

THE EMERGENCE OF NEO-FEUDALISM IN
PAKISTAN: THE CASE OF ISLAMABAD AND
KARACHI



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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this thesis entitled: “**The Emergence of Neo-Feudalism in Pakistan: The Case of Islamabad and Karachi.**” submitted by Ms. Huda is accepted in its present form by the Department of Development Studies, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Islamabad as satisfying the requirements for partial fulfillment of the degree in Master of Philosophy in Development Studies.

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Author's Declaration

I **Huda Hussain Bhurgri** hereby state that my MPhil thesis titled The Emergence of Neo-Feudalism in Pakistan: The Case of Islamabad and Karachi is my own work and has not been submitted previously by me for taking any degree from Pakistan Institute of Development Economics or anywhere else in the country/world.

At any time if my statement is found to be incorrect even after my Graduation the university has the right to withdraw my MPhil degree.

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DEDICATION

The most revolutionary thing one can do is always to proclaim loudly what is happening.

-Rosa Luxemburg

I dedicate this dissertation to the woman who gave birth to me and those women who guided my conscience. This dissertation would not have been possible without them.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I was raised in a village and grew up in a feudal family. I have seen the power hierarchies, patriarchy and exploitation happening in the rural areas. However, when I moved to cities and got access to education and developed critical consciousness about class struggle in Pakistan, it dawned on me that we have been neglecting how a new kind of Feudalism is prevailing in urban hinterlands of Pakistan through exploitation and dispossession of people belonging to working-class. Therefore, this dissertation is a humble attempt to inquire about those new hierarchies and increasing inequalities.

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ABSTRACT

Globally, Neo-feudalism is emerging as a new form of domination in which an emerging class of nobles influence economic and government policies under the patronage of state institutions. The concept of Neo-feudalism has been widely discussed in international academic discourse. However, there is not enough empirical data available on Neo-feudalism explaining the political economy of Pakistan. This dissertation attempts to study real-estate development and expansion of housing societies in Pakistan as a Neo-feudal phenomenon that has facilitated the emerging class of real estate mafias and land grabbers acquiring land belonging to the indigenous and working-class communities. The data for this paper is collected through an extensive review of the literature and semi-structured interviews with economists, urban planners, policymakers, lawyers and academics. The thematic analysis of interviews suggests that Pakistan's real state overlords operate through disintegrated sovereignty, patron-client relationship with state institutions, rent-seeking, and illegal occupation of land in the hinterlands to accumulate windfall profits. While taking the case study Bahria Town Karachi, the thesis presents the structures and dynamics of Neo-Feudalism that includes parcelized sovereignty, political patronage, legalized land grabbing, coercive force and spatial inequalities through which the nexus of real-state mafia, military-owned corporations, political institutions and judiciary sponsor forced displacement and exploitation of indigenous communities. The recommendation section calls for immediate action by the state to protect the property rights, livelihood and ecology of local people through inclusive and people-centric policies concerning housing, land acquisition and urban planning.

Keywords: Neo-feudalism, Political Economy, Real Estate, Rent-Seeking, Parcelized Sovereignty, Dispossession

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

The political economy of Pakistan has always been an area of academic debate and inquiry. Some academics would define Pakistan as 'semi-industrialist' (Parveen and Dasti 2014), 'semi-capitalist' (Parveen and Dasti 2014) 'rentier' or 'neo-feudal' state (Hussain, et al. 2019). This academic paradox suggests that Pakistan's socio-political and economic structures have always been difficult to comprehend because they are neither capitalist in nature nor feudal in their entirety. Additionally, due to Pakistan's rent-seeking policies, a new class of nobles is emerging that comprises the real estate mafia, private developers, owners of the banking sector, politicians and military-led enterprises. The emergence of this class has also contributed to increase inequalities since these economic groups have been manipulating the state power to exploit resources such as land, minerals and capital through patron-client relationship and rent-seeking policies.

Moreover, while looking at growing income and spatial inequalities in the country and around the globe, it is pertinent to ask that is capitalism the best way to define current economic structures? Land privatization, acquisition of land through coercive and brute force, accumulation of wealth through artificial speculations, and rent-seeking has given birth to a new political economy and mode of production, which is neo-feudal.

In international academic discourse, Neo-feudalism has been defined as a new class of nobles and lords who have attained the same powers as nobles during pre-capitalist societies of England and the Sub-continent (Dean 2020). This new landed elite acquires land not to produce any commodity but to hoard money through rents through real estate business.

Speaking of land entitlements in Pakistan, many agricultural lands have been sold to commercial housing schemes such as Bahria Town and Defence Housing Authority in the past few years. These commercial housing schemes generate revenue through rents hoarded in the hands of few and do not circulate as they would in a capitalist mode of production. Moreover, these gated housing schemes located in the outskirts of cities create a neo-feudalistic spatiality: protected, often lively centres surrounded by agriculture and desolate hinterlands. Such commercial housing schemes create a split between 'town and country, a division between what is secured and endangered, who is prosperous and desperate'(Jodi Dean 2020).

The neo-feudal class of nobles have negatively impacted the survival and livelihood of the poor in the country. The socio-economic scenario of Pakistan is stark for people belonging to indigenous communities. The poor are taxed heavily and yet not given social protection of any kind, such as affordable housing, education, and health care facilities at their disposal. Secondly, the indigenous communities who own land for several communities have been displaced by the state machinery favouring housing project owners. The state has done massive land privatization on cheaper rates to real estate owners who have become neo-feudals, owning land as extensive as Manhattan, New York. The land privatization of this scale is neither officially planned nor discussed in consultation with people who own the land.

Based on the above discussion, this thesis attempts to define the concepts such as new nobility and neo-feudalism by focusing on land entitlements given to elites in urban centres through policies and laws that protect the rich and exclude the poor.

1.2. Statement of The Problem

The literature on Pakistan's political economy in recent years has not provided a comprehensive analysis of new emerging groups who have earned windfall profits through a patronage-based relationship with state institutions and rent-seeking strategies. One of those groups comprises

real estate developers who have assembled large scale landholdings in the hinterlands of Karachi and Islamabad by manipulating state power and coercive force. Therefore, this dissertation has attempted to analyse neo-feudalism and ‘new nobility’ within the context of Pakistan. Conceptualising these two concepts will also help understand the political and economic relationship between state institutions and new nobility. It will provide a comprehensive framework to see the nexus between new emerging classes, state institutions, and people affected through displacements and dispossession.

Summing up all the above-stated ideas subsequently brings us to the main thesis topic i.e.

‘The Emergence of Neo-feudalism in Pakistan: Case Study of Karachi & Islamabad’

1.3. Explanation of The Key Concepts

1.3.1. Neo-Feudalism

Neo-feudalism has emerged as a concept in the past decade as a new socio-political and economic order within contemporary Capitalism, which has tendencies of Medieval Feudalism such as class inequality, imbalance of power, absence of upward class mobility and exploitation of working-class by pushing working-class and indigenous population into mass serfdom (Dean, 2014). In this thesis, this concept is used to define the political economy of Pakistan, which is dominated by the ‘neo-feudal class’ comprising urban planners, owners of commercial housing schemes, and real-estate giants. This class operates with state institutions by creating networks with critical decision-makers and political parties to influence policies related to land entitlements in their favour.

1.3.2. The New Nobility

Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines the term 'nobility' as a group of people who possess the highest social ranks in society¹. The term 'New Nobility' is derived from the word 'Nobility', which means a new emerging class of nobles or neo-feudals. The concept of 'New Nobility' or 'New Lords' is one of the significant characteristics of a 'Neo-Feudal' order (Dean, 2014). This term is used for the individuals who build linkages with the ruling oligarchy to influence critical policies for their vested interests. This concept will be further discussed in this dissertation to understand the intersection between real estate developers and state institutions.

1.3.3. Capitalism

Capitalism is an economic system that promotes private ownership of the means of production. Under the capitalist mode of production, goods and services are manufactured massively as per the demand and supply determined by the free market (Jahan & Mehmud, 2015)². The characteristics of a capitalist economy comprise ownership of private property, accumulation of capital, wage labour, voluntary exchange, a price system, and competitive markets. In this dissertation, the concept of Capitalism is used to analyse the power relations between the wealthy elite and the working class. Moreover, in this dissertation, Capitalism will also be used for comparative analysis of Neo-feudalism in the context of Pakistan.

1.3.4. Forced Displacement

Forced displacement is defined as an involuntary and coerced movement of people from their home or region³. This term is used in this dissertation to explain the displacement of

¹ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/>

² <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2015/06/pdf/basics.pdf>

³ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/forced-displacement#3>

communities living in different villages located at Malir District in Sindh (which Bahria Town Karachi has occupied) and Islamabad.

1.3.5. Dispossession

Athena Athanasiou and Judith Butler define Dispossession as “*processes and ideologies by which persons are disowned and abjected by normative and normalising powers that define cultural intelligibility, and that regulate the distribution of vulnerability: loss of land and community; ownership of one’s living body by another person, as in histories of slavery; subjection to military, imperial, and economic violence; poverty, securitarian regimes, biopolitical subjectivation, liberal possessive individualism, neoliberal governmentality, and precaritization*” (Athanasiou & Butler, 2013). In this dissertation, this term will be used to explain the dispossession of land, identity and livelihood Bahria Town Karachi & Islamabad affectees.

1.3.6. Land Use

Oxford Dictionary defines Land Use as “*the purpose for which an area of land is being used, such as residential, agricultural, commercial, retail, or industrial*”⁴. This concept will be discussed in this dissertation to analyse the land use policies in Pakistan and how these land entitlement policies are affecting the housing needs of the working class in urban centres of Pakistan.

1.3.7. Rent-Seeking

Johann Graf Lambsdorff defines rent-seeking as “various forms of seeking preferential treatment by public decision-makers, for example, competitive lobbying and corruption. Based on welfare economics, this approach provides a normative framework to determine what policy

⁴ <https://www.oxfordreference.com/viewbydoi/10.1093/acref/9780198609957.001.0001>

should occur” (Lambsdorff, 2002). In this dissertation, the term will explain how the neo-feudal class manipulates public decision-making, judiciary, and other state institutions for illegal land acquisition.

1.3.8. Hegemony

The concept of hegemony is defined as a method through which a dominant group or class exercises its non-coercive power through private and public organisations such as trade unions, educational institutes, religious seminaries, and laws by manufacturing the consent among the masses. This concept is used in this dissertation to conceptualise the structures and dynamics through which the neo-feudal class operates by manufacturing consent among crucial policy decision-makers and the general public through advertisement and charity to legitimise their role within society.

1.3.9. Extractive Economic Institutions

Extractive economic institutions refer to institutions that are designed by the politically wealthy and robust elite of any society to extract resources from the rest of the population. Such economic institutions discourage upward class mobility through policies devised only to reward the one in power. It is essential to study such extractive economic institutions in Pakistan through which the neo-feudal class extracts resources from the poor through land entitlements.

1.4. Research Question

How can Neo-feudalism be defined in the context of Pakistan?

Explanation: This research question is crucial since it will help conceptualise the dissertation's theoretical framework. Also, the socio-economic and political systems in America and Europe are different from Pakistan. Thus there is a need to define ‘neo-

feudalism' in the Pakistani context and localise the definition while considering the history, culture, economic activity, and political developments of Pakistan.

- What are the characteristics of neo-feudalism in Pakistan?

Explanation: This question will help analyse Pakistan's current socio-political and economic system and how key economic stakeholders use power and dominance to influence policies for their benefit. There have to be those characteristics that defy feudal and capitalist norms in Pakistan and are neo-feudal. This thesis is vital to identify and define those characteristics to establish that Pakistan is becoming a neo-feudal state.

- What are the structures and dynamics through which the neo-feudal nobility operates in Pakistan?

Explanation: To establish that emergence of the neo-feudal class is underway, it is necessary to identify the different socio-political and economic structures through which the neo-feudal nobility operates and strengthens its dominance.

- How is the intersection of landed elites within new nobility and their role, excluding the poor through displacement, dispossession and illegal land acquisition in Karachi and Islamabad?

Explanation:

In order to understand the power dynamics within Pakistani society, it is essential to discuss how the emergence of this new nobility is affecting the landless and indigenous populations in Karachi and Islamabad. This question will help analyse the challenges faced by the working class due to discriminating and anti-poor policies of the extractive institution of Pakistan.

1.5. Research Objectives

- (a) To define the term ‘neo-feudalism’ in Pakistan’s context.
- (b) To explore the characteristics of neo-feudalism in Pakistan.
- (c) To find structures and dynamics through which neo-feudalism operates in Pakistan.
- (d) To articulate the intersection of land elites within the new nobility and their role in excluding the poor through displacement, dispossession and illegal acquisition of land Karachi and Islamabad.

1.6. Limitation of The Study

The study will only focus on defining neo-feudalism in Pakistan's context, focusing on real estate development in Karachi and Islamabad.

1.7. Significance of The Research

This thesis will be the first empirical inquiry about Neo-feudalism in Pakistan since the literature to define neo-feudalism is very limited. Applying Jodi Dean’s concept to Pakistan’s context will also be a new feature that this research will offer.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1.Introduction

This chapter comprises a review of available literature about the political economy of Pakistan. The chapter has four parts. The first part deals with the evolution of Pakistan's political economy, the second part deals with defining neo-feudalism, the third part deals with the concepts of class struggle in Pakistan. The literature review in the thesis covers literature written from 1890 to 2021, including articles, books, research papers, and concepts.

2.2.Review of Literature

2.2.1. Defining Feudalism

Academics have multiple opinions concerning the origin of the term 'feudal.' Some argue that it derived from the Latin 'feodum' since, in Medieval Latin Europe, the term evolved and became 'feudum' and has been used for the person who received a land grant in exchange for his services (Lubetski 1998). The term first appeared in the French language in 1823, in the Italian language in 1827 and entered the English lexicon in 1839 (Cheytee 2005).

Alauddin Samarrai sees the origin of Feudalism from the Arabic word 'Fuyu' which means 'returned.' It was also seen as a land conquered by the soldiers, a theory related to 'fief' and 'feo' (Samarrai 1973). Karl Marx explained this theory in the context of the mode of production and observed the relation between towns and industry, ignoring agriculture (Morrison 2005). However, in Pakistan, the theories of Feudalism are of two forms. One theory focuses on the relationship between agriculture and economics, and the second view Feudalism as a hindrance to any substantial institutional or political reform. Hamza Alavi, a Marxist sociologist and academic, theorises the Capitalism and Feudalism by asserting that it will be a mistake to draw a line between feudal lords and capitalistic farmers and thus wrote more about a shift from a

feudal mode of production to a capitalist mode of production in Post-Colonial Pakistan (Alavi 1974).

2.2.2. The Beginning of Feudalism in Early Europe

John Thomas Abdy, in his book on *Feudalism*, talks about the evolution of Feudalism, initially as a land tenure system in early Europe, where small landowners and King himself were bound to provide military services to protect the realm against any external threat. The power of the feudal government was strengthened by the different political, financial, judicial, military, and other public institutions (Abdy 1890). Crusaders also played a significant role in strengthening Feudalism in early Europe so they could fight for Christianity. Although in old Europe Feudalism was more individualistic and less aristocratic. On the other hand, in medieval Europe, the land became more important to the feudal, and the feudal lords would surpass any moral or ethical code to protect their properties.

In 15th century, mercantilism and industrialism were crucial to transform the relationship between lords and peasantry when people started migrating to urban centres. The exploitation of the peasantry by the aristocrats was common in Japan, Egypt, and China, where peasants were bound to serve their lords (Baloch 1961). Concisely, Feudalism became an economic system where lords and vassals form a relationship of patronage. This tie was also political and thrived in geographical areas where agriculture was the only mode of production (Sills 1968).

2.2.3. Feudalism and Political Economy in South Asia

According to Dr. Mubarak Ali, the emergence of ‘feudalism’ in the Asian subcontinent was different from Europe (Ali 2003). In his paper *Feudalism in Historical Perspective*, Ali (2003) implies that in the 3rd century, Hindus and Buddhists ruled the entire subcontinent where the King, priests, and warriors controlled the state. In that era, the economic system relied on the labour produced by the peasants and artisans. Whenever the rulers met political resistance,

they would give land grants to political and religious opponents to acquire their political support. Later on, the Turkish emperors introduced a system in which the lands were granted in exchange for military services known as 'Iqtaa' (Ali 2003). Inspired by the Iqtaa concept, Mughals modified the land tenure system and introduced the Mansabdari system in the sub-continent.

In 1647, the Emperor and 80000 Mansabdars ruled the sub-continent without any concept of private property. The system of land distribution in the 17th century was too complicated for the British colonists that were appalled to see the value south Asians attached to their lands. Oriental Feudalism was way too complicated for European rulers that they distributed lands, issued *sanands* (land allotments) to landed elites, and devised laws for permanent settlements to protect the right of private property of Jagirdars. Laws such as the alienation act of 1900 prohibited the urban gentry from purchasing property in rural areas, a legal measure by the colonial masters to strengthen the political support of landed aristocracy in rural areas. The British government also established educational institutes where offspring of Jagirdars were given modern education, such as Aitcheson college Lahore, Mayo College Ajmer, and Talluqdar College in Oudh (Cheesman 1997).

2.2.4. The Historical Overview of Feudalism in Pakistan

In a book titled *The Modern Economy of Sindh* (2019), the authors gave a detailed historical account of the landholding administration in Sindh. It is crucial to analyse the significance of Pakistan's political economy in general and how colonialism strengthened the feudal economic system in the sub-continent (Ishrat Hussain & *et all* 2019). According to *The Gazetteer of West Pakistan*, the history of political and economic development in Sindh has been divided into seven stages, i.e., the Arab conquest, the middle ages from Mehmud of Ghazni till the establishment of the Mughal Empire in Sindh, the Mughal period, the reign of Kalhora and Talpur dynasties followed by the pre & post-British era (Sorley, 1968).

From 1807 to 1820, the political power of the British within Sindh increased when two treaties were signed, the first treaty called for a British native to be stationed in Sindh and the second demanded all Europeans and Americans, other than British, to leave Sindh immediately (Sorley, 1968). Amidst the Franco-Russian threat, these treaties strengthened the British forces, and the *Amirs* of Sindh lost all their political power in the region. The relationship between *Amirs* and the British became more bitter when the Indus River was used to transport British troops to Afghanistan to mitigate the political risks, a condition not agreed upon by the *Amirs* in the treaties. The first resistance from the *Amirs* in 1839 caused a fall of Karachi. The second resistance from Baloch armies in 1843 led to the fall of Hyderabad. General Sir Charles Napier, commander-in-chief of the British military, assumed the charge of Sindh as governor, and Sindh was annexed and included in the Bombay presidency in the same year.

Hamida Khuhro, the author of *The Making of Modern Sindh: British Policy and Social Change in the Nineteenth Century*, is of the view that although the Kalhora and Talpur dynasties made significant modifications in the landholding system, the administration predominantly remained as Mughals left it in place (Khuhro 1978). The Mansabdari system introduced by the Mughals authorised the Emperor to grant land to the officers in exchange for their military services. When the British annexed Sindh, the administrative units in place were dated back to of Mughal era. Those units are now known as *Parganas*, which got divided into *tapas*. During the Pre-British period, the *Jagir* grants used to be classified into *Seri* grants, *pattadari*, *khairat* grants, garden grants, tree grants, Hindu and Rajput grants (Khuhro 1978).

The work of Khuhro discusses, at length, the revenue collection system put in place by the British government after the annexation of Sindh. In Sindh, the Crown appointed collectors and deputy collectors in Karachi and Hyderabad were made by governor Napier. The British rulers also introduced a system of *Ryotwari* to collect direct revenue from small landholders (Khuhro, 1978). On the contrary, *Jagirdars* had to pay tax in kind or cash per *biga* of land.

Other than money, the *Jagirdars* were also obliged to pay for the construction of roads and schools, *hukabo*, and water drawn from the government-owned canals.

British played a very transformational role in advancing the economy of Sindh through introducing a modified revenue collection system, building roads, railway tracts, and barrages, and controlling the law and order situations. However, they did it due to their economic and political interests, which led to strengthening the Jagirdari (Feudal) system and culture of patronage in Sindh. The authors also see British colonialism better than Feudalism since it guaranteed some economic liberation from the Amirs (Nobles) and feudal of Sindh.

Sajida Parveen & Humaira Arif Dasti in their paper *Feudalism: A Pastime of Power, Economic and Political influence in Pakistan* state that unlike the western world, where Capitalism replaced Feudalism, Pakistan's power, economy and politics is still influenced by Feudalism.

After reviewing the emergence of Feudalism in the Sub-continent, there are three schools of thought on Pakistan's current political economy. The first school of thought believes that colonial rule put an end to feudalism during colonisation agricultural economy transformed and formed capitalistic relations between landowners and tenants. The second school of thought is that 'the agriculture remained feudal' and recapitalised during the colonial rule, but post-colonial Pakistan is no more feudal. However, the third school of thought maintains that the agricultural economy is still feudal and remains semi-feudal and semi-industrial (Parveen and Dasti 2014).

The thesis of the author is that Feudalism is still prevalent in Pakistan due to two reasons. Firstly, the feudal lords have now politically organised themselves and became part of the ruling class. Secondly, they always aligned themselves with bureaucracy and military dictatorship to safeguard their interests. The authors claim that feudal culture prevails everywhere, which is an obstacle to the country's political, social, and economic progress. The

failure of land reforms, the landed elite acquiring political spaces in government have established a complicated relationship of patronage with the people. The authors also endorse the 'selflessness' of the migrated leadership of Pakistan during the formative phase of Pakistan, who were successful in bringing land reforms. However, they also claim that the Muslim League had a clear dominance of feudal lords, which prevented the party from taking any serious measures. Land reforms, the authors claim, could alleviate poverty (Parveen and Dasti 2014).

Moreover, Feudalism has dominated the rural economy by meddling between market and tenants, controlling Pakistan's feudal and capitalist economy. Furthermore, Feudalism is incorporated in the value system of Pakistan, where people follow political personalities as they used to follow Jagirdars previously. In the end, the authors claim that Feudalism, along with Capitalism, is present in Pakistan and influences the country's political, economic, and intuitional policies for their vested and anti-poor interests (Parveen and Dasti 2014).

2.2.5. The Politics of Class Struggle in Pakistan

In his paper titled Rural Bases of Political Power in South Asia, Hamza Alavi draws a contrast between Indian and Pakistani polity. While the Congress Party in India continued to gather the support of masses in all elections amidst violence and rigging, Pakistan remained under the control of the indirectly elected ruling oligarchy, which knew nothing about grass-root politics. From the first constituent assembly, many attempts by the opposition for free and fair elections were silenced till 1970, when for the first time, elections were held based on universal adult franchise. During 1959-62, Ayub Khan came up with the idea of 'Basic Democracy', an indirect way to elect the President and members of National and Provincial assemblies by an electoral college of 80,000 'Basic Democrats' for the direct universal adult franchise. 'Basic Democrats' were elected by the village constituencies of about 10000 persons each. *The system, it was argued, was designed to protect the peasant from political demagogues who*

exploited them' (Alavi 1974). However, the landed political elite despised the basic democracy system. Thus the system failed miserably.

Moreover, abuse of power and corruption reached its pinnacle in Pakistan. The attempt to give peasants a choice did not go well, and the system was abolished in 1970, followed by the first general elections. However, Bhutto's party won seats in Punjab and Sindh, and his victory appeared as a 'representative form of government'. On the contrary, a wealthy landlord headed Pakistan's first democratic government (Alavi, 1974).

After comparing the differences between Indian and Pakistan's political and constitutional development, the author introduces his first primary argument by emphasising on the fallacy that people are economically, socially and politically independent and are free to choose their representatives. This argument has been a primary yet incorrect argument in favour of 'representative democracy'. Alavi (1974) argues that 'Democracy' and 'representative governments' in India or Pakistan are not democratic due to the economic and political dependence of the rural population on the land-owning class. It is assumed that governments elected in both countries have won the 'popular mandate' where the voter is free and politically conscious. In reality, the voter is chained and has no political insight. Such assumptions, according to Alavi, legitimise the institutions and the processes of representative government no matter if they are corrupt or based to protect the class interest of the landed ruling oligarchy.

The author supports his argument by disagreeing that the national polity is entirely driven by rural bases. For him, the national polity is '*a constellation of power not only of the land-owning class but also the indigenous and 'metropolitan' bourgeoisie together with bureaucratic-military oligarchies which mediate their interests but also enjoys a relative autonomy concerning each of them*' (Alavi 1972).

While speaking of the role of landlords in national polity, the author compares the classical and post-industrial ‘feudalism’, which gives an insight into how Marxist academics, such as Hamza Alavi, used to see the economic and social structure of Pakistan. For Hamza Alavi, ‘Feudalism’ is a generalised term used for the power relationships between landlords and peasants. The author argues that Feudalism in Pakistan is no more in its classical form where few landlords own vast landholdings and they have power over many villages and a significant number of people. On the contrary, anyone owning land more than 20 acres or having his land cultivated by sharecroppers can be classified as a landlord. Nevertheless, landlords residing in many villages of Pakistan have an aggregated power as a class, and they dominate the political arena collectively while protecting their class interests.

In the final analysis, Hamza Alavi suggests that democracy in India and Pakistan is not achieved through popular mandate and with the ‘free will’ of the voters. On the contrary, the power holders in both countries are ruling oligarchies, consisting of wealthy people who compete with each other as rivals and yet belong to the land-owning class. The idea of ‘representative government’ is not a cycle of economic exploitation of poor peasants who are bound to align their political allegiance with their landlord masters.

2.2.6. Conceptualising The Term Neo-Feudalism

In humanities, the concept of ‘Neo-feudalism’ was first outlined by Thomas Carlyle as an alternative system to modern capitalist democracy. He proposed a tight-structured system with a small ruling elite at the head and provides for the welfare of the subject masses, a system that is assumed as neo-feudal (Jones 1960).

In economics, George Reisman wrote a pamphlet in 1961 titled *The Revolt Against Affluence: Galbraith’s Neo-feudalism* criticising John Kenneth Galbraith’s book *The Affluent Society*. Reisman accused Galbraith of unreasonably promoting ‘the modern brand of Prussian

feudalism’ and used Neo-Feudalism as a metaphor to describe a system with more public authority on institutions (Reisman 1961). Theodore Levitt foresees that the institutionalised social responsibility of the business elite would lead to a new form of Feudalism with all its paternalistic and autocratic ills (Levitt 1958). William Beck used the terms ‘contemporary feudal society’ and ‘contemporary feudalism’ to analyse the economic relations across the world in the 20th century (Beck 1992). Eric Hobsbawm, a well-known South American historian, describes neo-feudalism as a phenomenon in which people are subjugated to the influential owners of large estates in Peru (Hobsbawm 1969). According to Hobsbawm, the oppressed Peruvian communities did not resist the development of personal dependency because they are given certain privileges such as social safety, infrastructure and stable income (Hobsbawm, 1969). To describe neo-feudal patronage at the state level, Amitai Etzioni, a sociologist, explored how political parties provided healthcare, education and employment to Jewish immigrants migrating to Palestine before their arrival to establish a bond of patronage and loyalty to safeguard their mutual interests (Etzioni, 1962). Immanuel Wallerstein used the term Neo-Feudalism to describe the economic characteristics of peripheral economies (Wallerstein 2011). Wallerstein also viewed neo-feudalism as a system where local hierarchies will be compatible with information technology. The neo-feudal economic system will legitimise its existence by returning to a belief in natural hierarchies (Wallerstein 1996).

While McKenzie Wark views Neo-Feudalism as an exploitative economic system progressing within communicative Capitalism, thriving on the accumulation of rent, debt and power in American society as the new nobility comprising Zuckerberg and Bill Gates has emerged (Wark 2020).

2.2.7. Characteristics of Neo-Feudalism

E.K Moorcroft defines Neo-Feudalism in his paper *Neo-Feudalism, An Exercise in Reciprocity*, published in Saldru Farm Labour Conference in September 1976. This paper aimed to see neo-feudalism, which, as per the author, still ‘constitutes the structural framework for employer-employee relation in rural South Africa’ (Moorcroft 1976). The author attempts to analyse certain traditional social institutions which allow neo-feudalism to prosper as a system and ensures success in terms of labour stability and ‘apparent labour contentment’, but the system has also become instrumental in exploiting labour further.

The author shares the social and financial arrangements provided by the capitalist farmers to the labourers of the South African community living in the Eastern Cape. Neo-feudalism is widely practised in the community of Xhosa-speaking Africans who are engaged extensively in stock-rearing and are the ones who operate as labourers in the neo-feudal model of the economy. This system draws its inspiration from existing culture. The author identifies a few significant characteristics of Neo-Feudalism, which may help us understand and define the term.

The first characteristic of the neo-feudalist system is that in the agro-economy societies, the role of the farmer is ‘Paternal’ in nature. He influences the familial decisions of his employees. Those decisions include the composition of the family; the approval of the employer to keep ageing or ailing relatives on the farm; and the rule which prohibits unmarried mothers to live on the land provided to the employees. The second characteristic of the neo-feudalist system is the farmer’s attempts to alter and sometimes replace his position as the traditional ‘tribal chief’ whenever he deems appropriate. In South African communities, the farmers are often considered and respected as ‘providers’ or ‘Lord of Manor’ or ‘Father of his people’. As a ‘patron’ and ‘provider’, the farmers form a more personal relationship than a professional one. The author argues that ‘neo-feudalism has evolved due to Xhosa customary traditions’ (Moorcroft 1976). The third characteristic of neo-feudalism is defined as the relationship of

reciprocity between the farmer and his employee. This reciprocity could result in ethnic and tribal lines, but they are also formed on class differences. According to the author, the tribal chief enjoys the highest privileges and powers in a Xhosa society. Nevertheless, those powers entirely rely on the 'reciprocal obligations' between him and his subjects. This reciprocity demands extravagant qualities from the employer, such as a great sense of justice and generosity. He could only be rewarded with loyalty if he is just and fair in his dealings (Moorcroft 1976).

The author's primary argument is that in traditional agrarian societies of South Africa, the 'fathers or providers' are chosen due to their social capital as tribal heads and persona, which reflected their generosity and a great sense of justice. However, in present post-feudal societies, employers are replacing those chiefs, and while becoming the 'providers', they are, unconsciously or consciously, following a rural tradition. This patronising trait in employers makes them expect the same loyalty and allegiance from the workers, which the traditions made obligatory. As a result, due to his financial status, the employer influences and controls the socio-economic and political life of his workers. This patronising relationship between a capitalist farmer and his staff is what the author calls 'neo-feudalism' (Moorcroft 1976).

On the other hand, Jodi Dean, an American academic, outlined four characteristics of neo-feudalism in her lecture on '*Communism or Neo-Feudalism?*' (Dean 2020). The First feature of neo-feudalism is parcelization of sovereignty. Ellen Meikins Wood, in her book *Citizens to Lords*, mentions that now in many countries, the sovereignties are vertically and horizontally fragmented, which allow different political and economic authorities to claim jurisdiction (Wood 2008). Additionally, as feudal lords exploited surplus from labourers through laws promulgated by the lords themselves, neo-feudal lords such as global financial institutions and technology firms are now exploiting the developing countries to facilitate the developed world

(Dean 2020). Hoarding wealth in off-shore banks to avoid taxes is one example of escaping state law and parcelization of sovereignty.

The second feature of neo-feudalism is the hierarchy and expropriation with ‘new lords’ and ‘new peasants (Dean 2020). The world is witnessing the new lords of tech who are extracting millions by outsourcing cheap labour from developing countries, exploiting the free labour of users, getting tax breaks and creating their Hegemony by controlling and using data for their profits (Dean 2020). An increase in land privatisation is also one of the key characteristics of building a new hierarchy. In his book *The New Enclosures*, Brett Christopher writes that in England, two million hectares of public land has been sold to private buyers, leading to private sector land-hoarding and transforming Britain’s economy into a ‘rentier’ economy (Christophers 2018).

The third feature of neo-feudalism is the desolate hinterlands and privileged municipalities. In America, there is now a split between town and country, urban centres and the countryside creating a division but controlling both through land grabs and making more and more ‘hinterlands’ devoid of basic facilities for the poor (Dean, 2020).

The fourth feature of neo-feudalism is the insecurity and anxiety about the future. The constant surveillance at the workplace, job insecurity, and stress make the working class anxious about their survival. On the other hand, apocalyptic insecurity is resurfacing, ‘techno-pagan’ and ‘anti-modern’. The proponents of this neoreactionary, anti-democracy and anti-egalitarian ‘dark enlightenment’ movement support ‘democratic feudalism’ where the *“promise of democracy is to govern another being as completely as a monarch governs his subjects”* (Robin, 2011).

2.2.8. The Correlation Between New Economic Class and Patronage-Based Polity In Pakistan

In his lecture *Failing State or Fragmented Hegemony: The Political Economy of Change in Pakistan*, Asim Sajjad Akhtar presents a ‘traditional and historical materialist’ analysis of the Pakistani state and society. The author refers to the Gramscian theoretical framework for his analysis to understand how patronage-based political economy has been adopted by the newly emerged intermediate class and seen as ‘common sense’. In this lecture, the author presents his arguments challenging the relevancy of Hamza Alavi’s thesis on ‘post-colonial state’ in post-Green Revolution Pakistan (Akhtar 2016).

Akhtar (2016) agrees that Pakistan's ‘military-bureaucratic oligarchy’ played a mediating role for the propertied classes (Alavi 1972). He also agrees that the urban bourgeoisie, i.e., economic imperialism, still dictates society. However, he argues that Alavi’s theoretical framework is static, knowing that the power dynamics kept changing within the ruling groups, which cannot be oversimplified through ‘classical dichotomies of the historical materialism’ (Akhtar 2016). One thing that was missing from Hamza’s analysis, according to Akhtar, was the exploitation of the working class, which helped the powerful retain their authority. He agrees that the military, bureaucracy, industrial, landed, colonial power and corporations have a stronghold on Pakistan’s socio-economic life, but how come this system survives after inflicting evident injustices? How are those who are exploited responding to this system? Which other classes have emerged in the last few decades other than the three outlined by Hamza Alavi in his thesis?

The author's principal argument is that there is an ‘intermediate strata in Pakistan which historically emerged through the development of the secondary and tertiary sectors of the agrarian economy that is now the face of capitalist modernity in Pakistan’ (Akhtar 2016). He views this class as the ‘bedrock of the political and cultural movements of religious and secular

right' (Akhtar 2016). This class, as he describes, consists of traders and merchants who have been playing a critical political role in the post-colonial state (Akhtar 2016).

Akhtar believes that the Pakistani state is no more the 'Steel Frame' which British powers created to support its reign in the subcontinent before partition. Nor the power dynamics of the military-bureaucratic oligarchy are the same. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's tenure brought several changes in the structures of bureaucracy by introducing a quota system, thus now civil services are more representative and not solely dominated by the candidates hailing from bourgeoisie families. Therefore, Alavi's argument that bureaucracy in a post-colonial state comprises the metropolitan bourgeoisie is no more relevant in today's Pakistan. Akhtar argues that power was distributed by civil bureaucracy to the landed elite controlling the means of production such as agricultural land and water in colonial times. The post-colonial state, however, 'culminates patronage-based politics' in itself (Akhtar 2016).

The author agrees that the military arm of Pakistan's state is the guardian and custodian of state power, and they often exercise that power through coercive means. However, the subordinate classes do not interact with the military power in political and economic spheres. Instead, they interact with civilian political leaders and 'policing institutions' depicted as corrupt, yet are the key institutions where hegemonic power is rooted.

The intermediate class emerged within the subordinate classes, which started participating actively in politics and the market. The intermediate class of traders, merchants and transporters, emerged as political actors after the Green Revolution. The newly emerged intermediate class mobilised through 'informalization', labour migration to gulf countries and rapid urbanisation. This class was at the forefront and leading protests against Bhutto's reign and facilitated dictatorial campaigns of Zia-ul Haq's under the banner of 'Islam' because they could finance such campaigns and aided those in power for their socio-political and economic gains.

Akhtar believes that ‘The Green Revolution, Gulf migrations and the process of urbanisation more generally had transformed the predominantly rural social order and mandated the working out of new political configurations by the state and dominant classes’ (Akhtar 2016).

Moreover, thus ‘the intermediate classes and the religious right were the new faces of the patronage-based order instituted by the Zia regime. They were the new mediators between the subordinate classes and thana/ katcheri. To be sure, they have not so much displaced the ‘traditional’ landed oligarchy as adapted the particular mode of politics that the latter championed throughout the colonial period and the first few decades after the country’s creation’ (Akhtar 2016).

The crux of the argument is that the intermediate class now sees patronage-based politics as a new common sense which makes them consent to seek patrons to achieve political and economic gains and also navigates ‘cynical political imaginary’ (Akhtar 2016).

2.3. Conceptual Framework: Narrative & Diagram

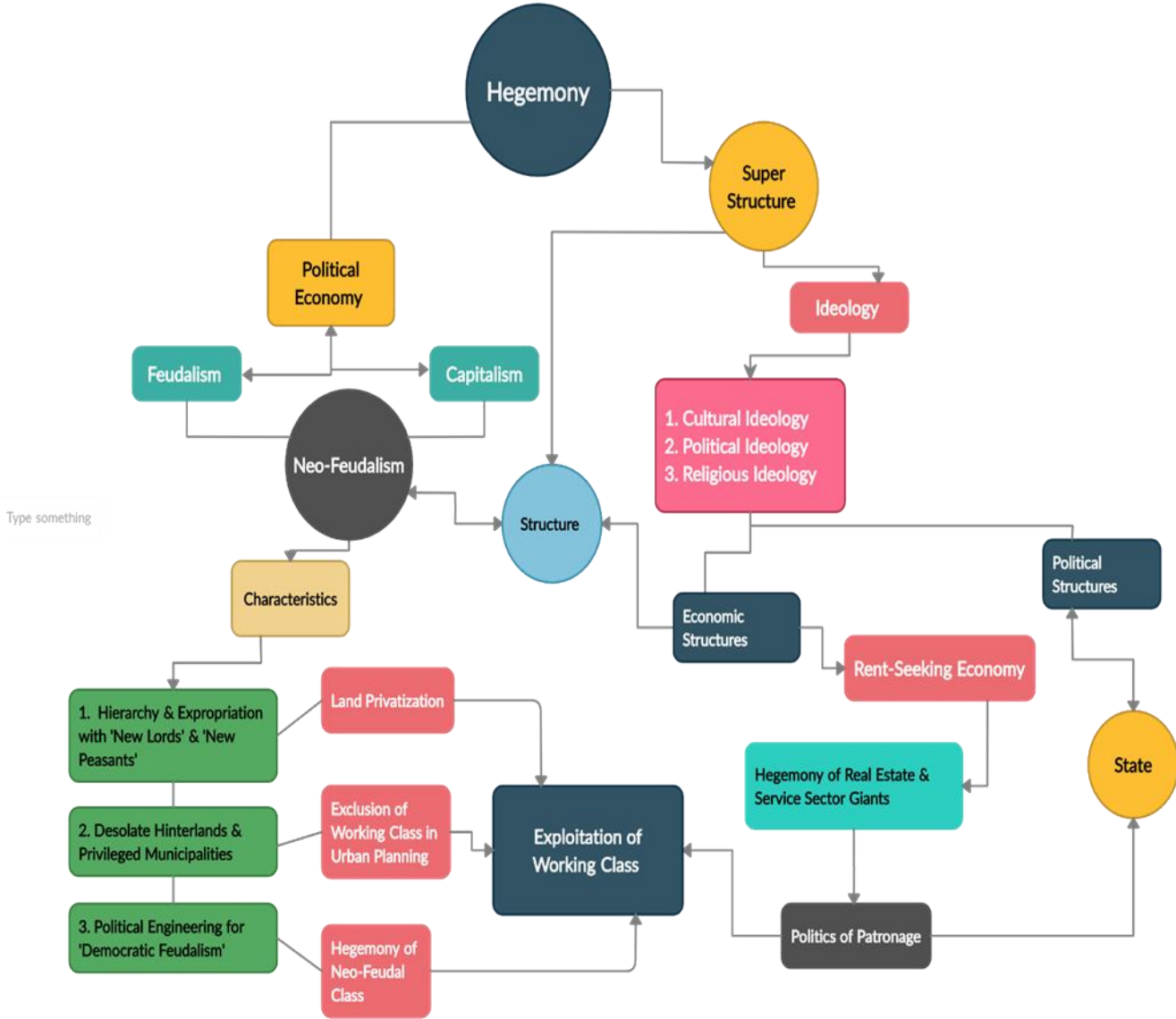
In this dissertation, the Gramscian concept of *Hegemony* will be applied to analyse the relationship between the superstructure, which entails single or multiple ideologies and structures such as socio-economic and political structures. This relationship defines how some ideologies shape economic and political infrastructure through which dominant groups exercise their Hegemony by creating consent among the masses. Thus the concept of Hegemony has been placed at the top tier of the conceptual framework.

Understanding *Superstructures* given by Gramsci is crucial for analysing how people from affluent classes manufacture consent among the masses and state institutions to legitimise their authority and create an enabling environment for their class interests without facing a structural political resistance from the marginalised classes. Therefore, the dominant cultural, political, and religious ideologies will be analysed and thoroughly studied in this dissertation.

The Political Economy of Pakistan is the second most crucial factor which needs to be explored to understand the nexus between Feudalism, contemporary Capitalism and how these two modes of production have encouraged the neo-feudal socio-political and economic order. The study of the political economy of Pakistan will allow comprehending the historical development of economic and political institutions and how in the recent past, they have evolved.

The definition and characteristics of Neo-Feudalism given by Ellen Meiksins Wood (2008) and Jodi Dean (2020) will be studied in this dissertation. The characteristics of *Neo-Feudalism* includes hierarchy & expropriation with ‘new lords’ and ‘new peasants’, desolate hinterlands and privileged municipalities and political engineering for democratic Feudalism. These characteristics result in policies of land privatisation, neglecting housing and other needs of working class in urban planning and hegemonic power of the rich class over the marginalised majority.

Figure 2.1: Diagram of Conceptual Framework



CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1.Introduction

In this chapter, research methodology will be discussed in detail. This chapter comprises of five parts which included Research Strategy, Research Design,

3.2.Research Strategy: Qualitative

Alan Bryman defines research strategy as a ‘general orientation to the conduct of social research’ and outlines three major research strategies, i.e., quantitative research, qualitative research, and mixed research. The quantitative research strategy quantifies the collection and analysis of data and uses a deductive approach to test a theory. In quantitative research strategy, research is conducted from a Positivist epistemological position, involving scientific research methods through which social reality is viewed as ‘external and objective reality’ (Bryman, 2015).

I will be applying a *qualitative research* strategy that encompasses an inductive approach while determining the relationship between theory and research to generate one or more theories. I will be conducting this research from an ‘Interpretivism’ epistemological position. Interpretivism emphasises that there is a need for a strategy that treats the differences between people and objects of natural science to find a subjective meaning of a social activist and norms associated with it. While my epistemological orientation is ‘Interpretivist’, my ontological stance is as of ‘Social Constructionist’. ‘Constructionism’ stance negates the notion that social phenomena are static and inorganic. It implies that social realities are continually evolving and subject to change. Thus there is always room of new meaning or motivation behind every social action.

3.3. Research Design

Research design is a set of research methods and techniques that allow a researcher to collect and analyse the data logically. According to Alan Bryman, there are five types of research designs for qualitative and quantitative research, i.e., experimental design, cross-sectional or survey design, longitudinal design, case study design, and comparative design.

According to Alan Bryman, the Experimental design is not widely applied in social research except in few areas such as organisational studies, social psychology, or to evaluate the impact of social policies (Alan Bryman 2015). The experimental design is further divided into two types, *laboratory experiments* and *field experiments*. The laboratory experiment is conducted, as the name implies, in an indoor or contrived facility. On the other hand, field experiments are conducted in a social setting such as classrooms or offices to gauge impacts of reform, policy, or new teaching methods. In social research, field experiments are more useful as compared to laboratory experiments since they are conducted while interacting with social actors in a real-life setting.

The reason experimental research is not very popular among social scientists is that it entails a technique called *Manipulation*, through which the researcher manipulates an independent variable to assess its impact on the dependent variable. In social research, this method cannot be applied because it is impossible to manipulate one group's social, gender, and class identities to assess its impact on the other group. Thus this research design offers limited opportunities to understand social actions.

The Cross-Sectional or Survey design is used for both quantitative and qualitative research. This research design allows a researcher to use different research methods such as structured interviews, questionnaires, structured observation, content analysis and official statistics of more than one case to draw a pattern of association. The pattern of association means that in

this design, a researcher does not manipulate the variables. The other feature of this particular research design is that it is conducted one point at a time, which means the data can be collected at the spot and will be ready to analyse later on. In qualitative research, the unstructured interviews can be used as a cross-sectional design, but this research design is usually used for quantifiable data collection.

The *Longitudinal design* is considered time-consuming and expensive research design due to its very framework. The said research design requires the sample to be surveyed more than once to assess the casual interferences over time and its effects on the sample, such as an ethnic group, social class or gender. This design is considered an extension of the survey design, but the only difference is the assessment at different time intervals. The longitudinal design is further divided into two different types, panel study and cohort study. In a panel study, a sample is selected randomly at the national level as a data collection unit. However, in a cohort study, an entire cohort is selected based on similar characteristics as a data collection unit. Since this research design is pretty expensive and time-consuming, it is not preferred in social research unless necessary.

The *Case Study* design is another type of research design that is widely used in social research. According to Alan Bryman, the case study design is ‘an intensive study of one case’: a social group, an individual, or a community. There are five types of case studies such as the critical case, unique case, representative or typical case, revelatory case, and longitudinal case.

Comparative design is a study of two different cases. A researcher uses comparison logic to understand social action by comparing it with two or more different cases or situations. This method is used in both qualitative and quantitative research.

I will be using a *Descriptive* research design to conduct my dissertation. Descriptive design explains a socio-political and economic phenomenon in a detailed and comprehensive manner

by studying different variables. Since in this dissertation I am conceptualising the concept of ‘Neo-feudalism’ and ‘New Nobility’ in Pakistan’s context, I aim to describe some features in terms of land use and land entitlements to establish that in Pakistan the emergence of a neo-feudal class has taken place. Another reason to choose this research design is that it allows me to use different research methods for qualitative data collection, such as textual analysis, structured and unstructured interviews, focus group discussions, and sampling.

3.4.Units of Data Collection (UDCS)

Udc 1: Documents

Explanation: The data will be collected by extracting and analysing different documents. The documents will include policy documents, institutional reports, documents of commercial housing schemes and TV advertisements in electronic and print media, court decisions on land encroachment, stay orders, and state laws on land entitlement in Pakistan. The analysis of these documents will be crucial to understand three essential issues. Firstly, the policy documents and court decisions will explain how policies have been devised and used to benefit the neo-feudal class and deprive the indigenous communities. Secondly, the commercial housing documents and advertisements will be analysed to establish that through knowledge dissemination, the neo-feudal class promotes the idea of ‘neo-feudal spatiality’ among middle-class people to normalise a practice of ‘exclusion’ for the landless and working class. Thirdly, laws related to land entitlements and land use will be analysed to determine whether they are being implemented or have been violated under the political influence of urban planners and owners of commercial housing schemes.

Udc 2: Architects & Urban Planners

Explanation: The key architects and urban planners will be interviewed to collect data. The interview with Architects and urban planners will focus on urban planning in Pakistan, the role

of government in land privatization and their opinion about the expansion of housing societies. The urban planners will be also interviewed to understand how urban planning in Pakistan have excluded the poor.

Udc 3: Economists

Explanation: Since the thesis topic deals with political economy, land use, economic policies and mode of production of Pakistan, key economists will be interviewed. The interviews of economists will help to understand the political economy of Pakistan, the frameworks that can be used to describe the role of political institutions on economic decision making, and how certain economic groups interact with state institutions.

Udc 4: Lawyers

Explanation: To understand the laws related to land use and land entitlement, I will interview lawyers. The input of lawyers will help to critically evaluate the legality through which the ‘neo-feudal’ class operates and exploits the resources of the land. Interviewing lawyers will also help to understand the legal terms and principles. Secondly, the lawyers can also give their insight on the rights of the landless working class and how their needs can be addressed through legal reforms.

Udc 5: Civil Society Members & Human Rights Defenders

Explanation: Civil society and human rights defenders play a crucial role in voicing the needs of the voiceless in any society. Civil society networks and social activism have brought significant change in Pakistan by focusing on class, gender, and the national question. Interviewing critical civil society members and social activists will provide information about four primary aspects. Firstly, civil society members and human rights defenders can share their struggle against discriminatory policies that are made without including the voices of the marginalised and what challenges they have faced while fighting for the rights of the working

class. Secondly, the interviews will help understand how civil society and human rights defenders mobilise people for their activism and what response they get from the masses. Thirdly, interviewing them will also help to record their understanding of the political economy of Pakistan and class dynamics in the country. Whether they see urban planners and real estate giants as mere few individuals or a new and emerging class in itself? Fourthly, the interviews will also highlight the critical movements led by civil society against anti-encroachment and the outcomes of such movements.

Udc 6: Academics

Explanation: The academics from different fields of social sciences such as political science, sociology, public policy and history will be interviewed to see the phenomenon from different angles of social sciences and the latest scholarship.

3.5. Research Methods

For qualitative research selecting appropriate research methods is very necessary. Thus, I am choosing five research methods for this research, i.e., semi-structured interviews, Thematic analysis, and sampling. These research methods are further elaborated in the following paragraphs.

3.5.1. Interviews

Alan Bryman defined four types of interviews. Structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, unstructured interviews, and focus group discussions. In this dissertation, I will be applying the following two interview techniques (Bryman 2015).

3.5.2. Unstructured Interviews

The unstructured interviews are also known as *qualitative interviews* since this technique is widely used in qualitative social research. As its title implies, the unstructured interviews are very flexible and allow a respondent to share as much information as she deems suitable. This

technique will help to unleash the thought process of the interviewees and helps to analyse the different layers of information and how the flow of information is being shared.

3.5.3. Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured *interviews* allow a researcher to list down the main topics or questions to ask, but the questions' order is not restricted. The semi-structured interviews are also flexible, but it ensures a more focussed discussion than unstructured interviews (Bryman 2015). For this dissertation, I will be conducting semi-structured interviews with economists, urban planners, lawyers, human rights defenders and academicians to gather data related to my topic.

3.5.4. Focus Group Discussions

The *Focus Group Discussion* in social research helps to explore and understand a topic or a theme as members of a group.

3.6.Sampling

Sampling is a method through which a researcher chooses a specific group of people from a larger population as data collection units. There are different types of sampling, such as *probability* and *non-probability* samples. *Probability sampling* is a sample 'that has been selected using random selection so that each unit in the population has a known chance of being selected' (Bryman, 2012). The *non-probability sampling*, however, is a sample that is not selected randomly. Some groups have more chances to be selected than others. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling; a method I will be applying to select the UDCs for my research.

3.6.1. Purposive Sampling

The overarching goal of purposive sampling is to select participants based on their relevance to the research question. This sampling method also allows a researcher to select participants from the different segments of the society, so every aspect of the research topic can be explored

deeply. I am choosing this sampling method is that this method facilitates my research goal and UDC selection criteria. From UDC 2 to UDC 6, all participants are selected because their opinion, role, and actions will help me determine my research findings.

3.7.Procedure of Data Collection

The data will be collected through semi-structured interviews and a review of the literature. I identified 20 respondents under each UDC from UDC 2 to UDC 6 through a purposive sampling method for the semi-structured interviews. The respondents were selected based on their location, profession, experience and work related to my thesis subject.

I followed the following steps to collect the data. First, I completed the identification procedure through calls and emails. Second, I sent them a brief about my topic and interview guide so they know why they are being interviewed. Third, I shared the interview consent release form with all respondents to obtain their written approval to record the interview and utilise their ideas for my thesis. Fourth, due to Covid-19 restrictions, I could not travel or meet the interviewees in person, so I asked them if they could be available on zoom. Since they all agreed to my request, I shared the zoom meeting link with them and conducted the interviews. Each interview was of 50 to 140 minutes on average.

The area and UDC wise segregation of respondents is given in the table below:

Table 3.1. Respondents Segregation

Sr.	UDC	Karachi	Islamabad/Rawalpindi
1	Architects & Urban Planners	2	1
2	Economists	2	2
3	Lawyers	3	3
4	Human Rights Defenders	2	1
5	Academics	2	2
Total		11	9
		20	

3.8. Thematic Analysis

In this dissertation, I have selected Thematic Analysis which is a widely used data analysis method. The reason I selected Thematic analysis is because it helps a researcher to study data sets as themes. The thematic analysis also describes the ideas and provides an in-depth analysis of data set (Braun and Clarke, 2006). There are two approaches of thematic analysis, the inductive approach and the deductive approach. I have applied both inductive and deductive approaches to analyse the data and generated the codes based on the literature review and the answers given by my respondents to specific questions.

3.9. Locale

This research will be conducted in Islamabad and Karachi. The purpose of selecting these two locales is that both cities come under urban planning schemes. The hinterlands surrounding

these locales are privatized to commercial housing schemes, such as Bahria Town and Defence Housing Authority.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1. Data Analysis & Discussion

This chapter comprises data analysis and discussion. The data presented in this chapter was extracted from semi-structured interviews. Each interview was 50 to 120 minutes long and transcribed. After transcription, the process of coding was adopted, in which 170 codes were generated. The analysis of codes was combined and presented under seven significant themes. The themes are discussed in detail in the following paragraphs.

4.2. Theme 1: Defining Political Economy of Pakistan

It is pertinent to understand the political economy of Pakistan to define the concept of 'Neo-Feudalism'. The literature review of this thesis has already discussed the term feudalism, its evolution, the historical evolution of the political economy of Pakistan, and how different power holders have played a key role in the economic decision-making in the country since 1947. While the mode of production has slightly evolved from feudalism to industrial capitalism, the politics of Pakistan remained unstable amidst civil war (partition of West Pakistan in 1971), military dictatorship and short-spanned civilian democracy. However, a lot has changed since the partition when it comes to political economy and socio-political structures. Therefore, it is essential to gather empirical data and understand how economists, urban planners, policymakers and academics think of political economy today. In this regard, the respondents were asked how they would define Pakistan's political economy, and their answers were quite enlightening. The responses of interviewees are presented under four major sub-themes below.

4.2.1. The Over-Developed Post-Colonial State

Hamza Alavi's concept of an over-developed state emerged during data collection, which has been discussed in the literature review chapter of this thesis. Explaining the historical evolution of Pakistan's political economy, Ammar Rashid, a political activist and policy researcher, referred to Hamza Alavi's concept of an *Over-Developed State*. According to Ammar Rashid, after the partition of the Sub-continent, Pakistan inherited rigid Military and bureaucratic institutions that were more developed than other political and social institutions. These over-developed institutions created a historical bloc with feudal and emerging industrial classes, influencing economic and social policies to facilitate their interests (Rashid).

4.2.2. Political Economy of Alliance between Feudalism & Capitalism

The concept of alliance between feudal and capitalist classes is a new finding that emerged during the data collection, which was not covered in the literature review section of this thesis. The data finding also contributes to the hypothesis concerning the nexus between feudal and capitalist hierarchies that have always existed in Pakistan, which provided a pathway for the neo-feudal class to emerge. According to the respondents, the second feature of Pakistan's political economy highlights a historical alliance between feudal and capitalist classes. According to Dr. Ammar Ali Jan, a professor of Political Science and political activist based in Lahore, the bourgeois revolution⁵ did not occur in Pakistan as it happened in other countries during the Industrial Revolution of the 19th Century. Dr. Ammar further states:

"Initially, we used to define the political economy as a compromise between Feudalism and Capitalism. In the case of Pakistan, classical capitalism did not happen in which, through

⁵ Bourgeois Revolution in Marxist terms is defined as a social revolution by capitalist class of industrialist against feudal mode of production.

bourgeois revolution, capitalists would have attacked feudal lords. Both Bourgeois and Feudal Lords allied under the supervision of Military."

According to the respondent, the above statement highlights the mode of production in Pakistan, which was never fully developed based on the classical capitalist model. The second argument highlights the Military's role in strengthening the authority of elite classes. This phenomenon is discussed in the following chapters. However, as the interview data suggests, from 1947 and onwards, the alliance between feudal and capitalist classes was the second important characteristic of Pakistan's political economy.

4.2.3. The Political Economy of Patronage

According to the data, the third characteristic of Pakistan's Economy is dominated by the patron-client relationship between the state and new emerging classes. This concept has been already discussed in detail in the literature review chapter. A review of Asim Sajjad Akhtar's lecture '*Failing State or Fragmented Hegemony: The Political Economy of Change in Pakistan*' has been presented. He discusses the concept of 'Common Sense' from a Gramscian framework of analysis. Interestingly during data collection, the concept also emerged when I asked respondents to describe the political economy of Pakistan. In this regard, Ammar Rashid used Aasim Sajjad Akhtar's concept of the '*politics of common sense*'. In his work, Aasim Sajjad Akhtar writes about how, in the 1970s, an intermediary middle class of traders, servicemen, and professionals emerged and gained favours by building a patron-client relationship with state institutions. This relationship was possible through consent manufacturing among the masses and created an acceptance for the 'clientelist approach' to prevail. While describing '*common sense*', Rashid states:

"The politics of common sense, as Aasim Sajjad Akhtar explains, is essentially a way through which the Pakistani state forms a clientelistic relationship with its citizens. People from

different social groups form a patron and client relationship to gain control over resources in services, land, grants or money. In return, the state buys the loyalties of these social groups to strengthen its control & authority".

It is important to note that Aasim Sajjad Akhtar also argued that Hamza Alavi's theoretical framework of '*rigid military-bureaucratic oligarchy*' is static because power dynamics change over time (Akhtar 2016). He sees classical dichotomies of historical materialism as a 'lazy' and oversimplified way to analyse the political change in society (Akhtar 2016).

The data also suggests that the patron-client relationship between the state and these emerging classes is reciprocal. If the emerging classes (intermediary classes such as servicemen or traders etc.) are granted favours, they pledge allegiance and support the state's different decisions. This finding corresponds to E.K Moorcroft's definition of Neo-Feudalism, in which he defines that the patron-client relationship between capitalist farmers and their employer is reciprocal. The farmers reciprocate to the power dynamics in exchange for the favours they received.

4.2.4. Rentier-State & Rent-Seeking

The data finding suggests that the fourth important feature of Pakistan's political economy is 'rent-seeking'. This feature is also illustrated in the conceptual framework of this thesis, where I hypothesised that one of the essential features of the Neo-Feudal economy could be rent-seeking. The interview presented below confirms this hypothesis.

During data collection, while presenting the current political economy scenario of the country, Ammar Rashid mentioned the importance of understanding the framework of the 'rentier state' and 'rent-seeking'. While defining 'rentier state', he states:

"Rentier State derives a large part of its national revenues by renting out its natural or strategic resources to external clients, such as foreign and imperialist powers. It has always been this kind of a gateway area, so the Pakistani state leverages that to obtain the national resources

from the very start. It is dependent on foreign powers, whether it is Saudi Arabia, the USA, or China. Moreover, because of that situation, it has never really devoted much attention to developing the domestic base of production that can help sustain the country's needs and its own needs as a state. So, we continue to suffer from a failing economy."

As per the statement mentioned above, Pakistan's economy reportedly relies on strategic ties with external powers, which keeps Pakistan's economy stable at the cost of a weak domestic production base. While explaining the correlation between Pakistan's macro and micro-economic policies, Rashid believed that at the domestic level, the government has been applying the same logic by facilitating specific individuals to extract the resources through 'Rent-seeking'. Rent-seeking, according to him, is the present dominant feature of Pakistan's political economy, as he implies in a statement below:

"and that kind of rentier state logic has also permeated into the state's relationships with the society as well. Many of the state's resources are rented out to powerful domestic groups, such as real estate developers, multinational companies, water companies, or large construction mafias. The state has a clientelistic relationship with these groups. A large chunk of domestic revenue is generated through renting out natural resources such as land, water, minerals etc., to large capitalists and feudals."

The rent-seeking feature of Pakistan's political economy is also highlighted by Dr. Ammar Ali Jan, a professor of political science and activist based in Lahore. According to him, the Pakistan state no longer prioritises industrialisation, commodities production, improving research, or creating diverse avenues for economic growth. He states:

"Pakistan's state became a rentier state with a global function of leasing out its land due to its geostrategic location. Since the state is not interested in strengthening domestic production, this rent-seeking model is trans-mutating into something close to Neo-

feudalism, which is the idea that state has ran out of any capacity to facilitate industrial growth."

Military-owned corporations such as Fauji Fertilizers and Foods have also gained windfall profits in recent years through rent-seeking. Moreover, in terms of land, Military enterprises have been engaged in real estate business and own extensive land holdings in Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad through Defense Housing Societies. In this regard, Dr. Keisar Bengali states:

"to back your argument of neo-feudalism in Pakistan, you have to take into account the military enterprises as the biggest and largest landowner in Pakistan. It has monopolised long-distance transportation and production of fertilisers. Military enterprises have ensured that natural gas is supplied to them at 13% of economic costs. In other words, there is an 87% subsidy given to them on natural gas. Moreover, the government also offers 80% subsidy on the 10% of raw materials input required for fertiliser production. So if they can get 90% of raw material at 90% subsidy, then obviously it has to be a very profitable industry and making much money".

Through the exploitation of state power and policies, military enterprises became the most profitable industries. Their profits are not based on commodity production but on how little they pay to produce a commodity. The military enterprises have not only monopolised the industrial and real estate business.

During the interview, Dr. Idrees Khuwaja, an economist and academic based in Islamabad, also discussed the 'rent-seeking' element of Pakistan's political economy. When asked that how would he define the political economy of Pakistan, he said:

"There is a lot of rent-seeking. The politics in Pakistan is dynastic, and a segment present in Parliament belongs to the landed elite, due to which you cannot levy agriculture tax.

However, the industrialists to have clout in Parliament, so, basically, one key element of Pakistan's political economy is rent-seeking."

When probed how industrialists and landlords exploit their ties with politicians for rent-seeking, Dr. Khuwaja gave the example of 'Statutory Regulatory Order', commonly known as SRO. Dr. Khuwaja defined SRO as:

"The budget is presented in the Parliament, and the representatives of the people approve those Taxes. However, then the executive authority (ministry) has certain executive powers so they can in between the budgets, and on the pretext of emergency and urgency, can issue a certain order. For example, the order can say that the duty on steel has to be reduced from 15% to 10%. Moreover, this notification is known as statutory regulatory order. The SRO does not go through the Parliament because it is not easy to pass an unfair law when something goes to the Parliament. After all, 300 parliamentarians elected by the people will question the favours granted to certain individuals. Even in Parliament, one person might favour you (the industrialist or agriculturist), but all will not favour the decision. Nevertheless, if the order goes through only three or four government officials, it is easier to influence the decision. This is how several taxes are imposed, or the exemptions are granted to certain individuals."

The statement given above highlights the patron-client relationship between different dominant classes which operate through rent-seeking. The favours are granted through SROs to bypass democratic decisions by the country's elected representatives concerning taxation, subsidies, and tax exemptions.

4.2.5. Casino Economy

According to the results, Pakistan's political economy's fifth feature is the 'Casino Economic' model. This concept was not anticipated or thought upon before, so this could be termed as a new finding. While collecting the data, the concept of '*Casino Economy*' also emerged that describes the nexus between the affluent class and the state. The term '*casino economy*' was used to analyse the wealth accumulation by certain groups through '*managed speculations*', especially in the case of the Stock Market and Real Estate Development in Pakistan. In this regard, Dr. Keisar Bengali, a key economist based in Karachi, described the term and its application to Pakistan's macroeconomic policy. According to him, the industry is not considered a profitable business anymore. The local investors are more interested in accumulating wealth through speculation. He further said:

"Pakistan's macro-economic policy was geared to enable certain individuals to gain windfall profits out of managed speculations. They have also gone into large scale Real Estate projects. There used to be a cement factory there (Malir District, Karachi). However, as you might know, factories are closing down, and the industry is not profitable. People are shutting down their factories and going into the stock market or the property market and speculate there to make more money very easily. This is the Casino Economy."

According to the statement above, the second dominating feature of Pakistan's current political economy is a speculation-driven casino economy.

4.2.6. Political Economy & Modes of Production

As per the interview data, one aspect of Pakistan's political economy is the confusion about the regimes current mode of production⁶. Some respondents believe that the mode of production

⁶ In Radical Political Economy inspired by Karl Mark, the mode of production is broader system through which society produces good and services. Mode of production comprises of two components, means of production and relations of production. The means of production include non-human inputs such as natural resources,

of Pakistan is not feudal. The other respondents were of the view that Pakistan certainly does not have free-market or classical capitalism. However, most of them believed that Neo-feudalism could be a more suitable term to define Pakistan's current mode of production. The comparative analysis of different modes of production is given in the following paragraphs.

The data suggests that in Pakistan, multiple factors and different actors play a central role in decision-making regarding the utilisation of available resources that ultimately influence the mode of production. In this regard, Dr. Nida Kirmani, a Sociology professor based in Lahore, states:

"I think in the context of Pakistan's economy, there is definitely capitalism, and there are also some feudalistic elements, and I do not think it's going to work like directional transitions between these concepts. Along with these, I would say that we do not have free-market capitalism. Different groups present like traditional feudal landlords, industrialists, Military, and now we have such real estate veterans in urban areas. These groups overlap with the political class, and there is also very much overlap between these groups. I do not know how to combine all these factors and use a term to describe the nexus of military feudalism and capitalism. We have different modes of production at play in Pakistan."

Dr. Kirmani's statement identifies three significant arguments that highlight the class question surrounding the emerging interest groups in Pakistan that play a crucial role in influencing economic decision-making. First, feudals, Industrialists, military-owned corporations and real estate developers as a class have a lot of common characteristics. Secondly, this class also interacts and overlaps with the political class, so their interests get amplified in the political and economic decisions. Third, Pakistan doesn't have free-market capitalism, which means

infrastructure, land and capital to produce economic surplus. On the other hand, the relations of production analyses the ownership of the means of production. Definition extracted from Das Kapital, Volume 1 by Karl Marx <https://content.csbs.utah.edu/~ehrbar/cap1.pdf>

that country's mode of production is under debate. If the mode of production is not capitalist, can we classify it as feudal? Haris Gazdar, a senior researcher and political economist, rejected the notion and stated:

"I don't think that Pakistan's economy is feudal. This characterisation of what happens in Pakistan is Feudal, is a lazy characterisation."

According to Mr. Gazdar, many writings about Pakistan's political economy have misplaced history. To analyse the relationship between people and state institutions, one should delve deep into the historical evolution of Pakistan's political economy, addressed at the beginning of this chapter.

To conclude the analysis of this theme, Pakistan's political economy can be defined as a political economy that is driven by neither free-market capitalist nor the feudal mode of production. It is an economy dominated by certain groups such as the Military, Real Estate Developers, Stock Market Brokers, Feudals and Industrialists. These groups have several common characteristics, which can help to determine them as a class in itself. Additionally, these groups also overlap with the country's political class, allowing them to gain certain favours in exchange for their loyalty to the ruling elite. The data collected through interviews also implies that the state has established a reciprocal-clientelistic relationship with these groups. The government devises different mechanisms and policies to strengthen and enable some individuals to extract resources, accumulate wealth without investing in the domestic production of goods or services through managed speculations and rent-seeking. The next theme will further discuss this ruling class by defining Neo-Feudalism.

4.3. Theme 2: Conceptualising Neo-Feudalism in The Context of Pakistan

In the literature review chapter of this dissertation, I have defined 'Neo-feudalism' as per the definitions given by international academics, scholars and economists. However, it was not

easy to access any research material about this concept in Pakistan. The lack of scholarship on the subject shows a research gap, and there is a significant need to theorise this concept to explain the emergence of a new class of nobles in Pakistan. Additionally, the need to define Neo-feudalism in Pakistan also emerged during the data collection process because the parameters outlined by international scholars often resonate with their culture, economy, political structure, the rule of law situations and governance system. We might draw some parallels, but applying international definitions of political economy frameworks to Pakistan's economic structures would not suffice since Pakistan's history, socio-political and economic structures are quite distinctive. Moreover, as a South Asian Feminist researcher, I would rely on a more localised definition of the concept rather than applying a logo-centric scholarship to the political economy of Pakistan. Therefore, in the following chapters, an attempt will be made to combine the ideas shared by respondents to develop a concept of neo-feudalism that resonates with Pakistan's Political Economy, mode of production and different social structures.

To analyse the pre-knowledge of the respondents about the concept 'Neo-feudalism', I asked all 20 respondents whether they have ever come across the concept before. Out of 20, only three respondents were aware of the term. Interestingly, those respondents were political activists and academics who have been actively engaging in leftist-leaning politics in Pakistan. All other 18 respondents, including lawyers, urban planners, academics, policy researchers, and political economists, never heard of the term but found it interesting to look at the dominant groups in Pakistan and how they exercise their influence. The lack of information about this concept among the respondents had few advantages and disadvantages. The advantage was that a well-established theory does not influence their idea of the concept to provide a very personal, localised and Pakistan-centric definition. On the other hand, the disadvantage was that the respondents shared multiple ideas, theories, nuances, and assumptions, which could be difficult

for a researcher to combine and define. Nonetheless, the following sections of this chapter will discuss how respondents conceptualised the term Neo-feudalism in the local context of Pakistan.

4.3.1. New Type of Feudalism

As stated earlier, most of the respondents were not aware of the term 'Neo-feudalism'. However, they attempted to define it. In this regard, Abira Ashfaq, a lawyer and member of Sindh Indigenous Rights Alliance, was of the view that Neo-feudalism can be defined as a new power dynamic in terms of land acquisition, utilisation and overall control, she said:

"I have not heard the term before, but I did look up this term, and it makes much sense. You can see that in the context of neoliberalism, we see many fluxes. There is changing power relations, changing capital shifts, land ownership shifts, and shifts in land use, as we can see the transition from agriculture to corporate farming, etc. It can be seen as a change in power relations in small towns and rural areas."

As per the statement above, the respondent views Neo-feudalism within neoliberalism with changing power relations. Similarly, Dr. Idrees Khuwaja sees it as a new type of feudalism that yields power in various forms, not limited to land. However, his definition also focuses on the aspect of control over people's choices and life. According to him, Neo-Feudalism could be defined as *"control of assets, control of cyberspace and controlling the will of other people and major aspects of their lives."*

4.3.2. New Landowners

When asked Dr. Keisar Bengali what he thinks of the term neo-feudalism, he states:

"I have not come across this term, Neo-feudalism, that you are talking about it. It is an exciting idea that you are putting forward. Neo-feudalism is not only happening in urban areas. For example, in Sindh, it has happened for a while in rural areas also. An individual

who wants to contest an election from a certain constituency buys land and becomes the landlord. With the land comes the sharecropping labour, the tenants, so they become beholden to them. Neo-Feudalism has also been a new phenomenon, where the new landowners are becoming neo-feudals in urban areas as well."

Dr. Kesiar Bengali further explained that Neo-feudalism in Pakistan could be observed by looking at state policies and how few groups exploit those policies for their interests. According to him, Bahria Town, Defence Housing Society and Bankers Mafia are a few examples of Neo-feudalism where owners of corporations, real estates, banks, and the Army extract resources by manipulating state powers. He also mentioned that *"it is not just the land mafia, the bankers mafia is also very powerful. They also determine a lot of broader economic policy."*

4.3.3. New forms of Atrocities & Exploitation by Real Estate Overlords

While describing Neo-feudalism in relation to housing societies in Karachi and Islamabad, Hafeez Baloch, a lawyer and member of Sindh Indigenous Alliance, believed that with the technological boom, many things have evolved in the recent past. The attitudes and atrocities of the bourgeois class have also evolved and transformed into a new kind of feudalism (Hafeez). He further states:

"I had an idea of Neo-feudalism, and I used to think about it since we are also semi-tribal people, so that is why we do know about neo-feudalism. It is also because we are interacting with Neo-feudals for the last ten years (referring to Malik Riaz⁷, owner of Bahria Town) in which we saw how the bourgeoisie act as 'wadera'.⁸ To attain power and money, they are

⁷ Malik Riaz Hussain is the Chairman of Bahria Foundation and considered the 6th richest man in Pakistan after Asif Ali Zardari (Pakistani Politician and former President of Pakistan).

⁸ *Wadera* is a Sindhi word which describes the authoritative feudal lord owning large chunks of land. Here the term is being used to define the authority, power and behavior of Malik Riaz who acts like a feudal lord.

using the same methods as old feudalism. We know neo-feudalism, we understand, and we are also witnessing it."

Hafeez Baloch presents a perspective of the indigenous community who have suffered at the hands of real estate developers and discriminatory practices of state institutions. Hafeez used the Sindhi term '*wadera*' for Malik Riaz. The term '*wadera*' has a connotation of extreme superiority, power and control over land and people, and it also suggests indigenous people see real state developers as feudal overlords.

4.3.4. Oligarch Rule of Real Estate Mafias

To explain the phenomenon of control as a prominent feature of Neo-feudalism, Dr Sarfraz Ahmed, a sociology professor based in Islamabad, states:

"if we look at Pakistan, especially after 2017, we can easily contextualise the term of neo-feudalism. In Pakistan and many countries except North America, we can see iron-hand oligarchy prevailing and controlling everything. Specific individuals are controlling society as a whole. This class comprises of real estate mafias, urban mafias, and industrialist mafias.

They operate under Neo-Feudalism paradigms".

In the statement above, there are multiple enlightening aspects. First, the literature review chapter of this thesis and different theoretical frameworks rejects Dr. Ahmed's concerning the USA not being controlled by few individuals. The concept of 'Neo-feudalism' is the invention of American economists, theorists and academics who have argued about the dominance of specific individuals dominating every aspect of American society and economy.

Second, the Iron Law of Oligarchy⁹ concept was a new concept and intrigued me to read more about it. Since this concept emerged just once during the data analysis and coding stage, I did not have enough evidence to analyse Neo-feudalism through this theoretical framework.

However, I mentioned this concept in this chapter as one of the data findings that could help future researchers explore neo-feudalism from a sociological perspective.

4.4. Theme 3: Comparison Between Classical Capitalism, Feudalism & Neo-Feudalism

While collecting data, many respondents drew comparisons between capitalism, feudalism and neo-feudalism. This comparison is essential in defining neo-feudalism and its correlation with Pakistan's mode of production and political economy. The comparison between these three modes of production has emerged as one of the key findings during research. The available literature on neo-feudalism does not provide a comparative analysis of how the neo-feudal production mode differs from capitalism and feudalism in Pakistan. In this regard, when asked respondents that how they would draw a comparison between capitalism, feudalism and neo-feudalism, their response is combined and presented under the following sub-headings:

4.4.1. Land

According to the interview data, the first point of comparison between feudalism, capitalism, and neo-feudal mode of production is the question of land (Dr. Ammar Ali Jan). In the feudal mode of production, the feudal lord controls the land and labour to accumulate wealth (Bengali). In the capitalist mode of production, the land also plays an essential role as one of the means of production. The industrialist class owns the land, labour, and capital to produce a commodity and then accumulates wealth by extracting surplus-value profits (Nadeem-ul-Haq). However, neo-feudalism is not limited to land but is a system that facilitates a new class of nobles in accumulating wealth through speculation, rent-seeking, exploitation of state power by individuals, and disintegrated sovereignty (Dr. Jan).

4.4.2. The Concept of Contract & Citizenship

In order to analyse the relationship between people and the dominant class in different modes of productions, it is pertinent to understand the modality of the social contract or agreement

between both ruling and ruled parties. In this regard, the second point of comparison between feudalism, capitalism, and neo-feudalism is the presence or absence of a social contract and agreements (Dr. Jan).

In the feudal system, there were unwritten agreements between feudal lords and its subjects. According to those agreements, the feudal lord had to perform specific duties to its subjects in exchange for their allegiance. Comparing traditional feudals with capitalists, a well-known researcher and urban planner, Arif Hassan, states that:

"a traditional feudal lord had some responsibilities. Capitalists, on the other hand, doesn't have any responsibilities towards people".

Explaining the non-verbal pact between feudal lords and peasants, Dr. Ammar Ali Jan states:

"If we look back at the history of traditional feudalism, the absence of verbal or written contract can be seen as a most significant feature of a feudal system. The relationship between feudal lord and peasant was based on customs. There is no actual legal obligation which means anything that is not guided by the custom is open to the whims, interpretation and the arbitrary intervention by feudal lords."

In this statement, Dr. Jan also explains that while feudal lords perform specific customary duties, the absence of written contracts leaves room for one-sided and exploitative arbitrary decisions.

Capitalism, considering the disadvantages of un-written agreements, introduced '*contracts*' and the idea of '*citizenship*'. According to Dr. Ammar Ali Jan, a bourgeois society introduced homogenous laws and citizenship to create equality between the masses. The concept of citizenship meant that "*everybody will operate under the same legal framework and can claim equality in the eyes of the law*" (Dr.Jan).

However, in neo-feudalism, the relationship between the neo-feudal class, state and people is not determined through written contracts or agreements. Like feudal lords, the neo-feudals overlords do not directly interact with people, instead, they use state institutions that include politicians, judiciary, bureaucracy, and Military to exploit the poor. In this regard, Dr. Keisar Bengali believed that Bahria Town Owner Malik Riaz had purchased land of people from the state in less than the market rate. It shows how little state or this emerging class of nobles care about the private property rights of the citizens. Dr. Bengali further states:

"the Bahria Town was established on land Malik Riaz purchased at a low price from the state. In reality, he would first occupy the land and then negotiate a price with people.... So we can say this class might have more control over people in the government, but they do not concern themselves with the opinion of the masses that they are causing trouble through creating housing issues & displacing them. This happens through state' support."

The statement of Mr. Bengali shows that land is acquired before negotiations, which means that laws do not protect the vulnerable in a neo-feudal system. The neo-feudal hierarchy disbands the capitalist concept of citizenship.

4.5. Theme 4. Role of Government in Urban Planning

According to the interview data, the 'Role of Government in Urban Planning' emerged as the fourth theme. The respondents stressed that role of government in urban planning is the most important factor which determines how land resources are distributed or assembled. In case of Pakistan it is also essential to understand the role of the government in addressing the issue of housing in Karachi and Islamabad. In this regard, Mr. Haris Gazdar, a senior economist, gave a detailed historical account of government's policies around housing issues in Karachi.

Gazdar believed that the Pakistan state has always used political undertones to legitimise its land-use policies and urban planning agendas. Giving a historical account of the urban development of Karachi after the Partition of Sub-continent in 1947, he states:

"After the partition, the government steered to provide housing for the Muslim migrants coming from India. The government officials deliberately used 'muhajirs' word (Urdu word for migrants) for the Muslims, linking them and Muhajireens of Makkah. The latter took refuge in Madina following Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This means that if someone is from Parsi, Christian or any other faith, he or she can not be considered Muhajirs. These communities were not referred to as Muhajireens because they were not Muslims. So the beginning of urban planning and development in Karachi based on to create housing for the Muslim migrants of India."

As stated above, the government wanted to create housing for Muslim migrants in Karachi, and for that, it has to acquire land from villagers who have owned the land for many years (Gazdar). The government acquired that land through the colonial Land Acquisition Act of 1894. Since the people living in those areas had weak claims on the paper, it was easy for the government to snatch their land and dispossess them from their properties. The land was acquired and then it was handed over to private developers. In this regard, Haris Gazdar further states:

"you have to understand that Karachi Development Authority came into being to provide housing for the poor Muslim migrants. However, the government was never interested in developing that land. They need private developers, and when you bring private developers, they need profits. So the housing becomes expensive for the poor to afford, and you see informal settlements expanding. The state's urban planning or land-use policies are never for the poor but to facilitate the private developers."

According to the statement above, the government would prioritise housing on the terms that private developers will develop those housing societies. If developers set the value of a house, they would surely hike the price to earn maximum profit, and people belonging to the low-income strata of society would not afford a house.

The housing crisis for the poor increased, and more 'Katchi Abadis' were established in Karachi. When asked Dr. Keisar Bengali about the role of government and initiatives that it took to address the housing crisis for the poor, he shared that since 1977, low-income housing has never been government's priority. In this regard, he states:

"Since 1977, not a single Low Income Housing has come up in the up to the Fourth Five Year Plan. A portfolio plan was never implemented. However, at least the plan was made. All these plans used to have a chapter on housing. The government would allocate the money, but those plans were never fully attained."

Dr. Bengali also shared government always considered housing a private sector domain with credit financing. In Karachi, the House Building Financing model was introduced to provide credit support to people who can not afford a plot or a house. To be eligible for the facility, a person should prove stable monthly income or collateral to prove that he/she can pay the instalments. The same is the case with Prime Minister's Naya Pakistan Housing Scheme, which has been branded to provide low-markup loans to the poor so they could build or buy a house.

Dr. Bengali further states:

"So of course, who can take credit? It has to be someone who has some collateral or some ability to repay instalments on time. But most workers don't know if they will have any money in their hands at the end of the month. How can they be sure of paying their installments in time, and they don't pay their installments in time there are brackets confiscated. So there is absolutely nothing for the middle class and the poor."

As per the statement above, government policies for housing were not designed considering the socio-economic realities of the working class. The housing projects were made more profitable for either real estate developers or credit financing institutions. Ayesha Shahid, an urban planner, based in Karachi, criticised the government's inefficient role in making policy frameworks concerning urban planning. She states:

"The role of government in urban planning is setting up the rules and regulating the land markets. It determines that who is benefiting from the land assembly and who will be at the greatest disadvantage. But in case of Pakistan, the role of government has remained surprisingly biased towards certain groups."

Ayesha Shahid further shared that, unlike any other market, the land market is finite because the land is a scarce resource. The role of the government in regulating the land or real estate market is also crucial because whatever will be built on the land, it is going to stay on that particular piece of land for many years (Shahid). In this regard, she states:

"Government should determine that since land is a scarce resource, is the privatisation of large size landholdings beneficial for the future generations? Government should be concerned about how it will meet housing needs for the growing population, which will eventually need housing? Why there are no master plans and considerations for the future challenges?"

Ayesha Shahid's analysis of the government's land-use policies also suggests that land assemblies like Bahria Town Karachi and Defense Housing Authority will also shrink space for the marginalised population.

The role of the government in urban planning and privatising land to private developers was also criticised by Marvi Mazhar in the interview. She believed that the government has never

realised the importance of having a Master Plan for Karachi, nor it has considered the need to reevaluate the privatisation of agricultural land for commercial purposes. Marvi further states:

"Karachi city has no master plan. There is no room for plantations in the city. The development and urban planning policies have no regard for the environment or people's needs. Moreover, if you look at the legal point of view, destroying the city's greenery is synonymous with destroying the city. Secondly, we can not and should not use agricultural land for commercial purposes."

According to the data collected through interviews, there is a need for active and inclusive urban policies designed to cater to low-income communities' needs and reevaluate the current policies in place.

4.5.Theme 6: Structures & Dynamics of Neo-Feudalism in Pakistan

My second research question deals with identifying the structures and dynamics of Neo-feudalism through which new nobles operate. In this regard, I am taking the case study of the Bahria Town Karachi Housing project under this theme to analyse the structures and dynamics which enable neo-feudal approach to real estate. In this regard, I have reviewed news articles and court orders to analyze the timeline of Bahria Town Karachi and the way it has displaced the people. I have also asked interview respondents to share their analysis about Bahria Town's occupation and legality of such a massive land assembly. While analyzing their responses and literature, the following paragraphs will discuss the neo-feudal occupation of land by Bahria Town in Karachi with the help of different state and political institutions.

4.5.1. Bahria Town & Patronage of Military Institutions

Bahria Town Karachi is owned by Malik Riaz Hussain, a business and real estate tycoon of Pakistan. However, according to respondents, the Pakistan Army has played a significant role in facilitating Malik Riaz in land grabbing through extortion and forced displacements. The

military institutes in Pakistan have been influencing the economic policy since the country's inception. Military-owned Defense Housing Scheme controls a considerable chunk of land in Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad. In this regard, Arif Hassan rightly points that

"Malik Riaz is a produced by Military and Politicians".

The respondents also believed that Bahria Town was established as an extended arm of the Defense Housing Authority (DHA) owned by the Pakistan Army. A profile of Malik Riaz Hussain published in Dawn Newspaper on June 10 2012, states that DHA facilitated Malik Riaz in land grabbing of land worth Rs. 62 billion from an estimated 150,000 people who belonged to lower and lower-middle-income groups (Dawn, 2012). In this regard, it is pertinent to look at the origin of Bahria Town and how it has evolved. Marvi Mazhar, a famous architect and academic, shared that Malik Riaz in 1996, deliberately requested Bahria Foundation¹⁰ to use the name 'Bahria' for his housing project in exchange for 10% shares (Marvi Mazhar).¹¹ Interestingly, Malik Riaz already owned a firm 'Hussain Global', yet he chose the 'Bahria' name for his housing scheme, which seems a strategy to gain legitimacy in the public eye (Marvi Mazhar). In this regard, Marvi states:

"If you look at it closely, the name Bahria has a ring to it. Malik Riaz knew that like DHA, he has to legitimise his land grabbing and the only way to legitimise it is to select a name which has military connotations."

Hafeez Baloch, an advocate and member of Sindh Indigenous Rights Alliance, also see this interlink between Malik Riaz and DHA, he states:

¹⁰ Bahria Foundation was established in 1982 by Government of Pakistan as Charitable Trust under Endowment Act of 1890. The Bahria Town committee administration is chaired by the Chief of the Naval Staff. Bahria Foundation today owns real estate, different commercial business, educational institutes and maritime works organizations. Initially Bahria Foundation was established to support retired Naval Officers but later on it became a profitable business entity.

¹¹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1172384>

"Malik Riaz illegally confiscates people's land, so indeed, he is feudal. People who own DHA are also feudals. In Karachi, every builder mafia is feudal who exploit people in the name of development."

Similarly, Ammar Rashid was of the view that the military-bureaucratic apparatus of Pakistan has always had more influence on decision-making concerning land as compared to any other group, he states:

"The fact that the military-bureaucratic apparatus of the state, and its control over land and resources, and decision making is far stronger than the rest of society. Moreover, such groups in society that have some capital and have relative power, they have relationships of accommodation with the state through this military-bureaucratic apparatus."

As per the statement above, any individual with some financial capital tries to enter the realm of business and wealth accumulation through building ties with military institutions since it is the only institution with the power and authority to bent the existing policies and laws. Supporting Ammar's statement, Lawyer Abira Ashfaque believed that one could not deny the hegemonic control of Military institutions. She states that

"we cannot ignore the hegemonic control of the Military institutions in Pakistan on policies and acquisition of land."

Abira used the term 'hegemony' to describe the traditional feudalistic role military institutions have used to extract resources through rent-seeking and support certain individuals. In this regard, Ammar Ali Jan explained the support Malik Riaz has received from military personnel in the past, he states:

"Within state institutions, you will find loyalty among different kinds of tycoons. In 2012, DG ISPR and many other Army Officials appeared in a court hearing on behalf of Malik Riaz

during Dr. Arsalan Iftikhar vs Malik Riaz¹² case. They vouched for Malik Riaz's good character and reputation¹³."

Moreover, according to respondents, many Army Officials are on the payroll of Bahria Town. Malik Riaz has hired retired Army Officers at its top management positions. The reason to hire military personnel, according to respondents, is nothing but to materialise the patron-client relationship with military institutions.

In the light of data collected during interviews, it is concluded that one of the structures through which neo-feudalism operates in Pakistan is a military institution that provides support, patronage and extra-legal advantages to tycoons such as Malik Riaz.

4.5.2. Parcelized Sovereignty

Parcelized sovereignty has been defined in the literature review section and illustrated in the conceptual framework in chapter 2 of this dissertation. Historians Ellen Meixsin Wood and Perry Anderson defined parcelled sovereignty as a key feature of European Feudalism (Wood 2008). The rule of law during European Feudalism was replaced with the arbitration of feudal lords, and the laws formulated by the feudals claimed fragmented jurisdiction (Wood 2008). Jodi Dean describes parcelled sovereignty as a neo-feudal characteristic in which private corporate entities are granted extra-legal favours and exempted from the legal obligations (Dean 2020). Interestingly, the data collected through interviews suggest that sovereignty has always been parcelised to provide impunity to certain economic groups and individuals in Pakistan.

¹² <https://tribune.com.pk/story/394736/enemy-of-an-enemy>

¹³ In this statement, respondents refers to the controversial case in which Dr. Arsalan Iftikhar Chaudhry, son of Chief Justice Iftikhar Ahmed Chaudhry, was accused of taking a bribe of 400 million from Malik Riaz to influence the judicial process. In 2012 Chief Justice Iftikhar Ahmed Chaudhry took a suo moto to probe an investigation.

The makeup of Pakistan's political economy has been designed to accommodate certain economic groups through impunity and fragmented laws. Likewise, respondents believed that Bahria Town could not dispossess people from their land if the laws were followed (Arif Hassan). The massive land assembly by Bahria Town Karachi was not possible without the support of politicians and government institutions. To understand how parcelization of sovereignty has been utilised by Bahria Town Karachi, I asked respondents about their view of state institutions' role in facilitating Malik Riaz's land occupation in Karachi & Islamabad. Their responses are discussed below.

Respondents believed that people's fundamental rights, such as owning property, are no longer protected by the country's political institutions. According to Dr. Ammar Ali Jan, the political elite of Pakistan has constantly created an exception for individuals like Malik Riaz. This state of exception is what Jodi Dean called 'Parcelization of Sovereignty', the first fundamental characteristic of neo-feudalism (Dean 2016). Dr. Ammar Ali Jan explains the parcelization of sovereignty in Pakistan's context as:

"Parcelization of sovereignty is when some state of exception is formed. In such a space of exceptions, all forms of normality, laws and rights are suspended. The suspension of laws allows few people from the outside to manipulate and extract as many resources as they can. Malik Riaz has acquired land because all legalities were suspended for him, he was given a state of exception, and he reaped benefits out of it."

In light of the above definition, it is pertinent to analyse how the state of exceptions was created for Bahria Town to pursue the illegal occupation of land. The following section will provide the legal frameworks that have excluded the poor and facilitated the real estate developers.

4.5.3. State of Exception: Legalizing Land Grabbing

The Bahria Town initially claimed that it had purchased approximately 7,631 acres in Malir District, Karachi to develop a Sub-Urban American style gated housing project along the Super Highway, northeast Karachi (Malik Asad, 2015). Supreme Court took a Suo-Moto notice, questioning the legality of land acquired by Bahria Town Karachi.

In August 2016, the Supreme Court of Pakistan, in its landmark order, ordered Bahria Town to halt any further construction. The order was issued about the Suo-motto order by the Supreme Court who questioned the legality of state land acquired by Bahria at 25% of the market rate. The Malir Development Authority exchanged the state land with private land owned by Bahria Town in Gadap Town, which was not under the authority's jurisdiction. The bench headed by Justice Amir Hani Muslim and Justice Mushir Alam found the land swap between Bahria and MDA puzzling and requested the authorities involved explain under which law this land swap was allowed. The Supreme Court also ordered National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to conduct an investigation and present the report within two months (Siddiqui 2016).

During the court hearing, NAB submitted an interim report along with a survey prepared by the Directorate of Survey, Ministry of Defense, which stated that total land *“consolidated by the MDA and handed over to Bahria Town measured 9,385.185 acres”* (Siddiqui, 2016). In this regard, the Supreme Court Judgement of 2016 states:

“According to the survey report, the M.D.A has exchanged/consolidated 9140.260 acres of land to Bahria Town. The survey report contains a portion of green colour with black lines, reflecting that M.D.A has consolidated a piece of land measuring 244.925 Acres which the Bahria Town has not yet developed. The survey report further shows that the total land consolidated by the M.D.A and handedover to the Bahria Town is 9385.185 Acres. The portion marked with pink colour as “A” reflects that the Bahria Town has developed 386.276

acres of land which has not yet been consolidated by the M.D.A. The portion of survey report in pink colour marked as “B” reflects that Bahria Town has developed an area of 1975.059 Acres which though developed by the Bahria Town has not been consolidated by the M.D.A.

Another portion of the survey report marked as “C” in pink colour shows that the land measuring 410.444 Acres has been developed by the Bahria Town, but has not been consolidated by the M.D.A. The survey report shows that total land developed/under development but not consolidated by the M.D.A comes to 2771.79 Acres. In this respect, total area of land of Bahria Town reflected in the survey report comes to 12156.964 Acres.”

(Supreme Court Order dated 01st August 2016 under CIVIL MISC. APPLICATION NO.376-K OF 2014 IN S.M.C. NO.16 OF 2011).

According to the judgement, the land MDA handed over to Bahria was 9385.185 acres. However, the report prepared by the Ministry of Defense suggests that the total area of land acquired by Bahria was 12156.964 acres means Bahria Town developed 27771 acres of unconsolidated land. Interestingly, Bahria Town continued occupying more land and kept allotting land to the people who had made the purchase.

In 2018, the Supreme Courts Bench, headed by Justice Ejaz Ahmed Khan, the exchange of land in question ‘null & void’ as per the Colonization of Government Act (COGLA) 1912. While critically reviewing the language and content of the judgement, it was revealed that the people whose lands were illegally acquired were not even parties in the judgement, nor their concerns were heard. Therefore, I am providing the text from judgement in two sections. The first section declares the land swap by MDA illegal. The judgement dated 04th May 2018 states:

“we are constrained to declare that the grant of the land to the MDA, its exchange with the land of the Bahria Town and anything done pursuant thereto being against the provisions of

COGLA 1912 and statement of conditions are void ab initio and as such have no existence.

The government land would go back to the government and the land of the Bahria Town exchanged for the government land would go back to the Bahria Town.” (Supreme Court Judgement, CIVIL MISC. APPLICATION NO.376-K OF 2014 IN S.M.C. NO.16 OF 2011.)

This first part of the judgment was a landmark to declare the illegal acquisition by Bahria null and void. However, in the next paragraph, the Court provides a solution favouring Bahria Town and MDA without consulting indigenous communities of Malir District whose lands were forcibly acquired. The second paragraph states:

“Since a great deal of work has been done by the Bahria Town and a third-party interest has been created in favour of hundreds of allottees, the land could be granted to the Bahria Town afresh by the Board of Revenue under the provisions of COGLA 1912.” (Supreme Court Judgement, CIVIL MISC. APPLICATION NO.376-K OF 2014 IN S.M.C. NO.16 OF 2011.)

This point was also raised by Usama Khawar, a lawyer based in Islamabad whom I interviewed to interpret the judgements of the Supreme Court. He believed that the decision should have ended where it stated that the land exchange between MDA and Bahria Town was illegal. He states:

“The remaining part of the judgement could be challenged since people who owned the land, are now dispossessed by both State and Bahria Town, are not considered the party. The Court protected the rights of the third party allottees. It provided a provision to Bahria Town as well, but failed to recognize people who owned the land in the very first place.”

The same concern was raised by Kazim Mahesar, a lawyer based in Karachi. He states:

“Villagers were not a part of the decision, which is a clear violation of article 10 of the constitution, which gives the right to a fair trial to every citizen. Government and Supreme

Court did not bother to make the villagers party of the decision who are the main custodians of the land.”

In the judgement of 2019, the Supreme Court halted the NAB investigation against Bahria Town. The judgment also agreed on a 460 Billion Pakistani Rupees settlement, which will be paid in instalments for over seven years to the government (Bhatti 2019).¹⁴ The judgement also made clear that once Bahria Town pays all dues to Supreme Court, the allottees will be granted 99 years of the lease and own all the assets within the premises of Bahria Town Karachi (Bhatti 2019). The supreme court will then decide how and to whom the amount will be paid. Moreover, Supreme Court only approved a plan of 16,896 acres which Bahria Town has developed against the 24,571 acres of occupied land. (Final Order by Supreme Court dated 19 March 2019, case: Civil Misc. Application No.376-K of 2014.)

Kazim Mahesar, a lawyer by profession and affectee of Bahria Town Karachi project, disagreeing with the court’s judgement, further stated that land assembly by Malik Riaz in Karachi and Islamabad does not fall under the legal obligations of Bourgeois law. Bahria Town Karachi acquired land through extra-legal methods and brutal force (Kazim). Kazim Mahesar further states:

"the occupation by Bahria Town in Karachi is illegal and neo-feudal. I call this an illegal occupation because there are laws in Sindh that prohibited any decision by the government concerning land privatisation that has been taken without the provincial assembly's approval.

Sindh Assembly in March 2015 unanimously passed a resolution in which the assembly recommended the government stop Malir Development Authority from selling the land of local inhabited communities to business enterprises since it will dislocate villagers and destroy historical sites. Therefore I call this land acquisition illegal and unconstitutional."

¹⁴ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1471002>

The analysis of essential court orders and judgements reveal that the judiciary has protected the right of middle-class households who were allotted the land in Bahria Town. However, it did not consider the plight of indigenous communities who have been displaced and brutally dispossessed from their indigenous lands. Moreover, one can also see that Bahria Town kept expanding its occupation despite all restrictions imposed by the courts. If in 2016 it acquired 12156.964 acres of land as stated in the judgment of 2016, then by March 2019, it had acquired 25,571 acres. This shows how the neo-feudal class operates and exploits the state power and impunity despite imposed restrictions.

4.5.4. Coercive Force

Brutal and coercive force is also a key feature of disintegrated sovereignty (Dean 2020). In this regard, respondents also shared that coercive force is becoming an essential tool of neo-feudal control in real estate development. Coercive power is also characterised as a feudal tool of exploitation, in which a feudal lord makes laws to protect his rights and punishes those who disobey.

In case of Bahria Town, the coercive force was used as an instrument in different ways. Naziha Syed Ali writes in her investigative report published in Dawn titled '*Bahria Town & others: Greed unbound*' (updated on 28th September 2019)¹⁵ that indigenous were afraid to resist Bahria's forced acquisition. The communities faced challenges on multiple fronts. First, the state-appointed SSP Rao Anwar who illegally detained local villagers and pressed terrorism charges on them following the order of the Sindh Government. Second, the retired colonels hired by Bahria Town kept threatening the people and pressured them to submit.

Even after the court's decision of 2019 in favour of Bahria Town, Bahria Town did not stop and kept acquiring land in Malir District. This time, the state and local feudals provided the

¹⁵ Bahria Town & others: Greed unbound <https://www.dawn.com/news/1503689>

required workforce to dispossess and displace residents who refused to sell their lands. In this regard, Hafeez states:

"Local feudal lords and politicians have provided the manpower needed to blackmail and displace indigenous people in Malir District where Bahria Town is located. When Malik Riaz uses Malik Asad Sikander and his paid gundas to harass people, how is this system different from feudalism?"

Hafeez Baloch shared his lived experience as a resident of one of those villages that Bahria Town Karachi destroyed. In the light of his statement, one can see that neo-feudals also manipulate the local feudal structures in Pakistan to gain control over illegal land, harass the communities and use brutal force to suppress any resistance.

Hafeez Baloch's statement also draws our attention to the unique feature of Pakistan's neo-feudalism: the utilisation of local feudal structures by the neo-feudal class to exploit the people. This feature is missing in Jodi Dean's analysis of parcelized sovereignties in the west. Due to the bourgeois revolution in Europe, feudal lords were annihilated by the industrial capitalist class. However, in Pakistan, the feudal hierarchies are still prevalent because most politicians hold large landholdings in rural areas around the urban cities.

The interview data implies that law enforcement and paramilitary forces forced people out of their homes. In this regard, Abira Ashfaque shares her experience while surveying displacements caused by Bahria Town Karachi in Sindh. She states:

"While we were working with Bahria Town Affectees, we saw the heavy presence of Rangers soldiers in the vicinity who have been forcing the people to evacuate their homes. The question is, who gave the order to Rangers to do this job? Of course, the politicians are providing all kinds of support to Malik Riaz."

Comparing Bahria Town's strategies of land-grabbing, Arif Hassan shared that more than 400 people were suspiciously murdered during the occupation of land by Bahria Town in Islamabad. He states:

"around 400 people murdered who owned land in Islamabad where Bahria Town Housing project is constructed. It has been several years; there is no justice for those people."

The use of coercive force also includes silencing the voices of dissent. On June 6th 2021, a crowd gathered outside Bahria Town Karachi and protested against the project's expansion beyond the limit approved by the Supreme Court of Pakistan. The protestors were booked under Anti-Terrorism Act since some unknown people torched the gate of Bahria Town.

As per the residents, Bahria Town has been acquiring more land and destroying the livelihood of people. In this regard, Hafeez Baloch states:

"When people refuse to leave their land, Bahria Town destroys their water supply, establish a boundary wall around them and put his guards to keep a check on the people and their activities."

The statement given above proves that coercive force has been used as a tool to occupy, dispossess and dislocate indigenous communities of Malir District.

4.5.5. Political Patronage

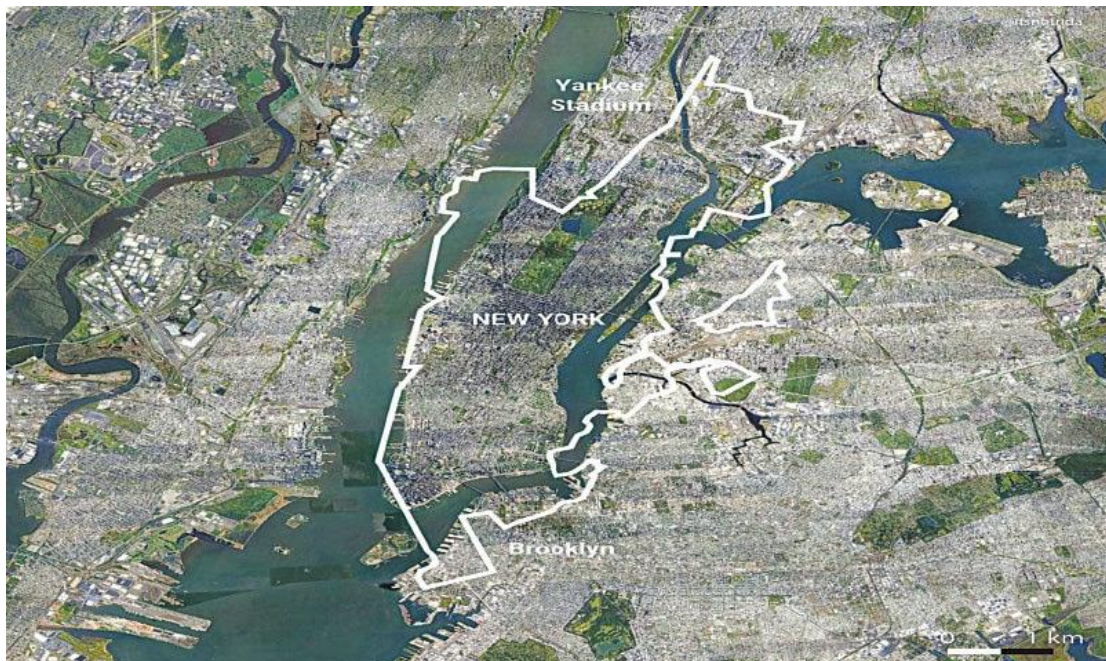
Speaking of government and politicians' role in facilitating certain individuals and private entities, Arif Hassan expressed his concern about the scale of land sold to Malik Riaz by Malir Development Authority, Karachi, despite the protests by the indigenous communities in 2019. The Bahria Town kept acquiring land. According to Arif Hassan, the vast and un-official land assembly of Bahria Town is equivalent to Manhattan, New York, which was not possible without the support of police, board of revenue and politicians. In his article published in Dawn

News on February 14, 2021, titled '*Understanding The Truth Behind The Façade*', a satellite map image of Bahria Town's was placed on New York's map image.¹⁶

Emphasising the extra-legal role played by politicians and government departments, Arif Hassan states:

"Even minor land assemblies of around 200 acres take longer than that, but in Bahria Town Karachi, more than 35000 acres were assembled without prior planning, which is one striking feature. Also, we do not have records of how much land has been assembled, how many people were displaced."

Figure 4.1: Sattelite Image of Bahria Town's Occupation



Bahria Town Karachi's outline superimposed on satellite imagery of New York to give a sense of the spatial scale of the project. A land use change over such a large area is not a part of any official plan | Mapping by Rida Khan (Advocacy planner) Archived from: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1606997/understanding-the-truth-behind-the-facade>

The statement above justifies that political and government entities have fragmented the laws or exploited the laws to facilitate the neo-feudal class in Pakistan. According to the

¹⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1606997/understanding-the-truth-behind-the-facade>

respondents, Bahria Town Karachi has also sought rent-seeking ways to exploit state resources.

In this regard, Dr. Keisar Bengali states:

“The K4 water pipeline was need of Karachi city. It was supposed to provide water to people living in Karachi. However, Bahria Town got it diverted. Likewise, there are talks about creating a flyover that connects the Bahria Town to the central city, but of course, the flyover will be constructed with people's tax money.”

It is interesting to note that Bahria Town also benefits through rent-seeking methods and uses state’s resources. But the question may arise that what does the political institutes of the country get in return? Why do they support the neo-feudal class in attaining their extra-legal and extortive profits? In this regard, I asked respondents to shed some light on the benefits received by the politicians in exchange for their rendered services to real estate developers.

According to the respondents, the neo-feudal class creates business ties with politicians through funding the election campaigns. Quoting an example of corporate funding to political campaigns in the USA, Dr. Idrees Khuwaja states:

"Ford motors, Google or whatever, if they are financing the election campaign of Donald Trump, of course, they are not doing it for charity. They expect something in return. So even those corporations are acting like statesmen. Previously, in Pakistan, people like Malik Riaz used to fund the election campaigns to gain political favours from the government. It was illegal, but it kept happening. However, very few people know that the Electoral Bill of 2021 allows corporations to fund election campaigns. Funding election campaigns is legal now."

Dr. Khuwaja, in the statement above, highlights that through election campaign funding, many individuals and economic groups bargain for political favours, which results in policies to facilitate rent-seeking.

As per the interview data, it is concluded that political and government institutions have also played a key role in sustaining the control and authority of new emerging classes through creating a state of exception for the few people, that includes the owner of Bahria Town.

4.5.6. Spatial, Class & Ethnic Inequalities

In the literature review chapter, I have discussed in detail the characteristics of neo-feudalism given in the conceptual framework of Jodi Dean. One of the characteristics of neo-feudalisms, according to Jodi Dean, is spatial inequalities that is created through land privatization. Dean sees the state's massive scale of land privatization as one of the signs of neo-feudal hierarchies (Dean 2020). This feature is also illustrated in the conceptual framework given in chapter 2 of this dissertation. In order to understand the rationale behind the expansion of gated housing projects in Pakistan, I asked respondents to share their views about the utility of such massive land assemblies by private entities. Are these projects meeting the housing demand of Karachi? To which Arif Hassan shared:

“Bahria Town was not the need of Karachi due to several reasons. First, it is too far away from the main city. People cannot afford the transport cost of living there. Secondly, the question arises: who are those 3 million people going to be housed there? The policymakers don't have any answers.”

According to Arif Hassan, the Bahria Town project was not the need of Karachi. A similar response was given by Abira Ashfaque, a lawyer based in Karachi. She shared that DHA phase 8 is still available for the housing project. It is a more viable location since it is in the central city. However, the privatizing of land in hinterlands allows the developer to purchase land through illegal methods. Thus, the gated communities have been created in the suburbs to profit through speculations and extortion by dislocating the poor.

Interestingly, spatial inequalities as a new power hierarchy have also emerged during data collection in the field. Respondents shared that the land privatisation of the Bahria Town housing project is one of the neo-feudal symbols of spatial inequalities.

The respondents believed one of the ways to assert their control and authority, owners of housing projects, had created fences to demonstrate the spatial inequality. Criticising the role of public-private partnerships in building walled housing societies, Marvi Mazhar states:

"The Public-private partnership has brought in corporatisation, which means that no matter if the state says that such partnerships will benefit the poor in need of housing, the purpose of these private developers is to bring fencing, ticketing, schedule and timings to exclude the poor."

According to Marvi Mazhar, ticketing and fencing are tools to create 'spatial inequalities'. Fencing, as Marvi argued, is a 'symbol of power'. I found Marvi Mazhar's analysis as an Architect fascinating. She described the zonal map of the Bahria Town Karachi project and explained the symbols of power structures even inside the walls of Bahria Town. In this regard, Marvi states:

"You should have a look at Bahria's zonal map and analyse it. Bahria is a rectangular space that has houses assembled area wise. Firstly, there are small houses of 300 square yards and then big houses of 500 or 1000 square yards. The big houses are given a unique and separate place from the rest of the small houses. Then at the top of the hill within Bahria, one house belongs to Malik Riaz's son. You can see the power structure within this housing scheme by looking at its design and how it is planned."

The power structures outside the walls of Bahria Town are also quite visible. The construction of Bahria Town on land owned by indigenous people is a constant reminder of class disparity for the neighbouring villagers. According to the data collected through interviews,

communities living in villages near Bahria feel alienated. The land that once belonged to their natives and neighbouring communities now seems like a dystopian future they could never be part of. In this regard, Abira Ashfaque shares:

“While working with villagers, I have noticed the immense feel of alienation they face. They feel their identities are being washed away. The land they were once custodians of is now alien to them. The Grand Mosques, Zoos, Golf Courses and Cinemas, these all facilities are not for them. They could never get a chance to go inside the walls of Bahria.”

Secondly, in the case of Sindh, spatial inequality has also been observed through a nationalist lens. The people of Sindh see Malik Riaz as an occupier and destroyer of their cultural identities. In this regard, Gohar Ali Memon, an academic and Indigenous Rights activist, states:

“The spatial inequalities are not limited to the class disparities. Here nationalist identities are equally important. The destruction of centuries-old villages, graveyards and homes is the erasure of Sindh’s history from the face of the earth.”

Gohar further states that creating housing for 3 million people in Bahria Town should also be seen as a tool to alter the demographics of rural Karachi. The dislocation of Sindhi and Baloch tribes and providing homes to the urbanite elite of Karachi is also an attempt to turn the Sindhi communities into a minority that the new settlers will eventually overpower.

In the end, the findings of this theme suggest that Bahria Town is a neo-feudal entity that has gained support from Military and government institutions that includes Bahria Foundation, Defense Housing Scheme, Board of Revenue and Malir Development Authority the acquisition of state and private land through illegal means. The results defined that neo-feudalism in Pakistan operates through parcelled sovereignty, weak property rights, political patronage of state institutions, rent-seeking, land privatization and spatial inequalities.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

5.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the results of the study were discussed in detail. In this chapter, I will discuss significant findings, conclude the analysis of my work and share the limitations I have experienced during data collection. In the end, I will list down some policy recommendations for policymakers.

5.2. Conclusion

This study aimed to attain four objectives. The first objective was to define the term Neo-Feudalism in the context of Pakistan; the second objective was to investigate the characteristics of neo-feudalism, the third objective dealt with finding the structures and dynamics through which neo-feudal class manoeuvres in the country and lastly to articulate the intersection of landed elites within the new nobility. This work of research has attained all four above mentioned objectives successfully. The research findings are further presented under the headings below.

5.2.1. Political Economy of Pakistan

To define Neo-Feudalism, the study first aimed to analyse the political economy of Pakistan. The results show that Pakistan's political economy and production mode are neither based on free-market capitalist principles nor feudalism. In the light of collected data, the country's political economy is the archetype of Neo-feudalism with its striking characteristics of weak domestic production base, rent-seeking policies, the patron-client relationship between state institutions and economic groups, artificially speculated real estate markets and massive land assembled by Military-owned institutions and local land grabbers.

5.2.2. Comparative Analysis of Capitalist, Feudal and Neo-Feudal Modes of Production

The unanticipated feature of defining neo-feudalism was the comparative analysis of different modes of production. I did not ask the respondents to draw a comparison between Capitalism, feudalism and neo-feudalism. In this regard, the data suggests that in neo-feudalism, the neo-feudal class exploits the spaces created by the government to its benefit. Those spaces are created through a shift in economic thinking and decision-making. In Pakistan, the state is no more interested in improving the domestic base of production. The state has learned the art of renting out its resources to external forces such as China or local groups, including Bahria Town Karachi or the Owners of the Banking Sector. Moreover, the capital and real estate market in Pakistan does not function as per the free-market principles of Capitalism. The markets are saturated, controlled, and manipulated by few individuals, resulting in excruciating inequalities and shrinking spaces for upward class mobility, which has establishments of small 'fiefdoms'.

The second aspect of looking at the distinctive features of neo-feudalism regarding capitalist or feudal modes of production is the land, absence of a contract, and disintegrated citizenship as the principal contradiction between feudal, capitalist and neo-feudal modes of production. If in feudalism, the feudal lord acted as a liege to the Monarch, in Neo-Feudalism, the state acts as liege of the neo-feudal lords. In feudalism, the feudal lord extracted rents from the tenants to pay the monarchy. However, in Neo-Feudalism, the state and local feudal lords extract the rents, dislocate the residents, and facilitate a neo-feudal lord to earn maximum profits. This surprising finding has ultimately strengthened my argument that Pakistan is a neo-feudal state since all the features mentioned above are present in Pakistan.

5.2.3. Definition of Neo-Feudalism in Context of Pakistan

To my surprise, out of 20 respondents, only two respondents were aware of the term 'Neo-Feudalism', which added advantage to my study in localising the concept of neo-feudalism in

the context of Pakistan. The data results show that neo-feudalism is defined through four major aspects. The first aspect sees neo-feudalism as a modern, more exploitative and post-capitalism phenomenon. The second aspect finds neo-feudalism as a result of new-emerging landowning classes, including military-owned corporations, real estate developers and politicians. The third aspect explains neo-feudalism from the emerging trends of exploitation, extortion, brutalisation, and feudalistic behaviour towards people belonging to the marginalised segments of society. Lastly, the fourth aspect that defines neo-feudalism finds land acquisition by real estate developers creating a new type of hierarchies that causes spatial, class and ethnic inequalities.

In short, in this dissertation, Neo-Feudalism has been defined as a new form of feudalism prevailing in urban Pakistan, with emerging classes of the military, real state owners and politicians at the top, who by exploitation and extortions deprive people of fundamental rights, which ultimately results in spatial, class and ethnic inequalities.

5.2.4. Land Use, Urban Planning & Real State Development in Pakistan

Since the focus of this study was to analyse neo-feudalism prevailing in urban Karachi and Pakistan, the findings include the critical analysis of land use, urban planning policies and real state development in Pakistan. As per the findings, the land-use policies in Pakistan have political undertones, which means that the land assembly and privatization decisions are made to facilitate certain economic groups such as the military enterprises, government institutions, politicians and real estate developers. The neo-feudal class, which includes real estate developers, easily bypasses the due processes, consultations with concerned parties and legal pre-requisites concerning land use without any fear of accountability or consequences.

The results also show that urban planning is non-existent in Pakistan since the cities are planned without officially approved schemes. The judgements of the Supreme Court on the land acquisition of Bahria Town Karachi in Malir District have also raised this concern. Malir

Development Authority and Sindh Board of Revenue not only illegally exchanged state land with private land owned by Bahria Town, but it sold the land at less than 25% of the market rate. Secondly, the construction of the housing project began before the approval of any environmental assessment, which shows that many due processes were bypassed to make the acquisition possible.

Real estate development in Pakistan is also functioning without any regulations or principles. The data suggests that real estate in Pakistan has become the most lucrative market for investment. However, the real estate market in Pakistan does not operate the way markets work in other countries. The real estate market relies on supplying expensive housing without considering the purchasing power of the people who need the house. Most of the flats, houses and plots remain empty because the developers artificially speculate the price people could not afford to pay. Moreover, the real estate market is also monopolised by few individuals who, through the illegal occupation of land, dispossession and rent-seeking, manage to purchase state lands at a minimal cost.

5.2.5. Structures & Dynamics of Neo-Feudalism in Pakistan

The study has successfully explained the structures and dynamics of Neo-Feudalism in Pakistan by analysing the case study of the Bahria Town Karachi project. The results show that in Pakistan, there are six aspects through which neo-feudalism operates Pakistan. A detailed analysis of each aspect is presented in the paragraphs below.

Military institutions in Pakistan play a crucial role in enabling the monopoly of neo-feudal lords. The data shows that Malik Riaz Hussain, owner of Bahria Town, opted to name his housing empire after 'Bahria', which means 'Navy', demonstrating his ties with the most influential institution of the country. The retired military officials hold vital positions in Bahria Town management and often use their institutional power to exploit people who refuse to sell their lands to Bahria. The results also show that Bahria is considered an extended arm of the

Defense Housing Authority since it has helped Bahria acquire land worth Rs. 62 billion. Neo-feudal class, therefore, operates through military institutions in Pakistan.

Parcelized sovereignty is the second feature of the neo-feudal system, which helps new emerging classes to operate. The data shows that in Pakistan, neo-feudal classes operate by creating a state of exceptions with the help of state institutions. In this regard, the study finds disintegration of laws, policies and regulations created by political institutions, local feudals, government departments, judiciary and national accountability bureaus. The study shows that in parcelized sovereignty, people's fundamental rights are distorted. This distortion of rights has also been observed in the case study of Bahria Town Karachi. The supreme court judgements have been presented in this dissertation where the state institutions cast aside the custodians of Malir's indigenous land by not including them in its decisions and legalised the land-grabbing by Bahria Town. Neo-feudalism, therefore, uses parcelled and fragmented laws to operate in Pakistan.

Coercive force is the third feature of neo-feudalism through which new emerging classes in Pakistan operate. The study presents data that Bahria Town has acquired the land by using coercive force. Unlike traditional feudals, neo-feudals in Pakistan use state machinery and institutes to harass, blackmail, pressurise and exploit the marginalised communities. In Bahria Town, police, rangers, and the workforce employed by local feudal politicians such as Malik Assad Sikander, the Sardar of Kohistan, have played a key role in facilitating Malik Riaz in displacing people and destroying their livelihood in Malir District. Therefore, neo-feudalism operates through coercive force in Pakistan.

Political Patronage is the fourth important dynamic of neo-feudalism in Pakistan through which neo-feudal class gains the favour of state institutions. The findings of this study proves that land assembly of land that is equalent to the size of Manhattan, New York, would not have

been possible without political support to Bahria Town. Therefore, the patron-client relationship between state and neo-feudals allows neo-feudalism to operate.

Spatial, Class and Ethnic inequality is the fifth important feature through which neo-feudalism operates in Pakistan. The study proves that gated housing societies built on illegally acquired land of indigenous communities are symbols of power and neo-feudal authority. The luxury housing societies in the suburbs alienate the people living inside the walls from those outside the walls. The spatial inequalities have been already discussed in international discourse of Neo-feudalism. However, the element missing in the international definition of Neo-feudalism and the contribution of this thesis is identifying the national oppression and ethnic inequalities caused by neo-feudal hierarchies in Pakistan. The people displaced by Bahria did not only lose their land. They lost their identities, the sense of community and the relationship they had with the land. Therefore, neo-feudalism in Pakistan operate through spatial, class and ethnic inequalities.

5.2.6. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study aimed to apply two frameworks simultaneously. The primary framework by Antonio Gramsci's concept of 'Hegemony' and the second framework of 'Neo-Feudalism' by Jodi Dean (2020) were selected to conceptualize 'Neo-Feudalism' in Pakistan. However, during data analysis some themes emerged which contradict Gramsci's concept of Hegemony due to several reasons. According to Gramsci, some economic interest groups use 'consent manufacturing' as a tool to dominate and marginalize working class. Interestingly, as per my findings, the concept of Hegemony given by Gramsci is not applicable to the ways neo-feudal class operates in Pakistan. As per the findings of this thesis, I humbly reject the notion and propose that neo-feudalism in Pakistan operates regardless of the masses' consent. Unlike Capitalism, neo-feudalism uses forces, extra-legal measures and extortion as its tools of oppression. It never engages people. It never attempts to answer or pretends to

entertain what laws, people or intelligentsia of the state is saying. It brutalises, dispossesses and circumvents laws for its profit. Therefore, one major finding of this thesis was that Jodi Dean's concept of Neo-feudalism was more applicable as compare to Gramsci's.

5.3. Limitations of the Study

Although the study has attained its objective of analysing neo-feudalism in Pakistan. However, it contains several limitations which could inspire future researchers for further inquiry.

First of all, the study only explained real estate development in detail as a neo-feudal phenomenon. The research has listed other economic groups such as military enterprises, banking sector, credit financing institutions and stock exchange, who are also acting as neo-feudals and benefit from the structures and dynamics of neo-feudalism. The researchers could explore these economic groups from the lens of Neo-feudalism.

The study also does not contain the input of politicians. I initially planned to conduct interviews with the politicians, but due to time constraints, availability issues and Covid-19, I could not manage to learn how they see neo-feudalism in Pakistan from a political perspective.

The study also lacks field observations and data from focus group discussions with affectees of Bahria Town Karachi and Islamabad. The limitation has been caused due to inter-provincial travel restrictions, lockdowns imposed by the government in Sindh and banning of public gatherings. This limitation can be further explored in detail by future researchers. Secondly, due to protests in Sindh against Bahria Town in 2021, interview respondents shared information about Bahria Town Karachi project. Thus the findings in this paper have more information about Bahria Town Karachi than Islamabad.

In the end, this study does provide an analysis of Pakistan's political economy and mode of production, but there is room to explore neo-feudalism to declare that Pakistan has a new mode of production or not.

5.4. Recommendations

As per the findings of this study, I propose the following three recommendations:

- 1. Urban Planning:** An independent committee of Urban Planners, Policy Makers, Academics, Scholars, Environmentalists, Lawyers and community members shall be formulated to probe any land assembly by Government for housing projects. The committee's role should be to evaluate all aspects of the assembly, including the concerns of local citizens, community members, and whether the housing project will harm the ecology of people. Once the committee presents a report of its findings, then any project should be allowed.
- 2. Rehabilitation of Indigenous Communities:** The Supreme Court of Pakistan should recognize the indigenous community of Malir as a third party in its future course of work, including disbursement of Rs 460 billion paid by Bahria Town Karachi to the Supreme Court. The amount shall be utilized to relocate and rehabilitate communities that politicians, government, and police have dislocated.
- 3. Probing Investigation on Land Acquisition by Bahria Town in Karachi:** The Justice Providers must investigate the land acquisition by Bahria Town Karachi despite restrictions put by the Supreme Court of Pakistan that Bahria Town. One major issue identified in this dissertation is the lack of data about the land acquired by Bahria Town. Therefore, the investigation should provide consolidated data about the land acquired by Bahria Town and the number of people who have been dislocated due to this acquisition.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

1. How would you define the political economy of Pakistan?
2. Have you heard the term 'Neo-feudalism' before?
3. How would you define the term 'Neo-feudalism'? Do you think that this term is relevant to define Pakistan's political economy?
 - a. If yes, then list and explain those characteristics that help define the Neo-Feudal nature of Pakistan's political economy.
4. How would you define nobility in Pakistan's context? Do you think there is an emergence of new-nobility/class in Pakistan?
 - a. If yes, how this new class is operating in Pakistan?
 - b. If no, why you think so?
5. What you think about the government selling lands to commercial housing schemes such as Bahria Town or DHA?
6. Do you think that projects like Bahria Town and DHA housing schemes are introducing a new kind of feudalism in urban centers?
7. Do you think that such schemes are beneficial?
 - a. Which social classes are benefitting from such schemes?
8. What do you think about the housing crisis the working class faces in urban cities such as Islamabad and Karachi?
 - a. Do you think that the government favoring commercial housing schemes such as Bahria and DHA has anything to do with the working class's housing crisis?
9. How do you see encroachment drives in urban centers such as Islamabad and Karachi?
 - a. What are the socio-economic and psychological impacts of encroachment drives on working class men and women?
10. Do you think that land entitlement policies of the government are discriminatory towards the working class?

Interview Time Duration: 60 Minutes

Appendix B

Interview Release Consent Form

You (the interviewee) _____ have been asked

for

information by myself (the interviewer) Huda a

scholar affiliated with the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE),

Islamabad, to be used for preparing a data analysis of or a publication about The Neo-

Feudalism in Pakistan: The Case Study of Islamabad & Karachi.

I may be reached by email at hudabhurgri1@gmail.com or by

phone at 923356779981.

You will be asked about Your opinion about Neo-Feudalism in Pakistan and the land

grabbing by commercial housing schemes. The anticipated length of the first interview is

one to two hours. You are not required to answer any questions that you do not wish to

answer.

I will make a recording of your interview, which will then be used for scholarly publications,

or for other related educational purposes.

I, _____, have read the above, and I knowingly and voluntarily permit Hussain the full use of this information and authorize her/him to publish this information. I understand that the recordings made during the interview may eventually be donated to an archive.

Signature of Interviewee

Dated: