

Negotiation over Modernization: Elite Female Education and the Making of a Professional Class in Pakistan, 1947–1970

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Abstract

In Lahore and Karachi, between 1947 and 1970, a group of upper-class, urban Muslim women emerged from the sphere of domestic obscurity to earn a living wage in professionally paid work, thereby forming a new social class. This article argues that this professional class was produced through negotiation rather than through modernization. The new state demanded educated women to work in its schools, hospitals and offices but at the same time it demanded them to be keepers of a traditional moral order, and the elites' success stemmed from their ability to meet both demands. The article traces that negotiation through three phases: the post-Partition emergency of the late 1940s and early 1950s, when acute shortages of trained personnel opened public employment to women; the period of institutional consolidation, in which women's colleges and professional organizations were established; and the Ayub Khan years after 1958, when state-sponsored modernization widened opportunity while intensifying conservative opposition. It is based on the work of Shenila Khoja-Moolji on the "ideal educated girl" and the work of Deniz Kandiyoti on the "patriarchal bargain" to describe two devices by which this negotiation took place: the women's college, as a protected training ground where modern skills could be learned without contravening social convention; and the re-classification of paid employment as patriotic service, whereby a request that a conservative

family was able to refuse was made capable of being accepted. It further claims that this cohort did not remain the occupational but rather one with political power that manifested itself in the All-Pakistan Women's Association and through the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance of 1961. The study is a synthesis of published scholarship, the Report of the Commission on National Education (1959), and published memoirs; it uses no unpublished archival material and states its limitations accordingly.

Keywords: Elite women, Female education, Professional class formation, Post-Partition Pakistan, Respectability, Purdah, APWA, Muslim Family Laws Ordinance 1961

Introduction

Pakistan came into being in 1947 with a severe shortage of trained personnel. Partition removed a substantial part of the professional, commercial and clerical population of the territories that became the new state, and the deficit was felt most acutely in precisely those services by which a new government demonstrates its competence: schools, hospitals and offices. There were not enough teachers, doctors, nurses or clerks. In this emergency the state called upon educated women to leave their homes and enter public employment.

This article argues that what followed was not a straightforward movement towards modernity but a negotiation. The state needed women's labor; society continued to demand that women embody a traditional moral order; and elite women succeeded to the extent that they found ways of meeting both requirements simultaneously. They did not choose between tradition and modernity. They constructed positions from which both could be satisfied at once, and the professional class that emerged in Lahore and Karachi by 1970 was the product of that construction.

The negotiation proceeded in three phases. The first, from 1947 to the early 1950s, was dominated by the crisis of Partition itself, when refugee resettlement and the collapse of household economies pushed women into public space for reasons of survival as much as of policy. The second was a period of institutional consolidation, in which the state articulated a developmental rationale for women's education and the institutions that would train and organize professional women took shape. The third, following Ayub Khan's assumption of power in 1958, saw state-sponsored modernization open new opportunities while provoking conservative resistance sharp enough to require women to defend their positions publicly.

Two devices carried the negotiation. The first was the women's college. A number of institutions like Kinnaird College (Lahore, 1913), Queen Mary College (1908), Government College for Women (1922) and Fatima Jinnah Medical College (1948) served as sanctuaries for training young women of decent families without allowing them contact with mixed people. The second was the reclassification of paid work as national service. Women made employment more about a responsibility towards a nation in a visible state of distress than personal ambition; thus, making it harder to reject than to accept.

The argument advanced here is therefore about mechanism and about class. It does not rest on the claim that these women exercised agency, which the historiography of women in South Asia established some decades ago. It concerns how a specific negotiation was

conducted, what institutions carried it, and how an occupational cohort acquired the collective capacity to alter national legislation.

Historiography and the Gap

The scholarship on women in South Asia settled the question of agency long ago. Sangari and Vaid demonstrated that women were participants in, not merely objects of, nineteenth-century reform; Butalia's oral histories recovered women's own accounts of Partition; Minault documented female participation in Muslim educational reform; and Forbes established agency as the organizing premise of the field (Sangari & Vaid, 1989; Butalia, 1998; Minault, 1998; Forbes, 1996). An article which argued today that women were not passive victims would be restating a position adopted more than thirty years ago.

Two further literatures bear directly on this study. The first concerns education. Khoja-Moolji's genealogy of the "educated girl" argues that advocacy for female education in Muslim South Asia has never been simply about access, but has been concerned with producing particular kinds of female subject, with specified relationships to the patriarchal family, to paid work, to Islam and to the nation; discourses on women's education are therefore sites at which class relations are constructed as much as gender (Khoja-Moolji, 2018). The second concerns institutions. Maskiell's studies of Kinnaird College trace the social composition and family networks of college-educated Punjabi women from 1913 into the first post-independence decade, and remain the fullest account of how a women's college operated simultaneously as a place of instruction and as a marker of social standing (Maskiell, 1984, 1985).

What has received less attention is Pakistan's first two decades considered on their own terms. The great bulk of this literature concerns colonial India, and its categories were designed for a colonial state and a nationalist movement rather than for an independent government facing an administrative emergency. Pakistan after 1947 has been examined largely through the politics of the state, or read backwards from the Islamization of the Zia period, with the formation of a female professional cohort in the intervening years treated as background. Jalal's account of women and the state remain the principal exception (Jalal, 1991).

One objection must be met at the outset. Before 1947, women were already in medicine and education in India, so what is special about the post-independence period? The Colonial precedent is very true; the need for women practitioners to visit the private houses of secluded patients was recognized by the County of Dufferin's Fund of 1885 and the Lahore women's colleges were established decades before Pakistan got independence (Forbes, 1994). The scale and the reason for the opening was that which changed. Limited philanthropy had been provided by a colonial administration with female medical aid; an independent state made women's training a matter of national development and addressed its appeal to households directly, giving women an argument they had not previously possessed.

Theoretical Framework

Two frameworks organize the analysis.

First, is Khoja-Moolji's image of the "ideal educated girl" (Khoja-Moolji, 2018). On this side the educated woman is not an unmarked beneficiary of an increasing opportunity for

opportunity; rather, she is a constructed figure, a form that is built into reformist and state discourse, and always marked: educated for certain purposes, to certain limits, in certain relation to family, faith and nation. The framework is important here because it lectures on the historic variability of the content of the ideal and its historical construction as a political product. In the 1955s the woman that was deemed to be a suitable educated one in Pakistan was neither a companionate wife as envisioned by the colonizers nor a liberal professional. It was a figure in which the power to do service to the nation without hurting the family was the criterion, and the women who were examined here had to meet this requirement.

The second is Deniz Kandiyoti's notion of the patriarchal bargain (Kandiyoti, 1988). Kandiyoti claimed that instead of being grouped into one abstract condition, patriarchy is a collection of concrete systems, each offering women different rules of the game that elicit different strategies for how women can maximize security and expand their options. On this score, women plan their way through a situation they can't change, and their adjustments aren't false consciousness or failure; they are sensible reactions to a given situation. The framework is particularly suitable here, as the system she calls the classic patriarchy, with extended households, Patri-localism, and corporate status, and a woman's security based on her position in the family and not on their own resources, is the one she associates with the South Asian and Muslim world. It is the system in which the women examined here operated that is precisely.

Read through this framework, the conduct described in the following sections becomes legible as strategy rather than as compromise or incomplete emancipation. Defining paid labor as service to the nation; choosing occupations wherein contact with strangers' men was reduced; wearing chador while traveling to work and taking it off when arriving; keeping domestic duties intact in addition to being employed for the nation. These were not hurdled thrown down by women who had not behaved that way otherwise. The conditions that the deal was made on. Both achieved a measurable reward, either in monetary terms or in qualification, public recognition or later, political leverage – and they knew the cost of that reward. The negotiation that is described in this article is a bargain made by a class position that afforded women much more to bargain with than most, under classic patriarchy.

Two limits should be noted. The framework takes no account of the form the accommodation was in, but of the opening that made it worth having, which was provided by the material circumstances now to be examined. That it assumes women's strategies are rational in constraint may also obscure the extent to which the constraint itself was subject to conflict, as is clear from the conservative response below, which suggests the terms of the bargain were continually renegotiated.

Materials, Methods, and Limitations

This is a qualitative historical study based on published sources. Its evidentiary base consists of the secondary scholarship on women, education and the state in South Asia; one substantial official document, the Report of the Commission on National Education (Government of Pakistan, 1959), which sets out the state's own conception of the purposes of women's education; and published memoirs by women of the cohort under discussion, principally Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah's account of her movement from seclusion to the Constituent Assembly (Ikramullah, 1963). The method is interpretive: statements of official

purpose are read against the accounts women gave of their working lives, and where the two diverge the divergence is treated as evidence rather than as an inconsistency to be resolved.

Limitations of the Study

Three limitations follow from this design and are observed throughout.

First, the study uses no unpublished archival material. The institutional records of Kinnaird College, Fatima Jinnah Medical College and the All-Pakistan Women's Association, together with college magazines and annual reports, would permit a far finer account of recruitment, curriculum and internal debate than is attempted here. Where these institutions are discussed, the discussion rests on the published scholarship about them, chiefly Maskiell on Kinnaird and Chipp on the APWA, and not on the institutions' own papers. Claims about internal institutional practice are accordingly framed as inferences from that scholarship rather than as archival findings.

Secondly, the study does not provide a quantitative scale of the phenomenon it describes. It does not indicate the number of women who took up professional employment, the rate at which they did so or the composition of women by occupation in this time. Data on literacy and occupation for females were only available in the census volumes of 1951 and 1961 and have not been used here. The argument has to do with a mechanism and its institutionalization rather than a magnitude, and does not imply a statement about how common the transformation was.

Thirdly, the study is limited in terms of class and region. It is about the upper class and upper middle-class women in cities of Lahore and Karachi who are Muslim. The results of its findings are not applicable to rural women, the urban poor, religious minorities or to the social makeup and institutions of East Pakistan which was materially different. The restriction is not incidental to the sample, but is intentional – it is part of the explanation supplied – and this restricts the generality of the conclusions.

Phase One: The Crisis of Partition and the Need for Working Women

The disruption of 1947 was a humanitarian catastrophe and an administrative one at the same time. The areas that were going to become West Pakistan saw the commercial, professional and clerical population of these areas being wiped out and a refugee population which lacked the skill that was being sought. The process of displacement and resettlement was not a one-year process but continued well into the next decade, repeatedly raising the issues of property, belonging and livelihood (Zamindar, 2007).

This had a double effect for the households studied here. It destroyed the conception that a respectable family was at ease without income of its women members as many propertied families have come to Pakistan without the property on which they could be based. It stimulated a demand in the institutions which the state was trying to man, that could not be satisfied from the existing pool of men of proper qualifications. At the very moment that the state realized it needed women, women realized that it wasn't economical to stay within the house. The state was finding it needed women, and women were finding it was no longer economically viable to stay at home.

The financial impact was devastating and instant for Ashraf families. Money earned over a number of generations by holding land, doing business, or holding senior positions in the colonial or Delhi or Lucknow office could not be transferred over the border, and families of significant status in Delhi or Lucknow came to Lahore or Karachi with little. The loss changed the rules of the house right away. Women's lack of jobs had long been an indicator of male status; a man of importance could state that his wife and daughters were not required to work. However, it is not for the reasons of the late 40s when there is no food or rent to buy.

The demographic damage compounded the financial. Migration killed a great many men, and households that lost fathers, brothers or husbands had no male earner at all. Women who had been educated to read poetry and to manage servants found themselves obliged to convert that education into a salary. A woman schooled in English at a private colonial institution could present herself for work as a teacher or a clerk, and many did. It should be said plainly that this was not, for most of them, an entry into employment undertaken in pursuit of emancipation. It was undertaken because the alternative was destitution, and for many families sending a daughter out to work was experienced as a loss of honor before it was recognized as an economic necessity.

On the other side of the transaction, the new state faced vacancies it could not fill. Until 1947, Hindus and Sikhs had constituted a large proportion of the teachers, doctors, nurses and clerks of Lahore and Karachi. Their departure emptied schools, hospitals and offices at a stroke. In Lahore in the autumn of 1947 the medical and educational systems came close to collapse: hospitals were crowded with injured refugees and had almost no nurses to attend them, and girls' schools stood without teachers. The government understood that these positions had to be filled quickly if the state was to function at all.

The difficulty was that they could not be filled by men. Under prevailing norms of segregation, male practitioners could not readily treat female patients and male teachers could not readily instruct female students. The shortage was therefore not simply a shortage of trained personnel but specifically of trained women, and it could be met from only one source: educated women of the elite. The state's response was institutional. Fatima Jinnah Medical College was established in Lahore in 1948, within a year of independence, with the encouragement of Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, for the express purpose of training women to treat women within the conventions of purdah. Because the institution was entirely female, respectable families could send their daughters to study medicine without any perceived loss of standing. Its effect was therefore double: it produced physicians, and it established medicine as among the most respectable and most patriotic occupations available to a Pakistani woman.

A parallel opening appeared in refugee relief. The rehabilitation centers established after Partition dealt with very large numbers of displaced women, including women who had been abducted during the violence, and this was work that could be conducted only by women. Elite women organized the distribution of food, clothing and medical assistance in the camps, and in doing so found themselves managing budgets, directing volunteers and dealing directly with senior officials. The urgency of the crisis conferred an authority that would not otherwise have been extended to them. For the first time the state treated women of this class not as objects of concern but as necessary participants in its own survival, and the experience of administration acquired in the camps proved directly transferable to the organizational work examined in the final section.

These factors changed the context for the discussion of female education. Until the last decade before 1947, the prevailing view of educating Muslim girls, of respectable families, had been domestic: an educated woman would be a better wife, a better housekeeper, a better moralizer of her children. That rationale didn't go away, but it was supplemented with another. The Commission on National Education (CNE) dedicated to the education of women, in the Report of the Commission on National Education, made it a requirement for the development of the nation, and saw trained womanpower as a resource that was unavailable for the state to waste (Government of Pakistan, 1959). It's a change of register, which is a change of policy. Domestic competence education is considered as a private good. The state can challenge the household on education for national development.

For the women involved, the import of this shift was that it gave them an argument. A daughter's desire to become a doctor no longer needed to be explained as a personal choice or dream the father might be able to reject and was now a responsibility to a clearly suffering nation. The power of this reasoning is felt in the actions of Ikramullah herself and through the language of national service in the narratives of the time (Ikramullah, 1963).

The reframing was conducted deliberately and in public. The women themselves who led the relief were regarded by their political leaders as not being engaged in a selfish activity but in a duty to a new Muslim state. There was no abandonment of family by a nurse, but rather an injured country tended. A teacher was not neglecting her family; she was ensuring the well-being of Pakistan's children. Prescriptive literature and popular magazines changed as well, no longer advising women to stay home and instead portraying the image of an educated girl serving the nation, but dressing modestly and practicing her religion.

Since there is an implied contract with this formulation, it should be made explicit, as that constitutes the settlement this article describes. Women were allowed public careers on the proviso that they appear to be working on behalf of the nation not themselves. Ambition in the guise of flag was acceptable, ambition proclaimed to be such was not. There were a concession and a price to it for real. It enabled the first generation of working women to emerge from the home arena as patriots rather than rebels, and it at the same time set the terms of their scrutiny for the next twenty years.

This was a rhetorical rather than a motive resource, it should be emphasized. Females who saw their work as a patriotic obligation may have sought as well income, freedom from domestic confinement, professional fulfillment, or relief. The sources do not allow the motives of these women to be easily distinguished. What the framing accomplished was not sincerity but permission. It made it possible for a conservative family to say no to a request that they would otherwise have been unable to say no to without motif, and it made it impossible for a conservative family to say no to the request without seeming unmoved by the fate of the nation. This was the first and main instrument of the negotiation, and it was women who used it who were playing the game as much as the men who played the game.

Phase Two: The Burden of Respectability

Permission to work did not resolve the problem of how to work. Elite women entering employment could not take any post that was available. Their families' standing, as members

of the urban Ashraf, excluded manual labor and work in open commercial spaces. They entered instead a narrow range of occupations, and the range was not arbitrary.

Teaching and medicine were the two principal fields, and the reason lies in the operation of purdah itself. Because conservative families would not permit male physicians to attend their wives and daughters, the country required female doctors and nurses. Because they would not permit male teachers to instruct adolescent girls, it required female teachers and headmistresses. The strict separation of the sexes, ordinarily understood as the obstacle to women's employment, therefore generated a demand that only women could satisfy. A woman who taught at a girls' college or practiced in a women's hospital could leave her home, earn a salary and remain entirely respectable, because she was not mixing with unrelated men. These institutions functioned as extensions of the domestic sphere into public space, and it is through them that the terms of the bargain were most favorably set: a workplace populated entirely by women posed no threat to the household's standing, and so cost a family almost nothing to permit.

By the late 1950s the state bureaucracy was expanding rapidly, and a smaller number of women moved into government offices, administration and politics. This was a considerably greater step, since a ministry or a legislature was a mixed-sex space with no equivalent justification available. The possibility and the difficulty of acquiring a seat in the national assembly can be seen in Ikramullah's own journey from a house where purdah was observed to one in the Constituent Assembly; her memoirs reveal that the status of a national position did not free her from having to demonstrate respectability every day (Ikramullah, 1963).

Respectability demanded exactly what was required and was uncompromisingly policed. The clothes were to be modest but not antiquated, excessive contact with strangers of the wrong sex was to be avoided, the working day was to be finished with a prompt return to the house, and domestic duties were to be carried out in conjunction with the professional ones. According to Khoja-Moolji, the specification was not inherited, but is being actively produced (Khoja-Moolji, 2018). It was built on the elements that were driving it in different directions, professional competence, the state needed trained man power; religious propriety, the state's legitimacy had to be based on an Islamic claim; domestic capability, no household would be sending its women away; and national loyalty, all the others were bound together by this. The resulting figure was demanding in a particular way. It did not leave women with a choice between tradition and modernity, which would be at least one decision. It had to be done continuously and failure in either aspect was disqualifying.

The most visible expression of this daily negotiation was dress in transit. Between home and work, public space was the place in which professional women were the most vulnerable, and many wore a transparent chador or a simple burqa just for this purpose. The garment served a physical screen and it also was a public statement: that the woman underneath was not in her home and yet she was modest and respectable. The outer covering was allowed to be removed within the confines of the college or the women's hospital, but there was still a conservative dress code. The same applied to the proper way of conducting oneself. They did not shout out in the streets, they did not succumb to provocation, they made themselves as unobtrusive as possible, given the circumstances, and they knew that if they got in front of someone and confronted them, it would cost them more than it would benefit.

The strategy was carried out silently and day after day, and it worked. The first generation showed over and over again that it was not impossible for a woman to have a modern job and still remain a religious and cultural person, thus rendering the working woman increasingly ordinary as far as the opposition was concerned. It was also an accommodation – it was an admission that the respected Ness of the individual woman is a matter for public adjudication.

The cost is what the literature has termed a double burden, and the term is accurate provided its asymmetry is registered. These women never abandoned domestic duty for work, they supplemented it with domestic duty. Household affairs, family life and upbringing and keeping up family duties were all theirs and they did these with a working day. This was greatly offset by their class status, as much of the labor involved in the combination was taken up by domestic servants, who gained nothing from it, and it ought to be noted that a large number of the poorer women were also laborers, who did not benefit from the combination.

Conservative opposition was real and not merely rhetorical, and it sharpened as the number of working women grew through the later 1950s and 1960s. Women were seen to be improving rapidly and visibly under the state's sponsorship, as the Ayub government was immersed in the process of industrialization and rapid economic growth, while actively promoting education among women, and enacting legislation on family law. That visibility provided a symbol for religious and conservative critics that they needed. They believed that this loss of Islamic character was evident in the educated working woman and thought that women who travelled on buses, walked in city streets and worked with men were failing in their duty to uphold religious obligation and the moral order, so they started to condemn these behaviors in the conservative press and Friday pulpits.

The connection with the regime thus proved to be a two-sided affair. It provided professional women with strong patronage, and a receptive government, while also providing them as symbols to attack, as the enemies of the regime were seeking, and making their standing dependent on the success of a given regime. Its impact was not limited to the commonplace: the journey from a bus stop to an office or a college gate might be a trial of staring, comment, rebuke.

Phase Three: Colleges, the APWA, and the Making of a Professional Class

If these women had to deal with the burden described above one at a time, many would have quit. They didn't have to deal with it alone. The main thrust of this section is that the early women professionals achieved success through networking and two institutions followed suit: the women's colleges and the All-Pakistan Women's Association.

Colleges as Protected Training Grounds

The women's colleges did more than teach. They brought together the daughters of a restricted class group in a boarding environment for the course of a degree, and they not only taught them their topics, but also how to organize, administer and lead. Maskiell's research on Kinnaird portrays the close connection between college attendance and the family and the consideration of status (Maskiell, 1984, 1985). There are two features that need to be

emphasized. The first is residence—students from several cities lived together for several years, and after that, in their working lives. The second is that the credential was used in two markets simultaneously. It did not matter that the job was open to a Kinnaird education or one from the Government College for Women, as both enhanced the prospects of a woman's marriage negotiations. A family might sanction the education for the second reason and find the first following from it. This is one route by which conservative households were brought to underwrite an outcome they had not necessarily intended.

The APWA as a Professional Network

The All-Pakistan Women's Association was founded in 1949 by Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, initially to address the refugee crisis (Chipp, 1970). Its significance for the present argument is that it converted an emergency relief effort into a permanent organizational structure. It gave educated women a body that spanned cities, practical experience in committee work, fundraising, report-writing and public representation, and access to senior government figures which their class position made available and their competence made effective. Its welfare functions should not obscure its political character. An association drawn from the families that staffed the higher administration was, in effect, a lobby.

Exclusive Sisterhood

Out of the colleges and the association there emerged something new in Pakistani history: a female professional class conscious of itself as such. Its members had comparable education, comparable employment and comparable social origins, and they recognized one another. Two cultural markers defined the group. The first was English. Fluency signaled wealth, advanced education and modern professional standing, and it was the language of college magazines, APWA meetings and office work, linking a doctor in Lahore to an administrator in Karachi. Zeb-un-Nissa Hamidullah, the first Pakistani woman to write a regular English column and the founder of the magazine *The mirror* in 1951, exemplified the position: publicly visible, politically outspoken and financially independent, while remaining unimpeachably respectable, and using her editorial platform to reassure conservative readers that educated women were patriotic and virtuous. The second marker was dress, a style neither traditional nor recognizably Western, modest and practical enough for offices and hospitals, which functioned as the uniform of the working elite woman.

This sisterhood was narrow, and its narrowness was not incidental. It was confined largely to wealthy urban *ashraf* families. A woman working in a factory or on a farm could not pay the fees at Kinnaird and would not have been welcome at an APWA meeting. Its members believed themselves to be acting on behalf of the women of Pakistan; in practice they were consolidating a closed circle that protected the interests of their own class. The exclusivity should be stated plainly, and it does not diminish the historical significance of what was formed, since it was precisely the cohesion of this narrow group that produced the collective confidence required to enter politics.

Political Capacity and the Ordinance of 1961

Under the law as it stood in the 1950s a husband could contract a further marriage without his existing wife's knowledge or consent and could repudiate her without provision for her maintenance. Professional women were acutely exposed to this asymmetry, since a career offered no protection against domestic insecurity of that kind. The precipitating episode, as the literature records it, was the second marriage of the Prime Minister, Muhammad Ali Bogra, in 1955, his existing wife being a prominent member of the association; the APWA organized public protest in Karachi and Lahore and pressed for statutory reform (Mumtaz & Shaheed, 1987; Chipp, 1970). Because the women involved were educated, wealthy and connected to influential families, the government could not disregard them.

The campaign found its opportunity after 1958, when the Ayub government had reasons of its own for wishing to present Pakistan as a modernizing state. The APWA leadership worked with that government on the drafting of new legislation, and the skills acquired in college and in association work — organizing committees, preparing reports, arguing a case — were what made the collaboration effective. The Muslim Family Laws Ordinance of 1961 required a husband seeking a second marriage to obtain the permission of an arbitration council, regulated the pronouncement and registration of divorce, and raised the minimum age of marriage for girls. It was opposed strenuously by religious authority, and it survived.

Two observations follow. The first is that this outcome cannot be attributed to individual leadership alone. It required an organization capable of sustained lobbying, and that organization was assembled out of the colleges and professions described above. The sequence runs from education to occupation to association to legislation, and each stage is a condition of the next. The second is that the reform bears the marks of the class that produced it. The Ordinance addressed the insecurities of women in propertied, urban, formally married households, and operated through registration and arbitration machinery that such households could realistically invoke. It did not address the conditions of rural or laboring women, whose disadvantages were not principally of this kind. Pakistan's first female professional class legislated, as classes do, for itself.

Conclusion

The emergence of a female professional class in Pakistan between 1947 and 1970 is better understood as a negotiated settlement than as the advance of modernity against tradition. The state required women's labor and pressed for it; society continued to require that women embody a traditional moral order; and elite women succeeded to the extent that they found positions from which both demands could be satisfied at once. They did not resolve the tension. They inhabited it.

The negotiation was carried out by two instruments. The women's college provided a safe environment for the learning of modern professional skills, and it also put together and linked up the people who would apply them. The argument for the families to agree was provided by the reclassification of the job as national service. A structural fact which has not been adequately stressed is that the practice of purdah that is generally accepted as the barrier to women's employment, itself created a demand for doctors and teachers, both male and female.

The group as created was not an occupational group. It gained political skills through the colleges it entered, and the All-Pakistan Women's Association that organized it; and it used its political skills to get the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance 1961. This accomplishment was great, and it was also partial because it responded to the problems of the class that created it, and didn't significantly affect the problems of other classes.

The limits of the argument should be restated. It is based on sources published, it defines a mechanism but not a magnitude and it relates to a limited elite of two cities. It would be subject to three lines of further testing. Occupational tables for 1951 and 1961 census will give an indication of the extent to which this concentration exists and is as extreme as the argument suggests. It would shed light on how recruitment and internal debate actually happened from the records of Kinnaird College, Fatima Jinnah Medical College and the APWA. A comparison with India after 1947, where a similar colonial background combined with a different state, would suggest how much the pattern is due to seclusion per se and how much to the founding of Pakistan.

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