist needs to add an historical and geographical understanding to present social conditions, argued Geddes. However, in order to understand the present 'machine-civilisation', suggested Geddes, '[o]ur standpoint must be more general, and therefore sociological; yet at the same time more concrete, and therefore civic'. To this end, he asserted, addressing his critics, a study of 'concrete family budgets' would not be enough.[253]

These examples from the Sociological Society and those of Mann, Booth, Geddes and Robertson describe the tension within, and scope of, sociology as it emerged as an integrated field of knowledge. The issue whether sociology was mainly an administrative tool that could provide useful information about social questions upon which politicians or administrators could act, or whether sociology had grander theoretical ambitions to provide explanations and proof for social evolution, was still to be hammered out within circles of sociologists.

The views expressed here were carried along within a sociological corpus while sociology consolidated as a discipline, and they would, as we shall see, resurface again in the context of colonial Bombay. The debate was not overtly political: Fabians, Conservatives, Liberals and Marxists could share particular views on the future direction of the discipline of sociology. The quarrel was, rather, between those who despite political affiliation, argued for an autonomy or at least independence of science and research, and those who would be happy to measure knowledge strictly through its utility for political or administrative power.

4.2 New demands for social knowledge in colonial India

Life in industrial areas of India by the turn of the twentieth century was perceived as familiar by colonial administrators; they saw in it a mirror image of the past experience of Europe: urbanisation, industrialisation, and class-segmentation. Born out of that

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[253] Ibid., 215.

sense of shared experience emerged ideas of employing similar sociological methods as were used in Britain in coming to know conditions of life in modern industrial India. These new demands for sociological knowledge were also shaped by the fact that the early twentieth century proved to be politically troubled times in India for the British. Unrest added urgency to the administrative preoccupation to locate and understand sources of popular discontent.

In this section I will discuss how 'the social' emerged as a new terrain to be surveyed as a source of discontent, but also as a future resource to develop. To elaborate new techniques and institutions through which knowledge about the social domain could accumulate was now a priority for colonial officials in, for example, Bombay: demands were raised among colonial administrators for sociological method and theory. Shifting social and political realities surrounding the First World War were instrumental in the awakening of colonial interest in social science in India.

The period surrounding the war, when discussion of establishing a sociological research facility in Bombay came to fruition, proved dramatic for India in many ways. David Washbrook has argued that it came to change 'both the political context within which issues of economic growth and social welfare were considered and the economic context within which they had to be resolved'.[254] These intentions of creating a context for economic and social reform coincided with shifts within the fiscal structure of the Raj.[255]

The outbreak of war produced a sharp rise in prices of staple goods in urban India. Rising prices caused hardship among the Indian population. After a period of slow consolidation Indian nationalists now began to broaden their appeal in various sections of society: nationalists could tap into growing discontent within business elites, as well as within large sections of peasantry and urban lower and middle classes.[256]

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[254] Washbrook, 1997, 44.
[255] Cain, P.J. and Hopkins, A.G. (1993) *British Imperialism: Crisis and Deconstruction 1914-1990*. London: Longman.
[256] Kennedy, D. (2002) *Britain and Empire 1880-1945*. London: Longman.

The emergence of mass nationalism and anti-British sentiment was problematic for the British administration. On one hand, sections of the administration rhetorically attached to the emergence of a sense of shared nationhood a positive sign of the beneficial rule of the British: the Raj, they argued, had helped India to overcome its internal differences and advance toward national self-government. On the other hand, it had no real intentions of providing such self-government, and it feared the instability that could be unleashed by mass nationalism. Anti-British sentiment was more than an embarrassment to the Raj, David Washbrook notes, as the British during this period attempted to ideologically recast their empire as opposite to the totalitarianism and despotism of Bolshevism and Fascism.

Indeed, the basic structures of the colonial state in India had to undergo significant changes after the war.[257] Troops were moving out of India in large quantities to take part in action outside the Subcontinent. Massive recruitment campaigns caused resentment among Indians, especially in Punjab. Also, the war came down heavy on the budget of British India. The Government of India gave a war gift of £100 million to Britain, and it paid for its overseas expeditionary forces with £20-30 million a year.

Between 1913-14 and 1920-21 defence spending rose 300 per cent, producing a large deficit.[258] Land revenue could not carry such expenditure; war loans, but also fresh taxation, financed the war effort. This, of course, was a fine balance to tread, as increased taxation put pressure on already dissatisfied urban populations, such as those in Karachi and Bombay.

In Bombay a workers' politics was in the making. The First World War had brought great fortunes to Bombay manufacturers. Increased profits coincided with a general price rise, and demands were being made for higher wages. Before 1914, strikes had occurred within the cotton mill industry, although with little co-ordination between the various sections of workers on strike. Around 1917-18 that would begin to change, and between 1919 and 1940 eight well co-ordinated general strikes were carried out in Bombay.[259]

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[257] Bose, S. and Jalal, A. (1998) *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy* [2nd Ed.] New York: Routledge.
[258] Ibid., 16-17.
[259] Chandavarkar, R. (1981) 'Worker's Politics and the Mill Districts in Bombay between the Wars'. *Modern Asian Studies*, 15 (3), 603-647.

The situation caused much anxiety among British officials, who had little idea of what was going on in workplaces and poorer neighbourhoods. This is indicated by how E.S. Montagu, then Secretary of State for India, involved in the peace negotiations at Versailles, wrote worried letters from Paris to the then Governor of Bombay, George Lloyd, suggesting that Montagu would perhaps convince the socialist and trade unionist John Burns to go to Bombay and organise the workers properly.[260]

A sense of urgency had also crept into Lloyd's private communication to London. He found that a section within the administration shared a view that the social problem in Bombay had gone unchecked due to the inaction of his predecessors. Administrators now worried about Bombay becoming increasingly ungovernable.

At the basis of the strikes lay demands for higher wages and an end to wage-cuts. Sumit Sarkar notes how in Bombay City an increase in wages by an average 15 per cent was to balance an 80-100 per cent increase in the price of food grain. Also, unemployment hit hard at certain sections of workers in Bombay. However, Sarkar argues, the formation of mass workers' politics in the larger industrial towns in British India could not be explained by economic hardship alone: there was a general political awakening among workers and peasants throughout the industrialising world at this time.[261]

The general strike in Bombay in 1919 and 1920 involved 200,000 people and lasted several months, and had the backing of a sustainable organisation and networks reaching out in surrounding villages in the Presidency.[262] In fact, workers' action did push up wage levels in Bombay, compared with, for example, Calcutta. In fact, in several industrial centres in India strikes broke out at this time. During 1921 alone, strikes involved more than 600,000 workers in various places across India.[263]

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[260] O.I.O.C. Montagu Papers Mss Eur D523. Collection 22. Private letter Montagu to Lloyd 8 April 1920; O.I.O.C. Montagu Papers Mss Eur D523. Collection 22. Private letter Montagu to Lloyd 29 January 1919.
[261] Sarkar, 2005, 176-77.
[262] Newman, R. (1981) *Workers and unions in* Bombay, *1918-1929: A study of organisation in the cotton mills*. Canberra: Australian National University; Bakshi, R. (1986) *The Long Haul: the Bombay Textile Workers' Strike*. Bombay: BUILD Documentation Centre.
[263] Sarkar, 2005, 208.

Of immense significance was the start of the nationalist all-India Non-cooperation movement in 1919. Under M.K. Gandhi the movement evolved into the largest manifestation against the British presence on the Subcontinent since the Indian Mutiny of 1857. It included such elements of non-violent protests as picketing, boycott of foreign goods, and the resignation by Indians from government funded posts – although few Indians actually resigned from their government posts. The movement had both an economic impact and a psychological one. It had secured a strong backing from several sections of Indian society. Industrialists, especially in Bombay, initially kept the movement at arm's length, as they feared it would cause labour unrest. On the other hand, Gandhi himself was against strikes for political purposes.

In 1919, however, protests would occasionally turn violent. Gandhi was jailed in 1922, without having realised his promise of 1919 to bring independence to India within a year. The non-co-operation movement scattered. Smaller sections of the movement were radicalised, and after the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, British officials feared a spread of communism.

During the strikes of 1919 and 1920 a small section of communists were actually involved in strike action in Bombay. The group had emerged from an amalgamation of radicalised and disillusioned former members of Gandhi's non-cooperation movement. Hence, rather than being an off-shoot of the revolutionaries in Russia, it sprung from local movements. Initially communists had a marginal influence over Bombay trade unions, but communist elements asserted themselves more forcefully again by the mid 1920s.[264] Yet Sumit Sarkar reminds us: the real Bolshevik influence was small and the fear of its effect blown out of proportion.[265]

In the meantime, however, suggest financial historians Peter J. Cain and Antony G. Hopkins, the Raj was 'revitalised' with a new sense of 'mission'. The political reforms introduced in 1917-18 by the then Secretary of State for India, E.S. Montagu, and the then Viceroy in India, Chelmsford, brought ideas about nation building into the colonial administration. Certain departments of government were assigned to carry out

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[264] Sarkar, 2005, 247-249.
[265] Ibid., 247.

infrastructure and educational programmes. However, in reality very little came out of the many committees at work. Most plans were shelved, or stood without funding.[266]

4.2.1. A short history of science in colonial India

The development of science and social science in India was always closely connected to the shifting aspirations of British officials and the agendas of the British Raj. Obviously, it is indeed difficult to imagine the official introduction of sociology into British India outside of the contemporary parameters set up by the turn of the twentieth-century colonial administration; social science, as applied in India, formed within contemporary imperial realities described above.

Indeed, for sociologists empire did not only provide a field of opportunities in terms of data-collection, but in terms of employment. For some, empire as a phenomenon was even of theoretical interest. Margaret Elizabeth Nobel (Sister Nivedita) wrote to her fellow sociologist Victor Branford to complain about the lack of interest shown in empire by her sociologist colleagues. Nobel had taken great interest in India after meeting the Hindu reformist Swami Vivekananda in London around the turn of the twentieth century. He took her as his disciple, and she left Britain for Calcutta.

For Nobel, empire – both as a reality and an analytical category – provided a structure for the enhancement of human evolution. As such, it could be of great importance in the formulation of sociological theory. Nobel found that:

> [t]he outstanding phenomenon of the present age for the English people is undoubtedly the existence of empire. Sociologists may be assumed to be persons who are not quite intoxicated with vanity, but aware of many of the dangers and difficulties which empire involved, both for rulers and ruled, and are prepared to consider these facts in a calm and

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[266] Washbrook, 1997, 36-49.

unprejudiced manner, with a view of the determination and perhaps even the promulgation of true ideas on the subject.

Empire, Nobel continued, 'implies synthesis', and it was the role of sociologists to compile and theorise knowledge from far-flung places. They must seize the opportunity provided through the formal structure of empire. Why, she asked, 'should the English sociologist know nothing of what the Frenchman is discovering in Cambodia, or the Dutchman in Java?'. These were questions that those 'at work on the world's moral and social frontiers' needed to be informed about, Nobel argued, and sociology could carry the message.[267]

Yet, despite the hopes of Nobel and many of her colleagues of an autonomous production of knowledge, science, when developing within the context of the empire, was unable to detach itself from local colonial administrations. Gyan Prakash points out the historic contradiction inherent in the ideal universal and free science acting within the confines of empire. 'On the one hand', writes Prakash, 'science was projected as a universal sign of modernity and progress unaffected by its historical and cultural locations; on the other hand, science could establish its universality only in its particular history as imperial knowledge'.[268]

The debate about how and on what premise science actually established itself outside metropolitan societies was established even before George Basalla published his seminal article *The Spread of Western Science* in 1967. Yet, it is his diffusionist model that is still most frequently referenced in discussions about the development of science in the context of empire. Basalla described a three-phased movement of science and reason, outward from the metropolitan society towards science-less colonies of the periphery.[269] During the first phase colonies primarily functioned as sources of data for Western science. Scientists went out to collect things of interest, and went back to organise and theorise their findings. During the second phase colonial administrations established a 'colonial science' within the dependencies. Now a highly rudimentary infrastructure for scientific enterprise becomes imposed and implanted. It operated,

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[267] Univ. S.A. T-GED 3/1/2.2. Private letter Sister Nevidita to Bradford [n.d.] 1919.
[268] Prakash, 1999, 71.
[269] Basalla, G. (1967) The Spread of Western Science. *Science*, 156, 611-22.

however, within the confines of wider colonial objectives. The third phase was marked by a struggle for an independent scientific culture, often along nationalist lines.

Basalla's model has successfully been put to rest by, for example, Michael Adas in his *Machines as the Measure of Men*. There were several flaws in the model that needed to be accounted for. For example, it did not give credence to pre-colonial networks of information-gathering and indigenous modes of analysis.[270] The model furthermore suggested a one-way flow of science and reason emanating from the metropole. This is obviously a false claim. David Arnold, instead, points out the geographically shifting centres of influence in scientific work.[271] Moreover, Basalla's model suggests colonial science to be a closed container, out of touch with local systems of knowledge. Historical sociologist Bernhard S. Cohn has shown why this is a disputable suggestion. Local knowledge was, in fact, often absorbed by colonial scholarship, yet biased by local hierarchies of power.[272]

David Arnold, however, describes how the early British East India Company, and later the colonial state, were never keen on being advised by, or promoting, scientific work in their administration of the Subcontinent. Arnold points out that the East India Company and the subsequent early Government of India showed little interest in providing a beneficial milieu for research. In return, science had little influence over governance. With the exception of a few invited scientists working on zoology or geology – areas where scientific knowledge obviously could enhance revenue – most research took the form of general surveys carried out by Indian Civil Servants without research training.

Still, the notion of colonial science has some currency, I will suggest, if it is thought of in terms of science as an instrument of imperial power. The relationship between science and colonial administrative power was a close one. Deepak Kumar finds science to be 'inextricably woven into the fabric of colonialism'.[273] The import of a rudimentary colonial infrastructure for science did, however, take a long time coming, and it was structured by administrative expediency. The universities of Bombay, Calcutta and

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[270] Bayly, C.A. (2000) *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[271] Arnold, 2000, 13.
[272] Cohn, B.S. (1996) *Colonialism and its forms of knowledge: the British in India*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 26-30.
[273] Kumar, D. (1997) *Science and the Raj 1857-1905*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 3, 15.

Madras were promoted after long debate at the end of the 1850s in order to examine students – not to carry out research.[274]

However, this was about to change during the late nineteenth century. During the viceroyalties of Elgin (1894-99) and Curzon (1899-1905), the colonial state began to think scientific influence over policy a matter of necessity. Elgin admitted that the government's 'isolation' from modern science was a problem. He did so, Arnold points out, as public resentment mounted over intrusive plague measures carried out after the plague epidemic in the final years of the nineteenth century. Were the administration in better touch with medical knowledge, many ineffective measures to counter the plague would have been avoided at an early stage.

For Curzon, Arnold argues, science more clearly became a tool of government. Curzon found science useful, as it could help promote actual change in society at the same time as it enabled more efficient governance. The notion of science as positively contributing to, and being a factor in, government had in fact been with colonial officials for more than a decade at the time Curzon pronounced it. For the famous Strachey brothers, John and Richard, who both held high positions in India during 1870s-90s, science enabled 'certainty' in government.[275] What was new under Curzon, however, was the way in which science was promoted by the colonial officials – in Arnold's words: to 'provide a fresh source of legitimation' as Indian nationalism became much more vocal.[276] The colonial state, in short, argues Kumar, becomes central to any discussion on science in the colonial context.[277]

This intimacy between science and colonial administration provided little freedom for scientific thought and research under the Raj. In fact, Kumar argues, science under colonial circumstances had no real sovereignty. Although it sometimes provided original thought, science was, Kumar argues, utility driven rather than formed by curiosity. He suggests that colonial science could best be described as 'science-as-

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[274] Ganachari, A. (2008 February 2) 'Imperial Appropriation and Disciplining the Indian Mind (1857-1917): Whose History'. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 77-88.
[275] Caine, B. (2005) *Bombay to Bloomsbury: A Biography of the Strachey Family*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[276] Arnold, 2000, 135, 136.
[277] Ibid., 228.

enterprise', rather than 'science-as-avocation'. This holds especially true for scientific endeavours under the Raj, Kumar writes.[278]

As we shall see, this central tension within the relationship between science and colonial administration was that of science and social science as primarily a policy oriented and apolitical tool used for efficient administration, or as something wider, and less conformed. In colonial India, Kumar points out, 'the local civilian [administrator] wanted...practical results rather than research papers'.[279] This tension, which crystallised around the question about the utility of social science, became pronounced during the period here under review as science more frequently was called forth to legitimate colonial policy.

4.2.2. Initial proposals to establish sociology in India

Clearly, social realities in urban industrial India begged serious scientific investigation. To fall back on scientific research concerning the perceived causes of the unstable situation in British India could signal how serious the colonial state was in coming to terms with social problems, and could furnish government with practical plans.

At the time of Harold H. Mann's and Patrick Geddes's productive roles at the inception of the Sociological Society, their respective work was taken up in India and, in particular, in the Bombay Presidency. Soon after he took part in the first session of the Sociological Society, Harold H. Mann took up a position as principal of the agricultural unit in Poona, Bombay Presidency. The unit formed part of the Poona College of Science. This college had been initiated in 1854, but agricultural research was conducted from 1879 onwards.

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[278] Kumar, 1997, 16.
[279] Ibid., 110.

As will be further discussed below, Mann took a very active role in the expansion of the University of Bombay, and the establishment of a School of Economics and Sociology at the university. In this connection, Mann worked hard to secure Geddes as the School's first professor in sociology. Moreover, in the next section of this chapter I will show how Mann himself carried out or assisted in new sociological studies in the Presidency.

Geddes had been active in promoting sociology in India for some time, and he attached his effort to the highly anticipated proposal for a research institute by J.N. Tata. In 1898, Tata, a wealthy and influential Bombay based industrialist, had proposed to create a Trust that would finance the setting up and maintain a research institute in India. He would donate a sum of 3,000,000 rupees, an enormous donation for a single individual to make in turn of the century India. Associations interested in the promotion of science and funded by Indians had existed before Tata's initiative. Bengal Social Science Association, for example, had already begun to promote positivism in the tradition of Comte in 1867.[280]

Tata's scheme was devoted to actual research, and with his donation, Kumar points out, Tata came to symbolise 'the rising aspirations of the Indian bourgeoisie', which had become conscious of the need for Indians to engage scientific research. Tata's initiative created massive support in the Indian press, and it helped position science and the politics of higher education within wider nationalist politics. Initially the Indian National Congress focused almost exclusively its critique of the lack of scientific institutions and training in India on higher technical education and medical training.[281] The nationalist *swadeshi* movement made a more urgent, wider, and more politically charged appeal for improved science and higher education under 'national control' in India.[282]

Returning to Tata's proposal: when floating it, Tata had asked the Government of India to reciprocate his donated amount in almost equal terms. The Government of India was wary about such an ambitious research venture in India, Kumar writes. The then

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[280] Prakash, 1999, 58.
[281] Kumar, 1997, 208-9.
[282] Ibid., 210.

Viceroy Curzon attempted to bring the costs down on behalf of the government, thus reducing the ambition of the plans. Tata refused to bow down, and died in 1904 without realising his plans for a research institute.[283]

Before the death of J.N. Tata, however, in 1901, professor Patrick Geddes's wrote him open letters outlining what he called a 'needed type of research institute, geographical and social'. Geddes letters were printed in two Indian publications, *The Pioneer* in August 1901, and in the *East and West*, in September 1903. In his articles Geddes suggested an integrated institute focusing on civics, and which centred the social and geographical 'regional survey' as its main feature.[284] The knowledge coming out of such an institute would be beneficial for government as well as for the general public, Patrick Geddes asserted.

Geddes's plans were not successful with Tata. His proposals had, however, ignited the interest of local officials elsewhere in British India. Hopes of studying urban social questions in an Indian context were nourished by sections of colonial administrators. For them, sociology as a science of society brought with it concrete methods for studying modern life, yet it could be sensitive to various local forces, of which progress was contingent. How to formalise and institutionalise sociology as a research discipline in India was, however, becoming a difficult – and political – question for the Government of India.

At this point the future of the entire university system was becoming increasingly debated, and especially so after Curzon had appointed an Indian Universities Commission. Curzon had high ambitions with his university reform plans. He aimed to significantly transform the relation between the universities and the state. He wanted to curtail their independence while simultaneously channelling their accumulating knowledge into the administrative machinery. He had found the relative freedom of the university syndicates and senates too cumbersome to cope with.

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[283] Ibid., 202-5.
[284] Univ.S.A. T-GED 12/2/449. Geddes, P. (1903) *On Universities in Europe and in India and a Needed Type of Research Institute, Geographical and Social. Five Letters to an Indian Friend.* Madras.

In Bombay, sections within the university's governing bodies worried about the University of Bombay becoming a department of the Government of Bombay, and attempted to resist such moves. Debates emerged in Bombay over specific topics and reformulations of syllabus and curriculum. The Government of Bombay had asserted itself within these debates, attracting criticism from local influential Indian sections of society.[285]

4.2.3. Establishing sociological research in the Bombay Presidency

Within this context, ideas about establishing sociology as a university subject were floated in Bombay. Establishing sociological research in Bombay would turn out to be an urgent yet slow process, with interesting twists and turns.

In response to the question about the utilisation of grants put forward by the Government of Bombay in 1912, a committee was appointed by the University of Bombay.[286] The appointed Committee met during June to August to outline a scheme of how best to put the grants into work. The committee consisted of members of the Bombay University Senate, members of the Legislative Council, and local businessmen.

The University of Bombay had the doubtful privilege of having an active, but quite autocratic Chancellor in the former Governor of the Presidency, S.G. Clarke, later Lord Sydenham of Combe. In fact, much of the stipulated committee's work was pre-empted by Clarke as he widely circulated a letter addressed to the University Vice-Chancellor, formulating his view on how the grants ought to be put to use.

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[285] Ganachari, 2008, 80.
[286] M.S.A. Government of Bombay [G.B.] Education Department [E.D.] Compilation 360 of 1914. Letter no. 2195. Dastur to secretary of G.B. E.D. 5 Sep 1912.

In his letter Clarke argued that the grants open up 'new possibilities of the greatest importance to the Presidency'.[287] If utilised well, Bombay University could significantly strengthen its position as a centre of learning, and also widen its scope. There were also new opportunities for the university to focus on primarily social, economic and historical studies, and subsequently contribute to the running of the Presidency. Hence, it was important, Clarke argued, that the conception of the function of the university within the polity must be seriously rethought. 'A living university', Clarke writes, 'should not concern itself with its students alone. It should be an intellectual force in the [s]tate'.[288]

This process would imply centralisation of higher education in the Presidency, and a integration of social science into colonial administration. Clarke asserted that the different colleges in Bombay must from now on be better-coordinated, and in this co-ordination the Government of Bombay must play an active role. Moreover, government, university and business must form strong links for their mutual benefit, Clarke suggested. In order for the university to carry its new role as an intellectual force in the state, it would have to recruit prominent staff. To this end, according to Clarke, only British professors and lecturers would do.

In its final report, the appointed Committee was left with little choice but to basically adopt the outline made by Clarke. The Committee recommended that one or more 'eminent' professors or lecturers should be brought annually from Great Britain to deliver lectures in Bombay over a wide range of topics in economics, sociology and history. Moreover, a 'beginning should be made' to organise Bombay University into a teaching university, by appointing a university professor. The most important subject to be taught was that of economics and political economy, with a particular emphasis on economics in Indian conditions.[289]

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[287] M.S.A. G.B. E.D. Compilation 360 of 1914. Private letter Chancellor to the Vice-Chancellor University of Bombay 4 July 1912.
[288] Ibid.
[289] M.S.A. G.B. E.D. University of Bombay (1912) *Report of the Committee of the syndicate appointed to consider proposals of the utilization of the Government grants and the letter of Government regarding the contribution by the university towards the cost of the Examination Halls.*

When writing back to the Government of India on the subject of how the University would utilise its grants, the Government of Bombay reiterated the positions of the University Senate Committee and the Chancellor. It added that it is 'absolutely necessary to draw largely upon extraneous sources for the teaching agency required' if one wants to bring teaching to a 'higher plane'. In the Indian Education Service there are but a few professors who would be able to 'deal[ing] effectively' with the specific subject. 'If a new start is now to be made, it is essential that the impression created should be strong and lasting. This result can be obtained only by the employment of brilliant men', the Government concluded.[290] The committee proposal was accepted in late 1912.

In a simultaneous but separate exchange between Bombay and Delhi, the Government of Bombay discussed whether to establish a Commercial College in the Presidency. A Commercial College, the Government of Bombay argued, 'must be under Government control' but would consult with an advisory board where the commercial interests of Bombay would be represented. The focus of the college had, up to then, been restricted to commercial issues such as the training of actuaries and auditors, but that could now be broadened, the Government suggested.[291] The Secretary of State for India welcomed a broader scope when accepting the proposal.[292]

Shortly after hearing out the Government of Bombay on the two separate issues of the grants for the University and the establishment of a College of Commerce, the Government of India published its Educational Policy of 1913. In it, Delhi now found that due to the expansion of interest in commercial education in British India, it would be worth considering 'the question of making arrangements for organised study of the economic and allied sociological problems of India'. For the first time the Government actually combined the topics of economics and sociology into one distinct field of knowledge requiring an institutional home, and in that context, it put forward Bombay as the best place suited for hosting such an institution.

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[290] M.S.A. G.B. E.D. Compilation 360 of 1914. Letter no. 2910. Rieu to secretary of Government of India [G.I.] E.D. 11 Nov 1912.

[291] M.S.A. G.B. E.D. Compilation 360 of 1914. G.B. Resolution no. 888 E.D. 3 April 1912.

[292] M.S.A. G.B. E.D. Compilation 360 of 1913. Letter no. 16. Secretary of State for India 17 January 1913.

The idea of a college of commerce had met ready response in Bombay. Building on that response, the Government of India suggested that 'arrangements for the organised study of the economics and allied sociological questions in India...might advantageously be attached to the College of Commerce. Bombay, with its busy industrial and commercial life so largely the result of Indian enterprise and ability, seems peculiarly well placed for an experiment of the kind'. Although there had been previous attempts to treat 'political economy in its special application to Indian problems', these attempts had been isolated and not coordinated, wrote the Government of India. Instead, they now argued that there was a possibility to carry out a 'detailed investigation of facts by a series of monographs to be subsequently co-ordinated into a broad survey'. Indeed, they suggested:

> Indian sociology or Indian history treated from the sociological point of view is a science to which little or no attention has hitherto been given...The aim of a sociological history of India would be to arrive at the conditions which made the politics, the religion and the general structure of Indian society in its distinctive features.[293]

By synthesising ethnographical, sociological, historical and economic 'facts', keen observers of Indian conditions might derive a better understanding of contemporary Indian social, political and commercial life, the Government of India suggested.[294]

While the Governments of India and Bombay discussed the establishment of a sociological connection to the proposed College of Commerce, the University Senate now attempted to wrestle the control over sociological research in its favour. In its new scheme for post graduate studies the Senate outlined four departments of teaching and research. Among those four, one department was to combine the study of 'Sociology and Economics'.[295]

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[293] M.S.A. G.B. E.D. Compilation 360 of 1914. Letter no. 951. H. Sharp to secretary G.B. E.D. 27 May 1913.
[294] M.S.A. G.B. E.D. Compilation 360 of 1913. Resolution G.I. E.D. no. 301-C.D [paragraph 43] 21 February 1913.
[295] M.S.A. G.B. E.D. Compilation 360 of 1913. University of Bombay [U.B.], 'Scheme prepared by the Syndicate for the development of University Postgraduate Studies', 2 Aug 1913.

Subsequently, the Government of Bombay notes that it was now under consideration whether it would be more advantageous to create a 'School of Indian Economics and Sociology', and place it under the management of the University of Bombay.[296] Both the Government of India and Government of Bombay agreed to this new set-up in August 1914.[297] The cost of two professorships in Bombay, one in sociology and one in economics, was sanctioned with effect from financial year 1915-16.[298] However, the First World War put the planned expanded teaching in sociology on hold. Since the Government and the University Senate so thoroughly disbelieved in recruiting within India, they found it impossible to hire suitable professor from Britain until after the war.[299]

4.2.4. Getting Patrick Geddes to Bombay

The interest in the new forms of applied sociology was not reduced by the War within the wide circles of Government in Bombay. Harold Hart Mann, now fellow of the University and increasingly connected with the Government of Bombay – he would later be Director of Agriculture in the Presidency – was in touch with Patrick Geddes through their affiliation with the Sociological Society in London. Mann nourished hopes of bringing Geddes to Bombay, in order to help establish sociological research there.

In 1914 Lord Pentland, the then Governor of the Madras Presidency, invited Geddes to Madras. Geddes, as well as Pentland, hoped other 'liberal' governors would take interest in his work. Most of Geddes's initial work in India was practical and his reports were published as governmental papers. This restricted his audience. In the pages of the Sociological Review, however, his reports were praised for their applicability and '"concrete" sociological method', thus their translatability into planning and actual policy in India.[300]

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[296] MSA. G.B. E.D. Compilation 360 of 1914. Departmental note 22 January 1914.
[297] M.S.A. G.B. E.D. Compilation 360 of 1914. Letter no 2425. J.L Rieu to registrar U.B. 1 Aug 1914.
[298] M.S.A. G.B. E.D. Compilation 360 of 1915. Government Order no 270 F.D. 20 January 1915.
[299] M.S.A. G.B. E.D. Compilation 360 of 1918. Departmental note [n.d.].
[300] Farquharson, A. (1919) 'An Indian Example'. S.R., 11 (1), 65-68.

Geddes found interested administrators in the industrialising Bombay Presidency, as well as in Calcutta, but was not able to influence administrators all over British India. For many he seemed too radical. While working for colonial administrators, Geddes often turned to Indian leaders, both nationalist and traditional, for consultations on the problems of urban India. Geddes insisted that modern urban social questions demanded new administrative and political approaches in order to be resolved. According to Meller, Geddes thought that 'it would be possible to by-pass some of the stages of change suffered by western cities under the impact of industrialisation'.[301]

Geddes elaborated his ideas about what could be done in India under contemporary forms of administration. He thought it necessary to approach in a very detailed manner all aspects of life in urban India – to study occupation, housing, family life; to collect statistics, and ethnographies through social surveys; to thoroughly, and intimately, come to know life in modern industrial and urban India. When all the data was collected, administrative and political power might be employed in order to address particular issues. This approach seemed like a fresh one to observers outside colonial India. 'Your business in India' wrote his admirer and acclaimed American writer Lewis Mumford in New York, 'seems to be…to regionalize British imperialism; in other words to give it a larger raison d'être than sanguine map-painters of the City or Downing Street have any conception of'.[302]

H.H. Mann wrote to Patrick Geddes in November 1914. Geddes's European tour with a portable exhibition of 'Cities and Town Planning' had been compromised by the War, and he was about to travel to Bombay with his exhibition. Mann found that the new, more holistic sociological perspectives on social life were not yet fully appreciated within influential circles of the colonial administration. Mann hoped for Geddes to exert some influence in that direction. A new Town Planning Bill was about to be put forward in the Legislative Council by the Government, Mann pointed out, and it had been found autocratic by many in Bombay.

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[301] Meller, 1990, 203.
[302] Private letter Mumford to Geddes ([1918 n.d.] 1995). In Novak, F.G (Ed). *Lewis Mumford and Patrick Geddes - Their Correspondence*. London: Routledge, 49.

Mann worried that the Bill 'when passed may and possibly will be used to rivet on us Haussmannising schemes which will be extremely difficult to modify afterwards'.[303] Mann feared a fight between more technocratic engineers on the one hand, and those like him who were interested in what he thought socially sensitive development, on the other. He expressed his hopes that Geddes would help hold back the enactment of the legislation.[304]

The Bill was passed, yet Geddes's exhibition and accompanying lectures – with the main theme of 'citizenship' - were welcomed as important contributions to ongoing debates about civics, rights, and urban governance in Bombay.[305] Geddes argued in his lectures that in order to reach its full potential, a city like Bombay would need a new 'civic infrastructure', and would need to reduce levels of material poverty if it ever was to be able to establish a more inclusive form of citizenship. Geddes identified a series of amenities in his lectures, which he argues were actual entitlements falling within the realm of real citizenship. These amenities were 'decent homes, affordable public transport, universal access to water supply, and a comprehensive system of urban sanitation'.[306] Geddes also produced a series of town plans for towns in the Presidency.

After leaving Bombay in 1915, Geddes kept in contact with local administrators. S.M. Edwardes was one of them. It was to him that Geddes suggested the need to set up a 'Civic Institute' in Bombay. Edwardes welcomed this idea. From his sick leave in London, he endorsed it as 'very sound'. And, wrote Edwardes, 'although in Bombay we are only in the beginning to think of grappling with the various problems, social, sanitary, economic etc. which arise in every urban area', the main problem was still 'lack of coordination and little exchange of experience between the various bodies or organisations that are at work'.[307] Edwardes's answer to Geddes reflects a growing hope nourished by officials in Bombay to find an institutional structure for the exchange and accumulation of knowledge about social conditions.

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[303] In France Napoleon III assigned Georges-Eugène Haussmann to reorganise Paris after recurrent rioting in the city. Haussmann's was an attempt to improve housing and sanitation, but also to transform Paris in ways which benefited surveillance and policing.

[304] Univ.S.A. T-GED 12/3/42. Private letter Mann to Geddes 24 November 1914.

[305] Hazareesingh, S. (2000) 'The Quest for Urban Citizenship: Civic Rights, Public Opinion and Colonial Resistance in Early Twentieth-century Bombay'. *Modern Asian Studies*, 34 (4), 797-829.

[306] Ibid., 805.

[307] Univ.S.A. T-GED 12/3/54. Private letter Edwardes to Geddes 30 November 1916.

Clearly, by the end of the First World War the field of sociology had become central to the new scheme for expansion of higher education within the University of Bombay. Sociology was no longer attached as a contingent to commerce as an 'allied subject' – it was understood as valuable knowledge in its own right. Due to the substantial changes to the original proposal from the University of Bombay from 1912/13, a new approach was called for from the University Senate.

Subsequently, Harold H. Mann drafted an outline of a proposed 'School of Economics and Sociology' in which he conferred with the previous suggestion put forward by the Government of Bombay. Mann's outline suggests that the administration of the new school would be placed under a standing committee appointed by the Senate. The purpose of the school should 'definitely be to give the opportunity to students to conduct research in economics and sociology'.[308] The proposal was to be put before the University Senate in June 1917. Mann forwarded it to Geddes in May the same year, hoping he could soon come to Bombay again and perhaps take charge of the school.[309]

A new committee was constituted to present a revised plan for the 'School of Indian Economics and Sociology' as outlined by Mann. In a report submitted in late October 1917, the Committee formulated the purpose of the school as to 'promote the study of the Indian social institutions with reference to their effect on the economic and industrial life of the people and to conduct research in economics and sociology'. The School would consist of two professors with 'intimate knowledge' of Indian social and economic conditions. They, in turn, would be supported by two assistant professors.[310]

The main crux of the proposal at this point was that of recruitment of staff. Some, like Mann and the principal of the University of Bombay, Percy Anstey, had set their minds firmly on recruiting British sociologists to the school. Anstey, who had attended the so-called 'Summer meetings' in sociology and economics at King's College in London convened by Geddes, along with the Madras-based economist Gilbert Slater, dissented to the majority report.

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[308] Univ.S.A. T-GED 9/1384.2. University of Bombay 'Scheme prepared by the syndicate for proposed School of Economics and Sociology 20 February 1917'.
[309] Univ.S.A. T-GED 9/1384. Private letter Mann to Geddes 6 May 1917.
[310] M.S.A. University of Bombay (1917) *Report of the Committee appointed by the Senate on the 7th of July 1917 to consider and report upon the scheme for the proposed School of Economics and Sociology.*

According to Anstey, the School could not reach the standard it aimed for, unless European – read British – scholars were attracted to the University. This was particularly the case concerning the discipline of sociology. Wrote Anstey, '[a]s for sociology, I am not aware that there is in India a single teacher or writer in this subject – which even in Europe is the most recent of social sciences – who could by any stretch be called qualified to occupy a first rate professorial chair'.

Interestingly, for Anstey, familiarity with the subject matter was secondary to a sense for method and general theory. Of course, wrote Anstey, a European scholar 'would have to make it his first business out here at once to familiarize himself with Indian life...But I emphatically hold that if you have the right type of man practising the right method, temporary unfamiliarity with his environment will prove a quite secondary consideration. Were it not so, there would, as a matter of fact, be no science of sociology in existence'.

The idea of sociological method as a universal grammar, applicable to various social contexts, was at the core of the discipline. The question now was what was more important, a deep knowledge of those social facts, or a deep knowledge of the methods through which they could be ascertained and made known? The University Senate had been quite clear on the issue. Indian students should go for training to England, rather than having young English lecturers without knowledge about India sent to Bombay. Wrote Mann to Geddes, '[o]ur people won't look at a European who does not already know India unless he is a man of established reputation'.[311]

The report, and Anstey's minute of dissent, were forwarded for comment to Selby, the Bombay Government's Director of Public Instruction. Selby agreed with the suggestion that the proposed School of Economics and Sociology should be linked to Bombay University directly, rather than to one of the smaller colleges existing in Bombay. But, the Director argued, with the increased prestige of the School, and more importantly with the kind of sociological and economic research conducted in the school, the need to tighten control on behalf of the Government increased.

He argued that the Government of Bombay must now make it clear that any appointments of professor, assistant professor, or secretary to the new School would

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[311] Univ.S.A. T-GED 9/1453. Private letter Mann to Geddes 9 July 1919.

have to be sanctioned by the Government of Bombay. Such a procedure was never mentioned in Mann's outline. But the Director noted that '[i]n view...of the nature of the subjects which are likely to be studied and of their connection with important and far-reaching political and administrative problems I think it is essential that all appointments...in the school should be subject to the sanction of Government'.[312]

Subject to minor changes, the Governor of Bombay approved the revised scheme in August 1918.[313] Mann had suggested that Patrick Geddes be appointed to Professor of Sociology in Bombay. He wrote to Geddes that his proposal had been received positively, yet he worried that the ending of the War would see Geddes looking for new appointments in Europe.[314] In fact, the University was very active in its attempts to get Geddes to Bombay. It invited him to come and deliver six lectures on "Western Universities, in their origins and developments, their decline and renewals".[315] Geddes declined to come to Bombay at an early date, due to outstanding work in Calcutta – and then he left for Jerusalem.

Mann wrote again to Geddes telling him how anxious the University was to get him as its first professor of sociology. The University pleaded with Geddes to come to Bombay as early as possible to get things started. In fact, Mann wrote, the University Syndicate was so interested in seeing Geddes return to India as soon as possible that they 'would be prepared to entertain at least any proposal [Geddes] may make on the subject'.[316]

Geddes put forward his conditions to Percy Anstey, the Principal of the University. The conditions stated by Geddes implied that he would only be in Bombay between November and March each year of his contract. Moreover, the contract would present him 'with liberty to him during that period to do extraneous work which does not interfere with his university duties'.[317] Anstey found the conditions acceptable, and he moved in the University Senate that Geddes be appointed as Professor of Sociology.

[312] M.S.A. E.D. Compilation 360 of 1918. Government unofficial note no. M-79 13 May 1918.
[313] M.S.A. E.D. Compilation 360 of 1919. Letter no. 4757 U.B. to secretary G.B. E.D. 5 December 1918.
[314] Univ.S.A. T-GED 9/1426. Private letter Mann to Geddes 5 January 1919.
[315] Univ.S.A. T-GED 9/1432. Private letter Dastur to Geddes 11 February 1919.
[316] Univ.S.A. T-GED 9/1438. Private letter Mann to Geddes 2 May 1919.
[317] M.S.A. E.D. Compilation 360 of 1919. Departmental note [n.d].

The day after the meeting of the University Senate, Anstey wrote to Geddes that in his speech for the members of the Senate, Anstey had described Geddes's concepts of applied sociology, of city design, Geddes's practical work in Jerusalem, and his idea about civics. Anstey had been much helped by quoting from the spring issue of the *Sociological Review*, which favourably discussed Geddes's work in Indore. Anstey had put before the Senate that both the University and the city of Bombay – 'supreme example as it is of the total absence of rational forethought and co-ordination' – would benefit widely by Geddes's approach to applied sociology.[318]

Consequently – as recommended by Mann, Anstey, and then the Bombay University – Patrick Geddes was to be appointed as Professor of Sociology, with effect from 1 August 1919, subject to the Government of Bombay's approval. After trouble finding transport from Port Said, Geddes took up his duties as Head of the Department of Sociology and Civics, within the Royal Institute of Science in Bombay, by the very end of 1919.[319]

4.2.5. The marginalisation of abstract sociology

It is hard to say exactly how Geddes came to influence intellectual and governing circles in Bombay. There are few concrete examples that proves his influence over individuals or institutional structures. Geddes's initial hopes to engage students and to conduct wide surveys of the city and region were never fulfilled. As Meller points out, he had relied on the prospects of finding an Indian assistant who could carry out much of his work.[320]

One example where he did exercise some influence, however, is provided from the work of the Improvement Trust of the City of Allahabad in the Bombay Presidency. Geddes had made no secret of his lack of enthusiasm for the replication of urban Improvement Trusts into the context of India. Geddes was particularly critical of the Edinburgh Improvement Trust, which had been carrying out work in Edinburgh between 1867-89. British Improvement Trusts had been set up in order to transform and

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[318] Univ.S.A. T-GED 9/1456. Private letter Anstey to Geddes 24 July 1919.
[319] M.S.A. E.D. Compilation 360 of 1920. Letter no. 4816 Registrar U.B. 17 December 1919.
[320] Meller, 1993, 223-227.

sanitise urban landscapes. Their focus had been to broaden streets, ventilate houses, and to tear down insanitary buildings. But the Improvement Trusts had largely disregarded conditions of life.

Jagenath Pd.Srivastava, an official of the Allahabad Improvement Trust, wrote to Geddes to describe in detail how he conducted social surveys in accordance with guidance given in Geddes's sociological work. Pd.Srivastava had previously worked on a research project with Stanley Jevons at the University of Allahabad, but was now appointed special officer for 'civic survey and housing' in the 'Department of Civic Survey' of the Allahabad Improvement Trust. In his survey Pd.Srivastava studied the 'population' according to its: movement, distribution of occupation, health (birth rate, death rate, areas specially affected by epidemics, areas of special poverty, etc.), density, distribution of well being (family conditions, etc.), and education. The survey was to be included in the town planning schemes that would later become implemented in Allahabad.[321]

Nonetheless, most of Geddes's wide-ranging plans came to nought. He had made attempts to connect sociological studies at Bombay University with other sociological departments in Paris, Brussels and London. He even asked Lewis Mumford to help him investigate whether The New School in New York would be interested in the exchange of students and staff.[322] This idea failed.

Geddes also had high hopes to integrate the University and the city surrounding it. By diffusing knowledge produced within Bombay University, he assumed that actual reform could come about. The Government of Bombay and the Municipality initially saw the benefits of the idea. By the end of 1921, after recently attending the Conference of Universities of the Empire in Oxford, Geddes wrote to the Registrar of Bombay University proposing the constitution of a committee including 'representative citizens as well as members of the governing and teaching body of the university'. The Committee should aim at considering practical areas of fruitful collaboration between the University of Bombay and the city of Bombay, Geddes suggested.[323]

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[321] Univ.S.A. T-GED 3/2/9. Private letter Jagenath to Geddes 5 May 1922.
[322] Novak, 1995, 93.
[323] Univ.S.A. T-GED 12/3/63/2. Private letter Geddes to Registrar U.B. 12 December 1921.

The Committee was constituted and its results greatly anticipated. However, due to Geddes's frequent absence, the Committee worked slowly and, in fact, rarely met.[324] It initially tried to channel its work towards the new schemes of the Bombay Development Department. The Committee drew a list, where academic subjects of the university were related to the work of the Development and Housing schemes in Bombay City.[325]

Geddes pointed out that the University, in collaboration with the city of Bombay and the business community, could help energise a society of 'discontented and unhealthy population with low outlook'. In fact he argued:

> the University is called upon to lead in the spread of knowledge into new fields, in the actual increase of knowledge that is necessary to development, and in the creation of that bond between those who are pressing forward in the mutual development of the city and country, and those who insist that material development must be accompanied, at least to the same extent by moral, intellectual and aesthetic progress.[326]

But these plans also failed. Geddes's ideas were too 'aloof' for Bombay businessmen and colonial administrators, wrote Harold Mann.[327]

In the latter part of Geddes's tenure, influential Bombay citizens began to question the work of the School of Economics and Sociology. Two influential men of business in Bombay, P.A. Wadia and Lakshmidas Raowjee Tairsee, wrote to the *Times of India*[328] and to the *Bombay Chronicle* respectively[329].

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[324] Univ.S.A. T-GED 12/1/213. [N.d]. 'Note to Committee members of the Committee on Collaboration Between the City and the University'.
[325] Univ.S.A. T-GED 12/1/208. F. Dastur. [n.d.] 'The Committee on Collaboration Between the Bombay University and the Bombay City. Agenda of the meeting of the committee 9 February 1923'.
[326] Univ.S.A. T-GED 12/2/451. Memorandum Committee on Collaboration between the Bombay University and the Bombay City. [n.d.]
[327] Univ.S.A. T-GED 9/1539. Private letter Mann to Geddes September 17 1922.
[328] Univ.S.A. T-GED 12/2/360. Wadia, P.A. (1923 14 September) 'Readers Views' – Bombay University – Post-Graduate Studies'. *Times of India*.
[329] Univ.S.A. T-GED 12/3/6314. Raowjee Tairsee, L. (1923 25 April) 'School of Sociology and Economics'. *Bombay Chronicle*.

While Lakshmidas blamed particularities in Geddes's contract for his failure in Bombay, Wadia levelled a more comprehensive and devastating critique. Citing an acknowledgement made by H.H. Mann that the School had yet to live up to its expectation, Wadia advocated either closing it down or cutting its budget into a manageable size. Wadia pointed out that there had been a lack of coordination between the Department of Economics and the Department of Sociology, and this lack of coordination produced mistrust within the School. Sociologists were aloof with their concepts of "bio-technics" and "etho-polity", Wadia concluded. The Government of Bombay worried about these views. The Government of Bombay wrote to the university and requested a full report on the School and its work.[330]

These comments, and the Government of Bombay's reaction, reflect how Patrick Geddes was being increasingly marginalised in Bombay. He left Bombay in 1924 without managing to alter how his sociology was viewed. Geddes interest in theoretical, or abstract, sociology put him at odds with both the Government of Bombay, and the business community. For them sociological knowledge needed to be applicable, ready to use, in lines of business or administration. Ultimately neither the government, nor the business community, would assess Geddes's tenure as a success. Geddes's marginalisation reflects the ways in which abstract social science – in this case sociology – had no place within a colonial context.

The University's close proximity to the colonial administration limited the prospects of the development of sociological knowledge that was not solely for the purpose of administrative, or business utility. The administration had nourished high hopes for the Department of Sociology and Civics of bringing it useful information about local social conditions and economic life.

In order for sociology to function as a technology of government, as Prakash put it in the introduction to this chapter, social science could not be as abstract as Geddes presented it. Administrators in Bombay had clearly not worked towards the establishment of sociological research for the sake of general advancement of knowledge and academic debate; they looked for tangible results ready for integration into local projects. As Prakash suggests with reference to the British Raj: '[w]hile

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[330] Univ.S.A. T-GED 12/3/63/6. Letter no. 1303-2095-E. Ziman to Dastur 25 May 1923.

recognising that science was primarily concerned with theoretical discoveries, they wished to use it to yield practical knowledge and techniques'.[331] For sociology to enable efficient government, and for it to contribute to the actual running of the Presidency, it needed to provide administrators with actionable knowledge. In the next section of this chapter I will consider how this was being done.

4.3. Applied sociology in colonial Bombay: coming to know 'the social'

Above I discussed how sociology as a discipline consolidated in Britain and was taken up in the Bombay Presidency. Growing local pressure and deteriorating conditions of life made the colonial administration look to the prospects of sociology. The idea that the state needed to tend to the side effects of capitalism, as well as cater for the well-being of its subjects, expanded the colonial administrations bio-political scope. Sociology, administrators thought, would help them to come to know the newly conceptualised terrain of the social; sociology became both fashionable and useful in the eyes of administrators. Sociology, however, could only work for the administration in an applied form – abstract sociology had no place in the colonial context.

Below I will further detail how both sociological method, and sociology as a body of knowledge, were put to work in Bombay. In the following section we will see how sociological methods were utilised by the colonial administration in its attempts to comprehend social conditions in the Presidency. Of course, there were plenty of data on social problems in the Bombay Presidency to be found in late nineteenth-century official records. But with the increasing social interest of the colonial state, and the urgent need to grasp social realities in colonial India, sociology began to influence how the colonial administration collected data and accumulated knowledge. As I will point out, during the time here under review, traditional survey methods were partly redefined and given an explicit social character.

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[331] Prakash, 1999, 170.

This new form of reporting worked in ways of 'revealing' social and human conditions in Bombay. Through the scope of the new kind of surveys emerging during the first quarter of the twentieth century helped to delineate the social domain, and turn it to an object of social intervention. Surveys helped define the social as a resource to develop, as well as source of potential discontent.

4.3.1. The traditional 'survey' in India reinscribed into the social domain

Beginning in 1871 the Census became a central tool in mapping the whereabouts of the subjects of the Raj, and the conditions under which they lived. Every tenth year a new census would be conducted on an all-India level. The Census painted with broad strokes various aspects of life and society in colonial India. Local colonial administrations also gathered and published information through Local and District Gazetteers. These were complemented by the Imperial Gazetteer, which first appeared in 1881.

Trained scientists rarely contributed to this series of official documentations. Instead, they were placed under the Indian Civil Service; ordinary administrators carried out the work. Censuses and the Gazetteers provided a wealth of information, although parts of their accuracy were questionable. Bernhard S. Cohn describes how the systematic surveying made colonial society known to administrators, and how surveys categorised, and simultaneously attached political meaning to, various discreete phenomena of everyday life in colonial India.[332]

Actual 'surveys' were initially conducted with military objectives. Their focus was either trigometrical, topographical or revenue-enhancing. In 1878 the three themes were brought into one organisation. The timing was significant: as I pointed out in chapter two, the period was dominated by revenue-enhancing interventions, and the accent of the survey was increasingly put on information that could meet that end. During the

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[332] Cohn, 1996, 7-8.

1880s and 90s, Kumar points out, 50 per cent of those employed to carry out government surveys were working with surveys carried out for revenue purposes.[333]

The focus on revenue enhancement did not, however, reduce the political dimensions of the survey. David Arnold suggests surveys 'subordinated science to an ultimately political understanding of India and an administrator's sense of what constituted necessary knowledge'.[334]

If surveys and censuses were main the sources of social knowledge, there were plenty of other sources as well. Municipal health- and sanitation officers produced detailed statistics on rates of birth and death, police records describe riots from various points of view, and departmental annual reports and returns speak of conditions under which people lived and laboured. Campaigns against malaria, famine relief, flooding assistance and other particular interventions were followed by report-producing committees and commissions, where each and every report includes a wealth of information about conditions of life.

During the first decades of the twentieth century, however, a new style of reporting on conditions of life bears witness to the strong influence the invention of the social in imperialism had on governmental practices in India. At this time there emerged a form of reporting that investigated social problems in themselves – that is, exactly in their capacity of being 'social'. This reporting was not contingent of, or extensions to, investigations into natural calamities or disease. It looked into a new terrain of human existence, a new dimension of life: the social for its own sake. This form of social reporting takes its cue explicitly from contemporary sociological method; it refers to those methods and places itself within a longer tradition of social studies. The social survey attempted to investigate a wide range of social issues – for example housing, education, and sanitation – simultaneously and in a holistic manner.

For the first time, British colonial administrators and their Indian colleagues began to report on social issues placed within a distinct and integrated social space. The reporting

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[333] Kumar, 1997, 75.
[334] Arnold, 2000, 131.

discussed here delineated that social space, and outlined problems brought to that space by modern industrialism. And for a variety of reasons, it attaches a sense of urgency for the resolution of those problems.

Reporting on social issues followed, at this time, a certain pattern of almost standardised tabulations and inclusion of ethnographic detail. Household budgets, debt levels, conditions of housing, food prices and family income – all packaged along with descriptions of the home- and work-lives of workers and the middle classes. And here, within this compiled data of social-economic relations, officials claimed, lay the prospect of welfare and progress, and the risk of discontent.

The scope of the 'social survey' conducted by Arthur Edward Mirams, consultant surveyor to the Government of Bombay, on behalf of the Indian Industrial Commission, was wide. It covered almost all aspects of life in an industrial city. Mirams followed the format of similar studies made in industrial Britain. He submitted his memorandum and was called to give oral evidence in late November 1917, when the Commission stopped over in Bombay.

While Mirams's oral evidence concentrated on the issue of housing of workers, which he most 'emphatically' found the most important area of reform, his written evidence was more comprehensive.[335] For A.E. Mirams the 'improvement of industry' was intertwined with the 'improvement of labour'. For industry to develop, he asserted, the wage-earning classes had also to develop socially. However, Mirams was at pains to suggest that the 'improvement of the employee for his own sake' is a 'highly important' topic in itself. Although Mirams explicitly hoped that sociologists, as well as local authorities, would investigate further into the matters brought up in his survey, his is an account narrating the social conditions of the city through methods of contemporary sociologists.

A.E. Mirams used his social survey to argue that solving social problems would increase the industrial output of the population, enhance progress, and stabilise neighbourhoods and social structures. He was not alone in his assumptions, as we shall

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[335] Government of India (1918) *Report of the Indian Industrial Commission*. Written and Oral Evidence. Mirams, A.E. oral evidence 23 November 1917, 369.

see in chapter five: officials and influential sections of public opinion alike shared them. Witnesses before the Indian Industrial Commission argued that, for example, better housing would keep workers at home rather than hanging out on the streets after work; others suggested that the rise of Japan as an industrial nation was caused by how Japan had managed to reform its system of education.

Indeed, Mirams wrote in order to convince his colleagues in the Bombay Presidency and members of the Industrial Commission that contemporary social conditions had an undeniable effect on the population. Mirams wrote in his survey that he was:

> convinced that the manner in which the Industrial workers live in India today causes...lack of interest in public affairs, loss of industrial efficiency, bad training and development of children, as well as moral and mental delinquency and deficiency, especially among the young.[336]

Mirams's survey showed how living and working conditions for sections of society, especially the Indian middle and working classes, were abysmal. By studying social-economic indicators such as household budgets and levels of debt, Mirams pointed out that when coming to Bombay, workers and artisans incurred debts; in 1914-15, 80 per cent of the mill workers were indebted.[337] The monthly earnings for a whole family were just under 26 rupees a month, and of this amount 22 rupees were, in average, spent on food and everyday necessities. Less that four rupees were left for occasional expenses such as medical help and clothing.[338] The main social problem, and the most pressing area of reform, suggested Mirams, was that of housing.

The survey neatly played into administrators' growing anxiety about the future industrial progress of the Presidency. As officials better came to know the conditions under which workers, artisans, and also the lower-middle classes lived their lives outside of the factories, they began to argue that living conditions slowed industrial

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[336] Mirams, 1916b, 8.
[337] Government of India (1918) *Report of the Indian Industrial Commission*. Written and Oral Evidence. Mirams A.E. (1916) Memorandum of Evidence for the Indian Industrial Commission 1916-17, 22.
[338] Ibid., 2, 12, Appendix F.

progress.[339] Were these conditions not ameliorated, then, other reforms to increase industrial productivity would have no real impact.[340] In fact, it was suggested that with the continuation of present conditions of living, other reforms could become contra-productive. Mirams, on his part, hoped that his study would help 'emphasise...the correlation of Housing, Education and Recreation'.[341] It seemed to him that various social issues were clearly interlinked, and must be presented within the same investigation.

Following the main stream of contemporary sociology, Mirams's survey did not lend support to purely biological and deterministic explanations of poor health, poverty, and ignorance. Instead, he positions himself in between sociological and biological explanations, in that he stressed the interaction between populations and their environment as a decisive factor for progress. The state could act on both the population and the environment, Mirams indicated. While moral problems of the population were more difficult to address, perceived social problems could be more easily remedied through active state policy.

In an outburst of optimism, A.E. Mirams wrote in his survey of Bombay that most of the problems facing the city were rooted in poverty. And, he says,

> [p]overty is remediable. Economists of the highest authority do not subscribe to the belief that want is a biological necessity or inseparable from social conditions, although very much bound up with and affected by them...Amelioration is a question of national policy, social wisdom, sound economics and common sense.[342]

As a result, the 'remedy' to various kinds of alleged social problems now became '[c]hange the environment'.[343] Since it was the environment and not the individual that

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[339] M.S.A. G.B. General Department [G.D.] Compilation no. 1258. Letter no. 628 12 August 1920.

[340] M.S.A. Proceedings of the Indian Legislative Council of 1920. Holland, T. Proceedings of 19 February 1920, 817.

[341] Mirams, 1916, 19.

[342] Ibid., 13.

[343] Ibid., 21.

needed change, the government must focus now on how to carry out technical and combined interventions aimed at both populations and their environments, Mirams argued before the Industrial Commission.

A couple of years after Mirams submitted his memorandum, Harold Hart Mann wrote his report of the Sakchi industrial estate in Jamshedpur, where Tata had set up an expanding iron and steel enterprise. The plant proved significant for nationalist imaginations; Gandhi went here to praise the harmonious relations between labour and capital. Later, it also had a great impact on the emerging industrial sector of independent India. Interestingly, the industrial estate at Jamshedpur was founded upon an iron ore that geologist Pramatha Nath Bose located when he went into service of the Maharaja of Mayurbhanj, after being sidestepped for promotion by Thomas Holland in the Geological Survey in Bengal.[344]

Mann had been called upon to lead a survey of the social conditions and social welfare provisions in this expanding industrial town. He arrived in late September 1918 and stayed for one and a half months. At the time of his arrival, Sakchi had grown out of proportion, Mann pointed out. Amenities and infrastructure on the industrial estate had originally been developed for a population of around 20,000 people. In 1918, a decade after its inception, more than 100,000 were dependent on the works of the estate, or its dependencies. Mann, who we saw earlier had been involved in the work of Seebohm Rowntree and was later involved in the Sociological Society, still persisted in his sociological methodology. It might also be recalled how Mann, who had been influenced by Patrick Geddes, had been most eager to establish a sociological department at the University of Bombay. Mann was now the principal of the Agricultural College in Poona in the Bombay Presidency, and would soon become Director of Agriculture in Bombay.

In his study of Sakchi, Mann covered a similar wide range of social topics as Mirams had done in his memorandum submitted to the Industrial Commission. Mann brought to the survey his intimate knowledge of conditions in Bombay, and his keen sociological interest. His final 'Report on Investigations with regards to Social Welfare Work at Jamshedpur' was included in the 'Jamshedpur Social Welfare Series', along with a detailed report on town planning. The study had the size of a small monograph and

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[344] Arnold, 2000, 139.

covered 120 pages. Mann's report was published in January 1919 and classified as 'strictly confidential'.[345] In the report Mann describes in great detail the existing social provisions at the Sakchi industrial estate. He also gives recommendations regarding how a social welfare organisation could be further developed, in order to secure that the estate shapes into one 'where a healthy, decent, happy, and contended population can continue to exist'.[346] As was Mirams's, Mann's study is firmly placed within an emerging tradition of social surveys. It heavily draws on contemporary sociological methods, as well as categorisations.

The study investigates household budgets for various groups working in Sakchi. Mann meticulously lists food items and their prices, and amends quantity and expenditure according to ethnicity and occupation. An 'Aboriginal Coolie' and his family, a 'United Provinces Hindu', or 'Bengalis of the Artisan Class', all have their budgets broken down and analysed. Mann discusses the drinking habits of various sections of the inhabitants under the heading 'Moral Tone of the Town'. With the 'risk of appearing to be a fanatic', Mann suggests the abolition of drinking shops on the estate. It would improve the conditions in the town, he insists, and would help foster a sense community in Sakchi.

The survey discusses the alarmingly high frequency of discharge and complaints about bribes to secure works at the plants. Indian labour has a reputation of being 'notoriously' unstable, Mann points out, but a secure work environment would raise the efficiency of the plant.[347] He then discusses health facilities, facilities for women and children, 'Social Welfare in the Works', education levels, housing conditions, public amenities – in short, almost all areas conceived of as important dimensions of social life are studied and followed up for conclusions.

Indeed, Mann himself found that even questions about sewage, sewage disposal, and the supply of goods to the town had to be considered 'from the social point of view'.[348] He concluded, 'I am taking…social welfare work as including the interests of the workers in every aspect. Its object is to endeavour to make Sakchi a healthy, happy home for all

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[345] Univ.S.A. T-GED 23/1/20.2. Mann, H. H. (1919) *Report on the Investigations with regard to Social Welfare Work at Jamshedpur*. Poona.
[346] Ibid., 2.
[347] Ibid., 100.
[348] Ibid., 1.

those who live at the place, - both while working and while at leisure'.[349] An industrial town like the Sakchi estate must continuously be monitored from a sociological perspective, Mann asserted. A future social welfare organisation, he mentions, should include 'social workers' contributing to the welfare of the population. Social workers would enable future welfare provisions by carrying out 'actual careful scientific inquiries' into conditions of work and leisure.[350]

Between his article in Sociological Papers and his study of Sakchi, Mann had spent more than 15 years within the wider circles of colonial government in Bombay. Yet clearly, he was consistent in his way of conducting social surveys. He, along with others within the governing circles, saw the benefit of including sociology into governmental practice.

This approach was further entrenched and applied on a wider scale through the establishment of the Government of Bombay Labour Office. The Labour Office, under G. Findlay Shirras – former Director of Statistics with the Government of India – carried out almost yearly studies into social and economic conditions of the Presidency from the early 1920s.[351] In the radicalised climate in Bombay after the First World War, the Labour Office began studying a wide range of aspects of the lives of workers in different sectors, artisans, and the middle classes.

Under Shirras's leadership, the Bombay Labour Office began with studies of wages and working hours of those employed in the cotton mill industry. The impulse to carry out those studies came from the mill owners, as well as from the Government of Bombay. The studies provided by the Labour Office helped industrialist keep track of demands on wage levels. Studies into the lives of sections of colonial society helped the Government as well, in its attempts to grasp the conditions of workers and the middle classes.[352] Harold Mann himself later collaborated with the Labour Office in a study of wages within the agriculture sector in the Presidency. The study was ambitious in that it attempted to cover the annual changes in agricultural wages over two decades.

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[349] Ibid., 118.
[350] Ibid., 93.
[351] Government of Bombay. Shirras, G. F. (1923) *Report on an Enquiry into the Wages and Hours of Labour in the Cotton Mill Industry*; –. (1924) *Report on an Enquiry into Agricultural Wages in the Bombay Presidency*; –. (1925) *Report on an Enquiry into the Wages and Hours of Labour in the Cotton Mill Industry in August 1923*.
[352] Shirras, 1923, 1.

Shirras explained how he had been reminded by members of the legislative Council in Bombay that the International Labour Office collected data on labourers within the agricultural sector, and the Imperial Statistical Conference had called attention to that issue as well.[353] Although Shirras carefully attended to ethnographic detail, the organising categories used in the study were strictly social-economic and occupational.

Shirras and the Labour Office also published reports looking into working-class family budgets in Bombay City, where statistics were compiled to describe general social conditions of various sections of the labour force. The study was a success among influential circles in Bombay, and it was decided in 1923 to follow it up with an enquiry into 'sociological and economic' subjects concerning the middle classes.[354] By the late 1920s, the Labour Office began probing into working- and middle-class unemployment.

The timing of the inception of research under the Bombay Labour Office was significant. The Labour Office began to submit its information to the Government of Bombay and the Government of India, as well as to the International Labour Office, at a period of growing industrial unrest. I mentioned earlier how the period from 1918 onwards saw increased social tension, waves of strikes and a growing politicisation of trade unions.

The investigations conducted by the Labour Office not only exposed interesting data concerning life in contemporary Bombay, they depicted the ways in which workers and the middle classes lived their lives. For the Government of Bombay, this was valuable information. The radicalisation of the post-war environment made it important for the administration to understand what moved the working and middle classes. Shirras stated this purpose plainly in his introduction to his enquiry into the wages and working hours in the cotton mill industry. 'In short' he wrote:

> the necessity of full and accurate statistics of current
> wages has been clearly shown during periods of
> industrial unrest in this Presidency and elsewhere.

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[353] Shirras, 1924, 1.
[354] M.S.A. Government of Bombay. Finance Department [F.D.] File 5781 (ii) of 1927. Government of Bombay Labour Office (1927) *Report on an enquiry into the middle class family budgets in Bombay City, 1924*.

This information is in the interest of those directly connected with labour questions (whether as employers' or workers' leaders), and of economists, historians, and politicians. The publication of this knowledge simplifies labour problems...This information is of a kind that can best be collected through official channels, and it is also important that it should be published by an impartial and authoritative organisation such as a Government Department.[355]

However, as is apparent from the above quote, with the establishing of a Labour Office, government-sponsored social surveys of the Presidency narrowed down. From the mid 1920s labour related issues were of primary concern; it was the 'labour problem', rather than the 'social problem', that now begged investigation.

The ways in which applied sociology both helped to delineate and reveal the new terrain of the social, and turn it into an area of administrative concern, was unprecedented in Bombay. Social surveys, this new way of reporting on the conditions of life, and of the social as a distinct space, proved their utility to the colonial administration. Reinscribing the traditional survey into the newly conceptualised social domain helped administrators to come to know that domain, in partly new ways. As the social domain grew in importance, so did the command of methods to study it. The ways in which sociological methods were universalised tell of how sociologists and local colonial officials thought of modern industrial society as having similar characterstics wherever it emerged. Sociology, in its applied form, produced a kind of action-oriented knowledge colonial administrators thought they needed when dealing with the new realities they were facing.

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[355] Government of Bombay. G. Findlay Shirras (1922) *Report on an enquiry into the wages and hours of labour in the cotton mill industry.* Bombay, 2-3.

4.4. Conclusion

The emergence of modern industrial society brought to the imperial scientific community a sense of bewilderment; to British politicians and local colonial administrators it brought anxiety. Above, I have discussed that combination. While social scientists asked what characterised life in industrial towns and how could these new realities be studied, predicted and compared, domestic bureaucrats and colonial officials asked: what were the effects on market and polity of the perceived deterioration in modern industrial society?

I discussed how by the final decades of the nineteenth century there were calls for a science of modern society that would synthesise findings of biologists, anthropologists, and philosophers. By the end of the nineteenth century, British sociology consolidated as a discipline in its own merit, rather than, as before, forming a fringe part of other disciplines. Sociology became central to progressive policy discourse in Britain. It influenced greater social focus of the state and played an important role in the emergence of social liberalism. Many leading social liberal politicians and thinkers took active an part in sociological debates.

A new forum for such debate was the Sociological Society in London. I pointed out that the Society's transactions from 1904-7 reveal two constitutive debates within sociology of the time: first, the question of whether biological or social-economic explanations took precedence in explanations of social change. A section of active sociologists argued for eugenics as a more plausible and effective determination of social development. Yet those who denounced the racial argument and relied on social-economic explanations in social change were strong within the Society.

Second, I stressed the emergence of a debate over the issue whether sociology ought to be abstract and theoretical, or applied and practical. This debate proved most important, and I showed how it was later carried into the colonial context of Bombay. Sociologists arguing for sociology as applied found the discipline most valuable to progressive politics in its attempt to tend to conditions of modern life. Politicians and, as I showed, colonial administrators in, for example Bombay, found that sociological methods enabled them to approach reality in new ways. Sociology could provide knowledge that

would, in turn, feed into the expanding social concern and bio-political scope of colonial policy.

I used the debate between 1912-19 surrounding the establishment of a School of Economics and Sociology in Bombay to exemplify the growing interest in the discipline of sociology among colonial officials. They hoped to establish a department of sociology where actual research into sociological questions could be conducted, which would, in turn, help them come to know the issues that mobilised urban Indian society. Those colonial officials hoped to hire prominent British sociologists. Knowledge about India was not of any great importance, they argued. What was important was a command over sociological method. Local administrators recruited professor Patrick Geddes, well known in Britain and India for his sociological work.

Yet, I pointed out, social science in a colonial situation acted within strict confines. Social science was always measured against its utility for government. Research into life on the Subcontinent had previously been conducted by administrators. There were plenty of data on conditions of life in colonial India provided by censuses or administrative reports. I argued, however, that the growing influence of sociology helped reinscribe the traditional survey into the social domain. Now a new kind of reporting emerged, which took the social as its referent object.

When formalised into a university subject, sociology was institutionalised within close proximity of the colonial state: appointments, allowances, etc. had to be run by the local government. The very ways in which social surveys delineated the social, and made it known to colonial officials, are revealing for the positive view of science of the time. Science brought certainty to government, and it helped reduce the factor of chance-making; it rationalised government.

The ways in which abstract sociology was pushed to the side lines, ultimately shown in the context of Bombay through the marginalisation of Geddes's sociology, are significant. The colonial administration only had use for applied sociology that would help them reveal colonial society: they turned sociology into a technology of government. By providing social experience to colonial government, sociological method would contribute to its new social approach.

5. Social imperialism projected in Bombay 1895-1925

Before I venture to describe the ways in which social imperialism was projected in the Bombay Presidency, a brief recollection of parts of my discussion so far will help situate this chapter. By the turn of the twentieth century, focus had shifted concerning what kind of projects colonial administrations privileged within growing industrial centres of British India. Now, justifications of colonial rule drew less on large symbolic, but mostly ineffective, gestures of moral reform that had marked early nineteenth-century British Empire. Gone was Macaulay's slant to educational reform of Indian minds and character, or ineffective campaigns against thuggery or 'suttee'. Large revenue-enhancing infrastructure interventions of the second half of the nineteenth century slowed down, although interventions into specific sectors of the economy, for example in agriculture, continued.

Instead, more comprehensive approaches to the government of society were elaborated. New forms of bio-political interventions aimed at conditions of life on aggregate levels of population or whole sections of society, and were hinged on state initiatives. I devoted chapters two and three to chart developments within nineteenth- and early twentieth-century British reformist ideology in Britain and empire, and related those developments to expanding bio-political concerns in imperialism.

I explicitly focused on the emergence of British social liberalism, and I then placed emerging social focus in imperialism in relation to that movement. I described how radical twentieth-century liberalism perceived contemporary society under pressure as the industrial system expanded, and how it saw in the social domain a location of progress as well as discontent. In order for society to advance, social liberals argued, the social domain had to be regulated and reformed. Within this conceptualisation, empire, liberals now argued, could function as a vehicle for dealing with social issues.

This movement within imperialism was further strengthened by its coupling with the newly established discipline of sociology. I described the ways in which sociology established itself in Britain and in India, and how sociology became applied in colonial governance in the Bombay Presidency. In Bombay, the administration institutionalised

the production of social knowledge within the reach of the state. I suggested that sociology helped to enhance a social focus in governmental practice. I argued that colonial administrators utilised applied sociology as a means to reveal an integrated social domain.

5.1. A social turn in the government of the Presidency

In this chapter I will describe how social imperialism translated into actual colonial governance in Bombay. I will connect discussions from previous chapters with detailed descriptions of local planning and actual execution of local projects in the Bombay Presidency c. 1895-1925. Detailed description dramatises the ways in which the bio-political concern of the colonial state, as well as its scope of action, expanded during the period here under review. Details show exactly how local administrators of the Presidency, on a day-to-day basis, became more inclined to discuss the social domain as an integrated and distinct space in need of management.

It will be further discussed below, but by the turn of the twentieth-century local administrators in Bombay increasingly worried over how they would manage society in order for it to become more productive, conducive of progress, and less prone to dissent. Accordingly, I will present three cases of how the administration in Bombay planned and implemented projects with a view of intervening into the social domain in more comprehensive ways than before.

Historical circumstances, local forces and individuals, of course, shaped the ways in which social imperialism translated into local colonial administrative practices. The measures of early twentieth-century colonial administration, entangled, as they were, in the intricacies of everyday governance, came across as crude and unnuanced. Yet I will show that social imperialism lent colonial administrators a set of new assumptions and concepts to work with, and it gave them a new socialised language, with which they could talk about their work.

The first case addresses sanitation and public health during a plague epidemic in the city of Karachi. I referred to this outbreak of plague earlier in the text, with reference to its

ramification in Bombay City. The second case deals with the introduction of free and compulsory primary education in the Bombay Presidency. The third case looks into housing and town planning in the city of Bombay. These cases represent a periodisation of 30 years: c. 1895-1925.

In this chapter I discuss how these projects manifest important characteristics of expanding bio-political considerations internal to social imperialism. I will argue they do so in a very specific way: they expose where new limits were being drawn at this time between society, market, and state action concerning how to effectively tend to questions of welfare and conditions of life in Bombay. Among the amassed detail described below we will see the ways in which colonial governance in Bombay, influenced by social imperialism, turned social, and began to chalk out a bio-political space of state action.

I will suggest that debates over housing and town planning, as well as over primary education in Bombay, in different ways point towards how colonial officials encountered the limits of the self-sustaining capacity of markets and voluntarism, and, in extension, the limit of self-help. During the period here under review, it was no longer controversial to suggest that political power had to create the social conditions for markets to function.

In the case of the introduction of primary education in to the Presidency, this bio-political shift was manifested through a rise of productivist arguments for education. The state, it was argued, had to intervene in order to educate urban labour, thus making it more efficient in ways a voluntary system could not. Poor housing conditions, on the other hand, showed with blunt clarity how markets failed to look to social problems that, in effect, threatened to disrupt economy and politics.

Epidemics, on the other hand, and in this case plague, illustrate how the colonial administration set the limits to possibilities of the social body to heal itself. The administration thus assigned itself the task of marking the limit of self-care. Plague meausres were early social interventions: the reaction to the spread the epidemic was often coercive, and lacked some of the more nuanced calculations made in relation to housing and education. Yet the ways in which the administration sought to handle the

outbreak of plague are significant, as they ushered in a pronounced social focus in colonial government.

This process of expanding the scope of state action within the social domain did not happen without debate. In the intersection between political language, local pressures, and internal tensions, when actually implementing interventions the contradiction of social imperialism could be spotted. As we shall see below, to negotiate social-liberal ideas of universality to fit the need of local colonial administration was a complex and often contradictory intellectual effort, marked by both pragmatic and principled debate.

These negotiations, however, were not the subject of high politics of state; they were carried out on a decentralised level of governance: on the project level – the level of everyday governance. Here, questions about drawing new borders between state, society and market quickly dissolved into dealing with particular, yet interlinked, local social problems. On the project level, a most interesting space internal to imperial forms of government opens up: while dealing with mundane questions administrators had to remind themselves – and they were frequently reminded by others – of exactly how much the colonial state could, might or ought to intervene into colonial society. Here, the actual balance between universal principles and colonial exceptionality was struck within an increasingly tested framework.

Although my intention is to explore the constitution and workings of social imperialism, and not the responses to it when imposed on Indian subjects, I believe it important to at least acknowledge the ways in which social interventions were met locally. So, while a full account of the various forms of resistance and response to social imperialism is beyond the scope of this thesis, I will, in the final section of this chapter, discuss two forms of responses occurring on the everyday level. I categorise these responses into two: spontaneous and mobilised. The first category of spontaneous responses is made up by instances of rejection of interventions functioning without ideological or organisational base, and primarily directed to rectify an immediate sense of harm or perceived injustice. The second category of mobilised responses relates to when people came together in organised and politically charged protests. In these cases, responses to social interventions often articulated into wider questions of nationalism or anti-Britishness.

5.2. The limit of self-care: sanitation and plague, city of Karachi, 1896-1900

This section revisits an outbreak of epidemic bubonic plague in the city of Karachi, Sind, in the northern part of the Bombay Presidency, between 1896 and 1900.

I will place this specific instance of epidemic plague in Karachi – and the administration's responses to it – within the wider argument of this thesis. In its effort to halt the disease, the administration crossed and reworked previous boundaries in state-society relations. I am particularly interested in how the administration in times of crisis expanded its bio-political concern by stressing the limit to society's ability to heal itself – to self-care. I also look at what the records tell of how the colonial administration practically began to delineate the social domain and think of it holistically, and how it began to think of individual subjects as part of an aggregate 'population' – a social body – in order to successfully combat the crisis.

Responses to the plague in Karachi were, however, early and acute forms of comprehensive and interlinked interventions at the beginning of the social turn. They show how colonial administrators grappled with exactly how to delineate the social; they found they lacked basic and sufficient knowledge about local social conditions. Officials began questioning their own ways of co-ordinating various interventions into society. When ultimately falling back on coercive measures of rule, administrators at the same time questioned the effectiveness of those measures. Yet during social crises of this magnitude, imperial bio-politics would set the limit to self-care: society, it was argued, was not in a position to cure itself of the plague epidemic.

In fact, the plague epidemic was on and off for an entire decade, causing death and disruption in the city. As has been described by Prashant Kidambi, outbreaks of plague in the Bombay Presidency took the administration by surprise, but made the administration reconsider the relationship between society, environment and disease.[356] These outbreaks, David Arnold points out with particular reference to Bombay City, panicked authorities for various reasons, and their occurrence triggered comprehensive

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[356] Kidmabi, P. (2005) '"An Infection of Locality": Plague, Pythogenesis and the Poor in Bombay, 1896-1905'. *Urban History*, 31 (2), 249-267.

governmental interventions.[357] Arnold focuses his study on how new and intrusive measures to combat plague borne out of the epidemic formed a colonial assault on the body, staged by government-sanctioned medical procedures. For Arnold, it is the body that is at the centre of analysis, and at the centre of colonial attention as the privileged site of intervention.

Prashant Kidambi, also focusing on Bombay City, instead points out how a section of the colonial administration in Bombay shifted attention from the body to the environment as the locus of disease. When taking this interest in the locality and environment into account, Kidambi argues, one is able to better tease out the subsequent colonial strategy of spatial reorganisation of the city.[358]

It is not entirely clear what caused this epidemic in Western India. It was indicated at the time that infested rats carried by ships from Hong Kong first entered the harbour of Bombay City, and that these rats later found their way onboard ships headed for Karachi and elsewhere. The disease had reached epidemic proportions in Hong Kong by the mid 1890s. By the end of 1900 plague had caused approximately 400,000 deaths in India; by 1921 estimated deaths due to plague had risen to 10 million.[359]

Local governments and the Government of India feared international ramifications of the epidemic. They worried it would spread to the Middle East, Europe, and even North America. The International Sanitary Conference in Venice in 1897 threatened to impose an embargo on British shipping. The threat was never realised. Yet, as a response, the British produced an Epidemic Disease Act, which was hastily put in place.

It was a far-reaching and coercive piece of legislation, Arnold notes. It authorised, among other things, compulsory hospitalisation of plague suspects, destruction of houses and infected property, and the banning of religious practices such as pilgrimages and fairs. As local resentment of intrusive measures grew in 1898-99, local governments in Western India opted for other ways of combating the disease.[360]

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[357] Arnold, D. (1987) 'Touching the Body: Perspectives on the Indian Plague, 1896–1900'. In Guha, R. (Ed.) *Subaltern Studies V*. Delhi: Oxford University Press India.
[358] Kidambi, 2007, 49-51.
[359] Arnold, 1993, 200.
[360] Arnold, 2000, 143.

Facing opposition, sanitary awareness, rather than coercive plague measures, Arnold writes, became a new official line. On a local level, as we shall see, much remained the same in how plague measures were actually executed. Nonetheless, Arnold writes, the first years of plague in India proved significant for future colonial policy in several ways.

The outbreak of epidemic plague made authorities wary about the previous object of state medicine in India. The medical services in British India had up to then primarily served the military establishment, and the Anglo-Indian community. The occurrence of plague, however, caused an unprecedented sanitary and medical response from the Raj. Facing often violent public resentment towards those sanitary and medical interventions made government doubt the political wisdom of unleashing coercive measures. Local colonial administrations began to look for new ways to approach problems of sanitation.[361]

5.2.1. The infected social body: spread of plague in Karachi

A cook working in the home of a cloth merchant in the Bunder area of Karachi in the northern parts of the Presidency was reported to have suddenly fallen ill. He did so on 8 December 1896. The same day, as his fever rose, the cook was moved by his friends to another house in the same area. While there, a Municipal Health Officer came to see him. Finding the case curious, the Health Officer went to see the Civil Surgeon at the Karachi Civil Hospital, in order to get further advice. At the hospital Dr. Braganza and Dr. Kaka labelled the case "certainly a very suspicious one"; the cook's fever ran extraordinarily high, and by now his groin had swollen. Then, suddenly, the cook died.[362] On 11 December 1896 a second case with similar symptoms was detected. This time a broker of the Khoja community was found ill in the crowded Old Town Quarters of Karachi. Friends of the broker noticed him coming to work as usual in the early hours of the day. However, at ten a clock he began to complain about fever. Soon afterwards

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[361] Arnold, 1993, 237.
[362] Sindh Archives, Karachi [S.A.] Records of the Commissioner in Sind [R.C.S.] General Department [G.D.] (Plague). File no. 1, pt. 2 of 1897. Letter no. G-932 of 1897. Tahilram Khemchand to Gilles 10 February 1897.

he too was dead.[363] The following week Karachi saw more deaths following the same symptoms. And so, on 19 December 1896, H.C.L. Arnim, then Deputy Sanitary Commissioner in Sind Registration District, wrote to the Government of Bombay that the symptoms by 'little doubt were due to Bubonic Plague'.[364] Ten days after the first case of death from plague was registered, Gilles, the Collector of Karachi, wrote to the Commissioner in Sind informing him that the Permanent Medical Board had pronounced 'the plague to be epidemic in Karachi'.[365]

By the 24 January 1897, 600 deaths had been reported. Still, they had only occurred in certain areas of the City.[366] Although the death toll initially was lower than expected, the situation was serious. Wingate, then acting commissioner in Sind, wrote to Gilles:

> [p]eople should be warned that unless full cooperation is now given it will be necessary to resort to stringent measures for which they will have themselves to blame. The Collector will be good enough to impress upon the Municipality to inform the public of Karachi the great anxiety that the spread of Bubonic cases causes to the Government of India and to Governments abroad.[367]

Worried telegrams enquiring into the outbreak came in from Alexandria, Tehran, and from around British India. Plague, in a busy port city, brought out nightmarish scenarios for administrators around the empire.

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[363] S.A. R.C.S. G.D. (Plague). Box 7312, file no. 1, volume 1, pt. 1 of 1897. Memorandum of the Public Health Officer 12 December 1896.

[364] S.A. R.C.S. G.D. (Plague). Box 7312, file no. 1, volume 1, pt. 1, 1897. Letter Deputy Sanitary Commissioner Sind Registration District [Armin, H.C.L.] to Sanitary Commissioner Bombay 19 Dec 1896.

[365] S.A. R.C.S. G.D. (Plague). Box 7312, file no. 1, volume 1, pt. 1, 1897. Letter the Collector of Karachi to the Commissioner in Sind 21 December 1896.

[366] S.A. R.C.S. G.D. (Plague). Box 7312, file no. 1, volume 1, pt. I of 1897. Note by Director General, Indian Medical Service [Cleghorn, J.] on the outbreak of bubonic plague in Karachi 2 February 1897.

[367] S.A. R.C.S. G.D. (Plague). Box 7312, file no. 1, volume 1, pt. 1 of 1897. Memorandum. Acting Commissioner in Sind to Collector of Karachi 10 Jan 1897.

5.2.2. Containing the infected social body: the limit of self-care

As the epidemic spread, urgent measures were designed to contain the urban population – the infected social body. The period January to March 1897 was marked by intense activity on behalf of the administration and influential interest groups concerning what measures could be applied to counter plague in Karachi. In late January and early February, the Director General of the Indian Medical Services, Cleghorn, went to Karachi and produced a note.[368]

After reiterating how the epidemic spread, Cleghorn narrates information on basic conditions in the city available to him. Cleghorn finds information sparse, bordering on insufficient. He approximates the population of Karachi at nearly 118,000. He describes how the city is divided into 31 wards, wherein 14 wards have been infected. Cleghorn described the geography of the areas most infected, and found that most of the houses he visited were 'quite unfit for human habitation'. He found that the rooms were 'overcrowded and the inmates lived in complete darkness'.[369] Poor housing, he argues, is not helping coping with the epidemic. He suggests that out of 606 reported deaths, 407 were reported from quarters like this. Until now, he suggest, the measures taken to combat the disease have been cleaning and disinfection of houses, and increased attention to the need for cleanliness.

On 11 1897 January the construction of 400 huts was commenced in order to replace housing for those bereft. In two weeks, about two weeks later 2,500-3,000 people had migrated to those huts, after initial protests. A civil officer, Cleghorn writes, had been assigned to keep the population under 'careful supervision'. Moreover, he suggests it:

> appears to be necessary for the future safety of the city that
> all houses declared by the local medical authority to be unfit
> for human habitation, should be demolished and the ground
> acquired by the Municipality.[370]

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[368] S.A. R.C.S. G.D. (Plague). Box 7312, file no.1, volume 1, pt. 1 of 1897. Note by Director General, Indian Medical Service, on the outbreak of bubonic plague at Karachi 2 February 1897.
[369] Ibid., 392.
[370] Ibid., 398.

Cleghorn concludes by pointing out that the arrangements to remove inhabitants to huts that had been made in Karachi will be closely watched elsewhere in India.[371]

Knowledge about conditions of life was lacking, found Cleghorn. Age-old censuses seemed not precise enough for government to act upon. The Municipality attempted to gather information about the disease, but found it had neither skilled researchers nor a proper methodology to work with. Its rudimentary enquiries about the habits of the infected and so forth only caused alarm among inhabitants, Tahilram Kemchand – the president of the Municipality – wrote to the Collector of Karachi.[372]

The Municipality thus concentrated on palliative measures, and proceeded to expand the main local hospital with new rooms. But the hospital procedures were so detached from the sentiments of local communities that they lacked all credibility. Not a single patient showed up to take up a room, Tahilram wrote. And neither could the people at first be convinced to move to those segregation camps provided.

Problems in organisation that the Municipality faced when grappling with a social breakdown like this were all too obvious to Tahilram, and plague spread rapidly to other areas of Karachi. Soon, mortality was reported to be as high as 50 people a day. The commissioner in Sind found it necessary to strengthen the Municipal Executive. In October the Municipality in Bombay City had a boost of its powers.[373] The Karachi Municipality had worked for increasing its powers for some time. Tahilram lobbied for, and formally requested, that the Commissioner made a notification under the Indian Epidemic Disease Act of 1897 that all persons in the Old Town quarters must vacate their houses within seven days.[374]

The Commissioner also stipulated new rules that would expand the reach of government: not only infected houses, but all houses in town, fell under the rules of

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[371] Ibid., 400.
[372] S.A. R.C.S. G.D. (Plague). File no. 1, volume 1, pt. 1 of 1897. Letter G932 of 1897. Tahilram Kemchand to Gilles [Collector of Karachi] 10 February 1897.
[373] Arnold, 1993, 203.
[374] S.A. R.C.S. G.D. (Plague). Box 7135, file no. 1, volume 2 of 1897. Letter no. G 1111 of 1897. Tahilram Kemchand to Wingate 16 Feb 1897.

inspection.[375] That is, authorities dealing with the plague epidemic could now enter any house in Karachi, at any hour, without producing particular search orders. The sanitation officer in Sind had already suggested that the health officer should divide infected districts into sub-divisions 'as he pleases' for purposes of containment and efficient supervision. Each subdivision ought to be observed by a Sub-divisional Inspector, wearing a special badge for recognition.[376] Those and other servants of state were enabled to, at any time day or night, 'inspect homes and localities in which any dangerous disease is reported or suspected to exist and to order destruction of any hut which by any medical practitioner was found infected'. Reasonable compensation might be paid to those who claimed it.[377]

As the disease continued to spread, the Surgeon Captain in Karachi, Borradaile, put forward new draconic ways to tackle it.[378] He argued for compulsory notification of any suspected case of plague and the isolation of the sick. 'I am aware of the strong feeling there is among almost all natives to this measure', he says, 'but I cannot help thinking that their resistance would soon give way before a firm attitude on the part of the authorities'.[379] General measures to improve sanitation were necessary, but to improve conditions of the inhabitants would take too much time, he argued. Forced isolation was much more effective, wrote Borradaile. Moreover, he argued, healthy inhabitants need to be segregated from infected areas. Inhabitants living in infected areas should be forced to migrate to health camps located elsewhere. Subsequently, those· quarters vacated ought to be set on fire, Borradaile concluded.

The disease now presented a problem of governance. Local government, and in effect the Government of Bombay, had to deal with internal migration, disruption to trade, and growing social discontent. The Government of Bombay felt a need to take control of the situation.

[375] S.A. R.C.S. G.D. (Plague). Box 3805, file no 1, volume 1, pt. II of 1897. G.D. Memorandum 30 January 1897.

[376] S.A. R.C.S. G.D. (Plague). Box 7312, file no. 1, volume 1, pt. 1 of 1897. Letter S.D-K-17 of 1897. Arnim to Commissioner in Sind 4 January 1897.

[377] S.A. R.C.S. G.D. (Plague). Box 7312, file no. 1, volume 1, pt. 1 of 1897. Letter no G 9617 of 1896. Tahilram Kemchand to A. Wingate 23 December 1896.

[378] S.A. R.C.S. G.D. (Plague). Box 7135, file 1, volume 2 of 1897. Letter Borradaile to the Commissioner in Sind 25 February 1997.

[379] Ibid.

A Plague Committee was constituted under orders of the Commissioner in Sind. The Committee was to exercise authority and control of all plague operations in Karachi. A small group of civil servants and medical experts were given extraordinary powers concerning health and sanitation. As Arnold notes, this measure robbed municipalities of authority that had been theirs since the reforms of the 1880s.[380]

The Plague Committee was given far-reaching powers. It could temporarily 'rescind, suspend alter or modify' any bylaw, rule or order issued by the Municipality. Moreover, the Committee could order the search of any buildings in the City; it could isolate people who were not even certified by health officers as sick. The Committee could impose restrictions on the amount of tenants in a building; it could prohibit the use of buildings, order cleansing and ventilation of dwellings. It could 'for the purpose of Military camps, segregation camps, hospitals', etc. 'take possession of and occupy any vacant ground or building' within as well as outside the boundaries of the Municipality. The Plague Committee could at any time ask the District Superintendent of the Police to back up its decisions with force, and it was the Municipality that had to foot the bills.[381]

Suddenly, the Assistant Commissioner and District Magistrate J. Sladen, who was the chairman of the Plague Committee, sat on vast powers. By the authority vested in his office he prohibited migration from one part of town to another. Now, if a person needed to move around within Karachi, Sladen had first to grant an application for travelling.[382] He did issue passes for urgent business trips in and out of Karachi, but very restrictively, and a rigorous system of reports and checks of the traveller were imposed.

Karachi's working and lower middle-classes were most exposed to the plague; it was they who were most frequently falling ill, were being isolated, displaced or restricted from moving. As a result commercial and industrial life in the city was being disrupted. Under normal circumstances it was these sections of society who would keep the port and its surroundings running. Now, with the prolonged epidemic, the disruptions in trade and commerce displeased local business.

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[380] Arnold, 1993, 204.
[381] S.A. R.C.S. G.D. (Plague). Box 7135, file no. 1, volume 2 of 1897. Noted extracts from The Sind Official Gazette (Extraordinary) Monday 29 March 1897.
[382] S.A. R.C.S. G.D. (Plague). Box 3651, file no. 1, volume 3 of 1899. Office of the Plague Committee Circular 7 February 1899.

The influential Karachi Chamber of Commerce sent a deputation of its most prominent businessmen to the Commissioner on 2 February 1897.[383] Top-level officials and administrators also attended the meeting. Mr. Petrie, the most senior businessman representing Karachi's biggest firm Messrs. Ralli Bros., spoke on behalf of the whole business community when he claimed that the plague epidemic threatened to cause an 'exodus of the whole labouring class' from Karachi.

Although they all saw the necessity of removing inhabitants from the infected areas, Petrie assured, he now argued that unless accommodation was provided for displaced people, they would disappear to neighbouring provinces. Subsequently, he argued, very soon trade would come to a complete standstill in Karachi. The city of Bombay had experienced migration due to plague between the end of 1896 and early 1897. Around 350,000 out of an estimated 850,000 inhabitants had moved out. However, as Arnold notes with reference to Bombay and elsewhere, this flight was due more to plague measures than the disease itself.[384]

Petrie recommended that 'suitable accommodation' should be provided outside Karachi, but sufficiently close so that clerks and 'coolies' could come to Karachi for work. Health camps ought to be constructed close to the main railway lines, he suggested, and daily morning and evening trains should run into Karachi. He agreed that employers would construct huts in the health camps; however, most of the money, Petrie suggested, should come out of 'local funds' of the government.

After negotiation, Gilles, the Collector of Karachi, agreed to charge public expenditure for half of the amount of huts, and the Ralli Brothers would fund the rest.[385] The same day, the Collector of Karachi telegrammed to the North Western Railways manager. Gilles made arrangements for the running of special trains between Karachi and the location of the future health camps, so that clerks and coolies encamped there could be

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[383] S.A. R.C.S. G.D. (Plague). Box 3805, file no 1, volume 1, pt. 2 of 1897. Letter no. 11 of 1897. The Chairman Karachi Chamber of Commerce to Assistant Commissioner in Sind 2 Feb 1897.
[384] Arnold, 1993, 207.
[385] S.A. R.C.S. G.D. (Plague). Box 3805, file no. 1, volume 1, pt. 2 of 1897. Memorandum 10 February 1897.

transported to work and home again.[386] And soon specially created huts were constructed in Landhi outside Karachi City. More than 2000 people were moved there. 'People move cheerfully', wrote the Acting Commissioner in Sind to the Private Secretary in Bombay, which was of course not the whole truth.[387]

Despite displacement and segregation of people in health camps, and the concentration of power within the hands of a few officials, the epidemic continued into 1898. In fact, by any standards, it was getting worse. The Commissioner in Sind called for a meeting in the Government House in Karachi.[388] High officials and members of local elites attended the meeting.

There were three main duties to perform for government and local citizens in a plague epidemic, argued the commissioner. The first duty was to ensure that the epidemic did not spread. The second duty was to stamp out the epidemic at home. The third was to cure the infected population. Karachi failed in this last duty, he claimed.[389]

The Commissioner was upset by the low turnout of people using the hospitals in Karachi. He said that the 'native community' must now persuade their 'ignorant and prejudiced caste fellows' to acquire information about the causes and symptoms of plague. The Commissioner had information that the Superintendents, who were out on Karachi's streets, found it increasingly difficult to access and supervise homes in infected areas. They also found it increasingly difficult to move people from infected areas into provided health camps. The inhabitants of Karachi did not offer their houses for inspection, and they revealed very little about their lives for the Superintendents.[390]

The Commissioner argued that plague authorities simply did not know how the population lived, what their habits were, and how this might have an effect on the spread of the disease. Yet they needed to know, and lacking sufficient methods, they turned to local communities for assistance. Native communities must assist the plague authorities in order to defuse the growing resentment towards plague measures, the

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[386] S.A. R.C.S. G.D. (Plague). Box 3805, file no 1, volume 1, pt. 2 of 1897. Telegram collector of Karachi to the Manager North Western Railways 2 February 1897.
[387] S.A. R.C.S. G.D. (Plague). Box 7312, file no. 1, volume 1, pt. 1 of 1897. Telegram acting Commissioner in Sind to Private secr. GoB. 25 January 1897.
[388] S.A. R.C.S. G.D. (Plague). Box 4839, file no 1, pt 1 of 1898. 'Memorandum' 4 May 1898.
[389] Ibid., 2.
[390] Ibid., 9.

Commissioner argued. Could the communities themselves reduce discontent and make better contact with the locals, he queried. In the meantime, however, as we shall see in a following section, the Commissioner sent military personnel to accompany plague intendents in the search for infected people.

In 1903-04 the plague epidemic had slowed down considerably. Only a few cases were now being reported. Yet the outbreak had made clear to the colonial administration that there were limits to what the social body could do to heal itself, and as the disease threatened to spread elsewhere, and had already upset trade and commerce, it intervened coercively. These early attempts by the colonial administration to constitute and intervene into the social domain were marked by the tact of previous approaches, where coercion had constituted a privileged mode of action.

Now, in wake of the epidemic, the pressure was mounting on the administration to engage conditions of life in the city. Questions were raised about how to link projects on housing conditions, sanitation and public health. Several issues highlighted by the plague would underpin the growing social concern of the colonial administration in Bombay. From the point of view of the administration, there was something missing: a sense of holistic perspective towards conditions of life that could function as a foundation for intervention. Officials in Bombay and Karachi found that previous administrations' lack of interest in issues of sanitation and housing had contributed to the difficulties they faced when acting upon the epidemic. Moreover, the lack of knowledge concerning the very basics of conditions of life of the neighbourhoods of Karachi was acute, and became a real obstacle when trying to combat plague. Clearly, the experience of plague in the Presidency was an important factor in the expansion of bio-politics in Bombay.

5.3. The limit of voluntarism: primary education in the Bombay Presidency 1905-1925

A debate emerged during the mid 1890s between members of local councils, colonial administrators and officials, concerning whether to introduce free and compulsory education in the Bombay Presidency. The question was also debated in the press, where

British loyalists and their opponents exchanged views. In this section I will probe into that debate.

On one obvious level this debate shows the essential inequalities of colonial rule: it was always in doubt whether Indian subjects were to be granted the same opportunities as domestic subjects. On another, less explored level, however, the debate occasions a shift occurring around the First World War in how the colonial administration viewed the population of the Presidency; at this time it began to see in it a resource to develop, and that education could be a means to further that development. The shift reflected a growing colonial concern with how to approach and manage life under new conditions of industrial society.

Compulsory education implied a far-reaching intervention into, and regulation of, society. Up till then education had been carried out on a voluntary basis, and on that premise many a local administrator did believe in the need for primary education for the progress of society. But they believed in it, then, as a means of individual self-development for the benefit of society. As Kumar points out, ever since the much-cited stance by Macaulay on education in India, primary, secondary and higher education was always framed by the objective of 'character formation' – that is, with a civilisational slant.[391]

The emphasis on character formation informed Government of India policy for a long time: in its Educational Policy of 1913, the Government of India wrote:

> There is reason to hope...that increased educational
> facilities under better educational conditions will
> accelerate social reform, spread female education and
> secure better teachers. Already much attention is
> being given to...social life, traditions, discipline, the
> betterment of environment, hygiene...[392]

The thought of shifting from an individually based voluntary system in elementary education to a population-based compulsory one made colonial administrators wary.

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[391] Kumar, 1997, 114.
[392] M.S.A. G.B. E.D. Compilation 360 of 1914. Extracts from the Educational policy of Government of India 1913.

My argument in this section is that this wariness towards free and compulsory education receded during the period here under review, when new productivist objectives were introduced into the debate on education. The argument that education could help improve the industrial economy was promoted by administrators, as well as by Indian business elites. They pushed, for this purpose, a greater state involvement in education. Voluntarism had its limits when productivism began to set the tone of the agenda.

New and often contradictory positions emerged among colonial officials within the debate. While administrators in rural settings listed the problems with compulsory primary education – for example, that educated children would leave farming behind to pursue careers in learned professions – urban administrators argued for the necessity of compulsory primary education for factory children, since compulsion kept children at the work place. Nationalists argued for its introduction because of its prospects of enhancing the general level of education among the populace, but also because an educated workforce might increase the output of goods from India.

The social turn in local colonial governance penetrated ways in which questions of education were perceived. By the end of the period discussed here, the principle of compulsory primary education had been established within the repertoire of the modern colonial state.

5.3.1. The old argument against: India is different

The issue of free and compulsory primary education had been promoted since the mid 1890s in the Presidency by Hindu social reform movements. The Government of Bombay remained unmoved by petitioners and deputations, and replied: 'In the present state of Society it is believed that a system of compulsory education is neither desired by the people, nor practicable without moving a burden on the rate payer which he would be unable to bear'.[393]

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[393] M.S.A. G.B. E.D. Volume 42, compilation 78 of 1906. G.B. letter no. 2725 1 December 1892.

In late June 1905 education was again on the agenda. *The Times of India* reported on 'a long and animated discussion' in the Municipal Corporation in Bombay. It was Ibrahim Rahimtoola who had initiated the heated exchange. Rahimtoola was then an influential member of the corporation, he would later become Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola, and take his place in the Legislative Council in Delhi. Rahimtoola proposed to the Corporation that compulsory primary education for boys should be introduced into the Bombay City. He asked the President of the Corporation to request the Government of Bombay to appoint a joint committee on the issue.

Rahimtoola suggested that the benefits of free and compulsory primary education were many. This debate took place approximately 10 years after the outbreak of plague described above. Rahimtoola refers to that experience in his initial call for a reformed system of education. *The Times of India* reports Rahimtoola saying to the members of the Municipal Corporation that it had frequently occurred to him in the wake of the epidemic 'that all the measures that they were adopting for the improvement of public health and general conditions of the people, did not result in the fullest benefit expected from them owing to the ignorance of the masses'.[394]

At this time the debate in the Corporation concerned not so much the principle of free and compulsory primary education. That principle was generally accepted. Rather, it concerned whether the time was right to introduce compulsion as a measure in India. The Governor agreed that a committee should be constituted to look into the matter of primary education in Bombay City. However, he ascertained, this would be done 'while not in any way committing Government to the principle of either free or compulsory education' in Bombay.[395]

The prospect of shifting a voluntary system of education to a compulsory one was first met by resistance from influential secretaries to the Government of India and Government of Bombay. They made a political calculation. Resentment would grow among poorer classes if free education would not be introduced, the secretaries feared. One secretary wrote to another: 'I was first inclined to regard the proposal to introduce compulsory education as so obviously impractible that it would be a waste of time to

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[394] M.S.A. Government of Bombay (1905) *Report on Native Newspapers Published in the Bombay Presidency 1905*. Extracts from Times of India 30 June 1905.
[395] M.S.A. G.B. E.D. Volume 42, compilation 78 of 1906. Note by Governor of the Bombay Presidency 30 November 1905.

appoint a committee to investigate it, but on further reflection…I am disposed to think that we should not refuse to accept the lead of the Municipal Corporation in a direction which may prove to be exceedingly beneficial to the poorer classes'.[396] Furthermore, he found 'to refuse the committee might wear the appearance of backwardness on part of the Government'.

The two secretaries continued their exchange on education the following year. Now they worried that besides high costs for the Municipal Board and the Government, the introduction of free and compulsory primary education might be accompanied by another kind of considerable 'political inconvenience'. Parents could create a fracas when being fined for not sending their children to school. Or, as one secretary put it, problems would arise with 'the laying upon the population largely composed of illiterate bigoted persons restrictions and penalties which they would, presumably, not easily tolerate'. Any committee established in the future must, therefore, discuss the political risk involved, argued the secretary to the Government of Bombay.[397]

A committee was finally appointed later the same year, in July 1906.[398] It reported and submitted its recommendations more than two years later, in September 1908. With only one dissenting member, the committee proposed that primary education should not be made compulsory in Bombay City due to the tension it would cause to prosecute parents who withheld children from schooling.[399]

Hindu reform associations once more opposed such recommendations and petitioned the Government of Bombay to introduce free and compulsory primary education. The question was now put to local collectors in the districts of the Presidency.[400] Most of these local officials argued that in order to have a progressive effect on society, it was no use making education free if it was not made compulsory: that would only benefit the wealthier classes of society who already sent their children to school.

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[396] M.S.A. G.B. E.D. Volume 42, compilation 78 of 1906. Departmental note 20 December 1905.
[397] M.S.A. G.B. E.D. Volume 42, compilation 78 of 1906. Private letter secretary to G.B. Gilles to secretary to G.I. Quin 14 January 1906.
[398] M.S.A. G.B. E.D. Volume 54, compilation 78 II of 1908. Government resolution no. 1249.
[399] M.S.A. G.B. E.D. Volume 54, compilation 78 II of 1908. Government of Bombay (1908) *Report of the committee appointed by Government to investigate the question of the measures which should be adopted to further the spread of Primary Education in the City of Bombay.*
[400] M.S.A. G.B. E.D. Volume 54, compilation 78 II of 1908. Letter no. 1419 of 1907. Collector of Ahmedabad to secretary to G.B. E.D. 31 March 1907.

However, on the other hand, they rejected compulsion in education on both practical and political terms. Were compulsion introduced, poor parents would end up being penalised by the district magistrate over and over again for withholding their children from education – as they, by necessity, employed their children elsewhere.

There were also general economic risks involved in pursuing such a policy of education, argued some administrators. Education among artisans or peasants could lead to contempt for manual labour. Wrote one deputy collector: '[e]ncourage education by all means in the masses, but please note that...an educated son of a peasant...becomes a permanent loss to agriculture'.[401] This could increase the shortage of factory and rural labour, they argued.

Finally, the Government of Bombay wrote to the Government of India regarding the abolition of fees for primary education. It found it difficult to agree with the argument 'that the abolition of fees in the Primary Schools of England and other equally civilized countries necessarily justifies a similar abolition of fees in India', simply because such arguments do not take into account that free education is an adjunct to compulsory education. Indeed the Government argued that the Bombay Presidency as a whole 'has not yet reached the stage at which compulsory primary education can be imposed upon the people without giving rise to grave discontent'.[402]

Administrators, however, acknowledged that the state of education was becoming a source of discontent in India, and they saw the need to address their own failing policy. This come out with some clarity in the exchange of views within the administration when the Indian social reformer, Gokhale, introduced a Bill in the Indian (Imperial) Legislative Council in Delhi for the introduction of free and compulsory primary education throughout India.

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[401] Lakori, K. K. [Deputy Collector, Mirpur Mathelo] Quoted in Government of Bombay Adminstration Report. *Land Revenue Administration Report of the Bombay Presidency including Sind for the year, part II, 1915-16.*
[402] M.S.A. G.B. E.D. Volume 54, compilation 78 I of 1908. Letter no. 257 of 1908. Edwardes to secretary G.I. Home Department [H.D.] 10 February 1908.

The Bill itself did not even make it into select committee and a second reading; debates surrounding it, however, show how deputy and district collectors agreed that progress had been slow in education. Some were quite frank in their assessment:

> When we see that only 5 percent of the population of this country are literate or that 7 out of 8 children are illiterate or that 4 villages out of every 5 are without a school we find that we have made very poor progress in the matter of the extension of the elementary education in this country. It is needless to say that elementary education is the ground work of the industrial, social, moral and political development of a country and therefore is the duty of the Government and people to see that it is extended as far as possible.[403]

Still, to shift the system and introduce compulsion was not really on the minds of the administration as a serious option.

5.3.2 The new argument in favour: education increases productivity

It would take the First World War to more substantially alter views and the framework for debate. The war had spread the need of 'producing facilities' for the development of the population, argued the *Bombay Chronicle* in late 1916. It was now seen as highly important, asserted the paper, to reconstruct the whole 'fabric for education of people'. To this end, the state carried an 'exceptionally heavy responsibility'. It is with the state the 'duty of educating the people principally rests and it is the holder of public money'.[404]

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[403] M.S.A. G.B. E.D. Volume 49, compilation 78 of 1912. Letter no. 117 of 1911. Ransing to collector West Khandesh 26 May 1911.
[404] M.S.A. Government of Bombay (1916) *Confidential Weekly Report on Newspapers Published in the Bombay Presidency*. Extract from the Bombay Chronicle 2 November 1916.

Nothing new had come up in terms of moral or political argument. New, however, was the introduction into the debate of an argument rendering education a force for the higher productivity of local industries. Political power would be called forth, as it were, to intervene into the social domain and amend conditions there, enabling better operation of markets. It was a bio-political demand that explicitly sought to regulate an area of life previously unregulated.

So, when V.J. Patel in 1916 moved in the Bombay Legislative Council '[t]hat this council recommends that an early beginning should be made in the direction of making elementary education free and compulsory throughout this Presidency by introducing it in the first instance within the limits of its municipal districts', he did so in a partly altered intellectual environment.[405] Patel argued that the Government must now prioritise education. He found that the arguments against the introduction of compulsion in primary education were 'unsound'. He asserted that the government had itself been in favour of introducing compulsion in primary education for children employed in factories. Why would there be a difference for the rest of Bombay, he asked. And despite the Government's fears, compulsory education would not make 'alien' British government unpopular, Patel asserted, because educated Indians were now themselves asking for the introduction of compulsion in primary education.

Indeed, just before the outbreak of the First World War, the Government of Bombay had raised the issue of compulsory primary education for children employed in factories. The suggestion of making education compulsory for children in factories had originally been made by the Indian Factory Labour Commission in 1908, but had not been met with much enthusiasm from local industrialists, who saw it as a tax on industry and a disadvantage in relation to foreign competitors.[406] The Government now responded both to the work of that commission and to continued inspections under the Indian Factories' Act, which had also raised the issue of education among children employed in factories in the Bombay Presidency.

A special committee reported to the Government of Bombay in 1913 on whether free and compulsory education could be granted to children working in factories. Three

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[405] M.S.A. G.B. E.D. Compilation 78 of 1916. Extracts from Bombay Chronicle 2 November 1916.
[406] MSA. G.B. E.D. Compilation 447 of 1915. Departmental note [n.d.]

government officials and the chairman suggested that children employed as half-timers – that is, those who worked six hours should have their shift divided into two parts. In the interval, mill owners should provide facilities so that factory children could devote time to study basic arithmetic, reading and writing.[407] The committee found that 'education should be made compulsory for factory children' as a provisional alternative to what they regarded as the 'only complete and satisfactory solution of the problem, namely a scheme of free and compulsory education for all children'.

One objective when introducing compulsion into the education of factory children was that the children could be better supervised, and so consequently their migration between Bombay and the villages could come to a halt. The minority of the committee – three mill owners – complained that this would increase the price on child labour, and that children weary of school and in need of money would look for work elsewhere during that interval. The Government of Bombay had long before the publication of the report made up its mind: the 'very qualified support' given by the committee would make it impossible for the Government to decide 'in favour of a measure of so highly controversial a character'.[408]

Patel returned in late 1916 with a new Bill after some politicking on the part of the colonial administration.[409] The Bill called for yearly grant-in-aid from the Government to the local authorities.[410] However, it had been hammered out in private meetings between Patel and the Governor of the Presidency so, when putting it before the Council, Patel could argue for its progressive character with the knowledge that the Government would not oppose the Bill.

In the debate he pointed out what a transformative event the First World War had been, in terms of views of how education contributes to productivity and wider reforms. He would not believe 'that the Government of India would adhere to their policy of pre-war times'. The Bill set out to experiment by introducing free and compulsory primary education only into the urban areas of the Presidency. It was left to local authorities to

[407] MSA. G.B. E.D. Compilation 447 of 1914. G.D. Resolution no. 8051 8 October 1914.
[408] M.S.A. G.B. E.D. Compilation 447 of 1916. Letter no. 7762-G.D. of 1912. G.B. to G.I. 16 November 1912.
[409] M.S.A. G.B. E.D. Compilation 447 of 1917. Extracts from the Bombay Government Gazette 11 January 1917.
[410] M.S.A. G.B. G.D. Compilation 447 of 1918. Departmental note by secretary to G.B. French 6 February 1917.

deal with faulting parents who did not send their children to school. The measures would be to first warn parents, and then levy a fine of three rupees if they would not change their ways. The Bill was harsher on employers who employed children during school hours. An employer could be fined up to 25 rupees if they withheld children from schooling.[411]

This time there were very few principled remarks against the Bill in the Council. The most debated aspect when the Bill was read a second time was the part dealing with compulsion. H.S. Lawrence, the then Commissioner in Sind – an area where local Muslim landed elites were highly sceptical of universal primary education as it would upset their agricultural economy – argued that one should not be light-hearted in one's support of the Patel Bill. Although he did not officially oppose it, Lawrence saw it as a major shift in the principles of government in the Presidency. Lawrence argued, '[g]overnment in this country have hitherto refrained most scrupulously from interference in the domestic concerns of the people. This measure is intended to control the relations of parents and children, and will affect every home in the selected localities in a manner never yet dreamt of by the people'.[412]

Yet Lawrence's were in a minority at this point. The War had illustrated the potential of Indian manufacturing capacity, but it had also pointed towards certain conceived weaknesses in the industrial system in Bombay. One such weakness, according to colonial officials, was the perpetuating instability of the labour force. It was now argued that primary education could help steady labour in the long term. The Indian Industrial Commission put it bluntly: 'the children of workers are provided with education under tolerable conditions of life, a new generation of workers will grow up, who will learn to regard millwork as their fixed occupation'.[413]

It was now clear to many of the industrial capitalists in Bombay that an educated workforce would increase productivity in their enterprises. However, A.E. Mirams suggested in his social survey, laid before the Indian Industrial Commission in 1917, that 'the trouble is that the employee is so crassly ignorant everyone seems afraid to

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[411] M.S.A. G.B. E.D. Compilation 447 of 1917. Extracts from the Bombay Government Gazette 4 July 1917.
[412] M.S.A. Proceedings of the Legislative Council of the Governor of Bombay 1917. Lawrence, H.S. Proceedings of 25 July 1917, 38.
[413] Government of India (1918) *Report of the Indian Industrial Commission*. Calcutta, 179.

make a serious beginning with him'. And since the 'current regulations' stipulate that education must be voluntary, teaching must be made 'intensely interesting' for employees to attend. Society as a whole might reap the benefits of better education of industrial workers, argued Mirams. Through more stringent elementary education employees could be given a chance of becoming 'more useful members of the community and more efficient citizens'.[414]

Indian industrialists and sections of administrators now pushed for a rethinking on issues of education. The representative witness of the Bombay Millowner's Association, C.N. Wadia, argued before the Indian Industrial Commission for immediate changes to primary education. He called for a system of centralised and compulsory education. Up until now, voluntary schools in mills had not been a success, he argued. Instead, he suggested that the Municipality should set up schools in every district and draw on the mill owners for funding.[415] In fact, mill owners suggested, the want of primary education was one of the reasons India was 'outstripped' by Japan in the 'race for industrial progress'.

The uneducated Indian workforce was not able to develop the new skills needed, the mill industry's representatives asserted before the Commission. Moreover, they suggested, a 'great impediment to…efficiency is the shifting habit of the operative, and to cure him of this he should be given better education, his surroundings inside and outside the mills should be made healthier and better'.[416]

The Indian Merchant Chamber and Bureau put it in similar terms. For them, to improve the labourers' efficiency and skill would have to imply a package of compulsory free education, sanitary housing, better wages and the redemption of debt.[417] This rhetoric surrounding the introduction of free and compulsory education was linking social and political ends. And here the indigenous intelligentsia and colonial administrators came to a shared view: education was becoming political. Here was an 'opportunity for Government to introduce compulsory education and satisfy the demands of the people

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[414] Ibid., 18-19.
[415] Government of India (1918) *Report of the Indian Industrial Commission*. Written and Oral Evidence. Witness no. 278 C.N. Wadia oral evidence 12 November 1917, 643.
[416] Ibid. Witness no. 280 N. B. Saklatvala written evidence, 667-668.
[417] Ibid. Witness no. 303 Indian Merchants' Chamber and Bureau written evidence, 805.

and by doing so they will allay the unrest'.[418] Moreover, primary education could help alleviate illiteracy – a major obstacle to progress, some officials argued. And primary education provided a chance for them to spread moral education much more effectively. The introduction of compulsory primary education would clearly benefit the population, they argued.[419]

By 1922 a consensus seemed to have emerged that the introduction of free and compulsory education was needed, and that the colonial state must take an active role. In fact, an official committee under Chairman Narayan G. Chandavarkar unanimously recommended that 'universal compulsion' in education for boys and girls must be the 'goal to be aimed at'. The report points out that the witnesses, with some few exceptions, favoured compulsion to such a degree that the opinion against compulsion 'need not be considered too seriously'. One colonial official stated in his evidence before the Compulsory Education Commission: 'Education is one of the most important functions of the State and the State cannot afford to let it pass out of its cognisance or supervision'.[420]

A voluntary system will not give enough progress in the matter of education, the report of the Compulsory Education Committee went on to argue, and especially not now when 'the people themselves are said to realise the need for education'. The committee recommended that compulsion in education would henceforth be introduced cautiously into most areas of Bombay City and more selectively into other areas.[421]

In a little more than a decade, views on the role of the state in education had changed considerably. When compulsory education was introduced as an argument for raising productivity, as well as promoting efficiency in government, it turned out to be of great importance to the state. The colonial administration now found it important to expand

[418] M.S.A. Government of Bombay (1922) *Report of the Committee Appointed by Government of Bombay to Consider and Report on the Question of the Introduction of Free and Compulsory Primary Education into the Bombay Presidency, 1922*. Written and Oral Evidence. Witness no. 47 R.R. Kale oral evidence 21 January 1922.

[419] M.S.A. G.B. E.D. Compilation 272 of 1916. Departmental notes [n.d.].

[420] M.S.A. Government of Bombay (1922) *Report of the Committee Appointed by Government of Bombay to Consider and Report on the Question of the Introduction of Free and Compulsory Primary Education into the Bombay Presidency, 1922*. Written and Oral Evidence. Witness no. 133 F.G. Pratt oral evidence 9 December 1921.

[421] M.S.A. Government of Bombay (1922) *Report of the Committee Appointed by Government of Bombay to Consider and Report on the Question of the Introduction of Free and Compulsory Primary Education into the Bombay Presidency, 1922*, 7.

its bio-political scope and regulate education: as it prioritised increased production over character-formation, the limit of voluntarism in education became more easily defined.

5.4. The limit of laissez-faire: housing and town planning, city of Bombay 1915-1925

Records produced with reference to housing and town planning in Bombay are revealing when discussing growing social concerns, and the expanding bio-political scope of the colonial administration there. Housing records tell of administrative anxiety over the many pressures of life in emerging industrial society. They reflect an understanding that these acknowledged pressures might ultimately have an impact, not only on the function of markets, but ultimately on the effectiveness of colonial government itself.

In this section I will describe housing as central to emerging social concerns of the colonial administration. Housing, I will suggest, formed a junction through which various other questions within the social domain connected. The ways in which the colonial administration attempted to get a grip of issues of housing and town planning reflect, in a particluar way, its efforts to redefine the responsibility of government in relation to market and society; when it came to deteriorating urban housing conditions the colonial state saw the limit of laissez-faire, and expanded its own bio-political scope.

As we shall see below, in the case of housing in Bombay, colonial administrators structured government action around relatively far-reaching regulations. Records concerning housing in Bombay reflect how social imperialism connected contemporary discourses on social intervention in the metropole to similar interventions in the colony. However, one will also encounter the adaptability of those discourses when actually applied to a colonial reality. The application of social imperialism in Bombay was always formed by local historical conditions of the Presidency.

The local government sensed, and recognised, strong public opinion forming around the question of urban housing in Bombay City. They acknowledged how sections of the

press, as well as business, increasingly attached to the state a responsibility to extend its reach into the social domain and to address the issue of housing comprehensively. Before, newspapers had found that employers but also communities must take full responsibility for housing their workers. Now, calls for a reorientation of the administrations housing policy began to emerge. As one newspaper pointed out in a discussion on housing:

> In almost every country in the world, the State has a
> recognised function in respect of social and moral
> progress. Such progress should, no doubt, proceed
> largely from non-official effort, but there are some
> matters where State aid is essential and in all matters
> the moral support of the State is of the greatest value.
> In British India, the reformer not only received no
> countenance from the State, but oftentimes, he finds
> the State ranged on the side of obstruction.[422]

I discussed this already in chapter three, but also in the colonial context of Bombay the belief in charity as a comparatively superior force in attending to housing lost ground. Colonial officials found that a charity based approach failed to remove the root causes of the problems society faced. A.E. Mirams, discussed earlier, put it quite forthrightly when he argued with reference to housing that he had:

> ...no faith in charity as a remedy...By all means let
> philanthropy do its proper part in the amelioration of bad
> housing conditions but it is useless relying on eleemosynary
> efforts for the solution of the problem.[423]

Instead, regulatory interventions executed by the state in collaboration with efforts by local capital would initiate 'social welfare work', Mirams argued; at least until a 'civic sense has become more fully developed', as the Indian Industrial Commission later had it.[424] Realities of urban life in Bombay as described earlier in this thesis, clearly lent

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[422] M.S.A. Government of Bombay (1909) *Confidential Weekly Report on Newspapers Published in the Bombay Presidency*. Extract from the Indian Social Reformer 23 May 1909.
[423] Mirams, 1916, 7.
[424] Government of India (1918) *Report of the Indian Industrial Commission*. Calcutta, 192.

issues of urban housing a sense of urgency. By the time of the outbreak of the First World War, housing, as I will discuss below, embodied aspects well beyond narrow early twentieth-century notions of tearing down congested areas. Poor urban housing teased out wider and more general anxieties concerning modern industrial life among administrators and business elites. With the invention of the social domain, these anxieties came together within one realm, through which administrators found a new conceptual focus.

5.4.1. Urban housing: microcosm of modern industrial society

Poor urban housing seemed to embody what politicians, bureaucrats and thinkers within empire feared most about modern industrial society: instability of labour and other groupings, disease, crime, and radicalism. Yet for sections of administrators it also presented an easy and technical fix to wider 'social' problems: amend poor housing conditions, and populations might become more productive, harmonious and prosperous.

The housing question had stirred feelings in British industrial towns already in the 1880s. New social surveys and sociological studies of the kind discussed in chapter four fed the press and bureaucrats with dystopian facts related to housing. Poor housing conditions had become an obvious reminder of urban poverty for politicians and reformers alike. Data on housing in Britain, as we saw in chapter three, translated into demands for state action: to social liberals and socialists there seemed to be clear limits to what employers, charity and housing societies could actually handle when housing developed into a problem.

But, as I have shown, there were also visionary components within discussions on housing and urban environmental conditions: social evolutionism and moral discourse flowed together and formed the prospects for moulding new and improved societies. This conflation created a more complex view of poverty and social ills, Alan Kidd argues. The poor, Kidd points out, were no longer perceived as a distinct class. 'Poverty' suggests Kidd 'was a condition or circumstance which might be analysed,

and by implication might be alleviated or even eradicated'.[425] Housing projects in Britain, Kidd suggests, manifested a growing inclination on behalf of the state to engage poverty.

Early housing policy in Bombay was modelled on nineteenth-century urban improvement schemes in Scotland and England. Town planning and city improvement in Bombay was initially oriented towards creating 'sanitary order', Prashant Kidambi argues. Housing improvement schemes in Bombay were, as will be mentioned below, initially carried out by the Bombay Improvement Trust.[426] Kidambi correctly points out the many failures of the Trust, and he shows how sections of the Indian intelligentsia, as well as Indian property owners, openly challenged the work of the Trust.[427] I will return to this below.

Yet the housing question, as I have framed it here, formed part of a much wider reconfiguration of state-society relations, structured by the ways in which social imperialism came to influence colonial administration and translate into local colonial governance. The housing question in Bombay must be seen in this light.

Housing was at the centre of emerging social concerns in Bombay. Colonial officials were influenced by how the question of urban housing was dealt with in Britain as key to the stability and progress of modern urban life; decisions to act upon poor housing conditions in Bombay also formed, as pressure mounted on the administration from several different directions. Prominent industrialists who were still reluctant to endorse nationalist positions found in the growing state involvement a way to pass on their costs for the housing of their employees to the public purse. Nationalists like the barrister M.N. Nariman or the famous Bombay based newspaper editor Horniman, found in poor housing a failure of British policy. Trade unionists like M.N. Roy began to raise demands for housing on behalf of the working classes. Yet despite their diverse reasoning, they all invoked emerging European welfare states as models of a 'civilised' state.

By intervening into the social domain and addressing issues of housing, it was now argued, the state might be able to resolve a whole set of socially rooted problems. A.E.

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[425] Kidd, 1999, 61-62.
[426] Kidmabi, 2007, 71.
[427] Ibid., 86.

Mirams suggested before an audience in Karachi that housing and town planning had become 'one of the latest of those great questions which are engaging the attention of social reformers'. While showing a lantern slide and lecturing about what the new Town Planning Act in Bombay could do for Karachi, Mirams argued that housing was in fact now considered 'most pressing because it is concerned with the living conditions of the whole of the people'. It was only very recently, A.E. Mirams continued, 'that there has been any idea that the regulation of these conditions for the benefit of the poor as well as for the richer classes is just as much a duty of Government as the provision of pure food and water'.

Housing reforms, he argued, were not only a question of creating shelter and planned physical spaces for the population. Rather, they helped articulate ways in which the state could relate to the intricacies of life of a modern industrial society. Were the state truly to embark on a series of interventions, Mirams continued, it would much better 'assist the growth of a healthy, happy and more contented people'.[428]

It was also suggested, for example, that better housing would help create a stable workforce. Around the outbreak of the First World War demands were made for reducing working hours in the textile cotton mills. But, mill-owners argued, if their housing was in a sorry state, workers would presumably rather turn to the streets than spend time at home during their increased spare time. And were workers to spend their spare time not at home, but on the streets, they would easily upset public order.

As one non-official member of the Indian Industrial Commission put it when discussing the issue with the representative from the Bombay Millowner's Association, C.N. Wadia:

> At present they [mill workers] loaf about and overcrowd the streets and find no place to go...If you give them more pay and less hours, do you not think they will loaf about the streets not knowing where to go and having nothing to do except drink or go away to their villages? Don't you think that the municipality must provide big play-grounds, better

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[428] Mirams, A.E. (1916b) *What the Bombay Town Planning Act Means to Karachi*. Bombay.

accommodation in chawls, and other facilities that will make them more steady?[429]

In short, to regulate living conditions would enhance stability and progress in the Presidency. Mirams argued when addressing the municipality of Poona that the new town planning regulations, referred to above, would prove to be most valuable to local authorities because '[w]ith improved environment the habits of the people and their outlook on life will undergo a transformation'.[430]

To remedy urban poverty through the construction of better housing was imperative in developing a colonial community in harmony. Coming back to Bombay after a study visit in Britain, Mirams wrote in his memorandum to the Indian Industrial Commission: 'Although I have observed a good deal of poverty in my walk through life and in many countries, and although I have read a great deal about poverty I confess I did not realise its poignancy and its utter wretchedness until I came to inspect the so-called homes of the poorer working classes of the town of Bombay'.[431] Referencing Charles Dickens's dystopian imagery of Victorian London, Mirams then gives a colourful description of the chawls, the tenement structures, in which the working classes of Bombay City lived:

> Many of these chawls are huge houses of from 3 to 5 floors with anything from 10 to 40 or more rooms. Each floor has a vernadah running along its whole front or an interior corridor...The access to the upper floors is by means of a very narrow and steep staircase. Glancing into the rooms as one walks along the verandah...the visitor might be excused for thinking them sparsely inhabited, but a closer inspection may reveal, sitting on the floor, a mother and 2 or 3 children, the father and as often as not some of the family relations and a lodger...In such a room...where there is hardly space to move, whole

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[429] Government of India (1918) *Report of the Indian Industrial Commission*. Written and Oral Evidence. Witness No 278 C N Wadia oral evidence 12 November 1917, 655.
[430] Mirams, A.E. (1916c) *An Address to members of Municipality and Citizens of Poona on 'The Bombay Town Planning Act of 1915'*. Poona.
[431] Mirams, 1916, 4.

families sleep, breed, cook their food with the aid of

pungent cow-dung cakes, and perform all the

functions of family life…This is truly a distressing

state of affairs…[432]

The idea of poor housing as a breeding ground for radicalism grew stronger during the period here under review. Poverty, ill health and deteriorating living conditions were increasingly seen as motivations for political mobilisation, and a reason why extremism gained a foothold, especially after the Bolshevik revolution in Russia.

The sociologist Patrick Geddes, discussed earlier, entertained similar ideas. Urban housing in Bombay manifested urban poverty in obscene ways, he thought; to find its remedy might help revert revolutionary tendencies in India. While administrators and public figures were marginalising his abstract form of sociology, Geddes took to satire in his critique of housing conditions in Bombay. His piece *University of Bolshevism (established 1920) in Worli Bombay* was an attempt to ironically describe the ways in which poor housing conditions in Bombay paved the way for Bolshevism, and how the Government of Bombay, through its own previous policies, promoted revolutionary activity as effectively as any agitator or conspiracy.

In his satire Geddes describes how the 'University of Bolshevism' had been open for three years, in order to promote Bolshevism in India. The 'university' had so far been able to appeal to the 'dissatisfied workers in the city', but was set to recruit from almost all classes in the city of Bombay. The main work of the 'university staff' was to bring about dissatisfaction among those enrolled.

The university had accomplished its work better than similar institutions in Russia or Germany, Geddes wrote wryly. Overcrowded housing with small rooms with little light and air catered for its success. Added to this was high rent, insufficient lighting, no parks or playgrounds. Here, Geddes wrote, lay the success for radicalisation of the population in Bombay.[433]

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[432] Mirams, 1916, 4-5.
[433] Univ.S.A. T-GED 12/1/282. Geddes, P. ([n.d.]) 'University of Bolshevism (established in 1920) Worli Bombay'.

Others took a moral and family-centred standpoint in their call for better housing in Bombay. Modern society brought a strain on family relations, it was argued, and through proper housing interventions government could help reform dysfunctional family relationships. This had been one of the themes of the Inter-allied Congress on Housing, held in London in June 1920, according to Dr K.E. Dadachanji. He brought this dimension of housing policy to the attention of the Bombay Legislative Council in the 1920s.[434]

The issue of housing in Bombay was even given an evolutionary slant. For Governor George Lloyd, anyone causing delays in coming to terms with the housing situation must 'recognize clearly the responsibilities of breeding up an unhealthy, an unfit and squalid race of people. Unless we give them better air, better light, better cleanliness and better conditions, we shall not breed a race worthy of this city'.[435]

Both within the colonial administration, and among public figures, much hope was pinned to the resolution of the urban housing problem. As these examples show, housing was depicted as central to a whole set of questions regarding the effect modernity might have on life in the city. Housing turned into a central junction of the newly invented social domain, and as such it was central to the expanding bio-political concerns of the colonial administration.

5.4.2 Engaging the 'housing question' through state action

It had not always been obvious that the colonial administration was under any form of obligation to address questions of housing in Bombay. Yet during the time here under review the notion of responsibility on the part of the administration to provide housing and public amenities for the population established itself in public and state discourse.

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[434] M.S.A. G.B. Public Works Department [P.W.D.] Development Department [D.D.] File 106 (ii) of 1921. Council Questions Dr. K.E. Dadachanji.
[435] M.S.A. Bombay Legislative Council Proceedings. Lloyd, G. Proceedings of 3 August 1920, 563.

The newly conceptualised field of the 'social', and the acknowledgment of its deterioration, made it possible to question the principle of laissez-faire: industrial capitalism seemed to bestow upon life certain negative effects that market mechanisms did not care to tend to, and charity could not end. Only through political power, it was argued, could these effects be reversed, and their various consequences controlled.

The question of who was responsible for housing and the provision of public amenities for the less-privileged sections of colonial Bombay became acute, as the Bombay Improvement Trust continued to falter. The Bombay industrialist Dinshaw Wacha asked the Government of India repeatedly in 1918-19 whether it recognised as a principle of a 'civilised State' its obligation to provide housing for the working classes.[436] Or, he asked, was it still up to industrial enterprises to uphold the social welfare of their employees?

It had been argued in the press for some time that employers had failed to carry out the necessary schemes, and that it was now up to the Government and the Municipality to take charge. Housing was, newspapers argued, the issue above all others that the Government had to address.[437]

For a long time colonial officials had looked to the market for the resolution of the housing crises. They had argued that the market would ultimately regulate itself, that it was up to major employers of labour to house their own employees, and it was not for the state to intervene.[438] However, after the massive plague epidemic, to which I referred earlier in this chapter, severely interrupted local trade and production, and the Government of Bombay had established the Bombay Improvement Trust in 1898 in order to 'open up' congested areas, the administration acknowledged that a continuation of a policy of non-intervention was difficult to justify. [439]

Initially, the Government was indifferent to the fact that the Trust displaced more people than it actually re-housed. However, as it became obvious early in the career of

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[436] M.S.A. Proceedings of the Indian Legislative Council 1918. Wacha, D. Proceedings of 4 September 1918, 7.
[437] M.S.A. Government of Bombay (1919) *Confidential Weekly Report on Newspapers Published in the Bombay Presidency*. Extracts from the Kaiser-i-Hind 23 August 1919.
[438] Government of India (1914) *Report of the Bombay Development Committee*.
[439] See: Government of Bombay Administration Reports. Reports of the City of Bombay Improvement Trust 1899-1905.

the Trust that it would not be able to carry reforms on such a large scale as deemed necessary, and that its projects were met by resentment among ever-widening sections in Bombay, a new approach had to be designed.[440]

Yet as late as 1914, the Bombay Development Committee had suggested that major employers bore the main responsibility of providing accommodation for their workers.[441] The Municipal Corporation initially approved in principle, but observed 'that there is little indication of this being done at present under the voluntary conditions prevailing'.[442]

The view within business, however, was divided. Mill owners in Bombay agreed that they should house their own workpeople, and assured that no legislative measures were necessary in order for them to do so. Another large employer of labour, the BB&CI Railway Company, on the other hand, was doubtful whether the provision of housing was within the proper function of a railway company.[443]

In fact, major employers of labour had a very poor track record when it came to arrangements for housing their employees in the city of Bombay and close-by areas. The two Bombay based railway companies, the Port Trust, and the Municipality, had built only 2640 one-room tenements – taken together – during the period between 1901 and 1915.[444] In response to this, E.S Montagu, then Liberal Secretary of State for India, drew on the British experience. He argued that was it to be found that cotton textile mill owners did not live up to their obligations, or that existing legislation was inadequate, it should now be considered whether the government or local authorities should be given greater powers, on the lines of the Housing Acts in England. 'The experience of housing difficulties in this country', Montagu asserted, 'indicates that private enterprise cannot be relied on to provide the adequate remedy'. He invoked a limit to laissez-faire.

[440] Kidambi, P. (2001) *State, society and labour in colonial Bombay c.1893-1918.* Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. Oxford.
[441] Government of India (1914) *Report of the Bombay Development Committee.*
[442] M.S.A. G.B. G.D. Compilation 1524 (a) of 1918. Private letter Sethna to secretary to G.B. G.D. 15 July 1915.
[443] M.S.A. G.B. G.D. Compilation 1524 (a) of 1918. Letter secretary Bombay Development Committee to secretary to G.B. G.D 25 May 1914.
[444] M.S.A. G.B. G.D. Compilation 1142 of 1918. Letter Thomas to secretary to G.I. 13 March 1918.

According to his information, 800,000 people lived in one-room tenements in Bombay City, and he found the pace in the construction of new housing very slow. Montagu asserted that the housing situation in Bombay was 'highly unsatisfactory', and that it demanded 'immediate and energetic action' on behalf of government. He requested a report on conditions of housing in Bombay.[445]

Montagu's request went out to local administrators through the Government of Bombay during the autumn of 1917. With the exception of a few rooms made available to employees by municipalities or other local authorities for low or no rent, and rooms rented out by bigger employers in larger industrial centres in the Bombay Presidency like Ahmedabad and Surat, no comprehensive official scheme of housing had been designed.[446]

The Government of Bombay, in turn, calculated that nearly 900,000 people lived in one-roomed tenements, and still there was a shortage of 64,000 such tenements. And to this end, the administration said, the provision of housing by the Bombay Improvement Trust and private enterprise was 'utterly inadequate'. State intervention was perceived as a practical necessity.

The War had altered the situation considerably, the Government argued. High prices of material, land and labour held back construction. Simultaneously, there was a big influx of migrants into urban areas, especially directed towards Bombay City. The shortage of housing did not only affect mill workers, but 'artisans and labourers of all sorts: and also for the lower and upper middle classes, whether Indian or European'.[447]

Subsequently the debate over how an intervention could be designed, where the government and local authorities would deliver newly constructed housing for the lower rungs of society, began to occupy the minds of local elites and colonial officials. It was clear to the administration that it could not carry out reforms by itself; moreover, it needed some public legitimacy in its programmes. Yet to improve housing conditions was too important for the economy and stability of the Bombay Presidency to be left to

[445] O.I.O.C. Bombay Proceedings Development Department. Despatch from the Secretary of State for India no. 85 Rev. 26 October 1917.
[446] M.S.A. G.B. G.D. Compilation 1142 of 1918. Letter no. 6992 of 1917. Secretary to G.B. to Commissioner in Sindh and Commissioners of Divisions 6 October 1917.
[447] O.I.O.C. Bombay Proceedings Development Department. Letter G.B. to G.I. E.D. 30 Sept 1919.

the market. New actors must come forward. As the chairman of the Bombay Improvement Trust, J.P. Orr, argued:

> we shall certainly need the aid not only of legislators but also of social reformers: for in these democratic days legislation involving interference with vested interests cannot be put through without the support of the people...Social reform is needed to create such discontent with existing conditions as will lead to the formulation of definite public opinion in favour of the adoption of higher standards in two important matters; (1) a higher standard of comfort, especially for the poorer classes...(2) a higher standard in the sacrifice of private to public interests'.[448]

In order to resolve this issue, administrators began to look towards Britain for inspiration. As he would later give evidence before the Indian Industrial Commission, A.E. Mirams asked permission from the Indian Office to study housing in larger towns in England, as he was anxious to familiarise himself with 'the latest thing in housing on the British Isles'.[449]

Measures taken by official bodies in England to empower local authorities to deal with housing impressed colonial officials in Bombay. Thomas H. Holland, who we met in the Preface, wondered while in Bombay for the Industrial Commission whether it would be 'possible to go a step further towards these socialistic arrangements and allow the Municipality to build the chawls, charging the mills in proportion to the labour they employ?'.[450]

J.P. Orr sent home a report from London where he had studied how 'the housing problem' was 'being tackled in England'. His report was put together in a leaflet and

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[448] Orr, J. (1917 8 October) *'Social Reform and Slum Reform: Bombay Past and Present'. A lecture delivered to the Social Service League*. Bombay.

[449] M.S.A. G.B. G.D. Compilation 959 of 1917. Letter Mirams to India Office 16 August 1917.

[450] Government of India (1918) *Report of the Indian Industrial Commission*. Written and Oral Evidence. Witness no. 298 J. A. Wadia oral evidence 12 November 1917 [question by chairman T. Holland].

read at the meeting of the Bombay Co-Operative Housing Association in early August 1919. The association comprised influential businessmen and public figures; on this evening justice N.G. Chandavarkar presided over the meeting. In his report Orr had found that the question of housing had been tackled wholeheartedly by all concerned in Britain, 'from King to workman'.

Orr found measures such as the introduction of 'drastic amendments' to the Working Classes Act inspiring. Being present in the House of Commons and the London County Council when housing was debated, he took heart at the way that party differences were put aside to get to the root of the matter. He commented on the enormous amount of money being spent on housing in England, and the thorough ways in which several committees have been studying the matter.

The most important aspect of the whole question, however, was the forming of public opinion. Orr commented on how the:

> workmen's aspiration to higher standard of comfort was very evident, and what is more, very well received; and the writer could not help feeling that the problem of housing the working classes in Bombay would be far easier if there were more evidence of similar aspirations there, if there were more "divine discontent", some agency like the Labour Party of England to champion the cause of the working classes.[451]

Initially, planning for the actual construction of new housing evolved around the existing structure of the Bombay Improvement Trust. However, as the new scheme would demand close co-ordination between various authorities, Governor George Lloyd suggested instigating a Development Board.[452] The Government of India generally accepted the idea and scope of the suggested Development Board, but saw difficulties in its relation to other local authorities.[453]

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[451] M.S.A. G.B. G.D. Compilation 379 of 1919. Orr, J.P. (1919) 'The Housing Problem: How it is being tackled in England'. In *The Bombay Co-operative Housing Association. Leaflet No. 33.*
[452] O.I.O.C. Bombay Proceedings Development Department of 1919. Letter no. 387-P. Thomas to secretary to G.I. E.D. 30 September 1919.
[453] O.I.O.C. Bombay Proceedings Development Department of 1919. Letter no. 154 G.I. E.D. 12 November 1919.

Soon the scope of this board expanded considerably. Some months later, Lloyd and the Government of Bombay had changed their view with regards to who should actually carry out the housing scheme. They found that it was better if the Improvement Trust concentrated its work on the schemes it had already undertaken but not yet implemented, partly due to the War. Instead, Lloyd proposed to establish a Development Department, which would deal with the 'housing question' in Bombay. It was to be designed in the fashion of the Munitions Boards – that is, simultaneously a department of Government and an executive authority.

The Development Department in Bombay was the first of its kind in British India. And as such, it mapped out a distinct realm for its functioning. The department was to be organised in such a way, Lloyd argued, that it could by itself carry out schemes pertinent to housing in Bombay. For example, it would take over all questions regarding acquisition of land in Bombay City.[454] Its director would be represented on the boards of several local authorities. The department, Lloyd suggested, was to be a specialised one – yet still firmly placed within the local state structure.

The Development Department was formed within the new governmental framework put in place by the 1919 Government of India Act. The Act established a governing system in which government departments were either transferred or reserved. Reserved departments answered to British authority. Transferred departments were placed under elected ministers, and as such they ensured limited local representation and influence. The Development Department was constructed as a reserved department of government, and as such, it was placed under the Governor.

Local elites were split in their immediate opinions over the announcement of the new department. During the debate in the Bombay Legislative Council following the publication of the new plans, nationalists rejected the idea of placing it directly under British authority and argued that the lack of public consultation beforehand showed the

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[454] O.I.O.C. Bombay Proceedings Development Department of 1920. Letter no. 1359. Monie to secretary G.I. E.D. 4 February 1920.

arrogance of the administration.[455] Industrialists argued for the need to involve local manufacturers. However, members of the council embraced the idea of something being done concerning the housing problem. Some newspapers called for non-official involvement; others found official agency necessary, yet debated whether it was up to the Municipality or the Government to carry out the schemes.[456]

More specifically, the Development Department was to deal with the construction of infrastructure and houses in and around Bombay City. Consequently, the newly established Industrial Housing Scheme was placed under this department. From here, plans emerged to construct 50,000 tenements in order to house 250,000 people in compartmentalised industrial-class areas of Bombay City.[457] Apparently, George Lloyd had had to curtail his initial plan of providing housing for 320,000 people.[458]

After constructing these tenements the Government had no intention of actually managing them. It was thought that employers, as well as the municipality and co-operative housing societies, should take over responsibility for collecting rent and keeping the constructed houses in shape. The Government also had a plan to let newly constructed houses to local civil society organisations such as the Social Service League, The Depressed Classes Mission, the Maratha Samaj and Christian organisations, so that these organisations 'endeavour to inculcate habits of decency and cleanliness among the tenants'.[459] Soon, however, the administration took over the running of the houses it had constructed as well.

It was suggested that if rents in the newly built houses were to be set below market levels, people would freely migrate to newly built areas. However, this strategy would amount to a loss for the colonial administration. To resolve this deficit it created the Cotton Cess, a town duty of 1 rupee on every bale of raw cotton travelling through Bombay City and Port. Money generated by the tax would be diverted to cover the

[455] See: M.S.A. Proceedings of Bombay Legislative Council. Proceedings of 3 August 1920.
[456] M.S.A. Government of Bombay (1920) *Confidential Weekly Report on Newspapers Published in the Bombay Presidency.* Extract from the Indian Social Reformer, August 14; Sánj Vartamán 21 August; Bombay Chronicle 21 August.
[457] O.I.O.C. Government of Bombay Departmental Reports. *Annual Report of the Development Department 1921.*
[458] O.I.O.C. Montagu Papers Mss Eur 524. Collection 24. Private letter Lloyd to Montagu 17 August 1919.
[459] O.I.O.C. Government of Bombay Departmental Reports. *Annual Report of the Development Department 1924.*

losses on rent. The duty, as it turned out, was also a source of revenue for the nearly bankrupt Municipality: it was to keep 3/7th of the duty and 4/7th was channelled towards housing.[460] India Office accepted this form of taxation, even though it had preferred one that would fall more directly on mill owners.[461] The tax resulted in Bombay losing out on trade, which was being re-directed towards Karachi.

Taken together, one colonial official claimed, these schemes under the Development Department implied 'the greatest transformation of any city in the world which has been undertaken since Napoleon III with the help of Haussmann recreated Paris'.[462] But out of grand plans came little. In the end, only 16,000 tenements were actually constructed under this scheme. Soon, letters dripping frustration over superiors and fellow colonial officials poured out of the Governor's House in Bombay. 'The main source of trouble and difficulty I find in doing anything here' writes George Lloyd to Montagu with regard to the proposed programmes of the Development Department,

> lies in the relationship of the local Government to the Government
> of India. It meets one at every turn, it delays, baffles and nullifies
> all one's energy and destroys all one's hopes.[463]

The Development Department became a subject of strong public criticism.[464] Costly attempts to reclaim land from the sea at the so-called Back Bay caused public outrage. The critique was only partly based on principle; often it stemmed from the fact that many of the early large orders for material and plants were placed in Britain, while local elites demanded them to be landed by Indian firms, in the context of a post-War depression for industries.[465]

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[460] O.I.O.C. Government of Bombay Departmental Reports. *Administrative Report of the Municipal Commissioner of Bombay City for the year 1919-20.*

[461] O.I.O.C. Bombay Proceedings Development Department of 1920. Secretary of State for India to Viceroy telegram 4 May 1920.

[462] Government of India (1916) *Report of the Bombay Back Bay Inquiry Committee.* Written and Oral Evidence, volume 1. Witness no. 48 Chitale oral evidence 16 August 1926, 216.

[463] O.I.O.C. Montagu Papers Mss Eur 524. Collection 22. Private letter Lloyd to Montagu 18 March 1919.

[464] Subedar, M. (1926) Minority Report. In Government of Bombay *Report of Bombay Development Department Advisory Committee*, 33.

[465] M.S.A. G.B. P.W.D (D.D). File 120 of 1921. Correspondence between Indian Merchant Chamber and Bureau and the Development Department November 1920-January 1921.

The Government of India argued that from the perspective of the colonial government, the financing of the housing schemes was the main crux. There was little room for further taxation. And for the Bombay Government, reallocations in the budget were not yet an option that would cover the expenses. Instead, the Government of Bombay now desired to lend money through long-term premium bonds, to an extent sufficient to finance the work under the Development Department. The funds raised by the bonds would be held by Bombay Development Fund Trustees.

Lloyd suggested in 1920 that, within the coming five years, 30 crores of rupees would be required to finance the Development Department schemes and the loans of local bodies in Bombay. This proposal was not met with much enthusiasm in London, as the House of Commons had rejected long-term premium bonds as a way of financing public spending.[466] Initially, the so-called Development Loan managed to raise a significant amount of money from the public, and it was hailed by the India Office as a success. For years to come, however, as the schemes under the Development Department began to fail spectacularly, the payment of interest and instalments on the loans pushed the Presidency very close to bankruptcy. Budgets for 'nation building' departments of government, such as covering for education and health, were significantly cut in order to cover for the failures of the Development Department.

5.4.3. Bio-politics of housing

Were the colonial administration to engage housing, it was argued, it might better handle growing mobilisation and discontent in Bombay. This, the Government of India wrote to the then Under Secretary of State for India William Duke, was of high priority. The Government of India argued that while it was well aware of the difficulties in terms of financing the housing schemes in Bombay, it was 'impressed with the industrial and political importance' of coming forward with actual proposals with regards to housing in Bombay:

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[466] O.I.O.C. Bombay Proceedings Development Department of 1920. Telegram No. A-202 Viceroy to Secretary of State for India 17 March 1920.

[t]here is abundant evidence to show that the very unsatisfactory conditions of housing are among the chief causes of the industrial unrest that manifests itself as periodical strikes, whilst reduction in factory hours and increase of wages merely add serious and cumulative taxes to local industries without, under the existing state of housing, corresponding advantages to the workers.[467]

Interventions to create better housing conditions could prove a successful measure to combat unrest. But to build houses might not be enough, officials in Bombay began to suggest. New social surveys directed their attention to the fact that an disproportionately high percentage of working- and middle-class wages went to the payment of rent, even in the newly built chawls.[468] Rents were on the rise: between 1913 and 1915 the average rent of one-room tenements had risen by more than 70 per cent.[469]

The First World War made the general economic relationship between tenants and landlords a critical one. Production growth in certain industries led to migration into Bombay City. As prices on staple goods rose, already strained working-class and lower-middle-class household budgets were on the verge of collapse. According to the records, disturbances in the poor quarters of Bombay City tipped the Government of India in favour of regulating rent levels.

The administration in Bombay feared widespread instability, and sought new rent regulating measures. Provisions were made under the Defence of India Act of 1915.[470] Under this ruling a landlord could not extract rent exceeding 10 rupees a month, save an additional fixed percentage each year in order to compensate for increased costs in repairs. When made into provincial legislation, two Rent Acts were passed.[471] They

[467] O.I.O.C. Bombay Proceedings Development Department of 1920. Letter no. 6 1920 Sharp to Duke 26 February 1920.
[468] Government of Bombay (1924) *Report of the Special Advisory Committee on the Industrial Housing Scheme*. Bombay.
[469] Mirams, 1916, 24.
[470] M.S.A. G.B. G.D. Compilation 1136 of 1920. Letter G.B. to E.S. Montagu 8 February 1918.
[471] Bombay Rent Act No I, Act No III of 1918; Bombay Rent Act No II Act no. VII of 1918.

were installed 'for the purpose of public safety', and cleared for the control and regulation of housing of labourers and artisans and their families.[472]

One Act was created in order to restrict the increase of rent in general in Bombay, the other as a continuation of attempts to restrict rent costs for labourers and artisans. These Acts were, in scope and character, related to the Rent Acts put in place in Britain at the same time. One major difference was that in the Bombay context there was no fixed and guiding 'standard of living', and administrators had neither then nor later any intention of calculating one.[473] The issue was debated within the legislative council. Indian members were split. Landlords felt that low rent levels went against their interest, while more reformist members called for even lower levels of rent. The issue, however, did not rouse any wider anti-colonial sentiments.

The establishment of new and concrete institutions enforced interventions into the social domain. Hence, a Rent Controller, a new function, was given significant powers under the Rent Act. The Rent Controller in Bombay City mapped Bombay into a grid covering all areas of the city. For inspection purposes Bombay was divided into seven wards. Each ward was divided into 82 sections. A Superintendent supervised each ward, and a ward clerk, in turn, supervised each section.[474] In fact, the Rent Controller had the powers of a civil court. He was to settle disputes between parties after hearing them out and could, in this process, demand the production of witnesses. There was no appeal against the Rent Controller's decisions. On his word, for example, premises that he found to be withheld from occupation for 'no good reason' could be confiscated by Government and rented out. In the first reading of the Bill it was suggested that a refusal from the landlord should carry three months' imprisonment. Geographically, the provisions under the Rent Act could be applied wherever the Government of Bombay deemed appropriate. In this way it came to constitute a means to confiscate property without liability.[475]

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[472] M.S.A. G.B. G.D. Compilation 1136 of 1918. G.B. J.D. Memorandum 17 February 1918.
[473] M.S.A. G.B. G.D. File no 1432 (iii) – (a) of 1925. Letter Collector and Rent Controller Bombay Suburban District 19 February 1924.
[474] M.S.A. G.B. G.D. Compilation 1136 of 1918. Municipal officer [n.s] to Controller of Prices letter [n.d].
[475] M.S.A. Proceedings of the Bombay Legislative Council. Desai, P.A. Proceedings of 30 July 1918.

The Acts were not initially debated among colonial officials. They were conceived as emergency measures, which would serve their purpose throughout the war. But as the war ended only a minority of colonial officials argued for the abolition of the Acts'; a majority wanted to see them kept. One of the main justifications for the Rent Acts was that they would serve as a non-coercive means to uphold stability in the city of Bombay. As former Municipal Commissioner Cadell put it, 'I have heard from the highest police authority in Bombay that the Rent Act has had a very good effect and more especially a sedative or soothing effect'.[476] The Acts could serve to buy the consent of the majority of the population, who would otherwise have to pay more than half of their earnings in rent. Accordingly, administrators found that the Acts 'were always political'.[477]

For Cadell and others within governing circles in Bombay, the way politics now expanded its reach into the social domain was a novelty with beneficial results. By reaching into society through designed housing interventions, the administration hoped to forestall public discontent, but also channel capacities within society towards more productive ends. Bio-political interventions such as housing policy could bring better, and perhaps more sustainable results than forceful interventions through the police or the military. With a principle of lassaiz-faire, this opportunity would have been lost to the administration.

5.5. Local responses to social interventions

On a general level all three cases described above point toward the ways in which social imperialism translated into the actual work of the colonial administration in the Bombay Presidency. The three cases show how the expanding bio-political scope of the colonial state formed and was introduced into Bombay. Moreover, as I suggested in the introduction to this chapter, these cases also indicate the decentralised level on which colonial state power began to intervene into colonial society during the time here under review. Detail provided by these cases exemplifies how newly designed interventions asserted themselves on the everyday level through projects of housing and rent

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[476] M.S.A. Proceedings of the Bombay Legislative Council. Cadell, R.R. Proceedings of 4 February 1918, 591.
[477] M.S.A. G.B. G.D. File no 1432 (iii) – (a) of 1925. Letter Controller of Rent Bombay Suburban Division 19 February 1925.

regulations, through the introduction of education for children in factories, or through detailed planning of movements in plague infected areas.

However, the chalking out of a widened area of state action and the making of 'the social' into a political entity in Bombay did not happen without response from individuals, sections and groups within colonial society. As it was politicised, the social domain became a space for various struggles, and in this section I will briefly address some of them. How these struggles formed and were fought out is outside the scope of this thesis. However, although I concentrate on narrating the birth of social imperialism, and how it translated into practises of government, I think it important to acknowledge the various ways in which interventions into the newly conceptualised social domain were resisted, or responded to, in the colonial context.

In this section I will categorise two forms of responses to the social interventions discussed above: spontaneous and mobilised. Although structurally restricted, both forms of responses did form in the Bombay Presidency during the period under review. Responses of the first category rarely evolved into wider protest on the part of local communities; occasional eruptions did not challenge colonial authority in any substantial way. These were weak responses in the sense that they lacked an organisational and ideological base. Spontaneous responses could be characterised as decentralised everyday friction, in opposition to decentralised everyday interventions.[478]

The second category formed as a broad amalgamation of various forms of mobilised discontent. These responses to social interventions were integrated into wider frameworks: both explicitly nationalist, as well as autonomous workers-politics. Mobilised responses also include instances of political action carried by single-issue-associations. This action crystallised around particular issues, rather than over wider areas of policy.

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[478] Haynes, D. and Prakash, G. (1991) 'Introduction: The Entanglement of Power and Resistance' in Haynes, D. and Prakash, G. (Eds.) *Contesting Power: Resistance and Everyday Social Relations in South Asia,*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1-22; Scott, J. C. (1985) *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

5.5.1 Spontaneous responses to social intervention

An example of the first category of spontaneous responses, or everyday friction, is illustrated with regard to Karachi during the plague epidemic, discussed above. In order to implement new and harsh plague measures, plague authorities visited a Khada fishing village in the Lyari area outside of Karachi City. During the visit of the authorities, rioting erupted in the village. The fishing village was small, with about 4000 to 6000 inhabitants. Although the area was infected by plague, the villagers would neither move into health camps nor go into local segregation.

I showed above how plague measures had been intrusive in Karachi, as well as in Poona and Bombay. Objections to the ways in which the administration carried out its programmes were made on several grounds, but a sense that the authorities were violating bodies, the domestic sphere, and religious sentiment, were central to Indian resentment. In Bombay, Hindu Brahmins refused to go into mixed hospitals where they feared pollution by lower-caste Hindus. Muslims as well as Hindus protested against the public examination of women by male doctors. Segregationist policies, based on the construction of almost inaccessible and separated health camps, encouraged families to hide infected relatives, rather than separate themselves from them for an unspecified duration of time. Outbursts of violence against plague measures were not infrequent.[479]

Yet in Karachi plague authorities saw local protests against plague interventions as ordinary law and order problems. When preparing to enter the Khada village in Lyari, the District Magistrate and President of the Plague Committee in Karachi, J. Sladen, foresaw trouble. 'There is among them', wrote Sladen, 'a considerable number of bad characters known to the Police'. Every year they were 'giving trouble' to the plague authorities, Sladen complained.[480]

In late April of 1898 villagers openly defied one of the representatives of the plague authorities who had come to inspect the village and forcefully remove plague-infected inhabitants. The inspection had then been called off, but Sladen insisted in carrying out

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[479] Arnold, 1993, 211-218.
[480] S.A. R.C.S. G.D. (Plague). Box 5749, file 1, volume 2 of 1899. Letter J.D. 1497 District Magistrate Karachi to Commissioner in Sind of 1899 4 May 1899.

inspections. On a later occasion he decided to call for assistance to the plague inspectors, for two hundred 'rank and file' of the Bombay Grenadiers. The soldiers were to have parts of the village cordoned off. In these parts of the village, Sladen argued, plague had been the worst, and here resided 'the most troublesome clan of the village'.

About three hundred village men gathered to resist the measure. Sladen ordered officer Swann, who was commanding the Grenadiers that day, to use force in order to carry out the containment of the village. Swann carried out these orders. He later wrote to Gilles, the Collector of Karachi, how proud he was of his soldiers.[481] Several villagers were severely injured by bayonets and rifle butts.

Representatives from the fishing village signed a petition to the Commissioner in Sind complaining about the treatment they received by visiting plague superintendents. 'We neither entertained the least idea of intentionally disobeying any reasonable order or of creating any disturbances or riot', the petitioners wrote. Plague officers, accompanied by 'military power', the petitioners ascertained, surrounded village houses, and 'immediately afterwards they began to rush in our huts and drag our children and females whoever came in their way'. Moreover, they used their bayonets 'freely', stabbing several villagers. The representatives of the village now called for an impartial enquiry into the incident.[482] The Acting Commissioner urged the collector of Karachi to send an officer to the village and convey the commissioner's response personally.[483] The message was read to the villagers; in it the commissioner wholly approved of the intervention. The villagers 'must obey the Sarkar's [lit. headman – here used for the Collector] orders and the Sarkar only wishes them well, as does the Commissioner', said the note.[484] Yet the population of the fishing village continued to refuse migrating freely to the medical huts created by the administration.

Going through the records one finds several cases of spontaneous responses to social interventions. Housing records tell of flight protests as petty landowners flee court

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[481] S.A. R.C.S. G.D. (Plague). Box 5749, file 1, volume 2 of 1899. Private letter Swann to Gilles 6 May 1899.
[482] S.A. R.C.S. G.D. (Plague). Box 5749, file 1, volume 2 of 1899. Petition Saleh Hussein et al. 4 May 1899.
[483] S.A. R.C.S. G.D. (Plague). Box 5749, file 1, volume 2 of 1899. Memo no. P-92 of 1899 Wingate 6 May 1899.
[484] S.A. R.C.S. G.D. (Plague). Box 5749, file 1, volume 2 of 1899. J.P.H [City Deputy Collector] to Saleh Hussein note [true translation] 6 May 1899.

procedures, when their land is to be coercively acquired.[485] The annual reports of government housing schemes show on a yearly basis the amount of money lost in the Revenue Department due to absconding tenants.[486] These protests often articulate resentment of perceived injustice or harm, rather than anti-colonial sentiment. They did not crystallise into systematic or organised forms of protest; they occurred on an occasional basis. However, as I will exemplify in the next section, organised responses to social interventions existed as well.

5.5.2 Mobilised responses to social intervention

The journey from the first category of spontaneous response, to the second category of mobilised struggle centred on everyday social interventions is a long one. I can only indicate certain tendencies of mobilisation in this work. Rajnarajan Chandavarkar, however, argues that this decentralised level of everyday life was important for the formation of workers' politics and political responses to British rule in Bombay. He has pronounced the 'neighbourhood' as a category for workers' mobilisation.[487] Access to formal political power in colonial Bombay was, of course, restricted to an exclusive sphere of colonial officials and local elites. This level saw few contributions from Indians before 1919, and it only gradually opened up for an indigenous elite contribution after the Government of India Act of 1919. Popular participation was in no way present.

Nonetheless, within actual unfolding interventions, mobilised responses did emerge. These responses took shape as elite ventures, or at least as elite mediated responses. As an example, I will refer to the formation of mobilised responses to housing and rent interventions in Bombay in the 1920s. The mobilisation included organised interests: chambers and associations for industrial and merchant interests; a Tenant Movement; a

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[485] O.I.O.C. Government of Bombay Administration Reports. *Annual Report of the Bombay Improvement Trust 1902*, 14-15.

[486] See: O.I.O.C. Government of Bombay Administration Reports. *Annual Reports of the Industrial Housing Scheme* for the years 1929-30 and 1939-40.

[487] Chandavarkar, R. (1991) 'Worker's Resistance and the Rationalization of Work in Bombay between the Wars', in Haynes, D. and Prakash, G. (Eds.) *Contesting Power: Resistance and Everyday Social Relations in South Asia*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 109-144

Landlords' Association. The arena for protest was the city itself, and the press, to a large extent.

At times, when considerations were made whether the Rent Acts should be abolished or extended, especially in 1919, 1924 and 1928, the tenant movement arranged public meetings in newly built chawls and elsewhere, passing resolutions and signing petitions. These meetings were often convened by social reform organisations such as Servants of India, or the Social Service League.[488] Workers from various locations came together in these meetings. Unions did take part in the mobilisation in its early form. Occasionally unlikely parties connected through protests: In 1919 the Bombay branch of the European Association, and more than 3,500 clerks in the Clerks' Union, found themselves on the same side arguing for the extension of the Rent Acts.[489]

Mill owners and merchants exercised more direct influence over the bureaucracy: high-placed administrators were always invited as guests at the Bombay Millowners Association's annual meeting.[490] Many prominent industrialists and landlords also acted inside political structures. They were members of the Legislative Council, they sat on committees and on – for example – the Advisory Board advising on the construction of working class housing in Bombay. The working classes, on the other hand, gained representation on the Board only after explicit requests.[491]

5.6. Conclusion

In this chapter I have exemplified and detailed how social imperialism translated into actual colonial policy in the Bombay Presidency during the period 1895-1925. Laying out details allowed me to pursue an argument about how the colonial state on the decentralised level of actual intervention, when addressing mundane questions of housing, sanitation and education, began to chalk out a bio-political space of action. The

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[488] M.S.A. G.B. G.D. File no 5518 (i) 1924; MSA. G.B. G.D. File 5518 (iii) 1928.
[489] M.S.A. G.B. G.D. Compilation 1135. Resolution by the Clerks Union, 16 August 1919; European Association Bombay Branch to G.B. letter 13 August 1919.
[490] See: Bombay Millowners' Association (1925) *Report of the Bombay Millowners' Association*, 5.
[491] M.S.A. G.B. P.W.D (D.D.). File 59 (i). Telegram K. Dwarkadas 12 May 1921.

details described above shows the ways in which new limits to market- and society based action were drawn in colonial Bombay.

I exemplified this process by pointing out how action against a plague epidemic in Karachi City set a limit to societal self-care, how productivist arguments for compulsory education in the Bombay Presidency set the limit for voluntarism, and how housing projects in Bombay City marked the limit to laissez-faire. These three cases show in different ways how interventions into society were designed and implemented in order to address threats to stability, risks of disruption to polity and markets, and obstacles to general industrial progress.

The first case described the ways in which the colonial administration reacted to an outbreak of bubonic plague in the port city of Karachi, 1896-1900. I showed that while the epidemic ran its course, authorities began to question their own knowledge about social conditions in the city, and also their ability to actually reach into society. I then pointed out how, in the face of social crises, the colonial administration resorted to stringent and coercive interventions in order to allegedly secure the city, rehabilitate trade and contain the disease. Society, the administration argued, could not heal itself; rather, the state had to mark the limit to self-care by implementing far-reaching interventions.

In the second case I investigated the debate whether or not the colonial administration ought to introduce free and compulsory primary education into the Presidency, in parallel with the introduction of free and compulsory primary education in Europe. I revisited the debate concerning education in the years 1905-25. I showed how the colonial administration initially was actively working against free and compulsory education on the grounds of the 'backwardness' or the 'low level of development' of Indians. According to colonial administrators in the Presidency it would mean an unnecessary political risk to introduce compulsion into primary education, as it might outrage those parents who would both lose out on their children's earning, as well as be levied a fine for keeping their children from school. However, by the end of the period under review the administration changed opinion after productivist arguments in favour of compulsion in education began to surface. The opinion that production could be increased if the workforce was better educated caught the attention of influential sections of administrators and business elites.

Finally, I investigated the conditions of housing in Bombay City between 1915 and 1925. I discussed how the question of housing, and in particular that of the lower middle-classes and the working classes, developed into a question of the highest priority among colonial officials. Poor housing, it was argued, had effects on both polity and economy: it could also lead to a slowing down of industrial progress, as well as to urban instability. Local officials now found markets failing to tend to the social costs of industrial capitalism, and they took active steps to address the situation through the establishment of a new department of Government – the Development Department. It designed plans to intervene into society in unprecedented ways, and it framed its projects with social language. The department had as its main objective to construct more than two hundred thousand new tenements. In the end, fewer than twenty thousand tenements were actually built.

The cases show how the administration began to further its reach into the social domain, and to act bio-politically through mundane questions of government. Yet, as I acknowledged in the final brief section of the chapter: the ways in which the social domain was turned political through the translation of social imperialism into colonial practice made it a space of struggles. I placed these forms of responses into two categories: spontaneous responses and mobilised responses.

The former, exemplified with unrest during the plague in Karachi, shows how villagers in the Lyari area resisted harsh plague measures through collective effort. Yet, I argued, this response was not based in ideology, and had no organisational base. It was not aimed at British rule *per se*.

I showed how the latter category of mobilised responses formed around the issue of housing in the city of Bombay. Public meetings were held where various sections of society were represented, various associations formed, and the responses took on an explicitly political character.

6. Conclusion: putting bio-politics into empire

This study into the birth of social imperialism, how knowledge and political thought operated within it, and how the local colonial administration in the Bombay Presidency applied it, has connected areas of research that often are kept separate. Within the confines of an historical period – 1895-1925 – I have discussed movements within British liberal political thought and within the history of British social science, and traced their influence over ideologies of the British Empire. I have studied the transforming of local realities in the Bombay Presidency, and how social imperialism translated into colonial social interventions. In conclusion I will now return to some of the main arguments of this work. I will then end by indicating some new angles of research that could follow from this study into the birth of social imperialism.

One has to tread cautiously with material from the archives. With hindsight, it is always tempting to read into the records too much of the present. I have made it clear throughout this work that I view colonial empire, imperialism, and local colonial practises as historical phenomena that should be studied as such. Decolonisation meant an end to empire, as we know it. Having said that, I think it important, on the basis of historical evidence, to expand discussions of the motivations, workings and features of empire and its underlying ideologies, not only for bringing new understanding to a particular period in the history of empire, but for shedding light on the many connections that do exist with what came after. As Mark Twain famously said, history does not repeat itself, but it rhymes.

By analysing the introduction of social concerns into imperialism, I have opened up for further probing the ways in which twentieth-century empire began to develop a bio-political dimension alongside its already defined economic and military cum geo-political motivations. From here, I will suggest, one could easily imagine further research into what motivations and features of socially sensitive empire, if any, found resonance within the new world of international organisations and domineering nation-states that took shape during the period following decolonisation.

The birth of twentieth-century social imperialism did not mark a definitive end to a particular era of British Empire, and the beginning of a new one. It should come as no surprise that the British Raj, while under the influence of social imperialism, never converted itself from a military-fiscal state into a state that systematically tended to the welfare of its subjects. As always in the long and diverse intellectual and political history of the empire, shifts were never clear-cut. Actors, institutions, practices and ideologies of the British Empire mixed, moved, and resurfaced throughout its entire existence. Social imperialism, as I have identified it here, built on what came before, so that views and practices co-existed within the imperial machinery; new concerns for conditions of life would develop alongside lingering ideas of racism and British supremacy.

Nonetheless, at any one period of the British Empire, certain tendencies of the shifting ideology that underpined empire stood out and found particular resonance within local colonial administrations, and thus came to shape the language and policy of those administrations. What I have analysed here – the introduction of social concerns into imperialism – make up one such instance in the history of empire.

It was, as we have seen, not new for the British to intervene into life on the Subcontinent and to elaborate interventions within a reformist intellectual framework. I have shown how liberalism enjoyed a privileged place in the history of reformist ideology within empire, and especially under the British Raj. Social imperialism thus formed part of a longer imperial reformist engagement in India, and it borrowed some of its internal components from that engagement.

Whether early British interventionism and reformist ideology had any actual affect on everyday realities on the Subcontinent is, however, a matter of dispute among historians, I have pointed out. In this work I have presented historical evidence of local ramifications of social imperialism, yet I have refrained from claiming that such interventions produced sustainable social change on the Subcontinent.

In chapter two I suggested that there are patterns to be categorised in how interventions were conceived and designed. I suggested that interventions under early British rule – that is, until the Indian Mutiny of 1857 – could best be characterised as aiming at moral reform, designed to transform the moral character of Indians. Yet as I pointed out,

although educational policy was elaborated, and campaigns against particular customs such as 'suttee' were implemented, they seem to have had only a marginal impact on the lives of Indians. Yet these interventions clearly reflected more than a fleeting colonial whim: they represented a mentality, and formed part of an early liberal reformist ideology brought to India by evangelical as well as utilitarian servants of the East India Company.

This phase, I argued, receded after the Indian Mutiny. It was replaced by what I have called revenue-enhancing interventions that were designed to increase the income of the consolidating colonial state. This shift could be explained by more than one factor, I argued. On the one hand, the British sensed that previous reformist interventions into Indian ways of life had caused resentment and discontent. Official rhetoric of that time indicated that fear of further unrest strengthened the British reluctance to continue moral reform interventions.

On the other hand, the shift towards revenue-enhancing interventions occurred at a time of intensified imperial competition among European powers. European chauvinism and racism fuelled ideas about a European right to govern over discrete places and peoples. The American Civil War caused disruptions within several agricultural markets, showing the weak spots in the structure of the world economy; simultaneously, technical innovations brought new intensity to industrial production. What Eric Hobsbawm has called the 'Age of Empire' was beginning to be felt in Asia and Africa.

However, I argued, by the early 1880s, British officials began to notice certain converging trends. Renewed resentment towards British rule was being channelled through modern forms of association. The Indian National Congress was perhaps the most elaborate platform from which critique of British policy was voiced. However, I pointed out, there were other forms of locally erupting unrest too. The mobilisation of nationalist and anti-British sentiment linked to a series of famines, outbreaks of epidemic diseases, and increased hardship among Indian urban populations.

A combination of calamities – natural and man-made – and new and productive ways to channel deep-felt dissatisfactions within colonial society built towards a real crisis in legitimacy for the colonial state. For the British, these experiences, I argued, ushered in a renewed interventionist rhetoric that allegedly aimed to preserve the lives of colonised

subjects. The new interventionist phase, I suggested, was a preamble to social imperialism. However, interventions forming within that period were not defined as 'social' by imperialists and local colonial administrators. They were designed to meet particular crises, rather than as attempts to create an approach to manage society in a holistic manner. It would take a couple more decades for local colonial administrators to begin to describe the measures they adopted to reach into society, through a language of social reform.

The rise of social imperialism during the first quarter of the twentieth century would prove innovative within sections of the doctrine of imperial thought, as well as within local colonial practice. What was distinctly new with the birth of social imperialism was the conceptualisation of the domain intervened into. I will return to this below, but the very notion of the social as a political entity formed during the period here under review.

Moreover, arguments and language used when framing interventions into the social domain were new. Social imperialism carried with it a re-coding of interventionist language that would reflect hopes of elaborating a rational, scientific, and secular approach towards the management of society. Operators within the imperial machinery thought that to invoke 'the social' in debates over why imperial rule was necessary in India would help provide legitimacy to the continuation of the imperial enterprise. Yet, as I have pointed out, the process of re-framing interventions as social, rather than moral, did not exclude moral motivations in imperialism and local colonial policy. Neither in Britain, nor in India, did the social turn in government imply a de-moralisation of society – as, for example, historian Gertrude Himmelfarb would have it. Religious sentiments, for example, would still inform how colonial administrators would motivate their work in India.

I discussed how this new interventionist ideology centred the state as a vehicle for reformist action. From both within and outside the imperial machinery, there were new demands for state action. As I have suggested, a wide range of previous assumptions regarding state-society relations were being reworked. Local colonial administrators found that the social turn implied a greater emphasis on the state, and on colonial administration, in carrying out interventions at the cost of society- or market-based

action. For them, innovations in social interventions could promote stability while being framed by a progressive language.

Social imperialism as an ideology that would inform British imperialists, as well as local colonial administrators, formed within a particular context; the turn of the twentieth century was a time of great intellectual and material change in Britain, as well as in India. For imperialists, it was a time riddled with contradictions difficult to wish away. Great pressures were felt on everyday livelihoods all over an expanding British Empire, while technical advance and political doctrine underpinned visions of a less unequal society. Radical intellectual movements in Britain and social movements in India called for new ways of conceptualising state-society relations, and although evoked within very different political contexts, these movements challenged the credibility of the ways in which imperial and domestic authorities met and dealt with the needs of transforming societies.

I have shown that London by the turn of the twentieth century was at the centre of a radical reformulation of ideas concerning the obligation of the state to tend to the side effects of industrial capitalism, while still catering for the future progress of modern society. In chapters three and four I discussed how two developing movements converged at this point: that of a newly formulated social liberalism and that of consolidating British sociology. I showed how these two movements had a lot in common, and that they came to reinforce each other. People and ideas moved freely between social liberal and sociological camps. The universal aspirations of these two moments helped create a perception among sections of British thinkers, politicians and colonial administrators that there existed a shared experience within emerging modern industrial societies of the British Empire. This, in return, speeded up the movement of new political and sociological ideas between Britain and industrialising India.

I devoted parts of chapters three and four to show how during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries it seemed evident to liberals – of whom many actively engaged in debates in sociology – and also to other British radicals such as the Fabians and certain strands of socialists, that a reformulated approach of government was needed in order to further the orderly development of industrial society. British radicals began to elaborate an intellectual framework where the state and political power were given central roles in the management of society. Through their labours they came up with a

new object of government, and this was the most radical shift emanating from that eclectic intellectual London-milieu I suggested: the conceptualisation and politicisation of a new terrain of human existence called 'the social'.

In order to better understand and analyse the intensified scientific and political interest in the social, I placed it in a wider analytical framework provided by Michel Foucault. As chapter one makes clear, my writing on the growing social concern in turn of the twentieth-century radical liberal thought and its impact on imperialism and local colonial government in Bombay has been influenced by his work on bio-politics. In my first chapter I described Foucault's approach to the ways in which tending to conditions of life and the welfare of populations was linked to the rise of liberalism and liberal forms of government.

According to Foucault, for early liberals, utmost economy in statecraft – that is, the most balanced utilisation of coercion in government – was imperative. The most economic mode of government for liberals, argued Foucault, would thus be people governing themselves. Yet a self-governing people had to be morally and materially fit in order to successfully exercise their sovereignty, according to contemporary liberals. Subsequently, liberals came to rely on interventions into the social domain and conditions of life, 'bio-politics' in Foucault's vocabulary, in order to develop the capacity of the governed. That is, the ability to tend to the moral and material condition of peoples emerged as a feature of good government in liberalism.

For Foucault, bio-politics was not necessarily monopolised by the state, but his assertions resonate well with the framing of new liberal ideas regarding the social obligation of the state that emerged around the turn of the twentieth century. I have pointed out that for early twentieth-century liberals, there were limits to the effectiveness with which societies and markets could avert the side effects of industrial society, and guide it towards future progress. For social liberals, charity or laissez-faire-based approaches were not only unable to cope with the many contradictions emerging within modern societies, they sometimes helped to produce them. Social liberals now looked in the direction of the state for more comprehensive action, and for moral and financial support – yet not for total or complete policy.

Chapters three and five make clear that the demands on the state, and the state's response to those demands, were obviously differently framed in colonial Bombay, compared with how they were framed in Britain. In Bombay, administrators argued that colonial society lacked the capacity to tend to itself by means of charity, initially urging employers of larger labour forces to take their responsibility by looking after the welfare of their employees. But as I have shown, new demands on social interventions were increasingly placed at the level of the state during the period I have been revisiting. These new demands were voiced by imperialists within the imperial machinery, as well as by an array of local interests in Bombay – industrialists, unionists and others.

In order to argue for more comprehensive state action within 'the social', however, I pointed out, liberals needed to come up with ideas of what the social domain in fact was. The social, I have suggested, was described as a dimensions of life that was somehow separate, yet contingent of, the economy and polity. In political terms, these aspects of life often proved to be technical and related to the everyday: they raised issues of housing, leisure, of education, of sanitation and health. Science, philosophy, and the arts invited much broader understandings of the social.

Debates referencing this social domain thus ranged from abstract views on the future evolution of industrial society, to exact estimations of various indicators of overcrowding, nutrition and household budgets for various sections of society. Previously detached aspects of life, I have argued, were now being linked and placed under the regulatory powers of the state. There seemed to exist, though, I suggested, a common notion of the capacity of these aspects of life to mobilise forces, causing great upheaval, as well as steady progress for society, economy and polity.

Clearly, the social domain was linked to the aspirations and consequences of modern life. The social was, however, not always evoked as being explicitly modern in itself – many sociologists studied the evolution of 'social' issues, problems and facts over time, yet the modern – or the contemporary – was always kept in the picture for comparison, as if what was actually studied were not the social problems or facts in themselves, but their dormant capacity to turn themselves into modern forms.

Modern society was thus always present as the final stage to any social development trajectory; it embodied the present stage of evolution, and, as such, it was

conceptualised as being universally applicable; to twentieth-century liberals and other radicals, the spread of modern industrial society did not end at the shores of Britain. As such the emergence of the modern industrial society outside of Britain created for social liberals a sense of we-ness, of a shared experience that connected metropolitan and colonial society. Yet since the British had already lived that experience for decades, they thought of themselves as well-equipped to guide India through its perils.

I have shown that to social liberal imperialists, what carried the modern industrial society around the world was not really clear. The British Empire might be a vector, or, argued some within the broad liberal movement, an instigator that would by the touch of British industriousness and civilisation set free progressive forces internal to every society and civilisation. For others, it was capitalism that expanded outward from its British core; still, some put their faith in Christianity as a transforming force in society.

Nonetheless, I have argued, it seemed evident to early twentieth-century liberals that a reformulated approach of government was needed in order to avoid further strains on modern industrial society, wherever it would emerge. These liberals began to elaborate an intellectual framework where the state and political power was given a much more central role in the management of society. Those who argued for a more pronounced social concern of the state shared a conviction that individualistically oriented political thought proved unable to deal with the many new problems thrown up by industrial society. As the social became politicised, the role of state action within society was reassessed and reformulated in wide liberal circles, to the extent that early twentieth-century liberals – contrary to their liberal tradition – saw a need to regulate the social, and reduce the influence of laissez-faire.

I have shown how the reformulated political language that framed these new liberal demands for state action inspired liberal imperialists to include a social component in their ideas about the role of projected imperial power in industrialising India. Liberal imperialists like H.L. Samuel now suggested that it was similar concerns making them social reformers domestically that led them to argue for the continuation of empire abroad.

Yet in order to advance social concerns of domestic politics and colonial administration the social domain had to be made known, to be studied for its internal dynamics and

unknown features. Sociology emerged at this time as a "science of society". I pointed out how sociology seemed attractive to domestic British politicians and local colonial officials alike as they thought it would help them – within different contexts – to decode the social through reasoned inquiry.

Already from the outset, as I showed in chapter four, there was a rift among sociologists in Britain over whether their discipline was primarily to help advance concrete political and administrative solutions to social problems, or whether it should produce more abstract discussions on social evolution and related topics. I used debates within the newly formed Sociological Society in London to show the scope of those debates.

Now, for those within the sociologist community that suggested sociology as a means for advancing political arguments of social reform, sociology was a mere tool, an application of a method through which the many problems in society could be indentified and revealed. For those sociologists, the freedom of social science lay not in its independence from governmental interference, but in the truth it spoke. In the colonial context, I pointed out, science, and in extension social science, had always been measured by its administrative utility.

For social imperialists, sociology provided several advantages when linked to political power: it helped bring legitimacy to state action, and it brought to politics promises of certainty in dealings with society and life. For colonial administrators this was a welcomed development. While social scientists asked questions concerning what characterised life in industrial towns and how these new realities could be studied, predicted and compared, domestic bureaucrats and colonial officials asked questions concerning what were the effects on market and polity of the perceived deterioration in modern industrial society.

I have shown the extent to which sociology influenced colonial administrators in the Bombay Presidency. Detailed social surveys by Charles Booth, or Seebohm Rowntree were held up as examples also in colonial Bombay; I showed how their work influenced Harold Hart Mann, who would later move to Bombay for work in the colonial administration. The sociological influence on colonial government, however, could best be understood by the ways in which the colonial administration of the Presidency attempted to officially introduce sociology as a research subject in colonial Bombay.

By way of a detailed discussion on the establishment of a School of Economics and Sociology at the University of Bombay, I highlighted the growing demand for the discipline of sociology among colonial officials. I showed how colonial administrators were highly active in planning for the new research School. They hoped that a new research facility would bring new light to the circumstances that they found themselves in the middle of – the implications of which they could not clearly make out.

However, while the University of Bombay finally recruited the well-known Professor Patrick Geddes, who I showed had been an active voice in the forming of sociology in Britain, his sociology did not fit the colonial boot. Colonial administrators and local business elites looked for a practical and applied sociology that could generate data of contemporary social conditions. Geddes was marginalised and criticised for his abstract sociology. Nonetheless, I showed that sociology – in its applied form – clearly influenced the administration in colonial Bombay. Social surveys helped delineate and explore the social domain. I argued that sociology influenced local colonial administrators in a very specific way: it developed as a technology of government, which revealed the social in its double role as a resource to develop and a source of discontent.

While chapters three and four discussed political thought and knowledge in social imperialism, and how they related to the Bombay Presidency, in chapter five I detailed exactly how social imperialism translated into actual colonial social interventions in the Bombay Presidency during the period 1895-1925. Providing details enabled me to narrate how the colonial state on the decentralised level of actual intervention – when addressing mundane questions of housing, sanitation and education – began to chalk out a bio-political space of action. Thus, I described the ways in which new limits to market- and society based action were drawn in colonial Bombay. The cases I discussed concerned how action against a plague epidemic in Karachi City set a limit to societal self-care, how productivist arguments for compulsory education in the Bombay Presidency set the limit for voluntarism, and how housing projects in Bombay City showed the limitations of laissez-faire.

The cases show in concrete ways how the administration began to further its reach into the social domain. They show details of how the social formed as a space of

legitimating colonial policy, as well as a space of contestation of local interventions. I showed how local colonial officials engaged certain calculations concerning benefits and drawbacks when furthering the reach of the state into the social domain. Yet, to expand the bio-political scope of the local colonial administration was a slow process covering decades. While the stability of the working-classes and middle-classes werer important factors in colonial housing policy, in the case of education for example, it was productivist motives that furthered the social agenda. The rise of Japan, and the First World War proved to lcoal business and colonial officials the importance of having a basically educated labour force. Consequently, the idea of free and compulsory education became anchored within the colonial administration.

However, in chapter three I argued, that there were also more refined arguments to expand the bio-political scope in imperialism: in the radicalised political climate in India, tending to social conditions of the subject population could serve as a more sustainable mode of government for local colonial administrations than the use of force. For a liberal like E.S. Montagu, a bio-political approach brought more legitimacy, as well as efficiency, to the ways in which the colonial state dealt with Indian populations. For him, and twentieth-century liberals like him, to repress unrest would only produce a fiercer backlash. He attached legitimacy to the claims but not to the methods of Indian revolutionaries when suggesting that the effort of the British administration must be to win the extremists over by becoming a better social reformer than the revolutionaries set themselves up to be.

Yet, as I acknowledged in the final brief section of chapter five, the ways in which the social domain was turned political through the translation of social imperialism into colonial practice made it a space of struggles and responses. I placed these forms of responses into two categories: spontaneous responses and mobilised responses. While the former category shows local populations' suspicion towards British official intent, it was not further based in ideology. The latter form of response, however, was political in a traditional way: it relied on organisation and political consciousness. The colonial administration was anxious of both forms of response, and it was especially anxious that they would conflate.

6.1. Further implications of the study

Although the topic of this study has led me to discuss what at a first glance might seem disparate areas of research, I have tried to keep the work concise. Consequently, there are questions that I acknowledge as important in relation to the birth of social imperialism, but have had to leave out for the sake of consistency. Below, I intend to outline a discussion with three interlinked components that build on the groundwork laid in this thesis but which I did not pursue in this work. I hope the discussion might provide ideas for future research into the motivations, effects, and legacies of social imperialism.

In this study I have pointed out that social concerns were introduced into imperialism at a time when the British Raj was in question. Assertive Indian nationalism broadened its base by penetrating new layers of colonial society, and other forms of discontent continued to find an outlet through a wide range of protests and eruptive unrest. Moreover, as I have pointed out, critique of previous policies of the Raj was voiced from within the imperial machinery too. New ideas concerning how the colonial administration would govern India more effectively were, as I have shown, developing with an acknowledgment of past administrations' inactivity. Yet those new approaches formulated within the colonial state did not suppose the end of the British Raj; rather, they built on the calculation of the indefinite perpetuation of British rule over India. Consequently, I think it important to further study historically what extent social imperialism formed as a self-reproductive force of empire.

I have shown how imperialists in Britain and local colonial administrators in Bombay, nourished hopes that social imperialism, when translated into local policy, would break with previous policy and produce the stability and legitimacy needed for empire to carry on during the twentieth century. Imperialists hoped that addressing areas of everyday concern of Indians would reduce general discontent, make basic presumptions of nationalist and extremist mobilisation superfluous and, at the same time, strengthen the legitimacy of the colonial state. Similar strategies seem to have been elaborated elsewhere at a later point – for example in Calcutta, and also in urban Kenya in the early 1940s, where A.E. Mirams carried out work.

Intriguingly, however, although those people advancing social concerns in imperial thought and practice might never have intended to reduce the embeddedness of imperial power within the everyday lives of Indians they seem implicitly to have played into the long game of decolonisation. Clearly, the ways in which the social domain was included into politics during the first quarter of the twentieth century opened up new prospects for a variety of local interests to articulate themselves politically.

Indeed, the new, complex, and often deteriorating everyday realities of industrial areas in British India did not only force local colonial officials or British liberal imperialists to re-frame policies of colonial intervention into society, they fed into a wide range of indigenous political aspirations. Social experiences of modern industrial society translated into political mobilisation in India and elsewhere in unprecedented ways. The idea that discontent over social realities and conditions of life could crystallise into political consciousness was partly a product of the very invention of the social as a political entity.

In Bombay, as I have mentioned, workers' politics formed around everyday issues of housing and sanitation, as did various other political expressions, including nationalist ones. This is an intriguing aspect of the rise of the social as a political entity not only in Europe, but in the colonial context; a politicised social domain emerged as an unequal discursive space shared by imperialists and those opposing empire. Colonial administrations in industrialising India and their discontents often shared the same social language – they utilised the same forms of classification of social entities, they studied the social through the same sociological methods, and they viewed everyday social issues as symbolic sites of political mobilisation. Curiously, then, the social formed a core in a critique of empire, as well as in attempts to prolong imperial rule over discreet peoples.

Fredrick Cooper has discussed this contradictory development in interesting ways with reference to labour questions in post-Second World War French West Africa. He suggests that French authorities felt an urgent need to elaborate new colonial approaches of government in the face of increased political mobilisation among urban workers.[492] For Cooper neither the newly organised labour forces in West African cities or French colonial officials intended for everyday social discontent to become a negotiation over

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[492] Cooper, 2005, 206.

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colonial rule – which, in fact, was how the situation would later turn out. For Cooper it is the ways in which organised labour and colonial officials interplayed within the 'labour question' that would, unintended one might add, help establish the conditions for decolonisation.

Indeed, (yet at an earlier point and in the context of British India) it seems likely that many of those engaged in criticising the past policy of the Raj and who helped turn social conditions political almost three decades before the events described by Cooper, simply saw it as putting legitimate demands before the state, rather than demanding an end to British occupation. Nonetheless, the politicisation of the social served as a strategy of government simultaneously as it empowered people everywhere in the industrialising world and brought new arguments to anti-colonial struggles.

Further studies into the ways in which the social emerged as a shared discursive space, and how it was appropriated by different and opposing interests, would help elucidate the historical centrality of early social politics, not only in Europe, but also elsewhere in empire in the beginning of the twentieth century. It would be a multifaceted topic that embodies questions concerning the ways in which imperial policy and the colonial state, never a monolith, carried the seeds of their own undoing. Studies of this kind would tell of how new social-political frameworks that were elaborated by thinkers and high placed officials, were appropriated by local protest leaders within colonial society, and adapted by lower rung colonial administrations across various contexts, creating a new situation where new forms of politics seemed plausible. Yet that would be a story best told within narrow historical periodisation.

Further studies into the globalisation of social politics under empire could, however, also advance discussions on a conceptual level that would be fruitful for the understanding of the present. On the basis of what has been discussed in this thesis, and in addition to what was mentioned above, it seems like social conditions of life, at this time, emerged as a defining space for questions of sovereignty of discrete peoples outside metropolitan countries. In other words, conditions of life – levels of poverty, ill health and so forth – reflected claims to, and the denying of, self-government.

For nineteenth- and early twentieth-century imperialists, as I have shown, political freedom was always qualified. During the nineteenth century moral and civilisational

advance made up the qualification mark. It was, allegedly, the moral character and customs of people encountered by the British through military conquest, trade and occupation, which made up the defining aspect of sovereignty. Correspondingly, the difference of indigenous ways of life legitimised the British denial of local capacity for self-government. Barbarians, nineteenth-century imperialists argued, could be educated into civilised ways, and would then graduate for full independence.

It looks a likely hypothesis, however, that the social – as it was evoked within liberal imperial thought by the turn of the twentieth century – began to overtake moral character as the litmus test for perceived capacity for independence. In other words, arguments for denying sovereignty of discrete peoples would be framed in social, rather than moral terms. I have argued that influential sections of twentieth-century imperialists suggested that by injecting into colonial society a modern industrialism that would enable welfare on unprecedented levels, imperial power might sculpture colonial people capable of self-government. Yet the sense of we-ness that began to emerge as modern industrial society actually did expand would always come with the disclaimer that colonial administration must continue, if only to guide India through new forms of social hardship it had only just begun to experience.

Moreover, according to twentieth-century liberal imperialists like E.S. Montagu, social welfare was a prerequisite for political independence. Political freedom would never take root in disease-ridden neighbourhoods among the illiterate and poor, who lived their lives as pendants to machines, they argued. If claims to political freedom were anyhow articulated under such circumstances, there would be no one to exercise it in responsible ways: people living under poor conditions were not disposed to take full advantage of their independence.

This was obviously one of Foucault's presumptions when discussing liberal forms of government: for liberals of both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, bio-political interventions were understood as necessary as long as particular populations were morally or materially unqualified to govern themselves. For liberal imperialists during the period here under review, the 'benevolent despotism' of the British Empire would temporarily see colonised populations through to welfare; empire would see them through to true sovereignty. Yet, in the case of twentieth-century liberal writings on the British Empire as we have seen, the tail end of that developmental journey towards

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sovereignty was still as it had been during the nineteenth century – always unspecified and deferred for an undefined future. For twentieth-century liberal imperialists there existed, as it were, a continuing need for imperial intervention into everyday realities within the realm of the empire.

Foucault's writing is unclear on how nineteenth-century liberal thinkers would conceptualise the ways in which people would be assessed for self-government. In the context of empire, the subjugation of discrete peoples under the 'benevolent despotism' of empire relied on a set of fluid qualifying assumptions. However, during the early twentieth century, as this study illustrates, the imperial test of whether a discrete people would qualify as sovereign, was cloaked in the language of rationalism and underpinned by a methodology of social sciences. Only to a lesser degree did it refer to the cultural coding of nineteenth-century philosophy, history and literature.[493]

By the turn of the twentieth century colonial administrators could simply seize upon urban neighbourhoods to collect sociological and economic data of household budgets, overcrowding, literacy levels, child mortality, and so forth, and from that compiled data they would read out their justification, and perhaps motivation, for continuing colonial intervention.

A further analysis of the turn towards social in imperialism as a basis for denying sovereignty and legitimise external bio-political interventions might prove useful as it provides a more tangible basis for comparison between past and present forms of interventionism. The shift discussed in this thesis might prove helpful to scholars who probe today's world for the legacies of the British Empire.

Mark Duffield, for example, has looked into how imperial techniques were absorbed and reworked by new forms of internationalised development and security regimes, and by the expansive national interests of domineering nation-states. Although the moment of decolonisation produced a world of formally equal nation-states, suggests Duffield, populations inhabiting this world were simultaneously split into those perceived as developed with full capability of self-government, and those perceived as underdeveloped thus producing ineffective states. For external powers to aid underdeveloped populations and their states would initially be framed in terms of

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[493] Said, E. W. (1993) *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Knopf.

solidarity, Duffield writes. Now however, underdeveloped populations in ineffective states are viewed as risks: they might erupt violently, turn radical, or migrate. To fix conditions of life through continuing external bio-political interventions becomes necessary in order to discourage any such tendencies. On a global level, Duffield argues, 'territorial sovereignty remains, sovereignty over life within ineffective states is now internationalized'.[494]

Duffield effectively shows the connection between imperial and post-imperial justifications for breaching sovereignty over life. In order to analytically capture this continuing process of how external powers define and deny sovereignty, and justify bio-political interventions, Duffield evokes the notion of a shifting and 'negotiated sovereign frontier'. The sovereign frontier, consequently, is not simply drawn as a boundary between nation-states; rather, it is drawn between peoples, who are either perceived as capable or incapable of self-government. Over various epochs writes Duffield, the sovereign frontier has been consolidated, negotiated, and reconsolidated among and within discrete peoples and places so that '[c]olonization, decolonization, and today renewed interventionism can be interpreted as the expansion, contradiction, and re-expansion of the West's external sovereign frontier'.[495]

Duffield's account is convincing and arresting, yet, it has a weak spot. In order to establish the location of the sovereign frontier over time, he relies on how the binary opposition of barbarity/civilisation has been framed within liberal discourses within an unspecified West. This makes it difficult to compare liberal interventionism on either side of decolonisation because the rhetoric surrounding external bio-political intervention has changed dramatically over the last two hundred years. In order to follow these shifts Duffield traces how cultural representations reflected in liberal thought as structuring oppositional categories change over time. This leads him to suggest that where John Stuart Mill would have talked about the imperial responsibility to, as it were, educate the savage, today's liberals talk about educating failing or fragile states. For Duffield, such a change in rhetoric figures signify the continuing update of discourse on the basis of evolving cultural representations, rather than a full-blown discursive disjuncture.

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[494] Duffield, 2007, 225.
[495] Ibid., 232.

But it is not entirely clear why nineteenth-century liberal views on the moral and civilisational character of a particular people would now simply correspond to twentieth-century liberal views of the states that govern them. So, although he initially successfully detaches the qualification for sovereignty from its territorial and geo-political moorings, and places it amongst people, Duffield still falls back on the state as the carrier of sovereignty. It is the sovereignty of states, although not in a territorial sense, but over life, that is continuously infringed upon in Duffield's account. However, it is not evident, I believe, that ideologies of liberal interventionism have shed their social component in order to become an exclusively political doctrine. Externalised interventionism is still interested in fixing up people.

A much more tangible approach in detecting the current location of the external sovereign frontier and how it connects back to empire, would be to look at how social conditions of people were framed as the privileged space defining their sovereignty on either side of decolonisation. Clearly, poor social conditions have motivated external bio-political intervention into everyday life under empire, as I have shown here, and surely it has continued to do so in the world that came after. At various locations in the world previously covered by the British Empire, sectors like those discussed here – education, housing, and sanitation – remain practically sustained by non-indigenous actors. They are likely to remain so until a time when local populations are perceived capable of looking after their own affairs. The language of justification might be very different, and the aim, and techniques might differ, but the idea that the social domain is key to progress and stability still remains.

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