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## LEGACIES OF THE PARTITION FOR INDIA AND PAKISTAN

**ABSTRACT**

South Asia's political and socio-economic landscape has been greatly transformed in the seven decades since India and Pakistan achieved their independence. Nonetheless, many features are only explicable with reference to the legacies of the 1947 Partition. This essay traces these legacies with respect to ethnic and religious nationalism, state construction and the contrasting trajectories with respect to democratic consolidation. It argues that while the recent scholarship has acknowledged the enduring presence of the Partition on the lives of refugees and their descendants, accounts of its ongoing impact on statecraft are less developed. It is only when such legacies are analyzed that a fuller understanding is possible both of domestic developments and of the enduring rivalry between the two states.

**Key words:** migration, ethnic nationalism, religious nationalism, Partition, violence

India and Pakistan have changed dramatically during the seven decades of independence. The two 'distant' neighbors possess the most potent symbols of modern power in the form of nuclear weapons. Their economies have grown rapidly, in India's case propelling the country to the brink of a global economic power. The Subcontinent is now the most populous region in the world<sup>1</sup>, but the famines of the colonial era have been avoided because of the Green Revolution's impact on agricultural production. Life expectancy has more than doubled in both countries since 1947 and per capita income has risen five times in India and over four times in Pakistan. The countries' international environment has been similarly transformed from a world still dominated by European Empires to a globalized economy. Citizens of the subcontinent have access to opportunities for international travel and instantaneous communication which were inconceivable in 1947.<sup>2</sup>

Amidst all this rapid change, there have nevertheless been important continuities. Income is unevenly distributed, resulting in a large proportion of the population living in poverty.<sup>3</sup> The high levels of child malnutrition are linked directly to this.<sup>4</sup> Contemporary political developments, in the subcontinent as elsewhere, can only be fully understood in their historical context. Whether it is the case of Indo-Pakistan tension over Kashmir, the predominance of the army in Pakistan politics, the rise of Hindu nationalism, or the periodical outbreaks of communal rioting in certain North Indian towns and cities, understanding requires an assessment of the legacies of the colonial era and of its dramatic denouement in the Partition which accompanied the British departure.

The Partition in August 1947 not only divided the Subcontinent, but most importantly the Muslim majority provinces of Punjab and Bengal, both of which had areas in which non-Muslims predominated. The provinces' division was accompanied by mass migrations and killings. The number of casualties has been estimated at anything from a quarter of a million to 2 million deaths. The exact number will never be known. Upwards of 100,000 women were kidnapped on both sides of the border. The epicenter of the social dislocation was in the Punjab, but much of North India was affected. After uncontrollable spontaneous flight, the two new states which had received their independence as Dominions oversaw a virtual exchange of populations in the Punjab region under the control of the Military Evacuation Organisations. Elsewhere in the Subcontinent migration remained spontaneous. All told, the partition-related migration involved the greatest refugee migration of the twentieth century. Some seven million people migrated to Pakistan. Around 5.5 million Hindus and Sikhs crossed the new international boundary in the opposite direction. In Bengal, despite government

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<sup>1</sup> The Indian population has more than trebled since independence, while Pakistan's population has grown 5 times.

<sup>2</sup> There were just 84,000 telephone lines for India's 350 million people and 14,000 for Pakistan's 75 million population. Today there is 80 percent and 70 percent mobile penetration rates for the two countries.

<sup>3</sup> World Bank indicators reveal that 58 per cent of the Indian population and 36.9 per cent of the Pakistan population subsist on \$3.10 per day.

<sup>4</sup> Over 1 in 3 children in both countries are malnourished.

efforts to assure minority populations, there were waves of migration which continued throughout the opening decades of independence whenever there were outbreaks of violence or rumors of communal conflict.

Social dislocation on this scale possessed such profound influence that it has defied closure at individual, community and national levels. Much of the scholarship on the Partition in the past three decades has focused on the human dimension of the trauma. It has its roots in the pioneering study of Urvashi Butalia's, *The Other Side of Silence*.<sup>5</sup> The scholarship has not only brought a gendered perspective to the Partition and its aftermath, but questioned stereotypes drawn from its constructed memory. It has also revealed the long-term individual, family and community legacies. These are still evident today in the shops and localities that refugees have named after ancestral homelands abandoned in August 1947. Middle Class refugees in north-west Karachi affirmed their identity by naming their areas Delhi Colony, Agra Taj colony. For a number of years, the Amritsar Rovers Hockey Club competed successfully in Lahore.<sup>6</sup>

These legacies are also present in the new colonies built for refugees and in food, fashion and marriage networks that perpetuate cross-border ties and culture.<sup>7</sup> Delhi is very much a Punjabi migrant city<sup>8</sup>. Large refugee housing projects were constructed in the south of the city in the 1950s in such places as Lajpat Nagar. The former Muslim locality of Karol Bagh became an important commercial area for Punjabi refugees. Later Khan Market, near India Gate, was created for refugee businessmen from Pakistan. The grand-daughter of Balraj Bahri Malhotra, the founder of the famous Bahrison bookstore there, has recently published the first account of partition through the prism of material objects.<sup>9</sup> Karachi is another major South Asian city shaped by the Partition migration. In fact, many Pakistan Punjab cities have upwards of fifty per cent of their population originating from across the border in Indian Punjab.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See: U. Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence. Voices from the Partition of India*, New Delhi 1988. See also: R. Menon, K. Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries. Women in India's Partition*, New Brunswick, NJ 1998; V. Fazila-Yacobali Zamindar, *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia. Refugees, Boundaries, Histories*, New York 2007; I. Talbot, *Divided Cities. Partition and its Aftermath in Lahore and Amritsar 1947-1957*, Karachi 2006.

<sup>6</sup> For details of the office holders elected at its September 1950 AGM see, *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore), 2 October 1950.

<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of the culinary impact of partition-related migration see: R. Bhagat, "Partition Ethnographies: Food and Memories Across Borders", in I. Talbot (ed.), *The Independence of India and Pakistan. New Approaches and Reflections*, Karachi 2013, pp. 259-288.

<sup>8</sup> See: V.N. Datta, "Punjabi Refugees and Urban Development of Greater Delhi", in R.E. Frykenberg (ed.), *Delhi Through the Ages. Essays on Urban History, Culture, and Society*, Delhi 1986; R. Kaur, *Since 1947. Partition Narratives among Punjabi Migrants of Delhi*, New Delhi 2007. Recent research has argued that the experience of refugees from NWFP in the city has been neglected. See: A. Kumar, "Post-Partition Refugees from NWFP in Delhi: An Ignored and Underplayed History of Dalit Refugees", *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, vol. 72, part-II (2011), pp. 1344-1353.

<sup>9</sup> A. Malhotra, *Remnants of a Separation. A History of Partition Through Material Memory*, Noida 2017.

<sup>10</sup> For discussion of these themes see I. Talbot, *Divided Cities...*, footnote 10; I. Talbot, G. Singh, *The Partition of India*, Cambridge 2009; T.Y. Tan, G. Kudaisya, *The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia*, London 2000; P. Virdee, *From the Ashes of 1947. Reimagining Punjab*, New Delhi 2017.

Within the UK, much of the BBC media commemoration of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence focused on the partition-related refugee journeys. Presenters and producers, from a self-confident Punjabi Diaspora seeking to reconnect with family roots, drove this approach in a series of productions that contrasted dramatically with the 50<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary coverage.<sup>11</sup>

It is important to acknowledge however that people who did not migrate also suffered. Scholars like, Yoginder Sikand and Mushirul Hasan have explored Indian Muslims' cultural challenges arising from the legacy of the Partition. UP Muslims had to 'prove' their loyalty to India.<sup>12</sup> While at the same time facing a threat to their Urdu cultural world, without leadership from their political, intellectual and religious leaderships, who had migrated to Pakistan. Joya Chatterji has revealed the internal displacement of Muslims in West Bengal.<sup>13</sup>

Despite such notable exceptions as Ayesha Jalal's, *The State of Martial Rule*, there are far fewer studies on the political impact of the partition legacies.<sup>14</sup> Refugees played a part in nurturing 'right wing' visions of both the Indian and Pakistan nations. The Jan Sangh forerunner of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) relied heavily on the urban Hindu refugees for its support base.<sup>15</sup> Lal Krishna Advani who remained in Pakistan until 1955 was later to become the BJP's leader and a prime mover of the *Hindutva* movement in the 1980s. In Pakistan, the early debate about the position of Islam in public life was greatly influenced by the arrival from India of Maulana Nadvi from the Nadwat-ul-Ulema of Lucknow and Maulana Abu A'la Maududi, a journalist and theologian who had founded the Islamist Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) party in 1941. It had opposed the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan, because of the secularist orientation of the League leadership and the modernist reconciliation of the nation-state concept with Islam. Once Pakistan was created, JI sought to Islamicize Pakistan and set up its new headquarters at Zaildar Park in Lahore. The stage was set for the continuous debate about the vision for Pakistan.<sup>16</sup> Until his death in 1979 Maududi played an important role in undermining Jinnah's pluralist understanding of the state.<sup>17</sup>

In the remainder of this piece, I want to examine not only a little more about the legacy of the partition and religious nationalism in India and Pakistan, but to address three other areas: namely, its encouragement for state centralization in both India and Pakistan; ethnic nationalism and tensions as a result of partition related demographic

<sup>11</sup> See for example the production: *My Family, Partition and Me: India 1947* presented by Anita Rani, Babita Sharma and Adnan Sarwar, *Dangerous Borders: A Journey Across India and Pakistan*.

<sup>12</sup> This is the theme of M.S. Sathyu's classic film *Garm Hava* (Hot Winds) which was based on the short story by the renowned Urdu novelist Ismat Chughtai.

<sup>13</sup> See also J. Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition. Bengal and India 1947-1967*, Cambridge 2007.

<sup>14</sup> A. Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule. The Origins of Pakistan's Political Economy of Defence*, Cambridge 1990.

<sup>15</sup> C. Baxter, *The Jana Sangh. A Biography of an Indian Political Party*, Philadelphia 1969.

<sup>16</sup> See: F. Shaikh, *Making Sense of Pakistan*, London 2009.

<sup>17</sup> S.V.R. Nasr, *Maududi and the Making of Islamic Revolution*, Oxford 1996.

changes and consolidation; encouragement in Pakistan for state consolidation around the army and bureaucracy, rather than political representation.

## CENTRALIZATION

The upheavals that accompanied the partition intensified the pre-existing fears in the Indian political establishment of the 'Balkanisation' of the subcontinent. Significantly, Gandhian thought with its vision of a decentralized polity and economy based on the village was reduced to the margins of the nation building enterprise, although the Mahatma was mythologized as independent India's founding father. The Center circumscribed the fiscal and legislative powers of the states which were also subject to the system of central planning introduced in 1950. It is debatable whether the Partition was the sole cause. Nehru certainly possessed a long term commitment to a 'strong center' as part of his vision for India to be able to clothe herself in the 'garb of modernity.' A clearer linkage is evident however with respect to the Constituent Assembly's refusal to accept separate electorates for religious minorities. Many Congressmen saw the Partition as the outcome of the British divide and rule policy of giving separate electorates to Muslims in 1909.

The Partition also influenced India's nationalist discourse. It comprised a series of binary opposites with 'unity' and 'integrity' favorably contrasted with 'secessionism' and 'fissiparous.' Most importantly, 'secularism' which was the cornerstone of the Nehruvian state was juxtaposed to 'communalism.' The discourse was far more than a rhetorical flourish as it delegitimized both demands for greater political autonomy and religious demands. It came to possess profound consequences in later years in states like: Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir and the small north eastern states of Assam, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Manipur. In August 1947 Nehru's response to the self-determination movements in the last region was blunt: *We can give you complete autonomy but never independence. No state, big or small in India will be allowed to remain independent. We will use all our influence and power to suppress such tendencies.*<sup>18</sup>

The demands for independence have not vanished in post-independence India. Frequently initial demands for greater autonomy have become radicalized because of heavy handed state responses. They have not only involved outright repression, but manipulation of political processes and elections. Electoral manipulation was to have a corrosive effect in both Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir. The June 1987 state elections in Jammu and Kashmir were blatantly rigged and contributed to the growing militancy.<sup>19</sup> Such manipulations in 'peripheral' regions of India resulted both from the local Congress' weakness and a national determination that there should be no more Partitions.

In the heartland of India, policies designed to co-opt ethno-nationalism and linguistic nationalism to a centralizing India state were more successful. This, in part,

<sup>18</sup> N. Maxwell, *India, Nagas and the North-East*, London 1980, p. 4.

<sup>19</sup> See: S. Ganguly, *The Crisis in Kashmir: Portents of War, Hopes of Peace*, Cambridge 1997, pp. 98-100.

resulted from what was known as the 'Congress system' in these areas. It differed from the one-party state in that it was flexible and responsive to public opinion. Political competition, nevertheless largely took the form of competition within the Congress Party rather than between it and its opponents.<sup>20</sup> Nehru also accommodated regionalist tendencies in the linguistic reorganization of Indian states. This successful achievement contrasted with the marginalization of Bengali in Pakistan.

The Partition had also encouraged the pressure for centralization in Pakistan, although the Muslim League had historically championed minority rights and provincial autonomy, albeit in the context of a perceived threat of Hindu majoritarianism within a united India. The unprecedented refugee influx, and its association with an Indian threat to Pakistan's very existence drove centralization. This comprised of a top down approach to nation building; a disavowal of pluralism; the imposition of Urdu as a national language throughout Pakistan including East Bengal where Bengali was the mother tongue of over half the population; a refusal to accord legitimacy to ethnic minority demands; and finally the use of executive authority to override elected governments in a context of an increasing slippage of power to the army and the bureaucracy.<sup>21</sup>

The new Pakistan state was totally unprepared for the refugee influx which saw 4.68 million Muslims enter the country from the Indian Punjab alone in the three and a half months after independence.<sup>22</sup> The Pakistan demand had not been linked with a call for movements of the population. The only anticipatory migration which Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, had called for, was the location of some 'national building' economic enterprises in the future Pakistan areas. The dismissal of the elected government of Khuhro in Sindh in April 1948 was an example of the use of executive authority in Pakistan which had its roots in the refugee crisis. It set a precedent which boded ill for the future. Muhammad Ayub Khuhro had strongly opposed the Pakistan Government's demand that Sindh should accept those refugees who could not be accommodated in Punjab. He maintained that the local populace was already suffering from the burden imposed by the resettlement of over a quarter of a million displaced persons. Raja Ghazanfar Ali, the Pakistan Minister for Refugees and Rehabilitation brusquely dismissed his entreaties as raising the 'virus of provincialism.'<sup>23</sup>

The tradition of viewing the Army as the guardian of the state also began with the heralding of its role in providing humanitarian assistance during the refugee crisis. The Pakistan Military Evacuation Organisation helped evacuate trapped Muslim populations in India. In addition to logistical support, it provided food and medical supplies and guarded transit refugee camps. It also helped in the clearing of riot damaged cities.

The refugee influx accompanied the wider deterioration in Pakistan's relations with India. Many Pakistani officials were convinced that India was intent on making things

<sup>20</sup> See: R. Kothari, "The Congress 'System' in India", in idem (ed.), *Party Systems and Election Studies* (=Occasional Papers of the Center for Developing Societies, no. 1), Bombay 1967, pp. 1-18.

<sup>21</sup> A good account is provided in A. McGrath, *The Destruction of Pakistan's Democracy*, Karachi 1996.

<sup>22</sup> *Eastern Times* (Lahore), 25 December 1947.

<sup>23</sup> I. Talbot, *Pakistan. A Modern History*, London 2006, p. 108.

impossible for them by pushing as many Muslims out of their country as possible. There were, of course, other strategic and symbolic issues at stake, in Pakistan's emerging conflict with India, but the enmity caused by the partition massacres and migrations played a significant role.

## ETHNIC NATIONALISM AND TENSIONS

Refugee resettlement in India and Pakistan encouraged ethnic nationalism. New demographic majorities were created that strengthened pre-existing separatist sentiments as in the Indian Punjab. For the first time Sikhs were to form a majority in the cradle of their religion, renewing the possibility of a separate state that had been denied on demographic grounds in 1947. Simultaneously, resettlement generated tensions between newly arrived migrants and locals. Their most striking examples in Pakistan were the clash between the UP refugees (*mohajirs*) and native Sindhis and the tide of Bengali opposition to 'Bihari' refugees. In Sindh, Urdu speaking refugees outnumbered native Sindhis in Karachi and Hyderabad. This was to awaken fears that Sindhis would be pushed to the margins in their native land.

The Pakistan state's failure to integrate local populations and refugees possessed fourfold consequences in Sindh. Firstly, there was a strengthening of Sindhi nationalism; secondly, there was the unexpected emergence of a *mohajir* 'new ethnicity'; thirdly there was the pitting of both Sindhi and *mohajir* nationalism at different times against the centralizing Pakistan state. Finally, there were clashes between Sindhi and *mohajir* activists resulting from what some authors see as the machinations of the military-security establishment.<sup>24</sup>

The labyrinthine details of Sindh's politics from 1940-7 need not detain us here.<sup>25</sup> Suffice it to say that Sindhi political consciousness amongst sections of the Muslim elite coexisted uneasily with the Pakistan demand. These fissures widened with the expulsion of the Sindh Muslim League President G.M. Syed from the organization in 1946. Syed talked increasingly of the need of a 'Sindhi Pakistan'.<sup>26</sup> This was cast more in terms of autonomy than the idea of Sindhi nationalism he was to develop after independence. Nevertheless, through the columns of his newspaper (*Qurbani* Sacrifice) Syed played on existing anti-Punjabi sentiment and inveighed against the possible future subordination of Sindh to Punjab.

The inadequacy of central Government funding to rehabilitate refugees from North India constituted an important grievance of Sindhi politicians in the post-independence period. The refugees' presence intensified Sindhi hostility to outsiders. Many

<sup>24</sup> I. Talbot, G. Singh, *The Partition of India...*, pp. 144-146.

<sup>25</sup> See: I. Talbot, *Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement. The Growth of the Muslim League in North-West and North-East India, 1937-47*, Karachi 1988.

<sup>26</sup> See: S. Ansari, "Identity Politics and Nation-Building in Pakistan: The Case of Sindhi Nationalism", in R.D. Long et al. (eds.), *State and Nation-Building in Pakistan. Beyond Islam and Security*, London 2016, p. 106.



Sindhis felt they had more culturally in common with the departed Hindu Sindhi population than the incomers. In some rural areas this led to clashes between Sindhi tenant farmers and refugees.<sup>27</sup> The long-term divides were, however, on a rural-urban basis with the largely rural Sindhi speaking elite opposed to Urdu speaking urban based refugees. This divide was most evident in the transformation of Karachi as a 'refugee city' that was administratively separated from Sindh. The 1941 and 1951 Censuses reveal the city's transformation. In 1941, Hindus formed 41 per cent of the population. In 1951 they were just 0.5 per cent, whilst, refugees accounted for 60 per cent of the residents.

Post-colonial political developments, with a growing Punjabi domination of the state<sup>28</sup> and the centralizing impulses institutionalized by the One Unit Scheme (introduced in 1955) fueled Sindhi nationalism. The introduction of Martial Law in 1958 only increased Sindhi marginalization. G.M. Sayed's warnings that the creation of Pakistan would entail Punjabi domination appeared to come true.

G.M. Syed consolidated Sindhi nationalists first in the Sindh Awami Mahaz and later in the mid-1960s in the Jiye Sind party which called for the creation of a Sindhi nation (Sindhu Desh). Relations between Sindhis and 'foreigners' became more complicated with the expansion of Karachi as it attracted migrant laborers from Balochistan and the NWFP. Nonetheless, the post-partition refugee influx established the long-standing frictions between Sindhis and migrants and tensions in the relations between the province and the central government.

A *mohajir* ethnic nationalism emerged much more slowly. In the early post-independence period, Urdu speaking refugees held important roles in the bureaucracy and the higher echelons of the ruling Muslim League. Moreover, *mohajirs* replaced Sindhi Hindus as the leaders of Karachi's commercial life. The introduction of martial law in 1958 resulted in a significant shift in power in favor of the Punjabis. This reflected the predominant role of the region's 'martial races' in the Army and the increasing melding of Pakistan and Punjab identities. The transfer of the capital from Karachi to Islamabad which was built nearby the garrison city of Rawalpindi symbolized the new power structure. The rise of the Sindhi politician, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, to power in the wake of the 1971 breakaway of Bangladesh signaled a further decline in *mohajir* influence.

Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party was an all-Pakistan Party which required Punjabi support to rule. Nonetheless, Bhutto appealed to Sindhi sentiments and benefited his fellow Sindhis with the introduction of affirmative action policies in education and employment in his native province. *Mohajirs* lost out from these policies. This created the context for the rise of a new ethnic identity that asserted that *mohajirs* be recognized as 'the fifth nationality of Pakistan.'

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>28</sup> This intensified with General Zia-ul-Haq's military coup in 1977. There was province wide resistance to his regime in which Sindhi nationalists and Pakistan People's Party activists fought against the army which was seen as a colonial occupying force. Sindhi culture expressed in poetry, and attachment to Sufism was pitched against an Islamizing nation building project which vociferously advocated Urdu.



The institutionalization of a *mohajir* political identity and the fluctuations in its co-option by and resistance to the Pakistan state lies behind the scope of this presentation. Suffice it to say that at times in the past three decades, *mohajir* activists have been engaged in violent ethnic conflict, internal fighting and low intensity insurgency against the Pakistan state. Their charismatic leader Altaf Husain directed operations from his London exile. He has paradoxically been accused of being both an army stooge and an Indian Agent. Like Sindhi nationalism, *mohajir's* ethnic identity can only be understood in terms of post-independence migration patterns and complex and sometimes murky political developments. Nonetheless, it forms part of the wider legacy of partition-related migration.

Altaf Husain took up cudgels on behalf of the fate of 'Bihari' Muslims who were 'stranded' in Bangladesh following the break-up of Pakistan in 1971. The causes of the dismemberment of Pakistan remain complex and highly debated. Some accounts link the process to the inevitable demise of a country whose eastern wing had been separated by the Partition from West Pakistan by over a thousand miles of Indian territory. The fact that the strongly defined Bengali collective consciousness resisted the 'top-down' state construction that marginalized the eastern wing's cultural and socio-economic interests was more important than this 'geographical absurdity'. Bengalis formed 55 per cent of the population, but their mother tongue was initially by-passed in favor of the more 'Islamic' Urdu tongue.<sup>29</sup> The Bengali demographic majority was cancelled out by merging the West Pakistan provinces in 1955 into the One Unit scheme and according an equal status to East and West Pakistan. Bengalis opposed the exploitation of economic resources, through the diversion of foreign exchange to West Pakistan that had been generated by Bengali jute exports and termed this 'internal colonialism'. The final element in the clash between Bengali ethno-nationalism and Pakistani centralism arose from the Bengali marginality in the Army and Bureaucracy.<sup>30</sup>

The story of East Pakistan's gradual drift into a campaign for autonomy and then eventual secession in 1971 is a familiar narrative.<sup>31</sup> South Asia's 'second partition' left the basis for further conflict between Bengalis and Urdu-speaking migrants known collectively as 'Biharis.' Some Biharis had a long history of residence in the Bengal region, but a significant proportion were Partition migrants from Bihar, Orissa and East UP. The Biharis had collectively supported the centralization effort of the federal government from the 1950s. A number fought as irregulars alongside the Pakistan Army and engaged in acts of 'genocide' in 1970-1. They became victims of Bengali vigilantes in the immediate post-independence chaos. Pakistan accepted less than a fifth of the Biharis who applied for 'repatriation' after the 1971 war. As late as the mid-1990s, there were still around a quarter of a million 'stateless' Biharis eking out a miserable existence

<sup>29</sup> Advocates of Urdu claimed that it was an 'Islamic' language in contrast to the Hindu influenced Bengali tongue.

<sup>30</sup> In 2004, Badaruddina Umara introduced a fresh perspective of people's struggle in the work, *The Emergence of Bangladesh*, Oxford 2004.

<sup>31</sup> T. Maniruzzaman, *The Bangladesh Revolution and its Aftermath*, Dhaka 1980.

in Dhaka's refugee camps.<sup>32</sup> Altaf Husain's pleas on their behalf fell on deaf ears. Further Urdu speaker migration to Sindh would only exacerbate an already combustible ethnic mix.

Turning to India, we see that the East Punjab, a largely mixed province of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs before 1947, received significant numbers of Sikh refugees from Pakistan. The Sikh influx along with boundary changes converted the Sikhs from forming less than 15 per cent of the population in the birthplace of the Sikh faith in 1941 to over 55 per cent by 1961. The lack of a majority which had undermined the Sikh political claims to a separate statehood at the end of British rule was now reversed. The new demographic concentration of the community laid the basis of the subsequent campaign for a Sikh-dominated *Punjabi Subha* (a Punjabi-speaking state).<sup>33</sup> This demand was conceded by Nehru in the back-drop to the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war. A new autonomy movement, however, was launched in the 1970s in response to Indira Gandhi's centralization policies.<sup>34</sup> This movement demanded that the powers of the Centre should be limited to currency, communications, defense and external affairs.

The campaign for a separate Sikh state (Khalistan) did not secure support until after the Indian army's storming of the Golden Temple, the Sikh's holiest shrine in Operation Bluestar (June 1984).<sup>35</sup> In this sense it cannot be seen as the unfinished business of the Partition. Nonetheless, Punjab's emergence as a site of violence is clearly linked with the Indian State's post-partition response to what it sees as secessionist opposition. As in the case of Kashmir, the State's failure to manage and accommodate regional demands drove political opponents to escalate calls for autonomy to those of territorial sovereignty.

## RELIGIOUS NATIONALISM

The Partition remains a significant mainspring for religious nationalism in India and Pakistan. The context for the contemporary emergence of Hindu nationalism (*Hindutva*) as a powerful force is clearly different from its emergence in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>36</sup> It is marked by the exhaustion of the Congress, the processes of economic liberalization and the political mobilization of the lower caste parties, notably in

<sup>32</sup> See: P. Ghosh, *Partition and the South Asian Diaspora: Extending the Subcontinent*, London 2007; eadem, "Partition's Biharis", *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, vol. 17, no. 2 (1997), pp. 21-35.

<sup>33</sup> See G. Singh, *Ethnic Conflict in India. A Case-Study of Punjab*, Basingstoke 2000, chap. 5.

<sup>34</sup> On Mrs. Gandhi's political approach and the reactions to it see: J. Manor, "Anomie in Indian Politics: Origins and Potential Wider Impact", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 18, no. 19/21 (1983), pp. 725-734.

<sup>35</sup> R. Jeffrey, *What's Happening to India? Punjab, Ethnic Conflict, Mrs. Gandhi's Death and the Test for Federalism*, Basingstoke 1986.

<sup>36</sup> See J. Zavos, *Emergence of Hindu Nationalism in India*, New Delhi 2003.

north India.<sup>37</sup> Nonetheless, its discourses rely on partition related themes of an 'essentialized' Muslim community that aggressively threatens Hindu civilization. Stereotypes of the Muslim 'other' as a sexually rapacious and violent aggressor have been drawn from the partition 'history' and replayed at times of communal conflict.<sup>38</sup> They are reinforced by the limited social interaction between Muslims and Hindus in contemporary India. The persistence of these discourses suggests that in Indian politics today, the partition remains an unhealed wound, which under appropriate conditions has the potential to seriously infect the broader body politic.

Partition pathologies are evident not only in Hindu nationalist discourses, but the violence of the *Hindutva* forces led by the BJP, RSS and VHP. Nehru's vision of a secular India tumbled along with the domed structures of the Babri Masjid on December 2, 1992. The 2002 pogrom against Gujarati Muslims was even more notorious. There were claims that the state's BJP Chief Minister Narendra Modi was complicit in the attacks which over a three month period claimed as many as two thousand lives.<sup>39</sup> The Gujarat violence exhibited the partition era repertoire of violence with gang rapes, the disemboweling of victims, complicity by the police and large-scale displacement of the population. But the 'Modi brand' of development in Gujarat was eventually to secure his triumphal national election in May 2014.<sup>40</sup>

The Partition plays little part in the transnational jihadist variant of religious nationalism that has emerged in the last two decades in Pakistan. This is, in part, institutionally linked with Deobandi Islam that opposed the Two-nation theory approach of the Muslim League because its territorial nationalism was privileged over Islamic Universalism. In the 'traditional' State sanctioned, as opposed to jihadist version of religious nationalism, however the Partition plays a prominent role. The 1947 violence is linked with caricatures of Hindu treachery and a desire to destroy Muslim culture. These sentiments have been expressed most clearly in school textbooks sanctioned by the state. They provide a highly ideological version of the colonial era and Pakistan's birth.<sup>41</sup> Hindu India remains the principal 'other' of the Pakistani states sanctioned by religious nationalism today. The construction is rooted in the Pakistani narrative of the Partition, but it has been reinforced by events such as the Gujarat pogrom. Moreover, school textbooks encourage the notion that Pakistan is for Muslims alone.<sup>42</sup> India textbooks also perpetuate antagonism to Pakistan.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>37</sup> S. Corbridge, J. Harriss, *Reinventing India. Liberalisation, Hindu Nationalism and Popular Democracy*, Cambridge 2000.

<sup>38</sup> D. Anand, *Hindu Nationalism in India and the Politics of Fear*, Basingstoke 2011.

<sup>39</sup> See S. Varadarajan (ed.), *Gujarat – The Making of a Tragedy*, New Delhi 2002.

<sup>40</sup> S. Pande, "Just the Right Image", *Business Today* (Delhi), 8 June 2014.

<sup>41</sup> K.K. Aziz, *The Pakistani Historian. Pride and Prejudice in the Writing of History*, Lahore 1993.

<sup>42</sup> See: A.H. Nayyar, A. Salim (eds.), *The Subtle Subversion. The State of Curricula and Textbooks in Pakistan, Urdu, English, Social Studies and Civics*, Islamabad 2003.

<sup>43</sup> M. Lall, "Educate to Hate: The Use of Education in the Creation of Antagonistic National Identities in India and Pakistan", *Compare*, vol. 38, no. 1 (2008), pp. 103-119.

Religious nationalism predates the Partition, but it has been strengthened by it. Historicized and essentialized constructions of 'rival' religious communities provide a popular basis for conflict between India and Pakistan. They possess a wide appeal. This is strongest in urban communities where many refugees settled, but it is by no means exclusive to them. Religious nationalism not only impacts inter-state relations, it also contributes to the marginalization of minorities. Indian Muslims, as the scholarship of Gyanendra Pandey has revealed, have been constantly called on to demonstrate their loyalty to the post-colonial state.<sup>44</sup> The rise of the BJP to power has increased communal conflict around the issue of cow slaughter.<sup>45</sup> At the same time, the high levels of poverty and low educational attainment highlighted by the 2005 Sachar Committee continue to afflict Indian Muslims.<sup>46</sup>

In Pakistan, minorities have been treated as second class citizens. The 1956 and 1973 Constitutions successively reduced the high state offices that non-Muslims could hold. The 1973 Constitution stipulated that the President of Pakistan must be a Muslim. The narrowing discursive space since the period of Islamization under General Zia-ul-Haq has encouraged not only discrimination, but in numerous cases, allegations of blasphemy to pursue local power and vendettas directed against Christians and Ahmadis.<sup>47</sup> Vigilante activities are parallel to those of militant Hindu groups (*gau rakshaks*) in India. In recent years, the identification of Islam with a narrow Sunni interpretation has increased tension with Pakistan Shias.<sup>48</sup> *Sipah-i-Sabha Pakistan* (renamed *Ahlu Sunnat wal-Jamaat* in 2009) and *Lashkar-i-Jhangvi* have been at the forefront of the anti-Shia propaganda and violence.<sup>49</sup> Finally, within Pakistan, religious nationalism has also been used to provide legitimacy for military regimes in what Husain Haqqani has termed the mullah-military complex.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>44</sup> G. Pandey, "Can a Muslim Be an Indian?," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 41, no. 4 (1999), pp. 608-629.

<sup>45</sup> See Minority Rights Group International, *A Narrowing Space: Violence and Discrimination against India's Religious Minorities*, June 2017, at <[https://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/MRG\\_Rep\\_India\\_Jun17-2.pdf](https://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/MRG_Rep_India_Jun17-2.pdf)>, 7 January 2018.

<sup>46</sup> For evaluation of issues in the wake of the publication of the Sachar Committee Report in 2006, see: Post Sachar Evaluation Committee, *Report*, New Delhi 2014; R. Hassan (ed.), *Indian Muslims. Struggling for Equality of Citizenship*, Carlton 2016.

<sup>47</sup> N. Saeed, *Faith Under Fire. A Report on the Second-Class Citizenship and Intimidation of Christians in Pakistan*, London 2002.

<sup>48</sup> M.Q. Zaman, "Sectarianism in Pakistan: The Radicalization of Shi'i and Sunni Identities," *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 32, no. 3 (1998), pp. 689-716.

<sup>49</sup> A. Rieck, *The Shias of Pakistan. An Assertive and Beleaguered Minority*, London 2015.

<sup>50</sup> H. Haqqani, *Pakistan – between Mosque and Military*, Washington 2005.

## THE PARTITION AND ITS LEGACY FOR DEMOCRATIC WEAKNESS IN PAKISTAN

Pakistan's weak democratic culture and party system is rooted historically in the colonial inheritance. Much of what was to form West Pakistan had been a 'British security state.'<sup>51</sup> The territory in these areas had been acquired for strategic purposes rather than trade. The British were slow to introduce representative institutions and when they did so, ensured that they were populated by the loyal local elites. The large landowners and Sufi Pirs opportunistically switched allegiance from loyalist parties to the Muslim League in the later stages of the Pakistan movement.<sup>52</sup> They provided it with a foothold in the future Pakistan areas, but at the cost of factionalism and opportunism.<sup>53</sup> This political culture along with corruption dogged the Muslim League in the opening decade of Pakistan's independence. It was a factor in the first coup in 1958 which set the country on the path of authoritarianism.

The Partition might have shaken up existing power structures, if it had been accompanied by land reform. Political interests and the fact that there was sufficient land abandoned by Sikh farmers to accommodate Muslim refugees sustained an agrarian system in which land was *perceived to be a political rather than a commercial commodity*.<sup>54</sup> The Oxford-educated left-leaning Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din, the Minister of Refugees and Rehabilitation in the West Punjab cabinet, had pressed for the kind of policies of tenancy reform and land redistribution that were pursued across the Indian border.<sup>55</sup> The refugee Punjab Chief Minister, the Nawab of Mamdot blocked these policies. The power of the large landholders thus went unchallenged. Indeed, in some instances, landlords tightened their grip on local society, by 'illegally' acquiring abandoned property. They also replaced Hindu moneylenders in providing credit for their tenants.

The reinforcement of the large landholders' power quickly ended the nascent hopes of the Muslim masses that independence would bring social and economic transformation. The patron-client politics that ensued, persists to today.<sup>56</sup> It provides a reservoir of support for military rulers, as a section of the landholders has cooperated with them.<sup>57</sup> The religious establishment has also legitimized military regimes.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>51</sup> See I. Talbot, *Pakistan. A Modern History...*, chap. 2.

<sup>52</sup> Idem, *Khizr Tiwana, the Punjab Unionist Party and the Partition of India*, Karachi 2002.

<sup>53</sup> The Muslim League's traditional support came from such Muslim minority provinces as UP and Bombay. In the future Pakistan areas, it was confined to urban middle-class support.

<sup>54</sup> S.S. Thandi, "The Unidentical Punjab Twins: Some Explanations of Comparative Agricultural Performances since Partition", *International Journal of Punjab Studies*, vol. 4, no. 1 (1997), p. 72.

<sup>55</sup> He called for a 50 acres ceiling on landholdings.

<sup>56</sup> On patron-client politics see: H. Javid, "Class, Power and Patronage: The Landed Elite and Politics in Pakistan", unpublished PhD thesis, London School of Economic, June 2012.

<sup>57</sup> Co-opted landlords have been active in such pro-establishment parties as PML-Q.

<sup>58</sup> H. Haqqani, *Pakistan...*

## THE PARTITION AND THE ENDURING RIVALRY BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN

The enduring Indo-Pakistan rivalry is variously attributed to competing conceptions of national identity, a trust deficit, disputes over territory, especially Kashmir, and the emergence of Pakistan as a military dominated state.<sup>59</sup> These all have their roots in Partition, although Indo-Pakistan differences have become more complex since independence.

Partition internationalized the long standing ideological differences between the Congress and the Muslim League. These were embedded in the conflicting notions of a composite, multi-ethnic and multi-religious Indian nationalism and a self-conscious Muslim separatism. The Partition violence added a layer of negative stereotypical representations of the Hindu and Muslim 'other.' Hindu nationalism sees the Partition as denying the truth of Indian unity. Both Congress and the Muslim League are blamed for this 'tragedy.' On the day that Pakistan was created, the *Organiser*, the mouthpiece for the Hindu nationalist Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh carried on its front page an illustration of Mother India in the form of a map of the country with a woman lying on it, one limb severed with Nehru holding a bloody knife. Subsequent articles equated Pakistan's emergence with the 'violation' of Mother India. Rape, Muslim men and Pakistan were made synonymous through lurid accounts of assaults and the claim that the lust for Hindu women and property had motivated separatist demands.<sup>60</sup>

Pakistan's national identity construction has been partially forged against a perceived threat of Hindu majoritarianism. According to this discourse, Pakistan was created after an epic struggle against an indefatigable opponent that sought to strangle the state at birth. The Pakistan political elite and military establishment have shared the view that India remains unreconciled to the Partition.<sup>61</sup> This perception rested, in part, on the mistrust surrounding the 'messy separation' in 1947. The disputes over the division of financial assets, military supplies, water and territory are well documented. In their process, 'both sides fought tooth and nail for every rupee of assets, the one anxious to deny, the other determined to secure.'<sup>62</sup> An agreement was only reached in December 1947 to the backdrop of fighting in Kashmir. Pakistan's rulers were convinced that the Government of India had deliberately prolonged the negotiations to undermine the new state.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>59</sup> See, for example: J.N. Dixit, *India-Pakistan in War and Peace*, London 2002; S. Ganguly, *The Crisis in Kashmir...*; I. Talbot, G. Singh, *The Partition of India...*; M. Aziz, *Military Control. The Parallel State*, London 2008; V. Schofield, *Kashmir in Conflict. India, Pakistan and the Unending War*, London 2003.

<sup>60</sup> I. Talbot, *India and Pakistan*, London 2000, p. 1659.

<sup>61</sup> For a discussion see: idem, "Does the Army Shape Pakistan's Foreign Policy?", in C. Jaffrelot (ed.), *Pakistan. Nationalism without a Nation?*, New Delhi 2002, pp. 311-337.

<sup>62</sup> A. Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule...*, p. 33.

<sup>63</sup> I. Talbot, G. Singh, *The Partition...*, p. 157.



Political distrust was reinforced by the daily resentments of millions of uprooted citizens. The 'India syndrome' in Pakistan has been subsequently reinforced by New Delhi's alleged role in the 1971 Bangladesh breakaway and the increasingly asymmetrical power relations between the two countries.<sup>64</sup> The Kashmir dispute is regularly viewed as the principal cause of the India-Pakistan rivalry. It is acknowledged that this was more than a dispute over boundaries, but symbolized the competing conceptions of national identity, we have been discussing. For Pakistan, Kashmir's Muslim majority status meant that it was at the heart of the state's two nation theory identification of religious identity with territory. Kashmir stood for the 'K' in its identity. Aside from Nehru's personal attachment to Kashmir, the existence of a Muslim majority state in the Indian Union exemplified the early post-colonial state's commitment to a diverse plural society that contradicted the Two-nation theory legitimization of Pakistan.<sup>65</sup>

The Kashmir dispute was also linked with the Partition in two other ways which have been less remarked on. Firstly, the Pakistan state's encouragement of the Pakhtun tribal invasion responded to killings of Muslims in Jammu province that added to the flood of refugees that were threatening to overwhelm the new state.<sup>66</sup> Secondly, the subsequent accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India was linked to what people in Pakistan saw as the 'partisan' British boundary award.<sup>67</sup> The notion was further encouraged that the Partition had been stacked in India's favor and an embattled Pakistan had to fight for its very survival.

Events in Kashmir provided a defining moment both in Indo-Pakistan relations and for Pakistan's domestic priorities. Although the military conflict was confined to Kashmir, it starkly revealed Pakistan's strategic vulnerability. The priority of building up the armed forces was spelled out by the Pakistan Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan as early as October 1947. In a broadcast to the nation he declared, *The of the State is our foremost consideration... and has dominated all other governmental activities. We will not grudge any amount in the defence of our country.*<sup>68</sup> Pakistan thus embarked on the establishment of a 'political economy of.' Seven tenths of the national budget were allocated to defense in the opening three years of Pakistan's existence.<sup>69</sup> This effort was

<sup>64</sup> J.-L. Racine, "Pakistan and the 'India Syndrome': Between Kashmir and the Nuclear Predicament", in C. Jaffrelot (ed.), *Pakistan...*, pp. 195-229.

<sup>65</sup> There is a vast literature on the material, symbolic and ethno-nationalist dimensions of the Kashmir dispute. See, for example, S. Bose, *Kashmir – Roots of Conflict, Paths to Peace*, Cambridge, Mass 2003; S. Widmalm, *Kashmir in Comparative Perspective. Democracy and Violent Separatism in India*, Oxford 2006; S.K. Mitra, R.A. Lewis (eds.), *Subnational Movements in South Asia*, Boulder 1996; V. Schofield, *Kashmir in Conflict...*; eadem, *Kashmir in the Crossfire*, London 1996.

<sup>66</sup> I. Talbot, *Pakistan...*, p. 116. Dogra state police and military attacked Muslims in Jammu thereby pushing 80,000 refugees into Pakistan.

<sup>67</sup> On the boundary award see: L. Chester, *On the Edge: Borders, Territory and Conflict in South Asia*, Manchester 2008. The Radcliffe Boundary Commission's award of the Muslim majority Gurdaspur district to India was seen in hindsight as making possible the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India as it provided road access even in the winter season.

<sup>68</sup> C. Muhammad Ali, *The Emergence of Pakistan*, New York 1967, p. 376.

<sup>69</sup> Y. Samad, *A Nation in Turmoil. Nationalism and Ethnicity in Pakistan, 1937-1958*, New Delhi 1995, p. 128.



detrimental to democratic consolidation. Even so, Pakistan could not match India. It thus turned to the U.S. for support. The alliance with Washington in 1954 strengthened the institution of the military.

The Pakistan Army has been prone to adventurism over Kashmir as in the 1965 War and the more recent 1999 Kargil conflict.<sup>70</sup> Its attempts to wrest Kashmir from India have perpetuated the enduring rivalry. Even when the army has returned to the barracks, its influence behind the scenes has undermined civilian attempts to improve relations with India.

## CONCLUSION

The subcontinent has changed dramatically since independence. Both India and Pakistan are more populous, prosperous and powerful than might have been imagined in 1947. India, since economic liberalization in 1991, is emerging as an economic powerhouse that might rival China. Nonetheless, this presentation has argued that the legacy of the Partition still looms over the two countries. The relations between the 'distant neighbors' are anchored in the rival understandings of 1947. The Kashmir dispute has embodied these conflicting discourses. The challenge of *Hindutva* and of Islamism to the state's foundational ideologies has added another layer of complexity and virulence.

The Partition has also impacted on the Subcontinent's domestic politics. Fear of further partitions has delegitimized ethno-linguistic and regional demands in both India and Pakistan. The official treatment of calls for autonomy as a 'law and order' issue has only served to radicalize movements in the peripheral regions. Repression has spilled over into state violence in East Bengal, Indian Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir. Only the Bengali secessionist movement has succeeded in conflict with the increasingly repressive post-colonial South Asian State.<sup>71</sup> The accumulation of coercive capacity has come at the cost of tolerance. The increasing appeal of *Hindutva* and Islamism is rooted in socio-economic and political transformations, but it cannot be fully explained without reference to the effects of insurgencies. The growing power of religious nationalism has further disadvantaged minorities in both countries.

Finally, the mass migrations, insecure borders and the perceived threat from a mighty and hostile neighbor encouraged the emergence of what some scholars term the garrison state in Pakistan.<sup>72</sup> The army has subsequently pursued its own institutional interests.<sup>73</sup> Its influence has also thrived on geo-political conflicts that extended

<sup>70</sup> On Kargil see: B. Sarkar, *Kargil War. Past, Present and Future*, New Delhi 1999; S. Mazari, *The Kargil Conflict, 1999. Separating Fact from Fiction*, Islamabad 2003.

<sup>71</sup> On the state's accumulation of coercive capacity see: T.V. Sathyamurthy, "Impact of Centre-State Relations on Indian Politics: An Interpretative Reckoning 1947-1987", in P. Chatterjee (ed.), *State and Politics in India*, Delhi 1998, pp. 232-271.

<sup>72</sup> I. Ahmed, *Pakistan The Garrison State. Origins, Evolution, Consequences, 1847-2011*, Karachi 2013.

<sup>73</sup> On the army's institutional interests see: A. Siddiqi, *Military Inc. – Inside Pakistan's Military Economy*, London 2007.

far beyond the partition legacy of enmity with India- namely the Cold War and more recently the 'War on Terror.' The army's influence persists, despite periodic transitions from military rule to elected governments.

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