

# Chapter One

## Remapping Partition

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### Introduction

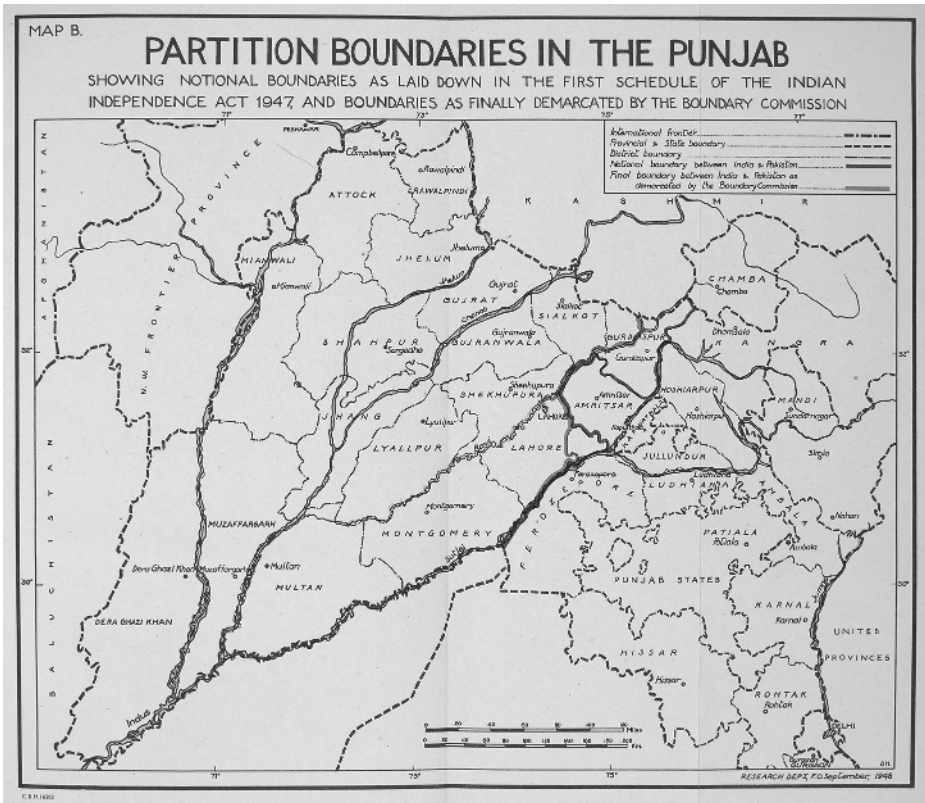
On 14 August 1947, Pakistan celebrated its first day of independence in its new capital, Karachi. Crowds of people celebrated in the street, raising and waving flags and cheering ‘Pakistan Zindabad!’ (‘Long Live Pakistan!’) as the new prime minister of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, drove through the streets in a State procession accompanied by the last British viceroy of India, Lord Louis Mountbatten. ‘Spirits were high’, one observer recalled, as ‘officials who had opted for Pakistan were pouring in’, already beginning the work of establishing the government and ‘working in improvised offices’ (Spate, 1991, pp. 58–59).

Despite the celebrations, the festivities ‘were on a modest scale’, charged with a sense of uncertainty, as the geopolitical partition of the subcontinent had only just begun to take shape (Spate, 1991, p. 59). The official map of the new borders had not yet been made public. People checked newspapers and public notice boards for graphic evidence of independence – for a map – and for official news to reach towns, villages and local government offices. And the uncertainty was accompanied by threats and outbreaks of violence: Mountbatten had reported news of a bomb plot targeting Jinnah during their official drive to Government House in Karachi on 14 August. Despite the threat, the new leader of Pakistan insisted on the procession, and so even as ‘the route was lined with enthusiastic crowds’, the police and military presence was a reminder of the very real fear and

uncertainty facing the new states of Pakistan and India (Mansergh 1983, p. 771). There were rumours of riots, explosions and scores of refugees crossing the new eastern and western borders of India and Pakistan. The celebrations were joyful, yet they were intermingled with fear, sadness and the imminent threat of violence.

Such fears were not unfounded. It has been estimated that roughly 14.5 million people migrated across borders in the four years following Partition, and that between two and three million people were killed or went missing (Bharadwaj et al., 2009). Kudaisya (1996) puts the number of migrants even higher, at over 18 million. The majority of migrants crossed the western boundary, with approximately 73% arriving in the Punjab (Waseem, 1999, p. 203). Those that arrived on both sides recounted stories of terrible violence, the abduction of women, and the killing, torture and rape of neighbours, relatives and strangers. Even for those who did not directly experience or witness the violence, the atmosphere was permeated by anxiety and insecurity. Even at the elite levels, the business of constitution-writing and nation-building that lay ahead was intertwined with a sense of territorial indeterminacy and uncertainty. The new borders were eventually announced on 17 August, two days after Indian independence and three days after Pakistani independence. On Independence Day, the border lines had been drawn, but only a select few, stationed elsewhere, knew their course (Figure 1.1).

This is a book about those borders. It is about how those borders were drawn and enacted in a rush in the summer of 1947, but also how they were imagined in multiple and contested ways during the prior decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and about how their foundations were slowly and subtly brought into being in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The book recovers and examines cartographic and territorial imaginaries of India at work from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in order to trace the historically constructed discourses of ethnic, religious and geographical difference which permeated political discourses of distinctiveness and separation. Rather than follow the line of thinking summed up by Sumathi Ramaswamy that, ‘although the Partition of India was arguably precipitated by nongeographic and extraterritorial factors, the actual determination and drawing of the new boundary lines was a cartographic act’, I argue that geographical knowledge and colonial cartography were in fact at play prior to the actual drawing of the borders in July and August 1947 (2017, p. 290). In doing so, I construct a detailed story that takes a longer view of the geographical genealogy of Partition in order to trace the ways in which the geographical logic that was mobilised for the consolidation and administration of British India was the same logic that gave rise to the social, political and spatial conditions of Partition. The book also shows how a longer historical geographical account, which incorporates both the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, can inform new ways of conceptualising the geographies of Partition, as well as uncover as-yet under-examined histories of geography in British India. This empirical investigation opens up new ways of understanding the events of 1947 as being more than simply a succession of interrelated decisions, negotiations



**Figure 1.1** Partition Boundaries in the Punjab Map depicting notional boundary (east) and the boundary demarcated by Punjab Boundary Commission (west).

Source: British Library, Report on the last Viceroyalty, 22nd March-15th August 1947 by Rear Admiral the Earl Mountbatten of Burma, KG, PC, GMSI, GCIE, GCVO, KCB, DSO. IOR/L/PJ/5/396 / CC BY 4.0.

and episodes which created a new spatial order. Rather, I show how those physical and imaginative Indian spaces which Partition was designed to administer and reorder were in fact a dynamic and active component of the partitioning process. I argue that the spatial and discursive arenas in which borders are imagined, contested, drawn and enforced are deeply political sites within which both states and subjects are reconstituted.

As this introduction will show, there are already many books about Partition. Why write another? Why write it now? This book grew out of the disjuncture between, on the one hand, the often intricately detailed and theoretically complicated debates on Partition that have taken place among historians and other scholars of the subcontinent for many decades and, on the other, the relative paucity

of a sustained engagement with the topic among human geographers. How could human geography, a discipline to which historical geographers have contributed so much, not have produced a community of scholars concerned with one of the most significant geographical events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century? In the past few years, historians have embraced a 'spatial turn', concerning themselves more deeply with the role that space and place play in the past and our interpretation of it, and this includes historians of Partition. Sarah Ansari and William Gould highlight the importance of place in the introduction to their 2019 book on citizenship in the newly partitioned nation-states of India and Pakistan, *Boundaries of Belonging*: 'Ignoring the spatial turn of the last couple of decades is no longer a realistic option for historians' (Ansari and Gould, 2019, p. 4). Historical geographers, similarly, are engaging more systematically with historical geographies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including vital work on decolonisation (Clayton, 2020; Craggs, 2014; Ferretti, 2020). Yet there remains no historical geography of the political and legal process of Partition, nor is there a geographical account of the role of geographical knowledge and practice in the making of the boundary. What would historical geography have to say, not only about Partition but about how scholars might study Partition, if its methods and modes of inquiry were brought to bear on the Partition archive and the already crowded field of Partition literature?

This book attempts to bridge this gap by recasting the material spaces and spatial practices of Partition, and by probing the ways in which space (broadly construed to encompass large-scale territorial units and small-scale rooms in courthouses, homes and offices) was both contingent and constitutive during the Partition process. Much of the literature on Partition has illustrated with great efficacy and rigour the many ways in which Partition precipitated the reconstitution of identity, very often wrought through the physical act of migration from one side of the new borders to the other, and was shot through by trauma and violence (e.g. Butalia, 1998; Khan, 2007; Menon and Bhasin, 1998; Pandey, 2001). I do not seek to challenge these powerful narratives. Rather, I argue that a more sustained engagement with the history and development of geographical practice, specifically with regard to surveying, cartography and boundary-making in the context of Partition, and of British India more generally, allows for a different way of understanding violence and trauma wrought by the Empire and by Partition. By examining the productive capacity of space, we can draw a more explicit link between the epistemic violence of Empire as articulated by postcolonial writers, and the physical and psychological trauma associated with the violence of Partition.

I show how notions of 'Indian territory' continued to develop during the later colonial period, and probe how the spatial imaginaries which underpinned British governmentality in late colonial India were refracted through Indian reformist and nationalist narratives of 'India'. I contend that these earlier spatial imaginaries informed the eventual Partition process in 1947. This historical orientation,

I argue, allows for a new mode of interrogating both the geographical and political processes at work during the informal meetings, courthouse sessions and formal negotiations involved in the boundary settlement of 1947, and opens up new possibilities for understanding the logics, techniques and exigencies that characterised the territorial re-ordering at the heart of India's and Pakistan's passage to independence. This book builds on and contributes to three distinct intellectual projects. First, the book adds a distinctly geographical approach to the Partition studies literature (a term used here as shorthand to refer to the historical, anthropological and political scholarship on the 1947 Partition of India and Pakistan), not only through its analysis of maps and geographical materials but also in its emphasis on the histories of colonial geography as technical practice and mode of knowledge production. Second, the book is the first to contribute an extended account of the 1947 Partition of India and Pakistan to the critical literature in historical geography on geography, empire and decolonisation, particularly its post-colonial theoretical framing. And third, in both its empirical focus on maps, geographical data and narratives of spatial imagining and its theoretical postcolonial framing, the book is situated within the tradition of critical histories of cartography literature, which brings postmodernist, poststructuralist and postcolonial modes of analysis to the history and practice of mapping.

The most significant empirical contribution of the book takes up the issue, identified in both scholarly and popular accounts of Partition, of the lack of geographical expertise consulted during the boundary commission hearings in Bengal and the Punjab, either in the form of an academic geographer or a government official with practical experience in boundary-making. There were, in fact, geographers who participated in the process in various ways during the summer of 1947. One of those geographers, Oskar Spate, had been employed by the Muslim League in the Punjab to assist in the development of their official arguments to the Punjab Boundary Commission. His role is acknowledged in some work on Partition (e.g. Tan and Kudaisya, 2002), and Lucy Chester (2009) makes very effective use of his personal diaries from 1947. But his geographical contribution to, and position within, the boundary commission has generally been unexplored. Intriguingly, and perhaps even more surprisingly, given Spate's illustrious career and foundational contributions to the discipline of geography, historical geographers have also overlooked Spate's connection to the Muslim League. On both counts, this is a significant oversight, and one I seek to rectify here, through the recovery of and work on a cache of previously unused archival material.

The rest of this introductory chapter proceeds as follows. First, I briefly sketch the historical background of Partition, in order to show the complexity of the story as well as the dynamic and volatile atmosphere of the final years of British rule in India. This provides historical context for the next section, where I outline the broad contours of the complex field of scholarship on Partition, highlighting the relative scarcity of interventions by geographers. This is then followed by an overview of the ways that geographers have engaged with the wider questions of

empire, colonialism and decolonisation, in order to situate this project firmly in both fields. Most importantly, I situate this study of Partition within the critical history of cartography tradition, which has deep connections with the postcolonial and poststructuralist work of historical geographers and historians of mapping and empire. Throughout the book, I return to the concepts and approaches developed and refined by historical geographers of cartography and mapping in two primary ways: first, to re-read scholarly accounts of Partition through a lens of critical cartography, and second, as a lens to analyse the primary source material produced here. Finally, I set out the structure of the book and introduce the archival sources that form the basis of the empirical research presented in the book.

## The Unmaking of British India

The process of independence involved the significant reordering of territory, the creation of an entirely new nation-state and the transfer of power to two new governments. The official process of Partition and the formal transfer of power was conducted within the space of two months. On 3 June, just two months before Jinnah and Mountbatten rode through the streets of Karachi, a radio announcement broadcast across India declared that British imperial rule in India would come to an end and that Independence would be granted to the Indian people (Khan, 2007). In the intervening weeks, one of the most significant geopolitical events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was negotiated and enacted, including the making of one of the most fraught boundaries currently in existence. Scholars have, rightfully, been both fascinated and dismayed by the speed with which the borders were drawn and published, while mainstream and popular accounts of Partition often frame the boundary-making process in similar terms. ‘Arbitrary and artificial – established in haste’ wrote Sarfraz Manzoor in *The Guardian* in 2016. Marking the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Partition, the writer Pankaj Mishra recounted in 2007 in *The New Yorker* Mountbatten’s decision to ‘abruptly. . . bring forward the British government’s original schedule [for the transfer of power] by nine months’. Mishra sums up the takeaway from this story succinctly: ‘his decision is partly to blame for the disasters that followed’ (Mishra, 2007).

Despite the rushed timeline of the Partition itself, the political path to independence was much longer, and part of the wider, complex and rapidly shifting political, social and economic contexts of the time. The June announcement was preceded by a number of failed attempts by nationalist leaders and the British government to agree on a plan for independence, as well as increasing public agitation and outbreaks of violence in India. As Yasmin Khan (2007) notes, independence occurred within a post-war global context of economic hardship and political upheaval: mass food shortages and famine, the return en-masse of Indian soldiers from war-torn Europe, memories of unkept promises of

independence by the British Government, and the release of Congress party leaders from prison all contributed to the rush towards a transfer of power. The Independence movement had diversified as more players entered the arena. Marxist and communist groups, Hindu nationalists, scheduled caste groups, entrenched regional political parties and others all worked to mobilise Indians and popularise ideals of independence. Meanwhile, post-war circumstances in Britain meant an overwhelming Labour victory in Westminster, led by Clement Attlee, and a sea change in Indian policy.

Politics in India were similarly shifting. There had, from the beginning of British involvement in the subcontinent, been anticolonial feeling and action among Indians towards the British. But the final stage of centralised and organised anticolonial and nationalist politics began in earnest in the 1880s, with the founding of the Indian National Congress, which was to become the political party that would assume power in India upon independence in 1947. The party of Gandhi and Nehru, the Congress from its founding had framed its mission as representing the interests of all Indians, no matter their background or identity, and insisted that, while the majority of Indians were Hindu, Congress politics were secular and the party's membership was open to all. But criticism and opposition came from a variety of positions and places. Prominent among them were the All-India Muslim League, founded in 1906 by a group of elite Muslim intellectuals and politicians predominantly from the United Provinces in north India. The League argued that the Congress' position of universal inclusion and representation could not overcome the problem of electoral democracy for minorities in India. Dalit leaders mounted a similar criticism, arguing that the Congress did not adequately represent the interests of scheduled castes. Meanwhile, Hindu nationalists, many of whom were affiliated with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) founded in 1925, argued that Indian identity and Hinduism were inextricably linked and that India was fundamentally Hindu. The Hindu Mahasabha, a Hindu nationalist organisation within Congress, split from Congress in 1933 to become an independent political party. Meanwhile, regional parties like the Unionist Party in the large province of Punjab were suspicious of an overly strong central government, and worked to build regional alliances across identity-based communities to retain power at the regional scale.

Over the course of the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Indian nationalist movements worked in competition and collaboration with one another, creating dynamic spaces of debate, dissent, protest and negotiation. By the mid-1940s, it was increasingly clear to the British government and the Indian parties' leadership that independence would be granted to India. The arguments honed in on what that independence would look like, and what form the new Indian government should take. Before the Second World War, the Congress Party was the most powerful of the Indian nationalist parties. In 1942, however, Congress leaders were imprisoned by the British Government over their connection to the Quit India Movement, a civil disobedience campaign for independence. During

this period, the Muslim League managed to chip away at the Congress Party's hold over the Independence movement and to build a solid base of power among Indian Muslims. Jinnah, who had been working since the 1930s to rebuild the Muslim League, win seats for League candidates and create a political party with the authority to represent Indian Muslims, finally succeeded in proving to the British Government that he had a legitimate role to play in the transfer of power.

The elections of 1945 marked a significant moment in the transition process for a number of reasons. For historian Yasmin Khan (2007), the elections were the Indian people's first taste of democracy and introduction to self-rule. Shot through with ballot fraud, bribery, coercion and limited access, the elections were far from 'legitimate' by contemporary standards. But for Khan, this was self-rule in action, and it set the stage for the eventual takeover of regional assemblies, bureaucracies and institutions by the victorious parties in 1946. Additionally, the Muslim League's unprecedented and overwhelming success in the 1945–1946 elections became the most powerful card in Jinnah's hand when Britain officially withdrew from India; Jinnah had become, in Ayesha Jalal's (1994) words, 'the sole spokesman' for Indian Muslims.

Meanwhile, communal tensions continued to escalate across north India. On 16 August 1946, Jinnah and the Muslim League called for a day of 'Direct Action' where Muslim businesses would close and Muslims would gather in public places to make known their political will for the creation of Pakistan. What followed was one of the most infamous and violent series of riots in British India. Bengal in particular was caught up in the waves of communal violence (Khan, 2007). As tensions grew and episodes of violence became more systematised and organised, the British government and Indian nationalist leaders grew increasingly desperate to find a solution.

The British Government attempted, through a series of missions, to build a framework through which power would be transferred to the Indian political parties. All of these missions maintained at their core the idea of a united India. The final mission, the Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946, eventually failed when Congress, under Nehru's leadership, chose to reject its terms. Jinnah, however, was prepared to accept the Cabinet Mission Plan, sparking scholarly interest in Jinnah's true motives for supporting the Pakistan demand (Jalal, 1994).

After the 11th-hour failure of the Cabinet Mission Plan, Mountbatten was appointed Viceroy in February of 1947 and charged with the task of facilitating the withdrawal of the British Government from the subcontinent and transferring power to Indian leaders. It was decided that the boundaries would be drawn by two boundary commissions, one each for Bengal and the Punjab, which meant that when independence came, India and Pakistan would thus share not one but two international borders. The historical and geographical implications of this dual Partition have been tremendously significant. After the 3 June radio announcement, Mountbatten, Jinnah and Nehru began the process of determining the structure and remit of the boundary commissions. Each of the

boundary commissions would be comprised of a chair and four Indian justices. Nehru insisted that the four judges on each commission be of 'high judicial standing', and that they should represent the primary populations and parties at play (Sadullah, 1983, p. viii). The Congress Party and Muslim League therefore were central in the nomination of each of the judges for each of the commissions. The four judges were hardly neutral players, of course, and were the ones who took the keenest interest in the way their respective parties' arguments to the boundary commissions were constructed (Chester, 2009).

Both boundary commissions, it was agreed, would be chaired by Sir Cyril Radcliffe, a highly regarded London lawyer. The commissions would hold simultaneous semi-public hearings in Lahore and Calcutta, where representatives of interested parties would be invited to submit memoranda and present arguments to the justices. One of the most curious and widely cited facts about Radcliffe was that he was not a boundary-making expert and he had not previously visited India. He was unfamiliar with the geography of this vast colonial domain and had only scant knowledge of the political and ideological battles between Indian nationalist groups that had led to the decision to divide British India into two independent nation-states. The India-Pakistan boundary still bears his name – it is known as the 'Radcliffe line' – and he has variously been understood as elusive; disinterested (both in the sense of being fair-minded and detached from colonial and nationalist emotions and intrigues); as a pawn in an Indian (specifically Hindu-Muslim) power struggle; and as an imperial bureaucrat and overseer whose influence was hedged by complex political forces (Chester, 2009).

Despite this criticism of Radcliffe's lack of geographic credentials by scholars and other commentators today, Jinnah and Nehru both consented to Radcliffe's nomination as chair, believing that his lack of knowledge and familiarity with India would make him a more neutral and objective arbiter (Sadullah, 1983). He was assisted by two secretaries, V.D. Ayer Rao and H.C. Beaumont. Both had for many years served in the Indian Civil Service and were appointed in order to provide Radcliffe with an expert knowledge of India. Although Radcliffe met briefly with members of each boundary commission before the hearings began, he chose not to attend either set of hearings as they took place concurrently, and as an effort in his mind to maintain his neutrality. He preferred to work at a distance from the cut and thrust of the legal and political debate, with arguments and evidence flown to him in Delhi after each day's proceedings. He also heard individual arguments from each judge after the hearings had finished (Spate, 1991). His award was published on 17 August 1947, but violence had already escalated in the first two weeks of August. The two-day delay in the announcement of the award did not help stem the tide of aggression and brutality. Even before the award was officially announced, the communal violence and mass migration which has become so emblematic of Partition historiography had begun. Radcliffe left the country immediately, saying he could never return and destroying all of his papers relating to his work as chair of the boundary commissions (Chester, 2009).

The intricacies and intrigues of British-imperial and Indian high politics, combined with the catastrophic violence and mass migration which attended the geopolitical act of partition, have spawned an array of interpretations and debates regarding the process and legacies of Partition from different ends of the social and political spectrum. The processes precipitating the creation of the new national borders, and the events that followed the August decision (both immediately and in the longer run), have been the subject of multiple tellings and re-tellings of Partition. These narratives and interpretations are the crux of an eclectic (Indian and Pakistani; Hindu, Muslim and Sikh; metropolitan and colonial; elite and sub-altern; academic and popular) specialist literature on the subject. In recent years, this literature has played a significant role in the configuration of a wider border studies literature that envisions physical and symbolic borders and boundaries as integral to contemporary problems of cultural identity, nationhood, migration, democracy and human rights, and to configurations of sovereignty, state power and resistance in a putatively 'borderless' age of globalisation.

## Historicising Partition Historiography

This section introduces the broad thematic and methodological debates in the scholarly literature on the Partition of India and Pakistan. Partition studies itself has a history. A crowded field, historical accounts of Partition have been written since the 'moment' of Partition itself. Indian nationalists and British witnesses, many of whom were bureaucrats or civil servants, wrote their own accounts of the years leading up to Partition, of the summer of August 1947, and of the aftermath. This is the period, between 1947 and roughly 1980, in which official and more traditional historical accounts of Partition were consolidated and canonised. Importantly, Partition entered official and semi-official state historiographies of India and Pakistan in relation to particular nationalist and communal ideologies and discourses and helped develop them. In many cases (and certainly in the most famous cases), these authors were current or former members of government. Eyewitness accounts from the founders and thinkers of the new nation-states, therefore, became seminal for those whose job it was to bring these newly independent countries into the international community and global economy. As early as 1949, Partition was being narrated officially by those who had observed it from various vantage points. Indian accounts included G.D. Khosla's *Stern Reckoning* (1949), V.P. Menon's *The Transfer of Power in India* (1957) and Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah's account of the Muslim independence movement in Bengal and the establishment of Bengal, *From Purdah to Parliament* (1963, 1998). British accounts of Partition written from the perspective of colonial officials included Penderel Moon's *Divide and Quit* (1962), H.V. Hodson's *The Great Divide* (1969), Christopher Birdwood's *India and Pakistan: A Continent Decides* (1954) and E.W.R. Lumby's *The Transfer of Power in India* (1954). The journalists

Dominique Lapierre and Larry Collins' often cited *Freedom at Midnight* (1975) recounts Mountbatten's role (largely from interviews) and positions Mountbatten's memories as a faithful and accurate narrative of Partition. And finally, one of the most significant eyewitness accounts was produced by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, a prominent Muslim member of the Congress party during the decades leading to independence. He completed *India Wins Freedom* in 1958, but it was not made available to the public until 1988.

The proliferation of more critical academic treatments of Partition began in earnest in the 1970s and 1980s, and many of these began to move away from official and explicitly ideological renderings of their subject to foster more critical and revisionist approaches. Most prominent among these is undoubtedly Ayesha Jalal's (1994) *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League, and the Demand for Pakistan*. A path-breaking revisionist work, Jalal looked afresh at, and in some respects recovered for the first time, the complexity of Muhammad Ali Jinnah's political strategies and leadership of the All-India Muslim League. Her chiefly archival findings and argument challenged the accepted historical narrative, which held that Jinnah and the League were so intractable in negotiations that Pakistan became the only acceptable outcome. This narrative placed the blame for Partition primarily on Jinnah and his League supporters, absolving Nehru's Congress Party and Mountbatten himself of responsibility. Jalal showed that Jinnah had spent the 20 years leading up to independence attempting to consolidate a diverse and diffuse Muslim political community in India through the vehicle of a run-down and barely functioning political party (the All-India Muslim League). Even more astounding was her contention that Jinnah's demand for Pakistan was a 'bargaining chip'. She argued that Pakistan was a political card that Jinnah hoped to play in order to force the Congress' hand in agreeing to more legal and institutional protections for minorities, and, in particular, the sizeable Muslim minority, in a de-centralised but still unified independent India. The idea that Jinnah could, in fact, disagree with the demand for Pakistan and that his support for it was rooted in a more complex series of political manoeuvres, departed significantly from official narratives of the Independence movement and transfer of power. Jalal's work led the way for critical historiographical accounts of Partition that challenged colonial and nationalist narratives about the varied concepts and themes that much of the earlier work took for granted, including religious identity and communalism, hagiographies of prominent individuals and, importantly, where responsibility for Partition should be located (e.g. Ahmed, 1997; Chatterji, 1994; Page, 2002).

There has simultaneously been a proliferation of other works that depart significantly from the 'high politics' approach to Partition that imbues early and official historiography. They lean more towards regional or local politics and popular and oral histories, and emphasise the human drama and trauma of Partition. This shift away from official and institutional archival sources was subject to critique because it reframed the agenda away from identifying a seemingly

more accurate and nuanced picture of how Partition came about and towards a multiplicity of irreconcilable narratives of experience rooted in memory and testimony. By the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, debates about methodology as well as interpretation and narration had developed considerably (Pandey, 2001). Ian Talbot argues that much of this work grew out of the experience of 'communal violence in India during the 1980s' which 'encouraged a number of activists and scholars to draw parallels with Partition' and do so within the analytical framework and timeline of 'living memory' (2006, p. 4). At the vanguard of this movement were feminist scholars Urvashi Butalia and Ritu Menon, whose work recovered the experiences of women during and after Partition. Butalia's *The Other Side of Silence* (1998) and Menon and Kamla Bhasin's *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition* emphasised a methodology of 'history from below' (1998, p. 8). This work introduced the notion that most people whose lives were irrevocably altered by Partition had been excluded from most accounts of it. Violence and trauma now occupy a particular place in the literature on Partition. The feminist work above necessarily engages deeply with the experiences of violence, as well as the methodological challenges of articulating and narrating memories of violence. Paul Brass (2003) has written about Partition violence in Punjab in terms of genocide, as a way of understanding both the violence itself and of clarifying our understandings of collective violence.

In conversation with the feminist approaches and work focused on violence and trauma studies, there is also a strand of Partition literature that stems from the school of Subaltern Studies, which is a collective of primarily historians who formed in the early 1980s, which also attempts to historicise and spatialise the trauma and violence of this event in different and more holistic ways. In a historicist mode, subalternists like Gyanendra Pandey (2001) argue that Partition violence should not be conceived as an exceptional 'blip', or an unexpected or uncharacteristic moment in an otherwise glorious South Asian history, but as both a historical event and a collection of malleable and shifting meanings through which contemporary conflict and moments of violence in India are refracted and written into nationalist myths and historiographies. For Pandey and his colleagues, the disjuncture between studies of the high politics of Partition and the quotidian violence of Partition (and the debates over the legitimacy and quality of methodologies and sources which grow out of this disjuncture) prohibits scholars from dealing effectively with the ways in which Partition as event and Partition as memory are intertwined in processes of Indian nationalist myth-making (Pandey, 2001). He says, 'The current debate on the vexed question of memory and history, in fact, tells us more than a little about the relationship between nation and history, and history and state power' (2001, p. 7). Pandey's work is a relatively theoretical engagement with the relationship between violence, remembering and forgetting, and the implications of these for writing Partition historiography, but he points to other forms of recording memory, including oral histories, which have also been central to the empirical project of reckoning with the violence.

Reflecting David Gilmartin's (1998) call to move beyond the high politics/history from below division, much historiographical work now aims to bridge the gap between the high politics of Partition and the ways that Partition shaped the lives of people who lived through it. One of the most successful examples of such work is Yasmin Khan's (2007) *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (2007). Not only does Khan analyse Partition at multiple scales, she shows how events that took place in one arena had consequences in another. Ian Talbot and Gurharpal Singh's (2009) account brought into a single frame the causes and legacies of Partition, allowing for a more nuanced appreciation of Partition as a set of processes that represented both rupture and continuation. Some work has honed in on the importance of scale, moving away from the national scale to examine Partition's causes and legacies at the regional or city scale. Studies of the Punjab have been well represented in the literature (Ahmed, 2012; Chester, 2009; Gilmartin, 1988; Jalal, 1998; Singh and Talbot, 1997; Virdee, 2017). Meanwhile, Joya Chatterji (1994, 2007) challenged the dominance of the Punjab in Partition historiography by fixing her attention on the eastern border in Bengal, while Talbot and Singh (1999) have engaged a comparative approach. Sarah Ansari (2005), meanwhile, considers the legacies of Partition in Sindh, in Pakistan. Ansari and William Gould (2019) have more recently considered the significance of comparison across the border, examining how in Sindh and Uttar Pradesh, the Indian and Pakistani states were both in the process of creating new citizens. Vazira Fazila Zamindar's (2007) excellent *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories* similarly illustrates how high-level attempts at state-making, through the creation of passports and the transfer of property, were both experienced and shaped by contingencies on the ground.

As in Zamindar's account, migration and mobilities have become more prominent themes in scholarship on Partition, including themes of intergenerational experiences of displacement and familial remembering and forgetting. Haimanti Roy's (2013) *Partitioned Lives: migrants, refugees, citizens in India and Pakistan, 1947–65* also examines how the state produced citizens, focusing more specifically on Bengal and the eastern border. Ian Talbot and Shinder Thandi's (2004) collection *People on the Move: Punjabi Colonial and Post-Colonial Migration* places Partition migration within the wider context of mobilities that were both facilitated and forced by colonial capitalism, Partition, and postcolonial political economy.

Many accounts of migration make effective use of oral history, demonstrating how personal testimony can illuminate the ways that everyday social lives and cultural practices were transformed by the geopolitical and bureaucratic processes taking place in government offices. Much of this work also utilises literature, art and film alongside oral history to furnish narratives of Partition that move beyond traditional scholarly modes of writing. Pippa Virdee (2013) illustrates how oral histories produce unique forms of narrating and understanding troubling and violent pasts in the context of Partition. Gera Anjali Roy and Nandi Bhatia's

(2008) *Partitioned Lives: Narratives of Home, Displacement, and Resettlement* examines displacement and the making of home in just this way. Ayesha Jalal's (2013) account of her uncle, the writer Saadat Hasan Manto's life, analyses a selection of his fiction in the context of her family archive, illustrating how Manto reflected Partition as he witnessed it in his stories. Anindya Raychaudhuri's (2019) *Narrating South Asian Partition* reads an extensive oral history collection alongside cultural representation of Partition in film and literature to examine how collective memory of Partition is formed through the imbrication of lived experience with cultural texts. He opens his book with a story about a conversation he had with his mother, declaring at the start that autobiography is central to his method, and there is a growing trend for scholars of Partition to frame their readings of Partition memory in terms of their own. Aanchal Malhotra's (2019) *Remnants of Partition: 21 Objects from a Continent Divided*, which presents memories through the telling of stories about objects that migrants brought with them, begins with an interaction with her grandmother. Neeti Nair (2011), meanwhile, reflects in her opening pages on how an encounter with a document in the archive unsettled her inherited knowledge of Partition.

There are fewer explicitly geographical and spatial analyses of Partition, although there have been some notable and highly significant interventions. Lucy Chester's (2009) groundbreaking *Borders and Conflict in South Asia* was the first archival account to take the boundary commissions themselves seriously. She argues that one of the reasons the boundary commissions have been sidelined in the historiography is because they have not been seen as critical to understanding either the causes or the outcomes of Partition. She shows how the making of the commissions, as well as the drama of the hearings themselves, were in fact contingent and did have a bearing on how the process was completed. One of her strongest contributions is her archival work on Cyril Radcliffe, showing how he might be re-inserted into the narrative of Partition in a way that neither vilifies him nor denies his impact. More recently, William Gould and Stephen Legg (2019) have edited a special collection, 'Spaces before Partition', that shows how multi-scalar historical study can help us understand how spatial reordering in the years before Partition impacted the eventual Partition itself. The collection emphasises geographical modes of analysis, demonstrating how scholars can use scale to unpack complex and often contradictory social and political boundary-making processes.

Meanwhile, a few notable and relatively isolated studies in political geography indicate that the politics of Partition are of relevance to political geographers. One of the earliest works in political geography, produced by Thomas Fraser (1984), sketched the politics of Partition in Ireland, India and Palestine, highlighting the potential for comparative studies to show how Partitions were central to British decolonisation processes. More recently, Reece Jones has argued that 'the Partition was based on the false assumption that people can be logically divided up into groups based on identity categories and territorial maps'

(Jones, 2014, p. 297). However, in framing the Partition process as ‘false’, he implies that there was some other ‘true’ reality on the ground, a reality where categories were ‘blurry, overlapping and incipient’ (p. 297). Meanwhile, political geographers and scholars of contemporary border studies have drawn on some of the historiographies of Partition to contextualise their varied engagements with contemporary South Asian borders (Aijaz and Akhter, 2020; Cons, 2013; Ferdoush, 2014; Jones, 2012; Jones and Ferdoush, 2018; Mustafa, 2021; Shewly, 2013; Sur, 2021; van Schendel, 2005). With the notable exception of environmental histories of water politics in the Indus basin (e.g. Gilmartin, 2015b; Haines, 2016; Michel, 1967), historical work on Partition itself has tended not to incorporate geographical modes of enquiry and analysis, while much of the political geographical work on borders remains focused on contemporary processes rather than centring historicist modes of enquiry.

This book is firmly rooted in the Partition studies literature sketched above. Informed particularly by the revisionist accounts of Partition produced by scholars such as Yasmin Khan (2007), Gyanendra Pandey (2001), Ayesha Jalal (1994), Urvashi Butalia (1998) and Lucy Chester (2009), my reading of Partition is critical in its assessment of official nationalist and imperialist accounts, while being sensitive to the theoretical and methodological tensions inherent in studying Partition as a historical, political and social process. Like these authors, I understand the violence and trauma that characterised Partition to be an inextricable part of the process, rather than as an unfortunate, or tangential, aspect of the story. And, like these authors, I am concerned with the different scales at which Partition occurred, and with recognising the importance of disentangling the drama and intrigue of high politics from the everyday trauma of individual and collective experience. Therefore, as I show in the following sections, the book critically probes the relationship between geographical expertise and scientific accuracy among the professional spaces in which territorial claims were developed and the notion that expertise and accuracy might have impacted the experiences of violence, displacement and loss felt by individuals and communities. And finally, inspired by these authors, I began my own research by attempting to uncover the territorial aspirations underpinning the idea of Pakistan. From where had ‘Partition’ come?

David Gilmartin (2015a) has argued in a critical review of Partition scholarship that historians and religious studies scholars have explored in detail the diversity of ways that religious thought and organisation were transformed in India in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, but that scholars have generally shied away from explicitly connecting these processes with the actual Partition of the sub-continent in 1947. He suggests that this is for political reasons, that, ‘they have also been extremely wary of turning the history of communalism itself into a story of popular agency, for that might simply provide fodder for right-wing Hindu nationalists with their own erasures of popular agency in the name of essentialised religious – and civilisational – identities’ (p. 29). Indeed, I find the

possibility of reading Partition back in time to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and of rendering it inevitable, to be both ahistorical and politically dangerous. Yet the apparent suddenness of Partition remained curious.

Such curiosity about the seeming swiftness – and to me elusiveness – of Partition heightened when I started to delve into some of the literature on Partition, especially by the tendency by historians, anthropologists and political scientists to eschew a sustained critical interrogation of the territorial and spatial aspects of the Partition process itself. Despite the fact that Partition was, at its core, a geographical process, deeply concerned with the configuration, reorganisation and reinscription of territory, the vast body of literature on Partition had generally taken concepts of territory, borders and cartography for granted, and portrayed their role as inert, focusing instead on what Gilmartin (2015a) identifies: colonial forms of knowledge production and its relationship to communalism, the reconfiguration of religious identities into political identities, and the concurrent development of anticolonial rhetorics of liberation, sovereignty and democracy. These spatial attributes and conduits of power were presented as fixed, assumed and standardised, rather than as historically and politically constructed and contested ideas and practices.

Some of the most original and enlightening books on Partition, including Khan's (2007), Jalal's (1994) and Pandey's (2001) cited above, are characterised by this geographical oversight. While they work effectively to show the contingencies and contestations of the political, social and cultural forces at work during the Partition process, they tend not to critically examine the *geographical process* in the same way. Moreover, one of the rhetorical ways in which the Partition studies literature brings its subject into focus as a historical event, and thus surmounts its fractious politics, is through the deployment of spatial and psychological metaphors to describe the psychological, affective and traumatic effects of territorial division. Common use of spatial metaphors belies a paucity of sustained critical spatial theorising and reflection in the Partition studies literature. The spatiality of Partition, and particularly issues of boundary-making, tends to be glossed rather than probed. Indeed, spatial metaphors tend to normalise and occlude, rather than open up and question, the geographical processes at work both in how the Partition was enacted and how it has been studied.

The term 'Partition' is itself profoundly geographical, and the recent spate of scholarly and creative work with titles like *Partitioned Lives*, deployed by both Nandi Bhatia and Gera Anjali Roy (2008) and Haimanti Roy (2013), and *The Partitions of Memory* (Kaul, 2001) indicates a relative consensus on the uses and meanings of spatial metaphors of 'Partition' to convey upheaval, trauma, dislocation and displacement. The metaphor of the border or boundary, exemplified by Menon and Bhasin (1998) in their book title *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition*, effectively applies the image of the new border on the map to the new social and cultural identities (for Menon and Bhasin, intersectional gendered, religious and national identities) that were forged in the wake of the

making of the boundary. Such metaphors work to fix within Partition literature an understanding of Partition as a simple spatial process of territorial division and with the territories of India and Pakistan seen as sites of struggle torn asunder (in Indian nationalist narratives) or born anew (in Pakistan). The consequence of such fixed and unexamined uses of spatial concepts is that the way territorial partition works as a geographical and geo-political project and practice has not received the critical attention it warrants. While the historical and political contingencies of the partitioning process are often central to historiographical and ethnographic accounts of Partition, the geographical practices and spatial contingencies involved are left unexamined or undertheorised. Chester's (2009) work is the first sustained study that addresses the legal boundary-making process of Partition in detail. She showed how the boundary commission's structure, remit and process had an active hand in creating the eventual borders, and she effectively showed how the particularities of an individual, Radcliffe, could shape the process in both small and large ways. This book builds on Chester's focus on the Punjab Boundary Commission and extends her project by tracing the forms of geographical knowledge and cartographic materials presented in 1947 to the 19<sup>th</sup>-century colonial geographical archive. I argue, like Chester, that the boundary commission played a significant role in Partition in the Punjab, but I shift my focus away from Radcliffe and the politics of the various parties involved towards the production and mobilisation of geographical data, techniques and strategies by both the colonial government and Indian nationalists before and during the Partition process. While Chester looks in detail at the 1947 Punjab Boundary Commission, this book begins in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, examining the histories of geographical and spatial thinking in British India over a longer period.

## **Geographies of Empire, Colonialism, and Decolonisation**

As the previous section has shown, until recently, relatively few historical accounts of Partition engaged deeply with the kinds of questions that interest critical human geographers and historians of cartography: questions, in the present context, about the relations between maps, knowledge and power; borders and boundary-making, geo-political strategies, geographical imaginations of land and territory and the mutual constitution of society and space. More specifically, the Partition studies literature has tended to skirt around the connections between the apportioning of space and the production of territorial sovereignty; and also between British colonial modes of producing geographical knowledge and controlling territory, and Indian nationalist modes of challenging that knowledge and re-shaping it for the purposes of nation-building.

Despite the salience of these geographical questions to Partition, historical geographers, past and present, had until recently made remarkably little of the territorial Partition of the subcontinent. The historical geographies of empire,

and the histories of geography *and* empire, are well developed. As Dan Clayton writes in a recent overview:

Empires have been greatly shaped by geographical understandings, traditions, practices, concepts, and institutions – of frontiers, the exotic, and the unknown; expeditionary traditions of discovery, observation, mapping, description, and classification; colonising practices of appropriation and dispossession; cosmographic and secular systems of geographical knowledge, and doctrines of environmental determinism and geo-politics; and learned societies such as the Royal Geographical Society (founded London 1830) and popular magazines such as *National Geographic* (founded Washington DC 1888). (Clayton, 2017, p. 1)

Critical interest in the spatiality of empire has developed within the framework of postcolonialism, which can be characterised, in broad terms, as a multifaceted disciplinary project that seeks to challenge the idea and hope that independence heralded a complete break with the colonial past and new autonomy. Rather, colonial categories, practices, power structures and ideologies of colonialism and modernity outlived the formal eclipse of empire after World War II and continued to impinge on the fortunes of the decolonised world.

Postcolonialism necessarily has recourse to the colonial past as a means of addressing undisclosed and unresolved problems in the postcolonial present, and is centrally concerned with the creation and maintenance, and resistance to, hierarchical configurations of identity and belonging – categories of ‘us’ and ‘them’, and ‘inside’ and ‘outside’. A range of work within geography literature which might be described as a ‘postcolonial geography’ draws from Edward Said’s well-known and hugely influential account of the power of ‘imaginative geographies’, and dwells on the significance of both material geographical processes of colonisation and the spatial practices of representation that shaped and supported empire (Gregory, 1995; Jazeel, 2019). Said (1979) argued that the ‘Orient’ was culturally produced by Western writers and artists, and that over many centuries, a Western ‘imaginary’ regarding the East took root which portrayed the Orient as the West’s ‘surrogate self’ and mystical, aberrant and inferior ‘other’. Said famously argued that this imaginary, this means by which the West built up an image of itself in opposition to the Orient (and by extension non-Western world), shaped and supported Western imperial expansion and colonial rule in so-called Oriental regions from North Africa to the Far East (and by extension in other areas of the world). Cultural and historical geographers have used and extended Said’s insights to examine how Western European scientific knowledge (geographical knowledge to be sure, but not just geographical knowledge) produced spatial imaginaries of ‘us’ and ‘them’, ‘self’ and ‘other’, ‘the West and the rest’ that were often mobilised for the purposes of colonisation.

In postcolonial critique, critical analysis is often placed on text, image and discourse (or systems of representation). In this regard, particular interest has

been shown in the role that potent national and Eurocentric ways of seeing distant lands and territories, and constructing the ‘colonial other’, played in inducing, expediting and justifying imperial expansion and colonial rule, and more specifically in how spatial practices and discourses of exploration, surveying, mapping and travel worked as tools of empire. These spaces of representation (or discursive spaces of empire) were bound up with discourses of Western philosophy, natural history and political arithmetic (economic and demographic statistics); and latterly with professional disciplines like geography and anthropology which found their *raison d’être* in the study of exotic peoples and places, and in metropolitan spaces of the exhibition, museum and zoo, which exemplified and exuded ideas of imperial right and might, and European progress and civilisation.

Historical and cultural geographers in a myriad of ways examined how these imaginaries were built and how they operated in different ways in different colonial times, places and projects, including those of exploration (Burnett, 2000; Driver, 2001; Naylor and Ryan, 2009), communication (Ogborn, 2008), transportation (Baker, 2014); settlement and missionary endeavour (Pettitt, 2007; Wainwright, 2009); and colonial government and control (Legg, 2007, 2014). Geographers also consider how these processes and projects took place in myriad metropolitan and colonial spaces of knowledge and in a variety of documentary forms: travel narratives (Arnold, 2011; Guelke and Morin, 2001; McEwan, 2000), maps and atlases (discussed further below), photographs (MacArthur, 2022; Ryan, 2013); accounting and administrative systems; museums, exhibitions and learned societies (Bell, 1995; Driver et al., 2021; Livingstone and Withers, 2011). Historical geographers have theorised extensively about the ‘othering’ and fetishizing of tropical space, giving rise to a subset of literature on tropicity (e.g. Bowd and Clayton, 2018; Driver and Martins, 2005; Ferretti, 2021).

The study of geography’s empire is one (albeit diffuse) strand of a much broader engagement by geographers with postcolonial theory. Tariq Jazeel’s recent intervention makes two key points that are relevant here (2019). First, he reminds us that postcolonialism has itself always been geographical, pointing specifically to the ways that early postcolonial theory was preoccupied with the production of colonial and metropolitan space. In this way, he argues, geographical knowledge and postcolonialism are mutually constitutive, rather than a one-way street, where human geography engages postcolonial theory (much of which originated in literary theory and history) without actively shaping it. This partly explains why geography, as metaphor, as theatre and as a taken-for-granted problem, permeates the Partition studies literature, even as its histories and contingencies remain underdeveloped compared to writing on, for example, violence or memory. The postcolonial study of Partition is, therefore, bound up in geographical questions.

Second, Jazeel calls attention to the ways that geographers have put postcolonial theory to work well beyond the historical geographies of empire literature to show how geographers have examined issues of belonging and identification

stemming from processes of decolonisation and independence. 'If colonialism was dependent upon, and productive of, the networked spatialities [of empire], then these networks and border crossings, geographers reasoned, were centrally implicated in post-colonial and diasporic lives as well as in the ways the nation-state is (re)produced culturally' (Jazeel, 2019, p. 26). The literature on geography and empire has often been concerned largely with the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and often with the agendas, worldviews and foibles of colonisers and the metropolitan world rather than with those of the colonised and the messy pragmatics of colonial encounter and conflict. Historical geographers have produced ground-breaking and rigorous theoretical and empirical works on the post-enlightenment promulgation of what Felix Driver (1992) termed 'Geography's Empire', but substantially more geographic research remains to be done on the post-war era of decolonisation; as Dan Clayton, who has been at the forefront of this work in geography, notes, 'remarkably little historical attention has been paid to geographers' entanglements with postwar decolonisation' (2020, p. 1543). Interestingly, geographers working within the critical traditions of development and post-development studies have studied the period of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, and there is excellent literature on 'cold war geographies' (Barnes, 2022; Barney, 2015; Farish, 2010), but this work has not yet been critically connected to 20<sup>th</sup>-century processes of decolonisation. Only in the past few years, more sustained attention has been paid to the geographical knowledge and practices implicated in the retreat and break-up of European colonial empires (Bowd and Clayton, 2018; Clayton and Kumar, 2019; Craggs, 2014; Craggs and Neate, 2020), and especially how colonial territories were divided and transformed into independent, territorially bounded nation-states (Clayton, 2020; Ferretti, 2020). This was a curious oversight and until recently a crucial limitation to postcolonial geography as a critical project. It also seems increasingly anomalous given the broad turn within postcolonial studies over the last 15 years or so away from the more distant colonial past and towards a concern with decolonisation as a proximate location from which to probe the phantasms and predicaments what Derek Gregory has called 'the colonial present' (Gregory, 2004).

## **Critical Cartography and Map Histories**

Mapping and cartography occupy a central role in geography's colonial and imperial history, and historical geographers of empire often work in conversation with the interdisciplinary critical history of cartography tradition, pioneered by J.B. Harley (1988, 1989), Harley and Woodward (1987) and Denis Wood (1992), and developed latterly by Jeremy Crampton (2010), John Pickles (2004), Mark Monmonier (2006, 2018) and most especially by historian Matthew Edney (1997, 2019). The critical history of cartography project began in the 1980s, when Harley, a cartographer, began to draw on the work of Panofsky, Derrida

and Foucault to reinterpret and reimagine the making and use of maps. In his 1989 essay 'Deconstructing the map', he argued that maps were not simply scientifically produced, and thus faithful (impartial and over time ever more accurate) representations of reality, but contained hidden, symbolic meanings which freighted and shaped social relations of power. Although never fully or (for many) coherently unpacked by Harley, 'deconstruction' was the approach he advocated to get at the observable and invisible (symbolic) power of maps. Influenced by Foucault's conceptualisation of knowledge as inherently power-laden, Harley had previously argued that maps are not 'inert records of morphological landscapes or passive reflections of the world of objects', but are, rather, 'a way of conceiving, articulating and structuring the human world which is biased towards, promoted by, and exerts influence upon particular sets of social relations' (Harley, 1988, p. 278). He argued that, as cartography was a form and expression of knowledge, it therefore was also a mechanism by which power could be obtained, held and exercised: 'the surveyor, whether consciously or otherwise, replicates not just the 'environment' in some abstract sense but equally the territorial imperatives of a particular political system' (Harley, 1988, p. 279). At the time, this was a profound epistemological break from the commonly held assumptions of professional cartographers. Matthew Edney notes that Harley's work was a critical response to internal assumptions and ideals within the academic discipline of cartography in the 1980s, which sought an 'epistemological ideal of cartographic perfection' (1997, p. 24).

Historical geographers have engaged with Harley's work, and with critical cartographic theory more broadly, in a variety of ways. Felix Driver has shown how central mapping was to the development of geography as a set of practices and a mode of knowledge production in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries: the production of 'maps and charts [that] crafted a new way of seeing the worlds beyond Europe', and that this process was driven by a popular narrative of the geographer-explorer 'as a missionary of science, extending the frontiers of (European) geographical knowledge' (2001, p. 4). Scholars have also used critical cartographic analysis to challenge triumphalist Eurocentric and white settler-focused historical narratives of early exploration and discovery, recasting European scientific surveying and cataloguing exercises as part of territorial conquest (Burnett, 2000; Carter, 2010; Clayton, 2000).

Matthew Edney's (1997) *Mapping an Empire* is emblematic of this work in the context of South Asian history and has enabled much of the theoretical and empirical work set out in this book. Edney examines the role of geographical knowledge in the East India Company's campaign to discover, claim and govern Indian territory, chiefly through the implementation of the Great Trigonometric Survey and the eventual establishment of the Survey of India. Edney's intervention illustrates the spatial corollary to the more widely known statistical and enumerative strategies and technologies that were so central to Britain's colonial governmentality in India. Governmentality, articulated by Foucault most especially

in his later lecture series (2007, 2008), and developed by many scholars since (see Legg and Heath, 2018), encompasses the ways in which the state exercises power across scale in order to create and maintain a productive population. This emphasis on scale makes it a particularly effective concept for doing a historical geography of Partition; governmentality simultaneously targets the individual, the family and the state, and operates through institutional frameworks, discourse and quantitative forms of analysis.

Technologies of colonial governmentality included the census, which has been the subject of extended theorisation that posits that the census, rather than capturing social and cultural identities that existed a priori, in fact was central to the production of modern identities that were politicised in various ways by colonial governance (Appadurai, 1993; Cohn, 1996; Dirks, 2001; Kaviraj, 1992; Metcalf, 1994). Ethnological and linguistic surveys created and consolidated for administrative purposes extended lists of the ethnic and racial groups that lived in British India, and the predominant languages spoken by each (Majeed, 2020). Similarly, revenue surveys were deployed for the purposes of taxation and land management (Michael, 2007). Government surveys ‘improved “the exercise of power by making it lighter, more rapid, more effective,” and more subtle’ (Edney, 1997, p. 24). But this was always an ideal of colonial surveying rather than the reality. Edney argues that ‘European states and their empires could never be so totalising. They could never be so effective’ (p. 25). Maps and surveys were ‘like all instruments of state power. . . exercises in negotiation, mediation and contestation between surveyors and their native contacts, so that the knowledge which they generated was a representation more of the power relations between the conquerors and the conquered than of some topographical reality’ (p. 25). Imperial ‘texts and maps did not present truth. . . The British simply believed that they did’ (p. 26).

Even more importantly, these mapping processes were not one-way. Scholars have pointed to the ways that cartographic science and map images have simultaneously been mobilised for anticolonial agendas. Sumathi Ramaswamy’s (2009) study of *Bharat Mata*, or Mother India (the divine incarnation and visual representation of the Indian nation) recovers the cartographic impulse and mode at the heart of the visual tradition of *Bharat Mata* – a cartographic counter-mapping from an Indian perspective – and argues that ‘barefoot cartographers’ both relied on and subverted the norms of cartographic practice in order to depict their spiritual and historical claim to an independent nation-state (p. 34). Meanwhile, Edney reminds us that empire was not simply created and reproduced in ‘maps, subsuming all individuals and places within the map’s totalising image’ (1997, p. 24). He further complicates the power of imperial mapping, arguing that it ‘is an ironic act, postulating as it does a double audience: the population in the mapped territories remains ignorant while another population is actively enabled and empowered to know the mapped territories’ (Edney, 2009, p. 13). But, like Ramaswamy shows, this was an *ideal* of colonial cartography, rather than the

reality, because colonised people were also cartographers. Indeed, colonised people made productive use of the cartographic practices and materials produced by colonisers for anticolonial ends. In *Decolonizing the Map*, James Akerman (2017) and his contributors show how decolonisation processes very often made use of colonial maps in the transition to independence, but that creative modifications could be used to decolonise national space. As Raymond B. Craib argues in his introduction, 'Maps and atlases thus helped perform the hard cultural work of decolonizing the land, the past and, in the famous phrase of Kenyan intellectual Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, the mind' (Craib, 2017, p. 18, diachronic marks not in original).

Yet even as I sketch the influence of the critical histories of cartography tradition on this project, I note that, while maps form a substantial component of the archival material examined in this book, they are not the sole object of study. Nor is map analysis my chief mode of enquiry. Rather, the historical geography of Partition narrated here takes seriously Matthew Edney's recent radical suggestion that 'we should abandon the critique of maps, whether normative or sociocultural and engage instead in a critique of the ideal of cartography' (2019, p. 4). Edney argues that cartography has, among critical scholars and technical practitioners alike, been taken for granted, conceptualised as the making and study of maps. In this framework, cartography might vary across time and space but is at its core a universal practice. He points to critical work on the history of cartography, which has often attempted to bring historically marginalised forms of mapping into the fold, to recognise the diversity and multiplicity in forms and styles of cartography. Non-European, Indigenous, pre-colonial and prehistoric maps have all been studied in this way, as if they had always been examples of cartography but as a result of enlightenment and colonial modes of categorising knowledge, had been rejected as false, unscientific, inaccurate or, in the language of colonial anthropology, 'primitive' (e.g. the foundational *History of Cartography* project, originally edited by Harley and Woodward, especially Volume 2, Book 3, published in 1998). But all of this assumes that *cartography* has existed for as long as humans have bothered to represent the world in spatial and visual ways. Critical scholars have therefore focused their attention on analysing maps. Harley's foundational work is an illustrative example of this: while postmodernist and poststructuralist approaches to analysing the 'text' of the map do reveal important features that the map hides, such as power relations, ideologies, invisible or excluded perspectives and so on, cartography itself remains an ontologically stable concept, the fixed framework within which maps are critiqued.

The maps *themselves* only tell us so much about Partition, a process and event that many scholars have already told us quite a lot about. We are left with narratives that are often rigorously researched and beautifully written but remain frustratingly descriptive in some ways. This is not to diminish the fine work of scholars who have written about Partition maps, nor to claim that my own work somehow succeeds where others have not. Rather, I aim to call attention to the

opportunities that Edney's new work opens up for historical geographies of Partition and to show how we might shift our critical focus away from the maps and towards what Edney calls the 'ideal of cartography' that was at work before and during the Partition process. Importantly, examining the ideal of cartography also helps explain why commentators on Partition, both scholarly and not, have appealed to geography as a form of knowledge that could have, if done properly, prevented some of the violence and trauma caused by the partitioning of territory in the subcontinent. In order to explore the ideal of cartography at work in the Partition, I bring into the frame not only the maps and the boundary-making process of 1947 but also older colonial forms of surveying and gazetteering in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. I argue that, although we cannot and should not read Partition itself into 19<sup>th</sup>-century maps of India, we can uncover the ways in which an ideal of *colonial* cartography was at work in British India, and which was imbricated in the ways that anticolonial actors, Indian nationalists, Indian and British politicians and civil servants conceptualised India and, eventually, Pakistan.

## Doing Historical Geographies of Partition

As much of the above suggests, there is considerable scope to rethink the history of Partition in geographical, and specifically cartographic, terms, and open up a series of original and important questions about territory, boundary-making and the nature, meaning and productive capacities of borders. In order to tell this story, I have employed a methodology of archive-based textual and visual analysis. The book draws together and analyses an eclectic and original combination of primary documents which, when examined alongside one another, allow for the construction of a new narrative of Partition. In some sections, I use a range of archival and secondary sources to construct a narrative timeline or to reimagine the spaces and events of a historical scene. In other sections, I focus my analysis on specific significant, and usually under-examined, texts. I utilise both methods in order to more creatively and substantially highlight the ways in which spatial and geographical knowledge and practice were produced and mobilised in the late colonial period in India.

Throughout the book, I pay careful attention to the ways in which the sources presented here both produce and illuminate the discursive and material nature of borders and boundaries in the subcontinent. I show how an array of investigative projects, namely the production of atlases, geographical treatises and boundary-making handbooks, worked to produce and naturalise boundaries in colonial India rather than simply capture or reflect pre-existing physical and human areas, differences and divisions. I demonstrate how spatial boundaries and divisions in the Punjab region of colonial India were produced – rather than given – in the form of atlases, maps, diagrams, gazetteers, census reports, government quotas and reserved seats (the colonial government's policy of allocating a set number of

elected seats based on identity categories), segregated schools and so forth. I also examine the question of the constitutive nature of borders and boundary-making from both 'British/colonial' and 'Indian/Pakistani' perspectives and put these categories in scare quotes to flag the notion that the investigative projects and modalities of boundary-making were implicated in creating, realising, maintaining and revising the identities and categories underpinning the colonial divide and aspirations for independence. Finally, the book aims to open up and examine the different (geographic, textual, visual) venues in which Partition took place, and how these spaces (from maps and gazetteers to census-taking and the courtroom debate) shaped the partitioning process. My re-mapping of Partition has three main geographical components: first, a regional focus on the Punjab and the Punjab Boundary Commission, in order to show how issues of scale and regional diversity both impacted and were impacted by wider national or imperial agendas before and during the partitioning process; second, the promotion of deeper historical-geographical understanding of how colonial and nationalist imaginations and constructions of the Punjab and Pakistani territory developed alongside a set of boundary-making principles and precedents; and third, a concern with how such imaginations and principles were at work in both the boundary-making practices and political deliberations that precipitated Radcliffe's August 1947 decision.

Accordingly, the book is divided into four substantive chapters. Chapters 2 and 3 deal with the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. These chapters work together to highlight the ways in which colonial geographical practice and imperial geographical imagination worked to construct the particular social and political conditions within which a territorial partition of India could be imagined and negotiated. They show that the possibility of Pakistan before Independence was part of a dynamic intellectual arena in which the future of India, both as a political ideal and as a bounded and discrete territorial unit, was highly contested and contingent. Chapter 2 traces the development of mapping and surveying in British India after 1858, showing first how British colonial officials produced and used geographical data to administer British India, and second how British geographers and colonial officials placed increasing emphasis on boundary-making and workable borders into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The chapter begins with an examination of the production of the first *Imperial Gazetteer of India* (1885) by William Wilson Hunter and probes the logic of bordering at work in Hunter's mission (which has received remarkably little scholarly attention, and which was instrumental in facilitating the first major iteration of the Indian census). The chapter then traces ideologies of 20<sup>th</sup>-century boundary-making in the work of the British colonial surveyor, Thomas Holdich, and the American geographer and boundary-making expert, Stephen B. Jones, who worked for the US State Department.

Chapter 3 considers how these cartographic and surveying projects and ideologies sat alongside some of the first nationalist imaginings of 'India' and 'Pakistan'. This chapter examines the development of Muslim nationalist political

and religious philosophy during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, uncovering the traces of geographical, spatial and territorial thinking that was threaded through broader nationalist discourses among Indian Muslim intellectuals. Beginning with the Aligarh school, its founder Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, and his idea of the two-nation theory, Chapter 3 considers how some prominent Indian Muslim thinkers and leaders appropriated, challenged and incorporated colonial geographical knowledge into their understandings of India, what it meant to be Indian, and their visions for India after the departure of the British.

These chapters set the stage for a thorough investigation of some of the key spaces of the Partition process itself in July of 1947, which form the basis of Chapters 4 and 5: the Lahore High Court, the homes and hotels where party members and officials lived, stayed and met during the course of the summer of 1947, as well as the cartographic and geographical evidence which was produced and mobilised during the Punjab Boundary Commission hearings. In Chapter 4, I undertake a textual and visual analysis of the Punjab Boundary Commission documents, particularly the hearing transcripts, which were collected over the 10-day period in the Lahore High Court, and the maps that were pivotal to the way testimony from the main parties was presented and heard. This chapter shows how geographical knowledge was one of many forms of knowledge used by delegates and members of the boundary commission to produce competing claims to territory. The chapter also draws on the material analysed in the first two chapters to illustrate how such geographical knowledge was itself power-laden and contingent, produced within and mobilised by colonial institutions in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Finally, the chapter provides the historical context for understanding how geographers and geographical expertise contributed to the Partition process.

Chapter 5 conducts a thorough examination of unpublished and previously unused material (held in the National Library of Australia) pertaining to the boundary commission that were documents produced and collected by the British geographer Oskar Spate, who worked as an independent advisor to the Muslim League during the Punjab Boundary Commission hearings. I analyse Spate's maps, notes and reports on the court proceedings, diaries, letters and memoirs, in order to extend understanding of the geography of Partition. Particular attention is paid to the relationship between Spate's academic (in many ways scientific-rationalist) persona and his political connection to the Muslim League, and his ambiguous role as both actor in and witness to the boundary commission. In Spate's diaries, the space of the courtroom was a decidedly legal and juridical venue in which competing geographical narratives and arrangements – which were bolstered by maps, charts, tables, handbooks and manuals – were presented and debated. The space of the courtroom was an important aspect of the boundary commission hearings, lending the process an air of legality, of transparency (even in the midst of government-mandated controls on media reports), of Indian responsibility and accountability, of the possibility of compromise and negotiation.

It is equally telling that the chairman of the boundary commissions, a prominent lawyer and judge (and the only British member of the commissions), did not ever enter the space of the Indian courtroom.

In the analysis that follows, I heed the call of Sanjay Chaturvedi, who wrote 20 years ago that ‘a critical geography of Partition(s) should compel us to look at the other side of the “exact” maps of the world, and to question their privileged locations, localities and directions. . . concealed behind such “settled” maps are not only the violent histories and geographies of Partition and boundary-making but also “unsettled” and “unsettling” assertions of disagreement and dissent’ (Chaturvedi, 2003, p. 148). Ultimately, the book argues that Partition, as enacted by the Government of India in 1947, was not an exceptional solution to the terrifying and irresolvable problem of ‘communal violence’. Nor was Partition simply the poorly planned and hastily executed result of a British government that no longer cared about India. Partition was part and parcel of imperial and colonial forms of governance, and, although the circumstances of the summer of 1947 provided a dramatic narrative, those circumstances were neither extraordinary nor exceptional. Rather, they were the product of the consolidation of colonial procedures and technologies of territorial governance carried out gradually over the course of two centuries. Crucially, the book shows how those colonial procedures and technologies are rooted in particularly modern forms of *geographical* knowledge and power.

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