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***How to Make an 'Agricultural' Region: Canals, Commodities, and Crises in the Production of Punjab, 1880s - 1970s***

My dissertation undertakes an analysis of infrastructure, capitalist development, and environmental change in north western India from the late-nineteenth to the late-twentieth centuries. It argues that the intensifying socioeconomic and ecological crises of agriculture in this region are not simply outcomes of the Green Revolution but originate in the late-colonial period, when parts of colonial Punjab were transformed into a vast commodity frontier and incorporated into the globalizing space economy of capitalism.

Through a heterodox account of the preconditions and consequences of colonial interventions in irrigation in world historical context, this research aims to show how the colonial state's attempts to produce the "general conditions of production" in a conjuncture of rising inter-imperial rivalry and global economic crisis were deeply contradictory, resulting in new forms of social ascription, spatial polarization, and uneven geographical development that shaped subsequent trajectories of agrarian change and crisis within and beyond Punjab.

This dissertation uses a combination of methods including multi-sited archival research in India and the United Kingdom as well as statistical and geospatial analysis. It draws upon a wide array of historical evidence—including records of canal construction, historical maps and cartographic surveys, district-level records of agrarian change, and little-used accounts of irrigation-induced environmental dislocations—to develop a critical reinterpretation of the entwined histories of colonialism, capitalism, and infrastructure in South Asia and a novel theorization of the relationship between infrastructural space and the production of geographical difference under capitalist imperialism.