

The Factors Affecting South Asian National Hierarchy

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i. Introduction

The South Asian identity has evolved greatly over the last century. The term is 'highly problematic, masking deeply salient divisions of nationality, culture, religion and language'.¹ While never something that could be attributed to encompass the entirety of the vast and diverse population of the region that now contains India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, the 20th century saw all three of these countries gain independence from colonial rule and forge a unique national identity for themselves. When these identities were being constructed, the inhabitants of this region were divided along religious and class lines. These divisions still linger on in the South Asian political narrative. This paper aims to analyze the differential formation of the distinct national identities of these three countries by weighing in the effects of British colonial strategies of divide and rule versus actual irreconcilable differences between the Hindu and Muslim populations of South Asia. With that understanding, it attempts to show that religion and culture have played a key role in establishing the hierarchy of these nations. Finally, I will use recent examples of relations between the three countries to show that this hierarchy continues to dictate the nature of interactions between India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh to this day.

ii. Background and Literature Review

Defined as 'the socio-historical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed', racial formation is both a macro-level process and the culmination of myriad individual encounters, and is constituted by 'racial projects large and small'.² This

¹ Nazli Kibria, "'Not Asian, Black or White? Reflections on South Asian American Racial Identity.'" *Amerasia Journal* 22 (2): 77.

² Michael Omi and Howard Winant. 1994. *Racial formation in the United States: from the 1960s to the 1990s*. New York: Routledge: 61.

section looks at existing literature and discusses the factors that define the politics of South Asia and create the distinct national identities that we see in the present day.

a. Internal differentiation of National identities

I begin by looking at the state of South Asian solidarity in pre-partition India. Singh and Singh attempt to piece together the fragmented history of the short-lived Ghadar Rebellion of 1915, which is a largely unwritten but hugely important chapter in the history of India's march to freedom.³ The Ghadar Party was an organization composed of Indian settlers abroad, especially in Canada and the U.S., and the rebellion that was aimed against the British colonial rule began partly as a response to the racially charged treatment of Sikhs in these countries. While the majority of the rank and file members of the Party were Sikhs, the rebellion for the most part was led by educated Hindu and Muslim leaders from the subcontinent. I emphasize this text to highlight the fact that, prior to partition, there was a time when South Asians at home and abroad were drawn to one overarching identity, and there was solidarity amongst the different groups that exist now.

The development of cracks in this sense of solidarity may be traced back to the partition of 1947 and the events leading up to it. The partition itself was made by the British, but was done not completely against the will of the people of the Subcontinent. Indeed, the Hindu and Muslim communities in British India referred to themselves as two different nations, and they felt that they were separated by cultural and social values that would make it impossible for them to work together under a peaceful political system.

³ Khushwant Singh and Satindra Singh. 1966. *Ghadar 1915*. New Delhi: R&K Publishing House.

These animosities began to reflect in the fundamental differences between the two major political parties that were growing in popularity there at the time. The Indian National Congress and the Muslim League differed greatly on how they viewed the relationship between religion and the state. Even though the majority of the Indian National Congress was Hindu, secularism was a basic principle of the Congress from the time of its founding, while the Muslim League was established strictly as an organization that worked for the welfare of Muslims, and did not permit individuals from other religions to join their party, and their constitution specifically rejected the notion of secularism.⁴ This would become a problem in Pakistan after the partition, as roughly 30% of the population of East Pakistan was Hindu. These ideological differences between the Muslim and Hindu sides caused the communities to thus actively want the formation of separate Muslim and Hindu nations.

On the other hand, the Bangladeshi constitution, established in 1972 after liberation, stipulated that the unity and solidarity of the Bangalee nation derived its identity from language and culture, and “attained sovereign and independent Bangladesh through a united and determined struggle in the war of independence, shall be the basis of the Bangalee nationalism” and also said that “the principles of secularism shall be realized by the elimination of... the granting of the State of political status in favor of any religion”.⁵ While the Islamist party Jamaat has grown in importance in Bangladesh since, I have shown that there was profound ideological differences between the political climate of the three countries – while Pakistan was built on the basis of a Muslim state, India and Bangladesh were secular countries, though India put emphasis

⁴ Sisson, Richard, and Leo E. Rose. 1990. *War and Secession: Pakistan, India, and the Creation of Bangladesh*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press: 35.

⁵ Nazli Kibria. 2011. *Muslims in motion: Islam and national identity in the Bangladeshi diaspora*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press: 18.

on the return to the Golden Age of Hindustan and Bangladesh emphasized on the Bengali identity as the basis for their country.

Thus there were deep cleavages between the ideas of India and Pakistan from even before the partition, but the people of the region were willing to work in solidarity when they were faced with the external threat of British Imperialism. However, it should be noted that these cleavages may not have completely reflected the feelings of the masses in India. Yasmin Khan discusses how it was the leaders of the Muslim League and Congress who at many points leading up to the Partition helped incite communal violence and distrust between Hindu and Muslim communities in India.⁶ Therefore, it could also be argued that the ideas of Hindu-Muslim disharmony was a construct of the political elite in the early 1900s.

b. External differentiation of National identities

The other side of the argument involves the influence of the British Raj on the state of Indian solidarity. How did the British influence the creation of two distinct national identities in the years leading up to the partition in a region of the world where the natives that until that time had not had any substantial internal discourse regarding the definition of their nationalities?

Lawrence James provides color into the hand played by the British in dividing up India.⁷ His writings show how the British East India Company in its early days followed in the footsteps of the Mughals by playing the Indian princes against each other by acting as kingmaker and providing its resources to the Indian rulers in a strategic manner, which ensured that there was no coordinated uprising against them. The British not only created friction between neighboring

⁶ Yasmin Khan. 2007. *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

⁷ Lawrence James. 1997. *Raj: The Making and Unmaking of British India*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin.

provinces, but, as seen during the Sepoy's Mutiny of 1857, the British generals "realized the importance of the binding power of religion" and undertook "an exercise in black propaganda by spreading rumors that the Muslim mutineers had desecrated Hindu temples".⁸

Furthermore, Romila Thapar describes how the Aryan identity developed in India in the 19th century via the collaborative hands of European scholars and upper-caste Hindus- "Keshab Chunder Sen follows Max Mueller and John Wilson in his statement that, '... in the advent of the English nation in India we see a reunion of parted cousins, the descendants of two different families of the ancient Aryan race'".⁹ This was a time in history when Europeans viewed their 'races' as advanced, and those of the colonized, as 'lesser breeds'. For the British, having an Aryan class and a non-Aryan lower class (the dasas) in their Indian colony allowed them to create racial hierarchies within India, creating divisions between the people of the region thus easing their ability to remain in control. For the upper class Hindus who qualified as being Aryan, this became an exclusive status.

In terms of the class aspect of Hinduism, the years leading up to partition had seen many lower caste Hindus convert to Islam or Christianity. According to Arundhati Roy, between the years of 1881 to 1941, the Hindu population in pre-partition, undivided Punjab dropped from 43.8 percent to 29.1 percent, due largely to the conversion of the subordinated castes to Islam, Sikhism and Christianity.¹⁰ The large-scale exodus of untouchables from the Hindu fold would have been catastrophic for the "Hindu" majority as the demographic aspect of how post-partition India would look like began to take importance. This could also be seen as a problem created by British rule. The empirical taxonomy of the British census had solidified and freeze-dried the

⁸ James: 269.

⁹ Romila Thapar. 1996. "The Theory of Aryan Race and India: History and Politics." *Social Scientist* 24 (1): 8.

¹⁰ Arundhati Roy. 2014. "The Doctor and the Saint: Ambedkar, Gandhi, and the battle against caste." *The Caravan*.

rigid but not entirely inflexible hierarchy of caste, adding its own prejudices and value judgements to the mix, classifying entire communities as “criminals” and “warriors” and so on. The untouchable castes were entered under the accounting head “Hindu”, making class mobility even harder than it used to be. Therefore, to the Hindu interests groups who would benefit if Hinduism remained a demographic majority, other religions like Islam, Sikhism and Christianity began to start looking like the face of the enemy, who was slowly but surely eroding Hindu power in India.

Finally, the biggest outside contribution to the development of differential national identities in India can again be placed at the feet of Western colonizers. Partha Chatterjee traces out how nationalist thought emerged in colonial India, and how it developed over the years leading up to Partition. The book has a chapter that discusses culture and power in the thought of the Bengali nationalist, Bankimchandra. Bankim points out to an important aspect of the Hindu identity, in that “the very designation of something called a ‘Hindu religion’ was the work of foreigners”.¹¹

Therefore, it can also be argued that, independent of the internal political processes that led to the creation of Pakistan and India, there existed strong external factors that contributed to the creation of two distinct South Asian identities. Firstly, the British strategy of divide and conquer created or exacerbated animosities between Hindus and Muslims in India. Secondly, the propagation of the Aryan myth into popular upper-caste Hindu thinking created a racially charged class element between Hindus and non-Hindus, who were thought to be lower-caste Hindus who had converted to other religions. Finally, the whole idea of Hinduism being one

¹¹ Partha Chatterjee. 1993. *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse*. London: Zed Books: 75.

religion can be contributed to a European desire to classify the people of India who practiced a way of life that had not been seen by them till then. The remainder of this paper will attempt to investigate whether mass-elite politics or external construction played the greatest part in creating the three countries that now make up the sub-continent.

iii. Theory of National Hierarchy

Based on the literature of both internal and external factors, I hypothesize that national formation and identities in South Asia were built along the basis of religious and ethno-racial lines. As shown in Table 1 and through the texts of Chatterjee (1993), Thapar (1996) and Khan (2007), for example, a hierarchy has developed in national formation where Hinduism is seen as the superior religion, and being a part of an Aryan, or Martial race is seen as being of a superior race.

Table 1: Race-Religion hierarchy of South Asia

Religion	Race
Hindu	Martial
Muslim	Non-Martial

As an addition to my primary hypothesis, I also assert that the three countries fall into levels of power and influence in the South Asian political landscape as a result of this – The Hindu and Martial India comes out on top, followed by Islamic Pakistan. Bangladesh, with its non-Martial Islamic population, finds itself in the bottom, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Influence by National Characteristics, in descending order

Country	Characteristics
India	Hindu and Martial
Pakistan	Muslim and Martial
Bangladesh	Non-Hindu, Non-Martial

The following section will focus on specific instances of interaction between the three countries during the years following Partition in 1947 to provide evidence for my hypotheses. Additionally, it will attempt to weigh in the effects of mass-elite politics and external (i.e. Western in general and British in particular) intervention on how these interactions played out to assess whether the national hierarchy was an externally imposed structure or an internal construction.

iv. Case Studies

This section focuses on specific instances in the 68 year period from 1947 to 2015 in order to provide color to the hypotheses outlined in the previous section. I break it up into two further subsections, the first focusing on interstate interactions while the second looks more at the state of affairs at the intrastate level. Analysis at both levels is important to understand the national hierarchy hypothesis in its entirety. While the interstate evidence helps provide an idea for the broader interactions between the three countries, the intrastate view provides more granular evidence to support the criteria for the national hierarchy hypothesis, as it shows the differential treatment of different religious and ethno-racial cohorts after controlling for their nationalities.

a. Evidence from an interstate perspective

The Kashmir Conflict

Evidence from the issue of Kashmir provides some clarity to the relative positions of Hinduism and Islam in the national hierarchy model, as well as the importance of both elite politics and the external hand of ex-colonial masters. Kashmir was one of the three princely states over which

India and Pakistan had the most complex of territorial problems and disputes – the other two being Junagadh and Hyderabad.¹²

In the years leading to partition, the Muslim-majority land of Kashmir had been ruled by a dynasty of Hindu kings, the Dogras. During their rule, with the help of the British overlords they set up a system of institutions that neglected their Muslim subjects, their shrines and cultural symbols in favor of their much smaller Hindu constituency.¹³ At the time of partition, India argued that since Kashmir was ruled by Hindus, it should be part of India, while Pakistan argued that Kashmir should be a part of their territories as the majority of the civilian population was Muslim. This led to the first Indo-Pakistani war in 1948 which was halted by the UN, and at the end of which India was allocated control of two thirds of the state of Kashmir.¹⁴ Therefore, the external hand of British colonial overlord and the UN, at the time a very new western institution, determined that the Indian Hindu claim was greater than the Muslim claim to the region.

However, the situation with mass-elite politics in the Kashmir issue is also worth touching upon. Muslim Kashmiri elites - though a disappointingly small constituency – were rallying behind Jinnah's desire for the Muslim nation of Pakistan, but a large part of the Kashmiri population wanted a separate secular state of Kashmir.¹⁵ Neither of these two things happened, which show that not only was the mass desire overlooked during the whole issue, but the Muslim elite perspective was also not given as much importance as the Hindu elite perspective by the British nor by other western powers.

¹² Sisson and Rose: 38.

¹³ Sanjay Kak. 2011. *Until My Freedom Has Come: The New Intifada in Kashmir*. Chicago: Haymarket Books: 267.

¹⁴ Kak: 255.

¹⁵ Kak: 260.

Bangladesh's War of Independence

While Bangladesh's secession from Pakistan was a result of a civil war and thus an intrastate affair, I look at it from the interstate lens as it led to the formation of the third South Asian country. The events surrounding it show not only the Pakistani elite view on the matter of Bengali power over the country, but also toward Bengalis as a race themselves.

Bangladeshi secession was a culmination of 23 years of turbulence between the Western and Eastern provinces of Pakistan, but was sparked off by the results of the 1970 General Election – the first ever in the Muslim nation. The Awami League (AL), which was an East Pakistani political party whose platform centered on autonomy for East Pakistan, legitimately won the elections by a landslide.¹⁶ However, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the leader of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) - the West Pakistani political party that had gotten the second highest number of votes – and one of the key players in the demonstrations against Field Marshall Ayub Khan that led to the call for elections in 1970, vehemently blocked the transfer of power into the hands of the AL.¹⁷ His influence over Yahya Khan and his ability to continually push back the handover of power to a Bengali government and the meeting of the National Assembly shows that, under a legitimate setting of electoral victory within a Muslim nation, the Pakistani agenda was valued over the Bengali claims.

Gary J. Bass has recently analyzed declassified White House documents that showed U.S. support for the Pakistani military Junta during the war.¹⁸ He notes how “West Pakistan's elite scorned the ‘Bingos’ as weak and unmartial”, which is essentially an extension of the

¹⁶ Sisson and Rose: 33.

¹⁷ Sisson and Rose: 61.

¹⁸ Gary J. Bass, 2013. *The Blood Telegram*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

British perception of Bengalis.¹⁹ He describes the U.S. government's stance of non-action in response to the atrocities committed by Yahya Khan's Pakistani Army, even when they had detailed knowledge of what was happening via telegrams from their consulate in Dhaka. Another example of the perception of Bengalis as inferior was seen between a conversation between Henry Kissinger and President Nixon at the beginning of the war – “[Kissinger] told him that ‘it looks at the moment as if Yahya has gotten control.’ Nixon was surprised: ‘Really? How?’ Kissinger told the president, ‘the Bengalis aren’t very good fighters I guess.’”²⁰

The evidence from here suggests again that elite politics had a strong hand in enforcing the national hierarchy between Pakistan and Bangladesh. The US support played a part in legitimizing the Pakistan government's stance during this time, and shows that there was external enforcement of this power dynamic as well. Additionally, one could also argue that the British set the precedence on determining the worth of the people of Bengal – British scholars felt that the Aryan bloodlines in India were especially diluted in the distant east, where the influence of aboriginal women had been strongest, and had led to the propagation of feminized Bengalis who had no necessity to fight.²¹ Additionally, the views of Lord Cherwell - advisor to the British government - along with large parts of the British Cabinet regarding the Bengal Famine of 1943 supported a Malthusian argument. They felt that “Those peoples whose lack of sexual restraint caused them to reproduce recklessly were especially prone to what he called ‘positive checks’ on their population. These unhappy constraints included war, disease, vice, and ‘the last, the most dreadful resource of nature’ — famine”.²² So not only were the British blaming the people of

¹⁹ Bass: 21.

²⁰ Bass: 57.

²¹ Madhusree Mukerjee. 2010. *Churchill's Secret War : The British Empire and the Ravaging of India During World War II*. New York: Basic Books: 32.

²² Mukerjee: 204.

Bengal for a disaster they themselves had a large hand in creating, but they were also not making active efforts to help them out of this.

b. Evidence from an intrastate perspective

The Crisis of Ayodhya

Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state, is thought by most practicing Hindus to be the birthplace of Lord Rama, who was believed to be the seventh avatar or incarnation of the Hindu god Vishnu. Ever since the nineteenth century, Hindu activists had been claiming that the Mughal emperor Babur in the 16th century allegedly tore down an older Hindu temple marking Lord Rama's exact birthplace and replaced it with the Babri Mosque.²³ Following clashes between Hindus and Muslims regarding the building in 1949, the Mosque was sealed off by the UP government to avoid trouble.

Sumit Ganguly's paper provides an understanding of how the conflict in Ayodhya that boiled over in 1992 by the destruction of the Babri Mosque by BJP-led Hindu activists was a result of a calculated political play. He explains how the manner in which the Congress party under the leadership of Rajiv Gandhi handled the Shah Bano case created a national issue over the disputes between two religions. The Shah Bano case involved a divorced Muslim woman who appealed to the Indian Supreme Court to overrule her ex-husband's claim that Muslim personal law exempted him from having to pay her alimony. The court ruled that, despite the existence of a separate Muslim personal law, the husband was indeed obliged under Indian criminal law to make the alimony payments.²⁴ This angered many Indian Muslims as they felt it

²³ Sumit Ganguly. 2003. "The Crisis of Indian Secularism." *Journal of Democracy* 14 (4): 18.

²⁴ Ganguly: 17.

infringed on Muslim personal law, although the Indian judicial system had already done away with Hindu personal law before that. Anger at the Court ruling led to a mass mobilization, which caused Rajiv Gandhi to overturn the Court ruling and grant Muslims a separate dispensation in matters of marriage and divorce.

The Gandhi government's decision was a short-sighted one that was aimed at curbing unrest, but ended up creating more unrest from the Hindu end. Riding the tide of the Supreme Court victory, Indian Muslims mobilized and made a successful push to reopen the Babri Mosque in 1986. This enraged many of the Hindu population, and provided the opposition party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), an opportunity to gain support thru an anti-Babri Mosque stance. The BJP and its affiliates started a nationwide campaign to demolish the mosque and construct a Hindu temple in its place, urging people from across India to send bricks to Ayodhya for this end.²⁵ The BJP's mobilization towards the reclaiming of the "Ramjanmabhoomi" eventually resulted in the destruction of the Mosque on December 6, 1992.²⁶

The appeal of fundamentalism in a religious community that has had no history of zealotry has grown in India alongside the demise in the moral authority of the state, and the BJP has been a major beneficiary of the progressive attenuation of secularism. The party, which held only two seats in the Eighth Lok Sabha, increased to 85 in the 1989 election with 11.4% of the vote, and to 119 in 1991 with 19.9% of the vote.²⁷ They found their zealous supporters from a particular subset of the Hindu population – the middle-classes, especially traders, small business

²⁵ Ganguly: 19.

²⁶Ramesh Thakur. 1993. "Ayodhya and the Politics of India's Secularism: A Double-Standards Discourse." *Asian Survey* 33 (7): 646.

²⁷ Thakur: 653.

people, and white collar workers.²⁸ Equally significant, that segment of the population whose formative years were in the partition era, was also more likely to support the demolition. So in the case of the Babri mosque is also an example of religious hierarchy where Hinduism is placed above Islam, and is a result of the dynamics of mass-elite politics.

Treatment of Minorities

The Ayodhya conflict shows that the model of national hierarchy can express itself within the borders of the South Asian nation-states themselves. It also highlights the treatment of minorities in India. Minorities have an altogether hard time in the South Asian countries in general, and this section will focus on the treatment of minorities in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Religious minorities in Pakistan – those belonging to religions not belonging to Sunni or Shia Islam, and including Muslim groups such as Ahmadiyas and Aga Khanis – have to deal with the Blasphemy Laws that exist in the country. These laws, introduced in stages by General Zia-ul-Haq between 1977 and 1988,²⁹ have wide-blanket coverage of acts that may fall within the offences of blasphemy, the violation of which carries long prison sentences and death by hanging.³⁰ Offences include the intent to insult the religion of any class through any action; defiling a copy of the Holy Quran; use of derogatory remarks with respect to the Holy Prophet of Islam; uttering words with deliberate intent to wound religious feelings; use of derogatory remarks with respect to holy personages; misuse of epithets, description and titles reserved for certain holy personages and places; a person of the Qadiani group or Ahmadi calling himself a

²⁸ Chhibber, Pradeep K., and Subhash Misra. 1993. "Hindus and the Babri Masjid: The Sectional Basis of Communal Attitudes." *Asian Survey* 33 (7): 665.

²⁹ Siddique, O., and Z. Hayat. 2008. "Unholy Speech and Holy Laws: Blasphemy Laws in Pakistan—Controversial Origins, Design Defects and Free Speech Implications." *Minnesota Journal of International Law* 17 (2): 310.

³⁰ Rasul Baksh Rais. 2005. "Islamic radicalism and minorities in Pakistan." *Religious Radicalism and Security in South Asia* 459.

Muslim or preaching or propagating his faith. The most problematic part of these laws is that any individual can accuse another of breaching them, and no solid written proof is required to indict them.

The blasphemy laws have not only increased religious intolerance but have failed to provide any legal or institutional safety net for religious minorities.³¹ Their origins lie in the Indian Penal Code enacted for the Indian subcontinent by the British colonial government in 1860.³² As the British ruled over a region very heterogeneous in its religious affiliations, it would appear that the Indian Penal Code was created to ensure the maintenance of order in a multi-religious society and the containment of attacks targeted at any religion.³³ This colonial legacy was used as a blueprint by the Zia government when it enacted its own version of the blasphemy laws in Pakistan that essentially created a system that could allow the majority religion to discriminate against minorities.

Discrimination against minorities is a problem in Bangladesh too. In the aftermath of the parliamentary elections in 1970, between the months of December 1970 and March 1971 thousands of Biharis were killed as a result of ethnic cleansing on the part of Bengalis.³⁴ This was an act of retribution on the part of Bengalis, as it was widely perceived that Biharis in East Pakistan supported the pro-Pakistan Muslim League. This kind of persecution continued on in Bangladesh after independence, and the new government of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman failed to stop the violence against the minority community of Biharis. Even though a small portion of

³¹ Rais: 460.

³² O. Siddique and Z. Hayat. 2008. "Unholy Speech and Holy Laws: Blasphemy Laws in Pakistan—Controversial Origins, Design Defects and Free Speech Implications." *Minnesota Journal of International Law* 17 (2): 335.

³³ Siddique and Hayat: 337.

³⁴ Sen, Sumit. 1999. "Stateless Refugees and the Right to Return: The Bihari Refugees of South Asia - Part 1." *International Journal of Refugee Law* 11 (4): 630.

Biharis had joined the East Pakistan Civil Armed Forces (EPCAF) – paramilitary groups that assisted the Pakistani Army, more commonly known as *Razakars* and *Al-Shams* – the mass murder of Bihari refugees by Bangladeshi nationalists continued unabated.³⁵

The case of the persecution of Biharis is interesting in the sense that they were not religious minorities, but to Bangladeshis represented the repressive “other” that they had to fight against to gain independence. Here, the power of mass politics set up a scene for revenge-taking by Bangladeshi nationalists. While this is counter to the national hierarchy model in its most specific nature, it does show that in a context of minority discrimination, it can be easy for the majority to turn the minority into the face of the enemy and exercise power over them.

v. Conclusions

In this paper I attempt to create a framework that can understand the political relationship between the three South Asian countries of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh using the criteria of race and religion. I find evidence for the formation of a hierarchical system of international relations based on the majority religions of the countries from my case studies, which show that India’s being a Hindu state brings it above Pakistan as a Muslim state, and that this is in part a legacy of British colonial preferences and Elite politics leading up to Partition. I also use Bangladesh’s war of Independence to show that, even within the two constituencies with the same religion, there is a differentiation by the political elite on the basis of martial races, and how the deployment of forces against East Pakistani civilians was legitimized on the basis of Bengalis not belonging to a martial race. Again, there is evidence of the external western hand in

³⁵ Sen: 633.

constructing these categorizations, as seen by the perspectives held by the Americans and the British before them.

At the intrastate level, I also find evidence for the existence of a religious hierarchy. The case of Ayodhya supports my classification of Hinduism being seen as more valuable than Islam, and shows that mass-elite politics played a huge role in the destruction of the Babri Mosque and the ensuing violence. The treatment of minority groups in Pakistan and Bangladesh, however, provided another factor that was not defined in my hypothesis, as these case studies showed that, regardless of their race or religion, minorities would be likely to find themselves at the bottom of the hierarchy. This shows that majority–minority relations also have an important part in explaining national hierarchy, and leaves the door open for more research into that perspective.

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