

# The Class Structure of Pakistan

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# Thesis

1. Mughal India cannot be understood as feudal but as constituting the Asiatic Mode of Production (AMP).
2. India did not have a colonial mode of production but underwent a *colonial path of transition* to capitalism leading to the formation of Asiatic capitalism.
3. Agriculture is dominated Asiatic-capitalism. That is, by non-waged labour together with commodity production and private property in land.
4. Manufacture is also dominated by petty-commodity and petty-bourgeois production.

# What was the *dominant* mode of production in Mughal India.



- R. P Tripathi, Ibne Hasan, and P. Saran argue Mughal India was feudal
- Sarvepalli Gopal, Romila Thapar, Radhakamal Mukherjee, Harbans Mukhia, Brij Narain, and Ravinder Kumar reject that view.

# Four Features of the Asiatic Mode of Production

1. Natural Economy
2. Absence of Private Property in Land
3. State and Public Works
4. Surplus Extraction and Class Formation



# 1. Natural Economy

A natural economy is one where the division of labor is determined by factors other than market exchange. It is a feature common to all pre capitalist modes of production.

“Domestic handicrafts and manufacturing labor, as secondary occupations of agriculture, which forms the basis, are the prerequisites of that mode of production upon which natural economy rests - in European antiquity and the Middle Ages as well as in the present-day Indian community.” (Marx)



## 2. Absence of Private Property in Land

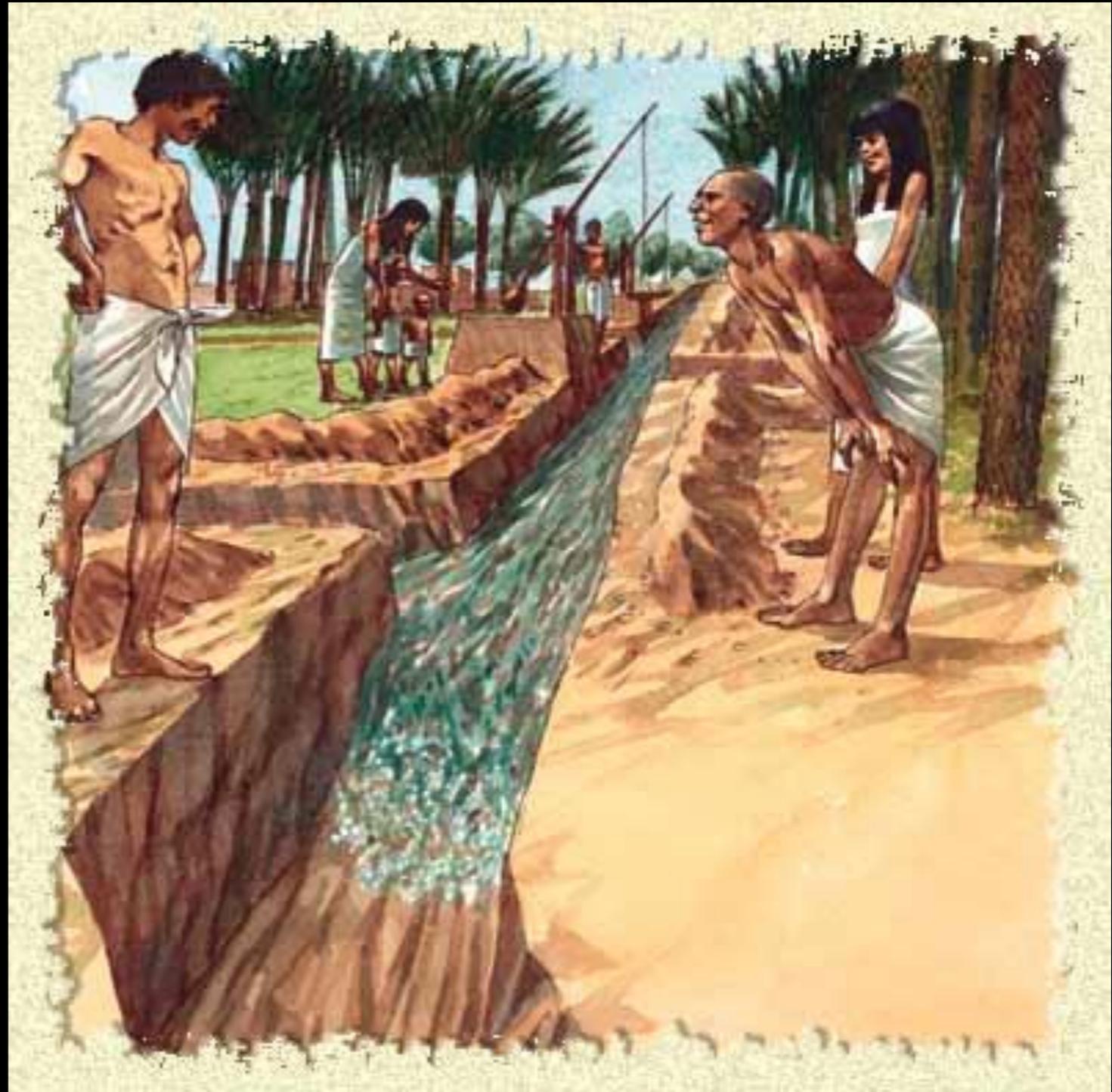


- Jagirs were not hereditary and jagirdars were re-transferred every three or four years. Zamindars were essentially tribute/tax collectors.
- There was “private possession” of land, but no records exist of land being alienable private property.
- Permanent Settlement Act of 1793 introduced private property in land.

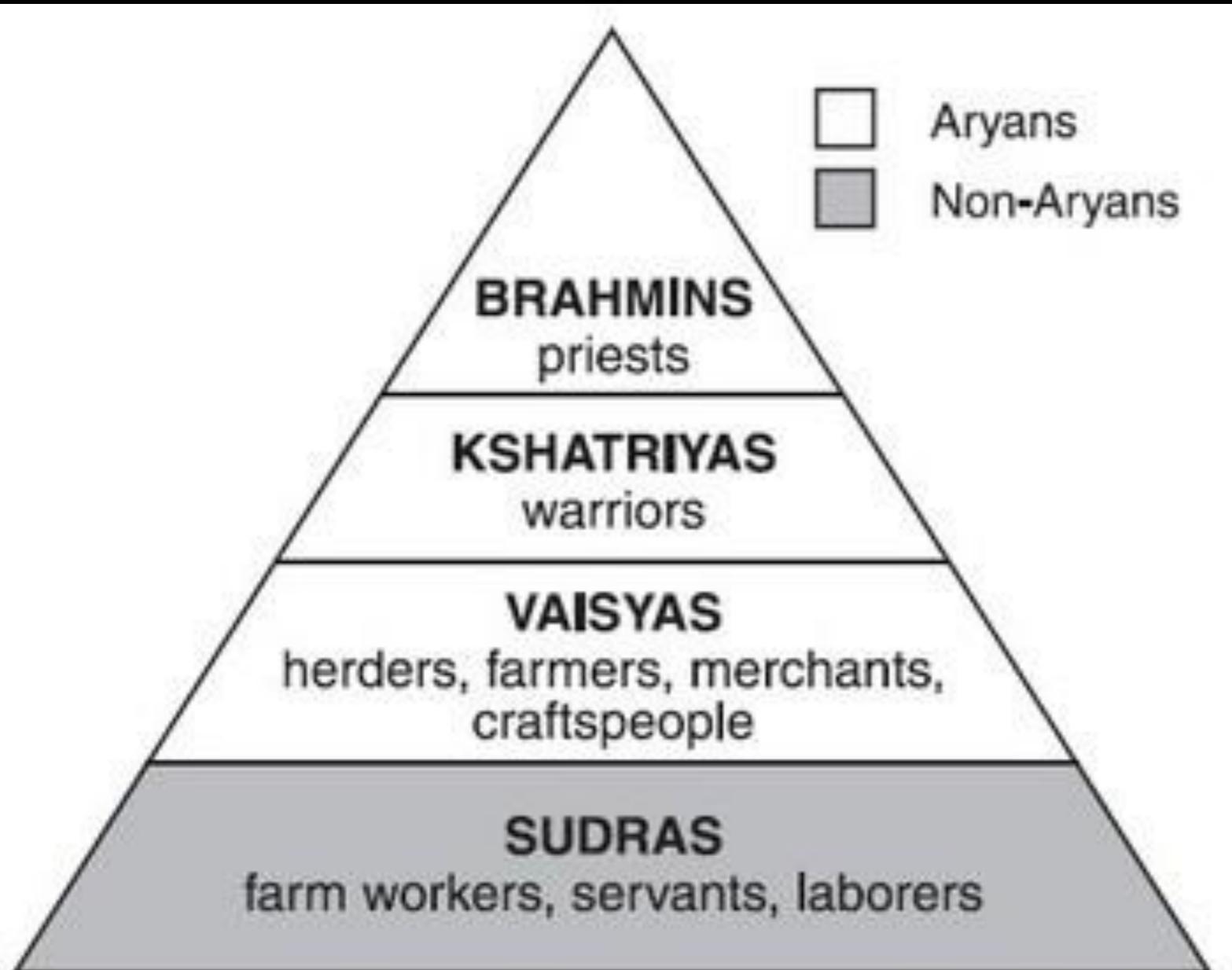
# 3. State and Public Works

In South Asia, 80 percent of the annual precipitation occurs in the monsoon season. Hence, the control of rain, river, and floodwater, through channels, dams, dikes, and so on, is vital for agriculture. This control of water requires the organisation of collective labour. In addition to other collective functions of the community, the organisation of this collective labour gave rise to various unifying authorities that became the precursors of the Asiatic state.

[In Asia] “artificial irrigation is the first prerequisite for agriculture, and this is the responsibility either of the communes, the provinces or the central government.” Engels.



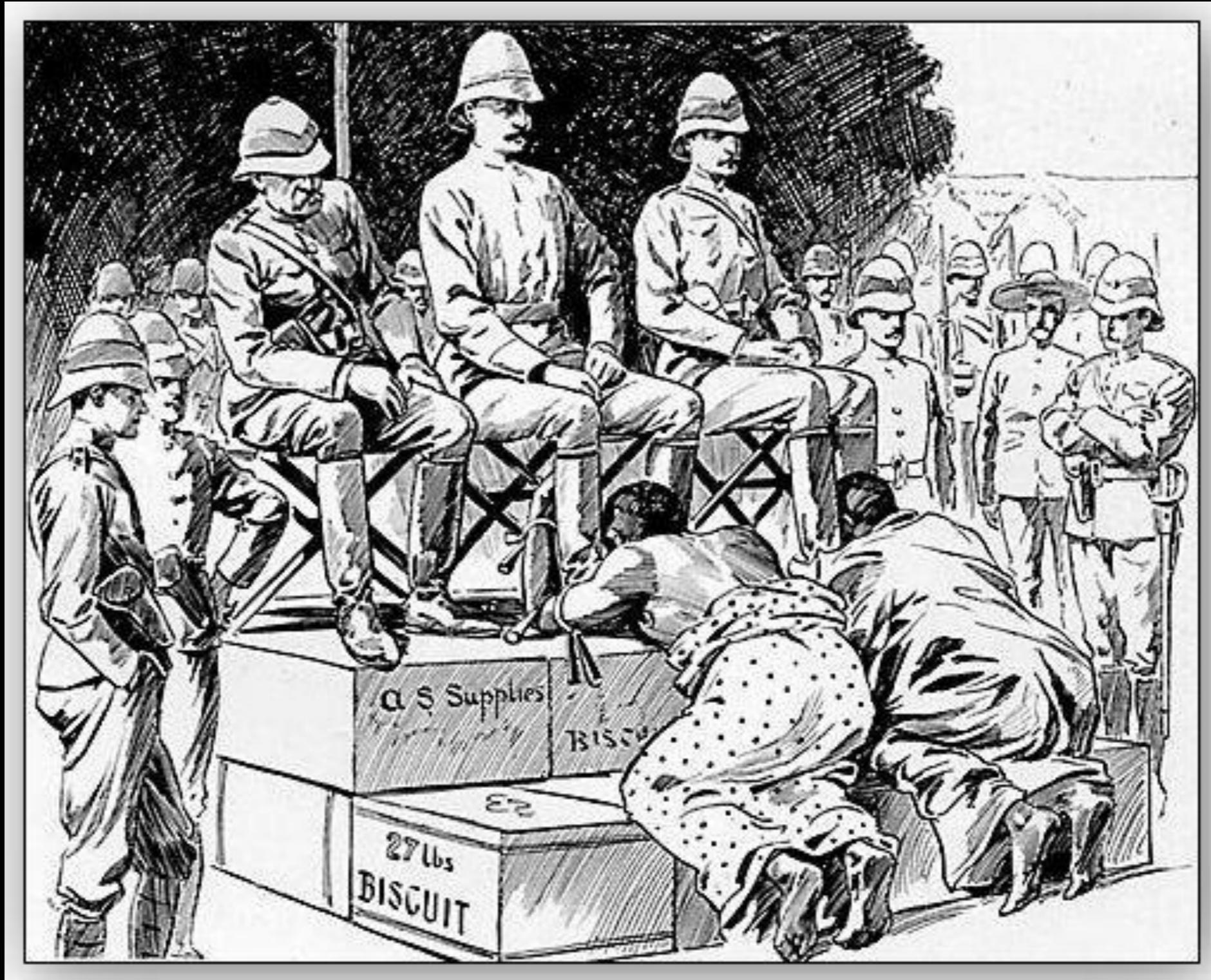
# 4. Surplus Extraction and Class Formation



Source: *Guide to the Essentials of World History*,  
Prentice Hall, 1999 (adapted)

- Jagiradars were not owners of land. There was surplus land and shortage of labour.
- Forms of bondage was not serfdom but caste. Feudalism = Serfdom
- Land revenue (not land rent) was the form of surplus extraction and the basis of the ruling class.

# Colonial Path and Asiatic Capitalism



Was there a colonial mode of production?

# Review of Literature on European Transitions



1. Revolutionary republican path
2. Junkers path

# Review of Literature on Transitions in South Asia



- Modernisation - Charles Grant, T. B. Macaulay, Lord Bentinck, Jeremy Bentham, James Mill, Thomas Munro, Charles Metcalfe, John Malcolm, Mountstuart Elphinstone.
- Anti-colonial nationalism
- Varieties of Marxist theories (Alavi, Bagchi and others put forward the theory of the colonial mode of production).

# 1. Revolutionary Republican Path

- The bourgeois develops within the feudal system as a subservient class.
- It overthrows the feudal ruling class in a revolutionary upheaval.
- It sweeps away the political, economic, cultural and ideological vestiges of feudalism.
- England (1648), France (1789), USA (1776) instances of bourgeois democratic revolutions.



# 2. Junkers Path



The feudal aristocracy reforms state and society along capitalist lines. There is no bourgeois democratic revolution. The vestiges of feudalism remain intact but are reformed. Prussia is the classic example of the Junkers path.

# 3. The Colonial Path

Enjoy

*Colonialism*

Since 1493

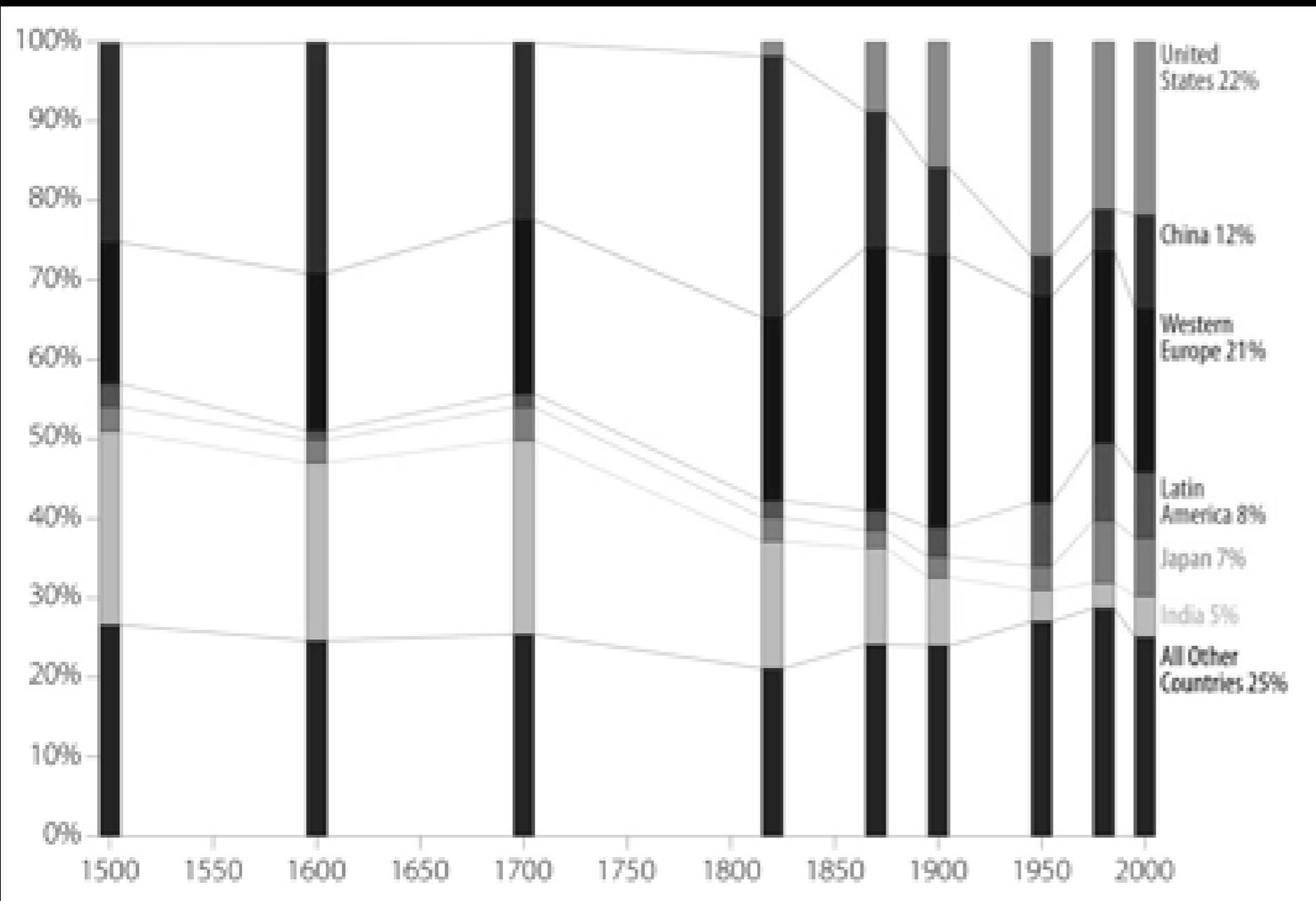
1. Foreign Domination
2. Siphoning of the Surplus
3. Capitalism planted on the AMP

# A) Foreign Domination



- “To form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, – a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect.” Thomas Babington Macaulay.
- “There is something in human history like retribution; and it is a rule of historical retribution that its instrument be forged not by the offended, but by the offender himself” Marx.

# B) Siphoning the Surplus



India's share of world manufacturing output fell from 25 to 1.7 percent between 1750 and 1900. Its share of world GDP declined from 22.6 percent in 1700 to 3.8 percent by 1952.

	1700	1800	1850	1952
China	23.	32.	13.	5.2
India	22	15	11	3.8

# B) Siphoning the Surplus

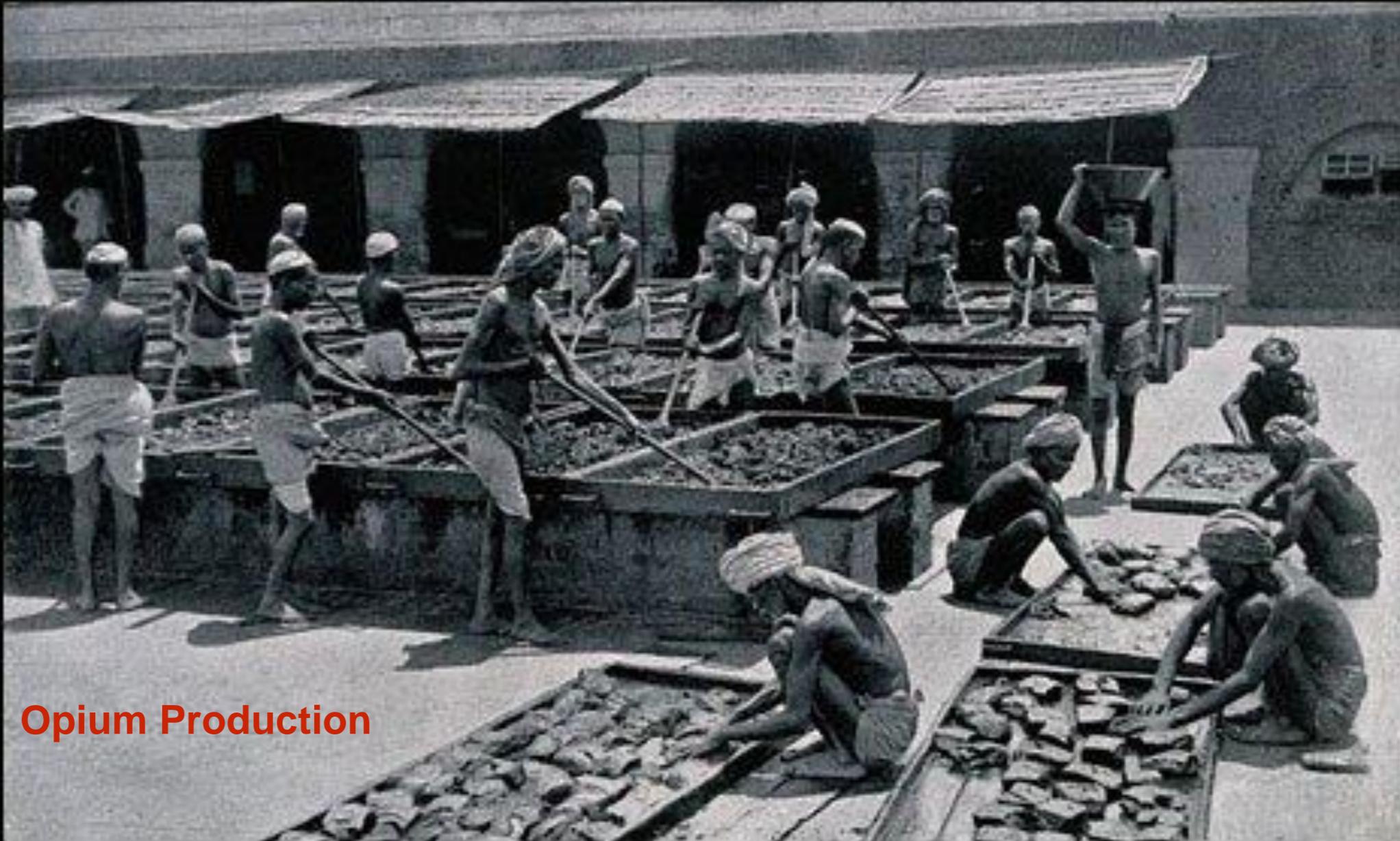
Levels of GDP Per Capita in Britain and India, 1500–1998 (1990 international dollars)

	1500	1700	1820	1913	1950	1998
Britain	762	140	212	515	690	187
India	550	550	533	673	619	174

Growth of Per Capita GDP in Britain and India, 1500–1998 (annual average compound growth rates)

	1500– 1700	1700– 1820	1820– 1913	1913– 1950	1950– 1998
Britain	0.31	0.34	0.96	0.80	2.10
India	0.00	-0.03	0.25	-0.23	2.18

# C) Capitalism Upon the AMP



Regulation VII of 1799 (known as the Haftam) gave zamindars power to confiscate and sell the crops, cattle, or other properties, summon the defaulting tenants to their katcharis and keep them confined in fetters, impose community fines on the entire village or villages until the arrears were paid. Regulation V in 1812 even gave zamindars the power to create their own permanent settlements. In addition, various forms of pre-capitalist extra-economic extraction of surplus, such as abwab, nazrana, begar, selami, and so on, remained in place.

# Asiatic Capitalism as a Transitory Form



“As a *transitory form* from the original form of rent to capitalist rent, we may consider the metayer system, or share-cropping, under which the manager (farmer) furnishes labour (his own or another’s), and also a portion of working capital, and the landlord furnishes, aside from land, another portion of working capital (e.g., cattle), and the product is divided between tenant and landlord in definite proportions which vary from country to country.” Marx

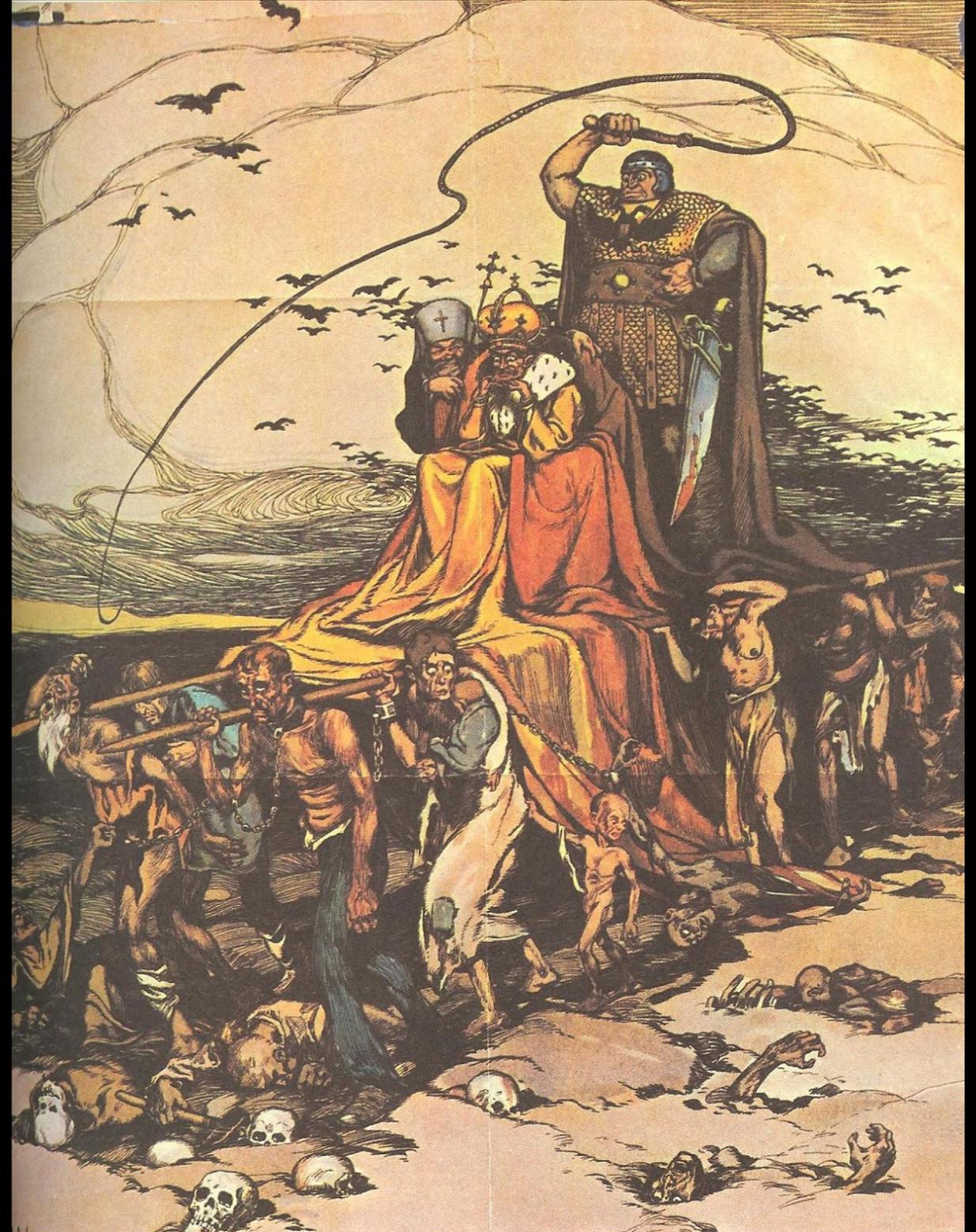
# AMP & Colonial Path

## Asiatic Mode of Production:

1. Natural Economy
2. Absence of Private Property in Land
3. State and Public Works
4. Surplus Extraction and Class Formation

## Colonial Path of Transition

1. Foreign Domination
2. Siphoning of Surplus
3. Capitalism Planted on the AMP



# Asiatic Capitalism in Agriculture

- Asiatic capitalism is a system of commodity production based on private property with the use of Asiatic labour relations (caste).
- In the Punjab, the registration of land, as private property, began in 1846 and continued right through to 1863.

# Caste as Class

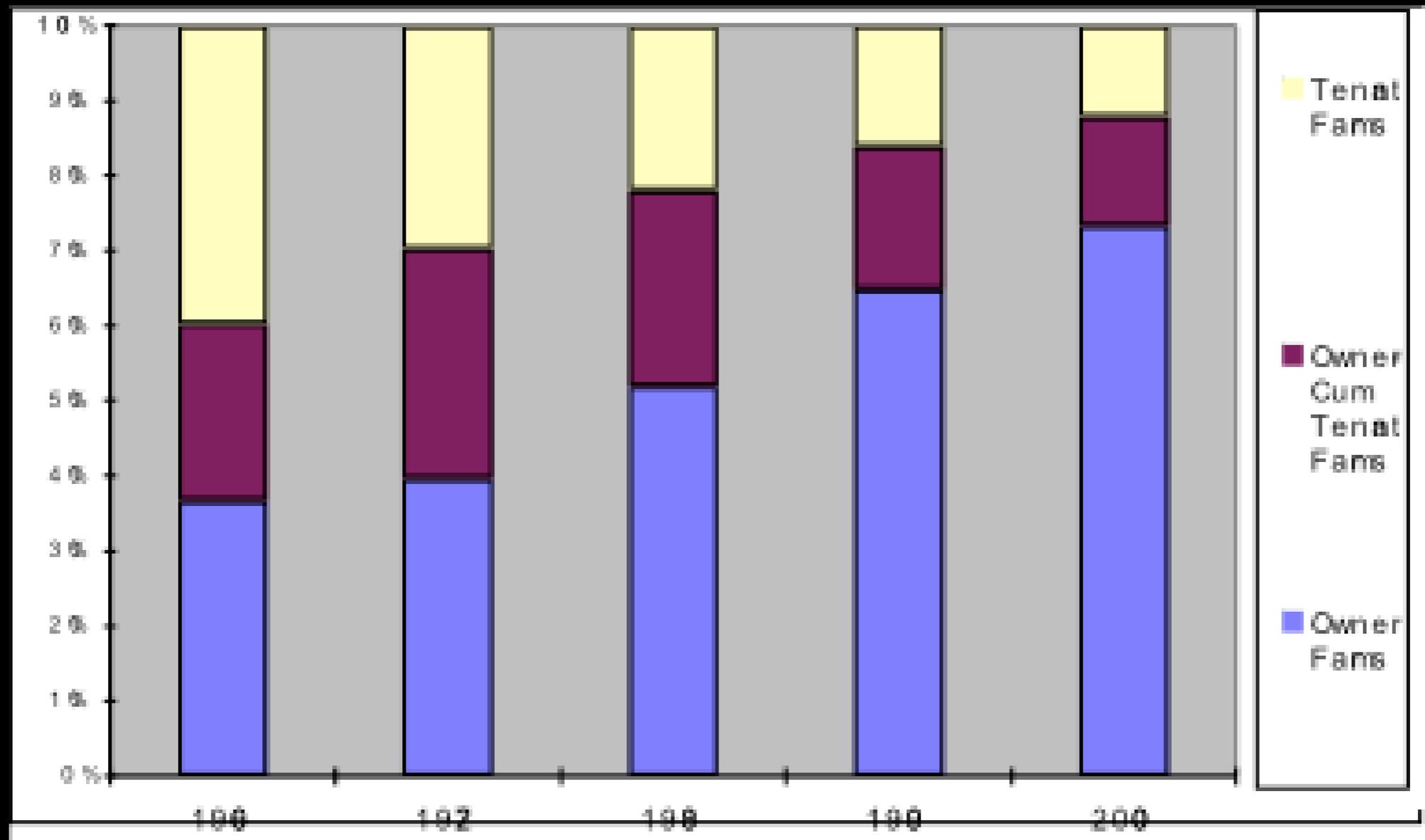
- Caste as Class: The specific economic relationship of a given caste to the means of production is the class of that caste. 'Jaat' (or 'zaat') means 'thus born', and delineated clans and tribes. Each jati had a specific role in the division of labour, which was hereditary. That hereditary role in the division of labour had a very specific social status that was maintained by detailed sets of rules, of which arguably the most important related to endogamy and the sharing and preparation of food. A caste-based village council enforced these rules of social, economic, and political status. In fact, many jatis, especially of a lower status, are still named after their traditional occupations.
- This system of a hereditary division of labour, which coincides with clans and tribes, came about as the result of a long history of evolving induction, through conquest or agreement, of various independent and free tribes into a hierarchically-organized class society. As each tribe was inducted into Hindu class society, it accepted three conditions: the veneration of the cow, the caste system, and the dominance of Brahmins. Aside from these changes, the tribe retained its religious practices. Over time, these various diverse tribes and their religions' narratives became, in various ways, part of the diverse narratives of Hinduism as a whole. (Rosas 1943: 159). To put it simplistically, castes are pre-capitalist classes.

PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION LIVING BELOW POVERTY LINE

Caste	Rural	Urban
Scheduled Tribes	45.80%	35.60%
Scheduled Castes	35.90%	38.30%
Other Backward Castes	27.00%	29.30%
Muslim Upper Castes	26.80%	34.20%
Hindu Upper Castes	11.70%	9.90%
Christian Upper Castes	9.60%	5.40%
Sikh Upper Castes	0.00%	4.90%
Other Upper Castes	16.00%	2.70%
All	27.00%	23.40%

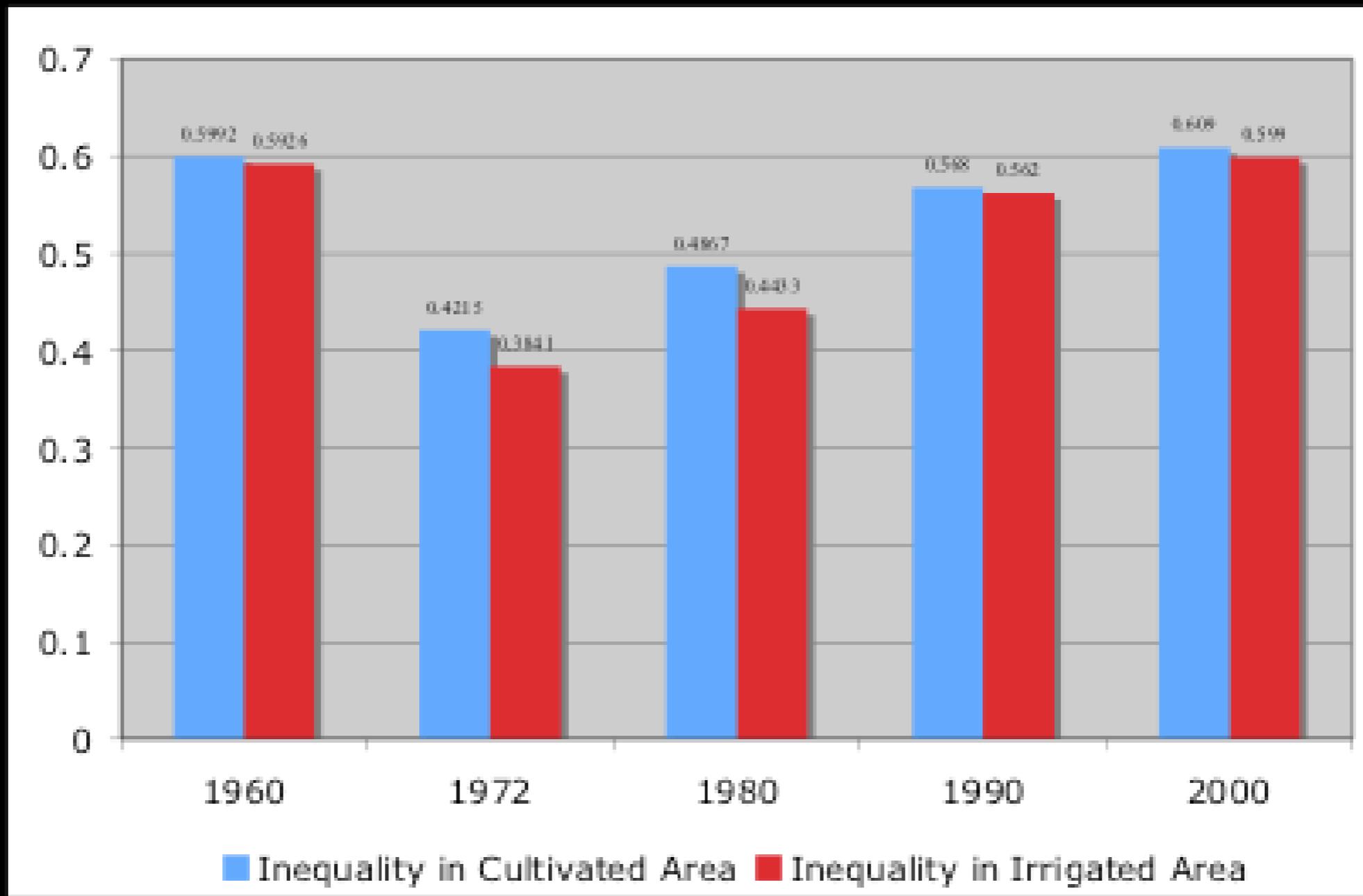
Source: NSSD, 55<sup>th</sup> Round, 1999-2000

# Tenant Farming



- Broadly speaking, agrarian relations can be divided into three land tenure systems—Tenant farms, owner-cum-tenant farms, owner farms.
- Agricultural statistics demonstrate the gradual erosion of traditional tenant farming, accelerated by the Green Revolution.
- At no point in this agrarian transition was the power of large landlords broken through a mass peasant uprising or revolt, or even through institutional reforms promoted by central government.

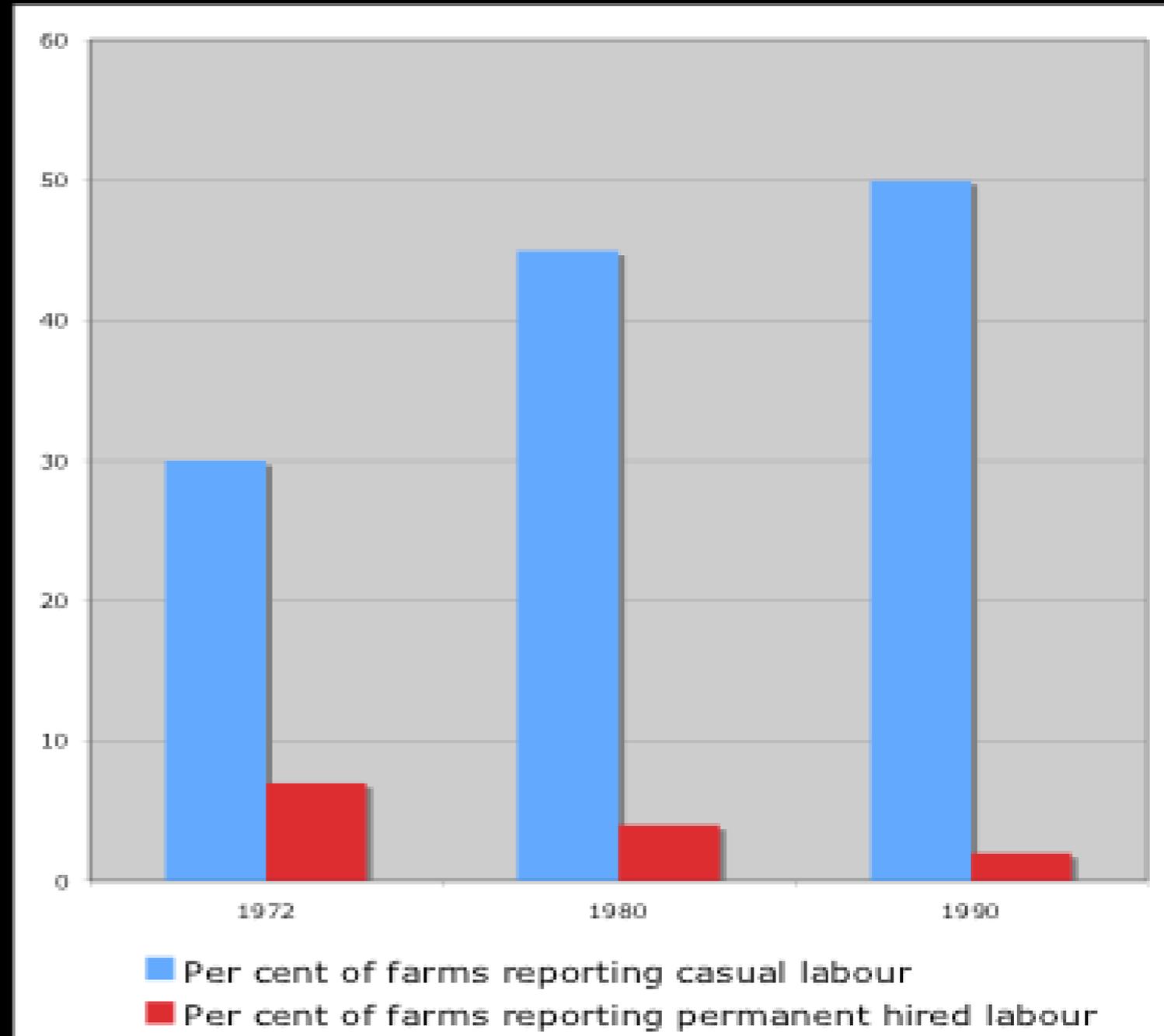
# Landholding Patterns



- From 1924 to 1939, the number and area of farms between 10 and 50 acres showed a marked decline. The same trend could be seen after Independence. According to the Agricultural Census, by far the largest decline has been in the strata of peasantry owning between 12.5 and 25 acres. The aggregate results can also be gauged in terms of the rising land inequality index.

# Wage Labour in Agriculture

According to the Agricultural Census of 2000, permanent wage labour in agriculture was only around 3.8 percent of the total agricultural labour force. However, casual wage labour figures are much higher. Whereas only 30 percent of farms reported the use of casual wage labour in 1972, this figure rose to 45 percent in 1980, 50 percent by 1990, and then declined to 40 percent by 2000. Despite the overall rise in casual wage labour agriculture continues to be dominated by non-wage based relations.



# Agrarian Relations Conclusion

- Caste are forms of pre-capitalist classes.
- Tenant farming is declining.
- Land inequality is growing.
- Casual wage labour in agriculture is growing, permanent wage labour is declining.  
Nonetheless, non-wages relations continue to dominate Pakistani agriculture.

# Manufacturing in Pakistan

- Population & Urbanisation
- Labour force by Sector
- Petty Commodity Production and Petty Bourgeois Production.
- Organised Labour Movement?

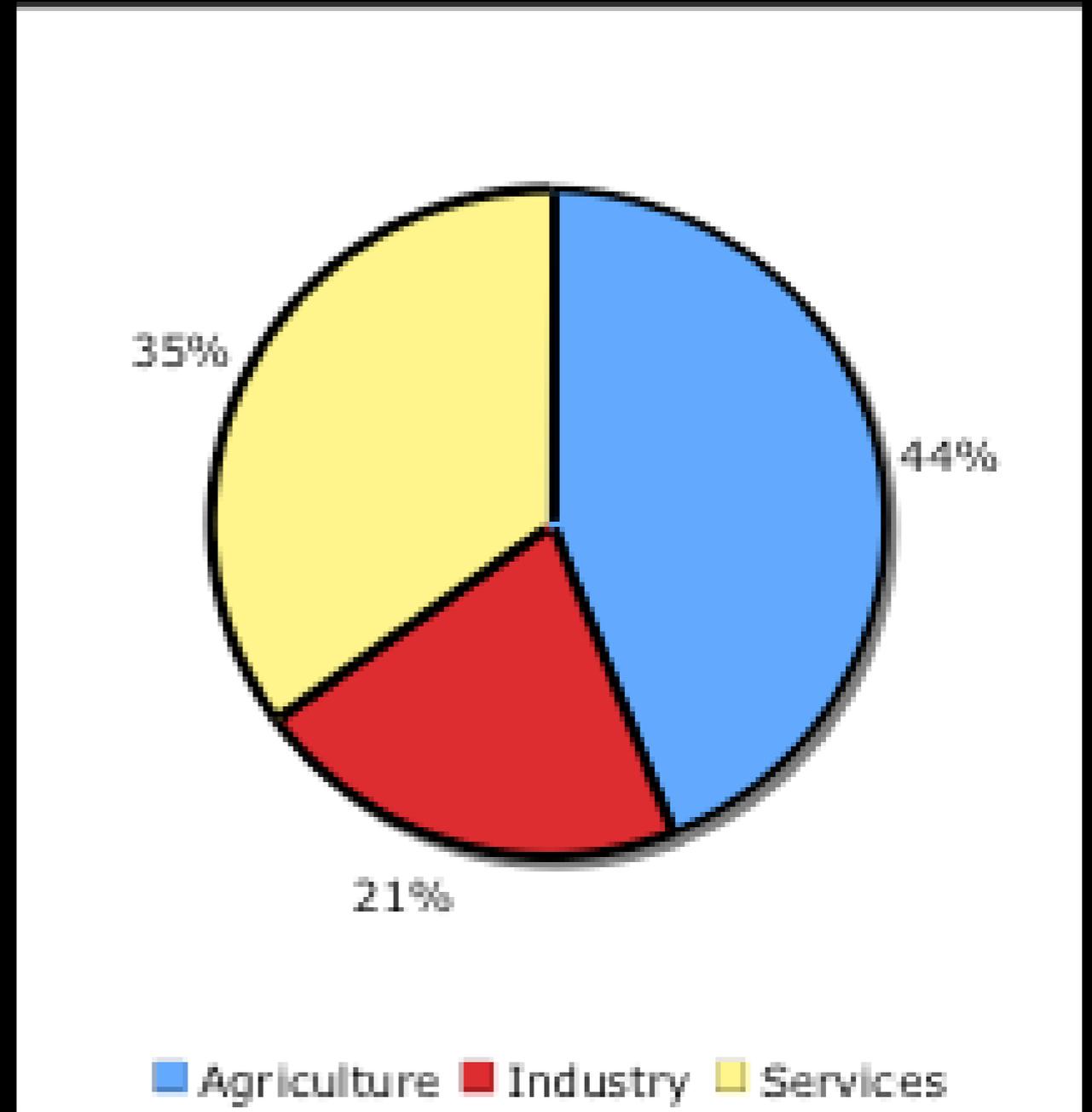


# Population & Urbanisation

- At the turn of the twentieth century, the region that is Pakistan today had a population of 16.5 million; today, the population of Pakistan is estimated at 167 million
- While the total population increased nearly fivefold from 1951–2009 (from 33 to 167 million), the urban population expanded over sevenfold in the same period.
- Hence, the entire edifice of the AMP in India that was constructed on the foundation of the small and isolated village communities is undergoing a rapid transformation.

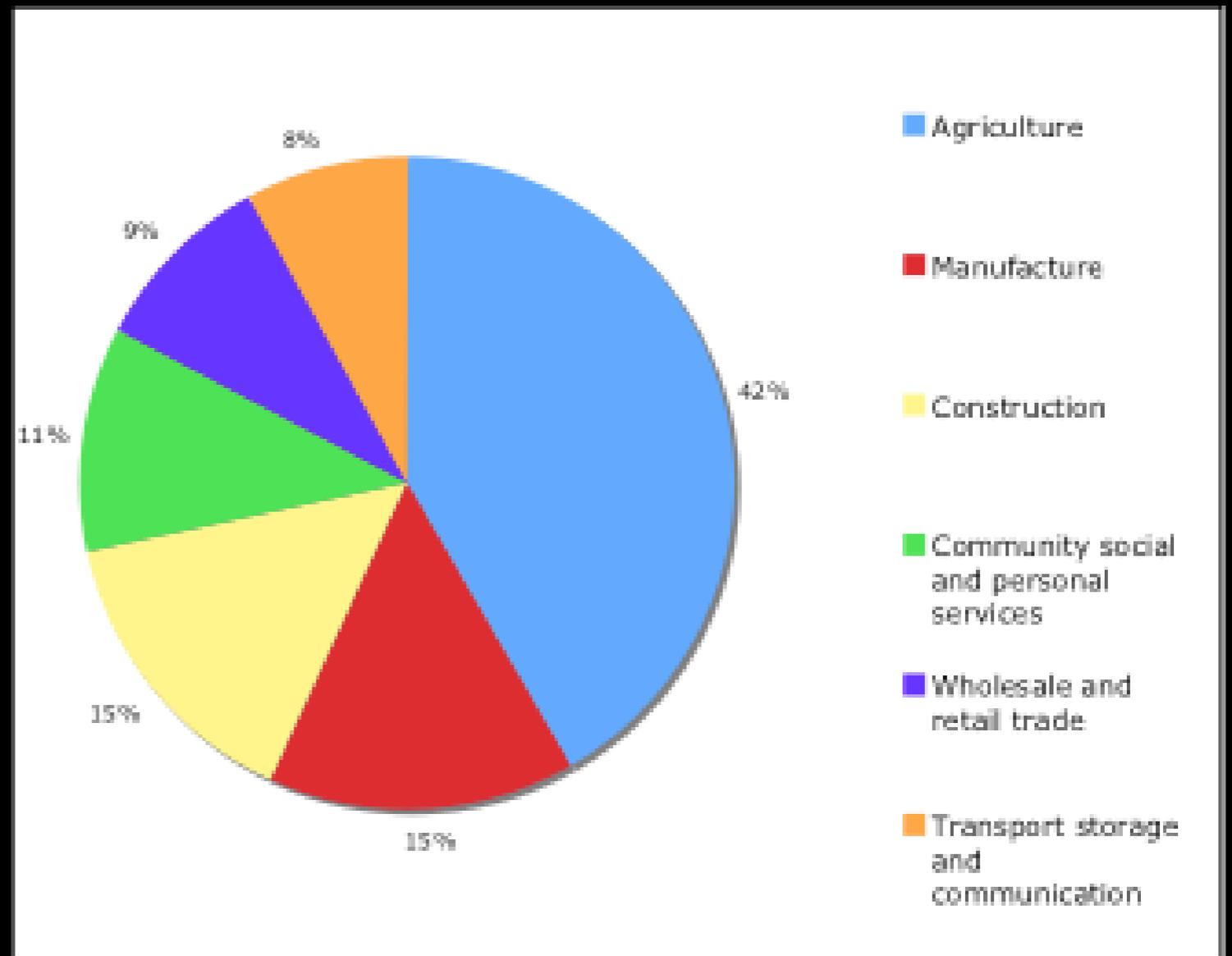
# Labour Force by Sector

- Today, the principle locus of economic production and surplus extraction is no longer merely the agricultural production of the village community, but urban and semi-rural manufacturing and services.



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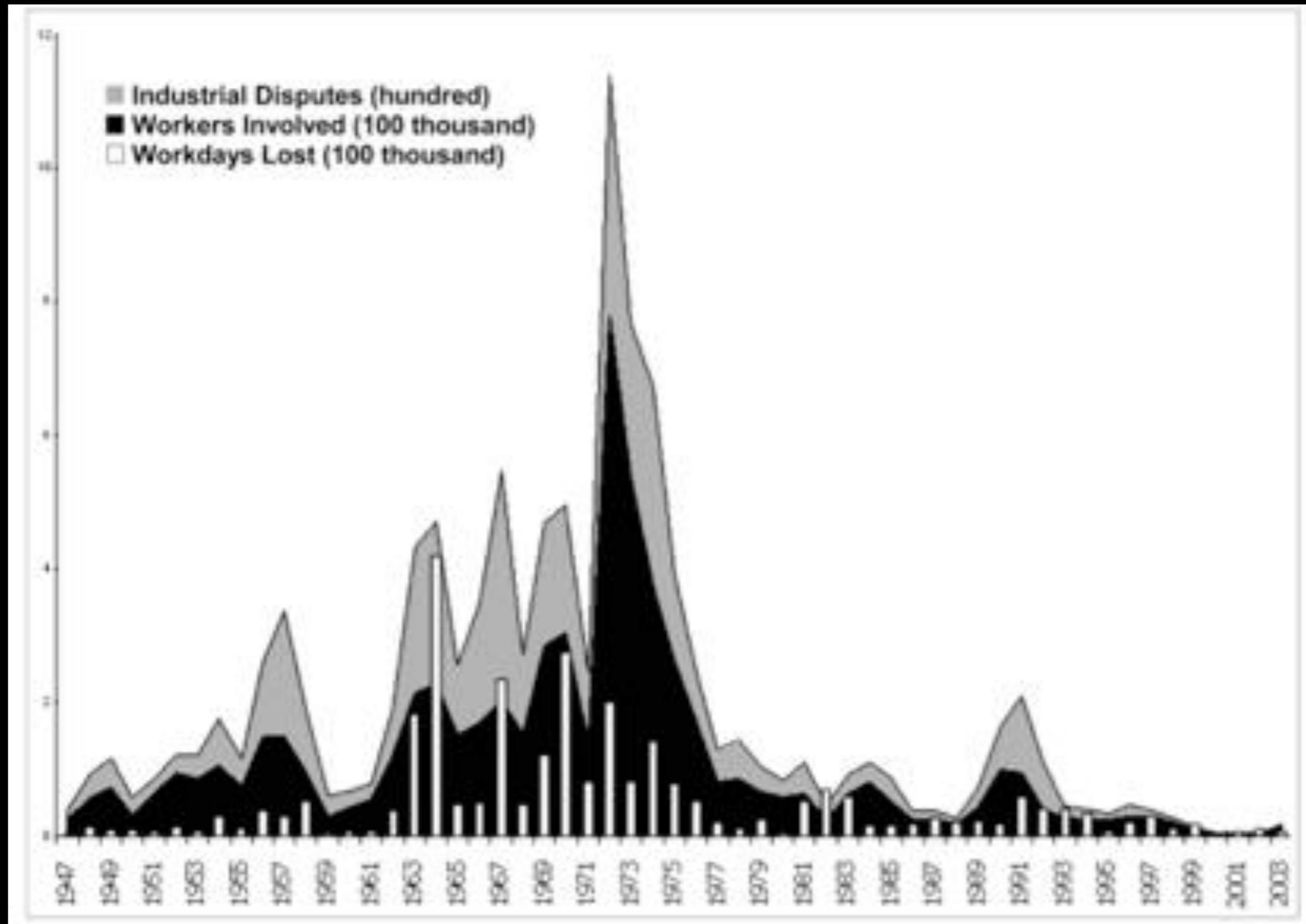


# Petty Commodity Production and Petty-Bourgeois Production

- The mode of production that seems to be replacing the AMP at the mass level is not large-scale capitalism but petty commodity production and small-scale capitalism.
- Of the overall labour force—a significant portion of which is unaccounted for in official statistics because it is composed of women who work in their own homes as domestic workers—about half are characterised as wage labourers. About 70 to 80 percent are employed in enterprises that employ less than 10 individuals—that is, about 21 million, out of 28 million non-agricultural workers, are involved in petty commodity production and small-scale capitalism.
- Even though large-scale industry dominates output—producing 17 percent of the overall GDP, while employing only about 3 percent of the overall employment—the everyday working experience, and hence the social formation of non-agricultural production, is dominated by petty commodity production and small-scale capitalism.



# Organised Labour Movement?



Trade unions organise only 0.4 percent of the non-agricultural labour force in 2005.

# Manufacturing Conclusion



In a society where about 80 percent of the non-agricultural working class is involved in establishments that employ fewer than 10 individuals, can one expect an organised labour movement at the national level? Caste identities can easily morph to become an integral part of petty commodity production and small-scale capitalism.

# Implications for Further Study

1. Unilinear evolutionism (all societies pass through the same stages of development) amounts to the imposition of a European schema of historical development on fundamentally different societies.
2. The caste system is the articulation of the AMP in India. Castes are essentially pre-capitalist classes. A class analysis bereft of an examination of the transformation of castes into modern classes leaves much to be desired. The foundation of caste is a social system that enforces endogamy and this is the key link between caste, class and gender.
3. The colonial path of transition to capitalism not only retains central features of the AMP in the transitory form of Asiatic capitalism, it also imposes the fetter of rapacious colonial/imperial exploitation that contributes to the development of under-development and a paradoxical pattern of modernisation.
4. What we consider to be the 'vestiges' of the Asiatic system — honour killings, patriarchy, caste oppression, and so on — are very much embedded in the economic base of society.
5. Any emancipatory project must shed the illusion that European transitions provide a cut-and-dry formulation for social transformation in South Asia. Specifically the illusion that 'feudalism' and capitalism are in a fundamentally antagonistic contradiction in South Asia; that social emancipation is possible without a simultaneous struggle against patriarchy, caste & class oppression.