

City University of New York (CUNY)

CUNY Academic Works

Dissertations, Theses, and Capstone Projects

CUNY Graduate Center

2-2015

Institutionalizing Colonial Identity: A Case Study On The Indian Partition

Jamie Bodine

Graduate Center, City University of New York

[How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!](#)

More information about this work at: https://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc_etds/527

Discover additional works at: <https://academicworks.cuny.edu>

This work is made publicly available by the City University of New York (CUNY).

Contact: AcademicWorks@cuny.edu

INSTITUTIONALIZING COLONIAL IDENTITY:
A CASE STUDY ON THE INDIAN PARTITION

BY

JAMIE L. BODINE

A master's thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, The City University of New York

2015

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

Prof. Tomohisa Hattori

Date

Thesis Advisor

Prof. Matthew K. Gold

Date

Executive Officer

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

INSTITUTIONALIZING COLONIAL IDENTITY:
A CASE STUDY ON THE CREATION OF PAKISTAN

BY

JAMIE L. BODINE

Adviser: Prof. Tomohisa Hattori

In 1947, the British colony of India was declared independent and emerged as two separate states, Pakistan and India. To examine this event, I ask what material cause(s) made possible the institutional separation between these two new states. To approach this question, I will review the process of political identity formation from the upheaval of 1857 to the 1947 partition. In so doing, I argue that the system of categorizing those who were under British colonial rule manufactured a particular set of political identities on the Indian subcontinent.

Contents

Introduction.....	1
Literature Review.....	4
Part I: Pre-Colonial India, the Upheaval of 1857, and the Beginning of the British Raj.....	15
The First War of Independence or the Sepoy Mutiny [1857 – 1859].....	16
Consequences of 1857.....	21
Part II: Institutionalization of Colonial Identity.....	23
Manufacturing Colonial Identities: Elite Civilizing and Mass Traditionalism [1860 – 1884]	24
In Education.....	24
In the Census.....	28
In the Legal System.....	31
In Association Formation.....	33
Part III: Origin and Development of Parallel Politics.....	39
Origins of All-India Political Associations.....	39
Indian National Congress & The Muslim League [1885 – 1905].....	42
British Maneuvering over the Indian Councils Act of 1892.....	45
Part IV: Origin and Development of Parallel Electorates.....	51
Granting of Separate Electorates [1906 – 1916].....	52
Implementation of Separate Electorates [1917 – 1927].....	57
British Imposition, Indian Response, & Parallel Political Structures [1927 – 1937].....	60
Deepening Divisions & Partition [1937 – 1947].....	65

Conclusion.....	60
Bibliography.....	75

Introduction

In 1947, the British colony of India was declared independent and emerged as two separate states, Pakistan and India. To examine this event, I ask what material cause(s) made possible the institutional separation between these two new states. To approach this question, I will review the process of political identity formation from the upheaval of 1857 to the 1947 partition. In so doing, I argue that the system of categorizing those who were under British colonial rule manufactured a particular set of political identities on the Indian subcontinent.

I will explore the relationship between institutions and political identity formation under the British system of categorization. I will look at the manufacture of a static identity on the Indian subcontinent from identities that were previously more fluid. I argue that this led to the institutionalization of a homogenized and fixed identity that eventually resulted in the demand and implementation of separate electorates. These constructed political identities deepened divisions in India and made partition the most likely outcome as constituencies and politicians in India sought to maximize their electoral interests along the lines of their manufactured identities. A historical analysis will explore the formation of political identities and separate electorates that lead to the development of parallel political structures, the Muslim League and the Indian National Congress (INC) which path determined the formation of two states. The historical evidence will seek to explain how colonially manufactured political identities and separate electorates created the conditions that made possible the development of two parallel organizations that could not coexist in the framework of a unified state. The trajectory of politics will be identified through reforms and elections as seats at different administrative levels of power are divided by the British between Muslim and Hindu constituencies, considering the

actions of Indian Subjects, the INC, the Muslim League, and the British throughout the period following the upheaval of 1857, and leading up until the 1947 partition.

There are several authors without whom this work would not be possible. They provide the intellectual framework to help us look deeper into these events and seek greater understanding. Of these authors the most influential are Edward Said, Partha Chatterjee, Ranajit Guha, and especially Mahmood Mamdani. Edward Said will help us understand the particular form of cultural imperialism, Chatterjee nationalism as it relates to political mobilization, Guha the social dynamics of power relations, and Mamdani the administrative strategies. This is not to say that these are exclusive cantons of thought as they overlap and inform each other, but these are their primary intellectual contributors to this work. After setting out more particularly these authors' arguments they will be applied to detailed historical analysis.

I will begin with a focus on the period of time before and after the events of 1857. This will provide the starting point for an exploration of the British Raj, as well as a brief analysis of the upheaval and its impact on administrative strategies, the Raj's administrative choices, and Indian responses.

Next, I will explore the implementation of ruling strategies in several domains: education, law, society (association formation), and most starkly in the form of the census, as it literally names and communicates the ordering of identities ascribed by the British. In each of these domains the impact of administrative ruling strategies in the day-to-day life of the Indian subjects is demonstrated, revealing their effect, diverging society between a civilizing elite and traditionalizing mass as well as between Hindus and Muslims.

Following the exploration of ruling strategies, I will look at the formation of political associations, their consolidation at the all-Indian level, British involvement, and responses. This section more broadly sets up the origins of political movements and associations as well as the sectarian and British dialectics that shaped political developments, reviewing ideological debates in India and Britain. The interaction between Muslim and Hindu politicians will be traced from their initial cooperation and political identification primarily as Indian, to their formation of parallel organizations along the lines of a sharpening sectarian divide fostered by the British and collaborating religious officials.

Lastly, I will examine how the process of parallel political development becomes entrenched into electoral schemes. I will look at how separate electorates were granted and why. That exploration will reveal how these separate electorates were implemented and how that continued to shape political organization. The role of expanding suffrage will be examined throughout. Finally, I will look at the confluence of expanding suffrage, separate electorates, imperial administrative strategies and objectives, and the events on the path to state separation.

Plotting this trajectory from the upheaval of 1857, and the imposition of the British Raj, to the eventual division into two states is designed to try and find understanding as to what made this possible. This historical analysis will attempt to draw some conclusions about political identity formation and how identity is shaped by power. Through all of the political events, institutions and established behavioral patterns, through administrative strategies, and religious collaboration throughout the course of this century in Indian history, 1857-1947, political identities were shaped in the service of power. This is the story of how power shaped those political identities and path determined two states.

Literature Review

The way in which power, acting through institutions, shapes political identity formation has long been the crux of my thinking about praxis in politics. This is particularly evident in colonial states and their evolution towards ‘native’ rule. If identity, and the definition of that identity ascribed by power, is the conditioning agent of political and state formation the question becomes, how does power shape political identity formation? Since much of the world’s present governments stem from a colonial state, it is important to understand the process by which power manufactures identities. In the context of this project I will examine specifically how in colonial India political identities are shaped in the service of imperial objectives.

To begin this endeavor it is essential to lay down the necessary concepts, and associated authors to gain the theoretical footing required in analyzing the political identities and formations that led to the physical division of India. To do so, I will briefly explore the works of four major influences, with whom I have found the most scholarly parallels to this hypothesis: Edward Said, Partha Chatterjee, Ranajit Guha, and Mahmood Mamdani

Edward Said first outlined the modern notion of Orientalism, giving it its modern flavor as a pejorative. It has become synonymous with the imperial gaze, and the ascribed attributes to peoples and places by those outside of those peoples and places, the West or Occident. Orientalism today is used to denote the fetishization of the ‘other’ by societies in global positions of power and influence. The result of looking at the other from this imperial gaze is telling in,

...the encyclopedic description of Orientalism roughly from 1765 to 1850 given by Raymond Schwab in his *La Renaissance Orientale* (1950). Quite aside from the scientific discoveries of things Orientale made by learned professionals during this period in Europe, there was in addition the virtual epidemic of Orientalia affecting every major poet, essayist and philosopher of the period. Schwab’s notion is that “orientale” identifies

an amateur or professional enthusiasm for everything Asiatic, which was wonderfully synonymous with the exotic, mysterious, profound, seminal...¹

For Said, the concept of Orientalism was a form of cultural imperialism. He demonstrated the exotic and homogenizing nature of imperial culture by conducting literary reviews from texts written under the influence of imperialism. During his analyses he points to a distinct concept of identity formation: negative identity. That is identity as a formation against the 'other' more powerful imperial identity. If the Orient is exotic and mysterious to the Occident center, the Occident or West is familiar and rational because it is the imperial ruler. There is something pernicious in the way the mind categorizes people as the 'other.' It is pernicious because the underlying presupposition is that of an unbalanced dyad. Said cites Strauss in his conceptualization of this problem,

Despite the distraction of a great many vague desires, impulses, and images, the mind seems persistently to formulate what Levi-Strauss has called a logic of the concrete. A primitive tribe, for example, assigns a definite place, function and significance to every leafy species in its immediate environment; many of these herbs and flowers have no practical use, but the point Levi-Strauss makes is that the mind requires order, and order is achieved by discriminating and taking note of everything, placing everything of which the mind is aware in a secure, re-findable place, therefore giving things some role to play in the economy of objects and identities that make up an environment. This kind of rudimentary classification has a logic to it, but the rules of the logic by which a green fern in one society is a symbol of grace and in another is considered maleficent are neither predictably rational nor universal. There is always a measure of the purely arbitrary in the way the distinctions between things are seen. And with these distinctions go values whose history, if one could unearth it completely, would probably show the same measure of arbitrariness. [...] But if we agree that all things in history, like history itself, are made by men, then we will appreciate how possible it is for objects, or places, or times, to be assigned roles and given meanings that acquire objective validity only after the assignments are made. This is especially true of relatively uncommon things, like foreigners, mutants, or "abnormal" behavior. Obviously, some distinctive objects are made by the mind, and these objects, while appearing to exist objectively, have only a fictional reality. A group of people living on a few acres of land will set up boundaries

¹ Said, "Orientalism", 164

between their land and its immediate surroundings on the one hand, and on the other, a land beyond theirs which they call "the land of the barbarians." In other words, this universal practice of designating in one's mind a familiar space which is "ours" and an unfamiliar space beyond "ours," which is "theirs," is a way of making geographical distinctions that can be entirely arbitrary. I use the word arbitrary here because imaginative geography of the "our land / barbarian land" variety does not require that the barbarians acknowledge the distinction. It is enough for "us" to set up these boundaries in our own minds; "they" become "they" accordingly, and both their territory and their mentality is designated as different from "ours." To a certain extent modern and primitive societies seem thus to derive a sense of their identities negatively.²

It is in this way that systems of categorization as governing practices based on those systems, imagine identities for those governed in the context of colonial administration. This kind of imagined self/center categorizing of the other is how colonial rule is carried out in the cultural sphere, whether conscious or unconscious in the minds of the administrators, collaborators, and individuals recording and creating knowledge. Said summarizes this neatly,

To restore a region from its present classical greatness; to instruct (for its own benefit) in the ways of the modern West; to subordinate underplay military intervention in order to aggrandize the project of acquiring priceless knowledge in the process of political domination of the Orient; to formulate the Orient, to give it shape, identity, definition with full recognition of its place in memory, its importance to imperial strategy, and its "natural" role as an appendage of Europe; to dignify all the knowledge collected during colonial occupation with the title "contribution to modern learning" when the natives had neither been consulted nor treated as anything except pre-texts for a text, whose usefulness is not to the natives; to feel oneself, as a European, in command, almost at will, of Oriental history, time, and geography; to institute new areas of specialization; to establish new disciplines; to divide, deploy, schematize, tabulate, index, and record everything in sight (and out of sight); to make out of every observable detail a generalization and out of every generalization an immutable law about the Oriental nature, temperament, mentality, custom, or type; and, above all, to transmute living reality into the stuff of texts, to possess (or think one possesses) actuality mainly because as a European nothing in the Orient seems to resist one's powers: these are the features of Orientalist projection fully realized...³

² Said, "Orientalism", 166-167

³ Said, "Orientalism", 199

It is in this way that British colonial administrators governed their Indian colony, making mass generalizations that put their subjects neatly into categories, and stripped them of their own agency, specifically by conceptualizing and defining identities suitable in the service of imperial objectives. To operate within the British Raj, Indians needed to present themselves to power under the terms of power, as a British imagined political category, defined by the British and serving their power.

To move more closely to the subject at hand, and the logical extent of Said's previous statement, we turn to the Subaltern Study Group, a body of post-colonial scholars studying the theoretical transition between colonial and native rule. Their view is that of the voiceless in the experience of colonial rule, to give agency back to Indian subjects. In this recounting, of the events leading up to the Indian partition, the role of the subaltern becomes of interest in the formation of nationalism as electorates are created and expand, making it necessary for elites to coopt masses and convince them of the primacy of their colonial defined political identity. One of the most prominent subaltern scholars, Ranajit Guha, sought to address the Indian historical disparity between the role of elites and the masses. To Guha and the subaltern scholars,

Indian history, assimilated thereby to the history of Great Britain, would henceforth be used as a comprehensive measure of difference between the peoples of these two countries. Politically that difference was spelled out as one between rulers and the ruled; ethically, between a white *Herrenvolk* and blacks; materially, between a prosperous Western power and its poor Asian subjects; culturally, between higher and lower levels of civilization, between the superior religion of Christianity and indigenous belief systems made up of superstition and barbarism – all adding up to an irreconcilable difference between colonizer and colonized. The Indian past was thus painted red.⁴

⁴ Guha, *Dominance without Hegemony: History and Power in Colonial India*, 3

They saw the history of India as produced under the dichotomy we have discussed with Said. Guha goes on to distinguish the liberal ideological unity of the elite (both British and Indian), “all transactions between the two parties which made up the stuff of elite politics followed from an understanding to abide by a common set of rules based on British constitutionalist parliamentary model. It was a matter of playing cricket. If a nationalist agitation ran into difficulty, the bureaucracy would gloat that Gandhi was on a poor wicket, and he would, on his part, condemn the administration as ‘un-British’ whenever he felt outraged by the harshness of official violence.”⁵ This is one of the aspects that are most critical to understanding the role of Indian elites in political formation. They were so extensively educated in British systems of knowledge, almost exclusively so, that they acted wholly inside of the paradigms set forth by the British.

Another subaltern scholar, Partha Chatterjee, focused on nationalist thought as a liberal economic imperative – progress. For Chatterjee Indian actors did indeed operate within these confines, but this did not mean that they were devoid of agency. Chatterjee thought quite the opposite about the character of colonial nationalism,

...nationalist thought in the colonised countries of Asia or Africa did not simply create a derivative discourse. At one level it challenged the colonial claim that the backward peoples were culturally incapable of ruling them-selves in the conditions of the modern world. It thus denied the alleged inferiority of the colonised people. At the same time, nationalism also asserted that a backward nation could 'modernise' itself while retaining its cultural identity, thus accepting at another level the values of 'modernity' and 'progress' as developed in the West. Nationalism thus produced a discourse in which, even as it challenged the colonial claim to political domination, it also accepted the very intellectual premises of 'modernity' on which colonial domination was based.⁶

⁵ Guha, *Dominance without Hegemony: History and Power in Colonial India*, 4

⁶ Chatterjee, “Transferring a Political Theory: Early Nationalist Thought in India”, 120-121

Again, for Chatterjee, like Guha, there is a sympathetic intellectual framework for the colonizer and Indian elite. These challenges to colonial rule were articulated by the formation of English style political associations and both acted within the frame work and challenged it. This was the dilemma of colonial administration and was resolved by the British by claiming that these elite were not representative. In order to undermine these initiatives and a unified nationalism from forming the British for their part institutionalized religious divisions in governing seats and electoral schema.

Chatterjee correctly identifies the connection between historical realities, ideology, and social structures,

It is at the level of the problematic that nationalist discourse makes certain claims regarding the historical possibilities which it thinks are feasible; it also makes claims regarding the practical forms through which those possibilities could be realised. Historical possibilities, practical realisation. The claims of the ideology are directly located on the terrain of politics, the field of contest for power, where its claims are challenged by others emanating from an opposite discourse. It is at the level of the problematic then that we can connect the ideology to its 'social bases' relate its theoretical claims to the state of the social structure and its dynamics, to the 'interests' of various social classes, their opposition as well as their coming together. It also become evident that the problematic need not remain fixed and unchanging. As 'historical conditions' change, so are new political possibilities thought out, the problematic undergoes a transformation within the same structure of discourse. With the help of the problematic, then, we seek to establish the political location as well as the historicity of nationalist discourse.⁷

There is a distinct connection between national discourse, social structures, and historical realities. I would add that political identity formation is born out of historical realities that are shaped by administrative strategies and structures, particularly the political. Without a unified

⁷ Chatterjee, "Transferring a Political Theory: Early Nationalist Thought in India", 122

framework of liberal nationalism with the impulse to create a common market, which was a challenge to the British, politics took on the necessary character of historical realities as defined by a manufactured static categorization of the Indian populace.

The confines of the debate were set and the framework established under the generalizations produced about India and all rapprochements to power were made in that guise. To be suitable collaborators to the British, an Indian needed to present themselves in the terms that were legible to the colonial power, as elites that were both suitably English in the leadership, but had mass appeal to these fixed political categories that reflected an Indian history understood in these terms.

In turning to colonial administrative strategies, the most influential author on this work is by far Mahmood Mamdani. In his most recent book, *Define and Rule* (2012), he outlines a very similar process to that which will be discussed later in this work. He identifies a shift in colonial administration after the upheaval of 1857 from one of civil law to customary law. While I agree that this shift does take place, it is more broadly a shift from direct to indirect rule of which this was one facet, however, this can be seen as the starting point for the institutionalization of traditionalized political identities. Mamdani lays out his argument quite succinctly in a recent lecture at the CUNY Graduate Center by first starting with,

Queen Victoria's proclamation after the 1857 uprising, "We declare it our royal will and pleasure that none be in anywise favored, none molested or disquieted, by reason of their religious faith or observances, but that all shall alike enjoy the equal and impartial protection of the law. And we do strictly charge to enjoin all those who may be in authority under us that they abstain from all interference with the religious belief or worship of any of our subjects on pain of our highest displeasure."⁸

⁸ Mamdani, "*Define and Rule: Native as Political Identity.*", Lecture

Mamdani then uses this as the basis for his argument that this,

...turned into a charter for all around interference, for one reason. The occupying power gave itself the prerogative to define the boundaries of that in which it will not interfere, and then to define the content of the authentic religion with which there was to be no interference, and finally to acknowledge the authentic authority that would define and safeguard religion in its pure form, without external interference. So it gave itself the right to define the authentic religious authority, the authentic religion, and the boundaries of that religion. [...] It was a political project to define allies of custom, and to define custom itself, and to define a platform for a defense of that custom and thereby the defense of those allies in order to stabilize colonial rule.⁹

As we move through the historical analysis, this process will become increasingly identifiable and useful in understanding the choices of actors.

In the book that popularized Mamdani's work, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, Mamdani highlighted an aspect of colonial rule that critically influences his work and mine, "Together, segregation and customary law would create something more than just territorial segregation between the colonizer and the colonized, the settler and native; it would create an embryonic 'institutional segregation.'"¹⁰ He recognizes in this statement the systemic nature of political formation that occurs under colonial rule. In the same work he, more specifically, brings attention to a shift from direct to indirect rule and, "stressed two aspects of the colonial situation in the early part of this century [the 20th]: the lack of personnel that every colonial power faced and the extreme difficulty in communicating over long distances."¹¹ These exerts are meant to demonstrate his early acknowledgement of the institutional factors in state formation as well as the necessity in the strategic shifts in colonial administration. This hints at what was to follow in his next title, *When Victims Become Killers*,

⁹ Mamdani, "Define and Rule: Native as Political Identity.", Lecture

¹⁰ Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, 63

¹¹ Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, 72-73

where he articulates the thrust of this work more accurately, “By taking seriously the historical backdrop to political events, I hope to historicize both political choices and those who made these choices. If it is true that the choices were made from a historically limited menu, it is also the case that the identity of agents who made these choices was also forged within historically specific institutions.”¹² This is the essential focus of my argument, and the parallels that Mamdani will set up in his most recent work. The underpinning of my examination of the Indian partition rests on Mamdani’s’ description of political identity and how he understands it as part of state formation, as I do. He writes,

I suggest we recognize that the process of state formation generates political identities that are distinct not only from market based identities but also from cultural identities. [...] To focus on the construction of political identity is not to deny significant overlaps – or interrelations or even determinations – among cultural, economic, and political processes. No Chinese Wall exists between the political and other domains. [...] Yet, no one historicized the political legacy of colonialism, of the colonial state as a legal-institutional complex that framed and set in motion particular political identities. [...] as political identities undergirded and reproduced by institutions of colonial vintage...¹³

Mamdani establishes that political identity is inseparably a result of the process of state formation. Since political identities are a part of the process of state formation he now moves onto to describe how they are defined,

Political identities are the consequences of how power is organized. The organization of power not only defines the parameters of the political community, telling us who is included and who is left out, it also differentiates the bounded political community internally. This it does by acknowledging different kinds of identities in law. It is identities so acknowledged in law – and thus legally enforced – that form the basis of

¹² Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*, 8

¹³ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*, 20

different political identities. Legal enforcement makes identities the basis of participation in state-organized institutional and political life.¹⁴

He then goes on to illuminate what is meant by polarized political identity and how type of rule, indirect or direct, creates difference,

Polarized identities give rise to a kind of political difference where you must be either one or the other. You cannot partake of both. The difference becomes binary, not simply in law but in political life. It sustains no ambiguity. Every state form generates specific political identities. I shall illustrate this...with regard to two forms of the colonial state, characterized by direct and indirect rule. Direct rule tended to generate race-based political identities: settler and native. Indirect rule, in contrast, tended to mitigate the settler-native dialectic by fracturing the race consciousness of natives into multiple and separate ethnic consciousness. Once we have understood the dynamic whereby distinctive forms of the colonial state tend to generate distinctive types of political identities, we shall be in a position to understand the process of formation of...political identities through different periods in...history.¹⁵

Pulling these ideas into a symbiosis, the trajectory I intend to lay out concerning the partition of India, is theoretically grounded in a knowledge system, Orientalism, produced for colonial rule, which only takes into account the imperial perspective and broadly generalizes 'natives' into imagined static and fetishized groupings. The subaltern study group contributes to revealing some of the agency of Indian actors, but more importantly sheds light on the similarities between the Indian and British elite. It explores their common perspective, and how they have internalized the 'civilizing' project. It demonstrates the pervasiveness of Western thought and its necessity in the thinking and presentation to British power by elite Indians. It applies Said's argument to the individual and group as these actors seek arbitration for rewards and punishments in the colonial system. Mamdani sees what I see, that the project of creating

¹⁴ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*, 22

¹⁵ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*, 23-24

political identities is part of the process of state formation in a colonial setting where these identities were specifically tied to institutional difference, articulated for colonial management. The system of indirect rule, born out of the problems of direct rule, sought to shape identities to serve colonial administration. The result of such a long period of rule based on institutionally differentiated political identities produced different political entities, and eventually different countries. In the case of colonial India it is not surprising that in 1947, when declared independent, two separate states emerged: Pakistan and India. This raises several questions about political identity formation. How did institutional arrangements contribute to political identity formation? What material cause motivated these formations? How did political identities become polarized? To approach these questions I will review the process and historical period from more than a century before and up until partition, during which colonial institutions and Indian political structures emerged, grew, and formed separate states.

Part I: Pre-Colonial India, the Upheaval of 1857, and the Beginning of the British Raj

The upheaval of 1857 seemed the most appropriate launching point for our analysis for several reasons. One reason is the name itself. I have chosen to call these events the “Upheaval of 1857.” To the British and most of the western world it is known as the Sepoy Mutiny. To many Indians it is known as the First War of Independence. The events themselves are so polarizing that the naming of them, as we will learn is often the case and specifically so with regard to the British Raj’s categorization of its subjects, reveals the intent and thought behind those giving the name itself. For the imperial power it was a mutiny, to Indian nationalists it was the start of their self-determination. Another reason is that as a result of these events British administration changed drastically in two important ways: 1) The East India ceded control to the British Crown, and 2) The administrative strategy shifted from direct (a civilizing mission) to indirect (traditional/religious patronage networks) rule.

To begin, I will cover the preceding period leading up to the upheaval and the events of it. Governing ideologies and their correlated administrative strategy, Orientalist (indirect rule) and Utilitarianism (direct rule), will be reviewed. I will lay out how their proponents developed their arguments as historical events proceeded, how these ideologies and strategies shifted over time, and eventually coalesced into an administrative policy predicated on class division, one for the elite and the other for the masses.

Next, I will examine the aftermath and the administrative choices made in its wake, how through systematic community rewards and punishments the British reinforced political identity as primarily religious. This will demonstrate the administrative shift as well as the Indian responses at the inception of a sharpening colonial political identity.

The First War of Independence or the Sepoy Mutiny [1857 – 1859]

As the last Moghul Emperor left Delhi for exile, the beginning of a new British reign, the British Raj, was formulating in response to the bloodshed of the 1857 upheaval. The upheaval was, ostensibly, sparked by the use of new weapon cartridges in the Indian Army, rumored to contain pig or cow grease which was highly offensive to both Muslim and Hindu Sepoy (Indian soldiers). This was only the spark of the rebellion. There were long standing grievances that had coalesced and exploded, but the kernel that is necessary to understand the shift that this upheaval marked is in the governing strategy of the British. In the most serious respect,

The British should have known better. They should have remembered how, at the turn of the century, decades before 1857, sepoys in southern India had mutinied when ordered to remove their caste marks. And Hindu sepoys in the Afghanistan campaign of 1838 had expressed unhappiness at not being able to bathe as often as their religion demanded and became restless when weather forces them to wear sheepskin jackets (such contact with leather is forbidden to upper-caste Hindus).¹⁶

During the preceding century, the British had shifting administrative ideologies that each represented two ruling strategies, direct and indirect rule. There was ongoing tension between two schools of thought in this regard. The incarnation of administrative ideology, known as Orientalism, lent itself well to the strategy of indirect rule and was championed by Warren Hastings (governor-general of Bengal 1774-1785) who, “presumed that British interests would be best served by bringing peace and tranquility to the subcontinent and allowing Indian society to continue to function within its traditional socio-religious framework. [...] Then there were the Utilitarian’s, who believed equally strongly that they had a duty to bring rationalism and enlightenment embodied in Western laws and civilization to the barbaric and superstitious

¹⁶ Vohra, *The Making of India: A Historical Survey*, 70

natives.”¹⁷ The ideology of Utilitarianism seemed to lend itself well to the strategy of direct rule. The ongoing debate between these two approaches over the course of the British Raj engendered two competing approaches and fostered a multifaceted response by Indian individuals, communities, and organizations as well as British functionaries.

Marquess Wellesley (governor-general, 1798-1805), ... used the system of subsidiary alliance to firmly establish the British Empire of India, continued many of the Moghul political practices, suitably modifying them to ensure that the British paramountcy would remain unchallenged. [...] founding the College of Fort William in Calcutta (1800), where British administrators got training in Indian languages, history, and Indian laws. [...] time ran out for the Orientalists when the East India Company changed its policies regarding British administration in India. The College of Fort William was closed in 1830, and the new recruits to the civil service began to receive their training at the hands of the Cambridge clergy.¹⁸

This shift from genuine respect for, albeit from an imperial viewpoint, Indian systems and culture begot a grafting of British rule onto the Moghul systems under its supremacy and became a civilizing mission to turn these “backward” people into a highly administered and anglicized population, shifting from a system of indirect to direct rule. Instead of using the systems that had traditionally been the levers of authority a new schema had to be introduced.

The sense of European racial superiority that began to replace the Orientalists’ respect for Asian cultures is best reflected in the Utilitarian James Mill’s assessment of Indian and Chinese character in 1819; he found both peoples to be insincere, dissembling, treacherous, mendacious, cowardly, unfeeling, conceited, and “disgustingly unclean.” [...] It was during the regime of Governor-General Lord William Cavendish Bentinck (last governor-general of Bengal and the first governor-general of India 1833-1835) that the ascendancy of the Utilitarian-Evangelist combine first became apparent. Bentinck... did believe in the Utilitarian principles of the “maximum happiness of the maximum numbers,” and followed policies of reform intended for the good of the Indian peoples. [...] On quite a different plane, Bentinck revealed his positively anti-Orientalist attitude when he decided to expand English education at the expense of traditional Indian education...closure of the College of Fort William and another was a drastically reduced

¹⁷ Ibid, 66

¹⁸ Ibid, 65-66

level of financial aid to such institutions as the Asiatic Society and the Calcutta Sanscrit College.¹⁹

All of the institutions of learning about India, its people, languages, and cultures were being marginalized. The clear objective was to discount Indian knowledge systems and impose enlightened English education, move full bore into a system of direct rule.

The Orientalists had lost. Their respect for Indian society and culture was seen as misplaced and ineffective in supporting British rule. There is an ideological debate going on here for the justification of rule. If India was so great prior to the British why were they conquered and for what cause? It did nothing for the moral justification of the British to simply call it what it was, a commercial enterprise. While it was primarily a commercial enterprise, the study of Indians and India made good sense as a tool for conquest, one must know their object of conquest to facilitate effective coercion and since the British were outnumbered it was essential for them to form alliances and cultivate influence, rule indirectly. However, as the British consolidated it became harder to justify the study of its subjects; instead one must govern their subjects, directly. It becomes hard to make a case of just government over a people if you believe them to have such laudable attributes. It fits much more neatly into a moralistic narrative for rule when your subjects need to be saved as it were from the own savagery.

Bentinck operationalized these attitudes and took,

...the view of Charles Trevelyan and Thomas Babington Macaulay, the ardent Westernizers that English should be made the official language of India. Trevelyan ridiculed the Orientalists for trying to revive the “dead” Indian civilization, and Macaulay not only thought that the Indian people were ‘a race debased by three thousand years of despotism and priestcraft’ but also believed that ‘a single shelf of a good European Library was worth the whole native literature of Arabia and India.’ The idea, in

¹⁹ Ibid, 65-66

Macaulay's words, was to create, through English education, "a class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect," who would be interpreters between the rulers and the ruled.²⁰

The shift away from respectful, even if overtly caricatured, Orientalist attitudes of India to this Westernizing mission in administrative affairs culminated in the 1857 explosion of violence against British direct rule.

This shift is precisely mirrored in the attitudes of the British towards their Sepoy soldiers.

In the early days, after the occupation of Bengal, when the East India Company's army was still small and the company's authority still not fully established, the officers had very good rapport with the sepoys. However, as the company territory, authority, and army expanded, an attitude of superiority and aloofness entered the officer corps. The old sense of intimacy between officers and men was replaced by distance and contempt. At the same time, the salary differential between the British noncommissioned officers and the Indian counterparts became so large that there was no possibility of any camaraderie between them. The ordinary sepoys were now often looked upon as menial servants and were often ill-treated.²¹

Again the shift from respecting the old system, indirect rule, and initially grafting British administration on top of Moghul paradigms, to one of replacement, and direct rule, fuelled the cause for rebellion. Previously, the British worked within a system of subservient alliances, and while this system did not totally erode the economic landscape many of the most important areas necessary to consolidate a contiguous territoriality for British rule were deceptively taken by pre-rebellion anti-Orientalists like Governor-General Lord Dalhousie [1848-1856].

Dalhousie's firm belief that British rule was more beneficial to the Indians than native rule led him to ruthlessly utilize the "doctrine of lapse" (which allowed the East India Company to take over any subsidiary state whose ruler had no natural heir) to "peacefully" annex the states of Satara, Jaitpur, Sambalpur, Jhansi, Nagpur, Baghat, Udaipur, and Karauli. [...] Dalhousie's action had the effect of removing pockets of native rule that came in the way of establishing territorial contiguity in British India. [...]

²⁰ Ibid, 68

²¹ Ibid, 70

The annexation of Avadh was carried out on the grounds that the current (“puppet”) *nawab*’s irresponsible administration had brought “suffering to millions.”²²

On May 12th, 1857, when the rebels reached Delhi, they proclaimed the elderly Bahadur Shah II the “Emperor of India.” He was the last vestige of the old Moghul authority. Although he had long before been humbled by the British and existed as their pensioner, he would serve as an appropriate unifying symbol for the cause.²³ “It was the first time in the history of India that so many disparate elements, from many diverse regions, although guided by conflicting aims and lacking a unified organization or program, made a foreign power the common target for attack.”²⁴

The apathy and disrespect for traditional systems and beliefs that burst forth in the form of this mass upheaval made it very clear to the British that a shift was needed in administrative policy.

The termination of the rebellion brought to a close the East India Company’s rule in India, and on November 1, 1858, the British Crown assumed direct authority over the land. Queen Victoria’s proclamation promised that Britain would “respect the rights, dignity, and honor of native princes as our own,” and declared that the Crown felt “bound to the natives of our Indian territories by the same obligations of duty which bind us to all our other subjects.” In the long run the second part of this grand and eloquent statement of intent proved hollow and inconsequential...²⁵

The era that was marked by a belief in a truly civilizing mission that characterized the 30-year period preceding the upheaval was over. Instead a new attitude seemed to emerge out of the violence, that Indians were indeed savage and that since they were primordial they needed to be governed as such, from atop and through intermediaries. This in practice meant the combination

²² Ibid, 68-69

²³ Ibid, 69

²⁴ Ibid., 72

²⁵ Ibid, 73

of Orientalism and Utilitarianism, in a system of indirect rule predicated on two classes, elites which were there to serve as intermediaries and become civilized, and the masses that needed to be governed by tradition. Since law and order were the objectives, and it was believed as a result of the rebellion that the masses of India were not ready for English administration, they needed to be governed by the most traditional systems. In essence, the British took the worst of both. Orientalism became an increasingly caricatured categorization and Utilitarianism came to mean the maximum happiness for the maximum number of each tradition, those traditions being identified first and foremost with religion. The British then set out to further divide each identifiable grouping as it served their purpose of administration. The problem of the rebellion was its broad appeal across perceived cleavages. If the British were to continue to govern they needed to stress those cleavages and court their collaborators appropriately within the identities being emphasized by the British, they needed elites, traditional religious and civilized administrative intermediaries.

Consequences of 1857

Although there was diverse support for the rebellion, when looking upon several institutions it was at its end a destruction of a vast amount of Muslim power. The capitulation of Avadh, the last territory seized under Dalhousie and the “doctrine of lapse,” was a large part of the resentment felt. “The reaction of the Muslim sepoys, and the Muslim population, was particularly violent because the *nawab* was the last surviving symbol of Muslim supremacy.”²⁶ In every respect the Rebellion of 1857 shaped the next century, initiating the institutionalization

²⁶ Ibid, 71

of political identities as primarily religious. As a result, during the period leading up to the formation of All-India movements, a severe schism arose in the aspects of the daily life of Indians along religious lines, hardened through the British response to the upheaval. This is reflected in all of the institutions and administrative controls of the Raj. “The British did, indeed, feel that Muslims were more responsible than Hindus in creating the upheaval of 1857, and since Muslim loyalty and allegiance were suspect, the British favored the recruitment of Hindus into the administrative services.”²⁷ They now sought to fix, as they had in their system of alliances previously, one side against the other in a bid to avoid cross-cleavage coordination as they moved from a system of direct to indirect rule. This allowed them to act as the sole arbitrator between the two religious categories and shape daily life in-kind through a system of associated rewards and punishments.

²⁷ Ibid, 96

Part II: Institutionalization of Colonial Identity

The period that followed the dramatic events of 1857 saw the implementation and entrenchment of imperial administrative strategies. I will examine several spheres of public life, their interaction with these strategies, and the consequences. This section will grapple with the division of society by the British and how that division served imperial objectives of divide and rule, linking these policies to the creation of hardening political identities with respect to a Muslim and Hindu divide as well as elites (civilizing) and masses (traditionalizing).

I will first survey the role of education in both its content and its institutions. Looking at the gaps in education between the Hindu and Muslim population, as well as the associated institutions, will show who was educated and how. This will provide an understanding of how imperial administrative strategy was applied as a result of the events in 1857, and its effects. I will also approach the question of educational content as applied to elites and masses. Looking at the Indian census, the most clearly defined categorization of India's population as compiled by the British, I will use their categorisation to analyze administrative strategies and imperial objectives.

Studying the legal system will lay out how justice was administered and codified by the British, and what effects that had on the daily life patterns of India's population. Particular attention will be paid to division in law between Hindu and Muslims, as well as the sources of codification on which the British relied.

After reviewing several spheres of public life, the next logical step is to examine the formation of associations, the beginning of nationalism, and how the British classification of the population resulted in specific communitarian based nationalism as well as a secular nationalism

at the elite level. Through these spheres and their connection to association formation, I will attempt to demonstrate how the naming of the populace and that categorization, put into practice in the public spheres, resulted in sharpening political identities.

Manufacturing Colonial Identities: Elite Civilizing and Mass Traditionalism [1860 – 1884]

In Education

The gap that existed in the period following the upheaval, in higher institutions of learning between the Hindu and Muslims was extensive,

Hindu students (including a very high proportion of Brahmins) constituted an overwhelming majority in all these institutions while the percentage of Muslim students was far below the Muslim representation in the population of each presidency... To give a few examples, (1) in Bengal, more than half the population was Muslim, but between 1836 and 1886, only 5.2 percent of the students who passed examinations at Calcutta University were Muslim (85.3 percent were Hindus); (2) in Madras Presidency, since 91.4 percent of the population was Hindu and only 6.2 percent Muslim, it is more readily understandable why the number of Muslim students in the colleges would be small—in 1881-82, Muslim students were 1.8 percent of the total, while Hindu students were 90 percent; and (3) in Bombay Presidency, Muslims formed 18.4 percent of the population and the Hindus, 73.4 percent, but here, too, of the successful candidates in university examinations between 1876 and 1886, only 1.3 percent were Muslim, whereas Hindus constituted 72.6 percent.²⁸

Following the upheaval the British looked elsewhere for their collaborators. The Muslims looked inward and became more insular, and the Hindus stepped into fill the void. “Muslim leaders still could not reconcile their Islamic fundamentalism with Western secular education. In 1867, the Deoband School of *ulama* (Islamic scholars) developed a more rigid form of scriptural Islam. By 1900, forty schools connected with Deoband had been established to spread this

²⁸ Ibid, 95

strictly orthodox form of Islam throughout India.”²⁹ Without a path of incorporation into the British administration and a distinct preference for Hindus, Muslims turned to consolidating their identity and constructed a more rigid imagining, increasingly identifying with the broader Islamic community, the *umma*. Bolstering this belief and attracting many Indian Muslims was “the Iranian thinker Jamal-ud-din al-Afghani (1838-1897), who sought to resist the West by consolidating the world of Islam under the spiritual leadership of the Ottoman caliph... culminating in the 1919 pan-Islamic Khilafat movement.”³⁰

As some Muslims looked elsewhere to remedy their “backwardness” the great Muslim leader, Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898), “... an employee of the East India Company...supported the British during the 1857 revolt and was honored by them for his loyalty, emerged to rehabilitate his community in the eyes of the government [...] The gist of his teaching was that an attitude that failed to allow ‘the Muslims to progress as a people... to make provision for education in those worldly sciences which are beneficial and useful, to ensure economic security, to open avenues of honest employment, to remove the blemishes in social life’ could not be ‘justified in the eyes of God.’”³¹ Sir Syed went on to found the Translation Society (later renamed the Aligarh Scientific Society) in 1864 and the Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental College (known as the M.A.O. College or Aligarh College) which combined Arabic, Islamic, and Western studies. “The founders state the aim of the college was ‘to make the Muslims of India worthy and useful subjects of the British Crown; to inspire them with loyalty which flows...

²⁹ Ibid, 96

³⁰ Ibid, 96

³¹ Ibid, 97

from a sincere appreciation of the benevolence of a good government.”³²

Sir Syed was certainly an answer for the British as he embodied their ideals and was a useful counterbalance to an increasingly agitated Hindu dominated intelligentsia. Of course all of this education was made to produce, as was the initial project, Englishman in all but blood and color. This is made quite apparent by Ranajit Guha in his classic work, *Dominance without Hegemony*.

For some of that evidence one may turn to a number of essays written by students of the Hindu College in answer to the question: “Has Europe or Asia benefited most by the discovery of the passage round the Cape of Good Hope to India?” These essays were proudly exhibited by the school authorities at a prize-giving ceremony... Here is an excerpt from one of them.

Of all the nations of Europe... the English have derived the greatest advantage by this passage... On the other hand it must be acknowledged, that it has also, in some measure, contributed to the good of Asia, particularly in the countries under the British sway; for in the time of the Mohammedan tyrants, nothing but luxury and oppression prevailed among the nobles; they had properly speaking, no fixed laws for the administration of justice. In fact, the Natives suffered the most mortifying proofs of their cruelties, until Providence, to avert the evil brought them under the illustrious sway of the English, who not only freed this country from the hands, but have adopted all possible measures for its amelioration, introducing arts, sciences, schools, academies and colleges for the dissemination of knowledge.

Another student, too, concluded in much the same vein, saying that as a result of that discovery “we are safe every way, improving in literature and sciences day by day, and shall continue to do so as long as the British patronizing sway shall rule over us.” Clearly the politics of collaboration caught natives young. The youthful enthusiasm for Western science and literature and the institutions set up to promote these was predicated unquestioningly on an appreciation of “the illustrious sway of the English.” After that there would be only one short step for the student to take before maturing into a committed loyalist as he left school for employment at a lower rung of the colonial administration...³³

³² Ibid, 97-98

³³ Guha, *Dominance without Hegemony: History and Power in Colonial India*, 170

It was this type of individual that the system was designed to produce.

The British introduced English-language education for elites in the 1830s after a long debate between competing schools. On one side stood the Orientalists, who argued that education should be conducted in the vernacular languages of India, because this would be the best means of conveying Western knowledge to Indian society as a whole. The benefits would trickle down from the small elite receiving such education to a broader base. Vernacular-language education would have helped maintain a link between Indian elites and the masses and preserved a certain degree of cultural autonomy and self-respect. The Orientalists school lost out...³⁴

The British for their part had maintained a cultural chauvinism; the true breadth of Western knowledge could only be conveyed fully in the English language. The vernacular was incapable of expressing it. The second reason for the Orientalists loss in this respect was administrative,

...a more pragmatic note, suggesting that it would suit Britain's imperial purposes to train an exclusive elite of Indians in English language and culture. This Anglicized elite would, they argued, become the cheap and willing subaltern bureaucracy of the Raj. The Anglicists won the debate in part because elements within the Indian elite supported them, groups ranging from cultural reformists who valued English as a passport to new knowledge to conservatives clerical groups who saw mastery of English as a means to promote their monopoly of administrative employment. In the early twentieth century, the British did become interested in vernacular mass education. But good intentions fell foul of budgetary constraints and a tendency to regard traditional religious institutions rather than the state as the proper providers of education.³⁵

As the British lesson from the rebellion had reinforced in their administrative mindset, the best ruling strategy was indirect and the most monetarily efficient collaborators were the guardians of religious tradition.

³⁴ Misra, "Lessons of Empire: Britain and India", 139

³⁵ Misra, "Lessons of Empire: Britain and India", 139-140

In the Census

As we turn to the Indian census the British intent becomes clearer. “After the Mutiny of 1857, the ideological nature of social identities became more systematic and far reaching. Employing the new disciplines of statistics, anthropology, and ethnology, the British created and ordered hierarchical classification of the whole of Indian society through the mechanism of the decennial census. The census sought to identify the exact caste and religious affiliation of every Indian.”³⁶ It was in this way that these disciplines acted on behalf of colonial power. Census data forms the basis of a self-image of a people, their territory in connection with their category, and internalizes these boundaries. The British were concerned with the census to ease administration and define their subjects, with a seemingly pervasive attitude to divide its subjects into useful administrative categories.

Foucault rightly emphasised that power and knowledge are closely interconnected. Categorisation of people and the information generated about such categories in a country play an important interconnecting and supporting role between power and knowledge. These categories provide a characteristic legibility to a society by strongly influencing perceptions of us and the Others. No wonder that each political power generates information/data and knowledge in terms of its own interests and worldview. [...] People who wield power as well as those who are capable of resisting the effects of power play the prime role in deciding social and spatial categories employed for the census and for administrative purposes. In quite a few cases, changes in census categories over time also manifest changing definitions of us and the Others and the nature of relationship between the two. In a way, census categories not only reflect social identities, but also help in creating new identities in tune with specific discourses of major political parties in a country. Such categories not only define different social strata, but also play a part in "locking in" individuals to specific groups. [...] If it suits the ruling class(es) of a country to subdivide the Other, then a large number of census categories could be used as was done under the British rule in India.³⁷

In this respect the British were masterful in identifying divisions and reinforcing identity

³⁶ Misra, “Lessons of Empire: Britain and India”, 144

³⁷ Gill, “Politics of Population Census Data in India”, 241-242

boundaries. This is also completely consistent with Mamdani's articulation of indirect rule, that to administer it effectively power needed to subdivide the native population against each other. In direct rule the power dynamic is between the settler and the native, but in an indirect rule administration the power dynamic must be between natives as defined by the colonial power, in this case being Muslim and Hindu. This dynamic was also demonstrated within the Hindu category as well and was recognized by the individuals and groups being enumerated as either divisive or solidifying to their imagined community or defined category.

Religion has been a regular and an important item in Indian census since the first census in 1871. [...] Right from the beginning of the census in India in 1871, there have been strong views for and against collection of data on castes. The support for or opposition to census data by caste transcends Left-Right dichotomy as both "Left liberals and upper-caste Hindu Rightists" could be seen joining together on both sides of the fence. Those who support inclusion of caste for census purposes argue that since caste is an inseparable feature of India's social life, it deserves to be reflected in the census returns. The opponents believe that caste data would work to erode the imagined solidarity of Hindu society. It is important to note that it is mainly the people from upper castes who are against census by caste, while those from lower castes invariably welcome such an effort. Caste data were also collected for all the religious groups, including the Christians, in the 1871 Census. However, as the protestant missionaries were opposed to inclusion of caste for the Christians, this practice was discontinued for them at the 1881 Census. Similarly, as the Muslim League was ideologically "against the mention of 'caste' among the Muslims", the list of caste for the Muslims gradually got shortened after 1921.³⁸

The effective results of census politics is this: if you want to create a more unified imagined community use less census categories and use more to divide an imagined community creating several. In order to prioritize identity, make the intended division the first category, in this case religion. As subjects reading the census, the differences are internalized. If the first category of division is religion then this is also being conveyed to the subjects of the census as the most important of their identities. From an imperial standpoint segmenting the Muslim community is

³⁸ Ibid, 245

perfectly logical.

...the British set out to establish precise boundaries between South Asia's Hindu and Muslim communities. The British were always wary of India's Muslims as the elite from whom they replaced the Moghuls. Muslims also constituted around 25 percent of the Indian population before partition (and still account for 10 percent of the Indian population now), though this number hides their heterogeneity in terms of sectarian, class, regional, and linguistic allegiance. The British, however, considered them a unified and potentially threatening group that had to be appeased. This belief grew stronger after the Mutiny of 1857, an event with complex causes, but which many British officials attributed to Muslim fanaticism. After 1857, British policy privileged certain Muslim groups in order to diffuse this threat.³⁹

This is all perfectly in line with the post-1857 British policy of indirect rule that traditionalized Indian society. It presumed that these categories were fixed, caste and religion being the dominant socio-political categories of India and as a result they have become fixed. Through imagined, and then internalized categorization, the people of India were placed under the yoke of an outsider's ethnography. In fact these categories were not as fixed as the British made them.

In most cases these identities were quite fluid, in pre-colonial India, caste (or jati as it would have been known) was a highly fluid and essentially local identity. The British, under Brahmin influence, replaced this fluidity with the much more rigid classical Hindu four *varna* system, with Brahmins at the top and untouchables at the bottom. [...] the effect of these relentless attempts to identify reliable collaborators through pseudo-scientific and pseudo-historical research undoubtedly hardened the previously fluid boundaries between Indian communities.⁴⁰

The British had indeed learned their lesson from the upheaval of 1857, Indians were a primitive race and needed to be managed by their traditions through indirect rule. This in turn gave undo sway to the gatekeepers of those traditions, in the case of Islam they turned to the ulama and in the case of the Hindus they turned to the Brahmins. It is not surprising that when one asks deeply religious individuals or textual scholars that they would have a more orthodox view, a

³⁹ Misra, "Lessons of Empire: Britain and India", 145

⁴⁰ Ibid, 144-145

more rigid interpretation than would be expected of their own congregations. These views being perceived as the basis of Indian society were taken up by the British and differences in the form of the census were reemphasized, traditionalizing and fixing identities to their “purest” form as defined by the colonial power through religious orthodoxy. Again, this harkens back to Mamdani’s interpretation of the Queens proclamation, that the British identified collaborators that defined and created a symbiosis with those that ruled. This in no small measure played a role in shaping the imagination of political associations, communities, and identity. One only needs to ask a number of counterfactuals to quickly discover what an impact this system of knowledge can have in ordering an individual’s view of society, what if class was made the first category, wouldn’t solidarity be the anticipated outcome? This could be expected of a Marxist government as the intent of that power would be to highlight social class inequality. In this context the goal of power was to govern by tradition construed as primarily religion and as a result this was the focus of their categorization.

In the Legal System

Perhaps the first area of political identity consolidation took place in the legal system. As this is the system of arbitrating dispute and maintaining order, it is logical that this is the first arena that the British sought to codify. Again the British rely on text and have turned what was once a more fluid situation dependent on local cultural norms into a state apparatus that can be categorized under traditional religious doctrine. This type of justice for Muslims and this type for Hindus,

...the Company state under Lord Cornwallis nevertheless began modifying Islamic criminal and civil law to better fit its own requirements. This was done by making a distinction between ‘public’ and ‘private’ law. One way to restrict opposition to judicial innovations was to undertake not to interfere in the personal laws of India’s religious communities. Although consistent with pre-colonial practice, Muslim and Hindu sovereigns had never professed indifference towards religion. The legitimacy of temporal sovereignty had always depended on some measure of religious sanction. Muslim rulers, for the most part, acknowledged the supremacy of the *sharia* even while expanding their temporal authority under *qanun-i-shahi* or the law of the sovereign. Non-Muslims retained their personal laws but were subject to the *qanun-i-shahi* and aspects of Islamic criminal and civil law. So if a dichotomy marked the private and public laws of non-Muslims in Moghul India, no such distinction existed for Muslims prior to the establishment of the Company state. It was colonialism’s marshalling of the existing sources of cultural legitimacy in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century India which, in separating the public from private, most profoundly effected redefinitions of social identities. In the case of the Muslims, this was done by gradually denuding the Islamic *sharia*—erroneously interpreted as an immutable code of laws and not a set of moral precepts to be loosely applied according to local circumstances—of its civil and criminal components and defining it as Islamic ‘personal’ law. Colonial officials also began compiling, if not always codifying the *shastras*, which were seen as the Hindu counterpart to the Islamic *sharia*. Lending greater rigidity to both Muslims and Hindu personal law, derived from textual sources rather than actual social practices, may have been an unwitting result of the colonial state’s search for a semblance of cultural legitimacy by appropriating aspects of Indian traditions. [...] Indians were to be the subjects of the British Crown with fewer civic rights than religious. Forced to fall back on the religious community, Muslims as well as non-Muslims couched their demands for rights in terms of identifiable interests. Discussions on civic rights were for the most part marginalized by a public discourse claiming to project the identity and interests of religious communities. Discrepancies between official discourse and social realities, even when seemingly effaced by the narratives of communitarian interests appearing in print, continued to haunt the colonial bureaucracy at each level of the administration. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the domain of the colonial legal system where being a Muslim did not entail the blanket application of Islamic law. Confronted with a welter of regionally and locally specific social arrangements governing the lives of their Muslim subjects, colonial officials pragmatically accommodated customary deviations from Islamic *sharia*. This ensured that the Muslim remained more of an abstract legal category than a social entity whose life was ordered according to the precepts of religious doctrine.⁴¹

⁴¹ Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty: Individual and Community in South Asian Islam*, 140-142

As in all aspects of British rule in India, they sought to codify peoples into neat little boxes having little understanding of the real cleavages of society, manufacturing, although previously existing, hardened political identities into the daily life of Indians.

In the examination of the legal and education systems, along with respect to the census the British solidified identities that had previously been far more fluid than in these systematic epistemological articulations, establishing behavior patterns that over time did hamper the construction of a secular Indian national identity and segregated daily population patterns, resulting in the reinforcement of colonially imagined communities. Benedict Anderson identifies this well in his work, *Imagined Communities*,

The new demographic topography put down deep social and institutional roots as the colonial state multiplied its size and functions. Guided by its imagined map it organized the new educational, juridical, public health, police, and immigration bureaucracies it was building on the principle of ethno-racial hierarchies which were, however, always understood in terms of parallel series. The flow of subject populations through the mesh of differential schools, courts, clinics, police stations and immigration offices created 'traffic-habits' which in time gave real social life to the state's earlier fantasies.⁴²

In Association Formation

All of these entrenchments towards religious political identity in the system of administration resulted in reflective association formations. As the class of Orientalist-Utilitarian inspired British educated Indians came to the forefront and began petitioning for their say in the government, the tension between Western ideas of representation and the indirect traditionalized administrative system were brought to the surface. The question became at what point are the Indians 'ready' to govern themselves. The subservient alliance of traditional collaborator

⁴² Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 169

networks turned into associations, new communitarian nationalists emerged, as well as a budding secular Indian nationalism. The British for their part set up a system that,

“...exerted much influence in shaping the social and cultural identities of “natives” competing to present themselves as the most suitable collaborators. [...] Much of Britain’s imperial power rested not on these institutions, but on far more informal and indirect mechanisms. They exerted power through semi-independent Indian princes, clerics and community leaders, powerful landlords, wealthy urban magnates, and other traditional power groups. [...] These groups were not the dynamic nation-builders of the eighteenth century, but the toothless successors, rendered dependent on British largesse, shorn of real authority in Indian society, and used to lend an aura of continuity, tradition, and, it as was hoped, legitimacy to an imperial system.”⁴³

The duplicity arose when one considers the dueling basis for legitimacy that is represented by these networks in contrast to associative formations. The British both had a vested interest in providing lip service to Western ideals for government to its educated Indian administrators and also maintaining traditional patronage networks. This was most commonly resolved for Indians by attempting to combine Western teachings with the traditional. The Aligarh movement in general is a great example and effectively accomplished a symbiosis. It also accomplished the imperial goal of undermining any potential proto-nationalistic unity by empowering group based, majority-minority politics. One of the most expedient allies in this endeavor was the trusted British servant and founder of the Aligarh movement, Sir Syed.

Until about 1880, or there about, Sir Syed still considered Hindus and Muslims as “belonging to the same nation,” but in 1883, when the British government began to discuss the possibility of conceding to Indian demands for elected local governments, Sir Syed expressed his fear that “the system of representation by election means the representation of the views and interests of the majority of the population... [which] would totally override the interests of the smaller community.” It was for this reason that Sir Syed turned against the Indian National Congress soon after it was established in 1885 and in 1888 founded an organization of his own, the United Indian Patriotic Association, which aimed at preserving “peace in India and strengthen British rule; and to

⁴³ Misra, “Lessons of Empire: Britain and India”, 146

remove those bad feelings from the hearts of the Indian people, which the supporters of Congress are stirring up throughout the country and by which great dissatisfaction is being raised among the people against the British government. [...] It was the fear that Hindus would dominate Indian administration and politics if, and when, the British left the country that drive Sir Syed to change his view (expressed in 1883) that “India is like a bride which [sic] has got two beautiful and lustrous eyes—Hindus and Mussulmans,” to the totally contradictory ones he expressed in 1888, when he said that the “two nations,” the Muslims and Hindus, could not sit “on the same throne and remain equal in power.” [...] As Maulana Azad (1888-1958), a highly respected Muslim nationalist leader put it, “[as late as 1912] the leadership of Muslim politics...was in the hands of the Aligarh party. Its members regarded themselves as trustees of Sir Syed Ahmad’s policies. *Their basic tenet was that Muslims must be loyal to the British Crown and remain aloof from the freedom movement.*”⁴⁴

As Sir Syed firmly towed the British line throughout the period following the upheaval of 1857 and influenced Muslim political development far beyond his death, the Hindu community made various attempts to grapple with combining Western education with Hindu belief. This was manifested in the form of several movements including the Brahma Samaj, Ramakrishna, and Arya Samaj. Brahma Samaj, founded by Raja Rammohan Roy, had as its main tenet the belief that Hinduism was at its core monotheistic, which found intense displeasure from orthodox Hindus.⁴⁵ The succeeding movement, Ramakrishna, went further promoting the idea that, “the inherent truth in all religions was the same and that the gods of all religions were the same Great God who is one and many, with and without form, and who may be conceived either as a universal spirit or through symbols.”⁴⁶ The third movement, Arya Samaj, “fulminated against the evils that had crept into Hinduism ever since it moved away from the Vedas...vigorously attacked idolatry, caste, child marriage, discrimination against women, and superstitions such as

⁴⁴ Vohra, *The Making of India: A Historical Survey*, 98-99

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 101-102

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 102

the ban on travel overseas and faith in horoscopes.”⁴⁷ Unfortunately, the tone and nature of these movements was rooted in Hindu texts, and often adversarial towards Muslim history and religious customs. The Arya Samaj was known for chronicling examples of historical injustices done by Muslims to Hindu.⁴⁸ In a bid to reimagine a glorious Hindu past, much like the Orientalists, these groups sharpened the divide between Hindu and Muslim by reinforcing their differences. It is in this environment that the seeds of nationalism are formed through associations. While Sir Syed seems to have amalgamated an acceptable synthesis of political Islam in the service of the British through his religious-political associations, Hindus leaders appear to have taken a more fractured religious-political discourse. As has just been briefly discussed, a few of the religious reform movements at the same time there were burgeoning secular association being formed. Although it must be said that these associations, like Sir Syed’s, were often religiously insular. In this way many of the intermediaries sought to appease from atop the British in their “civilizing” mission and from the bottom the masses by evoking their religious categories and group symbology.

Demonstrating the various strains of proto-nationalism and preceding the Indian National Congress were several organizations that formed the basis for emerging nationalist thought. The first, which is indicative of how identity was being politically constructed, was the Society for the Promotion of National Feeling among The Educated Natives of Bengal. Founded by Rajinarayan Basu in 1866, the society’s mission was, “to promote ancient India’s ‘enlightened customs...such as female education, personal liberty of females, marriage by election of bride,

⁴⁷ Ibid, 103

⁴⁸ Ibid, 103

marriage of adult age, widow re-marriage, inter-marriage, and travel to distant countries,' and to revive respect for Indian medicine, arts, music, physical exercises, and native languages. The society also aimed to 'introduce such foreign customs as have a tendency to *infuse national feelings into the minds of its members.*'"⁴⁹

The Orientalists had certainly imparted their zeal for a 'reclaimed' Indian history to the reformers who emerged in the latter half of the 19th century. In doing so they had also imparted a sanitized and simplistic understanding of the past as a unified community, predominantly under the auspices of religious categories. What nationalism meant to the National Society (an affiliated organization born out of Rajinarayan Basu association) was starkly revealed when a reader of their *National Paper* wrote in criticism of the term National in their title since their makeup was purely Hindu. The response was, "We do not understand why our correspondent takes exception to the Hindus who certainly form a nation by themselves, and as such a society established by them can very properly be called National Society."⁵⁰ The editor went on to expound the thinking behind his statements on other occasions, "just as love of country promoted nationalism among the Greeks and the Mosaic law among the Jews, the basis of national unity in India was Hinduism. 'Hindu nationality,' he said, 'embraces all of Hindu name and Hindu faith throughout the length and breadth of Hindustan...*The Hindus are destined to be a Hindu nation.*'"⁵¹ How apparent the political consequences of Orientalism had become. Neglecting a shared history that involved diverse and intertwined narratives, the indigenous population had truly internalized their colonially constructed political identity. The project inaugurated in the

⁴⁹ Ibid, 104

⁵⁰ Ibid, 104

⁵¹ Ibid, 104

first half of the century found itself entrenched into the perspective of those Western, and more appropriately British, educated Indians that seem to have found synthesis in the Utilitarian “civilizing mission,” but with the foundation being an Orientalist imagining of fixed Indian communities, emphasizing religious difference as the foremost ordering principle. Under this guise, and seeking the benefits under British power, it seems the logical union of these ideas would result in the greatest benefits for the colonially defined and imagined community.

Through these associations the divisions were made increasingly rigid and reflected the British conceptualizations of traditional Indian society, making these syntheses the basis for presenting economic interests to the British in a bid to garner the most benefits to one’s powerbase. These divisive organizations reflected the system of knowledge and categorization set up by the British that enabled an ease to indirect rule based upon them. The real threat was coming, the real threat to the British system did not stem from these groups, but by those who refused to see the Indian nation as a segment of its people. A people long under Moghul, independent, or as was during this period, British rule. The real threat was those who saw a shared history and rebuked the classification of a nation as sectarian, but as all of the peoples under British rule with a shared yoke and shared interests. This was a threat of imagination. If the people of India could imagine themselves as one, they could oppose the British as one, and that would be catastrophic to their power. It was because of this that the British undercut any broadly appealing organization and opted to lend support to the organizations that fit into their imagining of an Indian population as primarily classified by religion.

Part III: Origin and Development of Parallel Politics

This section broadly examines the origins of political movements and associations, as well as the sectarian and British dialectics that shaped political developments and outcomes. Examined here is the formation of political associations, their consolidation at the all-Indian level, British involvement and responses. This will trace the interaction between Muslim and Hindu politicians from their initial cooperation and their political identification primarily as Indian to their formation of parallel organizations along the lines of a sectarian divide fostered by the British and collaborating religious officials.

First, I explore the Indian Association, set up by Surendranath Banerjee in 1876, and the events that led to its consolidation into the Indian National Congress (INC). Following is a further look at the period of all-India political formations, particularly, the INC and Muslims League. I will look at the fluidity of membership between the two associations and how that fluidity was eroded. Finally, we will focus on the granting of native seats in administration, the internal discourse in Britain, Indian responses and outcomes.

Origins of All-India Political Associations

The first non-sectarian political association that made broad appeals to the Raj's subjects was the Indian Association, founded in 1876 by Surendranath Banerjee and based in Calcutta.

The goal of the organization was stated as follows:

1. The unification of the Indian races and peoples on the basis of common political interest and aspirations
2. The promotion of friendly relations between Hindus and Muslims
3. The education of the masses and their involvement in public movements, and the

creation of a strong body of public opinion.⁵²

This was indeed the British opposition, one that called for all of the Raj's subjects to unite in mass and irrespective of creed, and very much founded in the Western tradition. It was the very organization of educated Indians that had been hoped for to establish self-rule. It was the very British education that helped expose many of these leaders to the ideas of Western liberalism, which was at odds with colonial rule. If the mission was to make Indians British in all but blood and color, how could it not be expected for them to want, like the British, self-rule? How could Indians absorb the same liberal thinkers and not find contradiction in their own society. The two concepts of power, in theory and practice, were at odds. Indeed the British had imparted their liberal 'wisdom,' and in so doing found the greatest challenge to their established system of indirect traditional rule in India, Western liberalism.

Surendranath Banerjee embodied this ideal as evidenced in his statements, "In the name ...of a common country, let us all, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsees, members of the great Indian Community, throw the pall of oblivion over the jealousies and dissensions of bygone times and, embracing one another in fraternal love and affection, live and work for the benefit of a beloved fatherland."⁵³ The first incarnation of a democratic impulse came in the form of the British Indian Association founded in Bengal by leading zamindars (landlords) and was succeeded by like associations in Madras and Bombay, advocating for many of the issues that would eventually become the basis for later demands. Chiefly, they were concerned with appointing Indians to legislatures and high judicial posts, holding the civil service exam in India

⁵² Ibid, 105

⁵³ Ibid, 105

(to allow greater access for Indians), tax policy, and the plight of plantation cultivators.⁵⁴ Many of these demands had real roots in economic activity and the grievances of moneyed classes that were losing out on potential profits due to British policy. Banerjee lead massive protest meetings against British policy and in,

1879 and 1880, the Indian Association in its annual meeting discussed the question of self-government and came to the conclusion that local self-government must precede national self-government. To prepare the people for the first step, the association increased its activities in the district towns, encouraging them to send petitions to the government to introduce the elective system in the municipalities. When the Local Self-Government Act came into force in 1884, the association urged people to participate in the elections and try to get nonofficials to be presidents of the local bodies. But the act offered very little independence to these local bodies, and...they lost interest.⁵⁵

Again, these efforts seem entirely consistent with a good liberal Brit. They were simply requesting a greater stake in their administration, like other subjects of the Crown had done, but to no avail. Banerjee continued to pursue his secular nationalist aims.

Sir Syed and later Banerjee would both be knighted for their support of the British, as the two appeased and made themselves legible to power by operating inside of British procedural norms. They did not seek to overthrow British rule, but participate in it more broadly. What separated the two men, is the community for which they imagined themselves seeking support. In the case of Sir Syed, he was seeking to obtain greater benefits for Muslims. To Banerjee's credit, he was seeking to obtain greater benefits for all of the Raj's subjects, imagining a multi-faceted Indian community, an Indian people of many races, religions, and creeds as one. This conceptual difference most likely explains the British attitude towards the soon to be founded Indian National Congress (INC) as opposed to the Aligarh movement. The British readily

⁵⁴ Ibid, 105

⁵⁵ Ibid, 105

accepted Sir Syed as the representative of the Muslim community because he fit neatly into the British traditional conceptualization of Indian society, while Banerjee's aspirant organizations confronted the British with a modern interpretation of an Indian nation and this simply did not fit into the administrative strategy of indirect rule. It was a challenge to the system, whether Banerjee was conscious of it or not, and his subsequent loyalty to British rule leads me to believe that he did not see the challenge to British indirect rule in these terms.

In 1883 Banerjee organized an, "all-India' Indian National Conference in Calcutta, with representatives from all parts of India... The conference was not sectional or regional, but truly national; among the more than 100 delegates there were Hindus and Muslims representing over twenty urban areas, including Bombay, Madras, Delhi, Lahore, and Ahmedabad."⁵⁶ Two years later, the Indian National Congress was formed as the assemblage for unified political action as was stated in the first resolution put the floor, "From today forward we can with greater propriety then heretofore speak of an Indian nation, of national opinion and national aspirations."⁵⁷

Indian National Congress & The Muslim League [1885 – 1905]

The INC was not conceived as a challenge to the British, but as part of the same British administrative debate that had occurred over a half century before between the Orientalists and Utilitarian's. On one side Britain's, who like the Orientalists, had a deep respect for India, its peoples and their ambitions, and others whom like the Utilitarian's, were more focused on introducing "civilization" and managing rule,

⁵⁶ Ibid, 106

⁵⁷ Ibid, 107

...the credit of convening the Congress must go to Allan Octavian Hume (1829-1912). Hume was a high-ranking ICS officer who had retired to Shimla in 1892 after thirty-three years of service, and his liberal views and sympathies for Indian aspirations were well known. Hume was general secretary of the Congress for twenty-two years, from its inception to 1908. Because of Hume, the inauguration of the Congress also received the indirect support of Viceroy Lord Dufferin, who possibly believed that such a body of Indian politicians could function as a loyal opposition and a safety valve, and help the government to keep in touch with public opinion⁵⁸

The British were instrumentally shaping the path from both sides. It was the embodiment of the original administrative idea of Indian elite, British in all things but blood and color playing itself out against the Raj. Hume was just as British as his Indian INC counterparts, but the Raj administration, based on a system of patronage and alliances, was yet to see the threat from a national organization that was using the language of the British parliament to request representation in kind. As Englishmen it seems ironic hypocrisy on the part of the British to not expect these Indian “Englishmen” to demand a voice in the government as they had. In that respect, the INC was certainly,

...not conceived as a political party. It was more like a club where the leaders of the country met once a year with the intention of coming to know each other better, “to promote personal friendship and intimacy.” This friendly intercourse was meant to help eradicate religious, racial, and regional prejudices and aid in consolidating sentiments of national unity. [...] The difference between the Congress and the earlier associations was that the Congress was an all-India body that *presumed* to reflect national aspirations and speak for the nation. To begin with, this was a hollow claim. But as the activities and the membership of the Congress expanded, and its programs gained wider support from the press and the public, as the British government shifted its stand and began to view the Congress as a seditious body, and as the Congress got disillusioned with the governments hesitating policies of reform and changed its tactics, the Congress *did*, indeed, become a genuine national organization...⁵⁹

It was in this early period, at its inception and the preceding three years, that the INC

⁵⁸ Ibid, 107

⁵⁹ Ibid, 107-108

really exemplified the project of a secular Indian nationhood, an identity modeled on the Western ideal. These were the long sought after collaborators that could be the intermediates between the Crown and the 'natives.' The problem that emerged was the inconsistency of these British Indians secular conceptualization of a nation with the dominant administrative paradigm of indirect rule. That paradigm being that India was filled with systems of primordial traditionalism and divisive fixed identities that had existed unchanged from time immemorial. The imagining of a new expansive Indian nationalism, not grounded in these divisions, was the greatest challenge to the British system of domination.

To the British, the contention was that the INC was simply a small unrepresentative club, there to inform the British of 'native' opinion. The dilemma for Indians seeking systemic rewards was the best path to pursue, to appear British and remain a 'club' of elite collaborators acting as a 'safety valve' or to take up the banner of traditionalism and garner mass support. Sir Syed did both and as the INC attempted to do both those branches pulled apart into radicals and moderates, traditional/religious nationalist and secular nationalist.

In 1886, the National Conference of Surendranath Banerjee merged with the Congress. In the same year, the national and secular stance of the Congress got a sharper definition when Dadabhai Naoroji, in his presidential address at the Calcutta session, asserted that the Congress should have a political platform and discuss only those matters that affected the whole of India, steering clear of social questions. It is noteworthy that the number of delegates at Calcutta—they had been elected and not nominated—was 436 as against 72 in the first session, the number of Muslim delegates being 33 as against the original 2. By the third session, held in Madras in 1887 under the presidency of Badruddin Tyabji, it was evident that the Congress was becoming a more broad-based organization: not only did the 120 members of the Madras Reception Committee include Hindus, Muslims, and Christians, but it collected a sizable amount of money from contributions made by the rich and the poor; [...] Among the 607 elected delegates, a foreign observer noted 45 peasants and 19 artisans.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Ibid, 109

In the same year Sir Syed rebuked the INC and “declared that Hindus and Muslims were two distinct races; that representative institutions were unsuited to India because they would lead to a permanent subjugation of Muslims by Hindus; and that Indian Muslims should depend on the British to safeguard their interests. [...] the British divide-and-rule policies, Sir Syed’s overwhelming influence, Hindu revivalism, and the rise of the extremist faction in the Congress began to alienate the Muslims; between 1893 and 1905 the percentage of Muslim delegates fell to 7.1, as against 13.5 for the period 1885-1892.”⁶¹ The divide between these periods is encapsulated by The Indian Councils Act of 1892 which typified the didactic debate going on in both the colonial state and in Britain proper between liberals who aligned themselves with secular Indian aspirations and conservatives who vested power in the alliance between the British administration and its coopted traditional networks of patronage.

British Maneuvering over the Indian Councils Act of 1892

While the INC emerged with the help of a former British civil servant increasingly engendering wider appeal and broad based support in the period of 1885-1892, the British at home fought parliamentary battles over India’s administrative future. The Whigs, the liberal party, and the Tories, the conservative party, embroiled themselves in an ongoing debate over Indian aspirations throughout this period leading up to The Indian Councils Act of 1892. The elective principle was at the center of this debate and the emerging arguments focused on maintaining domination. The issue was how to allow the educated loyal ‘British’ Indians to

⁶¹ Ibid, 110

participate in administering the colonial apparatus. The British were all too aware of the emerging frustration and growth of extremists while they dithered on reforms. As the INC developed, so did the question of an Indian government enquiry. However, the Whig government waned and the conservative Tories took over, the question of despotic Indian government was consistently put to the back burner to spite parliamentary wrangling.⁶² It was Viceroy Dufferin, who during his last moments in the office, convened,

...a committee of three members of the executive... appointed to report upon the reform of the provincial councils. [...] The committee recommended that the provincial legislature should consist of two divisions of members, both of which should contain elected representatives. The divisions would reflect the traditional ordering of Indian society. Non-official members would be elected to the first division by 'the hereditary nobility and the landed classes', and to the second by the trading, professional and agricultural classes. The electors for the second division would be the members of the municipal committees and local boards, and members of the senates of the universities and holders of higher degrees. Since it seemed impossible to secure the representation of European settlers and minority groups within Indian society by election, certain non-official members of the second division should, however, be appointed by nominations. There would be official members in both divisions, and in both they would be in the majority.⁶³

From the moment the elective principle is conceived it was done as an extension of imperial power. The intent was to bring these formerly unaffiliated associations into the fold, to coopt any instances of secular nationalism. To bring into these newly created administrative positions those who would outside of it challenge the status-quo, to greater incentivize systemic rewards for participating in the system as oppose to throwing stones at it. It was also a highly pragmatic approach to the problem of the INC's budding divisions between moderates and extremists. Dufferin wrote, "that he intended, by reforming the provincial councils, to 'give full play to the

⁶² Moore, "The Twilight of the Whigs and the Reform of the Indian Councils, 1886-1892", 402-407

⁶³ Ibid, 408

legitimate and praiseworthy ambitions of the loyal, patriotic and educated classes in India, who are desirous of taking a larger share than hitherto in the transaction of the public business of the respective Provinces'. [...] Britain's policy must be to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of educated Indians to participate in government, but to rebuke 'such of the Congress demands and proceedings as... [seemed] extravagant and reprehensible'."⁶⁴ Dufferin's ironic contempt for the INC and reform minded, for the period, administrative thrust seems at odds, but his predecessor Lansdowne, summed it up nicely. He wrote that, "A timely concession... 'would...take a great deal of the wind out of the sails of the Congress, whereas, if the reform is delayed to long, it will be assuredly regarded as having been extorted from us.' Lansdowne was impressed by the 'temperate spirit' of the Congress meetings at Allahabad in December 1888 and thought that the moderate leaders 'would be delighted to shake themselves clear' of the extremists."⁶⁵

Unfortunately, these are the periods that create extremists, those periods where hope is held out and snatched away. There appeared to be momentum building for reform over the past decade, with the emergence of all-India organization, secular proto-nationalism, and British support in the form of the Whig government. This all came to a disappointing sunder with the Tory government, which squandered an opportunity to empower those moderates. With the absence of any seeming progress those who championed more agitation started garnering support and rifts emerged. In the face of a secular national project losing steam the extremist alternative was an appeal to masses routed in colonially manufactured categories, religious rhetorical appeals to uneducated masses hardened cleavages and thwarted burgeoning national bonds that

⁶⁴ Ibid, 409

⁶⁵ Ibid, 410

transcended religion. Instead of a unifying moderate secular nationalism, divisive religious based nationalism began to emerge as a stronger trend in all-India politics. In effect the British had made it look like moderation was no path to liberation and when constitutional or legal means are imagined as fleeting or impossible, those who imagine destructive means are always lent more credence. Sadly, the delay in implementing reforms reinforced religious identity as frustrated Indians began to articulate their demands on a religious basis, reviving Hindu nationalism and for Sir Syed, forming two races of people. It simply made it increasingly difficult to imagine a secular Indian community and shaped the political discourse along religious lines as those identities took increasing primacy over others.

The British imagining of an Indian identity became increasingly reified in practice. For Muslims an alternative was presented by Sir Syed, the “Mohammadan Educational Conference, which had been established in 1886 expressly to oppose the Congress.”⁶⁶

Between 1886 and 1892 the purpose of the Whig statesmen who were concerned with Indian affairs was to forestall radical nationalism demands by offering timely concessions. They would preserve the essentially despotic character of the government whilst offering facilities for the expression of representative Indian opinion and extending opportunities for the employment of Indian talent in provincial administration. The centres of political activity among Indians were to be moved from the non-official reform associations and Congress to the legally constituted municipal and district bodies and to the councils. The Whigs wanted to come to terms with nationalism in India... [...] Their progress was slow and their achievement was small. Even for a Whig the [eventual Indian Councils] Act of 1892 was too little too late.⁶⁷

The effect of this policy was institutionalizing the difference, “For the colonial power... It had already discovered, legitimized and entrenched the differences within the legal system; it was

⁶⁶ Vohra, *The Making of India: A Historical Survey*, 113-114

⁶⁷ Moore, “The Twilight of the Whigs and the Reform of the Indian Councils, 1886-1892”, 414

time to politicize it. The Indian Councils Act of 1892, which allowed ‘communal’ nomination to government councils, initiated the policy of separate representation.”⁶⁸

The intentions of the British administration were given greater clarity,

...under Viceroy Lord Curzon (1899-1905) [who] made no pretense of hiding its hostility towards the Congress. Indeed, Curzon... stated that “one of my greatest ambitions while in India is to assist [the Congress] to a peaceful demise.” To achieve this end, Curzon decided to weaken the nationalist movement by partitioning the province of Bengal (1905) because according to Curzon, “Calcutta is the center from which the Congress part is manipulated throughout the whole of Bengal, and indeed the whole of India.” Though Curzon claimed that the partition was intended to bring greater efficiency to the administrative system, his hidden agenda was to drive a wedge between the two major Indian communities by separating the Muslim majority in eastern Bengal from the Hindu majority in the western half.⁶⁹

It was the blatant culmination of a half century of fixing identities and their benefits to religion and the prescribed gatekeepers (collaborators) of that religion. It was not so ‘hidden’ but an obvious and relatively successful attempt at dividing these communities and undermining the INC’s ability to build a truly representative coalition. “In anticipation of the partition, Curzon toured Bengal and tried to win Muslims support by informing his Muslim audiences that Islam would be dominant in the new province and invest them with a unity ‘which they had not enjoyed since the days of the old Mussalman Viceroys and kings.’ [...] it was generally welcomed by the Aligarh School and many other Muslim associations of Bengal. In the long run, the partition did prove to have catalyzed separatist Muslims consciousness.”⁷⁰

In the following year, 1906, the project of dividing the political futures of these now ostensibly homogenized communities was completed by backdoor deals and parallel political

⁶⁸ Riyija, “Nations, Nation-States and Politics of Muslim Identity in South Asia”, 54

⁶⁹ Vohra, *The Making of India: A Historical Survey*, 113

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 113

formation.

Lord Minto (Viceroy, 1905-1910), and the new secretary of state for India, Viscount Morley, were planning to introduce reforms that would enlarge the Legislative Councils with “elected” Indian representatives. The Aligarh Muslims realized that the time had come for them to be a little more forceful in letting the government know of their fears and aspirations. Encouraged and advised by W. A. J. Archbold, the principle of Aligarh College, who had been in communication with the viceroy, a Muslim deputation was composed of thirty-five prominent Muslim aristocrats from various parts of India, though the bulk of them were from the north. Lord Minto, who had helped maneuver this meeting, felt that an expression of sympathy for the “hopes and aspirations” of the Muslim community would keep it loyal to the British and aloof from Congress; he had also decided that this was “a capital opportunity for making clear our position... [of] *resolute impartiality between races and creeds* [of India]” [...] The viceroy agreed that “in any system of representation... in which it is proposed to introduce or increase an electoral organization, *the Mahomedan community should be represented as a community and you justly claim that your position should be estimated not merely on your numerical strength* but in the respect to the political importance of your community and the service it has rendered to the Empire... I am entirely in accord with you.” That evening an overjoyed British official wrote to Lady Minto congratulating the viceroy for “a work of statesmanship” that was “nothing less than the pulling back of sixty-two millions of people [Muslims] from joining the ranks of the seditious opposition [the Congress].” Britain had committed itself to separate Muslim electorates and laid the basis of communal politics that marred all developments in India from 1909 to 1947.⁷¹

⁷¹ Ibid, 114-115

Part IV: Origin and Development of Parallel Electorates

In the fourth part we see how the process of parallel political development becomes entrenched into electoral schemes. We will look at how separate electorates were granted and for what cause(s). Then we will see how they were implemented and how that continued to shape political organization. Throughout we will examine the role of expanding suffrage. Finally, we will look at the confluence of expanding suffrage, separate electorates, British administrative strategies and objectives, and the events on the path to state separation.

In the first section we will look at how the Muslim League formed, its demand for and grant of separate electorates, the emergence of Muhammad Ali Jinnah as a leader, the Morley-Minto reforms that officially called for separate electorates as the elective principle was expanded, and the Lucknow Pact, an agreement between the INC and Muslim League which formed a unified front against colonial rule and accepted the use of separate electorates to spite the desires of many leaders for joint electorates including Jinnah. Separate electorates had been accepted as a part of the emerging political landscape.

In the second section we will focus on the implementation of separate electorates, Gandhi's return from South Africa, the first non-cooperation campaign, and the shifting alliance between the Khilafatists and the INC. Then we will move to the reforms of 1919 that expanded the voting base from 6.5 to over 30 million, the Nehru report which called for mixed electorates, Jinnah's 14 points which called for power to be centered in the province and separate electorates in the absence of a communal agreement, Gandhi's second non-cooperation campaign focusing on the salt tax that engendered mass support, critically the failure of Muslim politicians to act at

the all-India level, and Jinnah's answer to Muslim factionalism at the ballot box with the demand for Pakistan.

Finally, we will look at the last decade leading up to partition during which the INC engaged in a mass contact campaign and the Muslim League for their part consolidated political power through mass appeals and provincial party incorporation. The demand for Pakistan created transcendent Muslim unity for the league and their election victories leading to partition as well as their inability to form agreement with the INC produced designs to give territoriality to the Pakistan demand. As borders are drawn bloody upheaval grips the contours of the emerging new state and a separate Pakistan and India emerged.

Granting of Separate Electorates [1906 – 1916]

When the emerging Indian National Congress (INC) raised the demand for popular elections and political representation, Muslims felt increasingly concerned, especially because a property qualification for the right to vote would always place them in a minority position on account of their poverty. Therefore, in October 1906 a deputation of Muslim men of property and influence...waited upon the governor-general Lord Minto at Simla and asked him for the reservation of seats to be chosen by separate Muslim electorates.⁷²

The Muslim League was formed at the Simla deputation. The conference was called in order to have Muslim leaders voice their opinions on proposed constitutional reforms. These reforms were over electorate changes that would affect majority Muslim districts. The Simla deputation, as characterized by Minto, solidified "the British recognition that Muslims formed a distinct political community in India."⁷³ Minto was no bystander in this formulation. "Lady

⁷² Kooiman, "Communalism and Indian Princely States", 2124

⁷³ Hardy, *The Muslims of British India*, 164

Minto's journal entry... does suggest that Minto had a number of discussions with Mohsin-ul-Mulk prior to receiving at Simla the deputation which the latter organized..."⁷⁴ Minto suggested the Muslims would be "of real assistance to us [the British] in dealing with much of the one-sided agitation we have to face."⁷⁵ It is also important to note that, "...without separate electorates the small and scattered Muslim minority in the north could not have played such a leading role. It is hardly surprising to recall the special role of the United Provinces Muslim leaders...in formulating the original demand for separate electorates. It would appear that the minority status of the Muslims of the north itself gave impetus to Muslim separatist demands."⁷⁶ They were also the most wealthy and influential Muslims in India. I am sure this in no small measure played into their calculus.

Under the distinction of a Muslim political community and its political expediency for the British in administering indirect rule it is easy to understand how the all-India Muslim League was formed in this context as they claimed to represent that constituency now politically recognized, and long entrenched, as separate by the British and endowed with parallel electoral systems reflecting that separation. In Dacca, December of 1906, the Mohammedan Educational Conference folded into the Muslim League which consisted of aristocratic and landed elites.⁷⁷ A resolution was originally produced making several proclamations. Of these proclamations included was as usual a statement of loyalty to the British, for the promotion and protection of

⁷⁴ Moore, "Review of Lord Minto and the Indian Nationalist Movement, 1905 to 1910, by Syed Razi Wasti", 209

⁷⁵ Ibid

⁷⁶ Brass, "Muslim Separatism in United Provinces", 168

⁷⁷ Metcalf and Metcalf, *A Concise History of India*, 159

Muslim political interests in India, and avoiding hostility towards other communities.⁷⁸

In 1907, a formal constitution was adopted by the Muslim League. The document called for a maximum of 400 members. The League initially was dependent financially on the support of likeminded princes and aristocracy. During these first years the League wielded little power and remained fragile and underdeveloped.⁷⁹ The Indian Council Act of 1909 (Morley-Minto Reforms) established unofficial Indian majorities for the first time in provincial legislatures and indirect elections. These reforms made separate electorates a reality and reserved seats for Muslims in the councils.⁸⁰ During the first election under the new reforms, in 1910, the League failed to organize as a political party with a platform.⁸¹ The lack of organizational ability and factionalism was apparent when in 1909 a conference of the League called in Lucknow to approve the government's plan broke up in confusion.⁸² Again in 1911, the ineffectiveness of the League was demonstrated by the British reversal of the Bengal partition, which was seen as a harsh impingement of those interests the League was supposed to represent.⁸³

“The British and conservative Muslims had succeeded, as they thought,...in isolating the ‘young Muslim’ element both from radical Congress politicians and from Muslims outside...But they underestimated the willingness of the ‘young Muslims’ both to seek more popular support, through co-operation with those who had the ear of Muslims outside the British educational system, namely the ulama or Muslim religious scholars and to bid for the leadership of the

⁷⁸ Hardy, *The Muslims of British India*, 164

⁷⁹ Ibid, 165

⁸⁰ Metcalf and Metcalf, *A Concise History of India*, 159

⁸¹ Hardy, *The Muslims of British India*, 164-165

⁸² Ibid, 166

⁸³ Ibid, 165

Muslim League.”⁸⁴ The ‘young Muslims’ gained the reins of control under, western educated, Muhammad Ali, in the 1912 conference of the League in Lucknow.⁸⁵ Ali and his supporters “passed a resolution calling for a ‘suitable’ system of self-government for British India. Within six years of its foundations even an ‘upper-class’ organization as the League had passed from desire to be consulted by the government to a willingness to confront it.”⁸⁶ Ali’s’ position was further consolidated, in 1913, after a riot incited by removal of a washing facility connected to a mosque.⁸⁷ The outbreak of WWI intensified the position of the ‘young Muslims’ and ulama alliance. Ali wrote in the publication, *Comrade* (1914,) “‘all truly loyal people have closed the chapter of civil controversy with the officials’, but that nevertheless, if the war was really a war of right against might then Britain should evacuate Egypt.”⁸⁸ Even after this statement the Muslim League passed a resolution declaring loyalty to the British, although sympathy for Turkey amongst the Muslim population, particularly, the lower classes, was well known to the British.⁸⁹

The widening belief in Pan-Islamism is directly related to the sympathy and support for the Caliph in Turkey. This Pam-Islamism is expressed as the alliance of the ‘young Muslims’ and ulama. This alliance as described by a British official, “...gives him a link with great traditions. It may not be an ethical ideal but it is a militant bond...at this point he comes into touch with the priest of the arrogant domineering type, whose ambition lies in swaying the

⁸⁴ Ibid, 167

⁸⁵ Metcalf and Metcalf, *A Concise History of India*, 160-161

⁸⁶ Hardy, *The Muslims of British India*, 183

⁸⁷ Ibid, 184

⁸⁸ Ibid, 185

⁸⁹ Ibid

passions of the ignorant masses. Hence Pan-Islamism arises, the ideas of the Muslim ‘nation’ and many fantasies generated from it.”⁹⁰ The electoral scheme necessitated broadly appealing rhetoric, broadly appealing to an electorate defined by religion. The imagining of a Muslim nation beyond even the borders of India is completely consistent with the British imagining of a Muslim nation within India. It is as if the League took a page from the Raj’s playbook, political power securing legitimacy from religious officials.

The British response to internal threats throughout WWI was a fierce defense of its control by extreme repressive measures, most prominently the India Defense Act of 1915, which striped many of broad civil rights.⁹¹ Muhammad Ali Jinnah, even though he was interned upon the outbreak of WWI, saw the League moving in his desired direction, co-operation with the INC to hurry constitutional and political progress on an all-Indian level. In the service of this goal, the two parties met and signed an agreement negotiated by Jinnah in 1916, coined the Lucknow Pact. This pact created a formula for future representation, accepted separate electorates for Muslims, and agreed upon the Muslim percentage of elected Indian membership. In Muslim minority provinces the percentages were 10 to 15 percent. In Muslim majority provinces, Bengal and Punjab, the percentage was 40 and 50.⁹² “The contentious part of the Lucknow Pact was its acceptance of separate electorates. Jinnah had always preferred joint electorates. At the annual Indian National Congress of 1910, he moved a resolution rejecting separate electorates for local bodies. But after he joined the Muslims League, having failed to persuade his colleagues to accept joint electorate, he acquiesced in what the party demanded. He was probably also

⁹⁰ Ibid, 186

⁹¹ Metcalf and Metcalf, *A Concise History of India*, 162

⁹² Hardy, *The Muslims of British India*, 187

influenced by the fact that after the Morley-Minto reforms had enacted separate electorates, senior Congress leaders were reconciled to the idea.”⁹³

Implementation of Separate Electorates [1917 – 1927]

Confronted with an alliance of the Indian parties, the Liberal Secretary of State for India, Edwin Montagu, pronounced British plans for institutions that would be self-governing and eventually lead to Indian ‘responsible government.’⁹⁴ Repudiating the old model of British rule, “India would instead follow the path already chalked out by the white-settlers dominions of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Inevitably, too, it meant that, rather than disdaining the educated as an unrepresentative minority, the British would repose in them the confidence due future leaders of India. These men were, Montagu averred, in a telling comment on the declaration, ‘intellectually our children’, who had ‘imbibed ideas which we ourselves set before them’. Britain, however, retained the right to set the pace of the reform, which was to be slow and measured, a boon, as the British saw it, to be conferred upon the Indians as they qualified for its benefits.”⁹⁵ The British developed a diarchy which split the functions of government in two.

In provinces responsibility for raising necessary taxes, agriculture, and education were placed upon Indian ministers answering to local bodies. The central government was clearly still under British control and they preserved ‘reserved’ subjects such as law and order.⁹⁶ The Rowlatt Acts and other repressive mechanisms that were in place from WWI were used to coerce

⁹³ Alavi, Hamza, “Misreading Partition Road Signs”, 4519

⁹⁴ Metcalf and Metcalf, *A Concise History of India*, 163

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 165-166

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 166

Indians as the phantom of revolutionary terrorism and economic dislocation impelled the British in their designs. These measures invoked extreme resentment towards the British as the common Indian sentiment of these measures was a bitter compensation for Indian sacrifice during WWI. In response new methods of protest were developed and spread, resulting in martial law in several areas and the well-remembered massacre at Amritsar of peaceful demonstrators, which became a rally for anti-colonialism.⁹⁷

These events were stimulated by Gandhi's return from South Africa, his use of 'passive resistance,' and cooperation by the Indian parties against the British. After the end of WWI the Ottoman Empire was divided up, Arab holy lands now laid in the hands of European puppets and the fear of the caliph being displaced enraged a diverse array of Muslims. As a direct result in 1919 the All-India Khilafat committee was established.⁹⁸ Their members mostly consisted of ulama, conservative Muslims, and 'young Muslims.' They were largely Muslim Leaguers.⁹⁹ Gandhi negotiated an alliance between the newly emerged Khilafat Conference and Indian National Congress, however, the Khilafat movement, '...with its distinct organization and symbolic repertoire, helped define the emerging identity of 'Indian Muslims.'"¹⁰⁰ From 1920 until 1922 Gandhi led a massive movement with his alliance of non-cooperation. It ended after it turned violent and Gandhi himself called it off. The alliance also created one crucial defection from the INC, Jinnah the future leader of the Muslim League. He defected because of

⁹⁷ Ibid, 166-167

⁹⁸ Ibid, 164

⁹⁹ Hardy, *The Muslims of British India*, 189

¹⁰⁰ Metcalf and Metcalf, *A Concise History of India*, 178

disagreements with what Gandhi was leading, an “unseemly mass movement” as Jinnah described it.¹⁰¹

The reforms agreed to in the Lucknow Pact were institutionalized under the Government of India Act of 1919. “These reforms greatly reinforced and extended the communal base to Indian politics. They institutionalized the principles of separate electorates for Hindus and Muslims...one of the most crucial factors in the development of communal politics. Muslims politicians did not have to appeal to non-Muslims; non-Muslims did not have to appeal to Muslim. This made it very difficult for a genuine Indian nationalism to emerge.”¹⁰² These reforms expanded the franchise from one to over five million voters, which increased to a large extent the participation of rural voters in the electorate.¹⁰³ “The manner in which the reforms... shaped political life tended to sharpen communal awareness and antagonism... individual constituencies were small enough to give politics a personal flavour.”¹⁰⁴ “Communal antagonisms between classes of Hindus and Muslims in those provinces where the reforms of 1919 had been introduced grewled incessantly throughout the nineteen-twenties.”¹⁰⁵ The Khilafat-Congress alliance broke down. “The organization of parallel, yet separate, processions and meetings by the Congress and by the Khilafatists only intensified, and also institutionalized, this distinction between communities...In 1924 the new secular Turkish regime of Ataturk itself abolished the Khilafat. Bereft of this shared grievance, their separate political ambitions heightened by the promise of power held out under...reforms, Hindu and Muslim leaders turned

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 177

¹⁰² Hardiman, “Divide and Rule in British India”, 1492

¹⁰³ Ibid

¹⁰⁴ Hardy, *The Muslims of British India*, 201

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 202

instead increasingly to mobilizing followers by the use of each religions distinctive symbols. The result was an explosive era of rioting and recrimination.”¹⁰⁶ “At the street level, there were serious communal riots at Multan...Panipat...Rewari...Lahore...a number of Hindu-Muslim disorders occurred.”¹⁰⁷

The significance of separate electorates lay in the fact that they offered a structural definition of Muslim community far different from that emerging from reformist or devotional politics. In contrast to the shifting ambiguities found in public debates about the meaning of Muslim community, separate electorates rested on a flat, homogenous definition of Muslim community in which descent was primary – a definition drawn from the British Indian census. Separate electorate thus provided a bureaucratically fixed frame for Muslim community definition that had little reference to ongoing public debates relating to reformed behavior or to matters of the heart. At the same time, however, separate electorates subsumed the competitive structure of the electoral process itself, where rival Muslim candidates mobilized their opposing networks of personal, kin, and class-based support in sometimes bitter competition. Separate electorates thus embodied, simultaneously, the image of a common Muslim community, fixed by state definition, and the reality of deep provincial and local divisions. What separate electorates did not do, of course, with their roots in flat, census definitions, was to define a moral language of Muslim unity. It was no accident, in this context, that the Muslim votes in the 1920’s and 1930’s was on practice highly fragmented, focused on localized influence.¹⁰⁸

British Imposition, Indian Response, & Parallel Political Structures [1927 – 1937]

The British concerned with the obvious failures of the reforms of 1919 and the antagonism that they enflamed appointed a commission, headed by Sir John Simon, to advise on further reforms to India’s’ constitution. The commission was comprised strictly of members of British parliament. The existence of this commission implied that Indians were incapable of deciding their future and this implication was enough to facilitate the emergence of a second

¹⁰⁶ Metcalf and Metcalf, *A Concise History of India*, 179

¹⁰⁷ Hardy, *The Muslims of British India*, 203

¹⁰⁸ Gilmartin, “Partition, Pakistan, and South Asian History”, 1079

campaign of non-cooperation.¹⁰⁹ “The Muslim League split on whether the statutory (Simon) Commission should be boycotted...one faction lead by Jinnah, decided to join Congress in boycotting the Commission.”¹¹⁰ During the next few years several plans were discussed and the Muslim League became increasingly factionalized over the proposals. The Nehru Report “recommended joint mixed electorates, with reservation of seats for Muslims in the Muslim minority provinces, but no such reservation in the majority Muslim provinces...”¹¹¹ The Nehru report also recommended the abolition of separate electorates.¹¹² Conferences were called to discuss the report. However Jinnah felt frustrated that little was being advanced in favor of his ideals and in 1929 released his ‘Fourteen Points’ on behalf of the All-Parties Muslim Conference. It called for residual powers to rest with the provinces, maintenance of separate electorates in absence of communal agreements, 1/3 of the seats in the central legislature, and other protections of a separate Muslim identity.¹¹³ The failure of the Indian parties to cooperate in a constitutional reform process left the British in a position to mediate as they saw fit.¹¹⁴ In 1930 the Simon Commission recommended the grant of provincial autonomy, adding that a responsible government at the center was unlikely to form. A Round Table Conference was called, but members of the INC were not represented, non-cooperation had begun again. Gandhi began the campaign by marching to the ocean and making salt. Salt at the time was not a major source of revenue for the government. However, the denial of access soon became a rallying

¹⁰⁹ Metcalf and Metcalf, *A Concise History of India*, 187

¹¹⁰ Hardy, *The Muslims of British India*, 212

¹¹¹ Ibid

¹¹² Datta, “Iqbal, Jinnah, and India’s Partition”, 5035

¹¹³ Hardy, *The Muslims of British India*, 213

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 214

point for Indian nationalists and drew attention from around the globe. The Great Depression was also a factor in the outrage and disobedience movement that quickly spread throughout India. This second non-cooperation campaign was more inclusive enjoying widespread support.

Gandhi, in the midst of a brief truce attended the second round of these negotiations but came home with little accomplished and the INC, who denounced Gandhi as a 'sell out' was immediately repressed in the wake of Gandhi's return, as they were seen increasingly as a threat. Most leaders were imprisoned for two years after which the non-cooperation ended.¹¹⁵ In 1932, there was a 'Communal Award' that sought to give special treatment to minorities, including separate electorates. To the British this was ideal. "This meant that Congress politicians should be diverted to and then kept bottled up in the provinces, while the central government, with power shared among Muslims, princes, and other groups such as Sikhs and untouchables, would be in the hands of those who could be relied upon to secure Britain's interests."¹¹⁶ Following the doctrine of the Communal Award, the Government of India Act of 1935, "meant to set in place a framework for the Conservative vision of India, it made provision for a federal centre and, doing away with diarchy, substantially extended provisional autonomy, with ministers responsible to their local legislatures now in charge of all branches of government."¹¹⁷

In this context, "During the 1920s and 1930s separate electorates were strongly condemned by the Indian national movement as a colonial device meant to subvert the anti-imperialist struggle. In spite of all Congress protestations....communal representation was accepted as a regular feature and ran right through the Constitution, both in legislatures and in

¹¹⁵ Metcalf and Metcalf, *A Concise History of India*, 189-191

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 191

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 192

the public services. Separate electorates for Muslims...were maintain and extended.”¹¹⁸ Again, the British are completely consistent in extending the religious based political identity they created which allowed them to act as the arbitrator and continue to administer indirect rule effectively. “The main advance over the reforms of 1919 was the granting of full provincial autonomy, which meant that for the first time Indian politicians had the opportunity of winning real power at the provincial level. The electorate was expanded from 6.5 to 30 million voters, which meant that a tenth of the population or nearly a sixth of the adult population became enfranchised.”¹¹⁹ Nehru summarized the point well considering the, “process of divergence between the religious communities... aggravated by official policy symbolized by the establishment of separate electorates; and as the franchise was broadened periodically on this basis, the communal elements grew correspondingly stronger... pandering to myth and passion in their attempts to secure a base among the people.”¹²⁰

Elections under the new Act cemented the position of the Congress as a mass movement. However, when in office the Congress did not hold up to many of its promises and rather towed the line of the British government as they had expected.¹²¹ The Muslim League in contrast waned as a political party in the 1930’s. The idea of Pakistan had been discussed in the early 1930’s and Jinnah’s fourteen points described a road map to that end.¹²² However, the election in 1937 showed that the League did not really represent the Muslims of India. Provincially many of the seats had been won by local parties and not the League. “Jinnah...posed the alternative of

¹¹⁸ Kooiman, “Communalism and Indian Princely States”, 2124

¹¹⁹ Ibid

¹²⁰ Gopal, “Nehru and Minorities”, 2463

¹²¹ Metcalf and Metcalf, *A Concise History of India*, 192-193

¹²² Hardy, *The Muslims of British India*, 221

Muslims organizing themselves effectively as an all-India force for the first elections... under the 1935 Act. Jinnah returned to India in 1935 (From England,) to try to bind the moribund Muslim political splinter-groups. Only if the Muslims had a powerful all-India organization, with mass Muslim electoral support, could they influence the future constructively.”¹²³ Jinnah tried to develop a Central Parliamentary Board within the constructs of the Muslim League, but it was too little avail. The results of the elections sharpened differences between the INC and the League as the League under Jinnah orchestrated parallel structures to the INC. Jinnah attempted to make distinctions between the two groups by condemning those who freely fluctuated between the two, as he had earlier. Nehru as well tried to co-opt Muslim Leaguers under strict conditions that affectively resigned their political autonomy to Congress.¹²⁴

...in his [Jinnah] address to the October 1937 session of the Muslim League in Lucknow [he said]: No settlement with [the] majority community is possible as no Hindu leader speaking with any authority shows any concern or any genuine desire for it. Honourable settlement can only be achieved between equals and unless the two parties learn to respect and fear each other, there is no solid ground for settlement. Offers of peace by the weaker party always mean confession of weakness and invitation to aggression. Politics means power and not relying only on cries of justice or fair play or goodwill.¹²⁵

“The British introduction of separate electorates guaranteed that colonial elections fit into their overarching framework of community manipulation... elections offered also a new, important public venue for disputation that drew in those already involved in other forms of public debate about the self-definition of Islamic community. This led to the increasing politicization of the rhetoric of Muslim community about self-definition and... significant popular debate over the meaning of Muslim identity in a public and political arena attached directly to the structure of the

¹²³ Ibid, 223-224

¹²⁴ Ibid, 225-226

¹²⁵ Ibid, 226

state.”¹²⁶ When in 1937 the Muslim League failed to win power either through elections or provincial negotiations the League, “decided to reorganize, mobilize the Muslim electorate, and change the terms of political competition by raising the Pakistan demand.”¹²⁷

Deepening Divisions & Partition [1937 – 1947]

In the decade leading to partition growing divisions between the League and the Congress were exasperated. After the Lucknow sessions League membership grew as Jinnah expanded their base and attempted to form a grass roots organization parallel to that of the INC as the Congress sought to reach out to Muslims in the ‘mass contact’ campaign.¹²⁸ The ‘mass contact’ campaign antagonized further the Muslim League inciting anti-Congress tirades,

...which propagated the alarmist imagery of a Hindu Raj... the failure of power-sharing arrangements... demonstrated to Jinnah in a stark manner the futility of politics built upon separate electorates. Jinnah realized that, while separate electorates provided incentive to communal politics, they prevented further advance into formal structures of power, which required a majority status...even if the League had won all the minority seats it would still had to remain in opposition or at best lay a subordinate role to the party in power... Jinnah... proceeded to build alternative all-India political structures of the Muslims... seeking parity with the other all-India structures.¹²⁹

“By the outbreak of war in 1939 the Muslim League stood forth as the strongest single Muslim political organization in the Muslim minority provinces.”¹³⁰ This greatly increased the position of the Muslim League because the British sought support from the League both as a counterweight to the INC and because of the heavy reliance on Muslim areas, like the Punjab, for

¹²⁶ Gilmartin, “A Magnificent Gift: Muslim Nationalism and the Election Process in Colonial Punjab”, 419

¹²⁷ Brass, “Muslim Separatism in United Provinces”, 168

¹²⁸ Hardy, *The Muslims of British India*, 227

¹²⁹ Kudaisya, “Pointers to Partition”, 2374

¹³⁰ Hardy, *The Muslims of British India*, 228

soldiers in the war effort.¹³¹ In 1939 the Viceroy met with Jinnah and representatives of the INC. This meeting “stipulated that any expansion of the Viceroy’s executive council to include more representative Indians and any return to popular government in the provinces was conditional upon Congress and the Muslim League reaching further agreement. Jinnah had been presented with a veto upon further constitutional advance...”¹³² On March 23rd of 1940, the all-India Muslim League passed the ‘Pakistan resolution.’ Based upon the conclusion that, “No constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principles, viz. that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial adjustments that may be necessary, that the areas in which Muslims are numerically in a majority should be grouped to constitute ‘independent states’ in which the constituent units should be autonomous and sovereign.”¹³³ The colonially produced religious based political identities, were given shape by the British, embedded in electoral institutions, and inculcated in the actors, leading to a territorial articulation of the schema.

Indeed, the structural framework offered by separate electorates provides us a critical backdrop for understanding the Muslim Leagues adoption... of the demand for Pakistan. It was in response both to the electoral success of the Congress in 1937 and to the growing sense of fragmentation among Muslims themselves that the Muslim League linked its identity to the demand for a separate state as a symbol of the community’s moral unity; tension between an image of moral unity and the competitive structuring of politics of course long shaped Muslim rhetoric within the public realm. But now the League sought to frame this realm of competition with a fixed image of unity – an image tied at once to census definitions and to the moral authority associated with the image of

¹³¹ Ibid, 229-230

¹³² Ibid, 230

¹³³ Ibid, 231

a Muslim state. It was this that drove the League's attachment not only to the idea of Pakistan, but also to the vision of Jinnah as sole spokesman.¹³⁴

All of this as the British had originally imagined identity in India, as fixed and primarily defined by religion. Although once in separate electorates the differences within the Muslim community became apparent electorally, the unifying feature was to imagine a physical boundary for Muslims as the conceptual boundary had been reinforced through every institution and reform since 1857. The British stated that no transfer of power over Indian affairs would take place with a party whose authority was denied by a large segment of Indians. Essentially, leaving the option of Pakistan on the table as the British would not oppose it with the Congress.

In 1942, Sir Stafford Cripps, a British official on a mission to India, effectively gave permission for Jinnah to win mass support for a Pakistan movement and partition. In 1942, the Madras legislature of the INC recommended acceptance of partition demands and a series of meetings took place in which Gandhi agreed to autonomous regions. However concerted efforts to destroy League power, in the form of rebellion and the 'Quit India' campaign were exercised by the INC.¹³⁵ Over the next few years the League consolidated its power in the majority Muslim provinces and gave real support for the idea of Pakistan. Provincial parties were incorporated into the League as well as other politicians. An economic plan for the proposed Pakistan was developed in 1943 at a session of the League in Karachi.¹³⁶

In 1945 a conference was called by the British in Simla that would establish an interim government. However, the negotiations collapsed when Jinnah insisted upon representation of all

¹³⁴ Gilmartin, "Partition, Pakistan, and South Asian History", 1080

¹³⁵ Hardy, *The Muslims of British India*, 231-233

¹³⁶ Ibid, 234

Muslims.¹³⁷ Elections in the winter of 1945-1946 showed that Jinnah and the League did indeed garnish the support of the Muslim majority as the results of the election left the political landscape with two bitterly divided parties. The league swept the seats reserved for Muslims. The election was solely fought by the League on the issue of Pakistan.¹³⁸ “It was no accident that elections played a critical role in Jinnah’s efforts to substantiate this vision, for it was through the structure of elections that Jinnah appealed for local support while maintaining a symbolic vision of transcendent unity... Had they not done so, it is unlikely that they could have swept the majority of the Muslim seats and defeated powerful regional parties...”¹³⁹

Muslim League rhetoric thus helped to create an image of Pakistan as the antithesis of that power (colonial), as the embodiment of a community that transcended politics – indeed, that was defined in opposition to the noise and confusion of divisions. Separate electorates in fact fostered this appeal. The structure of the electoral arena defined the tension between the image of a fixed, objectively defined Muslim community (defined by separate electorates), and the reality of electoral conflict among Muslims themselves. The image of unity to which the Muslim League appealed – and which justified its claim to Pakistan – fed off this tension and thus drew, in an important sense, on the very structure of the colonial electoral arena itself.¹⁴⁰

Following the election there were, “bloody upheavals of 1946 and 1947 Pakistan underwent a transformation from visionary ideal to territorial state.”¹⁴¹ In March of 1946 the British devised a plan of their own for an independent India that would consist of a three tiered federation, whose central feature was the creation of groups of provinces of which Pakistan

¹³⁷ Metcalf and Metcalf, *A Concise History of India*, 207

¹³⁸ Hardy, *The Muslims of British India*, 235-236

¹³⁹ Gilmartin, “Partition, Pakistan, and South Asian History”, 1080

¹⁴⁰ Gilmartin, “A Magnificent Gift: Muslim Nationalism and the Election Process in Colonial Punjab”, 424

¹⁴¹ Metcalf and Metcalf, *A Concise History of India*, 211

would be one. The League essentially accepted this proposal.¹⁴² The Congress rejected this arrangement. Nehru said, “Provinces must be free to join any group, or none.”¹⁴³ The stalemate left little choice but to partition the two emerging states. Chaos ripped the country and the British eager to leave moved the date for a handover of power from 1948 up to August of 1947. In August the INC and the Muslim League asserted power over partitioned India.¹⁴⁴ The League seizing power over ‘Pakistan’ and the INC over greater India, and the disputes no longer could be negotiated as matters were taken into the street during the bloody separation of Colonial India into two.

¹⁴² Ibid, 212-213

¹⁴³ Ibid, 213

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 215-216

Conclusion

I have argued that the system of categorizing those who were under British colonial rule manufactured a particular set of political identities on the Indian subcontinent and as a result two states emerged out of one. This raised several questions: How did institutional arrangements contribute to political identity formation? What material cause motivated these formations? How did political identities become polarized? As we followed the historical analysis there are some conclusions we can begin to draw. Let's parse this out!

How did institutional arrangements contribute to political identity formation? Institutional arrangements contributed to political identity formation by using an imperial conception of identity to administer the state apparatus creating a pattern of day-to-day behavior that over time became distinct and separate as subjects interacted with the state and each other. This was done as part of the administrative strategy of indirect rule that allotted awards on a communal basis and made the British the intermediary between as they saw it their 'children.' The categorization of these groups in law, education, society, and most obviously in the census reinforced a particular identity that served imperial objectives. This process was finalized with the implementation of these categories into political identities acting through separate electorates. If there was any doubt in the mind of a subject to what their primary identity was the electoral division put it in sharp display.

What material causes motivated these formations? To the British, these formations were largely a function of administrative ease and of maintaining the necessity of their domination in order to continue the economic benefits associated. If they fostered two opposing groups they could act as the sole mediator, maintaining peace as it were, and continuing their economic

extraction of the subcontinent. To the elite religious figures this system gave them more authority as the British relied on them as the arbitrator of authentic religion and cultivated those allies that presented themselves as suitable collaborators with rewards. This was true for both Hindu and Muslim religious elites. To the Westernized elites, often the aristocratic and wealth producing classes they also sought to maintain their power and economic productivity. To the masses, they sought anything better and were willing to follow those that could provide resources and rewards, either in the form of religious or economic systems of patronage. This arrangement simply evolved into the formal political system as elections began and enfranchisement spread these power brokers became office holders.

How did political identities become polarized? Through the use of increasingly heated rhetoric as politicians sought to maximize votes in separate religious based electorates. If one can only vote for a member of one's religion that religion is the lowest common denominator in the electorate, it logically follows that religion will be the biggest vote getter so that is where rhetoric centers upon. This is also coupled with an institutional separation delineated by religion that impacted the day-to-day interactions with the state and its governing apparatus which created distinct and separate patterns of behavior between colonially defined communities. Things that are separate will never be perceived as equal and this also lent credence to the rhetoric, becoming self-reinforcing.

Keeping these questions in mind, the overall trajectory of events by my recounting is summarized as follows. The demand for separate electorates by Muslims to maintain their power in a majority Hindu government and the granting of this request by the British, as a counterweight to the independence movement set the stage for the process of parallel political

developments at the all-India level of these now electorally defined, through this award, two communities. It was the culmination of more than a century of divide-and-rule policies mixed with Orientalists notions of homogenized communities primarily based on religion that fixed, previously highly local and fluid, identities in the sub-continent. The fixing of these identities around this flat homogenous classification and the rewards for those who operated within it created a system of indirect rule that was dependent on these communal definitions and antagonistic to any mingling between them, primarily represented by the INC. The League presented itself in this paradigm and received benefits and British support as a result.

The path towards two states was born out of the British conceptualization and institutional recognition of a separate Muslim community and primarily the creation of Muslim as a political category and identity. Originally a collection of elite land owners and aristocracy, the League under Jinnah's leadership was turned into a party representative of the Muslim majority and garnishing wide based support by 1947 by mimicking the British in their imagining of that identity, he simply added physical borders around the conception. An organization of Muslim elites was transformed into a grass roots movement and then a separate state.

The constant reinforcement of separate political identities in the wake of the 1857 rebellion was finalized through the implementation of separate electorates that made the partition inevitable as competing groups began to see their interests only represented by 'their' party. As the voting base increased so did the need to reinforce unity around homogenous imagery, compounded by the consolidation of Muslims into the League and for Muslim political control to be in the hands of the League only, articulated through the demand for Pakistan and the rhetorical transcendent nature of Muslim League politics leading to partition. The partition and

the violence that ensued during the process was a direct result of indirect rule based on defined and fixed categories forming distinct political identities.

Demands for Pakistan began to emerge in the early 1930s as plans for constitutional reforms put forth both by Jinnah and Nehru, in response to the Simon Commission. Separate electorates were insured by the Government of India act in 1935 and Jinnah began building parallel structures to the INC. He consolidated the beginnings of political Muslim solidarity and all-India level advancements of the Muslim League. The election of 1937 that showed the League had little support, while the INC solidified their position, accelerated the efforts of Jinnah in building a grass roots organization that would represent the greater Muslim community as defined institutionally through separate electorates. The League gained immense ground and became the main player with the INC in deciding India's constitutional fate. The British seeking to counterbalance the INC with the League endowed Jinnah with vast power in the process of constitutional reform, reaping the rewards of a century of Muslim efforts to present themselves as the traditional homogenous community the British imagined them to be. Divisions quickly became cavernous and the rift became unstoppable, as the League won overwhelming victories in the election of 1946 on the platform of Pakistan. The inability of the two parties to come to terms in an Indian federation made cleavages in India burst at the seams. When India was handed over by the British the result would be a declaration of two states.

The character of the two parties, based in increasingly heated rhetoric, centered on the Muslim-Hindu divide which over decades was institutionalized in the form of separate electorates. The British for their part designed to divide-and-rule by manufacturing distinct religious based identities and a diarchic structure of governance that characterized colonial

India's political-social development and the two future states, it was the strategy of indirect rule and the associated divisions implemented in that service.

Separate electorates were originally awarded at the request of elite Muslim to safeguard their positions and to the British delight as a counterbalance to the INC. The conditions of colonialism – the British policy of indirect rule/divide-and-rule and elite minority's fear of losing their prominent positions initially fostered the award of separate electorates, but as parties and candidates sought to maximize their electoral vote's partition became the most likely outcome.

Overall the use and implementation of separate electorates based on colonially manufactured political identities established that in order to maximize electoral results an all-India Muslim appeal needed to be made to an imagined unified community, in reality the Muslim community was quite politically fractured. The parallel development of Muslim League structures to that of the INC operationalized this competitive imperative. The rhetoric espoused by the British and elites over decades entrenched the colonial political identity and enabled partition to be a viable solution to a government of two "communities." If only a Muslim can represent a Muslim than options for government become narrow and partition is an understandable development. "No electoral system should force electors and the elected into pre-determined identities – which is precisely what separate electorates do."¹⁴⁵ The partition of India and the creation of Pakistan was most directly a result of the institutionalization of colonially manufactured political identities following the upheaval of 1857 which culminated in the implantation of separate electorates after which it was a matter of path determinacy.

¹⁴⁵ Noorani, "Representing Minorities", 195

Bibliography

- Alavi, Hamza, (2002). "Misreading Partition Road Signs." *Economic and Political Weekly*. 37(44/45), 4515-4517+4519-4523. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4412807> (Accessed on Sep 26, 2011)
- Anderson, Benedict, (1991), *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd ed., New York, NY; Verso.
- Brass, Paul R., (1970). "Muslim Separatism in United Provinces: Social Context and Political Strategy before Partition." *Economic and Political Weekly*. 5(3/5), 167-169+171-173+175+177-179+181+183-186. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/435954> (Accessed on Sep 26, 2011)
- Chatterjee, Partha, (1986). "Transferring a Political Theory: Early Nationalist Thought in India." *Economic and Political Weekly*. 21(3), 120-128. <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/stable/4375224> (Accessed on Sep 26, 2011)
- Datta, V. N., (2002). "Iqbal, Jinnah and India's Partition: An Intimate Relationship." *Economic and Political Weekly*. 37(50), 5033-5038. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4412964> (Accessed on Sep 26, 2011)
- Gill, Mehar Singh, (2007). "Politics of Population Census Data in India." *Economic and Political Weekly*. 42(3), 241-249. <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/stable/4419164> (Accessed on May 25, 2014)
- Gilmartin, David, (1998). "A Magnificent Gift: Muslim Nationalism and the Election Process in Colonial Punjab." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. 40(3), 415-436. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/179270> (Accessed on Nov 26, 2011)
- Gilmartin, David, (1998). "Partition, Pakistan, and South Asian History: In Search of a Narrative." *The Journal of Asian Studies*. 57(4), 1068-1095. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2659304> (Accessed on Nov 26, 2011)
- Guha, Ranajit, (1997). *Dominance without Hegemony: History and Power in Colonial India*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Gopal, S., (1988). "Nehru and Minorities." *Economic and Political Weekly*. 237(45/47), 2463+2465-2466. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4394015> (Accessed on Nov 26, 2011)
- Hardiman, David, (1982). "Review of Prelude to Partition: The Indian Muslims and the Imperial System of Control, by David Page." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 17(37), 1492-1493. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4371344> (Accessed on Nov 26, 2011)

- Hardy, P., (1972). *The Muslims of British India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jalal, Ayesha, (2000). *Self and Sovereignty: Individual and Community in South Asian Islam*. New York: Routledge.
- Kooiman, Dick, (1995). "Communalism and Indian Princely States: A Comparison with British India." *Economic and Political Weekly*. 30(34), 2123-2133. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4403135> (Accessed on Oct 12, 2011)
- Kudaisya, Gyanesh, (2003). "'Pointers to Partition.' Review of A Narrative of Communal Politics: Uttar Pradesh, 1937-1939, by Salil Misra." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 38(24), 2373-2374. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4413679> (Accessed on Nov 26, 2011)
- Mamdani, Mahmood, (1996). *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Mamdani, Mahmood, (2012). "*Define and Rule: Native as Political Identity*." Mahmood Mamdani – Define and Rule: Native as Political Identity. The Center for Place, Culture and Politics. The CUNY Graduate Center, New York. Lecture.
- Mamdani, Mahmood, (2001). *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Metcalf, Barbara D. and Metcalf, Thomas R., (2002). *A Concise History of India*. University of California, Berkeley: Cambridge University Press.
- Misra, M. (2003). "Lessons of Empire: Britain and India." *SAIS Review* 23(2), 133-153. The Johns Hopkins University Press. <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/sais/summary/v023/23.2misra.html> (Accessed on May 26, 2014)
- Moore, R. J., (1966). "Review of Lord Minto and the Indian Nationalist Movement, 1905 to 1910, by Syed Razi Wasti." *The English Historical Review*, 81(318), 208-209. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/560007> (Accessed on Nov 26, 2011)
- Moore, R. J., (1967). "The Twilight of the Whigs and the Reform of the Indian Councils, 1886-1892." *The Historical Journal*, 10(3), 400-414. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2637844> (Accessed on Dec 05, 2014)
- Noorani, A. G., (2007). "Representing Minorities." *Economic and Political Weekly*. 42(3), 195. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4419152> (Accessed on Nov 26, 2011)

Riyija, Ali, (2002). "Nations, Nation-States and Politics of Muslim Identity in South Asia." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*. 22(1 & 2), 53-58. <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/cst/summary/v022/22.1riaz.html> (Accessed on May 12, 2014)

Said, Edward, (1977). "Orientalism." *The Georgia Review*. 31(1), 162-206. <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/stable/41397448> (Accessed on Aug 3, 2014)

Vohra, Ranbir, (2001). *The Making of India: A Historical Survey*, 2nd ed., New York: M. E. Sharpe, Inc.