
Army Recruitment and Patron - Client Relationship in Colonial Punjab: A Grassroots Perspective

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This article, in the light of revealing new sources, sheds fresh light on the patron-client relationship and the way it impacted on the recruitment process. It not only adds to our knowledge of the Punjab's military history but enhances our understanding about the functioning of collaboration in rural and urban settings. The case study material drawn from the Shahpur District of Colonial Punjab argues that patron-client ties were stronger in the rural areas. The different patterns between towns and countryside reflected the more even urban social landscape. Patron-client ties certainly existed within them, but did not have the same power and density as in the rural setting. Therefore they were less crucial in raising recruits in the towns as compared to the rural areas. It was in the countryside that 'voluntary' recruitment was most clearly tied with social hierarchies and above all the patron-client relationship between landowners and tenants, clan leaders and their less powerful kinsmen. Moreover, attachment of recruits to their 'family regiment' was a feature that was common to both rural and urban areas.

Introduction

The concept of collaboration was popularised by Cambridge historian Ronald Robinson.¹ He explained that in the absence of overwhelming resources British managed to maintain their empire through the support of indigenous elite groups. He was an Africanist historian and his understanding has been primarily tested in regards to British colonies in the African continent. Later the concept has been employed by a number of scholars in a number of setting and regions of India.² As far as Punjab is concerned Ian Talbot and David Gilmartin employed the concept in their pioneering studies in the 1980s.³ After the war of independence British searched for indigenous influential elite and won them over to their side by showering patronage. Second half of the nineteenth century witnessed canal colonisation and Punjabisisation of the colonial Indian Army. Agricultural colonisation unleashed tremendous resources which the British utilised to patronise the influential rural elite. In this regard rural notables received huge land grants and maintained their virtual rule in the countryside. In peace time they provided watch and ward services, maintained law and order and helped the British in terms of political control. Canal colonisation was contemporaneous with Punjabisisation of the colonial Indian Army and a number of studies have linked collaboration with the army recruitment as the collaborators served as military contractors for the Raj.

They raised recruits for the army and helped the British in their various military campaigns with logistics and remounts. During the First World War demand for recruits increased many fold and the collaborators saw recruitment as a resource to further augment their position by winning favours and patronage from the British. The theme that the British patronage could disturb the local balance of power and the elite started competing with each other for the British largesse, which shows that collaboration was a two-

way dynamic relationship and not a top-down one-way relationship has been discussed by the author somewhere else.⁴ The existing literature on collaboration and recruitment is mainly provincial. The broad brush approach does not give us much room to see the grassroots perspective on collaboration and the way it impacted on recruitment. The main reason is that it views these themes through the prism of provincial level sources. Most importantly the existing literature has little to say about patron-client ties. In fact collaboration was predicated upon patron-client ties and in order to understand their impact on recruitment we need to reduce our scale of analyses to micro level. This article addresses this gap in the existing literature. So far local level studies have been ignored because of lack of access to local level of sources. This article has become possible as the impediments in the way of access to local level sources have been overcome by the author. It is based on never-before-seen sources lying in the deputy commissioner record office Sargodha. These original sources are extremely invaluable as M. S. Leigh utilised them to write official war histories such as *Punjab and the War* and *War Services of the Shahpur District*. The official war histories were written with political motivation and they are silent about such themes as competition among the local collaborators as well as patron-client ties.

This article focuses on the phenomenon of collaboration with specific reference to patron-client relations and the way they impacted upon the recruitment process through a case study approach. By comparing and contrasting the patron-client ties in rural and urban settings it would help us to understand how leading rural notable families procured recruits in their respective areas. It will shed fresh light on the nature of the patronage extended by the collaborators to their clientele. This analysis is not only conceptually original, but has not been previously empirically tested at the district level. In addition, the article will also consider the role played by the regimental connection in the enlistment of

the recruits. It will test the proposition that the regiments having pre-war connections with the families and localities pulled greater number of recruits during the war. This would also demonstrate that the collaborators favoured recruitment for certain regiments.

Colonial Shahpur District forms an important case study. Military services of the district date back to the British campaigns against the Sikhs and the uprising of 1857. In the First World War the district lived up to its tradition of military support and collaboration, which was reminiscent of the Tiwana Maliks' earlier services ranging from the Multan siege and the uprising of 1857 to the troubles in the NWFP, and from the Tibetan campaign to the Somaliland affair. In the First World War once again the Tiwanas, a Rajput Muslim tribe centred at Mitha Tiwana, rendered significant services in terms of recruitment, collaboration and control. The 'martial races' which got representation in the army in the 1880s, when Punjab became home of the Colonial Indian Army, responded positively to the call to arms and were heavily recruited during the war. The district, which was historically known as one of the military districts of the Punjab, once again stood at the forefront during the First World War. In order to understand the patron client ties in particular and regimental connection in general it is necessary to look at the recruitment process not only in the crucial period of the war but also in period before the war when Punjab became home of the Colonial Indian Army.

A Comparative Study of *Mohalla Ahiranwalla* (Khushab Town) and the Kalra Estate

This case study focuses on the recruitment process at the locality level. It highlights that in both the rural and urban areas the existing regimental connections and the patron client relationship played an important role in the 'voluntary' enlistment. In urban areas the people who were connected with the colonial administration in one way or the other used

their influence to procure recruits from the localities. It was in the countryside however that 'voluntary' recruitment was most clearly tied with social hierarchies and above all the patron-client relationship between landowners and tenants, clan leaders and their less powerful kinsmen. The different patterns between towns and countryside reflected the more even urban social landscape. Patron-client ties certainly existed within them, but did not have the same power and density as in the rural setting. In both situations, the role of the regimental connection was significant, as the recruits enlisted showed a marked preference to join the regiments which already had an established-connection with their localities before the war.

Tan Tai Yong in his invaluable research⁵ has explained recruitment with reference to British mechanism of identification and selection of recruits as well as with reference to the prevailing economic conditions in the military districts which acted as a push factor. However, this case study is conceptually original in the sense that it not only explains the impact of patron-client relationship on the recruitment process but also for the first time it empirically tests at the locality level the direct co-relationship which existed between the regimental connection and the number of recruits pulled by the regiments during and before the war. In order to fully understand the impact of patron-client ties on the recruitment process in particular and the war effort of the district in general, it is important to reduce the scale of observation down to a village or a *mohalla* (neighbourhood) level. For the case study, two localities, one urban and the other rural have been selected. Kalra was the landed estate which had been built up by a leading rural collaborator in the district in the person of Umar Hayat Khan Tiwana.⁶ Since Kalra was a small rural locality almost the size of an average Punjabi village, it is therefore pertinent to select for comparison a *mohalla* rather than a whole urban centre or town famous for recruitment. *Mohalla* Ahiranwala of Khushab town is, therefore, selected for this

case study. Before discussing the recruitment and patron-client relationship we first have a brief introduction to the *mohalla* and the Kalra estate.

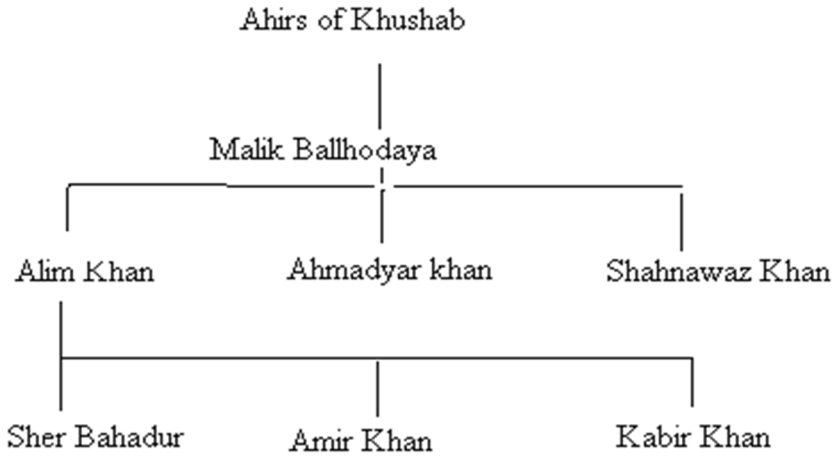
Mohalla AHIRANWALA

Mohalla AHIRANWALA was a small locality situated in Khushab town, headquarters of the Khushab *tehsil*. In total, the town had 12 *mohallas*. It was a common feature of all the old towns of the Punjab to have these *mohallas* as their constituting units. It was very rare that a *mohalla* would have a single *biradari* (brotherhood referring to a unit of social organisation) residing there. However, it was the norm that the name of the *mohalla* would be after the name of the most important family or *biradari* of the *mohalla*. This was also true in Khushab where the other *mohallas* were Naichanwala, Sujranwala, Balochanwala and Mudhanwala. They were named after the leading families of Naich, Sujran, Baloch and Mudh respectively. On the whole the Baloch were more influential as they were historically considered the *Sardars* (chiefs) in the entire region.

AHIRANWALA was a small *mohalla* which roughly had 50 to 60 houses and it is assumed that its total population would not have been more than 250 people. Although there were just two houses of Ahirs in the locality but still the *mohalla* was named after them due to their social position.

They had family members in the Municipal Committee, police department and the honorary system of magistrates, and not to mention they owned a rural estate. These two houses belonged to Malik Alim Khan and Allah Ditta. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century the family had assumed considerable importance for the British and J. Wilson, Revenue Collector, had left a record of the family in the revenue papers.

Genealogical Chart of Ahirs⁷



Alim Khan and his brothers Ahmadyar Khan and Shahnawaz Khan owned Chak Mangur, free of land revenue, and they also had some land in Khushab. Alim Khan was the *Lambardar* (village headman) of Chak Mangur as well as a member of the Khushab Municipal Committee. He offered his services to the government on various occasions and for combating crime he won police certificates. His son Sher Bahadur was a Deputy Inspector of Police in the early 1890s who served at various places and earned many certificates and was later to be promoted to the rank of Deputy Superintendent of Police. His second son Amir Khan was a *Daffadar*⁸ in the 18th Bengal Lancers since 1893.⁹ Since the Baloch were more numerous and their services eclipsed the services of Ahirs in the 1880s and 1890s no award was recommended for the family. On the other hand, among the Baloches of Khushab, who lived in their own *mohalla*, Balochanwala, Bahadur Khan had received some official awards. In 1900 Sher Bahadur was transferred to Kohat District where he established a very good reputation.¹⁰ During the war he served as an honorary

magistrate and made a significant contribution to the war. His close relatives were also in the police department. Aurangzeb Khan was a sub inspector whereas Muhammad Azim Khan, Malik Khan Muhammad, Shabir Khan and Sardar Khan were head constables.

Besides the Ahirs other important tribes of the *mohalla* included Sayeds, Awans, Kalyar and Kamboh. The Sayeds were in the majority not only in the *mohalla* but also in the army followed by Awan and Ahir. It is interesting to note that although the Sayeds were not designated as a martial caste, unlike the Muslim Rajputs and other tribes, yet they had greater presence in the army from the *mohalla*. This demonstrates the anomalous and complex nature of the recruitment process. The other tribes who had minor representation in the army or police included Khichi, Khoja, Mulazade, Mughal, Bhaba, and Paoli. The *War History of the Shahpur District* shows that in total 58 men from the *mohalla* served with the Allies in Europe and in Aden during the First World War.¹¹ We will later see that these figures were based on an exaggerated total submitted to M.S. Leigh by Sher Bahadur, an honorary magistrate who helped procure recruits during the war.¹²

The Kalra Estate

Kalra village was not a proprietary village rather it was comprised of people who were mostly tenants, workers, *kamins* and estate managers of Umar Hayat. The Hindus and Sikhs together comprised fifty percent of the overall population of the village. The village was established on the land grant of 8,000 acres awarded to Umar Hayat's father Malik Sahib Khan for his conspicuous services during the uprising of 1857. To begin with Sahib Khan resided at Megha but later moved to this new grant out of which he carved the Kalra estate.¹³ Ian Talbot has given a vivid depiction of the Tiwana residential complex.

The heart of the Kalra estate was the family dwelling which Malik Sahib Khan had constructed in the 1880s. It was modelled on a circuit house with its single storey, porch veranda and large living room with its high airy ceiling. The house was reached by a drive off the bazaar road; this linked the estate with the Sargodha to Jhawarian road. The polo ground ran between the house and the intersection of the canal and bazaar road. The family graveyard and mosque faced across the road to the polo ground. Behind this was the vegetable garden and orchard with its oranges and mangoes. The outbuildings included a guest house, the female quarters, stables, granaries and estate office. The guest house which contained fourteen bedrooms had been occasionally occupied by James Wilson and Malcolm Hailey during the time of the Court of Wards' administration of the estate.¹⁴

The exact number of people in the village cannot be obtained as they did not appear separately in the census reports. Before discussing the patron-client relationship we first turn to the regimental connection of the *mohalla* and the Kalra estate.

The Regimental Connection and Recruitment

Regimental connection played a very important role in recruitment process as it was not only limited to localities but had also developed into a family connection. The *Mohalla* Ahiranwala had strong links with the 18th Bengal Lancers. *Daffadar* Amir Khan Ahir, Jowaya Khan Kalyar and Mahtab Shah were the first three people of *mohalla* who had joined the army in the 1880s. They all had retired before the First World War commenced. Their relatives, *Daffadar* Muhammad Nawaz Ahir and *Risaldar*¹⁵ Khan Muhammad Kalyar followed in their footsteps. Like their predecessors they were all in the 18th Bengal Lancers and proved to be instrumental in the development of the regimental connection with the *mohalla* and their respective *biradaris*

living there. Ahirs, Sayeds and Awans also had developed regimental connection with the 56th Camel Corps and, therefore, before the war, most of the recruits from the *mohalla* had favoured service with these two regiments. However, during the war more men joined the 18th Bengal Lancers not only because the *mohalla* had historic affiliation with the regiment but also because the Ahirs were connected with the same regiment. The Ahirs used their influence to procure more recruits.

Table 1
Regimental Connection before the First World War: *Mohalla*
Ahiranwala

Regiments				Total No. of men
18th Bengal Lancers	15th Lancers	37th Lancers	56th camel Corps	
17	1	3	16	37

Source: Mohalla Ahiran Recruitment Record in file U/XIV/194, DCRO, Sargodha.

Table 1 reveals the pre-war regimental connection of the *mohalla*. It is evident from the data that the *mohalla* had developed a strong regimental connection with the 18th Bengal Lancers and the 56th Camel Corps. Retired *Daffadar* Amir Khan Ahir helped recruit nine men to his parent regiment, the 18th Bengal Lancers, from which he himself had retired.¹⁶ Later on during the war, his brothers, Sher Bahadur Ahir and Kabir Khan Ahir, who were retired police officers, played an important role in recruitment and thereby extended the regiment-*mohalla* connection.

Table 2
Regimental connection during the First World War: *Mohalla Ahiranwala*

Regiments		Total No. of men
18th Bengal Lancers	124th Baloch	
7	1	8

Source: See recruitment data on the *Mohalla Ahiranwala* in File U/XIV/194, DCRO, Sargodha.

Table 2 shows the regimental connection of the *mohalla* during the war. All these recruits were enlisted due to the efforts of the Ahir family. Regimental preferences of these recruits are quite visible from the table as seven of them joined the 18th Bengal Lancers and just one joined the 124th Baloch regiment.¹⁷

A similar trend of regimental connection was visible in the recruitment carried out in the Kalra estate. Like Ahirs, the Tiwanas' affiliation with the 18th King George's Own Lancers was historic. Umar Hayat's father had raised the Tiwana Horse which rendered services during the uprising of 1857 and a big part of it was acquired by Lord Napier as his body guards. Afterwards it was transferred to the 2nd Mahratta Horse, which after numerous changes came to bear the name of the 18th K.G.O. Tiwana Lancers.¹⁸ Umar Hayat kept his family affiliation alive 'by selling his own young stock as well as by collecting remounts from other parts of the district.'¹⁹ Because of his services for the regiment, he was given an honorary commission as Lieutenant in 1901.²⁰ He continued to assist his parent regiment whenever he was called to do so. On 17 July 1911 on the account of his meritorious services he was promoted to the rank of Captain.²¹

Besides his parental regiment Umar Hayat also helped other regiments to establish their connection with Kalra. However, the general pattern of recruitment remained the

same. Besides the 18th Lancers only those regiments and units which had representation before the war, could draw recruits during the war; and the regiments having greater number of men before the war managed to pull a greater number of recruits during the war.

Table 3
Regiments showing higher representation from Kalra Estate

Units	Nos. before the War	Nos. during the War	Total
18th K.G.O. Lancers	13	14	27
19th Lancers	8	16	24
32th Sikh Pioneers	13	57	70
34th Sikh Pioneers	10	11	21
23th Sikh Pioneers	3	1	4

Source: Kalra Recruitment Record in file U/XIV/194, DCRO, Sargodha.

In total there were 75 men from Kalra in 14 different units before the First World War. During the war 146 men were recruited into 19 different units and hence the total number of people who served during the war was 221. The 32nd Sikh Pioneers did exceptionally well. Compared to all the regiments which recruited men from Kalra, it secured the largest number of volunteers. The 18th K.G.O. Lancers, 19th Lancers and 34th S.P also did well as shown in Table-3.²²

Umar Hayat, like the other landed elites who had their private inundation canals, had his own private *patwaris* (revenue official). Since the *patwaris* used to maintain the statistics regarding the crop assessment and the provision of water from the inundation canals, they had close knowledge of the local population. Umar Hayat asked his *patwaris* to prepare fresh lists of men of military age. They came up with the total figure of 477 of which, nine were found to be dead,

73 had left the estates, 50 were rendered unfit and three were employed in the civil departments. In this way out of total 342 able bodied men, 221 or 65 per cent served in the army. Since the number of men sent to the army before the war was 75, this confirms that 146 men had been recruited during the war from the Kalra estate which also included 14 people who served as a party with Umar Hayat.²³

The recruitment data of the *mohalla* demonstrates that all the recruits who joined the army before the war also continued to serve during the war. So, on the basis of Table 1 and 2 we can assess that in total 45 men rendered active service during the war out of which, just eight joined the army during the war. For the *mohalla* unfortunately we do not have figures for the total number of able bodied men. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, a separate population data does not exist for both the localities. So we cannot compare the number of recruits in terms of total male population or in terms of able bodied men. Nor does it seem necessary because it does not hamper our understanding of the general pattern of recruitment in both the localities. Moreover, the recruitment data about Kalra suggests that a small number of people were also recruited from two hamlets situated close to the Kalra village, which were also part of the estate. However, the general pattern that the regiments with stronger pre-war connection pulled a greater number of men during the war remains true for both localities. Secondly, the role of patron-client relationship in recruitment existed in varying degrees in both the localities, which we turn next to.

Patron-client Relationship and Recruitment

Unlike *mohalla* Ahiranwala, in the case of Kalra estate the patron-client relationship was a conspicuous feature of the recruitment process. In fact the Kalra estate comprised three localities namely the small Kalra village, the hamlets of Hayatpur and Mankewala. Recruitment was therefore carried out mainly in these three sub-localities of the Kalra

estate. A number of families belonging to different tribes were tilling the land at these places. At Kalra the tenants included Bhasin, Kakra, China, Qureshi, Bhatti, Chahil, Gondal, Sayed, Gheba, Khokar, Awan, Arain, Baloch, Bara, Palyal. Therefore, from Kalra these were the people recruited in the army. In the same fashion, Awan, Wajoka, Rehan, Mekan, Khokar, Khalan, Lak, and Marath were recruited from Mankewala. However, Hayatpur was a small hamlet and only Kurar got representation in the army.²⁴ These families were directly linked to the Kalra estate and one way or the other they were directly dependent on the fortunes of the estate. Economically they were tied to it through customary tenancy practices and also through the supply of irrigation water from the inundation canals owned by Umar Hayat. Socially their status was determined by the amount of land they cultivated. Finally, by being residents of the area where Umar Hayat had the *zaildari* (related to *zail* - an administrative group of villages) and magisterial powers, they were politically subservient to his authority. These families were, therefore, not only socially and economically tied to Umar Hayat but were also politically dependent on his authority and, therefore, he was seen as their chief patron.

On the other hand in the *mohalla* the Ahirs were not seen as the chief patron because the patronage they could provide was restricted. As mentioned above their influence was due to their official positions and governmental connections. Whereas Umar Hayat had a vast estate and his influence was not limited just to the Kalra village. His influence in the neighbouring villages, which were also dependent upon his patronage system, added significantly to his political and social prestige in the area. This explains the contrast in the size of the patronage system prevailing in the *mohalla* and the Kalra estate. Ahirs, therefore, could provide only a fewer number of recruits outside their *mohalla*.

Umar Hayat's influence extended far and wide because of him also being a 'water lord'. The villages which were

dependent on water from his inundation canals were called *Chaharmi* villages as water was sold at the rate of *chaharmi* (one-fourth). They included Rawal, Pakewala, Khurshaid, Jhawarian, Koat, Ghangwal, Pachani and Sada Kamboh. He exercised a benevolent policy towards these villages and whenever they were affected by floods they were exempted from *chaharmi*.²⁵ His benevolence was rewarded by the villagers and he managed to procure a number of recruits from these villages as well. Moreover, he supplemented recruitment through his magisterial court.

When and wherever the patron-client relationship failed to procure recruits he did not hesitate to exert his authority. Jhawarina Police Station was entrusted to him as a magistrate and was situated close to Lak interspersed by the Kalra village. These villages were interconnected with each other due to marriages and *biradari* relationships. Many villages like Lak had solemnly pledged to oppose recruitment. Umar Hayat toured these villages with large number of horse riders 'who were taken as the show of *shikar* [hunting] and the villagers were so impressed that 'their turbulent ideas of opposition to the government were knocked out of their heads.'²⁶ In such situations coercion and collaboration went hand in hand in the recruitment process.

Another notable difference between the localities was in terms of communal composition and its affect on recruitment. In *mohalla* Ahiranwal a couple of shops were owned by the *Arora* Hindus, but their designation by the colonial state as a non-martial community meant that they had no tradition of representation in the army. Kalra on the other hand had a larger community of Hindu shopkeepers but like their counterparts in the *mohalla* Ahiranwala, did not volunteer for the army. The *mohalla* had no Sikhs whereas Kalra was home to a significant number of Mazhbi Sikhs and both Hindus and Sikhs made 50 per cent of its population.²⁷ Mazhbis were low caste Sikhs and they sought military service as a means to improve their status. Regarding the social mobility of the Mazhbis David Omissi writes that

The allocation of land to soldiers could create geographical and social mobility – as in the case of the Mazhbi Sikhs, a group of mainly landless menials, descended from Hindu Untouchables and despised by their Jat co-religionists. ...The Mazhbis served in their own infantry and pioneer units. Their British officers suggested, and Lord Roberts sponsored, a scheme to make grants of land on the Chenab Canal to Mazhbi soldiers with more than 15 years' service. Officers received 50 acres and other ranks 20 in Gujranwala district, which it was hoped would become 'a really valuable recruiting ground'. Thus the military connection transformed some impoverished menial groups into prosperous cultivators.²⁸

The Mazhbi Sikhs started enlisting in the army in the late nineteenth century. In the Kalra estate, they had an additional push factor to join the army as they were tied into the patron-client relationship, which we will discuss later. These Sikhs had developed a regimental connection with the two Sikh Regiments i.e. 32nd Sikh Pioneers and the 34th Sikh Pioneers before the war. Therefore, during the war they tended towards these regiments. As it is evident from Table 3 there were 13 men in the 32nd Sikh Pioneer and 10 in the 34th Sikh Pioneer regiments before the war. The majority of the Mazhbi Sikhs went to the same regiment during the war, the former attracting 57 people and the latter 11 respectively. The 23rd Sikh Pioneer regiment had little connection before the war and therefore it could only attract one person during the war. These figures further lend credence to the argument that the regimental connection was not only limited to the locality but had also become a family matter as the Sikh *biradari* on the whole showed their preference for certain regiments.

The Hindus and Mazhabi Sikhs also considered Umar Hayat as their chief patron as they were living on his estate and were enjoying different privileges. Many Sikhs worked as tenants whereas the poor Sikh families benefited from his

philanthropy. They also worked as agricultural labourers, mechanics, transporters, drivers and estate managers. Many of his *munshis* and *kardars* (estate managers) were Hindus and were very close to Umar Hayat. Munshi Hari Ram, for example, was his *mukhtar-e-am* i.e. had the power of attorney on behalf of Umar Hayat.²⁹ Some of them were cloth merchants, *halwais* (sweet makers), and were running shops in the Kalra Bazaar, which were again hired by them from Umar Hayat. Besides this, Umar Hayat had set up an allowance of 30 *sers*³⁰ of grain for all the unemployed on a monthly basis. Free medical treatment was provided to all his subjects. They were entitled to free fuel in the form of wood. Marriage expenses were drawn from the estate's exchequer. Similarly the maintenance cost of a Sikh *gurdwara* and Hindu temple was borne by the estate.³¹ A similar depiction of life in Kalra is also found in local folk poetry. A Sikh poet of Kalra, Sher Singh (1885 – 1945), who was famous for saying *mahya* (a form of folk poetry) verses and was patronised by Umar Hayat depicted life in the village as follows.

چہڑی جال وچ مپھسدی آ

(Chiri Jal wich phasdi aa)

مچ . لوق ج . را . و ش کالرے وچ وسدی آ

(Makhlug Khuda khush Kalrey which wasdi aa)

(People are happy and life is throbbing with passion at Kalra)³²

The quality of life at Kalra may be questionable but the patron-client relationship transcended communal boundaries and all the communities were socially knitted together with the common bond of privileges and services. This bond was not just skin deep and its strength was marked by reciprocal affection from both sides enabling

Umar Hayat to procure recruits for the Sikh Regiments before and during the war. Their affection for each other was reflected in an episode on 9 September 1915 when men from the 34th Sikh Pioneers took special permission from the commanding officer to see Umar Hayat but the place was heavily shelled and Umar Hayat came out and helped the men to take refuge in the trenches. Lieutenant Colonel, E. Cullen, wrote to him that 'it [was] very gratifying to know that [he] thought of the men of this regiment with which [he was] connected as [he had] always helped [the regiment] with recruits from [his] estate.'³³ This sense of mutual affection was the spirit of the patron-client relationship and Kalra took the lead in supplying valuable recruits in the whole Shahpur *tehsil*. Other Tiwana collaborators did their level best to eclipse the services of Kalra in a competitive display of loyalty to the Raj. Kalra, however, remained paramount in the whole region for its war services and Umar Hayat, in order to safeguard its prominent position, wrote to the district administration

I venture to say that no village in the district especially in the Jhawarian Ilaqa which is inter-connected with Lak and has been backward in recruitment can bear comparison with Kalra....and I must crave the indulgence of my superior officers to kindly see that when various officers are putting up the claims of the villages in their respective districts, my village may be given due consideration commensurate with my services, so that it may not be surpassed by those of other districts, which admittedly fall far below as regards services.³⁴

When different villages were vying to get a flag in recognition of their services, Umar Hayat ardently presented the case of his village through various letters to the district officers and Kalra got the flag as an insignia for its wartime services. The services of Ahirs and their *mohalla* got their recognition by being incorporated in the district war history.

Ahirs, unlike Tiwanas, did not have a long history of military service. Moreover, they were not privileged like

Tiwanas who could boast of having different privileges from the British. Besides the Kalra estate, Umar Hayat also owned agricultural land in the Jhelum and Chenab Canal colonies and therefore a number of villages and *chaks*³⁵ were under his patronage and the whole area amounted to thousands of acres.³⁶ The Ahir family wielded influence in the town mainly on account of Alim Khan being a member of the Municipal Committee and because of Sher Bahadur's previous police career and later his role as an honorary magistrate. When we compare the recruitment process in the rural and urban areas we find that the patron-client relationship was a more conspicuous feature in those rural areas where the rural elite had assumed the role of military contractors for the Raj. Recruits in both the rural and urban areas were drawn towards the regiments in which people from their family and area were enlisted before the war. On the other hand, for regiments this connection proved beneficial in attracting recruits.

Tan Tai Yong in his work has demonstrated that how these class regiments, when depleted during the First World War, resorted to recruitment from the same areas and same classes which they were originally composed of. He points out that when the 'class system' of recruitment was replaced with a 'territorial system' of recruitment the catchment area was expanded and a systematic effort, involving the coordination of military, civil administration and the rural elite, was made to recruit from all the classes and all parts of the district.³⁷

In this case study we have seen that in the Kalra estate, the recruitment base had been widened during the war and great majority of tribes from amongst the tenants of Umar Hayat got representation in the army. Moreover, the regimental connection continued to play a very vital role in the recruitment process as a pull factor. Whereas in the case of the *mohalla* the regimental connection remained vital during the war but the recruitment base remained largely confined to a limited number of tribes mainly because of the

constricted nature of the patron-client relationship of the Ahirs. The Ahirs, could only facilitate people in a limited sphere of police service and legal aid. This variation in the system of patron-client relationship in the urban and rural localities explains why the new policy of recruitment proved to be more productive and more successfully implemented in the areas where the rural elite performed their function as a military contractor. Ian Talbot has emphasised the importance of provincial level collaboration for the very existence of the Raj and the crucial role played by the rural elite in linking the political authority of the state with its subjects. He has also demonstrated the importance of rural elite from the military point of view and from the perspective of political control.³⁸ This case study not only provides empirical depth but also enhances our understanding about the actual functioning of the patron-client relationship at a locality level and its significance for military recruitment.

Conclusion

This case study enhances our understanding of the functioning of patron client ties in particular and the impact of collaboration on recruitment in general. Military recruitment in the Punjab depended both on the patron-client relations of the rural areas and on the colonial state's ability to reward such 'service.' The contrast between rural and urban Shahpur reveals however that even in heavily recruited districts, the patron-client relationship was less crucial in raising recruits in the towns than in the villages. In Shahpur's urban areas due to the constricted nature of the patron-client relationship the recruitment drive remained restricted to the immediate neighbourhood of the urban collaborators. Common to both urban and rural Shahpur was the attachment of local recruits to their 'family regiment.' This was a feature of the military recruitment system not only throughout Punjab, but elsewhere.

Collaboration was predicated upon patron-client ties. Existing literature links collaboration with the army recruitment. Leading collaborators served as military contractors for the Raj. This case study has revealed that the patron-client ties were more dense and powerful in the rural areas as compared to the urban areas. It was mainly because of the differences in the nature of patronage on offer by the collaborators to their clientele. Social hierarchies were more pronounced in the rural areas and the lesser tribesmen, tenants and estate agents/managers were more powerfully tied to the rural notables through patron-client ties. Military contractors in the rural areas, therefore, proved more effective in enlisting recruits for the army.

However, in the towns, the size and magnitude of patronage was restricted due to more even urban social landscape. Hence patron-client ties remained weak which limited the influence of the urban collaborators in procuring recruits for the army. This explains why the British strengthened rural elite through land grants which further entrenched their position in the rural society. In return they not only maintained law and order but also supplied recruits for the army.

Notes and References

- 1 Ronald Robinson, 'Non-European foundation of European imperialism: sketch for a theory of collaboration' in R. Owen and B. Sutcliffe (eds), *Studies in theory of imperialism* (London: Longman, 1972), pp. 117-142.
- 2 See for example, C. A. Bayly, *The Local Roots of Indian Politics: Allahabad, 1880-1920* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), Thomas. R. Metcalf, *Land, Landlords and the British Raj: Northern India in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979) and Sarah F. D. Ansari, *Sufi*

Saints and State Power, The pirs of Sind, 1834 – 1947 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

- 3 For details see Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1988) and David Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam*, (London: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 1988).
- 4 See the authors article 'Collaboration and British Military Recruitment: Fresh Perspectives from Colonial Punjab, 1914-1918' accepted for publication in *Modern Asian Studies*.
- 5 Tan Tai Yong, *The Garrison State: The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005).
- 6 For more details see Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana The Punjab Unionist Party and the Partition of India* (Richmond Surrey: Curzon, 1996).
- 7 *Mohalla* Ahiran Recruitment Record in file U/XIV/194, Deputy Commissioner Record Office [Henceforth DCRO], Sargodha.
- 8 A non-commissioned cavalry rank equal to sergeant.
- 9 See note by J. Wilson, Collector Shahpur District, dated 4 July 1893, in File U/XIV/194, DCRO, Sargodha.
- 10 The Deputy Commissioner of Kohat wrote that Sher Bahadur did excellent work in Kohat and solved many difficult cases. 'He was thoroughly honest and never got a single complain against him and during his tenure some 30 outlaws were captured.' See note by the Deputy Commissioner Kohat 15th December 1901, in File U/XIV/194, DCRO, Sargodha.
- 11 Khushab had a semi urban character as patterns of both rural and urban life style were present there. The majority of the people were connected with agriculture in a manner typical of a rural village with the *sep* system and using traditional tilling and irrigation methods.

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- 12 The recruitment data supplied by Sher Bahadur comprises the lists of men who were recruited before and during the War. Closer examination of the data reveals that some of the recruits were counted twice, which was down to human error. See the recruitment data supplied by Sher Bahadur, in File U/XIV/194, DCRO, Sargodha.
 - 13 Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*.
 - 14 *Ibid.*, p. 47.
 - 15 A non-commissioned cavalry rank junior to Risaldar Major.
 - 16 See Copies of certificates as regards to recruitment dated 17 December 1916 and 2 May 1916 from A.C. Sroober Esquire Captain Commanding Depot 18th K.G.O Lancers Sialkot to Daffadar (retired) Amir Khan Ahir, in File U/XIV/194, DCRO, Sargodha.
 - 17 See recruitment data on the *Mohalla Ahranwala*, in File U/XIV/194, DCRO, Sargodha.
 - 18 'A brief account of the career of Captain the Hon'ble Malik Umar Hayat Khan Tiwana, C.I.E., M.V.O. (Henceforth A brief account) p.1' in File U/XIV/194, DCRO, Sargodha.
 - 19 *Ibid.*
 - 20 Tombstone seen by the author.
 - 21 'A brief account', p. 12.
 - 22 Kalra Recruitment Record, in file U/XIV/194, DCRO, Sargodha.
 - 23 *Ibid.*
 - 24 *Ibid.*
 - 25 Interview with Muahammad Hanif, Kalra, 21 December 2008. Muhammad Hanif served as a driver of Khizar Hayat Tiwana, son of Umar Hayat Tiwana and the last premier of the colonial Punjab.

- 26 'A brief account'. p. 7.
- 27 Interview with Muahammad Hanif, Kalra, 21 December 2008.
- 28 David Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1860-1940* (Basingstoke: Macmillan in association with King's College, London, 1994), pp. 70-71.
- 29 FIR Report, Police Station Jhawarian, 16 July 1903.
- 30 Measure of weight a little less than a kilo.
- 31 Interview with Muhammad Hanif Kalra, 21 December 2008. Also see Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, p. 43.
- 32 Sher Singh was fond of dogs and also looked after the dogs of Malik Umar Hayat Tiwana. Malik Javaid Ghanjaira, *Phul Kirana Bar Day* (Lahore: Ravi Publishers, 1993), pp. 164-65.
- 33 Lt. Col. E. Cullen, commanding officer 34 Sikh Pioneers to Umar Hayat, 22 September 1915 in File U/XIV/194, DCRO, Sargodha. This incident in which he had shown great valour and affection for his men was immediately appreciated by the military authorities and Umar Hayat received a letter of praise from the Lt. General, C.A. Anderson, informing him that he will bring it to the notice of the higher echelons of the army. See C.A. Anderson, Lt. General, to Umar Hayat, 12 September 1915, in File U/XIV/194, DCRO, Sargodha.
- 34 Umar Hayat Tiwana to M.S. Leigh, 2 March 1919, in File U/XIV/194, DCRO, Sargodha.
- 35 Colony village
- 36 In Shahpur *tehsil* he owned many villages, Megha, Kalra, Chak Laloo, Mori Wala, Chak Umar, Hayatpur, Mankewala, in Bhulwal *tehsil* he owned Khizar Abad and Weruwal and in Chenab Colony he

owned, Nazarwala and Umarwala. Interview with Muhammad Hanif, Kalra , 21 December 2008.

37 For more details see Yong, *The Garrison State*.

38 Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1988).